



Make Democracy Great Again

Groundswell Action Fund
2022 Impact Report





Image courtesy of People Power Action Fund

Under Attack & Fighting Back

Unprecedented attacks on bodily autonomy and extreme voter suppression aimed at communities of color created a pressure cooker of an election year in 2022. Hundreds of election deniers and insurrectionists ran for office. And [Republicans filed a record number of lawsuits](#) challenging the results of midterm elections and attacking the right to vote.

Since 2020, **election denial has become dangerously mainstream** and normalized. This climate alongside a global trend toward fascism and white supremacy leaves our democracy hanging in the balance. That's why the urgency with which we do this work is at an all-time high.

At this moment, we all need to be bolder. **Think bolder. Act bolder. Fund bolder.**

We need to match the investments made by the far right during the last fifty years.

We need to fund our movements like we want us to win.

Groundswell Action Fund and our grantee partners have been building the political power and organizational infrastructure to fight back since our launch in 2017. Together, we push funders to prioritize electoral organizing, voter engagement, and policy advocacy while modeling how to work across issues and identities using an intersectional lens.

Despite intensified polarization and reactionary attacks targeting voting rights and bodily autonomy, our grantees have won legislative change, defeated regressive policy proposals, and elected new progressive voices to office. And they've done this all while addressing the intensified economic pressures facing communities long in crisis as well as the increased

Our votes are not disposable. We are not disposable.

marginalization of people of color, immigrants, and LGBTQ+ people. **As we prepare for the 2024 presidential election ahead, we must bolster our movements for change. We must double down on our investments in long-term organizing with a steadfast commitment to leave no state behind.** We must ensure that the grassroots organizations on the ground fighting for us amidst ever-worsening conditions have the resources to succeed and sustain themselves in this fight for our collective future.

By funding electoral organizing and policy advocacy at scale, we will build long-term political power in our communities. That is how we win. **And when we win, we win liberation not only for our people but for all people.**

**We've seen a force that would shatter our nation rather than share it
Would destroy our country if it meant delaying democracy
And this effort very nearly succeeded
But while democracy can be periodically delayed
it can never be permanently defeated**

from *The Hill We Climb*
by Amanda Gorman, Presidential Inaugural Poet



GROUNDSWELL ACTION FUND'S 2022 GIVING

Progress to Goals on Groundswell's 5-Year Blueprint

In 2022, we passed the midway point in our journey to deliver on the ambitious goals outlined in Groundswell Action Fund's Blueprint. This five-year strategic plan is a bold commitment to move another \$100 million to the field between 2020-2025, with Groundswell Action Fund moving \$20 million and Groundswell Fund moving \$80 million.

Since 2020, we have moved \$10 million of our \$20 million Blueprint goal to movements for reproductive and social justice. And we are on track to increase our annual budget from \$1.5 million in 2020 to \$5 million at the end of 2025.

Since our inception in 2017, our community of supporters has grown from four to 100+ today. More than 40% of that growth has happened in the last year. Support from both long-standing donors and new funders is a decisive vote of confidence in Groundswell Action Fund's ability to transform the electoral arena and enact policy change that matters for our communities.

You can learn more about our 2020-2025 Blueprint at groundswellactionfund.org.

Grants Provided:
\$3.7 million to 52 organizations

Capacity Building Support:
\$160,000 to 18 organizations

Long-Term Investments are Transformational

Year after year, we witness reproductive and social justice organizations making bold moves throughout midterm and presidential election cycles to boost their political power. And year after year, we watch their progress get steamrolled after election day. These harmful cycles of boom-and-bust funding—that only shows up to elect certain candidates during a key election year—do not allow leaders to build the strong, sustainable base of power needed to enact real change.

Groundswell Action Fund's response is to **focus our investments where they'll make the most significant impact and commit for the long haul.** In a world where our communities confront the effects of systemic racism, misogyny, homophobia, and transphobia daily, our grantee partners work tirelessly to put representative leadership in office and pass progressive policy change.

Democracy requires robust civic and legislative processes. It also requires an engaged community—people in the streets ready and able to take action and hold those in power accountable.

The current climate of 501c4 giving only proves that funding tied to a single grant-cycle or election-cycle can't be the future of philanthropy. We must add fuel to the already burning fires of local and state organizing, building coalition strength and organizational capacity on the left. No one election cycle can bring about change that broad and deep. That is why Groundswell— and the communities we support—are in this for the long haul.

“Many funders have our back to win the next campaign or election. Groundswell Action Fund is a funder who has our back on the path to liberation.”

— Jessica Byrd
Movement For Black Lives
Electoral Justice Project



Image courtesy of United for Respect



Image courtesy of Mijente



Three Pillars of Support

Giving to Groundswell transforms reproductive justice and social change organizations working in the electoral and legislative arenas. Each of these three strategies strengthens and reinforces the others.

1 GRANTMAKING: Organizations doing year-round electoral organizing are critical to U.S. democracy. That's why Groundswell Action Fund provides **unrestricted, multi-year, general support grants** that allow organizations to build long-term financial stability and avoid the harm caused by boom-and-bust funding tied to election cycles. We also provide **short-term, rapid response funding** in moments of extreme challenge or unexpected opportunity.

2 CAPACITY BUILDING: Groundswell Action Fund stands in the gap for organizations, providing robust support to build their capacity. Traditional models of electoral organizing can put stress on staff and crack organizational infrastructure. That's why we **bolster the stability, health, and sustainability of our grantees** by providing capacity-building funds.

3 FUNDER ORGANIZING: We're committed to **driving more resources to electoral organizing** led by women of color, low-income women, and transgender people, whether or not those funds come through our doors. Through connections with philanthropic advisors and affinity groups, Groundswell speaks with hundreds of people each year to raise the visibility of our partner organizations and secure additional resources for their work.

We Are Transforming Democracy

Groundswell Action Fund supports the most effective 501c4 organizations, led by Black women, women of color, low-income women, transgender folks, and gender-expansive leaders of color, as they build transformative political power and energize a truly inclusive, participatory democracy.

In the past, these **leaders of color have been so thoroughly cut off from financial support for their electoral organizing** that grants from Groundswell Action Fund quickly became among the largest received by some of the premier women of color-led efforts in the country.

Your support fills a critical gap in philanthropy. Here is just some of what you've helped make possible this year...

Stories from the Field

All* Above All Action Fund *Supporting abortion justice across the nation*

As access to abortion care and services is falling nationally, All* Above All Action Fund continues to advance a collaborative, long-term vision for justice. Through deep community engagement, the Fund made calls to elected officials locally and nationally, launching its largest paid media campaign for abortion justice in Texas, Michigan, Colorado, and Nevada. They also released a **comprehensive Action Plan for Abortion Justice**. This plan underscores the need for access in local communities, affordability, insurance coverage, and safety and dignity in getting abortion care regardless of gender, sexual orientation, immigration status, or income. In order to advance and secure abortion justice for all, they aim to enact a long-term strategy shaped by people most affected by abortion bans.

Victories in California, Kentucky, Michigan, Vermont, and Montana make it clear that when the issue of abortion is in the hands of the voters themselves, abortion justice wins.

— All* Above All Action Fund

STORIES FROM THE FIELD



Image courtesy of Asian Pacific Islander Political Alliance

Freedom Action Now (FAN)

Makeup of Wisconsin Supreme Court flips progressive in wake of Dobbs decision to overturn Roe v. Wade

Founded in 2020 as the c4 partner of 20-year-old Freedom Inc., FAN is building political power among low-to-no-income communities of color and LGBTQ+ communities in Madison's Dane County and six other Wisconsin counties. With expertise working with communities profoundly affected by violence and war, FAN organizes Black, Cambodian, and Hmong women, youth, gender non-conforming, and transgender community members. Using a "Linked Liberation" model of political education, they engage folks through voter education, leadership development, community organizing, and policy advocacy.

In 2022, FAN made 80,000 phone calls to voters and engaged 20,000 people via social media. They also endorsed candidates who support reproductive justice and provided information to their communities about how and where to vote. In early 2023, FAN continued their voter mobilization efforts in the state's election for the Supreme Court, knowing the outcome would have a direct impact on reproductive justice in Wisconsin. Because when *Roe v. Wade* fell, the state reverted to a criminal abortion ban on the books from 1849. In a race that captured attention nationwide and was the most expensive state supreme court race in U.S. history, **FAN made more than 20,000 calls to voters and helped flip the ideological balance of the court. With a progressive majority secured, it is highly likely that the lawsuit to overturn the 1849 ban will advance.**

“Bodily autonomy is a prerequisite for freedom.”

– Freedom Action Now

New Virginia Majority (NVM)

Multi-year organizing pays dividends as first Black woman in Virginia history elected to U.S. Congress

Centered in working-class communities of color, NVM engages, educates, and develops leadership in the state's urban areas. Organizing together as working class women of color, LGBTQ people, immigrants, and youth, they are mobilizing to end mass incarceration, build just economic policies, protect immigrants, expand democracy and access to the ballot, and preserve the environment.

Since 2015, NVM has registered 300,000+ voters, knocked on over 2.5 million doors, and helped elect a legislature that reflects the state's demographics, including 11 more women and the first two Latinas ever elected. This sea change helped expand Medicaid to nearly 400,000 people and more than **150,000 formerly incarcerated people had their voting rights restored, thanks to NVM's organizing.**

“We win when we show communities what is at stake, and when we provide a bold vision forward with key policies that will improve people's lives.”

– New Virginia Majority

While 2021 saw the election of an ultra-conservative governor and the loss of the Blue majority in the state Senate, in 2022, NVM focused on protecting past wins and building infrastructure for 2023 when the entire House of Delegates, now Blue controlled, is up for re-election. This work showed early signs of success when NVM and its allies made history in a 2023 special election, electing a Black woman to U.S. Congress for the first time in state history.



Image courtesy of Florida Rising

(quote source: <https://freedomactionnow.org/2022/11/Sign-the-Bodily-Autonomy-Pledge>)



(quote source: https://assets.nationbuilder.com/newvirginiamajority/pages/3946/attachments/original/1671067492/2022_NVM_FOY_Impact_Report.pdf?1671067492)

Image courtesy of New Virginia Majority

STORIES FROM THE FIELD



Black Women for Wellness Action Project (BWWAP)

From historic legislation to a constitutional amendment, California secures its place as a reproductive freedom state

BWWAP is the first Black-women-led reproductive justice 501(c)(4) organization in the country. In its five-year history, they have quickly established an essential place in California's political landscape: hosting candidate forums with partner organizations, endorsing candidates, and leading on some of the state's most important reproductive justice legislation.

In anticipation of the fall of *Roe v. Wade* in 2022, BWWAP dedicated two years to ensuring California would deliver on its promise to be a reproductive freedom state and meet the rising demand for people in need of abortion care from across the country. This work resulted in the creation of the California Future of Abortion Council, where BWWAP is a steering committee member. Together, they advanced a [historic 15-bill legislative package to secure reproductive freedom throughout the state as well as \\$200 million in funding to expand reproductive health care](#). During the 2022 midterm election, BWWAP deployed another successful campaign. They organized to advance passage of Prop 1, a ballot initiative that enshrined abortion and contraceptive access in the California constitution. Additionally, eight of their nine endorsed candidates won elected office at the city, country, state, and federal levels.

“Our work is long-term. And just as our vision is big and bold, so is our determination.”

– Black Women for Wellness Action Project

Funder Organizing: Moving Dollars Where They Are Needed Most

Funder organizing is a hallmark of Groundswell's work. Beyond our grantmaking, Groundswell staff participate in various affinity groups with funders and financial advisors. Each year, we speak to hundreds of people, deepening our relationships with key leaders and raising the visibility of reproductive, racial, and gender justice groups. Through this work, we are boosting donations to electoral organizing led by women of color, low-income women, transgender folks, and gender-expansive people of color.

Groundswell Action Fund entered 2022 with \$2.6 million in unanticipated income, compared to \$1.5 million in 2021, due to our fundraising success and heightened funder and donor interest during the 2020 election cycle. These funds ensured renewal grants and additional capacity-building support for all 52 grantees.

To achieve sustainability in our fundraising, and to increase overall resources moving to the field, we have launched an ambitious funder organizing program to educate funders and donors on the importance of c4 funding, share the impact of our grantees to philanthropic audiences, and coordinate with our funder peers to optimize impact.

“We know this work can only be moved when relationships exist with organizations on the ground doing the work. Investing in the long-term infrastructure that is needed, rather than the one-off, boom-and-bust cycle that is the norm, is how we build durable power. This is a call to recognize those movement-accountable institutions who have those relationships and to invest in them.”

– Quanita Toffie, Senior Director Groundswell Action Fund



CAPACITY BUILDING: CREATING SUSTAINABLE ORGANIZATIONS

In 2022, Groundswell Action Fund dedicated \$200,000 in capacity-building support to grantees through tailored coaching assistance in specific areas. All capacity-building offerings have been identified as needs by movement leaders and participation is always optional for grantee partners.

Key areas where capacity-building assistance is most often requested include data, digital, and technology; legal compliance; media and communications; c4 start-up and infrastructure support; leadership development; and campaign strategy for ballot initiatives.

Capacity Building Highlights

Legal Compliance: Compliance coaching is the most common capacity-building resource requested by Groundswell Action Fund grantees. They work directly with our compliance consultant to tackle operational challenges and build stronger operations. For emerging 501(c)(4) organizations, this coaching often includes expert support around state and federal reporting on their electoral work. Grantees are also given assistance to ensure they can pivot as needed throughout legislative and electoral cycles. Ultimately, this coaching ensures grantee partners can leverage our funding boldly and legally in highly politicized environments.

Communications Training: To help amplify their messages, Groundswell provided writing support to five grantee leaders to produce thought pieces and share stories of their work on gender and reproductive justice issues. We also sponsored five grantee partners to attend the 2022 Narrative Power Summit, a two-day convening for progressive and radical social justice communicators hosted by the Radical Communicators Network and ReFrame.

Leadership Development: In 2022, Groundswell Action Fund sponsored grantee partners BYP100 Action Fund, The Equity Alliance Fund, Working Families Organization, and New American Leaders Action Fund to join re:power's inaugural Standing in Our Power: Women of Color Leadership Cohort. The program supported women of color leaders over a 10-week period with intensive, focused training on management, healing justice, organizational development, and peer coaching.

Database Access and Tech Training: Through our membership in The Movement Cooperative, Groundswell Action Fund ensured eight emerging c4 reproductive justice grantee partners gained access to the Voter Activation Network, texting, and other data tools. Data access is critical for organizations to run year-round campaigns, engage in base-building, strengthen their infrastructure, and measure the impact of their work.

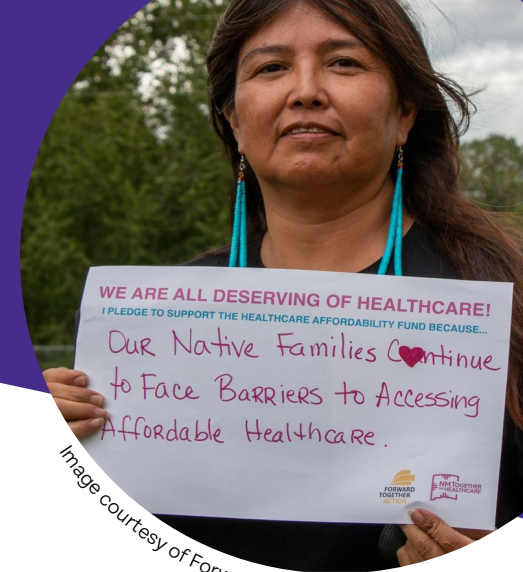


Image courtesy of Forward Action Together



Image courtesy of Mothering Justice

Image courtesy of New Virginia Majority

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Image courtesy of Black Women for Wellness Action Project



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