



Strategic Plan 2016-2018

INTRODUCTION

As the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving celebrates its 90th anniversary, we reaffirm our commitment to being a broad-based community foundation. We will continue to work with our donors to help them realize their charitable intentions and our community partners to respond to our region's most pressing needs and harness its extraordinary potential. Looking forward, we are eager to creatively leverage our expertise, influence and financial resources to forge a future where all residents have equitable opportunity to thrive and contribute to the well-being of our region.

At the same time, we recognize that significant disparities exist in our region for residents of different races, ethnicities and incomes. We have learned that equal distribution of resources will not produce the same outcomes among residents and communities with greater need and greater obstacles to high-quality education and employment. Some residents and communities may require more attention and support.

Nearly five years ago, we developed a strategic plan that balanced our work as a broad-based community foundation with a prioritized response to the deeply troubling disparities in educational achievement and workforce readiness across our region. We developed a long-term goal that focused on education: *Ensure that children in our region, especially those most vulnerable, are ready to learn when they enter kindergarten and prepared to succeed when they leave high school.* We knew this work would require us to think and act in new ways if we wanted to find transformative and lasting solutions. We also knew that achieving and sustaining our goal required years of ongoing investment.

We envision a future where all residents have equitable opportunity to thrive and contribute to the well-being of our region

Today, we have indicators of progress and learning to share about early childhood and K-12 education partnership and system building in our region. Our education work has a sharper focus born from lessons learned over the past five years that we will carry more broadly into our new strategic plan:

Investments must be integrated.

We understand that children learn best when they have nurturing, literate parents who earn a living wage and who can provide stable housing, adequate and nourishing food and quality health care and when they live in safe, culturally-rich communities with their families. We cannot tackle these and other major challenges in isolation.

Information is essential to create a roadmap to opportunity.

Our approaches must be grounded in knowledge, and support new ways to build and share information. We know that better information is needed about the factors that contribute to the most challenging issues facing our region, and that regional solutions require regional data.

 **Actions must be collaborative.**

In order to achieve sustained impact on education and other disparities, we know that effective collaborations are required with diverse partners at all levels and in all areas of our work.

Over the next three years, we will build on our achievements. We will lead, inspire and engage others to join us as we create pathways to opportunity. We will remain committed to education and bring a renewed focus on building vibrant communities and family economic security for all residents in our region, guided by our mission, core values and vision.

OUR MISSION

Putting philanthropy into action to create lasting solutions that result in vibrant communities within the Greater Hartford region.

OUR CORE VALUES

-  **Leadership.** We listen to the voices of our communities and convene, connect and catalyze positive and enduring social change.
-  **Innovation and Responsiveness.** We promote and explore new ideas and innovative ways of working as we respond to the most pressing needs in the communities we serve.
-  **Equity, Diversity and Inclusion.** We seek and embrace the participation and perspectives of people and communities that reflect who we are as a region and we are committed to ensuring that all residents in the region have the opportunity to thrive.
-  **Collaboration.** We cannot do this work alone. We are committed to seek partnerships with communities and nonprofit, private and public entities.
-  **Learning-Focused.** We embrace and promote individual and organizational learning and improvement.
-  **Outcome-Driven.** We pursue positive community outcomes and use measures of success to set expectations and guide action.
-  **Stewardship.** We uphold the community's trust by striving to preserve, protect and grow our resources.

OUR VISION

All residents in the Greater Hartford region have equitable opportunity to thrive and contribute to the well-being of our region, achieved and sustained by shared commitment and partnership among the Foundation, donors, the nonprofit, private and public sectors, faith leaders and residents in our region.

Charting the Path Forward

As we reflect on the accomplishments and lessons learned from our 2011-2016 strategic plan and chart our path forward for the next three years, we bring with us an even deeper understanding that a vibrant, well-educated and

strong Greater Hartford region requires that all residents, especially those with the greatest need, have equitable opportunities to achieve and flourish.

OUR PRIORITIES

Our three priorities are inter-related; success in one area depends on and reinforces success in the others. Children learn best when their families are economically secure and well equipped to care for them and when they live in safe, culturally-rich communities with their families. Transformation happens when we are able to forge creative, cross-cutting approaches that lift up all members of the region in all areas. With a clear focus on equity and opportunity, we will prioritize:

Focusing on equity and inclusion, we will prioritize people and places with the greatest need

Vibrant Communities

Goal: All of our region's residents should have the opportunity to live in and contribute to strong, safe and vibrant communities.

Focus: We will focus on people and places with the greatest need by engaging and supporting partners who promote meaningful civic engagement, safe affordable housing, quality health and mental care and a rich diversity of cultural and other experiences that contribute to a satisfying quality of life.

Sample Indicators of Success

- Increased engagement by diverse residents at the local level on issues critical to the region.
- Increased partnerships and collaborations that demonstrate an impact on safe and stable affordable housing at the local and regional levels.
- Increased access to the arts and culture for a diverse audience.

Learning - From Birth through College

Goal: All of our region's children should be ready to learn when they enter kindergarten and prepared to succeed when they graduate from high school.

Focus: We will focus on children who face the greatest opportunity gaps, leading and collaborating with partners to engage families with young children; develop family-school-community partnerships with low-performing school districts; abate summer learning loss; provide college scholarships; and other opportunities that promote learning, and inspire college and career readiness, for children and youth.

Sample Indicators of Success

- Increased opportunities for learning evidenced by improved and persisting attendance in early childhood programs and school, fewer disciplinary actions and strengthened family- school-community partnerships.
- Increased numbers of students attending college with scholarship opportunities.

Our Priorities:

-  Vibrant Communities
-  Learning – From Birth through College
-  Family Economic Security

- Key cross-sector stakeholders will share a common vision and commitment to aligned action that promote children’s development and learning.

Family Economic Security

Goal: All of our region’s residents should have access to clear pathways to employment and career advancement that lead to economic security for their families.

Focus: We will focus on adults with low-level literacy and job skills, including those previously incarcerated by incentivizing and supporting employment pathway components such as adult literacy, contextualized learning, career readiness, financial literacy, and other opportunities that contribute to economic development and success in our region.

Sample Indicators of Success

- Evidence that the knowledge from Career Pathway Initiative learning community and evaluation is shared widely and informs efforts to support family economic security.
- Evidence of an integrated and sustainable regional career pathway system for high-quality education and workforce development.
- Evidence of increased collaborative leadership among the philanthropic, nonprofit, public and private sectors to promote employment opportunities and economic growth in our region.

OUR STRATEGIES

Paving the way for equitable opportunity is complex. No one entity can achieve enduring social change entirely on its own. We will intensify our efforts to build, join and support strong collaborations where appropriate throughout our work. Together with our communities – the people who live and work here, our generous donors, nonprofits, our schools, the business community, and local and state governments - we will inspire, implement and assess innovative and transforming approaches to strengthen our region.

We have identified key strategies that best leverage the Foundation’s assets to affect enduring change in our priority areas and that allow us to be nimble and responsive to new knowledge and opportunities:

Build, Sustain and Share Knowledge

Knowledge, supported by data analysis, helps us understand what is happening in our communities, provides a basis to build on what’s working, and gives us new ways to think about and tackle issues. We will continue to engage and listen to all voices in the community to learn about emerging and ongoing needs and opportunities.

We will:

- **Commission, support and share research** that fills gaps and produces data to drive regional solutions.

Collaborating with Our Communities, We Will:

-  Build, Sustain and Share Knowledge
-  Influence Public Policy
-  Inspire Philanthropy and Steward Resources
-  Invest in the Region

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- **Promote evaluation practices** that enable us to gauge progress in priority areas.
- **Develop and cultivate learning opportunities** with and among donors, grantees and other partners.

Sample Indicators of Success

- The Foundation is regarded as a credible entity that builds, sustains and shares knowledge throughout the region and statewide.
- New information about early childhood system-building, family-school-community partnerships, career pathways and evaluation is developed and shared in ways that impact systems change.
- Our Community Indicators Project, including *Progress Points*, is shared with community members from all sectors to make informed decisions and engage in collective action to benefit the region.

Engage in Public Policy

It is clear that we must build upon our traditional efforts in grantmaking and capacity building if we want to craft new and enduring solutions. We must also use our experience, knowledge and influence to promote sustainable systemic change. This work is well underway and we are eager to increase the use of a range of public policy activities that support and further our mission and strategic goals, including administrative and legislative lobbying.

We will:

- **Make a significant contribution to administrative and legislative public policy at the local and state levels** that advance our priority areas.
- **Convene and join with others** to stimulate desired policy and systems change.
- **Build relationships with state and municipal leaders throughout our region** to understand regional challenges and support collaborative regional solutions.
- **Evaluate the impact** of our public policy efforts.

Sample Indicators of Success

- The concept of family-school-community partnerships is embraced and adopted by the State, municipalities and school districts, as evidenced by supportive policy and investments.
- Increased attention to the needs of infants and toddlers in practice, policy and budget decisions.
- The Foundation is an invited and valued participant in policy deliberations related to our priority areas.

Inspire Philanthropy and Steward Resources

Our donors are the bedrock of all that we are able to do. In return, we ensure the intent of each donor's gift is honored, and we invest their funds wisely. Making meaningful change in our priority areas compels us to think in new and creative ways about how we and our partners approach our work. We must do the same as we endeavor to generate the resources needed to support and sustain our efforts.

We will:

- **Respond to donors' interests** with innovative opportunities to benefit the region.
- **Connect new and existing donors with our priority areas** so they may learn firsthand about the extraordinary work being accomplished by our community partners.

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- **Harness the increasing diversity of our donor base** to reach out to a broad range of prospective donors to learn about the issues that motivate their giving and to introduce them to a wider range of effective giving options.
- **Grow, preserve and protect our endowment** for the long term through prudent investment strategies and increasing the number of funds and donors including legacy funds, private foundations and nonprofit endowment funds.

Sample Indicators of Success

- Our endowment is preserved and enhanced.
- Our donors represent the diversity of our region.
- New funding sources support our education, career pathway and public policy work.
- Our giving circles are thriving with members serving as philanthropic ambassadors.

Invest in the Region

We will continue to employ broad-based grantmaking to meet the broad needs of our region while incentivizing and funding innovative approaches to our priority areas. We also will continue our commitment to strengthen the capacity of the region's nonprofits while working in new ways to catalyze innovative solutions.

We will:

- **Leverage the Foundation's assets and introduce new funding** to the region by pursuing opportunities with local and national funders, government and business.
- **Promote creative nonprofit capacity, including endowment building**, that is tailored to the diverse needs of the region's nonprofits and that promotes innovation among these groups.
- **Motivate and fund new approaches, collaboration and partnerships** among nonprofit and other stakeholders working in our priority areas.
- **Incentivize and support grantees to collect and share outcomes data** as learning and thought partners in our efforts to develop lasting solutions in our priority areas.

Sample Indicators of Success

- We will have a deeper knowledge of where and how the Foundation is investing its resources, including evidence of the cumulative impact of our priority investments and place-based grantmaking in our communities.
- New funding from local and national funders and the public sector will be brought to our region.
- Innovative investment strategies that go beyond grantmaking and capacity building will be developed, implemented and evaluated i.e. organizational endowment building, impact investing.
- Evidence that our regional nonprofit sector has improved capacity for leadership, partnership and evaluation, including the ongoing impact of the Foundation's Nonprofit Support Program (NSP).

ORGANIZATIONAL AND FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Executing our strategies requires financial investment and priority-setting while continuing to support our ongoing operation as well as cultural change, new structures and new capacities within the Foundation to:

- Increase our ability to innovate;
- Prioritize reflection and continuous learning;
- Encourage creativity and strategic risk-taking;
- Enable us to work more collaboratively internally and externally;
- Share more about who we are, what we do and what we learn with the wider community;
- Test new ways to share information about our work, trends and regional issues with our Board, our Foundation staff and our community; and
- Develop a continuous assessment system that allows us to understand and evaluate impact before, during, and at the conclusion of initiatives and to adjust our work and community investments accordingly.