



Charles K. Blandin Foundation  
EIN: 41-6038619  
Tax Year ending 12/31/04

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

The Foundation's role is to infuse and energize rural community economies in Minnesota, the Foundation offers:

- Leadership development programs that help communities capitalize on their assets;
- Grant making to support community-generated economic strategies and it provides Community Responsive Grant in the Grand Rapids area;
- Public Policy programs to inform and engage the public on issues affecting rural economic viability, which currently include two major initiatives: Vital Forest/Vital Communities and Rural Broadband and a special initiative; Goods from the Woods.

1. **Blandin Community Leadership Program (BCLP)** – is a nine-day residential learning program for development of current and emerging community leaders. The program is intended to identify and enhance individual leadership skills and to foster effective leadership networks for collaborative work on specific community projects. The Blandin Community Leadership Program (BCLP), since inception in 1985, has served over 4,000 leaders from 244 rural Minnesota communities focused on individual and community change. *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 80 leaders from the Leech Lake, White Earth, Fond du Lac, Upper Sioux, Red Lake, and Mille Lacs Reservations. *Partners-in-Leadership Program* is for current and emerging leaders from communities of color and new immigrant communities. This program focuses on individual skill enhancement and links participants with BCLP alumni in partnership where participants and alums work together to broaden their community involvement and deepen their multicultural skills.

There were 198 community leaders from 8 communities who were involved with the core BCLP program in 2004, one reservation community with 21 leaders trained through the Reservation Community Leadership Program, and one community and 26 leaders trained through the Partners in Leadership Program during 2004, costing a total of \$1,370,766.

2. **Blandin Community Advantage Leadership Program (CALP)** – Building on the BCLP Core Program, the Community Advantage Leadership Program helps teams identify, align and mobilize their assets and opportunities in ways that advance their local economies. CALP is an advanced leadership program that helps leaders create private-sector driven changes that produce economic advantages with benefits that are widely shared. These widespread benefits are termed “community economic advantages.” CALP provides the framework and tools for rural leaders to leverage and act in three strategic areas: support

existing businesses, explore new asset opportunities, and develop entrepreneurial environments.

There were 61 community leaders from five communities involved in CALP, with a total cost of \$351,547 to operate this program.

3. Rural Minnesota communities need informed citizens and broad public engagement on issues relevant to their economic vitality. **Public Policy and Engagement** mission is to bring 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. The Foundation has committed resources to address two public policy issues of particular relevance to rural Minnesota: forest resources and broadband technology.
  - *Vital Forest/Vital Communities* focuses on forestry as one of Minnesota's key economic advantages. This initiative champions the reciprocal relationship between healthy communities and healthy forest ecosystems and helps communities optimize the forest's many values as a sustainable resource for the future. In addition, this initiative has been instrumental in propagating the successful special initiative *Goods from the Woods*.
  - *Blandin Broadband Initiative* focuses on broadband telecommunications, which is key to keeping communities competitive and thriving in a global economy. The Foundation's Broadband Initiative aims to develop a high-profile statewide broadband strategy, develop high-level community leadership engagement and public sector involvement from all levels of government, engage telecommunications companies in the process to foster collaborative efforts, and focus on risk mitigation and correcting the risk/reward balance.

Total cost to operate Public Policy and Engagement in 2004 was \$645,014.

4. **Children First!** - A Foundation Program initiated in 1998 as a volunteer-based effort to help assure that all children in Itasca County start kindergarten healthy and ready to do their best. It is a grass roots effort that includes 150-200 volunteers working to improve the healthy development of Itasca County's children 0-5. Facilitates the partnership of existing social, economical, and health resources to directly benefit the children 0-5 in Itasca County.

Children First! Program operating costs for 2004 was \$196,867.

5. **Blandin Education and Health Care Institutional Leadership Programs** are two key rural institutions which are major factors in local economies – for the services they provide, their often large payrolls and the pivotal role they play in the local economy. That's why the Foundation has chosen to work with educators and health care providers. The Foundation's goal is to help these key institutions address their unique challenges and become more dynamically engaged in community work.

- **The Blandin Education Leadership Program** helps local school district to identify and improve key districts and school outcomes. The program uses a critical mass approach to align school board members, administrators, teaching and non-teaching staff and community leaders to improve student achievement, build stronger community relations and develop the ability to drive important change. Participants learn leadership, analytic and communication skills in a feedback intensive environment.
- **The Blandin Health Care Leadership Program** helps rural hospitals, clinics and long-term care facilities identify and improve financial, operational and workforce performance and community-hospital relationships. The program aligns hospital trustees, administrators, doctors, nurses and other providers with community leaders around a common health care vision for the community. The Blandin Health Care Leadership Program is a data driven program and uses a balanced scorecard as the framework to set clear, measurable goals.

The cost to operate the Blandin Education and Healthcare Leadership Programs was \$598,336 in 2004 and four separate school districts and communities with 231 participants were trained in Blandin Education Leadership and four separate health care facilities and communities with 153 participants were trained in Blandin Healthcare Leadership.

6. **Blandin Associates** recognized and advanced social entrepreneurship in rural Minnesota communities. Created and funded by the Blandin Foundation, this program provided training, education, financial resources and support to individuals with innovative ideas to fulfill unmet community needs and opportunities in rural Minnesota. The Blandin Associates Program built on the success of the Blandin Community Leadership Program. Twenty-one rural Minnesota residents were selected to receive the Blandin Associates grants. After approval from the IRS in the form of a letter ruling, each Associate received a maximum of \$10,000 annual for two years to help support these individuals' projects which identified unmet needs in their own community. The Associates had innovative approaches to meeting a community challenge and who had demonstrated their ability and future potential to make a difference. The Foundation determined in order to better align total operating program resources toward the Foundation's new strategic focus the Blandin Associates program would be phased out in 2003 -2004.

The total cost to operate this program in 2004 was \$3,819.

7. **Blandin Foundation Grant Making** seeks to invest capital in strategies that identify community assets and mobilize multiple stakeholders to maximize the contribution those assets make to a community's economic viability, with widely share benefits. The Foundation has three grantmaking categories:

- Local grants that impact the Grand Rapids/Itasca County Area
- A limited number of grants to communities that develop strong *Community Economic Advantage* strategies
- Grants that address rural economic advantage issues on a statewide or regional level.

Community and statewide grants must contribute to community economic advantage strategies, while local grants are split roughly equally between economic advantage and responsive grants that address a range of social and community issues with priority on proposals that address the needs of disadvantaged people.

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 \$29 million in grants and scholarship in 2004 and the costs to operate the Grant Making program totaled \$368,331 for 2004.

8. During 2004, the Blandin Foundation's **other miscellaneous** internal operational small programs had a total cost of \$363,310.