



Somos Comunidad Fund held community engagement and listening sessions during the summer of 2022. These groups discussed a desire for greater community organizing and advocacy. They also expressed their wants, needs and concerns, including how Grand Rapids Community Foundation can continue to build deeper relationships and support meaningful, relevant opportunities for Latinx communities. The feedback was used to inform Somos Comunidad Fund's grantmaking priorities and processes.

## HEARD WITHIN THE FOCUS GROUP:

**Q: What concerns about your community keep you up at night?**

"MORE FUNDING, INVESTMENT + ATTENTION TO THE RANGE OF NEEDS for our community, from supporting small business owners to assistance to basic needs such as medical bills."

**Q: What would you like to see more of?**

"More GREEN SPACES, especially with climate change, low-income neighborhoods tend to be the hottest."

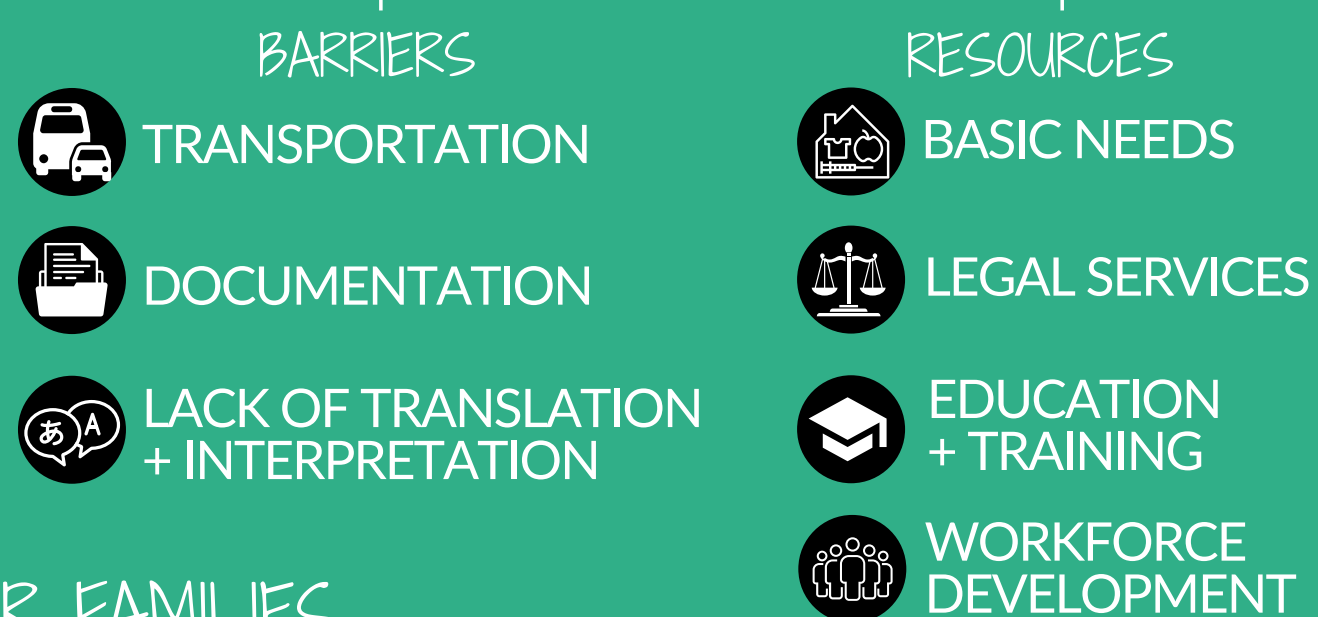
"FEELING UNSAFE due to gun violence, including access to guns by youth."

## KEY THEMES

1. PROVIDING SAFE SPACES FOR YOUTH
  - EXPLORING CAREERS + VOCATIONAL TRADES
  - OPPORTUNITIES FOR THEM TO THRIVE
2. PRIORITIZING ISSUES IMPORTANT TO THE COMMUNITY
  - ADDRESSING SAFETY
  - ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE CONCERNS
  - SUBSTANCE ABUSE
  - IMMIGRATION
  - ARTS + CULTURAL OPPORTUNITIES
3. PRIORITIZING ACCESS TO STABLE, SAFE + AFFORDABLE HOUSING FOR FAMILIES



## 4. ELIMINATING BARRIERS TO RESOURCES



*It's also important to recognize what people love and appreciate about their community!* Grand Rapids provides many spaces for people to gather - including parks and spaces for families. The city also continues to grow, and people like to support and build relationships with small, local businesses and spaces where there is passion and creativity.

## BY THE NUMBERS



### SOMOS COMUNIDAD FUND CHARTER:

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.

\*While we honor the ways our community self-identify, Choosing to use the term Latinx allows for us to expand beyond binary gender roles and nationalities to be inclusive of individuals' whole identity.

Flip over to READ MORE! ▶

# CORE QUESTIONS

ASKED IN EACH FOCUS GROUP

## 1. WHAT DOES YOUR IDEAL COMMUNITY LOOK, FEEL, TASTE + SOUND LIKE?

# 1.

- ACCESS TO FAMILY HOUSING
- ACCESS TO RESOURCES
- LOUD + COLORFUL + EXCITING
- BEING IN COMMUNITY WITH OUR NEIGHBORS
- NOT LIMITED BY GOVERNMENT BARRIERS
- FEELING SUPPORTED**
- A WALKABLE NEIGHBORHOOD
- NO VIOLENCE
- LESS TRAFFIC
- MORE YOUTH PROGRAMMING**
- RESPONSIVE LAW ENFORCEMENT
- WORKSHOPS + TRAINING TO HELP PEOPLE BOOST SKILLS
- ACCESS TO CHILDCARE

## 2. WHAT DO YOU LOVE ABOUT YOUR COMMUNITY?

# 2.

\*ABILITY TO ACCESS LOCAL PARKS, FOOD, DOWNTOWN + PLACES THAT ARE IMPORTANT TO ME. BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS WITH SMALL, LOCAL BUSINESSES.

5 people LOVED THIS!

\*SEEING THE CITY GROW, BUILDING A COMMUNITY HERE + SEEING THE DEDICATION THERE IS TO SUPPORT THE THINGS WE ARE PASSIONATE ABOUT.

3 people WERE FANS OF THIS!!!

Hearing + seeing the noises and movements of people in the city + neighborhood.

Proximity to the beach + woods.

Feeling welcome through a faith-based community.

Puerta Abiertas is an organization that has helped me a lot and others through support with language classes, nutrition, therapy, and self-esteem. It's a holistic program that focuses on helping the community, especially those undocumented.

\* MULTIPLE PEOPLE SHARED THIS

## WHAT CONCERNS ABOUT YOUR COMMUNITY KEEP YOU UP AT NIGHT?

- \*FEELING UNSAFE DUE TO GUN VIOLENCE
- \*DRUGS
- \*LANGUAGE BARRIERS
- \*ACCESS TO RESOURCES (EXACERBATED BY COVID-19)
- \*TOO MANY CARS SPEEDING
- GRPD Abuse of power
- Lack of education + training opportunities
- Systems that can't keep up with demand/ need.
- Need for financial assistance (esp. around housing)
- Implementing solutions

# 3.

\* MULTIPLE PEOPLE SHARED THIS

## WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE MORE OF IN YOUR COMMUNITY?

- Compensating those that are helping + volunteering for the community
- \*LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT, PROGRAMMING + OPPORTUNITIES FOR OUR YOUTH, INCLUDING LEARNING ABOUT DIFFERENT CAREER PATHS. (5)**
- MORE RESOURCES + SUPPORT FOR MENTAL HEALTH.
- CULTURAL CLASSES + WORKSHOPS
- \*MORE FUNDING, INVESTMENT + ATTENTION TO THE RANGE OF NEEDS FOR OUR COMMUNITY (i.e. supporting small businesses + medical bills) (6)**
- MORE GREEN SPACES
- \*FEWER BARRIERS TO ACCESSING SERVICES, REGARDLESS OF DOCUMENTATION (4)**
- \*MORE ORGANIZATIONS LIKE PUERTAS ABIERTAS (2)**
- Continuing education for adults - including making financial aid accessible.
- Addressing systemic issues (i.e., bank loan forgiveness) + having more representation from our communities in areas where these systems perpetuate harm to change it from within. (ex: banking, law enforcement, etc.)
- ADDRESSING WANTS + NEEDS
- SAFETY, SECURITY+ SUPPORT
- Better sewer + garbage services via the city
- MOTIVATION + INCENTIVES TO PROVIDE FOR FAMILIES TO CLEAN UP THEIR NEIGHBORHOODS

# 4.

\* MULTIPLE PEOPLE SHARED THIS



## 2022 COMMUNITY LISTENING + ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY

SOMOS COMUNIDAD FUND

