



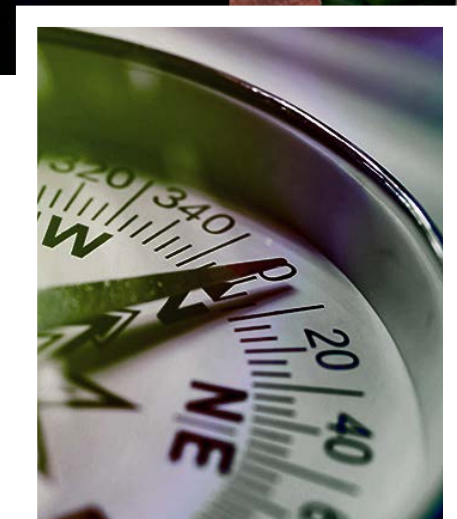
STRATEGIC PLAN: AN OVERVIEW

2020-2022



In 2019, in concert with renaming and rebranding the organization, the RRF Foundation for Aging (previously known as The Retirement Research Foundation) Board of Trustees and staff, engaged in a robust strategic planning process. The resulting plan ultimately affirmed the Foundation's long-held mission, developed vision and values statements, and articulated a clear direction and associated priorities for the Foundation's grantmaking and operations during the next three years.

RRF's strategic plan is a living document, meant to be refined over time, as issues and responses evolve. Our staff and Board will review the plan on a regular basis, make adjustments as needed, and ensure our work continues to be focused on how to best improve the quality of life for older people.



AFFIRMING OUR MISSION, VISION AND VALUES

The RRF strategic planning process began by considering and honing the core ideas that guide our work.

MISSION

RRF Foundation for Aging's mission is to improve the quality of life for older people.

VISION

RRF's vision is that ALL older people continue to be valued and respected as participants and contributors in community life.

VALUES



GROWTH understanding that growth occurs throughout one's lifetime, regardless of chronological age

INNOVATION recognizing that innovation generates new solutions and adds new value

INCLUSION acknowledging that inclusive communities are strengthened by diversity

CONNECTION promoting connection between families, neighborhoods, communities, and networks to support success at every age

VOICE having a voice is critical to the well-being of all older people

COLLABORATION using collaboration to leverage resources and expand reach

IMPACT knowing that impact is accomplished by investing in effective organizations, sound program models, and strong policies

CONFIRMING FIVE GRANTMAKING PATHWAYS

RRF grants, which all have a significant focus on older people (ages 65 and older), typically fall into one of the following "pathways":

- Advocacy to achieve positive social change around issues that affect older people in the U.S.
- Direct service to improve the availability and quality of innovative models and approaches to community-based services for older people. Direct service grants are awarded to organizations based in: Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Missouri, Wisconsin, and Florida.
- Professional education and training to increase the competency of professionals and paraprofessionals whose work is focused on older people.
- Applied research to seek causes and solutions to significant problems that affect older adults.
- Organizational capacity building to help Illinois-area nonprofits serving older people make long-term improvements in their management, governance, or organizational development.

CHARTING A MORE PROACTIVE GRANTMAKING STRATEGY

The RRF strategic plan sets out three primary goals to:

- **Achieve greater impact through proactive and focused grantmaking within our priority areas**
We will use a forward looking and strategic approach, specifically targeted in four priority areas (see below) that are critical to improving the quality of life as we get older.
- **Foster opportunities for collaborative grantmaking and co-funding**
Recognizing that we cannot achieve our mission and vision alone, we will seek partnerships that leverage the Foundation's financial assets and expand their impact.
- **Advance and share knowledge by communicating the Foundation's lessons and grantee outcomes**
This work will lift up the voice of the Foundation and its grantees in order to build the field and amplify the influence of the Foundation's investments on behalf of older adults.

ESTABLISHING RRF'S FOUR PRIORITY AREAS

RRF identified the core building blocks of older adults' quality of life, and our strategic plan sets out four areas in which our grantmaking will focus:



CAREGIVING

Ensuring that care partners (including family, friends, or neighbors) are informed, well-trained, and supported as they care for older people in community settings

An estimated 43.5 million family members, friends, or neighbors are helping older adults in the U.S. to age in community.¹ This care is valued financially at \$470 billion, a level exceeding all publicly funded services combined.² Caregiving can exact a significant physical, emotional, and financial toll. While not yet widely available, numerous proven interventions have demonstrated important benefits for caregivers and/or those for whom they are caring.



ECONOMIC SECURITY IN LATER LIFE

Ensuring and protecting the economic security and well-being of older people

Economic security for older people is defined as having access to the income, assets, and community-based supports necessary to meet basic needs in retirement. This includes access to housing, healthcare, nutrition, transportation, household essentials, and long-term care, if necessary. RRF envisions that all of us as we age will have the means to achieve a secure and dignified retirement.



HOUSING

Promoting efforts that make housing more affordable and provide coordinated services that enable older people to live safely in community settings

Access to affordable housing with supportive services, if needed, is one of the most essential components to whether or not we can age well. Older persons living in the community now do so in a range of settings, from their own homes to independent senior housing, congregate supportive housing, and co-housing. In order for us to live in the community as we get older, housing must be accessible and safe, promote social connectedness, and provide access to health and social services.



SOCIAL AND INTERGENERATIONAL CONNECTEDNESS

Strengthening social bonds through efforts that promote meaningful social connections, including those that span generations

Accumulating evidence suggests that social isolation, and accompanying loneliness, presents a significant risk to our physical and mental health and puts our independence at risk.³ At the same time, research suggests that ageist language, which separates generations, contributes to a sense of isolation, as well as to negative perceptions (and even self-perceptions) of older adults. Conversely, studies show that meaningful intergenerational programming may help to redress this ageism, reduce social isolation and enhance our physical and mental well-being.



OTHER PROMISING OPPORTUNITIES IN AGING

While these priority areas reflect RRF Foundation for Aging's primary funding interests, we remain open to supporting well-developed, promising projects on a selective basis. These projects will be particularly innovative, time-sensitive, collaborative and/or present a strategic opportunity to promote positive perceptions of aging.

RRF FOUNDATION FOR AGING: OUR GRANTMAKING FRAMEWORK

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Vision

Mission

Values

GRANTMAKING FOCUS

Priority Areas

Emerging Areas

Housing

Economic Security

Caregiving

Social & Intergenerational Connectedness

Other promising opportunities

PATHWAYS

Advocacy

Direct Service

Professional Education and Training

Research

Organizational Capacity Building

Some pathways have geographic restrictions. See funding guidelines for details.

LOOKING AHEAD

For more than 40 years, RRF Foundation for Aging has been a leader in aging philanthropy and a champion for older people. This strategic plan embodies our continuing commitment to RRF's mission and a renewed commitment to advancing the Foundation's vision for the future.

Moving forward, we will be increasingly focused and proactive, with a greater desire to be specific, intentional, and strategic. As we carry out this plan, we anticipate learning valuable lessons, sharing our insights, and seeing important gains as we strive to improve the quality of life for older people. As always, our success is bound up in the success of our grantees and other partners. We cannot achieve our ambitious vision on our own, and we look forward to productive collaborations that move this critical work forward and that make ensure all of us have the best lives possible as we get older.

1. Source: Family Caregiver Alliance

2. Source: AARP Public Policy Institute

3. Not all older adults who live alone and are socially isolated experience loneliness and its detrimental effects.

STAY IN TOUCH!



RRF Foundation for Aging