ORGANIZING NEVER GOES OUT OF STYLE
“If you want to support folks in this moment, don’t just fund now for one year while police violence is at the top of everyone’s mind. Fund it next year and the year after that.”

— JEREE THOMAS, PROGRAM DIRECTOR, COMMUNITIES TRANSFORMING POLICING FUND
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DEAR COMMUNITY,

Just two years after global uprisings erupted in the summer of 2020, as a community, we’ve witnessed funders and corporations, large and small, neglect - and in some cases, renounce bold commitments to the future of racial and social justice.

And while we hope more funders will seriously commit themselves to equity across the board, Borealis Philanthropy has always been clear and resolute about the need to stay the course.

I’m proud to say we at Borealis have expanded our efforts to support Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC)-led liberation movements. We fundamentally understand that in times of crisis and victory, returning to our roots as organizers is the best way to maintain momentum and serve our community.

So we met the intensity of 2022 with our own equal, collaborative intensity—one amplified by deep partnership with our community of grantee and donor partners. We’ve made significant strides on the long road of systems-wide transformative change—and there are no signs of us turning back or slowing down any time soon.

Borealis remains committed to removing barriers to funding for grassroots organizations and investing in intersectional movement work across communities so that they have the resources they need to thrive. Over the past year, we remained inspired by the steadfast efforts of our grantee partners, many of whom are part of small but mighty grassroots groups.

WE BELIEVE, WITHOUT A SHADOW OF A DOUBT, THAT ORGANIZING WILL NEVER GO OUT OF STYLE.
We extend deep gratitude to our grantee and funder partners for trusting us to resource our movements and dreams for a more equitable future.

Through continued community building, our grantee partners have committed themselves to critical issues such as defending bodily sovereignty for trans folks, organizing at the intersection of mass surveillance and mass incarceration, reimagining journalism that can better serve BIPOC communities, and so much more.

In addition to the tremendous work of our grantee partners, it’s important to name that the last time I shared an annual update with you, I mentioned our entire organization striving to align around a shared north star, build capacity to sustain our growth, and secure the alignment of our vision and values as top priorities. Since then, we’ve welcomed 21 new members to the Borealis team, allowing us to bolster our resource mobilizing efforts. We’ve worked together to identify the core values that shape our priorities and decision making, and moved through a collective strategic framework process to develop a shared understanding around the specific role that our organization plays—and should aspire to—in both the philanthropic and movement ecosystems. And we’ve done all this work in service of our goal to build authentic community and resource actionable change.

Building a strong organization, galvanizing resources, and creating partnerships based in trust takes time. As we settle into 2023, we will continue aligning ourselves more strategically with the movements we support, expanding our capacity, and experimenting with new strategies so that we can secure greater abundance, joy, and rest within the vibrant and resilient communities to which we belong and aim to better serve.

As we move forward, we are tremendously appreciative of our donor partners, whose support helps make transformative organizing work possible. And above all, we are endlessly grateful to our grantee partners. For the liberation practitioners, healers, journalists, advocates, and facilitators who—in the face of great adversity—continue to create new and impactful strategies for justice. Thank you for doing this work, on your own terms, for all of us.

In community,

Amorett Morris

President, Borealis Philanthropy
OUR IMPACT IN 2022

**Unaudited numbers. The numbers reported only include grants awarded in 2022 to be dispersed over 2022 and beyond.**

- $36M TOTAL GRANTMAKING*
- $3.3M IN RAPID RESPONSE GRANTS
- 75% UNRESTRICTED GRANTS
- 382 GRANTEE PARTNERS
- 498 GRANTS

*Does not include grantee benefits

OUR GRANTS WERE FLEXIBLE

- 75.4% UNRESTRICTED
- 9.2% RAPID RESPONSE
- 3.6% CAPACITY BUILDING
- 2.9% PROJECT SUPPORT
- 8.8% OTHER

70% OF GRANTEE BUDGETS WERE UNDER $1 MILLION
WE SUPPORTED GRASSROOTS GROUPS IN EVERY REGION

GRANTEE PARTNER ISSUE AREAS

62% OF GRANTEE PARTNERS FOCUSED ON ORGANIZING AND ADVOCACY
BOREALIS PHILANTHROPY is a philanthropic intermediary made up of nine collaborative funds working to advance the impact of our movements across the country. Our funds focus on a range of social justice issues, including Black-led movement work, disability inclusion and justice, uplifting the dignity and respect of queer and trans communities, and more. We also invest in leaders, organizations, and movements using diverse and innovative strategies to pursue transformational change.
The Black-Led Movement Fund (BLMF) supports the Movement for Black Lives (M4BL) and other politically aligned organizations to better shape policy agendas for Black communities, create alternatives to institutions that have been harmful to Black people, and build local Black community power.

In 2022, the BLMF had its biggest year of grantmaking yet, moving $8 million to 71 Black-led organizations. In partnership with the Communities Transforming Policing Fund, the BLMF hosted a Liberation Learning Lab with 14 grantee partners who, together, helped the Fund develop a new framework for telling the stories of its grantee partners. The BLMF also moved $1.25 million in rapid response grants to address urgent and strategic community and movement needs.

Internally, the Fund launched its inaugural participatory grantmaking process by recruiting and onboarding a 10-person community grantmaking committee. For the BLMF, participatory grantmaking offers an opportunity to shift and share power, and be more aligned with the real-time needs of the movement. Starting in March 2023, the BLMF expects to move all multi-year, core support grants through a participatory committee of Black community organizers. A participatory approach will make it possible for BLMF to continue funding folks like The People’s Advocacy Institute which hosts the only bail fund in the state of Mississippi — the Mississippi Bail Fund Collective, and New Orleans’ Women With a Vision whose Sex Worker’s Rights program supports women charged with prostitution offenses and offers alternatives to incarceration.

What makes me most proud about my work is that I get a chance to engage the community. I have an opportunity to educate the youth and bring light when [there is] darkness and also try to better lives and make [a] better day tomorrow. For me, it’s being able to wake up and know that cases are dismissed [and] that people are safe. That people are able to learn how to live again. So it’s just excitement and joy to know that lives are being saved.

— TS CANDII, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, BLACK TRANS NATION
In the spring of 2022, the CTPF celebrated its fifth year of grantmaking and its first round of participatory grantmaking, awarding $5.1 million in grants to 64 organizations, its biggest commitment in multi-year giving yet. This round of grantmaking was led by CTPF’s participatory grantmaking committee—which consists of advocates across the country who have been directly impacted by policing and the criminal legal system. CTPF prioritized grantmaking in several areas, including funding legal support networks for protesters of police violence, groups leading campaigns to divest from policing and invest in communities, decriminalizing sex work, drugs, and poverty, creating community-based safety strategies, and campaigns to remove police from schools.

CTPF has 17 additional multi-year core grantee partners from 2021, such as grantee partner Marijuana Justice who shared that their campaigns helped to successfully end the prohibition of simple possession and sealed over 64,000 misdemeanor marijuana charges. And grantee partner HEARD, which maintains the only database of deaf/blind/disabled people impacted by police violence and discrimination across the nation and in U.S. territories, was able to develop a new user-friendly and multilingual database allowing for its advocacy work to become more efficient and impactful.

The truth is, I am still very impacted by CTPF. It is one of the most rewarding experiences of my life. I have become just as intentional with all the work that I do. When I provide services to my participants, I think about how we funded organizations [through CTPF’S participatory grantmaking committee] that will change lives and communities. I learned that it is about creating what is generative and sustainable. I am forever grateful for the experience and all of the wonderful people that I met.

— LATANYA SUBLETT, PEER REENTRY PROGRAM DIRECTOR, CHICAGO TORTURE JUSTICE AND CTPF PGM MEMBER
The Disability Inclusion Fund heeds the advice of disabled movement leaders who have made it unwaveringly clear that disability justice is not only for this moment, but for all of our futures. In 2022, the Fund continued resourcing disability justice movement-aligned organizations through a participatory grantmaking process led by members of the disability community. The Fund moved $4.18 million to 57 disability-led organizations, and launched Joy Grants to support and seed restoration and joy as a critical part of disability justice movements. The DIF also launched its Disability x Tech initiative, supported by Ford Foundation’s Technology & Society Program, to ensure that technology can be used by everyone and is free from ableist bias.

DIF grantee partners had significant gains and increased recognition in 2022. Senior & Disability Action successfully advocated for the Bay Area transit system to extend its mask mandate. And Detroit Disability Power, Autistic Women & Non-binary Network, and the DIF’s program director, Sandy Ho, attended a reception at Vice President Harris’ residence to commemorate the anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

It is imperative that those of us in philanthropy listen to and engage with the people and communities who are most impacted by our work, so that they are not just influencing, but in many cases also leading the work. The Disability Inclusion Fund, guided by leaders from the disability community, is a great example of this.

— RICH BESSER, PRESIDENT AND CEO OF THE ROBERT WOOD JOHNSON FOUNDATION AND CO-CHAIR OF THE PRESIDENTS’ COUNCIL ON DISABILITY INCLUSION IN PHILANTHROPY

DIF 2022 HIGHLIGHTS

$4.18 million
57 grantee partners

RESOURCE

What is Philanthropy Missing? Disability Inclusion Fund Grantee Partners Have Some Thoughts.
The Emerging LGBTQ Leaders of Color Fund supports the role that young trans and queer leaders play to support pro-LGBTQ racial justice movements in becoming more connected, inclusive, and thus more powerful. The Fund invests in leaders and organizations who approach liberation work from a place of inclusion, and understand that issues like community safety, reproductive justice, and immigrant rights do not exist in isolation from each other.

The ELLC Fund invests in leaders whose work addresses the intersections of harm and inequity by building community power. In 2022, the ELLC Fund announced its biggest year of grantmaking yet, moving more than $2.5 million in grant support to 46 movement organizations. In order to support young queer and trans leaders of color, the ELLC Fund provides two primary types of support: 1) general operating support grants, and 2) Young Trans Women of Color (YTWOC) leadership grants.

Leading up to and during the aftermath of the fall of Roe vs. Wade, the ELLC Fund established a rapid response fund to support Queer and Trans BIPOC-led reproductive justice groups, as well as donor education opportunities for funders invested in hearing from folks on the frontlines. The Fund also spent the year sharpening its YTWOC grantmaking program, which invests in trans leaders who are organizing across movements and issues. Grantee partner the Knights & Orchids Society (TKO) mobilized trans youth, adults, and allies against Alabama state bills targeting trans and other LGBTQ youth. While both of these bills passed, TKO has expanded their youth engagement and is ramping up their youth ambassadors program to build more trans youth power.

I knew when we applied for ELLC last year that the big part would be around organizational development coaching. But I don’t think I expected how helpful that was going to be until we did it. I can’t even tell you, it’s been a life changer for me, so grounding and helpful. And because it has helped me, it has helped our entire organization.

— YUAN WANG (SHE/THEY), DIRECTOR OF LAVENDER PHOENIX

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— YUAN WANG (SHE/THEY), DIRECTOR OF LAVENDER PHOENIX
The Fund for Trans Generations (FTG) invests in trans-led organizing to support a future where transgender, gender non-conforming, and nonbinary people live with freedom, safety, and self-determination.

In 2022, the Fund for Trans Generations continued to invest in emerging trans-led organizations through capacity building offerings and grants, supporting organizational development, leadership development, and healing justice work. The FTG prioritized BIPOC, trans-led emerging and growing organizations through its participatory grantmaking process, and ultimately moved over $3.5 million to 75 trans-led organizations. The FTG also mobilized to move an additional $10 million to the trans movement ecosystem through the Trans Futures Campaign, alongside other trans funders.

FTG grantee partners like inTRANSitive are steadily responding to an onslaught of anti-trans legislation by bringing national attention to the anti-trans efforts of the Arkansas legislature. Trans organizers are helping folks survive and identify innovative ways to sustain their organizations during these intense times. The Fund also witnessed FTG grantee partners move towards purchasing land and buildings in order to disrupt cycles of displacement and provide spaces that allow for safety and security.

FTG 2022 HIGHLIGHTS

$3.5 million
75 grantee partners

RESOURCE
Trans Communities Are Under Attack. Here’s How Philanthropy Must Respond

It was an incredible experience to be among changemakers. Reading the proposals of trans-led organizations moving mountains all across the country and being able to resource their work filled me with joy and hope. We, trans organizers, are crafting futures and manifesting new worlds.

— RUMBA YAMBÚ, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, inTRANSitive AND FTG PGM MEMBER
The REACH Fund (REACH) invests in racial equity practitioners with expertise in working with the nonprofit sector on internal organizational racial equity transformation. Grant partners deepen and scale their practices to support organizational development work with nonprofits of their choosing.

In 2022, the Racial Equity to Accelerate Change Fund focused on healing, deepening its community of practice, and unlocking resources to advance racial equity. The Fund awarded $2.13 million to 19 groups, representing its largest annual grantmaking to date. The REACH also shifted its grantmaking schedule, and due to the support of MacKenzie Scott in 2021, was still able to provide an additional $116,000 to all REACH grantee partners in 2022.

Because the REACH Fund believes there is no racial justice without healing justice, it invited grantee partners to participate in a 6-month long monthly somatic circle and access their own healing tools and practices to support their work. A big focus of the REACH team was to secure additional resources to support and expand racial equity work among grantee partners. For example, REACH grantee The Embodiment Institute hosted somatics sessions making space for folks to examine the impact the work has on them as racial equity practitioners. In addition to self-care, REACH grantees like the Shriver Center on Poverty’s Racial Justice Institute were able to create, design and successfully launch new public courses focused on uplifting racial equity.

REACH 2022 HIGHLIGHTS
$2.13 million
19 grantee partners

RESOURCE
Investing in Community: Why Radical Human Resources Is Critical for Movement Organizations

Very few racial equity/racial justice funders understand and fund the depth and breadth of the types of engagements that advance transformation toward deep equity (deep meaning at the intra-personal, interpersonal, institutional, and systemic levels simultaneously) and liberation (meaning in continuous and interdependent connection with source, whole selves and whole stories). We are so very appreciative that the REACH Fund is one of the ones that does.

— ELISSA SLOAN PERRY, CO-DIRECTOR, CHANGE ELEMENTAL
The Racial Equity in Journalism Fund (REJ) invests in news organizations led by and for people of color. The Fund bolsters a strong, diverse, and independent local media sector that increases civic engagement for communities of color by reaching them with vital, relevant information.

**What news and information ecosystems do Black, Indigenous, Latine and Asian communities need to be well?**

This is a question the Racial Equity in Journalism Fund considers often, and one that led its work in 2022. The REJ Fund prioritized resourcing BIPOC-led news organizations providing people of color with content and/or programming aimed at strengthening civic discourse and participation. In turn, it moved **$5.2 million to 44 BIPOC-led and -serving field building and media organizations.**

Last year, the REJ Fund launched efforts to incorporate community power building and civic participation as pillars to their work. REJ even piloted a capacity building program focused respectively on business development and operations, while simultaneously facilitating peer exchanges, learning, and collaborations among the grantee community. Meanwhile, REJ grantees like **Documented** launched SMS-based verticals targeting New York’s Chinese and Caribbean immigrant communities, and now publishes in five different languages. And **Cicero Independiente** launched and expanded their Reporting Fellowship to include more Latine cohort members receiving photojournalism training.

**REJ 2022 HIGHLIGHTS**

- **$5.2 million**
- **44 grantee partners**

**RESOURCE**

**What We Learned: Strengthening BIPOC Media as an Antidote to Mis/Disinformation**

“The economic support that we received from Borealis has been transformative. Providing the grant resources in one lump sum and it being unrestricted is an absolute game changer. It has helped us expand our programming and our digital outreach. We’re doing things that a lot of Black media outlets, especially more legacy platforms, are either just starting to do or haven’t really thought about.”

— SARA LOMAX-REESE, PRESIDENT AND CEO, WURD RADIO

*ALIYAH CHAVEZ FOR INDIAN COUNTRY TODAY*
Racial Equity in Philanthropy Fund (REP) invests in philanthropy-serving organizations to inform, educate, and equip funders to integrate racial equity policies and practices into their grantmaking and programs.

Last year, the Racial Equity in Philanthropy Fund provided $2.16 million in general operating grants to 25 grantee partners who are at the forefront of advancing racial equity in the philanthropic sector and are pursuing cutting edge approaches, innovative collaborations, and transformative change. The REP Fund trusts that these additional resources will enable them to deepen the impact of their work in the months to come.

In 2022, the Fund focused on facilitating connections between grantee and donor partners through its first donor learning session in August, which featured a lively discussion led by Dr. Megan Ming Francis, who spoke on the importance of philanthropic organizations supporting racial justice by leveraging their political power to the benefit of the communities they aim to serve. The Fund was also proud to witness a collaboration between grantee partners Asian Americans/Pacific Islanders in Philanthropy (AAPIP) and Native Americans in Philanthropy (NAP), which co-hosted the Power in Solidarity conference on building cross-racial solidarity, power, and resources in AAPI and Native communities.

Receiving REP funding allowed our organization to build up our staff and increase our revenue base. We don’t often go after general operating funding because we don’t want to be in competition with our partner organizations for money. We usually pursue project-specific funding and sponsorships for our Unity Summit. With the continued support of Borealis and some additional contributions from other funders, we have the next four years of our budget fully covered without needing to add any new programs.

— CARLY HARE, FORMER EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, CHANGE PHILANTHROPY
The Spark Justice Fund (SJF) supports efforts to end the correctional control of people of color and the harms inflicted by the criminal legal system on families and communities in the United States.

In 2022, the Spark Justice Fund was proud to move $3.5 million to 30 grassroots organizations working to decarcerate, redirect resources for jails to community, and transform our collective vision of community-led safety. The Fund provided grantees with one-on-one organizational development support, unpacked the many ways surveillance leads to over-incarcerating marginalized communities through donor-learning sessions, and resourced groups with limited access to national funding streams. In 2022, 35% of SJF grantees had budgets under $350,000.

SJF grantee partners also witnessed many wins, affirming the dignity of incarcerated folks and our need for a future without prisons. Miami-based grantee partner Beyond the Bars’ advocacy led to reduced prices of calls for incarcerated individuals, saving families an estimated $5.5 million each year. As a result Miami-Dade County is exploring models for implementing free jail calls. Grantee partner SOUL, in partnership with Cassandra Greer-Lee, protested the lack of clean, safe drinking water in Illinois’ Stateville Prison. Together, they were able to provide 16,000 bottles of clean drinking water to the prison. And Mano Amiga secured additional funding from the San Marcos City Council, as well as $5 million in American Rescue Plan funds, for the opening of a Public Defender’s Office in Hays County, Texas.

What sets Borealis apart from many other funders is that they are really listening, fully understanding the experiences of organizations led by and serving Black and formerly incarcerated people as well as the cultural barriers that often are not present for our white counterparts. They really trust us and recognize us for our experience and expertise as leaders in this work. As such they invest and fund us appropriately.

— NICOLE HANSEN-MUNDELL, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, OUT FOR JUSTICE
RESOURCES FOR FUNDERS

Throughout 2022, Borealis’ nine funds have gathered invaluable lessons from our many grantee partners, offered thoughtful reflections on a variety of donor-learning sessions, and shared personal insights from working to support emergent movements.

WE ARE THANKFUL TO OUR COMMUNITY OF GRANTEE PARTNERS AND BOREALIS TEAM MEMBERS FOR PUTTING TOGETHER SUCH USEFUL PIECES. WE INVITE YOU TO EXPLORE THESE LEARNINGS AND SHARE THEM WITH YOUR COMMUNITIES.

8 Years After Mike Brown’s Killing: It’s Time for Philanthropy to Act

KEY TAKEAWAY: A reflection on Mike Brown’s life, the impact of the Ferguson Uprisings on community organizers, and ways to support safety for Black communities.

There Would Be No Pride If Not for Juneteenth

KEY TAKEAWAY: An exploration of Juneteenth’s impact on our culture as a whole, and more specifically, on what has become the trans and queer liberation movement.

You Can’t Serve the People If You Don’t Love the People

KEY TAKEAWAY: Amoretta Morris marks her one-year anniversary as Borealis’ President with a reflection on the role of philanthropy in her family and community.
Supporting Black-Led Movements for Safety & Liberation: Resources for Funders

KEY TAKEAWAY: Historical and political context of philanthropy’s support for Black-led movements, as well as lessons from the 2020 Uprisings and continued backlash to this critical work.

The Communities Transforming Policing Fund Shares Five Lessons from Participatory Grantmaking

KEY TAKEAWAY: One full year into the participatory grantmaking process CTPF shares five things they’ve learned for funders considering making this shift.

What is Philanthropy Missing? Disability Inclusion Fund Grantee Partners Have Some Thoughts

KEY TAKEAWAY: A conversation with DIF grantee partners who share their guidance for philanthropy and the impact that participating in the DIF has had on their work.

What We Learned: #BeyondChoice: Funding Abortion Access and Reproductive Justice in Uncertain Times

KEY TAKEAWAY: ELLC Fund grantee partners unpack their intersectional approach to reshaping reproductive care and collectively reimagining a liberated future beyond Roe.

Almost 35 Years Since America’s First National Coming Out Day: Why Do We Still Care?

KEY TAKEAWAY: A recognition of the legacy of NCOD and the broader LGBTQ liberation movement ecosystem, as well as ways to cultivate safety and visibility for queer and trans people.
Investing in Community: Why Radical Human Resources Is Critical for Movement Organizations

**KEY TAKEAWAY:** What donors need to know to fund more equitably, why it’s necessary to get HR right for social justice organizations, and how to shift our frames of thinking about the value of human labor.

What We Learned: Strengthening BIPOC Media as an Antidote to Mis/Disinformation

**KEY TAKEAWAY:** How BIPOC-led and -serving media operate as trusted sources of news and information, and increase civic engagement in the communities they serve.

What We Learned: Finding Philanthropy’s Political Power

**KEY TAKEAWAY:** Funders must be willing to leverage their political power to advance the movement for racial equity.

What We Learned: Divest from E-Carceration

**KEY TAKEAWAY:** A highlighting of critical strategies to address the surveillance, criminalization, and e-carceration of youth and BIPOC communities.

ON THE URGENCY OF THIS MOMENT

WE, AT BOREALIS PHILANTHROPY, ARE INCREDIBLY PROUD OF THE WORK WE WERE ABLE TO ACHIEVE IN 2022.

Resourcing 382 groups across the country with $36 million is no small feat.

Still, as our president, Amoretta Morris, illuminated at the top of this report, we’ve noticed a trend of funders rescinding dollars meant for racial equity-building work. Many of us predicted that the bold proclamations of justice and equity back in 2020 would fade. Sadly, we are witnessing this shift in real-time.

As an intermediary, Borealis cannot exist without the ongoing collaboration and deep partnership with committed donors. The progress we are helping to build in communities is made possible through the ongoing financial support of our donors. It enables our grantee partners to keep their doors open, expand their teams, and in turn, commit to organizing efforts rooted in long-term, transformative change.

As organizers ourselves, we know how to stay focused on our goals and push forward even when social and political climates shift. We ask for you, our partners, to do the same. Stick with us. Keep attending our donor learning sessions. Continue reflecting on your own changes and how you are showing up to your work. Stay curious and share what you’re learning. And most importantly, continue to support this work so that all of us can get free.

We all have a role to play in creating the world we want to see. Only with your support can that dream become a reality. We invite you to contact our Director of Development, Maya Berkowitz, at mberkowitz@borealisphilanthropy.org, to learn more.

IN SOLIDARITY,
BOREALIS PHILANTHROPY