

# Response, Recovery & Resilience

## COLLABORATIVE FUND

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### THE OPPORTUNITY

The Women's Funding Network (WFN) has created a multi-million-dollar Response, Recovery & Resilience Collaborative Fund (RRRCF) that will allow institutional funders and donors to join forces for a multi-phase COVID-19 effort that has immediate and long-term impact.

**We invite donors and funders to join us in this effort by helping resource the initial \$5 million so that WFN can immediately begin deploying grants to members.**

Women's Funds and Foundations are rapidly adapting and recasting their work for the greatest impact amid the pandemic. Because of their deep, cross-sector relationships and the trust of front-line service providers, they are well-positioned to champion and channel resources to the areas of greatest need within their communities. Several have been entrusted to lead their region's emergency response funds. However, because of the insecurity created by COVID-19, approximately one third of US women's funds and foundations are in danger of not surviving the year. Their loss could set economic mobility measures for women and families back decades. Further, WFN and our national philanthropic partners would lose the opportunity to learn from this crisis and transform that knowledge into a field of practice and strategy to advance economic mobility and opportunity for families.

A 2020 survey of our members revealed that the majority deployed their funding with a systems approach. They told us that they believe lasting economic security requires investment in training and career pathways for women, childcare access and quality early education, reducing intimate partner violence, peace advocacy, racial justice and healing, leadership advancement, and health. In 2018 alone, 46 of our women's foundation members invested \$50 million to strengthen the combination of interlocking parts that move women and girls from poverty to prosperity.



While there are bigger funders in the economic mobility and justice funding field, few have the WFN network infrastructure critical to leveraging collective resources and influence for social change. WFN is a community with members in 37 U.S. states, 11 countries, and 6 continents. WFN is a tight knit group of thought leadership and practice, as well as a platform for aligning investment to fuel movements in good times and bad.

### THE PURPOSE

The RRRCF will organize and deploy resources to stabilize financially threatened women's funds and foundations, as well as funding network members through the next phases of COVID-19 investment. Priorities include response, recovery, and resilience.

### THE GOALS

- Stabilize up to 45 vulnerable women's funds and foundations with grant funds and technical assistance.
- Convene a leadership committee of RRRCF funder partners and key women's funds and foundations to strategize the next phases of investment priorities.
- Deploy and coordinate funding resources and network infrastructure for each investment priority stage.
- Leverage the deep alignment of organizations and funders within the WFN network to amplify strategies, generate resources, and support the recovery and resiliency of women and families.
- Capture lessons from efforts nationwide — identifying successes, common challenges, and gaps that hinder progress.
- Promote partnership with women's funds and foundations to social justice field, funders, and donors as key strategic element for short, medium, and long-term COVID-19 response.



Sources: Adapted from the Center for Disaster Philanthropy's *Disaster Life Cycle* and FEMA's *Four Phase Emergency Management Cycle*

### THE EXPERTISE

WFN has deep experience developing and deploying collaborative funds. Notably, in response to the destruction and displacement caused by Hurricane Katrina in 2006, WFN partnered with Ms. Foundation for Women and the W.K. Kellogg Foundation to create the Katrina Women's Response fund. The Katrina Women's Response Fund focused on ensuring that the priorities of low-income women, and women of color and their families were central to the Hurricane Katrina relief, recovery and rebuilding process.

WFN President and CEO, Elizabeth Barajas-Román was most recently the CEO of Solidago Foundation. During her tenure she oversaw several national collaborative funds, including the Worker's Lab, Solidaire Action Fund, Criminal Justice Initiative fund, and the LIFT fund for workers. Each had multi-million-dollar budgets, at least one director, and national philanthropic partners. Elizabeth also directed a successful children's health portfolio at The Pew Charitable Trusts for several years, and understands the reporting requirements, and results-oriented nature of large philanthropic institutions.

### THE CAPACITY

The Women's Funding Network has the organizational capacity and expertise to lead in the effort to shore-up this important sector of place-based funds across the country. WFN is in close contact with these funds, is intimately aware of the needs and challenges that they face, and is prepared to disburse critical funding strategically to the sector. WFN has recently undergone a strategic shift and prioritized hiring a Program Director who will strategically deploy a range of programs to support membership and bring national attention to the issues that our members tackle daily to support women and communities.

### THE LEGACY

Positioning women's priorities, funds, and leadership as central to the recovery effort of COVID-19 is essential to the well being of all women, everywhere. This pandemic has highlighted and exacerbated inequalities faced by women across the globe. The abrupt decline of support that will certainly be faced if women's funds don't survive, will step back the decades of progress for equality and justice that have been so hard won. Insuring that women's funds survive, will provide fuel to hold the line, and even gain momentum in the face of this crisis.

### FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:


**Megan Murphy Wolf**

Deputy Director

Women's Funding Network

Direct: (415) 728-0400

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*Where women lead, change follows.*

With members in 37 states in the U.S., 11 countries, and 6 continents, the Women's Funding Network is the largest philanthropic network in the world devoted to gender equity and justice.

Learn more about Women's Funding Network at [womensfundingnetwork.org](https://womensfundingnetwork.org)  
To give online, visit [womensfundingnetwork.org/give](https://womensfundingnetwork.org/give)