



Building U.S. Community Foundation Engagement with the Sustainable Development Goals at the Local Level

*A Review of Investments by
the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation
(2018-25)*



CHARLES STEWART
MOTT FOUNDATION

Building U.S. Community Foundation Engagement with the Sustainable Development Goals at the Local Level

© 2026 Charles Stewart Mott Foundation

Lead Author: Larry McGill, Ph.D.

Cover Photo: UN Photo/Manual Elías.

Table of Contents

I. Introduction	2
II. Background	3
III. Rationale	4
IV. Strategy and Indicators of Progress	5
V. Scope of the Initiative	5
VI. Evolution of the Initiative	9
VII. Outputs and Outcomes	13
1. Increased community foundation awareness of the SDGs	
2. Increased community foundation engagement with the SDGs	
3. Development of resources to facilitate community foundation engagement with the SDGs	
4. Integration of the SDGs into the work of philanthropy support organizations	
VIII. Successes to Build On	23
IX. Cautionary Lessons	26
X. Conclusion	27
Appendix A: Mott USCFs & SDGs Funding 2018-25: Grant Descriptions	30
Appendix B: QUESTIONNAIRE: Where Does Your Foundation's Work Align with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)?	46

I. Introduction

The Charles Stewart Mott Foundation's initiative to build U.S. community foundation engagement with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) was launched in 2018 as a component of its Civil Society program, the mission of which is “to foster engaged, empowered and equitable communities across the world.” Created in 1992, the Civil Society program was reorganized in 2018 around four program areas:

- Strengthening Civic Space.
- Enhancing Community Philanthropy.
- Increasing Access to Justice.
- Special Initiatives.

Two objectives guided the work of the Enhancing Community Philanthropy program area:

1. Expand and strengthen the community foundation field in Africa, Europe and Latin America.
2. Improve the ability of community foundations to advance the Sustainable Development Goals at the local level.

This report focuses on a subset of investments by the Mott Foundation in support of **Objective 2**. While the geographic scope of this objective was global, **this report covers only those grants awarded for U.S.-based projects from 2018-25**. Across this eight-year period, Mott awarded 32 grants to 18 U.S. organizations that were intended to further this objective. A total of 21 projects received support with three recipients each receiving grants for two projects.

These grants were awarded to three types of organizations:

1. Community foundations (6 grantees).
2. Community foundation/philanthropy support organizations (8 grantees).
3. Institutions with academic or SDG expertise (4 grantees).

A complete list of these grants with information about each recipient, the grant purpose, grant amount and grant period is provided in Appendix A.



SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Figure 1.

II. Background

The [Sustainable Development Goals](#) (see Figure 1) generated considerable global excitement when they were adopted in 2015 by all members of the United Nations, including the United States. Countless SDG-related initiatives proliferated around the world in the years following their adoption. Strikingly, the U.S. did not embrace the SDGs with the same kind of enthusiasm. Yet, the U.S. did have SDG supporters who believed this was a meaningful opportunity to catalyze sustainable progress against significant social, economic and environmental challenges, many of which philanthropy had been working on for decades, if not longer.

The Mott Foundation recognized the opportunity presented to the sector by the SDGs and committed to an ambitious program of grantmaking, events and thought leadership to encourage U.S. community foundations to align their work with the SDGs. The Foundation approached this work with an open timeline, a multi-pronged strategy and a recognition that community foundations would vary in terms of the depth of their engagement with the SDGs. Furthermore, Mott approached the work without preconceived assumptions regarding how the SDG framework should be implemented and with an openness to discovery throughout the process.

III. Rationale

Unanimous approval by all member states of the United Nations in 2015 suggested that the Sustainable Development Goals could become a common global language for addressing critical issues facing people and the planet. The U.S., however, failed to implement any significant national initiatives aligned with the SDGs. If the SDGs were to take root in the U.S., it would have to happen at the local level.

As local catalysts for change, community foundations were well situated to play a coordinating role in bringing the SDG conversation into their communities to address local needs. Philosophically, this was aligned with one of the major learnings to emerge from the Millennium Development Goals, a 15-year, U.N.-driven initiative that laid the groundwork for the SDGs between 2000-14. A chief insight arising from the MDG experience was that the best way to ensure success in achieving global goals was to focus efforts at the local level with community input and participation.

This dovetails closely with the notion of [community leadership](#), an increasingly important role played by community foundations within their local spheres of influence. Developed by [CFLeads](#) as a way of broadening the potential of community foundations beyond grantmaking, a 2019 survey conducted by CFLeads/Candid found that 98% of U.S. community foundations expected to deepen or expand their community leadership work in the coming year.

The affinity between community leadership plans and the SDG frameworks is illustrated by CFLeads' definition of community leadership:

"The community foundation is a community partner that creates a better future for all by pursuing the community's greatest opportunities and addressing the most critical challenges, inclusively united people, institutions and resources from throughout the community, and producing significant, widely shared and lasting results."

Clear connections to the SDGs are shown through the prominent roles played in this definition by the concepts of "partnership" (SDG 17), "inclusivity" (SDGs 5 and 10), and "lasting results" (i.e., sustainability). Not incidentally, the first of the 32 grants to be awarded as part of Mott's initiative to "improve the ability of community foundations to advance the Sustainable Development Goals" implicitly acknowledged these connections. [Candid](#) received a grant in 2018 to work in partnership with [CFLeads](#) to develop a [Community Leadership Assessment Tool](#) for use by community foundations as a way of guiding them through their community leadership journey.

IV. Strategy and Indicators of Progress

The role of community leadership in furthering community foundation engagement with the SDGs was explicitly called out in the 2019-28 Civil Society Program Plan:

“We will encourage and support community foundations to find and apply local solutions to global challenges, such as climate change, migration, and inequality, as defined by the SDGs. Over the next ten years, the program will invest \$21 million in strengthening the leadership role of community foundations, which will result in an increase in community foundations prioritizing leadership and demonstrating their impact on creating local solutions to global challenges in their communities.”

The Foundation identified two strategies to achieve this objective: 1) Support key programs and organizations that develop the knowledge and capacity of community foundation support organizations (CFSOs)¹ to advance the leadership role of community foundations to address the SDGs; 2) Support durable, collective initiatives by sets of community foundations to address the SDGs.

As indicators of progress, the program would monitor the following metrics:

1. Number of initiatives to address the SDGs.
2. Number of community foundations participating in initiatives addressing the SDGs.
3. Number of learning products on leadership and SDGs for community foundations.
4. Progress in addressing the SDGs.

At the global level, the initiative aspired to the following outcome: **By 2028, at least 50 percent of community foundations worldwide will play a leadership role in helping their communities address the SDGs.** By extension, the hope was that a similar percentage of U.S. community foundations would also achieve this result.

V. Scope of the Initiative

The USCFs & SDGs initiative focused on three types of investments:

1. Support the work of individual community foundations that are proactively engaged with the SDGs.
2. Provide opportunities for U.S. community foundations to engage in peer learning, knowledge exchange and network building regarding the SDGs.

¹ While community foundation support organizations (CFSOs) are particularly important to the work of the Enhancing Community Philanthropy program, many philanthropy support organizations (PSOs) with broader missions also serve community foundations. Since the USCFs & SDGs initiative awarded grants to both, the broader term, “PSO,” is used when referring to these grant recipients in general, while the term, “CFSO,” is used when referring to support organizations that work exclusively with community foundations.

3. Develop tools and resources to support community foundation engagement with the SDGs.

While each grant may have been intended primarily to further one of these three main objectives, almost every grant produced outcomes across all three. Most of the projects were issue agnostic, but several focused on a specific area of work, such as economic mobility, climate change and immigrant integration. Racial equity was a primary theme across multiple projects. Figure 2 shows the distribution of funded projects by recipient type and primary purpose served.

By supporting individual community foundations, the initiative was in effect developing case studies of how the SDGs can be successfully integrated into their work. Four community foundations received Mott support intended to build or deepen their organizational capacity to engage with the SDGs:

1. [Southwest Florida Community Foundation/Collaboratory](#).
2. [Central Florida Foundation](#).
3. [Puerto Rice Community Foundation](#).
4. [Community Foundation of Greater Flint](#).

Three of these grants allowed community foundations already working with the SDGs — [Collaboratory](#), [CFF](#) and [PRCF](#) — to deepen their engagement; a fourth, to the [Community Foundation of Greater Flint](#), served to introduce the SDG framework to a foundation that was not already engaged with the SDGs and followed the foundation's progress towards integrating the SDGs into its operations over a multi-year period.

By supporting opportunities for community foundations to engage in peer learning, knowledge exchange and network building, the initiative was seeking to build communities of practice that could engage in mutually supportive activities to develop and deepen their work with the SDGs. Most of these grants (seven of nine) went to philanthropy support organizations while two were awarded to individual community foundations:

1. [CF Leads – first grant](#).
2. [Kansas Association of Community Foundations](#).
3. [Association of Black Foundation Executives](#).
4. [Council on Foundations](#).
5. [Welcoming America](#).

6. [Cleveland Foundation](#).
7. [Southwest Florida Community Foundation/Collaboratory](#).
8. [CF Leads – second grant](#).
9. [Community Foundation Climate Collaborative](#).

**Building U.S. Community Foundation Engagement with the Sustainable Development Goals
Projects Funded by the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, 2018 - 2026**

			Purpose Served by Project			
Recipient Organization		Prior Level of SDG Experience	Build/deepen organizational knowledge & capacity	Peer learning, knowledge exchange, network building	Build field awareness, knowledge & capacity	
Individual Community Foundations						
1	Central Florida Foundation	HIGH	PRIMARY		SECONDARY	
2	Chicago Community Trust	LOW	SECONDARY		PRIMARY	
3	Cleveland Foundation	MEDIUM	SECONDARY		PRIMARY	
4	Community Foundation of Greater Flint	LOW	PRIMARY	SECONDARY		
5	Puerto Rico Community Foundation	MEDIUM	PRIMARY			
6a	SW Florida Foundation/Collaboratory (1)	HIGH	PRIMARY	PRIMARY		
6b	SW Florida Foundation/Collaboratory (2)	HIGH			SECONDARY	
Philanthropy Support Organizations						
7	Assn of Black Foundation Executives (ABFE)	LOW	SECONDARY	PRIMARY		
8a	Candid/Foundation Center (1)	HIGH		SECONDARY		PRIMARY
8b	Candid/Foundation Center (2)	HIGH			PRIMARY	
9a	CF Leads (1)	LOW	PRIMARY			
9b	CF Leads (2)	LOW	SECONDARY	PRIMARY		
10	Community Foundation Climate Collab.	MEDIUM		PRIMARY		
11	Council on Foundations	HIGH		PRIMARY		
12	Kansas Assn of Community Foundations	LOW		PRIMARY	SECONDARY	
13	Native Americans in Philanthropy	LOW			PRIMARY	
14	Welcoming America	MEDIUM		PRIMARY	SECONDARY	
Academic Institutions/SDG Experts						
15	Brookings Institution	HIGH		SECONDARY	PRIMARY	
16	Grand Valley State University	MEDIUM			PRIMARY	
17	Indiana University	MEDIUM			PRIMARY	
18	United Nations Foundation	HIGH			PRIMARY	

Figure 2.

Most of the projects supported by these grants sought to integrate the SDGs into existing cohort-based programs, such as CF Leads' [Economic Mobility Action Network](#), ABFE's [racial equity workshops](#), the [Council's peer learning circles](#), Welcoming America's [Welcoming Network](#), and the ongoing work of the [Community Foundation Climate Collaborative](#). The [Cleveland Foundation](#) partnered with [Philanthropy Ohio](#) to recruit and deliver a series of learning sessions to a group of northern Ohio community foundations over a nine-month period.

[KACF](#) organized a learning collaborative of five rural Kansas community foundations to work together to apply the SDGs in their communities. The association also prominently included SDG content at its annual [Growing Community Foundations Conference](#) in 2022 and 2023. [Collaboratory](#) hosted a two-day summit that brought together key leaders of community foundations, PSOs and other organizations engaged with the SDGs to exchange knowledge and envision ways to accelerate community foundation uptake of the SDGs.

The third prong of the initiative, developing tools and resources, was intended to create a solid knowledge base that community foundations could draw upon to support their engagement with the SDGs. Eight grants resulted in the delivery of specific tools, reports or resources that are now available to help guide community foundations in their work with the SDGs. Four of these projects were carried out by organizations with either academic or SDG-related expertise, three by PSOs and one by a community foundation:

1. [Candid/Foundation Center: first grant awarded.](#)
2. [Brookings Institution.](#)
3. [Candid/Foundation Center: second grant awarded.](#)
4. [Indiana University.](#)
5. [United Nations Foundation.](#)
6. [Grand Valley State University.](#)
7. [Chicago Community Trust.](#)
8. [Native Americans in Philanthropy.](#)



A partial list of work products coming out of the USCFs & SDGs initiative includes:

- An issue of [Foundation Review](#) devoted to “Community Leadership and the Sustainable Development Goals” (vol. 13 issue 4, December 2021).
- Three tools:
 - [Community Foundation Leadership Assessment Tool.](#)
 - SDG Alignment Survey for Community Foundations.
 - [CF Express Training Video on the Sustainable Development Goals.](#)

- Four reports
 - [Advancing Welcoming Through Community Foundations.](#)
 - [A Kansas Experiment: Application of the SDGs by Small and/or Rural Community Foundations.](#)
 - [Indigenous Centered: Improving Equity and Accountability for Native American Communities with Community Foundations.](#)
 - Accelerating Community Foundations' Uptake of the SDGs.
- A website and newsletter — [American Leadership on the SDGs.](#)
- Data collected by CF Insights on SDG awareness and adoption by U.S. community foundations (2021-25).

VI. Evolution of the Initiative

When the Mott Foundation established its objective to build U.S. community foundation engagement with the SDGs in 2018, it was possible to look toward the future with a sense of optimism that real progress could be made on the global goals. At the same time, it was understood that the U. S. lagged behind much of the rest of the world in adopting the SDGs. Research conducted in 2019 through grants to the [Brookings Institution](#) and Candid showed that only a few U.S. community foundations, including the Southwest Florida and Hawaii community foundations, used the SDGs in their work. However, “many more are eager to learn how they might be applicable.”

Shortly after these findings came out, two major events disrupted the prospects for quick progress. The COVID-19 pandemic focused the attention of community foundations on addressing immediate humanitarian needs arising from the health crisis, while the racial reckoning unleashed by George Floyd’s murder shone a harsh spotlight on the long-festering issue of racial inequity in the U.S. In response, Mott commissioned a report examining “How the SDGs Can Help Community Foundations Respond to COVID-19 and Advance Racial Equity,” as a way to meet the moment and reiterate the applicability of the SDG framework even in times of uncertainty. In the wake of these events, Mott also added a second outcome within the objective to advance the SDGs: **“By 2028, at least 25% of community foundations in the U.S. are using the SDGs as a framework to advance racial equity.”**

Accordingly, three grants for equity-focused SDG projects were awarded in 2021:

- [Association of Black Foundation Executives](#) — “To provide racial equity training for up to 40 community foundation staff and board members.”
- [Welcoming America](#) — “To map how community foundations are engaging with

immigrant integration work, crosslink its newly-updated Welcoming Standards to the SDGs, bring together community foundation and Welcoming leaders through a virtual convening, develop a white paper and other resources to help community foundations initiate work on welcoming and the goals, identify and support a cohort of up to 15 community foundations to learn together through in-person and virtual convenings, provide one-on-coaching to this cohort and design a second phase of the initiative for subsequent cohorts.”

- [Indiana University](#) — “To lead a cross-national research team to design and pilot a study that will describe shifts in diversity, equity and inclusion in community foundations in the United States, Canada and Australia.”

Through 2024, the ABFE and Welcoming America cohorts engaged more than 50 community foundations with racial equity programming aligned with the SDGs. As of December 2025, this work continues through an ABFE/CFLeds partnership. The Indiana University research is also ongoing.

As the initiative unfolded, the relationship between the SDGs and equity was foregrounded in nearly every USCFs & SDGs project. The core principle of the SDGs — “leave no one behind” — was often invoked as a reminder that equity is not just consistent with the SDG framework but embedded within it. Moreover, two of the Goals (SDG 5 Gender Equality and SDG 10 Reduced Inequalities) explicitly link the SDGs to achieving equitable outcomes. And in discussions about assessing progress toward the goals, the importance of collecting disaggregated outcome data was described as a fourth level of the SDG framework to drive home the importance of bringing an equity mindset to the work (see Figure 3).

Working with the SDGs

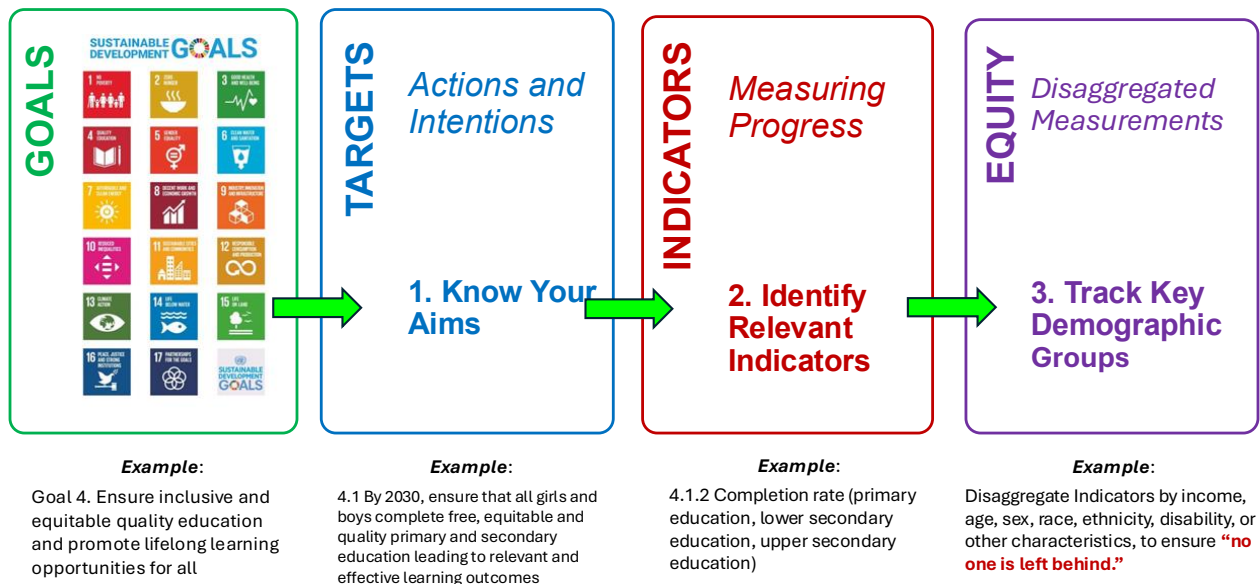


Figure 3.

By the end of 2021, 15 Mott-funded USCFs & SDGs projects were running concurrently. Four community foundations were supported to integrate the SDGs more deeply into their work and a fifth, the [Chicago Community Trust](#), was leading a project to explore how the SDGs could be incorporated into the way social impact investing is done.

Four projects explicitly focusing on the SDGs and racial equity were in progress, administered by ABFE, CF Leads (economic mobility), Welcoming America (immigrant integration) and Indiana University (trends in racial equity work by U.S. community foundations). A fifth project at the [Kansas Association of Community Foundations](#) focused on applying the SDGs to the work of a cohort of five small, rural Kansas community foundations, a project with its own equity-related elements.

[Grand Valley State University](#) was working on the SDG-themed issue of [Foundation Review](#), which featured articles on how two U.S. community foundations — the [West Central Initiative](#) in Minnesota and the [Southwest Florida Community Foundation](#) — were applying the SDGs in their work. Candid and the [Council on Foundations](#) were also engaged in Mott-funded projects, the former focused on building [CF Insights](#)² capacity to collect data on the uptake of the SDGs by community foundations and the latter focused on hosting [peer learning conversations](#) with community foundations seeking to deepen their engagement with the SDGs. Two other grants supported work by the [Brookings Institution](#) and the [U.N. Foundation](#) on projects designed to build cross-sector collaborations and communicate the collective contributions of American organizations, including community foundations, toward the goals.

In 2022, Mott funded two more projects under the USCFs & SDGs initiative. [The Cleveland Foundation](#) received a grant to “create a learning exchange cohort with other community foundations and local stakeholders in northeast Ohio on aligning their giving areas with the goals.” The cohort met monthly for nine months and provided opportunities for individual foundations to follow up with one-on-one consulting, if desired; two opted to do this. [Native Americans in Philanthropy](#) also received funding to “lead a series of convenings and conduct other data-gathering efforts through its network of Native stakeholders, focused on the role of community foundations in relation to Native communities.”

By 2023, Mott estimated that 15% of U.S. community foundations had engaged with the SDGs in some fashion. While this figure represented growth in uptake (from about 7% in 2019²), it was below the trajectory the initiative was hoping for at the start. So, in March 2023, Mott brought together 17 field leaders, representing community foundations, PSOs, academic institutions and organizations with SDG-related expertise, for a two-day summit meeting hosted by Collaboratory in Ft. Myers, Florida to discuss ways to accelerate U.S. community foundation uptake

² Unpublished survey results collected by Candid for CFLeads’ “Going All In” initiative (<https://cfleads.org/going-all-in>).

of the SDGs. Most of the participants had received prior Mott grants associated with the USCFs & SDGs initiative.

The meeting generated a rich set of insights that suggested a potential agenda for the next phase of work on the initiative, which was captured and shared in the proceedings. A survey of the seven community foundations represented at the meeting showed that while they agreed that uptake by the field had been slow, several said the pace was about what could have been expected, suggesting that hopefulness regarding uptake needed to be tempered with realism. The two most significant challenges faced by community foundations in working with the SDGs were “lack of staff to work on implementation” and “internal technical capacity related to data management and measurement.” At the same time, the survey found that the longer the foundation’s engagement with the SDGs, the deeper the SDGs had enhanced or enriched their work.



Two final Mott-supported projects came online in 2024. CFLeads received a grant to “establish a community of practice of ten community foundations” with varied experience in applying the goals to their work that would lead to the development of “a tool for aligning a community foundation’s work with the SDGs and executing an implementation plan.” The concept underlying this project was based on

insights derived from the Ft. Myers summit. By mutual agreement, CFLeads and ABFE (working with previously awarded Mott funding) joined forces to co-develop and deliver multiple sets of workshops blending the racial equity framework of ABFE, the Community Leadership framework of CFLeads and the SDGs, highlighting the strong interrelationships among them. Work on this project is ongoing as of December 2025.

The final grant awarded under the auspices of the USCFs & SDGs initiative was to support the work of the [Community Foundation Climate Collaborative](#), “a national network of community foundations united in our commitment to addressing climate change causes and impacts while advancing climate justice.” Together with the joint CFLeads/ABFE project, this project centers the strong connection between the SDGs and racial equity.

VII. Outputs and Outcomes

As of December 2025, the Mott USCFs & SDGs initiative has produced a significant number of outputs, as measured by the initial set of metrics adopted to assess progress:

- 21 U.S. initiatives to address the SDGs.
- More than 200 U.S. community foundations participating in these initiatives.
- More than a dozen learning products on leadership and SDGs for U.S. community foundations.
- Progress in addressing the SDGs?: Unclear.

The fourth bullet point is actually an outcome and illustrates an important difference between outputs and outcomes. **Outcomes are determined by outputs plus circumstances**, and circumstances certainly conspired to constrain progress on the SDGs. As Mott's Civil Society Program Update for 2025 stated:

When [the Community Foundations Advancing the SDGs] objective originally was developed in 2018, there was optimism about achieving the SDGs by 2030. Sadly, this optimism has waned, especially given setbacks due to the pandemic, conflict around the world, increased political polarization and weaker international cooperation. The stark reality is that most of the SDGs will not be achieved by 2030, and only 17% of the SDG targets are on track to be met globally by 2030.

For the community foundations involved in the USCFs & SDGs initiative, progress on the SDGs would need to be measured by changes in relevant metrics at the community level. The question of community-level progress, though, has two parts — one, assessing the collective contributions made by local government, business and civil society (including community foundations) to progress; two, having established metrics to measure progress against key goals. The reality, though, is that few communities represented by foundations participating in the USCFs & SDGs initiative have established key metrics tied to the goals, two notable exceptions being [Central Florida](#) and [West Central Minnesota](#). And the vast majority of these foundations remain in the early stages of familiarizing themselves with the SDGs. They have not had an opportunity to integrate them fully into their work, much less engage in the community-level conversations necessary to build consensus around local priorities or develop dashboards to measure progress.

Moreover, the pace of community-level change is slow, generally taking place over time periods much longer than the USCFs & SDGs initiative. The most that can be stated with certainty is that the initiative was able to bring U.S. community foundations into the SDG conversation, setting them up to play leadership roles going forward. We also know that, at the national level, the U.S. lags badly on the

SDGs and has paid them no more than lip service since they were adopted. Against this backdrop, any progress made at the local level would be defying the odds.

The 2025 Civil Society Program Update goes on to say:

Nonetheless, the SDGs have offered community foundations a shared framework by which they can achieve greater impact on development issues in their communities. Community foundations that have used the SDG framework are typically less interested in global achievement of the goals — as desirable as that may be — than they are with using the SDGs to help them hone their strategies, develop and adapt indicators according to their communities' needs and better communicate the impact of their work.

In other words, as circumstances changed, so too did the nature of the value proposition offered by the SDGs to community foundations. By way of an analogy, it is as if President Kennedy's historic admonition to "ask not what your country can do for you; ask what you can do for your country" were flipped on its head. Over the course of the USCFs & SDGs initiative, it became evident that the most salient tactic for engaging community foundations with the SDGs was to "ask not what you can do for the SDGs; ask what the SDGs can do for you." As it turns out, the SDG framework can do a lot more for community foundations than helping them align their work to the global goals. In assessing the outcomes of the initiative, it is important to view them in light of this change of perspective regarding the SDGs' value to community foundations.

The types of outcomes to which the USCFs & SDGs initiative can be expected to have contributed toward include the following, each of which is examined in turn:

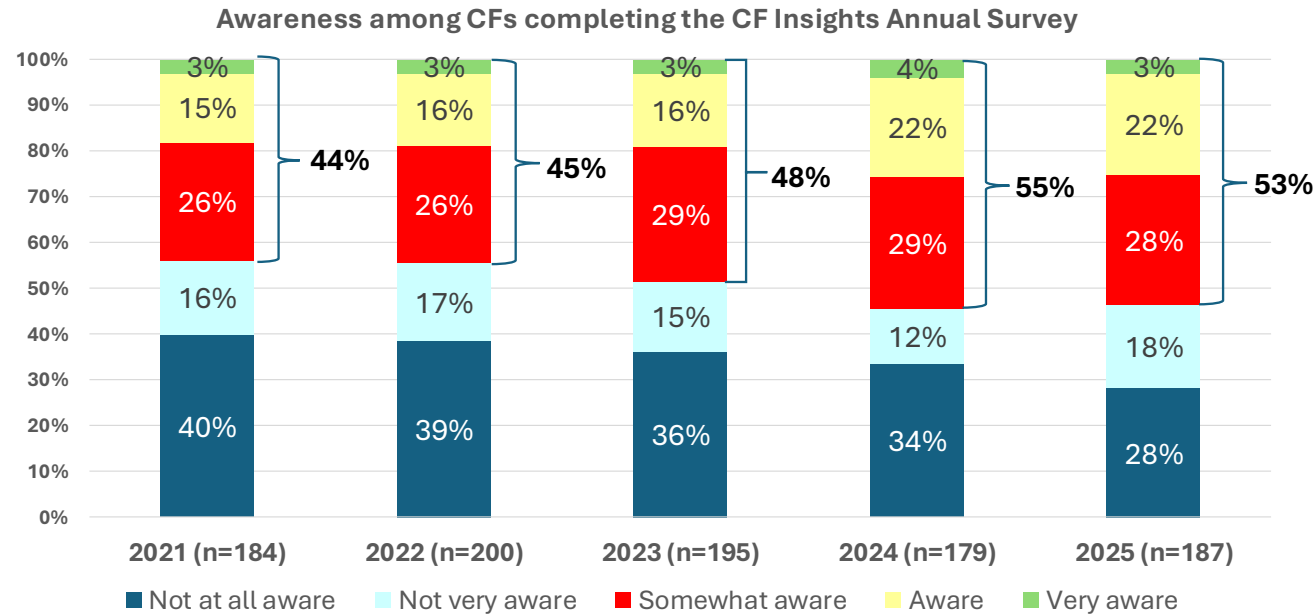
1. Increased community foundation awareness of the Sustainable Development Goals.
2. Increased community foundation engagement with the SDGs.
3. Development of resources to facilitate community foundation engagement with the SDGs.
4. Integration of the SDGs into the work of philanthropy support organizations.

Outcome 1. Increased community foundation awareness of the SDGs.

One of the primary objectives of the USCFs & SDGs initiative was to increase the general level of community foundation awareness of the SDGs. In 2018, clear examples of meaningful U.S. community foundation engagement with the SDGs were scarce. Beyond a handful of prominent examples — the Southwest Florida Community Foundation/ Collaboratory, Central Florida Foundation and West Central Initiative (Minnesota) — it was clear that the vast majority of U.S. community foundations were simply unaware of the SDGs, and how they might be relevant to their work.

Since 2021, CF Insights has been collecting annual data on community foundation awareness of the SDGs.³ From a baseline of 44% in 2021, the percentage of community foundations saying they were either “aware or somewhat aware” of the SDGs peaked at 55% in 2024, before dropping slightly to 53% in 2025. It is likely that the Mott USCFs & SDGs initiative played an important role in moving this needle. Large numbers of U.S. community foundations were exposed to the SDGs through high visibility sessions at the KACF conferences in 2022 and 2023 and through participation in Mott-funded SDG learning cohorts. Nevertheless, nearly half (47%) of U.S. community foundations were still “not very aware” or “not at all aware” of the SDGs in 2025.

General Awareness of the SDGs Among U.S. Community Foundations



Source: Community Foundation Engagement with the SDGs in the U.S. – CF Insights FY24 Annual Survey

Figure 4.

Outcome 2. Increased community foundation engagement with the SDGs.

As described in one of the [playbooks](#) that came out of the USCFs & SDGs initiative, community foundations might choose to work with the SDGs at one of three levels of engagement — *basic alignment*, *moderate integration* or *deep integration*. The appropriate level of engagement for a given foundation will depend on a number of factors, such as organizational leadership, staff capacity, financial resources and mission alignment across departments.

³Special thanks to CF Insights and the Council on Foundations for sharing this data.

Building U.S. Community Foundation Engagement with the Sustainable Development Goals
12 Projects Focused Specifically on SDG Engagement (2018-2025) - as of December 2025

Cohort-based Projects	Number of Cohorts	Total # of CFs	Level of Engagement		
			Basic Alignment	Moderate Integration	Deep Integration
Association of Black Foundation Executives (ABFE) Community Foundations Addressing Racial Equity	1	13	13		
CF Leads (1) Community Foundations, Economic Mobility and the SDGs	1	6	6		
CF Leads (2) - in partnership with ABFE Galvanizing Sustainable Development Goals Engagement Among Community Foundations	2	17	17		
Cleveland Foundation Northeast Ohio SDG Learning Cohort	1	9	7	2	
Kansas Association of Community Foundations Raising Awareness and Educating U.S. Community Foundations on the SDGs	1	5		5	
Marin Community Foundation Community Foundation Climate Collaborative	1	51	51		
Welcoming America Community Foundations Advancing Welcoming and Sustainable Development Goals	2	26	26		
Total number participating in Mott-funded SDG cohorts/peer learning projects	9	131*	120*	7	

* Includes some foundations that participated in multiple cohorts

SDG Peer Learning Circle	Number of Cohorts	Total # of CFs	Level of Engagement		
			Basic Alignment	Moderate Integration	Deep Integration
Council on Foundations	monthly	72*	Participants represented a range of CFs across different levels of engagement		

* Aggregate # of community foundations reached (deduped)

Projects Supporting Individual Foundations	Number of Cohorts	Total # of CFs	Level of Engagement		
			Basic Alignment	Moderate Integration	Deep Integration
Central Florida Foundation Southwest Florida Community Foundation Puerto Rico Community Foundation Community Foundation of Greater Flint	N/A	4			4

Figure 5.

Basic alignment. Helping community foundations reach at least basic alignment with the SDGs was the main objective of almost all of the cohort-based, peer learning projects funded by Mott. While each cohort was organized differently, participating foundations should have taken away, at minimum, a concrete understanding of the relevance of the SDGs, and how they might align with their work.

Mott funded eight cohort-based, peer-learning projects, involving close to 200 community foundations through 2024 (see Figure 5). Seven of these consisted of cohorts of community foundations that met together to attend a curated series of learning sessions over a period of time, ranging from three months to two years. Through 2024, these cohorts drew 127 participants. The eighth one, hosted by the Council on Foundations, invited any and all interested community foundations to attend monthly peer-learning sessions on rotating topics related to the SDGs. Through 2024, 72 U.S. community foundations had attended one or more of these sessions.

Moderate integration. Only one of the cohort-based projects was specifically designed to help community foundations achieve more than “basic alignment” with the SDGs. The Kansas Association of Community Foundations worked in partnership with Wichita State University’s [Community Engagement Institute](#) to recruit five small and/or rural Kansas community foundations to form a learning collaborative and to design and implement specific SDG-related projects. The collaborative worked together over a two-year period and presented the outcomes of their projects at the 2023 annual [National Conference for Growing Community Foundations](#).

Several unique components of the KACF project are worth bearing in mind as promising practices for embedding new competencies into the work of community foundations:

- *Engaging foundation leadership and community stakeholders from the outset.* Each foundation pulled together a working group from their community consisting of the community foundation’s executive director, a board member, a potential funder, a community nonprofit leader and a local government official.
- *Staged approach to deepening engagement over time.* The project took each foundation through a sequence of steps designed to deepen engagement over time:
 - Quarterly two-hour virtual sessions to increase organizations’ understanding of the SDGs and identify opportunities to apply them in their own communities.
 - In-person team building, learning and sharing with peers at the 2021 KACF annual conference.
 - Working with coaches to assess the feasibility of and plan for implementing specific SDG-related projects.

- Implementing the projects.
- Presenting their accomplishments at the 2023 annual KACF conference.
- *Documenting learnings to guide the work of others.* The project produced [several notable deliverables](#):
 - Two reports on the process and outcomes of the SDG Learning Collaborative's work.
 - Videos documenting the implementation of each foundation's project.
 - A learning module on the SDGs, added to KACF's [CF Express Training](#) online resources.

Two other cohort projects — the Northeast Ohio SDG Learning Cohort and the CFLeads/ABFE learning cohorts — provided opportunities for individual community foundations to move beyond basic alignment with the SDGs by working directly with a consultant to map their work onto the SDGs. Two community foundations from the Northeast Ohio cohort took advantage of this opportunity — the [Community Foundation of Lorain County](#) and the [Community Foundation of Mahoning Valley](#). Potential one-on-one engagements with individual foundations participating in the CFLeads/ABFE cohorts are still pending as of December 2025.

Deep integration. Three Mott-funded projects allowed community foundations with extensive SDG experience to continue deepening their work with the SDGs— Central Florida Foundation, Southwestern Florida Community Foundation/Collaboratory and Puerto Rico Community Foundation. A fourth grant to the Community Foundation of Greater Flint supported its efforts to move from zero prior engagement with the SDGs towards comprehensive integration of the SDGs across the organization. This project is now in its fourth year, and the SDGs are figuring prominently in CFGF's strategic planning, identifying grantmaking and community leadership priorities, developing communication strategies and monitoring progress toward organizational and community goals.

Outcome 3. Development of resources to facilitate community foundation engagement with the SDGs.

The Mott USCFs & SDGs initiative developed an array of resources that serve community foundations in the following ways:

- a. Understanding how the SDGs are relevant to the work of community foundations.
 - Introductory materials.
 - How the SDGs relate to specific issue areas.
 - Examples of how community foundations have engaged with the SDGs.

b. Applying the SDGs to aspects of community foundation work.

- Organizational readiness.
- SDG alignment with programmatic priorities.
- Aligning investments with the SDGs.
- Partnerships and community engagement.
- Other aspects of community foundation work.

a. Understanding how the SDGs are relevant to the work of community foundations.

Introductory materials designed to familiarize people with the SDGs are easily found online from sources such as the United Nations (sdgs.un.org), the Sustainable Development Solutions Network (unsdsn.org), Wikipedia and elsewhere. For community foundations specifically, Mott Foundation support contributed to the development of a number of **resources pitched at the introductory level**:

- [KACF CF Express Learning module on the SDGs](#) — a 30-minute video introducing community foundations to the Sustainable Development Goals.
- [How the Sustainable Development Goals Can Help Community Foundations Respond to COVID-19 and Advance Racial Equity](#) — Written at a time when concerns about COVID-19 and racial equity were at their peak, this publication serves as an introduction to the SDG framework, and how it can be applied to issues of public health and racial equity. It includes a detailed appendix listing all SDG Indicators pertinent to the work of community foundations, organized according to the “5 Ps” model of sustainable development — “People, Planet, Peace, Prosperity and Partnerships.”
- Accelerating Community Foundation Uptake of the SDGs — This report summarizes key outcomes from a meeting of 17 leaders representing community foundations and other organizations working with the SDGs. It provides lessons learned from these initiatives and offers recommendations for boosting community foundation uptake of the goals, including having clarity of purpose, building shared understanding internally and preparing for potential challenges and obstacles.

Two additional publications, produced by Welcoming America and Native Americans in Philanthropy respectively, **link the SDGs to specific issue areas** in which community foundations work — immigrant integration and supporting Native American communities:

- [Advancing Welcoming Through Community Foundations.](#)
- [Indigenous Centered: Improving Equity and Accountability for Native American Communities with Community Foundations.](#)

Resources that provide **specific examples** of how community foundations have

engaged with the SDGs include:

- [“Community Leadership and the Sustainable Development Goals,”](#) Foundation Review, vol. 13, issue 4, December 2021.
- [“American Leadership on the Sustainable Development Goals: Local Action for Global Solutions,”](#) UN Foundation.
- [“A Kansas Experiment: Application of the SDGs by Small and/or Rural Community Foundations,”](#) Kansas Association of Community Foundations.
- [“SDG Learning Circle for Foundations”](#) (available to Council on Foundations members and invited guests).

b. Applying the SDGs to aspects of community foundation work. Prior to engaging with the SDGs, community foundations may want to take a moment to assess their **readiness to do this work**. As noted earlier, factors such as organizational leadership, staff capacity, financial resources and mission alignment across departments may affect efforts to work with the SDGs. A general discussion of organizational readiness is provided in Section 4 of the Chicago Community Trust’s playbook, [“Where Can We Have the Most Impact?”](#) And since community leadership work is so closely aligned with the SDGs, community foundations may also wish to consult the CFLeads [Community Leadership Assessment Tool](#) to better understand their readiness in this area.

Understanding how the SDGs align with the community foundation’s programmatic priorities can be a time-consuming process, depending upon the depth of alignment being sought. At the most granular level, for example, it is possible to link each individual grant to one or more SDG Targets⁴ (of which more than 100 are relevant to the work of community foundations). This work is painstaking, but it yields important information about the foundation’s concrete efforts to address the goals that can inform other aspects of the foundation’s work, such as strategic planning, communications and impact assessment.

Working with the Community Foundation of Greater Flint, a quicker method of mapping foundation priorities to the SDG Targets was developed in the form of an SDG Alignments Survey⁵ that can be administered to foundation staff (and/or board members, donors and other stakeholders) in under an hour. Results can be compiled within two days and shared back to the foundation. While the survey yields a more impressionistic mapping of the foundation’s work to the SDGs, it overlaps substantially with the findings generated through grant analyses and is significantly more effective in identifying areas of connection with the foundation’s **community leadership** work. As of December 2025, the survey has collected data from close to 100 respondents representing 19 U.S. community foundations. Additional surveys

⁴ Each of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals is further subdivided into a set of specific Targets that identify the most critical areas of work that need to be done to achieve the Goal.

⁵ See *Appendix B*.

will be conducted in early 2026, after which time a report will be prepared sharing the findings from what will be the first aggregate-level mapping of U.S. community foundation priorities onto the Sustainable Development Goals.

Aligning investments with the SDGs is another way community foundations can leverage their resources to help achieve the SDGs. With Mott support, the Chicago Community Trust developed “[Where Can We Have the Most Impact? A Community Foundation’s Playbook for Investing with the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goals](#),” an interactive website and report that explains what the SDGs are and provides a four-step process to help foundations put their financial assets to work to build a more sustainable world.

Mobilizing collaboration among a broad range of stakeholders on critical community issues is a fundamental component of community leadership. With Mott funding, the Brookings Institution developed a resource called “[Community Foundations and the SDGs: A 17 Rooms Playbook for Community-Scale Leadership](#),” which guides community foundations through a structured, yet flexible approach to community collaboration and problem solving using the SDGs. As of December 2025, community foundations have utilized [17 Rooms](#) to advance community-level priorities in Central Florida, West Central Minnesota, Puerto Rico and Cleveland.

Other areas of work in which alignment with the SDGs has been explored — including communications, development, donor engagement, strategic planning, monitoring progress and impact assessment — have not yet resulted in published resources. The SDGs offer demonstrable value in all of these areas. To date, a great deal of material in these areas has been developed across various projects for staff, board, workshop and conference presentations. As of December 2025, an effort is underway to collect, compile and curate materials of this type that have been developed by the Community Foundation of Greater Flint as it has worked toward deep integration of the SDGs over the past four years. It is hoped that these could be made available in some form as a public resource.

Outcome 4: Integration of the SDGs into the work of philanthropy support organizations.

As noted earlier, the main objective of the USCfFs & SDGs initiative was to “improve the ability of community foundations to advance the Sustainable Development Goals at the local level.” Strategically, the work of community foundation support organizations was recognized as central to achieving this objective:

- “Support key programs and organizations that develop the knowledge and capacity of CFSOs to advance the leadership role of community foundations to address the SDGs.”
- “Support durable, collective initiatives by sets of community foundations to address the SDGs.”

Eight PSOs⁶ received grants through the USCFs & SDGs initiative (see Figure 2). For six of them, the primary purpose of these grants was to convene cohorts of community foundations to engage in peer learning, knowledge exchange, and network building around the SDGs. For the other two — Candid and Native Americans in Philanthropy — the focus was to build field awareness, knowledge, and capacity among community foundations with respect to the SDGs.

In terms of generating awareness of the SDGs among community foundations, the cohort-focused projects reached upwards of 200 community foundations and surveys confirm that SDG awareness has grown over time. It is not clear, though, to what extent these projects laid the groundwork for “durable, collective initiatives by sets of community foundations to address the SDGs.”

The clearest evidence of such an outcome is suggested by the work of the five Kansas community foundations (discussed earlier) that formed a multi-year community of practice around the implementation of the SDGs in local communities. As a model for achieving this outcome, the KACF project is worth further consideration.

An alternative way to achieve this outcome is suggested by Mott’s support of the Community Foundation Climate Collaborative. Rather than building a new community of practice around the SDGs specifically, this grant introduced the SDGs into an existing community of practice with clear affinities to the SDG framework.

To a certain extent, this model was also applied to Mott’s support of Welcoming America, which had already done some preliminary work with the SDG framework relative to the topic of immigrant integration. In this case, though, there was no prior working relationship between the Welcoming America network and community foundations, so the focus was more on bringing a cohort of community foundations with immigrant-related portfolios into Welcoming America’s orbit than on embedding the SDGs into Welcoming America’s work. As of December 2025, seven community foundations were listed as members of Welcoming America. The white paper commissioned for this project, *Advancing welcoming through community foundations*, also endures as a resource for connecting community foundations to the equity-related work of immigrant integration.

Work in progress by ABFE and CFLeads has involved more than two dozen community foundations in cohort-based activities, as of December 2025. These projects have focused on the inherent connections between the SDGs and equity and community leadership, respectively. Given the centrality of equity and

⁶As noted earlier, while community foundation support organizations (CFSOs) are particularly important to the work of the Enhancing Community Philanthropy program, many philanthropy support organizations (PSOs) with broader missions also serve community foundations. Since the USCFs & SDGs initiative awarded grants to both, the broader term, “PSO,” is used when referring to these grant recipients in general, while the term, “CFSO,” is used when referring to support organizations that work exclusively with community foundations.

community leadership to the missions of these organizations, their work is already substantially aligned with the SDGs. As with Welcoming America, making this alignment explicit contributes to the objective of positioning the SDGs as relevant to community foundations.

The Council on Foundation's SDG Peer Learning Circle provides a recurring online opportunity for community foundations to have SDG-related discussions. For the most part, each session tends to be self-contained, featuring a guest speaker presenting information about a specific issue or initiative. Described by the Council as "groups of foundations that organize themselves as a learning cohort within the Council's community," there may be unexplored potential for community foundations to leverage this platform further.

VIII. Successes to Build On

With respect to its primary objective of "improving the ability of community foundations to advance the SDGs at the local level," the USCfFs & SDGs initiative aspired to the following outcomes:

1. **By 2028, at least 50% of community foundations in the United States will play a leadership role in helping their communities address the SDGs.**
2. **By 2028, at least 25% of community foundations in the U.S. are using the SDGs as a framework to advance racial equity.**

Regarding the first outcome, the initiative has fallen somewhat short. By 2025, just 25% of U.S. community foundations were either "very aware" or "aware" of the SDGs (see Figure 4), which probably represents an upper bound on the percentage that are "playing a leadership role in helping their communities address the SDGs."

Regarding Outcome 2, the initiative can claim substantial progress. By the end of 2025, more than 120 U.S. community foundations had participated in Mott-funded projects tying the SDGs to advancing racial equity. According to the Council on Foundations, there are "more than 550" accredited community foundations in the U.S.,⁷ representing 96% of the nation's largest community foundations.⁷ By this measure, the USCfFs & SDGs initiative has likely reached more than 20% of accredited U.S. community foundations.

A more complete assessment of areas in which the initiative succeeded, however, would also need to acknowledge the following outcomes:

⁷ <https://www.cfstandards.org/the-program> and <https://cof.org/community-foundation-standards> (accessed on 11/24/25).

1. **Increased community foundation awareness of and acclimation to the SDGs.** Over 200 U.S. community foundations are currently aware of the SDGs and how they are relevant to their work. Having been acclimated to the SDG framework, they are now able to participate productively in what will continue to be a ubiquitous global conversation about sustainable development for the foreseeable future. Had the Mott Foundation **not** invested in the USCFS & SDGs initiative, it could be argued that U.S. philanthropy would have missed a critical opportunity to bring U.S. community foundations into this vitally important global conversation.
2. **The development of simple, efficient tools for mapping the SDGs to community foundation work.** One of the most important keys to establishing the relevance of the SDGs to an individual community foundation is to demonstrate exactly how the SDGs “map” onto their work at a granular level. Initial attempts to do this involved laboriously coding a year’s worth of community foundation grants (one by one) to one or more SDG Targets that are relevant to the work of U.S. community foundations. But because the USCFS & SDGs initiative was allowed to develop organically over time, opportunities arose to vastly accelerate this process. The field now has a quick and reliable method to map the SDGs onto the work of any U.S. community foundation in as little as two workdays, by administering a straightforward survey to community foundation staff (and/or other stakeholders). The results are then displayed in an easy-to-read format, as shown in Figure 6, which can be used for strategic planning, exploring partnerships, structuring public conversations to set community priorities and developing communications strategies, among other applications.
3. **A set of published resources that add up to a fairly complete SDG playbook for community foundations.** As noted earlier, a thoughtful “remix” of the many published resources developed throughout this initiative would constitute a largely complete, self-directed community foundation playbook for engaging with the SDGs. Such a playbook would take community foundations through a sequential process of understanding the SDG framework, mapping the SDGs to their work and applying them to all aspects of community foundation activity, from grantmaking to community leadership, from communications to community partnerships, from development to donor engagement and from impact investing to strategic planning.

Example: Community Foundation 2025 SDG Profile

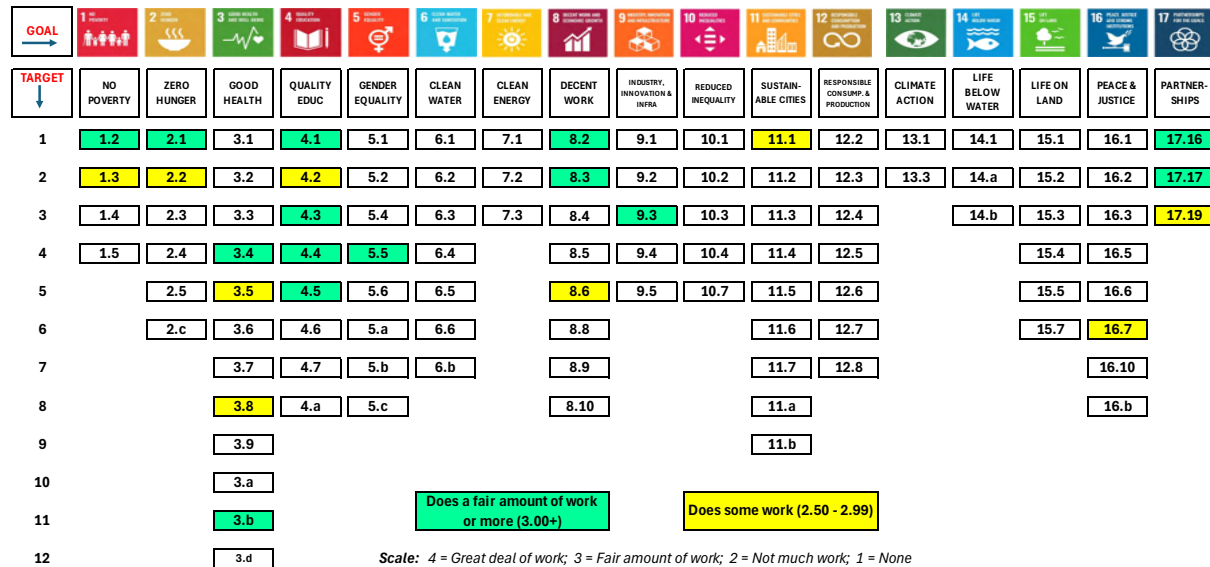


Figure 6.

4. **Recognition that the SDG framework can be utilized as a comprehensive “operating system” for all facets of community foundation activity.** This is related to the two previous points and suggests the continuing utility of the SDGs as a framework for systematically addressing operational challenges inherent in the work of community foundations. To operate effectively, community foundations need reliable tools to help them accomplish tasks such as the following:
 - a. Strategic planning.
 - b. Developing effective approaches to achieving their programmatic goals.
 - c. Assessing the impact of their work.
 - d. Communicating the intentions and impact of their work to the community.
 - e. Engaging productively with community stakeholders.
 - f. Forging strategic partnerships.
 - g. Fundraising and impact investing.

The SDG framework is directly applicable to each of these tasks. First and foremost, it provides a comprehensive “road map” of the issues that need to be addressed in order to ensure community sustainability. Such a road map is indispensable for purposes of strategic planning, engaging productively with community stakeholders and forging strategic partnerships.

It identifies more than 100 specific areas of work in which investments are needed to ensure sustainable outcomes. This helps community foundations hone in on and articulate their grantmaking and community leadership priorities.

It provides guidance on how to develop local indicators to measure progress toward community-level outcomes, which addresses the need of community foundations to assess the impact of their work. And the intentional and action-oriented language of the SDG targets helps the foundation develop clear messages about the purpose and expected outcomes of its work.

Lastly, all these attributes of the SDG framework add up to a robust and coherent pitch that can be made to donors about the degree of professionalism the foundation brings to the work of community development. In short, the SDGs add a beneficial layer of structure and discipline to the work of community foundations.

5. **Adding a powerful tool to the work of community leadership and addressing racial equity.** The case has been made above about the extent to which the SDG framework aligns with community leadership work in general and racial equity specifically. So, for organizations seeking to promote and/or apply the community leadership model (e.g., CFLeads, individual community foundations and potentially other PSOs), the SDG framework represents a powerful lens through which to practice community leadership. Likewise, for racial equity.
6. **Forging important working connections within the field of community philanthropy.** This represents an incidental “success” emerging from the USCFCs & SDGs initiative, but it is nevertheless worth noting. Through the Welcoming America project, community foundations working in the area of immigrant integration were welcomed as equal participants into a robust community of practice that had not previously engaged directly with community foundations as peers. And through grants awarded to ABFE and CFLeads, these two PSOs had the opportunity to co-develop a set of SDG learning sessions, allowing them to explore the potential of working in partnership with each other.

IX. Cautionary Lessons

Ambitious initiatives such as Mott’s USCFCs & SDGs inevitably encounter challenges. At the start of the work, no one was certain as to how receptive community foundations would be to engaging with the SDGs. Along the way, a number of factors surfaced as potential blockers to successful community foundation engagement with the SDGs:

- **Organizational readiness** — Community foundations that have integrated the SDGs into their work all say the effort must be coordinated at the highest level of leadership and integrated across the organization. Otherwise, anything more than “basic alignment” with the SDGs will not be achievable. Other factors that could inhibit SDG integration are financial resources, staff capacity and mission alignment across departments.

- **Time scale for implementation** — The deeper the level of engagement with the SDGs, the longer the time required for implementation. Also, a fair amount of time was required to develop learning resources about implementing the SDGs during the early stages of the initiative. Little time remained for putting these implementation protocols to use in subsequent projects.
- **Value proposition** — Community foundations vary in their openness to adopting new frameworks for organizing their work. Inertia and sunk costs inhibit innovation. So, the value proposition for exploring a new framework needs to be as compelling as possible in order to induce uptake. In retrospect, uptake of the SDGs was likely hampered by the absence of having a consensually designed, well-articulated value proposition available for wide dissemination early in the initiative.

External circumstances also threatened to impede the initiative's progress in both predictable and unpredictable ways. Predictably, given the state of U.S. politics, certain areas of the country were less receptive to engaging with a framework bearing the imprimatur of the Un.N. This led to frequent conversations regarding the extent to which the SDGs should be marketed as such or whether the SDG branding ought to be avoided altogether. At the same time, the actual substance of the SDGs (the specific goals and targets) did not appear to raise any significant concerns and community foundations generally found them relatable.

What was not predictable were the massively disruptive effects of the COVID-19 outbreak and the heightened national focus on racial equity in the wake of George Floyd's murder. To its credit, the initiative found ways to reaffirm the utility of the SDGs all the more during these unexpected circumstances.

X. Conclusion

Over the course of eight years, the Mott Foundation awarded 32 grants to 18 organizations for the purpose of “building U.S. community foundation engagement with the Sustainable Development Goals at the local level.” As a result of the USCFs & SDGs initiative:

1. Over 200 U.S. community foundations now have a basic working knowledge of the SDGs, and how they are relevant to their work.
2. The field has developed user-friendly tools for mapping the SDGs to community foundation work.
3. The field has developed a set of published resources that add up to a fairly complete SDG playbook for community foundations.
4. Community foundations recognize that the SDG framework can be utilized as a comprehensive “operating system” for all facets of community foundation activity.

5. The SDGs are recognized as a powerful addition to the community leadership and racial equity toolboxes.

Going forward, whether community foundations choose to work explicitly with the SDGs or not, one of the most useful characteristics of the SDG framework is how well it corresponds to other widely used philanthropic frameworks. This is largely due to its comprehensiveness and its focus on the interconnectedness of the goals. Frameworks such as the Social Determinants of Health map in straightforward ways to many aspects of the SDGs. This means that foundations working with the SDOH are already aligned with the SDGs and can use them to understand the SDOH in a larger context and identify ways to measure progress against locally relevant targets. A good example of this approach is the [Thrive Central Florida](#) initiative at the Central Florida Foundation. While Thrive's five central impact areas — Economic Stability, Healthcare, Livability, Education, Community and Social Action — are front and center, the SDGs serve as an operating system “under the hood.”

Beyond the Social Determinants of Health, the SDGs have been cross-walked to many other ways of organizing community-level action. Mott's support of Welcoming America, for example, allowed them to complete a detailed crosswalk of the SDGs to an updated version of their [Welcoming Standard](#), which serves as a roadmap for localities seeking to build truly welcoming communities for newcomers. Other prominent examples of SDG crosswalks include: the Brookings Institution mapping of [city government strategies](#) to the SDGs; a crosswalk linking [LEED Standards for Cities and Communities](#) with the SDGs; and a crosswalk between the SDGs and the [IRIS+ framework](#) used by investors to measure, manage and report their social and environmental performance. In fact, because cross-walking organizational activities to the SDGs has become so ubiquitous, several user-friendly tools have been developed to facilitate this process, such as [sdg360thinking.org](#), created by the Data Science Institute at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

At the same time, one of the mechanisms by which the practice of philanthropy moves forward is through periodic reformulations of how to understand the needs of the moment, and how best to structure its work. This is a natural outgrowth of the same sorts of temporal factors that compel organizations to rethink their “strategic plans” every half decade or so. A mode of operation that seemed most suited to making change happen ten years ago may seem anachronistic when facing today's challenges. But by modifying their orientation to prevailing conditions, sailboats are able to tack to their intended destinations.

Philanthropy has gone through periods during which “strategic philanthropy” was a favored way of approaching the work, along with “impact investing,” “collective impact,” “foundation administered programs,” “trust-based philanthropy” and so on. All of these have represented fresh ways to organize philanthropic practice and accelerate progress toward desired outcomes. This is how philanthropy continually refreshes its toolkit.

But the “real world” remains a constant. The tools and mindsets philanthropy brings to it will evolve in ways intended to best make a difference at a given time. The SDGs can certainly be thought of as yet another novel approach that can be employed to create desired change. But what makes the SDG framework more than just the “latest philanthropic tool” is that it was designed, as it were, from the outside in. That is, it took as its starting point an attempt to understand and catalogue, at the global level, the most pressing real-world issues threatening the long-term sustainability of people and planet. At the local level, in contrast, such mappings tend to be incomplete and idiosyncratic largely due to the lack of a systematic method for generating them. While the SDGs won’t map precisely to any local situation, they do provide a state-of-the-art template for moving that process forward.

As our country struggles to overcome the discord that divides us, the SDG framework has much to offer in our efforts to find common ground upon which to build a sustainable future for everyone. It is not a stretch to say that one of the most important principles underlying the development of the SDGs in the first place is, in fact, “building common ground.” The first sentence on the U.N.’s main SDG website states this intention quite

directly: “The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development [the SDGs], adopted by all United Nations member states in 2015, provides a shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet, now and into the future.”

In other words, the SDG framework is the result of exactly the types of community-level conversations that need to take place to “build common ground” locally, the main difference being that the United Nations solicited such input from millions of stakeholders worldwide. While the SDGs represent an attempt to address urgent sustainability issues at the global level, it is at heart a blueprint for collective change at any level. As perhaps the most comprehensive strategy ever created for this purpose, the SDGs offer a tailor-made tool for facilitating the work of building common ground.



Appendix A:

Mott USCFs & SDGs Funding 2018–25: Grant Descriptions

1. Community Foundation Leadership Metrics and Sustainable Development Goals

Candid

www.candid.org

- **Grant Amount** \$125,000
- **Grant Period** June 1, 2018–December 31, 2019
- **Location** New York, N.Y., United States
- **Geographic Focus** United States, World

The Foundation Center will develop and disseminate community leadership metrics relevant to the work of U.S. community foundations and develop baseline information about the degree to which community foundations are incorporating the Sustainable Development Goals framework into their work. The work will be led by CFInsights — a service of the grantee, which collects and shares data and conducts analysis that helps community foundations improve their performance. Established in 1956, the Foundation Center is dedicated to fostering public understanding of the foundation field by collecting, organizing, analyzing and disseminating information on foundations, corporate giving and related subjects.

2. Promoting Community-Led Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals

Brookings Institution

www.brookings.edu

- **Grant Amount** \$300,000
- **Grant Period** September 1, 2018–March 31, 2022
- **Location** Washington, D.C., United States
- **Geographic Focus** World

The project goal is to promote community-led implementation of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. To this end, the Brookings Institution will host a series of workshops, roundtable discussions and public events. These activities will inform and evaluate how place-based leaders set and track goals; mobilize investments and action to drive progress; and develop and disseminate relevant tools, policies and networks to maximize impact. The grantee will engage cities, states, foundations and other stakeholders that are championing the use of the Sustainable Development Goals and provide a neutral venue to coordinate, collaborate and disseminate tools and findings.

3. Community Foundation Leadership Metrics and Sustainable Development Goals

Candid

www.candid.org

- **Grant Amount** \$200,000
- **Grant Period** January 1, 2020–December 31, 2021
- **Location** New York, N.Y., United States
- **Geographic Focus** United States, World

The project goal is to help community foundations advance the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals at the local level. Over the past grant period, the grantee developed and tested community leadership metrics and established baseline information about the degree to which U.S. community foundations are incorporating the Sustainable Development Goals into their work. In the upcoming grant period, the grantee will institutionalize the annual collection of data on the work of community foundations related to the Sustainable Development Goals and community leadership. The grantee will also create and regularly convene a coordinating group of researchers working on this issue. The work is being led by CF Insights, a service of the grantee which collects and shares data and conducts analysis that helps community foundations improve their performance. Candid was established in 2019 as the result of a merger between Foundation Center, the leading source of information on U.S. philanthropy, and GuideStar, the leading source of information on U.S. nonprofit organizations.

4. Community Foundations, Economic Mobility and the Sustainable Development Goals

CFLeads

www.cfleads.org

- **Grant Amount** \$50,000
- **Grant Period** March 1, 2020–December 31, 2021
- **Location** Accord, Mass., United States
- **Geographic Focus** United States

CFLeads is launching the Economic Mobility Action Network, a peer network of initially six community foundation teams from around the country that will design and implement an economic mobility agenda in their communities over the next two years. The grantee will enlist an expert from the Brookings Institution and other community foundation peers to introduce the Sustainable Development Goals to this network. It will then test the possibilities for the participating community foundations to integrate the goals as a guiding framework for their economic mobility work. Expertise and peer learning will primarily be delivered through two meetings in 2020 as well as consulting and technical assistance. Established in 1991 as the Coalition of Community Foundations for Youth, CFLeads became an independent nonprofit organization in 2017. Its mission is to help community foundations build strong communities by advancing effective practices, sharing knowledge and galvanizing action on the critical issues of our time.

5. Adopting the SDGs as a Frame for Organizational Strategy

Southwest Florida Community Foundation

www.floridacommunity.com

- **Grant Amount** \$200,000
- **Grant Period** May 1, 2020–April 30, 2022
- **Location** Fort Myers, Fla., United States
- **Geographic Focus** Charlotte, Collier, Glades, Hendry, Lee, United States

The program goal is to encourage community foundations to advance the Sustainable Development Goals at the local level. To this end, the Southwest Florida Community Foundation will conduct a two-year research and development project to integrate the Sustainable Development Goals as the guiding framework for its work. Activities will include: 1) hiring a full-time animator and data analyst to coordinate with staff and others to articulate, organize and utilize the goals as the primary design and assessment framework for the organization; 2) acquiring a high-end data analytics tool; 3) issuing reports regarding the use of the Sustainable Development Goals framework for its local grantmaking; 4) analyzing donor-advised and field-of-interest funds and aligning them to the goals; 5) initiating discussions with donors to demonstrate how the grantee can tie its local and national giving to a global framework; and 6) issuing a report for the field on the experience of deploying the goals as a framework for traditional community foundation functions.

6. Thrive Central Florida

Central Florida Foundation

www.cffound.org

- **Grant Amount** \$150,000
- **Grant Period** December 1, 2020–October 31, 2022
- **Location** Orlando, Fla., United States
- **Geographic Focus** Brevard, Lake, Marion, Orange, Osceola, Polk, Seminole, Sumter, Volusia

The program goal is to encourage community foundations to advance the Sustainable Development Goals at the local level. To this end, the Central Florida Foundation will advance the Thrive Central Florida initiative — an integrated approach to utilizing the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and the Social Determinants of Health to create a more cohesive way to solve complex social issues in Central Florida. Founded in 1994, the grantee is a public grantmaking foundation that connects philanthropy and strategy to address community issues, manages and invests charitable gifts, offers donors personalized service and expert grantmaking advice and connects donors with charitable organizations that meet their philanthropic goals.

7. Raising Awareness and Education U.S. Community Foundations on the SDGs

Kansas Association of Community Foundations

www.kansascfs.org

- **Grant Amount** \$50,000
- **Grant Period** July 1, 2020–February 28, 2021
- **Location** Washington, Kan., United States
- **Geographic Focus** United States

The program goal is to encourage community foundations to advance the Sustainable Development Goals at the local level. To this end, the Kansas Association of Community Foundations will prominently include content on the Sustainable Development Goals and their adoption by community foundations at its annual national Growing Community Foundations Conference. This grant will support a panel of experts and community foundation practitioners at the conference's opening plenary as well as another breakout session. The grantee will also add a module on the goals used by community foundations to their CFExpressTraining online resource. Founded in 2005, the Kansas Association of Community Foundations strengthens and promotes community philanthropy in Kansas, educates its members and others on effective philanthropic operations and fosters collaboration and the exchange of information regarding philanthropic programs and issues.

8. Foundation Review Issue on Community Leadership and SDGs at Community Foundations

Grand Valley State University

www.gvsu.edu

- **Grant Amount** \$100,000
- **Grant Period** September 1, 2020–August 31, 2022
- **Location** Allendale, Mich., United States
- **Geographic Focus** United States, World

The program goal is to encourage community foundations to advance the Sustainable Development Goals at the local level. To this end, the Dorothy A. Johnson Center for Philanthropy at Grand Valley State University will publish a themed issue of its quarterly journal, "The Foundation Review", which will focus on how community foundations and other place-based funders are using the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals as a part of their community leadership, grantmaking and evaluation work. The publication will be provided to print as well as online subscribers with open access. Along with publishing the issue, the grantee will conduct a set of dissemination, training and agenda-setting conversations. Established in 1992, the Dorothy A. Johnson Center for Philanthropy is an academic center within the College of Community and Public Service at Grand Valley State University. The Foundation Review is the first peer-reviewed journal of philanthropy, written by and for foundation staff and boards and those who work with them.

9. Community Foundations Addressing Racial Equality

Association of Black Foundation Executives

www.abfe.org

- **Grant Amount** \$200,000
- **Grant Period** January 1, 2021–December 31, 2021
- **Location** New York, N.Y., United States
- **Geographic Focus** United States

The Association of Black Foundation Executives will assist community foundations across the country to advance racial equity. The grantee will provide a series of learning opportunities and focused racial equity training for up to 40 community foundation staff and board members, equipping them with the shared knowledge, skills and tools needed to better understand the foundations of race, racism and racial equity. The grantee will develop templates for the creation of community “fact sheets” to organize data on racial inequities and potential solutions to address them and provide a summary report to share observations with participating community foundation leaders. In addition, the grantee will collect data from community foundations on the presence of Black donor-advised funds. Founded in 1971, the Association of Black Foundation Executives is a national membership organization of predominantly Black trustees and staff of private, community and corporate foundations.

10. Advancing the Sustainable Development Goals in Puerto Rico

Puerto Rico Community Foundation

www.fcpr.org

- **Grant Amount** \$150,000
- **Grant Period** April 1, 2021–December 31, 2023
- **Location** San Juan, Puerto Rico, United States
- **Geographic Focus** Puerto Rico

The program goal is to support community foundation efforts to play a leadership role in helping their communities to address the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. The Puerto Rico Community Foundation will integrate its Community Capitals programmatic framework with the Sustainable Development Goals and align a diverse set of key institutional stakeholders in Puerto Rico around these goals. This will advance social justice and equity and build community wealth. The grantee will develop a set of indicators, gather relevant data and present the findings in a public dashboard and a local version of a Vital Signs report. The grantee will then organize roundtables aimed at developing strategic collaboration to address goals and promote strategies that could lead to a Voluntary Local Review by Puerto Rico’s government. Founded in 1985, the Puerto Rico Community Foundation promotes and strengthens social justice and equitable access to community resources on the island of Puerto Rico.

11. Community Foundations, SDGs and Racial Equality

Indiana University

www.iu.edu

- **Grant Amount** \$90,000
- **Grant Period** August 1, 2021–December 31, 2022
- **Location** Bloomington, Ind., United States
- **Geographic Focus** Australia, Canada, United States

The program goal is to help community foundations use the framework of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals to advance racial equity in their communities. To this end, the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation Chair on Community Foundations at Indiana University's Lilly Family School of Philanthropy, Dr. Laurie Paarlberg, will lead a cross-national research team to design and pilot a study that will describe shifts in diversity, equity and inclusion in community foundations in the United States, Canada and Australia. The study will identify early adopters of justice philanthropy, describe the process to move toward it and explore how the SDGs and other global frameworks advance racial justice work. The Lilly Family School of Philanthropy at Indiana University was founded in 2012. Its mission is to increase the understanding of philanthropy and improve its practice worldwide through critical inquiry, interdisciplinary research, teaching, training and civic engagement.

12. [Raising Awareness and Educating U.S. Community Foundations on the SDGs](#)

Kansas Association of Community Foundations

www.kansascfs.org

- **Grant Amount** \$300,000
- **Grant Period** July 1, 2021–October 31, 2023
- **Location** Washington, Kan., United States
- **Geographic Focus** Kansas, United States

The program goal is to encourage community foundations to advance the Sustainable Development Goals at the local level. To this end last year, the Kansas Association of Community Foundations prominently included content on the goals and their adoption by community foundations at its annual national Growing Community Foundations Conference. The grantee also added a module on the goals to its CFExpressTraining online resource. Over the next 16 months, the grantee will create a learning collaborative of five rural community foundations from Kansas that will work together to apply the goals in their communities. Progress and results will be shared at annual Growing Community Foundations conferences over the next three years. Founded in 2005, the Kansas Association of Community Foundations strengthens and promotes community philanthropy in Kansas, educates its members and others on effective philanthropic operations and fosters collaboration and the exchange of information regarding philanthropic programs and issues.

13. American Leadership on the SDGs

United Nations Foundation

www.unfoundation.org

- **Grant Amount** \$200,000
- **Grant Period** September 1, 2021–September 30, 2023
- **Location** Washington, D.C., United States
- **Geographic Focus** United States

The project goal is to promote a community-led implementation of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. To this end, the United Nations Foundation has launched the American Leadership on the SDGs project. The grantee will build a coalition of local multistakeholder networks, serve as a knowledge hub for U.S. efforts, elevate location innovation and action through coordinated communication and a storytelling effort, and coordinate and support new commitments and policy efforts leading to greater action on the Sustainable Development Goals from the local to the federal level. Outputs will include community-level convenings, an annual event on the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly, an online resources hub, storytelling, social media initiatives, research products, policy briefs and a regular newsletter. Founded in 1998, the United Nations Foundation acts as a strategic partner to help the United Nations mobilize the ideas, people and resources it needs to deliver on its mission.

14. Adopting the SDG Framework

Community Foundation of Greater Flint

www.cfgf.org

- **Grant Amount** \$200,000
- **Grant Period** October 1, 2021–December 31, 2023
- **Location** Flint, Mich., United States
- **Geographic Focus** Genesee County

The program goal is to encourage community foundations to advance the Sustainable Development Goals at the local level. To this end, the Community Foundation for Greater Flint will build its capacity to adopt the goals as a framework to holistically evaluate its work and to communicate impact to its donors, peers and community. The grantee will conduct an internal analysis of the intersectionality between its work and the goals, collect baseline data in Genesee County and assess the community's capacity to organize and improve performance on the goals. The grantee will then develop a plan to adopt the goals as a framework for evaluating and communicating its impact, especially around racial equity, and as a comprehensive business model and practice. Founded in 1988, the Community Foundation for Greater Flint is a major local philanthropic entity that strives to accelerate equitable and sustainable improvements in the quality of life for all Genesee County residents.

15. Community Foundations Advancing Welcoming and Sustainable Development Goals

Welcoming America

www.welcomingamerica.org

- **Grant Amount** \$200,000
- **Grant Period** September 1, 2021–December 31, 2022
- **Location** Decatur, Ga., United States
- **Geographic Focus** United States

The program goal is to encourage community foundations to advance the Sustainable Development Goals at the local level. To this end, Welcoming America will map how community foundations are engaging with immigrant integration work, crosslink its newly-updated Welcoming Standards to the Sustainable Development Goals, bring together community foundation and welcoming leaders through a virtual convening, develop a white paper and other resources to help community foundations initiate work on welcoming and the goals, identify and support a cohort of up to 15 community foundations to learn together through in-person and virtual convenings, provide one-on-one coaching to this cohort and design a second phase of the initiative for subsequent cohorts. Information about the project and its results will be disseminated at the grantee's nationwide convenings during this time period. Founded in 2009 as a nonprofit, non-partisan organization, Welcoming America works to create inclusive communities where immigrants and all residents can thrive.

16. Investing in Community Foundations

Council on Foundations

www.cof.org

- **Grant Amount** \$600,000
- **Grant Period** September 1, 2021–August 31, 2025
- **Location** Washington, D.C., United States
- **Geographic Focus** United States

Community foundations have been at the core of the Council on Foundations, a national philanthropic organization that currently represents 760 members, since its founding in 1949. The grantee's mission is to foster an environment where philanthropy can thrive and cultivate a community of diverse and skilled philanthropic professionals. At present, roughly 40% of U.S. community foundations are members of the grantee and roughly two-thirds are accredited by the Community Foundation National Standards Board, a supporting organization of the Council on Foundations. In order to advance a healthy policy environment for philanthropy and to advance local-level engagement with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, over the next three years the grantee will strengthen its work and support of community foundations through four areas of specialized engagement: leading on public policy, enhancing National Standards, expanding its community foundation reach and building community through the Sustainable Development Goals.

17. SDGs and Social Impact Investing for Community Foundations

Chicago Community Trust

www.cct.org

- **Grant Amount** \$150,000
- **Grant Period** October 1, 2021–October 31, 2024
- **Location** Chicago, Ill., United States
- **Geographic Focus** Cook County, Ill., United States

The program goal is to encourage community foundations to advance the Sustainable Development Goals at the local level. To this end, Chicago Community Trust will develop a toolkit for community foundations, fund managers and donors to integrate the goals into their social impact reporting. The grantee will also explore the feasibility of applying the goals to document the holistic impact of community foundations and to communicate that impact to key stakeholders. The grantee will also assess opportunities to incorporate the goals into the way social impact investing is conducted, such as supporting fund managers of color and ensuring transparency with reporting. The Chicago Community Trust is one of the nation's largest and oldest community foundations. Founded in 1915, its mission is to improve the lives of the people living in metropolitan Chicago, with a long-term organizational priority on closing the racial and ethnic wealth gap.

18. Community Foundations and Sustainable Development Goals

Candid

www.candid.org

- **Grant Amount** \$175,000
- **Grant Period** January 1, 2022–December 31, 2023
- **Location** New York, N.Y., United States
- **Geographic Focus** United States, World

The project goal is to help community foundations advance the Sustainable Development Goals at the local level. Over the past grant period, Candid regularly convened an SDG Working Group of researchers and philanthropy-serving organizations focused on promoting the adoption of the goals by community foundations within and outside the U.S. Over the next two years, the grantee will position CF Insights, a service of Candid which collects and shares data and conducts an analysis that helps community foundations, to improve their performance as a global hub for data collection and peer learning to promote further adoption of the goals. The grantee will expand the CF Insights data platform to include community foundations operating outside the U.S., host regular convenings of the SDG Working Group and develop an online peer learning resource platform. Candid was established in 2019 as the result of a merger between Foundation Center and GuideStar.

19. Improving Equity and Accountability for Native Americans Communities with Community Foundations

Native Americans in Philanthropy

www.nativephilanthropy.org

- **Grant Amount** \$150,000
- **Grant Period** August 1, 2022–July 31, 2023
- **Location** Washington, D.C., United States
- **Geographic Focus** United States

The program goal is to investigate how United States community foundations can more effectively engage with Native communities to advance equity. Native Americans in Philanthropy will lead a series of convenings and conduct other data-gathering efforts through its networks of Native stakeholders, focused on the role of community foundations in relation to Native communities. Afterward, the grantee will produce a report that will share findings and recommendations for long-term, sustainable accountability and meaningful partnerships between Native communities and community foundations. While community foundations and their donors will be the ultimate audience for the work, this project will center the voice of Indigenous community leaders and provide them a platform for candid and honest guidance to community foundation leaders and their donors. Founded in 1990, Native Americans in Philanthropy promotes equitable and effective philanthropy in Native communities.

20. Northeast Ohio SDG Learning Cohort

Cleveland Foundation

www.clevelandfoundation.org

- **Grant Amount** \$150,000
- **Grant Period** October 1, 2022–September 30, 2024
- **Location** Cleveland, Ohio, United States
- **Geographic Focus** North America

The program goal is to encourage community foundations to advance Sustainable Development Goals at the local level. To this end, the Cleveland Foundation will create a learning exchange cohort with other community foundations and local stakeholders in Northeast Ohio on aligning their giving areas with the goals. The grantee will convene stakeholders over 15 months for learning and alignment sessions, publish a teaching case study and/or report around goal alignment efforts, identify common benchmarks and shared measurements to further a regional vision, conduct a 17 Rooms-X exercise and develop a dashboard to capture the Northeast Ohio learning cohort's Sustainable Development Goals alignment efforts. Founded in 1914, the Cleveland Foundation is the nation's first community foundation.

21. Community Foundations, SDGs and Racial Equity

Indiana University

www.iu.edu

- **Grant Amount** \$100,000
- **Grant Period** January 1, 2023–December 31, 2025
- **Location** Bloomington, Ind., United States
- **Geographic Focus** Australia and New Zealand, Canada, United Kingdom, United States

The program goal is to help community foundations use the framework of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals to advance justice and racial equity. To this end, the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation Chair on Community Foundations at Indiana University's Lilly Family School of Philanthropy, Dr. Laurie Paarlberg, is leading a cross-national research team on a four-year project that will describe shifts in diversity, equity and inclusion in community foundations in the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom and Australia. In the first year, a literature review was conducted, a pilot quantitative analysis was conducted, sites were selected for case studies, a global research team was assembled and additional funding was solicited. Over the next three years, data will be collected and analyzed, case studies written, a cross-national study completed and results broadly disseminated. The Lilly Family School of Philanthropy at Indiana University was founded in 2012 and its mission is to increase the understanding of philanthropy and improve its practice worldwide through critical inquiry, interdisciplinary research, teaching, training and civic engagement.

22. Promoting Community-Led Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals

Brookings Institution

www.brookings.edu

- **Grant Amount** \$200,000
- **Grant Period** January 1, 2022–December 31, 2024
- **Location** Washington, D.C., United States
- **Geographic Focus** United States, World

The project goal is to promote the community-led implementation of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. To this end in 2018, the Center for Sustainable Development at the Brookings Institution established the Local Leadership on the Sustainable Development Goals initiative. This effort entailed supporting community foundations, businesses, universities and other local institutions in adapting and advancing the goals locally; hosting private roundtables and public events to showcase innovations; and building a set of resources and tools to support current and future implementation of the goals on a local level. Over the next two years, the Brookings Institution's Center for Sustainable Development plans to raise awareness of the Sustainable Development Goals for community foundations in various philanthropic media and event spaces, strengthen the emerging ecosystem of community foundation leadership on the goals and help adapt a 17 Rooms-X process model of engaging on the goals for use by community foundations.

23. Community Foundations Addressing Racial Equity

Association of Black Foundation Executives

www.abfe.org

- **Grant Amount** \$200,000
- **Grant Period** January 1, 2023–December 31, 2023
- **Location** New York, N.Y., United States
- **Geographic Focus** United States

The project goal is to help community foundations advance racial equity using the framework of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. During the previous grant period, the Association of Black Foundation Executives conducted racial equity training workshops for 53 staff and board members from 20 community foundations, organized in two cohorts. Participants were exposed to a structural frame of reference, a shared language for talking about issues of race and a sense of what an intentional approach requires to be most effective. In addition, the grantee identified 20 community foundations that launched or expanded funds to support Black communities. In the upcoming grant period, the grantee will continue its training activities and plans to organize four cohorts for a total of approximately 100 participants from an estimated 35 community foundations. Founded in 1971, the Association of Black Foundation Executives is a national membership organization of predominantly Black trustees and staff of private, community and corporate foundations.

24. Community Foundations Advancing Welcoming Standards and Sustainable Development Goals

Welcoming America

www.welcomingamerica.org

- **Grant Amount** \$300,000
- **Grant Period** January 1, 2023–December 31, 2024
- **Location** Decatur, Ga., United States
- **Geographic Focus** United States

The program goal is to encourage community foundations to advance the Sustainable Development Goals at the local level. To this end, over the past two years, Welcoming America has conducted interviews with 17 community foundations on how they engage in welcoming work, mapped its Welcoming Standard to the Sustainable Development Goals, convened a cohort of community foundation leaders at its 2022 conference, facilitated webinars and office hours and analyzed and consolidated learnings in a white paper. Over the next two years, the grantee will host four training workshops, convene at least 15 community foundations and three strategic partners at its 2024 conference, capture up to four case studies, publish two blog pieces and include at least 15 new community foundations into its Welcoming Network by the end of 2024. Founded in 2009 as a nonprofit, non-partisan organization, Welcoming America works to create inclusive communities where immigrants and all residents can thrive.

25. Advancing the SDGs

Community Foundation of Greater Flint

www.cfgf.org

- **Grant Amount** \$100,000
- **Grant Period** January 1, 2024–December 31, 2025
- **Location** Flint, Mich., United States
- **Geographic Focus** Genesee County

The program goal is to encourage community foundations to advance the Sustainable Development Goals at the local level. To this end, starting in October 2021, the Community Foundation for Greater Flint has developed a framework for mapping grantee outcomes and donor-advised funds in the areas of education and equity; completed a comprehensive analysis of recent funds distributed and their alignment with the goals; assessed existing data measures utilized by the foundation, its partners and grantees; and aligned its community engagement work on racial equity with the goals. In the coming grant period, the grantee will expand its Sustainable Development Goal alignment efforts to its finance, operations and community leadership areas; develop a community dashboard; raise awareness about the goals with grantees and key partners; and further integrate and operationalize the goals in its work. Founded in 1988, the Community Foundation for Greater Flint is a major local philanthropic entity that strives to accelerate equitable and sustainable improvements in the quality of life for all Genesee County residents.

26. American Leadership on the SDGs

United Nations Foundation

www.unfoundation.org

- **Grant Amount** \$200,000
- **Grant Period** October 1, 2023–October 31, 2025
- **Location** Washington, D.C., United States
- **Geographic Focus** United States

The project goal is to promote community-led implementation of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals in the United States. During the past four years, the United Nations Foundation has led the American Leadership on the Sustainable Development Goals program. This initiative has fostered collective action in new communities across the country by convening stakeholders, compiling and sharing best practices, producing research and amplifying local stories. Over the next two years, the program will continue to amplify what works, share useful resources and provide evidence and dialogue in support of domestic activities on the Sustainable Development Goals. Outputs will include targeted roundtables and convenings, an annual event on the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly, a communications toolkit and resources, research products, policy briefs and a regular newsletter. Founded in 1998, the United Nations Foundation acts as a strategic partner to help the United Nations mobilize the ideas, people and resources it needs to deliver on its mission.

27. Investing in Community Foundations

Council on Foundations

www.cof.org

- **Grant Amount** \$250,000
- **Grant Period** September 1, 2021–August 31, 2025
- **Location** Washington, D.C., United States
- **Geographic Focus** United States

The program goal is to strengthen the U.S. community foundation field by enhancing community foundations' leadership in achieving local impact. Since mid-2021, the Council on Foundations has been working to improve its support of community foundations through four areas of specialized engagement: leading on public policy, enhancing Community Foundation National Standards, expanding its community foundation reach and building community through the Sustainable Development Goals. One indicator of its progress thus far is that community foundations membership in the council has increased from 315 in mid-2021 to 383 at present. A grant increase will allow the council to improve and streamline its peer benchmarking data capacity for community and other foundations, develop a new centralized hub for information on Sustainable Development Goal adoption by community foundations and enhance how the council leverages data internally to inform its work. Founded in 1949, the Council on Foundations is a membership organization of private, community and corporate foundations, primarily in the U.S.

28. Galvanizing Sustainable Development Goals Engagement Among Community Foundations

CFLeads

www.cfleads.org

- **Grant Amount** \$300,000
- **Grant Period** January 1, 2024–December 31, 2025
- **Location** Accord, Mass., United States
- **Geographic Focus** United States

The goal of the project is to advance the adoption of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals by community foundations in the U.S. as a means to enhance their community leadership role. CFLeads will begin the project by developing a case statement for U.S. community foundation engagement with the Sustainable Development Goals. It will then establish a community of practice of 10 community foundations with varied experience in applying the goals to their work. Over the course of two years, through a guided peer learning process, these community foundations will help the grantee develop a tool for aligning a community foundation's work with the goals and executing an implementation plan. The grantee will also create a strategy and program for engaging community foundations in learning opportunities around the goals as well as a document that demonstrates the relevance and importance of tying the work to activate the goals to community leadership practices. CFLeads is a U.S.-based national network of community foundations committed to community leadership.

29. Community Foundation Climate Collaborative

Marin Community Foundation

www.marincf.org

- **Grant Amount** \$200,000
- **Grant Period** January 1, 2024–December 31, 2025
- **Location** Novato, Calif., United States
- **Geographic Focus** United States

The goal of this project is to build the awareness and capacity of community foundations to use the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals as a tool for aligning and informing their work around climate change and climate justice. To this end, the Community Foundation Climate Collaborative will build awareness of the goals among its members and incorporate the goals' framework into its learning sessions and in-person convenings. The collaborative will build the capacity of its members to identify meaningful targets and indicators for their environmental and climate-related priorities and develop cases of those that illustrate the practices and benefits of incorporating the goals into their climate change and climate justice grantmaking. The Community Foundation Climate Collaborative currently has 46 members in the United States. It is part of a larger network, the Community Foundation Opportunity Network, whose fiscal sponsor is the New Hampshire Charitable Foundation.

30. Improving Equity and Accountability for Native American Communities with Community Foundations

Native Americans in Philanthropy

www.nativephilanthropy.org

- **Grant Amount** \$500,000
- **Grant Period** January 1, 2024–June 30, 2026
- **Location** Washington, D.C., United States
- **Geographic Focus** United States

The goal of this project is to support the advancement of racial equity for Native communities by U.S. community foundations, applying the framework of the Sustainable Development Goals. In 2022, Native Americans in Philanthropy conducted a study of community foundations and received input from Native leaders. This resulted in a report that provided an assessment of the current state of community foundation interaction with Native communities and offered recommendations for how to improve relationships between them. These findings gave the basis for a further proposed six-year educational, relationship-building and resource-leveraging project. During the current grant period, the grantee will: 1) convene relevant stakeholders to share and discuss the report; 2) conduct a research study that will explore the link between the Sustainable Development Goals and community foundation data-gathering processes; 3) design a workshop curriculum; 4) develop a strategic communications plan; 5) hire a regional coordinator for the first of four regions; and 6) establish the first of four communities of practice, each of which will include up to 20 community foundations. Founded in 1990, Native Americans in Philanthropy promotes equitable and effective philanthropy in Native communities.

31. Community Foundations Addressing Racial Equity

Association of Black Foundation Executives

www.abfe.org

- **Grant Amount** \$200,000
- **Grant Period** April 1, 2024–September 30, 2025
- **Location** New York, N.Y., United States
- **Geographic Focus** United States

The project goal is to help community foundations advance racial equity using the framework of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. During the previous grant period, the Association of Black Foundation Executives conducted racial equity training workshops for 53 staff and board members from 20 community foundations, organized in two cohorts. Participants were exposed to a structural frame of reference, a shared language for discussing issues of race and a sense of what an intentional approach requires to be most effective. In addition, the grantee identified 20 community foundations that launched or expanded funds to support Black communities. In the upcoming grant period, the grantee will continue its training activities and plans to organize four cohorts totaling approximately 100 participants from an estimated 35 community foundations. Founded in 1971, the Association of Black Foundation Executives is a national membership organization of predominantly Black trustees and staff of private, community and corporate foundations.

32. Improving Equity and Accountability for Native American Communities with Community Foundation

Native Americans in Philanthropy

www.nativephilanthropy.org

- **Grant Amount** \$500,000
- **Grant Period** January 1, 2024–June 30, 2026
- **Location** Washington, D.C., United States
- **Geographic Focus** United States

The goal of this project is to support the advancement of racial equity for Native communities by U.S. community foundations, applying the framework of the Sustainable Development Goals. In 2023, Native Americans in Philanthropy issued a report that provided an assessment of the current state of community foundation interaction with Native communities. Based on these findings, the grantee developed a 6-year educational, relationship-building and resource-leveraging project. In year one, the grantee: 1) established relationships with regional community foundations; 2) created a model for future outreach in other regions; 3) hired staff and developed an internal work plan; 4) held an initial place-based workshop; and 5) implemented a pilot challenge grant program. A grant increase will enable the following activities in year two: conducting three regional workshops, establishing connections with the grantee's Tribal Philanthropy Coalition and issuing community foundation match challenge grants to Tribal Communities. Founded in 1990, Native Americans in Philanthropy promotes equitable and effective philanthropy in Native communities.

Appendix B:

QUESTIONNAIRE: Where does your foundation's work align with the Sustainable Development Goals?

1. Addressing basic health and safety issues

How much of your foundation's work focuses on...

[Scale: A lot of it; A fair amount; Not very much; None of it; Don't know]

1. Reducing undernourishment [2.1]
2. Reducing malnutrition among children under 5 [2.2]
3. Reducing anemia in women 15 to 49 [2.2]
4. Reducing maternal mortality [3.1]
5. Reducing mortality rates of newborns and/or children under 5 [3.2]
6. Reducing the adolescent birth rate [3.7]
7. Reducing mortality due to cardiovascular disease, cancer, diabetes, and chronic respiratory disease [3.4]
8. Eliminating AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria, hepatitis B, and/or other neglected tropical diseases [3.3]
9. Supporting the development of vaccines and medicines [3.b]
10. Reducing tobacco use [3.a]
11. Improving the prevention and treatment of substance abuse, including narcotic drugs and alcohol [3.5]
12. Reducing suicide mortality rate [3.4]
13. Reducing pollution related deaths (due to air, water, and soil contaminants) [3.9]
14. Reducing the number of fatal traffic injuries [3.6]

2. Expanding access of poor, vulnerable, and historically marginalized populations to basic services

How much of your foundation's work focuses on...

[Scale: A lot of it; A fair amount; Not very much; None of it; Don't know]

1. Reducing poverty [1.2]
2. Expanding year-round access to food [2.1]
3. Expanding access to quality, essential health care services [3.8]
4. Expanding access to health coverage [3.8]
5. Expanding access to reproductive health care [3.7]
6. Expanding affordable access to essential medicines [3.b]
7. Expanding access to safe, affordable drinking water [6.1]
8. Expanding access to adequate sanitation and hygiene [6.2]
9. Expanding access to adequate, safe, affordable housing [11.1]
10. Expanding access to affordable, reliable, modern energy services [7.1]
11. Expanding access to basic services and economic resources [1.4]
12. Expanding "safety net" coverage of the poor and vulnerable [1.3]

3. Community Resilience

How much of your foundation's work focuses on...

[Scale: A lot of it; A fair amount; Not very much; None of it; Don't know]

1. Strengthening resilience to climate-related hazards and natural disasters [13.1]
2. Adopting and implementing local disaster risk reduction strategies [11.b]
3. Reducing the impact of disasters on vulnerable populations [11.5]
4. Building the resilience of poor and vulnerable populations to disaster [1.5]
5. Improving community preparedness for (public) health risks [3.d]

4. Education and Employment

How much of your foundation's work focuses on...

[Scale: A lot of it; A fair amount; Not very much; None of it; Don't know]

1. Expanding access to free, equitable, and quality primary and secondary education [4.1]
2. Expanding access to quality early childhood development, care, and pre-primary education [4.2]
3. Expanding affordable access to quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university [4.3]
4. Ensuring that vulnerable populations have equal access to education and training [4.5]
5. Eliminating gender disparities in education [4.5]
6. Providing safe, inclusive, and effective learning environments/educational facilities for all [4.a]
7. Improving the proportion of pre-school-aged children who are developmentally on track in health, learning, and psychosocial well-being [4.2]
8. Improving school completion rates across all educational levels [4.1]
9. Increasing youth and adult literacy and numeracy [4.6]
10. Ensuring all learners acquire knowledge and skills to promote sustainable development - including lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of peace and non-violence, global citizenship, and appreciation of cultural diversity [4.7]
11. Increasing the number of youth and adults with relevant skills for employment, decent jobs, and entrepreneurship [4.4]
12. Reducing the proportion of youth not in employment, education, or training [8.6]
13. Expanding access to productive employment for all, including equal pay for work of equal value [8.5]
14. Protecting labor rights and promoting safe and secure working environments [8.8]

5. Reduced Inequalities

How much of your foundation's work focuses on...

[Scale: A lot of it; A fair amount; Not very much; None of it; Don't know]

1. Ending discrimination against women and girls [5.1]
2. Eliminating domestic violence against women and girls [5.2]
3. Ending the abuse, exploitation, and/or trafficking of women [5.2]
4. Ensuring women's equal access to economic resources, property ownership, and natural resources [5.a]
5. Providing women with access to enabling technology, such as information and communications technology [5.b]
6. Adopting and strengthening policies to promote gender equality and women's empowerment [5.c]
7. Promoting policies that recognize and value unpaid care and domestic work and encourage shared responsibility within the household [5.4]
8. Ending the abuse, exploitation, and/or trafficking of children [16.2]
9. Ensuring women's equal opportunities and participation in leadership across all sectors [5.5]
10. Promoting social, economic, and political inclusion for all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status [10.2]
11. Adopting and strengthening fiscal, wage, and social protection policies to promote equality for all [10.4]
12. Increasing the rate of income growth of the bottom 40 percent of the population [10.1]
13. Improving blighted or degraded residential properties [11.2]
14. Expanding access to safe, inclusive, and accessible green and public spaces [11.7]
15. Ensuring responsive, inclusive, participatory, and representative decision-making at all levels [16.7]

6. Peace and Justice

How much of your foundation's work focuses on...

[Scale: A lot of it; A fair amount; Not very much; None of it; Don't know]

1. Promoting the rule of law [16.3]
2. Ensuring equal access to justice for all [16.3]
3. Reducing all forms of discrimination and harassment [10.3]
4. Promoting non-discriminatory laws and policies [16.b]
5. Reducing all forms on interpersonal violence [16.1]
6. Reducing corruption and bribery [16.5]
7. Ensuring access to information held by public bodies [16.10]
8. Developing effective, accountable, and transparent institutions [16.6]
9. Facilitating orderly, safe migration [10.7]

7. Healthy Environment – Land, Water, and Energy

How much of your foundation's work focuses on...

[Scale: A lot of it; A fair amount; Not very much; None of it; Don't know]

1. Improving education, awareness, and capacity to mitigate climate change [13.3]
2. Combatting desertification and/or restoring degraded land [15.3]
3. Conserving mountain ecosystems to ensure biodiversity [15.4]
4. Ending poaching and the illegal trafficking of wildlife products [15.7]
5. Reducing marine pollution [14.1]
6. Investing in scientific research and the development of marine technology to improve ocean health and ensure biodiversity [14.a]
7. Improving water quality through pollution reduction and effective wastewater treatment [6.3]
8. Increasing water-use efficiency [6.4]
9. Protecting and restoring water-related ecosystems [6.6]
10. Implementing integrated water resources management across jurisdictions [6.5]
11. Increasing the usage of renewable energy [7.2]
12. Accelerating improvements in energy efficiency [7.3]

8. Food Systems

How much of your foundation's work focuses on...

[Scale: A lot of it; A fair amount; Not very much; None of it; Don't know]

1. Increasing agricultural productivity [2.3]
2. Reducing local food waste [12.3]
3. Promoting sustainable food production systems and resilient agricultural practices [2.4]
4. Maintaining the genetic diversity of seeds [2.5]
5. Reducing the proportion of local breeds at risk of extinction [2.5]
6. Increasing the earning power of small-scale food producers [2.3]
7. Providing small-scale fishers with access to marine resources and markets [14.b]
8. Expanding access to information about food commodity markets & reserves (as a way to limit food price volatility) [2.c]

9. Responsible Consumption and Production

How much of your foundation's work focuses on...

[Scale: A lot of it; A fair amount; Not very much; None of it; Don't know]

1. Reducing waste generation through prevention, reduction, recycling, and reuse [12.5]
2. Improving efficient use of resources in consumption and production [8.4]
3. Upgrading and retrofitting industries to make them sustainable [9.4]
4. Promoting the sustainable management and efficient use of natural resources [12.2]
5. Promoting the adoption of sustainable practices by companies and businesses [12.6]
6. Promoting sustainable public procurement practices [12.7]
7. Reducing the adverse environmental impact of cities, through sustainable management of air quality and waste [11.6]
8. Promoting local participation in improving water and sanitation management [6.b]
9. Enhancing inclusive and sustainable urbanization through participatory urban planning and management [11.3]
10. Ensuring access to information about sustainable development and lifestyles in harmony with nature [12.8]

10. Prosperity

How much of your foundation's work focuses on...

[Scale: A lot of it; A fair amount; Not very much; None of it; Don't know]

1. Improving local/regional economic productivity [8.2]
2. Promoting policies that support job creations, entrepreneurship, and innovation [8.3]
3. Expanding access to banking, insurances, and financial services [8.10]
4. Expanding access of small-scale enterprises to financial services [9.3]
5. Promoting inclusive and sustainable industrialization (i.e., manufacturing) [9.2]
6. Increasing scientific research and upgrading technological capabilities of industrial sectors [9.5]
7. Developing reliable, accessible, sustainable transportation infrastructure [9.1]
8. Developing policies to promote sustainable tourism [8.9]
9. Protecting and safeguarding the world's cultural and natural heritage [11.4]
10. Strengthening national and regional development planning across jurisdictions [11.a]

11. Partnerships

How much of your foundation's work focuses on...

[Scale: A lot of it; A fair amount; Not very much; None of it; Don't know]

1. Participating in multi-stakeholder efforts to support achievement of the SDGs [17.16]
2. Promoting effective public, public-private, and civil society partnerships (per se) [17.17]
3. Supporting the development of measures for monitoring progress on sustainable development [17.19]



July 2026