

African American Giving Initiative

Who We Are



Established in 2011, this initiative is focused on creating an endowment fund with broad community support and to provide grantmaking for needs that are specific to the African American community in the greater Rochester region. Members are committed to making a positive change in problem areas experienced most strongly within the African American community.

The group's goal is to raise \$1 million to create a permanent endowment that will grow and respond to the future needs and aspirations of Rochester's Black community – forever. Members' gifts to the African American Giving Initiative Fund will be designated for two purposes – half for grantmaking that year and half to help build the endowment.

All contributors decide together how to best distribute the charitable dollars raised, taking full advantage of the power of giving together. We encourage giving to the Initiative from

anyone who believes that a community is only as healthy as each person's neighbor.

There are several options for getting involved (see How to Join tab above). In addition to financial support, your participation and passion as a volunteer on the steering committee to direct grantmaking also can help further the work of the Initiative.

Our Previous Grants

2018: Three grants totaling \$10,000 were awarded to:

- **Big Brothers Big Sisters of Greater Rochester:** Supports the "Beyond School Walls" mentoring program that targets 70 at-risk Rochester youth ages 6 to 18, involves African American mentors, and one-on-one sessions to take place at the mentors' places of work. **\$5,000**
- **Quad A for Kids:** To strengthen the successful after-school programs offered at four city schools by focusing on academic, project-based learning, leadership development, and community service. **\$2,500**
- **Wilson Alliance:** Supports the Rochester City School District Wilson Pearls step team's college prep program that serves high school girls ages 14 to 20 four days a week and provides workshops, tutoring, team building, and community service. **\$2,500**

2017: Three grants totaling \$7,100 were awarded to support:

- **Gateways Music Festival 2017:** Professional musicians of African descent from across the nation come to Rochester to perform and, in conjunction with local volunteer supporters, change the face of classical music. **\$2,500**
- **Cameron Community Ministries:** Supports the Respect & Responsibility for Boys Group, a special weekly component of its youth program. **\$2,100**
- **University of Rochester:** For a two-year, paid youth apprenticeship program that will provide hands-on work experience for under-represented junior and senior high school students in Rochester with an expressed interest in healthcare. **\$2,500**

2016: The **Judicial Process Commission** received a **\$5,000** grant to assist African American ex-offenders as they re-enter the community by providing a mentor and job training opportunities.

2015: Three grants of \$3,333.34 each were awarded to support:

- **Cameron Community Ministries:** Strengthen the after-school program for 40 youth in the Lyell-Otis neighborhood.
- **Gateways Music Festival:** This biennial festival, held in Rochester since 1995, celebrates the contributions of classical instrumentalists of African descent.
- **Group 14621 Community Association:** Supports the Conkey Cruisers bicycling program that is changing the negative perception of exercise in that neighborhood.

2014: **Group 14621 Community Association** received \$2,500 to support the Conkey Cruisers bicycling program.

2013: Gateways Music Festival received \$5,200, the first-ever grant from the Giving Initiative. This biennial festival, held in Rochester since 1995 that celebrates the contributions of classical instrumentalists of African descent. The grant supported having festival musicians, who came from all over the country, perform for youth at Wilson Academy Foundation one night during the festival, in schools, houses of worship, theaters and Rochester City Hall.

Other Significant Work

The State of Black Rochester 2013: Education + Employment = Equity was commissioned by the Initiative to provide an overview of the racial and ethnic disparities in our community. This 40-page paperback, which is a compilation of essays from prominent community leaders and experts, includes data compiled by ACT Rochester. Proceeds from sales of the book are used for the Giving Initiative's future grants in our community.

Find it locally at Mood Makers Books in Village Gate, Writers & Books, The Library Store at the Central Library, and Baobab Cultural Center. On Amazon.com, the book is available in print and in e-book form.

For more information on the African American Giving Initiative, email Advancement@racf.org.

The African American Giving Initiative invites you to join and to find your place in giving through these levels:

- **Founder (\$1,000+):** This annual investment gives you a vote in the grantmaking process that directs dollars to organizations making a measurable difference. Founders receive exclusive invitations to AAGI-sponsored events as well as educational and community programs.
- **Supporter (\$500+):** This annual investment gives you a vote in grantmaking. Members at this level are invited to attend educational and community programs sponsored by the Giving Initiative.
- **Friend (up to \$499):** A donation of any amount will be put toward grants selected by AAGI members at the Supporter and Founder levels.

Half of all gifts are added to the AAGI endowment fund for the future and the other half support immediate community needs through grants. All contributions are tax deductible.

To join, use our easy and secure [online form](#) or mail a check, payable to Rochester Area Community Foundation (with African American Giving Initiative in the Memo line) to African American Giving Initiative, c/o Rochester Area Community Foundation, 500 East Avenue, Rochester, NY 14607. All contributions to the Initiative are tax deductible.

Through its annual grantmaking, the African American Giving Initiative supports projects and programs that positively impact or directly reduce an identified disparity in the African American community and lead to systemic change. Collaboration with partners and/or the ability to replicate program achievements are also key components of a successful application.

For more information about the Initiative's grant criteria and annual grant cycle, [click here](#).