Investing in Reproductive Justice Power to Scale

Groundswell Fund Blueprint Summary 2015–2019

Groundswell Fund

I’m fighting for YOU
#4immigrantwomen

This is YOUR LIFE
This is OUR TIME
This Blueprint honors the work of women of color. The strategies are a reflection of grassroots needs.

— Tannia Esparza, Young Women United, Albuquerque, New Mexico
Introduction

From raising our families in communities free from violence and environmental toxins, to determining if, when, and how we will have children, we should all have the power to make decisions about our bodies, families, and futures.

All too often, our reproductive health and wellbeing is jeopardized, not just by lack of access to information and health care, but also by economic inequality, immigration status, incarceration, environmental pollution, and other barriers. Women of color, low-income women, and LGBTQ people bear the brunt of this problem.

At Groundswell Fund, we believe they also are the solution.

Since 2003, as a leading funder in this field, Groundswell Fund has granted more than $20 million to the reproductive justice movement, and galvanized individual donors and institutional funders alike to increase funding in this area. We have seen first-hand what can happen when we mobilize new funding and capacity-building resources for efforts led by those who face the greatest barriers to accessing reproductive justice.

Around the country, a grassroots movement led by women of color, low-income women, and LGBTQ people is winning important victories for reproductive justice. Groundswell Fund’s vision, courage, and commitment must match that of our grantee partners. In the context of philanthropy and in partnership with them, we must set ambitious goals, devise creative strategies, and win.

Our new 2015–2019 Blueprint reflects our best learning gleaned from more than a decade of supporting this vibrant movement. Over the next five years, we are redoubling our efforts to be a key philanthropic partner to the movement, helping to take reproductive justice power to scale.
We urge you to join us in this critical work. Together, we can help build an ever-more powerful grassroots base that will continue to win major policy victories at the state and local levels, deepen and amplify national campaigns, and increase the ability of all people to access reproductive justice.

Vanessa Daniel
Executive Director, Groundswell Fund

Connie Cagampang Heller
Advisory Board Chair, Groundswell Fund
Co-Director, Linked Fate Fund for Justice
Building on Our Victories

Since our founding as an initiative of the Tides Foundation, Groundswell Fund has been a strong champion of grassroots organizing and advocacy led by the people experiencing the greatest reproductive health disparities. What began in 2003 as a $300,000 fund has grown into an organization with an annual budget of $5 million and a dedicated staff passionate about increasing philanthropic support for reproductive justice and grassroots organizing.

Groundswell Fund supports more reproductive justice organizations across the U.S. than any other grantmaker in the field. Since 2003, we have granted $20 million to 100 organizations, and provided millions more in capacity-building support. Through our annual evaluation (the most comprehensive annual assessment of the reproductive justice movement) and effective funder organizing, we also have increased the giving of dozens of national and local foundations and helped bring thousands of new individual donors to this movement.

Led by women of color, low-income women, and LGBTQ people, our grantee organizations are on the frontlines of the most important reproductive justice fights of our time—and they are winning. They have rallied hundreds of thousands of people to pass policies that promote reproductive and social justice around the country, while stopping harmful policies that damage our health and restrict our rights. From increasing access to abortion, contraception, and comprehensive sex education, to stopping the shackling of pregnant women in prison and reuniting families separated by inhumane immigration policies, they are making a real difference in the lives of women and LGBTQ people, their families, and our communities.
A Clear and Bold Vision Forward: Investing in RJ Power to Scale

After listening closely to our grantees and donor partners, our board and staff identified gaps in the field, took stock of our accomplishments, and mapped a clear and bold vision forward. The result of that work is our new 2015–2019 Blueprint, a plan that honors our mission, builds on our successes, and details specific goals and strategies for the next five years.

Through this work, we aim to help build an organized grassroots base with the scale, skill, and sustainability necessary to achieve long-term systems change. We will strive to nurture a reproductive justice movement that wins even more local and state victories, and achieves national impact. We envision women of color and reproductive justice groups being recognized as the powerful forces they are in social justice and progressive movements. We imagine reproductive justice groups adding strength to other social justice struggles, and more social justice organizations taking up reproductive justice causes, with greater understanding of our shared values.
2015–2019: Two Bold Goals

GOAL 1
Organize within philanthropy to expand total investment in reproductive justice power-building strategies:

- Award a total of $20 million in grants to reproductive justice power-building strategies across the country
- Attract new individual donors to the reproductive justice movement, in part by doubling the percentage of Groundswell Fund’s budget that comes from individual donors
- Play a leading role in catalyzing an increase in funding from foundations to reproductive justice work at the state and local level

GOAL 2
Grow the capacity of reproductive justice organizations to build power, win campaigns, and have sustainability for the long haul:

Invest $10 million in direct capacity-building support for reproductive justice organizations:

- 20 reproductive justice organizations will have strong integrated voter engagement capacity and the collective ability to reach 250,000 voters each year
- 40 reproductive justice organizations will have strong grassroots organizing capacity
- 15 organizations will have increased the amount of their annual revenue that comes from individual donors/earned income by 10%
Groundswell Fund defines strong grassroots organizing capacity as organizations with:

- A grassroots base of at least 50 volunteers who can be consistently mobilized to take action in-person (not counting online actions)
- Clear goals and systems for tracking the growth of their relationships with their base, leaders, allies and elected officials
- A sophisticated analysis of the political landscape including clear power maps that inform strategic campaign plans
- A functioning leadership ladder
- Leadership in key coalitions
- A demonstrated ability to evaluate the impact and effectiveness of policy decisions on their communities
In the United States, the majority of people support reproductive justice but the majority of policies and systems do not. This gap can only be bridged when the people organizing a strong grassroots base to hold decision makers accountable receive the resources they need to succeed. Groundswell’s is dedicated to resourcing the most effective grassroots efforts for systems change.
2015–2019: THREE CORE STRATEGIES

Grantmaking

Through its three funds, Groundswell Fund will provide “seeding, sustaining, and accelerating” grants to organizations across the United States. Seed grants will be made for new work in under-resourced areas such as the South. Sustaining grants will nourish established and emerging reproductive justice organizing efforts. A major new focus of will be our new ecosystem grant-making model, which accelerates systems change by increasing giving to reproductive justice organizations and their allies (such as economic justice groups) in key states.

Rapid Response Fund

Our newly launched Rapid Response Fund will empower advocates to respond to immediate, urgent challenges such as ballot initiative fights, major public attacks on reproductive justice, and environmental disasters.

Catalyst Fund

Our Catalyst Fund will continue to make deep investments in base-building, multi-issue organizing, and women-of-color leadership through general operating grants. Our flagship matching grants program will continue to bring new dollars to the field and create partnerships with local funders. Moving forward, we will merge the Reproductive Justice Fund and Catalyst Fund into one streamlined Catalyst Fund, which will continue to prioritize funding for work led by women of color. Most of our existing grant partners will continue, with grant amounts at the same levels.

Birth Justice Fund

Our Birth Justice Fund will amplify its efforts to reduce racial and economic disparities in maternal and infant health by making midwifery and doula care accessible to low-income women and women of color. Our goal is to double our annual grantmaking in this area to $360,000 by 2019.
Capacity Building

In addition to our grantmaking, we will expand our capacity-building efforts to help our grant partners improve their effectiveness through the following key areas:

- **Integrated Voter Engagement**, which blends community organizing and voter engagement to boost the scale and ability of grant partners to win systems change

- **Grassroots Organizing**, which supports the nuts and bolts of organizing and the fundamentals of advocacy, including how to identify issue priorities and demands, conduct community asset mapping, analyze the political landscape, and much more

- **Income Diversification**, which facilitates learning from other grassroots organizations that have successfully reduced reliance on foundation funding by building out their donor base and instituting earned-income models

- **Organizational Development**, designed according to grantees’ needs, in order to focus on areas such as stronger financial management and leadership succession

The underlying principle of our capacity-building work is that all programs are opt-in for grant partners, and organizations will not be required to participate in these programs in order to receive other grant support.
Central to our mission is encouraging funders and donors to learn more about reproductive justice and the need to fund organizations and movements led by those most impacted by the issue. Through briefings, convenings, materials, site visits, and one-on-one counsel, we work closely with our colleagues in philanthropy to inform and transform their grantmaking and giving.

Our funder organizing work has two intertwined goals:

• To increase funding directly to the field
• For funders and donors who cannot make direct grants to reproductive justice organizations, to increase funding to Groundswell Fund as a vehicle for moving more resources to the field

By 2019, we aim to double our annual budget to $10 million, with $7 million raised through institutional giving and $3 million raised through individual donors, and to move at least 80 percent of all revenue back out into the field.

Through rigorous annual evaluation (Groundswell Fund has the largest national data set on the reproductive justice movement), we will continue to document and share the impact of movement building at the grassroots level to advance reproductive justice.
What Is Reproductive Justice?

A Practical Strategy for Lasting Change

The reproductive justice movement is a transformational approach to advancing reproductive freedom and rights in the U.S. Founded more than 20 years ago by African American women, the movement encompasses the full spectrum of reproductive issues that impact people’s lives, from access to health care and information to mass incarceration, economic empowerment, and environmental health.

Central to the movement is the leadership and engagement of the people who experience the greatest reproductive health disparities, including women of color, low-income women, and LGBTQ people. The reproductive justice movement maintains that a grassroots base is essential to winning and maintaining policy and social change at the local, state, and national levels. It actively forges strong intersectional alliances, such as

There is no such thing as a single issue struggle because we don’t lead single issue lives.

— Audre Lorde
with labor and immigrant rights movements, to take a stand on reproductive policy fights. As a result, the movement now is the leading force in the U.S. engaging young people, low income people, and people of color as organizes and activists on reproductive issues.

**The New American Majority**

By 2020, millennials will comprise 40 percent of all eligible voters. People of color will make up the majority of the U.S. population by 2042. And single women of all races and ages comprised nearly a quarter of all voters in the last presidential election. Popularly known as the New American Majority, these three constituencies together have the potential to drive the direction of every major social issue facing the nation. Reproductive justice organizations are the leading edge of engagement for the New American Majority. Reproductive justice organizations all have:

- A multi-Issue platform that addresses the full spectrum of reproductive issues that impact our lives

- Diverse leadership that reflects the experiences of those facing the greatest reproductive health disparities, including women of color, low-income women, young women, and LGBTQ people

- An emphasis on grassroots organizing, policy advocacy, and alliance building that actively recruits new people and organizations to stand up on key reproductive justice fights
Partner with Groundswell Fund

For foundations and donors with a commitment to supporting under-resourced communities, Groundswell Fund:

• finds and funds the most impactful organizations
• pairs grants with capacity-building resources for the field
• leverages every contribution to attract new donors and dollars
• tracks and shares impact through robust evaluation

We have mapped a bold, clear path forward to take reproductive justice power to scale, and our collective investments are what will get us there. With your support, we can continue to help grow and sustain a movement that can improve the health and wellbeing of our communities—and win reproductive justice for all.

Join us!
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Co-Director, Linked Fate Fund for Justice

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Acknowledgements

Groundswell Fund would like to extend our heartfelt thanks to the many partners and allies who took the time to contribute their good thinking to this Blueprint, including: our staff, board, planning consultant Mariko Ryono, Sr. advisor Catherine Lerza, communications consultant Bilen Mesfin, and graphic designer Micah Bazant; former board members: Lourdes A. Rivera, Ford Foundation; Rini Banerjee, Foundation for a Just Society; Inger Brinck; and Elizabeth Hartig; as well as Lisa Korwin and Robin Horner of Korwin Consulting; Holly Bartling, General Service Foundation; Eric Braxton, Funders’ Collaborative on Youth Organizing; Vivian Chang, Advisor to California Calls; Will Cordery, Marguerite Casey Foundation; Sandra Davis, The California Endowment; Pat Eng, New York Women’s Foundation; Tannia Esparza, Young Women United; Erin Garner-Ford, ACT for Women and Girls; Jessica Gonzalez-Rojas, National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health; Karen Grove, Grove Foundation; Yamani Hernandez, Illinois Caucus for Adolescent Health; Laura Katzive, Wellspring Advisors; Kim Klein, Co-founder of the Grassroots Institute for Fundraising Training; Larry Kleinman, Pineros y Campesinos Unidos del Noroeste; Vivien Labaton, Former Director of Third Wave Foundation; Mary Lassen, Center for Community Change; Ellen Liu, Ms. Foundation for Women; Andrea Lynch, Foundation for a Just Society; Martha Matsuoka, Occidental College; LaTasha Mayes, New Voices Pittsburgh; Bill Mitchell, Alki Fund; Evelin Montes, Liberty Hill Foundation; Lynn Paltrow, National Advocates for Pregnant Women; Michelle Prichard, California Calls; Guillermo Quinteros, Solidago Foundation; Margarita Ramirez, Liberty Hill Foundation; Robby Rodriguez, W. K. Kellogg Foundation; Shira Saperstein, Conway Strategic; Kathy Sessions, Health and Environmental Funders Network; Malika Redmond, We Vote We Rise; Rye Young, Third Wave Fund.