



Community Heart & Soul®

Cedar Lake Heart & Soul
Guided by what matters most
www.cedarlakeheart.org

— Community — Heart & Soul

Legacy Foundation launched the Community Heart & Soul program in 2024 to help Lake County towns build community through this resident-driven process and take action on what matters most to its residents.

Join us as we launch year two of the program and select Lake County's second Heart & Soul Community!



Community Heart & Soul is a resident-driven process that engages the entire population of a town in identifying what they love most about their community, what future they want for it, and how to achieve it.

Developed and field-tested over a decade in partnership with over 90 small cities and towns across the United States, Community Heart & Soul is a proven process for engaging a community in shaping its future.

Based on three powerful principles - **involve everyone, focus on what matters most, and play the long game** – Community Heart & Soul helps towns move toward a brighter, more prosperous future by bringing community residents closer together.

Community Heart & Soul is unique in how it engages residents. It is a highly inclusive process that reaches deep into communities to ensure all voices are represented in determining a town's future. Instead of bringing residents to the table, Community Heart & Soul brings the table to residents at community events, neighborhood block parties, schools, businesses, and virtual gatherings.

Heart & Soul communities experience a range of social and economic benefits:

- Pride and confidence grow in the town
- Civility and respect increase
- Residents feel more connected to one another
- Volunteerism increases
- New young leaders emerge
- More residents run for local office
- Economic conditions improve
- Investment in the town increases
- New local businesses open
- Town officials gain a deeper understanding of what matters to residents
- Towns are better prepared to respond to emergency situations

How Community Heart & Soul Works

Community Heart & Soul begins with a four-phase, step-by-step process that brings residents together to identify and honor the unique character of their town and the emotional connection of the people who live there.

Phase 1: Imagine

Heart & Soul teams are formed to build awareness, interest, and commitment in all segments of the community.

Phase 2: Connect

Stories are gathered from residents, leading to the development of Heart & Soul Statements that identify what matters most and reflect what they love about their towns.

Phase 3: Plan

Residents develop action plans to guide future town planning based on their Heart & Soul Statements.

Phase 4: Act

Heart & Soul Statements are officially adopted by town and city councils, incorporated into comprehensive and other plans, and are used to guide future policies and decisions.



Cedar Lake was selected as Indiana's First Heart & Soul Community in 2024!



Through an application process, Legacy Foundation will select one community to assist with Community Heart & Soul planning.

Eligibility Requirements Include:

- Any Lake County, Indiana town or city with a population of 40,000 or less is eligible to apply.
 - If your town or city has a population of over 40,000 and you are interested in engaging your community, please reach out to set up a meeting.
- Applications must identify a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization community partner and municipality representative.
- Both the organization and municipal government must each have at least one staff person, or elected official, who will play an active role in the Community Heart & Soul Core Team.
- It is expected that the selected community will be ready to begin Phase 1 of the Heart & Soul program in January 2026 and participate in a pre-launch meeting in early December 2025.

2025 Application Timeline:

- Application Opens: Monday, September 1, 2025
- Application Deadline: Friday, October 24, 2025
- Notice of Award: Friday, November 14, 2025

Applications must be submitted via Legacy Foundation's online grant portal at Legacyfdn.org and can be submitted by either the community's municipality or partner nonprofit organization.

The selected community will receive training, technical assistance, and up to \$80,000 in supporting funds to implement the Community Heart & Soul process over a 2 year period.

How Applications will be Reviewed:

- Community readiness and commitment to using Community Heart & Soul as a new way to plan for their community's future.
- Involvement of key partners.
- Experience with and commitment to engaging the public in decision-making processes.
- Commitment to contributing resources (financial and human) to the Heart & Soul process.

Scan the QR Code or visit Legacyfdn.org/heart-soul to learn more and begin your application!



For questions, please contact:

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