![Akron Community Foundation logo — a stylized green tree]

# AKRON COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

ENRICHING LIVES SINCE 1955

# Akron Community Foundation Proactive Grantmaking:
## Building Community Prosperity Together

AKRON COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

ENRICHING LIVES SINCE 1955

# Welcome and Agenda

- Purpose of Proactive Grantmaking

- Grantmaking Priorities and Key Themes

- Appreciative Inquiry Summit Highlights

- Funding Models: Systems Capacity & Systems Change

- What We Are Looking for in Proposals

- Q&A

AKRON COMMUNITY FOUNDATION
ENRICHING LIVES SINCE 1955

*www.akroncf.org*

# About Proactive Grantmaking

**What is Proactive Grantmaking?**

- An approach to identify and address critical community needs before they become crises by setting intentional, forward-thinking priorities.

- Based on comprehensive assessments and direct community feedback, ensuring that the solutions reflect real community needs and insights.

- Encourages partnerships among nonprofits, government, businesses and communtiy leaders to create shared solutions and maximize resources.

- Seeks to fund initiatives that tackle root causes and strengthen local systems for sustainable impact.

# About Proactive Grantmaking

**Developing our Re-Imagined Proactive Grantmaking Approach**

- Utilized evidence from our community needs assessment, focus groups, and a community-wide Appreciative Inquiry Summit.

**Community Needs Assessment**

- Analysis from interviews, focus groups and surveys with non-profit leaders and community members revealed **Housing**, **Mental Health** and **Public Safety** as the primary areas of concern and need in Summit County.

AKRON COMMUNITY FOUNDATION
ENRICHING LIVES SINCE 1955

*www.akroncf.org*

# About Proactive Grantmaking

**Appreciative Inquiry Summit**

- A strengths-based approach to collaborative design that fosters innovation and sustainable change in complex systems by building on existing successes.

- 160 community leaders and students collaborated to design innovations, which we call **themes**, for how to address the identified community needs:

  - ➢ Trusted connections

  - ➢ Youth Engagement

  - ➢ Affordable Housing

  - ➢ Community Stewardship

AKRON COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

ENRICHING LIVES SINCE 1955

*www.akroncf.org*

# Proactive Grantmaking Themes

**Trusted Connections**

- Projects that promote opportunities for the community to build reliable and knowledgeable support systems through accessible and welcoming spaces that prioritize voices with lived experiences and include community members and nontraditional partners.

    o *Example: programs that involve community members, individuals with lived experience, and safety forces (fire, police) to promote meaningful neighborhood connections.*

AKRON COMMUNITY FOUNDATION
ENRICHING LIVES SINCE 1955

# Proactive Grantmaking Themes

**Youth Engagement**

- High-quality, engaging, and tailored youth programs and/or spaces that provide program participants with access to strong mentorship networks out of school hours.

  o *Example: collaborative hubs for comprehensive youth development located within walking distance and at familiar community spaces.*

# Proactive Grantmaking Themes

**Affordable Housing**

- Programs that help evaluate, create and/or support housing needs, as well as advance dialogue and increase awareness of housing options and renters' rights.

  o *Example: partnerships between groups that can strengthen overall community knowledge of housing options, needs, and rights; projects that address gaps in home safety (i.e., inspections) and accessibility (i.e., landlord incentives for individuals/families transitioning out of homelessness).*

# Proactive Grantmaking Themes

**Community Stewardship**

- Educational programs, community events/gatherings, and action plans to strengthen the community's sense of neighborhood pride, responsibility, and belonging.
  - o *Example: projects to help increase, cultivate, and/or maintain our sense of community and safety through neighborhood meetings, community gardens, or clean-up days.*

AKRON
COMMUNITY
FOUNDATION
ENRICHING LIVES SINCE 1955

*www.akroncf.org*

# Project Outcomes/Funding Buckets

**Systems Capacity**

- Focuses on strengthening the ability of organizations to deliver impactful, sustained programs.

- Enhances resiliency by investing in leadership, collaboration and technology.
  - *Example: A capacity-building grant for an advocacy organization to develop a digital tool connecting residents with housing resources and legal aid alongside programming to ensure those needing the tool can access it and know how to use it.*

AKRON COMMUNITY FOUNDATION
ENRICHING LIVES SINCE 1955

# Project Outcomes/Funding Buckets

**Systems Change**

- Targets underlying community structures, policies, and practices for long-term transformation.

- Aims to shift power dynamics and address root causes rather than symptoms.

  - *Example: Supporting a county-wide initiative to integrate mental health services into primary care settings, schools, and community centers. This could involve training healthcare providers, educators, and community leaders in mental health first aid and creating pathways for individuals to access preventive care and crisis support in familiar settings.*

AKRON COMMUNITY FOUNDATION
ENRICHING LIVES SINCE 1955

*www.akroncf.org*

# Grant Amounts & Payment

- **Systems Capacity** projects will be eligible for grants up to *$50,000*
  - Up to five (5) applications selected (up to $250,000 distributed)
  - Payments are distributed as a single installment.

- **Systems Change** projects will be eligible for grants up to *$150,000*
  - Up to five (5) applications selected (up to $750,000 distributed)
  - Payments will be distributed **in two or up to three annual installments**. After the initial installment and completion of the first year of programming, a second or third application will be required before the remaining disbursement(s). The second and third applications will assess the progress made and success achieved, and the program's continued viability and improvement plans.

# What Successful Proposals Look Like

**Characteristics of Strong Proposals**

- Clear alignment with ACF's priorities in housing, mental health, or public safety.

- A detailed plan for sustainable, measurable impact.

- Evidence of community collaboration and stakeholder support.

# Tips for Crafting a Strong Proposal

- **Show Impact:** Outline measurable outcomes that address community-wide needs.

- **Highlight Partnerships:** Describe how collaborations will maximize reach and effectiveness.

- **Focus on Sustainability:** Explain how the project will sustain and adapt over time.

- **Systems Perspective:** Demonstrate a clear understanding of Systems Capacity or Systems Change

# Demographics Via Candid Requirement

**Purpose of Demographics via Candid**

Demographics via Candid is a trusted platform that collects and standardizes nonprofit demographic data. By submitting your data, you're helping to create a transparent and equitable landscape for philanthropy.

AKRON
COMMUNITY
FOUNDATION
ENRICHING LIVES SINCE 1955

*www.akroncf.org*

# Demographics Via Candid Requirement

**Why it Matters**

- **Transparency and Equity in Grantmaking**

  o Ensures a clear picture of the communities being served and the diversity of organizations receiving funding.

  o Helps funders like ACF identify and prioritize funding for underserved communities and promote equitable grant distribution.

- **Informed Decision-Making**

  o Provides detailed data to assess gaps and opportunities in Summit County.

  o Helps ACF and other funders understand demographic trends, fostering more strategic and impactful grantmaking decisions.

AKRON COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

ENRICHING LIVES SINCE 1955

*www.akroncf.org*

# Demographics Via Candid Requirement

## Why it Matters

- **Strengthens Credibility and Visibility for Your Organization**
  - Organizations that provide demographic data are highlighted on Candid, making them more visible to other funders and collaborators.
  - Builds trust and alignment with funders who prioritize diversity, equity, and inclusion in their giving.

- **Enhances Community Accountability**
  - Collecting demographic data allows ACF to hold itself accountable in fulfilling its commitment to an inclusive, community-centered approach.
  - Reinforces our commitment to addressing the unique needs of diverse populations within Summit County.

AKRON COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

ENRICHING LIVES SINCE 1955

*www.akroncf.org*

# Timeline

- **Nov. 1, 2024:** Applications open

- **Dec. 1, 2024:** Application deadline

- **Dec. 16, 2024 – Jan. 8, 2025:** Application review period
  - Applicants should expect an invitation to a virtual video meeting to discuss the project; in-person meetings may be requested.

- **Jan. 15, 2024:** Semi-finalists notified

- **Jan. 29, 2025:** Semi-finalists interviews
  - Interviews will be in person at Akron Community Foundation. Applicants will have a conversation regarding the proposal with members of the Community Investment Committee, Donor-Advised Fundholders, and staff. Please put a hold for the entire day on your calendar to ensure your availability.

AKRON COMMUNITY FOUNDATION
ENRICHING LIVES SINCE 1955

*www.akroncf.org*

# Timeline

- **Feb. 5, 2025:** Community Investment Committee proposes finalists and grant awards

- **March 7, 2025**: ACF Board of Directors approves grants and award notifications are emailed

- **March 10, 2025:** Public grant awards announcement (press release, website, and social media announcements distributed the week of March 10, and inclusion in Foundations e-news and magazine to follow in late March and early June, respectively)

AKRON COMMUNITY FOUNDATION
ENRICHING LIVES SINCE 1955

*www.akroncf.org*

# Q & A

# Stay Connected

www.akroncf.org

@AkronCommunityFoundation

@AkronCF

@AkronCommunityFoundation

@AkronCF

@AkronCommunityFdn

AKRON COMMUNITY FOUNDATION
ENRICHING LIVES SINCE 1955

*www.akroncf.org*