

Wean Foundation Advances Racial Equity Outcomes with Strategic Grantmaking and Fall Programming

(June 18, 2021 – Warren, Ohio) As the Mahoning Valley emerges from the pandemic, the Wean Foundation announced its next round of grants, noted progress towards its racial equity outcomes and released its fall programming. “As demonstrated through our June community investment grants, we are committed to a strategic approach to rebuild,” says Jennifer Roller, Wean Foundation president.

Grant Announcements

COVID-19 Response Grants became a singular focus in 2020. As the recovery progressed, the Wean Foundation, the Community Foundation of the Mahoning Valley and the Youngstown Foundation drew their joint COVID-19 Response Grants to a close. To date, the Wean Foundation funded a total of \$527,775, including \$106,475 in 2021 focused on stabilization in Warren and Youngstown Black and Hispanic/Latinx communities.

Through the thoughtful review of its Resident Council, **Neighborhood SUCCESS Grants** infused \$49,575 directly into community initiatives in Warren and Youngstown. Significantly, the leadership makeup of those receiving grants was representative of the community with 46% Black-led, 16% Hispanic/Latinx-led and 39% White-led. Grants were equally distributed to Warren and Youngstown neighborhoods.

The Foundation made four **Community Investment Grants** with existing grantees among those first considered to ensure sustainability:

- **National Inventors Hall of Fame** for its Invention Project in partnership with Warren City Schools to support a nine-week afterschool program for 50 students of color led by Hall of Fame inventors and entrepreneurs who look like them. Students will learn the processes of ideation, product development and marketing and be exposed to new possibilities in education and career paths.
- **Ohio Transformation Fund** for general operating costs that deploy resources to frontline advocates and organizers combating racial disparities in mass criminalization and incarceration in Ohio's communities through direct work, electoral engagement and policy advocacy.
- **Policy Matters Ohio** for general operating costs that address the impacts of the pandemic and systemic racial injustice, supporting policy development and advocacy for an equitable recovery and reimagining of Ohio's economy.
- **Kent State University – Trumbull** for its pilot 2+2 Pathway Program, a bachelor's degree completion and workforce readiness program designed to ensure justice-involved learners at Trumbull Correctional Institution are in a better position to navigate the emerging economy.

Desired Racial Equity Outcomes

The Wean Foundation continues to progress towards its Racial Equity Strategic Direction 2019 – 2023. Stakeholder surveys and interviews are being conducted to inform the further development of the Desired Racial Equity Outcomes (DREO) for each of the Foundation's key areas of focus, including:

- **Grantmaking:** To fund development and implementation of viable solutions led by organizations whose leadership

reflects the racial demographics of the communities they serve.

- **Capacity Building:** To support sustainable Black and Hispanic/Latinx-led organizations.
- **Convening and Partnerships:** To define challenges, formulate solutions and take collective action with Black and Hispanic/Latinx-led organizations who have a stake in the decisions being made.
- **Operations:** To create and sustain a culture that challenges racism.

Fall Programming

The Wean Foundation looks to a revitalized set of 2021 programs as the region continues to see the pandemic recede, including:

- **Emerging Leaders Program:** The next cohort will convene beginning in the third quarter 2021. Along with core leadership tenets, the program will incorporate learning from the dual pandemics of 2020 and focus on racial equity and economic opportunity.
- **Race Equity and Inclusion Workshop:** To date, 62 individuals have participated in the 2021 REI virtual training thru May, bringing the overall total to nearly 600 community participants. The Phase 1, two-day workshop will resume in August followed by two fall sessions in October and November.

Details for both programs will be shared via the Foundation's website and on social media.