



CFOC Strategic Plan 2023-2028

In February 2023, the Community Foundation Board of Directors adopted this Strategic Plan to set CFOC's direction for the next five years. The path to this plan was multi-layered, involving the Board of Directors, an ad hoc Strategic Planning Committee, Otsego County Nonprofit leaders, donors, and the public.

We expect that this plan will be revised as we respond to our progress and our community's needs, but we believe that we have a clear vision that links to our mission.

There are three basic elements of this plan.

- Growing and Strengthening Otsego Communities
- Strengthening Otsego Nonprofits
- Growing and Strengthening Ourselves

The following pages address each of these major topics.

Growing and Strengthening our Community

The Community Foundation of Otsego County (CFOC) must position itself as a catalyst for innovative, creative, and new approaches, challenging the status quo to address the most significant issue we face today: population decline.

Facts:

- Over the past ten years the general population has decreased by 6%;
- Over the past 10 years our school population has decreased by 20.3%;
- Residents over the age of 65 have increased by 24.1% in the same time period; and
- Rate of birth and inward migration is slower than rates of death and outward migration.

We believe that reversing these trends is essential to creating a strong local economy and can lead to solutions to the many other problems we face today.

Building on a strong foundation of a beautiful environment, strong regional health care system, and two vibrant colleges over the next five years CFOC must:

- Encourage the development and execution of strategies to attract young people to our area , develop young leaders and keep more of our talented young people here;
- Promote diversity and inclusion as positive characteristics of our community;
- Identify and encourage growth of social, cultural, recreational, and environmental opportunities that are attractive to young individuals and families;
- Support entrepreneurship and the resulting economic development; and
- Support and promote new housing opportunities.

While we focus on reversing trends, we will not lose sight of the ever-present needs of underserved and underprivileged community members, from food insecurity to mental health to transportation and affordable housing.

Strengthening Otsego Nonprofits

Strengthening the nonprofit sector is a primary mission of CFOC and the second theme of our strategic vision.

Otsego County is home to a fairly large number of small nonprofits and a few very large ones. The smaller groups often are trying to do the work of much larger organizations but lack systems and cannot afford the staff to operate most efficiently and effectively.

CFOC is well situated to help support these nonprofits. We already have the resources to offer help in several areas. Other areas must wait until we have more staff and a physical location.

CFOC should concentrate on three areas: financial assistance, communications, and gathering/sharing. We also see needs to aid in administrative functioning and staffing (including volunteers), but these two areas are currently beyond our capacity in the next five years.

Financial Assistance: Two subtopics:

- Investment management of “endowment” assets (long-term); and
- Donation options such as coordinated local “giving day,” credit card and on-line giving (Venmo and QR code), appreciated stock gifts, electronic fund transfers, and other more complex options as CFOC develops its own expertise.

Communications:

The work of many smaller nonprofits is not well-known in the community. In 2022, CFOC did a very good job of getting its own messaging out into the public and even worked on publicizing the works of select smaller nonprofits. This is a valuable service that we should continue and expand, as our own capacity expands.

Gathering/Sharing:

In 2022, our effort to gather nonprofits for the purpose of sharing and exchanging ideas was very positively received. We believe that there is an effective role for CFOC in continuing to serve in this capacity and we will work to make this a consistent and energetic part of our work.

Growing and Strengthening Ourselves

CFOC's current organization has worked well in the first few years of its existence, thanks to the hard work of volunteers and board members on various operational and governance committees and the recent addition of a paid executive director and a part time assistant. We were fortunate to be able to recruit people with a wide range of skills and experience.

We had a very fast start because of generous funding from the Founders campaign that enabled us to focus much of our attention on finding ways to help the community through the Covid pandemic and with other urgent projects. If we are to expand our programs and projects over the next several years to the \$500,000 - \$700,000 level, we need to increase our funding. Several possibilities for achieving that include direct contributions, fees earned from assisting donor established funds within CFOC, and endowments. There are variations on all of these, and each has different impacts on short-term and long-term funding. To be successful we need to work on all of these funding methods, without reducing our efforts to find innovative projects that benefit the community.

To expand our impact and move forward, our organization needs to:

- Increase our financial resources;
- Attain expertise in our focus areas;
- Expand our Board and volunteers to reflect the diversity of the community we serve;
- Reach deeper into the community for ideas and support;
- Stay ahead of our growth by preparing our systems and governance for the larger organization we intend to become; and
- Operate efficiently so that the community knows that we are spending its money well and wisely.