



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**The Minneapolis Foundation Caps Off Its Centennial Year  
with More Than \$4.9 Million in Community Grants**

*Equity-focused funding will support students, immigrants, grassroots organizers,  
and thousands of other Minnesotans*

**MINNEAPOLIS** – The Minneapolis Foundation has launched its second century of community building by awarding \$4,937,900 in competitive grants for 2016. Wrapping up its Centennial year, the Foundation today announced grants to 81 innovative organizations that strengthen and enhance the economic vitality, education and civic engagement of the Twin Cities.

The grants will support students at schools that show strong academic achievement despite high poverty rates, low-income renters who are organizing to demand more equitable treatment, disenfranchised ex-offenders who are struggling for the right to vote as they re-enter the community, immigrants who are starting businesses, single mothers who are working toward college degrees, and thousands of other Minnesotans. Grant recipients include grassroots coalitions, schools, immigrant-led efforts, and other organizations that are working to increase equity—the driving value behind the Foundation’s unrestricted grantmaking.

“The need to build a more equitable community has never been more urgent, in Minneapolis and nationwide,” said Sandra Vargas, President and CEO of The Minneapolis Foundation. “Minnesota struggles with stark racial and economic disparities. Our future prosperity depends on our ability to work together *now* to ensure that everyone who lives here has real, meaningful opportunities to succeed—in school, in the job market, and in life.”

“These grants build on a 100-year tradition of community partnership that we’re looking forward to continuing in our second century,” Vargas continued. The Minneapolis Foundation has invested an estimated \$850 million to improve lives in Minneapolis and beyond since it was established in 1915.

One school, Friendship Academy of the Arts, will use a grant from the Foundation to provide additional support in classrooms that recently saw an influx of new students. Friendship, a high-performing charter school in South Minneapolis, topped the Star Tribune’s 2015 “Beating the Odds” list, which recognizes high-poverty metro area schools with the highest percentages of students scoring at grade level or better in reading and math.

Most students at Friendship come from low-income families, and some live in homeless shelters or have unstable housing. “We give children a fighting chance,” said Datrice Chukwu, the school’s academic

director. “We recognize that we can’t change their circumstances at home, but we can definitely affect what they get at school. Believing that they can achieve is what is going to get them there.”

The competitive grants announced today, which are awarded annually, 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 Twin Cities’ 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 81 grantees at <https://www.minneapolisfoundation.org/grants/recent-grants/>.

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***About The Minneapolis Foundation:*** For 100 years, The Minneapolis Foundation has connected people, resources, and ideas to improve lives, locally and globally. The Foundation manages more than \$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)