

FOUR PATHWAYS TO MOVE MONEY TO THE GRASSROOTS



Grassroots environmental justice organizations are rooted in the communities most impacted by pollution, where they *fight the bad* to protect their bodies, families and communities from toxic industries — and *build the new* through Just Transitions to local, living, regenerative economies. Despite chronic disinvestment in their work, grassroots environmental justice organizations are innovating, winning and leading some of the boldest climate solutions in the country.

Philanthropy is shifting its attention to climate equity and environmental justice with an urgent drive to scale its investments in these existing, proven climate justice solutions. Foundations give a tiny fraction — just 1.3% — of their U.S. climate dollars to support environmental justice organizations.¹ These organizations, led by Indigenous Peoples and Black, Latinx, Asian Pacific Islander, and poor white communities, share legacies of social justice organizing and power-building at the intersection of racial justice and climate justice.

Innovative grassroots climate solutions are abundant and ready for investment now. While we celebrate the major increase in commitments and interest from funders in climate equity and environmental justice, there is an implementation gap that must be closed quickly. There are four primary pathways to move capital and other resources with speed and trust to the grassroots organizing sector.

Grassroots Organizations

Unrestricted, multi-year, general operating funding directly to authentic grassroots and base-building organizations² that are of, by, for, and directly accountable to the most impacted communities is always preferred.

Grassroots-Led Alliances and Networks

Alliances and networks created by grassroots organizations build in resource-sharing and accountability processes for collective impact.

Community-Controlled Capital Infrastructure

Non-extractive loan funds, community land trusts, and worker-owner cooperatives are examples of community-controlled infrastructure that supports grassroots governance of capital and redistribution of wealth at the community level.

Grassroots-Centric Funder Intermediaries

Intermediary funders that center grassroots communities are a critical part of movement infrastructure. They not only fund grassroots organizations with flexible core support, but are also directly accountable to frontlines and engage grassroots leaders in their decision-making processes.

¹ Climate Funders Justice Pledge, organized by the Donors of Color Network.

² CLIMA Fund infographic: What does 'grassroots' mean, anyway?