



# FUNDING THE FRONTLINES

Confronting the Inequities in Criminal Justice Funding  
for BIPOC and Gender Expansive-Led Organizations

# Acknowledgements

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# The Stories and Leaders Behind the Statistics

Before we dive into numbers and analysis, we must begin by centering the voices, stories, and lived experiences of the people driving transformative change. **Data alone can map systemic inequities, but it is the powerful narratives of Black and Brown women and gender expansive organizers that reveal the urgency beneath the numbers, humanizing the challenges and illuminating pathways forward.** Their voices are not anecdotes or sidebars; they are essential guideposts, vivid testimony of what is possible when resources match resilience.

Philanthropy has long operated at a distance, comfortable behind the data while treating frontline narratives as optional or supplementary. But this is precisely why a gap persists between philanthropic intentions and real-world impacts. **Stories bridge this gap.** They transform abstract concepts into tangible truths, connecting boardrooms to frontlines, policy to lived realities.



They show clearly what works, who is leading, and what can be achieved when resources flow directly to those who understand the stakes most intimately. These stories are not merely inspirational; they are instructional.

**For Black, Brown, and gender expansive organizers, chronic underfunding is more than historical precedent. It is an entrenched reality, reinforced by a philanthropy sector that too often moves slowly, cautiously, and without urgency, even as communities face immediate harm.**

Today, this harm is escalating, fueled by coordinated opposition movements that are increasingly well-resourced and boldly anti-Black, anti-trans, and anti-democratic.

# The Stories and Leaders Behind the Statistics

Philanthropy's continued reluctance or outright refusal to fund those fighting back is no longer a passive oversight; it is an active choice.

Consider SnapCo, built intentionally to create safety, resources, and affirmation for Black and Brown communities excluded by mainstream institutions. SnapCo doesn't exist to please funders; it exists to sustain lives. "We don't do this work just because we have to; we do it because we love our people," says Toni-Michelle Williams, co-founder and executive director. "But love alone doesn't pay for permanent spaces, or the tools needed to organize and fight back." Their Passport Clinic recently helped 136 trans individuals secure affirming identity documents, demonstrating vividly the power of adequately resourced community action. Yet even their success unfolds within persistent scarcity, prompting an urgent question: What could they accomplish if their full potential were funded rather than constantly constrained?

At the Miss Major Alexander L. Lee TGIJP Black Trans Cultural Center (TGIJP), leaders describe this moment as one defined by clear battle lines, drawn not by them but by powerful interests intent on erasing Black, Brown, and gender expansive people from public life.

**"We didn't create these deficits," TGIJP leaders emphasize, "yet we're constantly expected to solve them, with minimal resources, no safety net, and scarce support."**

Still, they build. They are creating worlds where Black trans joy is cherished, protected, and abundant; spaces that cultivate life rather than merely defend against harm. But even their visionary strength cannot change one simple fact: justice requires money.

# The Stories and Leaders Behind the Statistics

Across multiple movements, from abolitionists dismantling incarceration to reproductive justice advocates protecting bodily autonomy, the pattern remains starkly consistent: those closest to the harm are always last to receive funding. Black and Brown trans leaders have warned for years about rising anti-gender ideology, criminalization, and racialized violence, yet philanthropy has largely ignored their prophetic insights. **This neglect is not neutral; it is complicit.**

Yet these leaders keep fighting. They remain steadfast, visionary, and victorious even amid scarcity and struggle. The question is not whether they are ready; they have always been ready. **The critical question now is whether philanthropy will finally align itself with their leadership, their vision, and their powerful, transformative work, or continue to perpetuate the cycle of neglect that holds us all back.**



The critical question now is whether philanthropy will finally align itself with their leadership, their vision, and their powerful, transformative work, or continue to perpetuate the cycle of neglect that holds us all back.

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

A Call to Action for Equity  
in Philanthropy

# At a Glance: Overview of Findings and Themes

Across the country, Black and Brown women, trans, and gender expansive leaders are creating community-based safety, healing, and justice. They are doing this work with little to no support from philanthropy. These leaders are not waiting for permission or perfect conditions. They are building what our communities need to survive and thrive. This report is not just a call to funders. It is a call to action. Our findings confirm what organizers have known all along. The people doing the most transformative, life-giving work are still getting the least.



Less than 10%

Less than 10% of private philanthropy's criminal justice funding is directed toward gender expansive-led groups.

Black trans-led organizations receive less than 1% of overall funding, signaling critical neglect.

Less than 1%



The South, a region with high rates of systemic inequity, receives disproportionately low funding for grassroots organizations led by Black and Brown leaders.

While current data does not specifically track youth, the absence is evident. Black and Brown cis, trans, and gender expansive youth are among the most highly criminalized and least funded—an omission that underscores the need for targeted, intergenerational investments.

# Urgent Imperative for Change

While public foundations allocate a higher percentage of their criminal justice funding to Black, Brown, and gender expansive-led groups than private foundations, the overall numbers remain far too low. This gap reinforces the urgent need for philanthropy as a whole to adopt more equitable and accountable funding practices.

**This report emerges in a high-stakes political moment. Across the country, we are witnessing coordinated attacks on bodily autonomy, racial justice, trans rights, and youth power—many of which are being codified through legislation and emboldened by political platforms like Project 2025.**

These efforts are not abstract. They are targeting the very communities leading

transformative justice work, particularly Black and Brown women, trans and gender expansive people, and youth organizers.

With an increasingly hostile climate for public dissent, and the critical 2026 primary election approaching, the philanthropic sector must recognize that failing to act decisively in this moment is not neutral—it's a choice. The time for bold, values-aligned investment is now.

**The data is clear: philanthropy must do more to support the vital work of BIPOC women and gender expansive leaders.** These organizations are driving transformative movements and building safer, stronger communities, yet they remain critically underfunded and overlooked.

The lack of funding for Black and Brown women, trans, and gender expansive leaders is not just a gap. It is a barrier that reinforces the same systemic harms these communities are fighting to dismantle.

# Key Recommendations

## 01. ——— Establish Dedicated Funding Streams:

Create specific budget lines for Black and Brown gender expansive-led organizations to ensure consistent, sustainable support.

## 02. ————— Prioritize Regional Equity:

Direct increased funding to underserved regions, particularly the South, where disparities are most pronounced.

## 03. ——— Adopt Gender-Expansive Funding Practices:

Align funding strategies with public foundation benchmarks to close the gaps for gender expansive-led groups.

## 04. ————— Strengthen Community

**Power through Collaboration:** Partner with intermediaries and grassroots organizations to strengthen community-driven approaches to justice.

## 05. ——— Commit to Transparency and Accountability:

Establish clear, public-facing accountability measures and transparent reporting on funding commitments, timelines, and outcomes, ensuring philanthropy remains answerable to frontline communities and movements.



As gender justice, racial justice, and LGBTQ+ rights come under coordinated attack, philanthropy cannot afford to remain cautious or comfortable. The moment demands urgency and clarity. Funders must move resources directly to those most affected by criminalization and systemic violence. Anything less is a failure to meet the stakes. This is the time to choose alignment over optics, and action over rhetoric. Justice requires more than statements. It requires investment.

**Without adequate funding, these organizations will be forced to scale back or even dismantle crucial programs and services.** The absence of these resources will hinder their ability to provide the support that so many rely on, deepening the very disparities they are working to eliminate. If philanthropy fails to act now, we risk not only stalling progress but reversing the hard-won gains in the fight for justice, especially as oppositional forces actively work to undo the progress we've made.

# INTRODUCTION

# Purpose of the Report

Philanthropy plays a powerful role in shaping which communities and strategies are resourced, and which are left behind. This report examines the current criminal justice funding landscape and calls out the deep, persistent disparities in how resources are distributed. Black and Brown women and gender expansive (transgender, gender non-conforming, and intersex) leaders are at the forefront of reimagining safety, healing, and accountability in their communities. Yet they remain critically underfunded, overlooked by a sector that often claims to value equity but continues to sideline the people driving real change.

**This report is a call to action;** a clear-eyed accounting of where philanthropy is falling short and a vision for what becomes possible when the sector aligns its values with its dollars.

Developed by a collaborative that includes the Libra Foundation, Borealis Philanthropy, Funders For Justice,

Action for Transformation Fund, and others. This research uplifts what can happen when philanthropy follows the lead of those most impacted and most equipped to transform our future.

**This work began with a simple but urgent question: Why are the very people most impacted by incarceration still fighting for scraps?**

As funders from different corners of philanthropy, we kept seeing powerful grassroots efforts led by women, girls, and gender-expansive folks go unsupported. We joined forces to shift that; to understand the landscape, confront the barriers, and build pathways for more accountable and equitable funding.

# Project Origins

The project was born out of a hypothesis that only a fraction of philanthropic “criminal justice” funding reaches BIPOC cis and trans-women-led organizations. To test this, a collaborative of funders launched a comprehensive research effort to collect and analyze data from some of the sector’s largest funders. Consultant Katayoon Majd initially spearheaded this work before transitioning to a full-time role.

From November 2023 to May 2024, Ryan Li Dahlstrom led the project, conducting surveys, interviews, and building partnerships to uncover where funding flows—and where it fails to reach.

## Working Definitions

**To ground this report in clarity and inclusivity, it employs the following definitions:**

### Gender Expansive:

Describes people who live and express their gender outside of restrictive binary norms. It affirms the right to self-define, disrupts rigid gender roles, and reflects the broad spectrum of identity and expression found in our communities.

### Criminal Justice:

Used broadly to reflect philanthropic categorizations, encompassing work that communities define and reimagine as community-based safety and justice.

**By centering these definitions, the report aims to bridge the gap between philanthropic terminology and the lived realities of communities driving this work.**

# KEY INSIGHTS:

What the Data Really Shows—  
and What Philanthropy  
Keeps Missing

# Persistent Criminal Justice Funding Gaps That Undermine Real Justice

The findings from this research reveal what movement leaders have been saying for years: philanthropy is failing to show up where it matters most. Resources continue to bypass Black and Brown women and gender expansive-led organizations, despite their leadership in building real safety and justice. **These organizers are not only leading the charge, they are also among the most criminalized and surveilled, navigating systems that were never built to protect them.** And still, they push forward. Their work is not just necessary; it is visionary. It is rooted in care, resistance, and the belief that our communities deserve more than survival. These are the people building the future. The question is whether philanthropy will finally fund it.

## Gender Expansive Leadership Marginalized:

Less than **10%** of private philanthropy's criminal justice funding reaches gender expansive-led organizations

Highlighting the systemic neglect of leaders actively addressing injustice.

Alarming, Black trans-led organizations receive just **0.8%** of total criminal justice funding

Leaving a significant gap in resourcing leaders uniquely positioned to drive intersectional approaches to justice reform.

Even within philanthropic initiatives that prioritize equity, gender expansive groups often remain an afterthought, relegated to smaller or siloed grants. This marginalization perpetuates systemic inequities and limits the transformative potential of grassroots leadership.

# Regional Inequities:

**The South, despite being home to many systemic inequities and transformative grassroots leaders, remains underfunded in the philanthropic landscape.**

Southern states face the highest incarceration rates in the U.S., alongside entrenched racial injustices.

Private philanthropy often prioritizes urban centers outside the South, undercutting opportunities to address systemic harms in this critical region.

Public foundations, by contrast, provide a more equitable share of resources to Southern initiatives, though their overall funding represents only a small fraction of the total philanthropic pie.

**These disparities persist despite the growing recognition of the transformative impact of Black and Brown women and gender expansive leaders in the field of justice reform.**



# Philanthropy's Ongoing Inequities and Emerging Opportunities for Change

The philanthropic sector remains marked by significant inequities, yet some shifts suggest what is possible with a stronger commitment to equity-driven funding strategies.



# Public Foundations Taking the Lead

Public foundations allocate a larger proportion of their funding to gender expansive-led organizations compared to private foundations, highlighting a critical gap in funding priorities. In 2023:

44%



44% of public foundation criminal justice funding was directed to gender expansive-led groups.

18%



18% of this funding supported Black trans women-led organizations—far exceeding contributions from private foundations.

Some public foundations offer a glimpse of what's possible when equity and intersectionality are truly embedded in grantmaking. Foundations like Astraea and Groundswell aren't waiting for perfect conditions. They're investing in leadership that's already building solutions.

The contrast with most of private philanthropy is stark and revealing. **It isn't just a funding imbalance, it's a reflection of who the sector sees as worth investing in. And that disconnect continues to fuel systemic disparities that movements have been working to dismantle for generations.**

# Marginal Steps in Private Philanthropy

In contrast to public foundations, most private philanthropy continues to fall short in prioritizing equity:

In FY23, the Libra Foundation allocated 11% of its criminal justice funding to gender expansive-led organizations, including 2% for Black trans women-led groups.

While these contributions mark small steps forward, they fall far short in a landscape where most private foundations continue to invest less than 10 percent of their resources in gender expansive-led work. This ongoing underinvestment is not just a gap, it reflects a broader pattern of institutional neglect and a failure to center justice in philanthropic strategy. Our movements cannot afford piecemeal change. Gender expansive communities have long been leading the work of imagining and building safer, freer futures. It's time for philanthropy to meet that leadership with the depth and scale of resources it deserves.

## 2022 Private Philanthropy Data Overview

\$91 M in Criminal Justice Funding



13% of funding went to all BIPOC gender expansive work. Only 3% went to BIPOC trans women-led groups, and 10% to BIPOC GNC-led organizations.

37% went to BIPOC cis women-led groups, totaling \$33.4M

60% of funding went to BIPOC-led groups

# Marginal Steps in Private Philanthropy

## 2023 Private Philanthropy Data Overview

\$111 M in Criminal Justice Funding



Only **0.8%** went to BIPOC trans women-led groups, and **6.5%** to BIPOC GNC-led groups, representing just over **7% of funding for all BIPOC gender expansive work.**

**30%** went to BIPOC cis women-led organizations, a **7%** decrease from 2022, totaling **\$33.3M.**

**45%** went to BIPOC-led groups, a **15%** decrease from 2022.

Public foundations directed **44%** of funding to BIPOC gender expansive-led organizations, compared to just **7%** by private philanthropy.



# THE CASE FOR URGENCY:

Contextualizing the Data in This  
Political Moment

# The Case for Urgency

The solutions to our most urgent problems are already in motion, led by the very people who've borne the brunt of systemic harm. Black, Brown, gender expansive, and youth organizers have been on the frontlines for decades, building alternatives rooted in healing, care, and collective safety. **We can't afford to keep sidelining the visionaries who are reimagining what justice can look like. When philanthropic dollars continue to bypass these leaders, it's not just an oversight—it's a direct investment in maintaining a harmful status quo.**

It can't be overstated: we are in a moment of rising authoritarianism, deepening criminalization, and a coordinated campaign to roll back civil rights. From anti-protest laws to attacks on youth, trans people, and reproductive autonomy, these efforts are designed to isolate and disempower the very communities leading transformational change. This is not just a political moment, it's a breaking point.

Inaction is not neutral—it's a decision to strengthen the systems harming our people. As we move toward a high-stakes 2026 election cycle, every philanthropic delay, every misaligned investment, becomes a direct threat to justice, safety, and liberation.

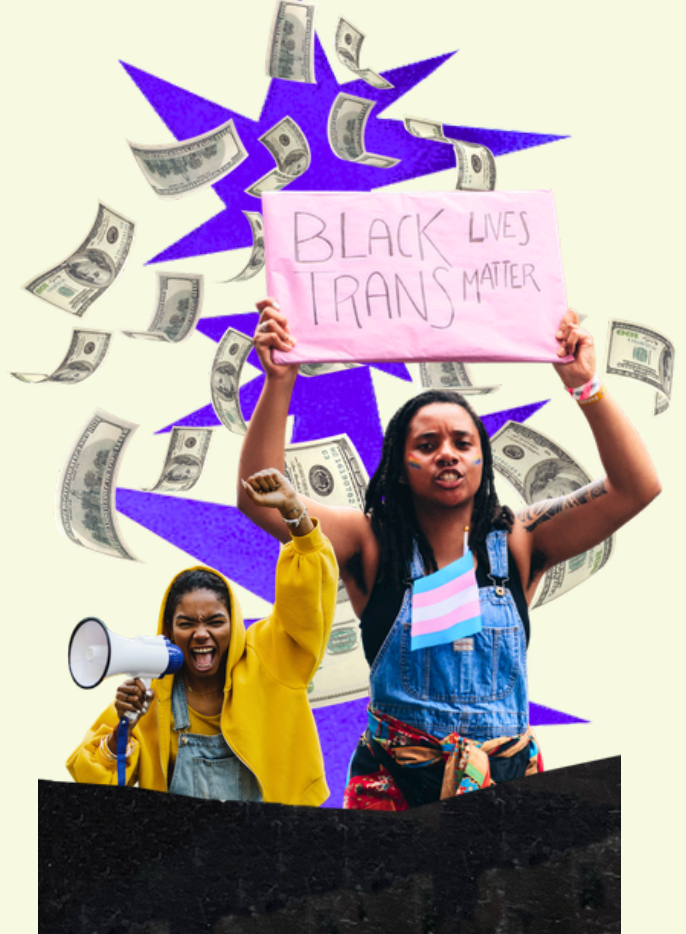
The chronic underfunding of Black and Brown women and gender expansive-led organizations is more than a statistical gap. It is a deep failure to align resources with those leading transformational change. These organizers are not waiting for permission. They are already doing the work of dismantling punitive systems and building community-based responses that actually keep people safe. And yet, the data tells us that philanthropy is moving backward. Between 2022 and 2023, funding to BIPOC gender expansive-led groups dropped from 13% to just 7% of total criminal justice grants. That is not progress. That is regression.

If philanthropy doesn't course-correct now, we risk not only losing ground, we risk losing a generation of organizers, communities, and movements that have been the heartbeat of justice work for decades.

Even more alarming is what's missing: data on resourcing youth-led organizing. Young people are not the future—they are the now. Some of the most innovative, visionary solutions are coming from youth who are organizing alongside intergenerational leaders and dreaming beyond the limits of reform.

The absence of data on their work reflects a dangerous erasure of their power, brilliance, and essential role in this movement.

This inequity isn't just a missed opportunity. It's a barrier to liberation. But it doesn't have to stay that way. Philanthropy has the opportunity—and the responsibility—to shift course. Every dollar directed toward these leaders is



an investment in a world where safety doesn't rely on cages and punishment, but on care, dignity, and self-determination.

We must move beyond traditional funding models that uphold systemic inequities. The organizations pushing the sharpest, most effective strategies are Black, Brown, and trans-led. The criminal legal system is a pipeline of oppression, and we will not transform it by investing in outdated policies or institutions that exclude the very people leading the fight.

So the question remains: will you invest in the people building what's next? Or will you continue to pour resources into the systems that have already failed us?

# MOVING MONEY WHERE IT MATTERS:

Strategies for Equity-Rooted  
Grantmaking

# Resourcing Justice at the Margins: Confronting Regional and Racial Disparities

## **Black and Brown Leaders in the South: Overlooked and Underfunded**

The South has long been a region where systemic inequities—rooted in historical and structural racism—are deeply entrenched. Despite being home to many Black and Brown leaders at the forefront of transformative justice work, this region remains significantly underfunded in the philanthropic landscape.

### **Research findings reveal that:**

- A disproportionately low percentage of criminal justice funding flows to Southern states, where the need is greatest.
- Black and Brown-led grassroots organizations in the South often operate with minimal budgets, despite tackling some of the nation's most pressing challenges, including high incarceration rates, voter suppression, and systemic violence.

- Southern Black trans-led organizations face the most significant funding gaps, receiving less than 1% of total criminal justice funding nationally.

This disparity reflects a broader trend of philanthropic neglect, where national narratives often overlook the South's unique needs and contributions to justice reform. Without targeted investments, these leaders and organizations cannot realize their full potential to drive meaningful, community-led change.



# The Urgent Need for Intersectional Investments

Addressing these disparities requires a shift in how philanthropy approaches funding decisions. The communities most affected by systemic inequities—Black and Brown women and gender expansive leaders—are uniquely positioned to lead solutions rooted in lived experience. However, their work is often intersectional, cutting across issues like race, gender, economic justice, and community safety, which traditional philanthropic silos fail to adequately address.

## Key insights from the data show that:

Intersectional justice work—most often led by gender expansive leaders—is systematically underfunded, not because it lacks impact, but because it refuses to silo the fight for liberation. These leaders confront multiple, overlapping systems of oppression at once, and yet their bold, interconnected approaches are too often dismissed as “too broad” or “too complex” for traditional funding models. This isn’t a flaw in the work—it’s a failure of philanthropy to meet the moment.

Funders who prioritize equity-driven, intersectional strategies see higher impact in addressing root causes of systemic harm.

Public foundations, which tend to allocate more resources to intersectional efforts, provide a blueprint for how private philanthropy can better align with community needs.

Investing in intersectional leadership is not just an ethical imperative, it is a strategic opportunity to amplify the impact of philanthropic dollars. By funding organizations that address the complex realities of systemic inequities, philanthropy can dismantle barriers that perpetuate harm and empower the leaders who are already building alternative visions of justice and safety.

# The Urgent Need for Intersectional Investments

The data in this report confirms what our movements have long known: Black and Brown women and gender expansive leaders are consistently underfunded, despite doing some of the most urgent and effective work to dismantle harm and build real safety. These recommendations are not theoretical. They come directly from organizers and advocates who live the consequences of philanthropic neglect and know what it would take to shift it.

**They are rooted in practice, relationship, and the refusal to accept crumbs when communities deserve resources, trust, and long-term investment.** If philanthropy is serious about aligning with justice, the path forward is clear, and **it begins with moving money where it matters.**



## 01. ————— Commit to Dedicated Funding Streams

The research makes it plain. There is a deep and ongoing failure to allocate resources in ways that reflect who is actually doing the work. Black and Brown women and gender expansive-led organizations are leading powerful, effective responses to criminalization, state violence, and systemic abandonment. Yet they remain chronically underfunded. It is not enough to tuck them into general funding buckets or one-off grants. Dedicated, long-term funding streams are essential. **If philanthropy is serious about showing up in solidarity, not just in statements but in budgets, it must prioritize and protect these leaders with the same urgency they bring to protecting our communities.**

**Why This Matters:** Dedicated funding ensures sustained, stable support for leaders who are not only challenging systems of harm, but actively building alternatives rooted in justice and care. Without intentional, long-term investment, these organizations will continue to be overlooked by institutions that claim to support equity. Real change takes resources, and movements cannot thrive on symbolic support alone.

### **Action Steps:**

- Allocate specific percentages of annual criminal justice funding to Black and Brown women and gender expansive-led organizations.
- Create multi-year grants to provide stability for grassroots organizations, enabling them to plan and scale their impact.
- Require transparency in reporting and tracking demographic data on grantees to measure progress toward equity goals.

### **Data-Driven Insights:**

- Out of \$91M in criminal justice grants awarded by private philanthropy in 2022, only 3% went to BIPOC trans women-led organizations, and 10% to BIPOC GNC-led groups, just 13% of total funding for all BIPOC gender expansive work. In 2023, the share decreased further to only 7%.
- By comparison, public foundations allocated 44% of their criminal justice funding to BIPOC gender expansive-led groups in 2023, with 18% directed to BIPOC trans women-led organizations.
- Public foundations offer a critical model for private philanthropy to emulate.

## 02. — Target Regional and Demographic Equity Gaps

The South is one of the clearest examples of where the need is greatest and the funding is weakest. It is home to some of the most visionary Black and Brown leaders doing this work, yet the region is routinely under-resourced by national philanthropy. This is not a coincidence. It is the result of deeply entrenched funding patterns that ignore or undervalue the brilliance coming out of Southern communities. For generations, the South has been a powerful force in movement leadership and resistance—from the Black freedom struggle to immigrant rights, from voting rights organizing to trans liberation.

Organizers in the South continue to model what it means to build power at the intersections of race, gender, class, and geography. And still, philanthropy looks elsewhere. At the same time, Black trans-led organizations across every region face the most severe funding inequities. These are the very groups confronting the worst impacts of criminalization and systemic violence while creating liberatory models that could transform how we understand safety. If we want to shift what is possible, we must shift who gets funded and where.

**Why This Matters:** If philanthropy is serious about supporting Black communities, working-class and poor people, immigrants and refugees, and those leading visionary movements for justice, then it must take the South seriously. This region has long been a frontline for the battles shaping our nation — from voting rights to labor, education to criminalization. And despite being underfunded, organizers in the South continue to develop some of the most brilliant, resourceful, and community-rooted strategies for building safety, power, and liberation. Investing in the South isn't just about closing gaps — it's about resourcing the heartbeat of transformative change.



## 02. — Target Regional and Demographic Equity Gaps

### Action Steps:

- Prioritize Southern states in funding portfolios, with an emphasis on grassroots organizations led by Black and Brown women and gender expansive leaders.
- Partner with regional intermediaries to distribute funds efficiently and equitably.
- Develop metrics to track the impact of regional investments and adjust strategies accordingly.

### Data-Driven Insights:

- In 2023, only 45% of private philanthropy's criminal justice funding went to BIPOC-led groups—a 15% decrease from the prior year. Funding to BIPOC cis women-led organizations also dropped from 37% in 2022 to 30% in 2023.
- The South remains the most underfunded region, despite its high incarceration rates and concentration of BIPOC grassroots leaders addressing systemic harms.
- Regional investments are critical to addressing these stark inequities and building capacity for change.



## 03. ————— Expand Gender-Expansive Philanthropy

Many philanthropic organizations still operate within traditional funding silos, failing to recognize the interconnected systems of oppression addressed by gender expansive-led groups. Adopting a gender-expansive lens not only fills critical gaps but also reflects the evolving understanding of gender in social justice work.

**Why This Matters:** Funding with a gender-expansive lens aligns with the realities of intersectional leadership and ensures the inclusion of marginalized voices in justice reform efforts.

### **Action Steps:**

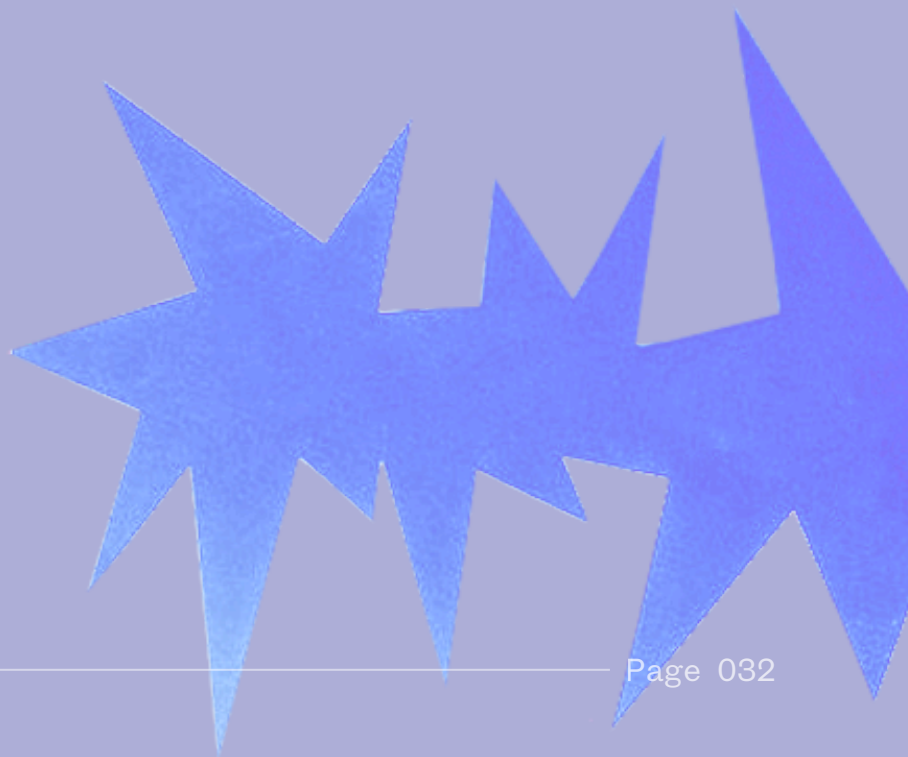
- Incorporate gender-expansive frameworks into grantmaking guidelines and priorities.
- Provide training for program officers on inclusive funding practices and the importance of trans and nonbinary leadership.
- Partner with organizations that specialize in gender-expansive justice work to co-design grantmaking strategies.

### **Data-Driven Insights:**

- Gender justice funding accounted for only 2.3% to 2.6% of total criminal justice funding in 2021-2022, with LGBTQIA-specific funding even lower at just 0.4%.
- In FY23, one major criminal justice funder allocated \$10.5M, but only 2.5% of that went to BIPOC cis women-led groups, with no funding reported for BIPOC trans or GNC-led organizations.
- Another large foundation dedicated 7% of its \$52M FY23 criminal justice funding to BIPOC cis women-led groups, with no funds allocated to trans or GNC-led organizations.

# CONCLUSION:

Seizing the Moment for  
Transformative Change



# Conclusion: Seizing the Moment for Transformative Change

To build the future our movements are fighting for, philanthropy must move with urgency and purpose. These recommendations are not just a call to fund differently. They are a call to stand with frontline organizers, youth leaders, and gender-expansive communities who are already reshaping what justice and safety look like.

**This is not a moment for incremental change. It is a mandate for transformation.** By establishing dedicated funding streams, confronting deep regional and demographic disparities, and investing in gender-expansive approaches, funders can help dismantle the systems that continue to harm Black and Brown women and gender expansive people and support the ecosystems that sustain our communities.

Philanthropy has a critical role to play, not as a savior but as a partner in liberation. This is a roadmap for resourcing power at the margins and fueling the bold visions already alive in our movements. The time to act with clarity, commitment, and courage is now.

## The Time for Bold Action is Now:

- **Make Public Commitments:** Declare your funding priorities. Set concrete goals for investing in Black and Brown women and gender expansive-led organizations, with clear timelines and accountability measures. Transparency is not optional.
- **Shift Power to Grassroots Leaders:** Philanthropy cannot dictate solutions from above. Partner directly with community-based organizations to co-create funding strategies that meet their actual needs—not just funders' assumptions.
- **Build Data Systems That Track Equity, Not Just Dollars:** Develop and standardize demographic tracking systems to measure progress, ensure transparency, and hold funders accountable for real equity in grantmaking.

# Conclusion: Seizing the Moment for Transformative Change

## The Time for Bold Action is Now:

- **Invest in Your Own Learning:** Funders must do more than write checks. Equip your teams with the knowledge and training needed to practice equity-driven grantmaking. Make ongoing learning a requirement, not an afterthought.
- **Push the Sector Forward:** Your influence matters. Call on your peers to step up, shift their practices, and commit to gender-expansive philanthropy. If you are serious about equity, use your platform to drive change.

Philanthropy has spent too long **underfunding, overlooking, and undervaluing** the very leaders best positioned to transform justice. That ends today. **Fund them. Trust them. Stand with them.**

Justice cannot wait. **Will philanthropy finally act—or will it continue to look away?**



# Appendices

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## Appendix A

### Survey Questions

In this survey we seek information about how much of your funding is going to groups led by BIPOC cis and trans women and gender nonconforming individuals. We know that defining "constituent-led" organizations is complex and differs across organizations, as explained [here](#)).

Defining constituent-led groups is about looking at who holds power in an organization, which is not always easy to do. That means we are not interested in just the identity of the executive director, but rather in who holds the various leadership roles in an institution. So for example, a "BIPOC-led group" would be one in which "BIPOC people hold at least 51% of the senior leadership and 51% of the board roles." But we recognize this is an imperfect definition.

### DEFINITIONS:

- **BIPOC:** A term referring to "Black and/ or Indigenous People of Color." While "POC" or People of Color is often used as well, BIPOC explicitly leads with Black and Indigenous identities, which helps to counter anti-Black racism and invisibilization of Native communities. ([Race Forward](#))
- **Cisgender:** Someone whose gender identity matches with the sex they were assigned at birth. ([National LGBTQ Task Force](#))
- **Gender expansive:** An umbrella term for those who do not follow gender stereotypes, or who expand ideas of gender expression or gender identity. Gender expansive does NOT mean non-binary and cisgender people can be gender expansive as well. It is important to respect and use the terms people use for themselves, regardless of any prior associations or ideas about those terms. ([PFLAG](#))
- **Gender justice:** A world where everyone can thrive regardless of gender, gender identity or expression, or sexual orientation. ([Borealis Philanthropy, citing Gender Justice](#))

### DEFINITIONS:

- **Gender nonconforming:** Term for people whose gender identity and/or expression is different from societal expectations related to gender. ([National LGBTQ Task Force](#))
- **Nonbinary:** Refers to people who do not subscribe to the gender binary. They might exist between or beyond the man-woman binary. Some use the term exclusively, while others may use it interchangeably with terms like genderqueer, genderfluid, gender non-conforming, gender diverse, or gender expansive. It can also be combined with other descriptors e.g. nonbinary woman or transmasc nonbinary. Language is imperfect, so it's important to trust and respect the words that nonbinary people use to describe their genders and experiences. Nonbinary people may understand their identity as falling under the transgender umbrella, and may thus identify as transgender. Sometimes abbreviated as NB or Enby, the term NB has been used historically to mean non-Black, so those referring to nonbinary people should avoid using NB. ([PFLAG](#))
- **Transgender:** A broad term for people whose gender identity or expression is different from those typically associated with their sex assigned at birth. "Trans" is shorthand for "transgender." ([National LGBTQ Task Force](#))
- **Trans Justice:** A commitment to creating a world where trans and gender non-conforming individuals and communities have the freedom to self-define and express their genders without fear of violence, discrimination, or harassment. A world where we recognize and honor that our communities have knowledge and expertise in matters relating to our own lives that no one else will have. ([Trans Justice Funding Project](#))

## Appendix A

1. Please provide as much of the funding data in the table below as you can. If you do not regularly collect this data, please provide the data based on your knowledge of the groups' leadership and work.

Grantee Organizations	Total FY23 Funding Amounts (anticipated)	Total FY22 Funding Amounts	If necessary to clarify your answers, please indicate any notes on the data here
ALL criminal justice grantees			
All BIPOC-led groups			
BIPOC cis women-led groups			
BIPOC trans women-led groups			
BIPOC gender nonconforming-led groups			
All organizations who center and meaningfully include the leadership, needs, and experiences of trans and cis women and gender non conforming people in their analysis and practice.			

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## Appendix A

**2. Of the groups you included in the totals above for BIPOC cis women-led, trans-led, gender-nonconforming-led groups and groups centering trans and cis women and gender nonconforming people, please list any funding intermediaries and their grant amounts in FY22 and FY23 here.**

**3. If you are able, please attach your criminal justice grants lists for FY 22 and FY23 here. (If that is not possible, please attach the list of those grantees led by BIPOC cis and trans women and gender nonconforming individuals, if you can.)**

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## Appendix B

### Project Context with Interview Questions

Funders for Justice Research Project

Re: Criminal Justice Funding for BIPOC cis and trans women-led groups

Ryan Li Dahlstrom is the lead consultant working with Funders for Justice on this project. The other partners are the Libra Foundation, Wellspring Philanthropic Fund, Grantmakers for Girls of Color, the Fund for Trans Generations at Borealis Philanthropy, and consultant Aldita Gallardo.

We are doing this project because we have observed that criminal justice funders do not typically use an expansive gender justice lens in their work, even though we know that criminal justice systems have varying impacts on cis and trans women and gender nonconforming individuals. (When we say "expansive gender justice lens", we mean organizations who center and meaningfully include the leadership, needs, and experiences of trans and cis women and gender non conforming people in their analysis and practice.) So much more money is being invested in criminal justice transformation in recent years, but of the more than \$1 Billion of criminal justice funding that we estimate goes to the field each year, we believe only a very small percentage is being invested in organizations led by *BIPOC trans and cis women and gender-nonconforming folks*, despite their important, powerful work.

The ultimate goal of our project is to drive more funding to these groups.

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## Appendix B

This first phase of the project is focused on collecting data from criminal justice funders about their funding to BIPOC cis and trans women and nonbinary people-led groups. We anticipate that in a second phase of the project (outside the scope of this research project), we will use the summary findings as a launch pad for driving more money to these organizations, through a widely expanded set of funders for the work.

### **PURPOSE**

- To research how much funding criminal justice funders are putting towards these groups
- To gather criminal justice funders' reflections on funding these groups.

We will use the data to write a memo analyzing the aggregate results. We will keep your individual responses confidential. If we want to highlight your organization and/or one of your grantees in public materials, we will ask your permission first.

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## Appendix C

### **Protocol for Semi Structured Interviews**

**Purpose:** This protocol is designed to gather insights from funders about their approaches to gender justice and criminal justice funding. The interviews will explore portfolio focus, internal barriers, and recommendations for philanthropy to better support groups led by BIPOC cis and GNC folks.

### **Interview Sections and Questions**

#### **1. Introduction (5 minutes)**

- Interviewer introduces themselves and the purpose of the interview and reiterates confidentiality and the voluntary nature of participation.

### 2. Questions for Funders Supporting this Work (25 minutes)

- **Portfolio Focus**

1. "Tell me a little bit about how you incorporate an expansive gender justice lens in your criminal justice work."
2. "How long has your foundation been funding groups led by BIPOC cis and trans women and GNC individuals?"
3. "What types of groups are you funding? (e.g., size, geography, focus areas)"
4. "What are some of the primary goals these groups are working towards, and what strategies are they using to achieve them?"
5. "What challenges do these groups face in their work, and how do you see philanthropy helping to address them?"
6. "In your opinion, what is some of the most exciting or transformative work being done with a gender justice lens?"

- **Internal Barriers and Opportunities**

7. "What challenges, if any, have you encountered when supporting these groups? How did you navigate or overcome these challenges?"
8. "How has using a gender-expansive lens impacted your foundation and grantmaking?"

- **Recommendations and Learnings for Philanthropy**

9. "What would you like criminal justice funders to understand about funding such work? What lessons do you want to share?"
10. "What advice do you have for other criminal justice funders who might be interested in supporting criminal justice work with a gender justice lens, including funding groups led by BIPOC cis and trans women and gender nonconforming individuals?"

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## Appendix C

### 3. Questions for Funders Not Supporting this Work (25 minutes)

- **Portfolio Focus**

1. "Can you tell me a little bit about your criminal justice funding? What types of goals, strategies, and groups do you focus on and why?"
2. "Has your foundation ever considered funding with a gender justice lens? If so, what was ultimately decided and why?"
3. "What aspects of funding groups led by BIPOC cis and trans women and GNC individuals would excite or inspire you?"
4. "What concerns or hesitations might you have about funding such groups?"

- **Internal Barriers**

5. "What challenges or barriers might you face (or have you faced) to funding groups led by BIPOC cis and trans women and GNC individuals?"

### Recommendations and Learnings for Philanthropy

6. "What are you most curious to learn about funding groups led by BIPOC cis and trans women and GNC individuals?"

### 4. Wrap-Up (5 minutes)

- **Ask if there is anything else the participant would like to add.**
- **Thank the participants for their time and insights.**
- **Provide a brief overview of next steps and how the findings will be used**

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## Appendix D

### Raw Data Findings

The following data was collected through surveys and interviews with public and private philanthropic organizations as part of this research project. This appendix provides a comprehensive overview of the findings to support the analysis and recommendations in the report.

### 1. Private Philanthropy Data Overview

#### 2022: Criminal Justice (CJ) Funding

- Total CJ grants awarded: \$91M
  - 60% of grants awarded went to BIPOC-led groups, totaling \$55M.
  - 37% went to BIPOC cis women-led groups, totaling \$33.4M.
  - Only 3% went to BIPOC trans women-led groups, totaling \$2.3M.
  - 10% went to BIPOC GNC-led organizations, totaling \$9M.
  - Combined funding for BIPOC gender expansive-led groups: 13% of total CJ funding.

#### 2023: Criminal Justice (CJ) Funding

- Total CJ grants awarded: \$111M
  - 45% of grants awarded went to BIPOC-led groups, a 15% decrease from 2022.
  - 30% went to BIPOC cis women-led organizations, a 7% decrease from 2022, totaling \$33.3M.
  - Only 0.8% went to BIPOC trans women-led groups, totaling \$0.9M.
  - 6.5% went to BIPOC GNC-led organizations, totaling \$7.2M.
  - Combined funding for BIPOC gender expansive-led groups: 7% of total CJ funding.

#### Summary of Trends Across Two Years (2022-2023)

- Private philanthropy awarded less than half of total CJ funding to BIPOC-led groups across the two years.
- Less than 10% of total CJ funding was allocated to gender expansive-led organizations as a whole.

## 2. Public Philanthropy Data Overview (2023)

- Total CJ grants awarded: \$3.8M
  - Majority of funding went to BIPOC-led and BIPOC cis women-led organizations.
  - 18% of funding went to BIPOC trans women-led groups.
  - 26% of funding went to BIPOC GNC-led groups.
  - Combined funding for BIPOC gender expansive-led groups: 44% of total CJ funding.

**Key Insight:** While representing a smaller proportion of the philanthropic “pie,” public foundations significantly outpace private foundations in funding BIPOC gender expansive-led organizations.

## 3. Comparative Data from the Criminal Justice Funders Forum (CJFF)

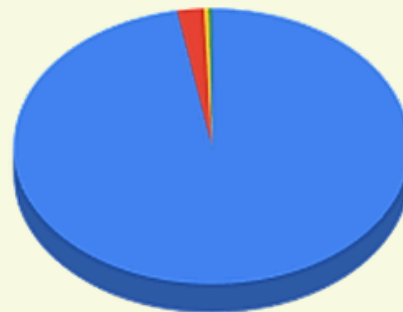
The CJFF, comprising some of the largest private CJ funders, revealed even starker disparities:

- Gender Justice Funding (2021-2022):
  - Only 2.3% to 2.6% of CJ funding went to gender justice issues.
- LGBTQIA Communities:
  - Only 0.4% of CJ funding was allocated each year.
- Women’s Reentry Services:
  - Only 0.3% of CJ funding was allocated each year.

### Funding Totals (CJFF)

- 2021: \$165M in total CJ funding.

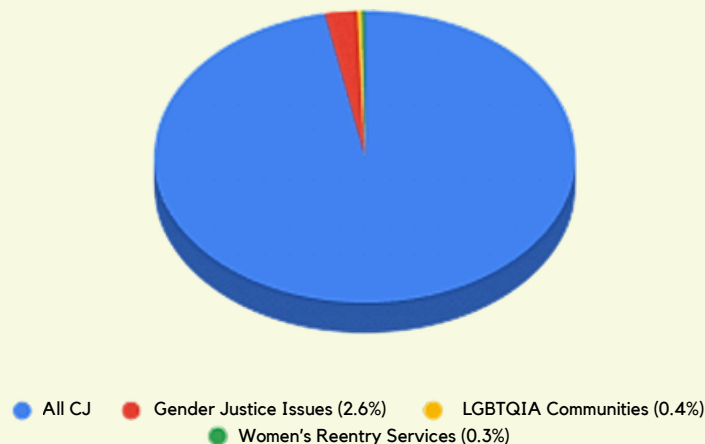
CJFF 2021  
All CJ Funding  
\$165 M (15 Funders)



● All CJ   ● Gender Justice Issues (2.3%)   ● LGBTQIA Communities (0.4%)  
● Women's Reentry Services (0.3%)

**2022: \$257M in total CJ funding.**

**CJFF 2022**  
**All CJ Funding**  
**\$257 M (21 Funders)**



#### 4. Notable Examples of Private Foundation Grantmaking

##### 1. Galaxy Gives (FY23)

- Total CJ funding: \$10.5M
- Only 2.5% went to BIPOC cis women-led organizations.
- No funding reported for trans, GNC, or broader BIPOC leadership.

##### 2. MacArthur Foundation (FY23)

- Total CJ funding: \$52M
- Only 12% went to BIPOC-led groups.
- Only 7% went to BIPOC cis women-led groups.
- No known funding went to BIPOC trans or GNC-led groups.

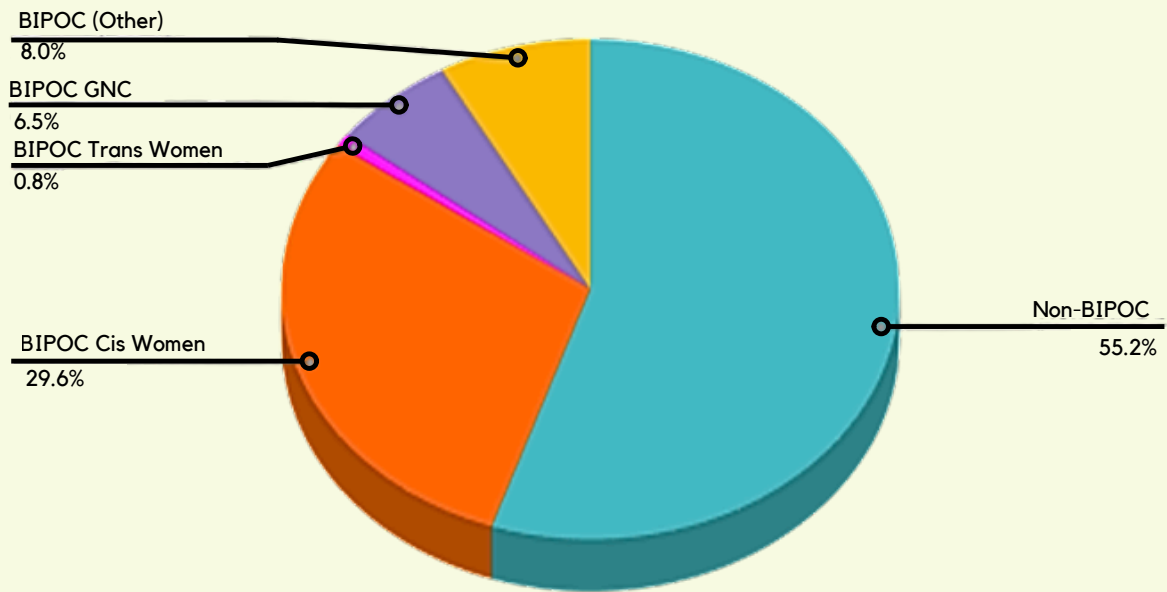
#### 5. Data Collection Challenges

- Demographic Data Inconsistencies:
  - Institutions vary in how they collect and report demographic data, creating challenges in standardizing and analyzing leadership demographics.
- Privacy Concerns:
  - Some institutions declined to share detailed grantee data, citing privacy concerns.
  - Others provided partial data, such as grantee lists or aggregate totals.

5. Data Collection Challenges

- Evolving Definitions:
  - Terminology for race, gender, and leadership categories continues to evolve, creating gaps in traditional data collection practices.

FY23 Private CJ Funding (By Race & Gender) \$111M



FY23 Private CJ Funding (By Gender) \$111M

