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Tax March is a growing movement of Americans who want a tax system that doesn't favor the superrich and big wealthy corporations. According to its website, more than 125,000 people joined demonstrations across the country on tax day 2017, like this one in San Francisco, to pressure President Donald Trump to release his tax returns and call for a fairer tax system. Image by Master, Steve Rappart under CC BY 2.0.



Amplifying the impact of outrage giving

Last year was one of the most polarizing and outrageous years in recent memory. The threats posed by President Donald Trump and his administration's policies of economic and environmental deregulation; tax reform benefiting corporate and wealthy interests; attacks on health care, journalism and democratic institutions; and the rising tide of

racism, sexism, homophobia and isolationism are daunting.

Yet, we also saw widespread mobilization and the activation of hundreds of thousands of people, including many first-time activists, to protect justice and democracy. We witnessed millions of dollars in new small gifts to support the progressive social movement, a flood of "outrage giving" expressing collective anger and resistance to the attacks on our rights and our future.

As we look to 2018, our challenge in the philanthropic sector is to amplify the impact of this new giving and support critical resistance work in the months and years to come.

By Jason Franklin, PhD

If Trump's tweets and executive actions felt like a constant bombardment throughout 2017, they also served as powerful fuel to fire an outpouring of new financial support outstripping any expectations. Anchor institutions protecting our civil rights ranging from the ACLU to Planned Parenthood saw tens of millions of dollars in new small gifts. Similarly, the activation of new activists was accompanied by a flood of giving for new organizing groups as well, with Indivisible standing as perhaps the foremost example. This new wave of outrage giving sparked by ongoing offensive actions from the alt-right¹ is spurred by and facilitated by advances in online (continued on page 13)



challenging grantmakers to strengthen communities

A message from the President and CEO



Dear Colleagues,

Many of us – activists, funders, service providers and others – are bracing for a tough year ahead. Each day seems to bring a new threat to our democracy and to communities with the least wealth and power. There are many reasons for despair, anxiety and anger.

But there's also room for hope. Hope that, with unity, hard work and passion for what is good and just, tides will turn. And hope that our sector will step up as essential partners of that work. The articles in this edition of *Responsive Philanthropy* highlight some of the various ways that funders can respond to secure a positive future.

In **"Amplifying the impact of outrage giving,"** Jason Franklin, board chair of the Proteus Fund and co-founder and co-chair of the Solidaire Donor Network, looks at the outpouring of small new donations to progressive social movements after the November 2016 elections. He examines what this means for the philanthropic sector and identifies five critical ways that grantmakers can leverage this momentum.

Andrea Levere, president and CEO of Prosperity Now, takes a deep dive into the strategies of one of its funders. In **"Learning from Emerson Collective's 'philanthropic recipe' for these times,"** she shares how Emerson is leveraging its LLC status and supporting grantees beyond the grant to highlight what other grantmakers can do to effectively respond to these tough times.

We saw some devastating natural disasters in 2017, which helped keep environmental and climate change issues in the headlines. But what's not often talked about is how the mainstream environmental movement largely sidelines men and women of color. Michael Roberts, program manager at The Schmidt Family Foundation's The 11th Hour Project, shares some lessons from the grantmaker's journey in diversity, equity and inclusion in **"Confronting the evidence: Addressing racial disparity in environmental grantmaking."**

Last year, many of you expressed interest in our community-led grantmaking webinar. So NCRP's Caitlin Duffy interviewed Gabriel Foster of Trans Justice Funding Project in **"Equitable participatory grantmaking in trans communities."** Foster discusses how the fund is centering the people it seeks to benefit in its grantmaking.

And for our Member Spotlight, we highlight **The California Wellness Foundation**, which seeks to improve the health of Californians "by making grants for health promotion, wellness education and disease prevention." After the elections, the foundation asked stakeholders what they needed given our current political environment. Learn how it responded and what it's asking other funders to do, too.

The stakes are high. You, me, family, friends, neighbors and entire communities are affected by the wave of regressive and unsustainable rhetoric and policies from our current administration and its supporters. Yet, I am hopeful that in 2018, funders, grantees and individuals who care about a just and thriving future for all will rally together to fight for that future. NCRP is committed to be in that fight.

We appreciate hearing from you! Tell us what you think about these and other articles from *Responsive Philanthropy*. Let us know what stories you'd like us to cover. Email community@ncrp.org.

Thank you for being part of NCRP's community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in red ink, appearing to be 'AD', written over a white background.

Aaron Dorfman
President and CEO

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Learning from Emerson Collective's "philanthropic recipe" for these times

By Andrea Levere

Our current political environment heightens the power and necessity of philanthropy and encourages us to reflect on those philanthropic practices that have worked the best and those in need of re-invention.

Nonprofits of all shapes and sizes across the country owe an enormous debt to the legacy of long-term institutional funders and private donors who have seeded and supported enduring organizations, infrastructure and networks committed to advancing the common good. We should also celebrate philanthropic innovations that provide tools such as program-related investments and "philanthropic equity" or operating funding that invests in a business strategy designed to generate revenue for an organization over the longer-term, in

contrast to funding the operating costs of specific program or service.

It is in the spirit of this legacy that I raise up a philanthropic partnership, which has adopted these practices while creating new ones of their own to address the specific challenges of our times: the Emerson Collective. (Disclosure: Prosperity Now, a nonprofit I lead that seeks to create financial stability, wealth and prosperity for all, has been a partner of the Emerson Collective since 2014.)

Founded in 2004 by Laurene Powell Jobs, Emerson Collective uses a wide variety of tools and strategies to achieve its mission of "removing barriers to opportunity so people can live to their full potential." While few of the elements that define Emerson's approach to partnership



Prosperity Now mobilized local, state and regional partners to protect the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program in early 2017. VITA is a network of thousands of volunteers who help millions of low-income taxpayers access the Earned Income Tax Credit and the Child Tax Credit. Photo courtesy of Prosperity Now.

are new, it is the timing, structure and quantity of the ingredients in its philanthropic recipe that merits our attention.

As any chef knows, it is the way that ingredients are selected, measured and combined that makes all the difference in the taste of a dish and a meal or, in this case, the effectiveness of philanthropy in accelerating the impact of the nonprofit sector navigating a changing world and unprecedented political environment.

MATCHING SOURCES AND USES OF FUNDS

One of the most useful lessons I learned in business school was that an organization's financial strength is driven by the ability to match sources and uses of funds. Thus, a long-term asset like a home should be financed by a long-term liability such as a 30-year fixed-rate mortgage. A short-term working capital need could be financed by a revolving line of credit. The riskiest uses of funds, such as the start-up of a new product or project, are best funded by equity.

The elegance and impact of this type of capital market structure is too rarely deployed in the nonprofit sector, yet the need is enormous given the complexity and risk faced every day by mission-driven organizations. It is precisely to meet this need that the Emerson Collective is structured as an LLC, which has gained popularity among Silicon Valley philanthropists.

There have been concerns about how LLCs are generally set up without transparency or accountability in mind. These shortcomings should not be forgotten as we all strive to create an equitable philanthropic marketplace. However, in Emerson's case, it is not its structure alone that produces value, but how it is leveraged in pursuit of impact.

The LLC structure "offers the opportunity to apply a broad set of flexible approaches without being constrained by old structures," said Anne Marie Burgoyne, managing director of social innovation at Emerson, in an interview.

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"Grants alone could not do the job. We have a set of tools that are evolving with the ability to support advocacy, communications and impact investing as well as the core work of our partners."

For Prosperity Now, Emerson's support for our constituency building, policy development and advocacy activities allowed us to act quickly and secure a victory for low-income communities. We were able to leverage post-election listening sessions with our local, state and regional partners to mobilize around the protection of the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Program in early 2017. This restored funding for hundreds of community tax preparation sites that help people access the Earned Income Tax Credit and the Child Tax Credit.

For other partners, the value arises from the fact that most of Emerson's grants provide multi-year operating support tied to broad organizational deliverables, which can support programmatic and policy activities while also promoting learning throughout the process. Stephen Tremaine, founder and director of the Bard Early College Program and an Emerson partner, captures this experience: "At no point in the process of pursuing or structuring funding were we presented

with a checklist of foundation priorities. At every step, our relationship has fundamentally been a dialogue between what we do and what Emerson does ... so the funding decision is structured as a conversation over time that changes as they learn more about the work."

Bard is establishing the Bard Center for Early College, which launches pilot projects that elevate early college in national dialogue on pedagogy, public policy and school design. They have launched a teacher training and certification platform to enable those with teaching backgrounds in higher education to shift to the public high school classroom. They have worked with local governments to identify and codify new and lasting funding sources that allow high quality early college to thrive and grow. And they are piloting a new model of early college that establishes tuition-free, degree-granting branch campuses of Bard within existing networks of high schools. The common factor across these three elements is that the funding is not just seeking *impact*, in a static and metric sense, but also *learning* – for the organization, for Emerson and for the field over a time horizon necessary to achieve real and measurable results.

IT'S THE PEOPLE, STUPID

But perhaps the most innovative practice is how Emerson intentionally and organically partners to build the capacity of the people who lead and work in the organizations it supports.

The Emerson model offers a broad array of offerings available on an optional basis to grantee staff and board members (individually, in teams or organization-wide) that supplements current funding. These services include management and fundraising training and coaching, access to high-profile training courses at major universities, data analysis consulting, and curated strategic counsel for communications, marketing plans and scaling an organization's work.

What defines Emerson's approach is that these services are provided on an ongoing basis throughout the life of its partnerships with some offerings selected to meet special needs of specific parts of its portfolio. Staff also carefully evaluates the quality and fit of services to ensure that they are delivering what their partners need. It is encouraging to see how this type of investment is growing among the philanthropic community and should be highlighted as a best practice – or special ingredient – by the field.

Beth Werlin, the executive director of the American Immigration Council (AIC), captures the impact of this approach on her organization: "They see the full picture of what an organization needs to do ... They clearly view this as an investment in a partnership with us because they see value in supporting our operations, management structures and infrastructure. The reality is that our work will only be strong if we have the strength to do the work."

Tremaine also noted that he and his staff have participated multiple times in training opportunities to build management skills. Prosperity Now has brought Emerson-funded management training to the organization on an annual basis in the belief that just because someone is a subject-matter expert doesn't mean that they know how to manage.

These practices extend to promoting dialogue among partners engaged in both similar and different lines of work. Tremaine appreciates this opportunity, as he "doesn't want to be competing in some sort of absurd 'gladiatorial contest' with organizations that I should be learning from."

GROWING THE "NET GRANT"

Clara Miller, president of the F.B. Heron Foundation and founder of the Non-profit Finance Fund, popularized the concept of the "net grant" to encourage nonprofits and funders to consider the transaction costs involved in fund-

raising in the hopes that, by measuring these costs, funders would see the wisdom in reducing them.

The "net grant" is what is left over after subtracting what it cost to obtain the grant and to manage it. For most grant seekers, it provides helpful information too often hidden from view and is often welcomed by program officers who are equally eager to ensure that they are providing as much value and support as possible during each step in the funding process.

Emerson's goal is to address this systemic inefficiency directly in the design and execution of its operations. Burgoyne remembers a conversation she had with the revered philanthropist, Bill Somerville, who advised her: "Philanthropy should be frictionless."

SHARING THE RECIPE

We are living in unprecedented political times, which have already had

profound consequences for the issues we care about and the communities we serve. If federal resources continue to decline, the future will be increasingly shaped by the strength and versatility of the partnerships forged among the philanthropic, private and nonprofit sectors.

It is precisely in the convergence of practices across these sectors that we witness how to produce the social and economic impact to which we all aspire: pairing the right kind of capital with high-quality training and services designed to strengthen the leadership and the organization's ability to meet its goals on its own terms.

In fact, one element of the fight over overhead rates is really a fight over capacity. While it should be noted that many funders restrict funds due to mission constraints or legal requirements, others could significantly increase the flexibility of their funding by integrating services that strengthen grantees' financial or program management to meet any concerns over the use of their grants.

Many institutional funders and donors are breaking new ground on providing their funds at an organizational level in recognition that having an impact requires that an entire organization be strong. Imagine the learning, creativity and results that could result if grants never required allocating each dollar across the general ledger.

The good news is that many of our most innovative and adventurous funders are using one or more of the practices described above, and others are testing new forms of investment as the social capital markets evolve.

But we need to share the recipe as if the future of thousands, if not millions, of people depend on it. Because, in fact, it does. ■

Andrea Levere is president of Prosperity Now, an NCRP nonprofit member. Follow @prosperitynow on Twitter.

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Confronting the evidence: Addressing racial disparity in environmental grantmaking

By Michael Roberts

Philanthropy has a tricky relationship with evidence. Evidence of progress toward our mission or of obstacles in such pursuit is welcome and actionable. However, evidence pointing to a truth that requires us to reframe our worldview is difficult for anyone – individual or institution – to grasp.

In 2014, such evidence confronted the environmental community – civil society and its funders alike – in its own relationship to racism. This evidence spurred us at The 11th Hour Project into action and reflection – launching a new institutional effort toward greater social and racial equity.

ANOTHER INCONVENIENT TRUTH

In late July 2014, Dr. Dorceta Taylor released *The State of Diversity in Environmental Organizations*, a damning report prepared on behalf of Green 2.0. For years, green organizations paid lip service to diversity in their ranks, but the report indicated: “The dominant culture of the organizations is alienating to ethnic minorities, the poor, the LGBTQ community and others outside the mainstream.”¹

It is well documented that communities of color are overwhelmingly more vulnerable to environmental hazards compared with white communities, as noted by Center for American Progress.² And, as reported on *CityLab*, it is often irrespective of income.³ A joint Earth Justice and GreenLatinos poll and another conducted by the Natural Resources Defense Council and Green for All find that black and brown communities reli-

ably support action on climate change and other environmental issues.⁴ These are just a sampling of the data that point to this trend, yet the insular world of environmental nonprofits and philanthropy continues to lack space for talented men and women of color.

The “environmentalist” worldview often argues that protecting nature at all costs is a task of such magnitude that, for humanity’s sake, so-called social issues like race and class are the domain of other affinities. Such a myopic perspective depends on the fallacy that humans are wholly separate from nature.

Dr. Taylor’s report shows us that working on the environment does not insulate us from social issues. By ignoring the evidence, we are complicit in the systems of race and class inequity that inhibit progress on all issues – environmental, economic or otherwise.

LOOKING IN THE MIRROR

After Dr. Taylor presented her findings at the Environmental Grantmakers Association 2014 Fall Retreat, our team began an internal discussion. Founded in 2006 to confront the existential threat of climate change, The 11th Hour Project has evolved to reflect a diversity of tactics and stakeholders. It prides itself for having a culture of accountability to mission and a commitment to the most vulnerable. It has always pursued an integrative approach and intersectional focus, yet racial disparity proved a blind spot.

Our executive director, Joe Sciortino, absorbed what was laid out in front of us and put it simply: “What do we do now?”

Three years into formally launching our work on racial equity, we recognize the importance of that question as an ongoing mode of inquiry rather than a one-off pursuit. Below are some of the answers we discovered:

1. Start somewhere - seek outside support

My first response to Joe’s question set the stage for an ongoing process: “The answer to that is complicated, but a good first step might be to get some external support.”

We contracted Keecha Harris and Associates, Inc (KHA) to help us as an organization understand our structural relationship to issues of diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) and explore what it looks like to bake racial equity into our “DNA.”

Dr. Harris and her team analyzed our portfolio on demographics and communities served, worked directly with Joe to find operational strategies and began the process of laying out a vision for The 11th Hour Project as a leader in the field on DEI.

To be clear, it wasn’t that conversations weren’t happening before we launched a formal process. A year or two earlier, one of our grantees – a person of color – remarked to me that an event we hosted felt “white.” It was said in jest but reflected a concern I know many colleagues in the field are familiar with. I’ve also made the occasional joke with the director of my program, Sarah Bell, when an event or conference seemed more homogenous than

the public golf courses I played growing up in Atlanta.

Casual conversations spurred action around the edges. Sarah and I increasingly found our voice with grantees, at conferences and within our affinity groups, calling for stronger attention to diversity and a better understanding of equity in our work. The conversations brought more stage time and some funding into frontline communities experiencing the worst economic and health harms of our industrial agricultural system. However, it didn't reflect the systemic introspection necessary to truly understand our power, privilege and responsibility to address racism as an underlying structural challenge to our work.

2. Invest resources for difficult conversations

Meaningful conversation about race is disruptive. For predominantly white organizations – including ours – talking about race is challenging because our culture has conditioned us to avoid the discussion.

In our first group exercise with Dr. Harris, we imagined a future where the foundation invested broadly and explicitly on racial equity. Responses were varied but polarizing. Two that stood out for me were along the lines of “Is this coming in our budget?” and “I thought we were here to talk about diversity, but this is all about race.”

These responses illustrate the two greatest barriers to our foundation and the field's ability to systemically move against obvious disparities.

On the one hand, we do good work, and we stand by our strategies: we take on difficult and entrenched systems like our food and energy sectors while seeking the most promising pathways for ecological and economic prosperity. Our grants support grassroots organizations and projects that don't typically receive mainstream attention and maintain a budget below \$2 million on

average, so any shifts in our portfolio would have immediate impact on the ground.

On the other hand, there was the common trait of many predominantly white organizations at play: We are great at talking about “diversity.” Diversity sounds positive, proactive. Safely broad. Race, on the other hand, is a trigger.

One of the greatest privileges white people enjoy is to voluntarily engage in the “race” conversation. White culture is treated as the default in society, seen in the ways terms like “mainstream” or “working class” seem automatically coded as “white.”

Dr. Robin DiAngelo describes a common defensive response when confronted with issues of race as “white fragility.” In a dominant culture that prides itself on values of objectivity and meritocracy, acknowledging racial disparity is challenging enough; acknowledging that we benefit from that disparity, and can be complicit in allowing these disparities to persist, is a challenge to our worldview.

DiAngelo argues for the importance of developing “perspectives and

skills that enable all people, regardless of racial location, to be active initiators of change ... Since all individuals who live within a racist system are enmeshed in its relations, this means that all are responsible for either perpetuating or transforming that system.”⁵

In collaboration with our staff, Dr. Harris recognized the need to develop a common language and build the skills to productively confront issues of race as it applied to our portfolio. Because we have always valued relationships with leaders in the field to support us as thought partners in our strategy, we reached out to Nikki Silvestri of Soil and Shadow for further support.

As the former director of People's Grocery and Green For All, Nikki was already familiar with our portfolio across programs and had trust with our staff. Nikki worked 1:1 with program staff and collectively with each program team to define learning edges around race and equity and use them to inform goals for our strategy.

As KHA continued to assess our wider operational practices and support Joe in setting benchmarks, it also continued to scan the field for best prac-



The 11th Hour Project joined other foundations around the country to address philanthropic inequities at the InDEEP professional development series in 2017. Photo courtesy of KHA.

tices and opportunities to develop cohorts with other foundations interested in addressing inequity in philanthropic practices. It recognized the demand in the field for peer-to-peer support to drive conversations on the issue, both internal and external.

As a result, KHA facilitated a series of “Peer Learning Exchanges,” which brought together foundations working across sectors to discuss strategies advancing our individual and collective practices. With our and other foundations’ support, KHA continues to facilitate peer-to-peer learning through the InDEEP professional development series.

By committing resources to internal diversity, equity and inclusion assessment and practice, we committed ourselves to confront the critical question head on: What does it look like for a predominantly white organization to be accountable in addressing the inequitable and institutionally racist systems we seek to change?

This is a question we continue to ask of ourselves and invite others to do so, too.

3. Your budget is a reflection of your values

Central to KHA’s inquiry in our practices was to follow the money. Recognizing the predominantly white leadership in organizations we fund, Dr. Harris and Joe conceived of a matching fund to support and encourage a shift in alignment of our grantmaking toward the demographic and social reality of the communities we aim to support.

With our board’s approval beginning in 2015, \$400,000 of annual discretionary funding provided a dollar for every two in new funding directed toward people-of-color-led and -governed organizations across our programs. This has translated to a sharpening of our strategies and a shift of more than \$2.4 million over two years for organizations at the frontlines of our climate and ecological crises.

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Being true to our values goes beyond budget, however. In the face of a challenging 2017, we reaffirmed our commitment to ongoing progress in DEI. The next step for all of us is to institutionalize the practice. We formed the “Beyond Equity” team last summer, comprised of associates across three programs. With the input of all staff and direct support from our executive director, the Beyond Equity team is collaborating to develop and standardize ongoing internal training on historical, institutional and structural oppression. To sharpen the analysis of our approach and worldview, the Beyond Equity team also helps facilitate regular lunch meetings to discuss topics outside our strategies.

We are still at the tip of the iceberg. As the team grows and diversifies, the commitment to learning and creating

shared language becomes mission-critical. We are establishing common ground by making space for productive conversations beyond our issue silos, which only serves to further our mission.

Racial equity does not require perfection, but a commitment to constant growth and accountability. It is our responsibility to step up to the task of understanding and articulating our role as individuals and organizations in the dynamic of structural racism and inequity. If we take the privilege to avoid the conversation, we undermine all our work at best and at worst, hinder our ability to face the social, cultural and ecological challenges in front of us. ■

Michael Roberts is program manager at The 11th Hour Project, a program of The Schmidt Family Foundation. Follow @11thhourproject on Twitter.

Notes

1. Dorceta E. Taylor, *The State of Diversity in Environmental Organizations* (Green 2.0: 2014), <https://www.diversegreen.org/the-challenge/>.
2. Jasmine Bell, “5 Things to Know About Communities of Color and Environmental Justice,” Center for American Progress, April 25, 2016, <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/race/news/2016/04/25/136361/5-things-to-know-about-communities-of-color-and-environmental-justice/>.
3. John Metcalfe, “People of Color Are Disproportionately Hurt by Air Pollution,” *CityLab*, April 15, 2014, <https://www.citylab.com/design/2014/04/people-color-are-disproportionately-killed-air-pollution/8881/>.
4. For more visit <https://earthjustice.org/features/poll-latinopinion> and <https://www.nrdc.org/media/2015/151104-2>.
5. Robin DiAngelo, “White Fragility,” *International Journal of Critical Pedagogy*, (NC: University of North Carolina Greensboro, Vol 3 (3) (2011), p 66, <http://libjournal.uncg.edu/ijcp/article/view/249>.

Equitable participatory grantmaking in trans communities: A Q&A with Gabriel Foster

Editor's Note: How do you define an "expert" grantmaker? Sector-wide conversations around equity and inclusion are spurring many funders to reexamine their definition, including how their intended beneficiaries' lived experiences factor into their work.

NCRP's Caitlin Duffy invited the co-founder and executive director of the Trans Justice Funding Project, Gabriel Foster, to delve deeper into how this funding initiative is practicing equitable participatory grantmaking.

CD: *In your funding model, how do you put those historically locked out of the room at the head of the decision-making table?*

GF: Trans Justice Funding Project (TJFP) is a community-led funding initiative founded in 2012 to support grassroots trans justice groups run by and for trans people. We make annual grants by bringing together a panel of trans justice activists from around the country to carefully review every application we receive. We're moving money *and* building a network as we continue to learn what trans justice looks like at this moment in time.

We do it through our Fellowship Model, our application process and the kinds of funds we provide.

Fellowship Model

We have the honor of working with some of the most brilliant, dedicated and passionate trans justice leaders and organizers out there through our Fellowship Model.

Every year we thoughtfully assemble a geographically diverse, intergenerational, multi-ability, multi-racial panel of six trans justice and gender nonbinary individuals to review applications, select grantees and award amounts. The panel is an invitation-only position that rotates each year to ensure variety of participation and provides a stipend that has ranged from \$500 to \$2,200 as our budget has grown.

Assembling and coordinating the funding panel is terribly exciting and not easy. It requires trust-building and coordination of a lot of moving pieces across identities, geographies and personalities. Our two staff manage the process – such as ensuring that the hotel we select for our grantmaking meeting is trans-friendly, creating a playlist of panelists' favorite songs and creatively distributing funds for panelists who are undocumented – and we hire two facilitators to guide the panel's in-person conversations.

Our panelists' visions of philanthropy are just as varied as our applicants'

and grantees' visions of trans justice work. By serving on the panel, they commit to a process that requires a lot of time, attention and unpacking of how we validate work and worth.

In 2017, our fellows read and prepared themselves to discuss 176 applications in detail, centering the leadership of trans people organizing around their experiences with racism, economic injustice, transmisogyny, ableism, immigration, incarceration and other intersecting oppressions. Each fellow was trained to use an on-line voting system, participated in ongoing individual and group check-ins, assisted with outreach and fundraising and convened in New York for a facilitated weekend-long meeting to select grantees using an intersectional and anti-oppressive framework.

The Application Process

TJFP believes that a short application – and a wise and experienced activist panel to read it as if they were a friend – is all it takes to make in-

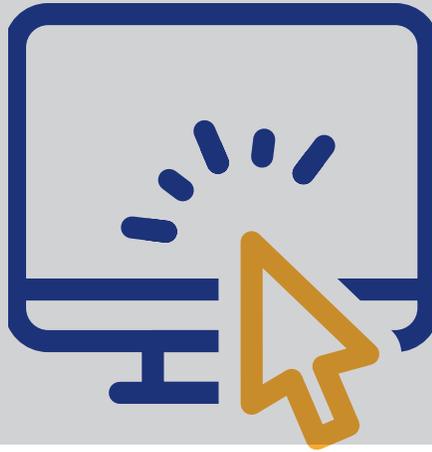


While on the From the Ground to the Sky listening tour, TJFP interviewed grantees Queer Trans Pueblo in Phoenix, Arizona (left) and former TJFP panelist, Trudee Jackson (right). Photo courtesy of TJFP.

RELATED

Pass the Reins: Shifting Decision-Making Power in Philanthropy

During this webinar in August 2017, we explored how funders can use their communities' collective wisdom for social change. We looked at community-led grantmaking models from Headwaters Foundation for Justice, The Colorado Trust, Brooklyn Community Foundation and Third Wave Fund. [Learn more and listen to the webinar recording for free on www.ncrp.org/events.](http://www.ncrp.org/events)



formed funding decisions. Many of our applicants do not have nonprofit status or fiscal sponsorship and are all small groups with budgets ranging from \$0 to \$250,000. We know that they have more important work to do than spending all their time trying to romance us. We keep our grant process simple and quick with a 10-question online application and, while the application doesn't require a detailed budget or other supplementary materials, applicants are welcome to share flyers, pictures or videos.

Even if we aren't able to fund a group that meets our criteria, if they consent to it, we add them to our [online directory](#) to document this growing movement and honor applicants' work. The database is available publicly on our website and helps trans organizers connect with each other and gain exposure to other potential funders.

No Strings Attached

For us, community-led means trusting and supporting trans leadership. We [do philanthropy differently](#) and give unrestricted funds because we have confidence that our grantees know best how to use that money. We believe groups should have the freedom to choose how to use the funding themselves and

what financial structure works best for them, based on their own goals.

We love to learn from the leaders we support and to share their work far and wide, but we don't have site visits, and we don't require any reporting because we reject the idea that grantees should be accountable to funders. Instead, we think funders need to be accountable to grantees. We leave it up to our grant recipients to decide if they want to share or be in touch. We've found creative ways – such as our [From the Ground to the Sky](#) listening tour – to connect and share their updates in ways that amplify them and do not require energy away from their work.

CD: Why is it important that marginalized communities – those who've historically not had voice, agency and control over resource distribution – be centered in decision-making around grants?

GF: Trans community members and leaders have been working tirelessly, some for decades, to meet the many needs of our people. Even with increased visibility these days, trans people – especially trans women of color who disproportionately experience [fatal violence](#)¹ – are not any safer. Trans people are used as a political wedge, as our bodies are criminalized and our

existence in public spaces is up for debate – and access to health care, gainful employment and education aren't a guarantee for many of us.

However severe our lack of resources and how uncertain these times are regarding our safety, this doesn't mean that trans communities are not resilient or capable of coming up with their own solutions.

The grantmaking fellows that TJFP gets to work with *are* the people on the “front lines.” They are the experts of their own lives and experiences, making them the most qualified to make decisions with and for their communities. Having a table surrounded with those most affected at the center of our decision-making process is the heartbeat of TJFP. It's not just a radical notion, it's right.

CD: What have you learned from your experience at TJFP?

GF: Over the past five years, we've learned that authentic participatory grantmaking is an intentional process that prioritizes marginalized communities, values lived experience and challenges people to think differently about giving, power and control. It isn't an easy road.

We are deeply committed to removing barriers and building access so that community members who are most affected by intersecting oppressions are able to participate in this process with us. It takes quite a bit of patience and commitment to bring thoughtful people into something versus excluding them. It also takes intentional budgeting. For example, our applications are available in English and Spanish on our website, and we budget for the translation of applications in other languages, as well as translators and ASL interpreters for in-person meetings.

We see a commitment to power sharing and accessibility as completely possible and incredibly necessary during this political moment. In our 2014

Annual Report, disability justice organizer and grantmaking panelist Sebastian Margaret shared heavy-hitting words describing the experience of disability and participation:

“Rarely are we approached ... as critical voices or essential comrades in ‘the struggle’; rarer yet are we considered leaders. ... To extend sustained, informed and accountable resources towards the leadership, agendas, desires, skills and momentum of [LGBTQI Trans] disabled and sick communities is to tilt the bedrock of the status quo. To exhibit trust in us ... would be groundbreaking; to ... ensure such trust is backed by respectful funding is revolutionary.”

Sebastian’s words are powerful because he talks about dismantling infrastructures that have historically excluded the leadership and meaningful participation of marginalized communities. TJFP wasn’t designed to give people a seat at the table. Instead, we wanted to build our own table!

CD: What advice do you have for funders seeking to embrace a more participatory approach to their grantmaking?

GF: If this becomes a direction that more funders decide to move in, I truly hope they do it with mindfulness and extreme care.

There are plenty of models to learn from and people out there with lessons and best practices to be shared. When TJFP was still merely an idea, a lot of time went into researching inspiring efforts like [The Fire This Time Fund](#), a former Chicago-based giving circle, and the [Criminal Justice Initiative](#).

What I hope I *don’t* see happen is marginalized community members being asked to participate in something that’s not actually about sharing power, that exploits them and their time, and/or co-ops participatory grantmaking,

turning it into a harmful experience that can be used as a justification for more “traditional” philanthropy practices.

At TJFP, our mission is to trust and believe in trans leadership, and the last thing we want is to create a harmful experience. Some of the reflections we use and recommend for equitable participatory grantmaking are:

- Are we being fully transparent about our decision-making process to avoid an arrangement where our grantmaking team has less power than appears?
- How are we valuing our grantmakers’ time and expertise? Are we making sure they are well prepared, supported and paid so they can fully participate?
- Are we being mindful that we’ve invited people into a process that they haven’t developed, while asking them to trust it?
- In addition to giving grant awards, is our grantmaking practice one that brings activists and organizers together and helps strengthen the network of a movement?

CD: Any last words for your philanthropy colleagues?

GF: Some of the greatest work is being done radically, outside of structures that can no longer hold how powerful we are. We need trans leadership, from rural areas to urban hubs, to feel empowered and hold positions where they make decisions about resources for their communities. We hope you will join us in trusting, believing and supporting trans justice leaders, wherever and wherever you are. ■

Gabriel Foster is a black, queer, trans, “momma’s boy” living and loving in New York and is co-founder and executive director of the Trans Justice Funding Project. Follow [@TransJusticeFP](#) on Twitter.

Notes

1. Maggie Astor, “Violence Against Transgender People Is on the Rise, Advocates Say,” *New York Times*, November 9, 2017, <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/11/09/us/transgender-women-killed.html>.



2016 Trans Justice Funding Project grantmaking panel, facilitators and staff. Photo courtesy of TJFP.

New and Renewing Members

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Blandin Foundation

Blue Shield of California Foundation

Brooklyn Community Foundation

California Endowment

Chorus Foundation

Community West Foundation

Consumer Health Foundation

Corporate Accountability

Daphne Foundation

David Rockefeller Fund

Evelyn & Walter Haas, Jr. Fund

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"We see [NCRP] as real leaders in pushing the field of philanthropy to really invest deeply in community organizing, in worker organizing, and in advocacy because we know that those issues of organizing and advocacy, those strategies are really the ones that are going to lead towards social change."

Roxana Tynan
Executive Director of LAANE
NCRP Member

contact_membership@ncrp.org with any questions

Amplifying the impact of outrage giving

(continued from page 1)

giving and crowdfunding that make this kind of giving fast and viral in ways unlike philanthropy from years past.

In the last year, we've also seen a slower-building but similar activation among progressive people with wealth. Current donors are giving bigger. They are changing their giving to move more money to civic engagement and movement organizing, while people who had not previously given to progressive issues are getting politicized and making their first forays into social change philanthropy.

This growth among new progressive major donors is further fueled by the continued intergenerational transfer of wealth and the rapid accumulation of new wealth, especially in technology and finance, which, although deeply problematic from an economic justice perspective, is giving access to resources to younger donors who skew more progressive.

PHILANTHROPY'S CHARGE – AMPLIFY THE POWER OF ACTIVATION

So, how then should both established and new major funders respond to this growing wave of outrage giving?

While we don't know how long this surge will last, I believe our charge is clear: Foundations and donors committed to social justice work need to step up their support for frontline organizers to engage this flood of new energy and giving in ways that enable powerful organizing today and stronger movements tomorrow.

Stepping up can take many forms, but I would suggest five critical opportunities in particular as we enter 2018:

1. Invest big in capacity building

The need for core capacity support is perennial, but, especially in a moment like today, where groups are raising new funds for frontline resistance work, our funds should be unrestricted. We

need to build the capacity of groups to respond when the viral outpouring of support takes place, invest in the tools and staff needed to engage these donors, and trust the organizers we believe in by giving them unrestricted dollars to quickly and flexibly add and sustain capacity to respond to a rapidly changing fundraising and political landscape.

The [Security & Rights Collaborative](#) offers a powerful example of this type of deep capacity building. Launched by the Proteus Fund after 9/11, the SRC has been investing in Muslim, Arab and South Asian communities for years. Last year, in the face of the Muslim travel ban, it provided critical communications, coordination and strategic small grant support as its grantees worked to both mobilize quickly and engage thousands of new volunteers and donors responding to increasing Islamophobia, which these frontline groups have been fighting for decades.

2. Fund new strategies and exploratory work

Today's social movements are evolving, with new tactics from distributed online mobilization to expanded 501(c)(4) advocacy work that builds on traditional 501(c)(3) community organizing. We need to stand with movement leaders by funding the exploration and testing of new strategies that will position movements to win in today's political environment.

For example, I've been privileged to work with the [Movement Voter Project](#) to move funds for one of the donors I independently advise to 41 groups in the last year to help launch new (c)(4) advocacy campaigns led by indigenous communities and people of color (like North Dakota Native Vote), youth organizing efforts, digital mobilizations, mass resistance coordination (we were among the first funders of Indivisible) and more.

Not all have been as wildly successful as Indivisible, but we have to keep experimenting and trying new approaches to create a winning mix of strategies for 2018 and beyond.

3. Support movement ecosystems

Amid today's reenergized resistance efforts, individual groups can become momentary superstars when a key viral video or powerful direct action generates a wave of attention and funding. But we must remember that social change movements are bigger than individual organizations; they are made up of a complex ecosystem of groups. Philanthropy needs to avoid the "group of the moment" syndrome and stay focused on lifting and building up entire movement ecosystems.

[Open Philanthropy Project's](#) funding for criminal justice reform is a remarkable illustration of this approach. It's worked with Color of Change and other high-profile groups benefiting from grassroots outpourings of support while simultaneously lifting up many smaller frontline groups to nurture winning coalitions that are reshaping the narrative on incarceration. One example of this was Black Mama's Bailout, an action on Mother's Day 2017 where multiple Open Philanthropy grantees collaborated with local groups to bail out over 100 black mothers around the country aligned with local actions generating major press attention to the destructive impact of the cash bail system.

4. Give at the pace of modern social change movements

Sometimes we have months to plan a campaign but, especially today, social change efforts are also faced with mobilizing in weeks or days. The rise of rapid-response funding mechanisms is an encouraging reaction to this accelerating pace, offering philanthropy the means to provide critical funds at the start of new movement activity or

offer a powerful reinforcement/validation that can help a campaign build momentum.

Traditional grantmaking practices were built for pre-digital policy change efforts when social change moved at a slower pace. Today, philanthropy needs at least some money to move faster than the normal 3 to 6+ month cycle if we are to effectively fund the work we believe in.

Public foundations skilled in rapid giving like the [Groundswell Fund](#), [North Star Fund](#) or [Solutions Project](#) offer vehicles you can invest in to move funding faster without overhauling your grant processes. Alternately, you can launch or join new collaborative rapid response funds like the [Defending the Dream Fund](#) established by the Hill-Snowdon and General Services foundations or the [Emergent Fund](#) launched by the Women Donors Network and Solidaire. Some of these, like the North Star Fund and Emergent Fund, even use decision-making practices that put the power of the grantmaking decisions in the hands of organizers themselves.

These funds can also serve as models to replicate for rapid giving to your priority issue or community or as you

develop internal practices to accelerate some of your grantmaking.

5. Stand in solidarity with long-term support

While today's fast-changing and exhausting dynamic of constant resistance calls upon us to fund fast, we have to balance this speed with the determination to fund social change efforts for the long term. For we know that deep structural change happens over years, and sometimes decades.

Outrage giving tends to be episodic, triggered by a shocking policy action, a viral video, a hateful speech, a galvanizing march, a bold direct action or some other act. Large-scale philanthropy (whether foundation or major donor) should have a longer time horizon. Even as we respond in the moment, we must also focus on sustaining movements for the years to come.

I am particularly inspired by the [Solidaire Network's](#) collaboration with the Movement for Black Lives resource table to support long-term black-led organizing. This [Aligned Giving Strategy](#) organizes donors to make giving commitments over five+ years, raising over \$7 million so far to provide powerful

baseline support for the M4BL in acknowledgment that the fight for racial justice will not end soon.

Ultimately, I believe our charge today is to sustain and increase our funding of social movement leaders and to be, as this journal is titled, responsive. Foundation funding strategies have to change and adapt the way that movements and resistance efforts are playing out on the ground. Sometimes we backfill, sometimes we shore up, sometimes we add on or sustain, sometimes we need to fund fast and at others we need to stretch funding over years.

If I have to make a prediction for 2018, it's that we're in for another year of polarizing attacks and unjust policy proposals. But I remain hopeful that we'll also see a continued wave of activism and outrage giving that will stop these attacks in their tracks and build momentum to reverse the political trajectory of the last year.

Philanthropy's job in this moment is to follow the lead of resistance movement leaders, ask what they need to succeed and design our funding strategies to amplify the voices and gifts of the millions who will be stepping up for racial, social, environmental and economic justice in the year to come. ■

Jason Franklin is board chair of the Proteus Fund and co-founder and co-chair of the Solidaire Donor Network. Follow @fundingchange on Twitter.

Notes

1. "Alt-right" is defined by Merriam Webster as "a right-wing, primarily online political movement or grouping based in the U.S. whose members reject mainstream conservative politics and espouse extremist beliefs and policies typically centered on ideas of white nationalism." More at <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/alt-right>.



Protestors attending the DC Tax March in April 2017. Photo by Janay Richmond.

The California Wellness Foundation

Los Angeles, CA

calwellness.org

@CalWellness



promoting equity, advocacy and access

NCRP: Why is it important for Cal Wellness to explicitly address the health needs of underserved communities in California?

CW: Since our founding 25 years ago, we maintain that good health requires more than just access to health care and individuals engaging in healthy habits.

We believe that health is a human right; yet all people do not have the opportunity to enjoy good health and wellness. Why? Because good health requires access to social and economic opportunities; high-quality schooling and schools; safe workplaces and safe neighborhoods with clean water, food and air.

For low-income and underserved communities, these conditions, termed the social determinants of health, are often inadequate and directly lead to poor health outcomes. We are committed to addressing these health disparities by making grants, pursuing policies and partnerships, and raising our voices to make California a place where every person has the opportunity to achieve optimal health and wellness regardless of who they are, where they live, work or play.

Furthermore, we believe in advancing the wellness of communities. Wellness is more than health. Wellness describes healing that encompasses body, mind and spirit and honors the human desire for justice, equity and voice.

NCRP: How is the foundation's grantmaking based in the social determinants of health different from other approaches to supporting health in our communities?

CW: We make grants that other health funders might not make because we believe that advancing wellness requires a commitment to social justice. Through



During a 2017 violence prevention summit, panelists Judy Belk, CEO of Cal Wellness, Reverend Samuel Casey (COPE), Marya Bangee, Bamby Salcedo and Suchin Pak stand in front of mural designed by artist and participants during 2015 Enough Summit. Photo courtesy of Cal Wellness.

our grantmaking, we seek to increase access to health care, promote healthy and safe neighborhoods, expand educational opportunities, and improve economic outcomes for underserved communities.

In addition, we believe that how we fund is just as important as what we fund. The majority of our grantmaking is for core operating support. We also fund policy advocacy and civic engagement efforts to build power in communities, ensure community voices are heard, and hold government accountable to the people.

NCRP: How is the foundation responding to current political efforts to roll back progress on social justice and equity?

CW: After the November 2016 election, we asked our grantees and community members what they needed given the

divisive political and social climate. In response to what we heard, we organized ourselves to work across programmatic areas and prioritize four key issues: addressing immigrants' needs, protecting access to health care, bolstering the safety net and preventing hate-based violence. Between January and June of 2017, we awarded \$16 million to organizations working on these issues. Plus, through our Advance and Defend campaign, we spoke out on behalf of social justice and health.

We've also committed \$50 million of our endowment to mission-related investing over the next five years and are rolling out initiatives focused on the needs of women of color, specifically reentry into community by formerly incarcerated women and AIDS/HIV/STI prevention.

NCRP: Given the current political moment, what are the ways that grantmakers like Cal Wellness can exercise leadership and strategic thinking to maximize impact on their communities?

CW: Fund up-and-coming grassroots and community leaders. Fund advocacy. Give general support. Listen to the people and organizations you fund and develop trusting partnerships – and then go beyond grantmaking. Speak out, work across sectors to build partnerships, and use your dollars for mission and program-related investments. Get your house in order by self-assessing your operations through a DEI lens. Focus on customer service, e.g., get money into the community more quickly and eliminate unnecessary reporting requirements.

There's much to do, and it requires profound commitment and ingenuity to answer what this political moment is calling upon us to do. ■



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by Ryan Schlegel and Stephanie Peng June 2017

The second report in this series explores why it's important for donors to build lasting wealth among the South's marginalized populations. It features six community leaders from the South who are working to revitalize local economies in ways that are inclusive and equitable for local residents in Kentucky Coal Country and the Lowcountry of South Carolina.

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