



CENTRAL MINNESOTA OPPORTUNITY GRANT PROGRAM

DEED Annual Report to the Legislature

As required by 2017 Laws of Minnesota, Chapter 94, Article 6,
Section 8, Subd. 5.

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Background

2017 Laws of Minnesota, Chapter 94, Article 6, Section 8 authorizes a grant to Central Minnesota Community Foundation in amount of \$500,000. Grant funds are to be used by Central Minnesota Community Foundation (CMCF) to establish a grant program and award funds through a competitive grant process to community initiatives in the St. Cloud area that will provide services, either alone or in partnership with another nonprofit organization, in one or more of the following areas:

- Economic development, including but not limited to programs to foster entrepreneurship or small business development;
- Education, including but not limited to programs to encourage civic engagement or provide youth after-school or recreation programs
- Housing, including but not limited to, programs to prevent and respond to homelessness or to provide access to loans or grants for housing stability and affordability.

Grant awards were made by CMCF in May, 2018 to 6 organizations that include United Way of Central Minnesota, The Initiative Foundation, Lutheran Social Services, Mid-Minnesota Legal Aid, the Yes Network, and Promise Neighborhood.

The following report provides details on grant program, descriptions of the projects awarded funding and the interim results of the ongoing projects.

Qualified expenditures

Competitively awarded grant funds may be used by a community initiative for the following purposes: operating costs, including but not limited to staff, office space, computers, software, and Web development and maintenance services; (2) program costs; (3) travel within Minnesota; (4) consultants directly related to and necessary for delivering services listed in paragraph (a); and (5) capacity building.

Eligible Recipients

Eligible recipients include nonprofit organizations in the St. Cloud area that provide services to central Minnesota communities of color in one or more of the following program areas: (1) economic development, including but not limited to programs to foster entrepreneurship or small business development; (2) education, including but not limited to programs to encourage civic engagement or provide youth after-school or recreation programs; or (3) housing, including but not limited to, programs to prevent and respond to homelessness or to provide access to loans or grants for housing stability and affordability.

The service area is defined as the St. Cloud area composed of the counties of Benton, Stearns, and Sherburne.

Reporting Requirements

As required by the authorizing legislation, this report will detail the use of the grants funds including the number of individuals served and, to the extent practical, measures of progress toward achieving the outcomes which include: (1) outcomes in areas including improved job training (2) workforce development (3) small business support (4) early childhood, kindergarten through grade 12, and higher education achievement; and (5) access to housing, including loans; and any additional information requested by the foundation.

Program Activity

The Central Minnesota Community Foundation, after conducting in-depth focus groups to learn about the most pressing needs among people of color including, immigrant and refugees, granted at a total of \$475,000 to six different organizations equipped to address economic opportunities, housing and/or education based on the grantee application process. The selection of the six grantees were conducted by the Central MN Community Foundation's Community Programs Committee which represents 19 community members. These members were trained in the grant review process. In November, site visits were conducted as part of the interim report process for each grantee by staff of the Central MN Community Foundation and its Community Programs Committee for nearly all grantees. Two remaining site visits will occur on December 4th to confirm outcomes in the interim report and learn from these organizations about their work in addressing housing, education and economic opportunities for immigrant and refugee populations (See Appendix B for "Grant Award Memo").

Based on interim program outcomes, 83% of program participants are from communities of color with more than half the individuals served coming from African immigrant communities (see Appendix A "Demographic Information").

The following is a brief description of the grant awards, grantees and projects.

Grantee	Award	Focus Areas	Project Description
Mid-Minnesota legal Aid	\$87,000	Housing	Project to prevent and end homelessness by providing legal represent action, advocacy and advice on behalf of low-income people. This project increases resources to educate both Somali and limited English proficiency tenants through listening sessions, education, and direct representation to identify and address issues.
Lutheran Social Services	\$70,000	Housing, Education	Provide additional supportive services to refugee families resettled in the area through an expanded education and housing program currently offered by providing rent assistance in the form of micro-grants and housing education related to tenants' rights and education to an additional SO refugees and immigrants in partnership with EAGLE (Eradicating Achievement Gap & learning Empowerment, Inc.).

United Way of Central Minnesota	\$88,000	Education	Neighborhood Resource Centers- establishing school-based delivery sites for comprehensive sets of services including educational, recreational, and social and health services.
The Yes Network	\$30,000	Education	Expanding on-site summer school program serving meals to 23 neighborhoods and offering activities to 14 of those in low-income areas.
Promise Neighborhood	\$50,000	Education	Program to enhance long -term economic self-sufficiency by improving educational and economic outcomes for people of color primarily through leadership training and office functioning for the organization and skill development that could transfer to opportunities in the community.
Initiative Foundation	\$150,000	Economic Development	Enterprise Academy Program- support to East African Entrepreneurs with classes, business planning technical assistance, and access-to-capital assistance.

Grant Funded Project Goals and Outcomes: Housing

Mid-Minnesota Legal Aid

Project Description

Prevent and end homelessness by providing legal representation, advocacy and advice on behalf of low-income people. This project will increase resources to educate both Somali and limited English proficiency tenants through listening sessions, education, and direct representation to identify and address issues.

Goals

Host meetings with Elders and Leaders to design and obtain feedback on project strategies and outcomes, conduct listening and education sessions to provide information about landlord/tenant rights and obligations, identify at least 3 sites or systemic issues to target for additional education and outreach, and provide representation to 125 Somali and other limited English proficient clients on issues related to obtaining housing or preventing loss of housing.

Outcomes/ Outputs

Through consultation with Somali Elders and leaders, it was agreed that an increase in knowledge by Somali residents would curtail unfair practices by landlords. This resulted in 8 listening and educational sessions focusing on landlord/tenant rights and obligations. These sessions have been successful due to the combined expertise of the attorney with assistance from the paralegal who is Somali and able to interpret that material. As a result, 13 households, comprised of 54 individuals, have received help and these cases involved 7 different

landlords. One effort to evict a tenant has been stopped, and another threatened eviction appears to have been stopped. Essentially, this means 455 nights of housing have been protected.

Additionally, \$1,800 has been preserved for tenants through obtaining the return of a security deposit and avoiding improper charges which is the most prevalent issue discussed during the site visit. A success story of a Somali immigrant family is attached at the end of the report.

Lutheran Social Services

Project Description

Project provides additional supportive services to refugee families resettled in the area through an expanded education and housing program currently offered by providing rent assistance in the form of micro-grants and housing education related to tenants' rights and education to an additional 50 refugees and immigrants in partnership with EAGLE (Eradicating Achievement Gap & learning Empowerment, Inc.).

Goals

Assist 50 vulnerable refugee and immigrant youth of color in accessing community and school resources and comfortably integrating into the community and schools, and successfully have them participate in after-school tutoring provided by EAGLE with results of improving their academic performance. Also provide training and education to 25 refugee and immigrant families of color to help them understand and access community resources related to public education and/or housing through cultural orientation and provide rental assistance to those who are at -risk of eviction and/or struggling to pay rent or security deposits.

Outcomes

The education specialist has confirmed a plan with the partner agency and has already been able to provide enhanced cultural orientation to 35 students. Currently, 39 students are enrolled in the academic tutoring program and attendance is being tracked for each student with initial academic placement for math and/or literacy in order to gauge progress. The housing specialist has developed the screening tool to assess the needs of families requesting financial assistance. This tool also includes an element of referral to other community services if the client does not seem to be a good fit for the micro -grant. No assistance or micro-grants have been awarded as of October 31, 2018.

Grant Funded Project Goals and Outcomes: Education

United Way of Central Minnesota

Project Description

Supporting the Neighborhood Resource Center which is a school-based delivery site for comprehensive sets of services including educational, recreational, and social and health services. The goal is to foster academic

achievement by reducing poverty barriers to educational success and address factors outside the classroom that is managed by a Community Navigator who specializes in outreach and community building initially focused at only 2 schools - Lincoln and Discovery.

Goals

Increase Target Services academic summer school participation to 200 daily at Discovery and 100 at Lincoln to drive academic success, while also increasing student retention at both schools by 10%, and parent attendance at conferences by 10% at Discovery and 15% at Lincoln. Also, by spring of 2020, increase the percentage of students in grades 3-5 meeting or exceeding MN Reading performance standards by 15% as measured by the Reading MCA tests.

Outcomes

Summer United, a summer school for summer camp enrichment and recreation programs, had significant success to the point whereby the school district is requesting an expansion to additional schools. Average daily attendance hovered above 90 kids at Discovery and 65 at Lincoln, nearly doubling the previous year's average. Navigators have built deep, lasting relationships with faculty, staff, and families at each school. Additional outcomes are not yet available.

The Yes Network

Project Description

Expanding on-site summer school program serving meals to 23 neighborhoods and offering activities to 14 of those in low-income areas.

Goals

Work with neighborhood residents to organize teams of 5-8 parents and teens in each of the three sites to understand, organize, implement and evaluate the summer programs and expand to 3 neighborhoods engaging 150-175 children in outdoor games and enrichment activities by hiring 18 high school students within the neighborhoods to gain leadership skills by assisting the university student activity leaders in serving meals and organizing the activities. Lastly, engage university students and high school students in hosting a monthly family picnic for resident families during the summer months to increase social connections.

Outcomes

Hired and trained staff that represent the cultures in the 3 neighborhood sites who visited residents to share information about the meals and activities and how their children would benefit. Attendance exceeded expectations and totaled 330 at the 3 sites. Property managers sited that there had been 2-3 serious incidents per week previously and shortly after the summer program decreased to zero per week. A total of 28 students were hired for these expansion sites. Each site had layered mentoring. Family picnics were organized but parents did not attend and it is anticipated that they didn't understand the purpose of the picnics.

The Promise Neighborhood

Project Description

Promise Neighborhood's program enhances long-term economic self-sufficiency by improving educational and economic outcomes for people of color primarily through leadership training and office functioning for the organization and skill development that could transfer to opportunities in the community.

Goals

Identify and train 2 community leaders to coordinate leadership development, writing workshops, basic computer skills, and access to networks for 10 targeted community adults, provide 4 newly trained community members with leadership opportunities at Promise Neighborhood to coordinate and implement year-round, quality out of school time for 25 youth.

Outcomes

10 community members are actively participating in trainings on board governance and fund development, 5 have been able to access leadership opportunities at Promise Neighborhood and in the St. Cloud community, and 5 have new or increased economic opportunities. Additionally, 35 youth participated in an academic summer camp and 4 program participants were able to provide 30 youth with back to school supplies, clothes and daily essentials.

Grant Funded Project Goals and Outcomes: Economic Development

Initiative Foundation

Project Description

Initiative Foundation's program is the Enterprise Academy which provides support to East African Entrepreneurs.

Goals

To perfect business plans, 50 individuals will participate in "Plan-It", and East African entrepreneurs will start or expand 24 businesses. To increase success, a new Enterprise Academy program coordinator from the East African community in greater St. Cloud will be hired.

Outcomes

The Enterprise Academy launched its first training cohort of 9 people with trainers from the East African community who possess extensive expertise. Eight of the nine participants successfully completed "Plan-It" classes. These graduates are a priority in the lending pipeline and technical assistance. In 2018, Enterprise Academy successfully provided its first Islamic-acceptable loan. A program specialist was hired from the East African community to assist with the training offered at the Academy.

Expenditures

Program Activities	Budget	Actual
Community Initiative Grants	\$475,000	\$475,000
Administrative (Direct)	\$20,880	\$16,567
Administrative (Indirect)	\$4,120	\$682
Total	\$500,000	\$492,249

Individual project budgets are available upon request and will be provided in detail for the final report.