

# 2025



ETHEL & JAMES  
**FLINN FOUNDATION**

## In 2025 ...

In 2025, the Ethel and James Flinn Foundation marked a pivotal year of reflection and forward momentum. As we launched a formal review of our five-year strategic plan, **we reaffirmed our commitment to improving mental health outcomes across southeast Michigan.**

This year's work deepened our focus on supporting **community partnerships, data-driven decision-making and sustainable systems change** — ensuring that every step forward is guided by impact, inclusion and accountability.



# Grants awarded in 2025

The Flinn Foundation awarded

**\$3.2 million**

**in grant funding to 64 organizations  
across southeast Michigan**

[See a full list of 2025 grants awarded](#)

# The Foundation's support spans several program areas including:

Evidence-based treatment practices for adults and youth

Capacity building

Advocacy support, and

Awareness and education initiatives



A hand is shown holding a white, textured cloth. In the background, there are several colorful silhouettes of human figures in various colors (orange, blue, yellow, green, purple) standing in a line. The overall scene is set against a soft, blurred background of green and white.

## Strategic plan review and reflection

In 2025, the Flinn Foundation took an intentional step forward to assess progress on its five-year strategic plan. With evaluation support from Black in Public Health Founder Tyler Logan, the Foundation engaged in data collection — including surveys, focus groups and direct conversations with grantees — to better understand how its investments have translated into impact across behavioral health initiatives, service delivery, youth advocacy and justice reform.

This work reflects the Foundation’s trust-based approach to philanthropy — one that prioritizes partnership, learning and flexibility in service of long-term systems change. While the formal plan period draws to a close, the insights gained will shape Flinn’s next strategic phase.

Building on the lessons of the strategic plan review, the Foundation continued to invest in programs driving measurable community impact.

[\*\*Learn more about this effort\*\*](#)

# These are some key Flinn Foundation-supported efforts we reported on in 2025:

## Transforming crisis response

**The Wayne State University School of Social Work Center for Behavioral Health and Justice** continued advancing a systems-level shift in how Michigan communities respond to behavioral health emergencies.

This initiative focuses on **training 911 dispatchers to recognize mental health crises at "point zero"** and connect people with the right resources — from mobile crisis teams to 988 crisis line responses.

By mapping local response networks and **prioritizing behavioral health** over default legal system involvement, the effort aims to reduce incarceration and emergency room stays while building a more compassionate and effective crisis response model.

[Learn More](#)

## Youth justice and systems change

In August 2025, Flinn Foundation Trustees toured the **Wayne County Juvenile Detention Facility** to learn from leaders involved in the **Wayne BEYOND** initiative. This three-year effort, led by the Center for Behavioral Health and Justice at Wayne State University, is designed to improve coordination, build grassroots capacity and elevate youth and family voices within the youth justice system.

[Learn More](#)

# These are some key Flinn Foundation-supported efforts we reported on in 2025:

## Bringing stakeholders together

Also in 2025, the Flinn Foundation partnered with the Center for Behavioral Health and Justice at Wayne State University School of Social Work to host **Critical Intervention Mapping sessions with community stakeholders** to assess the full youth justice continuum and identify opportunities for culturally responsive, community-led care.

**This work is building a shared roadmap to transform how systems support youth.**

[Learn More](#)

## Teen suicide prevention efforts grow

**The Hope Empowerment Coalition**, formerly known as the Western Wayne Suicide Prevention Coalition, expanded its youth suicide prevention efforts by launching a student council representing 19 high schools and implementing peer-driven initiatives like Hope Squad and Be Nice.

This initiative is supported by **GrowthWorks** and the Flinn Foundation.

[Learn More](#)

# These are some key Flinn Foundation-supported efforts we reported on in 2025:

Celebrating 50 years of work in the community

**The Washtenaw Area Council for Children** celebrated 50 years of prevention work and served more than 11,000 students and parents through mental wellness education.

WACC leads in **youth diversion and preventative mental health support programming.**

[Learn More](#)

Training program supports evidence-based, trusted mental health care

**Affirmations Community Center** began developing a training initiative for mental health professionals across southeast Michigan to improve **LGBTQ+ affirming** care and expand trusted referral networks..

[Learn More](#)

# These are some key Flinn Foundation-supported efforts we reported on in 2025:

During a difficult year, grass-roots community organizations reduce stigma and increase access to care

**Behavioral health needs have intensified since the pandemic, particularly in Black communities in southeast Michigan.** We continue to explore how rising needs, reduced funding and systemic barriers are making it harder to find affordable, culturally responsive care — and highlight the organizations that are filling in the gaps.

[Learn More](#)

Leveraging the role of philanthropy in systems change

In 2025, the Flinn Foundation spotlighted the **importance of philanthropy in advancing sustainable mental health solutions.** Its involvement with **Mindful Philanthropy** — a national network of funders — helps equip philanthropic organizations to make informed, equity-centered investments in behavioral health.

Flinn Foundation President and CEO Andrea Cole continues to serve on Mindful Philanthropy's board, **reinforcing the Foundation's commitment to sector leadership.**


[Learn More](#)

## Honoring the 2025 Leonard W. Smith Mental Health Heroes

The Leonard W. Smith Mental Health Hero Award was created to honor the late Leonard W. Smith, **longtime trustee and past board chair of the Flinn Foundation**, who dedicated his career to improving mental health systems and outcomes in Michigan.

The award recognizes senior nonprofit leaders in southeast Michigan who **demonstrate extraordinary commitment to mental health.**

[Learn More](#)

A group photo of four people standing in an office. From left to right: a man in a light blue blazer, a woman in a patterned top and glasses, a woman in a purple top, and a man in a blue blazer and glasses. They are all smiling.

**Four leaders were honored for their visionary service and received sabbaticals to rest and renew while their organizations received support to build internal capacity during their absence.**

Leonard W. Smith Mental Health Hero Award winners receive a sabbatical for rest and renewal, while their organizations receive funding for capacity building and professional development.

**Meet the 2025 Leonard W. Smith Mental Health Heroes:**



James Ebaugh, Executive Director, MiSide Health; Kalimah Johnson, Founder and Executive Director, SASHA Center; Lenora Hardy-Foster, President and CEO, Judson Center; Vincent Tilford, President and CEO, Hannan Center

[\*\*Learn More\*\*](#)

**Inside the Flinn Foundation in 2025, we continued to build the team that will guide our future grant making direction.**

Lasenby brings **deep behavioral health leadership** from her work in Oakland and Wayne counties.

[Learn More](#)



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**The Flinn Foundation also welcomed Dr. Linda Hryhorczuk's return to the Board of Trustees**

Hryhorczuk, a respected psychiatrist, returns to the board with **decades of experience in youth and adult mental health care.**

[Learn More](#)



## Looking ahead to 2026 ...

As the Flinn Foundation closes one strategic chapter and prepares for the next, the insights gathered during the 2025 review process will guide future investments in systems change.

In the year ahead, the Foundation remains committed to lifting up the essential work of its grantees and continuing to build a stronger, more equitable mental health system for all in southeast Michigan.

Learn more about  
the Ethel and James Flinn Foundation

Visit [flinnfoundation.org](https://flinnfoundation.org)



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