

Community Conversation Grants

While the *Framework For High-Impact Community Initiatives* identifies a number of sophisticated, innovative approaches to community building, it also makes clear that meaningful efforts work from the ground up. While the Boulder-Broomfield region is rich with high-performing talent and expertise across many sectors, our real transformative potential will never be unleashed without fully inclusive dialogue that harnesses the wisdom and experience of all our neighbors.

This begins with listening to what the community has to say on the issues we know matter. Foothills United Way has provided a Community Conversation resource on our website so that your organization can stage this type of 1-1.5 hour “kitchen table” chat at any time. (This resource can be a tool in helping you shape your conversation. It is not required for the grant.) These conversations require only a few key elements. First and foremost, the conversations need people to talk with—ideally about 10 to 15. Also, a comfortable conversation requires the right setting. Common public settings like libraries, schools, fire stations, churches or other community centers are great places to host this type of session. Some companies may even be willing to give their employees an opportunity to participate in this type of conversation during a lunch hour. Proper hospitality might also involve refreshments, childcare or transportation assistance. Finally, it is necessary for two people to work as facilitator and recorder in order to lead and record the conversation.

While Foothills United Way is proud to bring the Community Conversation tools to our partners, we also know that a commitment to these conversations can stretch some partners beyond their normal limits. Because we truly believe that this type of engagement is essential to true community building, we are providing *Community Conversation Grants* to help groups convene these sessions.

Grant Qualifications & Awards

Organizations or groups may apply for a *Community Conversation Grant* if they have:

- A shared interest in addressing at least one of Foothills United Way’s Priority Issues:
 - Strengthening families for early childhood success
 - Supporting regional efforts to secure adequate, stable, affordable housing for all people
 - Building community resilience
- The ability to convene the benefitting population in a culturally appropriate setting.

These grants can be used to cover costs associated with hospitality or facilitation. Applicants will be asked to describe their plan for convening conversations and how the community members will be made to feel welcome and comfortable to speak openly.

There will be two opportunities to apply for *Community Conversation Grants*: Fall 2016 and **April 5, 2017**. Foothills United Way staff will make recommendations to the Community Impact Committee for final decisions. Applicants will be notified by April 21, 2017 of the status of their grant. Awards will be paid in full within one month of the award notice. These grants will be awarded in increments of \$100 for 3-5 sessions over the course of 6 months.

To apply for a Community Conversation Grant, please use this link:

<https://goo.gl/forms/mDVZSqSzlvnZ92X2>

Reporting Requirements

Foothills United Way wants to make sure the learnings from these conversations are shared across the region. In order to amplify the voice of our community members, grantees will be required to report back to us with a final summary of funded Community Conversations including major themes identified and at least 2 quotes from participants per major theme. Additionally, grantees will be required to report back to the participants with their next steps. The Community Conversation model is intentionally designed so that community members define the relevant assets and strategies to create transformation. It is up to those organizations with the ability to lead collective action to take that information and move forward. In order to make sure the participants' voices are honored, grantees must provide them with information on what action will entail and how they can be involved. We hope that these conversations will also help groups identify potential grassroots leaders and actively recruit them to join their effort.