

Charles K. Blandin Foundation
EIN: 41-6038619
Tax Year ending 12/31/08

FORM 990-PF, PART IX-A, SUMMARY OF DIRECT CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES

The Blandin Foundation helps communities provide choice and opportunity for all, especially people facing social and economic challenges.

Through grant-making, leadership development and public policy initiatives, our goals are to:

- Support capacity of communities to identify issues and opportunities;
- Help communities value and mobilize diverse ideas, opportunities, experiences, and people.

The Blandin Foundation mission is to strengthen communities in rural Minnesota, especially the Grand Rapids area and the vision is healthy communities grounded in strong economies where the burdens and benefits are widely shared.

1. **Blandin Community Leadership Program (BCLP)** – For more than 20 years, Blandin has developed 5,100 community leaders in 301 rural Minnesota communities. This is a unique nationally-recognized program that builds competencies in three major areas: (1) Framing opportunities and challenges that lead to effective action; (2) Building social capital for collaboration and resource sharing; and (3) Mobilizing a critical mass of resources to achieve specific outcomes.

The program is designed for community teams that reflect the diversity of their community from all walks-of-life. A combination of an intensive residential retreat, coupled with on-going workshops, trains leaders in communications, conflict management, networking and stakeholder analysis.

The Reservation Community Leadership Program is a version of the BCLP Core Program and specifically addresses the economic, cultural and social assets of reservation communities. This program was initiated in 2001 and has served 135 leaders from the Bois Forte, Grand Portage, Leech Lake, White Earth, Fond du Lac, Upper Sioux, Red Lake, Lower Sioux, and Mille Lacs Reservations.

Partners-In-Leadership Program brings together leaders from Minnesota's growing immigrant populations with more established leaders.

There were 198 community leaders from 12 communities who were involved with the core BCLP program in 2008, one reservation communities with 21 leaders trained through the Reservation Community Leadership Program, and one community and 21 leaders trained through the Leadership in Ethically Diverse Communities during 2008, costing a total of \$2,275,937.

2. **Public Policy and Engagement** brings research, people and organizations together to address opportunities to strengthen rural Minnesota. The program encourages informed citizen action to assure that rural perspectives are well represented in public discourse. Blandin Foundation focuses on two critically important rural Minnesota policy issues: forest resources and broadband technology.
- *Vital Forest/Vital Communities* initiative champions the reciprocal relationship between healthy Minnesota communities and healthy forest eco-systems. Forestry is a key to the sustainability of many Minnesota communities.
 - *Blandin Broadband Initiative: Keeping Communities Competitive* focuses on broadband telecommunications, which is a key to keeping communities competitive and thriving in a global economy.

Total cost to operate Public Policy and Engagement in 2008 was \$1,429,392.

3. Blandin Foundation grants, in conjunction with resources from other stakeholders, provide incentives to implement strategies that create healthy rural Minnesota communities. Grants are focused on six major priorities:
- Strengthening economic opportunity in rural communities;
 - Supporting the educational attainment of rural Minnesotans who may not have had the same advantage as others;
 - Stimulating promotion of fairness and opportunity;
 - Supporting specialized leadership development;
 - Promoting a stronger rural voice, and
 - Stimulating intercultural competency.

Scholarships are awarded in the local giving area, focused on improving educational attainment of disadvantaged populations. College scholarships to high school graduates in the local area are awarded, as well as scholarships for adult learners and nontraditional residents of Itasca County. Invest Early is a program targeted to children under five years old, recognizing that the best start to a successful life is an early educational start.

When C.K. Blandin established the Foundation in 1941, he specified the Grand Rapids area as its primary beneficiary – the Foundation's most fundamental and enduring commitment. As the Foundation's assets grew, its mission expanded to include rural communities throughout the state. Concern about the Foundation's commitment to the local area has spurred periodic challenges and litigation. As a result, the Board of Trustees in December 2003 approved a resolution, ratified by Ramsey County District Court, to commit at least 55 percent of all grants to the area on the basis of a six-year rolling average.

The Blandin Foundation paid out over \$12 million in grants and scholarship in 2008 and the costs to operate the Grant Making program totaled \$626,896 for 2008.

4. **Other miscellaneous** internal operational programs include several smaller programs (assessment/evaluation and opportunity) which total cost was \$172,781 in 2008.