



MEMO

TO: Grantseekers
FROM: Bruce Karmazin, Executive Director
DATE: November 18, 2024
RE: Response to Grantseeker Survey 2024

I am pleased to share the results of the Lumpkin Family Foundation's sixth [Grantseeker Survey](#). Conducted by independent consultant Iris Krieg and Associates (IKA), this anonymous third-party survey of recent grant-seekers reflects the Foundation's nearly two-decade long commitment to transparency, having completed our first survey in 2006.

Although similar in scope to earlier surveys, the 2024 undertaking included respondents from the Nature-Based Climate Action program for the first time, as well as questions about the backgrounds of the people leading our grantee organizations.

We are proud that the comments of grantees as well as unsuccessful applicants reflect positively on the Foundation, our staff and the organization's efforts to build and maintain strong relationships. We are especially grateful to those grantseekers who took the time to complete the survey and offer constructive criticism and suggestions. Their thoughtful comments challenge us to improve our connections and to make the granting experience easier and more effective for the organizations and people we support.

This memo summarizes the Foundation's response to the Survey's findings and recommendations. The following points describe the actions we are taking or have already taken to improve our operations in response to the recommendations.

Survey-related Actions:

Although excellent suggestions are scattered throughout the report, IKA's recommendations begin on page 34.

We incorporated many suggestions when we redesigned our application and reporting forms and revamped the Foundation's website this fall. To be specific, you will find:

- Clearer and more descriptive information on the website covering the Foundation's mission, objectives, funding guidelines, and selection process.

- An interactive database, empowering applicants to more easily find examples of successful projects and the range of the Foundation's financial support.
- Sample application and reporting forms.
- Fewer redundancies and greater flexibility in the application and reporting process.
- As a matter of equity, a simplified process for small-dollar applicants to reduce the administrative burden of applying and reporting.
- A request for demographic information on organizational leadership and the communities they serve, helping us assess the equity impact of our grants. (Our new website will include an equity values statement and showcase more diverse representation of our grantees.)
- We will continue to emphasize relationships we have cultivated with our grantees and applicants, being responsive to their questions and concerns, and developing an understanding of the issues they face.

In response to this year's survey findings, we are also planning or actively working on these initiatives or operational improvements:

- Offering an easier, streamlined renewal process for current grantees.
- Hosting virtual information sessions for prospective grantees at, or prior to, each grantmaking cycle.
- Providing more information regarding site visits so applicants know what to expect and how to prepare, whether virtual or in person.
- Showcasing more news and stories on our website from our grantees and partners.
- Replying more promptly to inquiries regarding declinations. (While we have always prioritized responsiveness, we appreciate the need for unsuccessful grantees to learn more quickly why they were unsuccessful.)
- Grantee convenings in East Central Illinois and Chicago to build connections, strengthen networks and to identify collective action. While we are planning these events and have a rich history of convening, it's important to note that we often focus on specific areas or subsets of our grantees due to our limited staff capacity. We also support the capacity of our grantees to organize their own gatherings through our grantmaking programs.

Several recommendations, while potentially helpful to some applicants, we have elected not to adopt as a matter of strategy. Where feasible, we will aim to address the underlying needs in alternative ways. For example, offering individualized pre-submission consultations to all grantseekers is not the most effective use of our staff's

time. In this case, we will address the need for more communication by hosting pre-cycle information sessions or recording them for those unable to attend.

Embracing more challenging issues, and responding:

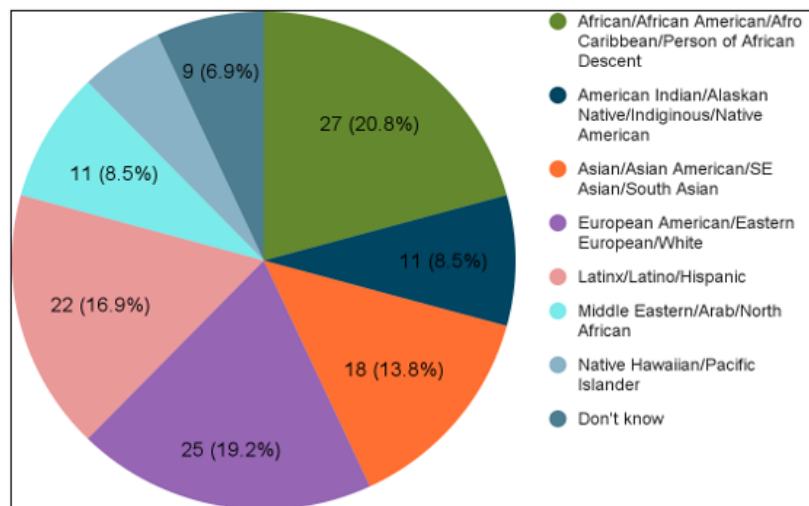
Survey responses highlighted ongoing concerns around diversity, equity and inclusion in the workplace culture. Participants challenged the Foundation to define equity in our work, and to clarify how it shows up in our decision-making. We take these observations seriously.

As a place-based family foundation rooted in rural East Central Illinois, our constituency and leadership have historically been predominantly white. The Foundation is deeply committed to the people and communities that supported the company whose success created the resources we now steward. Consequently, rural equity has always been our foremost concern. We are particularly aware of the inequitable distribution of philanthropic resources, which disproportionately favors urban areas.

In 2020, in the wake of George Floyd's murder, our board participated in a learning process that led the Foundation to expand its vision of equity and the role that racial equity plays even in largely white, rural communities, as well as in the relationship between rural and urban communities.

We have responded significantly by prioritizing BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) leadership in our grantmaking and engaging people of color in our decision-making committees, on our board, and within our staff. As the figure below illustrates, we have started tracking demographic data to enhance our awareness and

Racial and Ethnic Identity of Communities Served by LFF Grantseeker
Survey Respondents



intentionality in grantmaking. Over time, we hope our commitment will be naturally reflected on our website and in other communications.

Our expanded vision of equity also appears in our programs: In East Central Illinois we recently partnered with three community foundations to launch Untold Stories. Untold Stories makes grants that support organizations and people in uncovering and sharing the history that enhances our understanding of the impact that underrepresented groups have played in the achievements of the people in our region

In Chicago we have expanded the Foundation's main grantmaking program – Land, Health, Community-Chicago – and our funder partnerships reach directly into two historically underserved communities.

Some participants commented, as they did in 2020, that we should spend more time in Chicago and “make our presence felt.” In 2022, we hired our first program officer based in Chicago our programs there. Not only has the new position meant greater presence, but it has enabled the Foundation to play a role in connecting grantees to our funder colleagues.

We are deeply grateful to all who took part in the survey and in personal interviews. We honor your effort by sharing the [full report](#) with a commitment to act on the recommendations as stated in this response.



THE LUMPKIN FAMILY FOUNDATION
2024 APPLICANT AND GRANTEE ASSESSMENT
– RESULTS & RECOMMENDATIONS



PREPARED BY IRIS KRIEG & ASSOCIATES, INC.

SEPTEMBER 2024

PURPOSE OF THE ASSESSMENT

In March 2024, The Lumpkin Family Foundation (LFF) commissioned Iris Krieg & Associates, Inc., (IKA) an independent consulting and philanthropic advisory firm, to conduct an assessment of its grantees and applicants (referred to as “grantseekers in this report”) opinions about LFF’s grantmaking processes, their relationship to LFF staff, and about the impact that LFF has on the communities where it makes grants. The Lumpkin Family Foundation believes transparency and accountability are central to impactful grantmaking, and IKA has conducted five similar assessments for The Lumpkin Family Foundation since 2005.

As in previous years, the assessment included two phases of data collection – an online survey and a follow-up video interview with a representative sample of potential respondents. The online survey consisted of a mix of open-ended queries, rating scales, and multiple-choice/forced selection questions. Video conference interviews were guided by a questionnaire designed to provide anecdotal information and a deeper understanding of the topics addressed in the survey. For more detailed information on the assessment methodology, please refer to Appendix I on page 39.

Eleven unique questions from previous assessments were included in the 2024 survey to allow for comparative and cross-sectional data analysis, primarily in the sections about LFF’s website and technology, application processes, grantmaking processes and its relationship with grantseekers and community. A new section in the assessment addressed demographics and Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI) frameworks of both the organizations’ staff and boards, and the identities of the populations served by three of LFF’s grant programs: Aspiramos Juntos which operates in the Chicago area and the Land, Health, Community grant program and newer program, Nature-Based Climate Action Program, which serve the region in and around East Central Illinois. Both the online survey and telephone questionnaire are provided in Appendices II and III.

OVERVIEW OF DATA COLLECTION METHODS AND LIMITATIONS OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Participation in both phases of the assessment was entirely voluntary and organizations gained no incentivization for their feedback.

Phase One - Surveys: On-line surveys were created using Cognito Forms, which allows for questions to appear based on the respondent’s answers and skip sections that are not relevant. A total of 184 LFF grantseekers were sent surveys across the Foundation’s grant programs: Aspiramos Juntos; Land, Health, Community; and Nature-Based Climate Action Program. 20 were returned as “undeliverable” due to either the cybersecurity settings of intended recipients or non-existing e-mail addresses or domain names. Forty-two surveys were returned for a response rate of 26%. Two of the surveys were incomplete, although the completed responses from these two surveys are incorporated into this report. Two reminders were sent to organizations that did not respond. This represents a decrease of 8.5% from the 2020 engagement that had a response rate of 34.5%. The full survey and more details about the process can be viewed in Appendix II on page 40.

Phase Two - Interviews: IKA intentionally selected twenty-five organizations to invite to participate in the interviews, with the goal of conducting twenty interviews. Organizations were selected methodically to well-represent both grantees and applicants who had been denied funding across the three grant programs, the various geographic locations LFF serves, different grant sizes, the number of grants received, and the longevity of the relationship with LFF. Some organizations that had applied to or received funding for more than one of

the three grant programs were also intentionally included. Ultimately, nineteen LFF grant interviews were scheduled and eighteen interviews occurred via Zoom video conference, which allowed for more personal interaction than a phone conversation. IKA also employed an interview protocol, which appears in Appendix III on page 52.

A NOTE ON DATA, GRAMMAR, AND STYLE

Comparisons between previous assessments were not possible in some cases as there have been changes in questions. However, the format, aggregation method and the review of survey feedback in this assessment is similar to previous assessments in that the percentage of respondents offering positive answers as opposed to negative answers were compared. When possible, data results from the 2020, 2016, 2011 and even the 2008 survey were included when questions were comparable. Data from the 2005 assessment is not included in this report as its format varied too much from subsequent surveys and meaningful comparisons would be minimal. In addition, LFF's programs, operations and processes have changed significantly since the early 2000's when the foundation began to formally assess grantseeker input using an external consultant.

The online survey consisted of questions in three formats: open-ended, rating scales, and multiple-choice/forced selection. The rating scale questions were answered using the four-level scoring system below:

- N/A or Other
- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Agree
- Agree

"Strongly Agree" and "Agree" were considered positive while "Strongly Disagree" and "Disagree" were considered negative. Trends were identified by comparing the change in the number of positive and negative responses from previous years. Responses that were left blank or marked "Other or N/A" were noted when percentage totals included them or when respondents skipped questions that did not apply to their experience.

In this report, the term "grantee" refers to organizations that have applied for and received funding between 2021 - 2023 and "applicant" refers to organizations that applied for and did not receive any funding during that time period. There were some organizations that both received grants and declined funding between 2021 - 2023, either across the three grant programs or within the same grant program. These organizations will be referred to as grantees and clarification will be provided when relevant.

To honor the confidentiality that was ensured to respondents, this report uses third-person plural pronouns (they/them/their) instead of third-person singular pronouns (he/him/his or she/her/hers).

Some direct quotations from open-ended survey questions and telephone interviews required minor edits or generalization to enhance clarity or preserve confidentiality. Such specific language changes [in brackets] or simplifications do not alter the original meaning of the respondent's answer.

LIST OF REPORT TOPICS

This report provides an analysis of the survey and interview outcomes as well as recommendations for changes the foundation may want to adapt in response to applicants' and grantees' perceptions of the foundation's strengths and areas that could be improved. Overwhelmingly, survey and interview responses were positive and demonstrated that LFF is respected and appreciated in the nonprofit community. There was some constructive criticism that in most cases reflected small changes the foundation can make to clarify existing services, improve relationships, or streamline processes. The following are the topics that will be covered in this report:

SECTION I: Overview of Respondents -- page 4

- a.) Geographic Location and Grant Program
- b.) Grant Programs of Participants
- c.) Budget Size of Survey Respondents
- d.) Organization Application History
- e.) Demographic Information for Communities Served by LFF Grantseekers p.

SECTION II: Grantmaking -- page 8

- a.) Website, CRM, and Use of Technology
- b.) Letter of Inquiry (LOI), Pre-Submit Option, Application, Grant Reporting, and Site Visits

SECTION III: LFF Relationships -- page 18

- a.) Grantee Relationships with LFF Staff
- b.) LFF's Relationships with the Greater Nonprofit Community
- c.) LFF's Connection to its Mission

SECTION IV: Program Impact -- page 24

- a.) Land, Health, Community and Nature-Based Climate Action Programs – East central Illinois
- b.) Aspiramos Juntos – Greater Chicago Area

SECTION V: Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Frameworks -- page 30

SECTION VI: Recommendations -- page 34

Appendix I – Methodology -- page 34

Appendix II – Surveys -- page 39

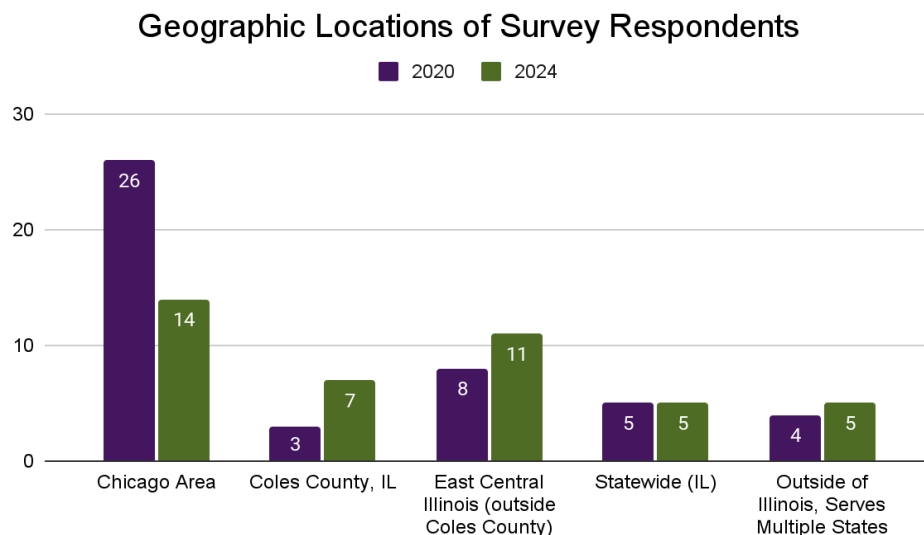
Appendix III – Interview Protocol -- page 52

SECTION I: OVERVIEW OF RESPONDENTS

This section is intended to give a snapshot of the forty-two organizations that replied to the survey. While this sample only represents 26% of the total grantseekers between 2021 - 2023, the variety of respondents was fairly representative of the entire pool of grantseekers. This expanded data on respondent organizations may be helpful for LFF in making future grantmaking or policy decisions.

a.) Geographic Locations of Survey Respondents

In 2024, 67% of survey participants were located outside of the Chicago area, which differs from 2020 where only 44% were from downstate. The addition of the Nature-Based Climate Action Program in 2020, which primarily occurs in East Central Illinois, increased the number of grantees from the region.

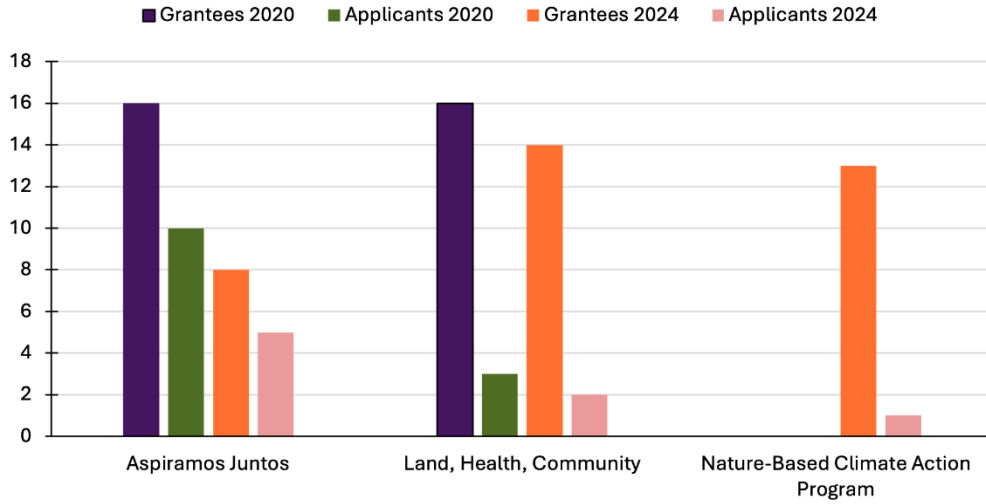


b.) Grant Programs of Participants

Surveys

As in 2020, more Grantees responded than those that had applied for and not received funding. Unlike 2020, in 2024, there were more grantees from Land, Health, Community that responded than Aspiramos Juntos. Proportionally, more applicants that did not receive funding applied to the Aspiramos Juntos program than the other two grant programs in 2024. As stated in the previous section, there were more grantseeker survey responders outside of the Chicago area in 2024 which differed from 2020. While there is no way to prove cause and effect, there are various potential reasons including but not limited to the number of years the program has been operating, changes in LFF funding guidelines, the rate of funding versus declining applications within a program, and external factors such as the pandemic which impacted all organizations in different ways in 2020 and the following years. The difference in 2020 and 2024 grant program respondents is also somewhat insignificant and could be happenstance.

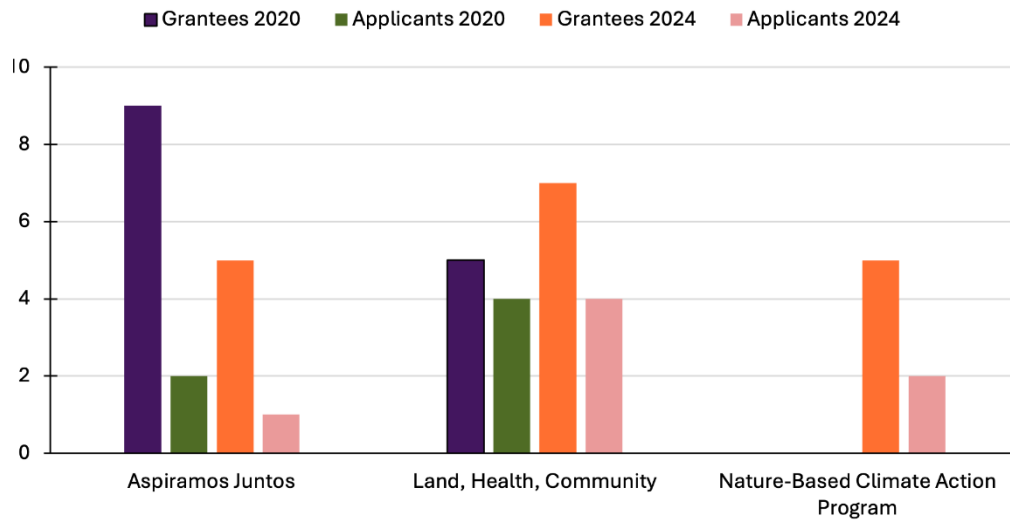
Grant Programs of Survey Respondents



Interviews

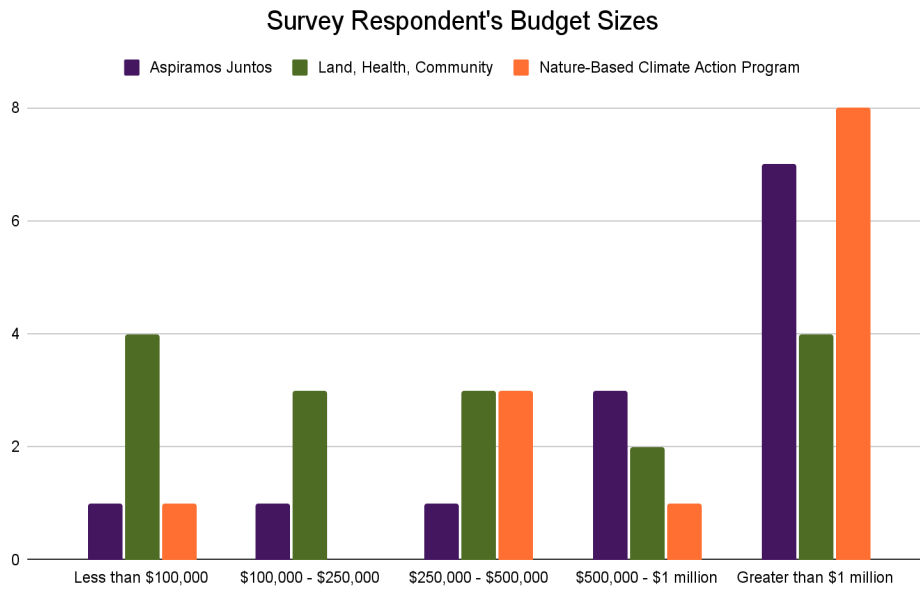
Of the eighteen telephone interviews conducted for the second phase of the assessment, seven had applied to more than one grant program. The chart below reflects all the various grant programs to which the eighteen participant organizations have applied; therefore, seven organizations are represented in more than one category.

Grant Programs of Interview Participants



c.) Budget Size of Survey Respondents

Of the forty-two survey participants (budget data was not collected for interview participants), 45% had budgets over \$1 million. 76% of Aspiramos Juntos respondents had budgets over \$500,000 and the Nature-Based Climate Action Program had the highest percentage of its respondents, 62%, with budgets over \$1 million. The Land, Health, Community Program trended toward smaller organizations with 54% of respondents having budgets less than \$250,000.



d.) Survey Respondent Application History

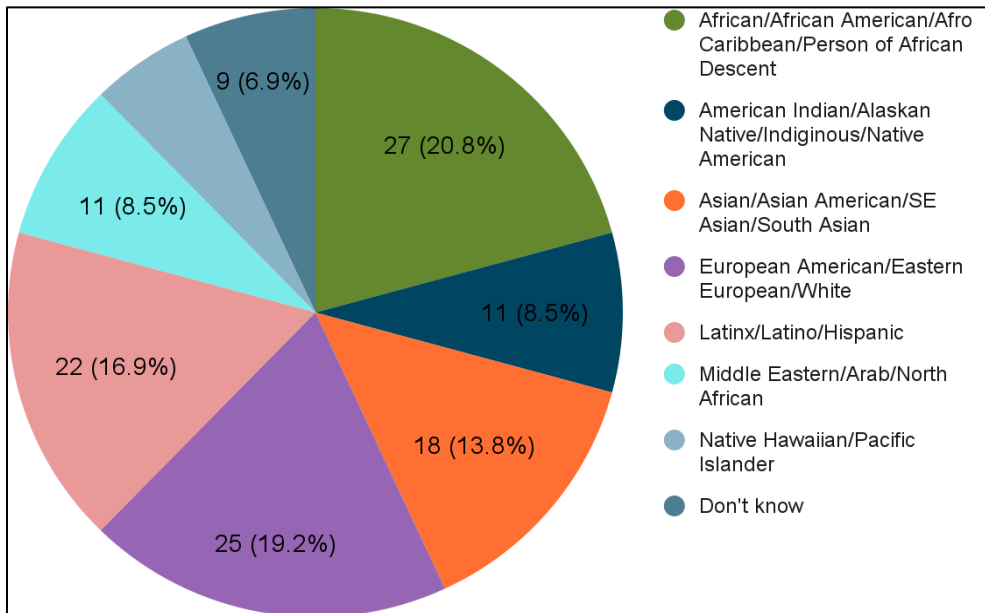
The chart below shows the number of respondents (out of 42), whether they have received funding, and if so, what was the cadence of grants historically.

History	Number of Respondents
Has not received funding	7
Received the first grant in the past three years	15
Has received funding for more than five years altogether	14
Has received multiple grants over the past five years	5
Other	1

e.) Demographic Information of Communities Served by LFF Grantseekers

Survey respondents could self-select multiple identities which are all represented in the chart below.

Racial and Ethnic Identity of Communities Served by LFF Grantseeker
Survey Respondents



In addition, 38 (90%) survey respondents reported having an office in the community they serve. Other demographic subcategories identified by survey respondents include:

- 15 (37%) serve immigrants and refugees
- 31 (74%) serve people with disabilities
- 29 (69%) serve LGBTQIA+ communities

There is further analysis on the demographics of LFF grantseekers in Section IV: Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion on page 30.

SECTION II: GRANTMAKING

Overwhelmingly, grantseekers had positive views of the grantmaking processes, from the LOI through to the final report. Most found the application process to be standard and easy to understand.

a.) Website Interface, CRM, and Use of Technology in the Grantmaking Process

“I like that all of the different grant programs are listed and that there is a description for each one that helps prospective organizations to discern which opportunities are more applicable.”

“There is enough information to do what I need to do on the website, but I would love to see more success stories of funded organizations, current trends in support, and the ways the Lumpkin Family Foundation is working with other foundations and organizations to help build a larger ecosystem of support.”

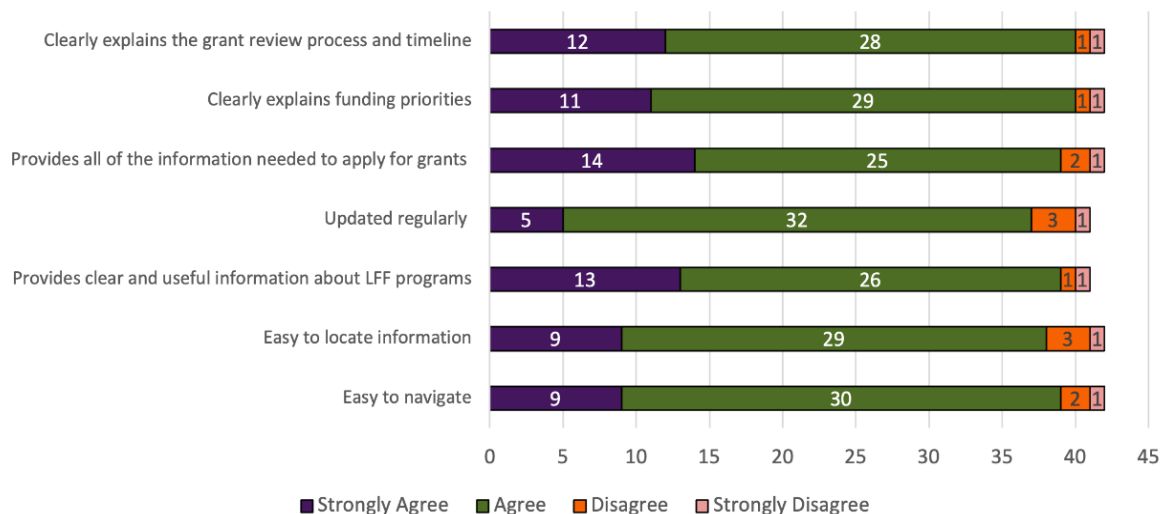
“The LFF website is attractive and succinct.”

“The description of the LOI and application process is thorough and easy to understand. For a first-time applicant, LFF made the process very easy!”

Website Interface

Questions specific to the navigation and usage of the LFF website were included in the 2024 assessment. The overwhelming majority of survey and interview feedback was positive. Twenty-two (52%) of the survey respondents either visited the website once or twice a year and seventeen (40%) visited once every few months. Only one respondent never visits the website and two visit the website more than once per month. The following chart outlines website questions that appeared on the survey and how people responded.

Survey Opinion on LFF Website



Of the eighteen interview participants, fifteen described the website as a good resource with useful information and descriptions and rated the navigability highly. Five organizations remarked that the website is beautiful and visually pleasing. The features that were most appreciated across both the surveys and interviews (mentioned by at least five participants) included:

- the FAQ section
- The lists of past grantees and the grant amount and purpose
- Easy to find deadlines and grant program descriptions
- Easy to find contact people and how to contact them

“The FAQ page is incredibly helpful and has great information like when to call a staff member, it is really robust.”

“I think it was all easily navigable and it was just generally informative and well laid out, easy to navigate.”

“I mean, I really like how they have contacts listed for the different programs, like Monique’s contact information specifically for our program. I think a lot of times you can end up spending so much time just not knowing who to call or exactly where to start if I have a question.”

There were some critical comments from both the survey respondents and the interview participants indicating that the website was not easy to navigate. Several commented that it was difficult to find the information about grant calendars and program descriptions, and three of the interview participants did not know there were lists of past grantees. One respondent thought that it took too many clicks to get information and another commented that the language about funding guidelines was too vague, making it difficult to understand if the grantseeker’s programs fit the guidelines. One respondent made the point that it is difficult to understand whether returning applicants must follow the same protocol as new applicants.

“It’s really hard for me to find what grants there are, when the deadlines are, how often they accept, if I’m just trying to go quickly through it [the website].”

“It would be nice to have all of the grant programs available as a submenu. With using the website so infrequently, I find myself clicking through submenus to find this and then having to go back to the home page to find the information. Where some of that critical information is located is not intuitive.”

Website Features

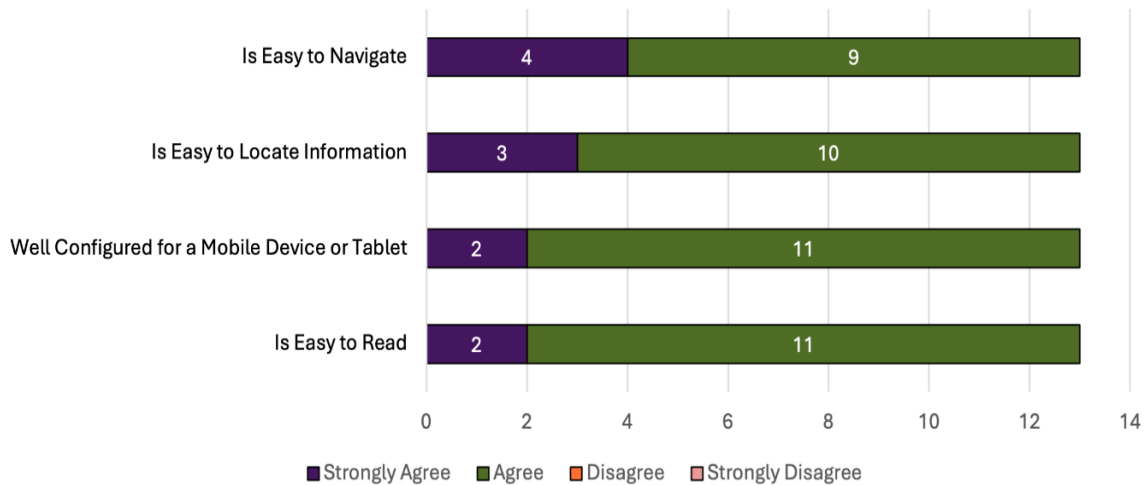
When asked to provide feedback on features and tools that the foundation should consider adding, **detailed reporting requirements** and **sample grant proposals** generated the most significant interest. The responses to the survey for this question varied from the 2020 assessment, the interest in articles and publications increased most significantly. In 2024, 41% of respondents indicated they would like to see the inclusion of articles/publications on the LFF website, while only 4% of 2020 survey respondents were interested.

Rate of Selection for Helpful Tools on Other Foundation Websites <i>(respondents could choose more than one)</i>		
	2020	2024
Annual Reports	33%	45%
Articles and Publications	4%	41%
Detailed Reporting Requirements	24%	60%
Events	17%	43%
HR Supports	-	2%
News and Resources	15%	50%
Sample Proposals	37%	60%

Accessing the Website via Smartphone or Tablet

Only thirteen (31%) survey respondents indicated that they used a smartphone or tablet to access the website. Of those thirteen, 100% of responders who did use a smartphone or tablet reported that they strongly agreed or agreed that the website was easy to navigate, well-configured to a table or mobile device, and easy to read.

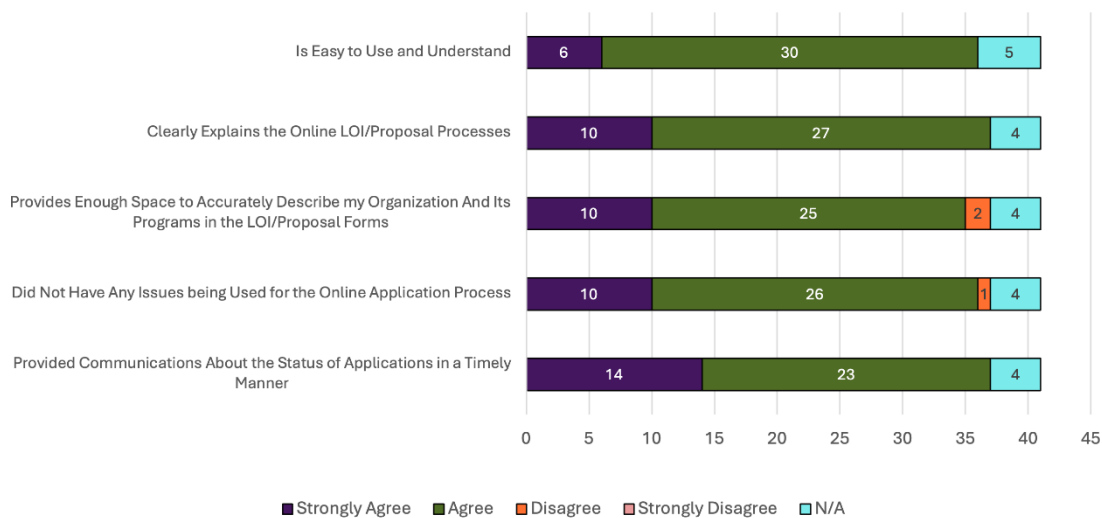
Survey Opinion on LFF Website on a Mobile Device / Tablet



Customer Relations Management System (CRM)

LFF uses CRM software developed especially for grantmakers, Foundant, which is used by many foundations. The overwhelming majority of respondents said that the CRM was standard and easy to use. Many mentioned using the same CRM for other foundations. In fact, thirty-six respondents selected the responses that LFF’s CRM is about the same or easier to use compared to other foundations, and the remaining five did not answer the question. Only two responders selected “disagree” about there being sufficient space to accurately describe their organization’s programs, and one disagreed with having no issues during the application process.

Survey Opinion on LFF CRM



Several people remarked that they appreciated the reminders the CRM sent them about due dates and that they could find historic records of previous proposals, reports, and other documents. Three people commented that they had to retype their board lists into their reports and could not just upload a document which was annoying to them. Two said that it would be nice if fields on proposal forms and reports could be pre-populated with the organization’s basic information and in some cases, fields related to their proposal.

b.) LOI Process and Application

“I found the process to be seamless.”

“The process and timeline were both reasonable.”

“We very much appreciate having an opportunity to connect with an LFF program officer before applying to ensure we are aligned and apply for the program(s) that are the best fit for our work. In the future, it would be helpful to have greater clarity about LFF’s policies and plans for funding organizations across multiple program areas before we prepare our LOI(s).”

“[LFF should] provide more clarity regarding how grants are scored.”

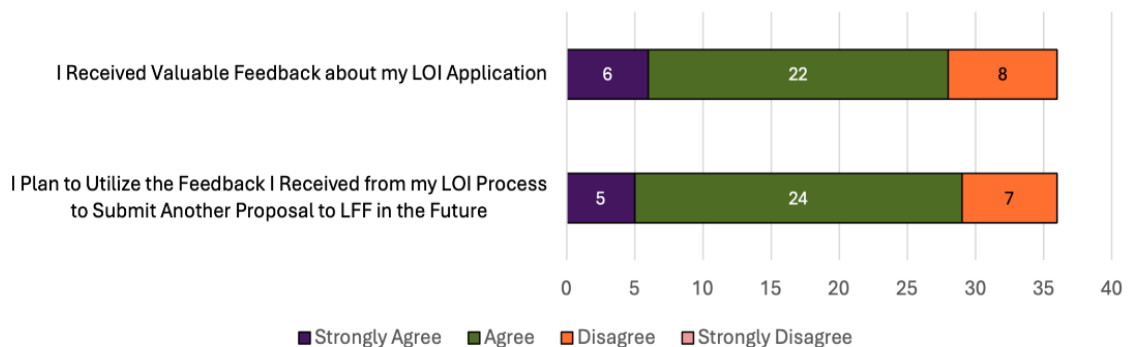
“I really appreciate their LOI, because it's really just like two or three paragraphs and then kind of a simple budget, from what I remember, and that's enough to paint the picture of what our ask is going to be.”

In 2024, both the LOI and the application were mostly viewed positively by grantseekers. Even organizations that ultimately did not receive funding had a generally positive experience with LFF’s grantmaking process. However, about 20% of the thirty-seven respondents who completed the LOI did not think they received valuable feedback, if any, about the LOI application.

“Our most recent LOI was declined, and since we were at that time an active grantee, we requested feedback. However, we did not receive a response to our email.”

Survey Opinion on LFF LOI Process

(37 Respondents Submitted an LOI)



Another issue that was mentioned multiple times was that the questions from the LOI and the application are somewhat repetitive, and a few respondents mentioned having to think of different ways to say the same thing.

“It felt like some of the answers almost felt somewhat repetitive, like there's some of the Questions were almost overlapped a little too much, where it caused me to write. I had to be really creative about not having a repetitive answer. So, if anything, I feel like I almost over-explained.”

“Between the LOI and grant application, I've found that some of the questions end up resulting in very similar answers.”

“The attachments: evaluation table, key steps, sometimes these add-on documents feel repetitive to the application, and other times some things for the grant don't quite fit into this matrix.”

Mostly, respondents found that the application process is reasonable and that the process was smooth. Telephone interviews and write-in survey responses also revealed positive perceptions of the LFF application

process. Most respondents commented that the process was seamless and that they would not change anything for the future.

“I’ve always appreciated both in the application process and in the reports that Lumpkin has very thoughtful questions, and they really force you to think about why you’re doing it, how you’re going to do it.”

Statement	2008		2011		2016		2020		2024	
	% Pos.	% Neg.	% Pos.	% Neg.	% Pos.	% Neg.	% Pos.	% Neg.	% Pos.	% Neg.
LFF has reasonable application requirements.	98.2	1.8	98.2	1.8	94.9	5.1	82.6	17.4	97.5	2.5
LFF communicated in a timely manner about the status of my pending LOI/grant proposal.	96.4	3.6	96.4	3.6	96.6	3.4	100	-	97.5	2.5
LFF made an effort to understand my LOI/grant proposal.	90.6	9.4	84.3	15.7	94.7	5.3	91.3	8.7	94.7	5.3

Positive responses to the statement **“LFF has reasonable application requirements”** have increased from 82.6% to 97.5% since the 2020 assessment while positive responses to the statement **“LFF communicated in a timely manner about the status of my pending LOI/grant proposal”** have decreased. Although, write-in questions in the survey revealed how the application process may be modified to better suit the nuances of particular organizations. For example, responses include:

“Formulating responses to current LOI and application questions may not yield the most important or timely or spontaneous responses. These may come through direct dialogue.”

“Being able to determine our own objectives and outcomes would be helpful, it is a lot to try and know which ones are the best for the program, as well as account for other metrics that might be valuable.”

“Provide more clarity regarding how grants are scored; update funding priorities to include explicit geographical restrictions and what that means.”

“Our general operating proposals seem to require specific program deliverables where typically those resources (that are absolutely critical to our success overall) fund things that are not as

flashy/fun to talk about. Seems like a bit of a disconnect between what's required in the proposals vs. what that funding actually funds.”

Pre-Submit Grant Review Process

A version of a pre-submit grant review process has been in place with the foundation since 2014. However, the option is only available to the Land, Health, Community program grantseekers. The pre-submit process is an opportunity for grantseekers to receive feedback from LFF staff on application materials prior to submitting a final proposal. The confidential feedback is not shared with the LFF board of trustees and has no bearing on the applicant’s formal grant review.

Ten survey respondents submitted their applications for a pre-submit grant review. This increase from 2020 is consistent with the increase in Land, Health, Community program grantseekers in the 2024 survey. Nearly all respondents agreed that the feedback provided to them was helpful, and all plan to utilize the service again in the future.

Statement	2016		2020		2024	
	% Positive	% Negative	% Positive	% Negative	% Positive	% Negative
I received valuable feedback about my grant application.	90.0	10.0	85.7	14.3	100.0	-
The feedback I received from LFF during the pre-submit grant review process was helpful.	84.2	15.8	100.0	-	50.0	50.0
I had enough time to make the recommended changes to my grant application.	89.5	10.5	100.0	-	100.0	-
I plan to utilize the pre-submit grant review process in the future.	100.0	-	100.0	-	100.0	-

Six of the interview participants have utilized the pre-submit option since 2021, and all said that they found the process useful and had made changes to their proposals based on the feedback they had received from LFF staff. Some of the interview answers were from staff that did not know if their organization had participated in the pre-submit process, though they all hoped they did.

“We received a small amount of feedback from Daniel Doyle, who was the program officer at the time, pretty quickly, after we submitted to him, and he did provide some good feedback, and we made those changes. I think he wanted a little bit more specificity on a couple of our answers to the application questions, so we were able to provide those clarifications in a quick timeframe, we submitted, and were awarded the grant.

Site Visits

“The discussion was thorough. LFF staff are well informed and genuinely interested in issues and projects being addressed.”

“The site visit was a great experience. Organizations in East Central Illinois are such a tight knit community, so staff really blended in during the site visit, which we really appreciated.”

“I enjoyed the casual conversation and the fact that we did not need to prepare a formal presentation to deliver.”

“The site visit went really well! Staff were very curious about the project, knowledgeable and asked really good questions. Staff seemed very authentic while very appreciative of our work. They met with our students and asked questions. They were really looking to learn more and wanted to be helpful.”

Applicant and grantee feedback about the Lumpkin Family Foundation’s site visit process was overwhelmingly positive. Of the forty-two full survey respondents, twenty-four received an LFF site visit. Fifteen were in-person visits and nine were video conferences; this distinction is introduced in the 2024 portion of the chart below. LFF’s site visits consistently met grantseeker expectations and is a valued part of the foundation’s grantmaking process. During interviews, grantseekers were specifically impressed with staff and committee members’ knowledge of their program and issues. Likewise, board members who attended site visits for Aspiramos Juntos received praise for their preparation and great questioning during the site visit.

Statement	2016		2020		2024 (in-person)		2024 (Video Conference)	
	% Pos.	% Neg.	% Pos.	% Neg.	% Pos.	% Neg.	% Pos.	% Neg.
I received adequate notice for the site visit	100	-	95.2	4.7	100.0	-	100.0	-
I knew in advance what to expect from the site visit.	92.3	7.7	76.2	23.8	93.3	6.7	77.8	22.2
The site visit met my expectations.	100	-	100	-	100.0	-	100.0	-
LFF staff and/or committee members were prepared for the meeting.	100	-	100	-				
LFF staff and/or committee members had a sufficient grasp of the issues to understand my organization.	100	-	95.2	4.7	93.3	6.7	100.0	-

Regarding video-conference site visits, only one question on this topic received negative feedback with about 22% of respondents indicating that they did not know what to expect from the site visit. In terms of in-person visits, around six percent of respondents indicated that they neither knew what to expect from the site visit nor felt that LFF staff/committee members had a sufficient grasp of their organization’s issues. Although, 100% of participants responded that the site visit met their expectations. There were some respondents that hosted an LFF site visit for the first-time and felt unprepared for some of the questioning. The most common suggestion was for LFF to provide an agenda prior to the site visit. Respondents also suggested a list of questions or topics that LFF representatives would like to discuss or see at the site visit in advance. These suggestions were prevalent in the 2020 survey and resurfaced in 2024.

Survey participants were asked what advice they would offer to nonprofits preparing for their first site visit with LFF. “Be prepared” was the most common piece of advice provided by respondents for applicants getting ready for their first site visit with the foundation. Specifically, one participant emphasized that it is “always good to work with your staff to prepare some stories to share with LFF to help make their investment in your work come to life.” Several respondents said that LFF staff asked a lot of good questions about the program. A few respondents also suggested that organizations should prepare any material that would help LFF staff to understand the program better in advance. However, most of the responses conveyed that prepared materials were unnecessary if the organization hosts were ready to give detailed information about the proposed program. There was one survey respondent who felt frustrated that they over-prepared, expecting tougher questions related to their funded program, and the site visit ended up being very casual. All the other respondents liked the casual nature of the site visit.

Post-Grant Reports

As mentioned previously, specific questions about reporting were added to the 2020 assessment and remained in the 2024 assessment. There was an option of “N/A or No Opinion” in this section, which only a few organizations chose. The 2020 survey question about metrics was removed from the 2024 survey. Reporting does not apply to organizations that did not receive funding, therefore five respondents answered as “N/A.”

Statement	2020		2024	
	% Positive	% Negative	% Positive	% Negative
LFF has reasonable reporting requirements.	78.6	17.9	85.3	14.7
LFF communicates reporting submission dates in a timely manner.	96.4	-	100	-
The reporting process is easy to navigate.	92.9	7.1	97.1	2.9
LFF staff was available to answer questions about reporting requirements.	82.1	-	100	-

**Five applicant respondents that did not receive funding skipped this set of questions*

For the most part, LFF's reporting process and requirements received positive remarks. Survey respondents felt that LFF staff and the system in place communicates when reports are due in a timely manner. During an interview, one organization pointed out that they received an electronic reminder from the CRM system and an email reminder from staff and was appreciative to have received such clear communication about reporting dates.

Several respondents and interview participants provided some alternatives to LFF's current reporting methods.

"A free form report has been a method we have enjoyed because it allows us to add photos and stories, as well as metrics. One thing we do not like about the LFF reporting process is that it asks many questions that we believe require similar answers, so we always feel a certain level of anxiety on whether we are providing the same information or enough unique information that the story is being told to LFFs satisfaction."

"Allow for discussion-based feedback in lieu of written narrative."

"While we are happy to continue to provide written reports, some of our other funders have replaced written narrative reports with a virtual meeting to share progress and achievements with program officers in a more interactive way."

"Many of our foundation supporters have moved away from formal reporting requirements in order to alleviate the administrative burden on their grantees."

The most positive comments were connected to grantseekers' ability to reach out to LFF staff to clarify questions, request an extension for reports, and to have general interaction with staff. This will be discussed further in the *Relationship with LFF Staff* section later in this report. The "Tell us a Story" section of the report was praised by one of the interviewed organizations. *"Some things can't measure impact more than what a story can tell you. I also liked how there was an opportunity to upload a video."*

SECTION III: LFF RELATIONS

The predominant majority of applicant and grantee organizations consider the Lumpkin Family Foundation to be accessible and responsive. The 2024 assessment yielded overwhelmingly positive perceptions of LFF staff's knowledge about issues in the community and their interactions with grantseekers, from being available to answer questions prior to submitting an LOI to staying in touch and present in and around the community, especially in the East Central Illinois area.

a.) Grantee Relationship with LFF Staff

“LFF is a wonderful organization that seeks to support many endeavors in our community. I work with numerous granting agencies and among them LFF is one I have a close rapport with. I know I can reach out to them at any time, ask questions, keep the lines of communication open, etc. They should feel proud knowing their grantees feel comfortable approaching them, not nervous or intimidated to approach them. I really do appreciate the approach LFF takes with its organizations.”

“We are excited to continue to build the relationship with LFF!”

To a significant extent, the survey and interview responses reflected positively on the foundation and LFF staff's relationship with grantseekers and the nonprofit community. During the phone interviews respondents also strongly praised LFF staff's accessibility and willingness to help when organizations were experiencing challenges. Even unfunded organizations generally viewed LFF staff favorably. In the chart on the following page, about ten to twenty percent of respondents responded that they had no opinion for various questions.

In large measure, organizations consider the foundation's staff to be accessible, responsive, and professional. However, although 100% of grantees and applicants said that they can contact LFF if they have questions or concerns, the number of respondents that believed that they have a good relationship with LFF decreased slightly from 2020.

The eighteen interviews yielded the following results:

- Fifteen (83%) responded that LFF staff is a good resource
- Fourteen (78%) thought that staff understands the issues their organizations face and two (11%) were unsure
- Sixteen (89%) felt that staff were fair and respectful
- Fourteen (72%) believed that LFF staff were helpful and responsive, two (11%) mentioned they had both positive and negative responses, and two (11%) answered negatively.

Two of the interview participants consistently replied negatively about their relationships with LFF, both of which have received multiple declines over the past few years. Both also said that they requested feedback on why they did not pass the LOI phase and never received a response from LFF staff.

"Because we're getting such good conversations from the foundation, it's hard to think of something else that would be of service to [us], I think they're doing a really good job."

In 2024, three respondents from each one of the three programs felt unfavorably about their relationship with LFF. The feedback given was that although LFF staff were very knowledgeable about the specific proposed program, there was a sense that staff did not always understand the broader, underlying issues that their communities face. When disaggregating the data for grantseekers *who did not receive funding* from the Lumpkin Family Foundation, there was very little variance in the overall positive perception of LFF staff and their organizations' relationships with the foundation.

"Staff is always available, welcoming, and helpful. They take the time to listen and try to provide solutions which may include financial, advice or a variety of other resources."

"We are new in partnership but are encouraged by the initiative and tangible support of our organization's mission."

As mentioned previously, there was very little unfavorable feedback about interactions with staff. Negative comments typically reflected the opinions of the individual, and often were related to unique circumstances. There were no indicated consistent complaints about grantseekers' relationships with LFF staff. Many organizations feel they have a strong relationship or that they are interested in continually building a deeper relationship with LFF.

b.) LFF's Relationship with the Greater Non-Profit Community

The Lumpkin Family Foundation has been deeply rooted in the East Central Illinois (ECI) region since its founding. This enduring presence is clearly reflected in the responses from survey and interview participants when discussing the Land, Health, Community program. Because LFF has a deep history in ECI, where there are also limited funding streams for climate-related agricultural support in the region, the Nature-Based Climate Action program also received positive comments about LFF's presence despite being a newer program:

"The Nature-Based Climate Action program is the only foundation grant focused on climate mitigation and adaptation in East Central Illinois and the state as a whole. This program is innovative and already generating massive impact."

While the Aspiramos Juntos program has been operating in Chicago since 2015, grantseekers had a more ambiguous understanding of LFF's presence in the community of nonprofits in Chicago. Outside of their own funding, none of the Aspiramos Juntos organizations that were interviewed considered LFF to have a strong footprint in the Chicago-area community.

[in response to being asked if LFF has a strong presence in Chicago] *"I think in the food space, yes, outside of that, probably not. Chicago is super crowded, and I don't necessarily see them as a major player. I do see their name around periodically - a couple of our partner nonprofits are funded by Lumpkin. There's a lot of momentum in the food regenerative, ag space. There's the Chicago Region*

Food Systems Fund which has the ability to bring people together, and I assume Lumpkin is involved.”

“I do not think they have a prominent presence. I’m happy to know LFF, but I definitely found them through deep research.”

Aspiramos Juntos grantseekers offered various opinions on how LFF could boost its visibility and engagement in Chicago:

- Partner with other foundations and join affinity groups
- Convene organizations for educational opportunities, networking, and collaborative problem-solving opportunities
- Participate in groups like Forefront and other philanthropic membership organizations
- Sponsoring events
- Host an annual event

Comparatively, respondents from the Land, Health, Community program expressed that LFF and its staff are often present at community events, program sponsorship, and other external presentations.

“Lumpkin is very well-known in this region. Everyone has really positive things to say about the foundation”

“LFF is a great foundation to work with and they do really care about our community and organizations like mine.”

There was one Land, Health, Community interviewee that expressed that LFF used to be more present in ECI than currently.

“They used to do a lot more networking, and they used to host more events. They haven't done things like that for a while. Those were helpful and would probably be well received and be helpful to all of us.”

When asked about LFF’s responsiveness to changing needs and emerging issues, survey and interview participants primarily responded positively, although a few said they did not know. The following are responses from Land, Health, Community, and the Nature-Based Climate Action Program:

“LFF has responded to changing needs. They have changed their mission since they started. Since 2016, the bridge between LFF and the community has been growing.”

“Look at what LFF has done during the pandemic – they were very responsive to emergency-directed needs.”

“Great organization to work with and they do really care about our community and organizations like mine.”

Below are some comments about LFF responsiveness to changing needs and emerging issues from Aspiramos Juntos Grantseekers:

“LFF was really responsive and asked if we needed any help when COVID hit.”

“I think the foundation does a good job. They understand the intersection of different issues like race, poverty, and access, which is really important to the field.”

“Things have shifted within the organization; they have been very level-headed and nimble about changes in the community. They are also open to hearing how organizations are changing to be more responsive and effective.”

c.) LFF’s Connection to its Mission

In 2020, a question was included about whether and to what extent the foundation is fulfilling its mission with its grantmaking and in the communities it serves. For the 2024 assessment, this portion of questions were divided into two sections depending on the geographic location of organizations of East Central Illinois and the Metro Chicago Area. A large majority of survey respondents believed that the foundation is creating long-lasting improvements in its four mission themes:

- Preserving and Protecting the Natural Environment
- Promoting Human Health by Encouraging Physical Activity and Healthy Eating
- Supporting a Strong Local Food and Agricultural Economy
- Fostering Collaboration Among People and Organizations through Strategic Community Leadership

In response to the question of whether LFF has created long-lasting improvement in at least one of their mission areas, twenty-four survey respondents answered that LFF had indeed created sustainable improvements in at least one of their mission areas and sixteen stated that they did not know. Survey respondents were asked to provide advice on how LFF could improve in any of these areas to fulfill its mission. There were only two responses from Aspiramos Juntos grantseekers. However, interview participants from both programs offered similar ideas. The comments for both the East Central Illinois and Chicago impact locations can be sorted into four categories:

1. Expand support/focus areas:

“Expanding the focus areas for grants in addition to local foods. Expand to more generalized nonprofit capacity building/ professional development opportunities. Perhaps, hosting a nonprofit conference for the region including training on grant writing, fundraising, best practices governance for both board and staff.”

2. Build relationships between organizations:

“Look for or contract with individuals or organizations in the East Central Illinois area to help find unique and diverse but impactful projects to fund.”

“Continuing to partner with other organizations, building deeper relationships with grantees, and just keep doing the good work you are doing:)”

“We always welcome the opportunity to connect with other LFF grantees or with other family foundations LFF works with.”

3. Build relationships between organizations and their communities (foster community engagement):

“Long-term, sustained relationship building is key to behavior change. Lumpkin Family Foundation could sponsor or support funding for community organizing, networking events, and community-based meals, focus groups, and celebrations, if they do not already.”

“Help provide more opportunities for young people and do more to engage them in constructively creating change in their communities.”

4. Demonstrate better communication and marketing:

“Better communications about what programs have been supported.”

“LFF does not do a lot of marketing, and I think it could reach others who carry similar interests, either by joining in efforts or applying for funding.”

The online survey also asked respondents to select the most useful services and programs that the Lumpkin Family Foundation could provide for their organization. Just as in the 2016 and 2020 assessment, **best practices and lessons learned from other grantees** generated the most interest. Two new services, **HR and legal supports on retainer** and **connection and networking** had the least interest. Despite networking being a common topic mentioned in open-ended responses. Write-in responses for this question in the survey were requested. The comments below were reiterated in the phone interviews several times:

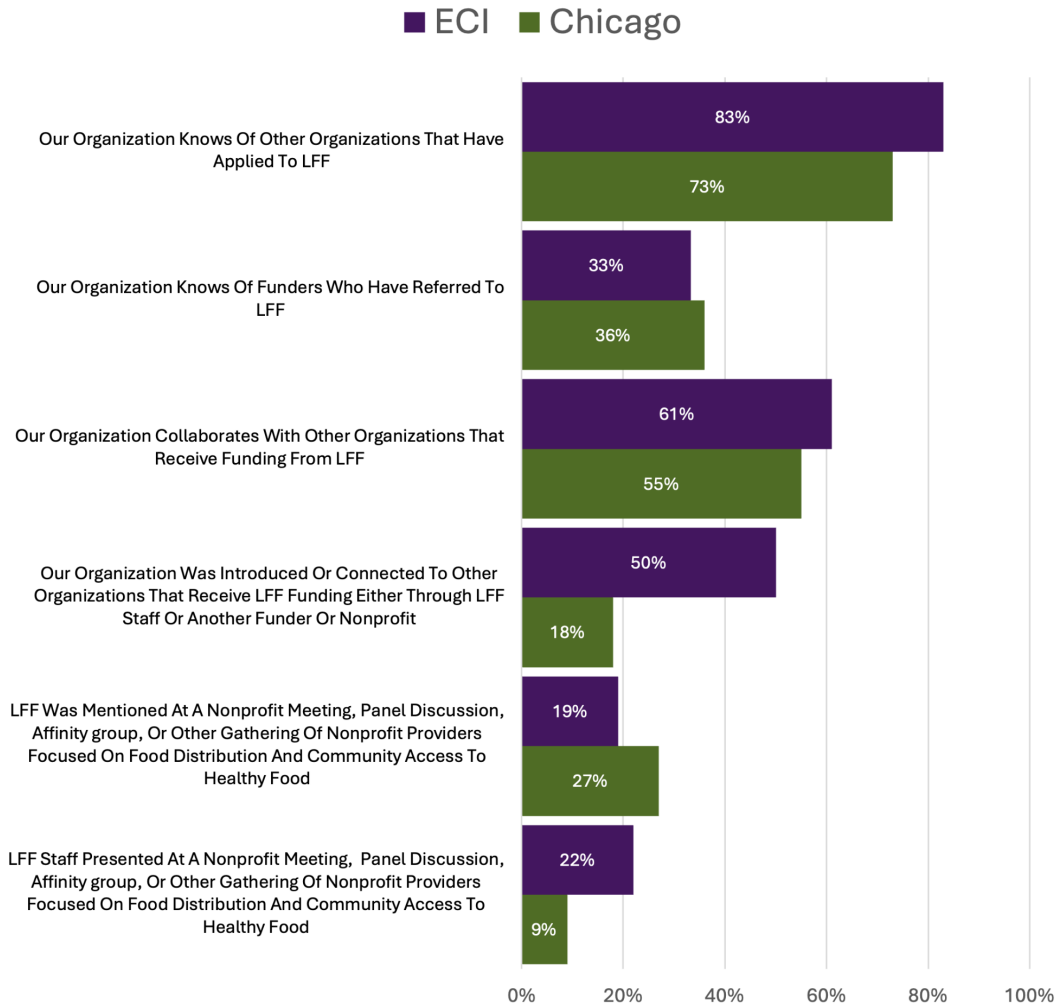
HR and legal supports on retainer	2.5%
Technical assistance developing metrics for grant evaluation purposes	27.5%
A check-in phone call from LFF staff during the grant term	32.5%
Best practices and lessons learned from other grantees	65.0%
Connection and networking	5.0%

SECTION IV: PROGRAM IMPACT

The 2024 assessment includes a section for grantseekers to offer feedback on LFF’s impact that is tailored to the two geographic areas of focus: East Central Illinois and Chicago. Because the two regions are very different in terms of LFF’s historic presence, number of available funding streams available to them, the issues they face, and the communities they serve, some of the questions addressed issues pertinent to each geography’s respective situations.

The following chart outlines a comparison of the views of LFF impact in each geography’s respective area by survey respondents.

LFF's Footprint in East Central Illinois (ECI) vs. Chicago



While there are some discrepancies among the responses of the two regions, the responses are more similar than dissimilar, indicating a shift in perception of the foundation's presence in the Chicago area since 2020. The most significant inconsistency is the question about whether grantseekers had ever been introduced or connected to other organizations that are funded by LFF. As was mentioned in the previous section on LFF's relations with grantseeker communities, respondents from both geographies expressed more chances to be connected to other organizations, but those in Chicago mentioned wanting opportunities to collaborate more.

During the interviews, grantseekers from all three grant programs were asked how LFF could provide assistance beyond grantmaking and all but one interview participant offered ideas which included:

- Introduction to other funders (mentioned four times)
- providing opportunities to network, share, and learn from each other (mentioned six times)
- Providing professional development opportunities for grantees
- Providing DEI training and connect organizations in the same sector that share concerns
- Convene other funders to promote the work LFF does
- Convene organizations to work collaboratively (mentioned twice)
- Have skilled people on retainer for grantees to access such as legal or HR
- Have Q & A sessions for potential grantees

Land, Health, Community and Nature-Based Climate Action Program – East Central Illinois

Land, Health, Community is the Foundation's primary and largest grantmaking program focused on promoting: a strong, local food system and agricultural economy; healthy lifestyles, healthy eating, and overall wellbeing; strong leaders in the region; and to conserve and protect the natural environment. In 2020, Nature-Based Climate Action Program, LFF's other ECI-focused grant program, was launched. Per LFF's website, a minimum of 50% of the foundation's annual funds are directed to projects in East Central Illinois. Nature-Based Climate Action Program is described by LFF as *"a program to demonstrate and promote tree planting, prairie restoration, and other nature-based solutions to climate mitigation in rural areas."*

Survey respondents were asked their opinion on what impact LFF's grantmaking has had in Central Illinois. This was an open-ended question that was answered by fourteen out of twenty-seven (52%) respondents across the two ECI grant programs. Of those, two did not receive grants and did not answer. The other twelve all made very positive statements about LFF's legacy in ECI.

"Their impact is HUGE. It is calling the attention to other grantees to invest more in our low-wage community."

"We know that many of the organizations funded through LFFs grantmaking, including our own, are putting the dollars to use in meaningful ways that are advancing the issues behind these programs."

“Thanks to the Lumpkin Family Foundation, East-Central Illinois has seen the expansion of regenerative agriculture adoption, education, and research.”

“As a non-profit I network with many others in my community. I know of their mission, goals, objectives, but also their struggles. Without funding from LFF, I know many of their projects would not come to fruition. I KNOW LFF has supported these endeavors, but LFF does not really broadcast all of their amazing efforts.”

The survey had a multiple-choice section that asked specific questions about LFF’s impact in ECI. This section included the options of “unsure” or “No opinion” which is recorded as “neutral” in the following chart showing the responses from twenty-nine Land, health, Community and Nature-Based Climate Action Program together.

Question	% Pos.	% Neg.	Neutral
LFF’s grant programs have had a positive impact on its grantee organizations and the communities they serve.	67%	3%	30%
LFF’s grant programs have collectively impacted access to healthy foods across multiple communities.	41%	3%	56%
LFF’s grant programs have had an impact on food distribution, climate action, and/or health and wellness in East Central Illinois.	17%	3%	80%
LFF’s grant programs have helped inform policy or systemic changes.	45%	0%	55%

ECI grantseekers were then asked the open-ended question of whether they knew of other ways that LFF had made an impact in healthy food accessibility or community members’ health and well-being, either intentionally or unintentionally. Four people answered “yes” and specified the following:

- LFF invests in the wellbeing of farm workers as workers regardless of immigration status.
- Sustainable and regenerative agriculture funded by LFF has very wide ripple effects into rural communities.
- LFF supports accessibility in communities allowing greater access to healthy food and preventing food deserts.
- LFF promotes trails, outdoor access, and ecological services via protected natural spaces.

Participants from ECI were asked if they had any suggestions for how LFF could have a greater impact in ECI. Of the twenty-nine participants, four remarked that LFF is doing a great job and does not need to change anything, eighteen either did not have recommendations or did not answer.

“Perhaps by expanding its support to include programs and projects that aim to reduce the use of single-use plastics, or that offer support for programs and projects to assist residents and businesses to participate in food scrap collection for composting, or that offer support for providing convenient options for recycling of materials (such as glass bottles/glass containers, textiles, mattresses to residents and businesses in East Central Illinois.”

“We have noticed that funding in recent years has gone to organizations that generally work outside of East Central Illinois but are dropping in to do one program with LFF funding here. We don't often see those organizations come back to continue building relationships with this region and those in the region, which we feel like an important piece in deepening impact in a community. While we don't know the best way to address this, perhaps there is some way to ask what the long- term plans are for engaging with East Central Illinois during the application process?”

“Long-term, sustained relationship building is key to behavior change. Lumpkin Family Foundation could sponsor or support funding for community organizing, networking events, and community-based meals, focus groups, and celebrations, if they do not already.”

“Helping organizations to retain program staff.”

“Help provide more opportunities for young people and do more to engage them in constructively creating change in their communities.”

“Expanding the focus areas for grants in addition to local foods. Expand to more generalized nonprofit capacity building/ professional development opportunities. Perhaps, hosting a nonprofit conference for the region including trainings on grant writing, fundraising, best practices governance for both board and staff.”

“LFF does not do a lot of marketing, and I think it could reach others who carry similar interests, either by joining in efforts or applying for funding. While I value the mission LFF has, there are a lot of wonderful efforts happening in east central Illinois that LFF could become involved with but that are not necessarily grant based. I think that is the only way to depend its organization's impact is to connect with other organizations on another level (not necessarily as donors), but to be present and immerse themselves more in the community they are impacting.”

Finally, here are some responses from interview participants on what are the most pressing issues facing East Central Illinois.

- Farmland protection efforts from mass land consolidation, specifically protection of small farmers
- Resources for undocumented farmworkers
- Climate change and intense flooding
- Not enough economic development, either from the private or public sector
- Agriculture pollution, herbicide drift

Aspiramos Juntos – Greater Chicago Area

Aspiramos Juntos (We Hope Together) is a grantmaking program offered to organizations in the Chicago region. Its goals are to support communities that are physically active, value healthy eating, and prioritize overall wellbeing. LFF also commits to funding communities that have faced and continue to face inequitable and unjust policies, laws, and practices, all of which can thrive, with the resources needed to realize their full potential.

Aspiramos Juntos grantseekers were also asked what impact LFF’s grantmaking has had in the Chicago area. This section included the options of “unsure” or “No opinion” which is recorded as “neutral” in the following chart, which shows the responses from twelve or the thirteen Aspiramos Juntos grantseekers as one did not complete this section.

Question	% Pos.	% Neg.	Neutral
LFF’s Chicago grant programs have had a positive impact on its grantee organizations and the communities they serve	75%	0%	25%
LFF’s Chicago grant programs have collectively impacted access to healthy foods, health, and wellness across multiple communities.	75%	0%	25%
LFF’s Chicago grant programs have had an impact on food distribution, health, and wellness in the Chicago region beyond their own grantees.	50%	0%	50%
LFF’s grant programs have helped inform policy or systemic changes.	25%	0%	75%

Aspiramos Juntos grantseekers were asked open-ended questions about LFF’s footprint in the Chicago area. Eight answered very positively giving detailed examples of the significance of LFF’s grantmaking in Chicago. Three organizations responded that they did not know the impact LFF has made, and one organization expressed dismay that they work on the far south side and that LFF seems to only fund on the west side. Below are some examples of the affirming comments.

“Austin Fresh seems to have had a very strong impact on that community”

“The Foundation’s impact has been significant. Their funding has allowed grassroots food systems to operate and have impact at a much higher scale, while remaining grassroots models and efforts. We especially appreciate that the Foundation supports grassroots efforts in ways that enable them to become more effective and sustainable, without the expectation that they move beyond a grassroots model.”

“LFF is supportive to organizations who do not always receive attention or support.”

“We are grateful for the impact the grantmaking has had not only for our programming but also for all of our peers working in community sustainability. These programs are all doing vital work in communities and an ecology facing complex issues.”

“The Foundation has had a significant impact on the development of urban agriculture and local food systems work in Chicago, specifically in south and west side communities.”

“LFF thoughtfully chooses organizations that make real impacts in Chicago, and their focus areas are all interconnected, creating a deeper impact than the sum of their grantees’ parts.”

When asked how LFF could have a greater impact in Chicago, only two respondents answered, perhaps because several offered suggestions on this topic voluntarily in Section II.

“We always welcome the opportunity to connect with other LFF grantees or with other family foundations LFF works with.”

This may be an issue of communication rather than actual impact; if an organization is not a current grantee, how would they hear about impact? I don't believe I've ever seen LFF at industry events which would be one suggestion to improve.”

During the interviews, Aspiramos Juntos grantseekers were asked if they thought LFF has made an impact beyond its grantmaking, and all the respondents either answered “no” or said that they did not know.

SECTION V: DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION

The Lumpkin Family Foundation values community and collaboration, supporting efforts to build healthy, sustainable communities across Illinois. By fostering collaboration among people and organizations through strategic community leadership, LFF works to preserve and protect the natural environment, promote human health, and support a strong local food and agriculture economy.

A commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) is critical to their work, as their dynamic mission areas require a collective effort that includes perspectives of all identities and community members. To further integrate DEI into their operations, a new section of questions related to DEI has been added to the 2024 assessment.

LFF defines DEI as the following in both the written survey and interviews:

Organizational frameworks designed to promote the fair treatment and full participation of all people, particularly any group of people who have been historically under-represented or discriminated against based on their identity or ability.

DEI in Rural Communities Versus Urban

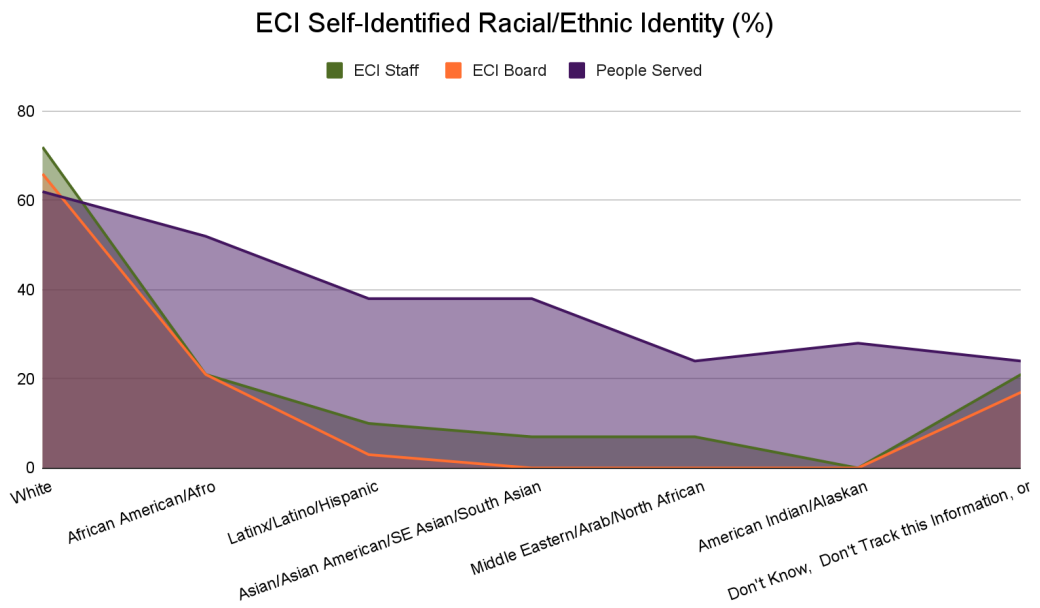
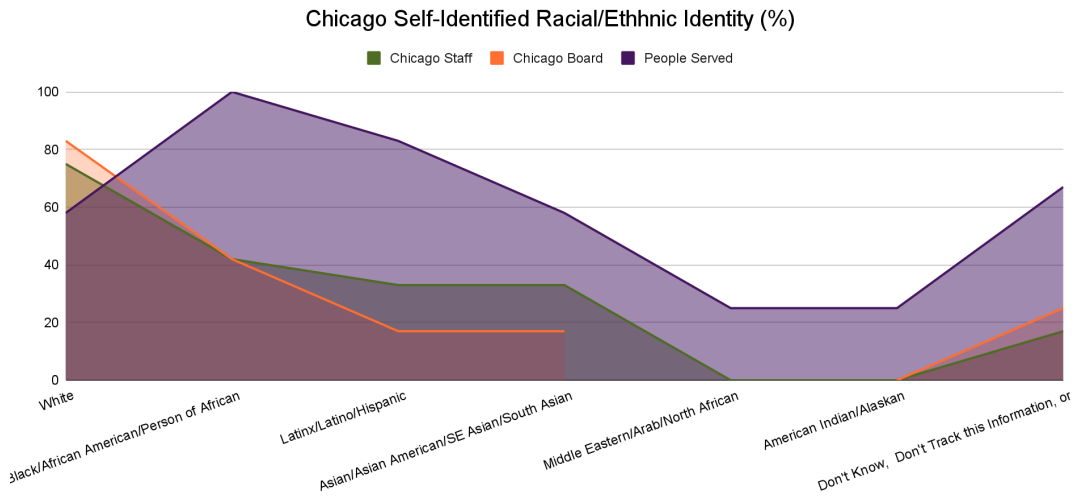
LFF funds in two separate geographic areas in Illinois: the Chicago area, one of the largest and most racially, ethnically, socio-economically diverse cities in the country, and East Central Illinois, a largely rural region except for the Champaign-Urbana area, home to the University of Illinois' main-campus which is an international destination for higher education. In the Chicago area, DEI frameworks and training are extremely important to many organizations and expected by a lot of funders. DEI frameworks tend to focus heavily on racial and ethnic diversity due to the city's multicultural population. Nonprofits in Chicago may have greater access to diverse board candidates and robust DEI resources, allowing them to more actively address racial and ethnic inequalities in leadership. However, in rural regions, where populations are generally less racially diverse, DEI efforts may look different. In these communities, the focus may shift toward other dimensions of diversity, such as socioeconomic background, gender geographic representation, or educational attainment. Despite these differences, both urban and rural organizations recognize the importance of equity in leadership, understanding that increasing diversity on boards—whether racial or otherwise—is essential for building trust and ensuring that decision-making reflects the communities they serve.

Racial and Ethnic Diversity Among Grantseekers' Staff and Board:

The survey assessment asked respondents to separately choose how most of their board and staff would identify themselves, with the ability to choose more than one answer for each question. Five respondents did not know the identities of their staff (13%) and seven respondents did not know the identities of their board (18%). One respondent mentioned they could not provide this information as they did not collect this data.

The charts presented on the next page show the difference in the respondents' identified board and staff ethnic and racial identities, superimposed with the people they serve. They also provide a comparison of the racial and ethnic identities in ECI and the Chicago area. The numbers are listed as a percentage of the entire group (twenty-nine in ECI and twelve in Chicago, as one organization did not answer these questions.)

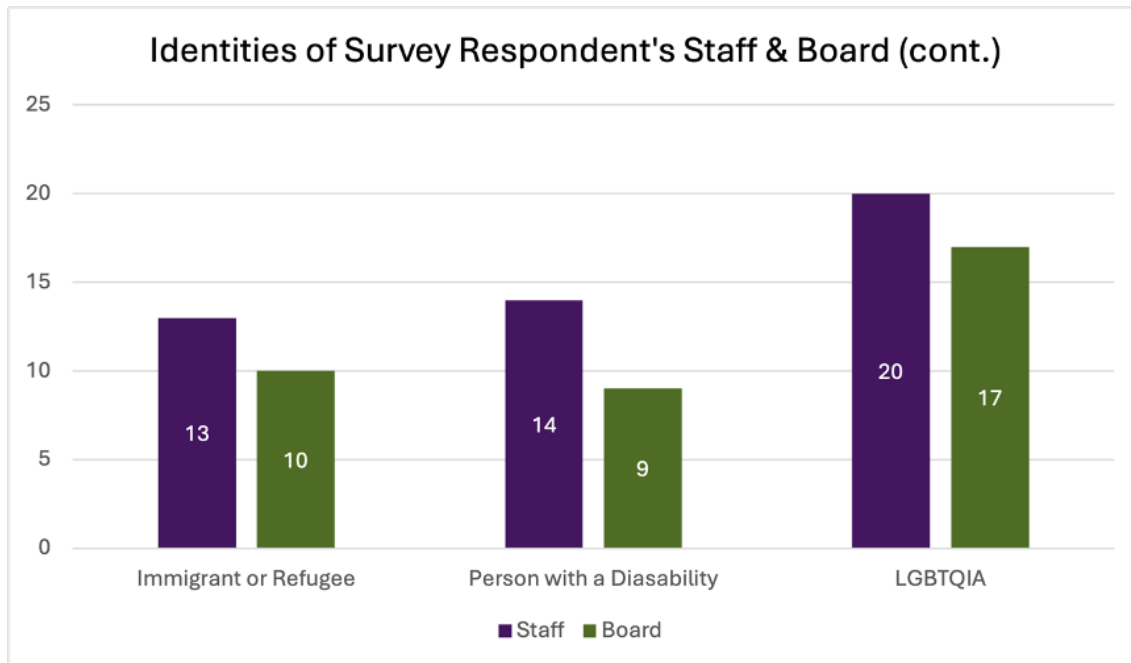
More respondents' staff and board identify as European American/ Eastern European/ White than any other identity and it is the only demographic on both charts where both the board and staff outnumber the identities of the people served. It is important to point out that seven ECI respondents selected all the demographics when referring to the people served by their organizations, although the question specified to select the identities that represent how the majority people they serve would self-identify. In other words, the purple area of the ECI chart is more likely aligned with the staff and board. This is likely because quite a few ECI grantseekers do not provide direct services to people, instead focusing on environmental conservation and climate change mitigation, which do positively impact everyone.



Survey responses and phone interviews made it clear that DEI throughout Illinois varies greatly. The chart below demonstrates other identities of the board and staff of all three programs combined: *Immigrant or Refugee*, *a Person with a Disability*, or *LGBTQIA*. A few responses emphasized that racial and ethnic diversity is often small and limited in Central Illinois communities. They suggested focusing on other ways that communities display diversity, such as socioeconomic diversity. Other identities present in survey respondent’s staff and board include:

- Gender
- Age (young adults or seniors)
- Various education levels
- Veterans
- SNAP recipients
- Rural residents

The following chart shows the number of organizations that have at least one staff or board member in each category.



Recognizing and Instituting Organizational Changes to Become More Diverse, Equitable, and Inclusive:

In the written survey, thirty-five organizations responded that their leadership believes that DEI policies and training are necessary at their organization (90%), while all interview participants stated that their organization considers DEI to be important. Thirty survey respondents (77%) have already implemented changes within their organization to become more diverse, equitable, and inclusive.

Many implemented changes to address the lack of diversity within their organization's staff and board through updated hiring practices and policies. The following strategies have been employed by survey respondents to increase DEI practices.

"Hiring minority contractors and targeting communities of color for program implementation."

"We make a conscious effort when hiring to post on diverse job boards as well as traditional boards to broaden the candidate pool."

"Hiring from the low-wage community that we are serving."

Interview participants reiterated similar ideas; many of their organization's boards have undergone changes in the last couple years to become more diverse and better reflect their community's identities. Although this process can be time consuming and resource heavy, board members and staff are often established in an organization. Therefore, staff and board changes take time and often happen gradually.

Additionally, one interview participant explained how DEI principles have always been rooted in their organization's "DNA," yet their mission and vision was only recently updated to explicitly address DEI. Similarly, another respondent stated, "We recently went through a five-month strategic planning process. The process was informed by over 300 members of our community, and we ultimately reevaluated our mission, vision, programs, and policies to ensure they were rooted in values of diversity, equity, and inclusion, as well as other values that we hold as an organization." These re-evaluations of frameworks along with changes in organizational structure, training, and programming were mentioned by multiple respondents and interview participants.

SECTION VI: RECOMMENDATIONS

There were three overarching themes that stuck out to us during this project:

- First and foremost, LFF should be as explicit as possible, providing precise information about its goals, transparency about its processes, and any other insight that might better equip a grantseeker for a successful submission and be prepared for what to expect over the course of the grant year. Similarly, the appeal for authentic and detailed information about LOI or proposal declines was also evident.
- Secondly, more streamlining was desired in the grantmaking processes – eliminating redundancies, reducing writing requirements, and allowing for more flexibility in applications and reports.
- Last of all, grantseekers expressed gratitude for the positive relationship they had with LFF staff and board members. In this case, there is no recommendation for change; however, IKA feels it is important to emphasize the appreciation and value that grantseekers expressed about the relationships they have developed with LFF staff as this was a prevalent theme. A substantial majority of survey respondents and interview participants commented on the appreciation they had for the staff’s responsiveness and the understanding of the issues facing the organizations and the goals and objectives of their programs. Grantseekers were equally appreciative of the impact that LFF has had on their grantees and the communities they serve.

Application Process and Website

Overall, the following are some areas the foundation could consider that would increase navigability and usefulness of the website.

- 1) ***Eliminate the “for Grant Seekers” and “For Community” sections.*** The information provided by both sections is useful for anyone with an interest in LFF’s grant programs, news and updates, initiatives, partnerships, and insights learned from its work. Dividing the website into two sections intuitively seems like it would make navigating the website easier for grantseekers, with a direct path to information specifically for them. However, some grantseekers had trouble finding the information pertaining to them. A few grantseekers mentioned that the green bar on the homepage that has the “For Grant Seekers” and “For Community” links are not clearly links at all. At first glance, the bar looks like a title bar and the content links should appear below. A simple solution to this issue is to add a “click here” button to access the links with the grant application guidelines and processes.
- 2) ***Update the main menu.*** Related to the above recommendation, LFF could update its main menu options to create clear paths to finding the information a grantseeker or community member may want to see. LFF could add a “Grant Programs” tab with a sub link for each grant program. The list of current and past grantees should also be easily found on the main menu as this feature was highly valued among participants. “Past Grantees” could either have its own sub-menu page under Grant Programs, or there could be an easily-seen “click here to see past grantees” link near the top of each grant program sub-page to an anchor link where the list is located.
- 3) ***Include more specific and explicit information about the foundation’s grantmaking goals and objectives.*** The main reason grantseekers visit the website is to see if their organizations are eligible to apply and whether their programs are a strong fit for LFF. Grantees visit the website mostly for due dates, accessing forms, and getting updates, or to learn how to make their existing grant programs more aligned with the

foundation's goals. This is the reason why the FAQ section and lists of past grantees are consistently mentioned as valuable. While the website's grant category descriptions are currently full of valuable information, here are some additional recommendations of how to further enhance communication of LFF's priorities through the website.

- a.) **Add a mission and vision statement under the "About" section.** While this information can be found peppered throughout the website, it should be up-front and easily discoverable. (The Land, Health, Community program, for example, has a beautiful theory of change – does LFF have an over-all theory of change that could be shared?)
- b.) **Add funding limitations into funding guidelines.** In addition to eligibility requirements, it can be helpful to have a list of what a foundation *will not* fund. In addition to examples of programs that are of interest, LFF could give examples of programs that are not of interest to eliminate unwanted applications. This is especially helpful for when a foundation is repeatedly receiving a specific type of request that is not really in the foundation's wheelhouse.
- c.) **Provide application assistance.** This could include resources such as tip sheets, application checklists, or metrics.
- d.) **Provide transparency about the foundation's selection processes.** Applicants expressed a desire to better understand how decisions are made.

4) **Share more news and updates.** Grantseekers are genuinely interested in the foundation's activities and would like to know more about what LFF is doing beyond grantmaking. This would also help them better understand LFF's "footprint" or impact as well as give another peek into what goes on "behind the scenes."

5) **Streamline the application and reporting processes In Foundant.** For example, make it possible for all required lists, budgets, and accompanying documents to be uploaded. Eliminate redundant questions and add more checklists and multiple-choice questions. To the extent possible, fields which will be repeated throughout the year should be pre-populated, so grantees do not have to write their basic organizational information or answer similar questions from the LOI to the proposal to the final report.

Pre-Submit Grant Review Process

This is a valuable tool that is highly valuable to grantseekers, and ideally, LFF could consider expanding the opportunity beyond Land, health, Community. Because this is a staff-intensive initiative, LFF could consider making this an option for first-time applicants to all grant programs that have made it past the LOI phase.

Application Process & Reporting Requirements

1) **Streamline the process for renewal applicants and define what is expected of them.** For example, renewal grantees (those requesting a subsequent grant for a *currently funded* program) could skip the LOI process altogether. Renewal applicants could have a proposal form tailored to them, focused on what a second grant would accomplish, and outlining any major changes to their currently funded program. Some newer grantees were unclear about whether there is a separate process for a subsequent grant, whether they should request funds for the same program, if it is typical for renewal applicants to increase their grant requests, or whether they should even reapply.

2) ***Eliminate Superfluous questions.*** In determining which questions can be removed, it may be beneficial for the staff and the board to have a conversation to ensure there is consensus about what information is truly needed and adjust the forms, so all questions are direct and purposeful.

3) ***Combine the report form and the renewal proposal form.*** This eliminates one entire form and makes it easier for LFF staff to review proposals, as all the information is in one document. The form can be divided into two sections: a report section where questions are asked about the results of the current grant program, and a proposal section inquiring about how LFF funds would be used to continue to support or enhance the current funded program.

4) ***Consider eliminating the report form altogether and replacing it with a 20 – 30-minute video conference.*** In conducting the interviews for this report, IKA has learned how easy and efficient it is to use an ai tool to transcribe video conferences. In addition, speaking with grantees builds relationships; gives LFF staff a much clearer understanding of its grantees' activities, accomplishments, and challenges; allows LFF staff to speak to multiple people at once such as leadership and program staff, in addition to development staff, garnering different perspectives; it greatly reduces the demand on grantees as writing a report can take hours; and will save LFF staff time because a good ai program will summarize the conversation and make transcripts downloadable.

Site Visits

LFF grantseekers overwhelmingly enjoyed site visits as they build relationships, give applicants a chance to explain and show what they do, and gives the foundation a much clearer picture of the organization. The only recommendation for site visits is to decrease anxiety by explaining what to expect beforehand. This can be as simple as telling the organization that they do not have to prepare anything and to expect a casual conversation. It also helps to let them know that the answers to any questions they can't answer in the moment can be provided to LFF later. Another recommendation is to let organizations know who will be attending the meeting ahead of time as some participants were unsure with whom they would be meeting. Regardless of the unknowns, all comments about site visits were positive.

LFF Relationships and Community Impact and Engagement

In the 2020 report, it was recommended that LFF should work towards a stronger presence in the Chicago area. In addition to staff site visits, a recommendation was made to deepen its relationships and visibility in the Chicago area. While there has been a lot of progress made in the past four years and LFF is becoming more recognizable in the Chicago funding community, there are various ways that LFF could be more involved and visible. The following methods were more evident in the ECI area due to LFF's long-standing presence in the region but were still solicited.

1) ***Convene grantees for networking, learning from each other, and collaborative problem-solving.*** This was the number one request from the Aspiramos Juntos grantees. This is a staff-intensive undertaking for a foundation but can be quite valuable for all involved. With the availability of video conferencing, it is also much easier to plan. In addition, LFF's Chicago investments in urban agriculture, food distribution, and food education are underfunded issues that are extremely important. There is an opportunity for LFF to become a foundation leader in these fields and there seems to be an existing and eager tight-knit community of nonprofit organizations in Chicago that work in these areas. ECI organizations also expressed considerable interest in being provided with opportunities to connect to each other.

2) ***Be more visibly involved in Philanthropy Groups, Affinity Groups, and Cross-Sector Collaboration Initiatives.***

LFF may already do this, but it seems that grantseekers are not broadly aware of what LFF does to advance its mission in addition to making grants. As several grantseekers pointed out, this could be a “marketing” issue in that it is not a priority for LFF to “share out” what it is doing. However, as stated previously, grantseekers are genuinely interested in knowing what the foundation’s efforts are. If LFF as an institution wants to have an established presence in the philanthropic/nonprofit sector, be a leader in the food distribution/urban agriculture community in Chicago or the climate change mitigation efforts and sustainable farming practices in ECI, LFF should increase its outreach. LFF could consider writing regular newsletters or blog posts that are shared via the website, e-mail blasts, and social media to share LFF’s latest efforts and activities. If it is difficult for LFF staff to find the time to do this, LFF could share relevant news or research content from other sources. Also, grantees love it when their work is highlighted by a funder. LFF could broadcast some of the work that their grantee partners are doing and ask them to submit content.

3) ***Host events where grantees are celebrated.*** These events not only acknowledge the hard work and achievements of grantees but also create opportunities for relationship-building and collaboration among stakeholders. By bringing together community leaders, other funders, local organizations, and grantees, the foundation can showcase its impact, increase awareness for the issues its grantees address, and demonstrate its commitment to its own mission. Moreover, hosting such events fosters goodwill, enhances the foundation’s reputation, and ultimately boosts its standing in the community.

4) ***Connect grantees to other resources.*** LFF could leverage its networks and expertise to help grantees access additional funding, training, corporate sponsorships, capacity-building, and potential partnership with other funders or community partners. Facilitating these connections not only strengthens the financial sustainability of the grantees but also fosters collaboration and resource-sharing across the nonprofit sector.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Frameworks

The increased use of DEI frameworks is important to many organizations and a few participants expressed gratitude that LFF was interested in what organizations are doing.

1) ***Define what DEI means to LFF and what LFF is doing to promote DEI within its own operations.*** Many times, foundations and nonprofit organizations talk about DEI frameworks being important to them without context and grantees can become confused about why they must share such personal information with funders. As mentioned previously, explicitness is the key to preventing ambiguity and collecting meaningful data from grantseekers. It is recommended that LFF clearly states what it means by DEI frameworks and why this is important to the foundation. Transparency is also important, so sharing examples of what LFF is doing to promote these frameworks within its own organization. By demonstrating its commitment to action, the foundation not only reinforces its values but also proves its own integrity, setting a powerful example for others to follow.

2) ***Provide clear communication about DEI frameworks and the decision-making process.*** Like the above recommendation, any information that can be shared up-front is appreciated. Make sure applicants know how the information they are providing will be used within the context of proposal review. Implementing DEI processes can be time-consuming and emotionally difficult for staff. It is important that applicants know that a funder is aware of this and therefore has reasonable expectations. For example, in the DEI section of this

report, having a predominantly white board is still prevalent among grantseekers in ECI and in Chicago, even when the communities served are predominantly not white. Board representation is not something that can be changed rapidly and happens by adding new board members representing diverse backgrounds and the communities served. As it can be difficult to find new board members of any background, let alone from specific communities, it is therefore reasonable for applicants to demonstrate that diversifying the board is a priority for them and that sharing the steps that have or will be taken to work toward that goal is sufficient.

3) *Promote the inclusion of different forms of diversity.* In the DEI section of this report, the differences in demographics in the two regions LFF serves means that LFF can not have a singular expectation of what DEI frameworks will look like in Chicago versus East Central Illinois. Within the Chicago area, agencies tend to focus on racial and ethnic identity when considering DEI. In ECI, racial and ethnic consideration may not be possible. It is therefore important that applicants know that all forms of DEI are important to LFF, including in urban areas. Because DEI conversations may not be happening as much in ECI, it may be helpful for LFF to tailor what its expectations are for DEI in its rural communities. As one rural interview participant pointed out, their board used to be all men over the age of sixty. The organization has made it a point to include more women and different age groups on the board and in board leadership positions.

APPENDIX I: METHODOLOGY

Phase one of the assessment commenced in June 2024 with an email from The Lumpkin Family Foundation to all organizations that applied for funding between 2021 and 2023. Follow-up-communication from consultants at Iris Krieg & Associates, Inc. included instructions and a link to an online survey. The survey was created using Cognito Forms, which allows questions to be tailored based on the respondent's initial answers and sections that are not relevant can be skipped. The original list of grantseekers provided by the Lumpkin Family Foundation included 184 unique organization organizations, staff contact information, grant size (if awarded), and grant programs. All 184 were sent a link to the online survey and twenty emails came back as undeliverable. In addition, it is impossible to know how many were delivered but were sent to recipients' junk mail or spam. Of 164 delivered emails, a total of 42 surveys were completed for a response rate of 26%. The online survey is provided in Appendix II.

We conducted cross-sectional data analysis for nine survey questions repeated from previous assessments. To incorporate comparisons of the data sets from 2016 and 2020 we calculated the percentage of answers that fell into "positive" (strongly agree, agree) or "negative" (disagree, strongly disagree) response categories.

The online survey consisted of questions in three formats: open-ended, rating scales, and multiple-choice/forced selection. The rating scale questions were answered using the four-level scoring system below:

- No Opinion or N/A
- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Agree
- Agree

"Strongly Agree" and "Agree" were considered positive while "Strongly Disagree" and "Disagree" were considered negative. Trends were identified by comparing the change in the number of positive and negative responses a question received. Responses that were left blank or marked "No Opinion or N/A" were not included in the totals.

The calculated percentage breakdowns helped to analyze survey responses in a variety of ways, including comparing percentages from different program areas and comparing responses from organizations from ECI versus Chicago-Area.

In addition, with the goal of twenty interviews, IKA initially invited twenty-five organizations that were intentionally selected to represent the three grant programs and the diversity of their geographic locations, funding request outcomes, and grant sizes. After several weeks and reminders being sent out, there were only eleven responses. IKA sent out another round of invitations and ultimately was able to schedule nineteen interviews. One organization was a no-show and so ultimately, eighteen interviews occurred via Zoom video conference between June 28 and August 1, 2024. Using Zoom instead of phone conversations for interviews allowed for a more personal interview experience. IKA believes that interviewees felt more comfortable and were more likely to be candid when being able to see a friendly face. In addition, IKA utilized AI software to transcribe the interviews allowing the interviewer to focus on the conversation without the need for taking notes. The software also provided a comprehensive snapshot of each conversation that IKA could use to capture anecdotal data without recall error. The software used is OtterAI. Both the online survey instrument and interview protocol were developed by IKA and approved by the Lumpkin Family Foundation.

APPENDIX II: ONLINE SURVEY

E-mail Accompanying Survey Link

Dear Lumpkin Family Foundation Applicant,

By now, you have received communications from Bruce Karmazin, Executive Director of Lumpkin Family Foundation (LFF), on its Grantee and Applicant Survey. The Foundation has asked Iris Krieg & Associates (IKA) to administer and evaluate the survey responses. IKA and its staff will be the only people with access to the survey and all feedback submitted. In addition, this survey does not have any identifiers for IKA or LFF to connect responses to specific organizations or individuals. IKA will use the feedback from this survey to compile and present a report to LFF in August 2024, which will be used for quality improvement efforts.

The survey should take no more than 30 minutes to complete. Since we ask only one person per organization to complete the online survey, we suggest the staff person who created and submitted the LOIs, applications, and/or reports to LFF answer the questions. Or you can gather your team to complete the survey together with only one survey submitted per organization.

Survey participants may make changes to their answers, but once the survey has been submitted, they can no longer return to make changes. Please be sure to click the **“Done”** button at the end of the survey to complete and submit it. IKA will also select a small group of LFF grantees and applicants to participate in a telephone interview in late June.

Click on this link to complete the LFF Grantee and Applicant Survey **no later than Friday, June 14, 2024**: [survey linked here](#)

If you have any questions at all regarding the survey or any technical issues, please feel free to reach out to me.

Thank you for your participation! Your feedback is very important to Lumpkin Family Foundation.

As mentioned in the Methodology Section in Appendix I, Cognito Forms was utilized for the survey form. Cognito has a nice clean look. Below is a screenshot showing what the first page looks like. On the following page is the full transcript.

Lumpkin Family Foundation Applicant/Grantee Survey

This is a survey of the Lumpkin Family Foundation applicants and grantees to gather insights about their views on their relationships with foundation staff and board, the application and grantmaking processes, and the overall impact Lumpkin Family Foundation has in the communities benefiting from funding initiatives. In this survey, we define Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) as organizational frameworks designed to promote the fair treatment and full participation of all people, particularly any group of people who have been historically under-represented or discriminated against based on their identity or ability.

Section One: General Organizational Information

What was the total size of your organization's budget in 2020-2023? Please select based on the year you applied for a grant from LFF. *

- Less than \$100,000
- \$100,000 to \$250,000
- \$250,000 to \$500,000
- \$500,000 to \$1M
- Greater than \$1M

Please indicate the geographic area where most of your programs or organizations operate. *

- City of Chicago
- Cook County, IL – (outside Chicago city limits)
- Coles County, IL
- East Central Illinois (outside Coles County)
- Illinois (outside East Central Illinois)
- Outside of Illinois
-

To which LFF program did your organization apply? *

- Land, Health, Community

Validation: On **Status:** Incomplete **Role:** Public

Close

2024 Survey Transcript

Section 1: Organization Information

1. What was the total size of your organization's budget in 2020-2023 (the year you applied for a grant from LFF)?
 - a) Less than \$100,000
 - b) \$100,000 to \$250,000
 - c) \$250,000 to \$500,000
 - d) \$500,000 to \$1M
 - e) Greater than \$1M

2. Please indicate the geographic area where most of your programs or organizations operate.
 - a) City of Chicago
 - b) Cook County, IL – (outside Chicago city limits)
 - c) Coles County, IL
 - d) East Central Illinois (outside Coles County)
 - e) Illinois (outside East Central Illinois)
 - f) Outside of Illinois
 - g) Other

3. To which LFF program did your organization apply?
 - a) Land, Health, Community <in Section 5, East Central Illinois questions will be visible>
 - b) Aspiramos Juntos <in Section 5, only Chicago Area questions will be visible>
 - c) Nature-Based Climate Action Program <in Section 5, East Central Illinois questions will be visible>

<If Aspiramos Juntos is selected, additional question will pop up asking if they also applied to North Lawndale or Austin Fresh>

<the user's response to this question will automatically open the corresponding questions in section 5 – Program Impact.>

4. Which of LFF's mission area(s) describe your work?
 - a) Preserving and protecting the natural environment
 - b) Promoting human health by encouraging physical activity and healthy eating
 - c) Supporting a strong local food and agricultural economy
 - d) Fostering collaboration among people and organizations through strategic community leadership

5. Select the answer which most applies to your organization.
 - a) We applied for and received our first grant from LFF in the past three years.
 - b) We have applied for and received multiple grants from LFF over the past five years
 - c) We have applied for and received funding from LFF for more than five years total (does not have to be consecutive years.) <if answer is yes – what year was your first LFF grant and How many grants have you received altogether over the years?>

- d) We applied for and did not receive funding from LFF
 - e) Other <please explain – open-ended>
6. How would the communities being served identify themselves (multi-picklist)
- a) African/African American/ Afro Caribbean/Black/Person of African Descent
 - b) American Indian/Alaskan Native/Indigenous/Native American
 - c) Asian/Asian American/SE Asian/South Asian
 - d) European American/Eastern European/White
 - e) Latinx/Latino/Hispanic
 - f) Middle Eastern/Arab/North African
 - g) Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander
 - h) Don't know
7. Do the communities being served by your organization fall into any of the following categories?
- a) Immigrant or refugees <yes or no>
 - b) People with disabilities <yes or no>
 - c) LGBTQIA+ <yes or no>
 - d) Other specific communities <Please specify – blank text box>
8. Does the organization have an office within the community being served? <yes or no>

Section 2: Website & Application Process

9. On average, how frequently do you visit LFF's website?
- a) Never
 - b) Once or twice a year
 - c) Once every few months
 - d) About once a month
 - e) Multiple times each month
10. Please indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding LFF's website.
- Scale: 1=Strongly Agree, 2=Agree, 3=Disagree, 4=Strongly Disagree*
- a) The website is easy to navigate.
 - b) I can easily locate the information I need on LFF's website.
 - c) The website provides useful information about LFF's programs.
 - d) The website is updated regularly.
 - e) The website provides all the information I need to apply for a grant.
 - f) The website clearly explains LFF's funding priorities.
 - g) The website clearly explains the process and timeline for reviewing grant requests.
11. Please indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding LFF's website as it appears on a phone or tablet.

Scale: 1=Strongly Agree, 2=Agree, 3=Disagree, 4=Strongly Disagree 5=N/A

- a) The website is easy to navigate.
- b) I can easily locate the information I need on LFF's website.
- c) The website clearly explains the process and timeline for reviewing grant requests.
- d) The website is well-configured for a mobile device or tablet.
- e) The text is easy to read on a mobile device or tablet.

12. LFF uses an external CRM (Customer Relationship Management) software program for grant management. What is your experience using the platform? Please indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with your experience using LFF's CRM.

Scale: 1=Strongly Agree, 2=Agree, 3=Disagree, 4=Strongly Disagree, 5 N/A

- a) The CRM is easy to use and understand.
- b) The online LOI and/or proposal processes are clearly explained.
- c) The LOI and/or proposal forms provide enough space to accurately describe my organization and its programs.
- d) I did not have any issues using the online application process.
- e) I received communications about the status of our application in a timely manner.

13. Choose the answer that best fits your opinion.

In comparison to CRM systems used by other foundations, the CRM used by LFF is:

- a) Easier to use
- b) About the same
- c) Harder to use
- d) N/A

Explain why you selected this answer <open-ended>

14. What is your favorite part of the LFF's website? Are there any parts you dislike? (open-ended)

15. Would you utilize any of the following components on the LFF website? *Select all that apply.*

- a) New & Resources
- b) Events
- c) Sample Proposals
- d) Detailed Reporting Requirements
- e) Annual Reports
- f) Articles & Publications
- g) Other

Section 3: Grantmaking Process

16. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding the grant process.

Scale: 1 = Strongly Agree, 2 = Agree, 3 = Disagree, 4 = Strongly Disagree, 5= N/A

- a) LFF has reasonable application requirements.
- b) LFF communicated in a timely manner about the status of my pending LOI/grant proposal.
- c) LFF made an effort to understand my LOI/grant proposal.

17. Did you submit a Letter of Inquiry (LOI) to LFF?

- a) Yes
- b) No <if no, form skips to question 22>

18. Please indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding the LOI process.

Scale: 1 = Strongly Agree, 2 = Agree, 3 = Disagree, 4 = Strongly Disagree

- a) I received valuable feedback about my LOI application.
- b) I plan to utilize the feedback I received from my LOI process to submit another proposal to LFF in the future.

19. Did you submit your grant application for a pre-submit review (only applies to the Land, Health, Community program)?

- a) Yes
- b) No <if no, form skips to question 21>

20. Please indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding the pre-submit grant review process.

Scale: 1 = Strongly Agree, 2 = Agree, 3 = Disagree, 4 = Strongly Disagree

- a) I received valuable feedback about my grant application.
- b) The feedback I received from pre-submit grant review was not helpful.
- c) I had enough time to make the recommended changes to my grant application.
- d) I plan to utilize the pre-submit grant review process in the future.

21. Did you receive a site visit from LFF?

- a) Yes
- b) No

<If no, form skips to question 27>

22. Was your site visit in-person or via video conference?

- a) In-person
- b) Video conference

23. Please indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding your LFF site visit.

Scale: 1 = Strongly Agree, 2 = Agree, 3 = Disagree, 4 = Strongly Disagree

- a) I received adequate notice for the site visit.
- b) I knew in advance what to expect from the site visit.
- c) The site visit met my expectations.
- d) LFF staff and/or family members were prepared for the meeting.
- e) The LFF staff and/or family members had sufficient grasp of the issues to understand my organization.

24. What advice would you offer nonprofits preparing for their first site visit with LFF? (*open-ended*)

25. What advice would you offer LFF to enhance the quality of discussion during a site visit? (*open-ended*)

26. Is there anything else could LFF do to support your organization during and after the grant process? If yes, can you provide examples? (*Open-ended*)

27. If you could change anything about the process of submitting an LOI or applying for a grant with LFF, what would it be? (*open-ended*)

28. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding the grant reporting process.

Scale: 1 = Strongly Agree, 2 = Agree, 3 = Disagree, 4 = Strongly Disagree, 5= N/A

- a) LFF has reasonable reporting requirements.
- b) LFF communicates reporting submission dates in a timely manner.
- c) The reporting process is easy to navigate.
- d) LFF staff were available to answer questions about reporting requirements.

29. Are there other reporting methods which your organization has used in the past for other funders that you think LFF should consider?

30. If your organization received LFF Funding in the past and did not reapply for funding in subsequent years, what was the reason? You may skip this question if it does not apply to your organization.

Section 4: Relationship with the Foundation

31. Please indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding your relationship with LFF.

Scale: 0= No Opinion, 1 = Strongly Agree, 2 = Agree, 3 = Disagree, 4 = Strongly Disagree

- a) I have a good relationship with LFF.
- b) I believe LFF respects my organization.
- c) I feel that I can contact LFF if I have questions or concerns.
- d) LFF staff returns phone calls or e-mails in a timely manner.
- e) LFF staff understands our organization and how we operate.
- f) LFF staff is knowledgeable about the issues and challenges faced by my organization.

32. Please indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding LFF's role in the greater community.

Scale: 0= No Opinion, 1 = Strongly Agree, 2 = Agree, 3 = Disagree, 4 = Strongly Disagree

- a) LFF staff are knowledgeable about issues and challenges faced by my community.
- b) LFF board members care about and are involved in my community.
- c) LFF appropriately addresses the needs of the community.
- d) LFF facilitates collaboration across traditional organizations or sector boundaries for community benefit.
- e) LFF develops public understanding of issues.
- f) LFF promotes the philanthropic support necessary to address issues of community importance.

33. Based on your knowledge of LFF, has it created long-lasting improvements in one or more of the following areas: protecting the natural environment, promoting human health by promoting movement and/or healthy eating, supporting a strong local food and agricultural society, or fostering collaboration among people and organizations through strategic community leadership?

- a) Yes
- b) No
- c) I don't know

<If yes, question Can you explain how? (open-ended) appears>

34. Besides grant dollars, what are the most useful services LFF could provide to your organization?

- a) Post-grant site visits
- b) Technical assistance developing grant metrics for grant evaluation purposes
- c) A check-in phone call from LFF staff during the grant term
- d) Best practices and lessons learned from other grantees
- e) Other – please list <blank text box>

35. What else would you like to share about your relationship with LFF? (open-ended)

Section 5: Program Funding Impact

East Central Illinois Questions

36. You indicated in question 3 that you applied for the Land, Health, Community Grant Program, or the Nature-Based Climate Action Program. In your opinion, what impact has LFF's grantmaking had on Central Illinois? (*open-ended*)
37. We are curious about LFF's footprint in the Central Illinois region. Please select all that apply:
- a) Our organization knows of other organizations that have applied to LFF.
 - b) Our organization knows of funders who have referred to LFF
 - c) Our organization collaborates with other organizations that receive funding from LFF.
 - d) Our organization was introduced or connected to other organizations that receive LFF funding either through LFF staff or another funder or nonprofit.
 - e) LFF was mentioned at a nonprofit meeting, panel discussion, affinity group, or other gathering of nonprofit providers focused on food distribution and community access to healthy food.
 - f) LFF staff presented at a nonprofit meeting, panel discussion, affinity group, or other gathering of nonprofit providers focused on food distribution and community access to healthy food.
 - g) Other – please add other evidence of LFF's presence in East Central Illinois <blank text box>
38. Please indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding LFF's role in the East Central Illinois nonprofit community.
Scale: 0= No Opinion, 1 = Strongly Agree, 2 = Agree, 3 = Disagree, 4 = Strongly Disagree 5 unsure
- a) LFF's grant programs have had a positive impact on its grantee organizations and the communities they serve.
 - b) LFF's grant programs have collectively impacted access to healthy foods across multiple communities.
 - c) LFF's grant programs have had an impact on food distribution, climate action, and/or health and wellness in East Central Illinois.
 - d) LFF's grant programs have helped inform policy or systemic changes.
39. Are there any other ways that LFF grant programs have made an impact in healthy food accessibility or community members' health and well-being either intentionally or unintentionally?
- a) Yes
 - b) No
- <if yes, Explain how with blank text box>
40. What suggestions do you have for ways LFF can deepen its impact in East Central Illinois? (*open-ended*)

Chicago Questions

36. You indicated in question 3 that you applied for Aspiramos Juntos, Austin Fresh, or North Lawndale Fresh. In your opinion, what impact has LFF's grantmaking had in the Chicago region? (*open-ended*)
37. We are curious about LFF's footprint in the Chicago region. Please select all that apply:
- a. Our organization knows of other organizations that have applied to LFF.
 - b. Our organization knows of funders who have referred to LFF
 - c. Our organization collaborates with other organizations that receive funding from LFF.
 - d. Our organization was introduced or connected to other organizations that receive LFF funding either through LFF staff or another funder or nonprofit.
 - e. LFF was mentioned at a nonprofit meeting, panel discussion, affinity group, or other gathering of nonprofit providers focused on food distribution and community access to healthy food.
 - f. LFF staff presented at a nonprofit meeting, panel discussion, affinity group, or other gathering of nonprofit providers focused on food distribution and community access to healthy food.
 - g. Other – please add other evidence of LFF's presence in Chicago <blank text box>
38. Please indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding LFF's role in the Chicago nonprofit community.
Scale: 0= No Opinion, 1 = Strongly Agree, 2 = Agree, 3 = Disagree, 4 = Strongly Disagree
- a. LFF's Chicago grant programs have had a positive impact on its grantee organizations and the communities they serve.
 - b. LFF's Chicago grant programs have collectively impacted access to healthy foods, health, and wellness across multiple communities.
 - c. LFF's Chicago grant programs have had an impact on food distribution, health, and wellness in the Chicago region beyond their own grantees.
 - d. LFF's Chicago grant programs have helped inform policy or systemic changes.
39. Are there any other ways that LFF Chicago grant programs have made an impact in healthy food accessibility or community health and wellness, either intentionally or unintentionally?
- c) Yes
 - d) No
- <if yes, Explain how with blank text box>
40. Do you have suggestions for ways LFF can deepen its impact on issues in the Chicago region? (*open-ended*)

Section 6: Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI)

In this survey, we define Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) as organizational frameworks designed to promote the fair treatment and full participation of all people, but particularly any group of people who have been historically under-represented or discriminated against based on their identity or ability.

41. How would the majority of your board identify themselves? (multi pick list)
- a. African/African American/ Afro Caribbean/Black/Person of African Descent
 - b. American Indian/Alaskan Native/Indigenous/Native American
 - c. Asian/Asian American/SE Asian/South Asian
 - d. European American/Eastern European/White
 - e. Latinx/Latino/Hispanic
 - f. Middle Eastern/Arab/North African
 - g. Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander
 - h. Don't know

41. Do your board members fall into any of the following categories?
- a) Immigrant or refugees <yes or no>
 - b) People with disabilities <yes or no>
 - c) LGBTQIA+ <yes or no>
 - d) Other specific communities <Please specify – blank text box>

42. How would the majority of your staff identify themselves? (multi pick list)
- a. African/African American/ Afro Caribbean/Black/Person of African Descent
 - b. American Indian/Alaskan Native/Indigenous/Native American
 - c. Asian/Asian American/SE Asian/South Asian
 - d. European American/Eastern European/White
 - e. Latinx/Latino/Hispanic
 - f. Middle Eastern/Arab/North African
 - g. Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander
 - h. Don't know

42. Do your staff members fall into any of the following categories?
- a) Immigrant or refugees <yes or no>
 - b) People with disabilities <yes or no>
 - c) LGBTQIA+ <yes or no>
 - d) Other specific communities <Please specify – blank text box>

43. Does your leadership believe that DEI policies and/or training are necessary at your organization
- a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Not sure

44. Does your organization have a DEI policy?

- a) Yes
- b) No
- c) Don't know

45. Does your board of directors have a DEI policy?

- a) Yes
- b) No
- c) Don't know

46. Has your staff or board received any DEI or related training/professional development?

- a) Yes
- b) No
- c) Don't know

47. Has your organization instituted any changes to become more diverse, equitable, and inclusive?

- a) Yes
- b) No
- c) Don't know

<if yes, a question appears asking what those changes are (open-ended)

Additional Information

48. Is there anything we forgot to ask, or that you would like to share, regarding your experiences with the Lumpkin Family Foundation? (*open-ended*)

We appreciate your time and effort to complete this survey. Thank you for your time!

APPENDIX III: INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Opening

Thank you for agreeing to take part in this assessment. You were selected to be part of this project because you applied for a grant from the Lumpkin Family Foundation between 2021 and 2023. This is not an assessment of your organization; LFF values your perspective as a recent grant-seeker and is eager to learn from you. Your honest feedback will help the Foundation make improvements and remain accountable to the communities it serves.

I hope you will be candid. As mentioned in my email, LFF has hired Iris Krieg & Associates as its outside consultant, so your answers are confidential, and the Foundation will not receive any information that can be linked to a specific organization or person.

Section 1: Organization Information

1. You submitted an LOI to the [Land, Health, Community/Aspiramos Juntos/Austin Fresh/North Lawndale Fresh/Good Food Policy Program] program in [2021/2022/2023] and were invited to apply for a grant. You [received/did not receive] the grant. Is that correct?

Section 2: Website & Application

2. What has been your experience using and navigating LFF's website and CRM grant management system? Are there any sections of LFF's website that were particularly helpful? What tools or elements might you like to see added? How do you think LFF's CRM system experience compares to that of other foundations?
3. Do you feel LFF's online application process allowed you to adequately explain your organization and proposal? Can you elaborate?
4. Do you have any other suggestions about how LFF could improve its website or online application process?

Section 3: Grantmaking Process

5. Do you have any suggestions regarding the application process, including the process itself or the timetable?
6. [ONLY FOR LAND, HEALTH, COMMUNITY] Did you submit your application for a pre-submit review? If yes, what changes were made to your application based on the feedback you received?
7. Did your organization submit a LOI? How did you feel about that process?
8. Did your organization receive a site visit? If yes, what was your experience? How could LFF improve the site visit process?

9. Did you complete a grant report? If so, what did you think of the reporting requirements? Reasonable? Too much? Any improvements you can offer?

Section 4: Relationship with the Foundation

10. Have you had any contact with Foundation staff in the last two years?
- If yes, please describe the interaction, who you talked to and what you talked about. Was it by phone, electronic, or in person?
 - Do you feel that Foundation staff members are a good resource for information and advice?
 - Do you feel the staff tried to understand your organization and the issues and challenges it faces? Explain.
 - Do you feel your interaction with foundation staff was fair, respectful, and honest? Explain.
 - Do you feel the staff has been helpful and responsive?
11. Do you think you receive enough communication from staff, or would you want more communication from LFF staff? If you said “more,” can you give examples?
12. What services or programs could LFF staff provide that would be more helpful to your organization?
13. Overall, how would you describe your relationship with LFF and its staff?

Section 5: LFF’s Land, Health, Community funding Impact and Nature-Based Climate Action Program

14. In what ways does the *Land, Health, Community* or NBACP theme align with your organization’s mission?
15. From your perspective, what are the most pressing issues facing East Central Illinois (ECI) and your organization?
16. Do you think LFF is well-known in ECI? What is your impression of how LFF is viewed among the nonprofit community?
17. What suggestions do you have for ways LFF can deepen its impact in ECI?

Section 6: Aspiramos Juntos, Austin Fresh, and North Lawndale Fresh

18. In what ways does the Aspiramos Juntos, AF, or NLF theme align with your organization’s mission?
19. Do you feel that LFF has established a presence in the Chicago area? Is the foundation known about by other nonprofits or funders? Do you have suggestions about how LFF could be more involved/visible in the Chicago region?
20. Considering LFF’s mission (*supporting organizations who are working towards healthy, sustainable communities*), what suggestions do you have for ways LFF can deepen its impact in the Chicago area?

Section 7: LFF's Role in the Community

21. Do you believe that LFF provides support for the community of nonprofits in your area, aside from funding?
22. Do you think LFF and staff respond to changing needs in the community or area of work?

Section 9: Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

For the following questions, we define DEI as organizational frameworks designed to promote the fair treatment and full participation of all people, particularly any group of people who have been historically under-represented or discriminated against based on their identity or ability.

23. How important do you feel DEI frameworks are to your organization? Has your board or staff discussed ways to increase or improve its understanding or use of DEI practices?
24. Has your organization had any training or made any changes to its policies or procedures to better reflect DEI principles?

Additional Information

25. Do you have other suggestions or comments you would like to share regarding your experiences with the Foundation's staff, grant making process, its relationships with applicants and grantees, or any aspect of its operation?