



Hill-Snowdon
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Stand, Plan, Expand! - Hill-Snowdon Foundation's Response to the Racial Justice Funding Cliff

Washington, DC (May 22, 2024) –Four years after the murder of George Floyd and the launch of the largest racial justice movement in US history, philanthropic commitment to racial justice and Black-led movements is in a state of uncertainty and retreat. The sea of solidarity statements have long since subsided, replaced by the tide of reticence and risk aversion to supporting racial justice and racial equity work. The status of the historic 2020 funding surge from progressive foundations and donors in support of Black-led movements and racial justice is unclear as many foundations fail to offer transparent plans, as their time limited racial justice funding initiatives expire. And as the surge of support recedes, the philanthropic sector tragically, yet predictably, pushes Black-led movements off a racial justice funding cliff that philanthropy created.

The [Hill-Snowdon Foundation](#) (HSF) considered this context as we sought to develop the next steps for our five year, \$5 million dollar [Black Movement Infrastructure \(BMI\) Strategy](#), developed in response to 2020's racial justice uprisings. Our deliberations were also guided by three fundamental imperatives: to **STAND** with Black Movements and our values and vision of a racially just world; to develop an urgent, transparent and accountable **PLAN** for supporting Black-led racial justice organizations; and to **EXPAND** our support for Black-led movements for the long-term. In consultation with our BMI partners, HSF determined the following next steps for our BMI strategy after its scheduled end in 2025:

- **Permanently increase our grants budget by \$500,000 annually, specifically to support Black-led organizing groups.**

In addition to permanently committing an additional half a million dollars to fund Black-led organizing groups, under this plan current BMI grassroots organizing groups will receive up to eight years of total support from HSF, the same as our regular organizing grants, and be integrated into our regular grantmaking program areas. Also, we will increase the grant size from \$40,000 to \$50,000 for current BMI grassroots organizing groups and they will be eligible for multi-year grants. Finally, HSF will also dedicate up to \$80,000 per year to support strategic convenings as a way of promoting the development of the Black movement ecosystem.

- **Extend funding for up to an additional three years for BMI Intermediary groups**

HSF has historically focused our funding on grassroots community organizing groups. Through the BMI strategy, we expanded our support to Black-led movement intermediaries due to the critical juncture in the movement for racial justice after George Floyd's murder. The next three years will be another critical juncture for this country and Black-led racial justice organizations, as it be relied on as a vital part of the multi-racial coalition needed to fight back against the catastrophic rise of a white supremacist, authoritarian social and political regime that imperils our democracy overall. Thus, we will extend support for BMI intermediaries for up to an additional three years.

“While I believe these next steps are supportive, transparent and values aligned and balance the need for increased and long-term support for Black-led movements with our financial reality, I wished we could do more” says Elizabeth Bonner, Chair of the Hill-Snowdon Foundation Board.

Over the past year, HSF has heard many stories from Black-led racial justice movement organizations about the pull back of funding from philanthropy. Sometimes gradual, sometimes abrupt, but always disruptive, the racial justice funding cliff imperils not just Black movement groups but the hopes for the inclusive and thriving democracy they are working towards.

“The racial justice funding cliff is real,” laments Judith Browne Dianis, HSF Trustee and Executive Director of the [Advancement Project](#). “Advancement Project experienced both the surge and the cliff, and now as we face aggressive attacks on racial justice, we and many of our partners are having to do more with less,” she adds.

“It is irresponsible and self-defeating for progressive philanthropy to pull back funding from any part of the Black Movement ecosystem in the coming years”, asserts Nat Chioke Williams, Executive Director of the Hill-Snowdon Foundation. “As philanthropy pushes Black-led

movement organizations off the racial justice funding cliff, we send into freefall our efforts to effectively fight back against the rise of white nationalist, authoritarianism and build a racially just and equitable society for all,” he adds.

While many of the time limited special initiatives that were part of the 2020 racial justice funding surge have already *silently* expired, we offer and urge our philanthropic colleagues to adopt the **Stand, Plan and Expand** framework as they consider future support for Black-led racial justice organizations in the coming years:

- **STAND** with Black led organizing, power building and movement organizations and don't push them off the racial justice funding cliff. Stand up for your values and do not be covered into stepping back from explicit support for Black communities, racial justice and racial equity.
- Develop an urgent, transparent, and accountable **PLAN** for supporting Black-led racial justice organizations OR explain publicly why Black-led racial justice organizations and work has been deprioritized in your funding strategy.
- **EXPAND** resources above and beyond 2020 surge levels and for the long term to greatly increase the capacity and strength of Black-led Movement Infrastructure as a core part of the expansive multi-racial movement needed to defeat the rise of white supremacist, anti-democratic and ultra-conservative power in the US that poses an existential threat to us all.

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