



**Omaha Community
Foundation**

Growing good, together.



Community Interest Funds

2023 IMPACT REPORT

Community Interest Funds

The Omaha Community Foundation awarded **92 grants totaling \$845,000** to local nonprofits and neighborhood groups through our five Community Interest Funds, which include 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.

BY THE NUMBERS

\$3.8M

requested from
224 applicants

\$845K

awarded through
92 grants

\$2.9M

in unmet needs
for funding



1 in 3

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.



Global Leadership Group Omaha



The House of Afros, Capes & Curls

African American Unity Fund

The African American Unity Fund is making a lasting impact in the Omaha metro by supporting vital initiatives in the Black community.

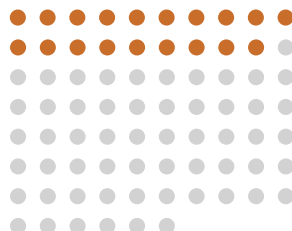
Established in 2008, the African American Unity Fund's funding priorities span across arts and culture, basic human needs, community development, health and wellness, and capacity building. Collaboration among multiple organizations is encouraged, promoting collective impact.

KEY INSIGHTS

Education and youth-focused requests, including recreation, mentoring, and college and career readiness, made up 30% of the total. Around 24% of the requests revolved around arts and culture. Additionally, though a smaller proportion, health proposals predominantly addressed pregnancy health and support.



12% of requested funds were granted, leaving unmet needs exceeding \$1.5M



25% of applicants received funding

2023 GRANT RECIPIENTS

The committee awarded \$225,000 to 19 organizations. The African American Unity Fund received 76 applications with grant requests totaling \$1,808,639.

- ▶ **A Mother's Love:** \$30,000 for Pregnancy Wellness Space
- ▶ **All In The Family Mentoring & Support Services:** \$10,050 for Youth Mentoring Program
- ▶ **B&B Sports Academy:** \$10,000 for B&B Summer Training Camp
- ▶ **Bobby Byars Foundation:** \$15,000 for 2023 Community Safety Day
- ▶ **Change of Omaha:** \$2,485 for Community Garden Impact expansion
- ▶ **Code Black Tech:** \$15,000 for Funding Capacity Grant
- ▶ **Emerging Ladies Academy:** \$10,000 for Tech Academy
- ▶ **Everyday Science and Science Support:** \$10,000 for STEM for All
- ▶ **Great Plains Black History Museum:** \$10,000 for Operational Support
- ▶ **J's Braintrust Consulting Services:** \$5,500 for Youth Sports Officiating Training
- ▶ **Juneteenth Joy Fest:** \$22,150 for 3rd Annual Juneteenth Joy Fest
- ▶ **Kinship Refined:** \$15,000 for BIPOC Real Estate Professionals
- ▶ **MOMentum:** \$5,000 for Career Empowerment Workshop
- ▶ **Omaha Alternatives to Violence Project:** \$4,815 for Preparing Returning Citizens for Reentry
- ▶ **Omaha Chapter of the Links:** \$15,000 for Links Locs Love
- ▶ **SkateFest Omaha:** \$10,000 for Operational Support
- ▶ **The House of Afros, Capes & Curls:** \$10,000 for Capacity Building
- ▶ **Well-Read Women of Omaha:** \$10,000 for Adopt A Class
- ▶ **Young Entrepreneurs of the Future:** \$15,000 for Life Skills to Entrepreneurship



"This committee introduced me to many nonprofits. I can now recommend certain people to nonprofits for resources or to help build their knowledge on what's happening in our community."

TINYA NIELSEN

2023 African American Unity Fund Committee Member



Futuro Latino Fund

Established in 2009, Futuro Latino Fund strives to enrich culture, improve socioeconomic well-being, foster civic engagement, and ensure long-term sustainability among local Latino families, neighborhoods, and organizations. It promotes self-sustaining models and capacity building strategies that address the diverse interests and concerns of the Latino community.

The grant program prioritizes investments in critical growth areas, including arts and culture, community and economic development, health and wellness promotion, civic engagement, organizational capacity building, and empowering youth, families, and women.

KEY INSIGHTS

Requests showed a strong emphasis on the arts, making up 30% of the total. An equal percentage centered on youth engagement, involving mentoring, sports, and recreation.



40% of requested funds were granted, leaving unmet needs exceeding \$265K



48% of applicants received funding

2023 GRANT RECIPIENTS

The committee awarded \$175,000 to 12 organizations. The Futuro Latino Fund received 25 applications with grant requests totaling \$442,900.

- ▶ **DIBS for Kids:** \$10,000 for DIBS Bilingual School Support Coordinator
- ▶ **H2O Collective:** \$15,000 for D' Colores
- ▶ **Families in Action/Familias en Acción:** \$10,000 for Mujeres y su Bienestar
- ▶ **Jackson Boxing Club:** \$17,500 for Operations, Equipment, & Competition Travel
- ▶ **Latino Economic Development Council:** \$25,000 for Adelante II – South Omaha
- ▶ **LIVE Leadership Camp:** \$20,000 for LIVE Leadership Camp
- ▶ **Matters On Tomorrow:** \$15,000 for True Potential Scholarships
- ▶ **Metro Young Latino Professionals Association:** \$15,000 for MYLPA Scholarship & Professional Development
- ▶ **Mexican American Historical Society of the Midlands:** \$10,000 for Mestizaje: Nosotros Somos Todos
- ▶ **MOMentum:** \$5,000 for Career Coaching & Support
- ▶ **Omaha Classic OLG youth athletics:** \$17,500 for Spring Lake Baseball Field Renovation
- ▶ **Park Avenue Neighborhood Association:** \$15,000 for Hanscom Park Mini-Pitch



"Because of the voices in the room through the resident-led grantmaking approach, the Omaha Community Foundation is truly able to support the projects that the community finds exciting and sees a benefit to. The programs funded make change and serve those who most need it."

CLAUDIA GRANILLO

2023 Futuro Latino Fund Committee Member



Heartland Pride

LGBTQIA2S+ Equality Fund

The LGBTQIA2S+ Equality Fund cultivates an inclusive community in Omaha-Council Bluffs, supporting diverse gender and sexual identities since 2018. Goals include providing strong support networks, amplifying voices, fostering inclusivity, and addressing inequities in social, economic, political, and justice systems.

Priority areas for funding are workforce training, accessible healthcare, justice system intervention, public leadership, and safe shelter.

KEY INSIGHTS

One out of every three requests focused on education and youth development, while an equal portion centered on health and human services, particularly mental and behavioral health support. Arts and culture requests accounted for 20% of the total.



33% of requested funds were granted, leaving unmet needs exceeding \$400K



53% of applicants received funding

2023 GRANT RECIPIENTS

The committee awarded \$200,000 to 16 organizations. The LGBTQIA2S+ Equality Fund received 30 applications with grant requests totaling \$601,956.

- ▶ **ACLU of Nebraska:** \$20,000 for Supporting & Defending LGBTQIA2S+ Nebraskans
- ▶ **Benson Theatre:** \$2,500 for Summer 2023 LGBTQIA2S+ Artistic Programming
- ▶ **BFF Omaha:** \$15,000 for First Friday Pride & Youth Programming
- ▶ **Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Midlands:** \$10,000 for LGBTQIA2S+ Youth Mentoring
- ▶ **Healing Ribbons:** \$10,000 for Capacity Building
- ▶ **Heartland Pride:** \$10,000 for Youth Pride & Scholarship Program
- ▶ **Inclusive Communities:** \$15,000 for IncluCity Youth Camp
- ▶ **Legal Aid of Nebraska:** \$2,500 for LGBTQIA2S+ Name Change Clinic
- ▶ **Montessori Co-op School:** \$10,000 for Trans-Inclusion & Pride Participation
- ▶ **Nebraska AIDS Project:** \$15,000 for Targeted Outreach & Testing
- ▶ **Nebraska Writers Collective:** \$10,000 for All Writes Reserved Youth Spoken Word Festival
- ▶ **Omaha ForUs:** \$20,000 for TransThrive
- ▶ **OneWorld Community Health Centers:** \$15,000 for LGBTQIA2S+ Health Care Promotion/Access
- ▶ **OutNebraska:** \$10,000 for Capacity Building - Supporting Programs/Operations
- ▶ **Planned Parenthood of the Heartland:** \$20,000 for LGBTQ+ Care Coordination in Omaha
- ▶ **River City Mixed Chorus:** \$15,000 for Unbreakable: LGBTQ+ History Through Music



"Through this grant program, numerous local organizations and projects have received critical funding, enabling them to expand their reach, enhance their services, and create a more inclusive and supportive environment."

ANDRES RAMIREZ HERRERA

2023 LGBTQIA2S+ Equality Fund Committee Member



Refugee Women Rising

Refugee Community Grant Fund

Established in 2020, the Refugee Community Grant Fund focuses on supporting organizations that are refugee-led or dedicated to serving refugees, ensuring that the community's unique needs and perspectives are at the forefront of funding decisions.

Funding priorities focus on crucial areas that can uplift the refugee community in Omaha. These priorities include family stabilization and youth support services/programs, education and culture, physical and mental health, as well as belonging and inclusion.

KEY INSIGHTS

Nearly half of the requests prioritized education and youth development, while 28% pertained to human services with a significant emphasis on addressing basic needs.



23% of requested funds were granted, leaving unmet needs exceeding \$560K



51% of applicants received funding

2023 GRANT RECIPIENTS

The committee awarded **\$165,000 to 22 organizations**. The Refugee Community Grant Fund received 43 applications with grant requests totaling \$725,768.

- **Access Period:** \$7,800 for Period Kits for Restoring Dignity
- **All People's Pantry: A Culturally Appropriate Food Pantry:** \$5,000 for Food Distributions
- **American Red Cross:** \$2,500 for Home Fire Campaign
- **AIM Institute:** \$7,500 for Accelerated Technical Training
- **Christian Outreach Program - Elkhorn:** \$2,500 for Western Douglas County Community Garden
- **Completely KIDS:** \$5,000 for Assessment and Liaison - Afterschool Programs
- **Cornerstone Nonprofit Healthcare:** \$13,400 for Health Fair Project
- **DIBS for Kids:** \$12,000 for Millard Elementary English Learner books
- **Heartland Bike Share:** \$7,800 for Bike Share Passes for Refugees
- **Immigrant Legal Center:** \$8,500 for Ukrainian Refugee Assistance
- **Intercultural Senior Center:** \$7,500 for Lunch for Diverse Older Adults
- **International Council for Refugees & Immigrants:** \$10,000 for Peer Support, Advocacy, & Research
- **Learning For ALL:** \$10,000 for ESL & GED Participant Expansion
- **MAC Foundation:** \$5,000 for Rising CEOs & Suit Up
- **MOMentum:** \$2,500 for Career Coaching & Support
- **Omaha Public Library Foundation:** \$1,500 for Refugee Book Giveaways
- **Refugee Women Organization of Nebraska:** \$10,000 for New American Urban Farmers
- **Refugee Women Rising:** \$9,000 for Driver's Education
- **Restoring Dignity:** \$8,500 for Welcome Home Program - Afghan Outreach
- **St. Pius X / St. Leo School:** \$10,000 for English Language Teacher Assistant
- **The Furniture Project Omaha:** \$10,000 for Warehouse & Driver Salary Assistance
- **Yates Illuminates:** \$9,000 for Accessibility/Synergies, Inclusive Outreach, & Wayfinding



"The committee's efforts and the grant program provide visibility and support for an underrepresented, underserved population. During decision-making, I can offer insights into the needs and challenges of the community we serve, particularly focusing on supporting small investment, high impact organizations and projects."

OSUMAN ISSAKA

2023 Refugee Community Grant Fund Committee Member



Morton Meadows Neighborhood Association

Omaha Neighborhood Grants

The Omaha Neighborhood Grants program is designed to support community leaders who are making a positive impact in their own neighborhoods. It empowers residents to take action and work together to address local priorities.

The primary goal is developing leadership skills among residents, including project planning, consensus-building, fundraising, and teamwork. Applicants are also encouraged to promote collaboration, increase neighborhood engagement, and provide benefits like enhanced safety and beautification.

KEY INSIGHTS

About 20% of proposals included community celebration aspects, while 10% featured public art. These projects also displayed strategic coordination with the City of Omaha Neighborhood Grant Program to maximize the impact of the funding.



38% of requested funds were granted, leaving unmet needs exceeding \$130K



46% of applicants received funding

2023 GRANT RECIPIENTS

The committee awarded \$80,000 to 22 organizations. Omaha Neighborhood Grants received 50 applications with grant requests totaling \$211,687.

- ▶ **Bemis Park Neighborhood Association:** \$5,000 for Baseball Diamond Restoration
- ▶ **Benson Little League:** \$4,200 for Community-Led Mural Project
- ▶ **BFF Omaha:** \$3,380 for Free Little Community Arts Center
- ▶ **Blue Bucket Project:** \$1,040 for Neighborhood Litter Kit Lending Station
- ▶ **Brown Park Neighborhood Service Organization:** \$3,700 for Z Street Garden Project
- ▶ **Cinco de Mayo Omaha:** \$4,000 for Historic 24th Street Celebrations
- ▶ **City Sprouts:** \$1,600 for Monthly Community Meals
- ▶ **Field Club North Neighborhood Association:** \$5,000 for Cement Pad with Picnic Tables
- ▶ **Free Farm:** \$5,000 for Increased Production, Engagement, & Sustainable Practices
- ▶ **Gifford Park Neighborhood Association:** \$5,000 for Activating New Leaders
- ▶ **Global Leadership Group Omaha:** \$1,100 for Community Cleanup Challenge
- ▶ **Highland South-Indian Hill Neighborhood Association:** \$4,000 for Upland Park Canopy
- ▶ **Highlander Neighborhood Association:** \$2,500 for Highlander Community Day
- ▶ **Joslyn Castle Neighborhood Association:** \$4,594 for Playground Equipment
- ▶ **Melanin Market Omaha:** \$2,500 for Event Planning & Management
- ▶ **Midtown Neighborhood Alliance:** \$2,000 for Planting 100 Trees
- ▶ **Morton Meadows Neighborhood Association:** \$5,000 for Mizpah Lodge Community Mural
- ▶ **PlaceMade:** \$5,000 for Skate Ramp & Trash Cans
- ▶ **Prairie Lane Neighborhood Association:** \$2,150 for Movie Nights at the Park
- ▶ **Robin Hill Recreation Association:** \$3,125 for Creating & Maintaining a Digital Archive
- ▶ **South Omaha Neighborhood Alliance:** \$5,000 for Alebrije Mural
- ▶ **Stony Brook Neighborhood Association:** \$2,741 for Planting Trees on Stony Brook Boulevard
- ▶ **Stop The NonSense:** \$2,370 for Neighborhood Cleanups & Saturday Open Gyms



"By democratizing the grantmaking process and involving a variety of community members, it empowers more individuals to be leaders and have a voice—and helps ensure the projects that receive funding are relevant to the community."

MORGAN ORMSBY

2023 Omaha Neighborhood Grants 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.

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BFF Omaha