

WEGE FOUNDATION CROSS-CUTTING THEMES AND PILLAR GOALS
Revised – June 21, 2019

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 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

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 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.

or minimize the adverse environmental impacts of grantees' programs, activities, facilities and 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.

*Example grants: **Grand Rapids Symphony** - Organizational transformation to embrace diversity, equity & inclusion in programming, community outreach & staffing (strong DEI theme alignment); **New City Kids** – Music program with academic and arts focus; **Center of African American Art & History** – Operating support for promoting crosscultural understanding; **Grandville Avenue Art & Humanities** – Youth opportunities to explore their creativity, celebrate their culture, the cultures of others and build community; **Diatrobe Inc.** – Poetry and spoken word workshops for youth from underserved communities.*

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.

*Example grants: **Grand Rapids Children's Museum** – Reduced admission rates for economically disadvantaged children and families; **Opera Grand Rapids** – Collaborate with GR Public Schools to bring opera instruction to middle school students; **Grand Rapids Civic Theatre** – Scholarships for a Summer Repertory Intensive Theatre youth camp; **Artist Creating Together, Inc.** – Mobile studio that provides access to art, cultural, and educational experiences for disabled individuals.*

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.

*Example grants: **MI Women’s Foundation** – Skills development for the next generation of women leaders; **Streams of Hope** – Tutoring and academic support for underserved youth and under-resourced schools; **Catholic Central** – Scholarships for Latino students; **Grand Rapids Community College Foundation** – Support and mentoring for Latino students; **Girls Growing II Women** – Personal and professional mentoring for young women; **Realism is Loyalty** – Summer mentoring program for young adults housed at the Kent County Juvenile Center.*

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.

*Example grants: **Endless Opportunities** – Youth development through mentoring for underserved students of color; **Urban League** – Mentoring and academic support for African American male high schoolers; **The Refugee Education Center** – 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; **Grand Rapids Initiative for Leaders** – Comprehensive leadership and mentoring program for at risk teens and young adults; **Early Learning Neighborhood Collaborative** – Free pre-school and parent skills development.*

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.

*Example grants: **Outdoor Discovery Center** – Environmental education and outdoor experiences for youth; **City of Grand Rapids Parks and Rec & Grand Rapids Public Schools** – “Connecting Children to Nature” partnership at four GRPS sites in underparked 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; **GREEN** – Collaboration of nine environmental education organizations to provide experiential environmental education.*

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.

*Example 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; **IPM Institute of North America Inc.** – Reduce negative impacts of synthetic lawn care chemicals; **Grand Valley Metro Council** – Restoration of Cold Creek Watershed (strong Civic Engagement theme alignment); **National Wildlife Federation** – Support for houses of worship to protect watersheds, create habitat and build diverse, resilient communities.

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

Example 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 (strong Civic Engagement theme alignment); **American Civil Liberties Union Fund of Michigan** – Voting modernization (strong Civic Engagement theme alignment); **West Michigan Sustainable Business Forum** – Equitable sustainability program that addresses racial and economic inequities (strong DEI theme alignment); **Groundwork Center** – Recruit W MI business leaders on climate change and renewable energy.

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.

Example grants: **Mel Trotter Ministries** – Homeless shelter for LGBTQ youth; **3-11 Youth Housing** – Safe & affordable housing for youth ages 18-24 including teen parents; **Family Promise** – 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); **HOAP Inc.** – Teen mother and children support program.

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

Example grants: **Treetops Collective** – Services for refugee women & teen girls including ESL & financial classes; **Start Garden** – Entrepreneurial support for start-up businesses for marginalized communities; **MOKA Corporation** – Employability skills training for people with disabilities; **Ferris State University Foundation** – Mentorship entrepreneur program to help Latinos develop successful businesses; **Micah Center** – Develop

*leadership skills and relational power building (strong Civic Engagement theme alignment); **Next Step of West Michigan** – Green product development by recycling scrap from manufacturing division (strong Environmental Sustainability theme alignment); **Women’s Resource Center** - Resources that remove barriers and build employability skills for women re-entering the workforce; **Rende Progress Capital** – Alternative financial lending to create economic equity for excluded entrepreneurs; **West Michigan Hispanic Chamber of Commerce** – Education & financial training to increase capacity of Latino business owners; **Michigan Non-Profit Association** – Ensuring marginalized individuals and hard to count communities complete census.*

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.

*Example grants: **Family Outreach Center** – Behavioral health services for underserved populations; **Grand Rapids African American Health Institute** – Health advocacy fellow; **Cherry Street Services** – Health care home visit services for senior citizens; **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; **Access of West Michigan** – Education and capacity building to address the root cause of existing systems & policies that perpetuate food insecurities (strong Civic Engagement theme alignment).*

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

*Example 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; **Mary Free Bed Rehabilitation Hospital** – Wheelchair and adaptive sports program that provides accessible recreation opportunities to patients; **Ronald McDonald House of Western Michigan Inc.** – Living accommodations and support services for families with sick children; **Senior Neighbors, Inc.** – Elderly support services.*