



**Omaha Community
Foundation**

Growing good, together.



Community Interest Funds

2022 IMPACT REPORT

Community Interest Funds

The Omaha Community Foundation awarded 87 grants totaling \$845,000 to local nonprofits and neighborhood groups through our five Community Interest Funds, which includes the African American Unity Fund, LGBTQIA2S+ Equality Fund, Futuro Latino Fund, Refugee Community Grant Fund, and Omaha Neighborhood Grants Program.

Grants made through our Community Interest Funds are strategic investments meant to increase access, equity, and opportunity. We engage everyday community members to lead grant processes, and we rely on them to exercise and apply their own power and understanding.

Each committee is made up of residents who come from or identify with the population being served. They review proposals, and based on the needs they are seeing in their communities, they decide which projects will have the greatest impact.

2022 INSIGHTS & IMPACT: BY THE NUMBERS

\$2.8m

requested from
177 applicants

\$845k

awarded through
87 grants

\$1.9m

unfunded requests
from 90 organizations



1 in 2

requests focused on projects related to
health, education, or arts and culture.

OUR MODEL

Resident-led grantmaking leverages the insights, connections, and lived experiences of residents who serve as both community advocates and responsive stewards of investment dollars. This model democratizes philanthropy by engaging and working alongside rather than being prescriptive and doing unto a community.

We made this model a priority for three main reasons.

1. It reduces inequity and decentralizes power.

Involving residents in the grantmaking process makes it accessible to under-resourced communities. It's a shared opportunity for the funders to get a better understanding of what priorities exist throughout the city. It also allows residents to amplify the awareness of smaller, grassroots organizations that are offering effective programs and services but may be otherwise overlooked.

2. It deepens authentic relationships.

Through these resident-led grant committees, we get to know individuals who identify as members of each community, and, in turn, they get to know us. The partnership model develops and deepens relationships in these communities.

3. It strengthens trust between donors and grantees.

By putting the communities we serve at the heart of the decision-making process, resident-led grantmaking shifts power to resident-led committees to decide which programs and services will best support and uplift those closest to the issue. By changing who determines grant funding, the decision-making process can result in more equitable grant awards that truly reflect the communities' needs. This model requires more listening, engagement, and vulnerability.





African American Unity Fund

The African American Unity Fund committee awarded \$225,000 to 17 organizations—seven of which were new applicants or first-time grantees. Established in 2008, AAUF supports initiatives in Omaha's Black communities.

A Mother's Love*

Culxr House

Eat N' Talk Africa

Equal Play: Inspiring
Confidence for Girls (EPIC)

Everyday Science and
Science Support

Great Plains Black History
Museum

House of Afros, Capes & Curls

Imagine Omaha

J's Braintrust Consulting
Services

Midlands African Chamber

New Life Family Alliance

NOISE

North Omaha Area Health
(NOAH)

O. NE Mentoring
Academy

Pear Tree Performing Arts

SkateFest Omaha*

Well-Read Women of
Omaha*



The committee members bring in different backgrounds, values, viewpoints, and abilities to lend to the success of nonprofits who desire to make an impact and change within their respected communities.

KIMBERLY C. BARNES
2022 Committee Member

2022 INSIGHTS

Among the varied requests, 18% were education-focused, often on providing support and mentoring to youth through recreation, usually sports. Support for arts and culture was another common request.

A Mother’s Love

\$20,000 for Doula Services Pregnancy/Birthing Support. Black women are three times more likely to die from pregnancy-related causes and more likely to experience postpartum depression than white women. A Mother’s Love seeks to address Black maternal health by providing doula services, life skills training, and pregnancy support.

SkateFest Omaha

\$21,000 for Operating Support. SkateFest Omaha is changing the narrative of skateboarding culture by teaching life skills and building confidence through skateboarding. Their programs and events engage underrepresented youth and allow for a unique way to normalize and amplify the voices of BIPOC students.

Well-Read Women of Omaha

\$10,000 for Mission Literacy. Fosters a love for reading while supporting literacy for Black women and children in the Omaha metro. Funds will help create Little Free Libraries, expand classroom adoption program, and create a book fair for local authors of color.



BY THE NUMBERS

73
applicants

\$1.3m
requested

17
grants

\$225k
awarded

\$1.2m unfunded





Futuro Latino Fund

The Futuro Latino Fund committee awarded \$175,000 to 13 organizations, half of which were first-time applicants. Established in 2009, one goal of this grant program is to contribute to the cultural enrichment, socioeconomic wellbeing, civic participation, and long-term sustainability of Latino families, neighborhoods, and organizations in the Omaha metro.

Cinco de Mayo Omaha*

Down Syndrome Alliance
of the Midlands

El Museo Latino

Families in Action

Future Kids

Generation Diamond*

Jackson's Boxing Club

LIVE Leadership Camp

Matters On Tomorrow

Metro Young Latino
Professional Association*

Mexican American
Historical Society of the
Midlands

South Omaha Classic OLG
Youth Athletics

Victory Boxing Club &
Community Center



After many years working in Omaha's nonprofits, I learned the Latinx community has a small say in our community's decision-making even though we have a deep understanding of our challenges and opportunities. I joined the committee to be a part of the conversation and share my philanthropic knowledge.

YAJAIRA GONZALEZ
2022 Committee Member

2022 INSIGHTS

Youth-focused grant requests made up over half of the projects. This included sports and recreation, leadership development, and educational opportunities, including ones to prepare for the workforce.

Cinco de Mayo Omaha



\$15,000 for General Operating. Cinco de Mayo Omaha provides cultural experiences through events and outreach programs. One of the most visible events is the annual festival and parade in South Omaha. Along with celebrating Hispanic heritage, the internship and mentorship programs offer much-needed personal and professional development opportunities for low-income youth living in South Omaha.

Generation Diamond

\$15,000 for Tattoo Removal Program. Through transitional programs and services, Generation Diamond empowers adults experiencing challenges related to homelessness or re-entry to succeed in building a secure and stable future. Their most impactful program provides the removal of visible or offensive tattoos for people who would otherwise be excluded from employment opportunities.

Metro Young Latino Professional Association

\$15,000 for Somos El Futuro Scholarship & Professional Development. MYLPA creates a support system and network that allows Latinos to engage with one another and collectively address issues around cultural enrichment, socioeconomic wellbeing, and civic participation—all while empowering current and future Latino leaders.



BY THE NUMBERS

18

applicants

\$246k

requested

13

grants

\$175k

awarded

\$70k unfunded



LGBTQIA2S+ Equality Fund

The Equality Fund committee awarded \$200,000 to 14 organizations. The fund was established in 2018 to cultivate a community that supports, includes, and respects those who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer or questioning, intersex, asexual, and two-spirit, plus additional sexual orientations and gender identities.

ACLU of Nebraska

American Foundation for
Suicide Prevention - NE

Big Brothers Big Sisters of
the Midlands

BlueBarn Theatre

Heartland Pride

Huespring*

Inclusive Communities

Legal Aid of Nebraska

Nebraska AIDS Project

Nebraska Writers Collective

Omaha ForUs

Owlish*

PFLAG Omaha*

Planned Parenthood
of the Heartland



Being able to serve more agencies would allow our efforts as a community-led fund to have an even greater impact and further establish Omaha as a supportive and welcoming place for the LGBTQIA2S+ community.

KRYSTA LARSON
2022 Committee Member

2022 INSIGHTS

One in three grant proposals focused on ensuring access to healthcare services, including behavioral health and making sure healthcare workers are trained to competently serve the LGBTQIA2S+ community. At 25%, another common request was to elevate the community through art.

Huespring

\$15,000 for Cultivating Collective Power. Through Huespring, LGBTQIA2S+ early career professionals are matched with mentors for a 7-month leadership development experience. The goal is to cultivate thriving LGBTQIA2S+ communities in the Midlands through mentorship support, professional development, and community training.

Owlsh

\$19,000 for Capacity Building & Brand Awareness. Owlsh seeks to elevate the voices of LGBTQIA2S+ Baby Boomers and Gen Xers in the Omaha metro by providing education and resources, sponsoring and advocating for legal protections, and continuing to strategically partner with senior living facilities to provide inclusive, safe housing for aging LGBTQIA2S+ adults.

PFLAG Omaha

\$7,500 for Omaha Latinx Project. Improves the quality of life of the Latinx LGBTQIA+ population and their families through activities and resources that focus on education, comprehensive healthcare and well-being, and professional development within a supportive community.



BY THE NUMBERS

20
applicants

\$397k
requested

14
grants

\$200k
awarded

\$197k unfunded





Refugee Community Grant Fund

The Refugee Community Grant Fund advisory team awarded \$165,000 to 19 refugee-led or refugee-serving organizations. More than half of the funded proposals went to organizations new to this grant program, which was established in 2020.

Big Muddy Urban Farm*

Children's Hospital &
Medical Center Foundation

Cornerstone Nonprofit
Healthcare

DIBS for Kids

East African Development
Association of Nebraska

Eat N' Talk Africa

Heartland Integration Center

Intercultural Senior Center

Learning For ALL

Midlands African Chamber*

Midlands Latino Community
Development Corp.

New Life Family Alliance

Nyampinga Empowerment

Omaha Center for Refugees
& Immigrants Service Inc.

Refugee Women Rising

Republic of South Sudan
(ROSS) Leaders

Restoring Dignity

The Talented 10th Group

Youth for Greater Good*



Services for this population must be unique and adaptive. Funding to support more agencies assures us that people are being reached and taken care of.

OSUMAN ISSAKA
2022 Committee Member

2022 INSIGHTS

Access to health, specifically healthy foods, made up 37% of grant requests. Another top area of need was education (33%), either ensuring services are translated or assisting new immigrants in learning English.

Big Muddy Urban Farm



\$7,000 for New American Urban Farmer. This program supports a group of new American and refugee farmers in a collaborative farming format that develops community connections, entrepreneurial skills, and agricultural practice. Vegetables grown are ones participants could easily find in their country of origin but not in local grocery stores. They are working to change that by supplying produce to refugee outlets and increasing access to fresh, culturally appropriate food.

Midlands African Chamber

\$10,000 for Rising CEOs Pilot Project. Midlands African Chamber empowers, connects, and champions African American business communities in the Midwest. This program prioritizes underserved refugee and immigrant youth, ages 14-19, in an entrepreneurship, technology, and leadership development pilot program intended to inspire them to create new businesses and take advantage of economic opportunities.

Youth for Greater Good

\$9,000 for After-School Program. Founded in 2016, Youth For Greater Good's mission is to support South Sudanese youth through academics, mentoring, and cultural awareness. They are uplifting future leaders by putting an emphasis on community, culture, and leadership. Funds will go towards expanding their after-school program with an increased number of days and also provide the needed materials to serve their growing members.



BY THE NUMBERS

27

applicants

\$500k

requested

19

grants

\$165k

awarded

\$335k unfunded



Omaha Neighborhood Grants

The Omaha Neighborhood Grants committee awarded \$80,000 to 24 neighborhood groups combining leadership development and community building work around Omaha.

Bemis Park Neighborhood Association

Benson Little League

Benson Neighborhood Association

BFF Omaha

City Sprouts

Community Bike Project Omaha

Dundee-Memorial Park Association

Free Farm*

Global Leadership Group Omaha

Gifford Park Neighborhood Association

Hanscom Park Neighborhood Association

Hillsborough Homeowners Association

Highland South-Indian Hill Neighborhood Association

inCOMMON Community Development

Joslyn Castle Neighborhood Association

Levi Carter Sherman Neighborhood Association

Little Bohemia Collective*

MAHZY Project

Midtown Neighborhood Alliance

Nebraska Children's Home Society

Plum Nelly East Neighborhood Association*

Quarters Neighborhood Association

South Omaha Neighborhood Alliance

Walnut Hill Neighborhood Association

2022 INSIGHTS

Beautification projects made up a majority (41%) of requests. Often these focused on engaging residents to plant flowers or trees as a way to beautify their neighborhood.

Free Farm

\$5,000 for Increased Capacity. Free Farm started in 2017 with four organizer-gardeners, one garden, and one free farm stand as an effort to address food insecurity by growing food together for each other. Now, they collectively farm multiple lots across East Omaha and hold weekly Free Farm Stands where neighbors can give and receive fresh, local produce for free.

Little Bohemia Collective

\$2,200 for Neighborhood Pocket Park Revitalization. Little Bohemia Collective is developing new neighborhood leaders that will work together to rebuild aging park benches, tables, and planters to increase neighbor engagement and park utilization. The group will create new bilingual signage, replace thinned mulch, and add new play items for neighborhood children and families.

Plum Nelly East Neighborhood Association

\$5,000 for Neighborhood of New Birth. To re-establish this historic area as an active neighborhood in North Omaha, funds will help conduct neighborhood cleanups, establish a community garden to address food insecurity, and host a series of neighborhood events to improve relationships, increase community pride, and revisit the rich history of the Plum Nelly neighborhood.



BY THE NUMBERS

39

applicants

\$200k

requested

24

grants

\$80k

awarded

\$120k unfunded



If we had more funding for Omaha Neighborhood Grants, we could help our neighbors make a greater impact on our community at large or even expand the program.

KARRISSA JYLES
2022 Committee Member





Omaha Community Foundation

Growing good, together.

The Omaha Community Foundation strengthens our community by building connections between people, ideas, and funding.

By developing a deep knowledge of local needs and the nonprofit organizations that are working on solutions, the team at OCF has established itself as a valued resource and a catalyst for good.

» omahafoundation.org

