

Community Foundation – creation and growth

Overview: *Worked on establishment and growth of a community foundation*

During the '70s and '80s, Western Massachusetts was losing its business base and wealthy individuals were moving out of the area after they sold their business or retired. To try to capture some of the wealth and retain it in the area for philanthropic purposes, as well as to create a better, more representative and efficient way to learn about and fund community needs, we decided to create a community foundation for 3 of the 4 western counties of Massachusetts. To jump start it and create credibility so that we could attract funding, we pulled in existing private foundations and scholarship funds, created a group of trustees who had regional credibility, a distribution committee designed to reflect the demographics of our area and a distribution process that is heavily volunteer driven. Over the years, as the foundation has grown from a standing start in 1991 to \$170 million in assets today, its ability to impact the area through more sophisticated grant making processes, better information gathering, and proactivity increases apace.

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