

The  
**COMMUNITY**  
Foundation  
*for* Greater  
New Haven



# CONNECTIONS

**SPECIAL  
EDITION**

FEBRUARY 2021

## **STEPPING FORWARD: A THREE-YEAR, \$26 MILLION COMMITMENT Funding to Address COVID Impacts and to Advance Racial Equity**

Calling the twin pandemics of COVID-19 and racial inequity “fundamental challenges to people’s lives in Greater New Haven,” The Community Foundation *for* Greater New Haven is stepping into this historic moment with Stepping Forward.

Stepping Forward is a supplemental commitment of \$26 million to help Greater New Haven emerge stronger than ever from the coronavirus pandemic and to advance racial equity in the region.

Both objectives require unprecedented action and resources, especially in local communities that have suffered disproportionate and devastating health and financial impacts. The work includes a major increase in The Foundation’s grantmaking and other current spending as well as new monies for endowed funds.

Stepping Forward is being funded through an unprecedented supplemental extraction from The Foundation’s discretionary endowments and through donor contributions.

### **STEPPING FORWARD WILL:**

- Increase Foundation spending in 2021-23 by \$15 million over current levels.
- Add \$11 million to create three new permanent endowments that advance basic needs, racial equity and civic engagement.
- Advance racial equity through systems change and by supporting our community’s change makers.

# Why is The Foundation Stepping Forward?

The COVID-19 pandemic has created extraordinary needs throughout the community and widened racial inequities that are rooted in a long history of exclusion and disinvestment.

## Stepping Forward to Address the Impact of COVID-19

COVID-19 has caused devastating financial, health and social impacts throughout the region.

In a July to mid-August 2020 DataHaven Community Wellbeing Survey, one in five of all adults in Connecticut reported that at least one adult in their household had lost their job or had been laid off since February of that same year.<sup>1</sup>

**As of February 2021, nearly two in five (39%) small businesses have closed their doors in Connecticut since the beginning of the pandemic, as compared to one in three (33%) small business closures nationally.**<sup>2</sup>

**While some sectors, including manufacturing and construction, have begun adding jobs, as of January 1, 2021, overall payroll employment in Connecticut is down 6.1% from one year ago.**<sup>3</sup>

Smaller, community-based organizations and the arts, in particular, have lost significant fee for service revenue since the pandemic began. A 2020 survey of Connecticut nonprofits showed that about one in five nonprofits (21%) reported being somewhat or very unlikely to be able to fully fund payroll. Nearly half (46%) of small organizations reported that they were struggling.<sup>4</sup>

One small Hamden-based youth arts organization, Arts for Learning Connecticut, reported to The Foundation a 65% decline in volume of programming overall in 2020, translating to approximately \$350,000 in lost revenue.

The ripple effects of the pandemic are also seen in the struggle for residents to get their basic needs met.

The 2020 DataHaven Community Wellbeing Survey revealed that 12% of adults in Connecticut did not have enough money to buy food for themselves or their family at some point during the prior 12 months.<sup>5</sup>

Despite supply chain shortages, declining food donations, increasing food costs and depleting inventory due to the pandemic, Connecticut Food Bank purchased more food than ever before in 2020 and distributed food through approximately 80 member agencies and programs serving Greater New Haven communities. The average volume of food distributed at a Mobile Pantry increased from 5,000 pounds to as high as 11,000 pounds of food provided in a single distribution.



iStock



Fair Haven Community Health Care

In response to unprecedented food insecurity, Fair Haven Community Health Care provided food distribution in 2020 through a partnership with the Connecticut Food Bank, the Connecticut Department of Agriculture and M7, a local taxi company. Food was delivered to between 200 and 300 families monthly, beginning in March 2020 and continuing to the present. Over 70,000 pounds of food have been distributed to date through this collaboration. "The demand currently exceeds our capacity and we are looking for additional ways to increase distribution," says Suzanne Lagarde, Chief Executive Officer of Fair Haven Community Health Care.

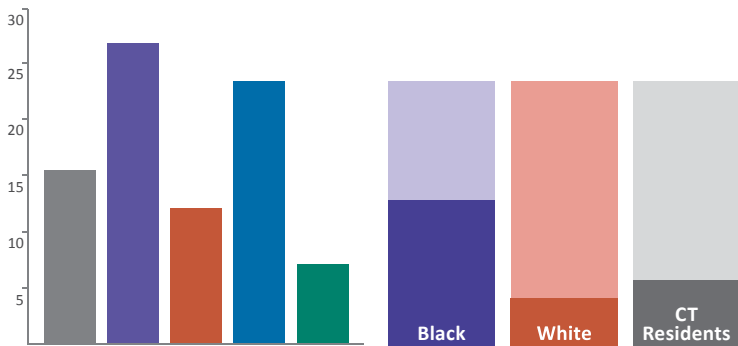
# Stepping Forward to Advance Racial Equity

Advocates and activists have always been at the leading edge of historic policy advances and lasting societal changes. The call for racial justice that swept the country in 2020 led to the emergence of new voices and young leaders who present a generation-defining moment for making systemic changes that advance racial equity.

COVID-19 has caused disproportionate suffering for Black and Brown communities, exacerbating longstanding health, economic, education and other disparities.

**The percentage of adults experiencing food insecurity, for example, ranges from 22% and 27% among Black and Latino adults, respectively, compared to 9% among white adults according to the 2020 DataHaven Community Wellbeing Survey data.**<sup>6</sup>

Gender disparities have also worsened since the start of the pandemic. **Nationally, four times more women left the workforce than men in September 2020.** In Connecticut, 75% of initial and continuing unemployment claims were made by women without a college degree.<sup>7</sup>

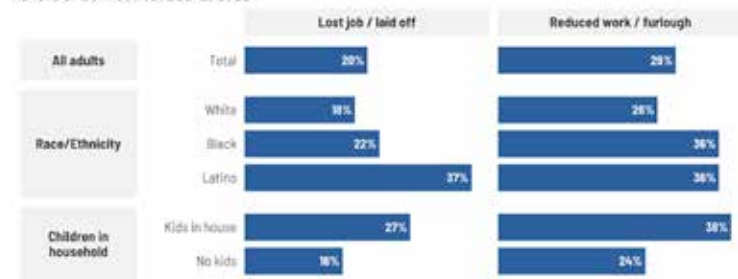


Age-adjusted rate of COVID-19 related deaths per 10,000 resident by race/ethnicity, statewide as of 02/15/2021.

55% of Black adults reported in 2020 that financially, they were either just getting by or finding it difficult to get by as compared to 18% of white adults and 24% of Connecticut residents overall.

## Latinos & adults living with children have been hit hard by job cuts

During pandemic, at least one adult in household has experienced... Share of Connecticut adults, 2020



<sup>1,5,6</sup> 2020 DataHaven Community Wellbeing Survey—COVID-19 Response Wave  
<sup>2</sup> Opportunity Insights Economic Tracker <sup>3</sup> CT Department of Labor <sup>4</sup> CT Community Nonprofit Alliance Survey <sup>7</sup> Essential Equity: Women, COVID-19 and Rebuilding CT

## New Permanent Resources for Long-term Change

Under **Stepping Forward**, three new permanent funds have been established: the Basic Needs Fund, Civic Engagement and Awareness Fund and Racial Equity Fund. Thanks to the generosity of local philanthropists and transfer of Foundation assets, nearly \$6 million has already been committed to launch these funds; a goal has been set to grow these endowments to \$11 million by 2023.

Downtown Evening Soup Kitchen



Since the onset of the pandemic, Downtown Evening Soup Kitchen has seen a 20% increase in the number of new households it serves.

### Basic Needs Fund

supports organizations that provide people living in poverty and distress with material basic needs such as food, temporary shelter, heat, personal safety, urgent health-care needs and hygiene products – with a special emphasis on needs that are not adequately addressed by existing government funding programs. As the unprecedentedly high demand for basic needs services continues in our community due to the pandemic, we expect this fund to make an important contribution to addressing the long-term impact of COVID-19.

The Community Foundation for Greater New Haven



Candidates for governor meet the public at a forum held by GNH Vote, a collaborative supported by The Foundation.

### Civic Engagement and Awareness Fund

supports the many people and organizations who work every day to advance civic engagement and awareness in our region, including nonprofit journalism; civics education; grass-roots efforts to promote civic engagement at the neighborhood level; and promoting civic values through cultural activities, convenings and other community gatherings and activities. Widespread resident engagement in our civic and public life is essential to building a more connected and cohesive community especially in these times of social isolation caused by COVID.

Thomas Breen/New Haven Independent



Addys Castillo (L) and Rep. Robyn Porter (R) call for racial justice during a 2020 march in New Haven.

### Racial Equity Fund

advances racial equity in Greater New Haven and tackles the structures that contribute to racial disparities in our community. The events of 2020 have underscored and revealed the depths of these challenges and the need for a sustained commitment to prioritizing racial equity. This Fund will support Black-led organizations and the promotion of Black leadership and grassroots advocacy, including emerging voices, ideas and collaborations on the front lines of challenging historical and cultural attitudes.

# Immediate Resources for Community Needs

**Stepping Forward** is the largest community investment in The Community Foundation's history. Beginning in 2021, The Foundation is using certain unrestricted and preference funds as collateral for a 10-year loan. This unprecedented action together with monies raised from donors will support a major increase in discretionary spending by The Foundation over the next three years.

## Enhanced and New Grant Making

**Stepping Forward** also creates important changes in grantmaking priorities and processes, including:

- New grant programs and more funds for existing programs.
- Significant increases to flexible funding for local nonprofits.
- COVID-19 relief and recovery.
- Funding to advance racial equity and dismantle racism and gender inequity.
- Increased funding access for small and emerging nonprofits and organizations coming to The Foundation for the first time.
- Leadership development for nonprofit leaders who are people of color.
- Funding for change-makers, including the arts, who are advocating and organizing to heal and dismantle inequitable systems and structures in our society.
- New funding opportunities for community-based, grassroots organizing groups that raise community voices.
- Increased investments in minority and woman entrepreneurs, small businesses and the New Haven entrepreneurial ecosystem.



Spanish Community of Wallingford

Spanish Community of Wallingford (SCOW) provides afterschool programming for Latino/Latina adolescents of immigrant families. When full distance learning went into effect at the onset of the pandemic, SCOW stepped in to help secure technology equipment for students without computers and hotspots for families without internet service.

These grant and loan programs are part of the initial roll out of **Stepping Forward**. Program enhancements and additions are anticipated as The Foundation continues to engage in and collaborate with the community. For the most up-to-date information about enhanced and new grant processes, eligibility, deadlines and applications, visit [cfgnh.org](https://cfgnh.org)

## We're listening.

Email [SteppingForward@cfgnh.org](mailto:SteppingForward@cfgnh.org), call 203.777.2386 or visit [cfgnh.org/SteppingForward](https://cfgnh.org/SteppingForward) to share your thoughts with us.





## Growing an Inclusive Economy in Greater New Haven

Before the pandemic, the economy was growing but economic growth in Connecticut has been too slow for too long.

Additionally, economic growth has been extremely uneven, bringing most of the benefits to the highest income earners while leaving people with middle and lower incomes behind.

### The Foundation will promote inclusive growth by:

- Supporting career pathways and workforce training.
- Supporting minority and women entrepreneurs.
- Creating an entrepreneurial ecosystem that supports new startups and emerging ventures.

### Mission Investing, Equitable Entrepreneurship and Small Business Loans

In 2017, The Foundation created The Community Foundation Mission Investments Company (TCF-MIC) as a wholly-owned subsidiary. TCF-MIC supports The Foundation's inclusive growth strategies by investing in small businesses owned by women and people of color and by helping to build an equitable entrepreneurial ecosystem in Greater New Haven.

The organizations funded by TCF-MIC investments typically lack access to a variety of resources including social connections and networks, financial backing, transportation and other structural or financial barriers. TCF-MIC is working to build the infrastructure support that will help entrepreneurs overcome these barriers and grow a pipeline of new businesses that create financial stability for their owners and employees.

When COVID-19 struck, lockdown restrictions threatened Julie Robbins' massage therapy and wellness clinic, The Well for Women. The Well has managed to survive, however, with the support of a low-interest loan from The Partnership Loan Program for Minority- and Women-Owned Businesses in New Haven and the Lower Naugatuck Valley, which is funded by TCF-MIC.

"The New Haven Partnership Loan provides a solid foundation that allows me to make strategic financial decisions, provide new training for my employees, and leaves me well-positioned for the unknown effects of COVID-19 in the coming winter," says Robbins. "I'm incredibly grateful, and would highly encourage other local businesses to apply while it is still available."



The team at Westville's Well for Women.

Julie Robbins

# Opportunity + Equity in the Time of COVID: A Panel Discussion

The first in a series of convenings regarding **Stepping Forward** was held on February 1, 2021 with a panel of regional and national experts on health, business, entrepreneurialism, youth organizing, housing, education, and inequity. Responses to the question of how to create greater opportunity and equity in our region included a need for collective organizing, changes to policy, changes to mindsets, and new relationships across all sectors of society.

## What We Heard

- With **Stepping Forward**, The Foundation is responding to COVID-19 and advancing racial equity with both resources and new ways of engaging the community.
- A sustained, long-term commitment is needed to advance opportunity and equity.
- Advancing equity requires challenging and changing existing power structures and policies.
- Opportunity is expanded when everyone feels their own power.
- Younger generations are at the forefront of making change.
- Sustained support of collective organizing is needed for change to happen.
- Inequity goes deeper than economic disparities, and will only be overcome through a transformational cultural shift with changed mindsets and new relationships.
- Services and programs should be steeped in the needs of the community.
- Every institution and every business needs to reflect the community with which it works.



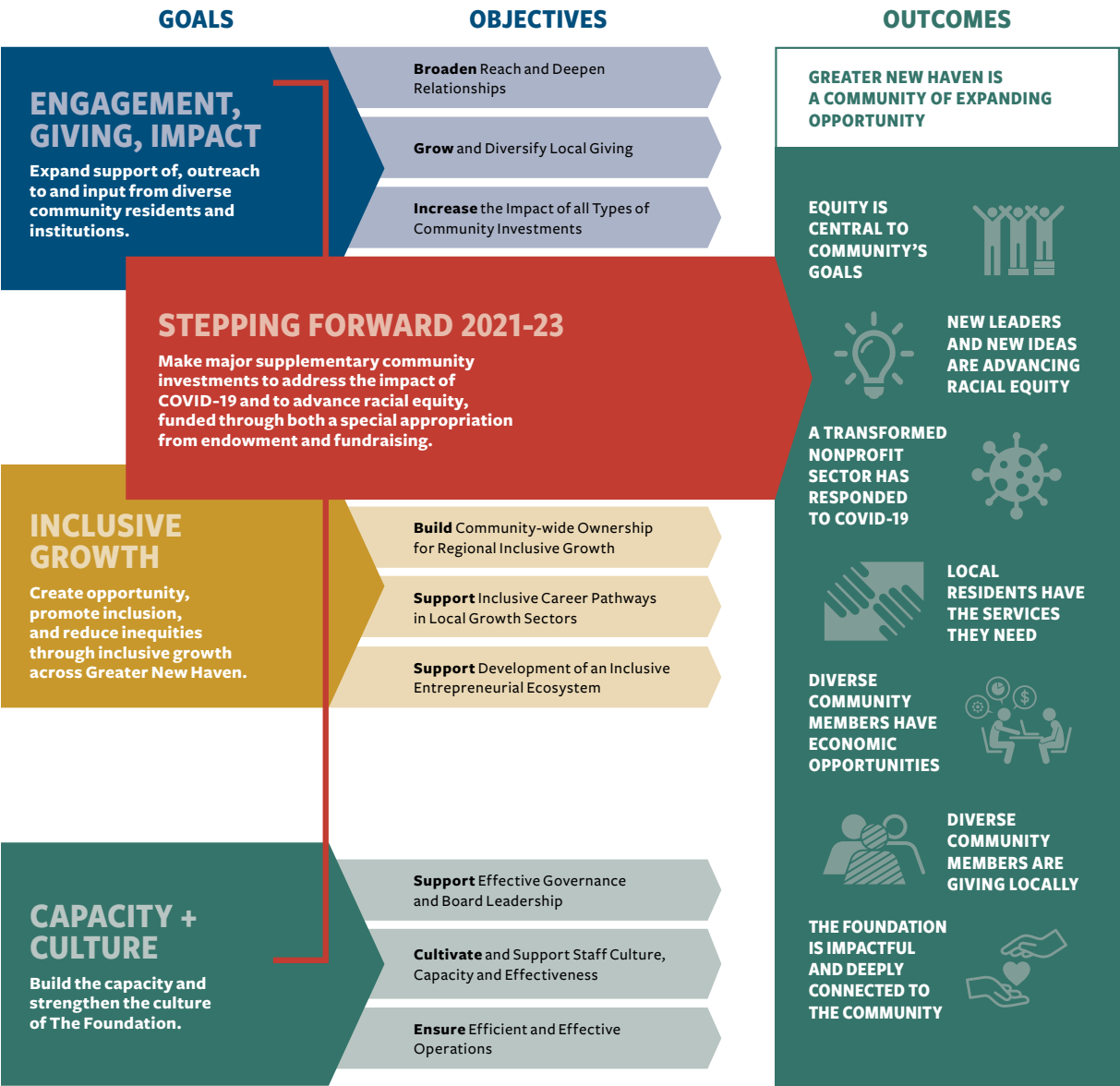
## Everyone Can Step Forward

- Give to the Greater New Haven COVID-19 Community Fund
- Contribute to one or more of the new permanently endowed funds for Racial Equity, Basic Needs, and Civic Engagement and Awareness
- Support a nonprofit listed on [giveGreater.org](https://givegreater.org) and during The Great Give®
- Start your own Fund
- Support or become involved with the Community Fund for Women and Girls or the Progreso Latino Fund
- Support TCF-MIC's investments in minority-owned and women-owned businesses in Greater New Haven
- Attend a Foundation event or workshop
- Email [steppingforward@cfnh.org](mailto:steppingforward@cfnh.org) to share experiences and stories with us
- Engage with us about advancing racial and gender equity through our community investments

# Opportunity + Equity

**Stepping Forward** is essential to the achievement of the goals and objectives of The Foundation’s 2020-2024 strategic plan, which is entitled “Opportunity + Equity.”

## The Foundation’s Opportunity + Equity Strategic Framework 2020-2024





# Stepping Forward in the Lower Naugatuck Valley

Like so many other communities since the onset of the pandemic, the Valley has experienced social and economic impacts in the areas of jobs, small businesses, healthcare and education.

**Stepping Forward** is a region-wide commitment that extends across the five communities served by The Community Foundation's affiliate, the Valley Community Foundation (VCF). VCF is aligning some of its work from 2021 to 2023 with **Stepping Forward** through its own initiative called **Stepping Forward in the Valley**. The two foundations are working together on an integrated plan that advances the goals of addressing the impact of COVID-19 and advancing equity in Ansonia, Derby, Seymour, Shelton and Oxford. The plan will continue to evolve as needs and opportunities change.

## Areas of joint focused investments include:

- Access to COVID-19 relief and recovery resources
- More resources for new and existing joint grantmaking programs
- Joint capacity building programs that support nonprofits in adopting best practices and policies regarding equity
- New equity strategies to create new processes and structures in the Valley that help close existing equity gaps

## Rising to Meet the Challenges

"The biggest needs when the pandemic came crashing down was a food need. We more than doubled the output of Meals on Wheels because of the pandemic, but also the network of food pantries that TEAM works very closely with saw more than a 30% increase of people coming in fast. In addition to that, formula for infants and toddlers and a diaper need spiked more than 200%," says David Morgan, President and CEO of TEAM Inc.



The human services agency serves a high percentage of low-income and vulnerable populations in the five communities served by VCF and neighboring towns. Fifty-three percent of individuals receiving TEAM services live below the federal poverty level. One in four individuals accessing TEAM's services is of Hispanic, Latino or Spanish Origins. Seventy percent of those accessing energy assistance are young children under 5 years of age, seniors aged over 60 and individuals with disabilities. Nearly 1 in 3 seniors accessing Meals on Wheels is aged over 90, and 1 in 2 are living below 150% of the federal poverty level.



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“The challenges of 2020 have shown us that old ways of doing things are not adequate. Addressing COVID’s impacts and advancing racial equity are the essential steps that need to be taken today to expand opportunity and equity in our community for the future. **Stepping Forward** is not moving away from our traditional ways of doing business. It’s adding to them.”

**William W. Ginsberg, Community Foundation President & CEO**

“The Foundation’s board realized that the extraordinary challenges of these extraordinary times call for extraordinary measures. Stepping Forward is The Foundation taking extraordinary measures.”

**Flemming L. Norcott Jr., Community Foundation Board Chair and Retired Connecticut State Supreme Court Justice**

“In this moment, we have to embrace what others have called cultural humility. To understand we don’t have all the answers. Breaking down structural barriers also means that we cannot expect anything of others that we do not demand of ourselves.”

**Khalilah L. Brown-Dean, Ph.D., Community Foundation Board Member & Past Chair, and Quinnipiac University Associate Professor**

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### OUR VISION:

A community of expanding opportunity in which all people share a sense of common destiny and have the support and connections needed to build successful lives.

### OUR MISSION:

To inspire, support, inform, listen to and collaborate with the people and organizations of Greater New Haven to build an ever more connected, inclusive, equitable and philanthropic community.

[cfgnh.org/SteppingForward](https://cfgnh.org/SteppingForward)

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