

# What to know about the community foundations serving Connecticut

These 21 entities collect funding from donors to provide to local charitable organizations or causes.



There are 21 community foundations across Connecticut serving different parts of the state. adobestock

By **Lilli Iannella** | Updated Nov. 19, 2024 4:03 p.m.



For those looking to [donate money to nonprofits or community-based initiatives in Connecticut](#), community foundations can help.

According to the [Connecticut Council for Philanthropy \(CCP\)](#), a community foundation is a charitable entity that manages endowment funds dedicated to serving local purposes. The foundations act as a funder of local nonprofits, according to the [Main Street Community Foundation](#), and rather than providing services, they provide organizations financial support and guidance to help identify and fulfill the needs of the local community.

Anyone from the community – individuals, families, nonprofits and for-profit businesses – can establish or donate to a fund, which has a specific purpose designated by the donor, according to the [Main Street Community Foundation](#). The purposes of the funds can cover areas like arts and culture, community and economic development, education, health, human services, environment and animals, as defined by the [CCP's data on funding by subject area in 2021](#).

Generally, funds aim "to improve the quality of life for people" in a certain area, according to the [Connecticut Community Foundation](#).

Across Connecticut and its eight counties, there are a total of 21 community foundations, said Karla Fortunato, the president of the CCP, and each community foundation serves specific towns or areas.

Some community foundations serve only one town and are run by volunteers, and others serve whole regions and are staffed with professional advisors, Fortunato explained.

Foundations across Connecticut distribute millions of dollars to nonprofits and community initiatives each year. For instance, according to [its website](#), the Community Foundation for Greater New Haven gave out \$32 million in grants and distributions in 2023 among its 1,000 charitable funds "to help fulfill the missions of hundreds of nonprofits" across its 20 town region.

Another foundation, the [Hartford Foundation for Public Giving](#), has distributed \$104.5 million in grants over the past two years to its [over 1,500 charitable funds](#), said Bradford Drazen, the foundation's vice president of communications and marketing.

The foundation serves close to 30 towns in the greater Hartford area and is one of Connecticut's biggest community foundations. They're tasked with partnering with donors to create funds supporting some of the Hartford area's most pressing issues, which includes "taking steps to dismantle structural racism and advance equity in social and economic mobility for communities of color," Drazen said.

For example, among its 1,500 charitable funds are its [three giving circles](#), the Latino Endowment Fund, Black Giving Circle Fund and the Catalyst Endowment Fund, Drazen referenced. Each year, members of the foundation discuss critical issues in each circle and choose a topic to focus funding on, according to the giving circles webpages. Past topics have included job training for veterans, access to mental healthcare for Black boys and men and leadership training for Latino youth, the webpages list.

"Both leadership and partnership are necessary to meet our region's most pressing challenges," Drazen said in an email. "We are committed and ready for the task—and we need you."

## Connecticut's community foundations

Each serves a specific town or region and dedicates funds toward different philanthropic goals.

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FOUNDATION

COUNTY

> **Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation**

Litchfield

> <b>Community Foundation of Eastern Connecticut</b>	New London, Windham
> <b>Community Foundation of Greater New Britain</b>	Hartford
> <b>Community Foundation of Middlesex County</b>	Middlesex
> <b>Connecticut Community Foundation</b>	New Haven, Litchfield
> <b>Essex Community Fund</b>	Middlesex
> <b>Fairfield County's Community Foundation</b>	Fairfield
> <b>Hartford Foundation for Public Giving</b>	Hartford, Tolland
> <b>Main Street Community Foundation</b>	Hartford, Litchfield, New Haven
> <b>Meriden-Wallingford Community Foundation</b>	New Haven
> <b>New Canaan Community Foundation</b>	Fairfield
> <b>Northwest Connecticut Community Foundation</b>	Litchfield, Hartford
> <b>South Windsor Community Foundation</b>	Hartford
> <b>The Community Foundation for Greater New Haven</b>	New Haven

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