



# SORH Philanthropic Case Studies

## SOUTH CAROLINA OFFICE OF RURAL HEALTH

**Funder:** The Fullerton Foundation. A South Carolina family foundation with a mission to improve quality of life in the Carolinas, primarily through investments in healthcare.

**Support Provided by Funder:** \$50,000 over one year.

**Project Description:** The South Carolina Office of Rural Health historically worked to improve access to healthcare for rural residents. As this work increasingly touched on social determinants of health, leadership decided to closely examine how these factors were affecting the health of rural residents and create action steps based on community feedback.

With funding from the Fullerton Foundation in 2017, the South Carolina Office of Rural Health led the development of the SC Rural Health Action Plan, a broad roadmap for improving the health status of rural communities. This effort included input from community leaders across multiple sectors and resulted in 15 recommendations and 50+ action steps to guide collaborations among the health, housing, educational, and employment sectors. Additionally, a lead strategist was hired to implement the action steps over the next 3-5 years following the publication of the document.

**Tips for Developing Relationships with Funders:** Consistent communication with the funder is key. In addition to providing requested reports, sharing compelling qualitative data is important. Lastly, ensure the funder is connected to your organization's social media, newsletter, or regular organization-wide information.

**Funder:** The BlueCross® BlueShield® of South Carolina Foundation — a statewide funder dedicated to supporting projects that aim to promote the health of South Carolinians and to increase access to health care for the economically disadvantaged. The BlueCross BlueShield of South Carolina Foundation is an independent licensee of the Blue Cross Blue Shield Association.

**Support Provided by Funder:** Eight years of funding to date.

**Project Description:** The Blueprint for Health initiative was developed to address local health and social issues after identifying gaps in rural communities. The SC Office of Rural Health (SCORH) has worked closely with rural health networks and various healthcare safety net networks around the state on community health initiatives, but there was still a need for support to look further upstream at the root causes of local health and social issues. The Foundation's priorities align with SCORH's mission, which has resulted in funding for related work over several years.

The Blueprint for Health initiative engaged diverse coalitions of local community leaders from multiple sectors to collaborate on the best ways to solve root causes of poor health. The original scope of the initiative included an 18-month process with leadership development training and the construction of a vision for community health. The coalitions also received some seed capital to take on a project to accomplish a "small win." Over the years, the Blueprint for Health initiative has grown and the community-first approach has been adopted by other organizations.

**Tips for Developing Relationships with Funders:** Think outside of the box and be creative with your approach. However, you also must be sure that you are not outpacing the funder's approach. At the time of this award, the Foundation did not typically fund projects such as those that address the social determinants of health, which were outside of their traditional priorities.

## MICHIGAN CENTER FOR RURAL HEALTH

**Funder:** CDC Foundation. An independent nonprofit and the sole entity created by Congress to mobilize philanthropic and private-sector resources to support the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's critical health protection work.

**Support Provided by Funder:** \$100,000 for 12 months.

**Project description:** The CDC Foundation approached the Michigan Center for Rural Health (MCRH) with the intent to support rural vaccine hesitancy campaigns. The MCRH implemented the program with rural hospitals in two rural counties.

**Tips for Developing Relationships with Funders:** Be prepared to be very creative and responsive if a call comes from an interested funder.

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**Funder:** The Michigan Health Endowment Fund. An independent foundation created by the legislature to improve the health of Michigan residents, with special emphasis on the health of children and seniors.

**Proposed Funding:** \$500,000 over two years.

**Project Description:** The project was in response to a special Request for Proposal from the funder focusing on statewide health organizations. The implementation will provide remote patient monitoring in three rural areas of Michigan with three Critical Access Hospitals and their primary care clinics.

**Tips for Developing Relationships with Funders:** Have lunch with the foundation Program Officer once or twice a year.

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## MONTANA OFFICE OF RURAL HEALTH

**Funder:** Montana Healthcare Foundation. A health conversion foundation with a mission to provide funding and leadership to tackle Montana's toughest health problems.

**Support Provided by Funder:** \$150,000 combined for two related grants.

**Project Description:** The Montana Office of Rural Health received two grants, both in response to Requests for Proposal. The initial grant was to partner development and clinical rotation establishment for University of Washington School of Dentistry students. A second grant provided additional support for preceptor development, rotation sites, and establishing a framework for a dental training program in Montana.

**Tips for Developing Relationships with Funders:** Establish relationships outside of just asking for funding. Invite funders to larger partnership meetings to educate on work already underway. Add funder contacts to partner and media distribution lists.