

GREATER TOGETHER COMMUNITY FUNDS EVALUATION

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE EVALUATION?

The evaluation will inform the ongoing implementation and development of the Greater Together Community Funds and assess the extent to which the Community Funds have fulfilled their threefold purpose:

- supporting the community in taking ownership around the needs in their town
- encouraging broad and inclusive civic engagement
- anchoring the Hartford Foundation in each town.

WHAT IS THE EVALUATION?

This developmental evaluation will monitor progress and examine the outcomes of the Community Funds over the first three years of implementation (2019-2021). In adopting a developmental approach, CES will support the Hartford Foundation in reflecting on and refining the Community Funds project. CES will act as a thought partner and critical friend to the Hartford Foundation as it lays the groundwork to build its own organizational and community capacity, and considers how to assess the effects of this work. Evaluation components include:

- **Implementation Monitoring Plan:** The plan will specify project data to be tracked in order to determine the status of implementation milestones in each of the 29 towns.
- **Project Implementation Assessment:** The evaluator will partner with Foundation staff to identify challenges and facilitating practices that influence implementation. In Year 1, the evaluation will focus on the establishment of advisory committees, creation of participatory grantmaking processes, initial grants made, and resources and assistance provided to

support these activities. Years 2 and 3 will focus on the maintenance and development of the advisory committees and related practices established in the first year.

- **Outcomes Assessment:** This component of the evaluation will examine the extent to which Community Funds with established advisory committees and participatory grantmaking processes have met the three project goals.

In addition to traditional methods such as surveys, focus groups, and interviews, CES anticipates using enhanced participatory evaluation methods such as self-assessment, social mapping, matrix scoring, and storytelling.

WHO IS CONDUCTING THE EVALUATION?

The evaluation will be conducted by the Collaborative for Educational Services (CES), an educational collaborative in Northampton, Massachusetts. CES answered a public request for proposals in June 2019 and was selected by the Hartford Foundation.

The evaluation team is comprised of cross-departmental staff who bring to bear experience in evaluation, community engagement and organizing, and social justice and equity.

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WHAT IS THE TIMELINE FOR THE EVALUATION?

CES began meeting with Hartford Foundation staff in July 2019 to develop an understanding of this project. During fall 2019, CES will observe the initial implementation of Community Funds and provide feedback to the Foundation. As the project progresses, CES will regularly attend community meetings, guide a participatory evaluation process among advisory committee members and the broader community, and generate synthesized findings for the Foundation and community stakeholders. The evaluation will conclude in June 2022 with a final report and reflection session.

