

## Request for Proposals

**Greater Together Community Funds Evaluation  
Hartford Foundation for Public Giving  
10 Columbus Blvd., 8th Floor  
Hartford, CT 06106  
(860) 548-1888  
[www.hfpg.org](http://www.hfpg.org)**

### **I. Background:**

The Hartford Foundation seeks consultant proposals for an evaluation of The Hartford Foundation for Public Giving's Greater Together Community Funds. The consultant will work with the Hartford Foundation to articulate evaluation questions, review and refine administrative data collection, collect data, conduct analyses, and report on the objectives outlined in the project description below. The consultant is also expected to collaborate with the Hartford Foundation to inform the implementation and development of the Community Funds project.

The Hartford Foundation for Public Giving is the community foundation for the 29-town Greater Hartford, Connecticut region, dedicated to improving the quality of life for area residents. One of the oldest and largest community foundations in the country, the Hartford Foundation has awarded grants of more than \$700 million since 1925 and has provided a host of other support and training services, to a broad range of area nonprofit organizations.

In 2018, the Hartford Foundation engaged in a Listening Tour of the 29 towns in its catchment to hear from the region's residents. A common theme emerged from these community conversations; residents understand the challenges in their communities but are often constrained in their response to these issues by a lack of resources. Residents expressed the need for greater access to funding and for more opportunities to share concerns and work together to develop solutions.

In response to the conversations, the Hartford Foundation made an initial investment of \$2.9 million to create the Greater Together Community Funds.<sup>1</sup> The investment establishes 29 separate \$100,000 community funds, one for each of the towns in the Foundation's region: Andover, Avon, Bloomfield, Bolton, Canton, East Granby, East Hartford, East Windsor, Ellington, Enfield, Farmington, Glastonbury, Granby, Hartford, Hebron, Manchester, Marlborough, Newington, Rocky Hill, Simsbury, Somers, South Windsor, Suffield, Tolland, Vernon, West Hartford, Wethersfield, Windsor, and Windsor Locks.<sup>2</sup>

The purpose of the Greater Together Community Funds is *to support the community in taking ownership around the needs in their towns, encourage broad and inclusive civic engagement, and anchor the Hartford Foundation in each town.* Community Funds are available in 2019. Of the \$100,000 in established funds, \$50,000 is allocated to an endowed fund and \$50,000 is

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<sup>1</sup> FAQs about the Greater Together Community Funds available at: <https://www.hfpg.org/donors/give-fund/greatertogether-community-funds/>

<sup>2</sup> List of towns available at: <http://www.hfpg.org/about-us/our-role/>

allocated to “current use” funds. This means \$50,000 would be immediately available to be granted in the first year of Community Funds implementation. Distribution of funds in subsequent years would be subject to the Hartford Foundation’s current spending policy.<sup>3</sup> This would make approximately \$2,500 available to most town funds in the second year for grantmaking.

### Developing local Community Funds

In order to begin to use their Community Funds, residents of each town will need to:

- Work with Foundation staff to form an advisory committee that meets established participation requirements
- Comply with Field of Interest Fund terms of agreement governing the advisory committee composition and the uses of funds
- Identify community needs
- Design and lead an inclusive grant-making process to address identified needs
- Recommend grants to the Hartford Foundation

Figure 1. Initial Action Steps to Making Community Funds Grants



After these initial action steps toward making their inaugural grants, advisory committees will continue to work with the Hartford foundation to:

- Maintain a functioning advisory committee that continues to meet participation requirements
- Monitor available funds
- Identify community needs

<sup>3</sup> More detailed information about the Foundation’s spending policy can be found at: <https://www.hfpg.org/about-us/financial-record/spending-policy/>

- Lead an inclusive grant-making process to address identified needs
- Recommend for grants to the Hartford Foundation
- Monitor the impact of awarded grants

Advisory committees may engage in local fundraising efforts to augment the funds provided by the Foundation. In situations where a fully functioning advisory committee is not present, the Foundation will resume control of fund allocation decisions until an advisory committee becomes available.

### Establishing advisory committees

The Foundation will assist each community to establish an advisory committee that is inclusive and reflective of all of the residents of that community. In addition to the requirement that it be inclusive and reflective of residents, the advisory committees must adhere to the following requirements:

- Members must be town residents
- Members must be age 14 or over
- Members cannot be an elected official
- Members must comply with a conflict of interest policy
- Members must comply with term limit policy
- Identification of a primary representative to work with Foundation
- Members who are approved by the Hartford Foundation

To initialize the formation of advisory committees, Foundation staff will conduct broad outreach to town residents informing them of the opportunity to be a part of the advisory committee. This multifaceted outreach plan features a series of sixteen in-person regional meetings (two meetings in each of eight regions) across the Foundation’s catchment area in early Fall of 2019. During the regional meetings, Foundation staff will provide information and resources about the purpose and establishment of the advisory committees including roles and responsibilities of committee members, term limits, and criteria for membership.

### Ongoing supports

The Foundation may also provide a start-up toolkit, resources, and as-needed guidance to residents of each community to establish a Community Funds advisory committee and develop the participatory grantmaking processes. The regional meetings, toolkit, technical assistance, and other resources are likely to address:

- Outreach and marketing to form an initial advisory committee
- Roles and responsibilities of advisory committee members
- Participatory decision making / grantmaking
- Creating and maintaining inclusive and effective groups
- Grantmaking components and processes
- Fundraising

The Foundation anticipates that it may need to provide ongoing, as-needed guidance to the advisory committees on these topics even after the advisory committees are established, participatory grantmaking processes are developed, and initial grants are made.

## **II. Project Description:**

The Hartford Foundation for Public Giving is commissioning evaluation of the first three years of implementation of the Greater Together Community Funds (July 2019- June 2022). The evaluation activities and findings will inform ongoing implementation and development of the Community Funds program and examine the extent to which the purpose of the project is achieved. The evaluation is intended to provide ongoing feedback to the Hartford Foundation staff and other potential technical assistance providers so that they can identify effective practices and respond to implementation challenges and opportunities. Particular emphasis in Year 1 will be given to understanding challenges and facilitators of establishing advisory committees in each town. To the extent the progress of the implementation of the funds allows, Years 2 and 3 of the evaluation will also examine the outcomes associated with the implementation of the funds in each of the 29 towns.

The primary components of the evaluation include 1) the development of an implementation monitoring plan, 2) a project implementation assessment, and 3) an outcomes assessment.

### Implementation monitoring plan:

In the first half of Year 1 of the project, the consultant will develop an implementation monitoring plan that includes key administrative and program data to be tracked on an ongoing basis. The plan will also contain practical recommendations regarding the frequency of data collection, approaches to data quality issues. The plan should incorporate ways in which the Foundation can leverage knowledge / data management platforms (including those already used by the foundation as well as other options) to house, organize, and query the data so as not to duplicate existing data collection efforts. The plan will propose steps and roles for the Hartford Foundation, the consultant, and other relevant stakeholders to:

- Determine the status of key *initial* milestones of implementation in each of the 29 towns (e.g. advisory committee is established, grantmaking process is designed, community needs are identified, first grants have been made).
- Continuously monitor *ongoing* implementation components in each of the 29 towns (e.g. advisory committee membership and turnover, resources requested and provided, types and extent of technical assistance provided by Foundation staff and / or other consultants, fundraising efforts, type and amount of grants made).

Project Implementation Assessment:

The consultant will examine the ongoing implementation of the Community Funds, with particular attention to identifying challenges and facilitating practices that influence implementation. As part of this examination, the consultant will serve as a partner with foundation staff to further develop and improve the implementation of Community Funds.

The Hartford Foundation anticipates that Year 1 of implementation assessment will focus on the *establishment* of inclusive advisory committees including assembling of initial committee members, the creation of participatory grantmaking processes, initial grants made, and what resources and assistance were necessary to support the completion of these activities. Years 2 and 3 of the project implementation aspect of the evaluation will focus on the *maintenance, development, refinement* of the advisory committees and other components and practices likely established in the first year.

Potential research questions for the implementation assessment may include, but are not limited to:

Implementation Assessment Research Questions	Year 1	Year 2 & 3
How and to what extent were the Regional Meetings helpful in supporting communities' ability to establish inclusive advisory committees?	✓	
What were the most effective ways of broadly communicating with the community about the purpose of and opportunities associated with the Community Funds?	✓	✓
How and to what extent were other resources (e.g. toolkit components, Foundation staff-provided technical assistance) helpful in establishing / sustaining inclusive advisory committees, needs identification, and grantmaking processes?	✓	✓
What were the facilitators and challenges in establishing / sustaining advisory committees, needs identification, and grantmaking processes that were inclusive of towns' residents?	✓	✓
Are there additional supports needed to establish and / or sustain advisory committees, needs identification, participatory grantmaking process, or relevant community funds activities?	✓	✓

Outcomes Assessment

The outcomes assessment phase of the evaluation will investigate the extent to which Community Funds with established and operational Advisory Boards and participatory grantmaking processes have fulfilled their threefold purpose: to support the community in taking ownership around the needs in their towns, encourage broad and inclusive civic engagement, and anchor the Hartford Foundation in each town.

The Hartford Foundation anticipates that the Outcomes Assessment phase of the project would largely focus on the work accomplished by advisory committees and Hartford Foundation staff in Years 2 and 3 of implementation. Preparation for Outcomes Assessment in Years 2 and 3 could potentially be underway in Year 1 (e.g. research question finalization, instrument development).

Where possible, outcomes should be assessed in each of the 29 communities in the region.

Potential evaluation questions for this phase may include, but are not limited to:

1. To what extent have the Community Funds supported the community in taking ownership around the needs in their towns?
  - a. How have advisory committee members sought, identified, vetted, and prioritized the needs that exist in their towns?
  - b. What types of subjects, issue areas, population groups, and nonprofits are addressed through the Community Funds grantmaking? How do these types compare to the types addressed by the Hartford Foundation's typical grantmaking in these communities?
  - c. How have the advisory committees monitored the extent to which their grants have addressed the identified needs in their town?
  - d. To what extent did participatory grantmaking increase advisory committee members' and other residents' sense of leadership and agency in their community? How? For whom?
2. To what extent have the Community Funds encouraged broad and inclusive civic engagement?
  - a. How inclusive and reflective of the community are the people comprising the Advisory committees? What value does this add to the participatory process?
  - b. How and to what extent have Advisory committee members encouraged and operationalized broad and inclusive engagement of community members in aspects of the work (e.g. assessment of community needs, identification of potential grant investments, decision-making, etc.)?
  - c. To what extent has advisory committee members' and residents' participation in the Community Funds work encouraged their engagement in other philanthropic pursuits in addition to participatory grantmaking (e.g. fundraising, other charitable giving, volunteering, and advocacy)?
3. To what extent have the Community Funds anchored the Hartford Foundation in each town?
  - a. How has the relationship between the communities and the Hartford Foundation changed since the implementation of Community Funds? (e.g. understanding of each town's needs, number or amount of donations from donors in a town to Foundation funds other than community funds, identification of new nonprofit clients or grantees that receive funding, technical assistance or other supports)?

- b. To what extent has awareness of the Community Funds and the Hartford Foundation in general changed in each of the 29 communities since the implementation of the project? For whom were there changes in awareness?

### **III. Data Availability:**

This section lists currently existing data that could inform the components of the evaluation presented above. To execute the project, the Hartford Foundation expects that the consultant would also generate additional data through methods including, but not limited to, staff / advisory group / stakeholder interviews, focus groups, surveys, document / artifact review, and observations.

- Administrative data including records documenting community members seeking information about / or involvement with the Community Funds
- Community funds work plan(s)
- Agendas and notes from Community Funds staff team meetings
- Notes from March 2019 focus groups with 40 community members from the region which were conducted to inform ongoing Community Funds outreach and information dissemination to lay the groundwork for the establishment of diverse and representative Advisory committees in each of the 29 towns.
- Media coverage of the Community Funds launch and outreach

The appendices of this RFP contain information relevant to available data. These include:

- Appendix A: A data dictionary of the Hartford Foundation's Community Funds administrative datasets
- Appendix B: Sample Community Funds Team meeting agenda
- Appendix C: Summary of Community Funds as prepared for October 2018 Hartford Foundation board book
- Appendix D: Summary report for March 2019 focus groups including map of participants
- Appendix E: PowerPoint slide deck shared at March 2019 focus groups

In addition, we recommend that respondents review demographic data on the 29 towns in the Hartford region. A list of the towns is posted at: <http://www.hfpg.org/about-us/our-role/>, and profiles for each town can be accessed via: <http://profiles.ctdata.org/>.

### **IV. Anticipated Activities and Deliverables:**

To support the project, the consultant will develop an evaluation design and work plan for the following activities:

- 1) Collaborate with the Hartford Foundation staff to develop research questions, finalize an evaluation design, and create a work plan to carry out the evaluation.

- 2) Monthly in-person or by phone check-in meetings with Hartford Foundation staff and other key stakeholders. At least some meetings must be in-person meetings in the Hartford region. These check-in meetings are anticipated to include reflection on emerging findings and strategic thinking about next steps for implementation.
- 3) Presentation (including a slide deck) and discussion of findings at an annual joint convening of advisory committees.
- 4) An implementation monitoring plan that includes:
  - a) Recommendations of key milestones and / or indicators to capture each town's progress toward first establishing a fully operational community fund;
  - b) Recommendations of key indicators and other measures to monitor ongoing implementation components in each of the 29 towns;
  - c) Recommendations for the collection, organization, and management of administrative data to support the monitoring efforts;
  - d) Recommendations for staff and/or consultant roles in implementing the monitoring plan;
  - e) Identification of any data quality issues encountered during the evaluation including a description of data cleaning and other decisions made during the course of analysis.
- 5) Interim memos that contain the following in Years 1, 2 and 3:
  - a) Year 1: Findings relevant to Year 1 Project Implementation Assessment research questions and strategic recommendations for Community Funds project development.
  - b) Year 2 and 3: Findings relevant to Year 2 and 3 Project Implementation Assessment and Outcomes Assessment research questions and strategic recommendations for Community Funds project development.
- 6) Annual reports with executive summaries that contain the following for each year:
  - a) Year 1: Findings relevant to the Year 1 Project Implementation research questions, strategic recommendations for project development, and needed refinements to the research design, questions, or methods for the Outcomes Assessment in Years 2 and 3.
  - b) Year 2 and 3: Findings relevant to the Year 2 and 3 Project Implementation and Outcomes Assessment research questions and strategic recommendations for project development and continuing monitoring and evaluation activities.

As a new project, the Foundation also encourages respondents to offer new ideas or approaches, not limited to those proposed above.

## **V. Budget**

The total three-year budget proposed by the consultant should be all-inclusive and should cover labor, expenses, travel, fees, overhead, and administration. The contract with the consultant will be subject to annual renewal based on good performance and renegotiation of budget based on project implementation progress.

The budget should assume evaluation of implementation of the Community Funds in 29 towns; however, it is uncertain the extent to which advisory committees with associated, fully-operational grantmaking practices will be established in Year 1 of implementation in each town. The Hartford Foundation acknowledges that the timeline of Community Funds implementation and several central evaluation tasks are not fully determined and will need to be negotiated (e.g. investigation of potential technical assistance supports that have yet to be requested or provided).

The Hartford Foundation encourages consultants to highlight any assumptions made in preparing the proposed evaluation approach and identify any budget implications that can be anticipated related to these assumptions and / or evaluation design and methodology decisions to be determined.

## **VI. Reporting and Management**

The selected evaluator will report to staff from the Hartford Foundation's Research and Evaluation Unit and should expect regular interaction with the Hartford Foundation's interdepartmental staff team responsible for implementing the Community Funds work. This regular communication includes at least monthly meetings and as-needed phone calls and email correspondence with the Community Funds Team.

## **VII. Proposal Content:**

To ensure that the Hartford Foundation can make the most efficient and equitable comparison among respondents to this RFP, proposals must be submitted as follows:

- 1) With no margins less than one (1) inch, and in Times New Roman 12 pt. font
- 2) No longer than 10 pages, single-spaced excluding Appendices A and B noted below.
- 3) Organized to address the items listed below in the following order:
  - a) Consultant's or primary contact's name, title, business address, phone and fax numbers, email address and web address. *For nonprofit consultants, please review the Hartford Foundation's [basic guidelines](#) for grantmaking and [key policies](#). Given the nature of this project, we will accept proposals from consultants based outside the Hartford region.*
  - b) Methodology – describe the process by which you propose to meet the requested project activities, including relevant qualitative and quantitative methods.
  - c) Tasks and timeline – provide an anticipated timeline needed to complete the activities discussed above (including tasks and responsibilities belonging to the consultant, the Hartford Foundation, or other stakeholders).
  - d) Summary of relevant experience – summarize the consultant's qualifications for this project and relevant experience, particularly any past work with participatory grantmaking, community-led grantmaking, similar participatory decision-making approaches (e.g. participatory budgeting), community foundations, and developmental evaluation.
  - e) Equity considerations – describe how the consultant will address equity concerns in their approach to this research including, but not limited to:
    - (1) Unconscious bias and implicit bias
    - (2) Cultural competence when working with diverse groups
    - (3) Power dynamics within communities and groups
  - f) Budget and cost (Appendix A) – provide hourly rates for the personnel assigned and estimated hours to be assigned, and an estimated total cost for the entire project.
  - g) Resumes of personnel (Appendix B) – provide resume(s) of consultant(s) who will be assigned to this project and list the responsibilities of each for this project.

- h) References (Appendix C: 1 page) – provide at least three current references for similar types of projects, as well as a brief description of the scope of your work for these references, the year completed, and a contact name and telephone number for each one.

A conference call will be held on May 28<sup>th</sup> from 1:00-2:00 p.m. (EST). Prospective consultants are encouraged to attend the conference call to ask questions about the project, proposal content, or other related issues. If interested in attending the call, please request dial-in information at [research@hfpg.org](mailto:research@hfpg.org)

### **VIII. Anticipated Timeline:**

#### **RFP distribution, response, and review**

May 15, 2019	RFP distribution
May 28, 2019	RFP conference call (1:00-2:00 EST)
June 7, 2019	Proposal submission deadline
June 21, 2019	Final Selection Announced

#### **Project timeline**

Late June/ Early July, 2019	Initial meetings with the Hartford Foundation staff
December 31, 2019	Implementation Monitoring Plan and Year 1 Interim Memo
June 30, 2020	Year 1 Annual Report
December 31, 2020	Year 2 Interim Memo
June 30, 2021	Year 2 Annual Report
December 31, 2021	Year 3 Interim Report
June 30, 2022	Year 3 Annual and final Report

### **IX. Submission:**

Please submit your proposal and any questions to:

**Hartford Foundation Research and Evaluation Unit**  
[research@hfpg.org](mailto:research@hfpg.org)

Hartford Foundation for Public Giving  
 10 Columbus Blvd. 8<sup>th</sup> Floor  
 Hartford CT 06106

**X. Appendix A: Data Dictionary of Community Funds Administrative Datasets**

<b>Telephone / email inquiry tracking dataset</b>	
<b>Name, first</b>	The first name of the person making the inquiry about community funds.
<b>Name, last</b>	The last name of the person making the inquiry about community funds.
<b>Title</b>	The title of the person making the inquiry about community funds.
<b>Telephone</b>	The telephone number of the person making the inquiry about community funds.
<b>Add'l Telephone</b>	An additional telephone number of the person making the inquiry about community funds.
<b>Street address</b>	The street address of the person making the inquiry about community funds.
<b>Town</b>	Town where the person making the inquiry about community funds resides.
<b>Zip code</b>	The zip code of the person making the inquiry about community funds.
<b>Email</b>	The email contact information of the person making the inquiry about community funds.
<b>Organizational Affiliation</b>	The organizational affiliation of the person making the inquiry about community funds.
<b>Interest in donating</b>	Did the person indicate an interest in donating to a community fund? (Yes / No)
<b>Interest in advisory committee</b>	Did the person indicate an interest in serving on an advisory committee? (Yes / No)
<b>Interest in volunteering</b>	Did the person indicate an interest in volunteering in some capacity for the community funds? (Yes / No)
<b>Interest in receiving updates</b>	Did the person indicate an interest in receiving updates about community funds? (Yes / No; and / or open-ended response about particular topics of interest)
<b>Best way to receive updates</b>	Way in which the person indicated they would prefer to receive updates about community funds. (Open-ended response)
<b>Date of Contact</b>	Date a Hartford Foundation staff person received the inquiry. (XX/XX/XXXX)
<b>Staff who received contact</b>	Means of contact (email, telephone call, referral etc.) and / or the first name of the staff person who received the inquiry about community funds.
<b>Staff who responded to contact</b>	Initials of the staff person who responded to the inquiry about community funds.

<b>Website inquiry tracking dataset</b> (web-based form available at <a href="https://www.hfpg.org/donors/give-fund/greatertogether-community-funds/">https://www.hfpg.org/donors/give-fund/greatertogether-community-funds/</a> )	
<b>Submitted Date</b>	Date the inquiry was submitted to the Hartford Foundation’s Greater Together Community Funds webpage form.
<b>First Name</b>	The first name of the person making the inquiry about community funds.
<b>Last Name</b>	The last name of the person making the inquiry about community funds.
<b>Email</b>	The email contact information of the person making the inquiry about community funds.
<b>Phone</b>	The telephone number of the person making the inquiry about community funds.
<b>Your Town</b>	Town where the person making the inquiry about community funds resides.
<b>Street Address</b>	The street address of the person making the inquiry about community funds.
<b>Zip Code</b>	The zip code of the person making the inquiry about community funds.
<b>Interested in being involved in the community fund where I live</b>	The person making the inquiry about community funds indicated “yes” they were interested in being involved in the community fund where they live (x)
<b>Interested in general updates</b>	The person making the inquiry about community funds indicated “yes” they were interested in receiving general updates (x)
<b>Interested in seeking funding as a nonprofit leader</b>	The person making the inquiry about community funds indicated “yes” they were interested in receiving funding as a nonprofit leader (x)
<b>Other interests (please explain)</b>	The person making the inquiry explains any other interests they have (open response).

**XI. Appendix B: Sample Community Funds Team meeting agenda**

**Community Funds Team Meeting  
May 9, 2019**

**Agenda**

- **Update workplan/timeline and assignment division**
- **Communications needs summary – update on meeting with communications staff**
- **Administrative Rules for Community Funds – Field of Interest Contract**
- **Email with program update to those that have expressed interest**

**XII. Appendix C: Summary of Community Funds as prepared for October 2018 Hartford Foundation board book**

**Community Funds Program**

**Hartford Foundation Board of Directors Summary**

**October 17, 2018**

In 2019, responding to what was heard during the 2018 Listening Tour, the Hartford Foundation will launch community funds in each of our 29 towns.

**Goals for the Community Funds**

Through the establishment of community funds, the Hartford Foundation seeks to:

- Anchor the Hartford Foundation in each town
- Encourage broad and inclusive civic engagement
- Support the community in taking ownership around the needs in their town

**Creation of Funds**

Each community fund will receive a total of \$100,000 over two years for a total investment of \$2.9 million. Funds will be established with both an endowment and current use section. The endowment portion will be \$50,000 and the current use portion will be \$50,000.

The endowment portion will ensure that funds are a perpetual resource for each town, while the current use funds will allow town residents to utilize those monies immediately. Once funds are used, they will not be replenished by the Hartford Foundation.

The community funds will be established as field of interest funds with an advisory committee. As such, the Hartford Foundation will retain the right to approve these committees. Agreements will be put in place for each fund's advisory committee, spelling out the intent, guidelines and parameters, including requiring funds to be used for the benefit of the residents of the town.

**Creation of Fund Advisory Committees**

Each community fund will be handled by an advisory committee of town residents that must be inclusive, representative and reflective of all of the residents of that community.

In order to establish the initial advisory committee in each town, the Hartford Foundation will conduct broad outreach to town residents informing them of the opportunity to be a part of this advisory committee. The Hartford Foundation will provide information on the roles and responsibilities of the advisory committee members, term limits, and criteria for membership.

**Grantmaking**

Once the advisory committees in each town are established, the decision of what project will receive the funds (grantmaking) will be made independently by town residents so they are empowered to identify and address their own local needs.

Hartford Foundation staff will provide guidance as to the legal parameters of what a community fund can support and will recommend best practices on participatory grantmaking processes and decision making.

All grants will be approved by the Hartford Foundation Board of Directors, using the same approval procedures currently followed for grants made by other component funds.

### **Hartford Foundation Resources**

The Hartford Foundation will provide resources and guidance in the form of staff time to residents of each community on:

- Outreach and marketing to create initial advisory committee
- Roles and responsibilities of advisory committee members
- Participatory decision making
- Creating and maintaining inclusive and effective groups
- Grantmaking
- Fundraising

Providing ongoing engagement, as needed, for each community will require a substantial investment of time on the part of the Hartford Foundation staff.

### **Impact on Fundraising for the Hartford Foundation**

The community funds program will provide a significant engagement opportunity for town residents to learn and work with the Hartford Foundation. This engagement will likely have a positive impact on fundraising, both for gift additions to the community funds and for other individual funds.

### **XIII. Appendix D: Summary report for March 2019 focus groups including map of participants**

**Hartford Foundation for Public Giving  
Greater Together Community Funds  
April 28, 2019**

#### **Feedback Session Summary**

##### **Feedback Highlights**

- **Each town is different** and implementation (by both Foundation staff and town residents) will require understanding the unique characteristics, power-dynamics, sub-groups, existing resources and information channels available in each community.
- Town leaders and residents expect **significant material, staff, and in some cases financial support from the Foundation** in order to implement the Community Funds program.
- Foundation support may include but not be limited to **initial and on-going meeting facilitation and logistical support, resident training workshops, tool-kits of sample materials, and regular/sustained communications and staff participation.**
- **Engaging elected and professional town governmental leaders** will be helpful in obtaining their understanding, buy-in, and support to establish Advisory Committees and participatory grantmaking in each town.
- **Existing power structures** within towns may serve to both facilitate and obstruct the creation of inclusive and effective participatory Community Funds programs.
- **Reaching traditionally marginalized residents will take dedicated and increased effort on the part of the Foundation and town leaders.** Efforts may include person-to-person invitations to participate, specialized training and possibly transportation, child care or linguistic support.

##### **Background and Design**

The Foundation conducted two feedback sessions on March 26 and 27, 2019. Foundation staff designed the feedback sessions to share information about the Community Funds program and collect information from community stakeholders to inform future planning and implementation.

Specific information needs related to the Community Funds program included:

- Community readiness to establish Advisory Committees
- Support needed from Hartford Foundation
- Methods of getting the word out within communities
- Identifying residents to participate in the Community Funds program

Foundation staff provided a PowerPoint presentation that outlined key components of the Community Funds program and general implementation steps needed to enable towns to access

funds and make grants. Foundation staff then facilitated feedback sessions with participants to invite their feedback on the plans and insights about implementation within their communities.

**Participation**

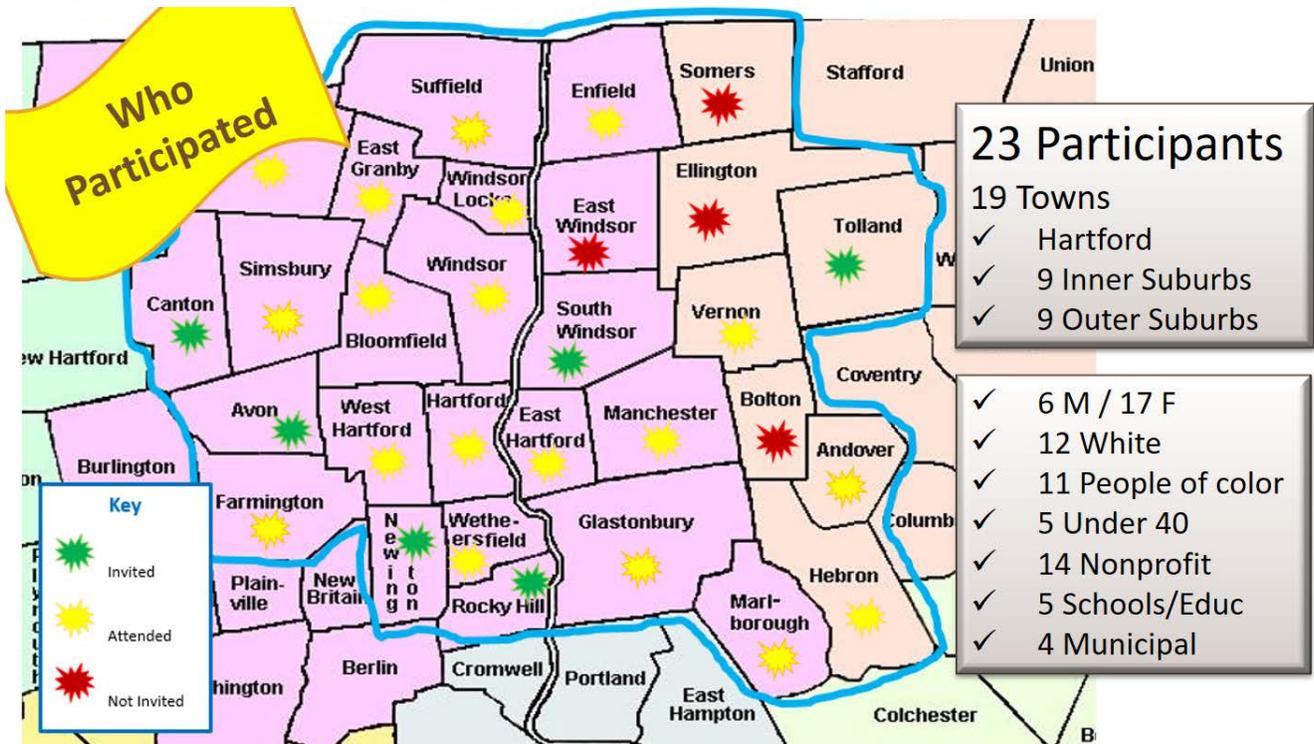
Foundation staff invited 46 individuals known for their understanding of how their communities work and who might be able/willing to carry information back to their communities. Participants were broadly representative of:

- the Foundation’s geographic range, including urban, inner suburban, outer suburban
- racial and ethnic characteristics
- religion, sexual orientation, age, socio-economic status, ability (to the degree possible)
- community roles (elected officials, nonprofit leaders, municipal staff, community members or volunteers, etc.)

While not intended to be inclusive of every town in the Foundation’s 29-town service region, or of every sub-group within every town, invitees were broadly representative of the range of community leaders within the Foundation’s service region.

Ultimately, 23 individuals participated in the two feedback sessions, as depicted below:

**Figure 1: Participation Demographic Summary**



## **Participant Responses**

Key response themes and sample participant statements aligned with protocol questions included:

### **1. Communities' readiness to establish a representative advisory committee.**

- a. Key community *attributes of or resources* and *challenges or factors* related to establishing a representative advisory committee.

Participants identified the following attributes and resources in their towns:

- Existing institutions, groups or locations provide focal points for community activity (churches, businesses, local boards and commissions, senior centers, NRZs, Hunger Action Teams)
- Active volunteer base, tradition of volunteerism
- Community diversity (Hartford, Manchester, East Hartford)
- Strong engagement of youth and older populations
- Positive community mindset, sense of community
- Skilled residents, many talents
- Effective means of communicating within community (newsletters, networking, social media – especially Facebook – such as: “Fans of the Wethersfield Turkey” FB site)
- Existing data and understanding of community needs
- Programs and organizations linked to school systems (Office of Family and Community Partnerships, PTOs, some sports teams)
- Active nonprofits and for-profits in the community

Participants identified the following challenges in their towns:

- Over-commitment of existing volunteers, too many priorities and projects, families are busy
- Attitudes of some community members (resistant to change, apathy, distrust, not wanting to share power)
- Need for capacity building and backbone support, clear guidelines, training for some community members to participate
- Lack of diversity in community
- Conflicts of interest, conflict of interest policy may limit volunteerism
- Politics and competing interests within community, some are more comfortable working in silos and not partnering, worry about town ‘influencers’ taking over
- Lack of inclusivity, history of disenfranchisement among some parts of community
- Community is very diverse, too many groups and sub-groups, many will want representation
- Divisions within community (polarization, regional differences)
- Structure and process required to set up advisory committees
- Some people don't know how to create inclusive groups

- b. Participants identified the following existing participatory decision-making best practices / success in their towns:

- Parent Leadership Academy (Enfield) – training academy for parents

- Youth equity squad (Manchester) – young people come together and present recommendations to school leadership
- Leadership Academy (Hebron) – started by Board of Selectmen to help residents understand town government
- Community Cuisine (E. Granby) – 7 or 8 community organizations come together
- Capital Improvement Commission (Andover) – decides on capital purchases, works well because so many wear multiple hats it represents many of the town’s needs and interests
- City of Hartford – great participatory events such as “Hartford Decides” and others

## **2. Support Needed from the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving.**

Participants identified the following support needs in their towns:

- a. Foundation Role
  - Leadership/commitment from the Foundation – stay involved for the long-term
  - Foundation staff should be personally involved and attend meetings, like the Foodshare staff does with Hunger Action Teams
  - Replicate this (feedback session) process in communities
  - Make it exciting to stimulate involvement
  - Serve as a neutral body to provide initial structure – don’t leave too much up to each town to have to decide initially, but just enough structure, ideas and resources that we can tweak to meet unique needs
  - Provide training workshops and materials for residents and advisory committee
  - Provide a clear vetting process to encourage people who don’t normally come out, identify who will filter applicants for advisory committee
  - Bring the committees from different towns together to share experiences and information, share regional priorities
  - Consider a cohort model for sharing among committees
- b. Services
  - Provide facilitation support, a trained facilitator, be present or help lead meetings
  - Workshops on grantwriting, facilitation, best practices, how to serve on a board, etc.
  - Resources for food and childcare to eliminate barriers for those that don’t normally participate
  - Multi-lingual resources
- c. Materials
  - Provide a tool-kit, starter-kit, a physical box with everything needed
  - Boiler-plate resources for each step of the process – not too many options to start – electronic templates that can be modified by the local committees
  - Set up structured help with some guidelines on committee size, process, so they don’t have to start from scratch
  - Listening Tour notes as a starting point for community needs
  - One-pager/fact sheet on the program to share in the community
  - One-pager on town demographics and needs to help people see the need for involvement

### 3. Getting the Word Out.

Participants identified the following ways to get the word out in their towns:

a. Best ways to get the word out.

- Take advantage of existing networks, opportunities and events within each town
- Email groups, social media groups, mailers, robo-calls (like politicians)
- Post to town websites
- Partner with large corporations that have many employees
- Most towns have events that include nonprofits and thousands of people – find these and have a booth at the event
- Have affinity groups to help expand the influence of advisory groups
- Be careful about getting too many people fired up if they cannot all be involved
- Offer a marketing budget to assist towns with this
- Use the power of competition between towns, like the thermometer to show progress
- Have “ambassador” type who is respected and influencer in town go out and market on behalf of program

b. Reaching people who might have barriers to participation.

- Use grass-roots efforts like going door to door, focus on key groups and marginalized groups in specific geographic areas
- One-on-one communication and building one on one relationships will be most effective with people from marginalized groups
- Parent leadership groups

### 4. One Word of Advice for the Hartford Foundation.

In summary, participants were asked to provide one word of advice to the Foundation regarding the establishment of Advisory Committees. Responses included:

- Listen!
- Follow up is key, have check-ins.
- Consistency – don’t drop and run!
- Help towns prioritize needs. Some towns will need help with strategic planning
- Consider how this will perpetuate inequality if rich town’s funds grow faster than poor towns
- Pick trusted community members
- Look below the surface to identify hidden agendas
- Have one person from town government and one from board of education to give ideas on community needs but not to vote
- Have someone from the Foundation present this information to the town councils or board, and to chief operating officers so they understand the program and can help support it
- Pick new people
- Lots of ethnic communities, like Bosnians, etc. - need to reach out to them
- Take a risk

**5. Questions from Participants.** In addition to responding to facilitator questions, participants had a number of questions concerning implementation of the Community Funds program that may inform future planning. Participants asked the following types of questions:

**Use of funds and spending**

- What is the length of these funds – one year, two years, or will it go on forever?
- What is the amount decided on for a grant? What are the ways you can choose to spend each year?
- Do communities need to spend the \$50,000 right away?
- Is there sustainability to this fund? \$50,000 is not a ton for some communities.
- What can the money be used for?
- There are many important charitable activities in towns like Andover that do not necessarily fall under a 501c3. How can these funds support those kind of activities?
- Could one town decide to give money to another town?
- What happens when certain town funds get larger than others through fundraising? How will that inequity be addressed? Will certain towns be “capped” at certain financial amount so as to not grow larger than others?
- Will there be a money available to town committees for the marketing of funds?

**Establishment of advisory committees / selection of members**

- Who will decide the makeup of an advisory committee, especially regarding demographics? HPFG or the town residents? How do you take the first step?
- You said the Foundation will accept applicants for the advisory committee – how will you decide?
- What if you get 10 young people that want to serve? I know I can get 50 people that want to serve, but how do we decide the best size?
- What are the term limits?

**Roles of advisory committee members and committee processes**

- How will committees run? Will they need Roberts Rules of Order? We do not just want them to get together and shoot the breeze, do we?
- There is some confusion over the role of a committee, are they grant writers?
- General conflict of interest policy questions.
- Eliminating town managers will cause loss of information on town residents who have hidden agendas. [How could we gather broad information about residents otherwise?]

**Similar participatory decision making and other resources out there**

- Towns already have similar resources. Will these be folded into Community Fund resources?
- Could you give us examples of other similar decision making processes in other towns, and what worked?

**General Questions**

- What timelines have been established, broadly speaking?

- Do you find that this [program] is something good for the community, or can it end up going crazy because everyone has different opinions about what is really best for the community, etc.?
- Isn't HFPG perpetuating the silo effect of CT by encouraging single town funds? Why not regional funds as well?

### Summary Observations

General areas of consensus that may serve to guide future planning include:

- **Each town is different** and implementation (by both Foundation staff and town residents) will require understanding the unique characteristics, power-dynamics, sub-groups, existing resources and information channels available in each community.
- Town leaders and residents expect **significant material, staff, and in some cases financial support from the Foundation** in order to implement the Community Funds program.
- Foundation support may include but not be limited to **initial and on-going meeting facilitation and logistical support, resident training workshops, tool-kits of sample materials, and regular/sustained communications and staff participation.**
- **Engaging elected and professional town governmental leaders** will be helpful in obtaining their understanding, buy-in, and support to establish Advisory Committees and participatory grantmaking in each town.
- **Existing power structures** within towns may serve to both facilitate and obstruct the creation of inclusive and effective participatory Community Funds programs.
- **Reaching traditionally marginalized residents will take dedicated and increased effort on the part of the Foundation and town leaders.** Efforts may include person-to-person invitations to participate, specialized training and possibly transportation, child care or linguistic support.

### Next Steps

Feedback provided by the 26 feedback session participants represents a thoughtful and invaluable body of advice, cautions, wisdom and potential action items to guide Foundation staff in implementing the Community Funds program. The Community Funds team is reviewing and incorporating this body of knowledge into its plans in preparation for reaching out to community leaders and residents to implement their respective Greater Together Community Funds.

**XIV. Appendix E: PowerPoint slide deck shared at March 2019 focus groups**



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# Greater Together Community Funds

## Community Feedback Sessions

March 26 & 27, 2019

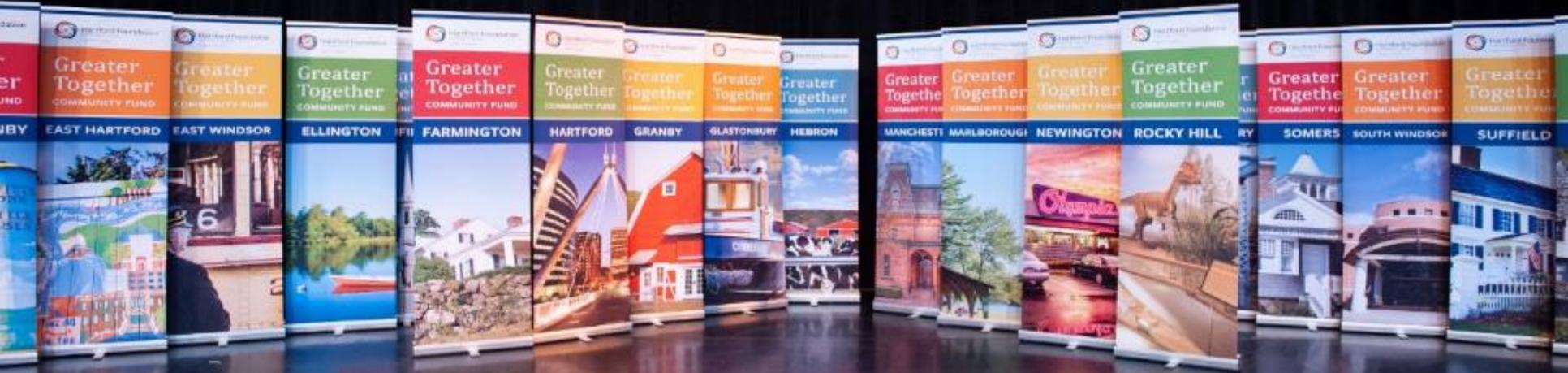
# AGENDA

- Welcome and Introductions
- Administrative Announcements
- Greater Together Community Funds Update
- Question and Answer
- Feedback Session
- Wrap Up



# Greater Together Community Funds

[hfpg.org/communityfunds](http://hfpg.org/communityfunds)



*To support the community in taking ownership around the needs in their town, encourage broad and inclusive civic engagement and anchor the Hartford Foundation in each town.*

# 29 Community Funds

**\$100,000 per town**

- \$50,000 Endowed Funds
- \$50,000 “Immediate Use” Funds

Opportunity for community fundraising and continued fund growth to support towns in-perpetuity



# Using Your Town Funds

- **Establish a Town Advisory Committee** – of town residents that is inclusive, representative and reflective of all town residents
- **Establish a Participatory Process** – to decide how grant funds will be allocated to meet the needs of town residents



# Advisory Committees

- Town resident, age 14 or over
- Reflective of all town residents
- Cannot be an elected official
- Term limits
- Conflict of interest policy
- Democratic and inclusive decision-making process
- Identify primary representative to work with Foundation
- Committee members approved by Foundation



# Roles

<b>Town Advisory Committees</b>	<b>Hartford Foundation</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Identify community needs</li><li>• Establish an inclusive grantmaking process</li><li>• Serve as liaisons to the Hartford Foundation</li><li>• Keep track of funds available for grantmaking</li><li>• Request support from Foundation staff as needed</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Maintain town funds</li><li>• Assist town residents to establish Advisory Committees</li><li>• Approve town Advisory Committees</li><li>• Assist Advisory Committees to establish inclusive processes</li><li>• Approve grants, disburse funds</li><li>• Monitor funds and grantmaking</li><li>• Provide ongoing support as needed to assist each town</li></ul>

# Getting to Grants - Action Steps

Hartford  
Foundation  
Establishes  
Funds

Town  
Residents  
Establish  
Advisory  
Committees

Advisory  
Committees  
Establish  
Grantmaking  
Process

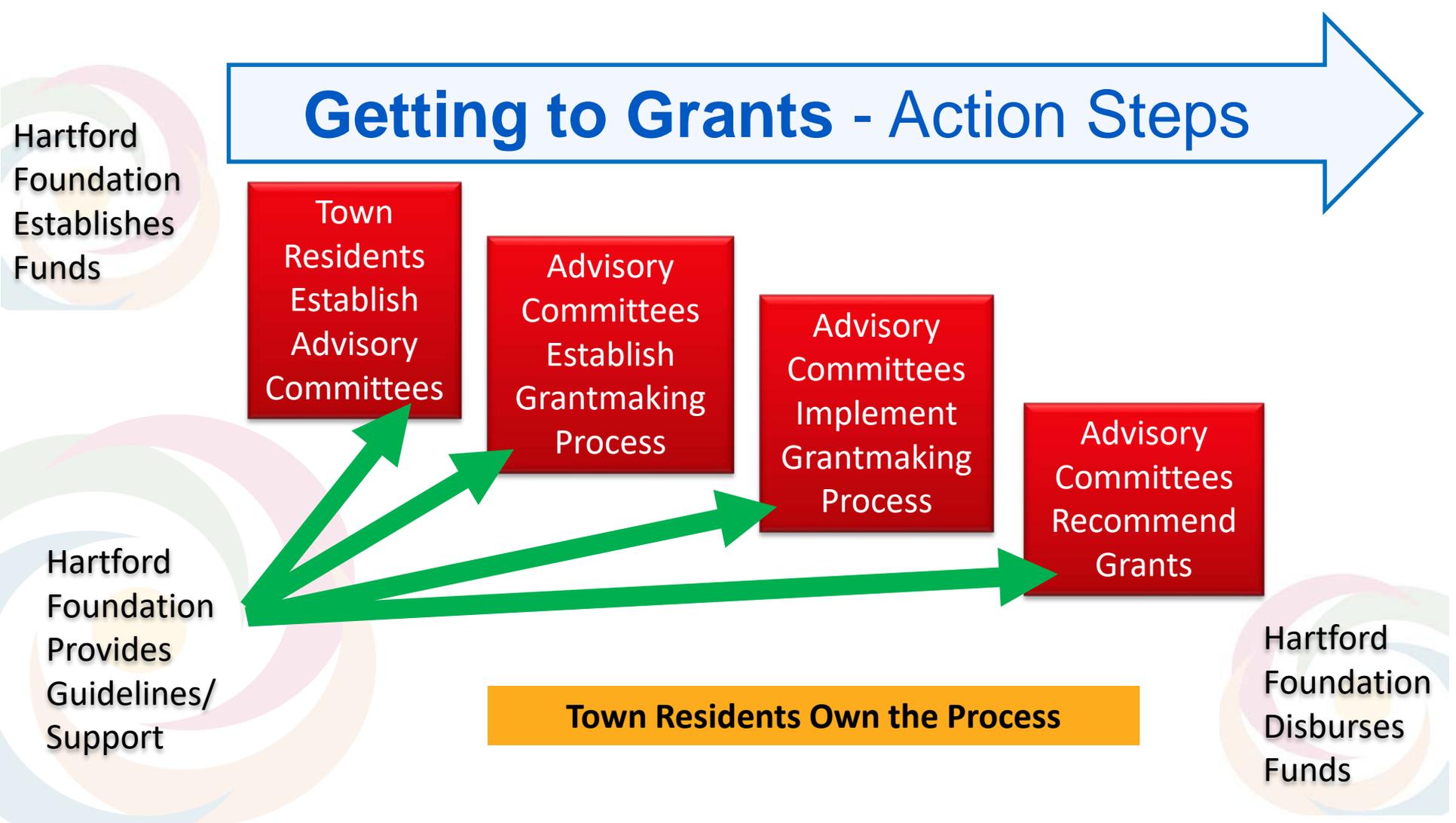
Advisory  
Committees  
Implement  
Grantmaking  
Process

Advisory  
Committees  
Recommend  
Grants

Hartford  
Foundation  
Provides  
Guidelines/  
Support

**Town Residents Own the Process**

Hartford  
Foundation  
Disburses  
Funds



# Where we need your help...

Your insights and experience on:

- Community readiness to establish Advisory Committees
  - Support needed from Hartford Foundation
  - Getting the word out within communities
  - Identifying residents to participate
- 
- *Keeping decisions within the community at each step*



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# Question and Answers

# Feedback Session

# Wrap Up

- How can I help?

**Identify people to participate in regional meetings!**

- What should I tell people if asked?

**Invite people to visit our website at: [hfpg.org/communityfunds](https://hfpg.org/communityfunds)**



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**THANK YOU!**