

**WEGE FOUNDATION CROSS-CUTTING THEMES
AND PILLAR GOALS**
Revised – December 18, 2017

INTRODUCTION

The Wege Foundation's Grants Policy affirmed Peter M. Wege's five “pillars” and established target grantmaking allocations for each of these topics of interest:

1. Arts & Culture (25%)
2. Environment (25%)
3. Education (25%)
4. Health Care (15%)
5. Community Service (10%)

In addition, the Wege Foundation has long embraced certain cross-cutting themes applicable to all five pillars, such as requiring LEED certification for capital grants and a commitment to helping the vulnerable and disadvantaged. The Foundation is in the process of clarifying these cross-cutting themes and of developing results-oriented goals for each of the pillars to focus its grant making, provide better guidance to potential applicants and enhance evaluation.

As with the grantmaking allocations among the pillars, these themes and goals are intended as “targets” to guide the Grants Review Committee and staff in recruiting and reviewing grant applications. The Foundation will continue to be flexible and strategically opportunistic in funding initiatives that forward Mr. Wege’s goal that Grand Rapids become “the best medium-sized city in the United States.”

CROSS-CUTTING THEMES

(Applicable to all pillars)

THEME #1 - DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION: Implement the Foundation's new ["Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Policy"](#) with respect to all pillars and all grantees.

THEME #2 - CIVIC ENGAGEMENT: Foster civic engagement¹ through grantees that intentionally and systematically develop in the individuals they serve the combination of knowledge, skills, values and motivation to make a difference in civic life and policy choices.

THEME #3 - ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY: Encourage grantees to demonstrate environmental responsibility by rigorously tracking, taking into account and seeking to eliminate or minimize the adverse environmental impacts of grantees' programs, activities, facilities and

¹ A civically engaged individual recognizes himself or herself as a member of a larger social fabric and considers social problems to be at least partly his or her own. Civic engagement can take many forms, from individual voluntarism to organizational involvement to electoral participation. It can include efforts to directly address an issue, work with others in a community to solve a problem or interact with the institutions of representative democracy. Civic engagement encompasses a range of specific activities such as working in a soup kitchen, serving on a neighborhood association, writing a letter to an elected official or voting. An engaged citizen should have the ability, agency and opportunity to move comfortably among these various types of civic acts.

operations and by inculcating values of and educating about environmental stewardship the people they serve including their board, staff, volunteers, vendors, collaborators, partners, constituents and beneficiaries of their programs.

THEME #4 - ORGANIZATIONAL SUSTAINABILITY: Encourage grantees to achieve organizational sustainability through a clear mission; thoughtful long-term planning and near-term implementation; outstanding board and staff leadership; effective use of volunteers; diverse, robust and stable revenue streams; creative fundraising programs expanding their donor base; rigorous budgeting and financial controls; effective collaboration and partnerships; and satisfied beneficiaries of programs and services.

PILLAR GOALS

Arts & Culture

ARTS & CULTURE GOAL #1: Foster authentic artistic and cultural expression by diverse neighborhoods and communities, especially those that are historically disadvantaged.

*Illustrative grants: **Girls Chorale Academy** – After school choir program for young girls; **Ebony Road Players** – Theatre arts education focused on children of color and work with local playwrights to create original, community-based work; **DisArt** – Festival of disability art practitioners; **Grandville Avenue Art & Humanities** – Provide youth opportunities to explore their creativity, celebrate their culture and the cultures of others and build community; **Mosaic Film Experience** – Work with disadvantaged teens on training, festival and social media platform for videos shot on mobile devices.*

ARTS & CULTURE GOAL #2: Assure affordable and welcoming access by lower-income and diverse individuals to a wide variety of artistic and cultural exhibits and performances through relevant programming and aggressive outreach.

*Illustrative grants: **Grand Rapids Children’s Museum** – Reduced admission rates for economically-disadvantaged children and families; **Grand Rapids Symphony** – Network of access points for people of all ages and walks of life to engage with orchestral music; **Opera Grand Rapids** – Collaborate with GR Public Schools to bring opera instruction to middle school students.*

Education

EDUCATION GOAL #1: Assure access to extracurricular services and programming (pre-K through post-secondary) that prepare disadvantaged students to learn and enhance academic and life skills achievements to promote the next level of development.

*Illustrative grants: **Family Futures** – Appropriate child development tracking and parent coaching; **Grand Rapids Community College Foundation** – Support and mentoring for*

*Latino students; **Girl Scouts Shore to Shore** – STEM and outdoor learning experiences; **Student Advancement Foundation** – Teach for the Watershed.*

EDUCATION GOAL #2: Support effective strategies for involvement by adult care-givers and mentors in children’s education, especially in public schools with diverse student populations.

***Illustrative grants: Roosevelt Park Ministries** – English language literacy program for adult learners; **Literacy Center of West Michigan** – Strengthen reading and language level of parents and increase the number of literacy activities in the home.*

Environment

ENVIRONMENT (& EDUCATION) GOAL #1: Assure access to experiential environmental education for public school students that is regular, systematic, integrated with curricula, and connected with “real world” community initiatives such as Grand River restoration, renewable energy & efficiency, water conservation and protection, addressing climate change, wildlife habitat conservation and sustainable food systems.

***Illustrative grants: City of Grand Rapids Parks and Recs** – Hands on experiential outdoor education through Canoe Mobile; **Friends of Grand Rapids Parks** – Tree planting in sensitive ecosystems at public schools integrated with curricula; **Lower Grand River Organization of Watersheds** – Engage urban youth in projects reducing urban and agricultural run-off pollution of two Grand River watersheds.*

ENVIRONMENT GOAL #2: Develop and implement long-term strategy to restore, protect, and make available for appropriate uses by all the lower Grand River watershed, including restoration of the namesake rapids in downtown Grand Rapids.

***Illustrative grants: American Rivers** – Green storm water banking and financing; **River Network** – Empower Latino community to support restoration and protection of waterways; **Ottawa County Parks Foundation** – Support multi-use pathway and protecting key natural features from city limits of GR downstream to river mouth at Lake Michigan; **West Michigan Environmental Action Council** – Green stormwater runoff management practices in underserved neighborhoods.*

ENVIRONMENT GOAL #3: Assure Grand Rapids continues to be a national and international leader in its commitment to sustainable development, i.e. “Economicology.”

***Illustrative grants: Habitat for Humanity** – Green home upgrades for affordable housing; **Green Home Institute** – Green home certification programs for affordable housing projects; **Inner City Christian Federation** – Upgrade approximately 150 single family affordable homes to certified green homes.*

Community Service

COMMUNITY SERVICE GOAL #1: Assure emergency and continuing compassionate support during disruptive life experiences such as spouse/partner/child abuse, homelessness, joblessness and substance abuse.

*Illustrative grants: **HOAP Inc.** – Teen mom and children support program; **Family Promise** – Support that provides resources to avoid homelessness; **Guiding Light Mission** – Shelter for homeless population that includes health screenings, immunizations and employment support.*

COMMUNITY SERVICE GOAL #2: Advance equity of economic opportunities for marginalized individuals, including support for entrepreneurship and businesses led by individuals of color.

*Illustrative grants: **Ferris Foundation** – Mentorship entrepreneur program to help Latinos support successful businesses; **GROW** – Training and education for women to start, grow and expand their businesses; **Micah Center** – Leadership and organizing training for low wage workers, food processing and farm workers to recoup lost wages.*

Health Care

HEALTH CARE GOAL #1: Reduce/eliminate racial and class disparities in key health outcomes through prevention and access to care, especially among children and programs that support seniors to remain in their homes.

*Illustrative grants: **Our Kitchen Table** – Farm to School food growing program that includes food systems education to Grand Rapids youth; **United Church Outreach Ministries** – Health program that includes focus on food justice; **Heartside Ministry** – Substance abuse and mental health treatment through art therapy; **Samaritus** – Refugee support to navigate health system; **Grand Rapids Red Project**– AIDS and HIV prevention, education and support.*

HEALTH CARE GOAL #2: Expand universal access to transportation and recreational opportunities for differently-abled individuals.

*Illustrative grants: **Alternatives in Motion** – Refurbishing and recycling wheel chairs; **Disability Advocates** – Expand public transportation for people with disabilities; **Mary Free Bed YMCA** – Universal design facility and grounds.*