



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is a Community Foundation?

A community foundation is a tax-exempt public charity created by and for the people in a local area. It enables people with philanthropic interests to easily and effectively support the issues they care about either immediately or through their estates. Community foundations operate in perpetuity, meaning that gifts made to them will continue to grow and provide resources for their own community forever. Community foundations provide leadership, expertise and capital to address issues and serve as a resource for nonprofit, civic, government and philanthropic organizations.

The first community foundation was established in 1914 by Frederic Goff in Cleveland, who realized the value of creating a permanent endowment that would benefit citizens in his community for generations to come. Today there are more than 700 community foundations across the United States that serve as stewards of charitable giving.

When was the Community Foundation of Greater Birmingham created and how has it grown?

The Community Foundation of Greater Birmingham was created by community leaders in May of 1959 as the Greater Birmingham Foundation. The first Advised Fund was the Mervyn & Dora Sterne Fund. Today, the number of grantmaking funds has grown to more than 500, with an average size of \$416,347 and the largest fund more than \$17 million. Assets at year-end 2018 totaled \$212 million.

How are the funds of the Community Foundation invested?

The Investment Committee of the Board of Directors determines the investment policy of funds established with the Community Foundation of Greater Birmingham, Inc., a corporate form created in 1997. This policy is highly diversified and uses a number of different money managers. Individual grantmaking funds also may be established in trust format at one of several financial institutions.

Who has led the Community Foundation?

Christopher Nanni currently serves as President and CEO. Past Presidents/Executive Directors include Peggy Spain McDonald, 1964-1991; Sheila S. Blair, 1992-1997, Mimi W. Tynes, 1998-2000 and Kate Nielsen, 2000-2014.