

Our Journey Statement

Jackson County is comprised of a population of different racial and ethnic groups, religions, perspectives, and all ages, life circumstances, and sexual orientations. The Jackson Community Foundation believes that this diversity of our community is a defining element of our community identity and becoming one of our greatest strengths.

The people of Jackson County will only feel and act as members of one community that is something greater than the sum of its diverse parts to the extent that they feel connected to one another. This sense of connection can only exist in an environment where all feel that we are respected, accepted, and treated with dignity. As a community, we all hope for opportunities to build successful lives, and to feel supported by others in meeting our challenges and celebrating our successes. This sense of connection requires that the people of our community have opportunities to spend time together, build relationships, and ultimately understand and empathize with one another.

Inequities persist in our community, as they do in the broader society. We know that we must dismantle the structural and cultural barriers to individual opportunity and achievement. Additionally, people in our community are implicitly and explicitly judged by their race, ethnicity, religion, age, life circumstance, or sexual orientation, without regard to their character or their contribution.

In order to fully serve our community and to promote the sense of connection to one another, we are committed to real change within our organization and throughout our community. Real change is seldom easy to achieve and it requires strong unwavering leadership, and the open participation and voices of all community members to make this goal a success.

It is for all these reasons that embracing diversity and inclusion and advancing equity are core values of the Jackson Community Foundation.

Equity Statement – Jackson Community Foundation

Embracing diversity and inclusion and advancing equity are values we hold dear, are connected to our mission, and critical to ensure the well-being of the community we serve. Therefore, we will:

- Lead with respect and tolerance through everyday practices.
- Practice and encourage transparent communication in all interactions.
- Commit time and resources to expand a more diverse leadership within our own board, staff, committees, community partners, and donors.

- Explore potential underlying, unquestioned assumptions that interfere with our own inclusiveness.
- Acknowledge and dismantle any inequities within our policies, systems, programs, and services, and will continually update and report our progress.
- Advocate for and support board-level thinking about how systemic inequities affect our work, and how best to address that in a way that is consistent with our mission and our resources.

With these principles in mind, we commit to the following:

Governance and Administration: The board of trustees seeks community leaders who will bring diversity and varying points of view and life experiences to our board and committees. We will hire staff that reflects the broad diversity of the community and will provide all staff members with an opportunity to maximize the use of their work-related skills and talents. We will retain a diverse group of product and service vendors to work with the Community Foundation and will strive to select product and service vendors committed to promoting a diverse workplace.

Community Partners: We seek grantees and community partners that are committed to promoting diversity, inclusion and equity. We will work with those who strive to encourage diverse governance boards, partner organizations, and served constituencies wherever practicable. We will assure that our grantmaking activities reflect and promote the diversity and inclusion of the community and advance equity across the programs and systems that touch our community members.

Donors: We seek to collaborate with donors of varying means and interests and together will promote a healthy, caring community. We ask for the support of our friends and neighbors throughout Jackson County as we work to bring these commitments to life, every single day.

APPROVED BY: BOARD OF TRUSTEES APPROVAL DATE: NOVEMBER 21, 2019