



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

January 3, 2017

**Contact:**

Sarah Lemagie  
PR & Communications Officer  
(612) 672-3877  
[slemagie@mplsfoundation.org](mailto:slemagie@mplsfoundation.org)

**The Minneapolis Foundation Kicks Off New Year with Nearly \$5 Million in Grants**

*Equity-focused funding will support 87 organizations working on education, economic vitality, and civic engagement*

**MINNEAPOLIS** – The Minneapolis Foundation has kicked off the New Year by awarding \$4,978,000 in competitive grants for 2017. The Foundation today announced grants to 87 organizations that are working to enhance the economic vitality, education and civic engagement of greater Minneapolis-Saint Paul.

The grant recipients range from Minnesota’s largest family shelter to an institute that supports emerging American Indian leaders to a college that offers a special program to train women in technical careers. In a variety of ways, all of the organizations receiving support are working to create a community where racial, social and economic equity thrives—the driving value behind the Foundation’s unrestricted grantmaking.

“This year marks a critical moment in philanthropy, when an exceptionally generous community has seen great outcomes, but still has troubling challenges,” said R.T. Rybak, President and CEO of The Minneapolis Foundation. “Our community doesn’t lack compassion, but it does lack alignment. With these grants, we’re working to achieve that alignment by joining forces with a host of organizations that are committed to ensuring that everyone who lives here has real opportunities to succeed.”

One grant recipient, Reading Partners, is collaborating with Minneapolis Public Schools to provide reading centers and individualized literacy interventions and tutoring at five high-needs elementary schools. Reading Partners uses an evidence-based model that has been shown to raise the reading proficiency of students who are at least six months below grade level.

“This grant from The Minneapolis Foundation is essential to Reading Partners as we seek to serve more students in our second year of operation in the Twin Cities,” said Karen Casanova, Executive Director of Reading Partners Twin Cities. “The need is urgent—state data shows that less than half of all third graders, and less than a quarter of those living in poverty, are reading at grade level in Minneapolis Public Schools.”

These annual competitive grants are just one slice of The Minneapolis Foundation’s grantmaking. The Foundation administers more than 1,200 charitable funds and distributed more than \$50 million in 2016, locally and globally.

The grants announced today represent a combination of endowment funds at the Foundation and co-investments from like-minded partners. They fall into one of three categories:

- **Civic Engagement** grants support projects and initiatives to create a community where everyone participates in democracy and public decision-making.
- **Economic Vitality** grants support efforts to build an inclusive workforce that reflects the metro area's changing demographics, and a business climate that fosters innovation, entrepreneurship and self-sufficiency.
- **Education** grants support schools and initiatives to create an education system where all children are on track to compete in a global economy, participate in civic life and pursue their dreams.

Learn more and view a complete list of the 87 grant recipients at [www.minneapolisfoundation.org/recent-grants/](http://www.minneapolisfoundation.org/recent-grants/).

###

***About The Minneapolis Foundation:*** For more than 100 years, The Minneapolis Foundation has connected people, resources, and ideas to improve lives in Minnesota and beyond. The Foundation manages nearly \$700 million in assets, providing customized and tax-smart giving solutions that result in the average annual distribution of more than \$50 million in grants. The Foundation brings people together to unite behind common goals and spark positive change in our community. [www.minneapolisfoundation.org](http://www.minneapolisfoundation.org)