community needs assessment

June 8, 2017
about Community Foundation West Chester/Liberty

• Founded in 1999 to encourage philanthropy and improve quality of life

• Current leadership:
  • Erin Clemons, President & CEO
  • Ian Murray, Board Chair

• Results and impact:
  • Nearly $15 million in assets and growing
  • $8 million distributed in grants, including from donor-advised funds
  • Transitioning to needs-based initiatives
Building on the work of CFWCL’s strategic plan, Ignite Philanthropy was contracted to undertake a Needs Assessment with two goals:

1) Gain a deeper understanding of the community’s needs where philanthropy can make a meaningful impact; and

2) Develop strategies to inspire donors to invest in areas of community need through the Foundation.
needs assessment process

1. **SUMMIT**
   - Nearly 100 community leaders participated
   - Developed ideal Future State and identified solutions
   - Narrowed discussion to identified focus areas

2. **INTERVIEWS**
   - One-on-one interviews with subject matter experts
   - Gathered perspective on challenges and tested focus areas

3. **DATA ANALYSIS**
   - Researched data and reports related to focus areas
   - Assembled data points relevant to needs findings
introductory thoughts on community


• Quality of life and economic data above average

• No singular platform emerged from needs assessment; rather a portfolio of opportunities

• CFWCL poised to focus on actions most likely to propel the community forward
Three issues were consistently identified as potential opportunities where philanthropy can make a significant impact:

**TRANSPORTATION**
- Partnering on transportation strategies that connect **all** citizens to community resources

**EDUCATION**
- Bolstering educational success through student achievement and community engagement strategies

**WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT**
- Developing a workforce pool that meets the needs of job-seekers and employers
In addition to the three needs areas, two consistent themes surfaced as potential barriers to progress:

1. Institutional Fragmentation

2. Communication Challenges
Transportation

**Issue**

- Community strategically located between two major metro areas
- Improving infrastructure requires large investment (public solutions)
- Many needs still exist at micro-level (public/private solutions)

**Opportunity**

- Philanthropy can help with:
  - Planning and community engagement
  - Recreation-focused projects
  - Options that support groups of citizens with limited access
transportation

EXAMPLES:

• Create public/private partnership to fund biking/walking trails and sidewalks

• Support large infrastructure efforts through:
  • Convening community leaders around solutions
  • Assisting with federal/state grant writing
  • Funding transit needs studies or data gathering

• Fund organizations that provide solutions for people with limited access to cars
1) K–12 Public Education
   • Quality public education imperative to community success
   • Challenges include closing the achievement gap and getting students on track for 3rd grade reading proficiency

2) Post-Secondary/Trade Schools
   • Needs in this area centered around workforce development

Opportunity

• Support Lakota Schools’ efforts to improve K-3 reading proficiency and encourage children at risk
• Reinforce value of Lakota Schools to community as a whole
• Aid Lakota Schools in community engagement
education

EXAMPLES:

• Promote and broaden Lakota Fund to support district in improving K-3 literacy and achievement gap-closing

• Seek ways to engage donors with Lakota School District leadership

• Develop education task force of volunteer community members and leaders to drive engagement efforts
workforce development

**ISSUE**

- Businesses need skilled employees in their workforce
  - Problem will only grow as baby boomers retire
  - Largest gaps are in manufacturing, management and hourly labor
- Job seekers lack relevant skills

**OPPORTUNITY**

- Partner with Chamber Alliance to convene business leaders, education and government representatives to encourage collaboration
- Match successful training program models with resources
workforce development

**EXAMPLES:**

- Develop fund to support gaps in workforce training opportunities
- Convene community CEOs to anticipate future workforce needs and gain buy-in on workforce training programs
- Drive and support partnerships among leaders impacting workforce development efforts
• Not identified as a major concern
• Important to monitor; trending upward in West Chester
• Establish mechanisms to collect and communicate data and needs moving forward
• Work with safety net organizations to respond with care and compassion
EXAMPLES:

• Prioritize solutions in the three focus areas that also address poverty
  • Programs that provide access for families living in poverty
  • Initiatives that lift students out of poverty
  • Workforce development training programs as pathway to living wage jobs
community foundation’s future focus

CFWCL will address focus areas by committing to four strategy pillars:

**CONVENE**
Convene leaders around ways philanthropy can improve the community

**COLLABORATE**
Collaborate with partners to accelerate progress in each focus area

**CONNECT**
Connect CFWCL donors directly with causes to step up impact and engagement

**CONTRIBUTE**
Target funding for organizations and initiatives that make an impact in the focus areas
Thank you

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