



WASHINGTON AREA WOMEN'S FOUNDATION

2023 COMMUNITY INVESTMENT REPORT

A CRITICAL GAP IN TRADITIONAL PHILANTHROPY

INTRODUCTION

For over 25 years, Washington Area Women's Foundation has been dedicated to investing in the power and potential of women and girls. Since our founding in 1998, we've proudly partnered with more than 215 local organizations, granting over \$17 million to support women, girls, and gender-expansive people in the Washington metropolitan area.



Did you know less than 2% of philanthropic giving goes to women and girls?

To counter this disparity, the Women's Foundation intentionally prioritizes women, girls, and gender-expansive people of color-led organizations. We provide these organizations with general operating support and a streamlined application process, removing unnecessary barriers. We trust our grantee partners' expertise and actively seek their guidance to ensure our investments align with the most pressing needs identified by those directly impacted.

We are proud to share this overview of our 2023 community investments, showcasing the collective power of our partnerships and the progress we are making together.

ABOUT OUR MODEL

We believe that women and girls of color are powerful agents of change. Despite often being unrecognized, their efforts have consistently advanced human rights and gender, racial, and economic justice in our communities for decades.



Grantmaking: We provide grants to organizations actively championing gender, racial, and economic justice and also award funding directly to women, girls, and gender-expansive people of color to support their leadership development and community initiatives.

Advocacy: We center the lived experiences of women, girls, and gender-expansive people of color, ensuring their perspectives inform policymakers and the local philanthropic sector to promote systemic and institutional changes through a lens of gender, racial, and economic justice.

2023 IMPACT BY THE NUMBERS

\$572,000

total amount
granted

15

total # of
organizations
supported

100%

of grants awarded
were allocated
toward general
operating dollars

53%

of grants awarded were
allocated toward
organizations with
operating budgets of
\$1M or less

100%

of grants awarded were
allocated toward
organizations with women
or gender-expansive
leaders of color at the
helm

2023 WAS A YEAR OF CELEBRATION!

The year marked not only the 25th anniversary of our founding and the substantial impact we've achieved within our community for more than two decades but also ushered in a new era of growth and transformation as we welcomed our new president and CEO, Dr. Tamara Wilds Lawson, and made significant strides in advancing our mission.

Thanks to your generous support, we strengthened our grantmaking and advocacy efforts, driving transformative change within our community. We launched new programs and initiatives to tackle critical issues facing our region and collaborated with community partners and leaders to influence policies that amplify the voices and meet the needs of women and girls of color from birth to the boardroom.

We are deeply grateful for your continued partnership and belief in our mission. Your investment is a powerful affirmation of the potential within every woman and girl of color in our region and a commitment to creating a world where they can thrive.

ADVOCACY HIGHLIGHTS



We championed women and girls in our community, lending our voice to 8 advocacy coalitions and philanthropic collaboratives.



We partnered with grantee partners to influence 23 local and state policies, positively impacting women, girls, and their families.

“

"Washington Area Women's Foundation knows its grantee partners and their work deeply. I trust [The Women's Foundation] to distribute the funds where they will have the most impact in my community."

- WAWF Donor

”

25TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

HONORING OUR PAST.
EMPOWERING HER
FUTURE.



On October 11, 2023, the International Day of the Girl, we celebrated our 25th anniversary and the power of collective action. Over 400 prominent leaders and advocates gathered, united in their dedication to advancing the lives of women and girls of color in our region.

The evening honored our 2023 Visionary Award recipients, Carol Thompson Cole, President and CEO of Youth Invest Partners, and Doreen Gentzler, Retired News Anchor at NBC4, whose lifelong commitment to gender and racial equity have left an indelible mark on our community.

The event was awe-inspiring as we shared stories of impact, highlighted our accomplishments, and celebrated two formidable leaders. **Thanks to your generous support, we raised over \$330,000!**

We extend our deepest gratitude to our sponsors and attendees for making our 25th-anniversary reception an unforgettable success.

**Over 400 prominent
leaders and
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OUR PROGRAMS

BLACK WOMEN AND GENDER-EXPANSIVE LEADERSHIP PROJECT

In 2023, we took a bold step forward in our commitment to elevate Black women's leadership in the nonprofit sector by releasing our groundbreaking report, "Thrive as They Lead: Advancing the Infrastructure to Support Black Women Leaders in the D.C. Metro Area Nonprofit Sector." The report arrived at a critical moment, emphasizing the urgent need to center the voices of Black women and gender-expansive leaders in shaping the infrastructure necessary for their leadership to flourish and, in turn, strengthen our communities.

Through the collective wisdom and lived experiences of Black women and gender-expansive leaders, we gained invaluable insights into their successes, challenges, and aspirations. Of 32 Presidents, CEOs, and Executive Directors in the region surveyed, only 19% agreed that D.C. is a place where Black women leaders can thrive. We listened intently to their calls for change, recognizing the systemic inequities and obstacles that hinder their ability to lead authentically and fully.



"Thrive as They Lead" distills the following ten key themes from these conversations, offering a roadmap for funders, philanthropic leaders, and community partners to co-create a sector and region that truly champions and advances the leadership of Black women: Leadership, Support, Expectations, Vulnerability, Resisting Scarcity, Boards, Compensation, Funding, Donor Relationships, Donor Relationships, and Wellness.

“When you invest in Black women, in Black women leaders, and in Black-led nonprofits, you are really getting a higher rate of return for your dollars. We are more likely to be connected to the community to be able to match those dollars with the right resources and relationships.”
– Study Respondent

EARLY CARE & EDUCATION FUNDERS COLLABORATIVE

The Early Care and Education Funders Collaborative (ECEFC), now in its 15th year, ensures every child in our region has the strongest start possible. Investing in early childhood education is not simply about building a better system; it's about nurturing the future, one child at a time. Housed at The Women's Foundation, the ECEFC is a powerhouse of collaboration, bringing together funders and changemakers who share a passion for early childhood education. We focus on the big picture, championing systems-change work that tackles racial inequities head-on and takes a holistic approach to child development.

GOALS OF THE INITIATIVE

- **Champion Early Childhood Educators:** Facilitate the advancement of Early Care and Education issues to enhance support and recognition for early childhood educators, fostering a valued and sustainable Early Care and Education Workforce.
- **Increase Public Investment:** Advance initiatives for increased public funding to support capacity building and pay equity across Early Care and Education systems.
- **Elevate Educators' Voices:** Center the experience and voices of family and center-based early childhood educators in decision-making processes and uplift providers as critical contributors through partnerships that contribute to their well-being, professional development, and business expansion.
- **Data-Driven Decision Making:** Leverage data tracking and research to yield actionable insights for policy enhancements and identify and address gender-based disparities and barriers to equitable early care across the region.



ADVOCATING FOR ACCESS & AFFORDABILITY

- Child Resource Connect and its allies played a critical role in advocating for the passage of **HB 495/SB 350**, protecting investments in the Child Care Scholarship program. This legislation safeguards access to affordable childcare for countless families in Maryland.
- DC Fiscal Policy Institute (DCFPI), in partnership with Under 3 DC, successfully advocated for an expansion of the childcare subsidy program, now reaching **300%** of the federal poverty level. This expansion benefits an additional **2,200 children**, primarily Black and brown children, who have been disproportionately affected by childcare affordability challenges.

BUILDING CAPACITY & COMMUNITY

- DC Family Child Care Association (DCFCCA) organized the successful **Walk for Family Child Care Walkathon** on July 29, 2023, raising awareness and building community support for family childcare providers. Their advocacy efforts also contributed to the passage of the **Baby Act**, prohibiting discrimination against Family Child Care programs in Condo HOAs.
- Maryland State Family Child Care Association (MSSPA) provided critical assistance and funding to **30 Spanish-speaking owners** of child development homes, strengthening their businesses and expanding access to quality care. They also supported the opening of three new home-based programs.



STAND TOGETHER FUND



Launched in 2020, the Stand Together Fund was our direct response to the COVID-19 crisis, strategically designed to uplift our most vulnerable community members. With the world and our region shutting down, supporting our community became a critical necessity, especially for women, 47% of whom experience intimate partner violence, sexual violence, and/or stalking in their lifetimes.

The pandemic exacerbated this vulnerability, resulting in a 36% increase in calls to survivor support organizations. This surge highlighted the need for increased services for survivors and financial support for frontline care workers facing income loss.

Since its inception, the Stand Together Fund has disbursed grants to 23 regional organizations providing culturally specific services to survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault and those supporting the care economy. By offering general operating funding, we empower these organizations to adapt swiftly and meet the evolving needs of survivors. Additionally, our direct cash assistance payments to childcare workers underscore our trust in the community's ability to make informed decisions and respond innovatively to emerging challenges.

As we conclude this final grant cycle, we express our deepest gratitude to supporters like you who have made this vital work possible. Your generosity has fueled our collective impact, ensuring our community remains resilient despite adversity.

TOTAL IMPACT SINCE 2020

23

number of organizations funded

\$506,750

amount of funding disbursed

9,679

individuals supported

“Washington Area Women’s Foundation has led the charge in specifically centering agencies led by Executive Directors of color whose work supports and centers women and girls of color. [With their support], we have been able to expand capacity to respond to the increase in requests for sexual assault services specifically in the schools where sexual assault is disproportionately impacting girls of color.”
- Indira H., Executive Director, DC Rape Crisis Center

YOUNG WOMEN’S INITIATIVE

The Young Women's Initiative (YWI) continues to be a transformative regional effort dedicated to improving life outcomes and increasing opportunities for young women, girls, and gender-expansive youth of color in the District of Columbia and Prince George's County, Maryland. Through leadership development, advocacy, and direct support to organizations, the Initiative aims to dismantle systemic and institutional barriers to success, enabling young women of color to reach their full potential.

PROGRAMMATIC WORK & EXPANSION

Recently, we expanded the Young Women’s Initiative to Prince George’s County, MD, broadening our impact and reach.

To achieve our goals and improve educational, economic, and life outcomes for young women, girls, transgender, and gender non-conforming youth of color in the District of Columbia and Prince George’s County, Maryland, the Initiative convened, facilitated, and supported the following grantee partners: Community Youth Advance and the DC Girls Coalition.

“The Women’s Foundation and YWI provided me with the support, resources, and guidance to help me bring my vision of restorative healing circles for my community to life. I received mentorship through one-on-one sessions and participated alongside a cohort of other young female entrepreneurs as part of the Rock Star Fund.”
- Kyiniyah G., Rock Star Fund Awardee

★ ROCK STAR FUND

The Rock Star Fund, a cornerstone of our Young Women's Initiative, is more than just a grant; it's an investment in the boundless potential of young women, girls, and gender-expansive youth of color ages 12-24. With a one-time award of \$2,000, we're fueling a movement of changemakers who are transforming their communities and providing infrastructure for the next generation of leaders.

Goals of the Initiative

- **Mentorship and Community:** We go beyond funding by providing personalized support, mentorship, and a vibrant network of like-minded changemakers, fostering collaboration and growth.
- **Youth-Led Decision-Making:** Young leaders are at the heart of the Rock Star Fund. They actively participate in the grantmaking process, reviewing applications and selecting awardees, ensuring the funds support projects that resonate with their peers.

The Young Women’s Initiative was able to:

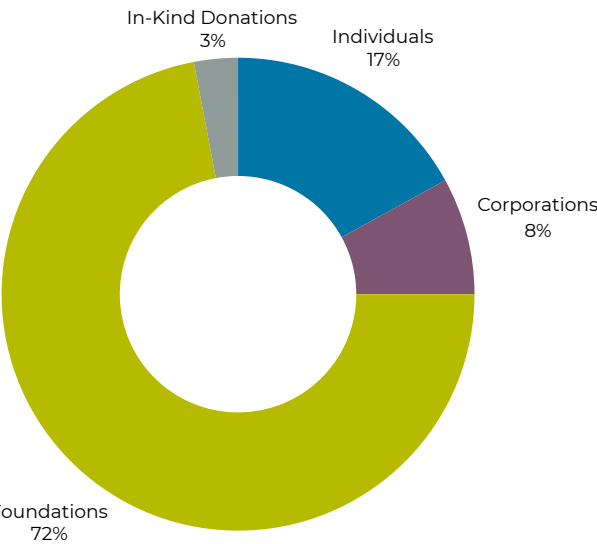
- 8 Select 8 Rock Star Fund recipients, providing them with financial support and mentorship to further their community investment and entrepreneurial goals.
- 300 Support the DCGC to provide ongoing support to over 300 young women and gender-expansive youth of color through advocacy and healing circles focused on their safety, health, and well-being.
- 2 Support the DCGC to host two town halls, with over 130 attendees, including city leaders, to discuss critical issues impacting young women.
- 40 Support the DCGC to convene a youth summit with 40 young people of color, amplifying their voices and perspectives on key issues.

FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP

As of June 30, 2023

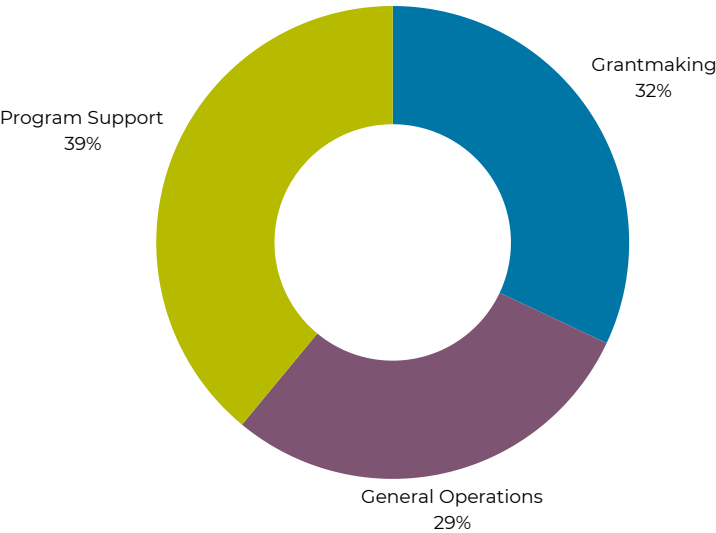


REVENUE



Total:
\$1,519,966

EXPENSES



Total:
\$1,773,571

OUR 2023 EARLY CARE & EDUCATION FUNDERS COLLABORATIVE INVESTORS

We are deeply grateful for the generosity and commitment of our investors, a diverse group of local and national corporate funders and foundations who share our vision for a thriving early care and education system. Their support makes our ECE work possible, allowing us to champion quality care, expand access, and empower educators to nurture the next generation of learners.

- Bainum Family Foundation
- Howard and Geraldine Polinger Family Foundation
- Richard E. and Nancy P. Marriott Foundation
- The Andrew and Julie Klingenstein Family Fund
- The J. Willard and Alice S. Marriott Foundation
- The Morris and Gwendolyn Cafritz Foundation
- The PNC Financial Services Group, Inc.
- The World Bank Group
- Washington Area Women’s Foundation

OUR 2023 GRANTEE PARTNERS

The Women’s Foundation has been fortunate to work with over 215 community-based organizations working to improve the lives of women and girls across the Washington region. Below are the Grantee Partners we worked with in 2023:

- 8 Rock Star Awardees
- Community Youth Advance
- DC Action
- DC Family Child Care Association
- DC Fiscal Policy Institute
- DC Girls' Coalition
- DCAEYC
- Mamatoto Village
- Maryland State Family Child Care Association (MSFCCA)
- Nonprofit Montgomery
- NVAEYC
- Prince George's Child Resource Center
- Spaces in Action
- The Multicultural Spanish-Speaking Providers Association
- The Person Center
- Voices for Virginia's Children

Learn more about The Women’s Foundation, our Funders, and Grantee Partners at thewomensfoundation.org!



THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING US!

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