

WDN | WDN ACTION

# STRATEGIC PLAN

2024 - 2028

**CONNECT + GROW + FUND + MOBILIZE**

# WDN | WDN ACTION

## Strategic Plan | 2024-2028

Approved September 21, 2023

by WDN and WDN Action Boards of Directors

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In 2023, WDN and WDN Action embarked on a thoughtful and rigorous strategic planning process. We collected a rich body of evidence from over 200 people amongst our network, peers, and the broader field. Thanks to the collective brilliance of this community, our new strategic plan is here. It reflects the proud legacy of this network and our aspirations to evolve in our next chapter.

This document outlines each component of the strategy. It is structured as follows:

- [Introduction](#) | A note on this era in WDN's and WDN Action's trajectory – and the challenges we collectively face
- [Our evolution](#) | Implications for the work and the shifts ahead
- [Strategy at a glance](#) | An introduction to WDN & WDN Action's overall strategy and our four new pillars: Connect, Grow, Fund, Mobilize
- [Our overall purpose](#) | The 'North Star' vision and core approach guiding our work together
- [Our community and values](#) | Who we are as a network and what we value
- [WDN: Our work](#) | How our pillars align with WDN's objectives, activities, and outcomes
- [WDN Action: Our work](#) | How our pillars align with WDN Action's objectives, activities, and outcomes
- [Operationalizing the strategy](#) | A brief look at how the next few years will require planning across our whole organization to bring the strategy to life

## Introduction

Across our decades-long journey, our network has continuously pushed further in our capacity to make change. We built into our collective DNA the ability to confront and grow past the norms of our time. This strategy continues that legacy, setting a bold ambition for how we evolve, yet again, to create change that will last beyond our lifetimes.

In our founding years – as Resourceful Women – we were a space where newly wealthy women stepped into their own power and agency together. Over time, we became the Women Donors Network – a community of women with the capacity to multiply our impact in radical and transformative ways. In 2017, the founding of Women Donors Network Action (WDN Action), the 501(c)(4) sibling



organization to WDN, cemented our commitment to political transformation as a fundamental part of social change and an animating force for our membership.

In the past six years, we have grown our grantmaking exponentially. We've sought to use our collective power and resources to curb the power imbalances finding deeper roots in our country, while proactively advancing a more just future. In parallel, we've continued to challenge ourselves to interrogate our own power and privilege, and to use it to advance our values.

Today, we stand ready to meet the profound challenges of this moment. We are facing a sharp rise in global fascism and a systematic removal of hard-fought gains in racial and gender equity. Combined with historic levels of economic inequality and a deepening climate crisis, the context we live in is increasingly clear. We need to mobilize like never before to build a better world within and beyond our lifetimes.

We envision a more just world where our self-determination and liberation are collectively realized and protected across a multiracial, multigenerational society. Currently, there are few donor networks that bring this full power, capacity, and vision together. We believe we must – and can – fill that gap.

To be most effective, we aim to:

- **Grow and transform the collective consciousness of those with power and privilege.** We all have agency and opportunities to channel and leverage our assets – beyond our philanthropic capital – towards a better future.
- **Build the power and strengthen the capacity of justice-driven movements and leaders** – especially BIPOC leaders – whose ability to build political and economic power and shift public consciousness around policies, practices, and values from the ground up has been well-documented<sup>1</sup> – and yet, are among the most under-resourced in philanthropy.<sup>2</sup>
- **Resource strategic narrative and culture change work to inspire and seed lasting transformation.** Fight coordinated opposition, misinformation, and disinformation – often gendered and racialized.
- **Reimagine political and economic systems and structures** so they no longer produce or reinforce inequities, but rather support the well-being and uplift the inherent dignity of all people.

Together, we can move mountains. Our impact through efforts like the Reflective Democracy Campaign, UltraViolet, and the Abortion Bridge Collaborative Fund are a critical precedent for what we can achieve as a network. As we fund, we

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<sup>1</sup> See [this resource](#) for more information on the efficacy and importance of grassroots movements.

<sup>2</sup> According to a [2020 report](#), BIPOC-led organizations receive only an estimated 4% of total philanthropic grants and contributions - much of it in the form of small, short-term, or restricted contributions

learn from each other, we build our collective power for good, and we grow into better, more thoughtful donors.

Thanks to the diverse lived experience of our membership, our unique lens, and our collective resources and talents, we have always been at the cutting edge of what it means to fund a better future. And we are in good company. We move in coordination with a field of visionary, justice-driven leaders working to carve a different path forward.

As we rise to meet this moment, we are uniquely poised to leverage our combined energies toward a future where everyone can thrive.

## Our Evolution

The strategic plan represents an ambitious shift in how the network operates today. Specifically, we seek to move:

- From a one-size-fits-all model to an *intentional community design* that honors and creates spaces for members of multiple identities and experiences, fosters cohesion and belonging, deepens learning experiences, and facilitates mobilizing opportunities between members and partners.
- From engaging members as philanthropists to *activating them holistically, enabling them to bring the full weight of their personal, professional, philanthropic, and political power* to bear in service of our North Star.
- From supporting members in acknowledging and grappling with the source of their wealth to *challenging and inspiring members to commit to using their power and resources to change systems in alignment with our values* – including systems that may benefit us as individuals.
- From operating in a less visible way to *stepping into our power* and sharing our point of view and best practices to multiply our impact.
- From operating in a silo to *working more strategically and collaboratively with peers and movement-aligned partners* to amplify our shared vision and collective impact.
- From functionally viewing the c4 as an add-on to the c3, with a primary focus on funding, to *including both c3 and c4 components in every pillar of our work, and formalizing c4 exposure, programming and education* across the membership.
- From centering the individual to *centering our shared North Star and impact*, deepening opportunities for members to engage actively and meaningfully.

- From unclear roles of members and staff to more clearly *defined roles across different spaces that value and leverage the respective expertise, experiences, and gifts we bring to this work.*

## Strategy at a glance

In our next chapter, the network will channel the collective power and resources of our multigenerational, multiracial community toward building a more just and sustainable world where every person can safely and freely determine their own future. We will redouble our commitment to advancing all forms of justice while anchoring our lens on race and gender across everything we do.

By 2028, we aspire to grow into one of the nation’s largest multigenerational, multiracial donor organizer communities for progressive political action and social justice, channeling \$50M+ towards our mission and influencing others – in our networks and in the broader philanthropic and political giving fields – to do the same.

We propose ambitiously and intentionally growing our membership by roughly 50% by the end of 2028. While our pace and magnitude of growth will depend on many factors, this strategy is built with this aspiration in mind.



*Note the use of this symbol throughout this document to signify a “step change” –or a place where, through this strategy, we plan to intentionally evolve in our next phase.*

## WDN & WDN Action: Our 501(c)(3) and 501(c)(4) organizations

This document outlines an integrated strategy for WDN and WDN Action – with differentiated details on our activities – reflecting that we are:



- *One network*, with a single North Star vision, shared aspirations and core beliefs, a shared set of evolved strategic pillars, and shared operational infrastructure.
- *One community*, where everyone has the chance to engage as they wish and drive impact through both the c3 and the c4.
- *Two organizations*, with two complementary missions, differentiated capabilities to drive change, and separate resourcing that reflects our distinct funding vehicles and legal requirements.

# Strategy at a Glance

## Our North Star

*We envision a just and sustainable world where everyone can safely and freely determine their own futures.*

### WDN

*We protect and advance gender, racial, economic, and climate justice by channeling collective power and resources in solidarity with movements to transform people, culture, and systems.*

## Our Missions

### WDNACTION

*We protect and advance gender, racial, economic, and climate justice by channeling collective power and resources in solidarity with movements to transform policies, political infrastructure, and political possibilities.*

## Our Approach

*Adopt an intersectional feminist approach*

*Seek liberation for all*

*Mobilize our collective power*

*Harness the power of our network*

*Transform ourselves to transform society*

**We rise together – recognizing that our struggles, our power, and our liberation are intertwined**

# Our Pillars of Work

**Our Work Together**



## Connect

We connect and build a multigenerational, multiracial community of donor organizers inspired to transform their power into collective action.

**WDN ACTION**

We connect political changemakers across and within our membership and our broader community.



## Grow

We equip members to deepen their learning, grow their skills, and unlock the full range of their financial, social, and political capital in solidarity with movements.

We inspire and educate political changemakers to channel collective power in solidarity with movements



## Fund

We boldly move collective resources to meet emerging needs and build the long-term power, capacity, and infrastructure of movements.

We invest in infrastructure to build political power and shore up against emerging threats, in service of gender and racial justice and a healthy, reflective democracy



## Mobilize

We multiply our impact by organizing and influencing our members, networks, and the philanthropic field in alignment with our North Star

We multiply our impact by supporting political activism in solidarity with movements

**Key Activities**

- **Strengthen cohesion** with engaging outreach initiatives
- **Foster belonging** and build community
- **Support self-organizing** for members outside of formal WDN spaces

- **Lay the groundwork** with an annual learning series
- **Deepen and streamline learning** with curated learning journeys

- **Deepen commitment** to trust-based philanthropy
- **Resource movements**
- **Incubate new ideas**
- **Increase strategic alignment** between WDN & WDN Action

- **Activate members** to become empowered donor organizers
- **Amplify impact** through partnerships and external communications

## Our overall purpose

### North Star

The strategy for our network is guided by our shared North Star:

***We envision a just and sustainable world where everyone can safely and freely determine their own future.***

Our approach to this work is defined by a respect for our diverse lived experiences and a commitment to rise together – *recognizing that our struggles, our power, and our liberation are interconnected*. We strive towards gender, racial, economic, and climate justice. We believe in the need for not just equity, but justice, and we believe all forms of justice are interlinked. In our approach, we pledge to:

#### 1. Adopt an intersectional feminist approach |

We are guided by feminist values including solidarity, trust, deep listening, shifting power to those who have been marginalized, and honoring and centering their lived experiences. We recognize that the diversity of lived experiences and overlapping forms of oppression impact people differently based on the multiple identities they hold.<sup>3</sup>

#### 2. Seek liberation for all |

Recognizing that no one is free until we are all free, we work to eliminate the harmful and extractive structures, systems, and narratives that hold us all back from reaching our potential and thriving as individuals and as an interdependent society, and we work in solidarity with those most affected by injustice.

#### 3. Mobilize our collective power |

We believe in the power and necessity of the collective – across generations, racial identities, and circumstances – to drive change. We expand our definition of what power looks like – including economic, social, and political capital – and leverage it in pursuit of our

#### Spotlight on gender justice

We seek to transform gender and power relations, and the structures, norms, and values that underpin them, and, ultimately, end patriarchy, transphobia, homophobia, and misogyny. We advance gender justice by mobilizing around gender justice issues (e.g., *advancing reproductive justice, pushing back against anti-trans bills*) and building the political power of women, gender-expansive, and BIPOC communities. At the same time, we recognize that the struggle for gender justice is deeply impacted by, and inextricably connected to, other issues and movements, including racial justice, economic justice, and climate justice. We therefore seek to center the experiences and leadership of those most impacted by discrimination and oppression (including Black organizers and women of color, particularly trans and queer women of color), and support work that seeks transformation across silos.

Sources: “*Journey Towards Intersectional Grantmaking*” and the *Third Wave Fund*.

<sup>3</sup> Source: “[Journey Towards Intersectional Grantmaking](#)”



North Star. We learn to discern when to yield our power, wield our power, and build the power of leaders and communities who have been historically excluded.

4. **Center community and interdependence** | We value the range of lived experiences, expertise, and gifts that we all bring to this work.
5. **Transform culture, systems, and structures** | We believe in the need to transform the people, policies, and systems that enable ongoing harm and oppression. We must come together in community to interrogate and transform our own role in those systems.

## Our Mission

In service of our North Star, and reflecting our identity and values as a network –



### WDN's mission is to:

*Protect and advance gender, racial, economic, and climate justice by channeling collective power and resources in solidarity with movements to transform people, culture, and systems.*

### WDN Action's mission is to:

*Protect and advance gender, racial, economic, and climate justice by channeling our collective power and resources in solidarity with movements to transform policies, political infrastructure, and political possibilities.*

### What we mean when we say...

*“Channel collective power and resources”* – This network is a home and a platform for donor organizer members, creating channels for them to move resources and act together towards our collective goals. As a network we also aim to articulate our viewpoint on effective donor organizing and provide education and tools to support individual growth and action.

*“In solidarity with movements”* – We believe deeply in the power of grassroots movements and grass-roots strategies to effect social change. We are committed to centering leaders and communities most directly impacted by the issues we work on – especially women, gender-expansive, and BIPOC leaders. We support movements that operate at and across local, state, and regional levels, as well as in digital spaces, and that seek changes in policies, cultures, and systems to better reflect and serve the will and needs of the people.

We also recognize that we have a unique role to play given the power and influence our network holds. We combine support for grassroots movements with grassroots influence, necessary to achieve our desired vision.

Ultimately, we seek to serve as a bridge between grassroots leaders and donor organizers, creating opportunities for donors to connect and channel funds in ways that demonstrate solidarity with those most impacted.<sup>4</sup>

## Our community and values

### Who we are



As a network, our diversity and our interdependence is our strength.

This strategy for the first time explicitly defines who we see as a member of WDN and WDN Action – as well as the values and commitments we hold ourselves accountable to as individuals and a community. This clarity will help us recognize the diversity that already exists within our community, attract new aligned members, inform programming to meet the needs of our full community, and ensure that every member knows they belong here.

None of this is radically new – as individuals and a community, we already embody these identities. This strategy invites us to name, honor, invest in, and create further space for the richness of our community.

#### *As individuals we are...*

- **Women (*cis and trans*), non-binary, and gender-expansive** | We recognize that gender identity is not binary and commit to building a community, culture, and brand that is inclusive – recognizing the importance of dedicated space for people whose gender has been marginalized.
- **Interested and able to channel power and resources to advance justice** | Our members are those with immediate and current social and financial capital; those with future earned or inherited wealth; and those with significant influence over capital flows.
- **Financial contributors to the network's impact** | Each of us seeks to examine and grow our giving over time – reflecting a collective spirit of pushing our own boundaries. Our updated financial model is multi-faceted and includes a “gliding scale.” It introduces a minimum entry point of \$3,000 for individuals, as well as a separate entry point of \$25,000 for members sponsored by a movement-aligned funder.

#### *As a network we are...*

- **Multiracial and multigenerational** | To realize our North Star we require a diverse coalition. We live in a multiracial, multigenerational society. Currently there are few networks that bring this full power together, and

<sup>4</sup>Trust-based philanthropic principles include partnering in a spirit of service, redistributing power, and centering relationships. We seek to reflect these values in our funding structures and practices, our culture, and our leadership.

we believe we have the responsibility and capacity to do so. This is one of our greatest strengths and comparative advantages. It is worth building on.

- **Donor organizers** | Our network is seen as a leader in this space. We invite all members to step into their role as both donors who organize, and people who organize donors and other resources in service of a mission. Whether it's in the halls of the Capitol or at cocktail parties, in board rooms or at our own dinner tables, we are influencers in the field at large.

## Shared values

As part of joining and renewing our membership in the network, we agree to a set of shared values and hold ourselves, each other, and our community accountable for how we show up. These values were developed based on input from regional meetings and the strategic planning member survey, where members shared what they see as some of the proudest and most important characteristics of this community, and include:

*"What keeps me is that this community is willing to push itself and ask the hard questions. That growth mindset is something I'll always choose to be in community with"*

- WDM member

- **Courage:** We understand that true social change involves taking risks, interrogating one's own privilege, and entering into uncomfortable conversations and spaces.
- **Curiosity:** We recognize we do not hold or know all the answers or strategies; we come with a growth mindset and a willingness to listen and act on the wisdom of the lived and learned experience of others, as well as available data, to inform our work.
- **Commitment:** We understand that social change is a long, non-linear, and relational process; and are committed to trust, patience, flexibility, and, above all, deep respect – for one another, for our partners, and for the communities whose power they build.
- **Centering the work:** We are part of WDM/A to build a community and society that advances our North Star beliefs, and we center that work – and the impact we can have together – in everything we do.
- **Accountability:** We compassionately encourage ourselves and one another to uphold our shared values and North Star beliefs, and ask others to hold us accountable to them. We create structures and systems - in our governance, our grantmaking, and our community norms - to enable this accountability.

As powerful as each of these values is on its own, we recognize they are immensely more powerful when practiced together. For example, through courage, commitment, and curiosity, members make the space to interrogate their privilege and power to learn – and to unlearn – what their role can be in advancing a vision of justice.

## WDN: Our Work

The network's new pillars – Connect, Grow, Fund, and Mobilize – build on and increase the ambition of our current Connect, Learn, Act model.

Though both WDN and WDN Action share these pillars of work, our objectives and activities are distinct. This section lays out WDN's objectives and activities to enable us to advance the 501(c)(3) mission.

### Objectives & Activities



Connection is at the core of our network. It is deeply valued by our members,<sup>5</sup> staff, and partners. The animating goal of this pillar is to **connect and build a multigenerational, multiracial community of donor organizers inspired to transform their power into collective action.** To build connection in this way, we'll work to:

*"I joined because of all the **dynamic, change-making women** who were already members"*  
- WDN member

#### 1) STRENGTHEN COHESION

Create a shared understanding of the network, its values, and what it offers, and deepen opportunities for members and partners to connect with one another and the organization through:

- A clear thrice-annual cohort-based onboarding process for members and partners to help them understand, navigate, and integrate into the network.
- A refreshed annual renewal process and annual resolution exercise that supports members to reaffirm shared values and reflect on how they would like to grow.
- Streamlined 1:1 member outreach to support members connections to, and their growth and action with, the network.
- Annual Conference to continue the success of building community, advancing our learning and showcasing our collective impact.
- Regional meetings to foster community and deepen relationships across our membership within our regions, oriented towards learning and action.

#### 2) FOSTER BELONGING

Ensure all members can find connection and belonging in our multigenerational, multiracial community through:

<sup>5</sup> Around 70% of member survey respondents wrote that what brings them - and keeps them - at WDN is the people, friendships, and community.



- Peer communities for sub-groups of members to cultivate community, learning, and support.
- Plenary gatherings to allow members and partners to connect, creating space for joy and solidarity.
- Strengthened community norms and facilitation of courageous conversations to foster both individual growth and collective belonging.<sup>6</sup>
- Annual ‘pulse check’ surveys on member experience and inclusivity across the network, helping to reinforce accountability to our norms and values.

*“WDN can play the role of facilitator for better grantee interaction and networking ...I’ve met some really worthy connections just by sharing a room with other grantees of WDN”*

*- WDN grantee partner*

### 3) SUPPORT SELF-ORGANIZING

Support members to connect and self-organize both within and outside of formal WDN spaces through:

- A refreshed member directory highlighting member personal and professional backgrounds, interests, and involvement across the network.
- Clearer support frameworks to improve transparency and create a standardized process for how member-led efforts receive staff support.
- Streamlined and consolidated tool to foster informal connections and engagement in events and uptake of resources across the WDN community.



## Grow

Donor education – particularly on the combination of equity, justice and liberation frameworks, movement-aligned philanthropy, and c4 giving and action – is core to what makes us unique amongst other networks. The animating goal of this pillar is to **support every member to understand, explore, and unlock the full range of their financial, social, and political capital for this work and deepen their understanding and interconnectedness of social justice issues.** To build growth in this way, we’ll work to:

### 1) LAY THE GROUNDWORK

Establish a common baseline understanding to level set and support members’ learning through:

- An annual WDN Essentials learning series that covers our North Star beliefs, fundamentals, and community.

<sup>6</sup> This reflects member survey findings that “increasing our comfort with hard conversations” is one of the most important steps to enable our multigenerational, multiracial community (57%).

## 2) DEEPEN AND STREAMLINE LEARNING

Develop a curated set of learning opportunities to enable members to unlock their full range of power through:

- Curated learning journeys to deepen collective learning, accommodate different interests and levels, and challenge members to think about what these learnings mean for their actions and giving.
- Thematic learning events, to build baseline knowledge across a range of issue areas (e.g., *Just Transition, voting rights, worker justice*).<sup>7</sup>
- Member-led learning events where members share their expertise and passions with one another to inspire collective action.



### Fund

Our funding is one of the most direct ways we support movements and innovative ideas that advance justice, while also inspiring and engaging our members around grantee partners' work, and modeling what trust-based giving looks like for the broader philanthropic field. The animating goal of this pillar is to **boldly move collective resources to build the long-term power, capacity, and infrastructure of movements and meet emerging needs in the field**. To build in this way, we will work across all of our funding vehicles to:

## 1) SHIFT POWER

Deepen our commitment to trust-based, solidarity philanthropy<sup>8</sup> and ensure all our funding is in line with our values through:

- A refreshed grantmaking framework to articulate principles for *how, who, and what* we fund – continuing and deepening our commitment to solidarity and trust-based principles and practices. Our funding is responsive to movements – unrestricted and multi-year where feasible – and centers those closest to the work. We fund BIPOC and gender-expansive leaders, new and emerging leaders and organizations, and people and power – not just projects.
- A participatory grantmaking journey, where members learn about different models to shift decision-making power towards movement leaders and communities and collaborate to pilot new models over time.
- Evolved member roles in grantmaking spaces (i.e., Impact Collectives, Hardisty Initiative) to more deeply engage members in learning and serving as “ambassadors” for partners by helping to crowd in additional resources.

<sup>7</sup> This reflects the member survey finding that learning about the specific issues and partners WDN/A funds is the most important driver of members' feeling of engagement in grantmaking (*selected by 60% of respondents*).

<sup>8</sup> [Fund for Frontline Power](#) defines solidarity philanthropy as “centering leaders from impacted communities as experts and decision-makers – honoring their lived experience, following their lead, and trusting that they know best what their own communities need.”

**Spotlight on participatory grantmaking**

The member survey results reflect a strong mandate for pursuing participatory grantmaking, with the *vast majority of respondents (87%) supporting a shift toward this model.*<sup>9</sup> We can start to explore ways to shift decision-making power through curated learning journeys with members and staff co-creating pilots across our grantmaking spaces. While there is no one-size-fits-all approach, this may include increasing funding to existing participatory models or creating a shared steering committee of movement partners and members. As decision-making power shifts in these spaces, member roles will evolve to focus more on learning from the work of partners, and serving as “ambassadors” for partners by crowding in support.

**2) RESOURCE MOVEMENTS**

**Move funding via our grantmaking bodies to grassroots movement leaders and organizations in alignment with our values and mission:**

- Invest in movements and infrastructure, cultural change and narrative strategies, and emerging opportunities via the Impact Collectives and Hardisty Initiative while exploring potential shifts in structure and thematic focus areas over time to reflect the multi-issue, intersectional nature of our grantmaking.

**3) INCUBATE NEW IDEAS**

**Incubate new, mission-aligned ideas and initiatives, while providing transparency and a runway towards independence over time through:**

- **Criteria to determine whether and how we support emerging member- and movement-originated ideas** (*i.e., one-time financial support, grantmaking bodies, Incubated Initiatives*) to provide clarity and transparency around when and how the network provides financial resources to new projects or organizations.
- **A model to incubate new initiatives** that provides exploratory funding, administrative resources, and transition support to new, strategy-aligned, movement-vetted ideas. This model places initiatives on a transparent, multi-year pathway to launch, with intentional support to help initiatives diversify funding sources over time and protect the leadership of movement leaders and activists.
- **Continued funding for catalytic projects** (*e.g., ABC Fund*) while exploring ways to responsibly sunset support for long-standing, well-established initiatives over time.

**4) INCREASE ALIGNMENT**

**Increase strategic coherence between our 501(c)(3) and 501(c)(4) entities:**

- **Deepen strategic cohesion and efficiency** (*e.g., through joint annual planning and evaluation of funding opportunities*).

<sup>9</sup> Includes respondents who favored a shift to participatory models 'over time' (~38%), those who favored a 'partial' adoption of participatory models (~30%), and those favored a shift in all grantmaking to participatory models (~20%).



## Mobilize



This pillar contains a fundamental shift in our new strategy, as we step into our power more fully in two key ways: as members, and as an institution. It formalizes the work that so many members already do to mobilize and influence their personal, professional, and political networks, with WDN providing a platform to catalyze this member action. In parallel, it creates space for WDN as an organization to mobilize and influence the broader field in line with our North Star.

*"WDN needs to step into their own power. By stepping into their power and sharing their best practices, other donor networks are learning"*

- WDN peer

The animating goal of this pillar is to **multiply our impact by organizing and influencing our members, networks, and the philanthropic field, in line with our beliefs and approach.** To build mobilize in this way, we'll work to:

### 1) ACTIVATE MEMBERS

Support members to become donor organizers who channel the full range of their financial, social, and political capital in service of our North Star through:

- **Member power mapping** to help members understand the types of power they embody in their personal and professional lives and how it can be yielded and wielded towards justice.<sup>10</sup>
- **Donor organizing toolkits** to support member self-organizing and activism (e.g., *shareholder activism, advocacy*) in line with our values and priorities.
- **Matching partner requests to member connections and resources** (e.g., *promotion support, office space, or references to people in members' networks with certain skills/expertise*). This will happen primarily through Impact Collectives and the Jean Hardisty Initiative as organizing forums to channel partner requests to the broader membership.

**"What are the tools we have to shift power?"** Money, influence, connections, our own smarts, our ability to change, our love for each other. These are our gifts, and I want to deploy them to this end"

- WDN member

### 2) AMPLIFY IMPACT

Amplify our North Star, best practices, and the work of partners through partnerships and external communications through:

<sup>10</sup> Data collected through the member survey offer a glimpse into the depth and power of this kind of exercise. 75% of members indicated that they were part of other networks and movements, and across just the 93 survey respondents, there is an estimated \$40M-\$70M in additional philanthropic giving being mobilized outside of WDN.



- **Deepened partnerships with movement-aligned peer funders** to increase visibility, collaborate on shared priorities, and share resources (*e.g., via joint learning events, moments for collective mobilization, co-funded initiatives*).
- **Bolstered external communications** – over the longer-term – to influence and mobilize more resources among progressive institutional funders in alignment with our North Star and approach. This influence may happen through institutional members, as a way to build stronger relationships and share ideas with institutional philanthropy.

## WDN Outcomes

Our 501(c)(3) and 501(c)(4) arms have a shared ambition and role – channeling collective power and resources – with differentiated pathways to impact.

At WDN, we focus on **transforming people, culture, and systems**:

**WDN** *If we achieve our mission, we will see the following outcomes:*

**People** Our community will be more fluent and effective in the work of social justice, and better positioned to influence others in their networks.

**Philanthropy** We – and the peer philanthropic entities we partner with – will increase the amount and quality of resourcing we provide movements and communities; and shift control over decisions for how those funds are utilized.

**Power** *over resources, narratives, policy, and laws* will be shifted to communities that have been historically excluded, manifesting in well-resourced movements for justice and the next generation of progressive leaders that have the holistic support they need to drive change.

**Narratives** in the media, culture and beyond that enable and reinforce power dynamics (*e.g., by othering suffering, erasing the role of systems in producing inequity, or stripping agency from communities*) will be challenged and shifted. Communities will be able to shape narratives about their own stories, histories, and legacies.

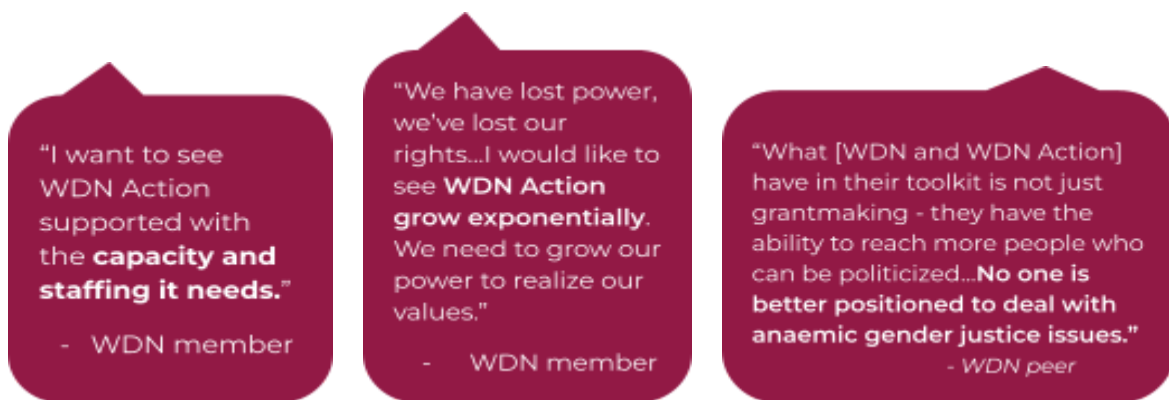
**Systems** will no longer produce, enable or reinforce inequities, but instead will protect, serve, and advance the interests of all people (*e.g., our tax system will not increase wealth inequity, our economy will drastically reduce their contribution to the climate crisis*).

## WDN Action: Our Work

### A new opportunity for growth

As WDN Action's first formal strategic plan, this plan represents an opportunity to build on the impact and successes of the organization's first chapter and more clearly articulate its goals as an organization, its relationship to the 501(c)(3) and broader network, and its niche in the ecosystem.

This plan seeks to grow, strengthen, focus, and resource our 501(c)(4) as a critical partner to WDN. In doing so, we recognize that political action, *including grassroots community organizing and grassroots advocacy*, is a critical and necessary pathway for advancing our shared ambitions.



### Our Niche

There are four ways our strategy carves out a differentiated, additive role for us in the broader c4 field:

- ***In leading with an intersectional gender justice lens:*** We are the leading c4 funder of gender justice work, and we take an intersectional approach, recognizing gender justice cannot exist without racial, economic, and climate justice.<sup>11</sup>
- ***In how we activate and engage members:*** We are not only a collective funding vehicle, we are also a platform for inspiring, educating, and equipping all network members to drive political change, and a home for political donor organizers to grow and mobilize together.
- ***In the tactics we use:*** We pair funding to movements and leaders with mobilizing the grassroots influence of our network to elevate and advance the priorities of our grantees.
- ***In what we fund:*** Our funding helps to build long-term, year-round movement infrastructure in select geographies and counter emerging

<sup>11</sup> This additive role emerged from landscape analysis and peer and partner interviews.

threats to justice anywhere, including by building a runway for emerging leaders and organizations to grow over time.

## Our Activities & Objectives

We work across four pillars – jointly with WDN, but with distinct objectives and strategies – to advance our mission.

Importantly, this strategic plan represents an evolution of our organizational focus – which has centered largely around our grantmaking and annual advocacy programming – to create a more holistic approach to advancing political change. We aim to connect and educate members about the importance of c4 work, inspire funding and action, and catalyze greater levels of support for our c4 movement partners, whose work we will reinforce as we mobilize and influence at the grassroots level.




## Connect



Our objective is to **connect political changemakers across and within our membership and our broader community**. In this pillar, we seek to connect members around political interests and expand our network’s understanding of WDN Action’s work. Its strategies and activities include:

### 1) STRENGTHEN COHESION

Create a shared understanding of WDN Action, its values, and what it offers, and deepen opportunities to connect with the organization through:

- **Onboarding sessions** dedicated to building fundamental awareness of WDN Action and the c4 landscape.
- **1:1 member outreach** to support members connections to, and their growth and action with, our c4 work.
- **Regional gatherings** to foster community and deepen engagement with WDN Action.

## 2) DEEPEN CONNECTION

- Political organizing-themed **peer communities** to connect members with each other around shared interests and activism.
- **Plenary events** (including our Annual Conference) that offer connection opportunities for members, c4 grantees, and political changemakers to share space, learn from one another, and strategize together.

## 3) SUPPORT SELF-ORGANIZING

Support members to connect and self-organize both within and outside of formal WDN Action spaces through:

- A refreshed **member directory** highlighting member personal and professional backgrounds, interests, and involvement across the network.
- Streamlined and consolidated tool to foster informal connections and engagement in political organizing.



### Grow



Our objective in this pillar is to **inspire and educate political changemakers to channel collective power in solidarity with movements**. In this pillar, we seek to build a baseline understanding of political power, giving, and action across the membership, and challenge and inspire members to step into their power as political changemakers. Strategies and activities include:

### LAY THE GROUNDWORK

- WDN Action **Essentials courses** to deepen understanding of the political context and the power of electoral organizing and advocacy.
- Recurring, **dedicated political education** learning opportunities.



### Fund



WDN Action's objective in this pillar is to **invest in infrastructure to build political power and shore up against emerging threats, in service of gender and racial justice and a healthy, reflective democracy**. Strategies and activities include:



## 1) SHIFT POWER

- Move funding in alignment with our values and mission through a refreshed grantmaking framework that articulates principles for *how*, *who*, and *what* we fund – continuing and deepening our commitment to solidarity and trust-based principles and practices. Our funding is responsive, unrestricted, multi-year where feasible, and centers those closest to the work.
- Prioritize resources for BIPOC and gender-expansive leaders, new and emerging organizations, and people and power – not just projects.
- Explore the potential for a participatory c4 decision-making body over time.

## 2) RESOURCE MOVEMENTS

- Build long-term infrastructure by deepening investments in a subset of states
- Strengthen the c4 landscape by resourcing new or emerging organizations
- Respond to emergent needs or priorities to protect and advance gender and racial justice.

## 3) LEARN AND ADAPT

- Build in an evaluative process to continue to iterate on our strategy and meet the moment in an evolving political landscape.

## 4) INCREASE ALIGNMENT AND STRENGTHEN OPERATIONS

*(shared priority with WDN)*

- Work with the c3 to deepen strategic cohesion and efficiency (e.g., through joint annual planning and evaluation of funding opportunities).
- Invest in c4 staffing and operations to deliver on this new strategy and reinforce strategic cohesion.



### Mobilize

WDN Action's objective in this pillar is to **multiply our impact by supporting political activism in solidarity with movements.**

Strategies and activities include:



### ACTIVATE MEMBERS

- Conduct member 'power mapping' (e.g., working with each member to articulate the positions, assets, and influence they hold that can be

*leveraged for impact*) to help members understand and realize how they can yield and wield the full range of their power – including their political voice, connections, and influence.

- Equip and educate members to mobilize and advocate around their own political education/funding goals (e.g., *building a political giving strategy*) through donor organizing toolkits and learning events.
- Evolve and deepen experiential learning opportunities like Women on the Hill, including to more fully leverage members' grassroots influence and connections to advance a shared legislative advocacy agenda with grantee partners.
- Facilitate member opportunities to mobilize (i.e., leveraging influence, relationships, and resources) via plenary events, connections with grantee partners, and regional hub activation.

## WDM Action Outcomes

Our 501(c)(3) and 501(c)(4) arms have a shared ambition and role – channeling collective power and resources – with differentiated pathways to impact.

Through WDM Action, we focus on **transforming policies, political infrastructure, and political possibilities**:

**WDM ACTION** *If we achieve our mission, we will see the following outcomes:*

**People** – Our members will be equipped and activated to be political change agents in their own networks and communities

**Power** – Political infrastructure and emerging c4 leadership will enable historically excluded communities to build and exercise their political and civic power for a more reflective democracy

**Policies** will be passed that make our systems more just (e.g., *redistributive tax policies, removal of discriminatory voter suppression tactics*), and emerging threats to people's right to self-determination (e.g., *bodily autonomy, gender affirmation*) will be thwarted

**Political possibilities** – Our entire political system (e.g., *Supreme Court, electoral system, legislative bodies, elected representatives*) will ultimately be reflective of and accountable to the will of the people and therefore protect, serve, and advance the interests of all people

## Operationalizing the strategic plan

Bringing the WDN and WDN Action strategies to life over the next few years will require planning across our organizations, including:

Workstream	Key priority
Communications	Strengthen our communications strategy and experience to optimize our impact and goals across our various audiences.
Recruitment	Create an intentional outreach plan to attract new members, and integrate and engage them as builders of this work with us.
Member programming and culture	Fostering member engagement, leadership and belonging, via shifts across our programming in line with the new strategy. Member-led, Co-led, and Staff-led programs will be articulated and supported.
Grantmaking and partnerships	Driving forward shifts to how we fund movements and mobilize our members, networks, and the field to enable our new missions. Leverage external partnerships to strengthen our strategy
People and Operations	Ensuring we have the staffing, structures, and governance in place to deliver on the strategy.

## High level summary of rollout approach

