



WOMEN DONORS NETWORK
Generosity Multiplied

2015 GRANTMAKING SUMMARY



2015 marked some impressive milestones for WDN. We celebrated our 25th anniversary, we launched a bold, new strategic plan, and we harnessed the power of our community to support critical social change work. As we look at the successes of our 25 years, we are proud to share this overview of our 2015 grantmaking.

During 2015, our Donor Circles invested \$473,000 in bedrock funding for movement-building organizations and initiatives across every major issue we care about, with an additional \$85,500 awarded in January of 2016. We granted \$380,000 to five Reflective Democracy Innovator projects, all working to create a democracy where women and people of color have a real voice in the halls of power. At the same time, through our new Jean Hardisty Catalytic Impact Fund, we are providing important resources to the emerging Movement for Black Lives, and embodying what it means to be a good ally.

Read on for a summary of the work we supported in 2015.

CRIMINAL (IN)JUSTICE CIRCLE

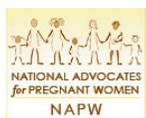
The Criminal (In)Justice Circle seeks to identify, strengthen, and invest in a broad network of organizations that are working to fundamentally change the unjust criminal justice system. The Circle's focus is on the disproportionately negative impact of the criminal justice system on women and families, particularly in communities of color. We bring an intersectional approach with a strong gender and racial justice lens to these issues.



GRANTS AWARDED:



All of Us or None – \$24,000, February 2015. After learning about Ban the Box campaigns that address the individual and structural discrimination faced by formerly incarcerated people in gaining employment, the Circle provided multi-year support to All of Us or None (AOUON) to organize a national gathering and leadership training for formerly incarcerated people in September 2015.



National Advocates for Pregnant Women– \$15,000, February 2015. The Circle added the National Advocates for Pregnant Women to their funding docket, which was inspired by the Circle's educational programs that focused on the gendered impact of the War on Drugs, and the organization's unique focus on the intersection of reproductive justice and criminal justice.



Nation Inside – \$52,000, February 2015. Beginning in 2013, the Criminal (In)Justice Circle awarded a multi-year grant to Nation Inside to increase their capacity to scale and support grassroots campaigns led by formerly incarcerated people and their families.

EARTH CIRCLE

WDN's Earth Circle seeks to address and better understand the inter-connectedness of global environmental issues, with a particular focus on the disproportionate impacts on women and indigenous communities and the power they have to effect change. Our members are concerned about climate justice issues ranging from global climate change to our broken food, water, and energy systems, and their toxic effects on all people, and the dire consequences of these policies and systems on the well being of communities.



GRANTS AWARDED:



Earthworks – \$30,000, August 2015. To support phase II of their successful Citizens Empowerment Project. Earthworks is the only environmental nonprofit in the country with its own FLIR Gasfinder camera, the same model used by industry and government agencies to detect leaks and chronic pollution. Our support has allowed Earthworks to scale this project and amplify the voices of those most impacted by oil and gas extraction projects.



Food and Water Watch – \$20,000, August 2015. To support the staffing of a community organizer to mobilize the majority-Latino population in Ventura County, CA, against fracking, in an effort to ban fracking in California as part of the larger organizing strategy for a national ban on fracking.



WildEarth Guardians – \$20,000, August 2015. To support their Navajo micro-grant program and their grassroots organizer in New Mexico to stop fracking in Chaco Canyon, which is a national historical park and a sacred Navajo site.



Women's Earth & Climate Action Network (WECAN) – \$30,000, August 2015. To support their programming and organizing to create a collective voice of women to address climate justice and demand action.



Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation – \$15,000, December 2015. To support the hiring of a central coordinator for a two-day Indigenous Peoples' Summit on climate change to develop a strategy to address climate change policy and lay the foundation for an Indigenous Climate Action Plan.

FILM AND MEDIA CIRCLE

The Film and Media Circle is focused on building the capacity within the WDN membership to evaluate high-impact films and media projects that bring visibility to critical social justice issues. This positions our members and WDN as a network to support the diverse voices working to shift culture for a stronger, more reflective progressive infrastructure.



GRANTS AWARDED:



Trapped – two grants totaling more than \$50,000 will be awarded in January 2016. To support strategic outreach efforts for the compelling new film, *Trapped*, which illustrates the insidious impact of abortion restrictions known as TRAP laws (Targeted Regulation of Abortion Providers) that are being passed across the country.

IMMIGRATION CIRCLE

The Immigration Circle focuses on providing education and collective funding opportunities to the WDN community about comprehensive immigration reforms and the impact of current immigration policy on women and children. The Circle continues to advocate at the national level for comprehensive immigration reform.



GRANTS AWARDED:



We Belong Together – \$40,500, October 2015. To support their innovative women-led advocacy campaign that mobilizes women in support of common-sense immigration reform that will keep families together and empower women. These organizing efforts amplify the message of immigration as a women's issue and build immigrant women's leadership.

MIDDLE EAST PEACE & DEMOCRACY CIRCLE

The Middle East Peace and Democracy Circle addresses the Israel/Palestine conflict by focusing on the broader region's complex history, current realities, challenges, and transformations. Through education and individual and collaborative philanthropic efforts, it supports and advocates for a constructive and equitable U.S. policy that promotes stability, peace and security, and economic viability of the region's emerging democracies. The Circle's activities aim to elevate and strengthen progressive women's leadership in all aspects of the public discourse, in the U.S. and the Middle East. The Circle is particularly interested in educating the membership about groups promoting peace and democracy, with a special interest in supporting the inclusion of women and diverse voices in such efforts.



GRANTS AWARDED:



Just Vision/Local Call – \$9,500, January 2015 (\$40,500 granted late Dec. 2014, for a combined total of \$50,000); \$64,000, December 2015. In support of the media project Local Call, an independent Hebrew-language media platform that promotes civic awareness and activism aimed at ending the occupation and promoting values of pluralism and equality. Local Call is unique in bringing a race, class, and gender lens to all of its coverage. It amplifies stories of women's leadership along with other marginalized groups, directly engages struggles for gender equality and ending gender-based violence, and serves as a platform for sharing best practices across nonviolent grassroots movements.

REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH CIRCLE

The Circle’s specific focus in 2015 was on grassroots organizing efforts led by those most impacted by a lack of reproductive health access, as well as supporting strategic emerging leaders in the field. The Circle has an ongoing commitment to supporting “megaphone strategies” that reach large numbers of women with messages about reproductive health and women’s empowerment, taking advantage of new social media tools and organizing for long-term engagement.



GRANTS AWARDED:



Take Root Conference – \$5,000, February 2015. Sponsorship for a reproductive justice conference that highlights the relevance of regional red state perspectives in the national reproductive justice discourse.



Groundswell Fund – \$72,800, October 2015; \$9,500, December 2015. The Groundswell Fund has been a catalyst in the reproductive justice movement by investing in grassroots organizations and their leaders: low-income women, young women, women of color, and other underrepresented women. Over the past six years Groundswell grantees have helped pass more than 150 pro-reproductive justice policies and ensure their implementation, have increased access to reproductive health for millions of people, and have defeated countless regressive policies. WDN’s October 2015 grant was a matching grant that leveraged a total of \$145,600.



UltraViolet – \$65,800, October 2015; \$9,500, January 2016. UltraViolet is a powerful and rapidly growing community of people from all walks of life mobilized to fight sexism and expand women’s rights. In just three years, UV has successfully executed more than 60 campaigns and its members have taken 7.7 million actions. WDN was UltraViolet’s first funder in 2012 when it was a new start-up. This grant continued to support UV’s work in the areas of reproductive health, preventing violence against women, and the linking of reproductive health and rights to women’s economic security issues.

WOMEN BUILDING A JUST PEACE

Active from 2010-2015, the Women Building a Just Peace Circle focused on women’s role in building peace and security, regionally and globally. We worked to deepen our relationships with women’s organizations in areas of violent conflict to build the capacity of their campaigns for human security and against corruption and militarization. We also collaborated with other WDN Circles working to support the political, civic, and economic empowerment of women in conflict zones.



GRANT AWARDED:



Mina’s List – \$25,875, January 2016. Mina’s List collaborates with in-country women’s rights organizations and current women legislators to provide country specific educational resources, mentorship, and an online engagement platform to build the capacity of aspiring women political leaders who commit to advance the rights of women and girls. This grant is for general operating support.

REFLECTIVE DEMOCRACY CAMPAIGN



As part of Year 2 of the Reflective Democracy Campaign, WDN announced grants to a total of seven projects in June 2015 that are tackling structural barriers to reflective democracy in new ways (two of the projects will not officially begin until January 2016). These Reflective Democracy Innovator grants included two collaborative efforts; in 2015, we provided support to six organizations and six individual practitioners. The projects span all four of our identified priority areas: Civic Institutions, Economic Barriers, Gatekeepers, and Voting Systems. Our 2015 Reflective Democracy Innovator grants totaled \$381,000.

PRIORITY AREA 1: CIVIC INSTITUTIONS



The Road to Power Goes Through Communities – Michigan United (\$20,000), Women Organizing Women-Minnesota (\$20,000), Restaurant Opportunities Center-DC (\$20,000), Oakland Rising (\$20,000), Public Leadership Institute (\$100,000), Total Award: \$180,000

This is a collaborative project that involves four local community-based organizations and two national organizations. Together, the organizations will develop a model program for building the capacity of grassroots organizations to participate in the system of candidate recruitment/support from their membership and constituency base, enabling them to be at the table when potential candidates are being identified, to put forward potential candidates from within their own ranks, and to get the backing of larger organizations that have electoral money to spend.



Harnessing the Power of Appointed Boards & Commissions – Texas Organizing Project Education Fund, Total Award: \$45,000

This is a planning grant with which Texas Organizing Project will develop a pilot program to link issue campaign work with opportunities for leadership development in appointed boards and commissions at multiple levels of local and state government. TOP works to improve the lives of low- and moderate- income Texas families, primarily in communities of color, by building power through community organizing and civic engagement.

PRIORITY AREA 2: ECONOMIC BARRIERS



Access to Public Leadership – Teresa Purcell, Elisabeth Sullivan, Colleen Loper, and Ross Peavey, Total Award: \$37,500

This is a collaborative project that involves two groups of research practitioners, one looking at a national scope and one looking at a local example. These projects will recommend options for creating innovative programs to help candidates and elected officials, particularly women of color, overcome economic barriers to running for and serving in office. These may include public interest fellowships, microloans, and scholarships, as well as other innovative new programs.

PRIORITY AREA 3: GATEKEEPERS



The Pathway Project – Jessica Byrd, Total Award: \$53,000

This is a planning grant for an emerging leader to develop a strategic plan for a network of people of color-led and -centered organizations to establish an alternative gatekeeper structure that would harness its power toward a long-term system of recruiting and supporting candidates of color, working across groups and institutions that are currently siloed by demographic group and focus.



Building Native American Political Power – Chrissie Castro, Total Award: \$41,000

Chrissie Castro, a citizen of Navajo Nation, is a seasoned leader with more than 15 years of community organizing and consulting experience. Working with two other Native women leaders, she is leading a project to map the barriers and potential solutions around political power for Native American communities, and will share her learnings with the broader field and the public.

PRIORITY AREA 4: VOTING SYSTEMS

We have deferred the funding of the two projects in this area until early 2016, and have included them in the 2016 budget for Year 3 of the Reflective Democracy Campaign.



Who Runs & Who Wins? – Paru Shah & Eric Gonzalez Juenke, Total Award: \$39,000

This project, led by two leading political scientists studying race, gender, and political candidacy, will undertake four research projects based largely on WDN's recently released data set identifying all candidates on the ballot in the 2012 and 2014 elections. Overall, the projects seek to answer several key yet unanswered questions: How do partisan support, political contributions, electoral structures, and campaigns influence when minority candidates run? When they win? And what are the policy implications of these findings?



Elections Rules & Reflective Local Democracy – Fair Vote, Total Award: \$65,000

This research project will map the correlation between voting system structures and representation by race/ethnic group, using WDN's Reflective Democracy database. The project will compare the demographics of elected officeholders against factors such as nonpartisan ballots, at-large elections, council/commission size, timing of elections, council compensation, community resources, and voter eligibility rules.

In addition, the Reflective Democracy Campaign granted **\$25,000** to the **State Innovation Exchange (SIX)** as part of a strategic partnership to engage state legislators in the work of the Innovator projects.

JEAN HARDISTY CATALYTIC IMPACT FUND

In 2015 we launched the Jean Hardisty Catalytic Impact Fund to support critically needed community organizing and social justice movement infrastructure through timely, catalytic investments. The first initiative supported through the fund will focus on issues of race, with emphasis in this first phase on the Movement for Black Lives.



Black Organizing for Leadership & Dignity. In 2016 we will fund BOLD's national leadership training program, which is designed to rebuild Black social justice infrastructure and create a leadership development pipeline to increase the skill-level and number of Black organizers and directors working for social change in the U.S.

Photos provided by and attributed to grantee organizations.



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