

# *Organic Philanthropy*



Small Investments,  
**Big Results.**

A photograph of three men in a meeting. The man on the left is seen from the back, with grey hair and a beard. The man in the center is bald with glasses, looking towards the right. The man on the right has grey hair, a mustache, and glasses, wearing a blue shirt and looking towards the left. The background is blurred.

We began calling our way of  
working with Native and  
Southwest Border communities

**Organic Philanthropy** because it  
**grew from the  
ground up,**







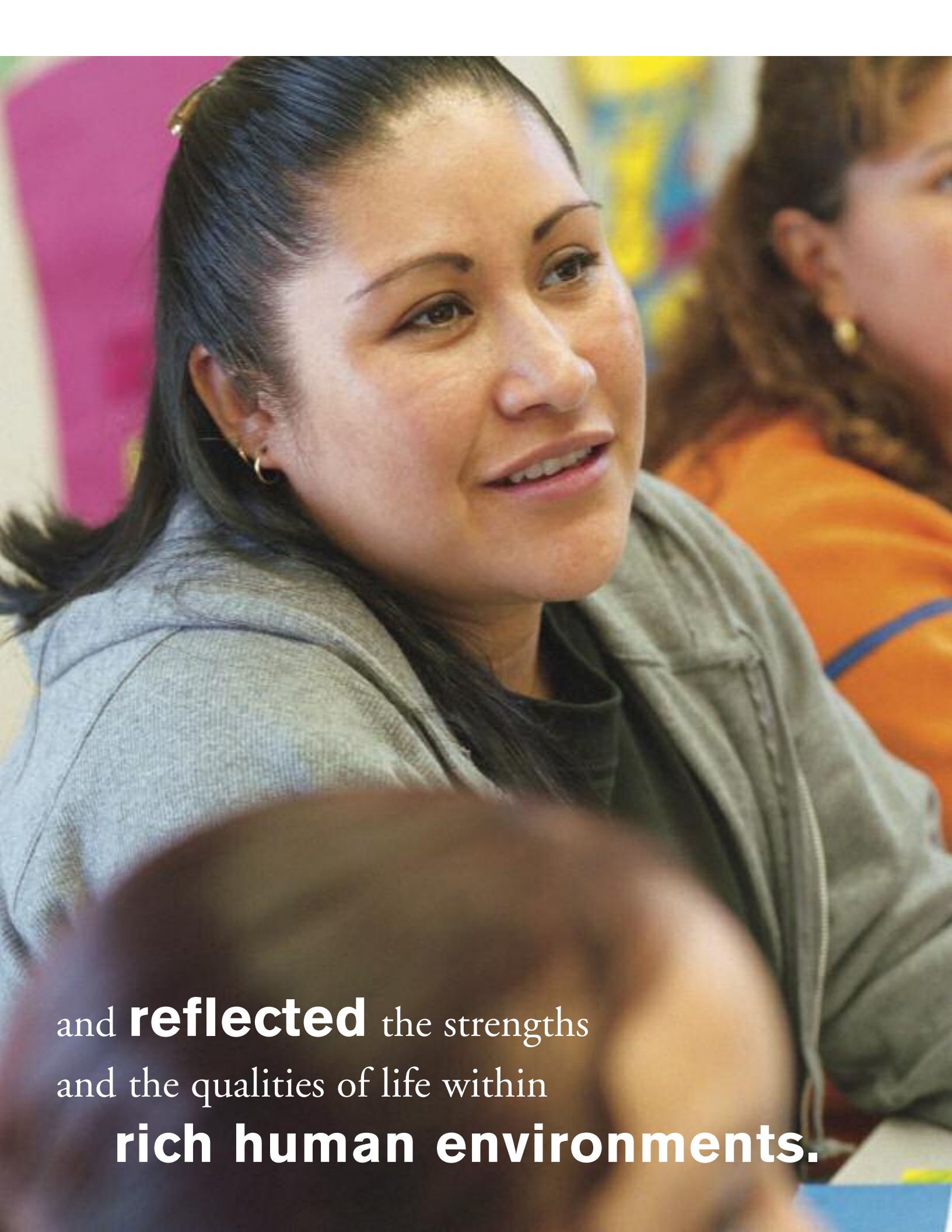






**flourished in the local soil,**





and **reflected** the strengths  
and the qualities of life within  
**rich human environments.**

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## *A Letter from Ralph Smith*

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT, THE ANNIE E. CASEY FOUNDATION

In 2002, the Annie E. Casey Foundation began to explore ways we could contribute to efforts to improve life for children and families along the U.S.–Mexico border and in Native American communities. This was a new area of work for the Foundation. We began by committing one senior consultant with expertise in the field to the effort and made series of modest investments. We hoped to find out if the Foundation's models and approaches might be useful to and welcomed by these diverse communities and if so, how best to work with those communities toward goals that community members themselves identified as essential.

This is the story of where that work led us and what we discovered along the way. While our efforts were focused on the Southwest border region and in Native urban and reservation communities, what we learned may be pertinent to philanthropic endeavors in other regions of the country and with other communities. Even modest strategic investments, we found, can have a significant and transformative impact when funds are used to bring community leaders and partners together to listen to and learn from each other in an atmosphere of deep engagement, genuine dialogue, and collaboration, working in rigorous pursuit of community-determined results. It's a promising approach that can lead to real improvements. We call this way of working Organic Philanthropy and hope our experience can offer you new ways of thinking about your own investments and work on behalf of children and families.

### *What is Organic Philanthropy?*

We began calling our way of working with Native and Southwest Border communities Organic Philanthropy because it grew from the ground up, flourished in local soil, and reflected the strengths and the qualities of life within rich human environments. Organic Philanthropy always begins with the community, engaging leaders and residents in defining their own needs. It is based on genuine dialogue and reciprocity, a way of working that respects the voices and wisdom of local leaders to identify and act on community-driven solutions to longstanding problems. Organic Philanthropy is about planting seeds, tending the garden during its slow and meandering growth, and sharing the harvest. It requires patience, humility, and a willingness to look, listen, and learn.

Organic Philanthropy leads with powerful ideas, not traditional grantmaking dollars (as indispensable as those are). Instead, it looks at resources in a broader sense, relying on relatively modest investments to foster *networks of relationships* among partners, who with time can begin to work together to build effective coalitions, leverage additional resources, and move the effort forward in a sustainable fashion. Foundation staff act as

catalysts and connectors to bring people together around a common table, seeding and initiating gatherings and conversations about common challenges and helping connect participants to additional people and resources.

Organic Philanthropy recognizes and builds on existing community strengths. Skills, capacity, and confidence are bolstered by the Foundation's commitment not only of modest grants, but of human resources, expertise, connections, training, technical assistance, data and research, and support for regional and national networking opportunities. The goal throughout is always to help hard-pressed communities achieve real and measurable results that promote strong families and expand opportunities. Human capital — people, connections, ideas — and modest grants are what make Organic Philanthropy grow.

Give and take. Resources. Reciprocity.





### ***Philanthropic investment.***

While the principles of Organic Philanthropy are not unique — the approach is, after all, an amalgam of tried-and-true community organizing, capacity building, and social networking models — it combines these models to powerful effect and seems especially well-suited in era of down-sized philanthropic endowments and escalating needs. Modest resources coupled with innovative strategies can be powerful levers for community change. Organic Philanthropy offers philanthropies a way to engage vulnerable communities with a direct and thoughtful approach and to do so with relatively modest *strategic investments*.

Family and community foundations are close to their communities and therefore in exactly the right place to make the most of the Organic Philanthropy approach. Knowledge of and experience with their local communities enable family and community foundations to build on existing relationships, cultivate new partners, and listen attentively to the voices of established and emerging leaders, all right in their own backyard. These deeper relationships in turn can help ensure that investments and interventions are respectful of community desires and traditions and, as a result, stand a better chance of creating enduring change. Organic Philanthropy always builds on the strengths and traditions of the community (however locally or globally that is defined). Many philanthropists and practitioners before us have observed that community-driven initiatives rooted in the self-determined needs of local communities and fueled with the passion, commitment, and know-how of local partners, have historically yielded more durable and meaningful results for severely underresourced communities than well-intentioned top-down efforts.





Family and community foundations can play another crucial role as well, with an Organic Philanthropy approach to grantmaking. Many foundations shy away from making investments in community initiatives because they feel they don't have sufficient resources to have a real impact. They leave it to the Big Foundations. But national foundations (like Casey) typically come and go, and after they are gone, the dollars and momentum sometimes go too. By working directly with culturally distinct and vulnerable populations, regional philanthropies can become deeply familiar with and to those communities — in effect becoming trusted partners and intermediaries — who can help connect local leaders and networks to additional philanthropic, public, and private funders and, in turn, act as a resource and partner to those funding entities, helping to ensure that their investments and interventions are respectful, culturally appropriate, and effective.

Organic Philanthropy is not for every foundation, nor does it match every mission. It is expressly a way of working with vulnerable communities grappling with the burdens of poverty and disenfranchisement. Philanthropies and governments have a spotty track record (at best) in making positive interventions in vulnerable communities; interventions like those the Casey Foundation attempted in Indian Country and along the Southwest Border. Yet when it is done in the spirit (and deed) of reciprocal relationship and genuine partnership, with respect for culture, language, and history, the rewards for beleaguered communities can be significant. Foundation staffs and boards will be enriched as well by what they've seen, heard, and learned.



Here's an example of the way Casey's practice of Organic Philanthropy helped to foster connections between our partners and the public sector, and leverage new resources.

## Impact The Public Sector

“You build from the ground up. Community organizations, faith and financial institutions, business, government — you partner with them to better serve families who might not otherwise get noticed.”

*Ricarda Soto* INTERNAL REVENUE SERVICE, TERRITORY MANAGER, WEST AND SOUTH TEXAS.  
EL PASO, TEXAS.

The Casey Foundation hoped to increase resources for financial education and asset-building strategies along the Southwest border and among Native communities, and found an valuable if unlikely partner in the Internal Revenue Service. The Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) is America's largest and most effective anti-poverty program and puts millions of dollars into the pockets of hard-working, low-wage workers each year. Coupled with financial education and savings plans, the EITC helps working Americans take more control over their financial lives. Yet each year, 10 to 15 percent of eligible taxpayers leave their money on the table. Among Latino families along the border and Native Americans, the percentage runs to 20 percent.

IRS representatives joined Native leaders and organizations, including the First Nations Development Institute and OWEESTA, at a Casey-sponsored gathering in New Mexico in 2001 to see what could be done to promote the EITC and other wealth-building strategies in Native communities.

The IRS sponsors **free** Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) sites around the country

**to help people access the EITC and other tax credits;**

in 2001, only 12 VITA sites providing free tax services targeted to Native peoples could be identified.

Casey funded a curriculum to promote Native financial education and financial education workshops for Native leaders, and the IRS stepped forward



## Impact The Public Sector

with travels grants (\$350,000 over four years) to conferences and trainings to help local leaders set up VITA sites, attract partners, and connect clients to financial education that reflected the realities and aspirations of Native families.

In 2009, 139 VITA sites were serving Native families during tax season, helping to secure

**\$46.4 million in tax credits** for Native families,

a 121 percent increase over 2007 (the first year reliable data were available).

Along the border, the IRS joined Casey and host of other community partners in El Paso, San Antonio, and elsewhere to pilot an outreach program for people with limited English skills (for whom Spanish was the first language). Working with trusted community institutions and champions (including the Frontera Asset Building Network), the IRS produced and distributed its publications in Spanish and reached out through Spanish-language media outlets. Partners also tried to ensure that Spanish speakers would be present and available at VITA sites to explain tax rules and procedures. Casey hosted a series of focus groups at national and regional economic development conferences that helped connect the IRS and its community partners with organizations that could help get key messages out to Spanish-speaking families. A connection with the Network of Latino Credit Unions and Professionals recently yielded an agreement to work together to build awareness of new “stimulus” tax credits for first-time homebuyers, and for car and energy-efficient appliance purchases among Latino families.

By thinking outside the box, IRS managers acted as change agents inside a major public agency and helped a growing network of community organizations better serve Native and Border communities with significant new resources, training, and opportunities. That’s a true Organic Philanthropy partnership.







### *Casey's focus.*

Organic Philanthropy doesn't mean you come empty-handed, without ideas about how to proceed. Rather, it means you bring what you have and offer it in a spirit of reciprocity, and with respect.

Powerful ideas will be your first investment. Our intention from the beginning of our work with Southwest Border and Native communities was to make strategic investments in organizations, initiatives, and leaders who were fostering innovation in their communities in four key areas. (See sidebar at right.) While we came to listen and learn, we also brought our own ideas and organizational resources with us, ready to share with partners and communities who expressed interest.

The Casey Foundation has a long history of investment in community change initiatives and in workforce development, family economic security issues, and asset-building efforts, including the Earned Income Tax Credit and strategies to reduce predatory lending and foreclosures. We knew these were important issues in Border and Native communities, where unemployment runs into the high double digits, and we suspected that some of our ideas and expertise might have resonance with the people we were meeting as we began this work. In fact, we found they generated keen interest among our new partners, all of whom in one way or another were trying to serve families who had been living on the financial edge long before the current economic meltdown.

You'll no doubt have your own focus and your own offerings to make that will be helpful to your new partners. So get ready. Set. Go.

#### **Our investment areas.**

The Annie E. Casey Foundation made investments in four key areas.

- Seeding and strengthening family economic success initiatives that connect families to tax assistance, public benefits, financial literacy, and savings and asset-building opportunities.
- Using data-based advocacy to inform, debunk widely held myths, and influence champions and public system reform.
- Stimulating philanthropic investments and leveraging new resources to increase private and public co-investments around the Foundation's priority areas.
- Building the capacity of local institutions by strengthening learning networks and empowering champions and community leaders with data and relevant models to increase their ability to help families and to sustain their efforts.



Here's an example of the way Casey's practice of Organic Philanthropy helped a foundation redefine the way it made its investments.

## Impact Philanthropy

“Our story is really about how a community foundation and its partners could create impact far above the resources they’re individually responsible for, by working toward shared outcomes in a collaborative fashion.”

*Mariano Diaz* VICE PRESIDENT (FORMER), SAN DIEGO FOUNDATION, SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA.

The San Diego Foundation (SDF) had a longstanding commitment to helping homeless families. SDF is a member of the U.S.–Mexico Border Philanthropy Partnership (founded by the Ford Foundation; Casey is a co-funder). Casey and other partnership members, including the San Diego Foundation, began to discuss ways that community foundations could move beyond traditional grantmaking and engage more deeply with their communities for greater leverage and impact.

The San Diego Foundation decided to see if “deep engagement” might lead them to invest differently, and community volunteers on its human services advisory group began to look more closely at the *causes* of homelessness. Could the foundation’s investments have greater impact by supporting strategies that reached families *before* they became homeless? Could interventions by local providers have a greater, more comprehensive impact on vulnerable families if SDF grants encouraged and supported collaborative relationships among providers and the sharing of expertise, data, and resources?

Today, SDF dollars are used to support a coalition of service providers who work together to offer a spectrum of linked interventions that help families

**reduce debt, improve credit scores,  
and save,**

helping them avoid homelessness in the first place.

With common outcome measures, the coalition is able to demonstrate the impact of its efforts and develop a powerful collective voice to advocate for families.



## *Ready. Set. Go.*

A foundation doesn't need to wait until it has a detailed framework or a strategic plan to get going. Rather, you only need to bring a whole-hearted concern about a particular community or issue and the willingness to invest your time, yourself, and a modest budget to the effort. Here's what the process of Organic Philanthropy looks like.

### **PAY ATTENTION TO PROCESS AND RESULTS.**

*When you imagine Organic Philanthropy, think spiral, rather than straight line; coexisting processes, rather than discrete stages.* Though we tend to refer to “stages” in the evolution of Organic Philanthropy (and community change initiatives), the effort really moves like a spiral, with early relationships, learning, and resources being carried forward and new relationships, learning, and resources being folded in along the way. Listening and learning are integral to the spiraling effort, all along the way. There is no “relationship building stage,” though that is an explicit goal of the early work. Rather, like a friendship, Organic Philanthropy assumes that relationships will be built and nurtured with mutual respect and honesty throughout the entire effort, and new friends and partners added as the work

matures. And results — what the community hopes to achieve — aren't something that can wait until the end. Instead, identifying, measuring, and getting results are essential to the effort from the get-go, and throughout.

### **LISTEN AND LEARN.**

*You begin by asking communities what they think they need. You begin by listening.* The early work involves listening to leaders and residents of the communities in which you are interested. Program officers build relationships and begin to seed networks. Small gatherings and conversations with leaders and residents begin to identify the community's most significant challenges and opportunities. (See sidebar at right.)

### **IDENTIFY PARTNERS AND LEADERS.**

*The goal is to help build and nurture a network of relationships that can lead to real improvements in the lives of disadvantaged children and their families.* Strong collaborative partnerships and coalitions are indispensable to Organic





### **Community first.**

The cycle of investment starts with the community first, joining people and partners in the process (often already underway) of defining their own problems and solutions. Communities and their philanthropic partners can explore questions (like those below) that can help identify leaders, issues, and community strengths and traditions to build on. Partners then move through a process of developing community-driven solutions and strategies for getting there.

- What strengths and assets does the community have that can be leveraged and built upon?
- Who are the key innovators and “organic” leaders who can collaborate with the foundation to mobilize their community to tackle tough problems?
- How can a network and resources be grown and sustained?
- What foundation models, best practices, and resources would help build community capacity?
- What issues or problems could be addressed first that are likely to yield relatively fast results (low-hanging fruit)?
- What qualitative and quantitative measures will help the community identify and track results and tell the story?
- How can the community and its partners sustain the improvements they achieve?





Philanthropy. It is primarily through these networks of relationships that results are identified, assessed, and achieved and that existing resources are leveraged and new resources secured.

Our earliest partners included community-based organizations, community foundations, civic leaders, and research institutions. In addition to the obvious go-to people working with established groups and organizations (who would be key to any successful effort), we searched for less high profile leaders who were intimately connected to the social networks of their communities, respected for their knowledge and insight, and eager to help find new solutions to old problems. (The less high profile leaders often, of course, know and are known by everyone!) Whether leaders are formal (civic and organizational) or informal (volunteers and neighbors), they need to be excellent communicators and trusted advocates, and able to help forge common purpose around stubborn challenges.

#### **CONVENE AND CONNECT.**

*Peer networks and communities of learning are powerful catalysts for change, allowing collective consciousness and a passion for change to flower.* Opportunities to meet and exchange ideas can help people find their collective voice and come up with a plan for action where none existed before. The foundation acts as a convener and a connector to bring leaders together for a dialogue (or a series of dialogues, or consultative sessions) to identify issues with the greatest significance and potential for improvement. The foundation can also offer additional resources to increase the



Here's an example of the way Casey's practice of Organic Philanthropy helped one of our partners to rethink the way it was doing business.

## Impact Partners

“We asked our clients, ‘What would you like to know more about [in terms of your finances]?’ The data opened our eyes to what was affecting them most and that drove what we offered in our [financial education] workshops.”

*Elizabeth Thomey* PROGRAM DIRECTOR, PIO DECIMO CENTER, TUCSON, ARIZONA.

The Pio Decimo Center, in Tucson, Arizona, serves mainly Latino families in a four-county region near the border. The average annual income of the families it serves is \$17,500. The Pio Decimo Center is a member of the Frontera Asset Building Network (FABN), a coalition of more than 50 organizations near the border that provide tax service, financial education, and asset-building opportunities to low-income families. Casey supported the formation of FABN to increase collaboration and information sharing among organizations in the region. Since 2005, FABN member organizations have helped families claim over

## \$80 million in tax credits

through free and low-cost tax preparation sites.

As a member of the network, Pio Decimo had access to an important resource: the Latino Financial Behaviors Survey (supported by Casey) that helps organizations understand the financial habits and needs of low-income families, and serve them better. The survey revealed a top priority for at least one-third of the families: information and products that would enable them to save for their children's education.

But few families were availing themselves of the savings opportunities Pio Decimo offered. So the center changed course, and now helps clients save with U.S. savings bonds through a pilot program called Doors to Dreams. “Our clients wanted to know more about how to save for their children's education and we jumped on the opportunity to provide savings bonds to be used toward this goal,” says Pio Decimo Program Director Elizabeth Thomey. The relatively safe, steady return — on even modest investments — seems to appeal to cash-strapped families. The pilot program is in its first year, but participation by families looks promising.





capacity of the collaborative partners, such as technical assistance, best practice models, and successful ideas from other projects, communities, and philanthropies. Support for travel to regional and national conferences and gatherings can be a powerful and effective way to build local capacity. (See sidebar at right.)

#### LEVERAGE RESOURCES.

*A foundation can be an ambassador to other philanthropies and public entities to help focus more resources for vulnerable communities and raise awareness of opportunities for investment.* Our partners in the Southwest Border region and in Native communities cited the lack of foundation understanding of their particular needs and limited funding of their communities as critical challenges. Border and Native communities historically lack fundamental economic development — jobs that pay a family supporting wage, affordable housing, good schools — and basic service infrastructure. Community leaders told us time and again that they perennially had too few resources to meet persistent and basic needs. A foundation can help partners and communities connect to new sources of philanthropic and public resources, and leverage new and existing resources to achieve greater ends. Philanthropic roundtables, meetings with the directors of large public agencies, and conversations with mayors and county executives can all build relationships and lay the basis for new and innovative funding strategies for communities struggling to cover basic needs.

#### Networks work.

What role can networks play in strengthening your work? Networks allow partners to:

- Build and nurture relationships
- Strengthen connections
- Broaden the scope of the work and help move it forward
- Communicate more easily and disseminate information
- Share ideas and innovations (and dream them up!)
- Access technical assistance, and build capacity and skills
- Enjoy support, affirmation, rich dialogue, and collegiality
- Take part in joint evaluation, assessment, and analysis
- Leverage resources

#### Making the match.

1:10. For every dollar the Casey Foundation invested, the Foundation and its partners

**leveraged ten dollars**

in investments for Southwest Border and Native communities.



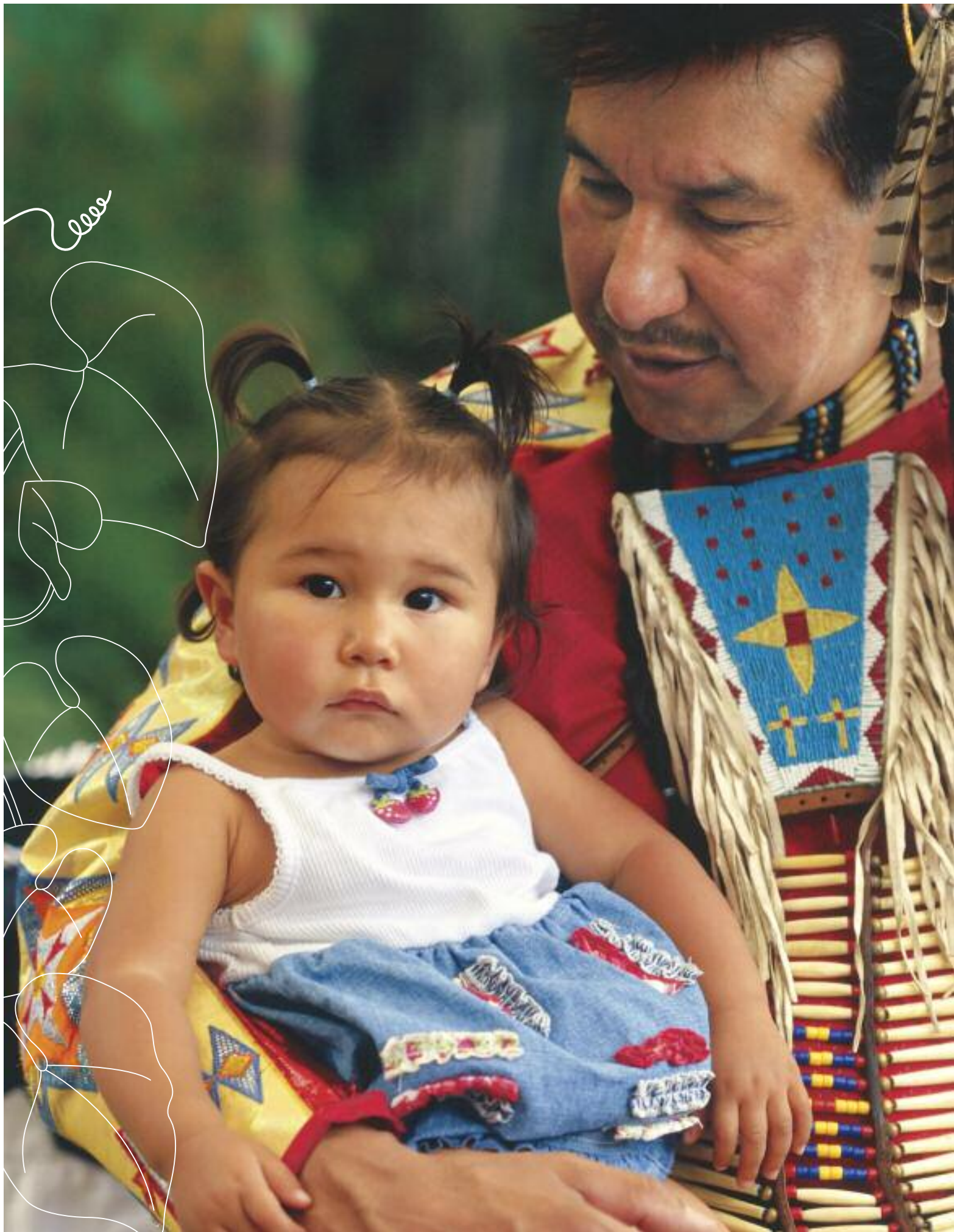
#### **TRACK RESULTS.**

*Organic Philanthropy means that everything you do is driven by one question. Will anyone be better off as a result?* The focus is always on improving life for families living in tough communities. But it can take time — sometimes years — before you start to see real change at the community level and have the data and information to support your claims. In the meantime, there are important near-term wins that can yield relatively rapid results; the challenge is to define, measure, and track targeted outcomes using both quantitative and qualitative methods.

Tracking results creates accountability and enables community members and foundation trustees alike to assess the quality of the effort. What do we hope to accomplish? How will we get there? How are we doing? Building relationships and creating the necessary trust and connections to sustain effective partnerships are indispensable results, though hard to quantify. How do you value and measure relationship building in a meaningful way? Other results will be easier to reckon. It will take a mix of methodologies — hard numbers, stories, creative and thoughtful ways to measure “soft” outcomes — to know whether your efforts are paying off, and what you could do better.









Here's an example of the way Casey's practice of Organic Philanthropy helped to build and multiply connections and create a network of relationships.

## Impact Connections

"It had been my dream to gather urban Indians across the country together. Before, that network didn't exist. Now we're building those relationships, gathering data to help tell the story, and sharing best practices."

**Janeen Comenote** DIRECTOR AND COORDINATOR, THE NATIONAL URBAN INDIAN FAMILY COALITION. SEATTLE, WASHINGTON.

Nearly three-quarters of all American Indians and Native Alaskans live in cities, not on reservations. Over the years, Indian centers have sprung up in cities and towns across the country to help urban Indians meet a range of needs. These nonprofit centers offer critical support and a strong cultural connection: a cup of coffee, a link to someone from back home, a referral to housing or child welfare services. Yet until recently, the urban Indian centers have remained largely disconnected from each other, and no national organization existed as a voice for urban Indians.

That began to change with a series of modest grants from Casey. The executive directors of 12 Indian centers from around the country met in 2004, along with several philanthropies and government agencies.

A year later they formed the

**National Urban Indian Family Coalition;** today there are **19 member organizations.**

The coalition is dedicated to efforts that strengthen urban Native families by reinforcing cultural identity and working in harmony with tribal governments and other institutions. NUIFC regularly represents urban American Indians at the United Nations World Urban Forum. The coalition is also working closely with the National Association of Friendship Centers in Canada on cross-border efforts.

NUIFC is guided by core cultural values of reciprocity, attention to relationships, resource sharing, and responsibility. With the Harvard Project and the National Congress of American Indians Policy Research Center, the coalition recently published *Urban Indian American: The Status of American Indian and Alaskan Natives Families Today*.



### *Human resources.*

Organic Philanthropy requires a foundation to make a different kind of commitment of funds and resources than traditional grantmaking. A foundation's program officer assigned to this work will be key to that commitment, and he or she will need particular skills to do it well.

Empathy, modesty, and the capacity to inspire trust will be as crucial to the work as the ability to track a budget or field contending ideas while building consensus (though those skills will be needed too). Organic Philanthropy can be messy, unpredictable, even uncomfortable at times — it's organic, after all. The process inevitably takes more time than anyone hopes (or tells the board it will) to see results. Program officers who are comfortable with ambiguity and able to take the long view will be more effective in the work. Having the skills and experience to practice both logical and intuitive ways of working will be a great asset. (See sidebar at right.)

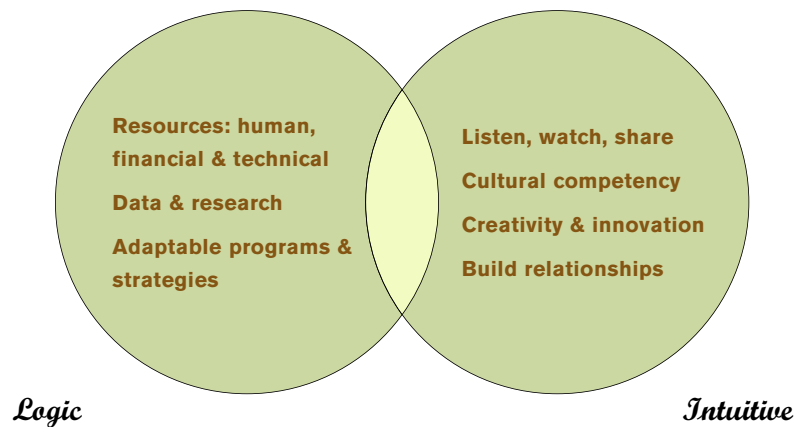
Language, history, ethnicity, and culture are intertwined in this work. What is referred to in the field as "cultural competency" requires candid self-knowledge on the part of a program officer, and respect for each community and its

strengths. Organic Philanthropy redefines the traditional focus on what's wrong or lacking to one that acknowledges personal and community strengths and empowers a community to build with dignity on its capacities. In Latino, African-American, Native, Asian, and immigrant communities, the presence and leadership of an empathetic program officer who is a person of color and has personal experience of what it means to live as a member of a non-dominant culture within the United States can be extremely helpful in establishing commonality and trust.

Whatever his or her background, the program officer needs the ability to work effectively in a cross-cultural situation. While the ability to speak a common language can be particularly helpful, it may not be essential if there is a deep and genuine knowledge of the history and culture of the community and empathy for its struggles.



## ORGANIC PHILANTHROPY



### Soft skills. Hard skills.

Organic Philanthropy is a balancing act between intuitive and logical ways of working, thinking, and assessing progress. Foundations and program officers will need skills, training, and tools to be able to use and balance both approaches for the greatest impact. Without relationships and networks (soft), the work won't happen, efforts will remain fragmented, and there will be no impact. Without results (hard), the lives of families and kids aren't going to change in any real way.

Organic Philanthropy's balance of intuitive and logic models proved to be an effective approach in Native and Southwest Border communities. Its focus on human relationships, its honoring of cultural and historical knowledge, and its grounding in community assets and strengths makes it a good fit for communities in which the expression of deep cultural traditions, values, and practices remain part of everyday life.

Logic elements provide quantitative structure for investment projects.

- Human, financial, and technical resources, connecting partners to resources

- Investments that create effective networks and coalitions across diverse sectors
- Data and research to build internal and external understanding of communities' needs and strengths (assessment, analysis, and dissemination)
- Program models and strategies that can be adapted to and rooted in the local context and culture
- Models to evaluate and measure the success of building and sustaining relationships and networks

Intuitive elements offer qualitative information necessary to building relationships and trust, and fostering innovation.

- Listening, watching, and sharing
- Cultural competency that reflects an understanding of the history, socio-political, and economic realities of a community
- Creativity and innovation
- Building relationships, partnerships, and networks
- Fostering leadership and ongoing learning among partners



### *Looking ahead.*

While Organic Philanthropy offers an effective way to help communities improve the lives of families and children, it is not a cure-all. The challenges in the communities in which we work are formidable. The origin of many of the most vexing and injurious problems and their remedies lie in centers of power far from the communities we care about. Even when all the stars align, and people begin to work together in new and promising ways to create change, gains remain fragile. Funding for critical services and basic needs like housing, health, and education remains hard to come by. Without a doubt, sustaining the work will continue to be a challenge.

Organic Philanthropy relies on the synergy of many people and organizations to create something larger and more lasting than any one of the partners could achieve alone. The work is always driven by a single question: Will children and families be better off as a result of what we and our partners do? We're pleased to say that we have seen significant and encouraging results from the work we have done with our partners. (See IMPACT sidebars.) We expect those results will ripple out and yield further results, as our partners use new tools, strategies, connections, and training to pursue their common goals.

But long-term sustainability — say, the time it takes to raise a generation or two — still depends on the need to secure additional, hard-to-come-by resources from public and private sources.

It depends as well on mustering the public will to see more resources allocated to historically underresourced communities, like Native American communities and tiny border towns, to help lift children and their families out of poverty. Community philanthropies can play an important role. When Organic Philanthropy is taken up by local and regional philanthropies and their partners, community change initiatives stand the best chance of being sustainable. National philanthropies, like the Casey Foundation, may invest and remain engaged for a period of years, and play a valuable role in seeding and supporting the work. Ultimately, though, it is community foundations and their local partners who are in the best position to know their communities well, connect to people and resources, and make the ongoing commitments that will help families and communities sustain their gains.

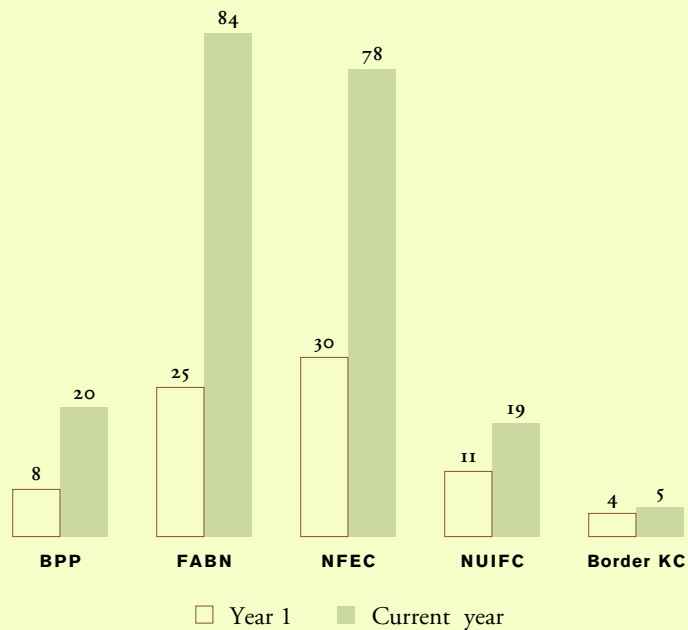
We welcome you to join us in this conversation and endeavor. There are many ways to help improve the well-being of families and children and we hope that the path we've described here — Organic Philanthropy — and what we've learned in pursuit of it, might prove useful to other foundations and community organizations.

Here's an example of the way Casey's practice of Organic Philanthropy helped to build coalitions and create a network of relationships.

## Coalition Partners

Casey provided modest resources to seed and strengthen existing and new relationships within Native and Southwest Border communities. As once informal relationships transformed into powerful learning and advocacy coalitions, Casey continued to nurture each coalition's growth with important capacity-building tools and support for long-term sustainability.

NUMBER OF COALITION PARTNERS



### Coalitions

#### BPP

*U.S.–Mexico Border Philanthropy Partnership*

Seeded: 2002. Partners: 20.

Foster philanthropic engagement and Family Economic Success in the border region

#### FABN

*Frontera Asset Building Network*

Seeded: 2005. Partners: 84.

Asset building and advocacy

#### NFEC

*Native Financial Education Coalition*

Seeded: 2002. Partners: 78.

EITC and asset building

#### NUIFC

*Native Urban Indian Family Coalition*

Seeded: 2003. Partners: 19.

Child welfare and advocacy

#### Border KC

*Border KIDS Count Cohort*

Seeded: 2005. Partners: 5.

Border research and advocacy





## Connect.

For more information about Organic Philanthropy and other Annie E. Casey Foundation initiatives, please visit [www.aecf.org](http://www.aecf.org).

To learn more about Casey's direct investments and impact within Southwest Border and Native communities we recommend *Strengthening Southwest Border and Native Families, Portfolio Reflection 2008*. It can be found on Casey's website at [www.aecf.org](http://www.aecf.org).

### OUR COALITIONS AND KEY PARTNERS

*First Nations Development Institute*  
[www.firstnations.org](http://www.firstnations.org)

*Frontera Asset Building Network*  
[www.fabnetwork.org](http://www.fabnetwork.org)

*National Congress of American Indians Policy and Research Center*  
[www.ncai.org](http://www.ncai.org)

*National Urban Indian Family Coalition*  
[www.nuifc.org](http://www.nuifc.org)

*Native Financial Education Coalition*  
[www.nfec.info](http://www.nfec.info)

*U.S.–Mexico Border Philanthropy Partnership*  
[www.borderpartnership.org](http://www.borderpartnership.org)

### Acknowledgements

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