



Foundations invest millions of dollars to carry out their missions and change the world. **How do they know their investments are working?**

The American Institutes for Research (AIR) uses the strongest research evidence and deep experience in systems change across multiple sectors to support foundations, large and small, in fulfilling their missions.

As a foundation leader...

- Do you have a theory of change that drives your strategic plan?
- Are you monitoring your results in real time?
- Is your investment strategy delivering on your mission?
- Your Board is asking...do you have an answer?

AIR can help you measure your results.

Nationally, foundations struggle to measure results.

A recent Center for Effective Philanthropy survey¹ of foundations found:



35% understand what their foundation has accomplished in the **fields** it seeks to affect



22% understand what their foundation has accomplished in **communities** it seeks to affect



20% understand their foundation's accomplishments for the **beneficiaries** it seeks to affect

Together, we can improve these numbers.

AIR works with foundations to tackle persistent education and workforce challenges. This work yields customized tools, processes, products and evaluations that respond to foundations' pressing questions and needs.

We begin by listening. We then assemble a team of experts from both the foundation and AIR who colead the strategic planning, formative monitoring and summative evaluation activities. We understand that foundations' needs will evolve. AIR builds in the flexibility to attend to the ever-changing funding landscape.

¹ The Center for Effective Philanthropy. (2016). *Benchmarking foundation evaluation practices*. Cambridge, MA: Author. Retrieved from: <https://bit.ly/2Mt9Abv>

“As a new foundation, we wanted to build a strong foundation for evidence building through our strategic grantmaking. Our partners at AIR have been invaluable in facilitating the development of the theories of change, logic models, and evaluation questions that guide our core grantmaking. We also collaborated on building a robust monitoring system that captures key qualitative and quantitative data from all grantees. This work has been rigorous and resulted in increased staff capacity to approach each grant with a more critical mindset.”

—ECMC Foundation



To learn more about our work, please contact Helen Duffy at hduffy@air.org, and visit our website at www.air.org.

What services and results can you expect?

Strategic Planning

- Theories of change that reflect foundation goals for diversity, equity, inclusion, or other outcomes
- Logic models that drive investment strategies
- Convenings with other foundations with similar funding priorities to learn from, inform and complement one another's investment strategies

Formative Monitoring

- Lessons learned from focus groups and interviews with grantees
- Monitoring systems that yield insights regarding investment strategies

Summative Evaluation

- Requests for proposals that address prioritized evaluation questions
- Short- and long-term results associated with your investments

AIR delivers these services by assembling teams with content and methodological knowledge that complements the foundation's expertise and interests. AIR also ensures that teams consist of staff with diverse perspectives and experiences so the work reflects an understanding of the cultures and worldviews of our partners and audiences. Some of the foundations we've worked with as research and content experts include:²

Alfred P. Sloan Foundation

Nellie Mae Foundation

Betty Moore Foundation

Novo Foundation

Charles Stewart Mott Foundation

Overdeck Family Foundation

ECMC Foundation

Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

Ford Foundation

Rochester Area Community Foundation

Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation

Stuart Foundation

William and Flora Hewlett Foundation

The Annie E. Casey Foundation

J.P. Morgan Chase Foundation

The Bainum Family Foundation

W.K. Kellogg Foundation

Wallace Foundation

Lumina Foundation

Walton Family Foundation

Michael & Susan Dell Foundation

William T. Grant Foundation

McDougal Family Foundation

Woodrow Wilson Foundation

² Our work to date with most of these foundations has been in response to requests for proposals. Through our projects, however, we have learned about the foundations' priorities.



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About American Institutes for Research

Established in 1946, American Institutes for Research (AIR) is an independent, nonpartisan, not-for-profit organization that conducts behavioral and social science research on important social issues and delivers technical assistance, both domestically and internationally, in the areas of education, health, and workforce productivity.