2020-2025

IMPACT REPORT

NEW COMMONWEALTH FUND

OUR "WHY"

Friends,

It's been five years since nineteen Black and Brown executives gathered in a moment of hope and outrage, determined to reframe philanthropy to focus on those closest to our deepest inequities. In those five years, the New Commonwealth Fund has worked to fulfill that promise, raising nearly $50 million and distributing nearly $17 million back into community organizations on the front lines of the fight for justice in our Commonwealth.

Our investment strategy underscores the importance of unrestricted operating grants to meet urgent needs—and, just as critically, prioritizes significant investment in capacity building. At the core of our mission is investing in leaders and equipping them with the training, resources, and infrastructure to grow, collaborate, and sustain impact. Along the way, we're influencing the sector itself—expanding access, shifting power, and building the conditions for lasting change.

When we reflect on the anniversary of our founding, we feel a range of emotions. Pride in the work that our team has done to date. Impatience at the pace of change in the philanthropic sector. At times, despair—when we see the intentional, deconstruction of racial equity that is sweeping through our country.

But we ultimately settle on hope. Here's why:

We are filled with hope by the leaders we fund and by their collective vision for a Commonwealth free from prejudice. Whether the organization is pursuing groundbreaking legislation to reform our criminal legal system; seeking to open the first midwife-operated birth center in Greater Boston; or to inspire a new generation of artists to speak their truth; these leaders remind us of their genius—and persistence—every day.

This has been a multi-year process of maturation for NCF. As our team of full-time staff has grown, we've built the internal capacity needed to support our grantees, refined our grantmaking model, and pushed our influence into new spaces. We remain deeply committed to the vision our nineteen founders set forth five years ago and to advancing equity across the Commonwealth.

On behalf of our founders and the entire board we are excited to share our impact and growth with you, and we're tremendously grateful for your enduring support.

Warmly,

Damian Wilmot
Chair of the Board & Founder

Quincy Miller
Vice Chair of the Board & Founder

Myechia Minter-Jordan
Outgoing Vice Chair of the Board & Founder





Dominic Blue
Juan Concepcion*
Mo Cowan
Gerard Cox*
Pamela Everhart
Linda Dorcena Forry
Paul Francisco
Damon Hart
Malia Lazu
Stephanie Lovell
Fred Lowery
Quincy Miller
Myechia Minter-Jordan
Valerie Mosely
Colette Phillips*
Rodney Pratt
Desiree Ralls-Morrison
Rebekah Splaine Salwasser
Greg Shell
Corey Thomas
BJ Trach
Damian W. Wilmot

*Founding ally






FOUNDING YEAR

Year 1
2021

- NCF is founded by 19 executives with the moonshot goal of raising $100 million to disrupt systemic racism. This launch set our trajectory to build a fund that would invest in Black and Brown communities.
- NCF makes an inaugural $3million of grants to organizations across Massachusetts to get dollars reinvested into the community with urgency

- NCF establishes a model of co-creation (impact measurement tool) via consistent proximity with our grantees.
- NCF refines strategy to place nonprofit leadership at the center; defining our moral compass of “Respect,” and anchoring our focus from simply supporting communities and organizations to intentionally investing in the leaders who drive change.

Year 2
2022

- NCF secures independence as a 501(c)(3), celebrates with 200 of our nonprofit partners, and closes the year with $25 million of gifts and pledges in the bank.
- Grantmaking and capacity building KPIs continue to be refined and our “Case for $100 million” is finalized.

THE JOURNEY







Year 3
2023

- NCF expands its geographic reach and continues to make grants at $3 million a year. Our Program Team qualifies its pilot and begins the design of a refined strategy focused on impact.
- Significant shifts in the national landscape begin to be felt. Supreme Court overturns affirmative action, corporations begin to retreat from racial equity initiatives.
- NCF pivots from a corporate fundraising strategy to pursue individual donors and extends the timeline for achieving $100 million.

Year 4
2024

- NCF operates with 12 FTEs, 17 governing board members, and 25 advisors.
- NCF closes its year by distributing a total of $3 million in grants to 100 organizations serving communities across Massachusetts.
- U.S. Supreme Court ends affirmative action in higher education and consequently opens the door for lawsuits against the Fearless Fund and Hello Alice to take hold.
- NCF launches its annual grant cycle aligning a leader's stage of development with the appropriate level of support—ranging from technical assistance and professional development to coalition building, mentorship, and unrestricted operating funding.

Year 5
2025

- The new presidential administration escalates attacks on equity work; NCF grantees (and communities) suffer the consequences of the loss of billions in federal aid.
- NCF begins the design of an endowment model that reduces the barrier to entry and simultaneously works to respond to the immediate and urgent needs of nonprofits.
- NCF initiates a campaign for "everyone" and recommits to releasing critical support to organizations impacted by cuts to diversity, equity and inclusion.
- NCF welcomes its 5th anniversary and plans the path forward.
- NCF completes fifth grant cycle, having distributed nearly $17 million in funds to nonprofits across Massachusetts.

NCF STAFF

Sidney Bowden
Olivia Chin
Luiza deCamargo
Lilliam Doriscat
Heidi Flood
Nadia Harden
Will Herberich
Makeeba McCreary
Daniela Mira
Yvonne Montilla
Joe Okafor
Zac Rich
Bethany Thomas



DEAR EVERYONE,

Founders, Board Directors, Advisory Board Members, Staff, Friends, Elected Officials, and Nonprofit Leaders across our Commonwealth—

Five years ago this May, the murder of George Floyd and the COVID-19 pandemic forced America to look at itself—and many of us were ashamed of what we saw. In boardrooms, classrooms, newsrooms, and town halls, people made promises. They pledged to do better. To listen, to learn, to invest.

The New Commonwealth Fund was born of that moment. Nineteen Black and Brown executives across Massachusetts came together in 2020 to launch a foundation that would do philanthropy differently—more urgently, more honestly, and in closer partnership with the communities most impacted. Since then, we've raised nearly $50 million, invested in hundreds of organizations, and contributed to a statewide network of changemakers working every day to advance equity in systems that were never built for us in the first place.

We're proud to share details of this work with you, our dedicated supporters, in this comprehensive impact report chronicling our first five years of operation.

We are living through a chilling moment—a coordinated backlash to racial progress. And make no mistake: it is working. In too many corners of our respective worlds, we are seeing a retreat, a paralysis. Silence.

I understand that this is a hard time to speak boldly. For many, the fear isn't just professional—it's personal.

So what I can offer you is my truth: this is not the moment to look away. This is the moment to stare it down. It's a time to speak with greater force, compassion, and clarity about the values that justice warriors before us gave their lives to uphold—so there is no confusion about where we stand or what we stand for.

We are five years out from a self-declared "racial reckoning," and once again we are being forced to ask ourselves:

Who are we and what do we stand for when the headlines fade? Will we stand on the sidelines—or rise to lead?

At the New Commonwealth Fund, our answer is clear.

We still believe in racial equity.
We still believe in communities that are inclusive.
We still believe in the power of leadership to change what's possible.
And we still believe Massachusetts can be a place where those ideals are not just aspirational but lived.

We're proud to share our five-year impact report with you—not just to celebrate what we've done, but to call in those ready to keep going.

If the moment of George Floyd's murder demanded moral clarity, this moment demands moral courage.

Let's prove we meant it then—and we still mean it now.

Respectfully,



Makeeba McCreary, EdD
CEO & President

OUR UNIQUE & HOLISTIC APPROACH

Since our founding in 2020 NCF has raised nearly $50M and provided more than 7,000 hours of capacity building, technical assistance, office hours, and site visits.

WE HAVE LIVED INTO OUR MISSION AS:

- **A capacity builder** supporting the growth of over 400 nonprofit leaders
- **An investor** of $17 million in unrestricted funding
- **An influencer** on issues of equity for our peers in the philanthropic community

WE LISTEN

NCF is proximate from its inception to its implementation.

We work to be deeply authentic and to create a safer than normal space for nonprofit leaders. NCF considers nonprofit leaders the experts in their fields and listens deeply to their perspectives.

WE CO-DESIGN

NCF co-designs with nonprofit partners through a non-shaming approach that puts leaders at ease and fosters deep relationships.

The partnership-based approach enables nonprofit partners to collaborate and innovate in ways they don't otherwise have the time or resources to do. Through this process, we support the creation of an ecosystem that has been absent for our leaders.

WE DISRUPT

NCF is not bound by calcified rules and decades of precedent. NCF is operating as a funder and disrupting philanthropy from within.

We challenge the ecosystem to shift outdated practices with urgency. While we believe that trust is an imperative intention, it is critical that we begin by building a relationship grounded in respect.



“Being a community leader we have to project an image that is so untrue... When I engage with NCF, I am in a safe place where I can be authentic.

– LESLIE CREDLE

Executive Director, Justice 4 Housing, Inc.

“The New Commonwealth Fund has really shaken the status quo, and it’s done so by focusing on BIPOC perspectives in ways that other philanthropies have not been able to successfully or meaningfully do historically.

– IVAN ESPINOZA-MADRIGAL

Executive Director, Lawyers for Civil Rights



NCF Co-designers

THE WAY WE WORK

NCF's holistic approach to systems change integrates investment, capacity building, and ecosystem development, positioning us as a leader in redefining philanthropic practices for long-term impact.



LET'S RECAP OUR SUPERPOWERS.

We do our work in 3 ways. Our investments and capacity building work are grounded in Massachusetts. While we do not suggest our work is unique in its intent, we do know that our delivery fosters a specialized experience. We galvanize, we influence, we are unencumbered, and we are trusted.



NCF Co-designers

> NCF is more than a funder of Neighborhood Birth Center, they are true partners in the work to advance reproductive justice. Together, we have ideated, experimented, and conjured community-first strategies. NCF is changing the relationship between 'funder' and 'grantee' by sharing power and investing in a return to community midwifery.
>
> **– NASHIRA BARIL**
>
> Executive Director, Neighborhood Birth Center



- Leader-informed professional development.
- Customized 1:1 support from NCF staff.
- Accelerator model of intensive, tailored, short-term intervention.
- Deep presence of NCF leadership at community-based convenings.
- Referrals to additional funding opportunities.
- Support current and prospective nonprofit partners in maintaining their charitable status with IRS, Secretary of State, and MA Attorney General's office.

WE WRAP AROUND SUPPORTS.

We have established a capacity building approach that is rooted in deep relationships. We stay close to the leaders, the issues they tackle, and the communities they serve. That proximity allows us to deliver the right support—at the right time.

Capacity Building

Investment

Influence

- Urgent need grants provided to respond on a 30-day cycle.
- Industry experts participate in our grantmaking process as members of our Selection Panel.
- Unrestricted operating support and multi-year funding provided on an annual basis.
- Outpaced our commitment to be widespread across the state by meeting our three-year goal in one year.
- Created learning cohorts that allow leaders to leverage each other's expertise and varied strengths.

2

WE ARE A FUNDER.

We've emerged as a leading grantmaker of unrestricted operating support, consistently outpacing peer funds across the country. Our respect-based approach to identifying, reviewing, and selecting grantees centers the expertise of the leaders and communities we exist to serve.



- Replicated and partnered with funds with aligned vision and methodology:
  1803 Fund
  Arbella Insurance Foundation
  Atrius Health Foundation
  Nellie Mae Education Fund
  The Boston Women's Fund
  The Equality Fund
  The Houston Equity Fund
  The Latino Equity Fund
  United Way of Massachusetts Bay
- Nonprofit partners have used NCF's influence to leverage ARPA funding.
- Leaders report having access to larger funding opportunities.
- Nonprofit partners expand networks to collaborate with one another.

3

WE HAVE A MULTIPLYING EFFECT.

NCF was founded not only to fund and support leaders, but to drive lasting, scalable change across philanthropy. By amplifying the ways in which we invest, we're influencing the sector and helping to reframe philanthropy.

5 YEARS AT A GLANCE





My potential isn’t measured with paper on the wall, it’s in being the best version of human I could aspire to be.

– DELPHENE MOONEY

Executive Director, On The Rise, Inc.

NCF Partner, Esperanza Academy

GRANTMAKING

AS WE CLOSE YEAR 5, WE WILL HAVE INVESTED NEARLY $17M INTO OUR 5 PILLARS

$3.4M
YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

$3.5M
HEALTH EQUITY

$3.7M
POLICING & CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFORM

$2.6M
IDENTITY & CULTURE NARRATIVE

$3.1M
ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

$700K
IMMEDIATE NEED

FROM 2021-2024, NCF HAS INVESTED A TOTAL OF:



CAPACITY BUILDING

NCF provides impactful technical and capacity building support.

426

INDIVIDUALS

from NCF portfolio participated in capacity building and technical assistance opportunities (target of 350)

97%

OF LEADERS

who participated in capacity building and technical assistance opportunities reported content was focused on valuable priorities and surpassed our target of 70%

LEADER ENGAGEMENT

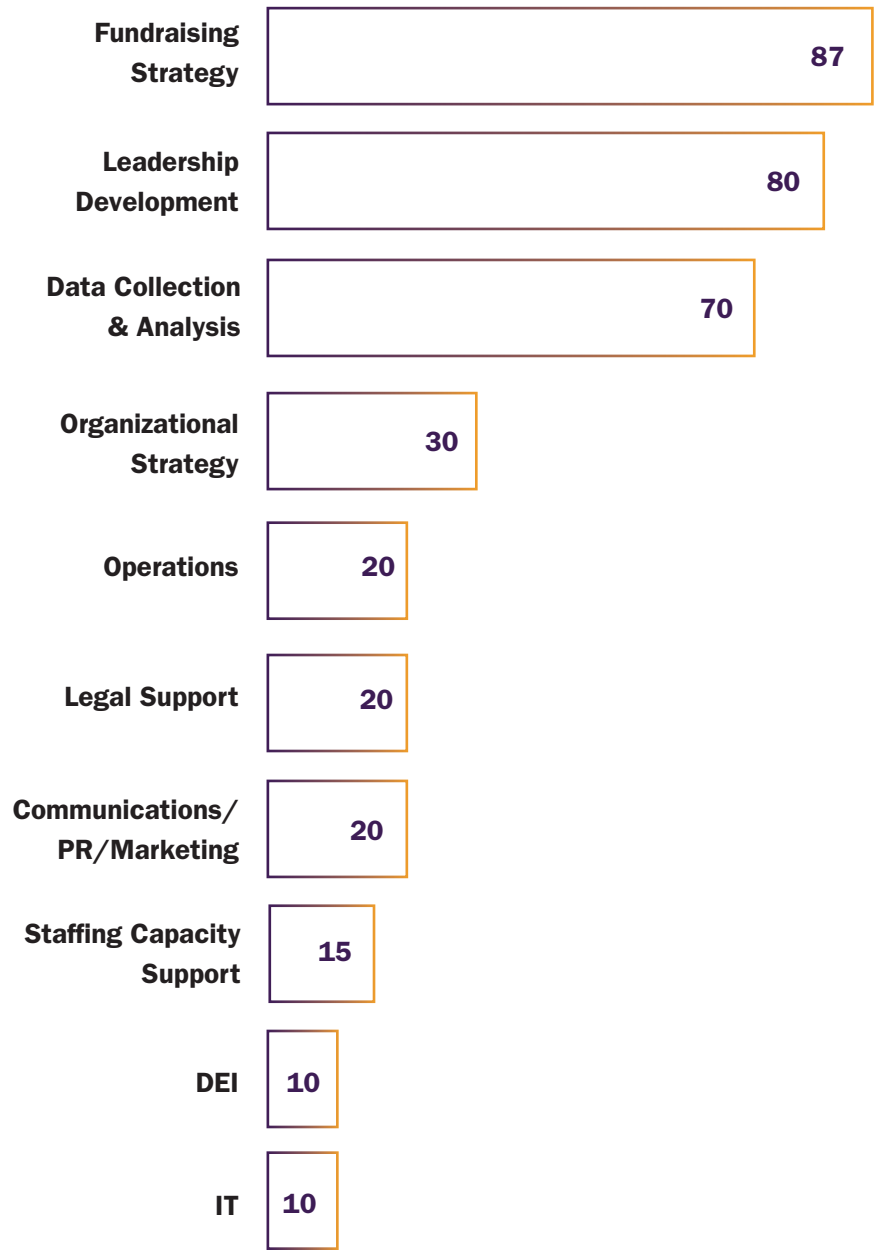
Staff Direct Service to Leaders

NCF is committed to the leaders in our portfolio—through our Respect-Based Philanthropy approach, NCF staff literally and figuratively meet leaders where they are. Whether it's grabbing coffee in North Adams to strategize through a board challenge, or over Zoom providing customized support in a group setting, we are committed to being active participants in every community that we serve.

NCF INVESTMENT BY THE HOURS

Technical Assistance	Capacity Building
6,453	140
In-Person Site Visits	**Office Hours & Virtual Site Visits**
200	2,214

WHAT AREAS OF SUPPORT WOULD YOUR OVERALL ORGANIZATION AND/OR STAFF BENEFIT FROM?



EXPANSION STORY

As of 2024, we've supported 231 organizations from more than 50 communities across the Commonwealth in response to a targeted effort to extend NCF's reach and impact beyond Boston.

NUMBER OF ORGANIZATIONS WE HAVE INVESTED IN MORE THAN ONCE

95

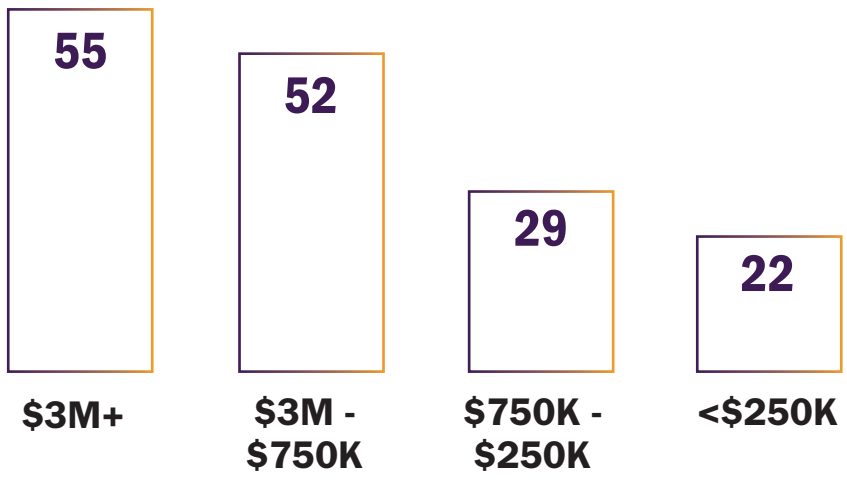
GEOGRAPHIC EXPANSION



Number of cities where we awarded grants in 2020

Number of cities where we awarded grants in 2024

OPERATING BUDGETS OF GRANTEES



DEMOGRAPHICS OF LEADERS

62%
Women-led

83%
Black/Brown-led

16%
Focused on mental health

60%
Led by returning citizens

RESPECTFUL ACCOUNTABILITY

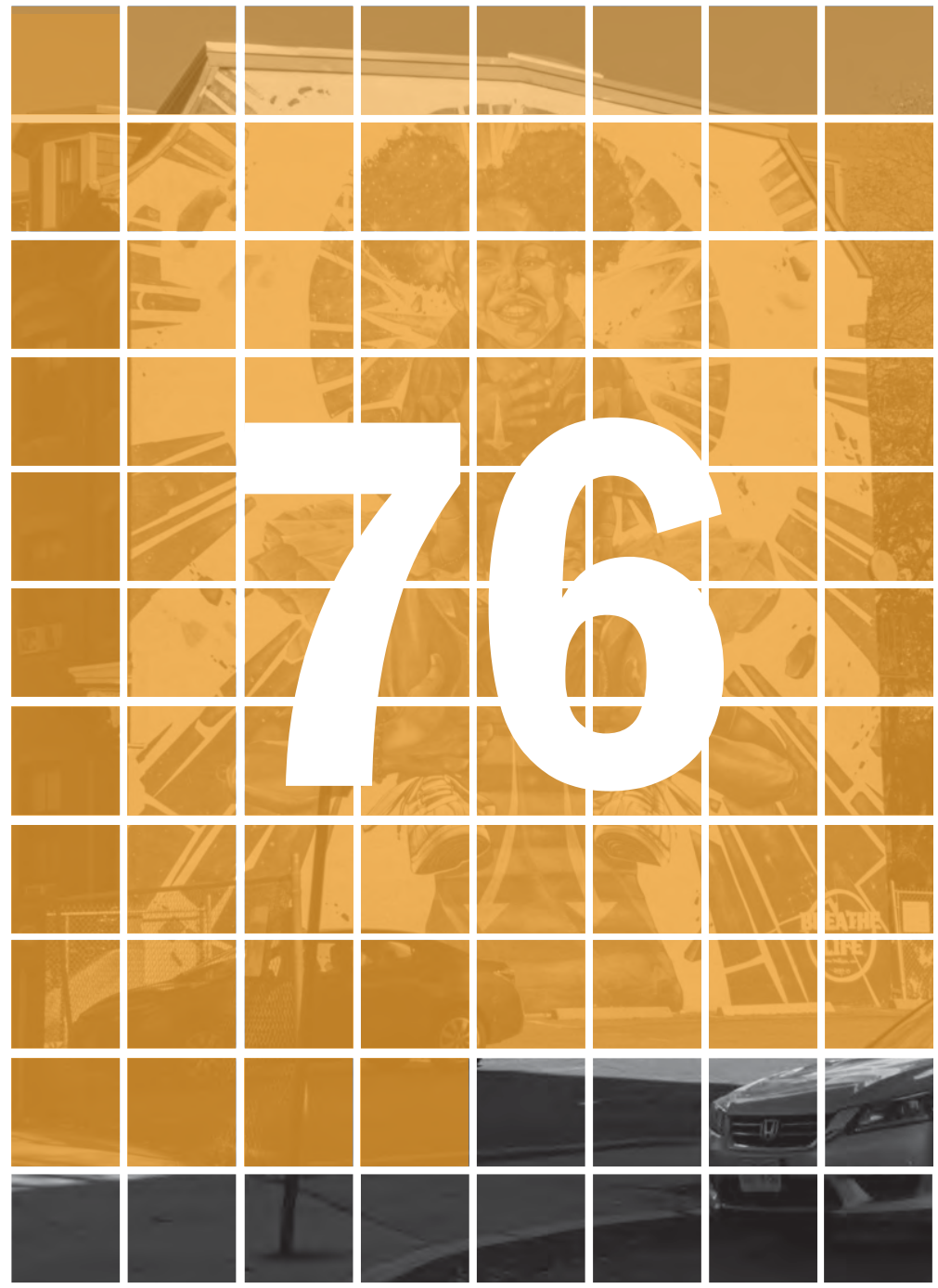
Investment alone cannot dismantle funding inequities. That's why the NCF team acts as a capacity building partner for the nonprofit ecosystem. During this year's grant cycle, **86 applicants were at risk of losing their nonprofit status**—and with it, access to critical funding—due to lapses in annual filings with the IRS, Massachusetts Attorney General's Office, and Massachusetts Secretary of State. Within 20 days, our staff contributed nearly 40 hours of tailored support, **guiding 76 organizations back to full compliance.** These organizations are now eligible for an estimated **$4.8 billion in statewide philanthropy**—capital they would have missed without NCF's intervention.

Statewide Philanthropy

$4.8B

Tailored Support Offered by NCF

20 DAYS
40 HRS



Guided back to full compliance

NCF Partner, Justice 4 Housing

INFLUENCE

We galvanize, influence, and are unencumbered. We are trusted.

Makeeba McCreary, Jeneé Osterheldt, Common, Demond Martin, Damian Wimot, Myechia Minter-Jordan, D'Wayne Edwards

NEW COMMONWEALTH FUND

THEORY OF IMPACT



INVESTING IN LEADERSHIP



FOR LEADERS

- Funding Equity
- Audacious Confidence
- Co-Authorship of Strategy

FOR PHILANTHROPY

- Investment in People
- Culture and Race as Genius
- Proximity. Safety. Authenticity.



When connecting with NCF I do not feel that I have to fit into a narrative or box in order to receive funding resources. Furthermore, I go about my work in part given my life experiences, which also has contributed to certain professional deficiencies, and I don't have to shy away from those deficiencies as NCF helps to strengthen my areas of weakness.

– SEAN ELLIS

Executive Director, New England Innocence Project

DO NOT RUSH TO TRUST. BEGIN WITH RESPECT.

We do not do this work alone—we do it in community with other funders and investors who have chosen to walk a similar path. Since our founding in 2020, NCF has become a model for replication by foundations collectively representing more than $600 million in assets.

Here are just a few examples of those who we've had the privilege of collaborating with:

Houston Fund for Social Justice and Economic Equity (HEF) was founded in 2020, during a time of unprecedented challenges, when a group of Houston philanthropic leaders followed our own founding with a shared commitment to making a lasting impact in their community. HEF is a collective of dedicated professionals working to support Houston nonprofits and small businesses with limited resources; fostering growth, sustainability, and economic opportunity. Our founders were honored to receive the outreach in 2020 that helped to inform and design the Houston Equity Fund (HEF). HEF continues to exist and mirrors our mission and values.

The 1803 Fund was created in 2020 by Rukaiyah Adams in Portland, Oregon. The initial business concept for 1803 was born from a desire to do something transformative in the wake of George Floyd's murder. The Fund was seeded by investor Phil Knight with $400 million and its focus is to help rebuild the economic prosperity and community spaces the Albina district in Portland has lost. The initiative focuses its funding on youth education services, art programs and other projects that support Black Portlanders. In 2024, the 1803 Fund partnered with NCF to adopt our Respect-Based model of philanthropy and continues to be a deep partner from across the country.

United Way of Massachusetts Bay exists to build more equitable communities, together. With over 85 years of local impact in eastern Massachusetts, they work with and for our communities to build economic prosperity and enable everyone—across races and ethnicities—to share in the knowledge, wealth and resources available. They believe that the key to unlocking opportunity is uniting people, and they bring together individuals, community leaders, corporate partners, legislators and organizations to build a powerful engine of change. When former CEO Bob Giannino led a strategic redesign of the organization's grant making, he used NCF's framework of "Respect" to drive a historic shift in the institution's approach to building deep relationships and making equity-based investments.

Atrius Health Equity Foundation In June 2022, the Atrius Health Equity Foundation was funded by the conversion of Atrius Health into a for-profit corporation. The Foundation now operates and is governed independently of Atrius Health with a mission that focuses on communities in need to address health inequities. When CEO Ann Hwang approached NCF for advice on how to design and launch a start-up fund, NCF's President handed over all of the documentation that had been used to build our foundation. Atrius adopted many of our equity-based tenets, identified NCF as an inaugural investment for its first round of funding, and continues to partner closely on health-related investments that align across both of our portfolios of nonprofit organizations.

MAY 25, 2021

HOUSTON BUSINESS JOURNAL

Philanthropy & Nonprofits

Houston Fund for Social Justice and Economic Equity launches to support grassroots nonprofits that uplift the Black community

A group of 13 Black leaders in Houston united to create a new racial equity fund dedicated to addressing social and economic inequalities. The fund is committed to raising $25 million, which will support grassroots nonprofits that uplift the Black community.



Houston Fund for SOCIAL JUSTICE and ECONOMIC EQUITY

JUNE 8, 2023

Atrius Health Equity Foundation launches its work with two $500,000 partnership grants to the Health Equity Compact and The New Commonwealth Fund.

“

ATRIUS HEALTH EQUITY FOUNDATION

Respect is essential to any partnership and is particularly vital if we are to tackle the power imbalances that come with philanthropy. I’m learning that respect means I might need to step back or even step away, recognizing that those who are doing the work bring the expertise and wisdom and that, as much as I don’t want it to, my presence can disrupt the ability of leaders to exercise their own power. Respect, in its fullest expression, forces a surprisingly radical examination of our deeply engrained beliefs and practices as they pertain to truth, knowledge, worth and power.

– ANN HWANG, PRESIDENT

MAY 14, 2023

08-14-2023 | IMPACT

Phil Knight ponied up $400 million to help historically Black areas of Portland. Meet the woman investing it.

Under CEO Rukaiyah Adams, the new 1803 Fund aims to revive a once-vibrant Black neighborhood that was razed in the 1950s



Rukaiyah Adams [Photo: Courtesy 1803 Fund]

“

1803 / Fund

The 1803 Fund deeply reflected on what it takes to share wealth within our community and for our collective benefit. We saw no other way to frame our work, other than through a respect-based practice of investing in and for our people.

So, as you can see, our framing was guided by the brilliant work of the New Commonwealth Racial Equity and Social Justice Fund. But, we also needed to establish the expectation that respect must be present from the start, and then maintained over the long-term. Maintaining is the hard work.

Thus, we added that we would express respect through ‘persistent regard’ for Black people in everything that we do.

– RUKAIYAH ADAMS, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

NOVEMBER 27, 2023



BOSTON – United Way of Massachusetts Bay President and Chief Executive Officer Bob Giannino today unveiled a list of 124 organizations that will partner with United Way in a first-of-its kind effort to eradicate the conditions that lead to poverty and economic injustice. As part of the partnership, each of the organizations will receive grant awards totaling more than $56M ($8M annually) through 2030.

UNITED WAY

“

Respect in philanthropy means putting our communities at the center of everything we do. It means we believe that those closest to the entrenched issues facing our region, those who have lived through housing instability, structural racism and income inequality, have valuable insights and experiences to share. It means when we invest in organizations focused on closing equity gaps and empowering historically marginalized Black and Latino/a populations, we prioritize those led by Black, Latino/a, and multiracial senior leaders and boards. Finally, we partner with nonprofits that involve community members in decision-making to ensure community perspectives and experiences are integrated into program design and implementation.

– DAPHNE PRINCIPE-GRIFFIN, INTERIM PRESIDENT & CEO

SUMMER 2024

“

At a recent convening of nonprofits and funders in the Boston area, I was asked my thoughts on trust-based philanthropy. For me, it is more about RESPECT rather than trust because trust must be earned, while respect can be given from the beginning. Respect is a fundamental aspect of relationship building, which is what philanthropy is all about.

– KRAFT FAMILY PHILANTHROPIES



NCF Partner, Boston Children's Chorus

REFRAMING PHILANTHROPY

MIRROR

We make the need for change clear.
Highlighting the disparities in philanthropies, elevating bright spots.

MODEL

We provide scalable frameworks and approaches.
Codifying NCF practices to disseminate with the field.

ADVISE

We consult on implementation.
Engaging directly with peers to provide expertise.

Embrace Boston stands in an affirmation of respect—respect not just for dreams but for the layered, complex realities of those forced to the margins, those denied the promises of a fair and just society.

We do this work as part of a legacy of leaders who have been historically underfunded and too often overlooked by traditional philanthropy. Here, respect becomes an act of reckoning with power itself; it is choosing to amplify voices long silenced by history's weight and facing the risk of losing out in the funding lottery. It demands the dismantling of philanthropy's gatekeeping and the reimagination of partnership as equity incarnate. This is hard work, a defiance of scarcity, and a call for relationships not measured by transactions but by shared humanity.

By honoring the resilience, creativity, and lived experiences, we dream of a city bold enough to confront its own injustices and compassionate enough to support and resource those who labor to repair and rebuild what's been broken.

– IMARI PARIS JEFFRIES

President & CEO, Embrace Boston



NCF Partner, The Fountain Fund

CASE STUDIES

NCF has piloted programming that falls outside of our grantmaking and capacity building when we believe it will have a critical outcome that will inform the field in one of our pillar areas. The case studies that follow are organized with a brief summary of our investment, the pilot, policy outcomes, and the voice of our nonprofit leaders.

A CASE FOR COMING HOME

In collaboration with the New England Patriots Foundation and the Executive Office of Public Safety and Security (EOPSS), NCF convened more than 50 stakeholders from across the reentry ecosystem to strategize sustainable public funding opportunities.

The goal of this work was to launch an independent statewide consortium of reentry stakeholders who share a commitment to improving outcomes for returning citizens and strengthening reentry systems and networks.

The council's design centers leadership by individuals with lived experience in the criminal legal system. Its goals include shifting funding processes to respond to the needs of nonprofits, providing technical assistance, and reducing the competition for dollars—a barrier to collaboration and coherence.

Respectful funding of marginalized groups requires intentional effort and outreach. We have deliberately cultivated relationships with returning citizens leading nonprofits, met them where they are, supported them through funding and reporting processes, and invested in their ongoing development.

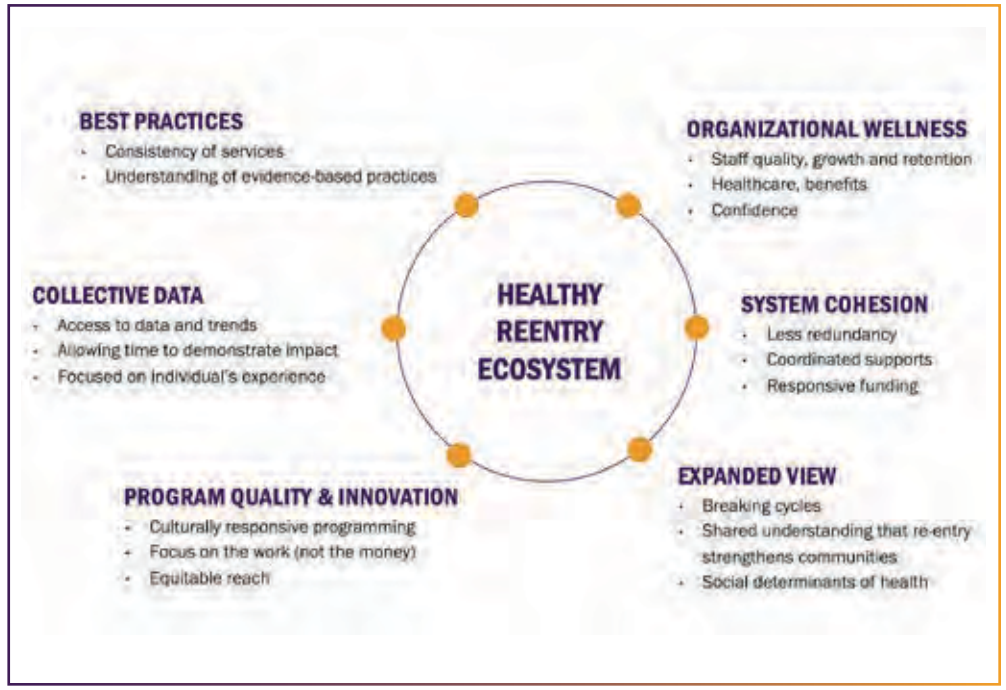
NCF's commitment to returning citizen leaders is seen in all aspects of our Respect-Based philanthropy model.

GRANTMAKING

The design of the entity was developed with a wide-reaching group of stakeholders in two co-creation work sessions. NCF funded the facilitation and co-design that included the service delivery, state and research partners over a 6-month period of time.

CAPACITY BUILDING

In partnership with NCF and trusted faciliators, several leaders shared both their capacity building needs and the harm caused by one-size-fits-all models that had been imposed on them in the past. In response, **and in addition to the original project,** NCF co-designed a tailored professional development series specifically for leaders who are returning citizens—piloting it in 2024 and expanding it in 2025.



PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS

Attorney General's Office · Barnstable County Sheriff's Office · Baystate Health · Boston College · Boston Health Care for the Homeless Program · Boston Medical Center's Community Behavioral Health Center · Committee for Public Counsel Services · Department of Correction · Department of Mental Health · Department of Public Health · Dismas House of Massachusetts · Essex County District Attorney · Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development · Executive Office of Public Safety and Security · Fines and Fees Justice Center ForHealth Consulting at UMass Chan Medical School · Franklin County Sheriff's Office · Gavin Foundation · Governor's Office · Greater Love Tabernacle · Hampden County District Attorney Hampden County Sheriff's Office · Haverhill Police Department · House of Representatives · Justice System Partners · Liberal Arts for Returning Citizens (LARC), Clark University MA District Court · Massachusetts Action for Justice · Massachusetts Housing and Shelter Alliance, Inc. · Massachusetts Office for Victim Assistance (MOVA) · MassCompetes MassHealth · New Commonwealth Fund · New England Patriots Charitable Foundation · Office of Returning Citizens, Boston · Parole Board · Probation Service · Rappaport Center for Law and Public Policy · Roca, Inc. · Sheriffs' Association · State Senate · Suffolk County District Attorney's Office · The Center for Teen Empowerment · Trial Court · University of Massachusetts Lowell · UTEC · Valley Springs Behavioral Health Hospital · Worcester Police Department · Youth In Crisis & Adults on the Rise



Addressing systemic issues in areas such as the prison system and healthcare is crucial, especially when it comes to the disparities faced by Black and Brown communities. By creating a shared understanding and awareness, there's an opportunity to build a united front and an ecosystem of change… it's encouraging to witness the intentional focus on areas like the prison system and healthcare, where reform is urgently needed.

– STACEY BORDEN

Founder and Executive Director, New Beginnings Re-Entry Services

A CASE FOR REFRAMING IMPACT

Together with a team of twenty Black and Brown nonprofit leaders, we co-designed a tool to measure impact using a racial justice lens. The team brought clarity from their own experiences and those of the people they serve. Grounded in lived experience, our co-design approach names racism as a deliberately constructed system of advantage—rooted in power and fear—and calls for a collective vision to interrupt what is and re-imagine what can be. We've applied this methodology twice: first in 2021 to evaluate impact, and again in 2025 to procure a more authentic offering of professional development.

THE DISRUPTION DECK: 2021

The outcome of our work together was initially intended to offer NCF a scaffold for its Respect-Based approach to measure the success of our investments. What we have designed has the potential to be used in many other ways—by funders, nonprofit organizations and even individuals. The Disruption cards were imagined by the New Commonwealth Fund, designed by a team of Black and Brown nonprofit leaders, and brought to life with Agncy and Onward.

CAPACITY BUILDING: 2025

The team, comprised of many of the original designers from the Disruption Deck, worked to create a shared vision of leadership, clarify topics for learning, and design modes for knowledge building and leadership development. Our new model for capacity building is grounded in these requirements:

Leaders as experts: the model will be focused on leaders learning from and with each other.

On demand: it will be responsive and allow leaders to access the knowledge and know-how of the NCF community when and how they need.

Relationship focused: it will elevate relationships between leaders—and with NCF—as the strongest mode of information exchange.

Cross channel: it will provide multiple ways for leaders to engage in learning, connecting, and knowledge exchange.

NCF-vetted: leaders trust NCF to connect them with quality people and resources aligned to NCF's approach and values.

We first stepped back from the need to own the solution. Rather than acting on our initial impulse to design a capacity building strategy ourselves, we recognized the opportunity to shift power. Instead, we invited leaders to co-create the approach with us—centering their lived experience, expertise, and vision at every step.

GET COMFORTABLE WITH THE UNCOMFORTABLE

We used an iterative, exploratory design process. We didn't know exactly what the outcome would be, and this required us to trust an emergent process. Because we all have been assimilated to the habits of individualism and linear logic, it is uncomfortable to move, as a collective, through ambiguous processes of learning and discovery.

INFLUENCE ON THE PHILANTHROPIC SECTOR

We designed an environment for the work that built relationships and wholeness. Creativity requires vulnerability. We spent time eating, resting, playing, and telling stories together, nurturing the space for folks to show up fully and be sparked by each other's wisdom and ideas.

Learnings from this co-design process:

- **The genius in the room:** leaders thrive with time together. Each day was structured to emphasize time one-on-one or in small groups so that people could share stories and lessons. The learning and brilliance was held by them, not extracted by NCF.
- **Asking leaders to lead**: each session had an opportunity for participants to step in and lead activities. This created a shared energy and showed us models of the very thing we were building together.

Learnings about leadership and capacity building:

This group of Black and Brown leaders built a vision of leadership that is different from the dominant definitions. This isn't surprising, but a healthy reminder that rethinking the capacity we are building—and to what end—is a necessary starting point.

- Capacity building is about lived experience. The group was clear that they sought applied knowledge and know-how, not book learning. They saw each other as their most powerful teachers.
- Leaders look to NCF and this group of peers to help decode situations shrouded in systems of racism. There was the sense that: on my own, I don't know what I don't know; together, we know everything we need to.

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A CASE FOR REIMAGINING CHILDBIRTH

In 2022, NCF and Mass General Brigham launched a five-year, $2.5 million partnership to advance maternal health equity by piloting community-based solutions that center the experiences of Black and Brown families. The program focused on building awareness of culturally relevant maternal health resources—addressing gaps in traditional healthcare models that often overlook the fears, curiosities, and needs expressed in these communities.

THE APPROACH

We piloted a "trusted hub" approach to engage specific populations by partnering with the organizations that are already in community with these individuals, delivering trusted programming.

- With investment from MGB and NCF, we engaged Vital CxNs, a partner with maternal health expertise and aligned values. Vital CxNs created an initial outline of topics and data.
- We partnered with 6 trusted hub organizations.
- Vital CxNs co-designed programming with each trusted hub organization to reflect the assets of their community.
- They trained community facilitators with each hub to co-lead the sessions.
- Programming was delivered by each trusted hub in partnership with Vital CxNs.
- A post-program reflection with trusted hub helped refine the process and the program for future execution.
- Mini-grants support ongoing maternal health programming at trusted hubs.

THE BIG IDEA

Maternal health must be a community conversation. It is traditionally treated as decisions made by the individual, too often in an unhealthy context of medicalized power and cultural pressures.

Impact

This pilot demonstrated the merit of the trusted hub model and reached a range of audiences: teen boys, teen girls, immigrant mothers, Black women, and educators.

Learnings from this co-design process

Co-designed programming: each trusted hub delivered the same set of maternal health facts and engaged in the same topics (e.g. individuals' birth stories, defining maternal health, envisioning liberated birth). The ways that these were embodied were entirely shaped by the knowledge of the trusted hub and the communities they know. In a session with teen boys, the young men explored this topic through music and lyric writing; in a session with immigrant mothers, women used collaging and journaling.

Facilitator connectedness

Each program was co-facilitated by members of the partner organization and in some cases, other members of their community. The connection between these facilitators and the participants was essential. Their own vulnerability about their origin stories and experiences were critical to creating a space that was safe for all stories to be told.

Learnings about maternal health

- Maternal health conversations are healing conversations. In every group, the sessions surfaced intergenerational harm. Addressing this past harm was necessary to being part of new cycles, births, and generations.
- *"How do I expect an apology or level of understanding from a person who has experienced the same cultural responses? And expect them to say overnight 'sorry' or 'I was wrong'? It's something that's been happening in the family for years and years."*
- Maternal health isn't only about mothers. Brothers, sons, sisters, cousins—from all perspectives, people were open to and curious about how they engage with healthy mothers and babies. Some young men, for example, were excited to have new language to describe their relationship with maternal health.
- *"I think I'm a doula. I've been to so many births and I didn't even know."*

MATERNAL AND CHILD HEALTH

‘How Babies Come into This World Matters for All of Us’

Nashira Baril (SPH’06) aims to make birthing experiences more equitable, personalized, and liberating.





Ariel Childs, MPH
Executive Director, Vital CxNs
Lead for NCF-MGB Maternal Health Pilot

CO-DESIGNERS

PROJECT LEAD

Vital CxNs

Neighborhood Birth Center
Technical Assistance

PLAYBOOK

AGNCY
Mae Solutions
New Commonwealth Fund
Vital CxNs

TRUSTED HUBS

EastieFit
Epiphany Early Learning Center
Freedom House
The Teachers’ Lounge
Young Man with a Plan

FUNDING PARTNER

Mass General Brigham

THE BELIEVERS

The New Commonwealth Fund has been a model for replication, renewal, and revision by other foundations and funds across the country representing more than $600 million in assets

Philanthropy stands at a critical crossroads in its mission to effect meaningful, sustainable change. It's no longer enough to merely acknowledge the systemic barriers faced by historically disenfranchised and marginalized communities—particularly our Black and Brown brothers and sisters—but we must act with urgency and intention to dismantle exclusionary systems and rebuild them to be inclusive and centered in proximity. These communities are not merely beneficiaries of our efforts; they are essential architects of their own futures. Through thoughtful and direct engagement with those who have lived experiences and intimate knowledge of the challenges they face, we can cultivate solutions that are not only relevant, but transformative. Listening and responding to those voices isn't just a best practice; it's a moral imperative that will unlock the full potential of our investments and initiatives.

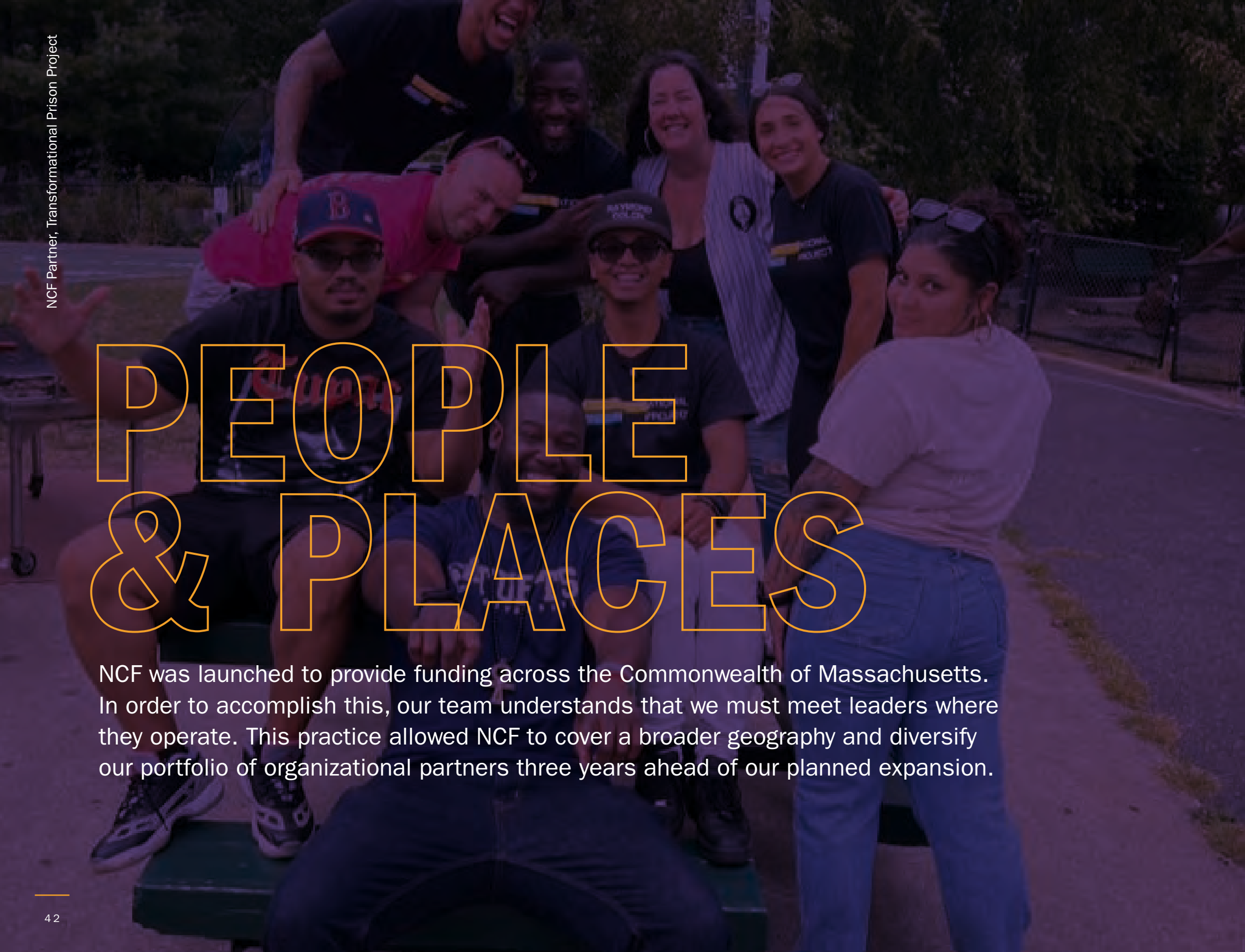
United Way of Massachusetts Bay's New Way Forward was a comprehensive redesign of a 90-year-old approach to impact. In making our work more responsive to the direction, creativity, and experiences of community leaders, we saw an opportunity to model the shifts needed in philanthropy itself—moving from a paternalistic approach to a collaborative and empowering one, based in respect and accountability. By prioritizing partnerships with local leaders and grassroots organizations, centered in humility, vulnerability, and an unwavering commitment to equity, we directed our finite resources to where they are most needed and can lead to the greatest and most lasting impact.

While I'm deeply proud of our work, one institution alone isn't going to foment the change that our communities, our Commonwealth, and our nation needs. We must act collectively and rise to the challenge of being not just funders but allies, co-creators, and advocates for justice. Together, we can ignite a movement that elevates voices from the margins, fostering a future where every community thrives, not just survives.

BOB GIANNINO

Former President & CEO,
United Way of Massachusetts Bay,
Senior Vice President, Lindauer





NCF Partner, Transformational Prison Project

PEOPLE & PLACES

NCF was launched to provide funding across the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. In order to accomplish this, our team understands that we must meet leaders where they operate. This practice allowed NCF to cover a broader geography and diversify our portfolio of organizational partners three years ahead of our planned expansion.

ORGANIZATIONS WE'VE FUNDED

FY21-FY24

2gether We Eat
826 Boston
A Healthier Democracy
Abilities Dance
About Fresh, Inc.
Accelerated College Experiences, Inc.
Accompany Doula Care
ACT Lawrence Inc.
Action for Boston Community Development
Adapt and Evolve
African Community Education Program
AGNCY
American Civil Liberties Union Foundation of Massachusetts
Amplify Latinx
Amplify POC Cape Cod
Art Resource Collaborative for Kids
Augustus A. White Institute for Healthcare Equality Inc.
Bay State Banner
BDC Community Capital Corporation
Be Inclusive
Beat The Odds
beheard.world
Benjamin Franklin Cummings Institute of Technology
Berklee College of Music, Inc.
Black Boy Joy Summit
Black Economic Council of Massachusetts (BECMA)
Black Unicorn Marathoners
Blue Hill Ave Muse
BMe
Boston Arts & Music Soul (BAMS) Fest
Boston Arts Academy
Boston Branch NAACP
Boston Bridges Initiative
Boston Children's Chorus
Boston Community Pediatrics
Boston Debate League
Boston Educational Development Foundation, Inc.
Boston Higher Education Resource Center
Boston Impact Initiative
Boston LGBTQ+ Museum
Boston Pride for the People
Boston String Academy
Boston Ujima Project
Boston University Center for Antiracist Research
Boston Women's Fund
Boston Women's Heritage Trail
Boston's Higher Ground
Bottom Line
Boys and Girls Clubs of Boston, Inc.
Breakthrough Greater Boston
Bridge Over Troubled Waters
Brockton Interfaith Community, Inc.
Brockton Workers Alliance
Brothers in Arms Men's Support Circle
Browning the Green Space
BU Spark!
Building Audacity
Calculus Project, Inc.
Cambridge Community Foundation
Castle of our Skins
Center for Teen Empowerment, Inc.
Chica Project
Children's Services of Roxbury, Inc.
Citizens for Juvenile Justice
City Mission Inc.
City of Boston
Coaching for Change, Inc.
Collective Power for Reproductive Justice
College Bound Dorchester, Inc.
Community Art Center, Inc.
Community Art Collaborative
Community Health Awareness Network Grows Equity (CHANGE)
Community Service Care, Inc.
Company One, Inc.
Compass Working Capital
Concord Prison Outreach
Covered By Music Foundation Inc.
Cristo Rey Boston High School
Data for Black Lives
DeeDee's Cry
Dimock Center
Dominican Breakfast
Drive Boston Community Resources Inc.
Drop LWOP New England
Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative, Inc.
Educators for Excellence
El Buen Samaritano
Elevated Thought
Empower Yourself Ltd
Empowered and Dedicated to Edify the Nation, Inc.
Enroot, Inc.
Epiphany School, Inc.
Esperanza Academy
Families First
Family Health Center of Worcester
Family Nurturing Center of Massachusetts, Inc.
Fathers' Uplift, Inc.
Floor Lords
Fontbonne Academy
Fortaleza, Inc.
Freedom House, Inc.
Front Porch Arts Collective of Boston
Garden of Eden & Associates, Inc.
GenUnity
Greater Boston Interfaith Organization (GBIO)
GreenRoots, Inc.
Grub Street
Haley House
HarborCOV
Hawthorne Youth and Community Center, Inc.
He is Me Institute
Health Equity Compact
Health Leads
Hoodlyfe
Hopewell, Inc.
Indigenous Peoples Day Newton
InnerCity Weightlifting
Inquilinos Boricuas en Acción, Inc.
Institute for Nonprofit Practice
Java With Jimmy
Jeremiah Program
Jewish Alliance for Law and Social Action, Inc.
Jose Ballet Theatre
Jumpstart for Young Children
Justice For Housing, Inc.
Justice Resource Institute, Inc.
La Colaborativa, Inc.
Latina Circle, Inc. DBA Amplify Latinx
Latino Equity Fund
Lawrence Community Works, Inc.
Lawyers for Civil Rights, Inc.
Leadership Brainery, Inc.
Legendary Legacies
LGBT Asylum Task Force

ORGANIZATIONS WE'VE FUNDED cont'd

Living in Freedom Together (LIFT), Inc.
Living Stones Church
Louis D. Brown Peace Institute
Luminosity
Mabel Center for Immigrant Justice
Mandela Yoga Project Inc.
Mariposa Museum & World Culture Center
Martin Luther King Jr. Family Services, Inc.
Massachusetts College of Art and Design Foundation (MassArt)
Massachusetts Institute of Technology
Massachusetts League of Community Health Centers
Massachusetts Transgender Political Coalition
Massachusetts Voter Table
Massachusetts Women of Color Coalition
Massasoit Community College
Mattapan Food and Fitness Coalition
Melanin Mass Moms
Meryl's Safe Haven
Mill Cities Community Investments
MLRI
MOCHA
Mujeres Victoriosas
Multicultural AIDS Coalition / LGBTQ+ Elders of Color
My Life My Choice
NAACP Brockton
NAACP New Bedford
NAACP Springfield
National Black Prosecutors Association
Nativity Preparatory School - New Bedford
NECAT
Nectar Community Investments
Neighborhood Birth Center
Neighborhood House Charter School Foundation
New Beginnings Reentry Services, Inc.
New England Blacks in Philanthropy
New England Innocence Project
New England Justice for Our Neighbors
Northeastern University
Odessa (Odaa) Community Foundation
On the Rise, Inc.
OneGoal
OrigiNation Cultural Arts Center
Pa'Lante Transformative Justice
Partakers, Inc.
Pensole Lewis HBCU
Phoenix Charter Academy
Pine Street Inn, Inc.
Prevent the Cycle
Problak Art
Project Evident
Project RIGHT, Inc.
Project Smile Inc.
Project STEP, Inc.
Raw Art Works, Inc.
Resource Organizing Project
Restless Books
Revere Youth In Action
ROCA, Inc.
Ron Burton Training Village
Roxbury Action Program, Inc.
Roxbury Community College
Roxbury Main Streets Revitalization Corporation
Sarepta Women and Children Empowerment Center, Inc
Self-Evident Education Inc.
SFS Golfing Society, Inc.
Share Our Strength
SIDE Presents, LLC
Sisters Unchained
Smart from the Start, Inc.
Soccer Unity Project
Social Good Fund
Sociedad Latina, Inc.
Spanish American Center, Inc.
Sportsmen's Tennis & Enrichment Center
Street Theory Collective
Talented and Gifted Association Inc.
Taunton Diversity Network
The American City Coalition, Inc.
The Artist Initiative for Revolution
The BASE
The Boston Foundation (Embrace)
The Boston Foundation (Equality Fund)
The Boston Higher Education Resource Center
The Boston Home
The Calculus Project
The Center for Hope and Healing
The English High School Association
The Flavor Continues
The Fountain Fund
The Immigrant Learning Center
The Innocent Convicts, Inc.
The Life After Prison*
The Loop Lab
The Resilient Sisterhood Project (RSP)
The SpaceMakers Society
The Supreme Team
The Teachers' Lounge
The Theater Offensive
THRIVE Communities of Massachusetts
Thrive Scholars
Tides Center
Tides for Reproductive Freedom
Transformational Prison Project
Transgender Emergency Fund of Massachusetts
Trinity Boston Connects, Inc.
Truth And Love Global Ministries
UMass Memorial Health - Medical Center
Union Capital Boston
United Negro College Fund Boston
United South End Settlements
Uptima Entrepreneur Cooperative
Urban Achievers (UA) SAFE School
Urban Farming Institute
Urban Impact
Urban League of Eastern Massachusetts
Venture Café Foundation
Victory Human Services
Vital CxNs
Vital Villages Network
Wampanoag Nation of Singers & Dancers
We Are Better Together Warren Daniel Hairston Project
We Got Us Project
We Move In Color
WellWithAll
Women Encouraging Empowerment, Inc.
Worcester Caribbean American Carnival Association
Words as Worlds
Y2Y Network
YMCA of Greater Springfield
YMCA of Metro North
Young Man with a Plan
Young People's Project, Inc.
Youth Advocacy Foundation, Inc.
Youth Guidance
Youth on Board

FY'25 AS OF JUNE 1, 2025

826 Boston
A Healthier Democracy
Action for Boston Community Development
BECMA
Boston Education Fund
Boston Impact Initiative
Boston Women's Heritage Trail
Bottom Line
Brothers in Arms Men's Support Circle
BU Spark!
Citizens for Juvenile Justice
Collective Power
Educators for Excellence
Elevated Thought
Esperanza Academy
Families First
GenUnity
GreenRoots, Inc.
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The Life After Prison
The SpaceMakers Society
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Boston Racial Equity Fund, City of Boston
Boston Scientific Corporation
CareQuest Institute for Oral Health
Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Converse, Inc.
Eastern Bank Foundation
The Edgerley Family Foundation
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Anne Churchill Jones Fund
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Champions of Love Foundation, Reverend John Finley
The Clowes Fund, Inc.
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The Crandall Family Charitable Fund
Deloitte US
Direct Action Fund
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Global Atlantic Financial Company
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Goldman Sachs Ayco Personal Financial Management
Goldman Sachs Gives
HarborOne Bank
The Hesperia Fund
Invest in Women Fund
Ironwood Pharmaceuticals
J.P. Morgan Securities Charitable Giving Fund
Jane's Trust
The John Scott Wynant Family
John W. McCormack Association
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Myers/Chang Charitable Fund
Nellie Mae Education Foundation
New England Patriots Player's Social Justice Fund
Newmark & Company Real Estate, Inc.
NFL
The Nordblom Family Foundation
Northern Trust Corporation
Nutter McClennen & Fish, LLP
O'Reilly Charitable Fund
OpenView Operations
Parkway Wealth
The Partnership, Inc.
Patriots Foundation
The PDM Family Fund
Phans for Racial Equity
Pine Street Inn
The Poler Family Foundation
Procter & Gamble Corporate Giving Fund
Quin Impact Fund
RhumbLine Advisers
Ropes & Gray, LLP
Safety Insurance Charitable Foundation
Sanofi
Shapiro and Fleishman Fund
Shorewood Charity Fund
STAG Industrial
State Street Corporation
Steven E. Lewis Living Trust
The Stop & Shop Supermarket Company
Street Theory, Inc.
Jeffrey Sullivan
Tamalpais Charitable Gift Fund
Todd and Weld, LLP
Tremont Strategies Group
Turner Construction Company
U.S. Charitable Gift Trust
United Way of Mass Bay and Merrimack Valley
US Charitable Gift Trust Board of Directors
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WS Development
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Zacchaeus Foundation

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