

TENNESSEE LOCAL STRATEGY

2025



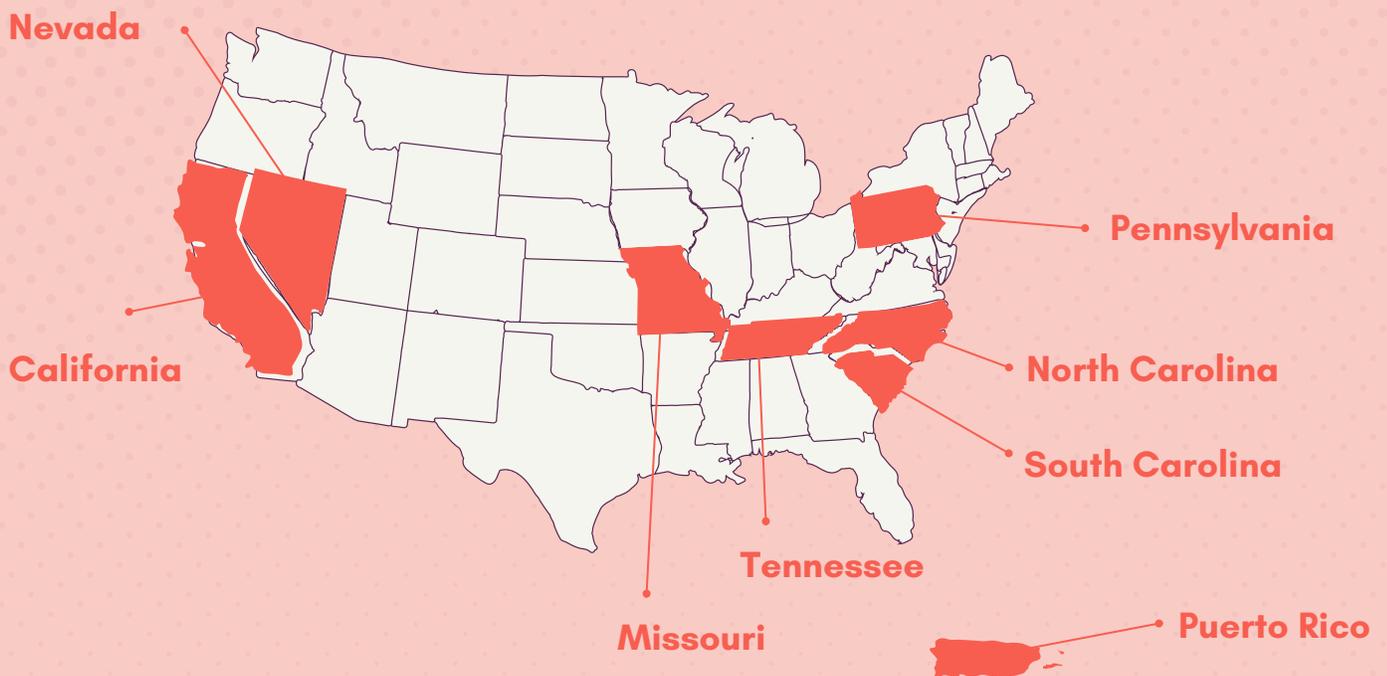
AMPLIFY FUND
NEIGHBORHOOD FUNDERS GROUP

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Amplify Fund is a place-based pooled fund that supports historically marginalized communities in maintaining and building decision-making power.

We do this by funding community organizing groups working on land justice, economic justice, holistic wellbeing, and human dignity issues.

Each of our funding places has a unique historic, economic, political, and social context, so our grantmaking strategy is tailored to each place.



Local Strategy Design

In 2025, after committing to extend Amplify Fund 10 years beyond the original 4-year lifespan, we decided to update our local grantmaking strategies.

11 interviews

In Nashville, we interviewed 11 leaders from our grantee organizations, other movement organizations, and value-aligned, local foundations. We asked about the most pressing challenges in the region, progressive solutions to those problems, the ecosystem of organizations and leaders working on those solutions, and capacities needed to achieve those solutions.

5 advisors

With that data, we identified five local strategy advisors, one of which was a grantee. Four of those advisors came together on June 9, 2025 to make decisions on what Amplify Fund should focus on in Nashville for the next five years and provided written feedback on the final strategy. One advisor* could not attend the meeting and provided written feedback. The final strategy decisions and local context can be found on the next few pages.



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Executive Director
Rise and Shine Tennessee



Sumita Keller *
Vice President of Programs & Advocacy
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Co-founder and Executive Director
Southern Movement Committee

Tennessee Context

NASHVILLE

Nashville isn't just "music city." Like many other places in the American South, Nashville has grappled with a violent, racialized history.

The end of the Civil War led to a large influx of formerly enslaved people seeking refuge and freedom into Nashville; but at the same time, the Ku Klux Klan held a meeting at the Maxwell House Hotel to officially organize themselves into a political and terrorist movement. That legacy continues today with state legislators promoting racialized violence, a white supremacist group purchasing land to create "white-only communities," and right wing media developing a presence in Nashville in the last seven years. This unsafe environment extends beyond Nashville's Black communities to growing immigrant communities as evidenced by increased Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) presence and deportations. →

Nashville has also been experiencing violence amongst youth.

In a short period of time, three shootings shook the city: a mass shooting in 2023 at The Covenant School, a Presbyterian elementary school; a fatal shooting in 2024 at Red Caboose Park by a 15-year-old; and the Antioch High School shooting in 2025. Protests in favor of stricter gun laws made national news when the Tennessee House of Representatives voted to expel representatives for "violating the chamber's decorum rules" by leading protests for gun reform on the House floor. ↓

Black and indigenous people, and other people of color in Nashville, who identify as women, LGBTQ+, under-resourced, and other intersectional identities cannot be abandoned simply because they exist in highly conservative regions.

With an increase in climate disaster in the region (extreme heat, tornadoes, floods) these populations are even more vulnerable than they were before. Join Amplify Fund in providing support to the following issues lifted up by our Nashville local strategy advisors. ■

It is an understatement to say that the political environment in Nashville is a challenge.

Tennessee Republicans achieved a supermajority in both chambers of the Tennessee General Assembly in the 2012 elections, and have since preempted inclusionary zoning, anti-discrimination in hiring, community oversight of police departments, community benefit agreements, and many other progressive policies. These politicians often have ties to corporate interest, or churches, demonstrating the significant influence of those institutions in pushing conservative agendas. ←

Grantmaking Priorities

NASHVILLE

Affordable Housing

Since 2015, the amount of affordable units needed to accommodate Nashville residents has quadrupled, and this was before the current administration's cuts to housing funding. Emergency shelters are at capacity; many college students are unhoused, and the only people who can afford to live in Nashville are transplants. Local advisors recommended Amplify Fund support organizations challenging the "colonization of Nashville" through social housing that uses Metro's median income, tenant organizing, and landlord accountability.

Jobs & Wages

The average household income in Nashville is over \$100,000; however, the median salary (which is less susceptible to outliers) is below \$60,000. And while corporations moving to the city are promising more jobs, these new jobs are non-union and are often going to transplants, keeping Nashville natives struggling to afford housing and other basic living expenses. Local advisors recommended Amplify support organizations promoting worker organizing, corporate accountability for higher wages, and public projects that create or use union labor.

Public Lands

Tennessee has a history of providing significant incentives to corporations like Oracle and Amazon to offset expenses in public land acquisition, effectively using public dollars to privatize land. Local advisors recommended Amplify Fund support organizations that are advocating for public land use to 1) be determined by impacted communities, and 2) address the affordable housing crisis.

Land
Justice

Public Schools

While public schools have historically been a source of jobs for Black women in the South and a place for child care, the new voucher system in Tennessee is stripping public money away from schools, blurring the separation between church and state, and continuing to criminalize Black, brown, queer and disabled students. Local advisors recommended Amplify Fund support organizations promoting "public dollars for public education," including those fighting the voucher legislation and organizing students and parents.

Economic
Justice

Grantmaking Priorities

NASHVILLE

Mental Health

With so many school shootings, youth mental health resources are urgently needed. However, many other populations are experiencing mental health crises and unable to afford or access health resources. Local advisors recommended Amplify support organizations pushing for public healthcare solutions such as the Nashville General Hospital, alternatives to police for mental health calls, a fund for emergency healthcare expenses, and free counseling for youth and families affected by gun violence.

Community Safety

The uptick in Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) activity is a symptom of a larger movement towards militarization and criminalization. Local advisors recommended Amplify Fund support organizations engaging in divest/invest campaigns and working with community members to identify better solutions to violence.

Local strategy advisors in Nashville encouraged us to see human dignity not as a set of problems with solutions, but rather as a lens. The important thing is for all oppressed communities to see their liberation tied into the liberation of other oppressed people. Local advisors recommended Amplify Fund support organizations 1) doing multi-racial base building and cross-issue organizing, and 2) holding a political analysis that understands impact across multiple communities.



Holistic Wellbeing

Human Dignity

Capacity Building

NASHVILLE

When asked what kinds of technical assistance or capacity building support local organizing groups most need to deepen the impact of their work, local strategy advisors identified the following priority areas:

1. **Organizing training and leadership development**
2. **Strategic Communications**
3. **Volunteer Retention**
4. **Healing, wellness, and safety**
5. **Productive collaboration with national groups**

As long as Amplify Fund continues to meet its fundraising goals, we will provide no-strings-attached, general operating grants to organizations in Nashville working on the problems and solutions named by local leaders in this strategy paper. We will also offer capacity building grants related to the priority areas listed above.

We encourage our fellow funders to join our pooled fund, or fund Nashville organizations directly, to support long-term change in the region.

If you have any questions about our local strategy process or would like to further discuss our final grantmaking strategy in Nashville, please contact amplify@nfg.org.