

WHO WE ARE

Karen Aldridge-Eason, a loaned executive from the C.S. Mott Foundation, serves as Foundation Liaison. She previously worked as a budget director in both local and state government, and a legislative assistant in the Michigan State Senate.



Maura Dewan serves as program associate for OFL. Previously, she worked with the Michigan Nonprofit Association, Public Sector Consultants, and the Executive Office.



GOVERNANCE

The OFL is governed by an Advisory Committee of contributing funders; the Council of Michigan Foundations (CMF), its fiscal agent; and a member of the governor's executive staff. Members are:

- David Egner, Chair, Hudson-Webber Foundation
- Susan K. Broman, Steelcase Foundation
- Kyle Caldwell, MNA
- C. David Campbell, McGregor Fund
- Robert S. Collier, CMF
- Carol Goss, Skillman Foundation
- Joanne Krell, W.K. Kellogg Foundation
- Milton W. Rohwer, Frey Foundation
- Diana Sieger, Grand Rapids Community Foundation
- Maureen Smyth, Charles Stewart Mott Foundation
- Laura Trudeau, The Kresge Foundation
- Regina Bell, Office of the Governor

PURPOSE & IMPACT

MICHIGAN'S NONPARTISAN OFFICE OF FOUNDATION LIAISON (OFL) WAS CREATED IN 2003 AT THE SUGGESTION OF FOUNDATION LEADERS AND WITH SUPPORT FROM NEWLY ELECTED GOVERNOR JENNIFER GRANHOLM.

THIS CABINET LEVEL POSITION – UNIQUE IN THE NATION – HELPS TO IDENTIFY AND BROKER STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS BETWEEN THE STATE AND FOUNDATIONS LIKELY TO RESULT IN POLICY REFORMS THAT WOULD IMPROVE THE LIVES OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES IN MICHIGAN.

THE OFL IS FUNDED BY FOUNDATIONS. IT DOES NOT SERVE AS A FUNDRAISER FOR STATE GOVERNMENT.

The OFL's objectives are to:

- Educate state officials about foundations
- Forge relationships and support the development of partnerships between the state and foundations
- Attract new national grant dollars to Michigan
- Respond to opportunities for new local and regional public/private partnerships to serve people and the implementation of government programs

According to Governor Granholm, "The OFL is uniquely positioned to bring together state policymakers with foundation leaders to share ideas, plan strategies and fund local, state, regional and national funding mechanisms to help all of Michigan's citizens."

The OFL evaluation being conducted by the Community Research Institute, Johnson Center for Philanthropy & Nonprofit Leadership, Grand Valley State University found that the OFL has leveraged:

- Increased levels of foundation investment in areas of critical need
- Better understanding and relationships and more and stronger partnerships between the state and foundations based on what evaluator, Dr. Mary McDonald, describes as "networking for the public good."

"When philanthropy and state government partner, the result is more dollars focused in priority areas. The OFL helps identify those priorities and needs and brings the two sides together. Bottom line is more money available for vitally needed programs," added Dr. McDonald.

"The Office of Foundation Liaison is fulfilling – and surpassing – all of our expectations."

~ WILLIAM S. WHITE, CHAIR, PRESIDENT AND CEO OF THE CHARLES STEWART MOTT FOUNDATION

“The OFL has enjoyed tremendous success in forging new partnerships and collaborations between the foundation community and state officials for the betterment of all Michigan citizens.” ~ ROBERT S. COLLIER, PRESIDENT AND CEO OF THE COUNCIL OF MICHIGAN FOUNDATIONS

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

IN JUST OVER SIX YEARS, **THE OFL HAS BROKERED MORE THAN \$80 MILLION IN FOUNDATION INVESTMENT** IN INITIATIVES DESIGNED TO HELP INCREASE MICHIGAN’S ECONOMIC COMPETITIVENESS THROUGH REFORMS IN K-16 EDUCATION, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT - INCLUDING WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT, HEALTH, EARLY CHILDHOOD AND LAND USE. RECENT ACTIVITIES INCLUDE:

ECONOMIC & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

- Worked with the Executive Office and the Council of Michigan Foundations to identify opportunities for philanthropy to assist the state with its response to the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA). Secured support from Michigan foundations to help the state in responding to energy efficiency and weatherization opportunities, as well as to develop the state’s response to stimulus related education reform strategies – including the Race to the Top application;
- Working with the Council of Michigan Foundations, Department of Human Services, the Executive Office, and the Michigan Association of United Ways to assess web-based systems that allow Michigan citizens to draw down more federal resources in the form of food stamps, LIHEAP, TANF, child care subsidies, Medicaid, and EITC;
- Worked with the Department of Corrections and the Council of State Governments around correction reform and continued support for the Michigan Prisoner ReEntry Initiative (MPRI);
- Collaborated with the Council of Michigan Foundations and the Executive Office to help create the “Michigan Business One Stop Shop” web portal. The web portal, which is a website that streamlines the process to do business in Michigan, is the result of the foundation supported Government Performance Improvement Initiative, an initiative to help reform state government and stimulate the Michigan economy.

LAND USE

- Hosted and facilitated a meeting with Michigan grantmakers, the Executive Office, and Bruce Katz, vice president and director of the Brookings Institution’s Metropolitan Policy Program and advisor to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, to explore policy ideas that work to address issues facing cities and metropolitan areas.

EDUCATION

- Worked with Department of Treasury to garner \$2 million from the U.S. Department of Education for support of college access initiatives. Helped the state create a stakeholders workgroup to advise them on the design of the Michigan College Access Network – which will include a robust web portal that helps students plan, prepare and apply for college. In addition, it will support the development of local college access offices throughout the state. The local offices will be enhanced by a \$1 million grant from the Kresge Foundation which includes a challenge grant for Michigan’s community foundations;
- Worked with the Executive Office and the W.K. Kellogg foundation on a \$16.7 million proposal designed by the Woodrow Wilson Fellowship Foundation to create a teaching fellowship for the state of Michigan focused on math and science teacher training. The program is designed to recruit and retain high achievers for teaching careers in middle and high school science and math in the areas of greatest need; and to improve the quality of teacher education in Michigan colleges and universities.

HEALTH & EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT

- Worked with the Council of Michigan Foundations and the Early Matters Funders Group to host a conference call for Michigan grantmakers with the Early Childhood Investment Corporation. This was an opportunity for funders to understand the proposed state budget cuts and their potential impact on early childhood in Michigan;
- Worked with the Fair Food Network in their efforts to improve access to fresh food in urban settings. Connected the expertise and knowledge of Fair Food Network’s President to advise the Executive Office staff on the creation of a fresh food caravan in Detroit launched in the summer of 2009. Helped organize the Fair Food Network’s fall presentation to Detroit area grantmakers on their launch of Mo’ Bucks, a foundation supported program that matches the value of food stamps used at farmers markets in Detroit for the purchase of Michigan grown fruits and vegetables.

ADDITIONAL FUNDERS

- Battle Creek Community Foundation
- Community Foundation of Greater Flint
- Community Foundation for Muskegon County
- Community Foundation for St. Clair County
- Fremont Area Community Foundation
- JEHT Foundation

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For more information, visit michiganfoundations.org/ofl

“We are dedicated to bringing together individuals, foundations and local and state officials so we may all work together to improve the lives of, and opportunities for, all our citizens.”

KAREN ALDRIDGE-EASON,
MICHIGAN FOUNDATION LIAISON

“The Office of Foundation Liaison is a recognized leader in the effort to energize Michigan’s economic competitiveness.”

~DAVID O. EGNER, PRESIDENT OF HUDSON-WEBBER FOUNDATION

OFFICE OF
Foundation Liaison
PARTNERING FOR A BETTER MICHIGAN