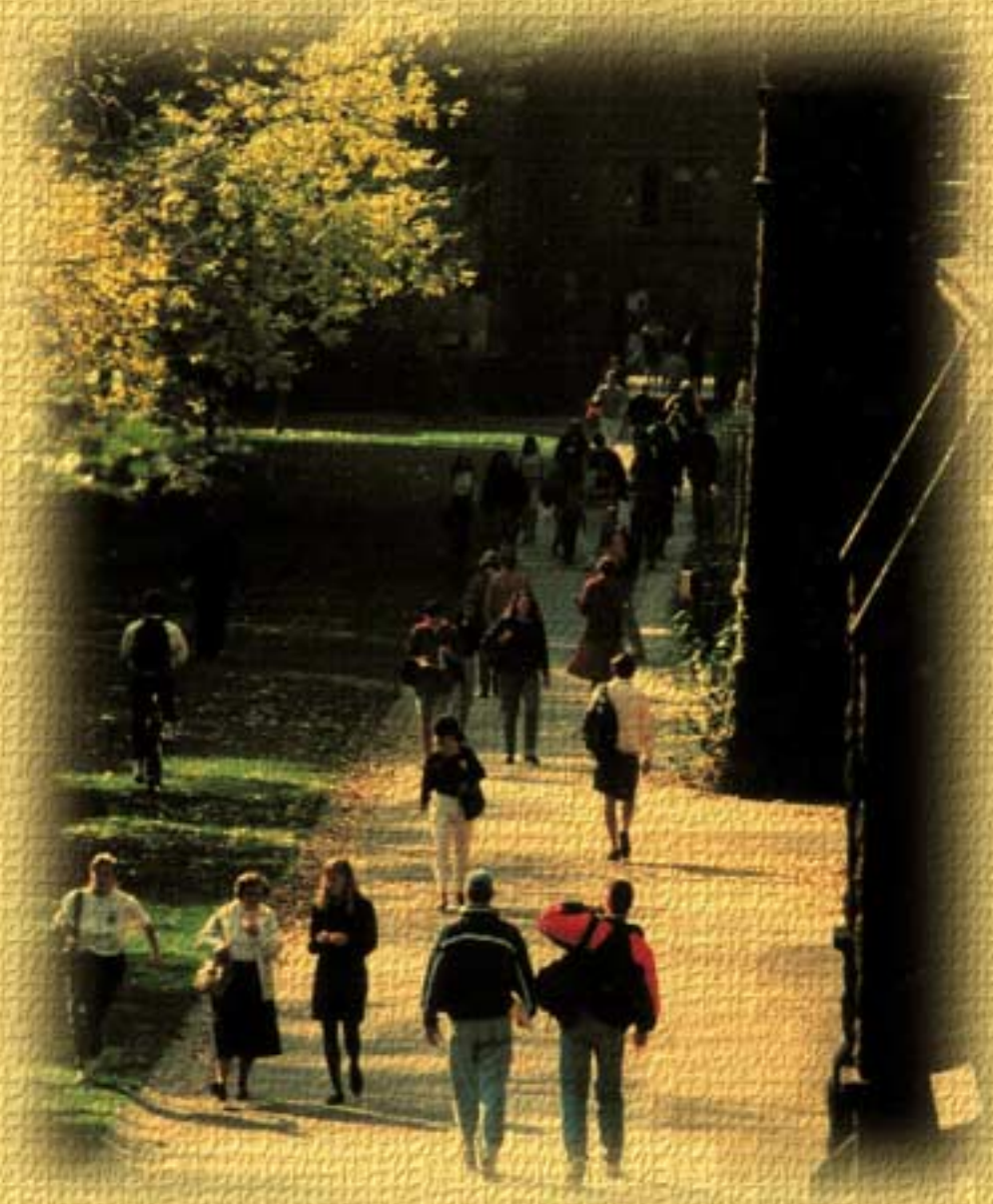


W.K. Kellogg Foundation
Engagement in Youth and Education Programming



INTRODUCTION

Promoting the engagement of communities and institutions – particularly higher education institutions – has been a priority of programming at the W.K. Kellogg Foundation. The Foundation’s legacy of support for these partnerships goes back to its early history, an outgrowth of its mission “to help people help themselves through the practical application of knowledge.”

In the past decade, Kellogg Foundation initiatives have focused on engaging communities and institutions of higher education in multiple arenas: health and food systems professions education, nonprofit management, service learning, institutional transformation, and community development.

These efforts have extended across all program areas – Health, Food Systems and Rural Development, Philanthropy and Volunteerism, and Youth and Education – to promote the reciprocal exchange of knowledge, resources, and problem solving to improve the quality of life.

Youth and Education programs support movement from institutional outreach to engagement, from continuing education to lifelong learning, and from individual institutional change to alignment of systems that serve young people. These efforts align well with emerging “P-16” strategies nationwide to form a cohesive educational pipeline from pre-kindergarten through college. Partnerships have been central to Youth and Education initiatives and programs supporting minority-serving institutions, adult education, and community colleges.

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COMMUNITY-HIGHER EDUCATION ENGAGEMENT AS A CENTRAL THEME

The history of higher education in the United States is closely linked to communities. Institutions of higher education represent significant investments of public and private support. Many land-grant universities, community colleges, and minority-serving institutions were

“Engagement produces vital partnerships based on mutual benefit, mutual respect, and mutual accountability.”

founded in partnership with communities. As part of this tradition, most higher education institutions make an effort to reach out to their communities – offering residents access to undergraduate, graduate, and continuing education; promoting student volunteerism and service learning; and conducting research studies that can benefit

local citizens. While laudable, these outreach efforts are often temporal and limited – part of a particular program, but not deeply embedded in the mission, vision, and central activities of the institution.

For their part, communities often seek to tap the knowledge, skills, and resources that reside in higher-education institutions. But many communities – even those existing in the shadows of universities or colleges in their neighborhoods and towns – often perceived they have little real power to affect or inform the work of institutions of higher education. While institutions may control resources that impact the well-being of communities, efforts to work together too often result in “town-and-gown” misgivings, misunderstandings, and mistrust.

Engagement – in which institutions and communities form lasting relationships that influence, shape, and promote success in both spheres – is rare. More frequently, there is evidence of unilateral outreach, rather than partnership based on mutual benefit, mutual respect, and mutual accountability.



ENGAGEMENT IN YOUTH AND EDUCATION PROGRAMS 2001-2008

The eight-year action plan for Youth and Education programs seeks to support healthy infant, child, and youth development by mobilizing, strengthening, and aligning systems that affect children's learning. A key strategy is to forge partnerships between education institutions and communities to promote learning, academic performance, and workforce preparation among vulnerable young people.

Within this context, the Youth and Education team expects engagement to be a key theme of its investments in higher education over the next decade. The Youth and Education action plan will examine three different ways in which communities and higher education engage:

1. Engagement of communities and post-secondary educational institutions,* working together to **help vulnerable youth achieve at higher levels and prepare for meaningful work or further education.**
2. Engagement of higher education institutions and the economically disadvantaged communities in which they are located, in order to **enhance the community's social and economic development** and to create a setting that is conducive to the institution's viability; and
3. Engagement of communities of color and higher education institutions, to **address discrepancies in higher education access and graduation rates among men of color.**



* Post-secondary educational institutions include public and private institutions, including universities, colleges, community colleges, vocational schools, and other post-secondary institutions.



A GUIDE FOR ENGAGEMENT

With more than three decades of work with community-higher education partnerships, the W.K. Kellogg Foundation is committed to learning from programming experience to strengthen and sustain future efforts. Building on grantees' lessons, the Foundation has identified eight characteristics of vital partnerships between communities and institutions of higher education to guide others seeking to establish and promote new levels of engagement.

Engaged higher education institutions and communities...

- 1. See their present and future well-being as inextricably linked;***
- 2. Collaboratively plan and design mutually beneficial programs and outcomes;***
- 3. Engage in reciprocal learning;***
- 4. Respect the history, culture, knowledge, and wisdom of the other;***
- 5. Create structures that promote open communication and equity with one another;***
- 6. Have high expectations for their performance and involvement with each other;***
- 7. Value and promote diversity; and***
- 8. Regularly conduct a joint assessment of their partnership and report results.***

These eight measures will guide Foundation program staff in assessing proposals that seek funding for Youth and Education engagement projects and activities. Further, the Youth and Education team will evaluate only funding requests that are jointly sponsored by and provide resources to institutions and community partners. To better understand the concept of engagement in action, the following expanded descriptions and questions for self-assessment should be considered.

ENGAGED INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND COMMUNITIES...

- **See their present and future well-being inextricably linked.**
Engagement is based on mutual interest and mutual gain. Thus, for example, a university or college that is engaged with its neighborhood conducts trade there, supports neighborhood merchants, and employs neighbors at living wages. A community that is engaged with the campus sees authentic advantages for its residents in jobs, education, facilities, and applied research. Each understands the benefits of investing time and resources in the other.

Questions to ask: Are all community members – not just prospective students – served and valued by the institution? Does the community share its priorities and concerns with the university? Do both actively support the success of the other? For example, when faced with crime next door, does a college or university work to replace blight with gentrification that changes the character of the neighborhood by increasing property values in a way that drives current residents away? Or does the institution invest in the community, helping residents become homeowners?

- **Collaboratively plan and design mutually beneficial programs and outcomes.**
The higher education institution and the community engage in an intentional process to build a shared vision, design a plan for implementation, hold each other accountable, and determine ways in which all will benefit.

Questions to ask: Is the funding request jointly sponsored by, and does it provide resources to, both the community and institutional partners? Is financial oversight of grants or programs a shared responsibility? What evidence is there that the partnership is a viable and active collaboration – not just an agreement on paper? What processes do the partners undertake to reach a common understanding of mutual needs and concerns? Are the priorities of both institution and community reflected in each other's annual goals and long-term strategic plans?



- **Engage in reciprocal learning.**

The community and the institution exchange knowledge and wisdom. Students and faculty work with community residents to identify, study, and ameliorate problems of mutual interest. University research and development efforts increase understanding and promote community problem-solving. Residents become active researchers, along with their university partners.

Questions to ask: Does the institution apply its resources to problems that matter to the community? Does the community seek university assistance in overcoming challenges? Is there mutual respect for the knowledge and experience within and without each sphere? Do the college and the community provide space to discuss problems of mutual interest and responsibility before entering into research or implementation agreements? Are curricula and extracurricular activities designed to involve faculty and students in community life?

- **Respect the history, culture, knowledge, and wisdom of the other.**

Communities are rich repositories of history and experiences. Their residents have important ways of living and knowing. Similarly, colleges and universities have their own expertise and culture. Their faculty members and students bring a wealth of skills and understanding to campus. Both the community and the institution work to develop opportunities to gain mutual understanding and trust.

Questions to ask: Are there ways in which the community and university, or college, both honor the knowledge and resources of the other? Does the community acknowledge the practices and traditions required by academia? Is the community's wisdom incorporated into the classroom? Does the community see the institution as a neutral facilitator and resource when dealing with contentious issues?

- **Create structures that promote open communication and equity with one another.**

The higher education institution and the community develop mechanisms for effective listening and learning. Leaders of the institution and community are actively engaged. Together, they work towards parity in planning and implementing research, development, and service programs. Resources are committed; problems are addressed – not ignored. Both partners pay attention to the impact each has on the other's ability to thrive – intellectually, socially, physically, and economically.

Questions to ask: Is the college or university committed to equitable engagement, rather than one-way outreach? Is the community a place where students and faculty are safe and welcome? Is the campus a place where community residents not only have access but also feel welcome? Do both the community and the institution share physical resources, such as libraries, playing fields, museums, and meeting spaces? Do community residents hold positions on university committees and vice versa? Does the community have organizations with the capacity and willingness to work across community-university boundaries? Do both use a variety of communication methods to reach each other effectively?

- **Have high expectations for their performance and involvement with each other.**
The higher education institution considers promoting the vitality of its neighborhood and community to be an essential part of its mission. Similarly, community organizations and residents believe that they have a responsibility to engage with the institution in pursuit of better schools, safer streets, job development, and other pathways to a strong community. Both sides are willing to move beyond limited self-interest and invest in the partner's well-being, while having the confidence to know that future dividends will have mutually beneficial returns.

Questions to ask: How do the institution and the community demonstrate their willingness to work with one another? What standards of performance have they set, and to what extent have they mutually agreed upon these standards? How will they evaluate their work together? Does the community have the capacity or willingness to mobilize on behalf of residents to meet their responsibility to engage with the institution?

- **Value and promote diversity.**
Learning experiences and social interactions are enhanced by racial and ethnic diversity. The university reflects the diversity of the community in its staffing, students, and advisory groups. The community is also inclusive, welcoming diverse students and faculty to participate fully in community life. Employment and housing practices demonstrate respect for all, without regard to race, class, religion, national origin, gender, special needs, or sexual preference.

Questions to ask: Does the institution reflect the diversity of the community in its staffing and students? Do communication and participatory processes include the diversity of the community? Do community decision-making bodies and leadership reflect diversity? Is diversity actively promoted and encouraged by the institution and community-based organizations? Are students and faculty welcomed by the community; diverse community residents, by the university?





- **Regularly conduct a joint assessment of their partnership and report results.** Both the higher education institution and the community open themselves to a shared, formal examination of their progress, demonstrating a willingness to deal with contentious issues. They are committed to using the data they collect as the basis of continued planning. The university or college values the scholarship required to undertake local assessments; the community supports academic rigor in pursuit of solutions to community issues. Successful efforts towards engagement are part of the assessment of institutional leadership, faculty, staff, and students. Engagement is built into the institutional merit and reward system. Communities assess their own commitment and capability to engage effectively with the institution. A regular “engagement report card” is released publicly.

Questions to ask: Does the university reward the scholarship of engagement and other activities that promote it? Are the engagement efforts of the university’s administration and business management, as well as its faculty and students, evaluated rigorously? Is engagement a part of a university’s self-study or accreditation? Do evaluators consider community engagement in their assessments of programs and activities? Does a community establish benchmarks and measures of its partnership with a university?



In reviewing proposals for engagement projects, the Kellogg Foundation's Youth and Education team will consider the questions listed on the previous pages. **In addition, the team will seek evidence that the institution and the community are committed to long-term engagement. Such a commitment requires a partnership developed *before* approaching the Foundation for funding support and strong evidence of mutual benefit, accountability, and respect.**

The Youth and Education program area has a proposal review team that considers all concepts and proposals. The initial review may take up to three months to complete.

Grant applicants are encouraged to submit requests by using the Foundation's online application at www.wkkf.org/Grants/Application.asp. Grant applicants who do not wish to apply electronically should submit a preproposal letter or concept paper of up to five pages in length. For information regarding our guidelines and preproposal process, please visit our Web site at <http://www.wkkf.org/Grants/Process.asp>.

The Kellogg Foundation generally does not provide funding for expansion of established programs; capital purposes; equipment; conferences; film, television, or radio programs; endowments or development campaigns; religious programs; or research.

For more information, please visit our Web site at <http://www.wkkf.org>.



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