



MEMO

TO: Grantseekers
FROM: Bruce Karmazin, Executive Director
DATE: December 18, 2020
RE: Response to Grantseeker Survey

Welcome to our fifth Grantseeker Survey conducted by independent consultant Iris Krieg and Associates (IKA); previous surveys were completed in 2006, 2008, 2011, and 2016.

Although similar in scope to previous surveys, the 2020 survey included respondents from our Aspiramos Juntos program for the first time, as well as questions about how applicants and grantees are handling COVID-19 and racial justice issues in their organizations. Adding Chicago-area applicants to the survey pool provided illuminating and helpful feedback, especially as The Foundation expands Chicago programming.

On the whole, we were pleased the comments reflect positively on The Foundation, our staff, and the organization's efforts to build and maintain strong relationships with our constituents. We were also grateful to receive comments and findings which challenge us to improve connections, increase our value, and make the LFF experience more effective for the organizations and people we strive to support.

Survey-related Actions:

Although excellent suggestions are scattered throughout the report, IKA's recommendations begin at page 30. Most of the recommendations can be addressed through updates to our website, and by reworking our forms. The following action items are planned or are in progress:

- Collecting and posting to our website photos from newer grantees that highlight their programs as well as the diversity of our grantees.
- Editing LFF web communications with an eye to the specific details that survey respondents felt were lacking or confusing.
- Site visits, which received high ratings in general, will be more carefully explained on the website and in preparation for meetings.
- Revisions to our LOI, Application and Post Grant Report templates will purge unnecessary or repetitive questions.

- *Land Health Community* metrics have been re-written to better inform grantee evaluation. (These new metrics were already incorporated into the Fall 2020 applications.)

Some recommendations we won't execute. It may be that, on balance, our experience suggests they aren't worth the time, as is the case with offering a pre-submit consultation to all applicants. Some recommendations, though they may be helpful to applicants, involve strategy choices which we have made consciously.

Embracing more challenging issues, and responding:

The question of our presence and visibility in Chicago came up in several ways. Some participants suggested we spend more time there and make our presence felt. A number suggested we play a bigger role in convening and connecting grantees to each other and to other funders. While these actions could serve some, The Foundation's profile in Chicago has been a matter of strategy. As a rural organization, our attention is focused on communities downstate that are underserved by philanthropy.

That said, this may change over the next few years with the recent launch of our Austin Fresh program.

Race, not surprisingly given the times, surfaced as a meaningful issue in the survey. The question of diversity and inclusion was raised directly in relation to the website, staff, and board representation.

Indirectly, one might infer meaning from the difference in scores between the Aspiramos Juntos and Land Health Community programs on the question of being "knowledgeable about issues and challenges faced by my community." On the other hand, it's not surprising that east central Illinois grantees, with whom we have worked for many years, rated some aspects of our work more highly.

We take these observations to heart. As a family organization, based in a rural Illinois community, we are – no surprise -- historically white in our leadership and our constituents. However, the events of 2020 have brought home the importance of questioning the assumptions that have led us here.

Unlike many organizations who announced their solidarity with the Black Lives Matter movement in 2020, we remained quiet. Our board has committed to a process to listen and learn and to understand how race and power affect what we do and how we do it – before any pronouncements. We have initiated a learning process to study race and social justice – in addition to our focus on rural equity – to identify action. We have responded to a degree already, prioritizing BIPOC leadership in our grantmaking and engaging people of color in our decision-making committees.

We are deeply grateful to all who participated in the survey and personal interviews. We imposed on you at an incredibly stressful moment. We honor your effort by sharing the full report and with a commitment to act on the recommendations.



THE LUMPKIN FAMILY FOUNDATION
2020 APPLICANT AND GRANTEE ASSESSMENT
– RESULTS & RECOMMENDATIONS

IRIS KRIEG & ASSOCIATES, INC.

AUGUST 2020

PURPOSE OF THE ASSESSMENT

In January 2020, The Lumpkin Family Foundation (LFF) commissioned Iris Krieg & Associates, Inc., an independent consulting and philanthropic advisory firm, to conduct an assessment of grantees and applicants. As the Lumpkin Family Foundation believes transparency and accountability are central to impactful grantmaking, the assessment was designed to examine grantseekers' perceptions and experiences. Iris Krieg & Associates, Inc. (IKA) has conducted three similar assessments for The Lumpkin Family Foundation since 2005.

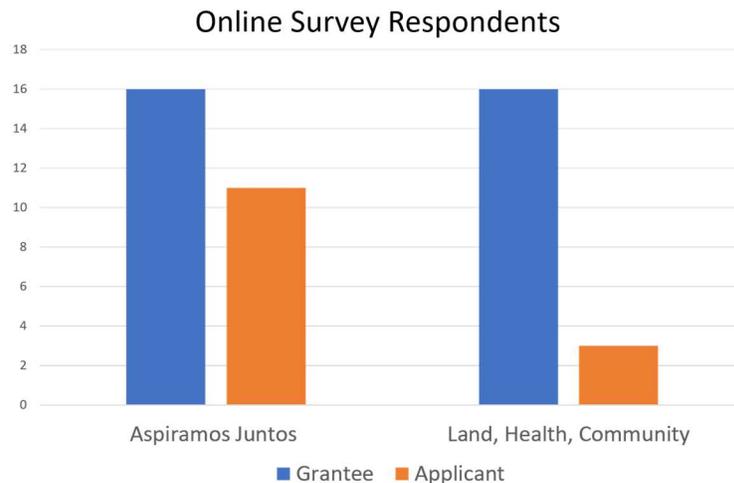
As in previous years, the assessment included two phases of data collection – an online survey and follow-up telephone conversations with a representative sample of potential respondents. The online survey was comprised of a mix of open-ended queries, rating scales, and multiple-choice/forced selection questions. Telephone conversations were guided by a questionnaire designed to provide anecdotal information and a deeper understanding of the topics addressed in survey. For more detailed information on the assessment methodology, refer to Appendix 1.

Seventeen unique questions from previous assessments were also used in this year's survey to allow for comparative and cross-sectional data analysis, primarily in the sections about LFF's grantmaking processes and its relationship with grantseekers and community. New sections in the assessment addressed grant reporting, the foundation's new Aspiramos Juntos grant program in the Chicago area and the continuation of the Land, Health, Community program in and around East Central Illinois. New questions were also added to the survey and telephone interviews regarding issues unique to 2020 such as the COVID-19 pandemic and racial justice. Both the online survey and telephone questionnaire are provided in Appendices 2 and 3.

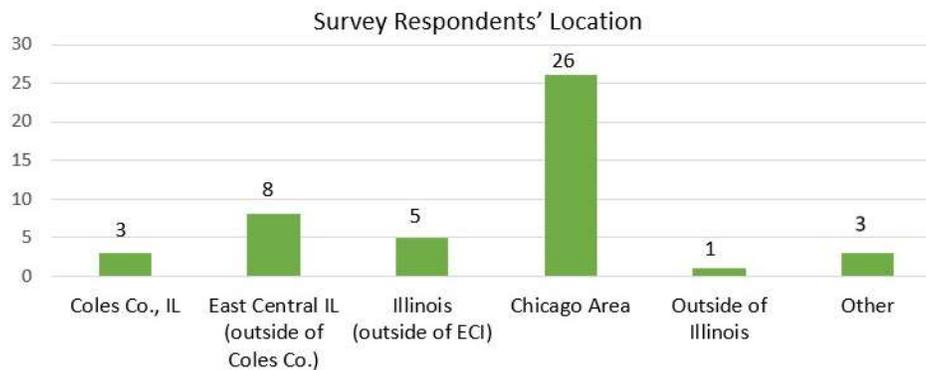
OVERVIEW OF DATA COLLECTION AND LIMITATIONS OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Of the 110 organizations that were sent surveys, 46 completed them for a response rate of 42%. This represents a decrease on the 2016 engagement at 57%. The 2011 assessment had a response rate of 54% and the 2008 assessment also resulted in a 57% response rate while the 2005 assessment had the highest rate of participation at 59% with 79 completed surveys.

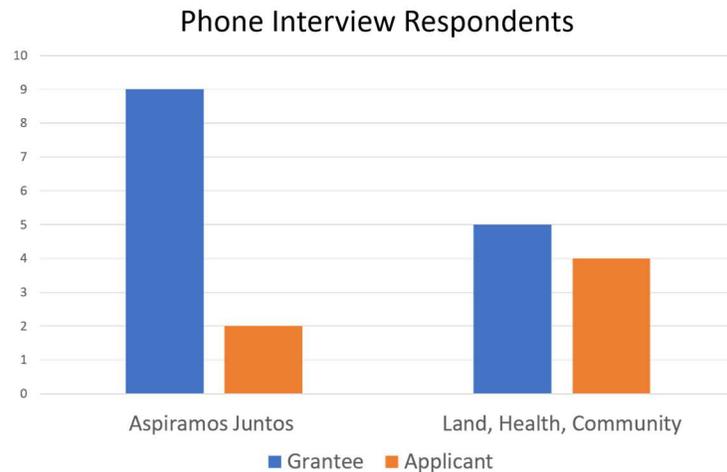
We suspect the response rate decrease this year may have to do with the COVID-19 pandemic and the challenging situations many nonprofits were experiencing at the moment due to streamlining staff responsibilities and often less staff altogether. Completing an anonymous survey may not have been a priority at the time.



As in previous years with the exception of the 2011 assessment, more grantseekers who were awarded funding completed the survey than applicants whose proposals were declined. Similarly, more Aspiramos Juntos (27) applicants and grantees completed the survey than Land, Health, Community (19) applicants and grantees. In 2016, 40% of survey respondents were located outside of the state. However, this year, survey participants were located all over Illinois with one organization outside the state. Most survey participants were located in the Chicago area and applied to Aspiramos Juntos, a Chicago-focused program. Respondents that applied to the Aspiramos Juntos program in the survey also reported more declinations. LFF staff had confirmed that the Chicago program receives more applications than other programs and therefore, has more declinations due to limited funding. The data in the survey is consistent with that information.



Of the 20 telephone interviews conducted for the second phase of the assessment, 14 were with grantee organizations and six were with declined applicants. There was a slightly higher response from Aspiramos Juntos (11) than Land, Health, Community grantseekers (9).



Participation in both phases of the assessment was entirely voluntary and organizations gained no incentivization for their feedback. In a few instances, the staff of the respondent organization had changed, or respondents could not recall details of the foundation’s grantmaking processes, introducing a degree of uncertainty into the data.

Online tools that have become more accessible and user-friendly since the 2016 assessment facilitated the dissemination of the survey and the tracking of responses. The survey was sent to all applicants from 2018-2019 and while organizations were sent reminders and urged to participate, those who actually participated did so of their own volition. Self-selection sampling is an effective strategy to gather descriptive and correlational data but is not a reliable method to assess cause and effect. Opinions expressed by self-selected samples cannot be considered representative of the entire sample group or smaller sub-groups.

While the results of this assessment cannot be considered definitive, survey and telephone interview responses highlight areas where grantees believe the foundation is doing well and other areas where LFF might consider making changes or adjustments.

A NOTE ON DATA, GRAMMAR, AND STYLE

Comparisons between previous assessments was not possible in some cases as there were only a few data points that were carried forward from the past five assessments completed. However, the format, aggregation method and the review of survey feedback in this assessment is similar to previous assessments in that the percentage of respondents offering positive answers as opposed to negative answers were compared. The action of weighting survey answers was eliminated in the 2020 assessment because rating scale questions were not given a numerical assignment. When possible, data results from the 2016, 2011 and even the 2008 were included when questions were comparable. Data from the 2005 assessment is not included in this report as its format varied too much from subsequent surveys and meaningful comparisons would be minimal. In addition, LFF's programs, operations and processes have changes significantly since the early 2000's when the foundation first embarked on a grantseeker assessment.

The online survey consisted of questions in three formats: open-ended, rating scales, and multiple-choice/forced selection. The rating scale questions were answered using the four-level scoring system below:

- No Opinion or N/A
- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Agree
- Agree

"Strongly Agree" and "Agree" were considered positive while "Strongly Disagree" and "Disagree" were considered negative. Trends were identified by comparing the change in the number of positive and negative responses a question received. Responses that were left blank or marked "No Opinion or N/A" were noted when percentage totals included them or when respondents skipped questions that did not apply to their experience. For example, some questions about metrics were specific to only those who applied to the Land, Health, Community program.

To honor the confidentiality that was ensured to respondents, this report uses third-person plural pronouns (they/them/their) instead of third-person singular pronouns (he/him/his or she/her/hers).

Some direct quotations from open-end survey questions and telephone interviews required minor edits or generalization to enhance clarity or preserve confidentiality. Such specific language changes [in brackets] or simplifications do not alter the original meaning of the respondent's answer.

LIST OF REPORT TOPICS

This report provides an analysis of the survey and interview outcomes as well as recommendations for changes the foundation may want to adapt in response to applicants' and grantees' perceptions of the foundation's strengths and weaknesses. Overwhelmingly, survey and interview responses were positive and demonstrated that LFF is respected and appreciated in the nonprofit community. There was some constructive criticism that in most cases reflect small changes the foundation can make to clarify existing services, improve relationships, or streamline processes. The following are the topics that will be covered in this report:

SECTION I: Grantmaking

Perceptions of LFF's grantmaking processes including website, Letter of Inquiry (LOI), pre-submit option, application, grant reporting, and site visit.

SECTION II: Engagement & Impact Beyond Grantmaking

Examining the foundation's staff, relationship with grantees/applicants, and nonprofit community engagement efforts.

SECTION III: Response to Current Events

A look at how grantees and applicants are responding to current events in their organizations and programming.

SECTION IV: Comparisons & Differences between Categories of Respondents

Analysis of differences in the perception and experiences of respondents by mission area, organization size, grants program, and grantee/applicant status.

SECTION V: Recommendations

SECTION I: GRANTMAKING

Perceptions of the foundation’s website, online application, and grant reporting requirements were largely favorable and consistent with previous assessments. This year’s assessment also gleaned positive responses about the foundation’s Land, Health, Community pre-submit grant review process which all applicants identified as a valuable resource, regardless of whether they ended up receiving funding or not.

Website Interface and Use in the Grantmaking Process

“The website was well done and easy to navigate.”

“I thought their FAQs were very helpful when preparing for a grant and I liked that they show their past awardees and the projects they support.”

Questions specific to the navigation and usage of the LFF website were not included in the 2020 assessment. The previous survey produced entirely positive feedback about the website’s navigation, but telephone interviews elicited more frank responses. Therefore, inquiries regarding the LFF website were highlighted in the interviews, and questions about the website were eliminated on the survey. Telephone interviews on the topic were quite varied in user experience overall.

Many interview participants appreciated the added “Apply/Report Here” button and landing page to the grant portal. They also found the website to be pretty standard with few surprises. Multiple grantseekers very much appreciated the FAQ page, as well as the ease in finding staff contact information for each program. There was also positive feedback about the list of current and past grantees in each program, although a significant number of respondents commented that they would appreciate more detail on the funded programs in order to get a better idea of the kinds of programs LFF is interested in supporting.

Most of those interviewed commented on the content and navigation of the website. One person interviewed from a Chicago-based organization who applied for the Aspiramos Juntos program spoke about the need to have more images of the diverse populations LFF serves on the website. The respondent conveyed that the foundation funds rural farming communities where many workers are immigrants, yet images on the LFF website do not reflect this. Likewise, images that reflect the diversity of the communities the Aspiramos Juntos program serves were under-represented.

Most respondents agree that the information on the foundation website is relevant and accessible even though 61% visit the website only once or twice a year and 35% visit the website once every few months. Although a great majority of the feedback on the LFF website was positive, potential areas of improvement were mentioned. The survey included one specific question about the website content as well as what elements respondents found useful on other foundations’ websites that they would like to see added to LFF’s website. (Chart on following page.)

Rate of Selection for Helpful Tools on Other Foundation Websites <i>(respondents could choose more than one)</i>	
News & Resources	15%
Events	17%
Sample Proposals	37%
Detailed Reporting Requirements	24%
Annual Reports	33%
Articles & Publications	4%

When asked to provide feedback on features and tools that the foundation should consider adding, **annual reports** and **sample grant proposals** generated the most significant interest. In the telephone interviews, multiple people voiced wanting more detailed reporting requirements even though only 24% of those who took the survey expressed that particular interest. Much of the responses on the survey for this question were similar to the 2016 assessment,

with the exception of having articles and publications included on the website. In 2016, 21% of respondents indicated they would like to see the inclusion of articles/publications on the LFF website, while only 4% of 2020 survey respondents were interested. Twenty-eight percent of respondents believed that the LFF website did not need to be improved upon at all.

Pre-Submit Grant Review Process

A version of a pre-submit grant review process has been in place with the foundation since 2014. However, the option is now only available to Land, Health, Community program grantseekers. The pre-submit process is an opportunity for grantseekers to receive feedback from LFF staff on application materials prior to submitting a final proposal. The confidential feedback is not shared with the LFF board of trustees and has no bearing on the applicant’s formal grant review.

Seven survey respondents submitted their applications for a pre-submit grant review. Nearly all of this group agreed that the feedback provided to them assisted in their submitted application, and all plan to utilize the service again in the future.

Statement	2016		2020	
	% Positive	% Negative	% Positive	% Negative
I received valuable feedback about my grant application.	90.0	10.0	85.7	14.3
The feedback I received from LFF during the pre-submit grant review process was helpful.	84.2	15.8	100	-
I had enough time to make the recommended changes to my grant application.	89.5	10.5	100	-
I plan to utilize the pre-submit grant review process in the future.	100.0	-	100	-

Of the nineteen Land, Health, Community grantseekers in the survey, only one respondent said they were not invited to the application process. Seven of the 18 respondents who were invited to the application phase took advantage of the pre-submit process. In the interviews, there were several grantseekers who were invited, but expressed that they did not partake in the pre-submit process. Some

of the interview answers were from staff that did not know if their organization participated in the pre-submit process, though they all hoped they did.

Application & Reporting Requirements

“What is expected of you in the application is clearly laid out.”

“The application and LOI were pretty standard processes for a foundation”

“The process was simple and LFF staff were easy to contact with questions. They took the time to understand our proposal and work and make suggestions on partnerships or others that we should engage with.”

Survey respondents were asked to provide feedback on the use of the LFF’s online application process. This included both the LOI and application stages. The application portal overall received high marks on the ease of use. The vast majority of applicants and grantees agree that the foundation’s online application process is easy to navigate and clearly explained on Lumpkin’s website.

As opposed to previous assessments, the 2020 survey split these sets of questions into two-parts: one for the LOI (Letter of Inquiry), and one set for the application. This was done to get better clarity of grantseekers’ perception of the process at different stages. In addition, the previous assessment asked about submitting a written application versus an online application. This question was eliminated due to electronic submissions becoming the norm for many foundations since 2016; the question seemed outdated. Lastly, a question regarding the grantseeker’s ability to fully express their program in the LOI and/or application stage was added in the 2020 assessment. For the set of questions, six respondents responded with “N/A” because they only got as far as the LOI in the process.

In terms of transparency about the application process, one respondent said, “it would help to have a [fuller] description of grant review criteria [on the website] than the simple statement, ‘A committee of members and community volunteers will review your LOI.’”

When comparing this to the previous assessment in the table below, it is clear that that respondents generally felt more positively about the LOI than the application. However, the differences were minimal and may be skewed by the six organizations that were not invited to the application stage. Overall, both the LOI and the application were viewed positively by grantseekers. Even organizations that ultimately did not receive funding had a positive experience with LFF’s grantmaking process.

Statement	2016		2020 (LOI)		2020 (Application)*	
	% Positive	% Negative	% Positive	% Negative	% Positive	% Negative
The online (LOI/App) process is clearly explained on LFF's website.	100	-	97.8	2.2	82.6	4.4
The online (LOI/App) process is easy to navigate.	98.3	1.7	100	-	84.8	2.2
The online process is more efficient than submitting a written LOI/application.	88.3	11.7	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
The online (LOI/App) process provides sufficient space to accurately describe my organization and its programs.	86.7	13.3	97.8	2.2	82.6	4.4
The online LOI/App is limiting and restrictive.	N/A	N/A	6.5	93.5	4.4	82.6

*Percentages do not include organizations that were not invited to the application stage.

Regarding the content and structure of the application itself, 100% of LOI respondents agreed that Lumpkin’s **online application provides sufficient space** to accurately describe their organization and its program. A common theme in the telephone interviews was that the application’s character limits were sufficient for organizations to express the full extent of their program. One respondent said, “LFF is more generous in [application] space than most [foundations] to talk about your work.” However, a concern about redundant questions in the LOI and the proposal application expressed in the 2016 assessment resurfaced in the 2020 survey and interviews.

“The application/LOI often feels like too much, especially for small grants. There are questions that feel repetitive in the full application.”

“Questions in the application are redundant. I ended up repeating myself or finding a different way to say the same thing. Sometimes I would just write, ‘as described in the previous question...’”

Statement	2008		2011		2016		2020	
	% Positive	% Negative						
LFF has reasonable application requirements.	98.2	1.8	98.2	1.8	94.9	5.1	82.6	17.4
LFF communicated in a timely manner about the status of my pending LOI/grant proposal.	96.4	3.6	96.4	3.6	96.6	3.4	100	-
LFF made an effort to understand my LOI/grant proposal.	90.6	9.4	84.3	15.7	94.7	5.3	91.3	8.7

Positive responses to the statement “**LFF has reasonable application requirements**” have decreased from 94.9% to 82.6% since the 2016 assessment. Telephone interviews and write-in survey responses revealed more detail on the change in perception, particularly when it came to the Land, Health, Community program metrics being limiting. More information about metrics was revealed in survey questions on the post-grant reports. For example, responses regarding the application process in relation to metrics included:

“The required outcomes and metrics section should allow the grantee to provide some of their own that might be more specific to their work.”

“I wish the website would feature the specific metrics for the Land, Health, Community program because we were not able to fulfill all of them when we were completing the proposal.”

“It would be nice to have sample metrics for the Aspiramos Juntos program on the website, just so we can get a better idea of what we should be measuring that would be translatable to Lumpkin’s interests.”

Post-Grant Reports

As mentioned previously, specific questions about reporting was added to the 2020 assessment. There was an option of “N/A or No Opinion” in this section, which only a few organizations chose. The question about metrics only applied to organizations that received Land, Health, Community grants. Therefore, 13 respondents answered as “N/A”. (Chart on following page.)

Statement	2020	
	% Positive	% Negative
LFF has reasonable reporting requirements.	78.6	17.9
LFF communicates reporting submission dates in a timely manner.	96.4	-
The reporting process is easy to navigate.	92.9	7.1
LFF staff was available to answer questions about reporting requirements.	82.1	-
Metrics provided for you to select to be evaluated upon were reasonable and reflective of your core work. (LHC Only) *	53.6	-

*13 respondents skipped question as they did not apply into the LHC program.

For the most part, LFF’s reporting process and requirements received positive remarks. Survey respondents felt that LFF staff and the system in place communicates when reports are due in a timely manner. During the phone interview, one organization pointed out that they received an electronic reminder from the system and an email reminder from staff. They were happy to have received such clear communication about reporting dates.

Just as with the application, some respondents felt that reports questions can be repetitive. One survey comment was very specific in the example, while several other comments were more general.

“We have found it difficult to differentiate our responses to some of the Lessons Learned questions, both between the questions and from year to year. In order to maximize our ability to use these questions for reflection, we would prefer a single, more open-ended question on Lessons Learned, or for one or more of those questions to be optional so we can avoid unnecessary repetition.”

“[We would prefer] less time-consuming reporting. If this mean increasing the frequency of reports or check ins, that might make sense. The best foundation relationships are those that are based on frequent communication, not based around the reporting or grant applications.”

“Reports could also be shorter and less redundant.”

“The grant report was long and repetitive.”

“[As a previously funded organization for Land, Health, Community], I felt the report this time was more difficult. The metrics in this post-report was so specific, it was difficult to answer. It would be helpful to get the metrics in advance of the start of the program”

The most positive comments were connected to grantseekers’ ability to reach out to LFF staff to clarify questions, request an extension for reports, and to have general interaction with staff. This will be discussed further in the *Relationship with LFF Staff* section later in this report. The “Tell us a Story” section of the report was praised by one of the interviewed organizations. “Some things can’t measure impact more than what a story can tell you. I also liked how there was an opportunity to upload a video.”

Site Visits

“The discussion was thorough. LFF staff are well informed and genuinely interested in issues and projects being addressed.”

“The site visit was a great experience. Organizations in East Central Illinois are such a tight knit community, so staff really blended in during the site visit, which we really appreciated.”

“I enjoyed the casual conversation and the fact that we did not need to prepare a formal presentation to deliver.”

“The site visit went really well! Staff was very curious about the project, knowledgeable and asked really good questions. Staff seemed very authentic while very appreciative of our work. They met with our students and asked questions. They were really looking to learn more and wanted to be helpful.”

Applicant and grantee feedback about the Lumpkin Family Foundation’s site visit process was overwhelmingly positive. Of the 46 full survey respondents, 21 received an LFF site visit. LFF’s site visits consistently met grantseeker expectations and is a valued part of the foundation’s grantmaking process. During phone interviews, grantseekers were specifically impressed with staff and committee members’ knowledge of their program and issues. Likewise, board members who attended site visits for Aspiramos Juntos received praise on their preparation and great questioning during the site visit.

Statement	2016		2020	
	% Positive	% Negative	% Positive	% Negative
I received adequate notice for the site visit	100	-	95.2	4.7
I knew in advance what to expect from the site visit.	92.3	7.7	76.2	23.8
The site visit met my expectations.	100	-	100	-
LFF staff and/or committee members were prepared for the meeting.	100	-	100	-
LFF staff and/or committee members had a sufficient grasp of the issues to understand my organization.	100	-	95.2	4.7

Only one question on this topic received negative feedback with nearly 24% of respondents indicating that they did not know what to expect from the site visit, although 100% responded that the site visit still met their expectations. There were some respondents who hosted an LFF site visit for the first-time and felt unprepared for some of the questioning. The most prevalent comment was for LFF to provide an agenda prior to the site visit. Respondents also suggested a list of questions or topics that LFF representatives would like to discuss or see at the site visit in advance. One respondent reported that they did not receive adequate notice of the visit and some of the vital staff for the program were not available and present.

Survey participants were asked what advice they would offer to nonprofits preparing for their first site visit with LFF. “Be prepared” was the most common piece of advice provided by respondents for applicants getting ready for their first site visit with the foundation. Several respondents specifically said that LFF staff asked a lot of good questions about the program. A few respondents also suggested that organizations should prepare any material that would help LFF staff to understand the program better in advance. However, most of the responses conveyed that prepared materials were unnecessary as long as the organization hosts were ready to give detailed information about the proposed program. Lastly, there were numerous positive comments on how LFF staff conducted the site visit “more like a conversation, than an interview”.

SECTION II: ENGAGEMENT & IMPACT BEYOND GRANTMAKING

The vast majority of applicant and grantee organizations consider the Lumpkin Family Foundation to be accessible and responsive. Compared to 2016, the 2020 assessment yielded overwhelmingly positive perceptions of the LFF staff's knowledge about issues in the community and their interactions with grantseekers, from being available to answer questions prior to submitting an LOI to staying in touch and present in and around the community, especially in the East Central Illinois area.

LFF's Connection to its Mission

For the 2020 assessment, a question was added at the request of LFF staff to receive feedback from grantseekers on how the foundation is fulfilling its mission with its grantmaking and in the community it serves. A large majority of survey respondents believed that the foundation was creating long-lasting improvements in its four mission themes:

- * Environmental Sustainability
- * Promoting Healthy Habits
- * Supporting the Local Food and Regenerative Agricultural Economy
- * Developing Nonprofit Leadership and Collaboration

Of the four themes, only two respondents, exclusively from the pool of organizations that applied into the Aspiramos Juntos program, gave negative responses to LFF for developing nonprofit leadership and collaboration.

Survey respondents were asked to provide advice on how LFF could improve in any of these areas to fulfill its mission. The comments revealed four themes:

1. Reflect the needs of the community LFF seeks to support:

"We are especially pleased to see LFF's support of educational efforts that extend sustainable food education and healthy food access to schools in diverse communities through school gardens."

"We feel that LFF could better represent communities served by bringing diversity to its board and staff."

2. Change the grantmaking strategy to demonstrate program success:

"There could be better alignment with what funding opportunities [the foundation] claims to support vs. grantees they fund. Specifically, the Aspiramos Juntos grant mentions behavior change and collaboration around 'environmental sustainability and climate change,' but recent grants are heavily weighted toward food systems and school gardens with little emphasis on collaboration, leadership development, or climate change initiatives."

“Offer multi-year (3+) grant commitments so programs can truly show program success.”

“It's difficult to assess "long-lasting" improvements without knowing what metrics and goals are being set.”

“Provide outcomes from grantees [on the website or in proposal examples].”

3. Create more capacity building opportunities.

“We haven't seen any broad [direct] capacity building opportunities present in recent years.”

“Consulting [opportunities] based on common issues faced by NFP community like HR, communications, collaboration, etc.”

4. Demonstrate and highlight LFF’s leadership in the community.

“LFF could improve its role as a thought leader through enhanced communication on its knowledge and role in the community.”

“LFF could connect more of its grantees with each other and other foundations.”

The online survey also asked respondents to select the most useful services and programs that the Lumpkin Family Foundation could provide for their organization. Just as in the 2016 assessment, **best practices and lessons learned from other grantees** and **technical assistance developing metrics for grant evaluation purposes** generated the most interest. Write-in responses for this question in the survey were requested. The interest in LFF assisting in program and organizational collaboration came up more than once.

Post grant site visits	10.9%
Technical assistance developing metrics for grant evaluation purposes	43.7%
A check-in phone call from LFF staff during the grant term	19.6%
Best practices and lessons learned from other grantees	69.5%

“Foundations often talk about wanting to see collaboration in applications. Since foundations get so many proposals, it could help if Lumpkin took a proactive role in encouraging collaborations between organizations that submit similar proposals... or when they see an opportunity to collaborate.”

“[Create] connections to grantees and other philanthropic institutions engaged in similar work.”

Relationship with LFF Staff

“If everyone was as responsive and communicated as well as Lumpkin, it would make my job easier!”

“A fantastic team with strong leadership from Bruce.”

In general, the survey and interview responses reflected positively on the foundation and the LFF staff’s relationship with grantseekers and the nonprofit community. During the phone interviews respondents strongly praised LFF staff’s accessibility and willingness to help when organizations were experiencing challenges. Lumpkin Family Foundation program staff – Bruce Karmazin, Laura Huddleston, and Daniel Doyle – received numerous positive comments about their interactions with grantseekers, especially during the phone interviews. Even unfunded organizations generally viewed LFF staff favorably.

	2008		2011		2016		2020	
	% Positive	% Negative						
LFF staff is knowledgeable about issues and challenges faced by my community.	88	12	100	-	90	10	95.6	4.4
LFF staff is knowledgeable about issues and challenges faced by my organization.	80.9	19.1	90.9	9.1	85.3	14.7	89.1	8.7
I believe I have a good relationship with LFF.	89.1	10.9	90.9	9.1	85.7	14.3	95.6	4.4
LFF staff returns phone calls and emails in a timely manner.	90.7	9.3	95.8	4.2	96.1	3.9	100	-
I feel that I can contact LFF if I have questions or concerns.	94.7	5.3	92.2	7.8	94.6	5.4	91.3	8.7
I believe LFF respects my organization.	96.5	3.5	97.7	2.3	100	-	95.6	4.4

In large measure, organizations consider the foundation’s staff to be accessible, responsive, and professional. However, although 100% of grantees and applicants said that communication is returned promptly, the number of respondents that believed LFF respected their organization was the lowest rating of all assessments from 2008, 2011, and 2016 at 95%, which is still a very favorable rate of satisfaction.

Of the statements this year, there were several mentions of LFF not being knowledgeable about issues and challenges facing the respondents’ organization, primarily from Aspiramos Juntos grantseekers during phone interviews. The feedback given was that although LFF staff was very knowledgeable about the specific proposed program, there was a sense that staff did not always understand the broader,

underlying issues that their communities face. When disaggregating the data for grantseekers *who did not receive funding* from the Lumpkin Family Foundation, there was very little variance about the overall positive perception of LFF staff and their organizations' relationships with the foundation.

"We have enjoyed working with the staff at LFF and appreciate that they checked in with us when quarantine began."

"We have always had exceedingly positive experiences working with LFF staff. They are very respectful, helpful and responsive. We've never had issues and felt that they were happy with what we did."

As mentioned previously, there was very little negative feedback about interactions with staff. Negative comments reflected the opinions of the individual and there were no indicated consistent problem areas among LFF staff. For example, one respondent felt that staff was too blunt while giving the organization feedback, while other organizations specifically appreciated the honest opinion and feedback of staff regarding programming, possibility of funding and improvements needed to the proposed project.

LFF's Relationship with Community

The Lumpkin Family Foundation has been a fixture in the East Central Illinois region since its inception. That strong, and long-standing presence is evident in survey and interview respondents when reflecting on the Land, Health, Community program. The Aspiramos Juntos program, in contrast, is a more recent program and was created by a family trustee interested in expanding LFF funding to the Chicago region. Grantseekers from this program had more mixed opinions about the foundation's expertise on issues affecting the region. Aspiramos Juntos grantseekers had a more critical view of the foundation's relationship with their organization and community of nonprofits.

Outside of their own funding, none of the Aspiramos Juntos organizations that were interviewed saw the foundation present in the Chicago-area community. Comparatively, respondents from the Land, Health, Community program expressed that LFF and its staff are often present at community events, program sponsorship and other external presentations.

Land, Health, Community survey feedback on LFF presence in community and responding to changing needs:

"LFF has responded to changing needs. They have changed their mission since they started. Since 2016, the bridge between LFF and the community has been growing."

"Look at what LFF has done during the pandemic – they were very responsive to emergency-directed needs."

"Lumpkin is very well-known in this region. Everyone has really positive things to say about the foundation"

Aspiramos Juntos survey feedback on LFF presence in community and responding to changing needs:

"I looked at their partners and they do have Chicago partners, but I don't see a lot of visibility from the foundation directly."

"LFF has been really responsive with the pandemic issues."

"They could do more beyond funding."

"The Calumet region could use more support."

"LFF was really responsive and asked if we needed any help when COVID hit."

"The foundation may want to consider reducing barriers for funding – simplify the process can widen the pool of applicants in the region."

"I think the foundation does a good job. They understand the intersection of different issues like race, poverty and access, which is really important to the field."

"Things have shifted within the organization; they have been very level-headed and nimble about changes in the community. They are also open to hearing how organizations are changing to be more responsive and effective."

However critical grantseekers were of both programs, most survey and interview respondents felt strongly that their program, particularly the ones funded, aligned with LFF's mission.

"100% we align! We are doing a lot of environmental justice work, so many programs fit within LFF's priorities."

"LFF is a really good fit for us!"

SECTION III: PROGRAM FUNDING IMPACT

This year's assessment includes a section for grantseekers to offer feedback on the two Lumpkin Family Foundation programs featured in the survey and interviews: Land, Health, Community and Aspiramos Juntos. Both which make up the largest portion of Lumpkin Family Foundation's funding pool. Although both programs seek to fulfill LFF's mission, the communities where these programs function are both very different. However different, these LFF programs continue to provide a valuable, and often rare opportunity, for grantseekers to receive support from a local foundation who recognizes the importance of building healthy, sustainable rural and urban communities.

When asked if grantseekers connected with LFF's mission's themes, several Land, Health, Community grantseekers did not believe their work connected with LFF's promotion of **physical activity and/or healthy eating**. Aspiramos Juntos grantseekers identified the least to the **agricultural economy** subcategory but did relate to LFF's subcategory of supporting a strong local food economy.

Land, Health, Community

Land, Health, Community, (formerly the Lumpkin Family Fund), is the Foundation's primary and largest grantmaking program. A minimum of 50% of the foundation's annual funds are projects in East Central Illinois. A question was included in this year's survey asking if the metrics provided for the grantseekers of Land, Health, Community funding were reasonable and reflective of their core work. Survey respondents felt overwhelmingly positive with 100% **agreeing or strongly agreeing** with the statement.

Respondents were asked what impact has LFF's grantmaking had on East Central Illinois or their immediate program area.

"LFF funding helped improve the health environments of the partner schools we work with to implement programming."

"LFF has been aggressive with funding agriculture and food economy work in East Central Illinois. These funds are necessary to provide programming around topics related to this work. They have been able to keep advancing positive work due to the funds distributed."

"There are several initiatives that would not exist without LFF support, and these have played an important role in the overall health of the region."

"LFF has greatly increased the capacity of non-profit providers in East Central Illinois and added support in an area where there aren't too many foundations supporting this type of work."

"Most larger foundations and government agencies require grant projects to focus on much larger areas (e.g. Midwest, entire state). LFF's grantmaking has allowed us and many other organizations to really focus in on ECI and have a stronger, more lasting impact in one place."

"They provide small organizations like ours a means to grow and gain footing in the community."

Phone interviews for the Land, Health, Community program went into more detail about what more the foundation can do to address pressing issues facing East Central Illinois and perspective regions.

“LFF is working on regenerative agriculture in the region as the corn/soy model is not sustainable. LFF should promote more market diversification.”

“It would be good to get more support on soil health and water quality in the area. Growing more conservation efforts in agriculture will result in better impact on environment and wildlife.”

“LFF programming changed when they changed their mission, but they may want to consider creating a more open program funding this year to shift with the current crisis.”

“The region could benefit from a formal community needs assessment. Publicly-available data doesn’t always tell the full story.”

Aspiramos Juntos

Aspiramos Juntos (We Hope Together) is a grantmaking program offered to organizations in the Chicago region by the Lumpkin Family Foundation. When asked what impact LFF has made on their organization in the Chicago region, responses included:

“The Lumpkin Family Foundation remains a steady supporter of our work in the Chicago region, which is crucial in the sustainability of our project.”

“LFF has been pivotal to the establishment and growth of the organization, which has especially benefited from LFFs support as its first multi-year funder, allowing us to sustain efforts to evolve the organization in terms of both its offerings and its operational model.”

“The funds allowed a significant expansion of the work we were doing to the communities we want to provide services to the most.”

“We were able to provide educational opportunities for adults and youth in urban gardening.”

“LFF has allowed [us] to exist, to thrive and to pivot.”

“Funds are essential to continuing our urban agriculture programs”

Phone interviews of Aspiramos Juntos grantseekers garnered a more critical view of the foundation than the survey. Respondents offered options of what the Lumpkin Family Foundation could be doing more of in the Chicago region.

“We don’t have a sense of what Lumpkin is doing around Chicago, outside of funding. It would be great to see a quarterly spotlight to know what else the foundation is doing in the region.

“LFF may want to shift its focus throughout the state to assist the very population that is working on rural farms: immigrants and Latino communities. This group is bearing the burden of the current crisis. LFF should also consider supporting POC farmers through COVID.”

SECTION IV: RESPONSE TO CURRENT EVENTS

In January 2020, a patient in Washington state was diagnosed with the first case of novel coronavirus in the United States. Soon after, the World Health Organizations declared a global health emergency. Pretty soon, states around the U.S. started to order residents into quarantine to help stop the spread of this highly contagious respiratory disease. On March 21, 2020, Illinois Governor J. B. Pritzker officially announced a shelter-in-place order to residents of the state.

This action greatly altered the social service and general nonprofit sectors with the health concerns, economic losses and the need to drastically change how organizations operate almost from one day to the next. Many nonprofits, including LFF grantees, were forced to halt programming to strategize how to keep operating, pay staff, and provide the services that their respective communities so vitally need.

The original date for the survey release was to be April 20. However, March and into April was a very chaotic period for the nonprofit industry around the state and for people personally. It was decided by LFF staff and consultant IKA to delay the release of the survey by a month until May 19.

Due to these dramatic changes to our professional and personal existence, the Lumpkin Family Foundation wanted to reach out to grantees and subsequently asked IKA staff to include questions about the COVID-19 pandemic in this assessment. A series of questions were therefore added to the survey as well as the interview questions.

In addition, on May 26, near the deadline of the survey, protests around the country emerged around the issue of racial injustice. As grantseekers completed their LFF survey, many commented on the events that were taking place, believing there was a connection between addressing racial inequity and Lumpkin Family Foundation's commitment to conservation and environmental justice. Therefore, LFF also requested a question about how and if grantseekers are addressing racial equity and social injustice in their work to be added to the existing telephone interviews.

COVID-19 Pandemic

The survey asked grantseekers to describe the financial, operational, and programmatic impacts the COVID-19 crisis has had on their organization. Not surprisingly, all respondents were forced to stop their programming completely and then quickly figure out how to shift program models to virtual platforms. Organizations were financially hit, as many of them were unable to receive programming fees from the public and had to cancel or convert fundraising efforts to virtual settings as well as cancel income-generating events all together. Some of the major themes that emerged are reflected in the following comments:

Fund/Income Loss:

"Our annual fundraising event, a source of general operating support, was canceled."

"Individual and sponsorship revenue is down. Unknowns for the future impact on grants is scary."

"We have lost significant revenue due to cancelling our facilitation training courses and conference center bookings."

“The COVID-19 crisis has surfaced a significant financial, operational, and programmatic impact on our nonprofit.”

“It has been significant due to all in-person programming being canceled and volunteers are no longer able to take part. PPP provides some financial relief, but it does not cover everything.”

“Grants for which we applied are not awarding funds, or not awarding funds in the original timeline for which we hoped to receive funding. A number of traditional supporters are choosing to fund COVID-19 relief efforts instead of humanities or environmental causes.”

“We have funders who have paused their funding allocations to our organization.”

Programmatic Shifts

“Initially, programs were closed or altered to maintain social distancing safety regulations.”

“It was difficult to take programs virtual and keep energy up.”

“We were able to pivot our community events to a virtual format, but this may have made them less inclusive.”

“Due to revenue loss, we had to temporarily reduce staff time and subsequent capacity to deliver programs.”

“We are pivoting to a virtual or small group programming format.”

“We had to suspend some of our programming indefinitely and were therefore unable to realize anticipated revenue.”

“We’ve had to work to accommodate virtual delivery/social distancing protocols for our program, which has resulted in a loss of engagement.”

“Our main program has had to shut its doors, and since it is an in-person, natural environment experience, [and] we are unable to recreate it in a virtual space.”

“We’ve had to pivot our programming as the main focus is in-school and now we are finding ways to keep kids healthy at home. We are addressing the immediate needs of schools as it relates to helping increase food access to school meals.”

Staff Loss or Changes in Work

“Most staff moved to working from home.”

“Staff working remotely is going fine, but we miss each other.”

“All our staff have been working remotely since March.”

“Staff has increased their hours in places to make up for the lack of volunteers.”

“Approximately 30 percent of staff was furloughed by the first week of April.”

Stress on Staff, Clients, and Community

“The long-term impact on communities of color and underinvested communities will be devastating. With this knowledge, and in the context of current protests around racism, inequity and violence, we are having important conversations about the larger structural changes that need to be made in order to address long standing inequities and racist structures that impact our communities.”

“We are continuing to provide support to parents, including providing parents with a wide variety of resources to help them support their children during this difficult time. These resources cover dealing with anxiety, maintaining physical activity, cooking healthy foods and more.”

“The current crisis is drawing more attention to the health disparities and structural inequities that are part of everyday life in Chicago. A study has already shown that more exposure to air pollution is linked to a higher death rate from COVID-19.”

“The crisis has decimated opportunities for local, sustainable growers to sell direct to consumers and weakened wholesale purchasing opportunities as restaurants face dire situations.”

“Communities on Chicago’s South and West Sides have been disproportionately affected by COVID-19, including incidence of infection, mortality rates, and resulting loss of employment and income.”

“Now more than ever, our community needs access to healthy food and opportunities to learn to grow their own food.”

“Data for Latinx deaths are inaccurate or delayed, which provides an unclear picture of how the virus affects this population. These devastating gaps represent the cumulative effect of disparities in health, education and wealth.”

“We have seen the pandemic lead to job loss, housing insecurity, and mental health challenges such as stress and anxiety.”

“Livestock producers cannot provide enough inventory to meet recent demands. Vegetable producers coincidentally had a cool spring and are not producing much product. They are also juggling consumer demand and direct-to-consumer market opportunities.”

“Farmers have been stressed with new market demands in some cases, and in others, lack of markets. People who were employed in food-related businesses lost jobs they may never recover. The entire food system, from local to industrial, has experienced major disruption.”

“Everyone is on edge. COVID. Violence. Police. Deportation. Race relations. Now the weather is hot. We are in a pressure cooker.”

Opportunity Emerging

“Even through all the challenges, it has also offered a tremendous opportunity for our organization to respond with innovation in order to continue serving our community.”

“Due to COVID-19 we have donated 100% of our food produced as of today. We have also partnered with other non-profit organization to provide additional food to our community.”

Although organizations, client, community and industry are struggling through this crisis, grantseekers were able to offer suggestions on how the Lumpkin Family Foundation can help outside of funding its usual grant priorities. Suggestions included:

- * Temporarily opening flexible funding for current grantees;
- * Fund COVID crisis-related needs;
- * While in-person programming is suspended, LFF could promote virtual event/classes provided by grantees on its website;
- * During this time, create or fund more opportunities for grantees to share ideas or learning sessions;
- * Directly fund efforts for organizations to build digital educational platforms.

Racial Inequity and Social Justice

Considering recent conversations on racial inequity in the United States, some organizations are re-evaluating how they are addressing this issue in their work. Therefore, a question asking organizations if they were planning to or currently addressing racial equity or social justice in their work was added to the telephone interview. The answers were quite varied, but unsurprisingly, there were distinct differences in responses between Aspiramos Juntos grantseekers in Chicago and Land, Health, Community grantseekers in rural Illinois. Chicago-based organizations were already incorporating social justice in their work, though organizations are at different stages and levels of the work. Conversely, rural-based organizations had very diverse responses in that they were either actively working on the issues, are the beginning of the process, did not know how to incorporate the issue into their work or did not see the need due to the lack of racial diversity in the region.

Rural-based Organizations

“We have a DEI (Diversity, Equity, Inclusion) committee who meet regularly and works with our staff who are people of color (POC). We need better representation of our staff to our community. We would like to see more POC in the work of the ecology environment. Transportation is an issue as well; we can get more diverse clients without board public transportation.”

“Our CEO addressed the current issues. We do not tolerate discrimination. In our staff resources, we have updated our racial discrimination policies in place.”

“We don’t have a lot of diversity in our county. We have some Hispanic families, but we don’t have a lot of African American farming families. The board is not currently looking into this issue.”

“We currently are not doing any work in this area. However, if we were to receive funding for this work, our board would be very responsive and interested in pursuing the issue.”

“We are not directly doing this work, though it intersects with our work significantly. There is a lot of ongoing conversation, but I don’t believe it will be a major focus of our work in the future.”

“We are very actively working on this. It started with efforts to bring diverse board members who can trickle the message down to our client base. We want to increase our client diversity because we don’t want to create social-economic barriers to our work.”

“Our work is explicitly supporting organizations led by POCs, particularly with vulnerable populations.”

Chicago-based Organizations

“Yes. [Addressing racial inequities] is one of the bedrocks of our work. “

“Climate resiliency fits within addressing racial inequities and making more green space available to underserved communities.”

“This is something a capacity grant would be helpful for. Our staff has had conversations among each other, but nothing concrete. Our programs currently function in non-diverse Chicago neighborhoods.”

“We have been working on this for 3-4 years and partner with brown/black communities. We work very closely with environmentalists who are POCs and often feature them on our panel.”

“the issue of equity is central to all of our external work. We are currently working on the issue internally. Although we have POCs on our board, our staff is mostly White and so it our leadership.”

There were a few themes that developed from the suggestions on how the Lumpkin Family Foundation can have a more active role in addressing social justice and racial inequity, as a leader in the funding and support of environmental sustainability. For example, respondents suggested:

- * Addressing the needs of farm laborers, both in the field and in meat processing;
- * Working with more black and Latino farmers;
- * Tackling the complicated history of the removal of land from native peoples;
- * Fund programs that are addressing racial and social inequities through environmental justice and access to green spaces.

SECTION V: COMPARISONS & DIFFERENCES BETWEEN CATEGORIES OF RESPONDENTS

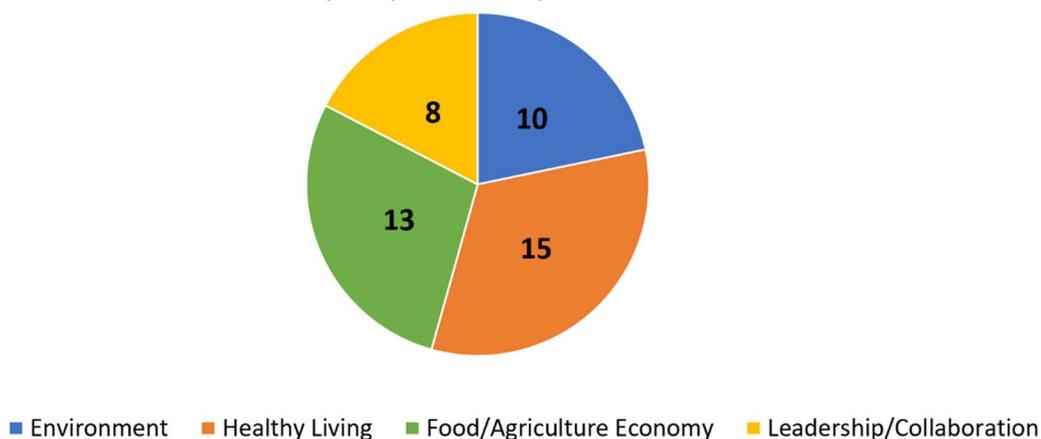
Disaggregation of the online survey data revealed similarities and differences among each category of respondents. While not all results were statistically significant, the findings highlight patterns, trends, and shared experiences of respondents by mission area, organization budget size, grant program, and applicant/grantee status.

Mission Area

The online survey asked respondents to select the elements of the LFF mission that best describes their organization’s work. The choices are labeled in the chart as follows:

- * Preserves and protects the natural environment (*Environment*)
- * Promotes human health by encouraging physical activity and/or healthy eating (*Healthy Living*)
- * Supports a strong local food and agricultural economy (*Food/Agricultural Economy*)
- * Develops leadership, and the capacity for collaboration among organizations and people. (*Leadership/Collaboration*)

Survey Respondents by Mission Area



Analysis of organizations by mission area generated the fewest statistically significant differences and comparisons of all the disaggregated survey data. For example, organizations that marked “Healthy Living” as their main focus also tended to be the most interested in the addition of **sample proposals** to the foundation’s website. Organizations that marked “Environment” as their mission focus area indicated wanting to have more explicit **best practices and lessons learned from other grantees**. Organizations focused on “Leadership/Collaboration” believed very strongly that the Lumpkin Family Foundation has created long-lasting improvements in developing nonprofit leadership and collaboration in the field. Only one of “Leadership/Collaboration” organizations believed that LFF should be doing more in this area.

Grant Recipients and Declined Applicants

Of the 46 respondents who completed an online survey, 32 were awarded a grant from the foundation in 2018 or 2019. The 14 applicants whose proposals or letters of intent were declined funding, however, may have received a grant during a former or more recent grant cycle. The survey data captured slight variances in perceptions of the Lumpkin Family Foundation between grant recipients and declined applicants, though most were not statistically significant.

Regardless whether grantseekers received funding from LFF or did not, most respondents from this assessment did not visit the LFF website frequently – 64% of applicants and 61% of grantees visited the website **once or twice a year**.

Not surprisingly, declined applicants had higher rates of negative responses than grantees to the following statements on LFF’s grantmaking process than funded organizations:

- * **LFF [did not make] an effort to understand my LOI/grant proposal.**
- * **The online LOI is limiting and restrictive.**
- * **The online LOI process [does not] provides enough space to accurately describe my organization and its programs.**

Grantee organizations had the highest positive rating when asked about their relationship with LFF staff: 96% indicated that they ***feel that [they] can contact LFF if [they] have questions or concerns***. In fact, out of that group, 78% of them “strongly agreed” with that statement. In addition, 97% of grantees felt they ***have a good relationship with LFF***. In contrast, only 28% of unfunded respondents felt they could reach out to the foundation if they had questions, and only 36% felt they has a good relationship with Lumpkin Family Foundation.

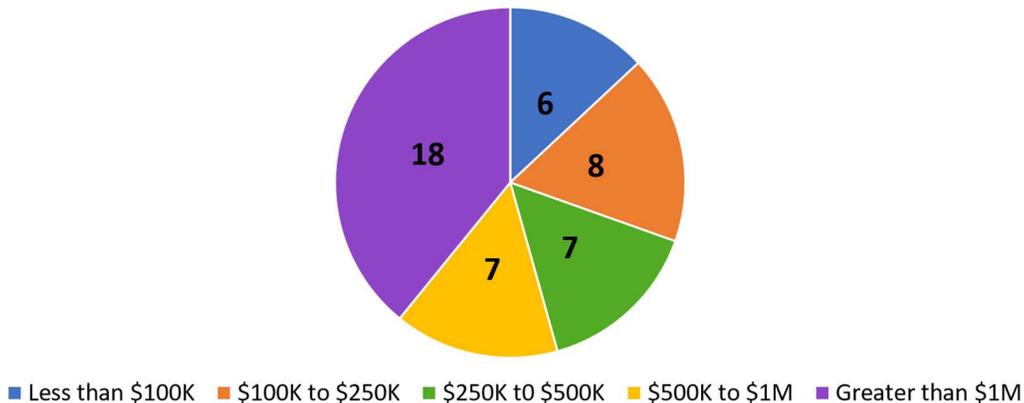
Regarding the foundation’s engagement in the nonprofit community, there was quite a bit of variance in the perceptions between grantee organizations and declined applicants. Lumpkin Family Foundation grantees believed strongly about LFF’s funding strong leadership. Of those funded, 100% agreed that ***LFF supports organizations demonstrating outstanding leadership in their field or community***. Not surprisingly, unfunded applicants were less confident in LFF’s knowledge about challenges to their organization. Only 22% of unfunded respondents felt that ***LFF staff is knowledgeable about the issues and challenges faced by [their] organization***.

Organization Budget Size

Online surveys were received primarily from organizations with budgets greater than \$1,000,000 (40%). The other 60% represented respondent numbers that were relatively equal in size: \$500,000 to \$1M (15%), \$250,000 to \$500,000 (15%), \$100,000 to \$250,000 (17%), and less than \$100,000 (13%). As in 2011 and 2016, comparative responses across budget size generated no statistically significant

differences. However, since organizations with larger annual operating budgets tend to have more resources to devote to fundraising and development, the fact that small, medium, and large organizations generally share the same positive perceptions of the foundation is significant.

Survey Respondents by Size



When splitting the groups into two relatively equal in number categories, one for organizations <\$500K and >\$500K, slight difference can be seen. Organizations with large budgets had a less positive view of LFF’s overall grant process than mid-sized to smaller organizations. When asked if LFF has reasonable LOI/application requirements, 20% respondents with larger budgets “disagreed” with that statement, while 14% of smaller organization felt the same. All groups, however, gave LFF a 100% when asked if the foundation communicated about their proposal in a timely manner. Similarly, 12% of larger organizations didn’t think the foundation *encourages experimentation and innovation*, while 100% of smaller organizations agreed in the affirmative.

Grant Program

Grantseekers recognize that LFF’s Land, Health, Community and Aspiramos Juntos programs are very different. In the 2016 assessment, grantseekers expressed confusion about LFF’s different programs. The Lumpkin Family Foundation made many changes to its funding since then, particularly with the renaming of the Lumpkin Family Fund to Land, Health, Community and eliminating the separate program “Regional Grant Fund”.

In comparing Aspiramos Juntos respondents to those who applied to the Land, Health, Community program, there was significant variance in how positively LFF’s grantmaking processes was viewed. Aspiramos Juntos grantseekers had more negative responses to the following statements:

- * **The online application process is clearly explained on LFF’s website.**
- * **I received adequate notice for the site visit.**
- * **The online application process provides enough space to accurately describe my organization and its programs.**
- * **LFF made an effort to understand my LOI/grant proposal.**

These differences are likely due to the higher ratio of declined applicants (40%) from this group as a whole. For organizations that received site visits, there was very little difference of opinion between the two programs: both had overwhelmingly favorable statements about the LFF site visit experience.

Finally, regarding grantseekers' view of the LFF's role in the greater community, there was a slight difference between the two programs. When asked if the respondent felt that ***LFF staff is knowledgeable about the issues and challenges facing [their] community***, 7% of Aspiramos Juntos grantseekers did not agree with that statement, while 100% of the Land, Health, Community respondents had confidence in LFF staff on their knowledge.

SECTION V: RECOMMENDATIONS

Website

Overall, the foundation's website continues to be perceived positively by both applicants and grantee organizations. There are several areas for change the foundation should consider.

- The foundation should do an assessment of both the images and content on the website to ensure that they are culturally relevant and accurately represent the communities LFF serves. The Lumpkin Family Foundation may want to engage external assistance to make more specific recommendations or solicit opinions directly from grantees through short surveys or focus groups.
- If LFF wants to be more responsive to applicants' wishes, all information that will give organizations across programs areas more insight into the decision process and what LFF seeks in a strong proposal candidate should be stated on the webpage. "If" is used because sometimes intentionally *not including* this type of information can be an effective strategy for foundations to determine the degree to which the organization is prepared or fulfills the foundation's mission without prompting from the website or staff. Respondents agreed that clear grant timelines and processes were appreciated as were lists of past grantees/grants. The unanimous gratitude for the FAQ section is a great example. In fact, some of the following recommendations could be included directly into the FAQ section:
 - 1) LFF should consider adding a sample model grant proposal and detailed reporting requirements, especially the metrics for the Land, Health, Community program since the metrics themselves and an organization's ability to track them may be a disqualifying factor.
 - 2) More detailed description of current and past grantees could help grantseekers understand the quality and types of programs that LFF funds.
 - 3) Include more information about typical site visits in the FAQ section such as what to expect, who should be present, the expectations, the need to prepare information or not, etc. At the minimum, it may be beneficial to create a sample agenda.

Pre-Submit Grant Review Process

Survey and interview respondents who took advantage of the pre-submit grant review process overwhelmingly thought it was helpful. Unfortunately, there were many applicants that didn't participate in the process which could be due to time conflicts on the applicant's part, or that they simply forgot that the option was available. Should LFF want more organizations to participate in this process in the future, the pre-submit opportunity should be promoted more frequently on the webpage, in applicant communications or on the LOI form itself. The pre-submit process also addresses the desire of organizations to access more of the foundation's thinking on what makes a proposal competitive. This action could reinforce the already positive perceptions on LFF staff's approachability and responsiveness. If not already in the plans, LFF should consider expanding this opportunity to Aspiramos Juntos as well.

Application Process & Reporting Requirements

As was recommended in 2011 and 2016, the foundation should consider further streamlining the LOI and application processes, particularly addressing possible redundant or similar questions appearing within forms as well as repeated questions on the LOI and application forms. Similarly, individual questions should be audited to make sure that they are directly addressing information the board and staff need in order to make informed decisions. Superfluous questions should be eliminated. In determining which questions can be removed, it may be beneficial for both the staff and the board to have a conversation to ensure there is consensus about what information is needed and adjust the forms so all questions are direct and purposeful. Other recommendations include:

- LFF may also want to consider doing an audit of the LOI specifically to determine if it is a tool that provides a snapshot of the applicant organization and its programs. This would allow the LFF board and staff to quickly determine whether the organization is a good fit and if the specific proposed program would truly advance LFF's mission.
- Reporting requirements should be made available to organizations before they begin the application process. Some applicants for the Land, Health Community program felt unprepared and unaware of the program's metrics. It is recommended that specific metrics be available on the website, or prior to organizations applying.

Site Visits

The Lumpkin Family Foundation's site visit process received the highest and most consistent positive reviews from grantseekers than any other part of the grantmaking process. While Land, Health, Community grantseekers who received site visits were pleased to see familiar faces among LFF staff, Aspiramos Juntos grantees did not always receive a site visit with staff, only with a LFF board member. The foundation may want to consider creating opportunities for LFF staff to visit Chicago sites both to display interest in this area and to learn directly from applicants. Perhaps staff could visit the Chicago area annually or semi-annually to see multiple sites. This would also address a lack of LFF community presence that most Aspiramos Juntos expressed. The most prevalent suggestion from organizations that received site visit for both programs was to provide an agenda for the visit prior to attendance.

Community Engagement

The Lumpkin Family Foundation received positive ratings on its connection with communities, especially for the Land, Health, Community program. Nearly all respondents from this program worked in the East Central Illinois region where LFF is one of the most visible and prominent foundations. However, as stated above, LFF should work towards a stronger presence in the Chicago area. In addition to staff site visits, LFF may want to consider sponsoring grantee events in the region, creating opportunities for organizations to collaborate with each other, hosting capacity-building gatherings for grantees and potential grantees, and engaging Aspiramos Juntos applicants more actively in informing grantmaking guidelines. Even during the pandemic, respondents were interested in online events to engage with staff and each other. These actions would address several recurring themes that arose from the assessment: capacity building needs, collaboration among nonprofits, and networking opportunities for grantees to meet each other, LFF staff, and board members.

Relationship with the Foundation

Both the Land, Health, Community and Aspiramos Juntos grantseekers overwhelmingly had positive encounters with LFF staff. Nonetheless, the Lumpkin Family Foundation may want to consider more concerted efforts to connect to Aspiramos Juntos applicants and the Chicago community.

Aspiramos Juntos

Applicants and grantees of this program expressed great appreciation for Lumpkin Family Foundation's commitment to environmental sustainability and healthy food systems within an urban setting like Chicago. While many foundations fund environmental work in the city, few have the expertise that LFF has on these topics. The correlation between environmental justice and racial inequity is strongly linked. This is an emerging concept in the philanthropic community and many foundations are just starting to take notice. While LFF has a history of recognizing the links between environmental justice and the overall wellbeing of individuals and communities, more effort should be made to understand the nuanced and complex underlying issues that are specific to urban Latinx and Black communities in Chicago. The foundation may want to consider more intentionally supporting programs that are addressing racial inequity through environmental access and sustainability. This slight shift in what LFF is already doing in the Chicago area can signal the foundation's ability to understand the needs of the region while staying true to its mission.

Land, Health, Community

Overwhelmingly, respondents were quite pleased with this grant program with very few negative comments or critical feedback. They believe that LFF staff is quite knowledgeable about the issues in the region and that the foundation has a strong presence in the community. As mentioned above, many respondents in this program were interested in knowing the metrics upfront. There was some interest in LFF funding more region-wide efforts that may reveal emerging issues, such as the suggested local needs assessment of the East Central Illinois community. With an assessment, LFF may discover new opportunities to support. The foundation should also explore suggestions made in this year's assessment, such as addressing the needs of farm workers and assisting in the support of Black farmers in the region.

APPENDIX 1: METHODOLOGY

Phase one of the assessment commenced in May 2020 with an email from The Lumpkin Family Foundation to all organizations that applied for funding in 2018 and 2019. Follow up-communication from consultants at Iris Krieg & Associates, Inc. included instructions and a link to an online survey. The original list of grantseekers provided by the Lumpkin Family Foundation included organization names, staff contact information, grant size (if awarded), and grant program for 120 organizations. Accounting for duplicates and bounced email addresses, 110 unique contacts were sent a link to the online survey and a total of 46 surveys were completed for a response rate of 42%. The online survey is provided in Appendix 2.

We conducted cross-sectional data analysis for seventeen survey questions repeated from previous assessments. To incorporate comparisons of the data sets from 2008, 2011, 2016, and 2020 we calculated the percentage of answers that fell into “positive” (strongly agree, agree) or “negative” (disagree, strongly disagree) response categories.

The online survey consisted of questions in three formats: open-ended, rating scales, and multiple-choice/forced selection. The rating scale questions were answered using the four-level scoring system below:

- No Opinion or N/A
- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Agree
- Agree

“Strongly Agree” and “Agree” were considered positive while “Strongly Disagree” and “Disagree” were considered negative. Trends were identified by comparing the change in the number of positive and negative responses a question received. Responses that were left blank or marked “No Opinion or N/A” were not included in the totals.

The calculated percentage breakdowns helped to analyze survey responses in a variety of ways, including comparing percentages from different program areas and comparing responses from organizations with different operating budgets.

Data collection concluded in mid-July after telephone interviews were conducted with 20 applicants and grantees to gain additional insight beyond the aggregated survey data. Telephone interview participants were selected to represent a cross-section of the total respondent sample in terms of grant program area/geographic location, organization size, and grantee organizations vs. declined applicants. We contacted the selected organizations by email to schedule a time for the call and then by phone to administer the questionnaire. The questions used to guide each telephone conversation for this phase of the assessment are provided in Appendix 3.

Both the online survey instrument and telephone questionnaire were developed by Iris Krieg & Associates, Inc. and approved by the Lumpkin Family Foundation.

APPENDIX 2: ONLINE SURVEY

Email Accompanying Survey Link

By now, you have received communications from Bruce Karmazin, Executive Director of Lumpkin Family Foundation (LFF) on its Grantee and Applicant Survey. The Foundation has asked Iris Krieg & Associates (IKA) to administer and evaluate the survey responses. IKA and its staff will be the only people with access to the survey and all feedback submitted. In addition, this survey does not have any identifiers for IKA or LFF to connect responses to specific organizations or individuals. IKA will use the feedback from this survey to compile and present a report to LFF in August 2020, which will be used for quality improvement efforts.

The survey should take no more than 30 minutes to complete. Since we ask only one person per organization to complete the online survey, we suggest the staff person who created and submitted the LOIs, applications, and/or reports to LFF answer the questions. Or you can gather your team to complete the survey together with only one survey submitted per organization.

Survey participants may make changes to their answers, but once the survey has been submitted, they can no longer return to make changes. Please be sure to click the “Done” button at the end of the survey to complete and submit it. IKA will also select a small group of LFF grantees and applicants to participate in a telephone interview in late June.

Included in the survey are a series of questions that relate to the current COVID-19 crisis. Since these questions may require other staff in your organization to answer, we would like to share them in advance for your team to complete before going into the survey.

- 1. Please describe the financial, operational, and programmatic impacts the COVID-19 crisis has had on your organization.*
- 2. Please describe the impact this crisis has had on the community you serve.*
- 3. Please explain the future changes you anticipate at your organization in the next 6 months to 1 year, if any.*

*Click on this link to complete the LFF Grantee and Applicant Survey **no later than Friday, June 5, 2020**: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/LFF2020>*

If you have any questions at all regarding the survey or any technical issues, please feel free to reach out to Shilpa Bavikatte at sbavikatte@ikriegassoc.com.

Thank you for your participation! Your feedback is very important to Lumpkin Family Foundation.

Section 1: Organization Information

1. What was the total size of your organization's budget in 2018 or 2019 (the year you applied for a grant from LFF)?
 - a. Less than \$100,000
 - b. \$100,000 to \$250,000
 - c. \$250,000 to \$500,000
 - d. \$500,000 to \$1M
 - e. Greater than \$1M

2. Please indicate the geographic area where most of your programs operate?
 - a. Chicago Area
 - b. Coles County, IL
 - c. East Central Illinois (outside Coles County)
 - d. Illinois (outside East Central Illinois)
 - e. Outside of Illinois
 - f. Other

3. To which LFF program did you submit a letter of inquiry?
 - a. Land, Health, Community (East Central, IL)
 - b. Aspiramos Juntos (Chicago Area)

4. Which of LFF's mission area(s) describe your work?
 - a. Preserves and protects the natural environment
 - b. Promotes human health by encouraging physical activity and/or healthy eating.
 - c. Supports a strong local food and agricultural economy
 - d. Develops leadership, and the capacity for collaboration among organizations and people

Section 2: LFF Website Usage

5. On average, how frequently do you visit LFF's website?
 - a. Never
 - b. Once or twice a year
 - c. Once every few months
 - d. About once a month
 - e. Multiple times each month

6. Please indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding LFF's website?
Scale: Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree
 - a. The website is easy to navigate.
 - b. I can locate the information I need on LFF's website.
 - c. The website provides useful information about LFF's programs.
 - d. The website provides all the information I need to apply for a grant.
 - e. The website clearly explains LFF's funding priorities.

- f. The website clearly explains the process and timeline for reviewing grant requests.
7. Please indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding the online Letter of Inquiry (LOI) process.
Scale: Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree
- a. The online LOI process is clearly explained on the LFF's website
 - b. The online LOI process is easy to navigate
 - c. The online LOI process provides enough space to accurately describe my organization and its programs.
 - d. The online LOI is limiting and restrictive.
8. Please indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding the online application process. *If you were not invited to submit an application, please respond with N/A.*
Scale: Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree
- a. The online application process is clearly explained on the LFF's website
 - b. The online application process is easy to navigate
 - c. The online application process provides enough space to accurately describe my organization and its programs.
 - d. The online application is limiting and restrictive.
9. What is the most useful part of the LFF's website? Is there anything you dislike? (Open Comment)
10. What have you found helpful on other foundation websites that LFF should consider adding?
Select all that apply.
- a. New & Resources
 - b. Events
 - c. Sample Proposals
 - d. Detailed Reporting Requirements
 - e. Annual Reports
 - f. Articles & Publications
 - g. The LFF website does not need any improvements.
 - h. Other (*open comment*)

Section 3: Grantmaking Process Part I

11. Did you submit your grant application for a pre-submit review? *This question only applies to the Land, Health, Community program. (Skip logic question)*
- a. Yes
 - b. No

12. Please indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding the pre-submit grant review process.
- a. I received valuable feedback about my grant application.
 - b. The feedback I received from the pre-submit interview was not helpful.
 - c. I had enough time to make the recommended changes to my grant application
 - d. I plan to utilize the pre-submit grant review process in the future
13. Did you receive a site visit from LFF? (*Skip-Logic*)
- a. Yes
 - b. No

Section 3: Grantmaking Process Part II

13. Please indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding your LFF site visit.
- Scale: Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree*
- a. I received adequate notice for the site visit.
 - b. I knew in advance what to expect from the site visit.
 - c. The site visit met my expectations.
 - d. LFF staff and/or committee members were prepared for the meeting.
 - e. The LFF staff and/or committee members had a sufficient grasp of the issues to understand my organization.
15. What advice would you offer nonprofits preparing for their first site visit with LFF? (*open comment*)
16. What advice would you offer LFF to enhance the quality of discussion during a site visit? (*open comment*)
17. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding the overall grant process
- a. LFF has reasonable LOI/application requirements.
 - b. LFF communicated in a timely manner about the status of my pending LOI/grant proposal.
 - c. LFF made an effort to understand my LOI/grant proposal.
18. Is there anything else could LFF do to support your organization during and after the grant process?
- a) Yes
 - b) No
 - c) If yes, please provide a suggestion (*open comment*)
19. If you could change anything about the process of submitting an LOI or applying for a grant with LFF, what would it be? (*open comment*)

Section 5: Relationship with the Foundation

20. Please indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding your relationship with LFF.

Scale: No Opinion, Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree

- a) I have a good relationship with LFF.
- b) I believe LFF respects my organization.
- c) I feel that I can contact LFF if I have questions or concerns.
- d) LFF staff returns phone calls and e-mails in a timely manner.

21. Please indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding LFF's role in the nonprofit community.

Scale: No Opinion, Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree

- a) LFF is a resource for information and advice.
- b) LFF staff understands nonprofit organizations and how they operate.
- c) LFF staff is knowledgeable about the issues and challenges faced by my organization.
- d) LFF staff listens to and incorporates suggestions from nonprofit organizations and their work.
- e) LFF supports the creativity of nonprofit organizations by seeding new projects.
- f) LFF encourages experimentation and innovation.
- g) LFF supports organizations demonstrating outstanding leadership in their field or community.

22. Please indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding LFF's role in the greater community.

Scale: No Opinion, Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree

- a) LFF staff is knowledgeable about the issues and challenges faced by my community.
- b) LFF board members care about and are involved in my community.
- c) LFF appropriately addresses the needs of the community.
- d) LFF facilitates collaboration across traditional organization or sector boundaries for community benefit.
- e) LFF develops a public understanding of issues.
- f) LFF promotes the philanthropic support necessary to address issues of community importance.

23. Based on your knowledge of LFF, has it created long-lasting improvements in the following:

- a) Environmental Sustainability
- b) Promoting Healthy Habits
- c) Supporting the Local Food and Regenerative Agricultural Economy
- d) Developing Nonprofit Leadership and Collaboration

24. Do you have advice on how LFF could improve in any of the areas listed above? If you are pleased with LFF's work in this area, please offer some specific examples. *(open comment)*

25. Besides grant dollars, what are the most useful services LFF could provide to your organization?

- a) Post-grant site visits
- b) Technical assistance developing grant metrics for grant evaluation purposes
- c) A check-in phone call from LFF staff during the grant term
- d) Best practices and lessons learned from other grantees
- e) Other

26. What else would you like to share about your relationship with LFF? (*open comment*)

Section 6: Program Funding Impact

27. For which program did you receive funding for in 2018-2019??

- a) Land, Health, Community
- b) Aspiramos Juntos
- c) I did not receive funding from LFF in 2018 or 2019

If Land, Health, Community, proceed to question 29.

If Aspiramos Juntos, skip to question 31

If did not receive funding, skip to question 33

Section 7: Program Funding Impact in East Central Illinois

28. In your opinion, what impact has LFF's grantmaking had on East Central Illinois or your immediate program area? (*open comment*)

29. Do you have suggestions for how LFF can deepen its impact in East Central Illinois or your immediate program area? (*open comment*)

30. Did your organization complete a post-grant report? (*skip logic*)

- a. Yes
- b. No

Section 7: Program Funding Impact in the Chicago region

31. Please describe the impact LFF's grantmaking has made on your organization in the Chicago region? (*open comment*)

32. What suggestions do you have for ways LFF can deepen its impact on issues in the Chicago region? (*open comment*)

33. Did your organization complete a post-grant report? (*skip logic*)

- a. Yes
- b. No

Section 6: Reporting

33. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding the reporting process.

Scale: Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree, N/A

- a. LFF has reasonable reporting requirements.
 - b. LFF communicates reporting submission dates in a timely manner.
 - c. The reporting process is easy to navigate
 - d. LFF staff was available to answer questions about reporting requirements.
 - e. Metrics provided for you to select to be evaluated upon were reasonable and reflective of your core work. (Only applies to the LHC program)
34. Do you have recommendations for how LFF can improve its reporting process? Please explain.

Section 7: COVID-19 Response

35. Please describe the financial, operational, and programmatic impacts the COVID-19 crisis has had on your organization. *(open comment)*
36. Please describe the impact this crisis has had on the community you serve. *(open comment)*
37. Please explain the future changes you anticipate at your organization in the next 6 months to 1 year, if any. *(open comment)*

Section 8: Additional Information

38. Is there anything we forgot to ask, or that you would like to share, regarding your experiences with the Lumpkin Family Foundation? *(open comment)*

APPENDIX 3: TELEPHONE QUESTIONNAIRE

Opening

Thank you for agreeing to take part in this assessment. You were selected to be part of this project because you applied for a grant from the between 2018 and 2019. This is not an assessment of your organization; LFF values your perspective as a recent grant-seeker and is eager to learn from you. Your honest feedback will help the Foundation make improvements and remain accountable to the communities it serves.

I hope you will be candid; your answers are confidential, and the Foundation will not receive any information that can be linked to a specific organization or person.

Section 1: Organization Information

1. You submitted an LOI to the [Land, Health, Community/Aspiramos Juntos] program in 2018/2019 and were invited to apply for a grant. Further, you [received/did not receive] the grant. Is that correct?

Section 2: Website & Application (give time for people to review the website)

2. What has been your experience using and navigating LFF's website? Any sections of LFF's website that were particularly helpful? What tools or elements might you like to see added?
3. Do you feel LFF's online application process allowed you to adequately explain your organization and proposal? Explain.

Section 3: Grantmaking Process

4. Do you have any suggestions regarding the application process, including the process itself or the timetable?
5. [ONLY FOR LAND, HEALTH, COMMUNITY] Did you submit your application for a pre-submit review? If yes, what changes were made to your application based on the feedback you received?
6. Did your organization receive a site visit? If yes, what was your experience? How could LFF improve the site visit process?
7. Did you complete a grant report? If so, what did you think of the reporting requirements? If you reported on your LHC grant, do you feel that the metrics were helpful or reflected your program appropriately? Any improvements you can offer?

Section 4: Relationship with the Foundation

7. Have you had any contact with Foundation staff in the last two years?
 - If yes, please describe the interaction, who you talked to and what you talked about. Was it by phone, electronic, or in person?
 - Do you feel that Foundation staff members are a good resource for information and advice?

- Do you feel the staff tried to understand your organization and the issues and challenges it faces? Explain.
 - Do you feel your interaction with foundation staff was fair, respectful, and honest? Explain.
 - Do you feel the staff has been helpful and responsive?
8. What services or programs could LFF staff provide that would be most helpful to your organization?
9. Overall, how would you describe your relationship with LFF and LFF staff?

Section 5: LFF’s Land, Health, Community funding Impact

10. In what ways does the *Land, Health, Community* theme align with your organization’s mission?
11. From your perspective, what are the most pressing issues facing East Central Illinois (ECI) and your organization?
12. What suggestions do you have for ways LFF can deepen its impact in ECI?

Section 6: Aspiramos Juntos

13. In what ways does the Aspiramos Juntos theme align with your organization’s mission?
14. Considering LFF’s mission (*supporting organizations who are working towards healthy, sustainable communities*), what suggestions do you have for ways LFF can deepen its impact in the Chicago area?

Section 7: LFF’s Role in the Community

15. Do you believe that LFF provides support for the community of nonprofits in your area, aside from funding?
16. Do you think LFF and staff responds to changing needs in the community or area of work?

Section 8: Additional Information

17. Do you have other suggestions or comments you would like to share regarding your experiences with the Foundation’s staff, grant making process, its relationships with applicants and grantees, or any aspect of its operation?
18. Do you have anything else you would like to add from the survey on how your organization is doing during the COVID-19 pandemic? How has your organization’s work changed due to the COVID-19 pandemic? Aside from funding, what can LFF do to assist your organization through this crisis?
19. Considering recent conversations on racial inequity in the United States, some organization are re-evaluating how they are addressing the issue in their work. Is your organization planning to address or currently addressing racial equity or social injustice in its work? If so, can you explain how?