



Madison

COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

September 15, 2026

madisongives.org

A Fund For Women Announces 2026 Grant Awards



Last month, A Fund for Women awarded \$164,000 in grants to 13 local organizations that provide programs and support to empower women and girls and strengthen their opportunities for success.

AFFW grants support a range of programs designed to help women overcome barriers and build pathways toward economic security. Programs provide financial literacy, workforce development, childcare, education, mentorship, career pathways, housing stability and support for women facing barriers to employment.

"These grants reflect the many ways that economic security can change the trajectory of a woman's life. From gaining new skills and accessing education to finding stable employment, safe housing and the support needed to move forward," said Angela Davis, MCF's Director of Grantmaking. "We are proud to invest in organizations that are creating meaningful opportunities for women and girls in our community, and we know that when women have the resources to thrive, families and communities are stronger, too."

AFFW Grants continues
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Support MCF's Impact
in the Community

MAKE A GIFT



Meet the Goodman Nonprofit Center 2026-2027 Fellows

A new cohort of nonprofit Executive Directors will begin the Goodman Nonprofit Center Fellowship at the end of September. Over the next year, these leaders will meet monthly to develop their leadership talents and strengthen their skills to increase their capacity for running their organizations.

“The Fellowship is demonstrating the power of gathering nonprofit leaders for sustained learning and mutual support,” stated Center Director, Andy Davey. “I am thrilled to welcome another group of leaders into this experience and to join the growing community of Fellows. I can’t wait to hear what conversations they’ll have and see what actions they’ll take as they learn from the instructors and one another.”

2026-2027 Fellows:

Verónica Castillo

Waunakee Neighborhood Connection

Maurice Cheeks

Madison Public Schools Foundation

Cara Erickson

Friends of San Damiano

Virginia Escudero

UNIDOS

Lisa Fiala

Red Caboose Child Care Center

Jennifer Gurske

Madison Trust for Historic Preservation

Goodman Fellows Introduction
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Advisor Blog: Transferring a Private Foundation?

Many families that have established private foundations choose to revisit the decision at some point, wondering whether the structure still makes sense for them. Over time, administration can become burdensome, and as the next generation assumes leadership, they may want to consider a simpler strategy for their giving. For them, transferring the foundation’s assets to a donor advised fund can offer a more flexible path forward.

If you and your clients are not already familiar with the general benefits of a donor advised fund, we have prepared a side-by-side comparison of donor advised funds and private foundations. A donor-advised fund can reduce administrative responsibilities, eliminate many of the complex tax compliance requirements and allow families to focus more fully on their charitable goals rather than ongoing operations.

The mechanics of transition are straightforward

The technical mechanics of making the transition are relatively straightforward. While the process varies by jurisdiction, it typically works as follows:

- The private foundation’s governing body approves transfer of the assets to a donor advised fund, followed by dissolution of the foundation. The process for receiving this approval depends on how the foundation is structured. If the foundation is structured as a nonprofit corporation, the approval and dissolution process is usually governed by its articles of incorporation or bylaws. If the foundation is structured as a trust, the terms of the trust typically outline the process for approval and dissolution.

Transferring a Private Foundation
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AFFW Grants continued from page 1

African Center for Community Development

\$15,000 for Leader Champions Fellowship Program for Black Immigrant Women. Provides training, mentorship and skill-building for Black immigrant women.

Centro Hispano

\$15,000 for Cultivating Wealth. Expands financial education programs for Latina girls and women, helping families build wealth across generations.

Dane County Parent Council

\$15,000 for Wee Start Support. Provides a licensed childcare classroom at Capital High School.

Foundation for Dane County Parks

\$15,000 for Women in Natural Resource Management. Provides training for women in conservation careers, with a focus on land restoration and environmental stewardship.

Friends of the Odyssey Project

\$14,500 for Supporting Odyssey Women Students. Offers assistance to students so they can overcome socioeconomic barriers that may prevent them from graduating.

Gay Straight Alliance for Safe Schools (GSAFE)

\$10,000 for a permanent leadership and mentor program for transgender and gender diverse young adults.

Lake View Community School

\$14,500 for Stable Steps Fellowship – From Second Shift to Salary: Paid Pathways for Women in Education. Creates career pathways for five women to begin careers in education through paid tutoring positions.

Madison Area Community Land Trust

\$15,000 for Building Stability and Economic Resilience for Women Homeowners. Supports women homeowners with financial coaching and home maintenance education, ensuring long-term housing stability.

Midwest Mujeres

\$5,000 for Voices and Dreams Academy. Elevates Latina voices through storytelling and mentorship, inspiring leadership and confidence among participants.

OutReach LGBTQ+ Community Center

\$5,000 for Gender Affirming Closet. Supplies access to a gender affirming professional wardrobe free of charge.

The Road Home Dane County

\$10,000 for Women's Employment and Education Fund. Provides financial assistance to remove barriers to finding and maintaining employment and furthering education.

UNIDOS Against Domestic Violence

\$15,000 for Stitching Hope: A Sewing Empowerment Program. Provides Latina survivors of domestic violence with job skills, income opportunities and community healing through sewing.

Worker Justice Wisconsin

\$10,000 for Incubating a Women Owned Cleaning Cooperative. Establishes a co-op for women in the cleaning industry to protect against exploitative working conditions.

Yada Project

\$20,000 for Economic Empowerment Program: Job Creation and Training. Creates job opportunities and training for women who face barriers to economic security.

*Have an idea for a story?
Have exciting news you'd like to share?
Join the conversation!*



Nonprofit Fellowship 2026-2027 Cohort continued:

Denise Hanson

Root 2 Rise

Kia Karlen

Madison Children's Museum

Dana Kelly

*Norwegian American Genealogical Center &
Naeseth Library*

Maria Loy Carson

Camp Hope

Justin Markofski

Madison Northside Planning Council

Kathleen McNeil

Law Forward

Meghan Mietchen

*Community Action Coalition for South Central
Wisconsin*

Stephanie Robinson

350 Wisconsin

Jordan Rozeske

Forward Learning Youth & Young Adults

Connie Vacho

Shelter from the Storm Ministries

Fellowship Schedule

September: Program Orientation and Being a Leader

October: Crafting a Powerful Value Proposition for Your Nonprofit and Programs to Match

November: Governance and Board Management

December: Financial Leadership

January: Marketing and Communications

February: Fundraising and Resourcing the Mission

March: Human Resources and Organizational Culture

April: Advocacy and Collective Impact

May: Strategy and Evaluation

Upcoming Dates to Remember

OCT

14

Advisor Webinar: The Basics of Land Trusts

This complimentary webinar will feature a presentation by Christopher Gutschenritter (Director, Land Conservation Law Program, Gathering Waters), followed by a Q&A. **Register Today.**

NOV

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National Philanthropy Day

AFP Greater Madison will host its 39th annual celebration to honor local individuals, businesses, and organizations for their dedication, compassion, and leadership in the community. Visit afpmadison.org



Transferring a Private Foundation continued from Page 2

- The private foundation's governing body selects a donor advised fund sponsor and establishes a donor advised fund that aligns with the foundation's giving priorities. This includes naming the person or people who will be advising current distributions from the fund, and the person or people who will be responsible for directing the fund's distributions in the future.
- The private foundation's governing body pays any outstanding pledges, attorney and accounting fees, and other administrative and operational expenses.
- Once any final pledges and expenses have been paid, the private foundation's governing body transfers the foundation's remaining assets to the donor advised fund.
- The private foundation then files its final Form 990-PF, as well as any required state filings related to its dissolution.

While these steps are important, the transition is ultimately about more than mechanics. It is an opportunity to reposition the family's philanthropy for the future — reducing administrative friction while preserving, and in many cases enhancing, the impact of the family's giving.

Communication is essential for a smooth transition

A truly successful transition requires going beyond the mechanics. An important aspect people often overlook is communication with grantees. Many private foundations have relationships with nonprofit organizations that have developed over years. In some cases, grantees may rely on the foundation for annual or recurring support.

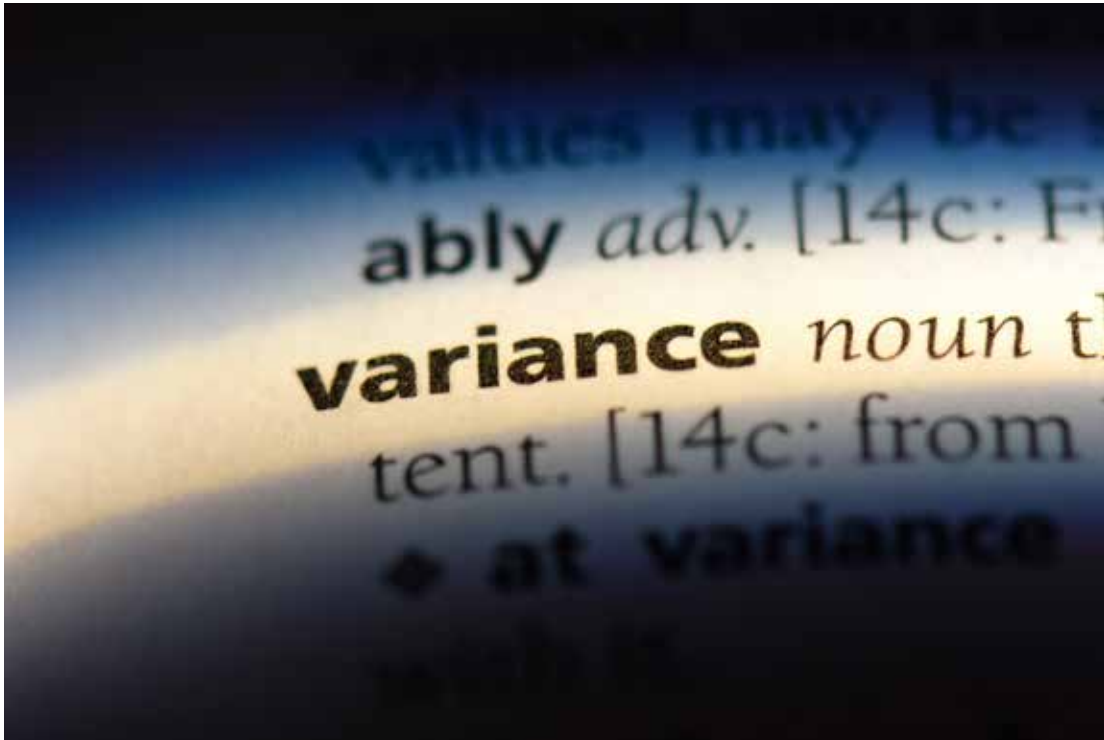
When a private foundation winds down, clear communication with grantees can avoid confusion or uncertainty. Here are four tips for helping your clients develop a communication plan for their transition to a donor advised fund:

1. Encourage them to communicate early and clearly with key grantees. Your client does not want nonprofits to hear about the transition from anyone else.
2. Resist the urge to overcomplicate things. A straightforward email message explaining that the private foundation is transitioning to a donor advised fund, and that the family remains committed to charitable giving, can go a long way.
3. If possible, have them reach out personally to each nonprofit grantee to ensure they received the email and answer any questions. This is not just a nice touch; it is a powerful way to maintain and deepen trust.
4. If they intend to continue supporting certain organizations, they can reassure those nonprofits that they can recommend future grants to them from the donor advised fund.

Madison Community Foundation is here to help you and your clients navigate both the technical and relational aspects of this process. Whether your client is ready to move forward now or simply beginning to explore options, our team is honored to work alongside you to ensure a smooth and thoughtful transition to support your clients' charitable objectives. Please contact us at 608-232-1763 or email us at legacy@madisongives.org to speak to a member of our Donor Engagement team.

Please note that this article has been prepared for informational purposes only, and is not intended to provide, and should not be relied on for, tax, legal or accounting advice.

Variance Power: Helping MCF Honor Donor Intent for Generations



When someone establishes a fund at Madison Community Foundation, they're doing more than making a gift. They're putting their trust in our organization to carry out their wishes – not just today, but for years or even generations to come.

Variance power, which is a unique feature of a community foundation, is one of the tools we can use to do that, even as the community and the nonprofits that serve it change. Every fund we steward reflects the values, priorities and charitable goals of the person or organization that created it. Our responsibility is to understand that intent, preserve it and make sure it continues to have the greatest possible impact over time.

That's one of the things that sets a community foundation apart.

Keeping Your Charitable Vision Alive

Funds at MCF are governed by a fund agreement between the donor and the foundation. That agreement outlines the purpose of the fund and how grants will be made. For some funds, that means supporting a specific nonprofit organization. Others focus on a particular cause, such as the environment or the arts. Donor advised funds allow individuals and families to recommend grants to the charitable organizations they care about most.

No matter the type of fund, our role is the same: to steward it in a way that reflects the donor's original charitable intent.

Would you like to use your
IRA to support your giving?

LEARN HOW

But communities change. Organizations merge. Programs evolve. Occasionally, a nonprofit closes its doors altogether. That's where the unique strengths of a community foundation come into play.

Honoring Donor Intent Through Variance Power

Community foundations have what's known as variance power, a legal authority that allows our Board of Governors to modify a fund's restrictions if the original purpose becomes impossible to fulfill or no longer serves the community's charitable needs. The term may sound technical, but the purpose is remarkably simple: to protect donor intent.

Variance power does not mean that MCF can simply disregard a fund agreement. In fact, it's just the opposite. It gives us the ability to continue carrying out those wishes when circumstances change.

One Question to Guide the Conversation

Whenever our Board considers using variance power, the discussion begins with one question: What was the donor hoping to accomplish? The answer guides every decision.

The most common situation in which we might need to use variance power is when a nonprofit organization goes out of existence. Sometimes the organization is acquired or merged with another nonprofit and its programs are carried on by the surviving entity. In that case the decision may be straightforward: Redirecting the endowment fund to the successor nonprofit makes sense. Our fund agreements also give the liquidating entity the ability to give advice on which nonprofit should receive the fund's future distributions, although the final decision always rests with the MCF Board.

A Real-World Example

One of the best examples of MCF using its variance power to continue to serve donor intent came when Madison Repertory Theatre closed its doors. MCF held two significant endowment funds created through the Great Performance campaign to support the Rep's work. When the organization dissolved, there was no successor nonprofit to receive the annual distributions.

Rather than simply redirecting the funds to another organization, MCF's Board looked carefully at the intent behind the gifts. Donors had supported the Rep because they believed in bringing professional theater performances to our community. To honor that intent, the Board exercised its variance power to establish the Great Performance Fund for Theater, a field of interest fund that continues to support professional theater productions at Overture Center. Today, the fund distributes approximately \$125,000 each year to local theater organizations, ensuring those original charitable goals continue to benefit the community.

Stewardship That Lasts

This long-term stewardship is one of the defining characteristics of a community foundation. Commercial donor-advised fund providers can offer investment and grantmaking platforms, but they lack the local knowledge, community leadership and dedication to ensuring charitable funds continue serving the purposes donors intended – even decades into the future.

A Promise to Future Generations

Most funds will never require variance power. The organizations they support will continue their work for decades, and distributions will follow the original fund agreement exactly as intended. But when change does happen, donors can have confidence knowing their charitable legacy won't simply come to an end. Instead, Madison Community Foundation has both the responsibility and the ability to ensure their generosity continues making the kind of difference they envisioned.