

An April food distribution organized by the Greater Pittsburgh Community FoodBank, shown below, was one of many now-familiar scenes from a year marked by the COVID-19 pandemic that has cost the lives of hundreds of thousands and global racial justice protests sparked by the killings of African Americans by police or vigilantes. As the stories in this issue of *here and there* demonstrate, it has been impossible for the work of The Heinz Endowments, its partners and its grantees to not be affected by these world events — and it has been impossible for us not to respond.



PANDEMIC RESPONSE

Front-line Support The Heinz Endowments awarded more than \$11 million to front-line organizations working during the pandemic to relieve hardship among families and individuals and to provide health safeguards for residents, local workers and medical staff. The grants have covered a range of needs, including support for child care and education, policies addressing public health impacts, arts organizations and artists who lost audience revenue, and various outreach programs and services.

Emergency Collaboration

Four Pittsburgh-area foundations — the Endowments and the Henry L. Hillman, Richard King Mellon and Pittsburgh foundations — along with the United Way of Southwestern Pennsylvania, created the Emergency Action Fund to assist the region's most vulnerable residents who faced immediate threats to their health or livelihoods. The foundations seeded the fund housed at The Pittsburgh Foundation with \$1 million each. The United Way offered its 2-1-1 Help Line and food distribution systems to help connect people to services. By July, the fund had raised \$9 million and awarded 313 grants to support nonprofits, government agencies and health care providers helping residents through the COVID-19 crisis.

Grantee Response Examples

Reflecting the variety of organizations that received funding from the Endowments and other foundations for emergency response to pandemic are the following:

The Allegheny Health Network, with support from the Endowments and the Henry L. Hillman Foundation, created a mobile coronavirus testing clinic for underserved local communities. Patients are accepted who experience symptoms consistent with the virus, such as fever, cough and shortness of breath, or had contact with someone with a confirmed COVID-19 diagnosis, but a physician's order is not required. An appointment is necessary, however.

Farm to Table Buy Local, which promotes food produced in Western Pennsylvania, is working with local farms, dairies and distributors to deliver boxes of fresh food to public housing residents, food banks and pantries, and other nonprofits. Similarly, 412 Food Rescue, the largest volunteer-led food transport network in the nation, has expanded its mission to delivering food to people who are homebound and unable to get to food support from other organizations. Previously it focused on delivering to food pantries and charities good but unsellable food from grocery stores and restaurants that would otherwise be wasted.

The POISE Foundation launched the Critical Community Needs Fund to provide emergency support during the pandemic to small and mid-sized organizations that serve Black residents and that could be overlooked by government aid programs and larger funds. The POISE fund was seeded by the Endowments and the Richard King Mellon Foundation.

EQUITY AND JUSTICE

Speaking Out Social justice protests sparked by the killings of African Americans by police and vigilantes included one by Pittsburgh Public Schools staff, below, that started on June 8 at 8:46 a.m. to signify the 8 minutes and 46 seconds that George Floyd suffered while a Minneapolis police officer pressed his knee on Mr. Floyd's neck. The Heinz Endowments was among several local and national organizations that posted website statements decrying the killing of Mr. Floyd and others. In "Standing Our Ground for Justice," the Endowments called for an end to systemic racism and the harm it has caused Black people and other individuals of color. Also, Endowments President Grant Oliphant penned several blog posts about the need for empathy, justice and equity concerning the pandemic response, the killings of Black individuals and the ensuing uprising, and the controversial move by the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette to bar two Black journalists from covering protests.

Joshua Franzos



Promoting Equity In May, the Endowments awarded grants totaling \$6.7 million to advance equity across southwestern Pennsylvania, including more than \$2.3 million to support local criminal justice reform. The criminal justice grants were part of the Endowments' three-year, \$10 million reform initiative called the Restoration Project. The other \$4.4 million focused on building capacity and leadership among nonprofits and the broader community to tackle a range of equity issues.

Confronting Media Bias The Heinz Endowments released a report in April that found that the majority of local news stories about Black people in the Pittsburgh region focus on crime and sports — a result similar to one reached in a 2011 Endowments-funded analysis of media coverage of Black men and boys. Among the conclusions in "Portrayal and Perception II: Content Analysis of Pittsburgh Media Coverage of African Americans" was that the limited focus in local media coverage indicated implicit racial bias, which news organizations should address through efforts such as learning from Black news outlets about the different types of narratives that could be told about Black people.