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August 28, 2018

Dear Grantee Partners and Community Colleagues:

On behalf of the Dean and Margaret Leshner Foundation board and staff, we *thank you* for partnering with us and for sharing in our mission to enhance life for the residents of Contra Costa County. You continue to invigorate and inspire us through your work.

We have some exciting news, and we want you, our trusted partner, to be one of the first to hear about it. In 2019, the Leshner Foundation will celebrate 25 years of grantmaking in Contra Costa County. In honor of this anniversary, **we have reaffirmed our commitment to our long-time mission:** to enhance the quality of life in Contra Costa County, through charitable giving in support of education, arts and culture, and children and families.

Building on this mission and three focus areas, the Foundation will now deepen its work to achieve **four distinct impact goals**. While we are still developing specific measurable goals in each of these four areas, our hope is that by the end of 2024:

1. *More children are thriving* through learning opportunities and stronger families—in time, resulting in educational and economic mobility.

What We Know Now: The Foundation will focus on early childhood, with an emphasis on supporting a localized collaborative approach, parent support, and creating an enhanced reading culture in communities—particularly for families with young children in east Contra Costa County. The Foundation is also exploring a possible initiative to support at-risk young adults in completing their education, gaining job skills, and acquiring the needed wrap-around support.

2. *More families have their basic needs met* in housing, food, and interpersonal safety.

What We Know Now: Building on our current work, the Foundation will continue to prioritize strengthening families by addressing basic needs, with an enhanced interest in preventive approaches.

3. Contra Costa County, with the Leshner Center as the hub, is a *premier arts and culture center* providing access to the arts for all in the region.

What We Know Now: Building on our current work, the Foundation will continue to fund arts organizations throughout the county, with an emphasis on the Leshner Center for the Arts as a dynamic arts center in the community.



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Additionally, the Foundation aims to provide access to the arts for low-income school children.

4. *East County nonprofit organizations gain more capacity to meet the communities' changing needs and reduce long-term poverty entrenchment.*

What We Know Now: Given the growing population and shifting demographics in east county, the Foundation will support strengthening the capacity of nonprofit organizations (those that fall within the Foundation's mission)—individually and collectively—to address the priority issues of their clients and communities, with the aim of alleviating poverty.

We've taken deep care and thought in making the decision to focus a portion of our grantmaking on these four impact areas. This mission-driven decision came not only at a board level, but also as the result of listening and learning over the past year about the needs of our communities, and how we can deepen our long-term impact. The board rooted its decision in what we heard from our partners and community leaders like you.

Be assured: we will maintain a responsive grantmaking program as we always have, be it with shifts in timing and allocated funds. We promise to keep you informed—and valued—as this strategy evolves, and will reach out again this November with more detailed updates. If you have questions or would like to connect before then, you may reach out to us anytime at 925-935-9988 or msj@lesherfoundation.org.

Together with you, our grant partners and colleagues, we look forward to making an even greater impact on the people and places of this community. We hope you will join us in our excitement for what's to come.

With thanks for all you do,

Cynthia Ann Lesher
President

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Executive Director

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