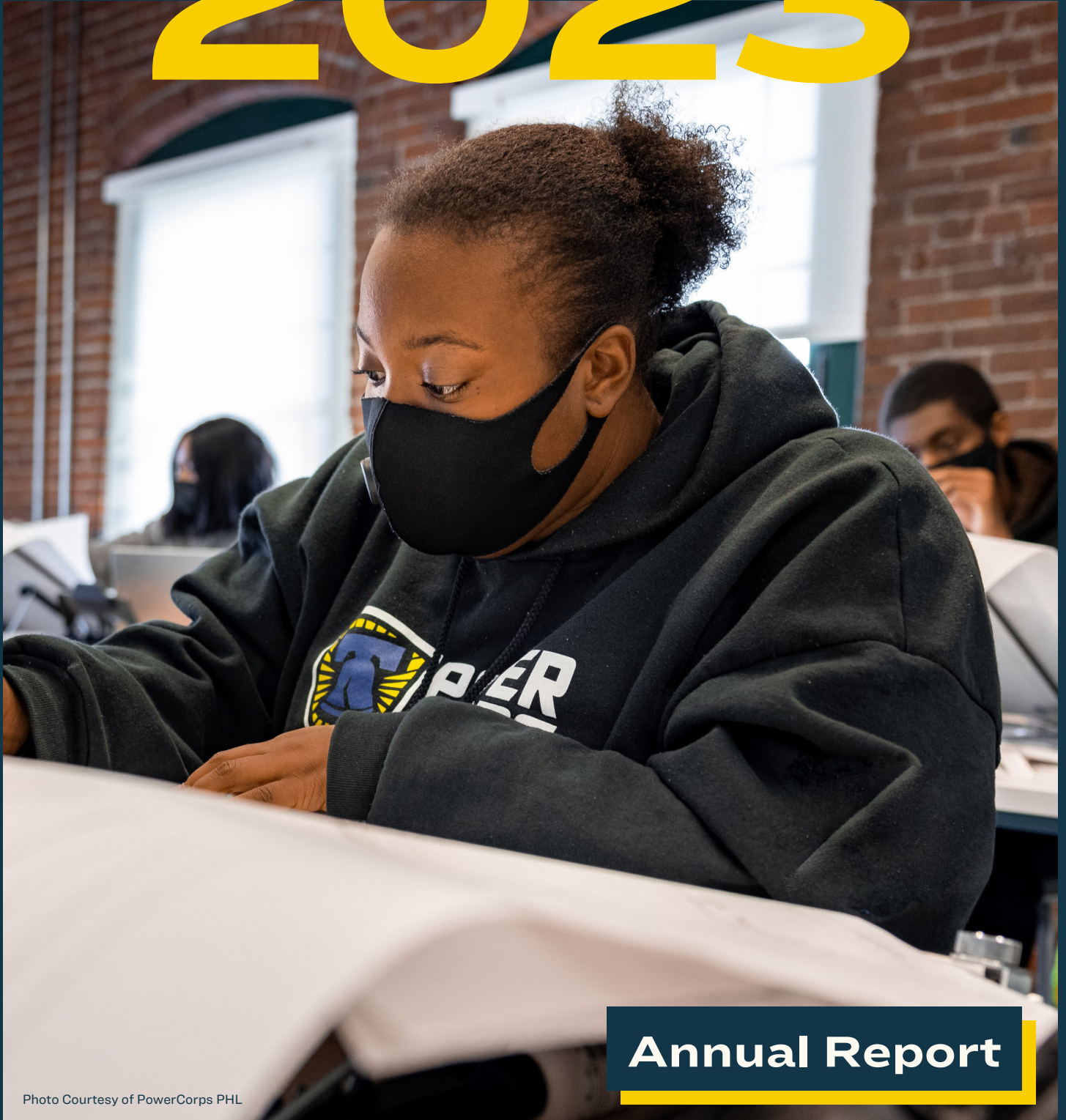


THE
**FAMILIES &
WORKERS**
FUND

2023



Annual Report

Photo Courtesy of PowerCorps PHL



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Reflections on 2023

To the Families and Workers Fund Community:

At its inception, the Families and Workers Fund was a \$7 million project co-founded by the Ford Foundation and Schmidt Futures in response to the devastating impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on workers and communities. So many people had lost their jobs and were struggling to navigate a confusing public benefits system, while essential workers kept the economy functioning amid great risk. These workers were our priority during that unique moment in U.S. history. But the challenges facing workers and families didn't begin with the pandemic — nor did they end as the crisis receded.

Today, it is an honor to share that the Families and Workers Fund has grown into a \$125 million pooled fund and platform for collective action. Our past work informs new systems change strategies designed to meet the needs of workers and families today. Consistent throughout our history, at least half of our funding comes from philanthropies and donors that are new to the issues we address and eager to join our community to learn and take action together. With grants and strategic partnerships, we support leaders driving change in communities, the government, businesses, and the movement for good jobs and effective, equitable public benefits.

For our team, 2023 was all about doubling down on our key impact areas: working to increase equitable access to public benefits, creating good jobs, and building a diverse, well-supported workforce for good jobs in the booming climate and infrastructure sectors. We were proud to create two new initiatives: the **Benefits Access and Equity Initiative** and the **Powering Climate and Infrastructure Careers Initiative**.

The **Benefits Access and Equity Initiative** aims to make it easier for individuals to apply for and receive public benefits that help reduce poverty, create economic security for families, and build trust in government institutions.

The **Powering Climate and Infrastructure Careers Initiative** is a collective effort to tackle climate change and train workers to thrive in these industries, leveraging massive federal funding for the clean energy transition and rebuilding the nation's infrastructure. In addition, we continued our ongoing programs to advance good jobs and improve job quality under our **Good Jobs Imperative Initiative**.

We are continually inspired by our grantees' work. For example, mRelief helped unlock more than \$142 million in SNAP benefits to more than 55,000 households nationwide (more details on page 14). PowerCorpsPHL collaborates with employers in Philadelphia to offer paid workforce training and supportive services — such as transportation and mental health resources — that aim to connect young people with living-wage jobs in climate resilience and clean energy sectors (more details on page 22).

For all this progress, the U.S. faces daunting challenges. Hate is rising across the country, and democracy is under threat. One-fourth of the U.S. population — more than 80 million people — lives at or near the poverty line. While child poverty declined during and after the pandemic thanks to smart and quickly implemented policies, it began to rise again last year. Structural racism, sexism, and other inequities are still baked into our economy. Members of our Essential Leaders Council, a group of diverse workers and leaders who guide us on priorities and grantmaking, have shared what their communities are experiencing daily. Affordable housing is hard to find, people are raising families on precarious incomes, and it is difficult for them to obtain the public benefits they are entitled to (more details on page 6).

We nevertheless remain hopeful and are energized to move forward with our work. **Our shared belief is that every person deserves a life of dignity, security, and opportunity.** If our country and economy can deliver on this promise, the stronger and healthier our society and the next generation will be. We are so appreciative of our coalition of funders, Essential Leader Council members, grantees, and partners for their support, and we look forward to learning, growing, and innovating together in the year ahead.

With gratitude and hope,
Rachel Korberg

Photo Courtesy of PowerCorps PHL



Our Work

Families and Workers Fund’s Impact Goals & Focus Areas

The Families and Workers Fund organizes its work under two impact areas, each of which has its own portfolios and initiatives that deploy complementary strategies toward the shared, overarching impact area goal.

IMPACT AREA 21st Century Benefits Equitable, Accessible Benefits	IMPACT AREA Recover Up Jobs That Sustain & Uplift
INITIATIVES & PORTFOLIOS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2023 Benefits Access & Equity Initiative ongoing • 2020–2022 Unemployment Insurance Portfolio complete • 2020 COVID-19 Emergency Cash Transfers Portfolio complete 	INITIATIVES & PORTFOLIOS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2023–Present Powering Climate & Infrastructure Careers Initiative ongoing • 2022–Present Good Jobs Imperative Initiative ongoing • 2021–Present Recover Up General Fund Portfolio large active grants, limited new
CROSS-PROGRAM FUNCTIONS	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategy, Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning • Strategic Partnerships (e.g., with federal agencies) • Grantmaking 	

“The Families and Workers Fund is a critical platform for collaborative philanthropy as we seek to build a more inclusive and equitable economy for everyone. With targeted programs focused on expanding pathways to quality jobs, increasing equitable access to public benefits, and training talent to enter climate and infrastructure careers, the Fund has seized a generational opportunity to address some of the most urgent issues facing people today.”

Darren Walker
President of the Ford Foundation and Co-Chair of the Families and Workers Fund

From the Frontlines to the Essential Leaders Council: Leading with Wisdom & Insight

The Essential Leaders Council (ELC) is a group of essential workers, family members, and leaders who have led through challenges like poverty, racial and gender inequity, and poverty-wage jobs. For our work to be effective, it must be grounded in the realities that diverse groups of workers and families experience daily. Our ELC members provide guidance on priorities and weigh in on grant prospects, sharing their distinctive vision and expertise, in order to achieve more dignified conditions in the workplace and strengthen the social safety net.

Janet Iraola, a coordinator at a Boston School who helps families access public benefits and also a co-leader of the Families and Workers Fund's Essential Leaders Council, shares her insights on the challenges facing her community and how she harnesses her expertise to drive change.

Tell us about your role in Boston's public schools as a community field coordinator.

I always say it is about community, family, and student engagement. I work in a school with more than 500 students, helping them with school choices and getting them what they need to be successful in school. I work with families in supporting with resources and engaging them in the child's education. I also build relationships with community partners to grow our network of resources for families and students.

What are the biggest challenges facing families today?

Right now it's affordable housing for low-income families. Although there are opportunities for affordable housing, we don't have enough low-income housing. Families are living together doubled and tripled up — an entire family

in one bedroom. There's a years-long waiting list for low-income housing and vouchers. The second is reliable and good paying jobs, especially for undocumented people who might lack job readiness skills, papers, and language skills. I sometimes help families with resumes to connect them to what's available for jobs, but without papers, it's difficult and they often end up with "under the table" work without benefits.

How are people in your community navigating the process of building a secure future?

Food stamps and cash assistance help, but if they get a job working 40 hours a week, benefits will be removed. Even working a full-time job, if someone makes more than just a bit of what the system allows, assistance is taken away. This causes many families to fall behind on their budget. Although expenses like childcare and health insurance are being added, this will not help them access the benefits. It becomes difficult to provide adequate proof to these agencies, which causes families to not even apply for the benefits offered.

What are some of the difficulties in accessing public benefits?

One of the hardest things is making direct contact with a benefits office. People are constantly calling but never get a real person on the phone to confirm an interview date and agencies assign an interview date but never follow through which causes clients to be denied. I also direct people to food banks and pantries, but often the food they give out is expired so they don't feel it is safe to eat. Or there is a very long waiting list, they happen at inconvenient times for working families, and choices of foods aren't great.

How are students coping with the stress?

Many students live in shelters, which is stressful for both kids and parents. The kids are embarrassed about it and don't want others to find out they are homeless, or they don't have book bags, sneakers, or clothes. Luckily our school has partnerships to help these families access school supplies and clothes. Sometimes shelters are far away from school, and some of these families are very new to Boston and aren't aware of where to find resources. All of this makes it tough for students to stay focused and engaged in school.

You have been on the ELC for almost two years. What do you admire most about its work?

The group wants to see change and is dedicated to the community. They want the best for the community and families and their kids' future. I've heard it many times; everyone says, "I want this to change now so my kids can have a better future." I admire that we've stuck with it and everybody comes up with great ideas and information and we share experiences.

How can we ensure that this change happens?

The powers-that-be have to listen to people who are struggling to see what they're going through — in schools, with jobs, in their lives. Don't push away those who are most vulnerable — welcome them. And find ways to make things better, whether through public benefits, job training, or preparing people for the world. These will open doors toward self-sufficiency for many families.

What is the message you want to deliver from families to our funder philanthropies?

We didn't come here simply to get cash assistance or live off the government. We want to earn our own money and do things for ourselves. We work hard. We just need others to work hard for us and with us.



Photo Courtesy of Share Our Strength

21st Century Benefits





Photo Courtesy of Share Our Strength

21st Century Benefits: Our Work

People in the U.S. are working hard to make ends meet, but far too many families still face economic insecurity. Although strong job growth over the past two years has pushed the unemployment rate below 4%, roughly 20% of children — or **13 million kids** — **face hunger** every day. And **one-fourth of the U.S. population** live at or near the federal poverty level.

The public benefits system was set up by the government to provide people with a base of economic stability, and many families and individuals have succeeded in accessing at least one such benefits program. Yet for millions more, an estimated \$80 billion in poverty-alleviating public benefits including Unemployment Insurance and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) remains frustratingly out of reach.

Available funds go unused each year because the barriers to access and delivery are simply too high. These include outdated technology due to underinvestment, a maze of daunting paperwork, language barriers, and confusing rules and regulations across state, local, and

federal agencies. While these challenges can harm anyone in need of public benefits, people who face structural racism, live in rural areas without high-speed internet, speak English as a second language, and other circumstances are more likely to be affected. For example, only 22 states have online applications available in Spanish, which is the first language for more than 41 million people living in the U.S. Fifteen states do not have any applications that are mobile responsive, requiring applicants to access a computer to apply.

Access and delivery challenges not only make it more difficult to reduce U.S. poverty and improve family economic security, but they also harm the broader economy and government efficacy. When taxpayer dollars are allocated to increase economic stability and stimulate local economies, yet fall short of fulfilling those purposes, evidence-based practices become necessary to ensure that services are efficient and fiscally responsible. If applying for benefits like unemployment insurance or SNAP is an easy and respectful process, those receiving the assistance that their tax dollars support will have

more trust in the government. Eventually, this will serve to strengthen democracy because people will better understand the role such services play in improving their lives.

GOALS & STRATEGIES

Our goals are clear: improve access to public benefits that guarantee a base of economic security by **making the process less burdensome** and **easier to navigate** for all applicants and **helping government agencies** provide benefits more equitably, quickly, and efficiently by addressing delivery and capacity challenges. This requires building a supportive, collaborative ecosystem of stakeholders, including philanthropies, government agencies, community-focused grantees, and other leaders that share the bold North Star of modernizing the public benefits system. A well-functioning public benefits system will have a direct and immediate effect on reducing poverty in the U.S. — making lives better now, providing a foundation of economic security, and giving everyone a better shot at economic mobility. In recent years, public benefits have been shown to reduce poverty by 50% among people who were able to access them. **We are therefore committed to ensuring that all families can achieve economic security and thrive.**

OUR WORK IN 2023

Based on promising preliminary results from our work in benefits access, last year the Families and Workers Fund decided to go beyond our initial focus on unemployment insurance and emergency cash to strategize more broadly. Recognizing a growing momentum in the field, we wanted to find ways to catalyze action across philanthropy.

The Families and Workers Fund brought together leading philanthropies under the **Benefits Access and Equity Working Group** to develop a collective vision and action plan. We drew on insights from both nonprofit partners deeply involved in this work and people with lived experience, as well as best-in-class evidence, research, and findings from our investments. As a result of this process, we established the **Benefits Access and Equity Initiative** to determine what role philanthropy could play in accelerating change. These included investing in new technologies, supporting increased government delivery capacity, and helping to

coordinate the ecosystem to create and align around a shared vision.

Our work on benefits access last year went beyond strategizing: we also made grant commitments to nonprofits working across the country to improve benefits access, equity, and delivery, focusing on fast-moving issues like the benefits system's response to the declared end of the COVID-19 public health emergency. Concurrently, we continued to manage a multi-million dollar portfolio of grants set in motion in late 2022. We also helped shape a promising new philanthropic-government collaboration with the White House Office of Management and Budget and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. This effort aims to apply the lessons from guaranteed income pilot research to public benefits programs.

WHAT WE LEARNED

Simplify the Process

We see the most impact when grantees offer proven and scale-ready methods to simplify the benefits application and delivery process for both claimants and administrators. For example, introducing an easy-to-use online eligibility screener and application assistance tools was a powerful way to enable mRelief to help more than **4.4 million people obtain \$1.7 billion in unclaimed SNAP benefits**. The Families and Workers Fund will continue investing in these catalytic solutions, often overlooked by philanthropy, given their potential to make lives better now.

Address Benefits Delivery Capacity

Improving public benefits delivery depends on maintaining sufficient staffing levels at government agencies and training agency workers to be well-informed about how the system works and the roadblocks users might encounter. The public sector workforce saw some of the most dramatic declines during the pandemic and has not fully recovered: today, the agencies responsible for public benefits are both understaffed and overburdened. Agencies need to be able to hire people with the competencies and skills for improving delivery such as design, engineering, and user research. Additionally, staff like case managers and attorneys who interpret the rules, regulations, and requirements that ultimately determine delivery decisions and govern the claimant experience need access to the right information

— oftentimes, rules, regulations, and requirements are interpreted too narrowly even though more flexible interpretations have already been implemented and accepted.

Design and Procure the Right Tech System

Technology issues are a major factor preventing people from more easily accessing public benefits. Given the outsized role that tech now plays in the public benefits system, procuring the right systems is also one of the most important levers for the government to improve delivery. During procurement, key decisions about design, ownership, troubleshooting, and user involvement in informing those decisions ultimately impact costs and how well the delivery process works. Procurement done correctly can come down to the choice between a user-centered, agile, and continuously improving delivery system and one that costs much more and requires years for improvements to be made. For its part, New Jersey consistently leads states in efficiently delivering unemployment insurance benefits because it uses a common sense, fiscally responsible approach to improving delivery systems.

Know the North Star

It has been hard to modernize the massive U.S. social safety net. Yet, a consensus is forming among community nonprofits, government agencies, and tech vendors around a set of common goals that shift the focus from compliance to also truly helping people and streamlining customer service. Data shows us what has gone wrong with public benefits delivery, and now there is a strategy to make it better. We envision a system in which an individual **applies in 20 minutes, shares information only once, receives benefits within one week and stays enrolled** for as long as they need.

Now is the time to solidify support for this inspiring North Star and work to ensure that ecosystem partners take unprecedented action to create a public benefits system that fulfills the promise of economic security, mobility, and prosperity.

Photo Courtesy of USDR





21st Century Benefits: Snapshot of Our Grantees' Impact

2023

\$960,046

Committed to 21st Century Benefits Grantees

To Date

\$13,841,903

Committed to 21st Century Benefits Grantees

2023

73,890

People Connected to Public Benefits

To Date

115,290

People Connected to Benefits

2023

392,587

People Receiving Support to Apply For/Renew Public Benefits

To Date

432,787

People Receiving Support to Apply For/Renew Public Benefits

2023

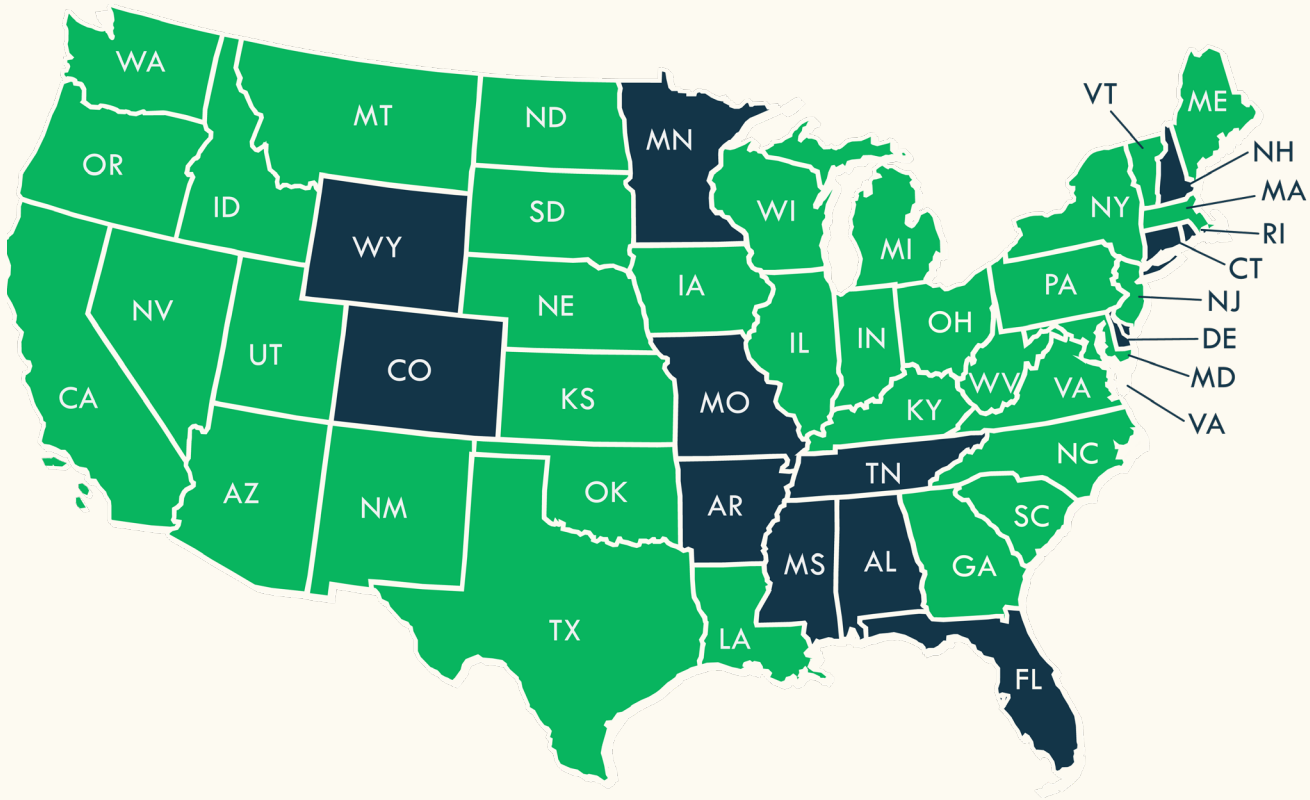
4,517,441

People Indirectly Impacted (i.e., Dependents and/or Other Household Members of Those Directly Impacted)

2023

\$142.7M+

Public Benefits Unlocked



Our grantee partners supported 4 federal agencies and 29 state and local agencies across almost half of U.S. states.

Public Benefits Impacted

- Unemployment Insurance (UI)
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
- Medicaid
- Women Infant and Children (WIC)
- Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP)
- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)
- Paid Family and Medical Leave
- Summer Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT)

“Public benefits are a lifeline for millions of people but far too many struggle to get the assistance they deserve. The Families and Workers Fund and its partners are working to help transform the public benefits system to make access and delivery easier and more efficient — ensuring that young workers, their families, and their children have essential supports such as childcare as they start their careers.”

Elizabeth Cheung
Senior Program Officer, Opportunity Youth, the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation



Transforming Lives Through Benefits Access: A Changemaker's Journey

Grantee: mRelief

Impact Area: 21st Century Benefits: Benefits Access and Equity Initiative

Description: Founded in 2014, mRelief is a Chicago-based nonprofit that helps people gain easier access to poverty-reducing public benefits such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP; formerly known as food stamps) in all **50 states and three participating territories**. Its online tools and platforms are designed to assess eligibility and streamline the enrollment process.

Impact: Since its inception, mRelief has served **more than 4.4 million** individuals and unlocked more than **\$1.7 billion** in public benefits. In 12 states (and counting) mRelief's simplified, mobile-friendly application reduced the number of application questions by 50% and guided users through key parts of the SNAP application process. By partnering with government and local community organizations, mRelief's simplified applications have a **70% overall approval rate**, boosting state approval rates from 5% to 20%, depending on the state. Their simplified applications reduce the time burden for SNAP applicants — completion takes an **average of 13 minutes or less**.

“Over the past year, I have been going through continuous unforeseen hardships, abuse, and enduring homelessness. I'm trying to get my life back on track and I felt hopeless not knowing whom to turn to. Your service saved me. I currently feel like I am in a very dark place, but the faintest amount of light is finally starting to show through the cracks. Thank you for saving me.”

mRelief Applicant in Illinois

Porschia Davis, Interim Executive Director,

talks about her experience with public benefits, why billions in SNAP benefits go unclaimed annually, and how mRelief plans to enroll an additional 1.5 million individuals annually.



Motivated by Personal Experience

As a SNAP recipient in college, the work of mRelief deeply resonated with me. I vividly remember how difficult and humiliating the process was to get benefits, even for a well-educated college student. I had received a full scholarship, but my family still struggled to support me. With SNAP, I could save money and contribute to school expenses and help my family reallocate their money to the household and another sibling. I thought it shouldn't be so hard to get benefits. Making the process more dignified and informed would have made my life so much easier, and this is what continues to energize and inspire me today.

SNAP's Impact Goes Beyond Food

Public benefits such as SNAP are key to economic security and mobility on many levels. They not only ensure that people have enough to eat when times are hard, but also help them pay for rent, health insurance, and medical care and prevent things from becoming a much larger crisis. It allows people to pursue higher education. Public benefits also impact future generations: children who receive SNAP are more likely to graduate from high school compared with those who qualify but don't receive benefits, and they're less likely to need SNAP when they become adults.

Learning From Clients

Our user-centered model lets us learn about the hurdles clients face, and how to improve services, whether that means rewording a question or changing the size of a font on an application. We learned that people need SNAP for the same reasons it is hard for them to apply: they don't have transportation to an office or their job

has unpredictable hours or they are providing childcare. We found that seniors are more tech-savvy than many imagine — they use eligibility screeners through Facebook — and that Black and Latinx populations prefer human interactions to digital. Our work in Jefferson County, Kentucky — which has a high eviction rate — showed a correlation between receiving SNAP benefits and people keeping their homes.

Strengthening Our Roots and Expanding Our Reach

SNAP-access funding that increased during COVID is now being cut back. Although hunger might seem less urgent without a declared national emergency, the fact is that **one in 10 people still don't have enough to eat** in one of the world's wealthiest countries and **\$13 billion in SNAP funding goes unclaimed every year**. So our goal over the next three years is to enroll an additional 1.5 million individuals in SNAP. We're reaching out to seniors through AARP and we're partnering with nonprofits and educational institutions nationwide to facilitate solutions for food, housing, and financial insecurity for 90,000 college students. Another project is working with Google.org to build an Advanced AI Client Advocate and with GitLab Foundation to explore whether AI can help build a document verification screener.

Choosing Justice and Equity

As an organization, we remind decision-makers that if you don't have enough to eat, it's hard to learn, work, stay well, and live up to your potential. **Poverty is a policy choice, and it didn't begin — or end — with COVID**. All the rules and procedures that make it harder for people to get benefits are choices too. Our work at mRelief shows what can happen if we choose differently. We choose justice and equity every day.

“As an organization, we remind decision-makers that if you don't have enough to eat, it's hard to learn, to work, to stay well, and to live up to your potential.”

Recover Up — Jobs that Sustain and Uplift

Photo Courtesy of Resilience Force





Photo Courtesy of WeCount

Recover Up — Jobs that Sustain and Uplift: Our Work

For decades, economic mobility in the U.S. has been on the decline as the economy produces low-pay, dead-end jobs while higher-quality jobs remain out of reach for so many. Today, [one-third of employed people still face difficulties paying for basic needs such as rent, transportation, and childcare](#), and [only 44% of the U.S. workforce says that they have a good job](#).

This systemic divestment from workers and pathways to economic mobility has made the U.S. economy more vulnerable to shocks and less ready to meet new opportunities for growth, such as the transition to a net zero economy. Although the economy is growing and projected to create millions of exciting, upwardly-mobile careers in high-growth sectors like climate resilience, electric vehicle charging, and renewable energy production, there is not enough effective, supportive, and inclusive training to ensure that everyone has equal access to these jobs and potential to be successful in them. These inequities disproportionately impact women, people of color, rural residents, people without college degrees, and other historically excluded communities, and

across the country employers are lamenting that they're not able to hire and retain enough workers.

Despite these challenges, significant change is underway. For example, for the first time in history, the federal government released whole-of-government principles defining a good job — announced at the 2022 [Good Jobs Summit](#) co-hosted by the Families and Workers and the U.S. Department of Labor. A growing number of mainstream investors and employers have demonstrated that investing in workers creates greater long-term business success. Dozens of such companies have joined the [Worker Financial Wellness Initiative](#) or partnered with worker-led programs like [Better Builder](#), two efforts supported by the Families and Workers Fund. The Families and Workers Fund and our partners have a critical role to play in helping continue to seize this moment and demonstrate how investing in U.S. workers is not only the right thing to do, but will also help strengthen democracy, the economy, our communities and families, and the clean energy transition. Across the country, labor unions, nonprofit training providers, community colleges,

employers, and philanthropy are increasingly coming together to scale up training and supportive pathways into in-demand careers.

GOALS & STRATEGIES

Our goal is to make good jobs a must-do mindset and practice for business, government, and the public and to help deliver one million uplifting careers for U.S. workers — especially for underinvested groups who have too often been locked out of quality career pathways and face the highest rates of poverty. Through our **Good Jobs Imperative Initiative**, we are working to shift mindsets, economic data, and government and business practices to embed job quality into them. Through our **Powering Climate and Infrastructure Careers Initiative**, we are working to help connect overlooked talent to the climate and infrastructure careers that will help power the country's transition to a net zero economy, prove out and scale up more effective and inclusive ways to train and support diverse U.S. workers, and deliver on the promise of public funding at the state and local levels.

OUR WORK IN 2023: THE GOOD JOBS IMPERATIVE

To make the concept and practice of good jobs — inclusive of equity — a lasting, must-do priority for mainstream business, government, and the public, we continued to strengthen government partnerships, advance business engagement strategies, position research and data systems for change, and invest in community-based and worker-led solutions. For example, we made an investment in two of the leaders of our [Job Quality Measurement Initiative](#) to build out a new tool that can be used to assess job quality within a company based on observable data rather than the typical approach used today: expensive, one-off surveys of workers. The [Good Jobs Champions](#) statement we released in 2022 continued to gain signatories and influence state and local practice, and commitments announced by the federal government at our Good Jobs Summit have helped to attach job quality, equity standards, and incentives to nearly [\\$240 billion in public infrastructure](#) and climate funds to date.

LOOKING AHEAD: GOOD JOBS IMPERATIVE

In 2024, we plan to deepen our focus on the small and medium-sized businesses (SMBs) that employ nearly half of the U.S. workforce and two-thirds of low-income workers. Through a new strategic partnership with the Gates Foundation, Prosperity Now, and Pacific Community Ventures, we will begin making strategic investments that demonstrate ways to scale job quality in SMBs. These include incorporating job quality practices into public and private procurement processes, embedding job quality measurement and incentives into private financing, and incentivizing peer-to-peer influence in which SMBs share learnings and best practices in their own trusted networks.

Acting on a [top recommendation](#) in the Job Quality Measurement Initiative, the Families and Workers Fund will launch a strategic partnership in 2024 to create the first-ever national job quality index. The index will provide government, business leaders, and the public with regular, reliable data about job quality — not just quantity — to help drive policies and business practices that benefit workers.



Photo Courtesy of Workplace Justice Lab

OUR WORK IN 2023: POWERING CLIMATE & INFRASTRUCTURE CAREERS

Across the United States, a clean energy and infrastructure boom is underway. The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, Inflation Reduction Act, and other recent legislation put more than \$2 trillion to work to fast-track our shift to a stronger, more sustainable economy. Paired with billions in private investments, these laws are projected to create 15 million jobs in the next decade. Yet companies are struggling to hire and retain enough talent just to keep up with today's demands. Meanwhile, millions of people are interested in new uplifting career opportunities but are too often unable to get a foot in the door. Our path to a net zero economy and 21st-century infrastructure will require millions more trained, specialized workers. Furthermore, there is no guarantee that the associated opportunities will extend to underinvested communities and deliver uplifting quality careers.

As part of our Recover Up impact area, the Families and Workers Fund publicly launched the **Powering Climate and Infrastructure Careers Initiative** in November 2023. This pooled funding initiative aims to raise at least \$50 million to help deliver on the promise of this moment, deploying philanthropic capital to help tackle workforce implementation challenges and connect people in communities — especially women, rural and low-income communities, and people facing racial inequities — to uplifting careers in clean energy, construction, and other specialized industries. We are providing critical support to public agencies, employers, education and training providers, and nonprofits on the frontlines of implementing this new federal funding.

In 2023, we continued to make grants to nonprofits with scalable, effective, and inclusive models for training in in-demand industries, as well as to state and local government and providers that support them in delivering these funds so that they truly create more good training and job opportunities for local residents. We also launched the **Powering Climate and Infrastructure Careers Challenge**, a national open call grants challenge for both nonprofits advancing inclusive, effective, and scalable training and for state, local, and tribal governments and their community partners to plan for and implement good job creation and inclusive workforce development. We're proud that

this Challenge is guided by an esteemed advisory group of leaders in workforce development, racial and gender equity, business, finance, and policy, including two former cabinet secretaries from both major political parties.



LOOKING AHEAD

We received 450 proposals for the Powering Climate and Infrastructure Careers Challenge from diverse applicants, including nonprofits in rural Kentucky to Tribal Nations and the New York City government. We have identified at least \$40 million in highly investable grant opportunities, and yet the Families and Workers Fund will only have sufficient funds to make \$12 million to \$15 million in grants out of the Challenge at this time. **We invite funders to join us in co-funding these crucial projects.**

In addition to Challenge grants, we are launching technical assistance to states on the frontlines of implementation. Based on extensive interviews and data analysis from the Challenge, the technical assistance will focus on filling three critical gaps currently hamstringing inclusive workforce implementation: sustainable workforce financing models, good job creation strategies, and labor market supply/demand projections and planning. By supporting states in addressing these specific gaps and pain points, we hope to be able to build on and spread what we have learned from grantees and partners like Results for America, Colorado Workforce Development Council, and the Better Builder Program in Texas that are having increasing success in helping public funds be delivered in ways that best achieve their goals while also creating uplifting careers that are accessible to all.

Recover Up: Snapshot of Our Grantees' Impact

2023

\$13,712,900

Committed to
Recover Up Grantees

To Date

\$32,693,845

Committed to
Recover Up Grantees

2023

125,530

People Directly Impacted by
Job Quality Improvements

To Date

835,260

People Directly Impacted by
Job Quality Improvements

Job Quality Improvements Include Actions Such As:

- More than 5,800 people on Better Builder job sites experienced improved job quality in 2023, including living wages, health and safety training, access to workers' compensation, rest breaks, and other benefits.
- One food company in JUST Capital's Worker Financial Wellness Initiative implemented a wage increase and benefit expansion for 2,500 employees to strengthen worker wellbeing and business performance.
- Resilience Force built good jobs standards into \$400 million in disaster recovery work and helped 3,500 workers access higher wages and health and safety standards.

2023

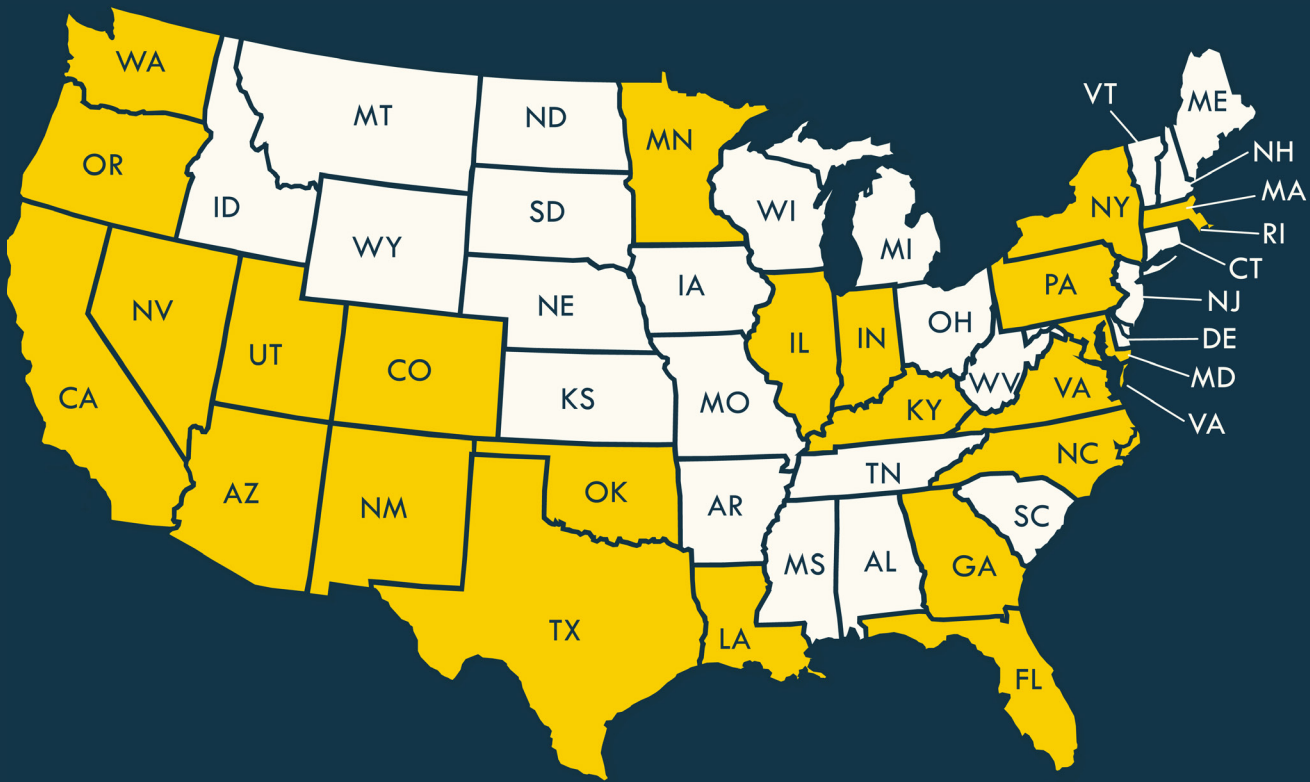
296

People Newly Connected
and Hired Into Good
Career Opportunities

To Date

8,253

People Newly Connected
and Hired Into Good
Career Opportunities



Our grantees and strategic partnerships supported 7 federal agencies and 61 state and local agencies across almost half of U.S. states.

2023

\$629 million

Dollars Leveraged

- Impacted \$571.5 million in public funding
- Grantees raised \$57.5 million in public and private funding

To Date

\$14 billion

Dollars Leveraged



To Date

238

Businesses Engaged

“To ensure a clean energy future, we urgently need millions more workers to tackle the demanding new jobs in the climate and infrastructure industries. The programs funded by the Powering Climate and Infrastructure Careers Initiative are not only training these workers and creating pathways to sustainable careers — but also supporting communities and underinvested populations.”

**Matthew Muench, Executive Director
Head of Jobs & Skills for Global Philanthropy, JPMorgan Chase**



From Logs to Lumber: A Journey of Growth

Grantee: PowerCorpsPHL

Impact Area: Recover Up: Powering Climate and Infrastructure Careers

Description: PowerCorpsPHL is a workforce development organization that engages out-of-school and out-of-work 18- to 30-year-olds in immersive programs to prepare them for and connect them to family-sustaining careers in clean energy, green infrastructure, and community development.

Impact: Founded in 2013 and based in Philadelphia, PowerCorpsPHL helps overlooked and underinvested young people develop their leadership and skills and access good careers in climate resilience, clean energy, and other sectors. It has grown to support more than 1,000 graduates and, with its grant from the Families and Workers Fund blended with employer and public funding, will scale its Climate Corps model to 10 additional cities to impact 1,300 young people. The team stands out for its deep trust-based relationships with the young people they work with and their exceptionally high completion and placement rates. PowerCorpsPHL provides intensive

supportive services — from mental health counseling to transportation to benefits access and beyond — and trauma-informed care to enable participants to thrive in training and employment. To date, **92% of program graduates transition to quality career pathways** and justice-involved young people average an 8% recidivism rate one year post-program compared to Philadelphia’s average of 45%.

“We are addressing entrenched problems around inequity and poverty and working with employers and young people to advance Philadelphia’s climate strategy.”

Julia Hillengas, Co-founder and Executive Director, talks about the founding of PowerCorpsPHL, its impact on participants, and connecting young people to quality careers.

Fighting Poverty and Helping the Environment

PowerCorpsPHL started when Philadelphia was developing its sustainable development goals and there were high levels of poverty disproportionately concentrated in communities of color and among young people. Many were just out of high school or prison and lacked opportunities and resources to find work and start a career. We brought these disparate issues together, addressing entrenched problems around inequity and poverty and working with employers and young people to advance Philadelphia's climate strategy.

Creating a Safe Space

We learned from alumni that our programs provide a safe space for people to explore careers they might have heard about but weren't connected to. That's important because clean energy and green infrastructure traditionally have some of the lowest levels of racial and gender diversity and often lack career access. To be honest, we send people to places where there are not a lot of people who look like them. That is starting to change through our work. Graduates say our programs have helped them transition to places where, increasingly, they feel they will belong.

“What we do is no longer just a theory of change and conceptual idea anymore; we have proven it can be done.”

The Bridge Between Business, Community, and Participants

Our work product is people so we have to center people. We sit in the middle of three clients — bringing together young adults, the community, and employers. Employers are talking to potential candidates; they are not only thinking about what they need to do to help candidates be successful but also what's good for the public at large. Young people looking to meet their own economic needs can do that in a way that is meeting the larger community needs. If we don't understand what an employer needs, if we don't understand what's going on with the young people in their communities — what's making them struggle — then none of it's going to work. That really is about building trust and credibility with all those partners to make these types of collaborations work; it's about trust and credibility of partnerships ([Learn more: A guide to how PowerCorpsPHL develops equity-centered workforce partnerships](#)).

Funding a Proven Concept

There is still federal infrastructure and climate funding in the pipeline, with millions of dollars hitting cities now. But there's huge uncertainty beyond that — and many unknowns. I think that if we can continue to implement programs that work and find champions, why would anyone want to cut the money, and with it, job growth? That is how we have survived. What we do is no longer just a theory of change and conceptual idea; we have proven it can be done. And so it becomes harder to negate something when there is proof right before you.

Becoming a Movement

Over the next decade, we want to expand our reach and bring what we've learned and experienced to other cities. This is already happening: we give technical assistance to the workforce development climate corps in Buffalo, New York; Reading, Pennsylvania; and Boston, Massachusetts. We teach them that our strategy creates an ecosystem with young people, employers, trade unions, local government, and communities and that this is meaningful and has an impact. **Equally important is that if more and more cities adopt our model, we will become a movement.**



Photo Courtesy of PowerCorpsPHL

Jaiden Liggett, PowerCorpsPHL graduate describes his experience at PowerCorpsPHL and the new role he was trained to be successful in.

When I graduated from high school, I didn't know what I wanted to do or how to earn an income. I had applied for jobs in retail and fast food while still in school but found the doors closed. They never accepted me.

Then I heard about PowerCorpsPHL through my sister, and after graduating high school in 2021, I enrolled in PowerCorpsPHL's Foundations program. They taught us everything about jobs and careers: how to write a resume and a cover letter and prepare for an interview. And about professionalism, like how to behave at a job, team building, and time-management skills.

I could also explore my interests. Because I was into power machines and hand tools, the best fit was the Reforestation Hub, which has a sawmill and a lumberyard where they turn fallen logs into lumber. We worked with chainsaws and wood chippers and I learned how to operate them safely.

You have to be open-minded to learn and study to achieve your career goals and pass your knowledge on to someone else. I recently accepted a job opportunity with the water department in Philadelphia as an apprentice safety technician, so I'm excited to teach others about how to be safe on the job.

“We are addressing entrenched problems around inequity and poverty and working with employers and young people to advance Philadelphia's climate strategy.”



Current Grantees

21ST CENTURY BENEFITS

- Aspen Institute Financial Security Program
- The Beeck Center for Social Impact and Innovation at Georgetown University
- Benefits Data Trust
- The Century Foundation
- Civillia
- Code for America
- Heldrich Center for Workforce Development at Rutgers University
- Maine Equal Justice Partners
- mRelief
- No Kid Hungry by Share Our Strength
- State Democracy Project
- U.S. Digital Response

RECOVER UP

- Better Builder® Program
- Center for American Progress
- Colorado Workforce Development Council
- Equitable Food Initiative
- Heldrich Center for Workforce Development at Rutgers University
- Jobs For The Future
- JUST Capital
- Milken Institute
- National Center for Civic Innovation
- National Domestic Workers Alliance
- National Fund for Workforce Solutions
- National Skills Coalition
- PolicyLink
- PowerCorpsPHL
- Resilience Force
- Results for America
- Social Finance
- State of New Jersey Office of Innovation
- Translational Research Services
- WeCount!
- Workplace Justice Lab at Rutgers University



Essential Leaders Council

June Barrett

Domestic/Care Work
Miami, FL

Daniel Castellanos

Disaster Restoration
New Orleans, LA

Janet Iraola

Education/Family Support
Boston, MA

Jessica Jackson

Healthcare
Detroit, MI

Carlos Lazaro

Agriculture
Santa Maria, CA

Donald Lowman Jr.

Business Industry
Philadelphia, PA

Joel Salazar

Disaster Restoration
New Orleans, LA



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- Robin Hood Foundation
- Rockefeller Foundation*
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- Truist Foundation

* Denotes Executive Committee



Our Team



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Program Associate



Courtney Lindeman
Executive Assistant



Jae Gho
Operations Associate



Jaidah Murray
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Jenny Weissbourd
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Rachel Korberg
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Samiya Sayed
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**Tyonka Perkins
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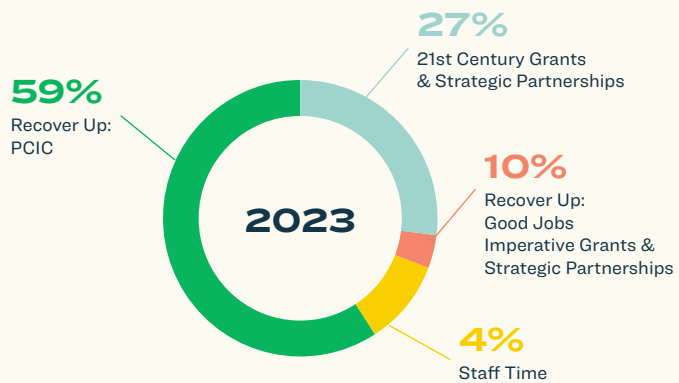


YK Vandekamp
Director of Philanthropy &
Operations



Financials

We have committed to maintaining an operating expense of 10% or less over the life of the Fund. In 2023, our operating expense was 8.4%, inclusive of our fiscal sponsorship administration fees.



Revenue

2023 Actual

\$45,710,767

Fundraising Commitments

2023 Actual

\$125,366,122

Fund Size to Date (April 2024)

Expense	2020 Actual	2021 Actual	2022 Actual	2023 Actual	Total Committed through 2023
Grant & Strategic Partnership Commitments	\$9,038,000	\$10,060,256	\$11,876,838	\$14,672,946	\$47,807,360

THE
**FAMILIES &
WORKERS**

FUND

CIVILIZATION STANDS UPON THE BACKS OF THE RISK TAKERS,
THE TINKERERS, AND THE EXPERIMENTERS, THE ONES WHO ENTER



Thank You

Photo Courtesy of Civilla