

Regional Policy and Practice

Background

Most Americans live in urban areas that are organized as metropolitan regions that cut across neighborhood, municipal, county, and even state lines. As a result, the interests of cities and suburbs have converged. Problems once considered local now call for regional solutions. Larger issues, too — the globalization of the economy, environmental sustainability, growing economic disparities — increasingly call for regional responses.

But such responses face a formidable set of barriers, including jurisdictional fragmentation, suspicion of centralized government, fiscal disincentives, parochialism, and race and class discrimination. Moreover, the field of regional policy itself is new and relatively undeveloped, with major gaps in knowledge and practice. Nevertheless, there is growing interest in the field and many opportunities for innovation. The challenge is to build the capacity of people and organizations to address complex, interdependent issues by thinking and acting regionally.

Grantmaking Strategy

The Foundation seeks to foster regional thinking and action by strengthening the infrastructure for research and practice, and by building knowledge about the issues that lend themselves to a regional approach. Our practical efforts are focused, as they have been for more than a decade, in Chicago and South Florida. These two metropolitan areas face all the basic regional challenges, provide interesting contrasts, and offer significant opportunities for cross-learning about regional policy and practice. Our support for research efforts is national in scope.

Three objectives guide our grantmaking:

Build Institutional Capacity. Some regions continually innovate and outperform others, even as individual leaders and entities come and go. This is due in large part to the presence of organizations dedicated to advancing a regional approach to local problems, opportunities, and policy development. The Foundation seeks to reinforce these activities by providing multi-year operating support to a small number of institutions in Chicago and South Florida that raise the visibility, credibility, and accountability of regional thinking and action.

Enhance Network Effectiveness. In the past, regions were thought of as a level within a hierarchical system of governments — municipalities, counties, regions, and states. But effective regional action today often is based on more flexible, non-hierarchical

networks of interested parties, including the private and non-profit sectors as well as government; indeed, it is often non-governmental entities that take the lead. The Foundation supports a small number of these informal networks — operating in Chicago, South Florida, and nationally — that demonstrate regional thinking and take effective action.

Support Research to Inform Regional Decisionmaking. Policymakers increasingly seek solid, evidence-based information upon which to base their strategies for investment, growth, and services. In response to that need, the Foundation is constructing a research portfolio with the goals of providing guidance to local, regional, and state decisionmakers about key challenges affecting regions, and equipping them with practical strategies for addressing these challenges in a variety of regional contexts.

Implementation

The Foundation has developed a set of criteria for grantmaking to institutions. For example, the institution must have a primary mission of promoting and advancing a regional approach to local problems; it must have a record of accomplishment in the regional policy or practice arenas; and it must be involved in collaboration and coalition-building. Major grantees included in this strategy are the Metropolitan Planning Council and Chicago Metropolitan 2020 in Chicago, and the Collins Center for Public Policy and the Catanese Center at Florida Atlantic University in Florida.

Within the second objective, the Foundation supports three kinds of networks: groups of elected officials working across jurisdictions to address regional problems; networks whose purpose is to bring new constituencies and voices to a regional problem-solving process; and networks that demonstrate innovative structures and forms of governance. Examples include the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus, a network of 45 locally-elected officials in the Chicago region, and InternetCoast, a network of business leaders from three highly-competitive counties in South Florida, both of which are demonstrating that regional approaches and action can achieve more success than can a formal single-sector institutional approach.

Projects in the research portfolio include the Brookings Living Cities Census Series, which has analyzed the policy implications of demographic shifts seen in the 2000 census; the Metro Economy Project of the Brookings Metropolitan Policy Program, which will provide local and state leaders with tools for addressing regional economic challenges; and the Successful Regions project at the University of California at Berkeley, which will help local and state leaders understand the demographic, economic, and technological challenges facing regions, the ways to address these challenges, and the trade-offs inherent in different policy options.

Representative Grants

PRACTICE (CHICAGO AND SOUTH FLORIDA)

CENTER FOR NEIGHBORHOOD TECHNOLOGY,
Chicago, Illinois

\$400,000 in support of the Chicagoland Transportation and Air Quality Commission (over three years).

CHICAGO METROPOLIS 2020, *Chicago, Illinois*

\$900,000 in support of general operations (over three years).

CHICAGO METROPOLIS 2020, *Chicago, Illinois*

\$250,000 to develop a technology platform for a regional learning game.

CHICAGO WILDERNESS, *Skokie, Illinois*

\$600,000 in support of general operations and regranting to member organizations (over three years).

COLLINS CENTER FOR PUBLIC POLICY, *Miami, Florida*

\$900,000 in support of general operations (over three years).

FLORIDA ATLANTIC UNIVERSITY FOUNDATION,
Boca Raton, Florida

\$750,000 in support of the South Florida Regional Resource Center (over three years).

FLORIDA ATLANTIC UNIVERSITY, CATANESE CENTER FOR URBAN AND ENVIRONMENTAL SOLUTIONS,
Fort Lauderdale, Florida

\$100,000 to adapt a regional learning game for use in southeast Florida.

INTERNETCOAST ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COUNCIL, *West Palm Beach, Florida*

\$300,000 in support of general operations (over four years).

METROPOLITAN ALLIANCE OF CONGREGATIONS,
Chicago, Illinois

\$200,000 in support of the collaborative project Religion and the Metropolitan Challenge: Religious Communities and Regional Sustainability in Metropolitan Chicago (over two years).

METROPOLITAN PLANNING COUNCIL, *Chicago, Illinois*

\$900,000 in support of the Regional Action Agenda (over three years).

OPENLANDS PROJECT, *Chicago, Illinois*

\$200,000 in support of research and analysis on regional strategies for governing public open space in the Chicago region (over two years).

PROTESTANTS FOR THE COMMON GOOD, *Chicago, Illinois*

\$200,000 in support of the collaborative project Religion and the Metropolitan Challenge: Religious Communities and Regional Sustainability in Metropolitan Chicago (over two years).

REGIONAL BUSINESS ALLIANCE, *Fort Lauderdale, Florida*

\$300,000 in support of general operations (over three years).

SOUTH FLORIDA REGIONAL PLANNING COUNCIL,
Hollywood, Florida

\$250,000 for the State Road 7/U.S. 441 Corridor planning initiative (over three years).

ULI FOUNDATION, *Washington, D.C.*

\$250,000 in support of the Florida Regional Solutions Initiative (over three years).

NATIONAL/RESEARCH

BROOKINGS INSTITUTION, METROPOLITAN POLICY PROGRAM, *Washington, D.C.*

\$1,000,000 for an initiative on the economic transformation in American cities and metropolitan areas (over three years).

FUNDERS' NETWORK FOR SMART GROWTH AND LIVABLE COMMUNITIES, *Miami, Florida*

\$175,000 in support of general operations (over three years).

METROPOLITAN AREA RESEARCH CORPORATION, *Minneapolis, Minnesota*

\$165,000 in support of the creation of a Web tool for mapping data from the book *The Struggle to Grow Equitably: Sprawl, Taxes and Race in America's Regions*.

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, BERKELEY, INSTITUTE OF INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS, *Berkeley, California*

\$20,000 for a study to identify gaps in the literature about regional policy design and implementation.

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, BERKELEY, INSTITUTE OF URBAN AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT, *Berkeley, California*

\$400,000 in support of the first phase of the Successful Regions research project (over 18 months).

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