**Community Trust FAQ’s**

1. **What does the Jefferson Franklin Community Action Corporation do?**

JFCAC is a non-profit social agency that follows the Community Action Promise of changing people’s lives, embodying the spirit of hope, improving communities, and making America a better place to live. We care about the entire community and we are dedicated to helping people help themselves and each other. Visit our website at [jfcac.org](http://www.jfcac.org) to learn more.

1. **Why is JFCAC hosting Community Trust Meetings?**

To empower local communities to come together and decide locally how they would like to create a more vibrant community.

1. **What is the process for the Community Trust Project?**

* One to two **community Input meetings** are held to gather feedback from community residents.
* Then a **Theme Prioritization and Trustee Selection meeting** is held for community residents where they will utilize a ballot to prioritize Community Themes identified from community input meetings and choose one Theme from which a final community project will be identified. They will also select Community Trustees.
* Trustees host a series of “Next Steps” meetings for community residents to invite/consider **project** proposals based on the theme/emphasis previously chosen. Trustees use a consensus-based discussion process to select some number of projects (4-6) to present back to the community at a final Next Step meeting.
* Final Next Step Meeting – Community residents select a project to be undertaken from the proposals presented by the Trustees. Trustees then craft a plan for project funding and implementation, meet as needed to fund and/or implement the project, and report back to the community the completion of funding and implementation (at the following year's Community Trust event, if not sooner).

1. **Why should I attend?**

You voice matters! We want to hear what everyone ages sixteen and older has to say about their community and what it might take to make it a more vibrant community. It is a chance for you to be heard and to hear what others are saying about their community.

1. **Do I have to attend every meeting?**

No, we would love to have you at all the meetings, but we do understand that life happens.

1. **What is the Prioritization meeting?**

This is a very important meeting to be a part of. At this meeting, community residents will use a ballot to prioritize Theme’s which were created from all the ideas/comments that residents shared during Community Input meetings. Those attending decide what **Theme** or area of emphasis the community will choose a final **project** from.

1. **Can anyone be a Trustee?**

No, “Resident Trustees” must be age sixteen or older and a resident of the community. “Non-resident Trustees” must own a business, or work in the community for at least 2 years. At least 50% of Trustees must be **residents**.

1. **Who funds this?**

Seed funding of $15,000 is provided by JFCAC. (This project is funded with federal funds received from the U.S Department of Health and Human Services provided by Department of Social Services.) Trustees are responsible for creating and implementing a funding plan for expenses that exceed the seed funding. JFCAC will provide support in seeking and completing grants.

1. **Do you provide childcare for the meetings?**

Not currently. We do offer the opportunity to attend the meetings virtually or to call in if childcare is an issue.

1. **How did you decide what towns to fund? Are you coming to my town?**

School district communities were selected based on results of Livability Studies done on each district in Jefferson and Franklin County. Our current grant covers the following identified school districts, **Jefferson County:** Hillsboro and Sunrise and in **Franklin County**: St. Clair and New Haven

1. **How can I help?**

We are always looking for volunteers. We need people to help serve food, check in participants, usher participants to their breakout sessions, timekeepers, notetakers and facilitators. Contact Jaime Dimercurio at [jdimercurio@jfcac.org](mailto:jdimercurio@jfcac.org) or 636-524-4459 to volunteer.

1. **Who administers the fund itself? Where is the money held?**

Initially, funds will be held and administered by JFCAC. JFCAC hopes and expects that, eventually, the Trust will become an independent entity to administer the Trust fund in line with community established priorities.

1. **If I donate money to the Trust, can I influence the decision of how it is used?**

Decisions concerning use of Trust funds are made through a consensus-based participatory process that you are welcome to participate in if you are a “resident” of the community as defined. Whether you have contributed, and how much you have contributed, to the fund does not affect how much you may influence the decision as all participants in the Trust annual meeting will have a voice in the decision-making process. The unique Trust benefit to donors lies in the donors’ ability to donate money for non-profit purposes and benefit from tax savings.

1. **Am I making a long-term commitment to work on the Trust if I attend the initial meeting?**

No, not at all. The more who are involved, engaged, and committed, the more likely outcomes will be achieved for the betterment of the entire community, however, the process is a voluntary one for each stage of the process.

1. **What is the defined community?**

Communities are defined by **school district boundaries**. Specific schools were identified through a Livability Study. The first 4 school districts are: Jefferson County: Hillsboro R-3, Sunrise School District, Franklin County: St. Clair School District, New Haven School District.

1. **What makes you a resident?**

If you live within the boundaries of the identified school district.

1. **Can I still take part in the decision making even if I do not donate money? Can I donate money and not take part in the decision making?**

Yes. Donating money, or choosing not to, does not affect your ability to participate in the consensus-based participatory decision-making process, provided you are a “resident” of the community. The use of Trust funds are decided in community meetings that are open to all community residents, whether or not they have donated money to the fund, however, all community residents are encouraged to donate as they would to any non-profit organization

1. **Where did the idea for the Community Trust come from?**

This project was created in Clarkston, GA by CDF staff who after interacting with and listening to residents of Clarkston, they noticed a community desire for increased collaboration among community residents and between community residents and organizations working locally. CDF borrowed from a variety of participatory movements, processes, and initiatives to create the concept of the Community Trust. Participatory budgeting (and other participatory) programs in Brazil and the United States, indigenous consensus-building processes around the world, and community land trust principles, as well as other models and processes, all informed the idea of the Community Trust.