



Hartford Foundation
FOR PUBLIC GIVING

Newsletter



Jay Williams
President, Hartford Foundation

Click on the video above for a message from Jay Williams

A Year We'll Never Forget

A letter from Hartford Foundation President Jay Williams

2020 has been a year like no other.

At the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving, we began the year committed to addressing disparities rooted in race, place and income. When COVID-19 arrived in March, we quickly pivoted to working alongside our nonprofit partners to meet the imminent needs of our community.

Thanks to the generosity of more than 250 corporations, individuals and private foundations, our **COVID-19 Response Fund** was able to award **more than \$9 million in grants** to respond to the acute need and cover unplanned costs such as food and housing, staffing and cleaning, technology and minor capital improvements, and more.

The pandemic also affirmed our commitment to dismantling structural racism. This crisis has opened millions of new eyes to the fact that generational

disparities created by systemic racism are firmly entrenched in American society, including in Greater Hartford. Furthermore, the deaths of George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery, and Breonna Taylor served as inescapable reminders of how racism is embedded in our society. COVID-19 didn't create these problems, but it did expose and exacerbate them.

As our nation faced the dual pandemics of COVID-19 and systemic racism, the Foundation responded by working with our community to address countless emerging issues. For example:



We partnered with the City of Hartford, HEDCO, Inc., and Capital For Change to [launch the Small Business Emergency Assistance Grant Program](#), focusing on businesses owned by people of color and women.



We partnered with the City and Dalio Philanthropies to fund a [free, high speed Wi-Fi network](#) accessible to all Hartford residents and businesses.



We announced a [three-year police training initiative](#) led by the University of New Haven's Center for Advanced Policing and the Tow Youth Justice Institute.



Thanks to funding from the LEGO Group and The LEGO Foundation, we awarded a \$1M grant to First Book to [provide computers](#) to more than 2,500 students.



The Foundation supported local organizations [working to Get Out the Vote and Get Out the Count](#), recognizing the vital nature of the 2020 census and election.



In 2021, the Foundation [will make \\$1 million grants](#) to The Prosperity Foundation and The Hispanic Federation – Connecticut to connect communities of color to resources and build sustainable change.



Our Artists of Color Unite advisory group is helping to advance the region's creative community, through projects like the [Black Lives Matter murals](#) in Hartford and

Bloomfield.

Our region continues to face myriad challenges. That said, when I reflect on generosity of our donors, the commitment of our community partners, and the creative determination of the staff at the Foundation, I see endless possibilities for our shared future.

If you need new reasons to hope or further inspiration, I encourage you to read the stories of our [COVID-19 Response Fund grantees](#), and marvel at the work created by local teens for our [Art in Action campaign](#). [Our news page](#) includes more information about our work and the positive changes we are enabling.

The work of dismantling racism and reducing disparities is not easy, but it is the right thing to do. We believe it will help repair the social damage caused by COVID-19, get our economy back on track and safeguard us against future crises. If you are ready to join us in our work, please take [our equity pledge](#). If you are able, consider [making a donation](#) or [opening your own fund](#).

On behalf of the Board and staff here at the Hartford Foundation, thank you for your partnership in 2020, and we look forward to a healthier, more equitable new year.

Jay Williams
President, Hartford Foundation for Public Giving

Questions? Email hartfordfoundation@hfpg.org.

