

ADIRONDACK Community FOUNDATION

What makes a strong community? How does philanthropy factor into it? At Adirondack Foundation, we ask ourselves these questions every day. There is no single answer, and the components of strong and healthy communities are rarely linear. That's why, as a community foundation, we take a "whole community" approach to amplify all that is good about the Adirondacks.

This framework reflects our approach to investing in promising opportunities, addressing critical challenges, and uniting people, institutions and resources to produce widely shared lasting results. We do this in partnership with generous donors and capable nonprofits—by making grants and devoting social, political, and reputational capital to make our region even stronger.



As we apply the **Strong Community Framework for the Adirondacks** to inspire, drive and measure positive change, these are the guiding principles to which we adhere:

Adirondack Foundation...

- brings all the tools of a community foundation to bear for community good: grantmaking, convening, local knowledge, data, investments, advocacy, and incubation;
- seeks to invest in innovation, cooperation, scalability and measurable impact;
- seeks public, private, and nonprofit sector partners that invest in regional vitality;
- is committed to equitable opportunity for all people.

Strong Community Framework for the Adirondacks

The vision we hold for each interest area, combined with demonstrated success, reinforces that the enduring charitable resources we build are addressing today's community needs, and will also be here to address the unknown needs of tomorrow. Since 1997, we have awarded more than \$80 million in grants, invested countless hours in nonprofit capacity building, and served as a catalyst. Together with donors and community partners, we are forever committed to the Adirondacks.

Interest Area	Vision	Grants awarded (2020-2024 snapshot)
<p>BASIC NEEDS</p> 	<p>Residents of all ages have equitable access to services that enable and promote a healthy quality of life.</p>	<p>\$8.5 MILLION</p> <p>For example: food assistance and nutrition programs; counseling and social support services</p>
<p>EDUCATIONAL PATHWAYS</p> 	<p>All children benefit from high-quality early learning and development. All learners have meaningful opportunities to pursue pathways to gainful employment and fulfilling lives.</p>	<p>\$9 MILLION</p> <p>For example: early childhood education, career-readiness; post-secondary pathways, trade certifications</p>
<p>ECONOMIC VITALITY</p> 	<p>Thriving communities provide equitable and just economic opportunity, build generational wealth, attract residents and businesses, and inspire community participation.</p>	<p>\$6.8 MILLION</p> <p>For example: workforce development programs; mobilizing resources for the greater good</p>
<p>ARTS + CULTURE</p> 	<p>Vibrant arts and cultural opportunities underpin community life by promoting social cohesion, expanding perspectives, and helping to drive the economy.</p>	<p>\$4.2 MILLION</p> <p>For example: access to enriching experiences for all students; live performances</p>
<p>ENVIRONMENT</p> 	<p>A healthy environment helps sustain healthy communities by bolstering climate change resilience, inspiring stewardship, and providing opportunities for outdoor recreation.</p>	<p>\$3.9 MILLION</p> <p>For example: outdoor recreation opportunities and access; ecological research and monitoring</p>



BASIC NEEDS

Meeting basic needs in our region can be hampered by factors like travel distances and availability of services. Many communities have limited access to healthy food – especially those where residents must drive 30 minutes or more to do their grocery shopping. On average, more than 40% of students qualify for free or reduced-price lunch programs at school. More than one thousand students receive assistance through food backpack programs, which help to ensure they have food during the weekend.

Behavioral, mental health, and home-support services are strained owing in large part to a critical shortage of therapists and qualified aides. Approximately 1,000 hours of home health services go unfilled every week. What's more, there are a growing number of families who make too much to qualify for government assistance programs but not enough to make ends meet.

The pandemic is putting social and economic disparities into sharper relief and rising prices for everyday goods like food and heat are putting additional strains on many of our neighbors. Social safety net programs can play a pivotal role in breaking generational poverty and helping people realize their full potential.

Photo caption: *The Adirondack Community Outreach Center's Weekend Backpack Program anonymously provides fresh and shelf-stable, kid-friendly foods for 70+ children in the Johnsbury Central School District.*

*While the needs and barriers across the Adirondack region are significant, there are inspired and deeply committed individuals and organizations working to address **basic needs**. Our strategy is to listen to and learn from those on the front lines; understand what works and what doesn't; and maximize philanthropic investment.*

PROMISING APPROACHES FOR IMPACT | BASIC NEEDS

1 | Expand and strengthen the social safety net to facilitate upward mobility

- Invest in innovative solutions that provide coordinated assistance (i.e., transportation, child/elder care, credit counseling, financial management assistance).
- Support improved coordination of preventative services to help people and families avoid crises. i.e., rent assistance, toxic stress, interpersonal and drug abuse.
- Improve access to basic services for our regions historically under-resourced. i.e., transportation, address food deserts, and safe, transitional and temporary shelter.

2 | Provide resources to assist with emergency relief

- Streamline philanthropic response during times of great need.
- Support emergency preparedness, systems, and response mechanisms when public funding is absent.
- Support strong organizations addressing gaps in service during times of emergency.

3 | Ensure access to quality support networks for all

- Expand care options for under-resourced children and seniors, including education, training, recruitment, and retention programs for in-home care providers.
- Support comprehensive resources, wrap around services, for families and individuals so that multifaceted challenges can be addressed and increase long term stability.
- Improve access to healthful activities and promote positive social engagement in our communities.

GIVE. COLLABORATE. ACCELERATE.

The best way to love the Adirondacks is to give back.

Please reach out to us to explore ways to make a difference.

info@adkfoundation.org | 518.523.9904 | adirondackfoundation.org | adirondackbt3.org

Outcomes are the benefits (qualitative or quantitative) resulting from the approaches, activities, or strategies taken. They can be thought of as the positive impact resulting from an organization, program, or initiative and can be short-term, mid-term, or long-term.

OUTCOMES | BASIC NEEDS

1 | Expand and strengthen the Social Safety Net

- Improved coordination helps families and individuals access a variety of services
- Coordination of services address multiple issues or needs simultaneously, improving individual and family outcomes
- Promising approaches that demonstrate preventative impact gain the funding and support to establish themselves and achieve sustainability
- Service providers report improved workforce and volunteer recruitment and retention outcomes
- Residents experience improved health and social connection
- Families and individuals access services, achieve stability and greater quality of life
- Preventative services and those addressing social drivers of health help decrease need overall, improving family outcomes
- Thriving, coordinated nonprofit sector effectively supports and directs families and individuals in crisis
- Service and care providers have the volunteer and staff capacity to provide all necessary services.

2 | Provide resources to assist with emergency relief

- Families, individuals, and communities receive emergency funding or support quickly
- Increased philanthropic resources flow to benefit people affected by disasters
- Communities affected by unexpected disasters are met with resources and support for both short- and long-term needs
- Strong, community-driven emergency preparedness plans mobilize public and private stakeholders to respond in times of crisis

MEASURES & INDICATORS

What can we track to measure progress towards outcomes? The following list includes examples of indicators that organizations might use to gain an understanding of the impact of their work.

- # of partnerships between service providers
- # of families/individuals reached through services
- # of families/individuals who successfully complete or reach a benchmark of completion of services
- # of families/individuals seeking but unable to be served (e.g. waitlisted, denied care, materials/supplies ran out, etc.)
- Change over time in demand or need for services
- Change over time in recruitment and retention data of service provider staff and volunteers
- # of people served in emergency disaster relief and total \$ given
- \$ raised or matched from other funding sources (state, federal, private philanthropy, individual giving)



EDUCATIONAL PATHWAYS

It is well-documented that a family's income can impact children's physical, health, cognitive abilities, school achievements and behavioral and emotional outcomes. The percentage of children in our region under six who live in deep poverty is 15%, which is higher than New York State as a whole. The differences in development can be profound for children born into different economic classes. The further behind kids start off, the harder it is for them to catch up as they get older. That's why early intervention and equitable access to opportunities that can lead to economic mobility are so important.

At 23%, an even higher percentage of kids from birth to 17 years old live at or below poverty in our region. Still, graduation rates in our schools tend to be high, with between 80 and 90% of students obtaining a high school diploma. But a much smaller percentage of these students go on to college, especially when compared to their counterparts from more affluent areas.

Beyond high school, many students may not be aware of opportunities available to them or may lack financial resources or social support networks to help them obtain a certificate, apprenticeship, or two- or four-year degree. Likewise, non-traditional students seeking additional training or credentials toward a career shift or advancement may also be stymied by a lack of resources and support structures.

Photo caption: Adirondack Center for Writing's Next Generation Newsroom program brings local news journalists to speak in Tri-Lakes schools and funds new equipment for newspaper interns.

Education is more than a pathway to a job and financial self-sufficiency; it is foundational to a stronger, more equitable community. Education is also deeply intertwined with other, persistent issues like poverty. Early intervention, literacy, mentorship and guidance, as well as career development and other support programs are among the areas where philanthropy can play a critical role in strengthening pathways.

PROMISING APPROACHES FOR IMPACT | EDUCATIONAL PATHWAYS

1 | Foster a systems approach for cradle-to-career education

- Build an ecosystem for career support with schools, mentoring/career visioning programs, workforce development and employers to help students succeed and find career pathways.
- Support life-skills and basic literacy (financial, reading, writing, digital) to help residents of all ages maximize their potential for growth and success.
- Alleviate financial barriers to education for all learners.

2 | Support early childhood development

- Support early childhood services and high-quality early learning customized for the specific needs of our rural region.
- Support a full complement of coordinated services for cognitive, physical, and social and emotional development, including home visiting and early intervention.
- Promote parent and family participation in their children's education, system building, and policy and funding decisions.

3 | Invest in career-preparedness*

- Make pathways to employment more accessible, more affordable, and more visible.
- Improve access to career exploration opportunities and mentors for all learners.
- Strengthen scholarship, apprenticeships, paid internships, and experiential learning opportunities for local students.

*Please ask us about our Theory of Change for College- and Career-Readiness to learn more about barriers and pathways.

GIVE. COLLABORATE. ACCELERATE.

The best way to love the Adirondacks is to give back.

Please reach out to us to explore ways to make a difference.

info@adkfoundation.org | 518.523.9904 | adirondackfoundation.org | adirondackbt3.org

Outcomes are the benefits (qualitative or quantitative) resulting from the approaches, activities, or strategies taken. They can be thought of as the positive impact resulting from an organization, program, or initiative and can be short-term, mid-term, or long-term.

OUTCOMES | EDUCATIONAL PATHWAYS

1 | Early Childhood Services and Learning

- Parents and children access childcare and intervention services more easily, quickly, effectively
- Parents and families are championed as experts on children's needs
- Strong base of donors are engaged and mobilized to support early childhood
- Increased viability of early childhood careers and sectors with higher wages for providers and sustainability for businesses and services
- Thriving children benefit from early education services and transition to school successfully. System strain decreases
- Families experience greater decision-making, pride, and satisfaction in children's educations

2 | Education to Career Support

- Increased and strengthened career pathways and mentoring programs for middle and high school students
- Coordination and effectiveness between schools, workforce development, and employers
- Students and learners graduate and/or enter the workforce successfully, earning degrees, certificates, or other credentials
- Increasing number of learners benefit from scholarships and funding opportunities, reducing barriers to education
- Youth experience a robust system of support and mentoring, leading to increased post-secondary degrees, workforce training, and improved school-to-work flow
- Growing network of youth/young adults whose lives and careers have been transformed are actively contributing to the region
- Residents achieve better quality of life and employment outcomes, living wage jobs increase

MEASURES & INDICATORS

What can we track to measure progress towards outcomes? The following list includes examples of indicators that organizations might use to gain an understanding of the impact of their work.

- # of children and families served
- # of nonprofits' referrals for early intervention, other services
- Providers' staff recruitment or retention data
- Expanded/strengthened network of organizations providing early childhood education and services
- # of students engaged in mentoring, career pathways, workforce development programs
- High school graduation, college/postsecondary enrollment rates, employment outcomes for students following the program
- # of regional businesses participating in programs
- # of people engaged in literacy and life skills programs



ECONOMIC VITALITY + CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Our region is as defined by its close-knit rural communities as it is by its rugged mountains, freshwater lakes, and meandering rivers. These attributes shape our way of life, fuel our economy, and contribute to overall vitality.

Fewer young people, declining school enrollment, and a growing number of retirees and seniors are among the challenging demographic trends we face. Poverty rates have a ripple effect on livelihoods, employment, education, health, and wellness. Local governments have limited capacity and resources to drive bold change.

On any given day, there are more job openings than workers to fill them and the prospects for finding solutions are complex. For example, a shortage of child care providers makes it difficult for parents to commit to full time employment or advance their careers. Plus, with median household income between \$49,000 and \$52,000, many parents cannot afford child care.

A shortage of affordable housing deters young families and professionals from moving here. In Clinton and Franklin counties, 50% of families live in rent-burdened households, which means more than 30% of their gross income is spent on housing.

On the plus side, there are deeply inspiring examples of people working together to enhance livelihoods and foster a strong sense of community in many towns. There is also great potential to replicate and scale local successes for broader impact.

Photo caption: *Amanda and Ryan Ragland bought the Towne Store in Schroon Lake with a loan through the Adirondack Small Business Opportunity Fund. Credit: Erika Bailey*

While Government funding must play a crucial role in economic development, it cannot take care of everything needed to help a community thrive. The real power in making positive change comes from public/private partnerships and philanthropic investments that empower nonprofits, agencies, innovators, and doers to work together toward a common good.

PROMISING APPROACHES FOR IMPACT | ECONOMIC VITALITY + CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

1 | Invest in towns and villages for regional uplift

- Support organizations and programs that increase the standard of living and economic viability of towns and villages.
- Support increasing availability of attainable housing.
- Encourage and leverage public and private investment in small business.

2 | Support workforce development and business sustainability

- Support initiatives that match educational and training opportunities with regional workforce needs.
- Support workforce development initiatives to ensure residents can access livable wage jobs, family care, and stable, appealing housing.
- Bolster the financial and community organizations that expand access to capital and provide technical assistance for economic development.

3 | Retain residents and encourage people to move here

- Encourage a sense of belonging for all people and build welcoming communities through diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives.
- Engage local residents, inspire community pride, increase volunteerism, and social capital.
- Support regional efforts to cultivate communities of economic opportunity, including partnerships that remove stigma and foster economic stability and vitality for all.

GIVE. COLLABORATE. ACCELERATE.

The best way to love the Adirondacks is to give back.

Please reach out to us to explore ways to make a difference.

info@adkfoundation.org | 518.523.9904 | adirondackfoundation.org | adirondackbt3.org

Outcomes are the benefits (qualitative or quantitative) resulting from the approaches, activities, or strategies taken. They can be thought of as the positive impact resulting from an organization, program, or initiative and can be short-term, mid-term, or long-term.

OUTCOMES | ECONOMIC VITALITY

1 | Workforce Housing Development

- Ecosystem of orgs that are increasingly effective in workforce housing development
- Charitable investments are leveraged to accelerate workforce housing
- Region approaches the 7,500 new housing units needed in next 10 years
- A portion is targeted for essential workforce (200% AMI and below)

2 | Small Business Development

- Easier access to financing & technical assistance for current and hopeful small business owners
- Increase in more resilient and diverse businesses
- Expanding network of municipalities and chambers working in partnership
- Improved & sustained small business success rates
- Increase in jobs in the region with wages that provide economic stability and mobility
- Improved small business success and wage growth by county

3 | Workforce Development to Increase Economic Mobility

- Adult learners complete workforce development and related programs, increase their skills/credentials
- Youth and young adults engage in defined career pathways, apprenticeships, other programs
- Adults in workforce attain stable, satisfying economically viable jobs, acquire assets and build generational wealth
- Emerging job sectors thrive, attracting employers and employees

4 | Empower Communities for Success

- Communities are welcoming to diverse residents and changing populations
- Equitable opportunities increase for public, open engagement in civic life
- Residents take action to coordinate on challenging issues
- Adirondack communities are known as thriving, desirable; population stabilizes and reflects shifting demographics
- All residents experience secure quality of life and sense of ownership and belonging in their local communities

MEASURES & INDICATORS

What can we track to measure progress towards outcomes? The following list includes examples of indicators that organizations might use to gain an understanding of the impact of their work.

- \$ leveraged from other sources (state, federal, other funders, etc.)
- # of housing units created and/or families housed through activities
- # of small business TA recipients
- # of jobs created/retained in region and \$ of related economic impact
- Predevelopment activities: progress and timelines
- # of partnerships for civic infrastructure projects
- \$ matched or leveraged from other sources
- Increase in civic engagement (volunteering, involvement in community improvement efforts, etc.)
- Thriving public/civic events offered in local municipalities (parades, farmers markets, public art, fairs, community centers, etc.)



ARTS + CULTURE

Arts, culture and creativity are integral to the health and vibrancy of the Adirondack region. They provide ways to communicate across barriers of language, class, and culture to enrich people's lives and create shared experiences.

The grandeur of the Adirondack landscape helps to attract and inspire creative people who enliven our communities through music, theater, visual arts, collaboration, and engagement.

While it's clear that investing in arts yields a tremendous return through personal growth and economic impact, the remoteness and socio-economic disparities of our region result in inconsistent access. Travelling performances, school programs, and innovative partnerships are among the powerful ways to overcome these challenges.

Photo caption: For the past 12 years, grants from the Community Fund for the Gore Mountain Region and donor advised funds have enabled Seagle Festival to bring musical theater productions to local schools, reaching more than 1,000 children in the region.

The breadth of local arts programming in our sparsely populated region is an unexpected surprise to many residents and visitors alike. It grounds people here and can help attract newcomers. Adirondack Foundation donors support grassroots and established arts and culture efforts in our communities and encourage collaboration across the region.

PROMISING APPROACHES FOR IMPACT | ARTS + CULTURE

1 | Support local arts centers

- Foster a vibrant arts culture
- Provide opportunities for participation for people of all ages
- Support cultural exchange and awareness

2 | Provide equitable access to arts and cultural events

- Support arts programming in schools
- Promote public art initiatives (such as the North Creek mosaic project pictured on the front, which is supported in part through the Community Fund for the Gore Mountain Region at Adirondack Foundation)
- Help people of all economic levels access museums, performances, and shows

3 | Nurture inner growth, health, and healing

- Provide programming for vulnerable populations like children and veterans
- Inspire tomorrow's playwrights, poets, musicians, writers...
- Help young people develop compassion and empathy

GIVE. COLLABORATE. ACCELERATE.

The best way to love the Adirondacks is to give back.

Please reach out to us to explore ways to make a difference.

info@adkfoundation.org | 518.523.9904 | adirondackfoundation.org | adirondackbt3.org

Outcomes are the benefits (qualitative or quantitative) resulting from the approaches, activities, or strategies taken. They can be thought of as the positive impact resulting from an organization, program, or initiative and can be short-term, mid-term, or long-term.

OUTCOMES | ARTS & CULTURE

1 | Equitable Access to the Arts

- Increased participation in local arts and cultural events across diverse age groups and socio-economic groups.
- Enhanced awareness and appreciation of different cultural traditions within the community.
- Strengthened partnerships between local arts centers and community organizations.
- Increase in number of local arts and culture projects and events that engage the community.
- A sustained increase in the number and diversity of arts and cultural programs offered by local centers.
- Greater cross-cultural understanding and integration within the community.
- Arts centers become central hubs for community engagement and cultural exchange.
- Equitable access to arts and cultural events becomes normalized, with widespread participation across all economic levels.

2 | Inner Growth, Health, and Healing

- Increased availability and participation in arts programs designed for vulnerable populations.
- Positive changes in emotional well-being and social behavior among children and youth engaged in arts programs.
- Vulnerable populations experience improved mental health and social integration through sustained arts engagement.
- A generation of empathetic, culturally aware youth who are active participants in the community's social and cultural life.

MEASURES & INDICATORS

What can we track to measure progress towards outcomes? The following list includes examples of indicators that organizations might use to gain an understanding of the impact of their work.

- Attendance figures for events at supported arts centers, segmented by age group and demographics.
- # of new partnerships formed between arts centers and other community organizations.
- Increase in attendance at cultural events by individuals from economically disadvantaged backgrounds.
- Health and well-being assessments of participants before and after participating in arts programs (e.g., reduced stress, increased self-esteem).
- Stories of collaboration - new approaches or effective collaborations develop into long-term, self-sustaining community resources
- Case studies showcasing how arts centers have become more vibrant and central to community life.



ENVIRONMENT

The Adirondack region is distinguished by vast stretches of protected lands and waters interspersed with tight-knit rural communities. It is a place where forests have been recovering from overharvesting in the 19th century and moose, mink and other animals have returned after habitat loss pushed them out.

Indeed, the natural landscape factors into everyday life, underpins the economy, provides clean air and water, and offers an array of outdoor recreation opportunities.

And yet, our natural resources and the sustainability of our communities are threatened by climate change, invasive species, limited capacity for stewardship, and other factors.

Philanthropic support plays a critical role helping to ensure that our most treasured asset can thrive today and for future generations.

Photo caption: With support from the #507 Fund for the High Peaks Summit Steward Program, summit stewards educated 33,421 High Peaks hikers this year on Leave No Trace principles, enhancing public understanding of the alpine zone, and protecting alpine plants.

Philanthropy is helping to conserve important lands and waters, strengthen resilience to climate change, inspire stewardship, enhance recreational opportunities, and so much more.

PROMISING APPROACHES FOR IMPACT | ENVIRONMENT

1 | Protect important lands and waters

- Safeguard forests, farmland, and other critical lands
- Support scientific research to identify threats and inform strategies
- Invest in strategic advocacy to hold government agencies to account, secure funding, and influence policy

2 | Promote and increase stewardship

- Prevent invasive species from harming native plants and animals and threatening the local economy
- Improve trails, recreational access, and stewardship efforts
- Foster cross-sector cooperation and innovation

3 | Bolster climate resilience and adaptation

- Help communities pursue win-win strategies for people and nature
- Support renewable energy
- Safeguard pathways for animals to adapt and move in response to a changing climate

GIVE. COLLABORATE. ACCELERATE.

The best way to love the Adirondacks is to give back.

Please reach out to us to explore ways to make a difference.

info@adkfoundation.org | 518.523.9904 | adirondackfoundation.org | adirondackbt3.org

Outcomes are the benefits (qualitative or quantitative) resulting from the approaches, activities, or strategies taken. They can be thought of as the positive impact resulting from an organization, program, or initiative and can be short-term, mid-term, or long-term.

OUTCOMES | ENVIRONMENT

1 | Stewardship

- Greater community engagement in stewardship activities, such as trail maintenance and invasive species control.
- Improvement in recreational access and the condition of local trails and public lands.
- Partnerships and collaboration among local organizations, government agencies, and businesses to foster stewardship.
- Tangible improvements in the health of ecosystems.
- A well-maintained network of trails and recreational areas that are widely used and valued by the community.
- Strong and lasting cross-sector partnerships driving innovation and continuous improvement in stewardship practices.

2 | Climate Resilience

- Projects or initiatives launched to explore strategies for climate resilience, benefiting both people and nature.
- Communities that are better equipped to withstand and adapt to climate change, with reduced vulnerability to environmental impacts.

MEASURES & INDICATORS

What can we track to measure progress towards outcomes? The following list includes examples of indicators that organizations might use to gain an understanding of the impact of their work.

- # of Summit Stewards (staff, volunteers), # of volunteer hours, and # of hikers educated (AMC)
- # of trails improved, miles of trail maintained, or new recreational areas made accessible.
- \$ raised or matched from other funding sources (state, federal, private philanthropy, individual giving)
- Measurable reduction in community vulnerability to climate-related risks, such as reduced flood damage or increased drought resilience.
- Stories of collaboration - new approaches or effective collaborations develop into long-term, self-sustaining community resources