

**TOOLKIT**

**START  
FROM THE  
GROUND UP:**

**INCREASING  
SUPPORT  
FOR GIRLS  
OF COLOR**

**MARCH 2019**

**GRANTMAKERS FOR  
GIRLS OF COLOR**



Welcome to the companion toolkit to *Start from the Ground Up: Investing in Girls of Color*. We know that research alone can only move the needle in our sector so far. Our network has clearly articulated a need for more data, but also a desire to deepen conversations in philanthropy around issues of equity, gender justice and intersectionality as well as guidance for how to build the case for why girls of color movements deserve bold philanthropic support. We are thrilled to share this Toolkit as a new resource to that end.

The Start from the Ground Up toolkit takes the critical findings and recommendations from the research and brings them to life through dynamic and creative activities and discussion guides. Our hope is that the toolkit inspires opportunities to think differently about grantmaking and investment in girls and women of color.

There is an urgent need to invest in girls of color and to remove the deep-seated barriers, from violence to discrimination, that prevent them from realizing their potential—and fully participating in our shared future. We know, especially in this political moment, that the leadership and wisdom of girls and women of color are essential to transform and heal our society.

Our hope is that this toolkit can facilitate new and innovative investments in opportunity, education and safety for girls of color, as well as in their leadership. We look forward to hearing how you use the toolkit and the research, and how we can continue to develop tools that give our sector the skills and resources we need to move the needle. Together, we can help create an equitable and thriving world for all girls and women of color.

Sincerely

Allison Brown, Communities for Just Schools Fund  
 Pamela Shifman, NoVo Foundation  
 Teresa C. Younger, Ms. Foundation for Women



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## INTRODUCTION

The Start from the Ground Up Toolkit is a companion piece to *Start from the Ground Up: Increasing Support for Girls of Color*, a project of Grantmakers for Girls of Color. We hope you will use this toolkit to start, lead and facilitate conversations about the contents of the report and related topics with your staff, team, network, coalitions and institutions.

Girls of color face structural barriers in nearly every aspect of their lives. Over 60 percent of girls of color are born to families living at or below the poverty line. Sexual and domestic violence is pervasive in the lives of all girls and often goes neglected, especially for girls of color. What's more, girls of color who experience harm are often unfairly penalized in schools or by the juvenile justice system.

In spite of these injustices, there is an urgent need to invest in girls and women of color and to remove the deep seated barriers, from violence to discrimination, that prevent them from realizing their potential—and fully participating in our future. We know, especially in this political moment, that the leadership and wisdom of girls and women of color are essential to transform



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and heal our society. Investing in opportunity, education and safety for girls of color, along with their leadership, is our only path to building the strong, women of color leaders we need in every sector and every community to create an equitable and thriving world.

*Start from the Ground Up: Increasing Support for Girls of Color* opens a window into opportunities for philanthropy to be more equitable and accountable to girls and women of color who are rendered nearly invisible by current approaches. This companion toolkit aims to provide pathways for more leaders to join the conversation.

This toolkit is for you if:

- You work in philanthropy and are looking for guidance on how to introduce and facilitate conversations about racial and gender equity and/or how to center girls of color at your institution.
- You are a research, learning, or evaluation professional interested in thinking about new methods for understanding capacity and measuring impact.
- You are curious about this approach to listening to girls and want to learn how to design similar opportunities for philanthropy to listen to girls of color organizations led by women of color for girls.



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## START FROM THE GROUND UP RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS

In short...

*Start from the Ground Up* is an effort to better understand the experiences of girls of color, the landscape of philanthropy’s current investment in girls of color, and the steps we might take to increase the quality and quantity of investment in girls of color. The research findings are informed by review and analysis of existing grantmaking data, focus group discussions with girls of color across the United States and in-depth interviews with non-profit and foundation leaders.

Our research revealed new insights into girls of color’s lives and experiences as well as recommendations for grantmakers. Together, these findings have important implications for how we do our work and invest in and partner with the girls and women of color leading this critical work.



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## FINDINGS

**1. Girls of color define themselves differently than philanthropy currently does.** Their identities begin with personal attributes rather than a racial designation as a “girl of color.” At best, they experience being called ‘girls’ or ‘of color’ as an oversimplification of their identities; at worst, it can feel like willfully ignoring the complexity of their identities. This erasure or ignoring can feel traumatizing and violent.

Ultimately, this finding demonstrates the disconnect that too often exists between funders and the communities they aim to serve. Until funders have the opportunity to learn more about the root causes and structural barriers that impact girls’ lives, the solutions that philanthropy champions will continue to miss the mark.

*“There is more than two genders...They need to educate themselves so they don’t go around offending people.” —Youth focus group participant, Washington, DC*



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*[On responding to people who incorrectly categorize her race and ethnicity]: “I know now when that stuff happened to me, I’d get really defensive about it. You know, I’d fight ‘em about it. Be like, you don’t know my family. You don’t know. Does [last name] sound white to you? Like yeah, you’re just saying it a different way. No, and I used to get really defensive about it. About my races. And after a while I’d get, like, I’d get more angry about it, because they just kept shoving into my face saying, oh, you’re not who you claim to be.” —Youth focus group participant, Denver, CO*



## 2. Although girls of color and philanthropy identify many of the same key challenges girls of color face, they differ in their framing.

This disconnect perpetuates myths about girls of color's experiences, mischaracterizes their needs and priorities and ultimately leads to inadequate funding of the programs and initiatives most likely to catalyze change in their lives.\*

- For example, girls of color named access to affordable, quality housing as a critical barrier in their lives, and many shared personal experiences of homelessness. In 2014, philanthropy invested \$558,334 (forty-one grants) under the category 'Housing' for girls of color. However, the bulk of that money was focused on emergency shelter and homelessness programs, with no investment in the structural solutions—affordable housing and urban planning—that could impact housing instability in the long term.
- Similarly, philanthropy's investments in education for girls of color is in excess of \$9.8 million (126 grants). The majority of that money is focused on higher education and charter schools, and not on the disproportionate discipline, underqualified teachers, lack of access to vocational education and insufficient financial aid prioritized by girls of color.
- In several communities, girls described pervasive challenges created by substance use and abuse, as well as mental health challenges caused by ongoing trauma and adverse childhood experiences (ACEs). Mental health issues also often lead to interactions with the juvenile and/or criminal justice system, which in turn adversely affect employment and educational opportunities.
- Despite the potential long-term consequences of unmet mental health and substance abuse needs, the Foundation Center (2014) data reports a total of \$40,000 allocated to Mental Health and Substance Abuse for girls of color—this is only two grants across the entire country.
- Add to this, the juvenile and criminal justice systems which disproportionately impact girls of color negatively, receive 0 philanthropic dollars specifically for girls of color. That means 0 grants are targeting a critical barrier that girls of color experience and want changed.

At the end of the day, we heard loudly from girls across the country that philanthropy needs to evolve into more of a both/and approach where investments are made to tackle the structural barriers facing girls of color as well as address immediate needs through direct services.



*“As funders we are issues-focused rather than allowing intersectionality. That is where GOC work lives, at the intersections.”*

*—Grantmaker*

*“I haven’t always been intentional about how I identify myself...I think I started thinking more about it in World History in high school. Our final was ‘What does it mean to be an American?’ It was really hard for me to answer. Seeing more and rediscovering my*

*Among identity really made me more intentional about how I identify myself because I think that’s important—and if you don’t identify yourself, someone else will do it, right?”*

*—Youth focus group participant, St. Paul, MN*





### 3. Nonprofit leaders currently must develop time-consuming workarounds in order to secure funding.

Grantmakers' reporting requirements overburden organizations with already limited resources. At the same time, organizations reflect that they are constantly shape-shifting in pursuit of funding and often feel as if they have to downplay their focus on centering specific or diverse girls of color.

For example, the Foundation Center data from 2014 shows \$168 million of grant dollars clearly designated for girls and women of color. Of that, a mere 20% was directed to the issues that girls of color say are most critical to their well-being and success which are:

- Job Benefits
- Housing/Urban Development
- Equal Opportunity in Education
- Vocational Education
- Comprehensive Sexual Education
- Criminal Justice/Law Enforcement
- Sexual Abuse
- Anti-Violence Efforts
- Mental Health/Substance Abuse

Furthermore, restrictive grantmaking overlooks leaders' deep knowledge of critical issues facing girls of color and their expertise in the communities in which they work, often requiring them to categorize their work in terms of either gender equity or racial equity. This dynamic further minimizes the intersectional work of these organizations and the innovative solutions they develop by and for girls and women of color.

*"We got our start-up funds [for] this organization using a fluffy framework around a similar goal and purpose that we had about advancing opportunities for youth. It just took a lot of time on our part, time that we didn't have but we needed the resources so we made it work."*

*—Nonprofit Leader interview*

*"We issued a survey two years ago to our donors, participants, and grantees about strategy, and we actually had pushback on why we asked specific questions about girls of color."* —Grantmaker

Note: Given the limited types of data available and the lack of clear, consistent approaches to coding in the sector, we recognize that more grants may be available than the Foundation Center data indicates.



## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR GRANTMAKERS

As a result of our conversations with girls of color and nonprofit leaders, we have surfaced the following recommendations for grantmakers:

1. Girls highlighted the importance of both/and approaches with **direct investment towards meeting their basic needs and providing critical supportive services**. Structural barriers must be dismantled but not at the expense of investing in solutions for immediate needs, and vice-versa.
2. Girls called for **increased investment in innovative approaches to health and wellness**. They emphasized the need for a comprehensive approach to substance use/abuse, as well as non-traditional supports to address trauma and mental health challenges. Girls also emphasized the need for comprehensive sex education.
3. Girls articulated a **need for investments in educational equity and opportunity**. In particular, increased efforts to disrupt the school-to-prison pipeline, to tackle disproportionate suspension and expulsion, and to ensure that low-income communities have access to qualified teachers, financial support, and mentoring for first-generation college students.
4. Most of the girls and young women indicated that they were both willing to remain engaged around these issues and interested in contributing to this work. Only through **ongoing engagement with girls and young women of color** can philanthropy effectively align investments with need, remain attuned to those needs, and chart change in investment patterns.





## ACTIVITY GUIDE OVERVIEW:

The activities and discussion questions in this guide are intended to help leaders and institutions use *Start from the Ground Up: Increasing Support for Girls of Color* to spark dialogue and action within their Foundations or organizations. Throughout the guide we will refer to different sections of the research report but we encourage everyone to read the full report as well.

Conversations about equity, race and gender can be difficult for any group. Therefore it is important to create spaces that are as accessible and engaging as possible. To that end, we've included sample group guidelines that you can use to set the tone and build a culture that facilitates these activities.

## SAMPLE GROUP GUIDELINES

**Take space, make space.** Be aware of whose voices are and are not being heard, and other patterns of participation. If you are someone who tends to speak up, perhaps pause to make space for others. If you are often a quieter participant, challenge yourself to take up more space.

**What is learned leaves, what is said stays.** Confidentiality is an important element of trust. Don't share the specifics of this conversation beyond this room and instead think about sharing themes and learnings.

**Accept, and expect there may be discomfort.** Conversations about equity, power, and race often spark strong or challenging feelings. Discomfort is often a sign of forthcoming growth and change. So take risks, make mistakes, learn from them and keep going. And keep breathing.

**Speak for yourself.** Use "I" statements and avoid talking on behalf of other people or communities.

**Call each other in.** Give clear but kind feedback. Go to the source or let it go.

**Be present.** These conversations are important and rare. Stay present, engaged and avoid technological distractions.



## ACTIVITY 1: IDENTITY INTERSECTIONS

**Length of time:** 45-60 minutes

**Ideal number of people:** 5-30

**This activity is great for:** Teams wanting to build shared understanding and language around the complexity of identity and intersectionality

**What you need:** Pens or markers, post-it notes, chart or butcher paper affixed to the wall

**Before the session:** You will need to select three broad categories that your Foundation works on. For example: Health, Education, Youth Development or Human Rights

Begin by establishing community agreements for the conversation. (See page 11 for sample agreements)

- Give each participant about 10 post-it notes and a writing utensil.
- Ask them to think about the different parts of their identity that are most important to them. Instruct them to write up to 10 different identities, each on a separate post-it note. For example, one person might create 6 post-it notes that say: Woman, Immigrant, Daughter, Latina, Athlete, and Midwesterner.
- Tell the group that you are going to read a prompt and that each person should hold up the post-it note that best reflects their response. Pause after each prompt to give participants an opportunity to select and share their identity, and take in what their colleagues chose.
  - Prompt 1: The part of my identity that I am most aware of on a daily basis is: \_\_\_\_\_.
  - Prompt 2: The part of my identity that I most often feel I need to hide or suppress is: \_\_\_\_\_.
  - Prompt 3: The part of my identity that most influences my work is: \_\_\_\_\_.
- Next, tell the group that each person should choose just TWO of their post-it notes for the next activity. They should put those two identities on the top of their stack of post-it notes.



- On the top of a piece of chart paper, write one of the broad funding categories that you identified. Then, ask participants to choose one of their TWO selected identities that they think would most impact the way they approach grantmaking and investment on this issue.
- Repeat with additional funding categories.
- Debrief the activities:
  - What was it like to have to choose between different identities?
  - How hard was it for you to decide?
  - What reflections or questions does this bring up for you?
  - How do you think it might be for a girl of color to participate in this activity?
- Reflect to the group that this is, at root, a conversation about intersectionality.
  - Here is the definition used in *Start from the Ground Up*: Intersectionality refers to the multiple identities embodied in one individual, as well as the interlocking and overlapping social constructs related to oppression and discrimination.
  - Based on the report, here are some other key points to consider sharing as the facilitator:
    - » All of us operate from the vantage point of our own identities and experiences. Our work requires that we lift up and invest in strategies that will have the most impact for the largest amount of people. Sometimes this means we create assumptions and myths about groups of people who do not have shared identities and therefore do not experience systematic oppression in the same ways.
    - » In brief, there is no one-size-fits-all approach, though philanthropy often approaches communities that way. We have to check our assumptions. Because one intervention works in one community, we can't assume it transfers to all other girls purely because of their gender or to all people of color purely because of their race or ethnicity.
- As we learned from *Start from the Ground Up*, girls of color often have to navigate or overcome barriers related to the ways that oppression is impacting them on multiple levels and because of multiple identities.



- Use the following discussion questions to further the conversation:
  - Where is our institution seeing intersectionality at play?
  - Where are there opportunities to deepen our intersectional approach?
  - Where are there specific opportunities for us to apply intersectionality to how we invest in girls of color?
  - How do discussions about intersectionality impact philanthropic efforts to share lessons learned and scaling of existing interventions?
  - What do we want to do next?
- Wrap up by confirming any identified next steps, inviting participants to check out the full Report, and sharing any additional resources or information.



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## ACTIVITY 2: LISTEN TO GIRLS

**Length of time:** 50 minutes

**Ideal number of people:** 5+

**This activity is great for:** Small or large groups who want to build a culture of listening in their grantmaking practice

**What you need:** Ability to view and listen to an online video clip, speakers, laptop, screen, two colors of post-it notes, butcher paper or a whiteboard, writing utensils

**Before the session:** Cue up the “Listen to Girls” audio mural online [bit.ly/startfromthegroundup](https://bit.ly/startfromthegroundup). Test your sound and video.

As experts of their own experience, girls of color are best positioned to name and identify themselves, and to identify and prioritize the issues they feel most create barriers in their lives.

*“Many in philanthropy have never had a conversation with a girl of color.” —Grantmaker*

- Begin by establishing community agreements for the conversation. (See page 11 for sample agreements)
- Affix a large piece of butcher paper to the wall, or use a whiteboard (the surface should allow things to stick to it).
- Distribute a pen and post-it notes in both colors to each member of the group.
- Divide the paper or whiteboard in two columns. On the left, write as a header: Girls of Color. On the right, write as a header: Needs and Strengths.
- Individually, use the first color of post-its to write down whatever words come to mind when you think about or hear about girls of color. When everyone is finished, each person should affix these to the butcher paper or whiteboard under the “Girls of Color” header.
- Now, on the same color of post-it notes write down your assumptions about girls of color. Where do they live? What challenges do they face? What is important to them? What solutions or actions should be prioritized to make change in their lives? Affix these post-it notes under the Needs and Strengths header.



- Invite the group to listen to the two AUDIO MURALS:
  - PLAY AUDIO MURAL 1
  - Take a few moments to write down any quotes, phrases or images that stayed with you on the second color of post-it notes.
  - Add these post-it notes to the Needs and Strengths column of your butcher paper or whiteboard.
  - PLAY AUDIO MURAL 2
  - Take a few moments to write down any quotes, phrases or images that stayed with you on the second color of post-it notes.
- Debrief the activity:
  - Consider your initial list of descriptions and assumptions. How are you feeling?
  - What do you feel like you got right?
  - Where are there gaps?
  - Are there post-its you'd like to add to the butcher paper or whiteboard?
  - How did the experience of listening shift your thinking? What are the key differences between the first and second colors of post-it notes?
  - How would more listening in your work shift your grantmaking?
  - Given your current role and focus, what do you need to learn from girls? What would you want to ask or learn from this community?
- If you have more time for discussion, you may consider ways in which you or your institution might build a culture of listening into the work you are already doing.

## TIPS & TRICKS FOR LISTENING

### HOW TO STRUCTURE A LISTENING SESSION



These research findings are in part informed by focus group discussions with girls of color. The groups enabled the girls to participate in facilitated open-ended discussions that touched on a variety of topics important to them.

To create accessible and respectful listening sessions, it is critical to partner with an organization or young woman with deep roots in the community you want to hear from. This partner can help design and/or facilitate your session, and will also have the trust and relationships necessary to foster open and honest dialogue.

Focus groups are not the only way to do this. Girls recommended grantmakers conduct more site visits, coming to the communities in which they live and work, learning first-hand the solutions built by girls of color and learning about the issues that are most important to them.

- **Fishbowl:** With larger groups of visitors it can be important to set up the space in a way that makes it clear whose voice is valued and who will be leading any discussion. A fishbowl set-up, where young people sit in a circle at the center of a room and external stakeholders sit outside of the circle, can provide important opportunities for grantmakers to witness and observe conversations to which they may not ordinarily have access.
- **Interviews:** Girls who participated in this research said they are interested and want to inform grantmaking through ongoing engagement. Work with your grantee partners to identify opportunities to speak with girls one-on-one about their experiences. You may even consider asking your partners to record short video/audio clips on a phone or other mobile media device and uploading these to a shared file at your institution. This can provide others on your team develop a more authentic and nuanced understanding of the girls with whom you work, and also can support future opportunities to amplify girls' voices in other ways (audio murals, podcasts, multimedia content, etc.).
- **Group Discussions/Panel Presentations:** The voices of girls and the nonprofit leaders with whom they work can also be elevated through inclusion in panel discussions alongside other experts. Girls and women of color are often relegated to only speak about race or gender or youth development, when in fact their experiences and the implications of their knowledge and expertise is far-reaching—from housing to criminal justice, climate change to economic empowerment.

In any of these settings it is important to LISTEN with intention and respect. Here are some tips to consider as you embark on or strengthen a listening practice.



- Invite people (your staff or other partners) who reflect the gender, ethnicity, language and background of the community in which you are learning/listening to participate in the session.
- Check your assumptions at the door. We all carry assumptions about other people. Structured listening sessions provide an opportunity to challenge our assumptions by speaking with real people. Asking your people to actually contemplate and write down some of their starting assumptions can facilitate learning and reflection throughout the process.
- Remember there are no right answers. No amount of study in a specific issue area is more relevant than an individual’s lived experience and their story. Remember both your study of an issue and their lived experience are valuable.
- Focus on the human being in front of us—not their political, religious or social opinions. It’s okay to disagree with what someone says or the choices they make with their life. Try to withhold judgment. Listening is not about agreement, it is about empathy.

### FACILITATOR NOTE:

Sometimes in our rush to make impact, we overlook the importance of listening to those most impacted by our grantmaking. Too often, we rely on third-party subject experts or others far removed from the unique context in which girls of color live and grow, to determine the structure and priorities of our grantmaking. Creating space for a diversity of girls’ voices and experiences and allowing this to guide our work is the only path to making real and lasting impact in the lives of girls of color.



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## ACTIVITY 3: TOWARDS EQUITY IN EVALUATION

**Length of time:** 30-60 minutes

**Ideal number of people:** 2+

**This activity is great for:** People in philanthropy who want to reflect on their current measurement practices and explore new ways of thinking about assessing impact and measuring progress toward change among girls of color.

*"I don't want to be a white girl. That is not my goal. So why do we keep thinking about the success of our girls in relation to white girls? That's not it." —Nonprofit Leader interview*

**The research design for Start from the Ground Up employed a mixed method approach.**

This approach allows us to incorporate narratives and disaggregated data points to fully examine the needs of girls of color, as well as capture the dynamic possibilities for addressing these needs. By incorporating quantitative and qualitative methodologies we can triangulate the data to report on the actual issues that girls of color face, rather than merely how we interpret those issues on a survey.

For example, a survey may show you that girls rank housing as an important barrier facing their communities. What the survey will not show you is how girls experience housing as a barrier. Only a structured conversation for example a focus group or in-depth-interview or other qualitative method—provides the space for girls to share a more nuanced account of their interactions with housing and how that interaction constitutes a barrier in their own lives. That's why combining qualitative and quantitative approaches are critical in the methodology for *Start from the Ground Up*.

Use the following guiding questions to explore how your organization can better understand and respond to the experiences of girls of color:





## KEY DISCUSSION POINTS & TAKEAWAYS:

- Nest quantitative data in narrative.** Numbers historically have been misinterpreted or misrepresented as a way of impeding the advancement of communities of color. As researchers and keepers of the data, we are responsible as much for the interpretation as for the rigor and accuracy of the data. Therefore, narrative, qualitative data helps us to craft a clear, fully developed context for quantitative data. See Page 7 of this toolkit and Pages 15-18 of the full *Start from the Ground Up Report* for examples of the issues girls of color identified as critical barriers in their lives (qualitative) and an analysis of current investments in those issues (quantitative).
- Investigate new ways of defining girls of color and of understanding their specific needs.** According to Foundation Center data, **68% of grants** specifically designated for girls of color did not specify a sub-group, but rather addressed girls of color as a whole. In addition, 85% of those grants were not specified by age. These data points reflect a broad issue: the incomplete conceptualization of girls of color and their needs.
- Research created with girls of color not for girls of color.** When we conduct research that directly targets girls of color, we must engage the girls themselves in the research process. If we do so, we gain access to more precise, nuanced research questions and analysis.





## ACTIVITY 4: GIRLS WANT YOU TO KNOW: RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE FIELD

**Length of time:** 30 minutes

**Ideal number of people:** Flexible

**This activity is great for:** Funders who want to inform their strategies with wisdom from the ground

**What you need:** Copies of page 22 from *Start from the Ground Up: Increasing Support for Girls of Color*

*“Look for people who can understand that group, so they can distribute the money.”*

*—Youth Town Hall participant, Washington, DC.*

- Begin by establishing community agreements for the conversation. (See page X for sample agreements)
- Pass out or project page 23 of *Start from the Ground Up* and review as a group.
- In addition, you may want to uplift one or more of the following findings from the report:
  - Girls and women of color don’t see themselves as in competition with boys and men of color for resources. They want themselves and their issues to be visible, and their leadership recognized for being inherently valuable to uplifting communities of color.
  - Many people and organizations feel that philanthropy approaches them in a deficit mode, but girls want their assets and strengths recognized and celebrated.
  - The majority of leaders who contributed to this research report that foundation grant and reporting requirements create undue burdens and force them to shape switch and develop workarounds to secure funds.



- Discussion Questions:

- Where is our foundation currently integrating some of these ideas?
- Where are there opportunities to deepen our accountability to this feedback?
- In what ways does your current grantmaking perpetuate myths of the deficits of girls of color? In what ways are you celebrating or supporting the assets, richness, and knowledge inherent to girls and women of color?
- What would it look like to reimagine your grantmaking to allow more flexibility?

NOTE: If you have time, Activity 5 is a great companion activity to this discussion about recommendations to funders. Activity 5 that will allow you to delve further into the data and understand the context for these recommendations.



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dismantling structural barriers, but instead on emergency and direct services. For example, more than \$500,000 is allocated for housing, but the majority of that money focuses on homelessness and emergency shelter and not on affordable housing and urban planning. See more data to guide this activity in the Research Highlights section of this toolkit.

- Begin by establishing community agreements for the conversation. (See page 11 for sample agreements)
- Next, start the conversation by reviewing the nine issue areas.
- Select one issue area to focus on. If there are more than three people in the room/activity, divide into pairs, and select one issue area per group.
- Select a profile of a girl of color. We've included three sample profiles based on the young women who participated in our Town Halls, but you can also create your own.
- You are a philanthropist or grantmaker who has been given \$5 million. In the first year of giving, how might you invest \$5 million in order to impact the immediate experience of this girl of color while tackling longer term structural change?
  - Work with your group to decide where and how you could use this investment to change the life and future of the girl of color whose profile you have selected?
  - Where would you invest in direct services and where would you invest in structural barriers?
  - What factors do you need to consider?
  - How does poverty, racism, discrimination, bullying, and community violence intersect with your issue area?
- Share your investment decisions/strategy with the broader group.
- Discussion Questions:
  - What does it mean to fund projects that dismantle structural barriers?
  - How can we educate philanthropy about the intersecting needs of girls of color, with the end goal of creating more adequate funding structures to overcome systemic barriers?



## SAMPLE PROFILES:

### Profile 1: Linda

- Hmong American and I live in St. Paul, Minnesota.
- People always say I look Chinese, but I'm not. We have our own culture and traditions. I'm proud to be Hmong.
- I'm a high school junior and want to go to college but unsure if my family can afford it. I'm excited to get out of high school and be on my own.
- My parents are not supportive of my going to college and question why a girl should pursue an education.
- My boyfriend is African American; my parents are getting to know him. At first it was difficult for them to understand why I'm not dating someone from our community. Hard to explain, I feel both Hmong and American.
- I worry about my mother's health and might not go to college so that I can stay close. I translate for her at doctor's appointments and if I'm gone, I'm not sure she'll get good quality care.
- I'm smart and funny. I think I have a good sense of style.

### Profile 2: Sheila

- Black, Queer and I live near Birmingham, AL.
- People always say I'm smart, but that I have an attitude. I mean, do they mean that as a compliment?
- I've lived in this neighborhood my whole life and things never seem to get any better. I've moved too many times to count. When I grow up I'm gonna have my own house and never move again.
- My cousins raised me and my little sister when my mom went to jail. She's back now, but she still struggles with addiction and sometimes she has to leave again. She's been to so many treatment programs, they know us by name.



- I’m going to be different. I want to become a social worker—so that I can help other young people like me. There’s good money in that, and it’s stable. I could take care of my little sister and help her to finish school.
- In my sophomore year of high school we had 5 different teachers. I liked the second one—he was cool, but I think he got into a fight with one of the students, so he had to leave.
- Me and my girlfriend have been together for 6 months now, and I think I’m ready to have sex with her. I’m not sure how we would do that safely. I mean all the information they have at the clinic is for hetero people, and I don’t like boys. So where do you go for that? My community knows I’m out, but my cousin doesn’t.

### Profile 3: Betsaida

- I identify as Chicana, Mexican, Latina and I guess Hispanic. I live in Denver, CO.
- My daughter just turned 2—she’s amazing. I really like being a mom, even though it came a little earlier than expected.
- She goes to daycare 3 days a week and she’s with my mom one day a week.
- I’m trying to work as much as I can to save money for my own apartment, but I can’t afford any more days of daycare and my mom works too. My mom said I could stay with her for a little while longer, but then she really needs the space for my brothers and sisters.
- I was getting my AA before I got pregnant and I want to go back, but I don’t have the time. How am I supposed to go to school and pay for my baby’s diapers?
- I want my daughter to grow up in a house. An apartment is only our first step.
- I want to get out of this neighborhood. I mean there are good things, but I know that if my mom could have, we would have moved. She came here from Mexico with nothing. Then my dad died and we just got stuck.
- I’m an artist too. I do hair sometimes on the side to pick up extra money. But mostly now I work at Burger King. The hours are okay and the people I work with are chill. The manager is terrible and sometimes he grabs my butt. But the other ladies there tell me to ignore him and that he isn’t that dangerous. I’m not sure what to do—I really need this job.



## CONCLUSION

If we want to affect the lives of girls of color and increase their ability to have power over their futures, we must trust them to identify the problems and create the solutions that will improve and strengthen their lives. This is not an 'either/or' conversation, instead it is a call to invest in immediate needs and long term transformation and leadership.

Our ultimate hope is that *Start from the Ground Up: Increasing Support for Girls of Color* will facilitate important conversations, bolster the work of leaders in the G4GC network, and catalyze an increase in resources to organizations and leaders that are addressing the structural barriers facing girls of color and working to build their power. Thank you for using this toolkit to be part of this critical effort.

### For more information:

Grantmakers for Girls of Color

<https://www.grantmakersforgirlsofcolor.org/>

[contact@grantmakersforgirlsofcolor.org](mailto:contact@grantmakersforgirlsofcolor.org)

Grantmakers For Girls of Color serves as a dynamic learning community of funders and donors. Through the website [GrantmakersforGirlsofColor.org](https://www.grantmakersforgirlsofcolor.org), it serves as an information resource for philanthropic funders, bringing together the latest research, data, and insights and making them easily available, all in one place.





## ADDITIONAL READINGS & RESOURCES

*Brave, Creative, Resilient: The Global State of Young Feminist Organizing.* Published by FRIDA and Association for Women's Rights in Development this is the first comprehensive global study to map key characteristics of young feminist organizing, including their current financial status. <https://youngfeministfund.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/Global-State-of-Young-Feminist-Organizing.pdf>

*Decolonizing Wealth: Indigenous Medicine to Heal Divides and Restore Balance* by Edgar Villanueva. *Decolonizing Wealth* is a provocative analysis of the dysfunctional colonial dynamics at play in philanthropy and finance. Award-winning philanthropy executive Edgar Villanueva draws from the traditions from the Native way to prescribe the medicine for restoring balance and healing our divides. <http://decolonizingwealth.com>

*From Words to Action: A Practical Philanthropic Guide to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion* by Barbara Chow. This resource published by Grantcraft aims to inspire new ways of thinking and doing in philanthropy related to diversity, equity and inclusion. <https://grantcraft.org/content/guides/from-words-to-action/>

*Gender Injustice: System Level Juvenile Justice Reforms for Girls.* Despite overall declining juvenile arrest rates, in the last two decades, girls' share of the juvenile justice system increased at all stages. This PDF lays out recommendations for how to make reforms so that justice systems will meet girls' needs, treat them fairly, and reduce their justice system involvement—finally moving girls off of the sidelines of reform so they can truly benefit from change. [https://nationalcrittenton.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/GenderInjustice\\_exec\\_summary.pdf](https://nationalcrittenton.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/GenderInjustice_exec_summary.pdf)

*Girls to the Front: A Snapshot of Girl-Led Organizing* commissioned by FRIDA and Mama Cash, 2018. The research used in-depth interviews and an online questionnaire, as well as an exhaustive desk review to collect data from girl-led groups and organisations, girl-centred organisations and the stakeholders that support them at different levels. This is an exciting opportunity to spotlight how girl-led organising takes place and how funders can provide flexible support that responds to the needs of girls and their organising. <https://www.mamacash.org/en/report-girls-to-the-front>

*Grantmakers for Girls of Color Video Library.* To hear from more girl and women leaders, check out our video library from listening sessions and past convenings. <https://vimeo.com/grantmakers4girlsofcolor>



*POWER MOVES: Your essential philanthropy assessment guide for equity and justice* is a complete self-assessment toolkit to determine how well your philanthropic institution is building, sharing and wielding power. This resource provides guidance on ways to transform your programs and operations for lasting, equitable impact. <https://www.ncrp.org/initiatives/philamplify/power-moves-philanthropy>

*Rebel Girls: Youth Activism and Social Change Across the Americas* from NYU Press, 2010. From anti-war walkouts to anarchist youth newspapers, rallies against educational privatization, and workshops on fair trade, teenage girls are active participants and leaders in a variety of social movements. *Rebel Girls* illuminates the experiences and perspectives of these uniquely positioned agents of social change. <https://nyupress.org/books/9780814783252/>

*Schools Girls Deserve* is a girl-led participatory action research effort sponsored by Girls for Gender Equity. This effort explored not only all the barriers that girls and Transgender/Gender Non-Conforming youth of color experience, but identified their visions for the school that they believe they deserve. <https://www.ggenyc.org/the-schools-girls-deserve/>

*The Sexual Abuse to Prison Pipeline: The Girl's Story* by the Human Rights Project for Girls, Georgetown Law Center on Poverty and Inequality and the Ms. Foundation. This report exposes the ways in which we criminalize girls—especially girls of color—who have been sexually and physically abused, and it offers policy recommendations to dismantle the abuse to prison pipeline. By illuminating both the problem and potential solutions, this report aims to contribute to ending the cycle of victimization-to-imprisonment for marginalized girls. [https://rights4girls.org/wp-content/uploads/r4g/2015/02/2015\\_COP\\_sexual-abuse\\_layout\\_web-1.pdf](https://rights4girls.org/wp-content/uploads/r4g/2015/02/2015_COP_sexual-abuse_layout_web-1.pdf)

*Winners Take All: The Elite Charade of Changing the World* by Anand Giridharadas. A groundbreaking investigation of how the global elite's efforts to "change the world" preserve the status quo and obscure their role in causing the problems they later seek to solve. <http://www.anand.ly/>

*Pushout: The Criminalization of Black Girls in Schools* by Monique W. Morris. Just 16 percent of female students, Black girls make up more than one-third of all girls with a school-related arrest. For four years Monique W. Morris, author of *Black Stats*, chronicled the experiences of black girls across the country whose intricate lives are misunderstood, highly judged—by teachers, administrators, and the justice system—and degraded by the very institutions charged with helping them flourish. Morris shows how, despite obstacles, stigmas, stereotypes, and despair,



black girls still find ways to breathe remarkable dignity into their lives in classrooms, juvenile facilities, and beyond. <https://www.amazon.com/Pushout-Criminalization-Black-Girls-Schools-ebook/dp/B017QL9AKG>



Credit: Unsplash

**Grantmakers for Girls of Color (G4GC) was born out of an organic and rapidly expanding community of people across philanthropy united by a commitment to connect, learn and organize to move more resources to movements centering and supporting girls of color. Initially launched as an online resource in 2015, G4GC has quickly become a dynamic learning and organizing space for hundreds of funders who are actively supporting or exploring efforts to address the structural inequities facing girls of color.**