Why is it important that The Greater Cincinnati Foundation invest in economic opportunity?

Many individuals and families in the Greater Cincinnati face significant financial challenges. The Greater Cincinnati region has one of the highest rates of poverty in America with an even greater percentage of our population living below 200% of poverty since 2005. There is a significant skills gap between jobs currently available and qualified individuals to secure and fill these jobs.

What are we doing to create change?

Through the generosity of donors past and present, GCF is able to make an impact through a collection of investments, grantwriting assistance, and partnering with other funders. These are long-term problems and with our donors we are in it for the long haul. Effective change doesn’t happen overnight.

The following are examples of our strategies for economic opportunity and the outcomes:

**STRATEGY:**
Support systemic interventions to help individuals and families stabilize their lives through basic services, obtain and retain gainful employment and advance along a career pathway through continuing educational attainment.

**HOW WE SUPPORT THIS STRATEGY:**
We invest in “backbone” organizations like Partners for a Competitive Workforce (PCW) that share our goals and objectives. PCW focuses on meeting employer demand by growing the skills in our current and future workforce.

**RESULTS:**
Over 6,100 individuals have been served since 2008, with 87% completing training earning more than 5,500 credentials, 82% obtaining employment and 75% retaining employment after 12 months.

**STRATEGY:**
We invest in organizations to ensure individuals’ and families’ basic needs for food, clothing, transportation, and shelter.

**HOW WE SUPPORT THIS STRATEGY:**
We invest in programs such as Legal Aid Society of Greater Cincinnati’s Stabilizing Neighborhoods Through Secure Housing Program that works to reduce the risk of homelessness by preventing foreclosures among low-income populations.

**RESULTS:**
In 2012, 670 homes were saved from foreclosure thanks to Legal Aid's program.
What can you do to help?

You don’t need your own fund at GCF to support favorite causes. Join our donors and select from GCF’s new Community Funds and make a donation of any size, with any type of gift. By giving to one of the funding priority areas, you support the current and greatest needs in our community. Options include: Cultural Vibrancy Fund, Economic Opportunity Fund, Educational Success Fund, Environmental Stewardship Fund, Health & Wellness Fund, Job Creation Fund, and Strong Communities Fund. A member of our Giving Strategies staff will be happy to talk to you about a gift.

Kevin Thomas works magic on the floors at TriHealth’s Bethesda Oak Hospital. But the gregarious young man would really like to use his people skills.

“I used to work at a nursing home and the interaction with the patients was gratifying,” he said. “I liked seeing how you can improve their lives. I always wanted to work with people and use my people skills. Although I can work miracles with these floors!”

“I’m in a program right now with the Health Careers Collaborative which is sponsored by TriHealth and other partners. They are actually prepaying my education. I’m working towards my associate’s degree in nursing.” Heather Brasfield-Gorrigan, Corporate Education Specialist II and Career Coach at TriHealth/Bethesda Oak, explains that Kevin is a great example of “helping the underemployed already working for us that have some barriers to advancing.”

“Tuition reimbursement might be fine for a lot of people but it’s a hardship for many,” she said. “And why not take the best performers you have and help them advance in areas where there is a need?”

Partners for a Competitive Workforce works with the Health Careers Collaborative and its partners like TriHealth to help individuals obtain and retain gainful employment and advance along a career pathway through continuing educational attainment.

Kevin is thrilled by the support and help.

“TriHealth truly invests in every employee. They are interested in taking an entry level employee like me and elevating my career and my life as a whole.”