

2010 Knight Community Information Challenge Winners

Recipient: ACT For Alexandria

Project: ACTion Alexandria

Award: \$102,000

To encourage community problem-solving in Alexandria, Va., this effort will create an online site where residents can post problems, debate solutions and decide on a course of action. While email lists have greatly improved the way neighbors disseminate local information, this project aims to provide the next generation platform for communities to freely share their thoughts and beliefs and act on them to improve their city.

Recipient: Akron Community Foundation

Project: Digital Media Center

Award: \$350,000

In order to strengthen community news and information-sharing, this grant will create a new digital media academy that trains residents to share news and information about their neighborhoods using cutting-edge technology. Citizen journalists of all ages will be given the training and tools to express their individual voices through the creation of news stories, music, documentaries, videos and other projects. Uploaded content will be broadcast on an open-application portal provided by the Akron Beacon Journal, which citizens can then tap into using their mobile phones, computers and other emerging technologies.

Recipient: Arkansas Community Foundation

Project: Write for Arkansas

Award: \$252,000

In order to provide more in-depth coverage of local issues, this project will add five reporters to cover community and economic development issues for community newspapers in Arkansas. The reporters

will write articles for print and blog about their communities and experiences on a new Write for Arkansas Web site. The additional reporting staff will help Arkansas residents and leaders have a greater understanding of the state's challenges and needs. Meanwhile, the project's online component will chronicle local issues from across the state and open a new channel of communication allowing residents to participate in the news.

Recipient: California Community Foundation

Project: Be Counted, Represent

Award: \$72,000

To encourage Los Angeles-area Latinos to participate in the U.S. census, this grant will help launch a dual Internet-mobile phone application. Voto Latino – A Census Challenge Game will target Latino youth to take an online pledge to be counted and give them an opportunity to become virtual 2010 Census recruiters by tapping others in their social networks to do the same. The site will also stream viral videos with celebrity-driven public service announcements that highlight the importance of participating in the census. The project, in partnership with the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund and Voto Latino, will provide accurate, instant bilingual information about the importance of participating in the census as it impacts federal funding and political representation.

Recipient: Centre County Community Foundation

Project: Central Pennsylvania 2-1-1

Award: \$225,000

In order to provide residents with vital civic information, this grant will help launch a 2-1-1 phone information service in 15 Pennsylvania counties. Residents will have access to round-the-clock answers to questions about local services for basic needs and emergencies, as well as general community information. While there will also be an online component, much of this area is without broadband Internet access, and phone service is likely to be the primary link.

Recipient: The Chicago Community Trust

Project: Community News Matters

Award: \$202,000

To stimulate new ways to provide the Chicago region with critical local news and information, The Chicago Community Trust has launched “Community News Matters,” a grant program to support the city’s media innovators. The Knight Foundation support will help fund projects designed to increase the flow of high-quality information to the public and to develop new distribution and business models. In addition, the Trust will conduct a study examining the region’s information infrastructure – its strengths and weaknesses – and convene a conference on the topic.

Recipient: Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan

Project: GreenSpace

Award: \$352,000

To encourage support for creating more livable communities, this grant will develop an information hub for the seven-county region of southeast Michigan that will inform residents about how to be good stewards of the area’s natural resources. The “GreenSpace” project will bring together all the available information on the topic – benefitting anyone from a family searching for a place to hike or bike, to a resident advocating for more parks and recreation and a government official developing land use policy. The hub will encourage users to contribute content and share links to information, helping to nurture leadership and action on important issues.

Recipient: The River Partnership of Community Foundations

Project: River Partnership Online Network

Award: \$141,000

In an effort to inform and engage residents around Mississippi River issues, a coalition of community foundations within the River Partnership of Community Foundations will launch a series of local Web sites that translate national and regional stories into the local context. Also, on the Web, residents will be able to make their voices heard on issues of water quality and the importance of sustainable development on the rivers’ shores while picking up tips to help river life.

Recipient: Community Foundation of Greater South Wood County

Project: Community Information Action Agenda

Award: \$152,000

In order to help meet the Wisconsin Rapids area's information needs, the community foundation will evaluate the region's changing media landscape, pinpoint strengths and weaknesses and create a community information action agenda. The plan formed will raise awareness about the availability of quality local news and information and broadband access while fostering support and partnerships for funding solutions.

Recipient: Community Foundation of New Jersey

Project: Public Interest News Service

Award: \$352,000

Expanding coverage of New Jersey state issues, this grant will help create a public interest news service that provides continuously updated online news, a weekly newsletter and online discussion forums. Analytical articles will provide useful tools so that residents, civic organizations and industry can relate the stories and data to their own communities. Also, the site will provide a place for residents to connect with each other and lawmakers on pressing issues. The site strives to increase local knowledge and understanding of statewide policy.

Recipient: The Community Foundation of North Florida

Project: We the People

Award: \$72,000

In an effort to revitalize the dialogue among the city's diverse residents, this grant will help launch "The Village Square: We the People," a 21st century virtual and real world public square. The project will offer unique town hall forums in addition to constructive online engagement and a community problem-

solving Wiki. Organizers aim to renew Tallahassee's marketplace of ideas where good solutions rise from an informed citizenship, and where abundant information can be channeled into constructive results.

Recipient: Coral Gables Community Foundation

Project: Gables Home Page

Award: \$130,000

To help strengthen community dialogue, this grant will support GablesHomePage.com, a real-time source for news including information by and about the area's mature residents. This year, the site will add two partnerships: one with the University of Miami's student newspaper for timely sports and campus coverage, and another with The Miami Herald, which will use Gables Home Page as a source for news and information. In addition Gables Home Page will provide a free venue for residents to post news, photos, commentary (blogs) and classifieds.

Recipient: Duluth Superior Area Community Foundation

Project: TheDuSu.com

Award: \$122,000

To attract and retain young adults in Duluth and Superior, the community foundation created TheDuSu.com, an online portal designed to help young adults share information and ideas. Currently, the portal provides information on working, living, playing and connecting in the Twin Ports. This grant will help increase site interactivity, enhance content, conduct research and increase guerrilla marketing tactics so TheDuSu can better provide the information young people need to thrive in the area.

Recipient: Greater Lowell Community Foundation

Project: Open Indicators Consortium

Award: \$62,000

Despite the increasing availability of data, and the technology to analyze it deeply, the average person's informed voice is missing in much of the public discourse in vital areas like health care, education and job growth. Debate is often defined by experts, lobbyists and pundits. As a counterweight to that trend, four community foundations in Massachusetts, Rhode Island and Connecticut will engage a range of local stakeholders to help develop easy-to-use and highly consumable analytical and visualization tools. They will include charts, maps, scorecards, dashboards, narrations and animations that reflect local stakeholders' needs and preferences. These tools will ultimately help transform the quality and breadth of public discourse in communities, and eventually in the nation. In addition to the Greater Lowell Community Foundation, the project partners include The Boston Foundation, The Rhode Island Foundation and The Community Foundation for Greater New Haven.

Recipient: Gulf Coast Community Foundation of Venice

Project: The Florida Independent

Award: \$352,000

In order to strengthen investigative reporting in Florida, Gulf Coast Community Foundation of Venice, the Community Foundation of Central Florida and the Center for Independent Media will create a nonprofit, statewide online news network. The Florida Independent will provide original investigative reports on subjects currently under-covered at the state level and link communities' issues with reporting in the state capital. Experienced Florida journalists will lead coverage of topics such as aging, health care, housing and social services and use online tools to engage with and connect interested residents. An advisory board will ensure fairness. The site will strive to safeguard the public's interest by providing critical information on issues that affect Floridians.

Recipient: Hartford Foundation for Public Giving

Project: ctmirror.org

Award: \$302,000

To increase access to unbiased Connecticut news and information, this grant will help launch an online site offering news, information and discussion about the state's government and public policy. Providing insight and analysis, the site will disclose the "whys" and consequences of public policy

decisions. It will use the vast capacity of the Internet to provide data from voting records and school test scores to original source documents in ways that are accessible and searchable. The project will also provide channels for information to flow from the people to public officials, through online public hearings, issue forums and conversations. Additionally, it will offer a diversity of opinions through op-ed articles and moderated reader feedback.

Recipient: Health Foundation of South Florida

Project: Health News Florida

Award: \$302,000

To strengthen knowledge of local health issues, the foundation will expand Health News Florida's coverage in three cities: Tallahassee, Bradenton and Miami. Reporters will be assigned to these areas, significantly increasing the amount of original reporting produced. Stories will be available to the public at no charge on the Web site and through e-alerts in addition to being reprinted by newspapers statewide directly and through the Associated Press. The information will help Florida residents make more informed choices about health policy and their personal care. The grant will also help Health News Florida develop a sustainable business model.

Recipient: Lander Community Foundation

Project: WyoFile.com

Award: \$122,000

To increase the availability of information on complex state issues, this grant will support WyoFile.com, which examines Wyoming public policy and politics. Historically, Wyoming's economy and culture have been rooted in natural resource industries including agriculture, timber, mining and oil and gas development. Like many energy colonies with small populations and vast landscapes, industrial proponents have heavily influenced Wyoming policies. WyoFile.com will increase its staff and reporting budget to further engage Wyoming's residents, lawmakers, educators and business people through an independent, alternative source of content and analysis.

Recipient: Northern Chautauqua Community Foundation

Project: County Bounty

Award: \$94,400

To raise awareness of local history, needs and resources, this grant will help create an online treasure hunt in Chautauqua County, New York. A sprawling rural area with 44 municipalities, communities tend to be insular, which impedes regional progress. Many residents are unaware of the area's rich history and cultural assets. Brain drain is a concern, with many younger residents moving away. County Bounty, an online treasure hunt, will showcase the county and increase community pride while aiming to engage and retain residents under 40.

Recipient: Rhode Island Foundation

Project: Community Forums

Award: \$102,000

As a way to promote community engagement around pressing concerns in a state where residents are known for their fierce independence, this grant will create a series of forums to be broadcast on public radio station WRNI. The conversations will also continue online through various social media. The project strives to unite Rhode Islanders around major issues in health, education, arts, the environment, economic development and human services. Presenting in-depth information and a balance of perspectives will encourage innovative solutions to the problems contributing to Rhode Island's economic challenges.

Recipient: Silicon Valley Community Foundation

Project: Envision Bay Area

Award: \$302,000

As a way to increase resident involvement in Northern California's pressing land use issues, this grant will help launch an Internet, public radio, television and community information campaign called "Envision Bay Area." Land use planning is a mystery to many people, yet it has a great impact on their

lives and the community. Using a series of “what if” scenarios enhanced by visualization tools, this project will provide residents with the information they need to develop a deeper understanding of policy decisions and their impact.

Recipient: The Community Foundation Serving Boulder County

Project: READY. GET SET. LEARN

Award: \$104,000

To raise awareness about the importance of school readiness for at-risk children, this grant will help launch a digital information campaign in Boulder, Colorado. The Community Foundation has collected ten years of research showing that the achievement gap is a major problem facing Boulder County. The gap will continue to widen until the community invests further in early childhood education. But the broader community hasn't fully grasped the issue's importance. The READY. GET SET. LEARN campaign will help parents, business leaders and the general public understand that there is a direct connection between a community's investment in early childhood education and the achievement gap that weighs down otherwise high-performing school systems. The campaign aims to create a groundswell of voices calling for someone to improve access to quality early care and education for Boulder County's at-risk preschool students.

Recipient: The New York Community Trust

Project: Beyond Bullets

Award: \$62,000

As a way to raise the collective consciousness about the impact of gun violence, this grant will help launch a media campaign using youth reporters and roving anti-gun film festivals. Television, movies and music videos normalize carrying weapons and glamorize them as a source of personal power, the American Academy of Pediatrics says. Meanwhile, news media focus on sensational stories about gun-related homicides, but rarely work to illuminate the causes or portray effective community solutions. The Beyond Bullets media campaign will challenge the mainstream entertainment and news media's narrative. The effort will offer in-depth youth reporting on the causes and costs of gun violence, and the unheralded – yet strong – efforts to combat it.

Recipient: Michigan's Children, a partner of The Skillman Foundation

Project: KidSpeak Neighborhood News

Award: \$126,000

As a way to boost involvement in Detroit issues, this grant will help create a multi-media youth news service, where student reports will focus on neighborhoods and schools. Close to 40 percent of Detroit's population is functionally illiterate, and many Detroit parents lack a high school diploma – creating obstacles to their children's success. Also, many low-income families don't have the Internet access that could bring them vital information about their communities. Engaging families by providing opportunities for their children to create high quality content will help fill the communications gap, bring young voices into public debate and empower residents and communities to create positive changes.