



Washington

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News Release

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Council on Foundations Recognizes Washington County Community Foundation for Compliance with National Accountability Standards

(**Washington**) – The Washington County Community Foundation is being recognized for having organizational and financial practices that are in accordance with the National Standards for U.S. Community Foundations. The Council on Foundations, a national membership organization of both public and private foundations based in Washington, DC, created the National Standards in 2000 to aid community foundations in establishing legal, ethical and effective operational practices that would illustrate the foundations' transparency and financial responsibility in light of the increased public scrutiny of foundation practices. In addition, National Standards were developed to distinguish community foundations from other philanthropic vehicles, build the capacity of community foundations to carry out their missions, and assist the field with self-regulation in a manner viewed positively by the Internal Revenue Service. *Of the nearly 700 community foundations in the United States, only 150 community foundations have been found in compliance with National Standards.*

The National Standards seal, pictured here, was developed for community foundations to signify that they have been confirmed in compliance with National Standards. Professional advisors and prospective donors will recognize the seal as an indication of the integrity and demonstrated excellence of the compliant foundation. “Adopting and adhering to high standards is the best way we can demonstrate our ongoing commitment to maintaining the trust of our donors and the entire community. We are committed to reaffirming the honesty and integrity that are a hallmark of our foundation.” said Betsie Trew, Executive Director of the Washington County Community Foundation.



Intended both as a blueprint for internal organizational development and as a tangible set of benchmarks for external assessment of performance, the 43 National Standards address six key areas of community foundation operations:

- *Mission, Structure and Governance*, including standards defining board accountability, compensation, independence, fiduciary responsibility and representation of the community.
- *Resource Development*, including parameters for administration of funds, disclosures to donors and commitment to building long-term resources for varied community issues and causes.
- *Stewardship and Accountability*, covering prudent investment and management of funds, transparent record-keeping, use of funds for their intended purpose, annual audits, and public availability of financial information, including standards related to due diligence and community responsiveness.
- *Grantmaking and Community Leadership*, including standards related to broad and open grantmaking programs, due diligence, and responsiveness to changing community needs.
- *Donor Relations*, encompassing guidelines for informing, educating and involving donors in responding to community needs.
- *Communications*, including openness to public scrutiny and frequent communications about activities and finances.

Community foundations must undergo an extensive review of their organizational and financial policies and procedures. The review is performed by trained, experienced community foundation practitioners.

The Washington County Community Foundation, which began operations in Washington County in 1995, promotes and facilitates local philanthropy by providing services to donors on an individualized basis and at reasonable fees. The Foundation currently manages over 100 permanent funds with a combined value approaching \$3 million. Temporary funds are also provided to serve donors whose charitable goals are more immediate than the endowed program provides. Grants are made from the various funds in the following areas: arts / humanities, education, environment, health, human needs, and religion. Cumulatively more than \$700,000 has been awarded from the WCCF in charitable grants and scholarships.

Questions should be directed to the WCCF, at (724) 222-6330 or wccf@cobweb.net.

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