

FOUNDATION
FOR THE
MID SOUTH



Foundation for the Mid South

*The **Foundation for the Mid South** is a regional, nonprofit organization created to enhance the region – by focusing on **economic development, education, and families and children.***

Supported solely by private philanthropic resources, FMS makes grants to and develops worthwhile programs for communities in Arkansas, Louisiana, and Mississippi.

Foundation for the Mid South

Mission Statement

The Foundation for the Mid South invests in people and strategies that build philanthropy and promote racial, social, and economic equity in Arkansas, Louisiana, and Mississippi.

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Economic Impact

*Since its inception in 1990, FMS has caused over **\$150 million** to be invested in Arkansas, Louisiana, and Mississippi for social change purposes which would not otherwise have been made.*

The Communities of Opportunity Program for Achieving Social Change



Adopting Community Change

The outcome of a successful community transformation is the creation of healthy communities for residents and businesses through resident inclusiveness and focusing on the needs and interests of the community.



Adopting Community Change

“Community change has a universal point of entry – *building relationships* and *social capital* among residents and ultimately, between residents and resource-holding institutions (Hyman, 2002).”



Adopting Community Change

To adopt change, Communities of Opportunity should act on their own behalf by building on the attitudes and willingness of the residents to unite in support of community interests.



Characteristics of Comprehensive Community Change

In *Voices from the Field II: Reflections on Comprehensive Community Change*, The Aspen Institute™ outlines Comprehensive Community Change:

- *An **initiative** rather than a project or program;*
- *The financial and technical support is provided by **funders serving as the catalyst** for bringing communities together;*

Characteristics of Comprehensive Community Change

- *The community change initiative involves an explicitly **comprehensive approach**;*
- *The community change initiative promotes deliberate, **community-based planning** established on the interests of community residents;*
- *The community change initiative relies on **governance structures or collaborative partnerships** within the community;*

Characteristics of Comprehensive Community Change

- *The community change initiative draws on **external organizations** for training, technical assistance, research, and other supports;*
- *The initiative seeks **partnerships** between the community and external sources of political and economic power; and*
- *The initiative includes a **learning component**.*

Key Principles for Community Change

- **Comprehensiveness** – *to increase the likelihood of achieving positive results by addressing the social, economic, and physical conditions of a community; and*
- **Community Building** – *to emphasize the participatory processes that develop leadership, enhance “social capital” and personal networks, and strengthen a community’s capacity for improvement.*

Communities of Opportunity (COO)

*The **goal** of the initiative is to establish a long-term, sustainable, asset focused, **resident-driven** community change initiative in a Delta community in Arkansas and Mississippi.*



Criteria for Selecting Potential COO Pilot Sites

- *A community willing to address its serious social problems;*
- *A strong community economic base;*
- *Committed community leadership willing to work across race, age, class, gender, and organizational lines;*
- *A commitment to increase the power of low-wealth residents; and*
- *A willingness to reach consensus on the goals and strategies for community change.*



St. Francis County, Arkansas
Leflore County, Mississippi

Seven Components of the COO Initiative

- A COO council;

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- **A learning agenda; *and***

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- **Community development;**
- **A learning agenda; *and***
- **Building philanthropy.**

Planning Phase

- **Initial Community Organizing** (*November 2003- March 2004*)
- **Smart Communities Orientation** (*March*)
- **Customize LeadershipPlenty® Model for COO** (*April*)
- **LeadershipPlenty® Train-the-Trainer Institute** (*April – May*)
- **Local LeadershipPlenty Training and Asset Mapping**
(*May – September*)
- **Traditional and Non-Traditional Leaders Community Retreat** (*August and September*)

Planning Phase

- **Regional Early Childhood Education Taskforce and National COO Advisory Committee Meetings** (*October*)
- **Traditional Leaders Seminar** (*November*)
- **Release RFPs for Early Childhood Ed, CDC Housing Development, and Public School Grants** (*December*)
- **Community Liaison Selection** (*December*)
- **Community Liaison Training – Survey and Focus Group Administration** (*December 2004 – January 2005*)
- **Administer Survey I and II and Conduct Focus Group Meetings** (*December – February*)

Planning Phase

- **Release RFPs for Small Incorporated and Unincorporated Town Improvement Mini Grants**
(February)
- **Build Citizen Knowledge and Participation in COO Initiative** *(February)*
- **Release Communication Updates on COO Progress**
(February – ongoing)
- **Revise CDC Housing Development and Public School Improvement Proposals** *(February – March)*

Planning Phase

- **Compile and Distribute Results from Comprehensive Community Survey and Local Strategic Plans** (*March*)
- **Develop COO Council and Draft Outline of Comprehensive Plan** (*March*)
- **Finalize COO Council Structure and Submit Comprehensive Community Plan** (*May*)
- **Submit Priority Area Proposals for Funding** (*June*)
- **Announce Awarding of Priority Grants** (*September*)

Implementation Phase

- **Leadership Training** *across the sectors and within sectors;*
- **Asset Mapping** – *A geographically specific assessment of strengths and resources (human, programmatic, monetary, etc.);*
- **Coaching** *(external and internal resources);*
- *Implementation of* **County-Wide Plans;**
- *Ongoing* **Community Outreach;** *and*
- **Proposals** *for priority areas.*

Regional Profile

- *Database for each county*
- *FMS Indicators web-site (www.fmsindicators.org)*

Initiative Partnerships

- *Tri-State Extension Service and United States Department of Agriculture;*
- *Enterprise Corporation of the Delta;*
- *Entergy - Community/Economic Development;*
- *Local Initiative Support Corporation (LISC); and*
- *As the Initiative expands, other (Regional and National) partners will be added.*

for more information

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The logo for the Fond Mid South Foundation is a vertical rectangle with a light beige background. It features the text "FOUNDATION FOR THE" at the top, "Mid South" in the middle, and a map of the Mid-South region at the bottom.

for more information

on our programs and events, visit our website at

www.fndmidsouth.org

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