



May 2020

Letter From Mary

Dear Friends,

I cannot help but feel a sense of hope as we enter the next phase of our state's re-opening. As businesses open their doors and families and friends are reunited, I look forward to better days ahead for our state. Together we are taking the steps forward.



With that said, the last few months have brought many challenges for our state and the future remains very uncertain. Here at MCF, like many others, we have adjusted. We are now doing business a little differently as our staff continues to work remotely and we tighten our expenses. We have also felt the impact of the volatile markets we saw in the first quarter of the year and continue to anticipate as we navigate this crisis.

Below we provide you with a glimpse into how MCF is responding. Special thanks to Sue Huffman, Board President at Philipsburg Area Education Foundation, for asking the questions that prompted this update.

As our state continues to grapple with the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, we remain steadfast in our commitment to philanthropy that supports our local communities, especially in uncertain times such as these. Endowments augment traditional funding streams for many organizations. MCF's asset allocations and spending policy are designed to weather financial storms.

We are grateful for your partnership. Wishing you and yours the very best.

Sincerely,

Mary K. Rutherford
President & CEO

Investment Update



The first quarter of the year saw a devastating global pandemic emerge, sending financial markets into turmoil, threatening a deep worldwide downturn, and prompting policymakers to take unprecedented actions in hopes of curtailing the fallout. The rapid decline of the S&P 500 ended the longest bull market run in US history.

Though the picture is still pretty bleak, we are remaining calm. We are focused on Montana's future and in the business of endowments because they promote philanthropy that impacts generations of Montanans forever. We are in it for the long haul and our investment portfolio reflects this focus. We do not time the market but instead allocate our assets to weather the ups and downs.

We know that the future is still uncertain and future market volatility is predicted. We keep ourselves positioned for the different scenarios we may face as our state and country continue to reopen. Our portfolio is diversified to encourage strong returns while also mitigating risk when the markets are down. We are working with our Investment Committee and investment firm, Cambridge Associates, to carefully monitor the situation. We are not overreacting, but instead reacting cautiously so that we can be ready to fully participate in the market when it does rebound.

MCF determines the distribution from an endowment by calculating the approved payout rate, which is currently 4.5% of the value of the fund, based on the average daily value for the past 36 months, ending December 31. The MCF Board annually reviews and sets the payout rate. This determination helps smooth out market fluctuations and provides organizations with a more predictable distribution.

Stay tuned for more information about an investment webinar we will be hosting at the end of June, in partnership with Cambridge Associates, to cover this in more detail. If you have additional questions at this time, please contact Mary Rutherford, President & CEO, at maryr@mtcf.org.

Census 2020: May Update

- Now that Census workers have resumed some operations in Montana, an estimated 200,000 Montana households that have

not yet received an invitation to participate will get an official 2020 Census packet left at the door. It will include the Census form and a postage-paid envelope. It just needs to be completed and put in the mail!



- More than half of Montana households have now self-responded to the 2020 Census, yet the state still lags behind the national average for responding to the once-in-a-decade count. [Learn more.](#)

The Montana COVID-19 Fund Reaches Nearly \$250,000 in Contributions to Support Rural and Tribal Communities



The Montana COVID-19 Fund was set up in early April and, since then, \$246,300 has been contributed to support rural and tribal communities adversely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. This total includes a generous \$100,000 contribution from Blue Cross Blue Shield of Montana, plus \$146,300 from businesses and individuals along with matching funds from AMB West Philanthropies and MTN.

The focus of the fund is to support rural and tribal communities in their recovery efforts, enabling them to better manage uncertainty and seek opportunities as they come out of this crisis. The fund also hopes to support rural resiliency that minimizes disruptions, helps ensure rapid recovery, with little loss of economic or social value, and reduces reliance on limited federal resources.

Grants will not be made directly to individuals or private businesses or to individual nonprofits. The fund will grant directly to nonprofit intermediary organizations (community foundations, United Ways, etc.) and rural tribal communities for re-granting in the areas identified by the Montana COVID-19 Fund Steering Committee (Montana Community Foundation, Montana Nonprofit Association, and MSU Extension).

[Learn more or contribute to the fund.](#)

The Women's Foundation of Montana Awards \$36,000 in Grants to Benefit Montana Women and Girls



This month, the Women’s Foundation of Montana (WFM), a program of MCF, awarded \$36,000 in grants to organizations serving women and girls across the state.

The [ten organizations](#) that received funding are all long-time partners of WFM. They were selected by the WFM Advisory Committee to receive funding to sustain important initiatives and programs that align with WFM’s mission to grow the economic security of women and create a brighter future for girls in Montana.

These grants will support the survival of STEM programs, advocacy programs, leadership programs, entrepreneurship, and wage-negotiation classes.

“We understand that nonprofits are facing trying times due to the current crisis. WFM is more committed than ever to investing strategically in programs and initiatives we feel are making real economic progress for Montana women and girls,” said Jen Euell, WFM Program Director. “Our grants this year aren’t limited to supporting particular work, but rather are given in a spirit of mutual trust and support. We want grantees to use the funds for whatever they need to survive the crisis and come out strong on the other side. We truly are in this together.”

[Learn more.](#)

Generosity at Work

This month, MCF mailed out scholarship award letters to over 150 students to support their educational endeavors as they pursue post-secondary or technical school. These scholarships help offset the high cost of education by helping students pay for educational expenses such as tuition and books. These scholarships are supported by over 40 scholarship funds at MCF, set up by generous philanthropists to support Montana students as they pursue their academic dreams.

Congratulations, MCF Scholars!



ABOUT MONTANA

COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

We're all about Montana's future. Through the power of permanently endowed funds, we help people achieve their philanthropic goals and nonprofit organizations establish stable incomes to support their efforts. Our mission is to cultivate a culture of giving so Montana communities can flourish.



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