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Lilly Endowment recognizes local efforts with 22 CAPE planning grants

Gratified with the grass-roots efforts of community foundations across the state, Lilly Endowment has awarded \$1.4 million in planning grants for 22 proposals that address compelling educational needs in 36 Indiana counties. Community Alliances to Promote Education (CAPE), a \$50 million competitive initiative, was launched in September to tap the creativity of local foundations in prioritizing and addressing their communities' educational needs.

“We could not be more pleased with the results,” said Sara B. Cobb, Endowment vice president for education. “The community foundations did exactly what we knew they could: They convened a broad spectrum of local stakeholders and presented to us thoughtful proposals on how their communities would plan and design strategies to address their most compelling educational needs. All told, we received 55 proposals representing 87 of Indiana’s 92 counties.”

The Endowment originally intended to award 15 planning grants of up to \$50,000 each for each county served but expanded the number to 22 because of the “needs presented in the proposals and, more importantly, the number of encouraging ideas being contemplated to address these needs,” Cobb said.

“We were heartened by the number and quality of collaborations developed in many of these counties and the communitywide participation in the proposal process,” Cobb said. “We also are aware that, in many cases, the collaborators had never before formally worked together on educational issues in their communities. And several of these groups are continuing to meet, even after submitting their proposals.

(more)

CAPE planning grants
Add 1

“These proposals both acknowledge the seriousness of the educational challenges facing Indiana communities and express optimism that intentional and targeted approaches can prepare them to compete and succeed in the 21st century,” she said.

Cobb further noted: “Depending on the circumstances and the specifics of the implementation grant proposals received, the Endowment may consider increasing the number of implementation grants it initially expected to approve.”

Community foundations – there are more than 90 across Indiana – have been strengthened during the last decade through four phases of the Endowment’s GIFT (Giving Indiana Funds for Tomorrow) initiative. This largely matching-grant program not only has helped the community foundations become local grant givers, but it also has elevated their profiles in their communities as conveners and consensus builders.

“Many of Indiana’s community foundations have developed credibility as community problem solvers,” said William M. Goodwin, Endowment vice president for community development. “It seemed to be the appropriate time to offer them the opportunity to focus their fellow citizens’ attention on one of Indiana’s most serious challenges, the educational needs of its communities.”

“It is apparent that people all across Indiana are seriously concerned about education,” Cobb said. “The proposals indicate that they are interested in increasing the value Indiana and its residents place on education, in improving literacy, in learning as a lifelong enterprise, in taking advantage of new technologies, and in improving access to postsecondary education.

“We are delighted that so many people spent so much time and energy preparing these proposals – and going through the necessary stages of convening the stakeholders, discussing their particular situations and prioritizing the needs they saw,” she added.

The following community foundations have received planning grants (up to \$50,000 for each county served) for the following purposes:

(more)

CAPE planning grants
Add 2

Community Foundation Alliance, Evansville (collaboration among Daviess, Gibson, Knox, Perry, Pike, Posey, Spencer, Vanderburgh and Warrick counties), \$227,500. Address issues relating to the “lack of a learning culture,” develop and support programs to encourage literacy, raise expectations, provide alternate learning programs and establish new levels of cooperation between education and business.

Community Foundation of Madison and Jefferson County, Madison, \$46,000. Establish programs to address county’s low per capita income and educational attainment rates.

Community Foundation of Muncie and Delaware County, Muncie, \$50,000. Establish Community Compact for Education as clearinghouse to address needs of parenting skills, lack of awareness of resources and poor communication skills.

Community Foundation of Randolph County, Winchester, \$50,000. Create a central education center with satellite location to address the issue of lack of qualified local workers to fill local jobs.

Community Foundation of St. Joseph County, South Bend, \$50,000. Emphasize the importance of early success in school by establishing learning labs in early elementary and preschool grades, increasing professional development for teachers, strengthening Head Start, and helping parents understand their role in their children’s educational success.

Community Foundation of Switzerland County, Vevay, \$50,000. Develop programs to stress importance of higher education by establishing partnerships between K-12 schools and higher education, provide academic and career counseling, and expand distance learning opportunities.

Fort Wayne Community Foundation (Allen County), \$50,000. Design programs to ensure that all children can read at grade level by the end of third grade.

(more)

CAPE planning grant
Add 3

Greater Lafayette Community Foundation (Tippecanoe County), \$50,000.
Encourage parental awareness of their children's education; emphasize literacy programs and technology training.

Hancock County Community Foundation, Greenfield, \$46,335. Support workforce development and youth readiness programs to cover reading, writing, math, keyboarding, basic software and the Internet.

Heritage Fund of Bartholomew County, Columbus, \$50,000. Develop Columbus Learning Center, a collaboration among Indiana University-Purdue University Columbus, Ivy Tech State College and Purdue Statewide Technologies to offer educational and training programs, career counseling and placement.

Lawrence County Community Foundation, Bedford, (collaboration among Lawrence, Martin, Orange and Washington counties) \$130,000. Offer a variety of educational opportunities by developing access to nearby learning centers.

Madison County Community Foundation, Anderson, \$47,300. Address issues of illiteracy and low high school graduation rates.

Montgomery County Community Foundation, Crawfordsville, \$50,000. Address low educational attainment rate by focusing on increasing number of residents with high school certification, developing connections between business and school districts, and expanding distance learning and learning centers.

North Manchester Community Foundation (Wabash County), \$50,000. Address issue of cultural bias against postsecondary education; create programs to inspire parents to begin early to create atmosphere of learning and support for their children.

Owen County Community Foundation, Spencer, \$50,000. Focus on ways to increase middle and high school retention and graduation rates.

(more)

CAPE planning grants
Add 4

Parke County Community Foundation, Rockville (collaboration between Parke and Vermillion counties), \$50,000. Address the inadequate preparation of children entering school.

Porter County Community Foundation, Valparaiso, (collaboration among Lake, Porter and LaPorte counties), \$128,000. Develop systematic approach to prepare youth to succeed in school despite major obstacles and improve employability of the workforce.

Wabash Valley Community Foundation, Terre Haute (Vigo County), \$50,000. Provide early childhood and parental education programs in the area's pockets of poverty.

Wabash Valley Community Foundation, Terre Haute (Sullivan County), \$44,000. Open a learning center so residents can take advantage of county's fiber optic link to technology.

Warren County Community Foundation, Williamsport, \$50,000. Provide reading programs for elementary youngsters and establish a learning center with satellite links to the rest of the county.

Wayne County, Indiana Foundation, Richmond, \$50,000. Address issues associated with low high school graduation rates and unacceptable ISTEP failure rates in early elementary school.

White Lick Heritage Community Foundation, Danville (Hendricks County), \$50,000. Develop a learning center to provide increased level of education for residents of Hendricks County, the second fastest-growing county in the state.

Proposals for implementation grants (up to \$5 million for each county served) must be postmarked by Sept. 15.

CAPE is another in a series of efforts by the Endowment during the last four years to address the "unacceptable" educational attainment level rankings of Indiana: 48th of 50 states in the percentage of adults with a baccalaureate degree, 50th of the 50 states in

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CAPE planning grant
Add 5

the percentage of its workforce in professional and specialty occupations, 45th in the most recent SAT rankings.

Over the last few years, the Endowment has funded more than \$280 million in grants to the state's public and private colleges and universities for programs and projects to encourage recruitment, retention and finding productive work in Indiana.

The Endowment also established the two-year-old Lilly Endowment Community Scholarship Program under which more than 350 Indiana residents are pursuing baccalaureate degrees in Indiana colleges with full-tuition scholarships. The Endowment also has made grants to Marion County public education foundations and private schools and funded research by the Indiana Fiscal Policy Institute into the issue of human capital retention in the state.

Major grants to Indiana University, Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology and Purdue University have encouraged these institutions to develop distinctive programs fostering innovation that should result in the eventual creation of attractive professional opportunities in Indiana for its talented college graduates.

And now CAPE. "The Endowment considers CAPE an important vehicle for rallying Indiana communities to develop and support creative efforts to improve the educational attainment of Indiana residents," Cobb said. "Their future and their children's future are at stake."