

STATE OF CONNECTICUT HEALTH AND EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES AUTHORITY  
Grant Committee Annual Meeting Minutes  
September 10, 2021

The Grant Committee of the State of Connecticut Health and Educational Facilities Authority held the annual meeting via teleconference at 9:00 a.m. on Friday, September 10, 2021.<sup>1</sup>

The meeting was called to order by Peter Lisi, Board Chair, at 9:01 a.m. and upon roll call, those present and absent were as follows:

**PRESENT:** Dr. Estela Lopez, Committee Chair  
Peter Lisi, Board Chair  
Lawrence Davis  
Susan Martin  
Alan Mattamana

**ABSENT:** Steven L. Elbaum

**OTHER BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:** Darrell V. Hill<sup>2</sup> (designee for Connecticut State Treasurer)

**ALSO PRESENT:** Jeanette W. Weldon, Executive Director  
Denise Aguilera, General Counsel  
Daniel Giungi, Communications and Government Affairs Specialist<sup>3</sup>  
Michael Morris, Managing Director, Client Services  
Cynthia D. Peoples-H, Managing Director, Operations & Finance  
Kara Stuart, Manager, Administrative Services  
Betty Sugerman Weintraub, Grant Program Manager  
of Connecticut Health and Educational Facilities Authority

**GUESTS:** Prabal Chakrabarti, Executive Vice President and Community Affairs Officer, Federal Reserve Bank of Boston

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Dr. Lopez requested a motion to approve the minutes of the May 19, 2021 Grant Committee Special Meeting. Mr. Lisi moved for approval of the minutes, which was seconded by Dr. Lopez.

Upon a voice vote, the “Ayes,” “Nays” and “Abstentions” were as follows:

<u><b>AYES</b></u>	<u><b>NAYS</b></u>	<u><b>ABSTENTIONS</b></u>
Lawrence Davis	None	None
Peter Lisi		
Dr. Estela Lopez		
Susan Martin		
Alan Mattamana		

<sup>1</sup> All attendees participated in the meeting via conference telephone that permitted all parties to hear each other

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Hill joined the teleconference meeting at 9:08 a.m.

<sup>3</sup> Mr. Giungi joined the teleconference meeting at 9:05 a.m.

Ms. Sugerman Weintraub introduced Mr. Prabal Chakrabarti, Executive Vice President and Community Affairs Officer for the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston.

**KEYNOTE SPEAKER – PRABAL CHAKRABARTI**

Mr. Chakrabarti gave a presentation on “Pre-Pandemic Disparities, Current Trends, and Post-Pandemic Opportunities.” The presentation included an overview of the following topics:

- Pre-pandemic disparities:
  - Before COVID, people of color were less likely to work full-time in CT
  - Before COVID, full-time workers of color more often had low family income in CT
  - Average hourly wages are not enough to make ends meet for a single adult with two children
  - Before COVID, low unemployment in CT, but dramatic inequality between those at the upper and lower ends of the pay scale.
- Pandemic driven disparities:
  - At the onset of COVID, employment decreased across multiple sectors in CT
  - Employment growth rates over the past 12 months indicate signs of recovery
  - Current unemployment rates of 7.3% remain higher than pre-pandemic unemployment rate of 3.5%
  - Before COVID, access to quality child care was inequitable and constraints have only gotten worse in the COVID era
  - Cost of child care exceeds the Department of Health and Human Services affordability benchmark of 7% of median family income
  - Across the state, child care workers earn low wages
- What are some holistic yet tangible responses to these workforce challenges?
  - Working Cities Challenge
  - Career Navigators in the 5 CT Working Cities has shown great promise to address unemployment
  - Racial equity work in the 5 CT Working Cities is focused on addressing disparities and providing opportunities.

After completion of the presentation, the floor was opened to questions and a discussion ensued.

CHEFA staff, Dr. Lopez and the other Board members thanked Mr. Chakrabarti for his time and exceptional presentation. Mr. Chakrabarti left the meeting at 10:05 a.m.

At 10:05 a.m. Dr. Lopez stated that a break will be taken and all parties were asked to return to the meeting by 10:10 a.m.

**CHEFA GRANT PROGRAM AT 20 YEARS AND INTO THE FUTURE DISCUSSION**

**History and Background**

Ms. Sugerman Weintraub referenced the meeting package and gave a brief history and background on the CHEFA Grant Program. CHEFA established the philanthropic Grant Program in 2002 initially partnering with community foundations throughout the state to determine the organizations selected to receive grants. After a few years, the program was revamped to be a competitive grant program run by CHEFA grant staff, including an Internal Review Committee made up of the Grant Program Manager and CHEFA staff volunteers. The current grant program includes three annual grant cycles: Client, Nonprofit, and Targeted.

Ms. Sugerman Weintraub reported that since inception, CHEFA has awarded over \$40 million to worthwhile programs and projects having an impact on the lives of Connecticut residents. Ms. Sugerman Weintraub stated that the grant program is viewed not only as a grant funder, but also as a convener of nonprofits, and a collaborator, with she and Ms. Weldon being members of multiple statewide committees. Ms. Sugerman Weintraub noted that being one of the few philanthropic organizations that fund statewide as well as program and capital expenditures has helped CHEFA become a grant leader in the state.

Ms. Sugerman Weintraub reported that over the 20 years, the grant program has supported about 270 distinct organizations with over 500 grants, some with statewide reach, and all representing CHEFA's four core priority areas of healthcare, education, childcare and culture.

Mr. Lisi thanked Ms. Sugerman Weintraub for her comprehensive data illustrating what a wonderful grant program CHEFA has.

Mr. Mattamana inquired about the new 'diversity, equity and inclusion' criteria added and a brief discussion ensued.

**Grant Funding – What works well? What can be improved upon?**

Dr. Lopez reported on the following strengths of the CHEFA grant program:

- Competitive process that has a statewide impact;
- Offers grants for capital projects, which very few philanthropic organizations offer; and
- The client, nonprofit, and targeted grant programs align with CHEFA's mission.

Ms. Sugerman Weintraub added that staff views the nonprofit organizations as partners, and is also very responsive and always available for grantees and applicants.

Dr. Lopez reported that one challenge of the CHEFA grant program is the consistent focus on outcomes. The outcome of a capital project is more self-explanatory, whereas the outcome for a program can be complicated and requires a number of years to show long term results. Dr. Lopez stated that it has been discussed to extend the grant program to fund at least two consecutive years, starting with the FY 2022 Targeted Grant Program. Dr. Lopez opened the floor up to considerations for the future and a discussion ensued.

Mr. Lisi inquired whether there are opportunities to collaborate with other community foundations to fund major initiatives. Ms. Sugerman Weintraub stated that CHEFA works with the Early Childhood Funders Collaborative which is one example of how numerous funders engage in supporting larger scale projects. In addition, the newly formed Health Equity Trust, that Ms. Weldon and Ms. Sugerman Weintraub are participants, may also collaborate in the near future to address large-scale issues of health equity. Ms. Weldon said that collaboration is one of CHEFA's strategic pillars and is focused on organization-wide. A brief discussion ensued.

Dr. Lopez summarized that CHEFA should continue, where appropriate, incorporating two-year grants, strengthening collaboration, and ensuring that equity is being addressed.

**How do we enhance and innovate our grant funding?**

Ms. Sugerman Weintraub stated that innovation was added to the grant program criteria based on the original guidelines to fund innovative programs.

Mr. Mattamana inquired whether an innovative approach could include market returning investments. Ms. Weldon noted the work of CHEFA CDC that has proposed legislation to create a state level New Markets Tax Credit program focused on investments and bringing private investors into low income communities. A brief discussion ensued.

**Future Targeted Grantmaking – Initial Conversation on focus area(s)**

Dr. Lopez reported that the targeted grant program has been running for 7 years, and is an intentional approach to supporting areas aligned with CHEFA’s mission. Dr. Lopez stated the primary focus area for FY 2019, 2020, and 2022 has been on statewide workforce development. Dr. Lopez said another area to consider is childcare, but staff would need an overview of the childcare complexities to better understand where there may be opportunities. A discussion ensued.

Mr. Davis stated that he would like to continue to see the CHEFA grant program fund workforce regarding trades and apprenticeships, given that they provide an opportunity for individuals to find a profession and make a living wage within that profession.

Mr. Lisi inquired about what focus areas Ms. Sugerman Weintraub has discussed amongst colleagues in philanthropy. Ms. Sugerman Weintraub stated sector specific philanthropic partners are discussing public-private partnerships and capacity building grants, such as for consultants, to address catalytic change that can have transformational effects. . A brief discussion ensued.

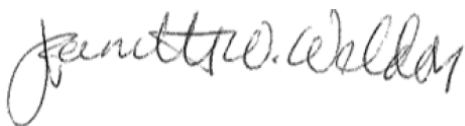
**CHEFA 20TH ANNIVERSARY NONPROFIT FORUM – HEALTH EQUITY FORUM IDEA**

Dr. Lopez reported that she and Ms. Sugerman Weintraub discussed the idea of a health equity forum to be held in March 2022. Dr. Lopez opened the floor to discuss other forum ideas. A brief discussion ensued. Dr. Lopez stated that areas of interest could include health equity, mental health, workforce training, and childcare.

Dr. Lopez reported that she is proud of the CHEFA grant program and its contributions to the community.

The meeting adjourned at 11:00 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Jeanette Weldon  
Executive Director