

# 5-Year Impact Report

# Environmental Justice Fund

2018–2022



**Seattle**  
Office of Sustainability  
& Environment



**Environmental  
Justice Fund**

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*Yehaw + The Common Acre Plant Day*

# Letter from our Deputy Director



**LYLIANNA ALLALA**  
Interim Deputy Director

*photo credit: Nia Martin*

## Dear Friends and Partners,

As I reflect on the impact and journey of the Environmental Justice (EJ) Fund, I am filled with immense gratitude and pride. What began as a collaboration between the City of Seattle, philanthropic, and community leaders to uplift and prioritize diversity, equity, and belonging within environmental work has bloomed into a beautiful long-lasting partnership—one rooted in collaboration, trust, and deep community connection. Ten years ago, I served on the City's Equity & Environment Initiative's Community Partners Steering Committee, a group of dedicated leaders, advocates, and changemakers working to advance environmental justice in Seattle and beyond. This Steering Committee helped inform what would become the foundational framework for the EJ Fund: Seattle's Equity & Environment Agenda. Back then, I could have never imagined how this work would take shape. What I did know was how important this work is to closing gaps in access, funding, partnership, and

influencing policy for communities overburdened by the impacts of climate change and environmental pollution. With the release of this report, the work has come full circle, with the groundwork built by and for community, leading to direct investments and real, lasting impact.

In this report, you will find the stories, data, and reflections that capture the heart of the EJ Fund's impact. You will read direct testimonials from our grantee partners that have expanded their reach, grassroots leaders who have been empowered to drive change, and collaborations that have sparked community-led solutions. You will also come away with an understanding of the unique and intentional grantmaking process the EJ Fund has crafted. This report celebrates the resilience, impact, and leadership of the communities we serve because at the core of our grantmaking is a belief that centering community, building trust, growing community leadership, and strengthening collaboration will yield the most



sustainable and equitable solutions to the climate and environmental challenges we face.

Looking ahead, our commitment to centering community-led environmental and climate work will remain strong. The successes of the past fuel our determination to further our impact, foster new partnerships, and continue listening to and learning from the communities we serve. I am hopeful for what we can do together, in partnership to uplift community-led climate and environmental solutions while dismantling barriers in the spirit of ensuring all of Seattle’s communities can breathe clean air, access clean water, and see themselves reflected in climate and environmental policies and programs. Thank you for being part of this journey—whether as a grantee, philanthropic partner, supporter, or friend. Only together, can we keep building a future where every community has the resources and power to thrive.

In partnership,



**Lylianna Allala**

Interim Deputy Director, City of Seattle Office of Sustainability and Environment

## EJ Fund Guiding Goals



**CENTERING COMMUNITY**



**BUILDING TRUST**



**GROWING COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP**



**STRENGTHENING COLLABORATION**



## EJ Fund Impact Highlights



**\$2,612,252**

**TOTAL FUNDING AWARDED**



**43**

**GRANTEES**



**53**

**PROJECTS FUNDED**



## SPOTLIGHT

# Basilica Bio

Basilica Bio focuses on building resilience in priority communities most affected by environmental injustices. The EJ Fund primarily funded their *Gardening Under a Microscope* program that aimed to increase education and knowledge around environmental justice to help create tangible informed action in the community. The EJ Fund grant came at a critical time for this organization and supported the ability to create more sustainable approaches to their educational program and allow for continued staff retention and relationship-building. By the end of the funding cycle, they had capacity to expand and create new programming, such as the *Bridge to Youth Leadership Program*.

They expressed appreciation of the support, guidance, and connections provided by the EJ Fund Team beyond financial support.

A staff member at Basilica Bio expressed, “Every time that we got to meet with EJ Fund staff, we were extremely energized and excited about the work that was happening, because we saw that she saw us - we felt very seen - and I think that was incredibly important. We’re a small organization and we’re still early on. So it was really great that we got reassurances, guidance, and connections that supported our work. I think that’s what community needs, like real support, not only financially.”

# Reflecting on our Roots



*Shared Spaces Foundation cleaning the banks of the Duwamish River*

People of color are disproportionately impacted by<sup>1</sup> polluted air, water, and soil due to historical and ongoing redlining and gentrification<sup>2</sup>. For decades, community-based organizations and leaders with lived experience and knowledge have driven **environmental and climate justice** efforts to address these challenges. In 2015, those decades of work were formally recognized through the creation of the first-ever Equity & Environment Initiative and

adoption of the Equity & Environment Agenda (**EEA**) in 2016, which became a key framework for the City of Seattle to advance environmental work that centers communities most impacted by environmental injustices<sup>3</sup>. Under the Equity & Environment Agenda, the Environmental Justice Fund (**EJ Fund**) was created in 2018 to directly invest in community-led environmental solutions from our **priority communities**.

1 Race best predicts whether you live near pollution | The Nation. (2017b, November 10). The Nation. <https://www.thenation.com/article/archive/race-best-predicts-whether-you-live-near-pollution/>

2 Erikson, L., Chang, M., Araújo, K., Asinas, E. N., Hatfield, S. C., Crozier, L. G., Fleishman, E., Greene, C. S., Grossman, E. E., Luce, C., Paudel, J., Rajagopalan, K., Rasmussen, E., Raymond, C., Reyes, J. J., & Shandas, V. (2023, November 14). Northwest. Fifth National Climate Assessment. <https://nca2023.globalchange.gov/chapter/27/>

3 Alexeeff, G., Faust, J., August, L. M., Milanese, C., Randles, K., Zeise, L. (2010, December 31). Cumulative Impacts: Building a Scientific Foundation, Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment. <http://oehha.ca.gov/ej/cipa123110.html>

The EJ Fund marked a pivotal moment in the City's commitment to center community-led environmental work that our priority communities were implementing in response to the environmental hazards and climate change impacts they were experiencing. It also prompted the City to prioritize and invest in community-based solutions and leadership. Ultimately, advocacy from our priority communities and partnerships with philanthropy, specifically the Seattle Foundation and Bullitt Foundation, led to continued, dedicated investments.

Over the last 7 years, the EJ Fund has been a critical resource to support Seattle's ecosystem of environmental and climate justice efforts that are grounded in the needs of our priority communities. By empowering community groups to design programs that reflect their lived experiences, beliefs, traditions, and cultural values, the EJ Fund ensures that their strengths are at the forefront of environmental justice work. Building on the EEA and now the Green New Deal for Seattle—currently the primary funding source for the EJ Fund—this program continues to foster meaningful, community-driven environmental change.

**“We created the Environmental Justice Fund to expand who sees themselves as an environmental leader and who gets resources to build solutions. Beyond funding, the Fund’s initial vision was also about shifting power, ensuring frontline communities-- people of color, immigrants, refugees, Indigenous communities, and youth -- have the support to dream, design, and create environmental and climate solutions rooted in their cultures and lived experiences.”**

**— SUDHA NANDAGOPAL**

Former Manager,  
Equity & Environment Initiative,  
City of Seattle



We define our **priority communities** as those most affected by environmental inequities and climate change: Black, Indigenous, People of Color, immigrants, refugees, people with low incomes, youth, and elders.

**Environmental Justice** is the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income.



# Stemming from Community: the EJ Fund Timeline

Launched in 2015, Seattle's Equity & Environment Initiative (EEI) is a partnership of the City and the community to deepen Seattle's commitment to race and social justice in environmental work. From the EEI, the Equity & Environment Agenda (EEA) was developed in deep partnership with the Community Partners Steering Committee. The EEA serves as a blueprint to advance racial equity in Seattle's environmental programs and policies by outlining key goals and strategies informed by our priority communities. An early action outlined in the EEA was the EJ Fund, a program to invest in community-led environmental justice and climate justice solutions.

## 2015

### Equity and Environment Initiative

Calls for communities most impacted by environmental injustice to be engaged in setting environmental priorities, designing strategies and tracking progress.

### Community Partners Steering Committee

16 BIPOC leaders partner with the City to share their insights and expertise on environmental justice. The Committee develops the Environmental Justice Guiding Principles that were adopted by the EEI.

## 2016

### Equity and Environment Agenda

The City and Community Partner Steering Committee develop this Agenda that is informed by over 1,000 residents. The Agenda outlines the EJ Fund as a key strategy.

## 2018–present

### EJ Fund

\$250,000 is dedicated for the first time to invest in community-led environmental justice and climate justice efforts.

### Community Review Team

Committee of 6 community leaders with expertise in environmental justice partner with the City to inform funding recommendations.

### Green New Deal for Seattle

The City passes the Green New Deal for Seattle Resolution and Executive Order to create investments and support communities most impacted by the climate crisis. The Green New Deal for Seattle is funded by the Payroll Expense Tax, which funds the EJ Fund.



*Lake City Collective volunteers cleaning up garden beds*

## SPOTLIGHT

# Lake City Collective

The EJ Fund helped Lake City Collective build capacity at a critical time in their early phases. Through community engagement, they identified environmental justice priorities and goals that contributed to guiding their work ever since. Funding from the EJ Fund helped them address injustices in their home neighborhood, Little Brook, such as creating a community garden and increasing open and green spaces in their community. Cesar Garcia, the Co-Founder of Lake City Collective, served on the Environmental Justice Steering Committee in 2017-18, which was created from the foundational work of the Equity and Environment Initiative and Agenda. Through this work, he played a part in establishing the

Environmental Justice Fund well before being part of an organization that received grant funding. Subsequently, he helped facilitate funding other community groups and organizations by serving on the Community Review Team.

Garcia recalls, "I was part of the initial Environmental Justice Committee, which opened my eyes to see how sitting at those tables was very important, it was a learning opportunity but also for sharing. You can share what you're experiencing in your community in those spaces where you can have influence. Then, that opens the doors for other opportunities, such as advisory roles with other city departments."



# EJ Fund Growth: The First 5 Years

ROOTED IN COMMUNITY, GROWING IN IMPACT



*Global Wisdom Collective in partnership with Khmer Community of Seattle King County*

The EJ Fund was developed to invest in community groups and organizations that:

- ▶ Already serve priority communities and are doing work that they may not call “environmental justice” but fall within the definition of that work
- ▶ Provide a broader set of services and include environmental justice as part of their community’s priorities but lack funding, staffing, and relationships with funders to grow that work
- ▶ Are growing their own environmental justice impact and need more funding, staffing capacity, and resources to accomplish that objective

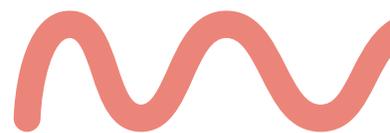
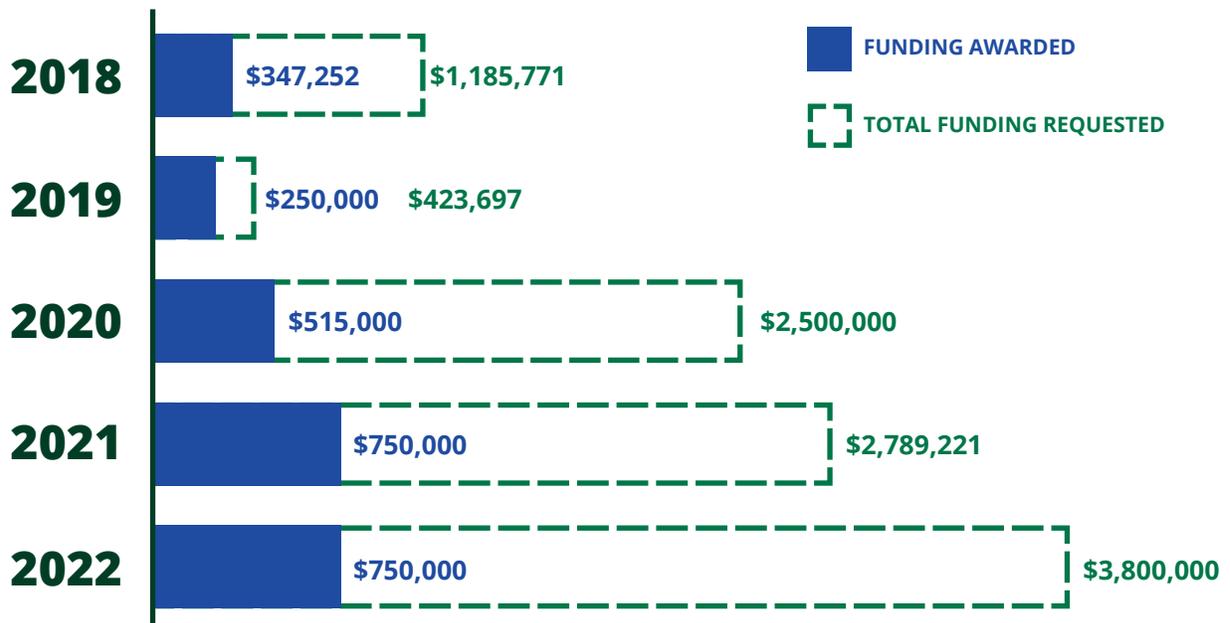
## Funding Trends

The EJ Fund launched with a baseline budget of \$250,000 from the City's General Fund. In the first five years, the growing pool of applications far surpassed and available funding as more and more organizations sought funding for their community-led efforts to advance environmental and climate justice. The passage of a Green New Deal (GND) for Seattle in 2019 resulted in additional funding from the Payroll

Expense Tax for the EJ Fund beginning in 2020 which was critical to meet this growing community need.

The GND is guided by three pillars which are: addressing the climate crisis and environmental injustice, investing in an inclusive, low-carbon economy, and promoting health and well-being in overburdened communities.

### FUNDING AWARDED & TOTAL FUNDING REQUESTED



## Grantees at a Glance

As a result of additional funding in 2020 from the GND, our total number of grantees increased by 44% from 2018 to 2022. Further, the additional funding enabled us to grow the minimum grant award amount from \$40,000 in 2018 to \$90,000 by 2022 which deepened the support for our grantees.

**44% INCREASE**

of total grantees funded in the 2022 grant cycle compared to 2018



**53**

Community-led environmental justice and climate justice projects funded by EJ Fund



**43**

Community Organizations and Groups led projects funded by EJ Fund

During the first 5 years of the EJ Fund, we awarded grants to 43 community groups and organizations across five cohorts. Our grantees were:

<b>Basilica Bio</b>	<b>FEED Seven Generations</b>	<b>Raíces Verdes</b>	<b>Sustainable Seattle</b>
<b>Beacon Hill Council</b>	<b>FEEST</b>	<b>Rainier Avenue Radio</b>	<b>The Backpack Academy</b>
<b>Black Farmers Collective</b>	<b>Got Green</b>	<b>Restaurant 2 Garden</b>	<b>The Doorway Project</b>
<b>Cham Refugees Community</b>	<b>Hmong Association of Washington</b>	<b>RVC</b>	<b>United Indians of All Tribes Foundation</b>
<b>Chief Seattle Club</b>	<b>Ignited Phoenix</b>	<b>Sawhorse Revolution</b>	<b>Unkitawa</b>
<b>Delridge Neighborhood Development Association</b>	<b>InterImCDA</b>	<b>Seattle Globalist</b>	<b>Villa Comunitaria</b>
<b>Duwamish Valley Sustainability Association</b>	<b>International Capoeira Angola Foundation</b>	<b>Serve Ethiopians Washington</b>	<b>Wa Na Wari</b>
<b>East African Senior Meal Program</b>	<b>Key Tech Labs</b>	<b>Somali Community Services of Seattle</b>	<b>Wing Luke Memorial Foundation</b>
<b>El Centro de la Raza</b>	<b>Khmer Community of Seattle &amp; King County</b>	<b>Somali Family Safety Taskforce</b>	<b>Young Women Empowered</b>
<b>Environmental Coalition of South Seattle</b>	<b>Lake City Collective</b>	<b>Somali Health Board</b>	
	<b>Muslimahs Against Abuse Center</b>	<b>Sound Generations</b>	
	<b>Na’ah Illahee Fund</b>	<b>South Seattle Emerald</b>	

Our grantees implemented various approaches to address environmental injustices and climate change impacts that their communities face. These included: educational outreach & workshops, capacity & skill building, relationship-building & community engagement, community-led research and assessments. These projects addressed a wide range of topics around the natural environment, built environment, cultural knowledge and preservation, and leadership and skill building.

Some examples of projects include the following:

- ▶ a school program for Indigenous youth to cultivate connections with traditional foods, Traditional Ecological Knowledge, and nature in a setting that empowers them to be environmental stewards.
- ▶ an urban gardening educational internship program for young people experiencing homelessness.
- ▶ an educational program for priority communities to understand the health impacts of poor indoor air quality.
- ▶ a workshop series for the East African community to identify environmental justice priorities.

## PROJECT TOPICS

### Natural Environment



- ▶ Soil remediation
- ▶ Environmental restoration
- ▶ Clean air (outdoor)
- ▶ Clean waterways & bodies of water

### Built Environment



- ▶ Indoor air quality & healthy homes
- ▶ Access to green spaces
- ▶ Community gardens

### Leadership & Skill Building



- ▶ Clean energy technology
- ▶ Youth empowerment
- ▶ Green jobs
- ▶ Recycling & composting knowledge
- ▶ Climate resilience

### Cultural Knowledge & Preservation



- ▶ Cultural practice preservation
- ▶ Indigenous food & medicine

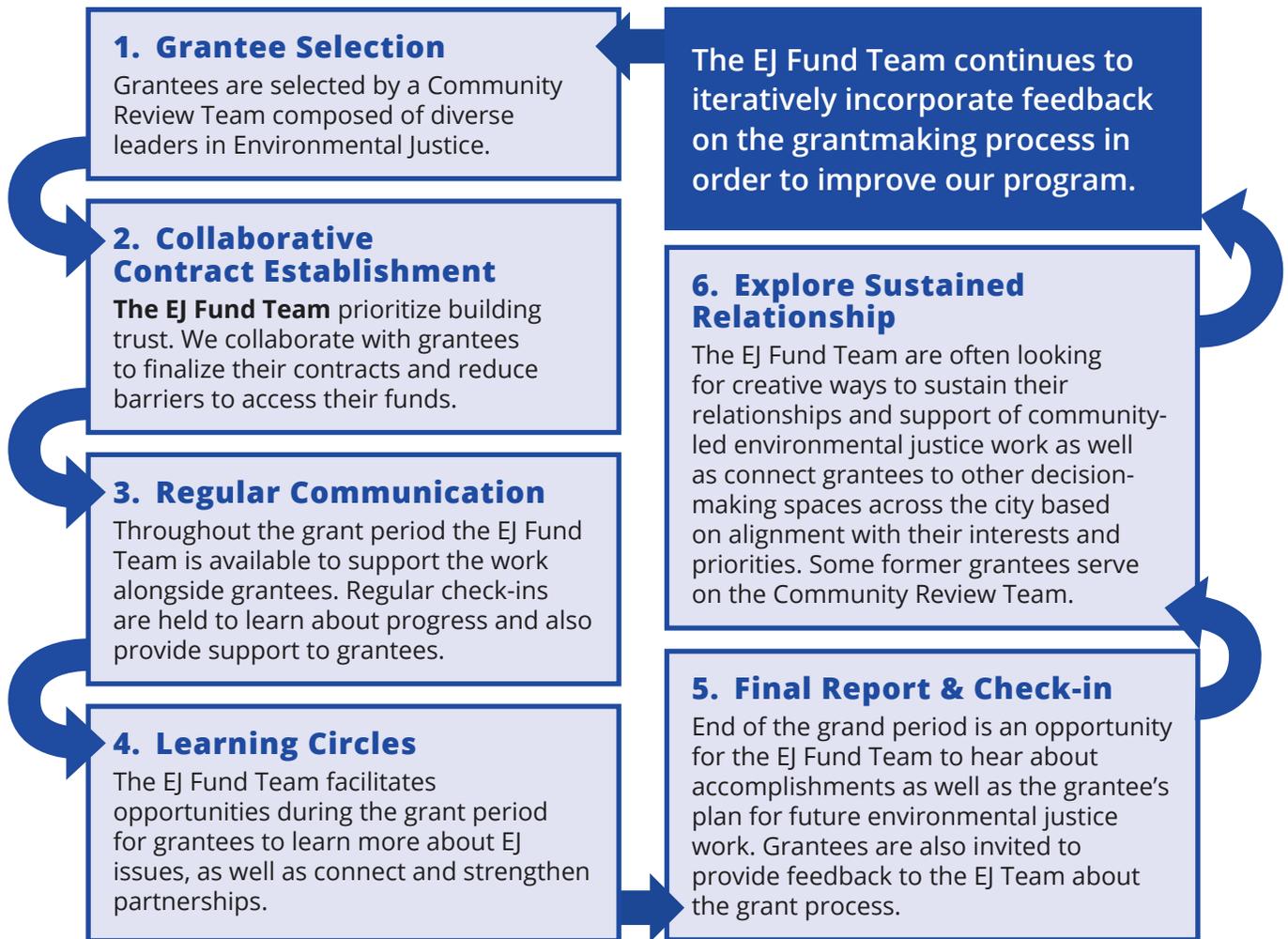
## EJ Fund Grant Cycle

To fund a diverse group of grantees, each year we iterate on the grantmaking process. We assess various factors including:

- ▶ which groups and organizations have yet to receive funding
- ▶ which geographic and priority communities are represented
- ▶ accessibility for organizations of various sizes

- ▶ feedback from our partners (including our grantees, applicants, Community Review Team members, consultants and staff) to make the grantmaking process more accessible

These considerations help us achieve our mission of funding community-led work. We have thoughtfully designed a grantmaking process that allows us to incorporate this feedback and create opportunities for longer-term engagement with our grantees.



The EJ Fund Team supports and facilitates the implementation of this program. The team includes full time staff at the Office of Sustainability and Environment, consultants and the Community Review Team.

## SPOTLIGHT

# Serve Ethiopians WA

Serve Ethiopians Washington was established during COVID-19 to support basic community needs that became even more urgent during the height of the pandemic. With their environmental protection and sustainability program, they wanted to give community members a way to take action on their concerns around the conditions of their environment and empower them through environmental stewardship. Through the work funded by the EJ Fund, they were able to identify community priorities and build programming based on these priorities. The EJ Fund was critical to these efforts, as it was the second grant that the organization received and helped shape their role as leaders in environmental justice in their community and served as a launching point to receiving more funding to expand their programming.

“The community members mostly feel like there’s nothing we can do,” said a member, “and that it is our fate to live in places that don’t have green spaces and aren’t clean. But when they come to us, we can tell them that they have a voice, they can influence policy makers and advocate for the things they want and deserve in their neighborhoods; and also at the same time, we can work with our community to steward the land and help make it green and clean!”



*Serve Ethiopians  
Washington*



# Laying the Groundwork: Our Guiding Goals



## Centering Community

*Community-centric grantmaking prioritizes the needs of the priority communities that the EJ Fund serves.*



## Building Trust

*Building trust is central to the grantmaking practices of the EJ Fund to establish strong relationships with grantees through intentional, trust-building efforts.*



## Growing Community Leadership

*Rooted in the EEA, the EJ Fund seeks to deepen the bench of environmental justice leaders from our priority communities to grow representation in this work.*



## Strengthening Collaboration

*Recognizing the power of collaboration and partnerships, the EJ Fund Team seeks to strengthen collaboration between organizations and local government as well as facilitate collaboration amongst grantees.*

The EJ Fund is one mechanism that advances the policy and program priorities of the EEA and GND through its mission of **investing in climate and environmental justice solutions led by or in partnership with our priority communities**. To achieve our mission, the EJ Fund follows the Guiding Goals and Strategies outlined below which serve as the foundation for the program’s success and impact:



## 1. Centering Community

*Community-centric grantmaking prioritizes the needs of the priority communities that the EJ Fund serves.*

Recognizing the potential impact that funding can have for our priority communities, the EJ Fund holds community groups and organizations as central to our grantmaking approach which was designed to reduce barriers to access funding and support grantees to implement their projects.

### Strategies Implemented

▶ **Reducing barriers to access funding**

Grantees are awarded lump-sum payments instead of a reimbursement process, which helps organizations quickly and effectively serve their community.

▶ **Maintaining flexibility**

We understand work often does not go as planned. Grantees are met with flexibility around timelines and unforeseen program changes to ensure the intended project outcomes are met.

▶ **Providing technical assistance**

Small groups and organizations do not always have full-time staff, grant writing resources, or may be English language learners. The EJ Fund offers applicants technical assistance during the application process and once they are selected for funding.

▶ **Incorporating feedback from grantees**

With each grant cycle, the EJ Fund Team seeks feedback from grantees to understand what is working well and what can be improved, then makes efforts to incorporate feedback and changes where possible.



## Grantee Reflections

- ▶ Especially for smaller under-funded organizations, the lump sum payments were highly valued and allowed for them to do what was needed by their community.
- ▶ Many grantees felt empowered when trusted by the EJ Fund Team to serve their community in whichever way was best for them, even if it was less conventional or innovative.
- ▶ Grantees reflected that with grants from the EJ Fund, they were able to better understand their community's priorities and provide them with programs/services that they needed.

**“I think the biggest impact was that [the EJ Fund was] one of our early stage funders. And it was huge. I’m not sure we’d still be in existence without it because it wasn’t just the funding, it was also the support and the acknowledgement.”**

**— KEY TECH LABS 2019 GRANTEE**



## 2. Building Trust

*Building trust is central to the grantmaking practices of the EJ Fund to establish strong relationships with grantees through intentional, trust-building efforts.*

To successfully fund and make impact on priority communities that have been historically and institutionally underfunded and under-resourced, it is key that we center trust-building and value our relationship with grantees.

### Strategies Implemented

- ▶ **Adopting a relational approach**  
The EJ Fund Team values the relationships with grantees and intentionally treats them as partners in the larger effort to advance environmental and climate justice for all.
- ▶ **Trusting grantees’ knowledge and experience**  
The EJ Fund Team holds community groups and organizations in high regard and creates space for them to determine the best solutions to meet their community’s needs around environmental justice. By not having restrictive definitions of what “environmental justice work” should

look like in community, community groups and organizations are able to design and implement creative and culturally-relevant programming.

▶ **Maintaining transparency throughout the grantmaking process**

Through each grantmaking cycle, the EJ Fund Team shares relevant information about the application process, the decision-making criteria, the review process, and granting timelines to ensure interested applicants know what to expect. Once grantees are selected, the EJ Fund Team meets with each grantee to begin to build connections.

## Grantee Reflections

- ▶ Grantees expressed gratitude for the EJ Fund Team humanizing their relationships and felt truly supported in their work, even as they sometimes came across challenges while trying to implement programs and plans.
- ▶ Many grantees reflected that the EJ Fund Team trusted them and the relationship opened up for more communication when things were going well and when challenges arose.
- ▶ Grantees that were new organizations or new to EJ work appreciated the EJ Fund Team meeting them where they were at, and providing support where needed throughout the process.

“The EJ fund has supported us multiple years in a row at different phases of our project and creating space for relationship building. The staff are in community with us and support our work, come out to the farm, and are always asking, ‘how can we support your capacity to meet the needs of your community?’ [The EJ Fund Team] is always coming in with curiosity around what support looks like for our community, taking the time to understand that each grantee is different and has unique needs.”

— **YOUNG WOMEN EMPOWERED  
2018 & 2022 GRANTEE**





## 3. Growing Community Leadership

*Rooted in the EEA, the EJ Fund seeks to deepen the bench of environmental justice leaders from our priority communities to grow representation in this work.*

Beyond the impact of funding community-led programs, the EJ Fund aims to develop more leaders in environmental and climate justice work. In doing so, priority communities benefit from having more community members leading efforts to address the impacts of climate change and environmental injustice.

### Strategies Implemented

#### ► Partnering with a Community Review Team

In alignment with the EEA, the EJ Fund partners with community leaders, involving them in the decision-making process to shape funding recommendations, as well as evaluation of the EJ Fund program to inform improvements to the grantmaking process. Acknowledging the valuable knowledge and expertise of these community leaders, the City of Seattle compensates them for their involvement in the review process and recognizes them as essential partners in guiding the EJ Fund's grantmaking decisions.

#### ► Strengthening organizational capacity

The EJ Fund understands that progress toward environmental justice and climate justice requires community groups and organizations to build and strengthen their organizational capacity. To do so, the EJ Fund supports groups and organizations to build and strengthen the system, structures, cultures, skills, and resources they need to continue serving their communities in the long term.

### Grantee Reflections

- Some grantees reflected that with EJ Fund resources, they finally had full-time paid staff or transitioned long-term interns/volunteers into paid positions. This allowed them to continue the work, and in some cases scale up programming to reach more community members.

- ▶ For grantees whose organizations did not solely focus on environmental justice, this funding has shifted some priorities in their organizations to include environmental justice work as part of their programming.
- ▶ Past grantees reflected that they have been happy to be part of the Community Review Team and brought into a position to open the doors for other organizations doing meaningful work.

“My work serving on the EJ Community Review Team helped to broaden my scope in the decision-making process in selecting EJ Fund grantees.”

— **BACKPACK ACADEMY**  
**2021 GRANTEE**



## 4. Strengthening Collaboration

*Recognizing the power of collaboration and partnerships, the EJ Fund Team seeks to strengthen collaboration between organizations and local government as well as facilitate collaboration amongst grantees.*

By bringing together grantees doing various types of environmental and climate justice work in such diverse communities, the EJ Fund recognizes the opportunity to serve as a connector between organizations. Additionally, by understanding grantees’ priorities, the EJ Fund serves as a bridge to connect them to City-led efforts so they can inform investment decisions as well as program and policy design.

### Strategies Implemented

#### ▶ **Facilitating connections**

The EJ Fund Team serves as a liaison between organizations and local government by connecting organizations that need support from other City departments or could use

some guidance in navigating local government structures to successfully implement their projects.

#### ▶ **Convening Learning Circles**

The EJ Fund organizes Learning Circles for EJ Fund grantees to create opportunities for grantees to connect and hear about work that

is happening in other communities and share learnings, while also diving deeper into various environmental justice topics that are of interest to them. These convenings facilitate organic relationship building that can lead to new partnerships and collaborations.

## Grantee Reflections

- ▶ Grantees valued learning about and being aware of work that other organizations were also doing in their communities to further environmental and climate justice efforts.
- ▶ Some grantees shared that the EJ Fund Team connected them with opportunities in local government or advocacy spaces. For example, some grantees have joined the Green New Deal Oversight Board, serve on the Community Review Team, and support resilience planning efforts led by the City.

“We really value the opportunity to meet with other grantees. It’s allowed us to make connections with other organizations and learn about those that are aligned with our own mission and doing similar work. Through this, we have been able to form partnerships that enable us to keep working toward creating community benefits.”

— **DUWAMISH VALLEY  
SUSTAINABILITY ASSOCIATION  
2021 GRANTEE**



# EJ Fund Impact on Funding Landscape



*Outreach & Transform Lives planting trees*

Various aspects of the model and approach of the EJ Fund have been adopted by other City of Seattle grant programs. For example, the King Conservation District Seattle Partnership Grant began shifting their funding approach to be more in alignment with the EEA, and consulted with EJ Fund leadership to make shifts towards funding community-led projects that directly improve natural resources through on-the-ground activities.

The Food Equity Fund (FEF), launched by Seattle's Department of Neighborhoods in 2021, shares the EJ Fund's mission to

invest in community-led efforts, with a focus on building an equitable and sustainable local food system. Since its inception, we have collaborated to share best practices and align our grantmaking approaches to reduce barriers for applicants. Similar to our practice, the FEF's grant review process includes a community review team. While the EJ Fund supported food justice efforts in the early years of our program, the introduction of the FEF has enabled us to focus our funding on other environmental justice and climate justice projects.

# Planting the Seed for the Future



*Wa Na Wari volunteers cleaning up garden beds*

Looking to the future, we will continue furthering our mission of **investing in climate and environmental justice solutions led by or in partnership with our priority communities** by aligning our funding priorities more closely with the pillars of a Green New Deal for Seattle.

**We will build on the strong relationships** established with our grantees to continue fostering an environment where candid feedback is encouraged. Through these valuable insights, we will explore additional ways to address grantee needs, such as expanding technical assistance. To further **enhance collaboration** between organizations and continue to strengthen efforts in the larger environmental and climate justice ecosystem, we will implement a more robust approach to Learning Circles.

On a broader level, the program model of the EJ Fund and its successes will inform future grantmaking programs administered by the Office of Sustainability and Environment. Additionally, to continue to **center community** and reduce barriers to access funding, we will continue to actively seek and incorporate partners' feedback and lessons learned to pilot new funding approaches. This includes exploring options such as offering multi-year funding to better support our priority communities to implement critical environmental and climate justice efforts.

Through these efforts, we aim to create a more sustainable and equitable future by empowering our priority communities and strengthening the foundation for long-term, impactful change.

**To learn more about the  
Environmental Justice Fund  
please visit  
[seattle.gov/environment/EJFund](https://seattle.gov/environment/EJFund)**



**Seattle**  
Office of Sustainability  
& Environment



**Environmental  
Justice Fund**