Our Foundation engaged in a learning and reflection year in 2019. This much needed pause gave us the opportunity to do internal and external assessments that highlighted the areas the Foundation has made significant progress on, how we can be more explicit and intentional about our social justice commitment, and how we can best support our grant partners as we work together to create a more just community.
ABOUT US

Our Foundation staff and leadership reflected on our mission, vision, and values, along with our work to date. What became clear is that the Foundation’s strength is our unique nature as an entity that promotes progressive and innovative grantmaking while developing authentic relationships with grant partners.

OUR COMMUNITY

Over the years, our grantmaking has become more focused. As we leaned into our social justice values, we had a better understanding of what issues are critical for us to support, and more importantly, who are the people we must center in the work.

OUR APPROACH

In recognition that no one organization can solve the complex issues in today’s society, we approach our work with a spirit of partnership. We listen intently and we trust our grant partners to know what is best for their communities. In addition, we are committed to providing support beyond the check so that organizations are able to sustain their people and their work.

Mission

To create an equitable and inclusive community through philanthropic leadership

Black, Indigenous, People of Color
LGBTQ+ Community · Immigrants
Women · Youth

“trust the people and they become trustworthy.”
- adrienne maree brown
CEP SURVEY
GRANTEE AND APPLICANT PERCEPTION REPORT

During 2019, we partnered with the Center for Effective Philanthropy to conduct a survey of our 2018 grant partners and applicants on our effectiveness as a funder. We had a high response rate, and we are grateful for the candid feedback we received. Please read below to learn more about what we heard and how we are responding.

WHAT WE HEARD

- Provide clearer funding priorities so organizations understand if they are a fit
- Desire for more regular engagement with program staff would help build stronger relationships
- Offer more support beyond the check, particularly support for collaboration, capacity building, and connections to other funders
- Rethink whether the fast pitch is the appropriate structure to have a meaningful conversation about an organization's work
- Consider how the Foundation can do more with the learnings shared in grant reports

HOW WE RESPONDED

- Released a new strategic plan with a clearer focus
- Employed trust-based philanthropy principles for how we do our work
- Piloted conversational grant applications and reports that allow for more engagement with Foundation staff around learnings
- Developed a toolkit of resources we offer beyond the check
SOCIAL JUSTICE IN ACTION: COMMUNITY PARTNER PROFILES

Our grant partners are a committed group of organizations working to advance the social justice movement by building strong networks and deeply engaging with the most impacted people in their local communities.

01 CAPACITY BUILDING FOR EMERGING LGBTQ+ ORGANIZATIONS
The Montrose Center offers a variety of services to the LGBTQ+ community, including a nonprofit incubator program. This program offers different levels of back office support to small and emerging LGBTQ+ nonprofits. The goal is to transition organizations out of the incubator as they grow and can self-sustain and to create a pipeline for funders to get to know these organizations.

02 ARTS AS SOCIAL JUSTICE
Jolt Initiative organizes young Latinxs in Texas around the power of their voice, vote, and stories. Culture and arts play a powerful role - the organization hosts "artists in resistance" on staff whom lift up issues, share stories, and inspire young Latinxs as they work together toward building a more representative democracy.
PATHWAYS TO ECONOMIC JUSTICE
03
Daya’s mission is to empower South Asian survivors of domestic and sexual violence through culturally specific services and to educate the community in an effort to end the cycle of abuse. Recently, staff attended the FreeFrom Survivor Wealth and Wellness training program to learn how to support survivors in generating income, protecting their finances, and building their assets. This work will help ensure that survivors have the financial security and long-term safety to live their lives in the way they intend.

THE POWER IN OUR STORIES
04
The Normal Anomaly Initiative seeks to express narratives through multiple media formats that reduce stigma, build confidence, and increase prevention and treatment amongst LGBT folx, those living with HIV and/or coping with mental health disorders. The organization creates avenues for conversation, raises awareness on issues, and offers community trainings to churches on HIV, all in an effort to bring visibility to the people most impacted and offer platforms for their voices to be heard.

SURVIVING, THRIVING, AND HEALING (JUSTICE)
05
Living Hope Wheel Chair Association (LHWA) works to improve the quality of life of individuals with spinal cord injuries or disease. The organization helps meet members’ basic needs through the provision of medical supplies and equipment. LHWA members recognize the need to organize and advocate for change so that no members of society are left behind due to their status as a low-income, undocumented, and/or disabled person. The organization incorporates a strong cultural and spiritual component that grounds members in their individual and collective strength as they work toward making living a life with dignity and respect a possibility for all.

CENTERING RACIAL EQUITY IN INTER-PERSONAL VIOLENCE
06
The Harris County Domestic Violence Coordinating Council (HCDVCC) hosted a Collateral Consequences of Color conference that focused on the racial disparities in inter-personal violence, particularly for the Black, Latinx, and South Asian communities. Factors such as race/ethnicity, cultural values, and immigration status create additional barriers to reaching out for help. HCDVCC is committed to continuing the dialogue about serving marginal communities to increase victim safety, hold batterers accountable, and prevent further acts of violence.
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Our Foundation prioritizes spending time in community to listen and learn from groups on the frontlines. We host convenings and offer trainings that center the voices of those most directly impacted, amplify their work, and support organizational capacity building and leadership development.

ART OF HOSTING TRAINING
Last November, we held an Art of Hosting training for local collective impact leaders and youth leaders. The training built participants' networks and communities of practice across their shared experiences and roles with a particular focus on centering equity and inclusion in the way we all work together.

COMMUNITY COFFEE CHATS
We have been hosting monthly coffee chats across the Greater Houston area to hear from our nonprofit partners and community members. These informal conversations have served as a valuable time to connect with each other, form new relationships, and learn more about work happening in community.

DATA EQUITY MEET-UP
We convened a group of interdisciplinary folks to talk about the powerful role data plays in our lives and how equity and community voices must be centered in the work. Our hope is that, as a community, we are able to advocate for data equity, shift the narrative around credible data and researchers, and provide more support to ongoing community-led efforts.

YOUTH ORGANIZER MEET-UP
We wanted to hear from youth organizers on the issues they care about and how the Foundation might support their leadership in the work. Youth organizers appreciated having their own space and being in community with other young people of color working to advance social justice.
Las Americas Newcomer School, HISD  
Lesbian Health Initiative  
Lilith Fund  
Living Hope Wheelchair Association  
Lone Star Family Health Center  
Love146  
Making It Better  
Memorial Assistance Ministries  
Mental Health America of Greater Houston  
Montgomery County Women's Center  
Montgomery County Youth Services  
Montrose Center, The  
Montrose Grace Place  
Nameless Sound  
NARAL Pro-Choice Texas Foundation  
National Latina Institute for Reproductive Justice  
National Network of Abortion Funds  
Neighborhood Recovery Community Development Corporation  
Network of Behavioral Health Providers  
New Leaders Council  
Normal Anomaly, The  
North Pasadena Community Outreach  
Northwest Assistance Ministries  
Northwest Colorado Health PACE Youth Programs  
Physicians for Human Rights  
Planned Parenthood Gulf Coast  
Project Row Houses  
PrOUnidades  
Refugee Services of Texas  
Rice University - Center for Philanthropy and Nonprofit Leadership  
Salvation Army Metropolitan Houston Area Command, The  
Sankofa Research Institute  
Santa Maria Hostel  
Save Our Sisters United  
SEARCH  
Service Dogs, Inc.  
Small Steps Nurturing Center  
South Asian Youth in Houston Unite  
SuperGirls SHINE Foundation  
Tahirih Justice Center, Houston Office  
Texans Care for Children  
Texas Appleseed  
Texas Civil Rights Project  
Texas Freedom Network Education Fund  
Texas Jail Project  
Texas Low Income Housing Information Services  
Texas Network of Youth Services  
Texas Observer, The  
Texas Tribune, The  
True Colors United  
True Child  
UltraViolet  
UndocuBlack Network  
University of Houston Graduate College of Social Work  
University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston, School of Public Health, Department of Management, Policy and Community Health  
University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston, The Upbring  
UTMB  
West Street Recovery  
Writers in the Schools  
Yampatika  
Young Center for Immigrant Children's Rights, The