



2022 Resilience Fund Grantmaking Framework

PURPOSE: The Resilience Fund was established in late 2020 to, “further address the impacts of COVID-19, bolster our region’s long-term efforts to rebuild, respond to emerging opportunities, help nonprofits adapt, and support creative new approaches and partnerships that would ideally benefit our communities well beyond recovery.”

While the purpose of the Resilience Fund remains the same, the way we understand and approach it has expanded, particularly when it comes to the “impacts of COVID-19.” While some in our communities continue to face challenges directly caused by or related to COVID-19, many more are addressing needs and challenges that existed well before 2020 but were amplified or made worse through the pandemic. Others face the challenge of continuing to strengthen our communities in a pandemic-changed social and economic environment still undergoing frequent and unpredictable shifts. Efforts to “recover” and “rebuild” have had to share space with the reality that COVID-19 is still with us. We believe that this requires us to continue approaching the Resilience Fund purpose with a flexible and open mindset.

CONTEXT: When we launched Resilience Fund Grants in 2021, we knew that we would be addressing a dynamic situation, which was not fully understood. To balance the need for learning with the need for decisive action aligned with our mission, vision, and values, we based our 2021 Resilience Fund grantmaking on a flexible framework (found [HERE](#)).

Under that 2021 framework, we funded 31 Resilience Fund grants in 2021 for a total of \$512,076. An additional 5 proposals emerged via the Resilience Fund Grant process, which we identified as key opportunities to increase impact and help gain a deeper understanding of community needs and opportunities. These 5 proposals were selected as “Focus Grants” and funded with an additional \$120,000 from other sources beyond the Resilience Fund.

BUILDING ON WHAT WE LEARN: The 2021 Resilience Fund framework was a “living document” that we expected to update with learning. As we made grants in 2021, we also worked to learn from the data, ongoing government relief efforts, nonprofit site visits and proposals, community members, and local leaders. Our Resilience Fund grant application asked applicants to share the biggest needs and opportunities they see among the population/s they serve. The answers to this question yielded valuable community feedback. This updated 2022 Resilience Fund grantmaking framework builds on what we have learned so far and reflects an ongoing effort to improve and strengthen our process.

2022 RESILIENCE FUND GOALS & PRIORITIES:

- **Geography:** We will consider proposals that fill crucial needs in our area (Thurston, Mason, and Lewis counties) and demonstrate strong connection to our local communities. We will prioritize proposals from organizations headquartered here.
- **Equity:** We will seek to ensure that funds are invested as equitably as possible by prioritizing the needs of underserved populations, communities, and geographic areas; and/or prioritizing organizations disproportionately impacted by the pandemic.
- **Impact:** We will prioritize applications that bolster community strength and long-term local resilience, including applications that address one or more of the following:
 - Provide crucial services or meet urgent needs
 - Fill gaps in COVID-recovery left out of the public sector response
 - Support multiple, deep, or interconnected local needs

- Expand services or improve capacity to better impact in the community
- Address needs related to our current insights (including support for children & youth, equity & inclusion, housing, mental health, technology, social connection & civic engagement—more details on these insights below).
- **Innovation and Collaboration:** We will seek to fund organizations that are adapting, innovating, and responding to changes in our social and economic environment; working with other organizations to do more than they can do alone; or making other changes to better serve the long-term health, well-being, and resilience of our communities.
- **Accountability:** We will prioritize services that are designed appropriately for the communities they serve and organizations that engage meaningfully with the perspectives of those most affected by the issues they seek to address.

2022 IMPLEMENTATION:

- **Approach:** We will accept both solicited and unsolicited applications via our online grant portal. Applications that are not chosen for Resilience Fund awards may be referred to other grant processes or funding sources.
- **Applications:** We will strive to keep applications as simple as possible while gathering enough information to evaluate proposals and support learning. For large requests, we may ask for additional narrative, financials, site visits, or other follow-up information.
- **Evaluation Process:** Community Foundation staff will perform the initial eligibility and due diligence review. Board members, led by the Ad Hoc Grants Committee, will serve as evaluators and recommend grants to our Board of Directors.
- **Flexibility:** Most grants will be unrestricted—an investment in mission rather than programs or projects—so that grantees can utilize the funds where most needed.
- **Iteration:** Learning will happen concurrently with our rolling grant process; information gleaned from the process will be used to inform, refine, and reevaluate future priorities.

2022 TIMELINE:

	1 st Quarter	2 nd Quarter	3 rd Quarter	4 th Quarter
Applications due	December 22, 2021	March 23, 2022	June 22, 2022	September 21, 2022
Award Notification	March 1, 2022	June 1, 2022	August 30, 2022	December 9, 2022

**Applications submitted through December 22, 2021, will be evaluated under the 2021 framework. 2023 Resilience Fund Grants will open in late 2022, contingent on remaining funds.*

ONGOING LEARNING: What we learned in 2021 helped us better understand community needs and opportunities. It also confirmed that there is still much to learn. We will continue to prioritize learning in 2022, including creating a more structured process to gather and share what we learn—both internally and with the broader community. We welcome additional data, feedback, and accountability from our community as we engage with this process.

Compared to public COVID-19 funding, the remaining balance of the Resilience Fund is small. Our hope for this fund is to keep it flexible and relationship-based, so that it can address unique needs outside federal and state investments. To avoid overlap, we will strive to remain aware of the public sector's ongoing response (including the American Rescue Plan funds we are

administering through Thurston Strong) so that we can adapt to and complement the public response. Relying on the trust and communication channels we have developed over the years, we will strive to fill gaps, help those in our communities who may otherwise be left out, and fund innovative solutions that do not fit neatly into government categories.

CURRENT INSIGHTS: The information below is a snapshot of some current insights from our learning so far, which have helped shape our 2022 Resilience Fund priorities. These insights were gleaned from data across multiple sources, community feedback, grant applications, site visits, and conversations with nonprofit leaders so far. We have paid special attention to emerging patterns and highlighted challenges and opportunities. This is not a comprehensive list, and many of these issues are complex and/or interconnected—impact in one area can lead to impacts in others.

- **Children & Youth:** Childcare and support for youth is a pressing issue creating ripple effects across organizations, sectors, the economy, and the broader community.
 - Childcare is affecting staffing shortages among nonprofits and for-profit businesses, and disproportionately keeping women out of the workforce. A lack of affordable childcare options creates barriers and affects the economy.
 - Months of social isolation have taken a toll on young people, negatively affecting their mental health, future hopes, academic success, and social connection. Many types of support—academic, social, emotional, and more—are needed.
 - With pandemic stressors and fewer in-person interactions, domestic violence and child abuse have increased, while limiting places where kids can get help.
 - Children and youth need places for healthy development, growth, and connection. This includes childcare settings and extracurricular opportunities as well as well as stable day-to-day living situations.
- **Equity & Inclusion:** Our communities are diversifying, with every county in our region seeing demographic changes and shifts that bring both challenges and opportunities.
 - We see a strong need to create more inclusion, honor the diverse experiences and stories of people from many backgrounds, address historic and ongoing inequities, create opportunities for people to connect across and celebrate differences, and build a community where everyone truly belongs.
 - Documentation and language barriers have made it more difficult for many immigrants to access support, leading to disproportionately negative outcomes.
 - Historically marginalized groups (e.g., LGBTQ+, Black, Indigenous, People of Color, rural residents, people with disabilities, and others) have experienced disproportionately negative health, economic, and housing outcomes—especially when they hold multiple, intersecting, and marginalized identities. Many have also been left out of the philanthropic response, challenging the Community Foundation to examine our own role and responsibility.
- **Housing:** Both affordable housing and permanent supportive housing are critical needs in our communities that intersect with many other challenges.
 - The number of unhoused people exceeds our current number of shelter beds, local jurisdictions are moving to clear encampments, and shelters have had to add more staff and spacing to accommodate COVID protocols.
 - Many households remain cost-burdened (30+% of income goes to rent/mortgage) leading to more housing insecurity and people left without housing.
 - Known factors driving local housing instability and homelessness: family rejection, substance dependency, domestic violence, abuse/neglect, physical & intellectual disabilities, housing affordability, and lack of job training. Overrepresented in

unhoused population: BIPOC (especially Indigenous), veterans, recently incarcerated, & LGBTQ+. Addressing contributing factors may be an opportunity for modest funding to make more of a difference.

- There is a trend of more seniors (65+ years) experiencing housing insecurity and homelessness for the first time in their lives.
- Supply chain issues and rising materials costs have exacerbated the challenges.
- Home repairs, including ADA adaptations, are one opportunity where smaller funding amounts can serve as a leverage point to keep people in their homes, avoiding the need for higher-cost solutions later.
- **Mental Health:** The ripple effects of the pandemic, loss of life, social turmoil, racial injustices, political polarization, physical isolation, economic struggles, and many other disruptions and interconnected factors experienced throughout our communities have strained our collective resilience and had a detrimental effect on mental health.
- **Animal Welfare:** The pandemic has disproportionately impacted low-income people in our community, including low-income pet owners. What's more, animals contribute in many ways to mental health—whether through therapeutic programs or just being present. The strain of keeping animals healthy over the past several months has taxed many household budgets and animal welfare organizations in surprising and significant ways.
- **Technology:** Technology has presented both challenges and opportunities.
 - For some, the experience of remote life and increased screen time have led to fatigue, physical & mental health problems, and increased feelings of isolation.
 - In other cases, adopting and increasing technology use has increased community engagement and expanded the reach of nonprofit programs—allowing more people to participate and access services.
 - Many organizations are moving toward a hybrid approach to maintain their expanded reach while also re-introducing more in-person opportunities for hands on engagement and social connection.
- **Social Connection & Civic Engagement:** Organizations across many focus areas—from youth to basic needs to the arts—have shared that a lack of social connection is a common struggle affecting mental health, individual and collective well-being, and creating isolation among the people and communities they serve.
 - Our communities need “third spaces”—places outside our homes and schools/workplaces where we can come together for connection and enrichment.
 - Arts organizations, especially small ones, were hit hard over the past 20+ months and many are still struggling to re-open and recover.
 - Places to celebrate culture and community are needed to create more belonging, learn, and engage across differences.
 - Many physical locations where underserved populations used to access resources have closed or limited services, making it even harder for people to find assistance.
 - Complex and far-reaching needs exceed the scope of nonprofit services and the philanthropic sector. Advocacy, cross-sector collaboration, and other opportunities to increase civic engagement are necessary for long-term resilience and changes.