

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE AND PHILANTHROPY

Challenges and Opportunities for Alignment



**Gulf Coast Center
for Law & Policy**

*southern perspective,
national impact, global influence*



HOUSEKEEPING

Please remain on mute

Submit questions to the chat box

(questions and discussion will happen at the end of the webinar)

This presentation will be recorded and posted online
along with the slide deck (Q&A will not be recorded)

AGENDA

Introduction

Research Study & Design

Findings:

EJ Organizations

National, Upper Midwest & Gulf
South

Opportunities

RESEARCH GOALS

Gain a greater understanding of grassroots EJ organizational **funding, capabilities and priorities**

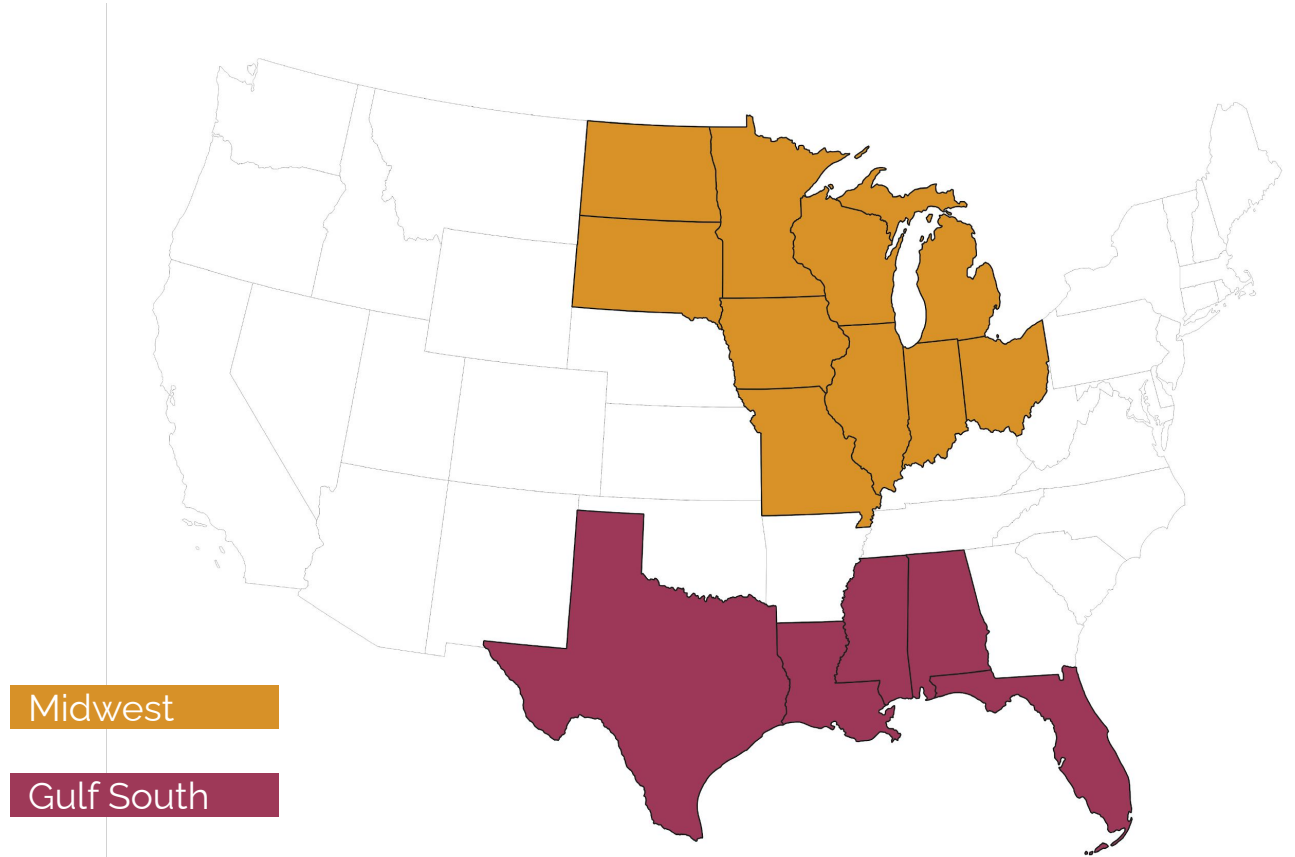
Highlight the **complementary objectives** of funders and EJ organizations

Develop a **consistent methodology** that can be **replicated**

Identify **systemic challenges and opportunities for better aligning** and increasing future funding for the grassroots sector



GEOGRAPHIC FOCUS



RESEARCH DESIGN

PARTICIPATORY RESEARCH TEAM: Direct involvement and under the guidance of the EJ sector

MULTIPLE POINTS OF CONTACT: Academia, the BEA, and in the EJ sector

MIXED METHOD: In-depth, semi-structured interviews, document analysis, review online database/website

REPLICABLE METHODOLOGY: serve as one model for conducting similar field assessments in the future



MIXED METHODS DATA

INTERVIEWS

Region	Foundations (44% Response Rate)	EJ Organizations (54% Response Rate)
National	8	N/A
Midwest	4	9
Gulf South	2	10
Total	14	19

FOUNDATION CENTER DATA

Region	Foundations
National	12
Midwest	10
Gulf South	6
Total	28

WHAT IS AN EJ ORGANIZATION?

Of the 14 foundations interviewed, none reported having a formal, explicit definition of environmental justice organizations.

OUR EJ ORGANIZATION DEFINITION

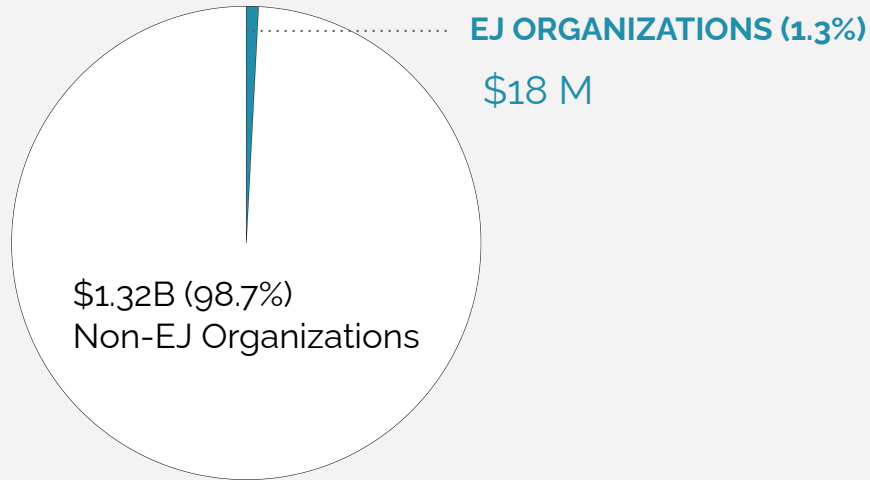
- ❖ Geographically or identity based
- ❖ Located in communities that are historically and systematically **overburdened by pollution**
- ❖ Values/Mission grounded in **EJ principles**
- ❖ **Rooted, in, accountable to, & representative of EJ communities** of Color, low-income communities, and tribal and Indigenous groups most impacted
- ❖ Works to **build local power**



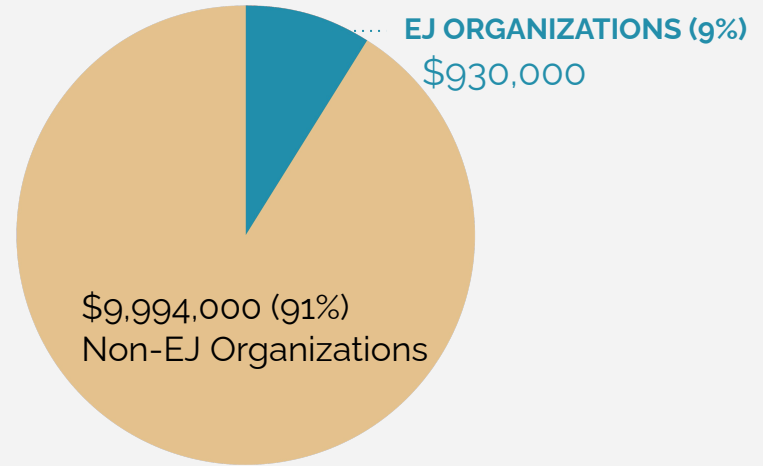
FUNDING DISPARITY: NATIONAL

Between 2016 - 2017, 12 national foundations awarded \$1.34 billion in environmental grantmaking in total **but only 1.3 % of this funding went to EJ organizations**

All Environmental Grant Dollars (\$1.34 B)



EJ Activities Dollars (\$11M)



ALIGNMENT OF PRIORITY ISSUE AREAS:

Ten out of 24 (42%) priority issue areas were named by both sectors

ALIGNED PRIORITY ISSUE AREAS (10)

Civic Participation
Youth Leadership
Renewable Energy
Indigenous Rights
Coastal Resiliency & Climate Adaptation
Movement Building/ Community Organizing
Water Initiatives
Economic & Racial Justice/ Workforce
Development
Food Justice
Climate Change



Image source: EPA <https://www.epa.gov/green-infrastructure/coastal-resiliency>

The relative priority, understanding and approaches to these issues can diverge significantly between the sectors

GULF SOUTH FINDINGS

EJ ORGANIZATIONS INTERVIEWED

10

STAFF SIZE (FULL TIME)

Median: 5

ANNUAL BUDGET

Median: \$560,000

Average: \$1.2m

We are focused on really advocating for communities that are underserved. Especially for us, **language access** is a big issue, communities with **immigration issues**, some of the **projects that are mitigating sea level rise and land loss or will be affecting them.**" - Grassroots Activist 4

"Every community-level front line group is trying to be everything to everybody in their community all the time....It's so much information that I feel like it sort of necessitates **general-level knowledge of what's going on in all those places, as opposed to a strategic, deep expertise in one of those issue areas.**" -Funder 2



FUNDING DISPARITY: GULF SOUTH

6 Gulf South foundations awarded approximately \$12 million in environmental grants in 2016-2017



UPPER MIDWEST FINDINGS

EJ ORGANIZATIONS INTERVIEWED

9

STAFF SIZE

Range: 0-14 Full Time

Median: 3 Full Time

ANNUAL BUDGET

Average: \$471,500

Median: \$500,000

"...They [environmental organizations] might be talking about air pollution and water stuff but they rarely add the economics...So some of those suburban groups got money and they want to talk about clean and safe water, that's every bit what we're concerned about too, but we're also concerned about **affordability**." - Grassroots Activist 13

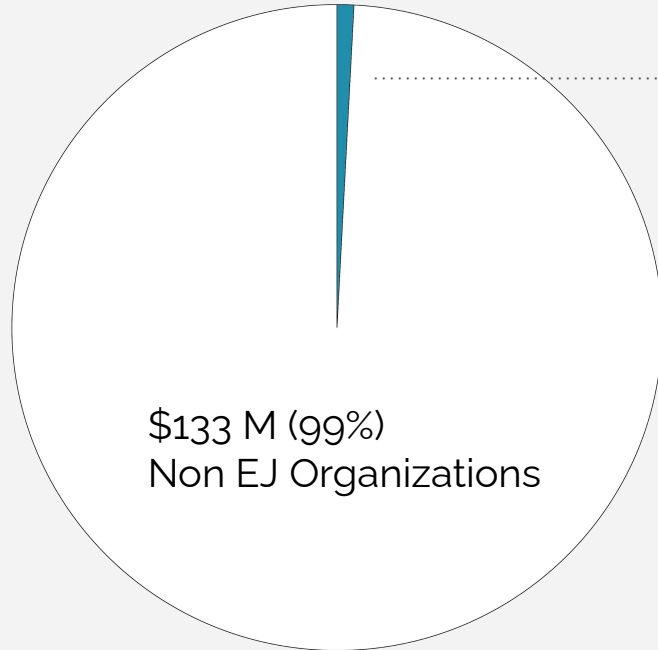
"...we also work on reducing and addressing threats to the Great Lakes, and that includes **invasive species, nutrient runoff pollution, diversions of water out of the Great Lakes**, and oil transportation. And we work on policy both, locally at the state level, regionally, and then we do some national water policies." - Funder 3



Source: LVEJO South Lawndale Coal Plant Shutdown

FUNDING DISPARITY: UPPER MIDWEST

10 Midwest foundations awarded a total of \$134 million in environmental grants in 2016-2017



EJ ORGANIZATIONS:
\$1 M (1%)

WHAT WE HEARD: BARRIERS TO ALIGNMENT

ACCESS

RACISM

IDEOLOGY

CAPACITY

I mean, it's centuries of colonization and slavery and deep systemic racism that I just think it's a trend in everything nationally, especially in philanthropy, where it's definitely dominated by white supremacy and by "do gooder capitalism," the sort of charity model...

- Grassroots Activist 5

...We (funders) can be much better advocates and champions for the environmental justice groups when we have a relationship with them directly, we know them, there's that trust and that two-way communication, makes us better donor organizers...

- Funder 5

WHAT WE HEARD: OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALIGNMENT

EJ ORGANIZATIONS

Promote 'wins'

**Connect local work to
bigger picture**

**Invite funders into
community**

Make multiple attempts

So it just seems like nine times out of 10 you're not going to get funding the first time you file an application or kind of speak with those folks. It's really about them getting to know what it is your organization does over a period of time. And then kind of buying into that process.

- Grassroots Activist 1

WHAT WE HEARD: OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALIGNMENT

FUNDERS

Open up, connect with EJ groups

Administrative hubs

Participatory grantmaking

Share political power, access

Make theories of change explicit

Internal transformations

Adopt EJ definition & track dollars

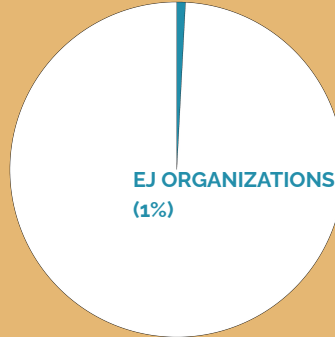
I try to just get out and see, going to events that community groups hold, or where community organizations are gathering. Whether they're tabling, or community garden events, just so I can spend more time, because what I find is, you meet more EJ leaders when you're working with and talking with the EJ leaders you already know. - Funder 3

MOMENT TO ACT

Adopt EJ Definition



Set Funding Targets



Leverage Intermediaries



Commitments to Relationship Building & Access

Invest in Capacity Building

Tackle Racism & Structural Power

QUESTIONS? AND DISCUSSION

Please submit questions using the chat box and we will do our best to answer everything!

For More Information:

BEA: info@bea4impact.org

Tishman Center:

tedc@newschool.edu

FUTURE RESEARCH: INTERMEDIARIES

BENEFITS

- Fills capacity needs
- Support EJ work on a national scale
- Help shape strategies and policies

CHALLENGES

- Limit foundations and EJ organizations relationships
- Control pass through money
- Over reliance on intermediaries

OPPORTUNITIES

- Develop shared accountability structures
- Track and report direct funding to EJ organizations from intermediaries



2020 BEA Steering Committee Meeting