The Ford Institute for Community Building plays a key role in achieving The Ford Family Foundation’s mission of “successful citizens and vital rural communities.” The Ford Institute works to create and support vital rural communities. Across rural Oregon and Siskiyou County, Calif., its intent is to affect progress in four areas of community building:

- **CONNECTIONS**
  - Growing community relationships
  - Strengthening partnerships
  - Increasing involvement across sectors

- **CAPACITY**
  - Skilling people up
  - Tapping into strengths
  - Maximizing the potential of people

- **COMMUNITY-LED ACTION**
  - Helping people take initiative
  - Unleashing people to take action
  - Catalyzing planning efforts

- **CULTURE**
  - Increasing hope and pride
  - Nurturing civic responsibility
  - Connecting people to what’s important

The evaluation findings below target the Ford Institute’s Community Building Approach work since 2015 building on 12 previous years of leadership development.

**The data show the Ford Institute’s Community Building Approach work is:**

- **GROWING COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIPS**
  - "The Community Building Approach has resulted in unexpected people working together."
  - Interviewee Quote

- **SKILLING PEOPLE UP**
  - "The support and training has provided a platform for groups to talk to each other. This feels new."
  - Interviewee Quote

- **HELPING PEOPLE TAKE INITIATIVE**
  - "We can take it on ourselves. We can figure it out. We are up to any challenge."
  - Interviewee Quote

- **INCREASING HOPE AND PRIDE**
  - "People are starting to believe that things can be different."
  - Interviewee Quote

**And yet key challenges include:**

- **BEING PROFOUNDLY INCLUSIVE**
- **MOBILIZING THE WHOLE COMMUNITY TOWARD A COMMON VISION AND STRATEGY**
- **BUILDING AND SUSTAINING MOMENTUM FOR LONG-TERM INITIATIVES**
- **BUILDING COMMITMENT AND RESILIENCE TO MOVE TOGETHER DESPITE RESISTANCE**

**The data revealed 10 causal factors that catalyze the Ford Institute’s work in communities**

- Volume of support
- Sustaining momentum
- Sparking action
- On-going support
- Making steps real
- Encouraging what is emerging
- Elevating the conversation
- Celebrating progress
- Bringing people together to learn
- Affirming and validating work
The Ford Institute for Community Building is one of five departments of The Ford Family Foundation.

IMPACT: BY THE NUMBERS

3 out of 4 community builders report the Ford Institute has had “quite a bit” or “very much” impact in their ability to...

- have energized and inclusive community events
- exchange ideas across groups of people with different perspectives, backgrounds and beliefs
- initiate multiple active collaborations and partnerships
- get community building work done
- community planning turns into action
- take action

CONNECTIONS

80% say the Ford Institute has significantly helped them work well together as a community.

85% say the Ford Institute has significantly helped them build relationships across differences in their community.

CAPACITY

90% say the Ford Institute has given them substantially more tools for community building.

COMMUNITY-LED ACTION

88% say they are significantly more actively involved in community building in practical ways because of the Ford Institute.

88% report they are significantly more committed to community building because of the Ford Institute.

CULTURE

80% say the Ford Institute has significantly helped them feel more optimistic and hopeful about the future.

60% report the Ford Institute makes a significant difference in the ability of the community to have a shared vision for their community.

ABOUT THE EVALUATION PROJECT

Ford Institute for Community Building staff and community partners designed and implemented an evaluation to understand the kind and quality of the Institute’s impact in rural Oregon and Siskiyou County, Calif.

The team (a) developed and refined its ideas of intended impact and indicators; (b) designed and implemented a mixed-methods (qualitative and quantitative) evaluation study; (c) analyzed and identified impact finding; and (d) considered the implications of the findings for strategy moving forward.

The Ford Institute evaluation team collaboratedly designed the survey and interview protocol and selected a stratified sample that purposefully included geographic, linguistic, age and gender diversity. Interview and survey data were collaboratively analyzed for themes. Participants included community collaborators over the last three years of the Ford Institute’s community building work.

Learn more about the Ford Institute’s Community Building Approach: www.tfff.org/FICBCBA

Read the full version of this report: www.tfff.org/FICBResources