



Final Report:
**Engagement Towards a
Grantmaking
Framework**

Somos Comunidad

Grand Rapids Community Foundation

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Consulting

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Our Scope

Brigham Consulting LLC began a scope of work with Grand Rapids Community Foundation in early 2020, before the height of the COVID 19 pandemic. Supported by a grant from W.K. Kellogg Foundation's Catalyzing Community Giving initiative, Brigham Consulting was asked to support GRCF by providing strategic support to the Latinx Advisory Council (LAC) and the African American Heritage Fund (AAHF). We were to provide this support through project management of both committees, design and execution of a strategic visioning and comprehensive planning process, development of an actionable strategic plan, and the development of recommendations regarding the plan's implementation and support structure.

Part of the scope with what is now known as the **Black Legacy Fund [BLF]** (formerly the African American Heritage Fund) and **Somos Comunidad** (formerly known as the Latino Advisory Committee to engage the Black and Latino/a/x communities respectively with the aim of reimagining philanthropy. The Funds were interested in building and sustaining authentic relationships with the communities in ways that acknowledge the traditional ways that Black and Latino/a/x communities have always engaged in "philanthropy" and working towards more effective social outcomes for those communities.

Obviously, the pandemic brought many challenges, particularly those that disproportionately and negatively impacted the Black and Latino/a/x communities. But the challenges also included the inability for the Funds to engage with the communities in

the ways they envisioned. As such, the body of work went forth minus the community engagement elements; however, not without useful capacity building within the Funds themselves [BLF and Somos Funds in particular] that would serve to undergird their collective ways of working and the grantmaking they were positioning themselves to take up.

Some of the capacity building elements [charter, racial equity guideposts; community agreements] are included in the grantmaking framework, as they represent equity structures, processes and practices that operationalize an equity lens in the external work of the Fund, as well as the internal operations and norms of the committee, including relationships amongst the identity Funds, between the Fund and the communities, and the Fund and the Foundation. Further explication of the aforementioned capacity building elements are evident below.

Figure 1 represents a set of recommendations provided to the Black Legacy Fund at the conclusion of the initial engagement.

Fig. 1 2021 Recommendations to BLF

Additional Recommendations

- Familiar ways of being that establish and maintain liberated ways of being
- The role of Culture Keeper Role
- Habitualizing a new culture for philanthropy
- Implementation of a regular calendar & expectations for the committee
- Determining & implementing consistency of the existing and new roles
- Establishing & maintaining a solid relationship with the Black community
- Building the structure of decision-making in concert with your grantmaking cycle that is consistent
- Deliberate on considerations for fund structure and distribution that would align with the values of RE guideposts

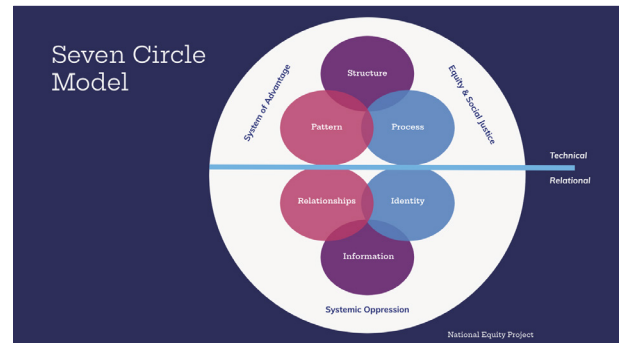
In Feb 2022, Grand Rapids Community Foundation reached out to Brigham Consulting, LLC to re-engage around the desire to do authentic community engagement. As concerns about COVID-19 began to wane with the increase of vaccination rates, the Foundation felt it important to attempt to enlist and re-engage relationships with respective community members represented by the identity-based funds. In this engagement, the scope broadened to include Our LGBTQ Fund, which had been working to racially diversify committee membership; grow its capacity to utilize a racial equity lens; build and deepen relationships amongst committee members and with BIPOC LGBTQ community members towards greater impact in the LGBTQ community.

Our Process

The philosophy that undergirded this project included the belief in community to solve for its own problems, and more so, to acknowledge the pride, love, joy, and set of assets that exists in communities, for which there is a desire to grow. Also driving this scope was the aspiration to build relationships in these respective communities in more authentic and sustainable ways, which included thinking about the make-up of the Fund committees. We know that centering relational, humanizing, and liberating ways of being are often what is often missing, and the lack thereof creates residence for misunderstanding and harm. For that reason, we place a premium on focusing on “how” we do our work, and as such, we set the groundwork for reverse engagement, that is conscious action toward non-extractive means of engagement, that right size the power relationship between the Foundation, the Fund, and community. Figure 2 is an illustration of the Seven Circle Model, a framework that supported the concept and acknowledged the need to hold identity and rela-

tionships as foundational for how programs and organizations should be developed, as opposed to the technical default; and recognized the systems of oppression and advantage that we are all situated in.

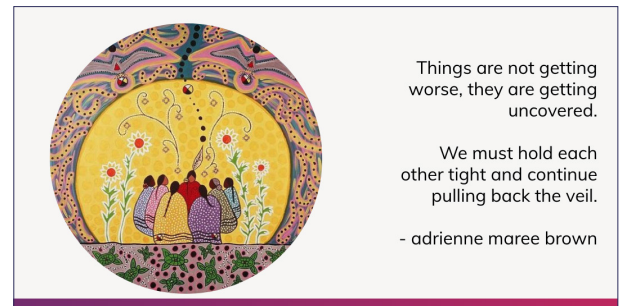
Fig. 2 Seven Circle Model



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In service of supporting the aims of the Funds to sustain these ways of being, it was important that they were situated with the capacity, agency, and will to hold authentic relationships with the communities, within the committees, and in the structures and operations of the Funds. So we advanced notions of reimagining philanthropy with a racial lens, attending to power, and understanding our personal and collective “why” for participating as Fund committee members.

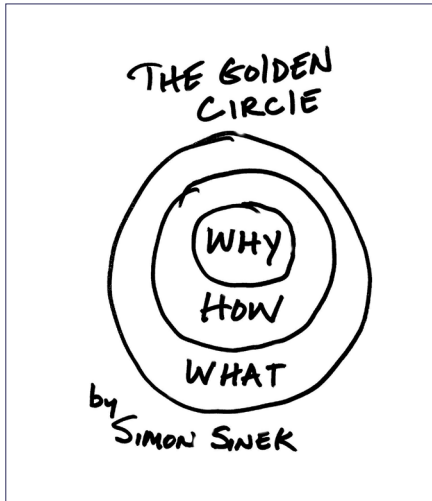
Fig. 3 Example of the spirit of the work



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²Modified from Dalmau Group & National Equity Project

³Example of the spirit of the work (Apr & May Fund Mtgs)



Exploring our “why” draws from the work of Simon Sinek, we believe that the most powerful forms of work are rooted in a clear understanding of WHY this work is important. This clear articulation of the WHY of the work is then capable of driving HOW the work is accomplished, and WHAT the end product should be. Brigham consulting’s first “move” with both the LAC and AAHF committees was to spend time clearly articulating the WHY of both committees, through a series of visioning activities. The end result of those activities was a clear articulation of each committee’s WHY in the form of a charter. These charters serve as guiding documents for the work of each committee⁴ and are pivotal for the grantmaking framework.⁵

Community Open House

On June 27, 2022, the Grand Rapids Community Foundation hosted a Community Open House for the affinity group funds for the purpose of listening and engagement. The open house served as a catalytic event to signal the desire to reconnect and build relationships with the Black, Latino/a/x, and LGBTQ+ community members and leaders and to gather feedback regarding the priorities and strategic direction of each of the Funds.

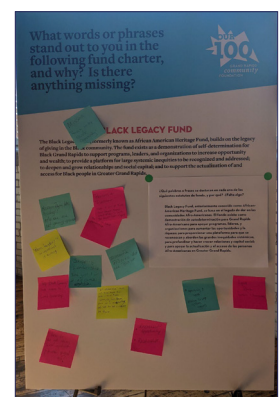
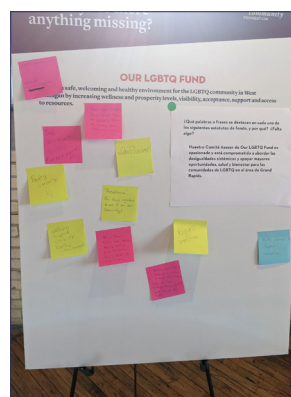
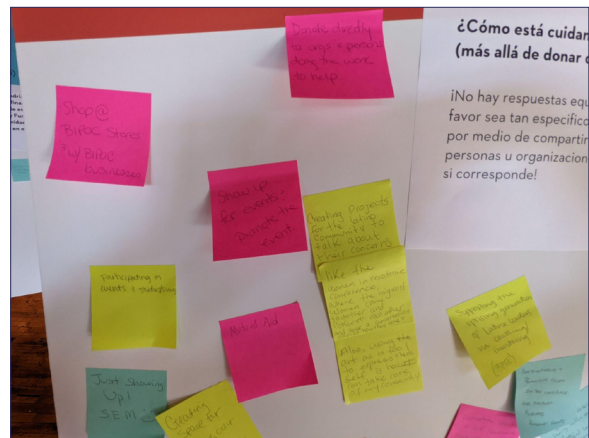
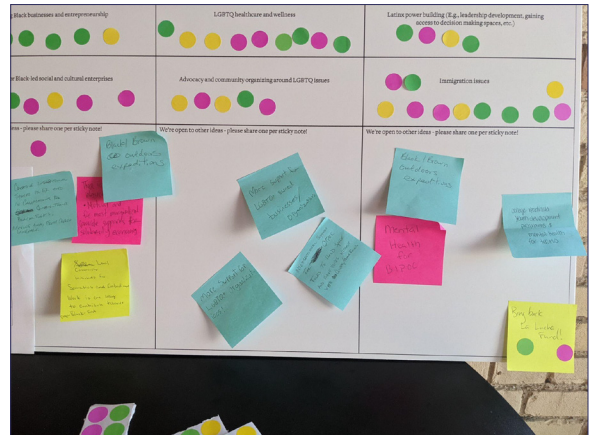
Across the affinity groups, community members are clear on who they view as their “helpers” in the community, with close friends, mentors/peers ranking first, while family and the Latina Network were tied at second.

⁴2020 Final Report from Brigham Consulting

⁵Because Brigham Consulting was not initially contracted to do deep engagement work with Our LGBTQ Fund, they did not undergo a charter development process, but the process is recommended as they move towards reconstituting the committee and set of internal and community relationships.

Five key themes emerged as points of feedback from the Open House:

1. Grand Rapids Community Foundation should continue to **address and dismantle inequities in philanthropic and grantmaking systems that lack inclusion and accessibility** for BIPOC and LGBTQ+ communities.
2. Values that surfaced throughout the conversation to **uphold and prioritize** across BIPOC and LGBTQ+ communities included (but are not limited to): **self-determination, authentic representation, acceptance, and increased opportunities for wealth building.**⁶
3. **Supporting racial + social justice movements, local activism, and having awareness around intersectional issues is critical to the work of GRCF and a way for the foundation to build power in BIPOC and LGBTQ+ communities.**
4. The Black Legacy Fund, Somos Comunidad Fund, and Our LGBTQ Fund provide a **space where marginalized voices are given a platform to participate in philanthropy, fund important issues in their communities, and establish a legacy of giving.** GRCF should continue to support and promote these efforts authentically and inclusively.
5. **Supporting youth and creating opportunities for talent and leadership development** are important issues to community members across the affinity group funds that the foundation should continue to invest in.



⁶Note: Wealth building in this context does not solely represent monetary assets directly related to capitalism, but also the creation of mutual aid spaces and opportunities.



Focus Groups

Between July 18-July 27, the three Funds [BLF, Somos Comunidad, & Our LGBTQ]:

| 7 Focus Groups | 76 Participating Community Members | Multiple Sessions |
|---|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hosted 7 focus groups in the community at organizations and companies that were situated in and focused on the respective communities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Welcomed 76 community members [15 members of the Black community; 39 members of the Latino/a/x community; and; 22 members of the LGBTQ+ community, all representing BIPOC communities, except 3 members identifying as white], with intersectional identities represented across all focus groups | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conducted 4 in-person sessions and 3 virtual sessions Lead 1 Spanish-only session |

Leaning into the aim to reimagine philanthropy, focus group questions bent toward aspirational, positive-leaning inquiries. They included:

1. **What does your ideal community look, feel, taste, sound like?**
2. **What do you love about your community?**
3. **What concerns about your community keep you up at night?**
4. **What would you like to see more of in your community?**

One of the initial aims of this phase of the engagement is to make space for intersectionality of identity and ideas that hold the complexity of how we are situated, diminish the artificial and inaccurate barriers of identity between the Funds, and that lend itself to better grantmaking strategies. As such, it is important to illuminate a set of key

collective themes were evident across the three identify Funds:

1. Supporting the Youth of the Community

Across all responses and groups, this was one of the most defining issues for all communities. **Communities want to know how best to support youth to ensure they thrive to their full potential and expression of who they should be in the world.** This includes having access to safe spaces that provide them with options for activities that keep them healthy and engaged and prevention programs around substance abuse, risky behaviors, and exposure to violence. There are concerns around youth lacking acceptance from within their schools, families, and the broader community, which is felt even more by BIPOC queer and/or trans youth.

There is a **call for investment into additional data collection focusing on youth in areas such as housing, health care, and education.** Additional research around youth in these areas, and others, would provide them and the issues that affect them with more visibility, helping to better match funding to meet needs.

2. Elevating Community Voices + Decision-Making Power:

While community members appreciate having spaces (such as the listening sessions and focus groups) to engage around important issues, they would like to move **beyond conversational stages to action and impact.** BIPOC and LGBTQ communities (acknowledging both distinct and intersecting identities amongst each other) **want to build power and have a voice in decision-making processes that directly affect them.**

For some communities, this might look like supporting local social, racial, and environmental justice activists. Other communities have expressed wanting to influence public policy processes from which they may have been excluded in the past due to systemic racism and systems of oppression. For others, it might mean building capacity for their community by offering continuing education for adults, leadership, and business development. In addition, communities want to see more representation in areas such as business, health care, and local government sectors.

3. Acceptance + Safety:

Many participants feel that while Grand Rapids has grown and changed over the last few decades to become more diverse and inclusive, it still has a very Eurocentric feel in its culture, norms, and systems. **There is a clear need to**

build community education and awareness around the lived experiences and realities of BIPOC and LGBTQ communities (both distinctly and in their intersections). While in recent years, there has been more symbolic support for social and racial justice movements (the presence of Black Lives Matter signs and Pride flags, for example), some feel that these are performative rather than concrete actions to demonstrate solidarity or support.

In addition, many expressed feeling unsafe or unwelcome in physical spaces around the city; individuals want to know they will be accepted wholly for who they are and not fear that they will be victims of violence or discrimination based on their identity, language, or culture.

Some individuals also expressed the need to break down stigmas within their communities due to generational or cultural reasons and the need to be supported through those conversations and processes through better access to mental health or spaces with those of similar lived experiences and identities.

4. Access to Basic Needs:

Given the ongoing effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, rising inflation, and costs, **those already experiencing a lack of basic needs and access to resources continue to be the most vulnerable and affected.**

For the Latinx/e community, in particular, the need to provide government documentation to receive services creates barriers that can potentially affect an individual and their family's access to housing, food, and other essential needs. In addition, language barriers to filling out forms or receiving information can cause delays in submitting time-sensitive

applications.

Communities also expressed concerns about housing costs, including rising rents and lack of access to pathways for home ownership. In addition, there is a concern around youth and the elderly experiencing houselessness and finding ways to best support them.

5. Why We Love Our Community and Why We're Hopeful:

While there are many challenges and barriers that community members expressed throughout their conversations, one thing that stands out is that people care about this community - their family, friends, neighbors, and neighborhoods - and that all want to see them thrive and flourish. Grand Rapids is a place that people feel has access to parks, nature, and spaces that are welcoming to families.

People appreciate the variety of cultural festivals, presentations, and community spaces that offer opportunities to attend them. In addition, participants feel that their city nurtures and supports spaces for creativity and the arts. Community members strongly support small and local-owned businesses and enjoy building relationships with owners.

Participants across all groups felt it was important to express why they love their community and how they are hopeful that their voices will make a difference for positive change now and for future generations.

While these five themes were evident across the three identity-based Funds, each carried specific themes that are important to name.



Somos Comunidad Fund's 5 key themes included:



Prioritizing **access to stable, safe, and affordable housing** for families.



Eliminating barriers (such as documentation, location, language, etc.) to accessing resources that include basic needs and other community priorities such as education and training, legal services, and workforce development.



Providing safe spaces for **youth to be in community and opportunities for them to thrive** - including being able to pursue a variety of career choices, such as vocational trades.



Prioritizing issues important to the community and addressing safety, gun violence, drugs, and environmental justice concerns; and as was true for all three identity-based Funds.

It's also important to recognize what **people love and appreciate about their community!** Grand Rapids is a place where meaningful connections can happen in day-to-day spaces and allow for

building community and networks amongst neighbors and families. Given how the non-profit and philanthropic structures are oriented around problematization [particularly for communities made marginalized by systems and structures], more space and energy is necessary to better understand, and create discourse and action around the assets, sources of love and appreciation, and aspirations within respective communities⁹.


Key Themes:
Somos Comunidad Fund

| | | | |
|---|--|--|--|
| <p>• Prioritize Housing Prioritizing access to stable, safe, and affordable housing for families</p> | <p>• Eliminate Barriers to Access Eliminating barriers (such as documentation, location, language, etc.) to accessing resources that include basic needs and other community priorities such as education & training, legal services, and workforce development</p> | <p>• Spaces for Youth to Thrive Providing safe spaces for youth to be in community and opportunities for them to thrive - including being able to pursue a variety of career choices, including vocational trades</p> | <p>• Prioritizing Community Concerns Prioritizing issues important to the community and addressing safety, gun violence, drugs, and environmental justice concerns.</p> |
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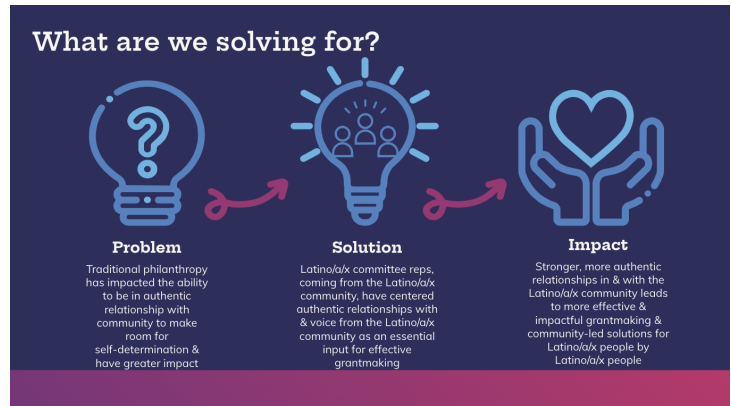
• Important to recognize what people love and appreciate about their community AND that they love and appreciate their community!

Grantmaking Framework

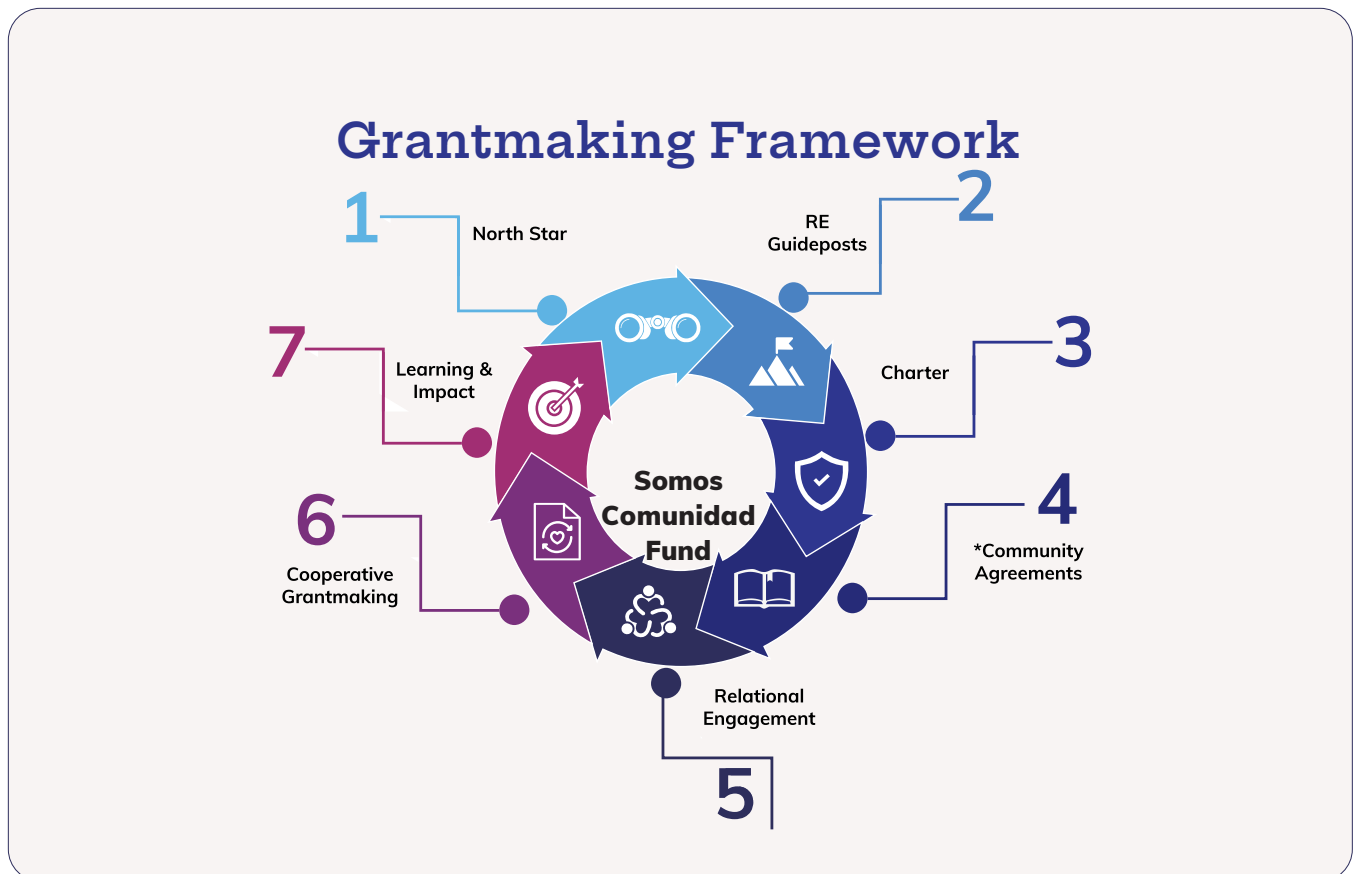
The focus groups yielded fruitful guidance that was instructive for the design of the grantmaking framework. In particular, the focus groups helped the Fund hear the aspirations of community members that act as inputs for strategic grantmaking priorities. And as a reminder, in addition to hearing and providing an invitation to be in stronger relationship with the Latino/a/x community, Somos Comunidad Fund was also committed to developing the kind of relationships with community that leads to a focus on the aspirations and most effective solutions for the Latino/a/x community.

⁹For more details on individual responses, please see the Somos Comunidad Fund Community Focus Group Report (July 2022)

Somos Comunidad Fund is interested in being in authentic relationships with the Latino/a/x community members and being represented on the Fund by said members to do more powerful and authentic grant-making with the Latino/a/x community.



As Brigham Consulting, LLC reflected on the journey with Somos Comunidad Fund, their aims, aspirations and pain points; the concepts and structures they moved to implement; and the expressed desire to have a grantmaking framework that aligned with the values and vision held for the Latino/a/x community, it was important that a framework be designed that attended to the current reality of the Fund being situated inside a traditional community foundation that is leaning into its North Star, while expanding opportunities for to make room for the voices and aspirations of those from the Latino/a/x who are often unheard, ignored or not invited to engage. We feel the recommended grantmaking framework below gets us close to that expansive vision.







North Star

The Grand Rapids Community Foundation has an espoused vision for how to live out equitable ways of being in their philanthropic efforts that create the conditions for all West Michigan residents to thrive. This is important, as the recommendations for this more liberating grantmaking framework help the Foundation to live into its North Star. More exact, the Grand Rapids Community Foundation states:

“For West Michigan to grow and prosper, we must make sure that everyone can apply **their talents and creativity to fuel our **future**. It is only by **connecting across perspectives and overcoming inequities** that we can **build and sustain an inclusive economy and thriving community**.”**

Racial Equity Guideposts

Generally speaking, the importance of using a racial equity lens helps to:

-  **Sharpen a focus on outcomes (i.e. a change in conditions), rather than outputs (i.e. number of people served)**
-  **Uncovers patterns of inequity that illustrate how society distributes benefits and disadvantages in predictable ways by race**
-  **Separate symptoms from root causes**
-  **Reveal how racism (structural, interpersonal, internalized) is relevant to ALL groups in service of all of our humanity, and not relegated to melanated groups as an issue that is theirs to contend with. Racism interrupts the humanity of all, even those who are believed to be privileged and have benefit.**

Practically and more specifically, racial equity guideposts help at the global level, but also in the particulars of grantmaking. It is encouraged that the Somos Comunidad Fund be able to, with the assistance of the Latino/a/x community and resources from the Grand Rapids Community Foundation:

- **Identify RE indicators for the fund (even if by grant cycle)**
- **Know strategies that are effective in Afro-Latino/a/x and undocumented communities**
- **Refuse universal approaches. Focus on targeted universalism, with cultural intelligence**
- **Regular & sustained engagement with Afro-Latino/a/x communities & undocumented**
- **Tether programmatic interventions with system and policy change**
- **Ensure root cause analysis**



Somos Comunidad Fund Charter

Somos Comunidad Fund members went through a reflective journey of: 1) the historical journey of the Latino Advisory Committee (LAC); 2) their experiences as Latino/a/x people in West Michigan; their aspirations for Latino/a/x people in West Michigan; and 4) how Somos Comunidad Fund (formerly LAC) aims to constitute itself in order to impact the aspirations and needs of Latino/a/x in West Michigan. One exercise Somos Comunidad members experienced is to explore their “why” for the committee. This was useful, as there was a feeling that not all aspirations and needs were being surfaced, or moreover, there Latino/a/x voices being missed [namely, Latino/a/x members from neighborhoods outside of those deemed Latino/a/x; Afro-Latino voices; voices themselves and not agents (i.e. organizational voice) of Latino/a/x community members. In essence, this results in no service, mis-service, and dis-service to the Latino/a/x community, as the community as a whole is not being seen or heard.

In addition to the “why” exercise helping committee members orient their intentions for, with and towards the Latino/a/x community, the “why” exercise also allowed the Somos Comunidad Fund to land on a charter that clearly articulated their vision for the Latino/a/x community and their collective work together. The Somos Comunidad Fund Charter states:

“ Guided by the voices of our Latinx community we seek to reimagine philanthropy for ourselves. We recognize the vibrancy of our diverse cultures and the philanthropy that exists within our communities. This fund will serve to uplift and build on our legacy of giving, invest in efforts which allow for the transformation of the Latinx community by determining our own future and untapping our potential to move our Latinx community forward.”

The North Star, Racial Equity Guideposts, and Charter acts as foundational elements of the grantmaking framework. Practically, the Somos Comunidad Fund should be asking itself:

1. To what extent are our grantmaking decisions aligned with the North Star?
2. Where are we exceeding/missing the mark?
3. What do we understand to be effective interventions, strategies, programs, and/or policies in the Latino/a/x community? The Afro-Latino/a/x community? The undocumented Latino/a/x community? Particular neighborhoods where Latino/a/x reside? As shared by who [i.e. to what extent have these segments of Latino/a/x people attested to their effectiveness?]
4. Are our investments aimed at symptoms or causes? [not to suggest investments can't focus on symptoms, but there is a consciousness of when investments are made to stop-gap or respond to an immediate need versus long-term need or aspiration.

5. In what ways does this investment(s) fulfill our commitment to our Charter?
To the heterogeneous Latino/a/x community members?



Community Agreements*

- This set of agreements, not to be confused with norms or rules, is set by the group, for the group, and determines how they are agreeing to show up for and with one another. These are fluid agreements that should be reviewed periodically (i.e. when new members join, a particular community event impacts the community requiring review, when a habit of broken agreements is evident, etc.) to ensure they stay at the forefront of the collective relationship.
- This is a development process that Brigham Consulting, LLC did not conduct with Somos Comunidad Fund, but is recommending they go through the process, particularly as membership shifts. The committee is entering the practical phase of the work, where it is not unusual to have tension between the vision and current reality of the work, and having a set of tools to help support the conversation and points of tension will undergird the relationships that will be advanced in the context of the work.
- One note to consider is that the community agreements should include technical [we agree to turn our phones off] and relational elements [we will lean into wonder and not judgment]. They should also help the group attend to the tension inherent between a focus on product and process.

*These last 3 elements represent the recommended components of the framework



Relational Engagement

In the social sector, it is a long-held best practice and value that end-users of organizations, programs and services should be engaged to learn of their experience, satisfaction, and needs. While the value and attempts are appreciated, the practice, for a host of reasons (i.e. inauthenticity, too many/too few engagements, types of engagements, and the gathering and use of the information, inaction and broken promises), has left a bad taste in the mouths of end-users and community members. The result has been harmful and extractive to communities.

As such, the identity-based funds decided earlier on, that they were centering their efforts on relationship building and not community engagement, with a premium on sustained and authentic relationships. Relational Engagement takes the best of the intentions of traditional community engagement, centers relationships, and includes feedback loops between committee members and community members. The engagement is not meant to be at one point in the grantmaking cycle. Traditionally, that would happen either at the end or the beginning of the cycle. The recommendation here is to have more fluidity

in the relationship, while recognizing the limitations of a volunteer committee.

Ideally, Our Somos Comunidad Fund would engage the community at the beginning of the grantmaking cycle, listening and learning, co-creating the grantmaking strategies and priorities, and decision-making regarding investments. Practically speaking, this cycle is a series of 3-4 community meetings per year with the Latino/a/x community [with sensitivity to Afro-Latino/a/x members, neighborhood diversity, and undocumented status] that represent different formats [i.e. community center, board room, local Latino/a/x businesses, etc.], across different neighborhoods in West Michigan. In between those touchpoints, it is important that the Somos Comunidad Fund and Grand Rapids Community Foundation have additional touchpoints that could include virtual drop-ins [i.e. 30 min Zooms], newsletters, texts, robocalls, etc. The purpose is to open, and keep open, the lines of communication between the Latino/a/x community, Somos Comunidad Fund, and Grand Rapids Community Foundation.

This level of engagement will require the Somos Comunidad Fund and Grand Rapids Community Foundation to negotiate structures necessary to support such touchpoints [i.e. stipends for committee members time; additional staff support; technology; processes for gathering and synthesizing inputs, etc.].



Cooperative Grantmaking

Relational engagement dovetails and sets the Somos Comunidad Fund up nicely for cooperative grantmaking. The crux of cooperative grantmaking is decision-making power and relational integrity between the Latino/a/x community, the Somos Comunidad Fund and Grand Rapids Community Foundation. It is the act of power restoration in that the power of where investment should or need to take place sits with community, at the intersection of the aforementioned relationships. What is unspoken, but necessarily at the base of relational integrity is a level of trust and commitment to the broader Latino/a/x community.

At a practical level, the committee will have to decide which engagement touchpoint makes sense for actual investments to be determined. However, one can see the second touchpoint as a likely place, as priorities will be gathered in the first, for which the RFP will be based. The committee should also hold to its vision to consider intersectionality and how it might partner with other identity-based Funds for greater relationship building, investment, and impact.



Learning & Impact

While learning takes place throughout the grantmaking cycle, and therefore the current figure representing the framework has limitations, we call attention to learning and impact, again to conceptualize right-sizing power in this element. The learning orientation should encompass organizational (GRCF and Somos Comunidad Fund) learning, leadership learning and community learning. It is about the “felt difference” for community.

From that standpoint, we attend to the seeming tension between learning and objectives. Often philanthropy asks organizations for objectives and outcomes they are aiming to achieve as a lens to determine alignment with the Foundation’s mission, funding priorities, and values. While understandable, it is often felt by community as an area to set up structures of evaluation and judgment to determine grant worthiness; to determine the effectiveness of the investment; and reinforces power dynamics around decision-making, worthiness, haves and have-nots, etc. As such, communities are leaning away from objectives and goals that come from outside the organization and community, and leaning more into “learning” as a clapback to Foundations and the power held over communities. One is felt as accountability and the other as reflection.

Brigham Consulting, LLC offers that outcomes and objectives [accountability] and learning [reflection] are not mutually exclusive and do not have to be pitted against one another. Instead, we contend that the conversation is really one about power negotiation and how folks are situated to express power; and therefore recommend that the Request for Proposals for the Somos Comunidad Fund have objectives/ goals and learning elements; however, those goals and objectives should be directionally coming from community, or at least negotiated with community. In this way, accountability exists, but is determined by and for the Latino/a/x community. The act of balancing goals/objectives, collective learning, and accountability/impact is the act of negotiating power in the direction of the Latino/a/x community.

**With this recommended grantmaking framework in mind,
the following pages are the recommended Request for Proposals.**



Request for Proposal

The Somos Comunidad Fund is an identity-based Fund within the Grand Rapids Community Foundation whose North Star is “for West Michigan to grow and prosper, we must make sure that **everyone** can apply their **talents and creativity** to fuel our **future**. It is only by **connecting across perspectives** and overcoming inequities that we can build and sustain **an inclusive economy and thriving community.**”

The Somos Comunidad Fund exists to:

“Guided by the voices of our Latinx community we seek to reimagine philanthropy for ourselves. We recognize the vibrancy of our diverse cultures and the philanthropy that exists within our communities. This fund will serve to uplift and build on our legacy of giving, invest in efforts which allow for the transformation of the Latinx community by determining our own future and untapping our potential to move our Latinx community forward.”

We believe the building of authentic relationships and application of relevant solutions in the Latino/a/x community, with all its diversity within, by Latino/a/x people (to the extent possible) is critically important. As such, we seek grant applications that align with the value we hold for the Latino/a/x community and the aspirations that community members have for themselves. **[We are making X amount of grants of \$x focused on X goals*].**

*Consider sharing criteria the committee will be looking at, including items that are ineligible if they exists. Share other important dates for potential grantees to know.

Proposals should be submitted via: **[online, mail, email, video, etc.]**, addressed to **[Name & Contact]** **no later than [Date • Time]**.

Timeline:

[Date] Release of RFP

[Date] Somos Comunidad Fund will be accepting proposals

Timeline Continued:

- [Date]** Somos Comunidad Fund will be sharing analysis of submissions via relational engagement session and garner input/feedback from the Latino/a/x community members
- [Date]** Somos Comunidad Fund will determine to host interviews, conversations or other ways to gather more information from potential grantees
- [Date]** Somos Comunidad Fund will make final grantmaking decisions
- [Date]** Somos Comunidad Fund will communicate grantmaking decisions to grantees

Date of Submission:

Name of Organization/Group:

Are you a 501c3:

Do you have a fiduciary (if, name*):

***Fiduciary:** An organization with the legal structure that partners with you to prudently take care of the grant for the project. Not having a fiduciary at this stage, does not disqualify you from receiving a grant. We are gathering information to better serve you.

If not, do you need support finding a fiduciary:

Executive Director/Contact Person:

Tax ID (if applicable):

Address:

City/State/Zip:

Phone:

Email:

Project/Program Name:

Total Project Cost:

Amount Requested:

Purpose of the Grant (one paragraph):



Zip Code Served:

No. of Ppl Impacted (optional):

How does this program help your organization accomplish its mission?

***Below is a list of possible questions to engage potential grantees.**

Considerations include: size of the grant request, focus of the project, prior knowledge of the potential grantee. The idea would be to ask only the most relevant questions and to keep it as short as possible.

TELL US MORE ABOUT YOUR PROJECT:

What do you want to accomplish with your project?

How will these funds specifically help you accomplish your goals?

What activities will you engage in to accomplish your goal?

How do you hope those activities will change the conditions you care about?

What do you seek to learn from your activities? How will you learn from your work?

What signals will confirm you are or have accomplished your goals?

How are you best positioned to meet this need or advance the aspirations you have for your community?

What is it that you love about the community you are serving?

How does your project grow that love?

What will the community look like if you accomplish your intentions?

Please share the project budget. If you do not have one, do you need support developing one?

TELL US MORE ABOUT YOUR ORGANIZATION

How are you in relationship with the community you are serving?

What portion of your staff/team/volunteers belong to the community you serve?

To what extent does your leadership/team reflect the community you serve?

To what extent does your board (or fiduciary's board*) reflect the community you serve?

*This is feedback to the potential grantee and to the Fdn about the extent to which we have fiduciaries that are led by Black people

In addition to financial resources, are there other resources you are requesting [i.e. access to a network, information, technical assistance, etc.]?

Have you thought about how to keep this work going beyond this grant?

RFP Decision-Making Process (External)

In addition to the racial equity guideposts, consider the following for sharing a decision-making process with potential grantees:

- Ensure that the criteria is in a language that is community friendly, and not in traditional foundation speak
- Select a handful of criteria that will act as the most critical guideposts for potential grantees

RFP Decision-Making Process (Internal Process)

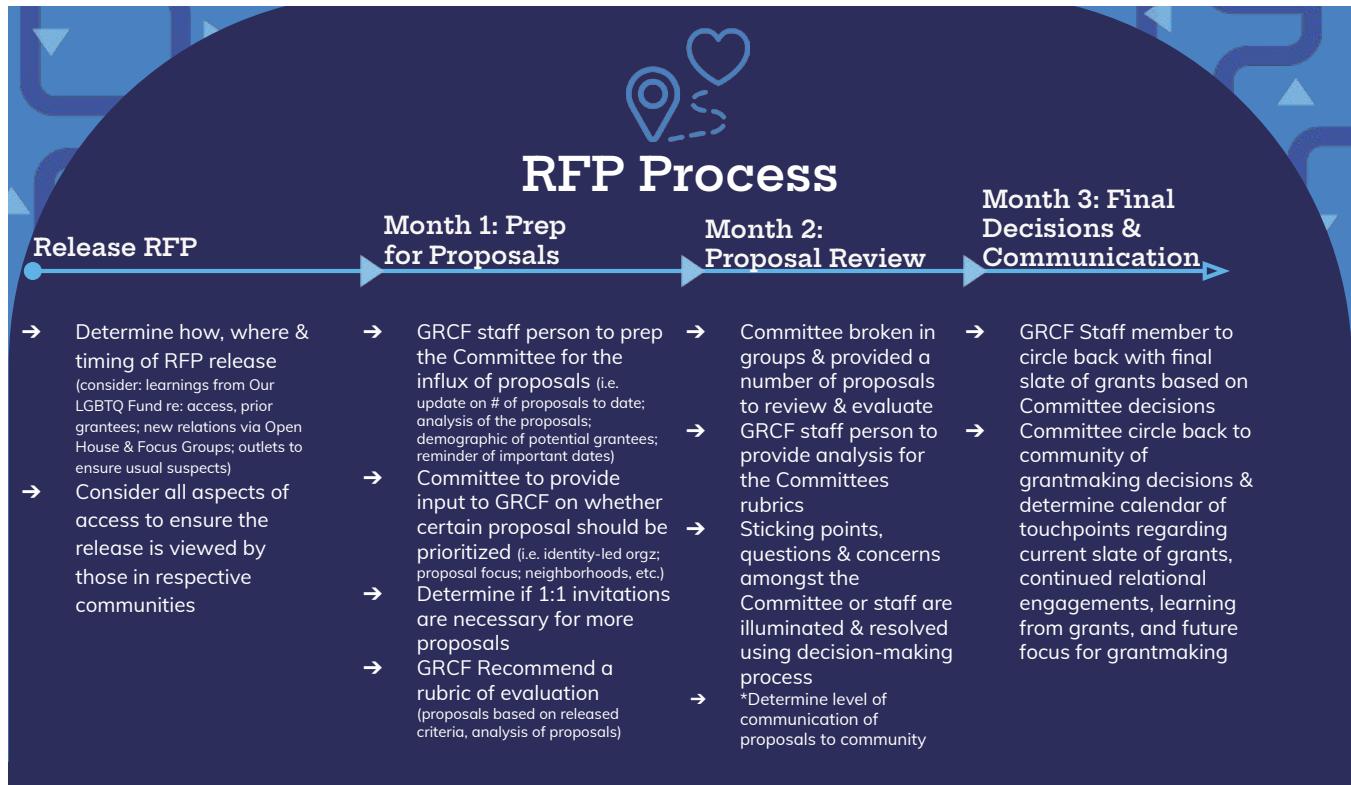
In addition to the racial equity guideposts, consider the following for decision-making:

- Does the project align with the vision and values embedded in your Charter?
- What is the balance between the technical abilities of the potential grantee and the relational capital they hold (i.e. Sometimes it’s more important who the grantees are and the capital they have in community, rather than the technical ability to nail the work. Technical capacity is an opportunity for growth and non-traditional partnership from the Foundation. Oftentimes, relational capacity is harder to come by, particularly from those outside of the community).
- Does this project provide an opportunity for power shifting and/or sharing?
- Using community agreements, determine a Committee decision-making process that includes conflict resolution components and mitigates against groupthink. For example:
 - Set a calendar for grantmaking process (see figure below)
 - Ensure a quorum for decision-making
 - Develop tie-breaking process
 - Utilize a decision-making process like the following:

Decision-Making Process



Grant-Cycle Framework



Recommendations

Brigham Consulting, LLC aimed to provide as much guidance as possible for the recommended grant-making framework. However, many of the nuanced details will depend upon the decisions, capacity, and nuances necessary for the grantmaking process within the Grand Rapids Community Foundation, and will depend upon GRCF to flesh out (e.g. rubrics for proposal evaluation, etc.). As such, we offer these overall considerations for moving forward:

★ What are the structures necessary within GRCF and the Committee itself to effectively implement the recommended framework?

- What supports might GRCF staff need to implement?
- Is the current structure for staffing identity-fund committees the most appropriate one for this grantmaking framework, particularly around relational engagement with community; proposal analysis and rubric development and analysis?
- Does this grantmaking framework create a necessarily different ask of Committee members (e.g. number of hours per month, etc.)?
- What are the platforms or spaces for relational engagement with community?

- ★ What processes does GRCF need to put in place so that this framework has a rhythm (i.e. cadence of engagement & communication with the community)?
 - One such recommendation is that Somos Comunidad members undergo the development of community agreements, particularly as they will bring on new members and those will be important cultural and grounding elements.
- ★ Think through and settle on grantmaking criteria that will be shared with community.
- ★ Settle on communication outlets to ensure the RFP reach deep into community.
- ★ Determine how GRCF marketing efforts support the desire for identity-based funds to be in deep relationship with community.
- ★ Determine how GRCF will develop an evaluation process to not only look at the extent to which this process positively impacts relationships with community, but also a process evaluation that explores implementation and its impact on outcomes of relationship engagement and cooperative grantmaking.

Thank you!

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