

# Ann Arbor Area Community Foundation

## Washtenaw Coordinated Funders

Ann Arbor, MI

### Challenge

Advance Washtenaw's social safety net by bringing together key human service funders across the public and private spheres to share funding processes and outcomes.

### Innovation

This impact-driven partnership has achieved: (1) the formation and expansion of a cross-sector partnership that is nationally unique in makeup of partners and the multidimensional strategy for impact; (2) the establishment of shared measurable community outcomes for each of our four focus areas; (3) the validation of this collaboration through an extensive third-party evaluation; (4) the preservation of public funds for local human service nonprofits; (5) the establishment of a more collaborative culture across local agencies and funders; and (6) the creation of a "cradle to career" continuum to closely link early childhood efforts with school-age youth.

In 2010, five founding public and private partners in the Ann Arbor area agreed to coordinate funding and work toward advancement of Washtenaw's social safety net and more partners have been added since. By 2016, the funders have collectively distributed \$24 million in grants in four priority areas: safety-net health and nutrition, housing and homelessness, aging, and cradle-to-career (representing early childhood and school-age youth). Coordinated funding has encouraged organizations that might view each other as competitors to work together for the benefit of the community as a whole. This is the first time in the community's history that key human service funders across the public and private spheres have agreed to share funding processes and outcomes. No single partner is capable of such broad community goal-setting and impact, but with collaboration the group is improving the county's most vulnerable residents' lives. The Washtenaw Coordinated Funders currently support 50 agencies and 60 top-notch programs and services, reaching an estimated 35,000 clients.

### Public Sector Partners

The Office of Community and Economic Development (representing the City of Ann Arbor, Washtenaw County, and Washtenaw Urban County Executive Committee)

### Other Partners

United Way of Washtenaw County, the RNR Foundation, and St. Joseph Mercy Health System

