

THE NEIL AND LOUISE TILLOTSON FUND

STRATEGIC PLAN
2022-2027



NEW HAMPSHIRE
CHARITABLE FOUNDATION

ABOUT THE NEIL & LOUISE TILLOTSON FUND

Neil Tillotson was an entrepreneur who, from the humblest beginnings, built numerous companies that employed thousands of people in the region and far beyond. Louise Tillotson, his wife, was a force all her own — she had worked for the BBC, had once built her own house and her own business. They traveled the world, but always — always — came back to the North Country. During their lifetimes, they gave quietly and consistently and generously to hundreds of community efforts.

When he passed away in 2001 at 102, Neil Tillotson left the bulk of his assets for charitable purposes. Louise Tillotson then established the donor-

advised Neil and Louise Tillotson Fund at the New Hampshire Charitable Foundation in 2006. The Tillotsons' gift was among the largest charitable gifts in the history of the state. The fund is one of the largest permanent rural philanthropies in the country and is positioned to support Coös County, NH and bordering communities in perpetuity.

Over the years, the Tillotson Fund's goals and priorities have consistently reflected Mr. Tillotson's philosophy to "be humble, be creative, and be kind" and Mrs. Tillotson's guidance to "protect the land and help the people." In this spirit, the fund supports a wide range of community and economic development efforts to help revitalize



the region. The work is guided by a local advisory committee and managed by a small team of staff who live in the region. Since 2006, the fund has made nearly \$50 million in grants, and has built capacity of the region through community gatherings, leadership programs, network-building and deep community partnerships.

The Tillotson Fund's past strategic plans reflect a deep and lasting commitment to place-based philanthropy, and a recognition that the work must be owned and led

by people. As the region grows and transforms, the Tillotson Fund will continue to build on the foundation of deep community connection and ensure that the philosophy and legacies of Neil and Louise Tillotson are embedded into the work.

Our 2022-2027 strategic plan incorporates the perspective from the Tillotson Fund staff and advisory committee (see page 7 for a listing) and dozens of community partners. The plan was approved by the advisory committee in June 2022.

OUR THEORY OF CHANGE

The Neil and Louise Tillotson Fund’s theory of change was developed to guide our work in the community. It is based on the legacy of Neil and Louise Tillotson and incorporates the perspectives of community members and the fund’s advisory committee. The theory of change will be revisited regularly with key stakeholders to ensure that our work is having an impact in the community.

| OPPORTUNITY FOR CHANGE | OUR APPROACH | OUR STRATEGIES | OUR OUTCOMES |
|--|---|--|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Deeper community engagement to drive priorities. Increased focus on equity to help ensure that all North Country residents have what they need to thrive. Improve and expand the fund’s investment approaches (grantmaking, advocacy, convenings and more) to increase participation of community members and service providers. Increased investments in systems change to create more lasting change. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> The fund’s staff and advisory committee is guided by its vision, purpose and principles (See page 4). Central to this journey is the fund’s commitment to take observable, measurable actions that advance equity. The Community Investment Framework (See page 5) defines the investment areas that are mutually reinforcing, guided by equity and informed by community. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Diversify and strengthen investments. Foster inclusive community building. Improve the fund’s way of working. (See our strategies on page 6) | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Community members have resources and support to achieve their aspirations. Community members have the skills, knowledge and attitudes to build resilient communities. The fund’s work advances systemic equity, increases impact and deepens community connections. (See our outcomes on page 6) |

OUR INTENDED IMPACT

The Neil and Louise Tillotson Fund provides stable and consistent resources and serves as an engaged and trusted partner to the people and organizations working to improve quality of life and the health of rural landscapes in Coös County and neighboring communities. All funding decisions are informed by input from many community partners and prioritize equity as guided by the fund’s principles. Community members and organizations are core partners in using the resources of the fund to enable the region to thrive.

VISION, PURPOSE AND PRINCIPLES

VISION

The vision of the Neil and Louise Tillotson Fund is to serve as a resource for the people of Coös County and neighboring communities in New Hampshire, Maine, Vermont and southern Québec to forge their own pathways to well-being and cultivate a region that thrives. The Tillotson Fund serves as a stable and consistent source of support for the people of the region to:

- Create and enhance opportunity;
- Preserve and uplift the historical and cultural assets that make the region unique;
- Hold the confidence and capabilities to foster strong communities and healthy rural landscapes.

PURPOSE

The purpose of the Neil and Louise Tillotson Fund is to engage with local communities to identify their short- and long-term priorities and invest in the ideas and initiatives which advance those priorities. The people and organizations of the region partner with the Tillotson Fund to create, to innovate and to achieve their aspirations.

CORE PRINCIPLES

We, the staff and advisory committee of the Neil and Louise Tillotson Fund, work with community members to uphold the following principles:

Foster Potential

The people in the region hold the knowledge and ingenuity needed to solve problems, create opportunities and build thriving communities. The fund aims to foster these strengths by supporting organizations and initiatives aimed at cultivating the entrepreneurial power, relationships and confidence that support self-determination and well-being.

Follow Community Lead

The resources of the Neil and Louise Tillotson Fund are primarily dedicated to the people and communities of this region. The fund works shoulder-to-shoulder with people in the region to help direct these resources to priorities and initiatives that they have identified. The fund works to be inclusive of all community members in this process, including those who are often excluded from decision-making.

Cherish Natural Resources

The natural landscape is one of the greatest assets of the region. The fund strives to be good stewards of the land, air and waterways, and to advance opportunities that strengthen human connection to the natural environment.

Cultivate Belonging


We hold a deep respect for the diversity of life experience of the people in the region and aim to cultivate communities where everyone feels valued.

Trust in Each Other

We build trust by prioritizing respect, humility, honesty and empathy in the fund's collaborations and interactions with partners and community members.

COMMUNITY INVESTMENT FRAMEWORK

The Neil and Louise Tillotson Fund Community Investment Framework is a key component of our approach. We will focus our investments in four key areas:



Individual and Family Well-being

Goal: Support individuals and families to meet their essential needs and achieve well-being.

- Meet essential needs for individuals and families.
- Strengthen systems of care.

Big Bet: A Whole Family Approach

Expand early childhood development strategy to a “whole family” approach, further aligning investments with the work of partners to accelerate improvements in family and child well-being in Coös County.



Healthy Workforce Ecosystem

Goal: Strengthen the capacity of local employers to maintain and/or grow their operations, build and retain a dynamic workforce, stimulate innovation and entrepreneurship, ensure business continuity and plan for the future.

- Attract and retain the workforce.
- Establish workforce housing solutions.
- Help companies and employees build skills and systems for sustained success.
- Link employers and employees to financial supports.
- Increase access to affordable quality childcare.

Big Bet: Invest in Workforce Housing

Establish a workforce housing seed fund for planning and concept development of housing solutions; and a workforce housing investment fund for development and construction.



Environmental Stewardship

Goal: Address the impacts of climate change by investing in mitigation and adaptation strategies, stewardship of natural resources, and efforts that foster human connection to the natural environment.

- Be good stewards of the land, air, forests, waterways and wildlife.
- Encourage and support responsible tourism and recreation.
- Build and enhance sustainable food systems.
- Promote, sustain and scale energy efficiency, clean energy and green building.
- Implement climate smart forestry solutions.

Big Bet: Protect Our Natural Capital

Invest in environmental stewardship in recognition that preserving the region’s natural capital is crucial for a thriving economy and healthy communities.



Resilient Communities

Goal: Support initiatives that build trust, belonging and connection and lead to stronger, more resilient communities.

- Empower youth.
- Convene, collaborate, celebrate.
- Build skills, knowledge and approaches to advance equity.
- Support community builders and change agents.
- Revitalize population hubs and preserve cultural and historical assets.
- Improve civic health.
- Strengthen municipal capacity and leadership.

Big Bet: Champions for Our Communities

Hire up to three full-time Community Stewards who live in or near Coös County to serve as community champions and to help community members advance local priorities. Create the Community Builders Hub to strengthen the skills, confidence, motivation and connections of community builders.



Our investment areas are mutually reinforcing, guided by equity and informed by community.

Our Commitment: Support community-identified and community-driven strategies and solutions.

Our Tools: Grantmaking, social impact investing, advocacy, convening and partnerships.

OUR STRATEGIES AND OUTCOMES

In the theory of change, three strategies define what Tillotson staff, the advisory committee and partners will do in order to further the goals of our community work. The strategies present a roadmap for achieving impact. The routes may change over time as we learn from our actions.

STRATEGY 1

Strengthen and diversify community investments

Improve community investment practices to shift power, strengthen partnerships and increase impact.

ACTIONS

1. Perform a comprehensive assessment of grantmaking practices across programs to identify and implement changes that prioritize equity, lower barriers to resources and share power with community.
2. Pilot approaches for sector-based and hyper-local grantmaking.
3. Expand partnerships with service providers in the youth development, early childhood and family support sectors.

LONG-TERM OUTCOME

Community members have the resources and support to achieve their aspirations.

STRATEGY 2

Foster inclusive community building

Support and scale the capacity of individuals and organizations to build resilient communities.

ACTIONS

1. Assess need and build capacity for community-building initiatives and activities.
2. Employ Community Stewards to serve as trusted, well-connected and informed community champions, advocates and change agents that will serve to support community members to advance local priorities and solutions.
3. Launch the Community Builders Hub, a capacity-building program designed to strengthen the skills, confidence, motivation and connections of community members.

LONG-TERM OUTCOME

Community members have the skills, knowledge and passion to build resilient communities.

STRATEGY 3

Improve the Tillotson Fund's way of working

Adapt internal operations and external engagement to advance equity, impact and community connection.

ACTIONS

1. Assess and adapt internal operations to align with vision, purpose and principles and to achieve strategic plan outcomes.
2. Deepen community engagement through volunteerism, communication and storytelling and community stewardship.
3. Enhance the governance structure of the fund to closely align with vision, purpose and principles and way of working.
4. Investigate and establish investment vehicles to effectively fund grant programs and system change initiatives.

LONG-TERM OUTCOME

The Tillotson Fund's work advances equity, increases impact and deepens community connections.

LEARN MORE

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