



CONNECTIONS

FROM THE DIRECTOR'S DESK



In our last newsletter, we showcased the data we have collected since the Midwest Early Recovery Fund began in late 2014. We presented data from 34 months of grantmaking that included 49 grants totaling more than \$2.39 million. Since then, we have awarded four more grants, bringing our total grantmaking to more than \$2.6 million. And there are more grants in the development stage!

Our [latest grants](#) support ongoing rebuild and repair operations in southeast and central Missouri following floods in May 2017. Two more grants were awarded in response to the wildfires in Montana. One grant funded a convening of partners to identify unmet needs; the other provided support for a disaster recovery coordinator in eastern Montana.

In this issue, you can find out more about how we decide where to make grants, who we make grants to, and how the [Midwest Early Recovery Fund](#) helps connect partners and resources to support the work of our grantees.

I invite you to read on,

Nancy Beers

Director, Midwest Early Recovery Fund

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS



Which Disasters Do We Respond To?

The fund supports early recovery for low-attention disasters in ten states in the Midwest. But how do we decide which disasters we will respond to?

Our first step is to qualify a disaster as low-attention.

We define a [low-attention disaster](#) as a one that does not garner national attention and is often localized, in rural and/or small communities. Most often identified by (all or some):

- No FEMA Individual Assistance (IA) declaration
- Limited national/regional media coverage
- Insufficient community resources/infrastructure to meet needs of affected populations
- Vulnerable populations disproportionately affected
- Little or no disaster response from national or regional organizations

To understand what happened in a community and who (if anyone) is responding to the needs of those affected, we connect with local contacts at [Voluntary Organizations Active In Disaster \(VOADs\)](#) and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). We also conduct online and in-person research.

If the disaster meets two or more of the above criteria, we plan a site visit

which includes understanding impact, and meeting local and regional nonprofits and officials to ask: **what do you need** and **how can we help?**
Next step? Locating grantees.



Who Do We Fund?

So far, the Midwest Early Recovery Fund has supported 39 different nonprofits to build local capacity. But how did we decide who to fund and what is the process?

Once the community has identified their needs, we make sure those needs fit within our funding priorities: early recovery services, services for children, and outreach, education and trainings. We also do a community vulnerability assessment using our database. The more vulnerable the community, the more likely we are to invest our resources.

During our site visit, we investigate who is already “stepping up to the plate.” These are often our first grantees. We work with long-term recovery committees (LTRCs) or community nonprofits to identify local agencies to fill gaps. If a local organization cannot be identified or needs additional training and support, we then look to our state, regional and national partners to supervise and train local hires.

We do everything possible to invest our funds locally. We firmly believe when we hire, train and support local talent, the community retains important expertise and knowledge, and therefore is more prepared (and resilient) when the next disaster strikes.

Please see how our fund investments have provided much [needed hope and](#)

[resources](#) to disaster survivors across the Midwest.

PARTNER CONNECTIONS



Making Connections and Developing Partnerships

In our February newsletter, we discussed how grantees partnered with more than 400 additional agencies and leveraged more than \$15.5 million in goods and services. Those partners contributed \$8.17 for every dollar invested by the Midwest Early Recovery Fund. How did that happen? By being intentional about developing relationships.

Meetings and convenings are often written into the grant budget to encourage information sharing and partnership development. As part of our grant agreement, grantees are asked to be a part of a LTRC or other local disaster recovery group, such as a COAD.

We have personally [hosted convenings](#) with other organizations, such as the [Community Foundation of the Ozarks](#) and the [Montana Community Foundation](#), to identify partners and grantees. These meetings proved critical to our work in Missouri and Montana.

Sometimes a partner becomes a grantee. When the LTRC in DeWitt, Nebraska decided they wanted to host a [Camp Noah](#) for children, a LTRC member, Blue Valley Community Action, asked us for a grant to do that work. We happily agreed.

RESOURCE CONNECTIONS



- We are in the first stages of producing a video about the Midwest Early Recovery Fund. If you know if any great videographers, [please share our RFP](#).
- The Midwest Early Recover Fund is looking for a new Administrative Program Assistant. Please share this [job description](#) with anyone you think might be interested. The job is 20 hours a week, and the applicant must live in our ten-state region.
- [Read my latest blog](#) about my trip to highlight our work in southeast Missouri with some of my favorite colleagues, including CDP CEO and president Bob Ottenhoff.

CONNECT WITH US

For more information on the Midwest Early Recovery Fund:

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