



GROUNDSWELL
ACTION FUND



Breaking Barriers, Building Power: A Year of Action and Resilience

2023 IMPACT REPORT

From the Desk of the Executive Director

DEAR COMRADES,

As we look back on 2023 and prepare for the 2024 elections, it's evident that the impactful work of women, transgender, and gender-expansive people of color has played a pivotal role in defending and propelling democratic progress despite mounting challenges.



Our nation has been starkly divided since the Supreme Court overturned *Roe v. Wade* in June 2022.

In some states, laws safeguard bodily autonomy, but in others, restrictive abortion measures continue to disproportionately impact marginalized communities. Assaults on LGBTQ rights, mainly targeting transgender individuals, have surged to unprecedented levels.

At the time of the publication, there have been **597 laws introduced in 43 states** that seek to prohibit trans people from accessing basic healthcare, education, legal recognition, and the right to exist publicly. Forty-one states have abortion bans in effect with limited exceptions. Six states have introduced legislation to criminalize those who have abortions and those who perform them.

It's imperative to recognize that these attacks on reproductive and LGBTQ rights are not isolated incidents but part of a broader, organized assault on bodily autonomy. **Policies and laws that infringe upon bodily autonomy undermine the principles of democracy by limiting individual freedom and agency.** That's why our grantee

partners work to defend and advance gender and reproductive justice – it is integral to ensuring that governments remain accountable to the people and uphold democratic values.

Despite our formidable challenges, we stand committed to our vision for a multiracial, feminist democracy.

Groundswell Action Fund and our grantee partners continue to effect change and push back against authoritarian, theocratic, and fascist forces who want to control our bodies.

Thank you for your unwavering dedication to our joint liberation. Together, we march forward in resistance against oppression and strive to advance justice for all.

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IN SOLIDARITY,



QUANITA TOFFIE
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

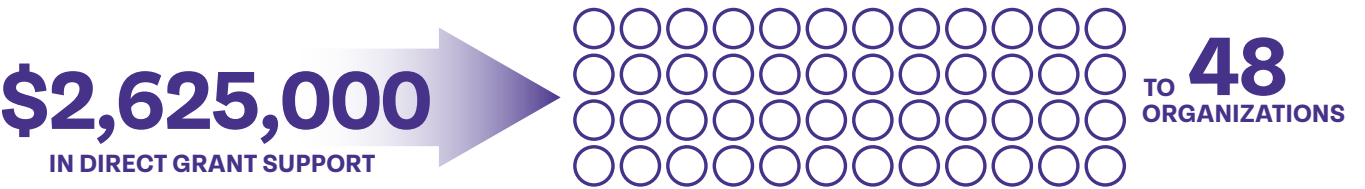
ADVANCE DEMOCRACY, FUND GRASSROOTS POWER-BUILDING

Throughout 2023, our grantee organizations have been at the forefront of the fight for justice, advocating for reproductive rights, bodily autonomy, LGBTQ rights, and the expansion of democracy through c4 power-building.

The challenges we face are immense, but so, too, is our determination to create positive change. Despite formidable odds and a democratic system in dire need of reform, organizations backed by Groundswell Action Fund are at the forefront of the resistance against authoritarianism, anti-democratic tendencies, and fascist ideologies. They also champion reproductive justice, gender equality, racial equity, economic fairness, democracy, and human rights nationwide.

Thanks to generous donors like you who believe in the importance of building political power all year, every year, Groundswell Action Fund disbursed \$2.625 million to the grassroots, and provided \$300,000 in capacity-building support.

MOVED \$2,925,000 TO THE GRASSROOTS IN 2023



CAPACITY BUILDING

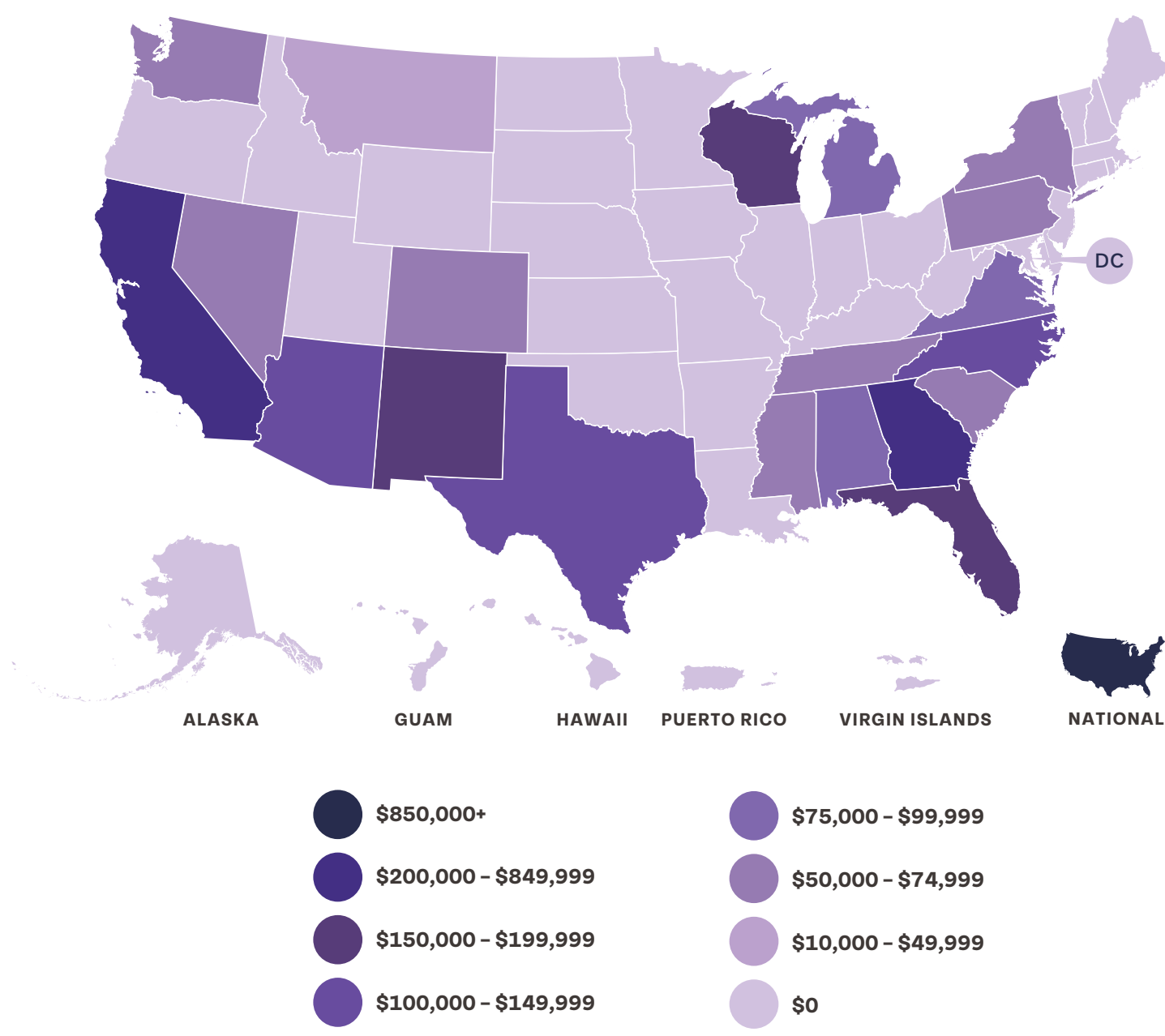


GROUNDSWELL IS ONE OF THE ONLY FUNDERS IN THE ECOSYSTEM FOCUSED ON HELPING THE RJ MOVEMENT BUILD OUT C4 CAPACITY.



Image courtesy of
ALLIANCE FOR YOUTH ACTION

2023 INVESTMENT BY STATE



Three Pillars of Support

Giving to Groundswell transforms reproductive justice and social change organizations working in the electoral and legislative arenas. Grantmaking, capacity building, and funder organizing are Groundswell Action Fund's core strategies to achieve transformational social change and reproductive justice.

1

GRANTMAKING

Our grantmaking is **unrestricted and general support** so that our organizations can have the confidence and clarity to invest in people and projects to get the work done. We also provide **short-term, rapid-response funding** in moments of crisis or unexpected opportunity after listening to movement leaders.

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 grantee partners by providing capacity-building support.

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.



Image courtesy of JOBS WITH JUSTICE



Image courtesy of
BLACK VOTERS MATTER

Propelling Democracy Forward

PILLAR ONE: GRANTMAKING

In 2023, Groundswell Action Fund grantee partners continued to propel our country forward to actualize change, helping to translate mass voter dissatisfaction with the fall of *Roe v. Wade* into positive, progressive electoral and policy outcomes.

Strengthening their internal capacity and external outreach efforts was key for preparing these organizations for a big election year. Across the country, our grantee partners stepped up their c4 policy advocacy work in the face of extreme opposition and division, lifting and amplifying the voices of women of color and LGBTQIA+ people and their allies at the local, state, and national levels.

From **Jobs with Justice** successfully advocating for the New York Hero Act, which enacted monetary and physical protections for frontline workers in New York state, to **Black Voters Matter** increasing Black voter turnout in nearly two dozen states to **MPower Change Action Fund** increasing the number of Muslim voters in nine states, **our grantee partners are taking steps that build toward political transformation, even when the road is long, dangerous, and full of obstacles.**

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GRANTEE PARTNERS IN ACTION

Alliance for Youth Action

Growing progressive power by empowering local youth-led organizations

In a year filled with anti-trans legislation, Alliance for Youth Action worked with their partner, New Hampshire Youth Movement, to defeat every anti-trans bill filed in the 2023 legislative session.

Along with coalition partners, they fought against SB 272, an anti-trans forced-outing bill, which was indefinitely postponed at the end of the legislative session in May 2023. Alliance for Youth Action also supported youth organizing and electoral work in Ohio, supporting Amendment 1, an initiative legalizing abortion until fetal viability.

Youth turnout in Ohio was an astounding 54% in an off-term election, compared to the previous 28% in 2018, which is largely considered to yield a higher voter turnout. This outcome shows that investment in youth-led organizations is the vanguard against right-wing attacks on our civil and human rights.



Image courtesy
of ALLIANCE FOR
YOUTH ACTION

“ We want to create a world where our democracy works for everyone and where all people – no matter where they come from, what they look like, or how they identify – live in loving, safe, and thriving communities. ”

— Alliance for Youth in Action
SOURCE: gswell.info/a4ycquote

Image courtesy of ALLIANCE
FOR YOUTH ACTION



Freedom Action Now

Using mass mobilization to expose systemic oppression and improve lives

When Roe fell in 2022, Wisconsin reverted to a criminal abortion ban from 1849, and the state's Supreme Court election held in 2023 would determine whether or not the ban would hold. Freedom Action Now (FAN) engaged over 80,000 Black and Southeast Asian women and girls, queer, trans, and intersex folx in the Wisconsin Supreme Court race in April of 2023.

FAN is a Black and Southeast Asian Wisconsin-based political organization creating change for the most impacted communities through voter education, leadership development, community organizing, and policy advocacy.

The Black and Southeast Asian population in Wisconsin have been considered “hard to reach” voters and can be the margin of victory in state elections. By activating their base to turn out for the election, FAN contributed to flipping the Supreme Court to a progressive majority, making it possible for the 1849 ban to be reviewed and potentially ended.



Image courtesy
of FAN

“As radical queer feminists, we recognize that voting is only the first step towards realizing our vision. It is, however, essential that we take steps to protect our ability to hold our leadership accountable and create conditions where progress is possible!”

— FAN

SOURCE: gswell.info/fanquote

GRANTEE PARTNERS IN ACTION

New Virginia Majority

Building power in working-class communities of color across the Commonwealth

New Virginia Majority (NVM) mobilized and engaged thousands of voters in preparation for a critical legislative election in November 2023, resulting in the rejection of a Virginia abortion ban and Democratic control of the state government.

To make this happen, NVM made over 113,000 calls and knocked on over 300,000 doors statewide, amplifying voters' concerns around healthcare access, voting rights, abortion access, and efforts to combat climate change.

Successfully preventing a Republican-majority government in Virginia was essential in protecting progressive policies and ensuring communities have a better opportunity to invest in their health, education, safety, and more.



Image courtesy
of NVM

“The right to vote, to choose our leaders, and to weigh in on issues affecting our lives is at the heart of what it means to be in a democracy. We want our elections to be fair, our votes to count, and our voices to be heard.”

— New Virginia Majority

SOURCE: gswell.info/nvmquote

Image courtesy
of NVM



Asian Pacific Islander Political Alliance

Championing APIs and building long-term power in Pennsylvania

Throughout 2023, Asian Pacific Islander Political Alliance (API PA) spearheaded advocacy efforts for their communities by orchestrating intricate political, electoral, and legislative campaigns to hold elected officials accountable.

Among their initiatives, API PA supported grassroots movements such as Save Philadelphia's Chinatown, rallying against constructing the 76ers new stadium in the historic Chinatown area.

Additionally, they collaborated with Justice for Christian Hall to champion the deployment of mobile mental health units as an alternative or supplementary response to law enforcement interventions.



Image courtesy
of API PA

“We need to come together and ensure our leaders represent our interests. That’s why API PA organizes in our communities not just before an election but year-round. We’re listening to our community members, working together on the issues that matter to us, and holding our elected officials accountable.”

— API PA

SOURCE: gswell.info/apipaquote



Image courtesy of
BLACK VOTERS MATTER

Building Capacity for Electoral Organizing

PILLAR TWO: CAPACITY BUILDING

We design capacity-building offerings in response to the needs and priorities of our grantees, and they always have the option to participate.

The critical capacity-building assistance our grantee partners most often request includes data, digital, and technology; legal compliance; media and communications; c4 start-up and infrastructure support; leadership development; and campaign strategy for ballot initiatives.

In 2023, Groundswell Action Fund dedicated \$300,000 towards these capacity-building projects through tailored coaching and technical assistance.



Image courtesy of UNITED FOR RESPECT

CAPACITY BUILDING HIGHLIGHTS

1



PEOPLE-POWERED DIGITAL STRATEGY

Groundswell Action Fund partnered with Kairos, a BIPOC-led digital strategy organization, to support their Learning Lab, launched in 2023. The Learning Lab was a six-week training program for organizers to strengthen a key campaign by incorporating a digital power-building strategy into their existing framework.

We sponsored three organizations to participate in the program to increase their existing base and capacity; incorporate tech into their power analysis and figure out where opposition is going uncontested; experiment with strategies to expand the base; and deploy community leaders' voices online and increase narrative power.

2



C4 MOVEMENT CONVENING

For those in the emerging c4 space, convenings are a meaningful opportunity to learn from others, building c4 organization and strategy, develop connections within the progressive movement, and leverage that peer learning to be more strategic with hard-to-raise c4 dollars.

In 2023, we partnered with Tides Advocacy Fund to sponsor “Beyond Impact C4 Power: Building a Pro-Black Future,” a 501(c)(4) strategy and learning space to serve and strengthen the advocacy infrastructure of BIPOC movement leaders. Over 200 social and reproductive justice leaders convened to discuss topics like building Black political power in the United States, lessons learned from moving money to C4 movements, building power through collaborative governance, and the foundation of solidarity in multiracial coalitions.

CAPACITY BUILDING HIGHLIGHTS

3



LEGAL COMPLIANCE & START-UP SUPPORT

Groundswell Action Fund provides compliance coaching to emerging c4 organizations to help them leverage funding boldly and legally in highly politicized environments, beginning with the application process and continuing through the grant period. We also assist grantees with pivoting as needed throughout legislative and electoral cycles.

For instance, we worked with grantee partners United for Respect to plan out 2024 election work, and helped APEN Action, a California-based partner, working on a campaign to rein in big oil drilling. **The goal of compliance coaching is to ensure that women, transgender, and gender-expansive people of color are able to access tools, support, and training as they ramp up for campaign success in the 2024 cycle.**

In 2023, we partnered with Community Change Action to amplify a progressive Compliance Academy providing training in essential back-of-house operations to ensure healthy multi-entity organization development.

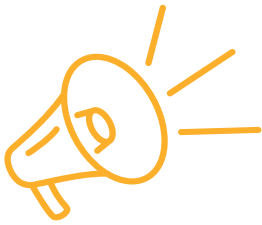


Image courtesy of APEN ACTION

Image courtesy
of BLACK VOTERS MATTER



4



COMMUNICATIONS

To help amplify their messages and counter harmful narratives, Groundswell Action Fund provides writing support to grantee leaders to produce thought pieces and share stories of their work on democracy, gender, and reproductive justice issues.

In 2023, 66 Wands Consulting and Change Consulting **provided ghostwriting support to amplify grantee messaging and media communication strategies in local and national press.**

We also sponsored seven grantee partners to participate in Reframe's five-day immersive experience rooted in narrative power building that focused on strategy development and communications tactics, known as The Academy.



Image courtesy of UNITED FOR RESPECT



Image courtesy of
JOBS WITH JUSTICE

The Power of the Collective

PILLAR THREE: FUNDER ORGANIZING

In 2023, we focused our efforts on recruiting and educating new individual donors on the importance of c4 funding for the Reproductive Justice Movement and relieving the burden from our partners actively working on the most challenging election cycle of their lives.

The polarizing political climate and escalating attacks on bodily autonomy and democracy required a deeper engagement level with our peer democracy funders. By collaborating closely, we remain vigilant and agile, efficiently support organizers in the field, and unlock maximal c4 funding in and between election years.

Groundswell Action Fund has increased our leadership in progressive funding spaces, leveraging every opportunity to educate our peers on the importance of c4 funding, particularly for new and emerging “c4-curious” funders and donors.

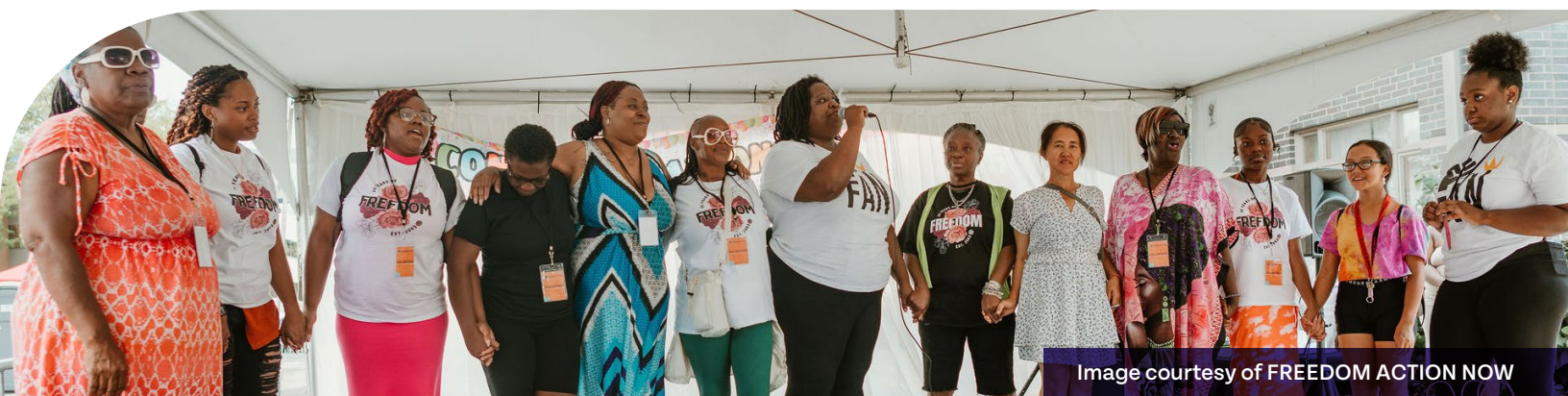
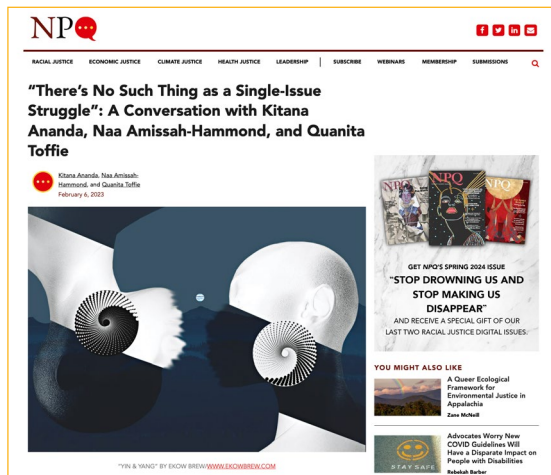
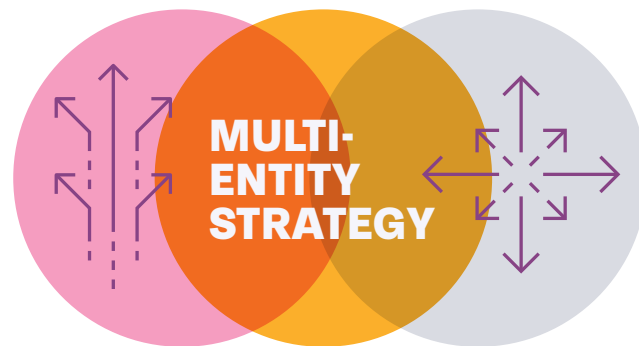


Image courtesy of FREEDOM ACTION NOW

FUNDER ORGANIZING HIGHLIGHTS



Nonprofit Quarterly featured **Quanita Toffie**, **Groundswell Action Fund's Executive Director** in an article titled "There's No Such Thing as a Single-Issue Struggle," to discuss the history and current state of the reproductive justice movement.

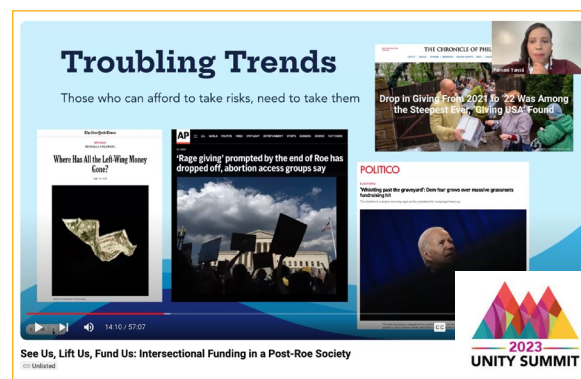


We joined a collective effort to educate donors and funders on the importance of **multi-entity strategy** through affinity spaces such as Funders Committee on Civic Participation.



3 EMERGING C4 STRATEGY SESSIONS

Collaborated with Funds for Aligned Transformation and hosted three in-depth **strategy sessions for emerging c4 funders** to foster a learning environment and encourage collaboration.



At the **2023 CHANGE Philanthropy Unity Summit in October**, and Groundswell Action Fund Executive Director **Quanita Toffie** and Groundswell Fund Chief Executive Officer **Yamani Yansa Hernandez** **presented a session titled "See Us, Lift Us, Fund Us: Intersectional Funding in a Post-Roe Society."**

BUILDING ROBUST INFRASTRUCTURE TO CHAMPION MOVEMENTS

Since Groundswell Action Fund's inception over seven years ago, we have moved over **\$16 million** to grassroots movements, invested in the capacity of our grantee partners, and organized hundreds of donors and funders to fund reproductive and racial justice.

Groundswell Action Fund has become a critical contributor to the larger philanthropic ecosystem. We are on track for growing the budget to \$5 million by the end of 2025, and continually attract brilliant and talented staff directly from community, labor, and electoral organizing.

Groundswell experienced exciting changes throughout 2023 as we searched for permanent executive leadership following the organization's first executive leadership transition. In August 2023, Groundswell welcomed **Yamani Yansá Hernandez** as our permanent Chief Executive Officer. Yamani's expertise in navigating organizational strategy and growth has provided critical leadership to Groundswell and our movements.

\$16M
TO GRASSROOTS
MOVEMENTS
SINCE
GROUNDSWELL
ACTION FUND'S
INCEPTION



Image courtesy of API PA

Groundswell's C-suite
PICTURED BACK L TO R:
angélique, Yamani, Quanita,
Naa, Chanda, and Lorena



Along with the Chief Executive Officer role, Groundswell also formalized the structure of its senior leadership team. This C-suite is comprised of **Chief Financial Officer Chanda Jones**; **Chief Strategy Officer Naa Amissah-Hammond**; **Chief Development Officer angélique nguyễn green**; **Groundswell Action Fund's Executive Director, Quanita Toffie**; and **Chief of Staff Lorena Gamboa-Martin**. This new leadership, along with the strong groundwork laid by Groundswell Action Fund and Groundswell Fund's collective bargaining activities with our staff union this past year, will strengthen and unify the organization as it confronts the challenges and opportunities of 2024.

As we enter a new season, we continue to implement better systems and infrastructure, foster greater sustainability within the organization, and build deeper alignment and trust between our Board, leadership, and staff.



Image courtesy of JOBS WITH JUSTICE

Progress on 2023 Goals and Groundswell’s 5-Year Blueprint

Groundswell has moved over **\$80 million** to critical efforts under our Blueprint plan, a bold **commitment to move \$100 million** (\$80 million via Groundswell Fund and \$20 million via Groundswell Action Fund) to the field between 2020-2025. We are on track to exceed our original goal by the end of 2025.

In 2023, we passed the midway point in our journey to deliver on the ambitious goals outlined in Groundswell Action Fund’s Blueprint, surpassing \$12 million awarded since 2020 to movements for reproductive and social justice. By the end of 2024, we will have moved \$15 million to the field via our 2020 Blueprint goals. We are also on track to increase our annual budget from \$1.5 million in 2020 to \$5 million at the end of 2025, with a goal of \$4 million for 2024.

Since our inception in 2017, our community of supporters has grown from four to 100+ today. Groundswell Action Fund’s ability to transform the electoral arena and enact policy change that matters for our communities is only made possible by our generous community of supporters.

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

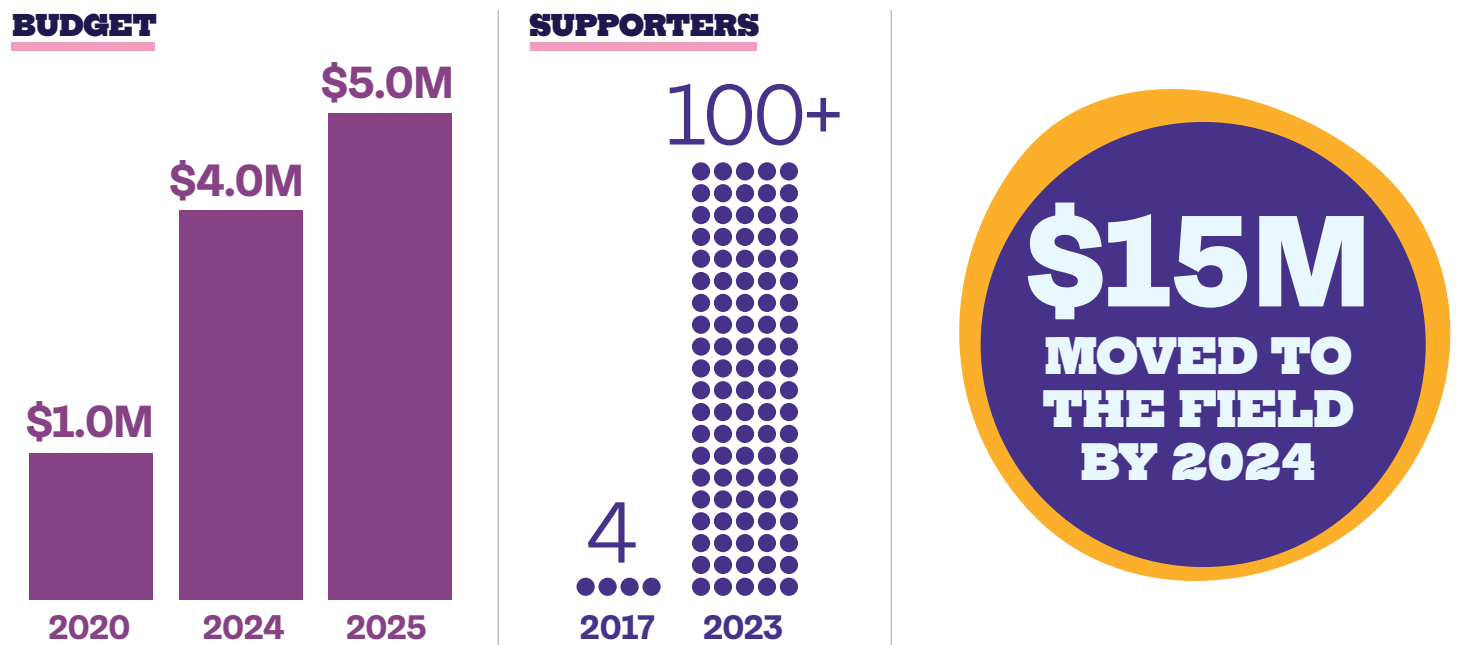




Image courtesy of
API PA

A Values-Aligned Investment

As we navigate the intricate political landscape, strategic investments in c4 power-building are paramount. The outcomes of the 2024 elections will shape federal and statewide policymaking for years to come, with potential Supreme Court Justice appointments carrying generational significance.

Groundswell Action Fund strategically allocates resources where they can yield the greatest impact and commit to the long haul – avoiding detrimental boom-bust funding. Because 501c4 funding is less abundant than tax-deductible 501c3 funding, it is crucial that we continue to build a robust, durable base of donors and funders committed to resourcing this work.

Through grantmaking and capacity-building offerings, Groundswell is committed to amplifying and responding to our grantee partners' needs to assist them in taking on critical, sensitive work with confidence and

diligence. Your support of Groundswell Action Fund makes strategic investments in c4 power-building possible.

We are grateful for your partnership in advancing reproductive, racial, and gender justice in the United States and look forward to continuing to build in 2024 and beyond.

Thank you.

The People Making It Happen

2023 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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

Dawn Boudwin (she/her), *Treasurer*
Director of In Solidarity,
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Jessica Byrd (she/her)
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Chrissie Castro (she/her)
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Daroneshia Duncan-Boyd (she/her)
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TAKE Resource Center

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Chief Executive Officer

Quanita Toffie (she/her)
Executive Director

Chanda Jones (she/her)
Chief Financial Officer

angélique nguyễn green (she/her)
Chief Advancement Officer

Wen Brovold (they/them)
Communications and Donor
Organizing Director

Victoria Cepeida-Mojarro (she/her)
Program Manager

K. Mitchell (she/her)
Grants and Operations Manager

Cover image courtesy of
NEW VIRGINIA MAJORITY



“Solidarity is a verb.
It requires active engagement
and commitment to
the long-term struggle.”

— Alicia Garza
American civil rights activist and writer



Image courtesy of
FREEDOM ACTION NOW



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groundswellactionfund.org

info@groundswellactionfund.org | 510.444.5900

