



# AMPLIFY FUND

## NEIGHBORHOOD FUNDERS GROUP

*We believe that community power is the key driver of just and equitable development, and that philanthropy has a role to play.*

As a funder collaborative, Amplify Fund supports Black, Indigenous, people of color and low-income communities to build power and to influence decisions about the places where they live. We are anchored in a racial justice framework, so everything we do -- in terms of process, strategy and outcome -- is structured to address the root causes of inequity and to center the leadership of Black, Indigenous, and people of color in all solutions. This extends to our administrative practices, which we designed to be clear, simple and user-friendly, to reduce burden on grantees.

Launched as the first grantmaking fund at the Neighborhood Funders Group (NFG), a network of funders who believe in the power of people to transform communities, Amplify is managed by NFG staff, and connected to NFG's Democratizing Development Program. *To date Amplify has:*

- Disbursed nearly \$7 million in grants, mostly in the form of general operating support, to 54 organizations;
- Co-created 8 unique place-based grantmaking with 31 Local Strategy Advisors (LSA);
- Influenced philanthropic practice at some NFG member institutions and among local funders in our 8 places of focus;
- Hosted learning visits and sessions (in-person and virtual) for funder members and grantees;
- Created a learning community among Steering Committee members, staff and consultants;
- Launched an equitable evaluation process.

### **Amplify's Theory of Change:**

**Our Vision:** We imagine a reality where directly impacted communities of color and low-income communities 1) have the power to lead equitable development and hold elected officials accountable for their promises about racially just policies and the allocation of public dollars; and 2) benefit from the changes caused by development, by gaining wealth, land control and quality of life outcomes like affordable housing, quality education, living-wage employment, and transportation access.

**The Problem:** Black, Indigenous, people of color and low-income people bear the brunt of negative impacts created by development due to the persistence of structural racism, the legacies of segregation, and that for-profit investors have an outsized influence in the development of cities and land. The dominance of a profit-driven development model threatens our collective well-being by exploiting community assets and consolidating wealth in the hands of a few individuals and corporations. To date, philanthropy has invested relatively few dollars in building power related to equitable development.

- **Strategy 1:** Distribute resources to local organizations via general operating support grants and wrap-around support for grantees, so communities of color and low-income communities will have more power to influence decisions.
- **Strategy 2:** Engage local, regional and national funder to foster opportunities for the work to be supported in the long-term.



### Grantmaking practice:

- In separate processes for each place, staff worked with Local Strategy Advisors (LSAs) to co-create grantmaking strategies and guidelines based on Amplify's Theory of Change. In California, Amplify's sister fund, Fund for an Inclusive California (F4ICA) ran their own process). These dynamic processes resulted in unique funding guidelines in each place based on local expertise and context. An up-to-date list of our grants is available online here.
- All Amplify grants are administered through the JustFund portal and disbursed in partnership with Amalgamated Charitable Foundation (ACF), the entity that holds Amplify's funds and conducts grantmaking due diligence.



### Funder organizing:

- The Steering Committee, comprised of representatives from the contributing foundations is Amplify's governing body and also has a key role in funder organizing (especially through the Fundraising & Funder Organizing sub-committee) and transforming philanthropy to have a culture of racial justice.
- Amplify's Director, Amy Morris, and Senior Program Officer, Melody Baker, work with 3 program consultants, Chi-Ante Singletary, Syma Mirza and Erica Henderson, to manage relationships with local funders in all 8 places aligned with local grantee needs and Amplify's overall goals.
- Amplify uses multiple activities to engage with funders: 1:1 conversations, funder visits (e.g. Charleston, Eastern North Carolina, Nashville), panel discussions at national conferences, engagement with NFG's extensive membership, distribution of written and visual communications.

### Short-term fund, long-term impact:

Amplify was originally conceived as a four-year fund, but the Steering Committee has started a "Future of Amplify" process to re-consider the timeline in light of positive impacts to date and shifts caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

*We welcome new funding partners to join us in changing the status quo in philanthropy and supporting communities of color and low-income people to own, and determine, their futures.*

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FORD FOUNDATION  
JESSIE SMITH NOYES FOUNDATION  
GENERAL SERVICE FOUNDATION  
MISSOURI FOUNDATION FOR HEALTH  
MORIAH FUND  
OPEN SOCIETY FOUNDATIONS  
RAIKES FOUNDATION  
ROBERT WOOD JOHNSON FOUNDATION  
SURDNA FOUNDATION  
THE CALIFORNIA ENDOWMENT  
THE CRICKET ISLAND FOUNDATION  
THE IPB FOUNDATION  
THE KRESGE FOUNDATION  
Z SMITH REYNOLDS FOUNDATION