GREATER TOGETHER COMMUNITY FUNDS

Year Two Summary Report • December 10, 2021

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WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN
buying a mango yourself and getting a mango as a gift?

A year ago, the Collaborative for Educational Services (CES) introduced the Mango Metaphor to describe the Greater Together Community Funds (GTCF) project. Our Year One report, finalized in October 2020, described how the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving gave the GTCF project as a gift – a mango, in our metaphor – to the 29 communities it serves. We translated the Hartford Foundation's goals for the GTCF into our Mango Metaphor:

Support the community in taking ownership around the needs in their towns.

Support the community in accepting the mango and helping them to understand how best to prepare it to support the health of their community.

Encourage broad and inclusive civic engagement.

Encourage broad and inclusive ways of using the mango, including participatory and collaborative processes to prepare and share the mango with each other.

Anchor the Hartford Foundation in each town.

Strengthen connections and relationships between the Foundation and the community through the gift of the mango.

The Year One report reflected on the initial stages of the project and how the communities were responding to this gift. Now we are at the end of the second year of the GTCF project. All 29 communities have received the mango and are making it their own:

- Some communities have already prepared and served the mango – they have made grants to their communities.

- Some communities are still working on mango preparation – they have formed committees that are currently planning how organizations can apply for and receive funding.

- A few communities are still determining how best to prepare the mango – they are working on forming the committees that will make grant recommendations.

We believe it is helpful to think in metaphors, because they are universally understood by everyone, no matter their background. We also think there is something important about our selection of the mango in particular. The mango itself, as opposed to other fruits, may be considered novel to some people in Connecticut, but other people may be quite familiar with mango, depending on whether it is part of their cultural culinary heritage. Following the metaphor, this work may be new to some, but perhaps not as new to others. We would also like to elevate the framing of the mango as a gift. This word "gift" is not typically used to describe the exchange that is happening between the Foundation and the communities, and yet, we think it best describes the emotional tone that we have observed the CF team demonstrate to each other, and to the communities. The framing of this exchange as "gift" is also rooted in indigenous ways of interacting and building relationships. We bring this forward as an example of one of the myriad ways in which this project may be viewed by people involved in this project, whether at the Foundation, CES, or in the communities.

The Evaluation and Learning team at CES is also a part of the mango metaphor. We have worked with the Hartford Foundation to collaboratively define our role as "learning partners" with the Foundation and the communities involved in the GTCF program. In other words, we pay special attention to what communities are doing with the mango and how they are relating to the Foundation and to each other while concocting their own special recipes, and we find ways to share that information back with everyone (such as this report!). In Year 1, we mostly played a behind-the-scenes role with the Foundation, reflecting with them on the infrastructure that was being put in place to support the work. In Year 2, we have expanded our contact with the program, making connections with nearly all of the communities to observe how they received the mango from the Foundation, what they are deciding to do with it, and how they continue to relate to the Hartford Foundation in that process. Our sincere hope is that by thoughtfully listening to everyone involved in this process, and then reflecting back to them what we are seeing, that the Hartford Foundation and participating communities can make the most of their mango gift, reach the goals that they set for themselves, and understand the greater impact on their community.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report reflects on the second year of implementation of the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving's Greater Together Community Funds (GTCF) program. As stated on the Hartford Foundation's website, "The purpose of the Greater Together Community Funds is to support the community in taking ownership around the needs in their towns, encourage broad and inclusive civic engagement, and anchor the Hartford Foundation in each town." This report explores the ways in which the Hartford Foundation and the 29 communities in its service area are meeting these three goals.

The questions that we explore in this report are parallel to the questions explored in our Year One report, completed in October of 2020. We found that these questions continued to track well with the evaluation work we have been doing, even as our evaluation shifted from engaging primarily with Hartford Foundation staff toward making direct contact with Selection Committee (SC) and Advisory Committee (AC) members (see "Appendix I: Sources" for a summary of our sources for this report). A brief summary of our findings in each area follows.

HOW DOES THE HARTFORD FOUNDATION DEFINE SUCCESS FOR THIS PROGRAM? HOW DO COMMUNITIES DEFINE SUCCESS?

In Year Two of implementation, there continues to be a tension between the results-related success of making grant recommendations and the process-related success of encouraging broad and inclusive civic engagement in the grantmaking process. Both of these goals are important to the Hartford Foundation, but they can work in opposition to each other; the fastest process for getting grants out the door is the process that draws upon the expertise of the "usual suspects" who already hold positions of power within their community.

During Year Two, we observed this tension in conversations with the Hartford Foundation staff as well as within community-based GTCF committees. While the Hartford Foundation is not pressuring communities to make grant recommendations quickly, and in some cases is encouraging communities to slow down and look closely at their processes, community members still sometimes seem to be focused on moving quickly to their goal of recommending grants. However, Advisory Committees have also mentioned other measures of success, such as working together, incorporating different viewpoints, and making a positive impact on their community. They also raised questions about how to measure success in reaching and supporting organizations that are not already known to them and in the wider community.

TO WHAT EXTENT ARE PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION AND COMMUNITY UPTAKE ALIGNED WITH THE HARTFORD FOUNDATION'S IMPLEMENTATION PLAN?

As of September 2021, all 29 communities in the Hartford Foundation service area are progressing along the path laid out by the Foundation:

- Two communities are developing Selection Committees.

- One community has an active Selection Committee and is working on a process for naming people to the Advisory Committee.

- Twelve communities have Advisory Committees that are working toward their initial grant recommendations.

- Fourteen communities have made their first grant recommendations and are continuing with their Advisory Committee work.

The facilitators of this process include the hard work and dedication of the committee members who comprise the Selection Committees and the Advisory Committees, the support of the Hartford Foundation (explored in more detail below), and the motivating factor of making positive contributions to the communities.

However, overall progress has been slower than was originally expected by the Hartford Foundation. The COVID-19 pandemic played a role in this slowdown, halting community progress entirely at a time when many communities were beginning to convene their committees. However, many communities recovered quickly and began (with help from the Hartford Foundation) to hold remote meetings and to plan processes that allowed for the lack of in-person community gatherings. We even heard from some committee members that the GTCF program offered a way to continue to connect with other community members during a time of intense isolation, with a focus on positive change.

We believe that progress towards creating inclusive and participatory processes took longer than the Hartford Foundation anticipated, and in some respects, appeared to slow progress towards grantmaking. Foregrounding the work of inclusion within processes and relationships, and not just outcomes, is a different way of doing business than many people – within the Hartford Foundation and in the communities it serves – are accustomed to. This work has included slowing down the process to focus on internal issues of representation and inclusion, allowing diverse perspectives to inform their grantmaking processes, and thinking about ways in which their processes will be conducive to supporting successful grant applications from organizations that have not historically been awarded funding.

In addition, some committees have been affected by member turnover, absenteeism, and internal dynamics. These issues can sometimes result in a significant slowdown of the work.

HOW ARE COMMUNITIES RESPONDING TO THE GREATER TOGETHER COMMUNITY FUND INITIATIVE?
As described above, communities are working steadily toward making funding recommendations, and many of them have already done so and are beginning to plan a second round of grants. Selection and Advisory Committee members are generally very positive about the GTCF work, and grateful to the Hartford Foundation for giving them the opportunity to contribute to their communities. They expressed appreciation for each others' hard work, and also pride in their communities as they learned about the many ways in which nonprofit organizations were serving others in need.

We found that Advisory Committee members were more likely than Selection Committee members to experience some challenging feelings about the GTCF process, possibly because their work is more lengthy and involved than that of the Selection Committees, and possibly because the Advisory Committees are more culturally diverse than was typical of the Selection Committees. While the AC members often expressed positive feelings about the GTCF work, they also sometimes expressed frustration about the slow pace of the process, the support they are getting from the Hartford Foundation, and the lack of communication among committee members.

However, we have found that committee members are willing to engage in conversations with each other that address these challenging feelings, and we have seen examples of these feelings being aired and addressed, leaving committee members once again feeling positive about the process. Advisory Committee members also

expressed generally positive feelings about the Hartford Foundation, their relationships with each other, and their understanding of their communities.

HOW IS THE HARTFORD FOUNDATION SUPPORTING THE GTCF PROCESS? ARE THERE ADDITIONAL SUPPORTS THAT COMMUNITIES NEED?

The Hartford Foundation continues to provide substantial support to the GTCF process. Community Fund team members attend nearly every Selection Committee and Advisory Committee meeting, providing support around initial organizing, advice and suggestions about moving forward through issues that arise, and facilitating connections with the grants management department at the Hartford Foundation in order to complete the grantmaking process.

The Hartford Foundation also provides support to GTCF behind the scenes, including weekly internal meetings to discuss GTCF progress, toolkits that provide information and templates to guide the process, and support from the Director of Strategic Learning and Evaluation, the Communications Department, and the Grants Administration Department. The Hartford Foundation is also planning a series of trainings about inclusive processes, for committee members as well as the CF team, in fall 2021.

Committee members are generally pleased with the supports that the Hartford Foundation is providing to them, but identified some areas where they would like additional support. These included support with outreach to communities, more up-front information about the process as a whole, more information about what is needed to finalize grant recommendations, and more support with using Google Drive. An additional, significant concern is with sustainability of the GTCF after the initial $50,000 is allocated. Communities are hoping for additional funds, and/or help with fundraising to continue the work.

HOW WILL THE FOUNDATION AND COMMUNITIES ADDRESS THE INHERENT POWER IMBALANCES BETWEEN FUNDER AND GRANTEE?

The Hartford Foundation has continued to model a cooperative and inclusive approach to the GTCF project, with Community Funds team members being sensitive to the importance of allowing communities to control their processes as much as possible. The CF team also supports communities with issues and concerns, but does not try to impose solutions on the communities. Selection and Advisory committee members with whom we have spoken have indicated that they view their relationship with their CF liaison as positive and productive. Some have also noted that they appreciate that the Hartford Foundation has provided tools and resources but encouraged communities to use them in ways that work for them, rather than mandate their use at a particular time or in a certain way.

There has been only one community in which we are aware of resistance to the Hartford Foundation's expectations for the GTCF; the Foundation is continuing to work with this community to resolve these issues.

HOW DOES THE EVALUATION TEAM PARTNER IN BUILDING SHARED POWER WITH COMMUNITY AND FOUNDATION STAKEHOLDERS?

As evaluators, we do not see ourselves as objective observers; we are aware that we bring our own biases to this work. We have been seeking to be transparent with Advisory Committees about how information is gathered, stored, and shared with the Hartford Foundation, and we have allowed communities the ability to review information prior to our sharing it with the Hartford Foundation or in this report.

We have also sought to engage Advisory Committee members in conversations about the outcomes they are interested in learning more about, and how we can work together to answer these questions. During Year Two, this took place during Advisory Committee meetings in Deep Dive communities; we are exploring establishing an Evaluation Advisory Committee made up of interested Advisory Committee members to help guide our evaluation work in Year Three.

MOVING GTCF FORWARD, AND NEW AREAS FOR EXPLORATION
While the GTCF has been largely successful so far, Year Three will bring two significant inflection points to the process. It is during this year that some Advisory Committees will allocate the last of the initial $50,000 provided to their towns, leaving them with only a small return on the endowed funds unless they do substantial fundraising. Also, the terms of many Advisory Committee members will expire, making it necessary for committees to recruit new members. These are two inflection points which could cause some GTCF Advisory Committees to either disband, or substantially slow down their work.

It is vitally important for the ongoing success of GTCF that the Hartford Foundation meet these challenges proactively. Lack of attention to these issues risks losing the hard work and good will that have been built up in the communities through the GTCF process. Our report provides specific recommendations for meeting these challenges, and also lists questions that we hope to address during the third and final year of our evaluation.

DEFINING SUCCESS: HOW DOES THE HARTFORD FOUNDATION DEFINE SUCCESS FOR THIS PROGRAM? HOW DO COMMUNITIES DEFINE SUCCESS?

SOURCES[1]

Meetings between the Hartford Foundation Community Funds (CF) team and the CES evaluation team

Conversations with CF team members

A conversation with the Hartford Foundation Executive Leadership Team[2]

Attendance at Advisory Committee meetings for selected Deep Dive communities[3]

Conversations with communities that have finished their Selection Committee and Advisory Committee processes

What does success look like for the Greater Together Community Funds work? In our Year One report, we explored the Hartford Foundation's thinking around the concepts addressed in the project's statement of purpose: *The purpose of the Greater Together Community Funds is to support the community in taking ownership around the needs in their towns, encourage broad and inclusive civic engagement, and anchor the Hartford Foundation in each town.* Our Year Two report continues to explore how the Hartford Foundation defines success for GTCF, while also reflecting on what we have heard from communities about how they define success. A theme we have heard from both the Hartford Foundation and the communities is that there is a tension between the speed of the process, and the desire to move quickly into grantmaking. This theme is explored in more detail in this section, and is highlighted in sidebar stories about specific Advisory Committee practices.

DEFINITIONS OF SUCCESS – HARTFORD FOUNDATION

In our Year One report, we included a section called "Shifts in Expectations, Staffing, and Funding During the First Year of Implementation." One part of that section addressed the tension between the Foundation's desire to incorporate inclusive and participatory processes in every stage of the work, and the desire to encourage communities to move toward making grants. The Dimensions of Success model from the Interaction Institute for Social Change ("Appendix II: Dimensions of Success") provides a graphic depiction of how goals for any project can address results, process, and relationships. During the first year of the GTCF implementation, the CF team believed that a strong focus on process and relationship building should be the priority. The Executive Leadership Team agreed that these goals were important, but their ultimate priority was to see communities advancing towards grantmaking, or results. This tension was a prominent feature of the Year One implementation and as such, the Year One reporting.

There has been less conversation about this tension during Year Two, during which most communities have formed Advisory Committees and more than half of those committees have recommended grants. However, we are still seeing examples of this tension playing out. A discussion of the first-year report in the fall of 2020 revisited this issue, with CF team members indicating that they are still feeling pressure about moving

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1   These and other sources are described in more detail in Appendix I: Sources.

2   See Appendix I: Sources for a summary of attendance and roles represented at this meeting.

3   The Deep Dive communities are Bloomfield, Hartford, Hebron, Manchester, Vernon, and West Hartford. Granby was originally identified as a seventh community for Deep Dive exploration, but this community has not yet formed an Advisory Committee. We describe our involvement with Deep Dive communities on page 7.

communities toward making grants. Later discussions in the spring of 2021 with members of the CF team indicated that this tension has continued. "Time is the enemy of inclusion," one member noted, saying that when something needs to be done quickly it will be done in the easiest way possible – in this case, going to the people who already hold power and voice in the community in order to make decisions about where the grants should be awarded. Another CF team member noted "I think it's important to not risk effectiveness in pursuit of speed. There's only so much you can do with the towns to move them along."

In January 2021, we spoke with members of the Hartford Foundation's Executive Leadership Team (ELT), and asked them to post responses to the following questions on an electronic bulletin board:

- What does success look like for the Greater Together Community Funds?

- What does inclusion look like, as part of GTCF and also in other Hartford Foundation work?

The bulletin board with the ELT's responses to these questions is shown in "Appendix III: January 2021 Executive Leadership Team". Many of their responses to both questions addressed the Hartford Foundation's priority of "Going beyond the usual suspects" – that is, listening to all voices and making sure that ideas for grantmaking are not coming from the loudest and most empowered voices. Other indicators of success included:

- Meeting communities' needs

- Having a positive impact on the towns

- Attracting donors to the funds

- Having a positive impact on the internal work of the Hartford Foundation

- Having all 29 communities actively involved in the process

Other thoughts about inclusion referenced making sure that dissenting voices are heard, offering the opportunity to participate meaningfully to all residents, and making grants to smaller, lesser-known organizations in a community.

The team acknowledged the tension between process and results, and spoke about how they want to balance their desire for results (in the form of committees forming and awarding grants) with the need for time spent on issues of inclusion. They noted that it is important to not let the perfect be the enemy of the good, and that it might be necessary to move forward even before reaching the level of inclusion and participation that they aspire to. They also said that goals are aspirational, and that the reality is that they have limited staffing and funding to support all 29 communities as they move through the GTCF process. They see the GTCF as a long-term project, and intend to engage with these communities through other projects and programs as well. The Hartford Foundation will continue to shift their grantmaking priorities toward equity and inclusion over time.

FOLLOWING SIX COMMUNITIES FOR A DEEPER DIVE INTO THE GTCF PROGRAM

With 29 communities participating in the Greater Together Community Funds program, it is impossible for the evaluation team to engage deeply with all of them. As committees formed Advisory Committees, CES and the Hartford Foundation agreed that CES would engage with each of the communities at certain transition points in the process, and also select six or seven communities to follow more closely. We call these selected communities the Deep Dive communities.

The Deep Dive communities are Bloomfield, Hartford, Hebron, Manchester, Vernon, and West Hartford. Granby was originally selected as well, but an Advisory Committee has not yet formed in Granby. These communities were selected with attention to diversity of community size, income levels, geographic location, and initial speed of their GTCF process.

CES representatives have been attending Advisory Committee meetings in each of these communities. We are primarily listening and reflecting, drawing out themes from their work that will be excerpted in this report. We have also introduced ourselves and our evaluation process to AC members, shared prior reports and ongoing progress summaries, and asked them what they would like to learn from our evaluation and whether they have ideas about how to measure progress (their responses are summarized in "Definitions of Success – Communities").

The excerpts in this report that illustrate how the GTCF process is playing out in specific communities are derived from our observation of these six communities. These excerpts have been approved by the committees to share, anonymously in this public report as well as in internal reports to the Hartford Foundation that identify the communities. We wanted to ensure that the reports are both accurate and also that the committee members feel comfortable sharing this information before we made it available to others.

DEFINITIONS OF SUCCESS – COMMUNITIES

The tension between speed of the process and results has also played out in communities. We have seen no evidence of the Hartford Foundation putting pressure on individual communities to move quickly through their process and make grant recommendations – in fact, in certain communities we have observed and heard about the opposite, with CF team members encouraging communities to slow down their process and reflect on issues of equity and inclusion before moving forward. However, some of the communities are imposing pressure on themselves to move quickly, to adhere to deadlines that they set for themselves, and to get money out to their communities.

PROCESS VERSUS RESULTS IN ONE COMMUNITY

In one of our Deep Dive communities, the committee needed to learn how to navigate the different strengths and skills of its members to form a cohesive team. Committee members are a diverse group, representing varied backgrounds, and some members were more accustomed than others to working in committees. Committee members brought different skills, and they needed to learn each others' skills by working together. Initially, some committee members felt excluded in the work; it took time and effort to

get to the point where the committee was able to communicate with each other despite their differences, but they succeeded and are proud of it. During reflection conversations, several members made comments about what they've learned:

"I was ready to drop out; I actually withdrew and went back. At first, I felt like this was a group where they weren't going to listen to me. I found out that they must have felt it and they approached me. When I got back to the group, I found that it was about listening and understanding that everyone comes from different backgrounds and lifestyles. I have to understand your different backgrounds. I have never been on a board, I have never experienced grant writing. One of my friends suggested that I do. I have learned that all the people on this committee are great people. We listen, we give, and we receive. I'm so happy I didn't leave. I'm glad people came up and pushed me back. I'm also glad about what I've learned about cultures and listening. We all have different points of view. There is no right or wrong. This is a great group."

"I'm so glad you came back. I'll be honest, I wanted to leave in a moment too. The leadership has been so valuable. I want to compliment everyone. It was not just about giving money. Purpose of the foundation: to get the community to think together, listen from different directions. Our community has many different people and it is not the same diversity."

"I was convinced I wasn't going to "Google" everyone. Organic growth and acculturation to group dynamics were troubling at the beginning. I didn't bring my authentic self at the beginning – didn't want to be overbearing. Courageous conversations with (the Hartford Foundation liaison) meant I was able to bring my authentic self to the table more. I didn't have to be timid. I would suggest for the next team that there be a resume supplied for the whole group so we don't have to fumble through getting to know each of our skill sets."

When we spoke with Selection Committee members about their process, we asked them if they believed it was successful and why. Many of them responded that they believe they chose an Advisory Committee that was capable, committed, and at least in some ways, representative of the community, and therefore their process was successful. Some noted that the Advisory Committees that they selected were not racially or ethnically diverse, although they often did not see this as meaning that they were unsuccessful – rather, that the constraints of town demographics and/or of people willing to be part of the Advisory Committees made this not feasible for them. This belief may come from Selection Committee members' lack of knowledge about and connection to the various demographic groups in their towns. The Hartford Foundation provided data to each Selection Committee about their town's demographics, but in describing the diversity of the Advisory Committees they chose, Selection Committee members more often mentioned gender and age rather than ethnicity and class.

Many Selection Committees also focused on their process, as well as their results (formation of an Advisory Committee), when they spoke about their success. They spoke of working well together as a team, with people bringing different skills to the table and contributing together to their common objective. As we noted in an earlier report to the Hartford Foundation, the Selection Committees in many communities were fairly homogenous, usually consisting of people who are white, educated, and working in or retired from white collar positions. They were less likely to have challenging conversations or push each other to rethink their ways of working together than would have been the case with committee members from more varied backgrounds.

In the Deep Dive communities, some Advisory Committees have been reflecting on what success in the project means for them. We have had conversations with five of these communities (Manchester is still too early in its process) to reflect with them about what they are asking themselves about the GTCF work, and what they are curious to know about. Many of them addressed issues of success in their work, specifically:

- How their committee was able to work together, building trust and sharing expertise.

- How they have incorporated different viewpoints into their work, and how they plan to focus on attracting applicants from under-represented communities.

- How the Hartford Foundation has moved toward decentralization of power by allowing residents in all of their member communities to direct the grantmaking process.

- How their committee's goal is to create a fund that is committed to having a long-term impact on the community.

These successes align closely with two of the Hartford Foundation's goals for the Greater Together Community Funds: supporting the communities in taking ownership around the needs in their towns, and encouraging broad and inclusive civic engagement.

> *"If you always do what you've always done, you get what you've always got. If you go to the known nonprofits, you are not tapping into what the needs are in town."*

They also raised questions about success in the work, such as:

- How will they know if they are successful in making grants to organizations that are not "the usual suspects," if they don't know how to find these organizations?

- How will the committee know that they have made a difference in the community?

- Would the committee be able to be more successful with its work if they received more structured training in grantmaking from the Hartford Foundation?

- How can committees learn from the successes in other towns?

- How will communities give attention to sustainability (a one-time infusion of funds will not make a permanent difference)?

During reflection conversations, members of one Advisory Committee expressed curiosity about the Hartford Foundation's intentions for this program and what the Foundation defined as "success." One person asked: Is the Hartford Foundation looking at this approach to decide how best to invest in the community? Has the work of the AC's validated that? Another person wondered whether they had met the expectations of the Foundation's original vision – going back to the original gatherings as the program was being launched. Did their Advisory Committee meet them?

The definitions of success that we heard from the Hartford Foundation and from the communities are intertwined and doubtless are influenced by each other. As the project moves into the third year of implementation, the challenge for the Hartford Foundation will be determining how to let the communities know what they would like to see happening going forward, without intervening too much in these committees' processes. What is the balance between guiding the committees within the parameters of the Hartford Foundation's goals, and letting them develop their own goals? We will be interested to see how this plays out as the GTCF process continues.

IMPLEMENTATION AND UPTAKE: TO WHAT EXTENT ARE PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION AND COMMUNITY UPTAKE ALIGNED WITH THE HARTFORD FOUNDATION'S IMPLEMENTATION PLAN?

As of September 2021, all 29 communities in the Hartford Foundation service area are progressing along the path laid out by the Foundation:

- Two communities are developing Selection Committees.

- One community has an active Selection Committee and is working on a process for naming people to the Advisory Committee.

- Twelve communities have Advisory Committees that are working toward their initial grant recommendations.

- Fourteen communities have made their first grant recommendations and are continuing with their Advisory Committee work.

"Appendix IV: Community Progress Over Time" is a visual display of the progress of each community through each stage of the GTCF process. "Appendix V: Advisory Committee Stages of Progress" shows the stages of Advisory Committee progress for each community that has formed an Advisory Committee.

PACE OF THE GTCF PROCESS: FACILITATORS AND BARRIERS

All but two of the communities (see "Appendix IV: Community Progress Over Time") have been working steadily toward the goal of making their initial grant recommendations. The remaining 27 communities usually meet every month; sometimes twice per month, and committee members often work in subcommittees between meetings.

The primary facilitator of the work has been the hard work and dedication of the committee members who comprise the Selection Committees and the Advisory Committees. These volunteers are donating their time as well as their skills to supporting this work in many ways: providing input at planning meetings, organizing and analyzing materials, doing outreach and publicity, developing applications, and making decisions that move the work forward.

The Hartford Foundation has also continued to provide a substantial amount of support through the assignment of a CF team liaison to each community. This is explored in more detail in the "Supports: How is the Hartford Foundation supporting the GTCF process? Are there additional supports that communities need?" section of the report, but should be noted here as well. The liaisons continually support the forward momentum of the work, throughout the Selection Committee process, into the early stages of the Advisory Committee work, and even after the Advisory Committees have been meeting for months. Some of these supports include initial organization and facilitation of meetings for both committees, providing a structure to move the ACs through the grantmaking

process, keeping the committees running smoothly when a transition in leadership roles is required, and identifying barriers to progress and addressing them with the committee.

Finally, several AC members have noted that being able to award grants and make positive changes in their communities has been a motivating factor for continuing the work.

While there are many facilitators to moving the GTCF work forward, the overall progress has been slower than was expected by the Hartford Foundation. Some of this, of course, was due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which shut down the work in the spring of 2020, just as many communities were beginning to plan their grantmaking processes. However, all of the communities have regrouped from this initial shutdown and are continuing to move the work forward.

A SLOW START

In one Deep Dive community, the group that would form the Selection Committee (SC) began to meet at the end of 2019. However, there were logistical challenges in location and follow up, as well as in identifying more members from the town. Once the Selection Committee began meeting, they created an application and a press release, in both English and Spanish, in hard and electronic copies, and made a plan to place hard copies of the application around the community. However, in April they had to back off their launch and application distribution because of the town's pandemic shutdown. In May, they adapted their application, and in June released it through social media and media channels, the Board of Education, and in hard copies distributed through the town. After an initial sluggish response, the SC did more outreach into diverse communities and extended the deadline, and application returns grew. By the end of September 2020, the SC had received 26 applications. The Advisory Committee was selected and notified in January 2021.

The Advisory Committee is a small and enthusiastic group. While they began as 12 individuals, during the early months of 2021, they experienced some drop off and inconsistent meeting attendance, making quorum a challenge. They began to research additional quorum models, and ultimately settled on 50% of the committee plus one member.

The AC decided to create a co-chair model with a rotating secretary, which "lessens burden and allows for more complete participation." One committee member set up a Google spreadsheet with sign-ups for note-taking, and concentrated on organizing the Google Drive and helping everyone access it. After a few members left the AC because of family or work conflicts, the committee decided to continue with a single chair, and divided the secretary roles into discrete internal and external communications tasks until they "see how the grantmaking process comes together." This group has found that their structure has fallen into place as they have discovered their way of working together, with support from their Hartford Foundation liaison.

HOW ARE THINGS GOING IN CANTON, EAST GRANBY, EAST HARTFORD, ENFIELD, AND ROCKY HILL?

In our Year One report, we identified five communities that, as of the end of the summer in 2020, either had not started their GTCF process or were having difficulties moving forward. One year later, all of these communities are now moving the process forward, although they are at different stages:

Canton: During the fall of 2019 and the beginning of 2020, Canton held several meetings and established their Selection Committee. In the spring of 2020, as a result of the pandemic, they decided to put their GTCF work on hold. In August of 2020, three members of the original Selection Committee met again and agreed to recruit new members and restart their process. They did not meet again until February 2021, but at that point began to move quickly toward establishing an Advisory Committee. The Advisory Committee was appointed later that spring, and had its first meeting in July 2021.

East Granby: East Granby was slow to start their GTCF process, but has moved quickly over the past year. The town formed a Selection Committee in July 2020, and the Selection Committee chose an Advisory Committee in October 2020. The Advisory Committee has met monthly since then, and made its first grant recommendations in July 2021.

East Hartford: East Hartford did not begin their GTCF process until February 2021, more than a year after community members attended a kickoff meeting in November 2019. Their Selection Committee was established in March 2021 and has met monthly since then, and is developing a process to form an Advisory Committee.

Enfield: Enfield's process of creating a Selection Committee didn't get off the ground after the initial presentation from the Hartford Foundation. CF team members connected with community members during the summer of 2020 to attempt to restart the work, but there was no progress until fall of 2021, when CF team members reached out again to the residents who had attended the initial presentation. Two residents responded, have identified potential Selection Committee members, and are getting support from the Hartford Foundation in moving the process forward.

Rocky Hill: As with Canton, Rocky Hill formed a Selection Committee prior to the pandemic, but put their GTCF work on hold during the spring of 2020. The town restarted its Selection Committee work in September 2020, and named an Advisory Committee in spring 2021. The Advisory Committee began meeting in May 2021 and has met monthly since then.

An additional reason for the slow progress of the GTCF, noted in the Year One report and also earlier in this report, is that inclusive, participatory processes take time – and they always take more time than expected. A quick turnaround would be possible only if towns used structures already in place and relied on familiar ways of working. When there is an expectation that the process be inclusive, communities must slow down their usual methods and rebuild the ways they make decisions. We explore this issue further in the section called "Inclusive and Participatory Practices".

However, it is not correct to assume that all or even most of the slowness of these processes stems from taking time to incorporate equity and inclusion into the work. In fact, it seems that more frequently the barriers to

progress stem from the issues that impact any volunteer organization, including member turnover, absenteeism, and internal dynamics. In addition, the Hartford Foundation's emphasis on inclusivity has meant that many committee members are new to the grantmaking process; they have not worked for organizations or done volunteer work that develops these skills. All of the teams have needed support to initiate both their Selection Committee and Advisory Committee processes, and CF staff continue to attend nearly every meeting in each community to provide support with moving the process forward.

INCLUSIVE AND PARTICIPATORY PRACTICES

As Selection Committees choose members of Advisory Committees, and as Advisory Committees develop grantmaking processes and then award grants, we have seen many examples of attention to issues of inclusion. "Inclusion," like many oft-used words, can mean many things depending on the context, so we'd like to share our own framework around inclusion as we discuss how committees are engaged with this work.

"Inclusion" to us refers to a set of practices that seek to increase representation and power of people who are historically marginalized, underrepresented, and targeted for oppression. The goal of inclusive practices is to shift the culture away from dominant practices rooted in white supremacy and other oppressive "-isms" to a culture in which members of marginalized groups are invited and encouraged to be leaders using the tools and cultural traditions which feel most comfortable to them. While representation *can* be powerful in shifting culture and practice, it alone is often insufficient, and can feel tokenizing.[4] For example, a group can be half white and half people of color, but if the white people continue to dominate air-time, group norms, and decision-making, then nothing has functionally changed. The same can be true with other kinds of identities, such as age. If a group has one young person among a sea of older people, then that young person may not be powerful enough – or willing – to shift the groups' culture, norms, or decision-making. Inclusion requires intentionality in each stage of the process – forming a committee, doing the work, and reflecting on the work – and an understanding of how power works and how to account for it. It also requires learning and reflection among members of dominant groups to understand how to step back and make way for new leadership.

We have seen inclusion addressed in different ways at different stages of the process.

Selection Committees: When the Selection Committees were choosing Advisory Committee members, they showed an interest in forming a committee that "looks like" their town. At the same time, they have sometimes felt limited by who responds to their outreach and applies to join the committee, and some have been sensitive to the potential of tokenism. A series of reflection conversations that CES held with Selection Committee members who had completed their process indicated that many members struggled with how to do outreach to specific populations in their communities without engaging in tokenism. Outreach was also limited by restrictions on in-person gatherings and the closing of public meeting spaces as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Most Selection Committee members indicated that they tried to reach out to as many members of the community as possible, and that they formed the Advisory Committees with attention to diversity of age, education, income, and experience as well as racial and ethnic diversity. In some communities, especially those that are more than 90% white, this resulted in all-white Advisory Committees.

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4   Tokenism refers to the practice of making only a perfunctory or symbolic effort to include people from underrepresented groups. It is focused on the appearance of equity rather than on achieving actual equity.

Advisory Committees – Developing applications and conducting outreach: In the Deep Dive communities that CES has been observing, we have seen Advisory Committees giving attention to issues of inclusion as they develop applications and conduct outreach.

For example, one Deep Dive community made its initial grant recommendations sooner than most other GTCF communities, but not until a year after the Hartford Foundation initially expected that grants would be made. Their Advisory Committee could have moved faster, but early on in their process the committee decided to pause their work and reflect on how they are incorporating inclusion into their processes:

SLOWING DOWN TO THINK ABOUT INCLUSION

One community's original Advisory Committee had no members of color. After the first few meetings, a member of the committee reached out to their Hartford Foundation liaison by email, to express concern that the lack of racial diversity on the committee was going to negatively impact their inclusive grantmaking process. At the time, this member did not feel comfortable bringing this concern to the committee on her own, but during a reflection conversation following the initial grantmaking, she identified herself to the committee while discussing this incident.

The Hartford Foundation liaison brought this concern to the committee, and some initially indicated that they did not see this as a concern. They were concerned that targeted recruitment of people of color would look like tokenism, and thought that if their grantmaking was intentionally broad and diverse, this would meet the Hartford Foundation's expectation of a broad and inclusive process. However, the committee agreed to slow their process to make time for sensitive conversations around diversity. Two members of the Community Funds team from the Hartford Foundation facilitated these conversations, which led to the decision to add two new members to the committee, both of whom are Black women. During their reflection conversation, the committee agreed that the broader perspectives that the new members brought to the table were important for their process and also to send a positive message to the community about inclusion. "It's about being intentionally inclusive, versus not being exclusive," said one member.

"This town is night and day from where they started" on issues of inclusion, said the Hartford Foundation liaison. "They have really stepped up with promoting an inclusive process, and many of their grant applications addressed issues of diversity in the town."

Other communities have also had conversations about how their committees are and are not incorporating principles of equity and inclusion into their work. They talk about the ways in which their committee members bring a diversity of experiences and perspectives to the grantmaking process. A recurring theme in Advisory Committees' conversations about inclusion has been their attention to broadening the field of potential grantees beyond "the usual suspects", and encouraging organizations with limited staffing and little grant writing

experience to apply for grants. Committees often discussed ways in which they could make their application process simple and streamlined, and in some cases requested Letters of Interest prior to being invited to apply.

INCLUSION IN GRANTMAKING

One example of Advisory Committee members purposefully developing a grantmaking process that was attentive to being approachable and inclusive of smaller and less established organizations comes from one of the Deep Dive communities. When shaping their grantmaking process, the AC members in this community were attentive to the ways in which their process could impact who applies for the grants. Several members indicated that they are worried that using a traditional application process would result in applications coming primarily, or entirely, from the "same people who always get the money." Committee members agreed that while some organizations are built to successfully seek grants, they wanted to think about supporting smaller organizations – "putting seeds where they might not grow otherwise."

Some ways in which the committee made their grantmaking process more approachable include:

• Starting with a Letter of Interest, to lower barriers to entry for organizations that do not have grantwriting staff.

• Changing the suggested wording on an application from "Is the organization well-suited to implement the project?" to "How are you well-suited to implement the project?"

• Limiting the length of the LOI, so as not to give an advantage to more well-resourced organizations that are in a position to write a lot. Members noted that this would level the playing field.

• Planned outreach to many different communities within the town.

The Deep Dive Advisory Committees have also been intentional and thorough about outreach to their community. COVID-19 restrictions have continued to impact large community gatherings, but most committees have created an outreach subcommittee that has made plans together to reach out in as many ways as possible to potential grantees. This has included press releases, social media postings, word of mouth, and also targeted messages to the nonprofit organizations in each community.

Committees have also indicated that they perceive a need for additional attention to equity and inclusion. This often refers to issues of representation; for example, members will note the absence of people from certain communities or demographic groups and indicate that they would like to bring in people to represent these voices. Sometimes, committees will also talk about the need for inclusive processes in their decision making; for example, some Advisory Committee members have indicated that they have felt as though some members of the committee charge ahead and make decisions, while others are quiet and not invited to participate. We have seen some evidence of committee members accepting this as being a natural outcome based on the personalities and expertise of the people involved, but others have raised it as an issue for their committees, and it can reflect a meeting space that makes some people more comfortable with participation than others.

Advisory Committees – Awarding grants: As noted above, 14 communities have made initial grant recommendations, including four Deep Dive communities: Bloomfield, Hartford, Hebron, and West Hartford (as of this writing, Vernon is in the process of reviewing initial Letters of Interest and will likely be making grant recommendations before this report is finalized). In determining how to award funds, we saw that Deep Dive Advisory Committees often considered how the proposed projects would engage with a broad spectrum of community members, and/or how they would serve traditionally under-represented communities within the town. In addition, one Deep Dive community made an intentional decision to delay awarding some of the initial $50,000 grant funds, for the following reasons:

- Committee members believed that the applications they received, while acceptable, were not the kinds of truly novel approaches to serving underserved populations that they were hoping to see.

- They also believe that the initial publicity from the first grants will motivate additional organizations to apply for funds later on. In the words of one member, "the people who have an organization always get there first, others find out later and it's too late – I would rather wait longer to try to get people who are not currently engaged with organizations."

Examples of applications and scoring sheets that Deep Dive committees used to assess projects are included in "Appendix VI: Sample Applications and Scoring Sheets Used to Evaluate GTCF Applications".

Support from the Hartford Foundation: The Hartford Foundation has supported committees' efforts to incorporate inclusive practices through in-the-moment responses to questions and issues that arise as committees are meeting, but has not yet provided structured support that specifically addresses issues of inclusion. As of this writing, the Foundation is working with a consulting team to develop a plan to support committees in exploring and understanding how inclusion relates to their work. This support will be provided during the fall of 2021, through technical assistance provided individually to Advisory Committees and also through cross-committee meetings and conversations.

In our Year One report, we referenced a tree image that showed how the Hartford Foundation is "going out on a limb" to incorporate inclusion in the way it thinks about and implements the GTCF program. We have updated that image with information about how both the Hartford Foundation and the communities are demonstrating inclusive practices in Year Two ("Appendix VII: Journey Toward Inclusion").

COMMUNITY RESPONSE: HOW ARE SELECTION AND ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS RESPONDING TO THE GREATER TOGETHER COMMUNITY FUND INITIATIVE?

SOURCES

Conversations with CF team members

Electronic records kept by CF team members

Attendance at Advisory Committee meetings for selected Deep Dive communities

Conversations with communities that have finished their Selection Committee and Advisory Committee processes

The previous section of the report addressed processes and results – how many communities have reached different stages of the GTCF process, what has helped or hindered them in their work, and how they have incorporated inclusive processes. In this section, we explore the "relationship side" of the Dimensions of Success triangle (see "Appendix II: Dimensions of Success"): how the people on the Selection and Advisory committees are feeling about the work, and whether and how it has changed:

• Their perception of the Hartford Foundation

• The nature of their relationships with each other

• Their understanding of their community

Overall, Selection and Advisory Committee members have expressed positive feelings about their work on these committees, and about the Hartford Foundation. We summarized Selection Committee members' thoughts about the GTCF process and the Hartford Foundation in a report to the Hartford Foundation in the fall of 2020. Since that time, we have conducted reflections with several more Selection Committees, but have not encountered any findings that diverge substantially from the ones summarized in the earlier report:

• Selection Committee members were generally very positive about the GTCF process and the ways in which they worked together as a team.

• Committee members were grateful to the Hartford Foundation for the investment in their communities, and positive about the support that the Foundation provided to them.

• Committee members would have appreciated an opportunity for a defined closure to the SC process, and/or an opportunity to meet (even virtually) with the AC group to formally hand over the work.[5]

We have also observed Advisory Committee meetings in Deep Dive communities, and engaged in reflections with Advisory Committees in each community that has made its first grant recommendations. While the overall vibe has been positive, we have encountered some more complicated feelings about the GTCF process among Advisory Committee members than we did among Selection Committee members. This is not surprising, as the Advisory Committee members are engaged in a longer and more involved process, and in many cases their membership is more diverse than was that of the Selection Committees. These feelings are described in more detail below.

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5 The CF team was aware of and understood the wishes of SC members to meet with their AC counterparts, but felt unable to commit the staff time necessary for supporting this in all towns.

FEELINGS ABOUT THE WORK

As noted above, Advisory Committee members with whom we engaged have been positive overall about the GTCF process. This is perhaps to be expected, given that the people with whom we are speaking are choosing to continue to engage in the work. If they had substantial concerns about how the process is working, they likely would have left the committees.[6]

> *"We're all turning into grantmakers."*

> *"This really did restore my faith in humanity."*

Some examples of the positive feelings about GTCF that committee members have expressed have included:

- Joy about being given the opportunity to support organizations doing important, impactful work.

- Pride in their communities and the many ways in which nonprofit organizations are supporting worthy causes.

- Appreciation for the opportunity to learn from each other about different backgrounds and cultures.

- Appreciation of each other's skills and hard work, and how well they work together as a team.

Advisory committee members sometimes expressed some negative or challenging feelings about their work as well. Some examples include:

- Strong emotions around conversations that touch on process issues, including but not limited to making space for conversations about diversity and inclusion, and how they impact the pace of the work.

- Frustration over the GTCF process not moving forward as quickly as they would like.

- Annoyance over a lack of communication from members working in subcommittees in between meetings

- Frustration at not having enough up-front training from the Hartford Foundation on facilitation, grantmaking, and other topics.

However, we have found that committee members are willing to engage in conversations with each other that address these challenging feelings, and we have seen examples of these feelings being aired and addressed, leaving committee members once again feeling positive about the process.

RECOMMENDATION: The Hartford Foundation should monitor AC participation and collect information on why people leave the Advisory Committee. An analysis of reasons why people leave, coupled with an analysis of the demographics of the people who leave and the people who stay, may uncover important information about who is engaging in the work and who is having difficulty with being part of an Advisory Committee. CES can begin this analysis during Year Three of the implementation, and provide a structure for the Hartford Foundation to continue the work.

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6   We have some limited information about people who have left Advisory Committees and their reasons for doing so. Our records show that 48 of 321 Advisory Committee members (15%) have left, or were removed for lack of attendance, prior to their terms ending. Only three of these people reported having resigned because of negative feelings about the work. Over half of the resignations for which we know the reason were because of the time commitment being more than the person could maintain, and/or personal situations that led to a lack of availability.

SUPPORT FROM THE HARTFORD FOUNDATION

In one particular AC, several members mentioned during a group reflection as well as in personal communications afterwards that it was difficult to know how to engage in a grantmaking process without having prior expertise or training. Several members felt that it would have been very helpful to have training specifically on grantmaking at the beginning of the process. There was a brief discussion as to whether the Hartford Foundation had allowed the group to "flounder" by not offering enough training upfront, or whether, by not prescribing a process, the Hartford Foundation was allowing an "organic" process to unfold and supporting the committees to determine their own needs and path forward. While the group didn't come to consensus on this, there seemed to be general agreement that more preparation and training upfront would have been helpful, and that members got to know one another better because they were figuring it out together. As one member said, "Teams are often built through adversity."

PERCEPTION OF THE HARTFORD FOUNDATION

Advisory Committee members largely have positive perceptions of the Hartford Foundation. Nearly all of the committee members with whom we spoke were very positive about the support they have received from their liaisons. They greatly appreciate the liaisons' quick responses to questions, the resources and suggestions that they provide, and their assistance with addressing issues that come up as the teams progress through the GTCF process.

Committee members were also aware of, and generally positive about, the Hartford Foundation overall. Some expressed appreciation of the Hartford Foundation's work toward decentralizing power and allowing communities to decide where the needs were greatest. "It's amazingly adventurous for a foundation," noted one AC member. Another noted that the Hartford Foundation was essentially "hiring" them – although on a volunteer basis – to really get out into the communities and make connections with the people doing work to support community needs.

> *"This is a pretty big step for them, a community-centric approach. This is the way things are heading in philanthropy. And the Hartford Foundation is a leader. We are very fortunate."*

RELATIONSHIPS WITH EACH OTHER

The Advisory Committee members are also developing strong relationships with each other. Some committees have encouraged this by reserving meeting time for personal sharing, but even in those ACs that quickly "get down to business," committee members have gotten to know each other and formed relationships. AC members noted ways in which members have stepped up to support each other, and have been openly appreciative of the skills and experiences that the different people on the committee have brought to the table.

It should be noted that for nearly all of the Advisory Committees, meetings have been held entirely online. Some of them have never met each other in person at all, particularly in larger communities where individuals' lives are less likely to intersect. Some AC members noted that this has been a barrier to building strong connections with

each other, and that they are looking forward to a time when they can meet with each other in person. However, it is clear that committee members have bonded, even over remote meetings.

GETTING TO KNOW EACH OTHER

In one particular Advisory Committee, they began their meetings by asking two people to share about themselves – kind of like a brief verbal bio. Many people chose to share where they were born or grew up; how they came to live in the community and when; what drew them to participate in the committee; their careers and volunteer experience, including other roles they held in the area; their family life; and hobbies and passions. Many found similarities (multiple people growing up in the boroughs of New York City, for example) and many had connections throughout the community and a passion for volunteerism and civic engagement. This tradition of starting the meetings really helped to kick things off on the right foot – it had the feel of neighbors chatting together and was generally appreciated, with one person noting that "the people are as important as the process". Not everyone felt that this kind of activity was needed, however. One member felt that it cut into the time spent on committee business and wished that there had been a different forum set up for getting to know each other.

THEIR UNDERSTANDING OF THE COMMUNITY

Advisory Committee members indicated that they have come to understand their communities better. Members of several different communities expressed surprise and pleasure about the number and breadth of organizations in their communities that are working to serve people in need; many of them said that they had been completely unaware of this prior to being part of the AC.

Members also noted that the GTCF has provided a way to understand the culture of their towns, particularly in suburban "bedroom" communities where people might not interact with other community members on a regular basis. They spoke of the way that the GTCF project has allowed them to become more aware of their community as distinct from its neighbors. "I enjoyed getting to know a group of people who I wouldn't have known otherwise," said one AC member.

> *"You get to know who people are. You think of Sesame Street: Who are the people in your neighborhood?"*

REFLECTIONS ON THE FIRST ROUND OF GRANTMAKING

In one of the Deep Dive communities, the group noted that it was a challenge to "hit all the [grantmaking] buckets" – being inclusive, being generous, considering whether the groups applying for funding would be able to use the money as planned – but they think they did a good job, especially for an initial cycle. One AC member felt a little disappointed that their funding was supporting existing programming rather than new organizations or projects, but understood that their community already had many organizations doing important work. AC members noted that the organizations that they decided to fund were small, and that their grants would have a substantial impact on these organizations' work. They recognized that larger organizations can and often do apply to the Hartford Foundation directly for financial support.

We have not yet reached out to people in the Deep Dive communities who are not part of the GTCF process, to determine whether there are responses to the work that reach beyond the committee members. We are currently working with the Hartford Foundation to determine whether and how this outreach should take place during Year Three of GTCF implementation.

SUPPORTS: HOW IS THE HARTFORD FOUNDATION SUPPORTING THE GTCF PROCESS? ARE THERE ADDITIONAL SUPPORTS THAT COMMUNITIES NEED?

SOURCES

Meetings between the CF team and the CES evaluation team

Conversations with CF team members

Electronic records kept by CF team members

Attendance at Advisory Committee meetings for selected Deep Dive communities

Conversations with communities that have finished their Selection Committee and Advisory Committee processes

SUPPORTS PROVIDED BY THE HARTFORD FOUNDATION

Two years into the Greater Together Community Funds implementation, communities are still heavily reliant on support from the Hartford Foundation. Each town has a CF team liaison who has been supporting the town throughout this process. In addition, the Hartford Foundation has provided behind-the-scenes support in various ways, and has developed materials and resources to support communities through this process. The Foundation is also planning a fall convening focused around how inclusion can be incorporated into the grantmaking process.

The Community Funds Team: CF team members continue to attend nearly every meeting, even as teams transition to Advisory Committees and begin the grantmaking process. There are no communities, even among the 14 that have already made grant recommendations, where the CF liaisons are no longer regularly attending meetings.

An analysis of meetings attended, by year of the grant and by type of meetings, shows no dropoff in meeting attendance by CF fund liaisons; in fact, CF liaisons were more likely to be present in meetings during Year Two than in Year One.

TABLE 1: PERCENT OF MEETINGS ATTENDED BY A CF TEAM LIAISON, BY GRANT YEAR AND TYPE OF MEETING

	Grant Year One September 2019 – August 2020	Grant Year Two September 2020 – August 2021	Total
Meeting to Develop a Selection Committee	82%	100%	83%
Selection Committee Meeting	90%	92%	90%
Advisory Committee Meeting	100%	94%	95%
Total	90%	94%	92%

Some of the types of support that CF liaisons are providing to communities include:

• Following up with communities that have been slow to form committees or who have encountered obstacles

- Organizing initial meetings of both Selection Committees and Advisory Committees, by scheduling the meeting, developing an agenda, facilitating, and taking notes.

- Continuing to attend meetings even after committees have chosen chairs and secretaries, in order to provide information as needed and help committees through any issues that arise.

- Communicating with committee members outside of meetings about process issues and areas of need.

- Reviewing grant recommendations to make sure they are consistent with Hartford Foundation guidelines[7].

- Facilitating connections with Communications and Grants Administration staff at the Hartford Foundation, as communities develop public materials around their grantmaking process and recommend grants to organizations.

At one point, one of the CF team liaisons indicated that she expected that regular attendance at Advisory Committee meetings would not be required after teams have moved through the initial stages of the grantmaking process and had selected chairs and secretaries. Clearly this has not been the case, and there appear to have been no decisions coming from Hartford Foundation leadership about when liaisons will be expected to reduce their involvement with the Advisory Committees or with GTCF overall.

CF team members have shared with CES their concerns about the heavy level of support they are providing to the communities. Some issues that have come up include:

- The tension between supporting the work and guiding the work. CF team members wish to remain in the background as much as possible, to allow the Advisory Teams to take the lead on the grantmaking process and work out issues according to their own values and preferences. At the same time, the Hartford Foundation is making an explicit commitment to inclusion as part of the GTCF process, and this value must be upheld throughout the process. CF team members are continually assessing whether to step in and recommend a course shift, or let a situation play out among committee members.

- The question of whether CF team members should be providing extensive logistical supports (such as scheduling meetings, managing Google Drive, and sharing information), or if they should be encouraging more independence among committees, particularly Advisory Committees that have been meeting for some time.

- The lack of training and expertise among some CF team members in issues that have come up during the GTCF process, including facilitation around issues of equity and inclusion, and knowledge of fundraising best practices.

Other Hartford Foundation Support: In addition to the day-to-day support provided by liaisons, the Hartford Foundation is also providing support to GTCF behind the scenes. The CF team is supported by a Senior Development Officer, who meets weekly with the CF team. They discuss community progress, identify issues, and make a plan for how the CF team can continue to provide support to each town. They also consider larger issues around GTCF implementation, such as those noted above.

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7   The Hartford Foundation does not approve or reject grantmaking recommendations from GTCF teams based on their content, but according to tax law the GTCF funds can only be awarded to nonprofit (501(c)3) organizations, municipal entities, or organizations/individuals that are partnered with a nonprofit organization as a fiscal agent.

In addition, communities continue to use Toolkits, collections of information and templates, that were developed during Year One of the GTCF implementation to guide their processes. There are Toolkits for each stage of the GTCF process:

- General Community Fund Toolkit – Establishing Your Town's Community Fund
- Selection Committee Toolkit – Selecting Your Town's First Community Funds Advisory Committee
- Advisory Committee Toolkit – Establishing and Running a Participatory Grantmaking Process

Similar to the Toolkits is an "Activation Model" for Advisory Committees, which was developed in response to the early needs of the Advisory Committees as they began their processes. It includes basic information about the program, sample templates that Advisory Committees can use, and guidance on topics such as facilitation, decision-making, and the grantmaking process.

Also, the Director of Strategic Learning and Evaluation attends meetings with the CES evaluation team and CF team members to discuss data collection and evaluation planning. The Communications Department reviews community materials for consistency with Hartford Foundation messaging, and posts these materials on a section of the Hartford Foundation website dedicated to each town's fund. The Grants Administration department processes the grant recommendations made by each community.

Fall Inclusion Trainings: The Hartford Foundation is also planning a substantial investment in capacity-building this fall, with a series of events that will lead community teams through an exploration of inclusion in their work. The current plan is to bring in two outside consultants who will work individually with each Advisory Committee, and then convene larger groups of Advisory Committees for cross-committee discussions. The consultants will also provide training to the CF team members around supporting inclusive processes in GTCF committees.

GTCF AND THE HARTFORD FOUNDATION FOR PUBLIC GIVING

The GTCF project represented a new way for the Hartford Foundation to work with communities, as well as a substantial investment of both financial and staff resources over several years. During the past two years of the project, the project's staffing has changed, as has its place within the organizational structure of the Hartford Foundation.

The initial configuration of staffing support for the GTCF drew staff from several different departments at the Hartford Foundation. The CF team consisted of four staff members from the Development, Community Investments, and Nonprofit Support teams at the Hartford Foundation. The process was initially supervised by the vice presidents of Community Investments and Development. Following the retirement of the Vice President of Community Investment, supervision was continued by the Vice President of Development, who was joined by the Vice President of Communications and Marketing.

Since then, the Hartford Foundation has undergone a restructuring of its internal teams. The Greater Together Community Funds project is now contained within a new team called Community Impact, which was formed during the summer of 2021. The team will now report to the Vice President of Community Impact.

CF team members had noted that the initial structure of the GTCF was designed to cut across internal departments and draw on expertise from several teams, but in practice the project was sometimes overlooked because it was not contained within a single department. This affected funding as well as communication with the team; team members were left out of some internal conversations, and the Hartford Foundation's initial 2020 budget did not include any funding for the GTCF, despite funding requests having been submitted.

Staffing for the project has shifted as well. Of the initial four team members, only one is still a CF team liaison. Two have moved into supervisory roles, and one has left the Hartford Foundation. The team now consists of one team member who has been with GTCF since its beginning, and three other team members who had been in other roles at the Hartford Foundation prior to being assigned to this project. One of the new program officers began supporting the project in December 2019, and the other two began in July 2021. Prior to the two new program officers joining the GTCF project, 11 communities were supported by a liaison who was employed by the Hartford Foundation on a temporary basis, from March 2020 through June 2021.

"This little team is teaching the Foundation a new way of working."

As the Hartford Foundation focuses its ongoing work on dismantling structural racism, and develops ways to operationalize this commitment, the GTCF's focus on inclusion has the potential to be a model for how other Hartford Foundation projects engage with communities. The focus on inclusion is new for the Hartford Foundation, and the lessons from the GTCF's implementation will be important for new as well as existing projects.

SUPPORT NEEDS IDENTIFIED BY THE COMMUNITY

Our conversations with committee members have addressed the supports that the Hartford Foundation has provided to them as well as questions about whether other supports are needed. As noted in "Implementation and Uptake: To what extent are program implementation and community uptake aligned with the Hartford Foundation's implementation plan?", communities have generally been very positive about the support that their CF team liaison has provided. They have appreciated the liaisons' consistent presence and nudging them in the right direction, and no one considered the liaisons to be overbearing with their support. Some committee members also expressed appreciation for the support that Communications staff gave them with developing their grantmaking materials and posting them online.

"I had never been on a grant committee before; it was nice to be taught and shown what to do."

Some communities indicated areas where additional support would have been helpful. These included:

- Access to Hartford Foundation contacts in a community for outreach about GTCF.
- More up-front information about the process as a whole, rather than information being distributed after committees reached certain milestones.
- More detailed information about what would be required of them from the grants administration team, after the committees have made grant recommendations.

- More support with using Google Drive (although the Hartford Foundation did provide this support to Advisory Committees, this concern arose in several conversations, indicating that not all AC members were aware that this support was available).

> **RECOMMENDATION:** We heard from some Advisory Committee members that the expectation that they would use personal funds for GTCF-related activities and then be reimbursed later was an unreasonable expectation of community volunteers. The Hartford Foundation should make implementation funds available to the communities up front, and then request documentation of how the money was spent.

Committee members have expressed concern about how they will sustain the work once the initial $50,000 for grantmaking has been allocated; and they are beginning to have conversations about how they will have to raise additional funds to supplement the return on their endowment. There were several requests for additional funding to continue to support the work, and one committee member suggested that the Hartford Foundation could help organize a large fundraising event to benefit GTCF, and divide the funds raised among the communities. The Hartford Foundation is aware of this concern among communities, and their Executive Leadership team and Board of Directors are considering ways to respond at the organizational level.

POWER IMBALANCES: HOW WILL THE FOUNDATION AND COMMUNITIES ADDRESS THE INHERENT POWER IMBALANCES BETWEEN FUNDER AND GRANTEE?

SOURCES

Meetings between the Hartford Foundation Community Funds (CF) team and the CES evaluation team

Conversations with CF team members

Attendance at Advisory Committee meetings for selected Deep Dive communities

Conversations with communities that have finished their Selection Committee and Advisory Committee processes

As we noted in our Year One report, shifting power is at the heart of the Greater Together Community Funds program. We also noted that even with the GTCF's explicit intention to shift power to communities to make grant recommendations, there will always be a power imbalance between a foundation and the communities that it supports.

Two years into the Greater Together Community Funds project, we have seen only one example of an Advisory Committee that is resistant to the Hartford Foundation's expectations concerning the implementation of the program. The Hartford Foundation is continuing to have dialogues with this committee about ways to move forward; as of this writing, there are issues that remain unresolved.

In other communities, there have sometimes been tense moments at meetings, as described above, but this has not translated into the Foundation asserting power over the communities or vice versa. Nor are we aware of problematic power dynamics between committees and other community stakeholders.

The Hartford Foundation has continued to model a cooperative and inclusive approach to the GTCF project, with CF team members being sensitive to the importance of allowing communities to control their processes as much as possible. The CF team also supports communities with issues and concerns, but does not try to impose solutions on the communities. Selection and Advisory committee members with whom we have spoken have indicated that they view their relationship with their CF liaison as positive and productive. Some have also noted that they appreciate that the Hartford Foundation has provided tools and resources but encouraged communities to use them in ways that work for them, rather than mandate their use at a particular time or in a certain way.

One member of the Hartford Foundation's GTCF team noted that "power sharing is a myth when you're a funder working with nonprofits; they will not push back because they want continued access. This won't be true for community teams." This is because the GTCF teams are not financially dependent on the Hartford Foundation for their continued existence. While they exist because of the initial funding and support from the Foundation, they can (and are expected to) continue to work within their towns after this initial support.

BUILDING SHARED POWER: HOW DOES THE EVALUATION TEAM PARTNER IN BUILDING SHARED POWER WITH COMMUNITY AND FOUNDATION STAKEHOLDERS?

SOURCES

Meetings between the Hartford Foundation Community Funds (CF) team and the CES evaluation team

Conversations with CF team members

Attendance at Advisory Committee meetings for selected Deep Dive communities

Conversations with communities that have finished their Selection Committee and Advisory Committee processes

In this Year Two report, it feels important to be more explicit about our own positionality as evaluators in this work. While we believe that evaluators or "learning partners" can be relatively impartial – meaning, we can see many perspectives and report on them – we do not believe it is possible to be "objective." In fact, we believe that claiming objectivity can often mask biases that lurk beneath the surface, and if left unexplored, can subtly influence existing power dynamics between people, groups, and institutions. Like the Hartford Foundation, we value inclusion as a leading framework and goal for how and why we do our work, and we seek to incorporate inclusive processes in our evaluation in the following ways:

- Being transparent with all Advisory Committees about how information is gathered, stored, and shared with the Hartford Foundation and with other interested parties.

- Talking with Advisory Committee members in Deep Dive communities about the outcomes they are interested in learning more about, and how they suggest we work together to answer these questions.

- Not including information that is identified as coming from a particular Deep Dive Advisory Committee in a report without first allowing the committee to review it, and adapting the information according to the committee's preferences. All of the information in this report that references a particular Advisory Committee's progress, other than the tracking of progress through GTCF stages, has been reviewed and approved by that committee.

We are also in the planning stages of developing an Evaluation Advisory Committee, consisting of representatives from Advisory Committees. This committee will begin by assisting the CES team with analysis of reflections from a convening planned in 2022, designed to help us understand how communities are engaging with GTCF goals. This committee will be an extension of work we are already doing with Deep Dive communities around understanding which outcomes are most important to the committees doing the work, and how we can understand whether these outcomes are being achieved. We believe that truly shifting power to communities involves a participatory approach to shaping how the work is evaluated, and we are hopeful that the Evaluation Advisory Committee will provide a structure for incorporating the voices of the Advisory Committees in moving the evaluation work forward.

CONCLUSION: MOVING GTCF FORWARD, AND NEW AREAS FOR EXPLORATION

The Greater Together Community Funds project is continuing to be implemented in a robust way across nearly all of the communities in the Hartford Foundation's service area. Twenty-seven of the towns and cities in the Hartford Foundation's service area have formed Selection Committees, and 26 of them have formed Advisory Committees that are have made or are planning to make grant recommendations. While these committees are still receiving support from the Hartford Foundation, they are successfully developing applications, doing outreach to the communities, and (for 14 communities) awarding grants. Community members have been positive about the work and the support they have received from the Hartford Foundation.

The GTCF is also having an impact on the Hartford Foundation, as it models an inclusive process for community engagement and shifting power. As the Foundation reorganizes its processes and operationalizes a focus on dismantling structural racism, the GTCF program has the potential to have a positive and lasting impact on how the Foundation continues to work in the greater Hartford area.

Year Three of GTCF implementation will be challenging. It is during this year that some Advisory Committees will allocate the last of the initial $50,000 provided to their towns, leaving them with only a small return on the endowed funds unless they do substantial fundraising. Also, the terms of many Advisory Committee members will expire, making it necessary for committees to recruit new members. These are two inflection points which could cause some GTCF Advisory Committees to either disband, or substantially slow down their work.

It is vitally important for the ongoing success of GTCF that the Hartford Foundation meet these challenges proactively. Lack of attention to these issues risks losing the hard work and good will that have been built up in the communities through the GTCF process.

Specifically, the Foundation should:

- Provide clear communication to all Advisory Committees about what (if anything) the Hartford Foundation is planning to do for communities once their initial $50,000 has been allocated. Right now, in the absence of clear communication about this, communities are having conversations about fundraising, and trying to figure out how they will meet this challenge.

- Determine how the Hartford Foundation will continue to staff the GTCF program, throughout Year Three and potentially beyond. Is the Hartford Foundation prepared to continue to support communities with a CF team member at nearly every AC meeting? Is it reasonable that the current CF team will be able to continue to provide this support?

- Consider how to support communities in creating a repository of knowledge, lessons learned, and best practices that can be communicated to new members as they join the GTCF program.

Some questions that we hope to address during the third and final year of our evaluation include:

- How do the Hartford Foundation and the 29 communities respond to the twin challenges raised above?

- How does the fall convening around inclusion affect communities' work with GTCF? What changes does the Hartford Foundation hope to see after the convening, and how (if at all) do communities adjust their processes?

- How are community members other than the Advisory Committees viewing the GTCF process and the Hartford Foundation – are they aware of both, or either? Do they view them as positive influences on their communities?

- Is the unique GTCF program structure resulting in grants made to less resourced and established organizations, and are these organizations new to the Hartford Foundation?

- How can CES help support the learning that is needed to sustain the work, for both Advisory Committees and the Hartford Foundation?

We look forward to exploring these topics with the Hartford Foundation and with GTCF communities.

APPENDIX I: SOURCES

This report draws from a variety of sources:

Meetings between the CF team and the CES evaluation team: Between July 2020 and the end of August 2021, the CF team and CES team met six times to discuss the GTCF evaluation. All of these meetings were held using Zoom teleconferencing.

Internal CES team meetings: The CES team meets weekly to reflect on recent work and plan work going forward. These meetings always hold time for conversations about what we are learning from the work as we gather information about the GTCF implementation. They also provide an opportunity for us to center ourselves in the work, and consider how the lens we are bringing to the work is helpful for the Hartford Foundation and for the communities.

Conversations with CF team members: Individual CF team members were paired with CES team members for monthly meetings, throughout Year Two of the GTCF implementation. These meetings, which usually lasted 60-90 minutes, would consist of a summary of major issues among the towns that the CF team member was supporting, along with a more general discussion of progress overall. This was also sometimes an opportunity to provide general project updates to CES.

Beginning in November 2020, several representatives from CES also met monthly with the CF team supervisor and the Hartford Foundation's Director of Strategic Learning and Evaluation, to discuss the evolving implementation of the GTCF, evaluation plans, and how GTCF fits within the larger organization.

A conversation with the Hartford Foundation Executive Leadership Team: In January 2021, CES team members facilitated a conversation among Hartford Foundation leaders about their goals for the GTCF and how they view inclusion, within the project and for the broader organization. Leadership team members in attendance were:

- Jay Williams, President
- Elysa Gordon, Vice President, Community Impact
- Brad Drazen, Vice President, Communications and Marketing
- Deborah Rothstein, Vice President for Development
- Bonnie Malley, Vice President for Finance and Administration
- Julie Feidner, Executive Assistant to the President and Manager of Board Relations

Electronic records kept by CF team members: CF team members record many details about GTCF implementation into a Google sheet shared with CES, including:

- Community status (inactive, developing a Selection Committee, Selection Committee in progress, Advisory Committee in progress, recommending grants)

- Meeting details, including dates, type of meeting, number of members in attendance, whether a CF team liaison was present, and major areas of discussion

- A list of current and former Advisory Committee members for each town

- For former Advisory Committee members, date and reason that they left the committee

- Advisory Committee progress through six stages of grantmaking, as defined by the GTCF toolkit

Attendance at Advisory Committee meetings for selected Deep Dive communities: During the fall of 2020, the CES team identified seven communities as targets of a Deep Dive analysis, in which CES team members attend Advisory Committee meetings, observe the implementation process closely, and engage the committees in participatory evaluation. The communities selected were Bloomfield, Granby, Hartford, Hebron, Manchester, Vernon, and West Hartford. Granby has yet to form an Advisory Committee, but CES staff have been attending meetings in the other six communities, and have engaged with these communities in initial conversations about their desired outcomes for the work and how these outcomes could be evaluated.

Conversations with communities that have finished their Selection Committee and Advisory Committee processes: The CES team has conducted conversations with both Selection and Advisory Committee members, to reflect upon the process and provide feedback to the Hartford Foundation. As of August 2021, we have conducted:

- **Selection Committee Reflections** in 21 communities, with SC members in four additional communities choosing to share their experiences with us through email

- **Advisory Committee Reflections** in nine communities:
  - Bloomfield
  - Ellington
  - Glastonbury
  - Hartford
  - Hebron
  - Newington
  - South Windsor
  - Tolland
  - West Hartford

APPENDIX II: DIMENSIONS OF SUCCESS

Results ("marching orders")

Process (how we will elicit the result)

Relationships (how people will relate to one another during the process)

Image description: The image shows an equilateral triangle with the words "Shared Responsibility for Success" in the middle with arrows going from the middle to each of the corners. Outside of the triangle, at each corner, is listed an aspect of success which mirrors the three categories as described above (Results, Process, Relationship)

From the Interaction Institute for Social Change

APPENDIX III: JANUARY 2021 EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP TEAM

What Does Success Look Like for the Greater Together Community Funds?

Community needs are addressed

The committees have used a variety of communication forms to identify the greatest needs of the community

Grantmaking that reflects boards needs or interests of the relevant community.

engaged committees; community members adding to funds (donations); grantmaking to the communuty

Positive impact on the town

Grants to local orgs to lift the quality of life in towns.

regional trainings with towns on variety of topics

Sustainability

Attracting community donors to the respective funds.

Positive impact on HFPG

CF team feels empowered and excited about work

The GHCF is well-integrated in the broader CI grantmaking strategy - we can identify clear links to outcome areas and strategic vision/goals

What Does Success Look Like for the Greater Together Community Funds?

Representation and Inclusion

Advisory committees that reach beyond the "usual suspects" of any given community.

A wide variety of the community is represented in identifying the community needs

Town advisory groups and grantmaking represent the town residents

Town residents have opportunities to inform and address needs in their community

RPF Process that accounts for inclusion

Process completed

Success is all 29 towns formed their committees and a large number are evaluating grant recommendations by the end of the year.

all towns involved in process

What does inclusion look like, as part of GTCF and also other Hartford Foundation work?

Diverse voices and perspectives among the Advisory committee (as feasible based on demographic limitations of a given town)

Same comment as before in reaching beyond the "usual suspects", but also including dissenting voices.

and once at table -- inclusion should consider opportunity to participate meaningfully

efforts/practice/proce sses that enable equitable opportunity for all voices to be represented.

under represented voices have a place at the table of decision making

differing perspectives and backgrounds represented

Realistically should we define Inclusion not necessarily that all voices are/must be represented at the table for the work to move forward but that that there intentional efforts/practice/proce sses that enable equitable opportunity

grants made available to and applications received from smaller, lesser-known organizations within a town/community.

APPENDIX IV: COMMUNITY PROGRESS OVER TIME

Community Progress through the Greater Together Community Funds Implementation Stages

Legend:
- Liaison Transition Point
- Kick-off Meeting
- Meeting to form an SC
- Selection Committee Meeting
- Advisory Committee Meeting
- Initial Grant Recommendations
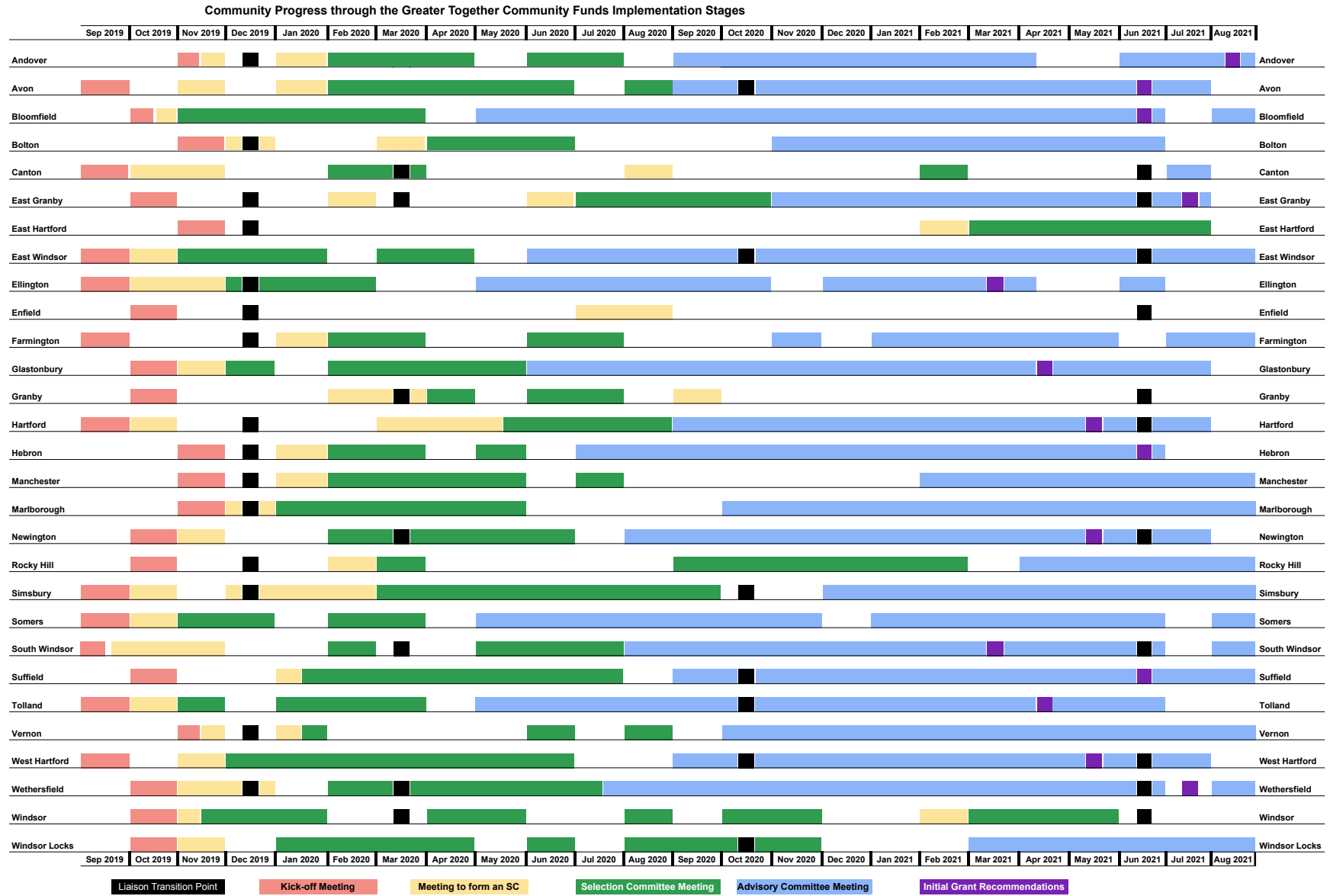
APPENDIX V: ADVISORY COMMITTEE STAGES OF PROGRESS

Greater Together Community Funds - Advisory Committee Stages of Progress

Town	Jun 2020	Jul 2020	Aug 2020	Sep 2020	Oct 2020	Nov 2020	Dec 2020	Jan 2021	Feb 2021	Mar 2021	Apr 2021	May 2021	Jun 2021	Jul 2021	Aug 2021
Andover				Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3				Stage 4					Stage 5
Avon					Stage 1	Stage 2					Stage 3		Stage 5 / Stage 6		
Bloomfield	Stage 1		Stage 2						Stage 3			Stage 4	Stage 5		
Bolton					Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3						Stage 4		
Canton															
East Granby					Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3					Stage 4		Stage 5	
East Hartford															
East Windsor	Stage 1		Stage 2				Stage 3					Stage 4			
Ellington	Stage 1	Stage 2				Stage 3		Stage 4		Stage 5			Stage 6		
Enfield															
Farmington							Stage 1		Stage 2		Stage 3	Stage 4			
Glastonbury		Stage 1	Stage 2			Stage 3					Stage 5	Stage 6			
Granby															
Hartford				Stage 1	Stage 2			Stage 3				Stage 5	Stage 6		
Hebron			Stage 1	Stage 2		Stage 3			Stage 4				Stage 5	Stage 6	
Manchester									Stage 1						
Marlborough					Stage 1		Stage 2			Stage 3			Stage 4		
Newington			Stage 1		Stage 2	Stage 3				Stage 4		Stage 5			Stage 6
Rocky Hill													Stage 1		
Simsbury								Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3				Stage 4	
Somers	Stage 1		Stage 2					Stage 3					Stage 4		
South Windsor			Stage 1	Stage 2		Stage 3		Stage 4		Stage 5		Stage 6			
Suffield				Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3							Stage 5		
Tolland	Stage 1		Stage 2	Stage 3			Stage 4				Stage 5	Stage 6			
Vernon					Stage 1	Stage 2		Stage 3					Stage 4		
West Hartford					Stage 1	Stage 2		Stage 3		Stage 4		Stage 5	Stage 6		
Wethersfield		Stage 1		Stage 2				Stage 3			Stage 4			Stage 5	
Windsor															
Windsor Locks										Stage 1		Stage 2			

APPENDIX VI: SAMPLE APPLICATIONS AND SCORING SHEETS USED TO EVALUATE GTCF APPLICATIONS

Sample Letter of Interest Form:

Q1: How will your project improve the quality of life for the citizens of _____?

Response & notes:

Q1 Score 1 to 5 (weak to strong) [ ]

Q2: How will your project engage with diverse members of the community?

Response & notes:

Q2: Score 1 to 5 (weak to strong) [ ]

Q3: How will your project engage and benefit the underserved members of the community?

Response & notes:

Q3: Score 1 to 5 (weak to strong) [ ]

Q4: How specifically will the grant of an award enable you to create your new project, or what enhancement will the funds enable you to create?

Response & notes:

Q4: Score 1 to 5 (weak to strong) [ ]

_____

For the Reviewer: How well do you feel that the Project reflects the aims and objectives of the Fund as previously stated?

Response & notes:

Overall review: Score 1 to 5 (weak to strong) [ ]

Sample Scoring Sheet:

Organization Name:_____

Grant Purpose:_____

Grant Amount Request:_____

501(c)3 or Affiliated: Yes / No

Date:_____

Reviewer Name:_____

CRITERIA	SCORE	COMMENTS
1. Community Need: *Total 10 points* This project is a real need in the community, will benefit the residents of _____ and this applicant is well suited to carry out this project. The applicant proposing this project is active in the community and seems to have a good understanding of the community's need. This activity will make a noticeable difference in the community.		
2. Innovative/New Idea: *Total 10 points* This is a new or creative idea that meets a need in our town. Is anyone else already doing this project?		
3. Organizational Credibility: *Total 10 points* The applicant can support the proposal. The applicant has expertise that will assist carrying out the proposal. The applicant describes clearly how they would be able to implement the activity. The applicant has community partners to help if needed in the proposal. The applicant represents the community it serves and has diverse leadership.		
4. Community Involvement *Total 10 points* This proposal encourages community building and/or involvement.		

CRITERIA	SCORE	COMMENTS
5. Impact: *Total 10 points* The proposal looks to impact a significant number and wide variety of residents of _____ or a smaller number of residents very significantly. The proposal will have a lasting impact on the community.		
6. Sustainability: *Total 10 points* After funding awarded from the Community Fund is depleted; 1) the applicant would probably be able to get funding somewhere else to continue this project; or 2) the applicant could integrate it into other work they are doing so the impact could continue to be felt; or 3) this is a one-time investment that would not need to be repeated.		
7. Planning: *Total 10 points* Proposal is well thought out, complete, concise and clearly written. Does the project seem likely to happen with funding requested? – if not, do they have additional funds/donors to complete the project. Does the proposal have a reasonable time frame for the project?		
8. Targeted Populations: *Total 10 points* This project will serve an underrepresented population and/or marganilized group in our community. Benefits residents without discrimination based on race, religion, gender, sexual orentation or other protected classes.		
9. Budget: *Total 10 points* Budget appears reasonable to support the proposal. Budget is clearly allotted to expenditures. The funds are not available from another source.		
Total Score	/90	

Sample Scoring Rubric

Rate on a Scale of 0-4 (4 being the best)

- The proposal presented a clear description of the program or activity.

- The proposal presented a clear description of how funding will be used.

- The proposal effectively describes a project with research or data that supports the necessity of the proposed project for the target population.

- This program will benefit and impact residents of _____

- The project has identified a clear way to measure success.

- The organization or community group submitting the application is well suited to implement this project

- The organization promotes diversity, equity and inclusion particularly for their Board of Directors and staff.

- Budget is reasonable for the proposed program or activity.

Total

CORE ASSUMPTIONS

Communities are strong when we work & learn together

Working as a team promotes collaboration

Inclusion is important to democracy

The learning – action - reflection process is integral to success

INCEPTION OF PROJECT

August 2019

Goals:
Advisory Committees are representative of the community.

Input by residents is reflected in the decisions made at the Advisory Committee

Examples of Practices:
Reaching beyond the "usual suspects"/using new communication channels

HFPG modeling inclusion

Asking: "What do you need to attend?"

Criteria of selecting committee members

YEAR 1

June 2020 — building on last year

Goals:
Town level committees take full ownership of the grant-making process.

Advisory Committees implement a grant-making process that results in funding for more grassroots needs and initiatives.

Examples of Practices:
Adaptation to virtual meeting spaces; expanding accessibility.

CF team modeling openness and vulnerability in response to racial justice.

CF team working in partnership with communities

YEAR 2

August 2021 — working in communities

The Hartford Foundation:
Supports communities to drive their own process.

Provides tools and facilitation for community dynamics around DEI.

Advisory Committees:
Pay attention to accessibility of the grant application for less established and resourced nonprofits: plain language, a simplified application process, and extensive outreach to the community.

Include questions related to inclusion on applications and scoring rubric.

Have intentional conversations about who is at the "table," and inviting sometimes uncomfortable conversations around diversity and inclusion

YEAR 3

WHAT RISK ARE YOU TAKING AS YOU MOVE RIGHT? WHAT SUPPORT IS NEEDED TO KEEP THE LIMB STURDY?