

McCune Foundation

Frameworks Supporting Foundation Priorities

After publishing its strategic plan in 2014, the staff at the McCune Foundation worked to further refine its priorities through conversations with community members, experts and key stakeholders. Through that process, we have developed the following “Frameworks,” which also include leverage points for each priority to help grantees and prospective grantees understand to what extent their work is aligned with the priorities of the Foundation. The following frameworks are listed in no particular order of importance.

Local Food Industry Development

Far too often, the existing food systems — a term commonly used to refer to all the processes, infrastructure and activities related to feeding a community — in the state of New Mexico contribute to poor nutritional outcomes for individuals and families, especially those considered low-income. Not only does New Mexico have one of the highest obesity rates in the nation as a result of these significant shortcomings, the systems in question contribute very little to the state economy, with as much as 80 percent of all money spent on food and nutrition leaving the state, according to New Mexico State University Extension Service.

It is primarily because of these nutritional and economic challenges that McCune supports development of market-based alternatives that will ultimately produce better health outcomes and contribute more directly to the economic well being of the citizens and communities of New Mexico. While agriculture is one of the largest contributors to the state’s gross domestic product, it can be a tough business for new generations of entrepreneurs to crack if they aren’t already a member of an old, established farm family or if they don’t have the backing of a large, corporate farming operation.

That said, a stronger, more locally based (and focused) food industry has been growing in New Mexico communities for the better part of this century. Grass roots efforts such as farmers markets and Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) programs have not only provided training for new farmers and germination for new businesses, they also provide the public with greater options to feed their families nutritional, locally grown fruits, vegetables and meats. This movement has been critical to the shift in people’s ideas about what it means to eat healthy, and what it means to support local agriculture. Local food system development also drives increased interest in protection of land and water, which are essential for local food production. All of this, in turn, allows for more small business creation and a deeper statewide economic impact.

To this end, the Foundation has identified six key leverage points for the development of the local food industry:

Key Leverage Points

Market development hinges on the promise of community based programs that are focused on building and maintaining relationships between consumers and small farms and other food producers. These programs have great potential when it comes to driving small-scale food entrepreneurship around New Mexico. Priority will be given to approaches that increase profitability and revenue for small farms and producers around the state. This includes programs that support sharing materials in order to build a broader market, as well as a deeper level of market engagement among small and new farms. Other innovative market engagement and development approaches will be considered.

Shared infrastructure can refer to equipment and facilities as well as administrative and operational functions and capabilities. Organizations that develop, implement and/or maintain shared infrastructural elements that support multiple farms and producers are well aligned with this priority. The Foundation also supports development of new technologies that improve farm profitability, through greater means of production, farm management training or increased access to consumers.

New farm/farmer development emphasizes expansion of the capacity of new farms, both in terms of agricultural practice and competence with standard business practices. As the demand for local and sustainable agriculture grows among consumers, the development of new farms and new farmers will present an opportunity for economic development as well as an avenue to uphold and maintain the state's longstanding (in New Mexico, that's practically ancient) agricultural traditions — particularly in vulnerable or rural communities where tradition persists despite the wide range of challenges our families face. But not to rest on tradition alone, new models of capital development to support emerging agricultural businesses will also be prioritized.

Nutritional health education/interventions refers to the need to engage and influence broader audiences in conversations about nutritional health as opportunities are presented by the growth of a more localized food industry. Having such programs directly connected to locally grown produce can provide even greater impact. The Foundation supports programs and organizations whose focus is on creating mechanisms that connect vulnerable populations with healthy and fresh local produce, dairy products, meat and other food products.

Support for **Policy and advocacy** demonstrates the Foundation's interest in development of new, innovative policy approaches that could drive greater demand for the products created by local farmers and producers. As such, the Foundation is aligned with organizations that drive development of policy that is supportive of emerging local food industries around the state. The Foundation also supports advocacy efforts that support heirloom and indigenous crop and seed varieties to maintain genetic diversity of our food system in the face of changing climate characteristics.

In addition, the McCune Foundation recognizes the deep link between agricultural practices and land conservation and management and supports efforts to develop and support practices that conserve land, soil and other resources.

Education Transformation & Early Childhood Development

No matter whose criteria you are using, New Mexico schools are regularly ranked among the nation's poorest. So perhaps it is no surprise that the Foundation strongly believes that innovation is needed in the state's education sector. McCune recognizes that the wide body of research confirms that interventions in the first four to five years of a child's life offer the best opportunity to influence later educational successes. The Foundation supports programs and organizations that advocate for policy reforms, and that provide direct services and build statewide investments in early childhood education and development.

Many of the McCune Foundation's funding partners and other organizations approach the area of education from a "cradle to career" perspective that honors the notion that people's lives are continuums, as opposed to collections of disconnected phases that we all simply "pass" through. This "big picture" approach reinforces that education transformation will always be limited in K-12, unless we work harder to make sure children are prepared to learn when they get to kindergarten.

And then there's the disconnection between the education system and the world of employment. This is not only a disservice to our students, but a detriment to our local economy. The McCune Foundation supports the "cradle to career" approach and hopes to engage that continuum through a number of its priorities, including Education Transformation & Early Childhood Development. In addition, the Foundation supports higher education initiatives that more directly connect university and college programs to economic development or workforce development efforts.

As a uniquely diverse state from a cultural perspective, New Mexico also requires a broader perspective about what child development and education means. Tribal communities often hold different perspectives with regard to how children should be educated and prepared for the world. The Foundation respects and supports a broad array of approaches and honors those that seek to reinforce long-held cultural beliefs and approaches.

For the purpose of its funding focus, the Foundation has identified five key leverage points that support its grants in these areas:

Key Leverage Points

Early Childhood Development. Among the toughest challenges facing the "cradle to career" continuum in New Mexico is that the majority of 4- to 5-year-old children who enter the education system are not yet prepared to learn. This means that a huge percentage of children

are beginning their formal education from a position of trying to catch up with their peers. This places a huge burden on school districts across the state that are already strained with financial and political struggles. It is widely agreed that the only real remedy for these problems is for the State of New Mexico to find a way to increase its investment in early childhood development. Studies show a 7 to 1 return to the economy for every dollar spent on early childhood development, making this a clear economic development issue as well.

Estimates of how much additional funding would be required range between \$250 million and \$400 million per year. Additional concerns exist regarding the availability of effective early childhood programming in the state. In support of this priority, the Foundation will favor proposals that drive the development of innovative early childhood and home visiting programming, as well as incubation of programs that appear promising. Collaborative approaches to this work, especially efforts that leverage existing work or connect work across geographies are especially compelling. The Foundation also prioritizes efforts to educate the public and lawmakers about the benefits of funding early childhood development and groups that advocate on behalf of funding for these programs.

School leadership development is key to the success of any school. In the most successful schools, that leadership extends beyond the administration and includes teachers in the classroom. As more innovative school models emerge, a growing pool of talented and motivated teachers will be key to the successes of even the most well-conceived approaches to education. The Foundation prioritizes programs and organizations that provide opportunities for professional development and creative career advancement for teachers and administrators.

Locally designed approaches are among the core values of education in New Mexico. While the Foundation appreciates the contributions and implementation of national models in our state, it also recognizes that education must be responsive to the communities it serves. Start-up schools, programs and educational approaches that are developed in New Mexico to address New Mexico-specific challenges and set high expectations for our students are prioritized for funding. The Foundation is moving away from providing ongoing support of established schools and funding for independent schools and focuses support on work that prioritizes vulnerable students.

Multilingual educational opportunities can be a unique benefit of living in a “majority minority” state with large populations for whom English is a second language. New Mexico’s multilingual capabilities, including the broad range of Native languages from our tribal communities, provide our state with unique educational opportunities. Data shows that students in multilingual classrooms have certain learning advantages over classrooms where only one language is used. And with burgeoning economies in Mexico and other Spanish-speaking countries in Central and South America, New Mexico has an opportunity to position itself as a conduit for business between enterprises based in the United States and Latin America.

Reform infrastructure development is critical for the future of education in New Mexico, especially with a broad spectrum of approaches being proposed to transform educational outcomes in our state. The reform landscape can be confusing to both community members and lawmakers. In addition, competing and cooperating organizations can further muddy the conversation through the information and rhetoric they inject into the discussion. The Foundation prioritizes programs and organizations that demystify education reform for community members, make it easier for community to get involved and facilitates broader interest in education around the state.

Afterschool and in-school supplemental programs will be considered for funding only if the work is aligned with the foundation's broader education transformation goals. Priority will be given to programs that connect to broader, community based initiatives or that reflect deeper levels of coordination among groups serving the same populations. The Foundation will also prioritize efforts that are coordinated or collaborative in nature.

Economic Development & Family Asset Building

An economic study released by the University of New Mexico's Bureau of Business and Economic Research (BBER) showed that New Mexico ranks near the bottom among all states in regards to economic development and job growth. The 2014 report highlighted the considerable challenges the state faces in regards to these economic parameters, with only two states faring worse. These findings were especially troubling since New Mexico had for 40 years previously ranked among the top 15 states for job growth.

Among other concerns revealed in the new study: the state economy's heavy dependence on federal funds; New Mexico has the largest income disparity between its highest and lowest earners; and that despite counting the fourth-highest number of residents (per capita) with a Ph.D., New Mexico ranks near the bottom of states in terms of people possessing bachelor's degrees.

Effective economic development is necessary to provide economic security and a dignified quality of life for our residents, especially due to the state's high levels of poverty and unemployment. For this reason, the McCune Foundation has prioritized economic development and family asset building within its grants program, adopting and following language for the priority:

A Foundation priority is to create and expand the economic base in New Mexico and to view its grant making through an economic development lens whenever possible, in particular supporting programs and organizations that seek to foster entrepreneurship across sectors. The Foundation also supports programs and initiatives that support and

help drive growth in family assets across the diverse communities of the state, enabling a broader base of economic stability for our families.

The following specific leverage points have been identified to help focus and drive the Foundation's grant making within these priority areas:

Economic Development

Scalable elements supported by high-touch interventions — Programs and organizations that provide training and technical assistance to entrepreneurs and prospective entrepreneurs in New Mexico have proven effective but are often limited in the depth of support they can provide due to “scalability” concerns. The Foundation is interested in approaches that push the envelope in terms of depth-of-support provided to emerging enterprises, especially those that show potential for growth.

Innovation in enterprise structure. Revitalization of New Mexico's economic sectors requires innovation. As such, the Foundation supports approaches that, among other things: appropriately and opportunistically blend various financial resources (private, public, philanthropic, etc.) to fund enterprise creation and growth; develop new structures of ownership and equity; and create opportunities for exit strategies that will benefit entrepreneurs, investors and the greater New Mexico economy.

Accessibility of capital is a key challenge for new, small and emerging enterprises in the state is accessibility of start-up and growth capital. Approaches that pair supportive elements to the entrepreneur — thereby mitigating risk to enable lower interest rates — with sources of capital that are committed to “social” and financial returns are of interest to the Foundation.

Family Asset Building

Financial capabilities and economic engagement. Many families (particularly vulnerable families) in New Mexico often lack the skills and capability required to adequately manage personal and family budgets and finances. This often leads to a lack of engagement with the broader economic system beyond simple transactions. The Foundation prioritizes approaches that seek to build competencies, confidence and economic engagement for vulnerable New Mexico families.

Mortgages and credit. Homeownership and short-term access to emergency (or otherwise) capital at non-predatory interest rates are key elements contributing to economic stability for New Mexican families, especially those living in our most vulnerable communities. The Foundation supports programs and approaches that make homeownership more accessible and successful, as well as those that work toward more affordable access to capital for working families.

Savings. Savings accounts represent one of the proven ways families can emerge from poverty. These accounts can often provide avenues for education, enterprise development and protection from unexpected emergencies that might otherwise derail any progress a family has made toward economic stability. Programs that encourage and incentivize savings are considered for funding.

Building Links between Arts and Community Engagement

The arts have traditionally played a significant role in the culture and history of New Mexico and continue to contribute substantially to the state's economic and civic livelihoods. The McCune Foundation supports efforts to build and diversify audiences for arts and culture, particularly programs and organizations that seek to leverage arts, creative expression, and aesthetic experiences for the purpose of inspiring and driving higher levels of community and civic engagement.

Arts and cultural organizations, along with artists and cultural workers, are essential components of New Mexico's public life, cultural identity, and economy. However, arts and culture are too often relegated to supporting roles or viewed as luxuries by policy makers. While we all enjoy art that is created purely for the sake of art, there is also great power in work that functions as a catalyst for connection and positive change. The Foundation encourages arts and cultural workers to amplify their role in New Mexico's communities by using arts as a vehicle to: inspire open and respectful dialogue; harness creativity in order to facilitate positive social change; empower individuals and communities through creative expression and access to arts education; and build collaboration and partnership within the arts community and across sectors (such as social services, economic development and education) to leverage resources and serve communities.

The McCune Foundation prioritizes its support for arts and cultural programs and initiatives as well as short- and long-term projects across artistic disciplines that creatively address the following specific leverage points:

Key Leverage Points

The Foundation defines **community engagement** arts as work that intentionally involves diverse community members in collaborative, art-based (visual, performing, literary and media arts) creative work and active participation. Effective and impactful arts and community engagement is evidenced by: (a) reciprocity between artist(s) and community; (b) creative expression and high-quality aesthetic experiences, which build community connections; (c) active engagement among diverse and multigenerational participants in shared cultural experiences; (d) social dialogue and civic engagement; and (e) a meaningful product and improved community capacity that outlast the engagement.

Arts and community engagement can drive programming and outreach for arts organizations, and it can also serve an integral and catalytic role in community planning, economic development, capacity-building, civic engagement and other development efforts.

Collaboration and partnership. The Foundation prioritizes programs and organizations that establish partnerships among arts and cultural partners to leverage resources, share costs, and identify opportunities to improve engagement and service to communities. Examples include shared advertising and marketing costs for similar programs, coordinated programming in communities and schools, and collaborative place-based audience building. The Foundation also prioritizes initiatives and projects that are built on collaboration among arts organizations and communities.

In addition, the Foundation also supports cross-sector partnerships (i.e. arts organizations in partnership with social service organizations or arts organizations in partnership with community planning initiatives, etc.) that broaden impact for arts organizations, creatively engage community and further the work in other areas such as education, civic engagement, economic development and other Foundation priorities.

Education. The Foundation recognizes the value of programs and organizations that offer relevant, transformative, and quality arts education opportunities for educators, K-12 students and elders. In particular, the Foundation is interested in both in- and out-of-school programs that encourage long-term participation in the arts, ensure financial accessibility, and intentionally support cultural and economic diversity among participants, teachers and staff. Programs that coordinate closely with other groups and organizations to create strategic opportunities for broader impact are prioritized.

Build and diversify audiences. The Foundation supports work that seeks to grow and diversify audiences for the arts in New Mexico, especially where these efforts extend across multiple organizations or geographies. Younger people and populations not typically served by arts and cultural events are also prioritized for audience building activities.

Leveraging Opportunities with Health Care

The passage and on-going implementation of the Affordable Care Act introduces meaningful changes to the health care environment nationwide. Because of New Mexico's socioeconomic circumstances, the people of the state are positioned to benefit significantly from some of these changes. Two key barriers to these opportunities being realized are a) lack of education about the availability of these opportunities and b) lack of health care practitioners to meet the growing needs. To take advantage of this structural opportunity to improve the health of New Mexicans, the Foundation supports programs and groups seeking to mitigate these barriers.

Negative health outcomes in New Mexico are often driven by a lack of access to preventive medical care and lack of information among large segments of the population about options for healthy living. Chronic diseases such as diabetes and obesity affect New Mexicans at among the highest rates in the country, with behavioral health, substance abuse and issues such as teen pregnancy also negatively impacting large portions of our population. The rural nature of our state, as well as language and cultural barriers, introduce additional challenges in building and maintaining robust health across our communities.

The McCune Foundation acknowledges that the scope of our state's public health challenges is vast, impacts hundreds of thousands of people and would require far more resources than the Foundation can access to address. Consequently, the Foundation is focusing its funding in this area to relatively limited areas.

The following specific leverage points have been identified to help focus and drive our grant making within this priority area:

Key Leverage Points

Frontline Healthcare Worker workforce development. Community Health Workers (CHWs) and the use of other lay service providers represent a proven model for positively affecting health in New Mexican communities. In an influential study, New Mexico CHWs working with a group of 448 high risk, high cost Medicaid managed care clients produced substantial cost reductions in emergency department, inpatient and prescription drugs totaling over \$2 million in two years. Cost savings attributable to the New Mexico program exceeded program costs by four fold. In addition, CHW employment is expected to increase by 21 percent between 2012 and 2022, an employment growth rate almost twice the national average. Demand for direct caregivers in New Mexico is expected to increase 53 percent by 2020. The Foundation prioritizes programs that seek to develop the CHW workforce and support the profession as a driver for economic development and job growth.

Innovative approaches to access. Geography, language and cultural barriers, and cost often hamper access to health care in New Mexico. Programs or organizations that use technology or other innovative approaches to mitigate these barriers and connect communities (including rural, tribal and other marginalized populations) to effective and relevant health services are supported by this Foundation priority.

Integrated approaches to addressing social determinants. Addressing social determinants (such as access to clear air and water, safe neighborhoods and healthy food, among others) in the health of New Mexicans continues to grow as a priority strategy in generating better health outcomes. The Foundation prioritizes efforts that seek to address various social determinants in an integrated manner, either by connecting multiple initiatives or integrating health factors into other, unrelated programs.

Influencing Urban Planning & Built Environments

“Built environment” refers to the constructed surroundings that provide the setting for human activity, ranging in scale from buildings and parks or green space to neighborhoods and cities. The term can also be applied to supporting infrastructure, such as water supply and energy networks. Decisions about how these environments should be developed are often driven by political considerations, short-term opportunism or other factors that are disconnected from the needs and preferences of the families that are most affected by them. Vulnerable families in particular tend to get the least benefit from these approaches and often end up bearing a disproportionate share of the burden that a lack of planning foresight imposes on our cities and towns. Because these families are frequently disengaged from civic participation and processes, their voices are rarely heard or solicited in the decision-making processes.

Beyond the basic function of housing, well-conceived built environments provide a key platform for many, or most, functions of civic life. These functions include economic development, public health and higher levels of community and civic engagement, among others. The Foundation has made meaningful investments in the development of downtown Albuquerque and continues to support the development of built environments across the state that seek to take advantage of the role these environments can play to move New Mexican families toward a more prosperous and healthy future.

The Foundation continues to view the well-conceived development of built environments as critical, supporting strategies that encourage energy efficiency, build civic engagement and support economic development. The following specific leverage points have been identified to help focus and drive our grant making within this priority area:

Key Leverage Points

Injecting community voices into urban development. Families are profoundly impacted by decisions made by government agencies, planning commissions and other entities, especially regarding the methods in which parks, roads, buildings, housing developments and other structures are planned and prioritized. The Foundation supports efforts that encourage the concept that community voice is of great relevance in these decision-making processes, driving higher levels of civic engagement and participation among all New Mexican families.

Driving resource efficiency in built environments. In a state often challenged by scarce resources, especially water, innovative approaches to planning, design and construction of buildings and communities that maximize efficiency in use of those resources should be prioritized. Organizations and programs that seek to drive these efficiencies as “best practices” in both rural and urban contexts are prioritized by the Foundation.

Innovative strategies for affordable housing. Safe, stable and appropriate housing is one of the key contributors to positive outcomes for families seeking to improve or maintain their economic situation. With high numbers of low-income families in New Mexico, overcoming various hurdles and increasing the availability of such housing remains an ongoing challenge around the state. While the Foundation is unable to directly fund the construction of housing developments, it does support efforts to initiate and drive such projects, especially those that integrate services or other programmatic elements that will help vulnerable families succeed or that include mixed-income approaches.

Stewardship of Natural Resources

As a primarily arid state and one in which meaningful portions of revenue are derived from outdoor and adventure tourism, New Mexico relies heavily upon its natural resources to support its economy and quality of life. Key natural resources (including water, air, wildlife, pristine landscapes and well-managed rangeland, among others) should be protected, managed and utilized in ways that support their viability in perpetuity. The Foundation supports organizations and initiatives focused on these objectives.

— from the McCune Charitable Foundation Strategic Plan 2014-2016

The McCune Charitable Foundation recognizes that it must identify and prioritize the most important natural resource issues affecting New Mexico and its residents, particularly in this time of climate change, extended drought and evolving environmental concerns. The Foundation identified priority issues in the state but recognizes that natural resource relationships are complicated and the issues inescapably interconnected. The Foundation also recognizes that stewardship of natural resources overlaps with most, if not all, of its other identified funding priorities. The land and its resources figure into almost every sector of life in our largely rural state with very old land-based traditions.

Based on its research, the Foundation has identified the following long-term concerns, short-term priorities, and key leverage points to maximize potential positive change. Most of the natural resource work currently underway in New Mexico is directly or indirectly related to these priorities and this list in no way precludes funding of other specific issues:

Long-Term Concerns

Climate Change is the critical issue of our day and it has a major influence on a range of natural resource issues that organizations are addressing in New Mexico. We cannot address water

quantity, quality and streamflow, forest health and fires, ecosystem resilience, wildlife habitat, the health of our state's acequia systems and many other concerns without taking climate change into account. With the most southerly snow-fed rivers in North America flowing through our state, New Mexico is the "canary in the coal mine" that will feel the inescapable effects of climate change sooner and more extremely than other areas of the West. The Foundation will consider projects that are New Mexico-based that address the causes of climate change or mitigation of and adaptation to the effects of climate disruptions.

Water is a perpetual and multifaceted concern in an arid state like New Mexico and challenges associated with water will only get worse as temperatures increase and precipitation decreases in the coming decades. Quantity and quality of groundwater and surface water resources, stream flows and the healthy watersheds that produce robust stream flows, are all critical to protect through multiple legal, regulatory and planning processes. The Foundation will consider projects that protect existing water resources, seek to improve water quality, protect and restore watersheds, and advance rational, long-term water policy planning that builds resiliency to respond to future water challenges.

Environmental Education is an identified priority, but it is also a key leverage point to address what has become known as "nature deficit disorder". We need to connect the next generation to nature so that when they become adults they will be better equipped to care more about the stewardship of natural resources. In New Mexico, we have a tremendous opportunity to build on and validate centuries-old traditional knowledge and land ethics in a way that is relevant to local communities and cultures. Environmental education includes educating adults about natural resource issues through public education, quality independent journalism and accessible outdoor recreation. The Foundation will consider all educational activities related to stewardship of natural resources, with an emphasis on coordinated efforts providing access to diverse populations.

Ecosystem Restoration. Restoring forests, riparian areas, streams, habitat and wildlife populations is important for its own sake, but also for the ecological services that natural systems provide for humans, including watershed health and more robust runoff, food production, carbon sequestration to mitigate climate change and the beauty of healthy, open lands. Restoration projects have great potential to engage traditional local knowledge and skills and create local jobs. The Foundation will consider ecosystem restoration projects on a watershed or bioregional scale that engage a diversity of community members and stakeholders, and can leverage additional funding and create local jobs.

Short-Term Priorities (three to five years)

Save the Gila River. The Gila River is the last "free-flowing" river in the state but it is currently threatened by a proposed dam and diversion system. As well as the important symbolism of protecting this wild river and bringing together a broad range of organizations and interests

from around the state in a common cause, the project is considered a financial and technical boondoggle and has been plagued by a lack of transparency and civic engagement. The Foundation will prioritize projects that contribute to protecting New Mexico's Gila River from dams or diversions.

Protect State Environmental Rules. Existing environmental protection rules, particularly those affecting groundwater quality, are threatened by industry interests. Allowing the so-called "copper rule" and "dairy rule" to go into effect will directly and permanently impact groundwater quality and create dangerous legal precedents. Other similar attempts to weaken existing rules may emerge in the near future, especially in the areas of nuclear waste storage. The Foundation will prioritize projects that strengthen existing state environmental protection rules or challenge attempts to weaken rules.

Prohibit Water Speculation. Test-case applications to allow private groundwater permits for the express intent of selling to the highest bidder are currently being considered by the New Mexico State Engineer's Office. This would essentially privatize a critical public resource and create a dangerous legal precedent. The Foundation will prioritize challenges to water speculation permits and efforts to educate New Mexicans about state laws to eliminate this option in the future.

Reduce Coal Pollution Impacts. Coal-burning power plants in the Four Corners area emit the greenhouse gases that fuel climate change and are implicated in one of the highest rates of childhood asthma in the country, as well as various neurological disorders related to mercury emissions. This inordinately affects impoverished Navajo children and communities, who in some cases do not even have access to the electricity being generated by these polluting plants. Various regulatory processes regarding these emissions are currently underway under the New Mexico Public Regulations Commission, the U.S. EPA, and NEPA. The Foundation will prioritize projects that address the causes and effects of these power plants, with an emphasis on direct support to and involvement of affected communities. Additionally, projects that provide support for renewable energy programs such as solar and wind, will be prioritized.

Key Leverage Points

Engaging Diversity. Cultural diversity is a core value that the Foundation seeks to promote in the organizations and projects it supports. It is also, fortunately, a strong reality for the citizens of New Mexico. Engaging that diversity not only expands the conservation movement with a broader base, but also strengthens it with a diversity of values, perspectives and land-based wisdom. Reflecting local diversity in organizations, working in authentic relationships, being responsive to community priorities and leveling the playing field for vulnerable communities all contribute to building a stronger conservation movement. The Foundation will prioritize organizations and projects that reflect and engage local diversity in meaningful ways.

Successful Alliances and Coalitions. Working collectively in alliances and coalitions can be more effective and create a synergy that is greater than the sum of its parts. Successful alliances and

coalitions develop organically around a specific campaign, critical need or clearly identified common ground — people and organizations find each other when they need to and they tend to get things done. The Foundation will consider support for established alliances and coalitions with a track record of success, emerging alliances and coalitions, and will consider larger grants for ongoing alliances and coalitions that have clear strategies and goals.

Intersection with Other Funding Priorities. In our rural state, and truly in the modern world at large, it is not possible to separate stewardship of natural resources from many of the Foundation's other funding priorities. The most direct and obvious intersection is with Local Food Industry Development. In terms of natural resource-based jobs or outdoor and adventure tourism jobs, there is also a potentially powerful intersection with Economic Development & Family Asset Planning, Strategies for Rural Development and Opportunities in Health Care. The Foundation will encourage and support projects that create new partnerships, engage multiple sectors and use a comprehensive systems approach to addressing these and other interconnected issues.

Networking. Engaging diversity, creating successful alliances and coalitions, and finding workable ways to intersect with other sectors and funding priorities require building relationships with other organizations and individuals. Networking through a variety of venues is an important investment in social capital of the natural resources community, in reducing counterproductive competition, and in building partnerships for greater efficiency and effectiveness. The Foundation will support and sponsor a variety of networking opportunities for grantees.

Communications and Ancillary Support. How organizations communicate is a key component of engaging the public and educating decision-makers regarding stewardship of natural resources. Assistance with media, messaging, marketing and general communications is a strategic leverage point for most conservation organizations. Similarly, many natural resource organizations work extensively in the legal or legislative arena but do not have internal expertise in those areas. The Foundation will support communications services for nonprofits and will support organizations that provide free or subsidized communications, legal and legislative support to a broad range of conservation organizations and communities.

Fostering Innovation. Risk-taking and innovation are another one of the Foundation's core values and it recognizes that it is important not only to support existing innovation but also to foster the fresh innovation needed to solve our evolving natural resource challenges. The Foundation will continue to identify and support successful approaches and to trust the perspectives, local knowledge and approaches of those working most directly with the issues at hand. The Foundation also seeks to harness the wealth of innovation and creative thinking in New Mexico and encourage new approaches through its grant making.

Capacity Building in the Non-Profit Sector

The scarcity of philanthropic and other resources in New Mexico contributes to a challenging environment for the state's non-profit sector. The McCune Foundation supports initiatives that build operational capacities for non-profits, making expertise in communications, finance, leadership, organizational development and other areas more broadly available in the sector.

New Mexico non-profits face tough choices when it comes to staffing. While programmatic elements are frequently prioritized, capabilities in operations and administration are often relegated to the backburner. Consequently, many organizations lack key operational and administrative expertise, leaving staff members to struggle with professional functions such as accounting, communications, strategic planning, evaluation and data collection. A strong base of expertise in these areas that is easily accessible to many high-performing organizations will help drive effectiveness and increase the impact these groups have in the broader sector. The Foundation's efforts in Capacity Building will be centered on addressing this need through the development of systems and platforms that can be leveraged by multiple organizations. In support of this priority, the Foundation has identified the following leverage points.

Key Leverage Points

Expertise and professional services. Because the skills, expertise and experience needed in the areas of operational and administrative execution are in great demand all across New Mexico, they are often expensive, and subsequently out-of-reach for many non-profit organizations. Yet, the highest-performing organizations — in the public and non-profit sectors — often demonstrate the highest levels of operational and administrative execution. Unfortunately, the best, most innovative programming available will be curtailed in its effectiveness if not supported by excellence in these other areas. While it is helpful to build competency within organizations in these areas, "expertise" offers the most positive impact on the programming those skill levels support. The Foundation is seeking innovative approaches that increase access to expert professional services and then integrates them within the non-profit organizations it supports around the state. In order to maximize impact of its funding, the Foundation is most interested in approaches that enable multiple organizations, as opposed to proposals that seek to build capacity within a single organization.

Shared services and infrastructure. Projects and programs that drive operational-efficiency in the sector by creating opportunities for multiple organizations to share infrastructure or staff will fall within the scope of this priority.

Leadership development. Leadership and management skills are crucial to building and delivering effective programs in the non-profit sector. The Foundation is interested in programs and approaches that seek to identify people with leadership potential and develops those individuals to be more effective employees and organizational leaders across the sector. In

particular, the Foundation prioritizes efforts that focus on under-represented populations and emerging leaders from vulnerable communities.

Workshops and training. The Foundation values the building of skills through workshops and other training opportunities. However, a number of partner organizations in the state already provide well-developed and professionally delivered programs of this nature, so the McCune Foundation will not seek to replicate such services.

Fundraising and development capacity. While fundraising and development are critical aspects of non-profit work, the Foundation is moving away from funding development positions within individual organizations at this time.

Strategies for Rural Development

New Mexico is the fifth-largest state in the nation in terms of land area and, somewhat conversely, it is the 36th-most populous state. This means that New Mexico is largely rural, with 26 out of 33 counties considered “frontier counties” (six or fewer people per square mile). While a majority of the population in the state lives in three urban areas (Albuquerque, Las Cruces and Santa Fe), New Mexico maintains a significant population base that honors its rural roots. Among both tribal and Hispanic communities, a rural way of life remains fundamental to a cultural connection with the landscape of the state and to the values that many families honor and maintain. In addition, many in our metropolitan areas are connected to rural traditions through familial and other connections.

Strategies and approaches that work in the state’s urban areas often fail in other parts of New Mexico, because of the geographic challenges implicit with rural landscapes and also because of cultural divides that exist between urban and rural communities. Nonetheless, the cultural, familial and social connections that exist between rural and urban communities provide opportunities to creatively connect with resources, programs and initiatives that have already developed support for work being done in urban areas.

The following specific leverage points have been identified to help focus and drive our grant making within this priority area:

Key Leverage Points

Economic development. High levels of poverty are often pervasive across New Mexico’s rural areas, with the trend becoming increasingly pronounced with the consolidation and decline of land-based activities, including agriculture, wood gathering, minding and logging in the last generation. New initiatives that seek to revitalize the most sustainable — and most traditional — land-based practices, including agriculture, in creative ways and support creation of food-based businesses in rural areas among vulnerable populations are of interest to the Foundation. We also support businesses that provide cultural benefit, including those based in the arts. In

addition, innovative applications of technology (e.g. video conferencing or new uses of broadband connectivity) that support development of new businesses or enhance operation of existing enterprises are also supported by the Foundation.

Educational advancement. While the state has poor educational outcomes rural areas tend to have more challenges in this area. Rural schools and libraries often lack resources yet also frequently play broader roles in the community as hubs for activity and social cohesion. Strategies that seek to leverage and support the position of these institutions as gathering places and social hubs in rural communities are priorities to the Foundation, as are innovative approaches that integrate “learning by doing” and deep student support into curriculum and practice.

Built environment. Small towns across the state often feature main streets and town centers that have become degraded or populated by decaying buildings or facades. These conditions often discourage a sense of community and vitality. The Foundation cannot support major capital projects, it does support community-informed initiatives and programs that seek to upgrade rural built environments in terms of energy efficiency, revitalization and general community cohesiveness and connectivity.