



VOICES FOR JUSTICE

in the Movement to End Homelessness

As part of our [Commitment to Racial Equity](#) and in light of the racial justice awakening in this country, Funders Together is sharing statements, articles, and other resources that highlight the voices of Black leaders in the fields of philanthropy, homelessness, and intersecting systems. While it's important for white leaders to speak up, we can further our commitments to racial equity by listening to, learning from, and incorporating the recommendations of Black leadership into not only our grantmaking but also into the structures of our organizations.



In February, philanthropic organizations in California launched the [Black Freedom Fund](#). This \$100 million fund, co-created with Black leaders and organizers, provides resources to Black-led power-building organizations over the next five years.

Shimica Gaskins, Executive Director of the Children's Defense Fund-California, highlighted the necessity of the fund, of power-building for Black communities, and what philanthropy should consider in their funding on the [Black Freedom Fund website](#).

The Need for Power-Building

Highlighting racial disparities in incarceration, education, and poverty in California, Shimica calls out the need for more funding for Black leaders and organizers in the state. In the work to end these disparities and to create a racially just world, Black-led organizations and community must be at the center because “we know that our communities have the

solutions.” Increasing funding for Black-led organizations, increases power in Black communities and leads us closer to transformative freedom.

The Black Freedom Fund will continue to grow connections between Black-led organizations and leaders in order to build power in Black communities statewide, and will deepen the impact of the work that Black-leaders and organizers have been doing for years.

Philanthropy's Role

Philanthropy must consider how existing grant cycles and requirements may be cutting off access to funds for Black-led organizations. Grant length cycles may not allow space for transformative ideas for racial justice. Along with this, Shimica notes that Black leaders are sometimes told their ideas are not innovative when, “we are trying to reverse the impacts of racism and solve problems that have been persistent for generations, which is the very core of innovation.” By considering how our funding is tied to time and to pre-conceived ideas of what innovation and justice look like, we are granted an opportunity to transform our own work, thereby allowing more transformation in our communities.

Shimica also reminds us: “When you invest in Black leaders, listen deeply. Don’t just extract the intellectual capital to advance other ideas, but really understand what’s needed in the community through what you’re funding.” Without deep listening, we can make harmful assumptions about what is needed in communities that lead us to further disparities and move us further from justice.

[Read the full post.](#)

Funders Together to End Homelessness

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