WILLIAM & SHEILA KONAR FOUNDATION

2026-2028 STRATEGIC PLAN

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION 2
OUR PURPOSE 2
THEORY OF CHANGE 3
OUR PRIORITY AREAS 4
1. Pre-K-12 Education 5
2. Families and Communities 5
3. Civic Health 6
4. Jewish Life 6

INTRODUCTION

In 2025, the Konar Foundation embarked on a strategic planning process. The process, which involved input from Foundation staff, trustees, and grantees, resulted in the revision of the Foundation's historical priority funding areas. Over the next three years, the Konar Foundation will deepen its impact by advancing four strategic priorities focused on work with grantees, internal operations, board governance, and local leadership and collaboration.

OUR PURPOSE

The Konar Foundation's purpose is inspired by William Konar's life. Like many other Holocaust survivors, he found himself without a home, parents, or most of his family at the end of World War II. In 1946, at the age of 16, he became part of a group of orphans brought to the United States by HIAS and placed around the country in homes that would accept them. William was placed in Rochester. Despite language barriers and ongoing discrimination, he attended Benjamin Franklin High School for two years, found a supportive Jewish community that helped meet his basic needs, and worked tirelessly to take advantage of Rochester's economic opportunities. Today, our Foundation addresses the urgent needs facing Rochester so that people in similar circumstances can share the opportunity to thrive.

Vision

A hopeful Rochester community where access to learning and opportunity enables every resident to reach their full potential.

Mission

We help build a resilient, tolerant, and engaged society by investing in quality education, workforce and career development, and opportunities for civic participation and shared community life.

THEORY OF CHANGE

The Konar Foundation's Theory of Change depicts how pursuit of its mission will lead to the fulfillment of its vision.



Values

- We are guided by Jewish values, including a belief in our obligation to serve those most in need (tzedakah) and continually work to repair the world (tikkun olam).
- We center relationships in our work and believe that society's greatest challenges can only be solved through collaboration and trusting partnerships.
- We value innovative approaches to solving complex problems.
- We listen with humility and act with care. We prioritize the experience and expertise of the leaders, organizations, and communities closest to the problems we seek to solve.
- We promote tolerance, cooperation, mutual respect, and understanding as pillars of civic life.

OUR PRIORITY AREAS

Prior to this strategic plan, the Konar Foundation's priority areas emerged organically over time. As part of this process, Foundation Board and staff members reflected on current and potential new priority areas, considering alignment to our mission, community needs, and the Foundation's expertise. As a result of these discussions, the Foundation aligned around four new priority areas.

While the majority of the Foundation's funding will focus on these four areas, the Foundation maintains flexibility to utilize funding strategies such as RFPs or PRI loans, or to disburse discretionary funds as necessary to meet urgent needs in the community.

Though these priority areas represent distinct issue areas, we see them as interconnected and mutually reinforcing components of realizing our vision.

- Pre-K through 12 Education: High-quality education is the foundation of opportunity, upward mobility, and prosperity.
- Families and Communities: To succeed academically, students must have their basic needs met and experience stability and enrichment outside school. All students and families must be able to access economic and cultural opportunities.

- Civic Health: Healthy civil society is a basic condition for stability and progress. Learning to participate in decisions that affect families and communities begins with civic education in school and continues through lifelong experiences to learn and engage. Community members who benefit from these opportunities can help give back to their communities at all stages of life.
- Jewish Life: The Foundation supports the Jewish community that supported Bill Konar as a newcomer to Rochester. At the same time, we recognize that America offers unique opportunities for people of different religious and ethnic backgrounds to live and prosper together while preserving their own identities and faiths. With these opportunities comes the responsibility to defend the values that make religious freedom possible.

1. Pre-K-12 Education

Our core commitment is to education. We believe access to high-quality education is essential for every child, regardless of race, ethnicity, or family income, and that education is one of the most important steps on the ladder of opportunity.

- We support organizations that enhance educational opportunities and outcomes for pre-K-12 students, whether directly or indirectly. While we may support select postsecondary initiatives like K-12 teacher training programs, we may choose not to support university endowments, endowed chairs, or postsecondary scholarships.
- We support organizations that strengthen all parts of students' educational experience, recognizing that academic outcomes are closely related to health, social emotional, and basic living needs.
- We also support programs that prepare students, particularly first generation, for college.

2. Families and Communities

Grounded in our mission to make Rochester a place where everyone has the opportunities and resources to live a life of dignity, this priority area focuses on economic and neighborhood revitalization, workforce development, addressing basic needs like food security and housing, and access to arts and culture.

- With the downsizing and departure of major employers from Rochester in recent decades, our region is in need of revitalization. We support efforts that stimulate the business sector and create quality jobs.
- We support programs that prepare youth and adults to succeed in the workforce by providing them with in-demand skills that translate to well-paying careers.
- Without access to food and stable housing, it is impossible to thrive and take full advantage of education and training opportunities. Working with partners who understand the needs of their neighborhood communities, we support programs

that address these needs and provide people with stability while they learn and pursue work.
- We see the arts and cultural sector as a critical extension of children's academic experience. We support initiatives that help the arts and culture thrive, particularly those that are committed to sharing the arts with pre-K through 12 students.

3. Civic Health

We need sound and consistent government policy-making to build better lives for our families and communities. Government policies that change constantly, exploit differences, and promote division over the common good give rise to intolerance, conflict, and violence.

- Our ability as people of different races, religious beliefs, and ethnic origins to survive and flourish in the United States depends on the preservation of our democracy.
- We support organizations that foster and teach tolerance – whether through the example of antisemitism and the Holocaust, the lens of racism and other forms of discrimination, or the shared understanding of different histories and cultures.
- We also support organizations that promote a positive vision for democratic government by educating people on their rights and responsibilities as citizens, offering them constructive ways to participate in political decision-making, and encouraging them to give back to their communities as volunteers.

4. Jewish Life

The Konar Foundation's approach to giving across priority areas is guided by Jewish values: we believe in our obligation to serve those most in need and to continue the work of repairing the world. In our Jewish Life priority area, we focus on supporting the Rochester Jewish community to adapt, innovate, and advocate for the freedoms that have sustained American Jewish life and protect other minorities today.

- We support organizations that meet the most urgent needs within the Rochester Jewish community.
- We encourage innovative programming and strategies that respond to Jewish Rochester's changing demographics and needs.
- We fund initiatives that renew Jewish spiritual engagement, activism, and civic involvement in the context of our 21st century community.
- We support interfaith coalition-building to promote understanding among people of different faiths and to work together in areas of shared concern, including preserving religious freedom and ensuring humane treatment of immigrants and refugees.