

2021 Impact Report

A New World is Rising



GROUNDSWELL
ACTION FUND

Illuminating the Path in the Darkest Hours

Launched in the aftermath of the 2016 election, Groundswell Action Fund gives donors the opportunity to support the strongest and most promising women of color-led 501(c)(4) organizations across the United States.

After one of the most critical years in history for our country's promise of democracy, **the organizing and advocacy work of women of color**, Black women in particular, in 2021 was **essential** to protecting hard-won progressive victories amidst massive backlash.

The organizations that Groundswell Action Fund supports navigated these crises in ways that built power and advanced the struggle for justice with a long-view lens.

Mission

Groundswell Action Fund strengthens U.S. movements for reproductive and social justice by resourcing intersectional electoral organizing led by women of color, low-income women, and transgender and gender-expansive people of color.

Vision

While we and our grantee partners understand the importance of winning individual elections and policy fights, the long-term prize is creating and sustaining a truly inclusive, participatory democracy with leaders who come from and reflect our communities, and who are rooted in progressive values of interconnectedness, structural inclusion, and an economy for the common good.

Building Long-Term, Durable Power

Groundswell Action Fund was founded on the simple premise that those most excluded from our democracy should be at the center of transforming it.

Our grantee organizations and their communities confront the impacts of systemic racism, misogyny, homophobia, and transphobia daily because **one election cannot bring about broad, deep change**.

Building lasting political power in their communities, grantees fight – and win – on crucial progressive issues; advancing solidarity-based organizing strategies that expand access to democratic participation for all people. **We find and vet the groups that are already changing the game on local, state, and national levels and put crucial support behind them.**

Democracy requires robust electoral and legislative processes, but it also requires people in the streets who are ready and able to hold those in power accountable.

In 2021, our grantee partners fought back against the acceleration of systemic issues from 2020, such as...

An **affront on bodily autonomy** seen in efforts to end Roe v. Wade and attacks on Trans youth

34 additional **voter suppression** laws enacted in 19 states

White supremacy continued to deepen its hold on the nation as we witnessed the January 6 insurrection

Climate change-related emergencies including devastating fires, floods, and snowstorms



Groundswell Action Fund is the only funder in the political funding ecosystem focused on supporting Reproductive Justice movement groups to develop 501(c)(4) capacity.

Bold Demands, 360° Vision

“If there’s one funder we can count on to continue to fund us even as our community speaks its most courageous truth to power, it’s Groundswell.”

– Michelle Tremillo, Texas Organizing Project



With hundreds of bills introduced in 2021 legislative sessions to restrict abortion access and voting rights, Groundswell Action Fund grantee partners utilized every strategic tool available to fight back and even expand voting access and bodily autonomy.

Women of color continued to propel our country forward by defending democracy and protecting hard-won victories from the 2020 ballot box. Our grantee partners strengthened internal infrastructures such as human resources personnel policies, strategic planning, and fundraising, not only to account for the pandemic but to achieve scale for the long term. Grantees also engaged millions of youth and voters of color to participate in consequential legislative sessions and local and statewide elections.

Mobilizing Black Voters in Virginia: Black Progressive Action Coalition National 2021 grant: \$75,000

During a crucial election in Virginia in 2021, **Black Progressive Action Coalition (BPAC)** helped organize the highest ever voter turnout for an off-year election. BPAC mobilized 500,000 Black voters in the statewide elections while elevating and advancing policy discussion around its core issues of economic justice, democracy, health, education, and the environment.

Core to this major mobilization was a strategic communications program that established trusted messenger relationships to implement early voter education strategies and counter disinformation.

Though the Blue trifecta was lost, the groundwork laid could prove crucial in future efforts for progress in Virginia

California Momnibus Act: Black Women for Wellness Action Project State-based 2021 grant: \$50,000

Black Women for Wellness Action Project (BWWAP) achieved a landmark victory in 2021 by helping to introduce the **California Momnibus Act**. The bill, signed into law by California Governor Gavin Newsom after passing both houses of the legislature by large margins, includes doula coverage for Medicare recipients and expanded access to midwifery services, and requires the state to close the racial maternal and infant mortality gap.

BWWAP also fortified its internal systems so that it could engage voters in the gubernatorial recall election, while deepening relationships with its base of Black women and girls to connect voting to the issues that impact them most, particularly for the 2022 midterm elections.



Ending Federal Abortion Coverage Bans: All* Above All Action Fund National 2021 grant: \$75,000

All* Above All Action Fund, a national organization centering abortion justice, contributed to a historic moment for an end to abortion coverage bans when President Biden’s 2022 budget did not include the **Hyde Amendment**. Through their **Abortion Justice Roadmap**, All* Above All campaigned for a federal budget without abortion coverage bans. This was the first Presidential budget without the Hyde Amendment in decades.

The organization is now working with national and state partners to challenge the Supreme Court decision that allowed Texas’ six-week abortion ban, SB8, to stand, and to win passage of the **EACH Act** to protect the right to abortion for all women.

Their efforts are critical as we face a post-Roe v Wade reality with the Supreme Court’s ruling on **Dobbs v Jackson Women’s Health Organization**, expected in June 2022.





Protecting Our Democracy: Black Voters Matter Fund

National | 2021 grant: \$75,000

Across the U.S., voting rights are being threatened in epic proportions, and despite the change in administrations, Black and Brown communities continue to suffer. That’s why Groundswell Action Fund grantee **Black Voters Matter Fund** was part of the host committee for the **Make Good Trouble Rally** marking the 58th anniversary of the 1963 March on Washington.



Not only is Black Voters Matters part of the organizing efforts, but they have also been working hard to combat voter suppression efforts, calling for the passage of the For The People Act (HR1) and the John Lewis Voting Rights Act (HR4), and driving the “Blackest Bus in America” for a **2021 Freedom Ride** voter outreach tour from Mississippi to Washington D.C. BVMF also weighed in on key elections, including the election of Tishaura Jones as St. Louis’ first Black mayor.



Black Voters Matter Fund knows how to build power in communities through an emphasis on relational organizing and prioritizing local infrastructure. And their method of approaching relationships as infrastructure works.

Now on the ground in 11 states, Black Voters Matter Fund builds political power in marginalized, predominantly Black communities because effective voting allows communities to determine their own destinies.

Digital and Grassroots Organizing for Latinx and Chicanx Movement: Mijente

National | 2021 grant: \$60,000

Mijente is committed to reaching Latinx people who have been locked out of leadership roles in Latinx organizations – Black, LGBTQ, transgender, or gender-expansive people, women, and those who are low-income, working-class, or formerly incarcerated—focusing on regions of the country without adequate organizing infrastructure or resources.



Throughout 2021, Mijente partnered with grassroots groups in target states, including North Carolina and Georgia, to mobilize Latinx voters, while continuing to expand electorally-focused work in the Southeast and the Southwest.

It also continued two core accountability campaigns: #NoTechForICE and police accountability.



#NoTechForICE identifies and exposes the links between private corporations and increased systemic criminalization and militarization of immigrants and communities of color.

The next phase of the campaign will build awareness around the harmful impacts of the **Biden Administration’s proposed high tech virtual border wall** and **the Department of Homeland Security’s plan to build a massive, invasive biometrics collection database.**



For a complete list of Groundswell Action Fund grantees, please visit our website.

Some activities described in this report were conducted with additional grants from funders other than Groundswell Action Fund.

Meeting the Moment Through Capacity Building

In 2021, we dedicated \$400,000 in capacity-building support to grantees through tailored coaching assistance in specific areas. All capacity-building offerings are optional for grantee partners and have been identified as needs by movement leaders.

Key areas of capacity-building support included:



Access to Data



Strategic Planning



Legal & Compliance



Media & Communications



(c)(4) Startup Infrastructure Support



Digital Security Training



Ballot Issue Campaign Strategy

“Groundswell’s track record of bolstering women of color-led organizing with general support funding and capacity building is unparalleled in the philanthropic sector.”

– Connie Heller

Groundswell Action Fund donor



Organizational Health is Critical

The sustainability of organizations that are doing year-round political organizing is critical to the health of the United States’ democracy. Boom-and-bust funding that only shows up to elect certain candidates during key election years stresses and cracks organizational staffing and infrastructure.

Throughout 2021, we stood in the gap for organizations, providing them robust infrastructure support.

Highlights include:

Data, Digital, and Tech



Provided a first-of-its-kind data training series entitled “Reclaiming Data-Driven Strategy for Community Power”, created in partnership with Emma Tramble of Wiser Strategy, Inc. Emma Tramble is a long-time Groundswell Integrated Voter Engagement coach and data practitioner and one of the top Black women data practitioners in the ecosystem.

(c)(4) Start-Up Infrastructure



Wrapped up an 18-month (c)(4) startup infrastructure program supporting emergent RJ 501(c)(4)/multi-entity power-building organizations in partnership with New Left Accelerator and RoadMap.

Legal Compliance



Offered compliance coaching directly to several emerging 501(c)(4) grantee organizations through the grant application process and during the grant period. This was particularly needed as grantee organizations wrapped up 2020 operations and utilized assistance with state and federal reporting on elections work.

Communications Training



Sponsored 10 grantee organizations’ attendance at Reframe’s SPIN Academy, a communications training for organizers. Participants focused on strategy development grounded in narrative power building and communications tactics and techniques.



Revolutionary Strength in Numbers

Funder organizing is a hallmark of Groundswell’s work. We are excited that our donor community has grown from four at our inception in 2017 to nearly 70 supporters today. Support from both long-standing and new donors and funders is a powerful vote of confidence in Groundswell Action Fund’s ability to replicate the success Groundswell Fund has had in the 501(c)(3) arena in the 501(c)(4) arena.

Because 501(c)(4) funding is less abundant than tax-deductible 501(c)(3) funding, it is crucial that we build a robust, durable base of donors and funders committed to resourcing this work.

In 2021, GAF moved \$2,580,000 to 48 organizations. We maintained grant amounts to long-standing grantees – national organizations received grants of \$75,000 each (up from \$50,000), and state-based organizations received \$60,000 grants (up from \$50,000). New grantees received grants of \$50,000. Emerging (c)(4) RJ organizations received planning grants of \$30,000 each.

Of the 48 organizations supported in 2021:

98%

are led by women of color

37.5%

are led by Black women

33%

are based in and/or work in the U.S. South

Since the launch of the [Blueprint in 2020](#), we have moved \$6.3 million of our \$20 million goal to the field.

2021 Funder Organizing Highlights

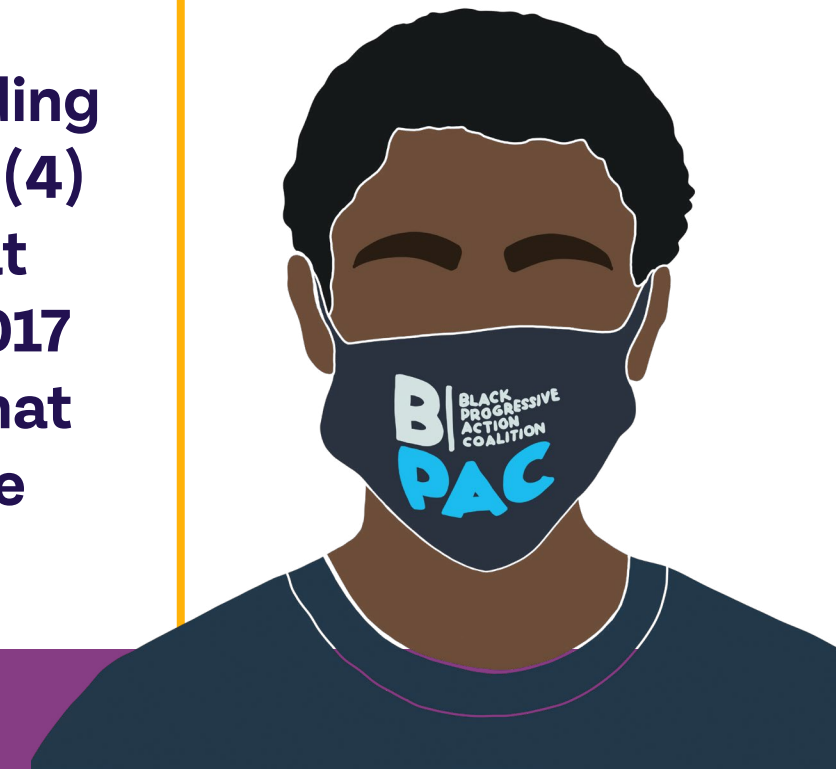
Quanita Toffie, Senior Director was a featured speaker for the **Funders Committee Action Fund’s Redistricting Funder Briefing**.

The discussion focused on the need for adequate 501(c)(4) general funding support to organizations engaged in redistricting efforts.

Developed and moderated a webinar for Funders for Reproductive Equity, **“Building Community Power to Advance Reproductive Equity and Justice: Exploring New Opportunities and Best Practices for Creating 501(c)(4) Organizations.”**

Invited to speak at an in-person **Democracy Salon in NYC hosted by Galaxy Gives**, which brought together high net worth individuals ages 18-25 to learn about the intersection of reproductive justice and democracy and how to support (c)(4) organizing efforts.

We provided seed funding to the only **four 501(c)(4) RJ organizations** that existed in the US in 2017 and have increased that number to **nine** since our inception.



Acknowledgments

Groundswell Action Fund is committed to continuing to unlock significant resources for organizations asserting the human rights of all and advancing a strong, inclusive agenda for change. This work would not be possible without your support.

Thank you.

We would like to thank all of our board, staff, and partners who have informed our work throughout 2021, including all past and present Groundswell Action Fund grantee organizations who are on the frontlines of innovation and change every day. We see you, and we have your back.

2021 Staff

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Quanita Toffie (she/her), Groundswell Action Fund, Senior Director

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2021 Board of Directors

Silvia Henriquez (she/her) (Chair) - Co-Director, All*Above All Action Fund

Kierra Johnson (she/her) (Vice-Chair) - Executive Director, National LGBTQ Task Force

Rye Young (he/him) (Treasurer) - Social Justice Philanthropy Consultant, Rye Young Consulting

LaTosha Brown (she/her) - Founding Director, Black Voters Matter Fund

Dawn Boudwin (she/her) - VP of Partnerships, Made to Save/Civic Nation

Jessica Byrd (she/her) - Founder, Three Point Strategies

Chrissie Castro (she/her) - Co-Founder, Advance Native Political Leadership (ANPL)

Daroneshia Duncan-Boyd (she/her) - Founder & Executive Director, TAKE Resource Center

Michelle Tremillo (she/her) - Co-Founder and Executive Director, Texas Organizing Project

Photo Credits in Order of Appearance

All* Above All Action Fund | Black Progressive Action Coalition | Women for Wellness Action Project

Black Voters Matter Fund | Mijente

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