



Supporting Economic Security for Families in Grand Rapids, Michigan

Summary of Opportunities for Action – June 2013

Contacts

June 2013

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About W.K. Kellogg Foundation

The W.K. Kellogg Foundation, founded in 1930 as an independent, private foundation by breakfast cereal pioneer, Will Keith Kellogg, is among the largest philanthropic foundations in the United States. Guided by the belief that all children should have an equal opportunity to thrive, the W.K. Kellogg Foundation works with communities to create conditions for vulnerable children so they can realize their full potential in school, work and life.

The Kellogg Foundation is based in Battle Creek, Michigan and works throughout the United States and internationally, as well as with sovereign tribes. Special emphasis is paid to priority places where there are high concentrations of poverty and where children face significant barriers to success. The Kellogg Foundation priority places in the U.S. are in Michigan, Mississippi, New Mexico and New Orleans; and internationally in Mexico and Haiti.

About Corporation for a Skilled Workforce

Corporation for a Skilled Workforce is a 22-year old national nonprofit that partners with government, business, and community leaders to develop good jobs and the skilled workers to fill them. CSW has an extensive performance record of providing strategic consulting services to local areas around issues of workforce mobility and economic stability.

The largest proportion of CSW's work has centered on how to effectively lead actionable public policy about workforce development and manage public programs. CSW has provided strategic planning support and related technical assistance to hundreds of local, state, and national public-private partnerships, economic development initiatives, and community workforce development collaboratives across the country. One of our current work focus areas is on deep and comprehensive place-based work. This emphasis is on defining the new economic realities for people, companies, and communities and designing local strategies for creating more equitable opportunities and prosperous communities.

The CSW team that led this research included two senior level strategy experts, Kysha Frazier and Leise Rosman. Kysha is a former Grand Rapids business leader that launched and directed a number of business and community partnerships within the city and the West Michigan region. Leise leads CSW's research and evaluation projects, and the organizations' foundation community engagement.



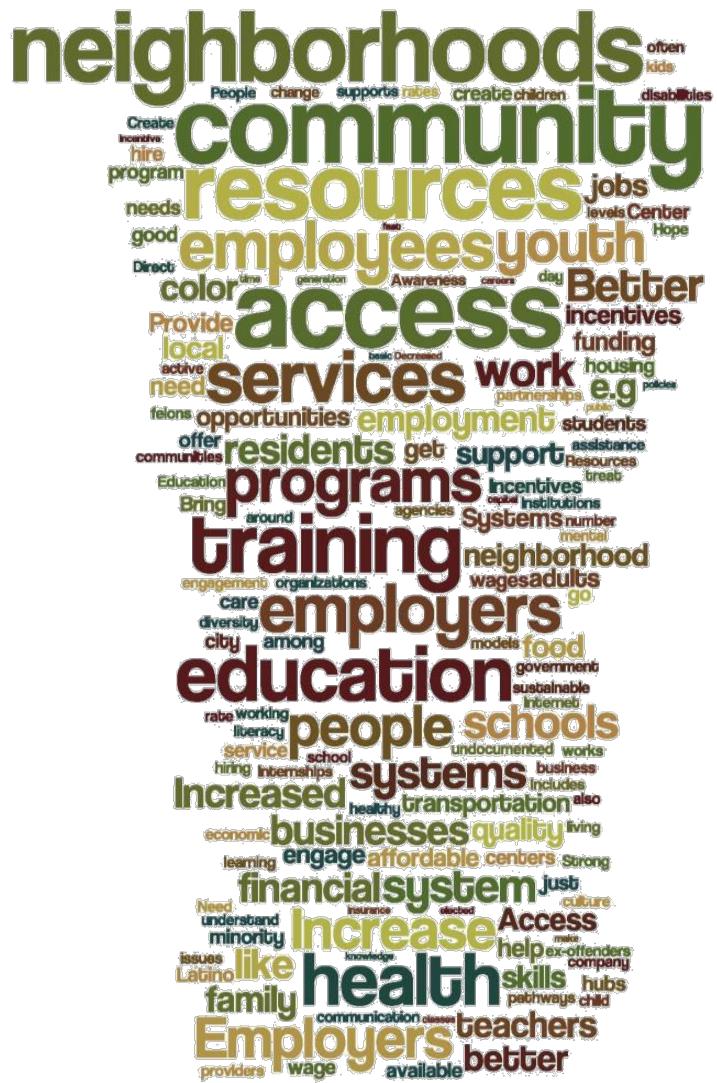
Introduction

The W.K. Kellogg Foundation (Kellogg Foundation) engaged the Corporation for a Skilled Workforce (CSW) to conduct local and national level exploration of potential strategies for investment that align with Kellogg Foundation's Family Economic Security (FES) program area and goal of moving families to 200% plus of the federal poverty level.

This report reflects feedback from a 93-person community-wide stakeholder engagement process performed from February to May 2013:

- A 19-person Steering Committee of community stakeholders was convened to identify guiding questions and process overarching themes that informed the framework for ongoing research and stakeholder engagement throughout the process.
- We met with 7 stakeholder groups, including 5 resident groups and 2 service provider stakeholder groups to discuss priorities for promoting family economic security in the focus neighborhoods.
- We then conducted conversations with several community funders to understand their priorities and how other investments and efforts could fit within a Grand Rapids FES strategy.

The local feedback served as the impetus for national level research and the resulting workforce mobility and economic stability recommendations in the key change lever areas of aligning systems, asset development, comprehensive bundled systems, and training and employment outlined in this report. The strategic opportunities described here work together to create secure, positive futures for the economically disparate Grand Rapids neighborhoods of focus.



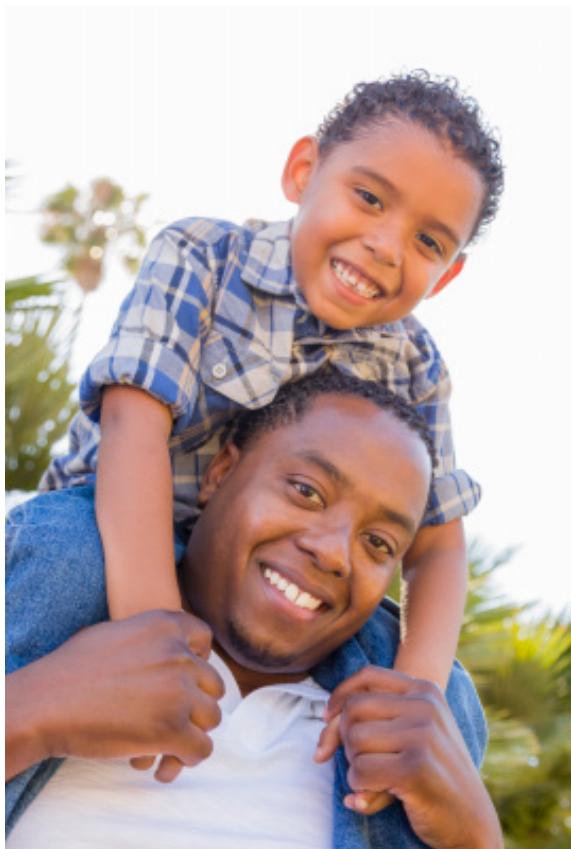
Community Impact Footprint: Visual summary of the topics of discussion throughout the stakeholder engagement process. Size indicates prevalence in discussions.

Background

The Case for Investment

The story of Grand Rapids, Michigan is a “Tale of Two Cities”. A city of opportunity and a city of struggle in which our most vulnerable families face daunting barriers to realizing their full potential. The W.K. Kellogg Foundation is focusing its FES efforts and investments within the near south and near west Grand Rapids neighborhoods, as these areas possess great economic inequity.

Life in the Focus Neighborhoods



2 out of 3 families with fewer than three children live on less than \$47,100 per year – that’s 200% of poverty. This is the point at which many families are deemed ineligible for vital public supports, but are also not able to fully provide for the needs of the family.

71.8% of residents are African-American, Asian, Latino and Hispanic, or Native American. These neighborhoods are home to diverse residents and affected by structural racism that creates barriers to equal access to opportunity resulting in large social, political, and economic disparities.

37.1% of residents lack a high school diploma or equivalent; only 20.2% of residents have completed at least two years of college. We know that many residents lacking secondary education often lack the basic skills necessary to access and be successful in postsecondary education and training, which is necessary to obtaining a family-sustaining career.

25.6% of residents are unemployed. This is more than four times the unemployment rate for the county which currently sits at 5.6% (BLS). Many of these residents are chronically unemployed and have been

disconnected from the labor market for a significant portion of their working lives. Youth in the neighborhoods also experience especially high unemployment rates.¹

These inequities, while systemic, are not immutable. Social transformation is within reach and can benefit the children and families in these neighborhoods in the next three to five years, and beyond.

¹ All data courtesy of <http://www.cridata.org/>

Findings: Actions and Options

Throughout the community engagement, research and planning process, we have attempted to identify levers that could create greater equity and real economic security for families in the focus neighborhoods. We have organized our findings into categories that together reflect what we learned from our data gathering process and a related comprehensive portfolio of strategies aimed at effecting the visions articulated below in each of the 4 focus areas: aligning systems, asset development, comprehensive bundled services, and training and employment.

Secure Families Portfolio				
	Aligning Systems	Asset Development	Comprehensive Bundled Services	Training & Employment
Visions	Residents have access to simple, accessible, results-oriented, flexible systems.	Residents make informed financial decisions with long-term impact on their households in mind.	Residents are empowered, connected to, and engaged with user-friendly, relevant resources accessible within neighborhoods.	Residents have access to robust pathways to sustainable careers.
Strategies	Equip users to engage, understand and change systems to meet their needs (accessibility, flexibility, structure)	Help residents make informed and effective decisions with their finances	Connect residents with information and resources through broader internet and technology access within neighborhoods	Create more opportunities for residents (as young as age 12) to explore careers and gain work experience and skills simultaneously
	Help systems promote equity and appreciate diversity	Create opportunity for residents through excellent financial tools	Employers help publicize and increase access to comprehensive resources, including health and transportation and skill building	Provide access to community-based jobs with advancement opportunities, living wages, and benefits (especially healthcare)
Foundational Conditions for Thriving Communities Where All Can Work, Play, and Live				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Community action produces fairness and social justice, supports racial healing and removes systemic barriers that historically hold some residents back ■ Twice as many strong, sustainable businesses - minority and locally owned that hire within neighborhoods ■ Community economic development supports strong businesses (nice storefronts, streetscapes) ■ Financial resources support businesses and community development through targeted, community-focused efforts by Community Development Financial Institutions and others ■ Employers embrace their roles, are aware of how they can contribute, and engage in systems change to benefit communities (e.g., transportation choices, targeted hiring, retention activities, etc.) ■ Employer investment, involvement in communities ■ Transportation is accessible and affordable; responsive to the needs of employers and residents ■ More opportunities for residents to volunteer and lead community engagement activities ■ Equal access to opportunities, especially for undocumented residents (including driver's licenses) ■ Public safety becomes a positive presence in the community ■ Educational opportunities (PK-12 quality and access) same in all neighborhoods 				

Within the 4 four focus areas, we considered factors for identifying opportunities for action as we synthesized feedback from our stakeholder engagement process and conducted a national scan of promising practices. We paid special attention to opportunities that were SMART (specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time-bound). We also looked for opportunities we felt could be successfully applied within Grand Rapids' unique context. And we assessed each opportunity based on the difficulty of taking action and the level of impact that could be expected from it.

Recommendations

The table below presents a visual summary of the potential opportunities for action that warrant further exploration and discussion by Kellogg Foundation program staff and board members with community stakeholders.

Secure Families Portfolio

Focus Area	Opportunities for Action	Strategies	Vision
Aligning Systems	Distill and support implementation of a framework for community-led systems change in the focus neighborhoods (i.e. Seeds of Promise).	Equip users to engage, understand and change systems to meet their needs (accessibility, flexibility, structure)	Residents have access to simple, accessible, results-oriented, flexible systems.
	Support the development of a Grand Rapids cohort to participate in the National Workforce Benchmarking Network.	Help systems promote equity and appreciate diversity	
Asset Development	Support a municipally-led Grand Rapids application to implement the Financial Empowerment Center model.	Help residents make informed and effective decisions with their finances	Residents make informed financial decisions with long-term impact on their households in mind.
	Support a Bank On campaign for Grand Rapids. Catalyze and support collaborative efforts to encourage more restrictive policies governing payday and predatory lending practices in Grand Rapids and potentially statewide.	Create opportunity for residents through excellent financial tools	

Focus Area	Opportunities for Action	Strategies	Vision
Comprehensive Bundled Services	<p>Reduce the cost of in-home Internet service.</p> <p>Provide refurbished Internet-ready computers for families at no or low cost.</p> <p>Create neighborhood computer lab sites with Wi-Fi.</p> <p>Increase digital literacy training.</p>	<p>Connect residents with information and resources through broader internet and technology access within neighborhoods</p>	<p>Residents are empowered, connected to, and engaged with user-friendly, relevant resources accessible within neighborhoods.</p>
	<p>Apply for JARC transportation program funding.</p> <p>Create a “reverse” Rapid PASS service.</p> <p>Provide transportation grants to employers.</p> <p>Build the capacity of the SOURCE to recruit more employer partners.</p> <p>Support continued investigation of policies and incentives that show public and private sector returns on investment for SOURCE model.</p> <p>Refine SOURCE services so that they are more customized to meet the needs of neighborhood specific populations.</p>	<p>Employers help publicize and increase access to comprehensive resources, including health and transportation and skill building</p>	

Focus Area	Opportunities for Action	Strategies	Vision
Training & Employment	<p>Leverage Grand Rapids Community College Pathways out of Poverty grant and create a comprehensive neighborhood recruitment strategy.</p> <p>Recruit youth residents into the LEAD program and provide employer funding for the Mayor's 50 Campaign.</p> <p>Expand apprenticeship training trade offerings at Grand Rapids Community College.</p> <p>Fund an Earn and Learn site.</p> <p>Implement a MORE project in Grand Rapids.</p> <p>Implement a sector partnership strategy focused on the needs of targeted industries.</p> <p>Join the National Fund for Workforce Solutions to provide pooled funding for resident workforce opportunities.</p>	<p>Create more opportunities for residents (as young as age 12) to explore careers and gain work experience and skills simultaneously</p>	<p>Residents have access to robust pathways to sustainable careers.</p>
	<p>Build a strong coalition of CBA experts to lead local conversations.</p> <p>Support the capacity building of coalitions to develop CBAs and economic development policies.</p> <p>Establish a local Step Up initiative.</p>	<p>Provide access to community-based jobs with advancement opportunities, living wages, and benefits (especially healthcare)</p>	

Clearly, there are a range of opportunities for action that could generate positive impact in the focus areas for Grand Rapids residents. We offer here several additional analyses that we hope will inform further prioritization of key activities and investments.



First, we have assessed each opportunity for investment based on the level of difficulty of taking action and the level of impact that could be expected from it. What we have detailed above reflects a focus on a subset of actions that fall in quadrant 1 - major improvement/easy to implement - and quadrant 3 - major improvement/difficult to implement.

Impact/Effort Grid		
	Major Improvement	Minor Improvement
Impact	QUADRANT 1 (Major/Easy) AS National Workforce Benchmarking Project AD Payday Lending Policy Change TE Career Pathways	QUADRANT 3 (Major/Difficult) AS Seeds of Promise AS DJA Workforce Participation AD Financial Empowerment Centers AD Bank on Campaign CS Internet to Residents CS Transportation CS The SOURCE TE National Fund for Workforce Solutions TE Earn and Learn TE Mayor's LEAD TE Apprenticeships TE CT Step Up TE Sector Strategy TE MORE Project TE Strive Partnership TE Community Benefit Agreements and Local Hire Mandates
Effort	<i>Easy</i>	<i>Difficult</i>

Following this analysis, we wanted to understand the length of time associated with implementing the practices we have highlighted above – specifically, the time from planning to realizing the first effects of an action within the community. The following timeline captures estimates of timing for each of the opportunities for action we have presented.

1 Year	2-4 Years	5 Years
<p>AS - Distill and support implementation of a framework for community-led systems change in the focus neighborhoods (a la Seeds of Promise).</p> <p>AS - Support the development of a Grand Rapids cohort to participate in the National Workforce Benchmarking Network.</p> <p>CS - Provide refurbished Internet-ready computers for families at no or low cost.</p> <p>CS - Increase digital literacy training.</p> <p>CS - Create a “reverse” Rapid PASS service.</p> <p>CS - Provide transportation grants to employers.</p> <p>CS - Build the capacity of the SOURCE to recruit more employer partners.</p> <p>CS - Refine SOURCE services so that they are more customized to meet the needs of neighborhood specific populations.</p> <p>TE - Leverage Grand Rapids Community College Pathways out of Poverty grant and create a comprehensive neighborhood recruitment strategy.</p>	<p>AD - Support a municipally-led Grand Rapids application to implement the Financial Empowerment Center model.</p> <p>AD - Support a Bank On campaign for Grand Rapids.</p> <p>CS - Reduce the cost of in-home Internet service.</p> <p>CS - Create neighborhood computer lab sites with Wi-Fi.</p> <p>CS - Apply for JARC transportation program funding.</p> <p>CS - Support continued investigation of policies and incentives that show public and private sector returns on investment for SOURCE model.</p> <p>TE - Recruit youth residents into the LEAD program and provide employer funding for the Mayor’s 50 Campaign.</p> <p>TE - Fund an Earn and Learn site.</p> <p>TE - Implement a MORE project in Grand Rapids.</p> <p>TE - Implement a sector partnership strategy focused on the needs of targeted industries.</p> <p>TE - Join the National Fund for Workforce Solutions to provide pooled funding for resident workforce opportunities.</p> <p>TE - Build a strong coalition of CBA experts to lead local conversations.</p> <p>TE - Establish a local Step Up initiative.</p>	<p>AD - Catalyze and support collaborative efforts to encourage more restrictive policies governing payday and predatory lending practices in Grand Rapids and potentially statewide.</p> <p>TE - Expand apprenticeship training trade offerings at Grand Rapids Community College.</p> <p>TE - Support the capacity building of coalitions to develop CBAs and economic development policies.</p>

Conclusion

Residents in the neighborhoods of focus face a number of barriers in trying to create the conditions that will help their families have secure economic futures. These barriers can become magnified when structural racism and resulting economic and social inequalities develop. A thriving Grand Rapids economy hinges on ensuring that all individuals can obtain the assets and skills they need to succeed, remain competitive as changes in employment opportunities arise, and secure a positive economic future for their families.

The recommendations in this report provide opportunities for the Kellogg Foundation to strategically and consistently invest in change levers over the next 5 years to help these families move to economic security. Moving forward, at the point of action level decision making and implementation, we recommend further exploration of these opportunities through additional discussion with Kellogg Foundation program staff, board members and community stakeholders.

Acknowledgements

CSW wishes to thank all of the local stakeholders who have participated in planning sessions, community dialogues, and interviews that have led to report findings and recommendations. Specifically, we would like to thank Kellogg Foundation Program Officers, Nadia Brigham and Andrew Brower for their thoughtful feedback and for encouraging and supporting the thorough exploration of this planning and research. We also would like to recognize local consultant Milinda Ysasi-Castanon for her assistance with this research. Finally, we would like to acknowledge other members of our project team at CSW for their efforts on this project – Jeannine La Prad, Holly Parker, and Melodee Mabbitt.



Appendix

Community Stakeholder Participants

A total of 93 stakeholders participated in the strategy generation process.

Steering Committee Members (18)

Kenyatta Brame, Vice President
Cascade Engineering

Michael Daniels, Executive Director
School to Career Progressions

Dr. Nkechy Ezeh, Chief Executive Director
Early Learning Neighborhood Collaborative

Bing Goei, CEO of Goei Center
Eastern Floral

Martha Gonzalez Cortes, CEO
Hispanic Center of Western Michigan

Susan Heartwell, Executive Director
GR Student Advancement Foundation

Joe Jones, Interim President and CEO
Grand Rapids Urban League

Lisa Oliver King, Executive Director
Our Kitchen Table

Jacob Maas, Executive Director
MI Works (ACSET)

Jill Momber, Vice President/Regional Director
Manpower Inc.

Randy Osmun, Executive Director
The Source

Julie Parks, Director of Workforce Training
Grand Rapids Community College

Mark Peters, Butterball Farms, Inc.
President/CEO

Darel Ross, Co-Executive Director
LINC Community Revitalization Inc.

Carlos Sanchez, Director
Ferris State University
Latino Business & Economic Development Center

Kevin Stotts, Talent 2025
President



Stacy Stout, Grand Rapids Public Schools
Dean of Students, Burton Middle School

Emilio Zamarrrippa, HOY Youth Advocate
Steepletown Neighborhood Services

Service Provider Stakeholders (32)

Baxter Community Center – Sharon LaChapelle, Mentoring Program
BL²END – Brian Parks, President
City of Grand Rapids – Shannon Harris, Program Coordinator Our Community's Children
Disability Advocates – Denise Borges, Employment Specialist
Garfield Park Neighborhood Assoc – Esther Reyes, SW Neighborhood Improvement Coordinator
Goodwill Industries – Nathan Salazaar, FOS Manager
Grand Rapids Area Black Businesses – Jamiel Robinson, Founder
Grand Rapids Community College – Lorena Aguayo, Learning Corner Program Assistant
Grand Rapids Community College – John VanElst, Grants Manager
Grand Rapids Initiatives for Leaders – Jevon Willis, Program Director
GROW – Tom Heinz, Program Manager
Hispanic Center of Western MI – Rachel Humphreys, Youth Program Advocate
Hispanic Center of Western MI – Deisy Madrigal, Program Officer
ICCF – Sireece Martin
ICFF – Jenny Ziegler-Siegel
Jubilee Jobs – Marcia Osborne, Executive Director
LINC – Omar Gonzalez, B2B Community Liaison
LINC – Rosie Lozano, B2B Community Liaison
LINC – Willie Patterson, Community Liaison at Large
LINC – Montel Pierre, B2B Natural Helper
Local First – Meghan Disselkoen
Mercantile Bank – Cesar Gonzalez, Personal Banker
Micah Center – Jordan Bruxvoort, Director
New Hope Baptist Church – Dallas Lenear, Executive Pastor
The Right Place – Megan Sall, Business Development Manager
Roosevelt Park Neighborhood Association – Maria Martinez, Neighborhood Coordinator
Seeds of Promise – Ken Steensma, Essential Community Team Leader
The SOURCE- Joyce Lewis Rohrer, Case Manager
The SOURCE – Erica Gonzales, Case Worker
Urban League - Jermale Eddie, Director of Education and Innovation
WMCAT – Jennifer Owens, Adult Program Manager
Williams and Works – Lynee Wells, Urban Planner

Local Funder Interviews (7)

Nadia Brigham, W.K. Kellogg Foundation
Program Officer

Andrew Brower, W.K. Kellogg Foundation
Program Officer

Laurie Craft, Program Officer
Grand Rapids Community Foundation

Chana Edmond-Verley, Senior Program Officer
Doug and Maria DeVos Foundation

Rich Liberatore, Vice President, Agency Impact
United Way Heart of West Michigan

Benita Melton, C.S. Mott Foundation
Program Officer - Income Security

Mary Alice Williams, President and CEO
Nokomis Foundation

Residents (36)

East End – 9 participants

Central – 8 participants

West End – 8 participants

South End – 8 participants

The SOURCE – 3 participants

