



## GREATER WASHINGTON COMMUNITY FOUNDATION CELEBRATES \$26 MILLION INVESTMENT IN INNOVATIVE DC HEALTH EQUITY PARTNERSHIPS

The Health Equity Fund at the Greater Washington Community Foundation has announced \$25.8 million in multiyear investments in five transformative projects focused on collaborative approaches to increasing economic mobility and wealth building.

The investments will support twelve nonprofit organizations working collaboratively over a multi-year period to advance health equity and create better outcomes for DC residents.

“Investing in bold, disruptive nonprofit innovations is a critical component of the Health Equity Fund,” said Tonia Wellons, President & CEO of the Greater Washington Community Foundation. “Our hope is that these strategic investments will provide a blueprint for sustainable systems change across our region as we work with our partners to scale evidence-based strategies that build wealth for people and communities with the greatest economic and health disparities.”

“At CareFirst, we understand that health is shaped by factors outside of clinical settings. That's why we are dedicated to supporting local organizations that are working to reduce health disparities and promote equity,” said Brian D. Pieninck, President and CEO of CareFirst. “The Health Equity Fund, in collaboration with the District, exemplifies our commitment to addressing the social drivers of health impacting individuals and communities in Washington, DC. With this latest round of grants, we aim to empower these organizations to continue their essential work, ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to live a healthy life, regardless of their socioeconomic status.”

Given that [80 percent of DC’s health outcomes are driven by social, economic, and other factors, compared to just 20 percent by clinical care](#), the Health Equity Fund adopts an economic mobility frame to address the root causes of health disparities in the District. Its strategy is designed to achieve health equity for all DC residents by addressing the social and structural determinants of health that impact health outcomes including education, employment, income, housing, transportation, nutrition, environmental safety, medical care, culture and recreation, and more.



The \$95 million Health Equity Fund is one of the largest philanthropic funds of any kind focused on community-based nonprofits that serve District residents. Since 2022, the Fund has distributed more than \$58.9 million with a focus on programs that [increase economic mobility and wealth building](#), advance [health advocacy, policy, and systems change initiatives](#), and support community-based strategies to prevent gun violence and increase public safety.

"This Health Equity Fund award represents an innovative advancement in our mission to foster economic mobility and wealth building. By channeling resources into projects that prioritize these goals, we are directly supporting Mayor Bowser's vision to empower District residents and ensure that everyone has the opportunity to thrive and succeed," said Karima Woods, Commissioner for the DC Department of Insurance, Securities and Banking.

The projects were reviewed and selected by Community Foundation staff, external reviewers with subject matter expertise, and members of the Health Equity Committee. Two of the projects – Sustainable DC and the NorthStar Institute – received funding starting in July. The selected projects include:

#### **THE PATHWAY TO ECONOMIC MOBILITY, PROSPERITY & FAMILY WELLNESS**

DC Action, Early Childhood Innovation Network (ECIN), and CityFirst Bank are partnering to implement a two-generation cash transfer program that will invest in the well-being and economic development of both parents and children in participating families.

The program will provide 100 low-to-moderate income families facing housing insecurity with unconditional monthly cash payments of \$1,000 over two years. Each participating parent will also receive \$1,000 towards an IRA, an emergency savings account, financial empowerment coaching and savings incentives to help them navigate the financial system and achieve their wealth-building goals.

In addition, each participating child will receive \$1,000 towards a DC 529 College Savings Account and an additional \$1,000 towards a ROTH IRA. Each family will also receive a \$25,000 Children's Trust Account that can be used to support their children's future professional, educational, and personal goals.

#### **LIFT AS WE CLIMB**

City Year DC and LIFT DC have partnered to provide a robust set of services and supports to create an opportunity pathway for local parents and caregivers participating in AmeriCorps. The project will demonstrate how additional resources in the form of coaching, monetary assistance, and wraparound supports can better retain caregivers in AmeriCorps and support their successful transition out of AmeriCorps into living-wage



careers. It will also provide valuable insights that LIFT and City Year will share with AmeriCorps, to make the case for additional investment in parents and caregivers, on a national scale.

### **ELEVATING BLACK FATHERHOOD: BRIGHTER FUTURES FOR CHILDREN, FAMILIES, & COMMUNITIES**

United Way of the National Capital Area (United Way NCA) and the Greater Washington Urban League have partnered on a 2-year demonstration project that will provide new comprehensive services for 150 DC fathers with child support arrears through the United Way NCA's Financial Empowerment Center. Program participants will receive ongoing support and resources to regain their financial footing, catch up on child support arrears, build stronger familial bonds, and strengthen social and emotional wellbeing for themselves and their families. The project will also provide data to combat false narratives about the role of Black fathers and provide a blueprint for systemic support structures that can better serve Black men and their families.

### **SUSTAINABLE DC**

Washington Area Community Investment Fund and the Coalition for Nonprofit Housing & Economic Development have partnered on a 3-year strategy to help BIPOC and women-owned small businesses grow and build resilience while combating climate change, by participating in the region's burgeoning green economy. The project will help small businesses implement sustainable practices by offering 1,000 entrepreneurs with access to flexible capital through a mix of grants and loans, capacity building and technical assistance, and one-on-one business advising and group training. Entrepreneurs will participate in new accelerator programs tailored for green economy businesses and designed to connect businesses with sustainability-focused procurement opportunities with DC area anchor institutions.

### **NORTHSTAR INSTITUTE**

NorthStar Institute, Academy of Hope, and the LAYC Career Academy have partnered on a 3-year integrated program for 2,500 students who are asset-limited, income-constrained, and also employed (A.L.I.C.E.) to set them on a path to financial independence. The program will offer high-quality education and job training for adult learners to pursue industry credentials and career advancement, combined with courses on Financial Well-Being and Money Management. Participants will receive dedicated access to a wealth advisor and financial planner for expert advice and guidance on homeownership, entrepreneurship, savings, investments, and legacy planning. The program will provide additional cash assistance to ensure participants can achieve their goals of savings, homeownership, business startup or investment capital.



For more information about the Health Equity Fund, visit [www.thecommunityfoundation.org/health-equity-fund](http://www.thecommunityfoundation.org/health-equity-fund).

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### **About the Health Equity Fund**

The Health Equity Fund was created to improve the health outcomes and health equity of DC residents. Over five years, the fund will support and advance a sustainable network of people, organizations, and projects leading a culture of disruption and innovation that will ensure equitable health outcomes for marginalized populations and underinvested communities in Washington, DC.

The fund is governed by a seven-member Health Equity Committee in partnership with the Greater Washington Community Foundation. The seven-member committee includes Nnemdi Elias, MD, MPH; Dr. Tollie Elliott; Wendell L. Johns; Lori Kaplan; Juan M. Jara; Kimberly Harris; and Courtney R. Snowden.

The Greater Washington Community Foundation was independently selected to manage the Health Equity Fund because of its track record of working with individual donors, businesses, and local government to manage effective community investments and create tangible, lasting change in the region. Health Equity Fund goals align with The Community Foundation's ongoing work and 10-year strategic vision to close the racial wealth gap by eliminating the historic, racialized disparities in our region.

### **About the Greater Washington Community Foundation**

For over 50 years, the Greater Washington Community Foundation has ignited the power of philanthropy to respond to critical community needs and build a thriving region where every person prospers. A galvanizing force for economic justice, The Community Foundation partners with generous individuals, families, and businesses, making it easy and effective for our donors to identify impactful nonprofits and support the greater good in the communities we call home. As the region's largest local funder, the Greater Washington Community Foundation has invested \$1.7 billion in building equitable, just, and thriving communities across DC, Montgomery County, Northern Virginia, and Prince George's County. For more information, visit [thecommunityfoundation.org](http://thecommunityfoundation.org).