



ADIRONDACK FOUNDATION

What makes a strong community? How does philanthropy factor into it? At Adirondack Foundation, we ask ourselves these questions every day. There is no single answer, and the components of strong and healthy communities are rarely linear. That's why, as a community foundation, we take a "whole community" approach to amplify all that is good about the Adirondacks.

This framework reflects our approach to investing in promising opportunities, addressing critical challenges, and uniting people, institutions and resources to produce widely shared lasting results. We do this in partnership with generous donors and capable nonprofits—by making grants and devoting social, political, and reputational capital to make our region even stronger.








As we apply the **Strong Community Framework for the Adirondacks** to inspire, drive and measure positive change, these are the guiding principles to which we adhere:

Adirondack Foundation...

- brings all the tools of a community foundation to bear for community good: grantmaking, convening, local knowledge, data, investments, advocacy, and incubation;
- seeks to invest in innovation, cooperation, scalability and measurable impact;
- seeks public, private, and nonprofit sector partners that invest in regional vitality;
- is committed to equitable opportunity for all people.

Making a Positive Difference with Vision and Purpose

The vision we hold for each interest area, combined with demonstrated success, reinforces that the enduring charitable resources we build are addressing today's community needs, and will also be here to address the unknown needs of tomorrow. Since 1997, we have awarded more than \$60 million in grants, invested countless hours in nonprofit capacity building, and served as a catalyst. Together with donors and community partners, we are forever committed to the Adirondacks.

Interest Area	Vision	Grants awarded (2019-2023 snapshot)
BASIC NEEDS 	Residents of all ages have equitable access to services that enable and promote a healthy quality of life.	\$7.9 MILLION For example: food assistance and nutrition programs; counseling and social support services
EDUCATIONAL PATHWAYS 	All children benefit from high-quality early learning and development. All learners have meaningful opportunities to pursue pathways to gainful employment and fulfilling lives.	\$8.8 MILLION For example: early childhood education, career-readiness; post-secondary pathways, trade certifications
ECONOMIC VITALITY 	Thriving communities provide equitable and just economic opportunity, build generational wealth, attract residents and businesses, and inspire community participation.	\$10.1 MILLION For example: workforce development programs; mobilizing resources for the greater good
ARTS + CULTURE 	Vibrant arts and cultural opportunities underpin community life by promoting social cohesion, expanding perspectives, and helping to drive the economy.	\$3.8 MILLION For example: access to enriching experiences for all students; live performances
ENVIRONMENT 	A healthy environment helps sustain healthy communities by bolstering climate change resilience, inspiring stewardship, and providing opportunities for outdoor recreation.	\$3.6 MILLION For example: outdoor recreation opportunities and access; ecological research and monitoring



BASIC NEEDS

Meeting basic needs in our region can be hampered by factors like travel distances and availability of services. Many communities have limited access to healthy food – especially those where residents must drive 30 minutes or more to do their grocery shopping. On average, more than 40% of students qualify for free or reduced-price lunch programs at school. More than one thousand students receive assistance through food backpack programs, which help to ensure they have food during the weekend.

Behavioral, mental health, and home-support services are strained owing in large part to a critical shortage of therapists and qualified aides. Approximately 1,000 hours of home health services go unfilled every week. What's more, there are a growing number of families who make too much to qualify for government assistance programs but not enough to make ends meet.

The pandemic is putting social and economic disparities into sharper relief and rising prices for everyday goods like food and heat are putting additional strains on many of our neighbors. Social safety net programs can play a pivotal role in breaking generational poverty and helping people realize their full potential.

Photo caption: Jason David, Jr. and his mom, Michelle Pelkey, are pictured here with Edrie Archibold, who is supporting them through Healthy Families in Clinton and Franklin Counties. This home-visiting program helps families access community resources and services to help babies get a healthy start in life.

*While the needs and barriers across the Adirondack region are significant, there are inspired and deeply committed individuals and organizations working to address **basic needs**. Our strategy is to listen to and learn from those on the front lines; understand what works and what doesn't; and maximize philanthropic investment.*

PROMISING APPROACHES FOR IMPACT | BASIC NEEDS

1 | Expand and strengthen the social safety net to facilitate upward mobility

- Invest in innovative solutions that provide coordinated assistance (i.e., transportation, child/elder care, credit counseling, financial management assistance).
- Support improved coordination of preventative services to help people and families avoid crises. i.e., rent assistance, toxic stress, interpersonal and drug abuse.
- Improve access to basic services for our regions historically under-resourced. i.e., transportation, address food deserts, and safe, transitional and temporary shelter.

2 | Provide resources to assist with emergency relief

- Streamline philanthropic response during times of great need.
- Support emergency preparedness, systems, and response mechanisms when public funding is absent.
- Support strong organizations addressing gaps in service during times of emergency.

3 | Ensure access to quality support networks for all

- Expand care options for under-resourced children and seniors, including education, training, recruitment, and retention programs for in-home care providers.
- Support comprehensive resources, wrap around services, for families and individuals so that multifaceted challenges can be addressed and increase long term stability.
- Improve access to healthful activities and promote positive social engagement in our communities.

GIVE. COLLABORATE. ACCELERATE.

The best way to love the Adirondacks is to give back.

Please reach out to us to explore ways to make a difference.

info@adkfoundation.org | 518.523.9904 | adirondackfoundation.org | adirondackbt3.org



EDUCATIONAL PATHWAYS

It is well-documented that a family's income can impact children's physical, health, cognitive abilities, school achievements and behavioral and emotional outcomes. The percentage of children in our region under six who live in deep poverty is 15%, which is higher than New York State as a whole. The differences in development can be profound for children born into different economic classes. The further behind kids start off, the harder it is for them to catch up as they get older. That's why early intervention and equitable access to opportunities that can lead to economic mobility are so important.

At 23%, an even higher percentage of kids from birth to 17 years old live at or below poverty in our region. Still, graduation rates in our schools tend to be high, with between 80 and 90% of students obtaining a high school diploma. But a much smaller percentage of these students go on to college, especially when compared to their counterparts from more affluent areas.

Beyond high school, many students may not be aware of opportunities available to them or may lack financial resources or social support networks to help them obtain a certificate, apprenticeship, or two- or four-year degree. Likewise, non-traditional students seeking additional training or credentials toward a career shift or advancement may also be stymied by a lack of resources and support structures.

Photo caption: As a non-traditional student who returned to college after an 18-year hiatus, Rebecca DeCarlo – a mother of four who lives in Moira – said initially it was daunting. She works as a critical care EMT and went back to school for a paramedic certification. Credit: Chris Knight/NCCC

Education is more than a pathway to a job and financial self-sufficiency; it is foundational to a stronger, more equitable community. Education is also deeply intertwined with other, persistent issues like poverty. Early intervention, literacy, mentorship and guidance, as well as career development and other support programs are among the areas where philanthropy can play a critical role in strengthening pathways.

PROMISING APPROACHES FOR IMPACT | EDUCATIONAL PATHWAYS

1 | Foster a systems approach for cradle-to-career education

- Build an ecosystem for career support with schools, mentoring/career visioning programs, workforce development and employers to help students succeed and find career pathways.
- Support life-skills and basic literacy (financial, reading, writing, digital) to help residents of all ages maximize their potential for growth and success.
- Alleviate financial barriers to education for all learners.

2 | Support early childhood development

- Support early childhood services and high-quality early learning customized for the specific needs of our rural region.
- Support a full complement of coordinated services for cognitive, physical, and social and emotional development, including home visiting and early intervention.
- Promote parent and family participation in their children's education, system building, and policy and funding decisions.

3 | Invest in career-preparedness*

- Make pathways to employment more accessible, more affordable, and more visible.
- Improve access to career exploration opportunities and mentors for all learners.
- Strengthen scholarship, apprenticeships, paid internships, and experiential learning opportunities for local students.

*Please ask us about our Theory of Change for College- and Career-Readiness to learn more about barriers and pathways.

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ECONOMIC VITALITY + CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Our region is as defined by its close-knit rural communities as it is by its rugged mountains, freshwater lakes, and meandering rivers. These attributes shape our way of life, fuel our economy, and contribute to overall vitality.

Fewer young people, declining school enrollment, and a growing number of retirees and seniors are among the challenging demographic trends we face. Poverty rates have a ripple effect on livelihoods, employment, education, health, and wellness. Local governments have limited capacity and resources to drive bold change.

On any given day, there are more job openings than workers to fill them and the prospects for finding solutions are complex. For example, a shortage of child care providers makes it difficult for parents to commit to full time employment or advance their careers. Plus, with median household income between \$49,000 and \$52,000, many parents cannot afford child care.

A shortage of affordable housing deters young families and professionals from moving here. In Clinton and Franklin counties, 50% of families live in rent-burdened households, which means more than 30% of their gross income is spent on housing.

On the plus side, there are deeply inspiring examples of people working together to enhance livelihoods and foster a strong sense of community in many towns. There is also great potential to replicate and scale local successes for broader impact.

Photo caption: State Senator Tedisco joined Hamilton County officials and residents to cut the ribbon at the new Mountain Rescue Training Center on Oak Mountain in Speculator. Rescue teams, firefighters, law enforcement, and emergency services technicians use this facility for trainings. This community resource came together thanks to the civic-minded owners of the ski hill, a combination of public and private grants, and volunteers. Credit: John DiGiacomo

While Government funding must play a crucial role in economic development, it cannot take care of everything needed to help a community thrive. The real power in making positive change comes from public/private partnerships and philanthropic investments that empower nonprofits, agencies, innovators, and doers to work together toward a common good.

PROMISING APPROACHES FOR IMPACT | ECONOMIC VITALITY + CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

1 | Invest in towns and villages for regional uplift

- Support organizations and programs that increase the standard of living and economic viability of towns and villages.
- Support increasing availability of attainable housing.
- Encourage and leverage public and private investment in small business.

2 | Support workforce development and business sustainability

- Support initiatives that match educational and training opportunities with regional workforce needs.
- Support workforce development initiatives to ensure residents can access livable wage jobs, family care, and stable, appealing housing.
- Bolster the financial and community organizations that expand access to capital and provide technical assistance for economic development.

3 | Retain residents and encourage people to move here

- Encourage a sense of belonging for all people and build welcoming communities through diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives.
- Engage local residents, inspire community pride, increase volunteerism, and social capital.
- Support regional efforts to cultivate communities of economic opportunity, including partnerships that remove stigma and foster economic stability and vitality for all.

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ARTS + CULTURE

Arts, culture and creativity are integral to the health and vibrancy of the Adirondack region. They provide ways to communicate across barriers of language, class, and culture to enrich people's lives and create shared experiences.

The grandeur of the Adirondack landscape helps to attract and inspire creative people who enliven our communities through music, theater, visual arts, collaboration, and engagement.

While it's clear that investing in arts yields a tremendous return through personal growth and economic impact, the remoteness and socio-economic disparities of our region result in inconsistent access. Travelling performances, school programs, and innovative partnerships are among the powerful ways to overcome these challenges.

Photo caption: More than 2,000 volunteers – from age three to 94 – added stones, tiles, glass and grout to help complete a 180-foot-wide mosaic along Main Street in North Creek. Under the guidance of artist Kate Hartley and through the Johnsburg Fine Arts Group, the finished product is a reflection of their community as it highlights local activities like whitewater rafting and mountain biking and landmarks like Gore Mountain and the Hudson River.

Credit: Nancie Battaglia

The breadth of local arts programming in our sparsely populated region is an unexpected surprise to many residents and visitors alike. It grounds people here and can help attract newcomers. Adirondack Foundation donors support grassroots and established arts and culture efforts in our communities and encourage collaboration across the region.

PROMISING APPROACHES FOR IMPACT | ARTS + CULTURE

1 | Support local arts centers

- Foster a vibrant arts culture
- Provide opportunities for participation for people of all ages
- Support cultural exchange and awareness

2 | Provide equitable access to arts and cultural events

- Support arts programming in schools
- Promote public art initiatives (such as the North Creek mosaic project pictured on the front, which is supported in part through the Community Fund for the Gore Mountain Region at Adirondack Foundation)
- Help people of all economic levels access museums, performances, and shows

3 | Nurture inner growth, health, and healing

- Provide programming for vulnerable populations like children and veterans
- Inspire tomorrow's playwrights, poets, musicians, writers...
- Help young people develop compassion and empathy

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ENVIRONMENT

The Adirondack region is distinguished by vast stretches of protected lands and waters interspersed with tight-knit rural communities. It is a place where forests have been recovering from overharvesting in the 19th century and moose, mink and other animals have returned after habitat loss pushed them out.

Indeed, the natural landscape factors into everyday life, underpins the economy, provides clean air and water, and offers an array of outdoor recreation opportunities.

And yet, our natural resources and the sustainability of our communities are threatened by climate change, invasive species, limited capacity for stewardship, and other factors.

Philanthropic support plays a critical role helping to ensure that our most treasured asset can thrive today and for future generations.

Photo caption: Land stewardship is a low-profile, yet critically important area that tends to be underfunded in comparison to other conservation initiatives like buying ecologically significant land to protect it from development. The Adirondack Land Trust cares for nature preserves and conservation easements across more than 23,000 acres of land. Credit: Nancie Battaglia, courtesy Adirondack Land Trust

Philanthropy is helping to conserve important lands and waters, strengthen resilience to climate change, inspire stewardship, enhance recreational opportunities, and so much more.

PROMISING APPROACHES FOR IMPACT | ENVIRONMENT

1 | Protect important lands and waters

- Safeguard forests, farmland, and other critical lands
- Support scientific research to identify threats and inform strategies
- Invest in strategic advocacy to hold government agencies to account, secure funding, and influence policy

2 | Promote and increase stewardship

- Prevent invasive species from harming native plants and animals and threatening the local economy
- Improve trails, recreational access, and stewardship efforts
- Foster cross-sector cooperation and innovation

3 | Bolster climate resilience and adaptation

- Help communities pursue win-win strategies for people and nature
- Support renewable energy
- Safeguard pathways for animals to adapt and move in response to a changing climate

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