EVALUATION & LEARNING
DATA BOOK 2021

Data Last updated: May 23, 2022
## OVERVIEW & PURPOSE OF EVALUATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>OVERVIEW &amp; PURPOSE OF EVALUATION</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## EVALUATION FOR ACCOUNTABILITY

- Living Into our Values | 6
- Achieving our Goals | 9

## EVALUATION FOR LEARNING

- Theory of Change Outcomes | 12
- Increased Capacity and Leadership | 13
- Community Mindsets on Health and Wellbeing | 15
- Relationships and Collaboration | 16
- Communities Exercise Influence | 17
- Better Policy Environment | 18
- Preventative Programs and Services | 19
- Funding for Reducing Social and Economic Barriers to Health | 20
- Current Portfolios | 21
- Early Childhood Initiative | 22
- American Indian Health & Wellbeing | 24
- GO! Grants | 26
- Policy Engagement | 28
- Responsive Grants | 29

## TRACKING LONG-TERM OUTCOMES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TRACKING LONG-TERM OUTCOMES</td>
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In traditional philanthropy, the foundation sets the metrics of success and requires the grantees to demonstrate that their work is meeting them. This is typically done by grantees spending countless hours on reports and evaluating their work against fixed goals even though the context has changed. The grantee turns in a report and hopes that it is read. It’s a one-way street where the grantee is accountable to the funder. Headwaters takes a different approach to evaluation.

We aim to ensure that the outcomes the Foundation is driving towards are dictated by our partners, not us. We created a reporting process centered around learning together, positioning grantees and the foundation as true partners in the work to improve health equity in Western Montana, and we developed accountability metrics for the community, as we strongly believe that the Foundation is accountable to the communities we serve. For Headwaters, we evaluate for three purposes.

1) **Accountability.** These are the measures used to hold Headwaters accountable to the communities we serve.

2) **Learning.** This captures data on what we are learning about progress towards the outcomes in our Theory of Change (as defined by our partners).

3) **Tracking.** We track long-term population health metrics over time to see if the strategies that Headwaters invests in are contributing to positive trends.
EVALUATION PURPOSES

Learning
Looking through the prism of learning offers a different view of evaluation. Rather than an accountability exercise, it becomes a powerful tool for improvement. And, rather than a function ‘outside’ an organization, evaluation is a part of every staff and board member’s job. It enhances the capacity of grantmakers and their grantees — as well as governments and communities — to understand and solve problems more effectively.

Accountability
When someone has a mission-based job, it is often harder to measure and hold them accountable. Evaluation standards should be based on specific goals, something measurable, attainable, and easily understood by both the employee and the manager.

Long-Term Outcome Indicators measure whether the program is achieving the expected effects/changes in the long-term. Some programs refer to their longest-term outcome indicators as impact indicators. Because outcome indicators measure the changes that occur over time, indicators should be measured at least at baseline (before the program/project begins) and at the end of the project. Long-term outcomes are often difficult to measure and attribute to a single program. However, that does not mean a program should not try to determine how they are contributing to the health impact of interest (e.g., decrease in morbidity related to a particular health issue).

“Evaluation in Philanthropy”; Grantmakers for Effective Organizations, 2010

“Performance Evaluations Can Help Workers Improve and Reach Their Goals”; The Chronicle of Philanthropy, April 22, 2004

From the CDC Program Performance and Evaluation Office
EVALUATION FOR ACCOUNTABILITY

This section captures data about our work and accountability measures.
LIVING INTO OUR VALUES
This section captures data and learning related to how we are living into our values as a Foundation.

NUMBER OF ORGANIZATIONS FUNDED
2021

111*

*55 have programs/services that serve American Indians

COUNTIES SERVED BY GRANTS
2021

GRANTS AWARDED BY CATEGORY
2021

• STRATEGIC INITIATIVE: 25
• GO! GRANTS: 85
• POLICY & INFLUENCE: 9

NUMBER OF ORGANIZATIONS FUNDED
2021

111*

*55 have programs/services that serve American Indians

COUNTIES SERVED BY GRANTS
2021

AMOUNT APPROVED BY GRANT TYPE
2021

$598,500.00
$2,450,000.00
$6,460,000.00

GO Grants  Policy Grants  Strategic Initiative Grants
LIVING INTO OUR VALUES
This section captures data and learning related to how we are living into our values as a Foundation.

“You make applying for a grant easy and stress free. It’s amazing to get funding to help with our general expenses and not just toward a specific project.”
-Bigfork Aces, June 2021

“When I talk to funders about how to really help small nonprofits get work done, I always mention Headwaters as an example of how respect for grantee staff time and resources can streamline the funding process. We are SO appreciative of all the ways that Headwaters prioritizes the needs of the grantees and the populations they serve, and shoulders on the work of satisfying the needs of your board and funders rather than passing that work on to us. It is, frankly, a little revolutionary. Your grantmaking process makes us feel more like partners, helping to mainline Headwaters resources to where they can make an impact, than applicants, forever striving to verify our trustworthiness and justify our existence (a job we do plenty of in other arenas). Thank you!”
-Flathead County Library Foundation, March 2021

“Thank you. Working with the Headwaters Team is a professional yet accessible experience, a rare combination in foundation support circles.”
-A Voice, April 2021

2021 Grantee Survey Responses

“I love that you gave choices for grant reporting!!! Very easy to work with and understanding!!”
-Salish Institute, August 2021

“The grant process was in depth yet very accessible. Thank you kindly!”
-Habitat for Humanity Missoula, September 2021

“I love the simplified application process and the willingness/availability of the Headwaters Foundation staff to answer questions or provide feedback when asked. Such a great foundation!”
-Promoting Excellence in Alberton-Area Kids Foundation, October 2021

“I really can’t think of anything. Headwaters is supportive, available and so willing to listen and help with any concerns that come up. I always feel supported and I am not afraid to reach out for clarification!”
-Butte 4-C’s, November 2021

“First Grant I have ever applied for and it was a wonderful experience thank you for making it so user friendly.”
-Postpartum Resource Group, May 2021

“The Headwaters staff is amazing. I have worked on a lot of grants. This is the most seamless, best, and transparent process in which I have ever participated. Thank you!”
-Jefferson Local Development Corporation, August 2021

“I wish you would put on a seminar for other grantors! Your process was easy to follow and intuitive and your response time was unbelievably fast!”
-Flathead Food Bank, June 2021

“Headwaters makes the process easy when applying for funding. As we are navigating through the pandemic, everyone especially Program Managers and Directors are stretched so thin that a typical grant application process can be grueling and in some cases unachievable because of time constraints. Working with Headwaters is like having a very trusting relationship with a good friend. The staff is very easy to communicate with and we are all working toward a common goal of making life better for our communities and the future of our children.”
-Helping Hands, October 2021
LIVING INTO OUR VALUES

This section captures data and learning related to how we are living into our values as a Foundation.

STAFF SURVEY RESPONSES- 2018-2021 COMPARISON

2021 GLASS POCKETS RATING

18/27 Indicators

(Headwaters’ rating in 2020: 10/27; other independent foundations averaged 15/27)

(Headwaters’ rating in 2020: 10/27; other independent foundations averaged 15/27)

(Source: glasspockets.org, December 2021)

2021 Support Beyond the Check Provided by Headwaters

38 convenings/meetings
30 webinars/conferences
34 tools provided
160 thought partnership hours
7 Blogs/Articles/Podcasts

Trust-Based Philanthropy Self-Reflection Tool: results by year and category

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<th>Practice</th>
<th>Board of Trustees</th>
<th>Executive Staff</th>
<th>Culture</th>
<th>Values</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<td>4.4</td>
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<td>4.9</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>4.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>2019</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>4.4</td>
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General Information
Governance and Policies
Staffing & DEI Policies/Data
Grantmaking
Planning & Performance
Financials
2021 WORK PLAN PROGRESS REPORT AND DASHBOARD

ACHIEVING OUR GOALS

This section captures progress against our 2021 yearly goals.

### Overall work plan level of delivery confidence:
- No significant risk to delivery
- Some risk to delivery
- Significant risk to delivery
- New to work plan
- Updated deadline

### Theory of Change Outcomes
- Community grievances influence
- Stronger relationships, cohesion, and collaboration
- Service availability and collective increase capacity and leadership
- More people to health

### Long-Term Goals

#### Related Theory of Change Outcomes:
- Achieving our goals

#### Annual Goals:
- Quarterly updates
- Q1 2021: Jan-Mar
- Q2 2021: Apr-Jun
- Q3 2021: Jul-Sep
- Q4 2021: Oct-Dec
- Q1 2022: Jan-Mar

#### Delivery Confidence:
- On track
- In progress
- Need improvement
- Not started

#### Achieve:
- Most of our goals will be achieved and shared among more than 20% of our partners, highlighting the importance of addressing social determinants of health.

#### Strengthen:
- Institutions and societal structures in western America to address wider resource core cuts.

#### Reduce:
- Health disparities faced by American Indian in Western Montana.

#### Build:
- The resilience of children ages 0-6 in western Montana.

#### Increase:
- Community cohesion and support in health of Western Montana.

#### Increase:
- Public health policies and engagement in communities in efforts that support the health of western Montana.

#### Continuously:
- Meet the financial and legal obligations for a robust foundation, including annual financial planning, sound and accurate budgeting, and ongoing fiscal governance.

#### Achieve:
- Operational excellence through strategic deployment, customer/patient focus, work process improvement, continuous measurement, and support for work environment.

#### Ensure:
- Strong organizational health for supporting successful outcomes and achieving our goals and upholding the organization’s vision.

#### Create:
- Public and democratic partnering processes of Mission.

#### Ensure:
- Mission, Western Montana, to community partners, leaders from our work, and the success of our work approaches to best serve our communities.
This section captures data and what we are learning about progress towards the seven outcomes in our theory of change. This data should inform future programmatic and strategic decisions by Headwaters board, staff and grantees.
The basis of our learning and evaluation framework is our **Theory of Change (see slide 13)**. The Theory of Change was developed by employing an external consultant to interview dozens of grantee partners across all Foundation program areas, asking what indicators they used to assess the progress of their work and what mattered to them when defining success. Their responses formed the following seven outcome areas of our Theory of Change. This section describes the outcomes and what questions we seek to answer through them. It includes a snapshot of Headwaters' focus areas and what we are learning about our work in the context of our Theory of Change.

What we heard was that organizations are working to **change long-held mindsets** in their communities around health and the factors that influence it. They are working to **get community members who face the most barriers to health engaged in the decisions** that have real implications for them, whether that's a parent who is struggling to afford childcare and put food on the table, or an unsheltered community member who has lost access to housing. They are working **to bring information to policymakers** that will allow them to be better informed about decisions they make that affect people’s health, sometimes in the form of research and sometimes in the form of real-life stories. Organizations shared that **building strong, meaningful relationships** with other organizations doing work outside of their own sector is critical to the long-term changes they seek, so they measure impact by the depth of these partnerships. Many organizations spoke about the need for more people to know that their services, especially preventative programs, exist. Everyone spoke about the need for **more funding overall** in Montana for preventative programs focused on reducing social and economic barriers to health. Universally, organizations said that they could achieve more of these desired outcomes if funders invested in the **leadership and capacity** of their organizations.
An increase in health equity in Western Montana where all, especially communities who face high barriers to health and wellbeing, are healthy and thriving

Impacts to which we contribute

Reduced social and economic barriers to Western Montanans’ health and wellbeing, particularly for families living in poverty and American Indians

Our purpose

Why we do our work:
Western Montanans face high social and economic barriers to health and wellbeing, particularly families living in poverty and American Indians.

How we do our work:
Headwaters Foundation was born from community and believes in democratizing philanthropy. We strive to be humble, mindful, and accountable to the people of Western Montana. We believe community-driven efforts will create positive changes upstream in the lives of Western Montanans, reducing the social and economic barriers to their health and wellbeing.

Our strategies

Strategic Initiatives
Policy and Influence
GO! Grants
Sponsorship
Strategic Communications
Capacity Building
Philanthropic Engagement

Our work is built on a bedrock of trust-based philanthropy and partnerships

Outcomes we expect to see:

Increased capacity and leadership for systems change in the organizations and collaboratives we support

There is greater funding for reducing social and economic barriers to health and wellbeing, from both public and private sources

Communities are more aware of and use nonprofit organizations’ programs and services more, particularly those that are preventative

There are stronger relationships, coordination, and collaboration between organizations from different sectors

Western Montanans prioritize community health and wellbeing more, particularly prevention, and believe they have a role in promoting it

Communities exercise influence through local leaders and the engagement, mobilizing, and organizing of members

A better environment for the advocacy of policies that reduce social and economic barriers to health

An increase in health equity in Western Montana where all, especially communities who face high barriers to health and wellbeing, are healthy and thriving
INCREASED CAPACITY & LEADERSHIP FOR SYSTEMS CHANGE

Increased capacity and leadership for systems change in the organizations and collaboratives we support.

- To what extent and in what ways is the capacity and leadership of organizations and collaboratives with whom we partner changing?
- How is our support contributing to changes in capacity and leadership and what types of support do they still need?
- How is the capacity of the field changing around the issues we are working on?

Headwaters commissioned the University of Montana to conduct a needs assessment of our grantee partners in early 2021. 88 Headwaters grantees participated.

Most significant barriers to organizational success include:
- Lack of financial resources;
- Lack of state or local resources;
- Inability to hire staff due to financial constraints; and
- Not enough time to complete work in a meaningful way.

In grant final reports, we asked grantees if they experienced an increase in staff capacity over the past year 2020-2021 (n=87):

- 44 respondents (52%) reported no increase
- 23 respondents (27%) reported a little increase
- 14 respondents (17%) reported somewhat increase
- 6 respondents (7%) reported a lot increase

According to the Center for Civil Society Studies Archive, the nonprofit workforce, as of December 2021, is still estimated to be approximately 3.7% smaller than its estimated pre-pandemic level.

What supports do grantee partners need?

In grant final reports, we asked grantees how many professional development trainings their staff attended in the past year (2020-2021):

- 926 respondents (100%)

To read the report, visit: www.headwatersmt.org

23 grants closed in 2021 demonstrated this outcome in their work.
INCREASED CAPACITY & LEADERSHIP FOR SYSTEMS CHANGE

What We Are Learning:

Central to the Theory of Change is the idea that if we help build the capacity of organizations, they will be better positioned to achieve the other outcomes in the Theory of Change. After a year of operating in a pandemic where organizations were required to adapt and shift programs to serve people remotely or safely, figure out how to serve people with less resources, and in many cases move all their operations online, we wondered how organizations were doing.

Throughout 2021, Headwaters increased grantee partner meetings (virtually), holding over 71 conversations with grantee partners. We asked how people were doing and what success looked like to them in their work. Partners consistently reported feeling understaffed, overworked, and approaching burnout. While Covid relief funding was helpful to some partners, many shared that the lack of long-term funding commitments made it impossible for them to feel stable. For example, some noted that they could not confidently hire staff when operating on one-year grant awards; instead, they engaged contractors or consultants. This in turn resulted in knowledge and built relationships leaving the organization once the contractor left. Compounded with the high general uncertainty due to the Covid pandemic, organizations reported feeling insecure, worried about their long-term sustainability, and increasingly stressed out with no end in sight.

In addition to the numerous grantee partner conversations, Headwaters commissioned the University of Montana to conduct a needs assessment with our grantee partners in the spring of 2021. One of the questions we asked was around the barriers that create the most significant challenges to organizational success. Top barriers reported were as follows: lack of financial resources; lack of state or local resources; inability to hire staff due to financial constraints; and not enough time to complete work in a meaningful way.

In response to these concerns, Headwaters devised a strategy to better support the capacity of our grantee partners. We made multi-year grants to 14 partners. We paid these grants in full up front, with the understanding that partners could determine how to best utilize the funding year over year. What we have witnessed so far as a result is the ability for organizations to think bigger and plan further ahead, commitments made it impossible for them to feel stable. For example, some noted that they could not confidently hire staff when operating on one-year grant awards; instead, they engaged contractors or consultants. This in turn resulted in knowledge and built relationships leaving the organization once the contractor left. Compounded with the high general uncertainty due to the Covid pandemic, organizations reported feeling insecure, worried about their long-term sustainability, and increasingly stressed out with no end in sight.

Headwaters also took what we heard and developed a framework for capacity-building that will guide how we continue to invest in and support our grantee partners. While there is no one-size-fits-all approach, the following key elements have emerged in our research on approaches that would best support our partners:

1) 1:1 Coaching. Some element of professional support with a coach they trust.
2) Peer Support. Peer learning communities or peer networks where people can connect to share lessons learned and problem-solve their specific issues.
3) Long-term and equitable support. One-off programs rarely have transformational impact; partners need a long-term partnership that allows the participants to build goals and receive professional coaching and peer support as they navigate through.

In 2022, we will begin to implement pilot programs and new test models for capacity-building with our partners in the field.

Headwaters has developed a set of principles to guide our capacity-building work, as well as some examples of what living out this principle could look like in our work.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principle</th>
<th>Examples of what this looks like in our work</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Partner Led</td>
<td>• Being mindful to offer what communities say they need even if it isn’t what we think they need or feel easily equipped to offer.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Providing the assistance on a timeline that works for the grantee, not one that is determined by the Foundation’s internal goals.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Participation determined by grantee partners, not us.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Equitable</td>
<td>• Offering tailored experiences, not one-size fit all approaches or toolkits.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Ensuring what we offer reflects the partner’s cultural values/norms.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Supporting those organizations who might not seem ‘ready.’</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Extending support to participants who aren’t typically seen as leaders in their organization (e.g. – beyond ED, to community volunteers with the organization, etc.)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Access to the support is available to those who need it (e.g. rural vs. urban).</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Diversifying the partners we work with to get more voices and perspectives around the table.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Funding grantee partner time for participation, in addition to regular investments in their programs.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Developing clear expectations for participation in capacity-building efforts with the grantee partner, based on where they are at organizationally; it may not be the same expectation for all organizations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharing</td>
<td>• Creating space for more collaboration.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Sharing lessons learned.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Supporting peer expertise and learning together.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distinct</td>
<td>• Not duplicating offerings that already exist.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Being innovative and taking risks with our support.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commitment</td>
<td>• Providing long-term support on capacity-building.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Keeping showing up.</td>
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How are mindsets changing about how social and economic factors contribute to health and wellbeing?

To what extent is awareness increasing around the particular traumas American Indian communities have faced and continue to face, that affect their health and wellbeing?

How are our strategic communications and complementary activities contributing to this change?

For our partners, success looks like changing long-held mindsets in their communities around health and the factors that influence it.

Changing hearts and minds is a critical piece of systems change work, and it takes significant time and resources to do it well. As Headwaters has looked at the incredible work of grantee partners across our program areas, we have noticed that communications capacity is severely lacking. Very few of our grantee partners have a dedicated communications staff person and even fewer are able to focus on the power of story. Support for strategic communications emerged in 2021 as a priority area for many of our grantee partners. In order to address this, Headwaters has created a small pool of strategic communications funding for existing grantees. The fund can be used to provide communications capacity-building for partners, or to support communications campaigns.

While more investment is needed to support robust narrative shift, we are seeing some examples of how community mindsets are changing on important health issues. For example, a number of business associations have been focused on child care solutions. The Kalispell Chamber of Commerce has been working on the issue and recently released a Child Care Call to Action Plan. The Missoula Economic Partnership’s Big Sky Economic Insights Summit is focusing an entire day of their 2-day meeting on child care solutions. Big Sky Economic Development hosted an event focused on employer solutions to child care. This indicates a recognition that supporting our youngest kids is a valuable service to the economy and society as a whole.

In our 2021 Needs Assessment, grantee partners were asked to describe their hopes and dreams for their community. Their responses (see below) indicate organizations are recognizing the importance of social inclusion as a social determinant of health.

```
Common Good Missoula has been hosting Wrestling with the Truth of Colonization trainings; there have been 189 local participants in the training.
```

```
When you think about the future of your community, what are your hopes and dreams for your community?
Please describe the one or two big-picture goals you have for your community.

Main Themes:
- Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion;
- Basic need fulfillment;
- Reduced stigma of mental illness & innovation in crisis response;
- Collaboration & Unification and Meaningful & Supportive Connection;
- Health, conservation, & sustainability;
- Dignity, life sovereignty, & belonging; and
- Prioritization of families & children.
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The Revenue Coalition's education efforts on harmful budget cuts generated 7,700 patch-through calls, 2,000 Facebook engagements and 70,000 impressions, and YouTube/streaming generated nearly 2.4 million impressions and 4,068 clicks.
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Kaiser Health News (KHN) stories have been published by over 65 newsrooms across Montana. KHN collaborated with MT Public Radio on six Montana-based pieces in 2021. Montana Free Press' collaboration with KHN led to a full-time MT health equity beat.
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“Story has many different qualities that make it useful for the work of systems change. It’s a direct route to our emotions, and therefore critical to decision-making. It creates meaning out of patterns. It coheres communities. It engenders empathy across difference. And it enables the possible to feel probable in ways our rational minds can’t comprehend.”
–Ella Saltmarshe, Telling the Difference
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27 grants closed in 2021 demonstrated this outcome in their work.
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Common Good Missoula has been hosting Wrestling with the Truth of Colonization trainings; there have been 189 local participants in the training.
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“Story has many different qualities that make it useful for the work of systems change. It’s a direct route to our emotions, and therefore critical to decision-making. It creates meaning out of patterns. It coheres communities. It engenders empathy across difference. And it enables the possible to feel probable in ways our rational minds can’t comprehend.”
–Ella Saltmarshe, Telling the Difference
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27 grants closed in 2021 demonstrated this outcome in their work.
How are communities coming together to address social and economic barriers to health and wellbeing?

To what extent are communities aligned on the problem they are working to address and the strategies to address the challenge? What facilitated their development? Where are there still tensions?

Headwaters partnered with the University of Montana to conduct a Social Network Analysis for local Zero to Five collaboratives in five counties. The analysis was conducted in fall of 2020 and published in January 2021. Social network analysis (SNA) is a research methodology that measures how organizations participate in a network and the quantity and quality of relationships between partners. SNA can help networks identify ways to improve how partners work together to achieve desired outcomes. SNA can inform strategies to strengthen relationships, leverage resources, and monitor change in networks over time. This SNA serves as a baseline and Headwaters plans to conduct it again to see what changes have occurred. See the SNA for each county by clicking the links below.

Headwaters heard loud and clear from organizations that building and deepening relationships within and across communities is a critical component of long-term systems change work. The sustained work that it takes to organize people across sectors is an investment that should not be underestimated. Headwaters grantee partners do this at local and state levels and across sectors.

Headwaters Foundation also supports collaboration on the issues we care about by convening stakeholders or actively participating in collaborative efforts. In 2021, Headwaters played a lead role in convening funders, state agency leaders, policymakers, and early childhood organizations across the state with an interest in addressing the child care workforce. Dubbed the Early Care and Workforce Stakeholders meeting, the group met at least quarterly to share information about the current state of child care and how federal funding opportunities could support the state’s needs. Headwaters also actively participated in a grantee partner-led project called the Early Care and Education Collaboratory, which brought together statewide stakeholders to map the child care business ecosystem and identify solutions. Headwaters also actively supported the Montana Partnership to End Childhood Hunger by participating in meetings and providing thought partnership.

Headwaters funded 18 collaborative efforts across 4 grant programs and actively led or participated in 3 other collaborative efforts in 2021.
To what extent and in what ways do our efforts and those of our partners involve the people we want to serve?

How are these efforts building on communities’ leadership to support them in exercising influence on local policy?

Communities exercise influence through local leaders and the engagement, mobilizing, and organizing of members.

Headwaters grantee partners are engaging the people they serve in their work through having diverse boards, creating community spaces, seeking community input, and through organizing and mobilization efforts. Multiple sectors are involved in much of their work.

In the early childhood space, we are seeing innovative programs that seek not only to listen to parents and caregivers, but to actively involve them in program development and civic engagement. For example, the Butte-Silver Bow Zero to Five Collaborative created the FLOC, Families Leading Our Communities. This parents group plans programs for their community and is given resources to work with by the Collaborative. The Missoula Zero to Five Collaborative developed the Parent Leadership Training Institute, which focuses on civics lessons for parents and caregivers, with an action-based community engagement project.

Grantee partners have shared that ongoing and consistent organizing work at the community level is critical to improving health in the long-term. Investing in the time it takes to build community with populations that are typically not engaged in developing programs or policy solutions is a long-term strategy that needs additional support, especially to reach Montana’s most rural communities.

Montana Food Bank Network engaged local community members with lived experience to provide testimony to legislators on the importance of programs like Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).

Montana Women Vote brought community voices into their defensive work around Medicaid. From insurance company executives to tribal council members – all shared the same messages by telling their personal stories.

Beaverhead Zero to Five gathered a diverse cross-sector governing board to help design their work. They conducted interviews with business leaders, parents, and child care providers to determine needs for early child care in the community.

When COVID hit, MNA offered weekly town hall meetings and included local, state and federal policymakers, business leaders and more to help organizations navigate the unknown. These calls had 2,700 participants from March to December.
What does the health policy environment look like in Western Montana and how is it changing?

How can the Foundation adapt support offered to partners to help them operate more effectively in this environment?

What strategies deployed by communities/partners have been effective in mobilizing Western Montanans to get involved in policy advocacy?

A BETTER POLICY ADVOCACY ENVIRONMENT

In our 2021 Grantee Needs Assessment, almost 43% of all respondents stated that their organization has a strong interest in engaging in more advocacy work.

Montana Nonprofit Association’s ability to quickly pull influential voices together at a crucial time helped veto a bill that would have been particularly harmful to nonprofits by requiring them to disclose donors to the Attorney General’s Office.

Amplify MT recognized that their work in local food systems aligns with current political agendas in the state, but they need to update their communications and messaging to maintain bipartisan support.

The Zero to Five Statewide Office played a key leadership role in providing recommendations on addressing the child care crisis to the ARPA Health Funding Commission.

Montana held its 67th biennial legislative session from January to April in 2021. It was the first legislative session under Governor Gianforte’s administration and the first to take place since the COVID-19 pandemic began. It was a challenging year for partners focused on policy change around social determinants of health. Health policy advocates were faced with building all new relationships in the legislature and among state agency partners as new staff were appointed. They were also faced with doing it all in a time when in-person meetings were not possible for most people. An additional challenge was tension between bipartisan groups of legislators (who voted to move forward legislation related to SNAP and child care) and the Governor’s office which vetoed several of these pieces of legislation to limit any new spending.

The session was hard on our partners; they told us that to ensure progress on health for Montanans, they needed more consistent and sustained resources to be dedicated to their efforts to expand their reach and bring people with lived experience and from diverse backgrounds into the policy process. As a result, Headwaters provided significantly larger, multi-year grants to three of our main policy grantees. Our goals were to provide more stable and sizable funding to support advocacy infrastructure in the state and ensure more Montanans who are typically left out of the policy process could participate.

As part of the expanded support for policy and advocacy work, we created new and responsive buckets of funding focused on building strategic communications capacity, policy-relevant research, and emerging actors (funding for issues that fall outside of our established program plan but that have emerged as clear community priorities).
Communities are more aware of and use nonprofit organizations’ programs and services more, particularly those that are preventative.

- To what extent and in what ways are communities becoming more aware of the services and programs provided by our partners?
- How is this changing the use of these services and programs?
- How are partners adapting programs and services to have more of a prevention orientation?

When our consultants asked grantee partners what success looked like for them as they developed our Theory of Change, awareness and use of programs was consistently highlighted as an important outcome. Yet, it was the one outcome that felt a little out of place for the Foundation as we thought about what factors are important for long-term upstream change. After all, does an increase in services or another new program demonstrate progress, or does it demonstrate that need is continuing to grow and we are further from upstream solutions? As Headwaters has worked with grantee partners over the past year, we have better understood why this is such an important outcome, especially for rural communities. Many of our funding efforts focus on building collaborative efforts in communities in order to build capacity to connect programs and resources across communities; ultimately this will help build better systems for all kids and families. We have learned that this work can’t be done when very few programs exist in communities. Additionally, whether a community is program rich or not, deep collaboration and systems change work can’t be done without building trust. Partners have demonstrated that this happens best through working together; working on programs and projects create avenues to collaborate.

The value of this outcome is clear for our grantee partners. Headwaters is still grappling with what’s important for us to track around this outcome. What we track now are the markers that partners share with us. Do we have what we need to understand whether the nature of programs is in fact changing to focus on prevention and root causes? Does higher program use suggest a reduction in stigma, which is a positive indicator of cultural change? These are all questions the Foundation will continue to ask as we think about how to measure progress on this outcome.

PREVENTATIVE PROGRAMS & SERVICES

In a 6-month period, the Beaverhead 0-5 Collaborative gained 150 Facebook followers.

In 6 months, the Butte 0-5 Collaborative had nearly 20 families utilize their newly-opened Foster Closet.

Butte 4Cs created 13 Circle of Parents groups around MT. This is a place for parents who have children with special health care needs and/or mental health conditions to share common experiences, successes, and challenges through meetings co-led by parents and professionals.

MNA partnered with the Montana Food Bank Network to send more than 18,000 targeted census flyers to 134 foodbanks across the state.
In September 2021, the Headwaters Board of Trustees approved a bold funding strategy to support critical work to address health disparities and uplift critical social determinants of health issues in our state. A core component of this investment strategy is built on the goal of leveraging federal funding, from Coronavirus-related relief packages as well as opportunities coming down from Congress. Tensions exist around federal relief funds. For example, federal spending can be controversial, with disagreements on amounts and accepting funds; states must determine how best to use these one-time funds without creating ongoing budget obligations; and navigating state executive and legislative branch roles about who gets to make decisions about how funds are spent is challenging. Despite this, there are numerous opportunities for organizations focused on health to leverage funding.

Grantees can successfully leverage federal funds when they are aware of funding opportunities relevant to their organization, are aware of new or enhanced services available to their clients and promote utilization of those services, are able to provide input to state agencies or commissions on funding needs and those recommendations are implemented and are able to collect and uplift client stories on the impact of services or gaps in services on their clients and share those stories with decision-makers.

Headwaters is working to support grantee partners in their efforts to leverage funding. For example, we are keeping partners apprised of the opportunities relevant to them and connecting them with other partners who can support them in grant writing if needed, and we are connecting grantees with resources for messaging and public affairs to more effectively uplift client experiences. As we look ahead, we are curious about what research might be needed on the impact of federal funding. What impact did new or enhanced services or increased benefits have on Montanans? Is there evidence to suggest the state should commit state general funds to continue certain programs or services?

FUNDING FOR SDOH (social determinants of health)

There is greater funding for reducing social and economic barriers to health and wellbeing, from both public and private sources.

- How is public and private funding for health and wellbeing – in particular, for reducing social and economic barriers – changing in Western Montana?
- How are we helping to make connections for our partners and bring in additional funding for these issues?

In 2021, 30 grants closed demonstrated this outcome in their work.

- Our grantees leveraged $1,240,168 in private funds from our grants in 2021.
- Our grantees leveraged $712,936 in government funds from our grants in 2021.
- Jefferson Local Dev. Corp. & Lincoln 0-5 partnered with other voices in their communities to advocate for ARPA funding to support early child care efforts. Jefferson County Commissioners reallocated $110,000 to support expanded child care efforts in Boulder and Lincoln County Commissioners allocated $100,000 in ARPA funding to purchase a mobile resource van for the county.
- Montana Legal Services Association received $25,000 to pilot a project with UM that has the potential to help keep family units together when Child Protective Services becomes involved.
- Missoula Zero to Five secured $80,000 in additional funding and was able to deliver $64,000 directly to child care providers.
Current Portfolios

How is our investment strategy contributing to desired outcomes?
EARLY CHILDHOOD INITIATIVE

2021 Early Childhood Initiative Funding by County

- Lincoln $600,000
- Lake $50,000
- Mineral $600,000
- Missoula $1,200,000
- Lewis & Clark $50,000
- Jefferson $50,000
- Beaverhead $200,000
- Silver Bow $600,000

Missoula Zero to Five Collaborative: $600,000
Lowell School Community Initiative Project: $150,000
Home Visiting Support: $50,000
Zero to Five Initiative Support (UM Center): $250,000
Raise Montana (Expanding Childcare in the state): $150,000

Zero to Five Statewide Office $600,000

How Zero to Five Describes their Work in 2021

- GROWTH: substantive, hopeful
- HEADWAY: exciting, solutions-oriented
- connection: collaborations, VARIED
- REWARDING: gratifying, long-lasting
- OPTIMISTIC: hopeful, collaborative
When Headwaters Foundation was founded in 2017, newly hired CEO Brenda Solorzano set out on the road to meet with as many community leaders as she could in our designated funding region. Dubbed the ‘500 cups of coffee tour’, Brenda had one goal for these meetings: to find out what issues related to health were most important to communities in Western Montana. What she consistently heard was that people were concerned about how social and economic issues were affecting the health of their communities. Low wages and limited job opportunities, lack of quality affordable housing and child care, and limited resources for families, especially those with young kids, rose to the top. When asked what the Foundation should do to help, a resounding message was voiced: invest in solutions that give kids the best possible start in life and trust local communities to identify and implement solutions that go upstream to address root causes. From these conversations, the Zero to Five Initiative – Headwaters’ largest funding initiative to date – was born.

Headwaters is the seed funder for Zero to Five. It is comprised of local collaborative efforts in communities across Western Montana and a statewide advocacy office located in the state capitol. Each organization operates independently with total discretion over their own goals, strategies, operating approach, and budget. What ties them together is a common, co-created Theory of Change, or their North Star. This initiative centers local solutions and leadership. It focuses on building the capacity of local communities to bring together a broad set of stakeholders to identify their most pressing concerns for kids and families and agree on solutions to address them. It works to connect local communities across Montana to leverage resources, share lessons learned, and identify opportunities for cross-community collaboration. Headwaters funded the first local collaboratives and the statewide office in late 2018. We currently fund collaborative efforts in Beaverhead, Lake, Lewis & Clark, Lincoln, Mineral, Missoula, and Silver-Bow counties. The investments we have made are elevating early childhood in local communities and at the state level in unprecedented ways.

Examples of Local Zero to Five Collaborative Work:
- Developed support programs for foster parents that help families thrive (Silver-Bow County).
- Created a community play space and parent education center (Beaverhead County).
- Developed parent leaders in remote areas to ensure every kid ages 0-5 and their family have access to information and activities to thrive (Lincoln County).
- Implementing a Kindergarten Readiness program geared towards ensuring families have what they need for kids to arrive to school ready to learn (Missoula County).
- Developed a parent liaison program with every school to provide support and resources to families where they are (Mineral County).

Examples of Statewide Office Work:
- Played an instrumental role in developing child care funding recommendations and presenting to the ARPA Health Commission.
- Convened stakeholders in early childhood work, including an infant-toddler support collaborative, a pre-K alliance, and a child care business solutions group.
- Launched a Community/Business Innovations pilot with the Montana Cooperative Development Center.
- Provided education to policymakers around key models and solutions to better support early care and education in Montana.
- Convened the local Zero to Five collaboratives to continue to share lessons learned and leverage each other’s strengths.

In 2021, we gave 16 grants totaling $4,000,000 to our Early Childhood Initiative.
The American Indian Health and Wellbeing Initiative has been driven by Native communities and leaders who have engaged with Headwaters and invested significant time and ideas to help Headwaters understand their values, issues, and priorities. Initial grantmaking data indicated that funding was not reaching Native-led organizations or organizations that were serving American Indians. In response, the American Indian Committee (AI Committee) was created to inform Headwaters’ strategy on investments to address health disparities among American Indians in Western Montana and support building relationships in the community. AI committee members emphasized the importance of culture and how it relates to the health of the people. Committee members highlighted the significance of acknowledging traditional knowledge, community voices and strength to promote sovereignty and culture. This was incorporated in the grantmaking strategy by using community-identified issues as the focus of the Initiative. In 2021, the American Indian Health & Wellbeing Initiative was launched with four focus areas:

**Mental Health Crisis Intervention and Prevention on the Flathead Indian Reservation** - Headwaters supported Voices & Visions, an event that brought together nearly 200 participants from various entities within the Flathead Reservation and Lake County who engaged in a 2-day community conversation. It brought together a broad swath of community members—both tribal and non-tribal—and engaged them in a process to identify solutions to the community’s most pressing health challenges. The event also resulted in the community voting on one project for Headwaters to fund moving forward. This project is called **Journey to Wellness** - they are building a community-supported peer model for crisis response and prevention.

**Food Sovereignty on the Flathead Indian Reservation** - Headwaters partnered with the Confederated Salish Kootenai Tribes (CSKT) to develop and launch a food sovereignty initiative on the Flathead Indian Reservation. This project supports healthy and thriving Native communities by providing healthy food to tribal people, promoting cultural values by reconnecting with foods and land, and supporting economic development opportunities for the community. This effort is in the initial planning stages and the intention is to develop a pilot program that will distribute fresh, local, and culturally-relevant food to elders in the community. The pilot program will also engage in activities that support food education and training for community members and Tribal cooks. The pilot program is a critical first step in building the foundation needed to meet the long-term goal of establishing a robust food sovereignty entity on the Reservation.

**Urban Indian Health and Wellbeing** - The ability to access fair and culturally-informed healthcare is one barrier that Native Americans living in urban areas face. There are currently five Urban Indian Health Programs (UIHPs) in Montana. These programs are independent of one another and are often in crisis management mode, unable to build an upstream strategic approach to addressing the social determinants of health that American Indians are facing. Headwaters supported the founding and development of the newly-formed **Montana Consortium for Urban Indian Health**, a collaborative of the 5 UIHPs that will share resources, fundraising, cultivate a coordinated policy and advocacy strategy, and provide training to staff and communities to increase access to healthcare.

**Culture and Identity** - In 2021, Headwaters funded Salish Kootenai College’s “Encampment,” a cultural enrichment program dedicated to the revitalization of Native American language, traditional skills and lifeways. Encampment was conceived at a specific location in Valley Creek on the Flathead Indian Reservation in 1968 by the late Agnes Vanderberg. During the Encampment experience, SKC students, faculty, staff, and community members gather on what is now known as the Vanderberg campground for instruction and participation in Native American subsistence, cultural, and social activities.

In 2021, we gave 6 grants totaling $2,200,000 to American Indian health and wellbeing.
How well are our funding strategies reaching American Indian populations in Montana?

From data on 30 AI-specific grants to 21 organizations, totaling $3,375,000 from 2018 to May 3, 2022

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Key Learnings from this Data:

This data raised a few questions for us to consider in our work. Of the 21 organizations that received funding, only 3 entered data into the Executive Leadership columns. This made us wonder -- is the data not being entered because there are not actually American Indians serving in those leadership positions at the organization, or is the way we have described executive leaders not culturally relevant for Indigenous-led organizations? If the former is true, then we must consider how we can support leadership development to ensure organizations can move American Indian leaders into these positions.

We are currently exploring this question with the American Indian (AI) Committee of our Board.

A note on the data: Headwaters asks grantee partners to enter demographic data on the communities they serve, their staff, and their board. However, this is not required. Therefore, the data reflected in these slides is based on “non-zero” data entries. We are working to find ways to collect demographic data that are easier for grantee partners (such as accepting the information in any format they may already have it in for other grants), as well as working to support organizations with resources to understand how they can equitably collect data in order to better serve their communities.
GO! GRANTS

The GO! Grants program was designed to provide general operating support to organizations in Western Montana’s most rural communities serving families experiencing poverty or American Indian communities. Over the past four years of program operation, Headwaters has learned a lot from GO! Grantee partners. They’ve told us that without flexible general operating support, sometimes they’re not able to meet the most basic needs of those they serve in their communities. They’ve said that our support has allowed them to retain staff or build staff capacity by hiring new positions or support employees by sending them to professional development trainings. Our grant partners have invested in updated infrastructure at schools and in low-income housing communities, creating safer and more stable environments for kids to thrive. Funding has provided the flexibility to purchase healthy food for kids in after-school programs, some who only get meals when they’re at school. Most importantly, the funding has allowed them to have a positive impact on children and families in their communities.

In the first few years of program operation, Headwaters heard that while $5,000 in general operating support was helpful, an increased funding amount would really make an impact in small communities. We listened to our partners, and in 2021 increased the funding amount to $7,500. The increased funding amount has allowed organizations to sustain or expand programming during an exceptionally challenging time.

Looking back on 2021 data, a significant portion of GO! Grants were made to organizations in Lake County and on the Flathead Indian Reservation, yet the percentage of American Indians being served by GO! Grants was only around 5%. A key focus area of the GO! Grants program is providing support to American Indian communities, yet we’re falling short of providing support to this population. Looking forward, Headwaters will explore additional strategies to ensure we can reach more American Indians and native-led organizations through this program.

Using GO! Grants as a Relationship Building & Networking Tool

When Headwaters developed the GO! Grants program, it was designed to reduce barriers to access by creating a simplified application process that could be completed in less than an hour. This streamlined application allowed Headwaters to easily identify strong organizational mission-alignment and cut down on wasted time for applicants who often don’t have development staff completing grant applications for their organizations.

Identifying mission-aligned organizations gave Headwaters the opportunity to build relationships in the community, extend and earn trust, and bridge new partnerships to other bodies of Headwater’s work, like Early Childhood and American Indian Health and Wellbeing. As Headwaters grant partners understood and trusted us more, they connected us with other valuable partners in their community that help advance our mission. The relationships built with our GO! Grant partners has given back to Headwaters in invaluable ways. Our partners have offered their time and feedback to create stronger systems for children and families in their communities. Our GO! Grantees truly are the source of change!

In 2021, we gave 85 GO! Grants totaling $598,500.

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“The increase from $5,000 to $7,500 in funding has made a big impact on organizations. It really allows them to do a lot more. It’s big money for little towns.”

– Cherry Valley Elementary

“This grant is a life-changer for the students at the Center. These kids would never get the opportunities that they get because of these funds. Our small-town businesses also appreciate all of it.”

– The Center for Excellence, Anaconda Public Schools
45% of our GO! Grantee Organizations serve 5% or more American Indians.

An average of 79% of the people our 2021 GO! Grantee Organizations serve live at or below the federal poverty level.

An average of 81% of the people our 2021 GO! Grantee Organizations serve live at or below 200% of the federal poverty level.

2021 GO! Go Grantee Organizations serving 80% or more American Indians
2021 GO! Grantee Organizations serving 20-79% American Indians
2021 GO! Grantee Organizations serving 5-19% American Indians
2021 GO! Grantee Organizations serving 1-4% American Indians
2021 GO! Grantee Organizations serving 0 American Indians

5.56%
0.05%
0.38%
0.02%
32%
14%
7%
15%

2021 GO! Grantees’ Strategic Focus Areas of Work
(Averages for our 85 2021 GO! Grantees)

2021 GO! Grant Amounts per County
(Note: this chart shows the county where the grantee organization is located, and not necessarily all of the counties each grant touches.)
As part of Headwaters’ policy engagement strategy and efforts to strengthen the policy ecosystem around social determinants of health in our state, we are working to support organizations that bring in diverse voices and people with lived experience into the policy process. During the 2021 legislative session, our grantee partners demonstrated how essential this work is. Our partners were able to push back on legislation that would have had negative impacts on children, families, American Indian populations, lower income Montanans, and rural communities. They were able to work with legislators from both parties to do important defensive work around food security, Medicaid, access to healthcare for rural communities, mental health services, and more.

Headwaters also helped to make connections between grantee partners to leverage resources and skills sets. For example, after connecting MTPECH (the Montana Partnership to End Childhood Hunger) and Montana Women Vote, MWV conducted an advocacy training for MTPECH members and went on to engage their members in their advocacy work with interim committees.

**Amplify Montana’s** goal is to empower people to share their stories while enabling them to be both self and systems-advocates, to educate others on the realities of hunger and poverty, and to improve the system for others that follow. In 2019-2020, they held focus groups of people with lived experience in three counties with 144 participants. From these participants, 29 went on to graduate from a free program that developed their public speaking and leadership skills. From the graduates, it is incredible to read: from interviews with Time Magazine to meeting with lawmakers to advocate for stronger SNAP legislation and speaking at the Capitol, there are many examples of how the participants went on to be involved. From one graduate: “It was so empowering and refreshing to have a program structured around people’s experiences. I liked that there was both the personal component of getting people empowered to share their own stories, and that there were also tools to connect to a broader community in terms of the structural analysis around poverty and the advocacy pieces.”

**Montana Women Vote** helped hundreds of Montanans submit comments during the public comment period surrounding the end of continuous eligibility for Medicaid expansion.

**The Montana Food Bank Network (MFBN)** brought together legislators and people with lived experience, healthcare providers, food pantries, and other community partners to share their stories, talk about consequences of food insecurity, and educate legislators from both parties about public assistance programs such as SNAP.

**How Headwaters Responded to Policy Grantee Needs**

The unprecedented federal investment in states, the crisis created by the COVID-19 pandemic, and the change in the political landscape in Montana created intense uncertainty among our grantee partners in the state. The need for advocacy and organization around health issues is enormous and Headwaters consistently heard this from our grantee partners. As a result, in September of 2021, after a lot of collaborative work with a set of core grantees, Headwaters staff took a bold proposal to our board to double down on advocacy and organizing work being done by a small group of our grantee partners. In response to the feedback we heard, our board approved making large multi-year grants to a set of core partners that were paid out up front. The objective was to allow our grantees to do what they felt they needed to do to be more effective. These grants would allow them to hire new staff, work more strategically in coalition, set a longer-term vision for their advocacy work, adjust staff salaries, and allow staff to focus on their critical work rather than focusing time and energy on fundraising.

In 2021, we gave 9 grants totaling $2,450,000 to our Policy Engagement Fund.
In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, in 2020, Headwaters gave 62 responsive grants totaling $773,500.*

* $450,000 were funds approved by the Board of Trustees as COVID response funds. The remaining $323,500 were a reallocation of American Indian funds as responsive funds.

When COVID first hit Montana, Headwaters heard from grantee partners across the board that food insecurity was a major concern. From local 0-5 collaboratives to policy grant partners, everyone was concerned about vulnerable populations struggling to meet their food needs. Headwaters responded by providing an additional $450,000 in funds to address a multitude of community care needs, with food security topping the list. This response led to new relationships with food pantries in our regions who now access GO! Grants, as well as new partnerships with policy organizations focused on addressing the root causes of food insecurity.

64% of the $773,500 in COVID-19 responsive funds went to organizations with programs/services to serve American Indians.

34% of the $773,500 in COVID-19 responsive funds went to organizations with American Indians on their board of directors.

70% of the $773,500 in COVID-19 responsive funds went to organizations with American Indians on staff.

41% of the $773,500 in COVID-19 responsive funds went to organizations with women on their board of directors.
TRACKING LONG-TERM OUTCOMES

This section contains data about population health in Montana, so that we can better understand any long-term trends. Our intention is that over time, our work will contribute to positive changes in these areas of population health.
Like a check engine light, long-term indicators point us to areas in need of further investigation. Indicators do not tell us why something is happening, rather, they encourage us to ask more questions and dig deeper for root causes.

Headwaters tracks long-term indicators to keep a pulse on systems change. Unlike measures of accountability or learning, long-term indicators are influenced by many factors that go beyond the work of the foundation or our grantees. These indicators are products of systems, not programs. Systems take time to change and that change, once achieved, requires maintenance to sustain. Systems are also complex and full of trade-offs. No single indicator will tell us the overall health of the system, rather, we must track a handful of related indicators that give us a high-level sense of the overall system’s functioning, while also pointing us in the direction of further inquiry to uncover root causes, challenges, and opportunities.

They say numbers don’t lie, but the questions we ask, the data we collect, and how we report that data are products of human systems and prone to bias. Headwaters is not a research entity and is thus reliant on others to collect and analyze data. We recognize that we must be mindful consumers of the data available to us, including the implicit biases inherent in what questions were asked, of whom, the method of data collection or analysis, and even what questions were not answered and what data was not collected. Headwaters is in the process of reviewing and updating this first draft of long-term indicators as we learn more about the data available to us.
Our intended long-term impact: Reduced social and economic barriers that keep Western Montanans from being healthy, particularly for families living in poverty and American Indians.

FAMILY RESILIENCY & EARLY CHILDHOOD

Children ages 3 to 4 not enrolled in school, including nursery school, preschool school or kindergarten, during the previous three months.

MT

FOOD SECURITY

% eligible recipients of free or reduced price lunch, Montana

TRUSTED DATA SOURCES

- County Health Rankings & Roadmaps (University of Wisconsin-Madison Population Health Institute & the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation)
- America’s Health Rankings (United Health Foundation)
- Community Opportunity Map (Casey Family Programs)
- Kids Count (Annie E. Casey Foundation)
- Feeding America
- Montana Department of Public Health & Human Services, Interactive Dashboards