

**WEGE FOUNDATION CROSS-CUTTING THEMES  
AND PILLAR GOALS**  
*Revised – May 31, 2018*

**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 has clarified these cross-cutting themes and developed 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 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 "Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Policy" with respect to all pillars and all grantees.

**THEME #2 - CIVIC ENGAGEMENT:** Foster civic engagement<sup>1</sup> 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

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<sup>1</sup> 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 board, 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: **Grand Rapids Symphony** - Organizational transformation to embrace diversity, equity & inclusion in programming, community outreach & staffing (strong DEI theme alignment); **Grand Rapids Civic Theatre** – Summer theatre program; **New City Kids** – Music program with academic and arts focus; **Opera Grand Rapids** – Children’s Opera Program; **Center of African American Art & History** – Operating support for promoting cross-cultural understanding; **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 Symphony** - Organizational transformation to embrace diversity, equity & inclusion in programming, community outreach & staffing (strong DEI theme alignment); **Grand Rapids Children’s Museum** – Reduced admission rates for economically-disadvantaged children and families; **Grand Rapids Symphony** – **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: **MI Women’s Foundation** – Skills development for next generation of women leaders; **Streams of Hope** – Tutoring and academic for underserved youth and under-resourced schools; **IKUS Life Enrichment Services** – Job skills development and employment opportunities for people with disabilities; **Grand Rapids Community College Foundation** – Support and mentoring for Latino students; **Girl Scouts Shore to Shore** – STEM and outdoor learning experiences.*

**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: **Endless Opportunities** – Youth development through mentoring for underserved students of color; **The Other Way Ministries** – English as a Second Language classes to increase capacity of adults to acquire gainful employment; **The Refugee Education Center** – Refugee support services to help refugees transition to new culture; **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: **Grand Valley Metro Council** – Sustainable agriculture education in Rogue River watershed; **City of Grand Rapids Parks and Rec & Grand Rapids Public Schools** – “Connecting Children to Nature” partnership at 4 GRPS sites in under-parked neighborhoods; **Grand Rapids Public Museum** – Pilot augmented reality digital learning platform; **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: **Michigan Association of Conservation Districts** – Build network of support for invasive species control; **Michigan League of Conservation Voters** – Expand sustained citizen engagement, especially on safe drinking water issues; **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 Grand River mouth at Lake Michigan;*

*West Michigan Environmental Action Council – Green infrastructure 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: Michigan Environmental Council – Build statewide equitable clean energy network that includes W. MI; Habitat for Humanity – Green home upgrades for affordable housing; Green Home Institute – LEED certification programs for affordable housing projects; Inner City Christian Federation – Upgrade single family affordable homes to certified green homes; Environmental Law & Policy Center – Technical, legal and civic engagement to meet Grand Rapids’ 100% renewable energy goal by 2022 (strong Civic Engagement theme alignment); American Civil Liberties Union Fund of Michigan – Civic engagement through voting modernization (strong Civic Engagement theme alignment).*

### **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: The Dwelling Place – LEED certified affordable housing units; Mel Trotter Ministries – Homeless shelter for transgender youth; HOAP Inc. – Teen mother 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; Dwelling Place – Affordable LEED housing using tax credit funding (strong Organizational Sustainability theme alignment).*

**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: The Other Way Ministries – Resident leadership development and neighborhood capacity building; West Michigan Hispanic Chamber – Increase capacity and expand food safety certification; Seeds of Promise – Employment and career training; MOKA Corporation – Employability skills training for people with disabilities; Ferris Foundation – Mentorship entrepreneur program to help Latinos support successful businesses; Micah Center – Leadership and organizing training for low wage workers, food processing and farm workers to recoup lost wages; Next Step of West Michigan – Green product development by recycling scrap from manufacturing division (strong Environmental Sustainability theme alignment).*

## 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: **Health Intervention Services** – Disease management for people with diabetes and hypertension; **Grand Rapids African American Health Institute** – Health Advocacy Fellow; **Our Kitchen Table** – Farm to School food growing program that includes food systems education of Grand Rapids youth; **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** – Refurbish and recycle wheel chairs; **Disability Advocates** – Expand public transportation for people with disabilities; **Mary Free Bed YMCA** – Universal design facility and grounds.*