



# Women & Girls of Color Fund

## Evaluation & Learning: Process and Impact Report Year 2



**The Women's  
Foundation of Colorado**

Women Thriving. Colorado Rising.®

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# Executive Summary



## Project Background

The Women & Girls of Color Fund is a community-developed, community-led field of interest fund dedicated to investing in and partnering with women-of-color-led organizations that are working to advance the economic security of Colorado women, nonbinary people, trans people and girls of color. In 2023, Women & Girls of Color Fund supported 51 women and nonbinary leaders of color. Point b(e) Strategies partnered with The Women's Foundation of Colorado (WFCO) to evaluate the Women & Girls of Color Fund in its second year.

## Outcomes

The following outcomes were measured:

1. Women of color grantees are able to more deeply support their organizations and communities.
2. Women of color grantees are able to provide relevant, dynamic approaches to advancing the economic security of women and girls of color.
3. Women of color grantees feel more connected to other women of color who are also leading organizations.
4. Women of color grantees feel they are better able to perform at their full potential.
5. Women of color grantees have equitable access to funding.
6. Women of color leaders are sharing and building power for and with other women of color.
7. Advisory council members build their skills to lead conversations about more liberated approaches to philanthropy.

## Methodology



*“The strength of the Women & Girls of Color Fund is the focus on BIPOC, women, and/or nonbinary leaders, which is far less common to find among other funders.”*



Point b(e) Strategies utilized a mixed-methods evaluation to gather grantee feedback about the Women & Girls of Color Fund and how it impacts women of color leaders, organizations, and communities.

## Key Findings

### Equitable Access to Funding

Majority of focus group participants stated that there is not much funding that is accessible to them in the ways that the Women & Girls of Color Fund is and shared that:

- While other funders and grants have tightened restrictions, especially funds specifically for BIPOC leaders, WFCO has continued to focus on making its fund accessible and low burdensome.
- The flexibility and structure of the Women & Girls of Color Fund allows them to meet the needs of their communities in responsive, culturally relevant, and impactful ways that other funds that are restricted do not.
  - Funding goes to “mainstream” organizations that are larger or have received funding for 10-20 years.
  - Criteria and eligibility make funds inaccessible for newer organizations.

### Strengths of the Fund

- Prioritizing women and non-binary leaders of color.
- The trust placed on leaders.
- Making the process accessible and low burden.
- The connection and community provided.

**The majority of grantees have no access at all or very little access to funding that is low burden.**

- 71% indicated very little or no access at all to funding sources with processes that are low burden for grantees, and 50% have very little to no access at all to funding sources with limited barriers to apply. 41% indicated having very little to no access to funding sources specifically for BIPOC leaders.

## Impact on Organizations and Communities

**Grantees were able to invest in their communities and in women and girls.** Grantees shared they were able to provide responsive programming and events for community members.

- 65% were able to increase the level of impact on community members, 55% were able to increase the accessibility of their programs and services, 50% were able to increase the number of people served, and 45% were able to increase the number of programs for their community.

**Grantees were able to address burnout, provide self-care, and support staff development.**

Grantees shared how they recognized the fatigue, burnout and second-hand trauma experienced by their staff and were able to invest in their staff and offer staff development opportunities.

- 95% of respondents were able to invest in their staff, an increase from 81% from Year 1. 80% had more time to focus on their infrastructure, and half (50%) had more time to focus on fundraising.

**Grantees were able to advocate and cultivate safe, accessible spaces and programming for community members.**

Grantees shared how they understand what their community members and those served are going through because of their shared experiences, identities, and community-centered lens.

- 85% of respondents were able to provide services that are relevant to the community, and 80% were able to adapt approach to respond to needs and engage community members in their program design/development.

**Grantees can model leadership to other women and girls of color.** Grantees shared that they were able to model for other women and young girls that a woman of color with their identities can be a leader and run an organization or a business.

***“We have more shared leadership in the organization so people feel like they can speak up and identify what some of those barriers are, those cultural barriers.”***

## Impact on Leaders

**Supporting the work, supports grantees as leaders.** Grantees shared how they have not been able to support themselves and instead have invested in their organizations and communities.

**Taking a retreat.** Grantees shared how they were able to take a retreat and take time off to then come back recharged.

- 53% were able to better focus on self-care, and 47% were able to better focus on other areas/responsibilities outside of fundraising, a 17% and 11% increase from Year 1, respectively.

**Learning and growing for their community.** Grantees shared how they have been able to support their own growth, including attaining training and certification, joining a network of other women and working with a counselor.

- 71% agreed that they are better able to perform at their fullest potential within their organization, a slight increase from Year 1. Additionally, 47% agreed that they feel less stressed in their job, an 11% increase from Year 1. Additionally, 88% of respondents were able to better focus on leading authentically and leading from a place of possibility to a great extent or quite a bit, and 82% were able to better focus on supporting their organization.

### Community Impacts:

- Responsive programming
- Women’s Retreats
- Legal Clinics
- Youth Leadership conferences
- Prioritizing language justice

### Organization & Staff Impacts:

- Brought in speakers & healers
- Paid Mental Health Days
- Staff Appreciation activities/lunches
- Professional Development
- Personal Development
- Training and Certification
- Salary Increases & Bonuses

***“I was a participant of a women’s retreat and got to talk about grief in a community way that we were not able to because we were the servers, so I never got to unpack the loss or impact on my mental health. We just had to keep going even when we lost one of our leaders. It just never stops. We got to pause and be with women who had gone through journeys like this and practice our medicine.”***

**Grantees feel connected to one another, but beyond a sense of connection, fewer feel supported by other leaders of color.**

- 88% of respondents agreed that they feel connected to other leaders of color, a 24% increase from Year 1. However, beyond a sense of connection, only 53% feel supported by other leaders of color to a great extent or quite a bit. Several focus group participants shared that being a grantee makes them feel connected to others, but they still don't have as strong of a network of other leaders of color they can go to for support, advise and collaboration.
- 88% of respondents feel supported by their staff to a great extent or quite a bit, 76% feel supported by their community, board of directors and WFCO. Lastly, only 34% feel supported by other funders.
- 14% of Advisory Council members indicated they feel connected to other women of color leaders to a great extent or quite a bit, whereas 57% indicated feeling connected to some extent.

## Sharing and Building Power for Other Women of Color

**Supporting women and girls of color through their missions.** Many of the grantees are supporting other women and nonbinary people of color through their programming and efforts.

**Leading by example, shifting mindsets and lifting up those within their organization.** Grantees shared how many of their staff are women and nonbinary people of color and that they were able to be a model and support them more through the fund.

- 82% were able to provide personal development opportunities to a great extent or quite a bit, 76% were able to provide professional development opportunities, and 75% were able to provide leadership opportunities.

## Advisory Council Members Build Skills to Lead Conversations About Liberated Philanthropy

**Gained knowledge of inequities within philanthropy and the sector.**

- 100% understand disparities in funding for women and nonbinary leaders of color to a great extent or quite a bit, 85% understand community-led grantmaking and liberatory leadership practices, and 71% understand liberated philanthropy specifically.

**Helped them find their voice.**

- 100% agreed that they are not afraid to challenge traditional philanthropic structures, 86% agreed that they hold decision-making power in where funding is deployed, and 71% agreed that they can talk confidently about liberatory approaches to philanthropy and liberatory leadership.

## Recommendations

- To strengthen the Women & Girls of Color Fund, Point b(e) Strategies recommends the following based on the evaluation findings and feedback:
- Continue providing ways for grantees to connect with each other, continue working toward multi-year funding, and support grantees with training to sustain the work.
- Share WFCO's efforts and advocate for additional, unrestricted funding for women and nonbinary leaders of color.
- Continue to improve the Advisory Council to reflect the fund's values and provide members more opportunities to learn together.
- Provide more support to the Women & Girls of Color Fund team.

*"The funding enables our organization to persist in its commitment to prioritize the well-being of Black women and youth in terms of their overall health, encompassing economic, mental, and physical aspects. Additionally, it serves as a powerful reminder to a team of Black women that when we are prioritized philanthropically, it grants us the space to dream and aspire even further."*

*"We invested in our staff. After 2020 and 2021 and this year we have seen a lot of fatigue from staff members. We have done some activities together as a staff—we did our own circles to talk about issues and share food. We are getting someone to come and talk about nonprofit fatigue and trauma. A lot of people that come here are from immigrant communities so there is a lot of stuff that we as humans absorb. We're trying to invest in our own wellness especially in a role that is so hard."*










## Introduction

The Women & Girls of Color Fund is a grant fund through The Women’s Foundation of Colorado (WFCO) and is a community-developed, community-led field-of-interest fund dedicated to investing in and partnering with women-of-color-led organizations that are working to advance the economic security of Colorado women, nonbinary people, trans people, and girls of color. The framework and funding priorities include funding to organizations that: are led by women, nonbinary people, trans people, and girls of color, are focused on women and girls of color, are Colorado-based and Colorado-focused, demonstrate radical practices of liberatory leadership, advance economic security, and support those most underfunded. The fund is designed to award unrestricted funding to women of color executive directors and leaders to choose how best to allocate the funding for themselves, their organizations, and their communities. The fund also includes an advisory council that is comprised of those the fund seeks to support—women of color leaders from across the state. The advisory council independently evaluates applications and makes final decisions on who to fund and the grant amounts. In 2023, the fund supported 51 women of color leader grantees. Point b(e) Strategies partnered with WFCO to evaluate the Women & Girls of Color Fund in its second year.

## Methodology

Point b(e) Strategies, in partnership with WFCO, revised the logic model from Year 1 that includes the outcomes and indicators to guide the evaluation activities. The following are the Year 2 outcomes:

-  Women of color grantees are able to more deeply support their organization and communities.
-  Women of color grantees are able to provide relevant, dynamic approaches to advancing the economic security of women and girls of color.
-  Women of color grantees feel more connected to other women of color who are also leading organizations.
-  Women of color grantees feel they are better able to perform at their full potential.
-  Women of color grantees have equitable access to funding.
-  Women of color grantees are sharing and building power for and with other women of color.
-  Advisory council members build their skills to lead conversations about more liberated approaches to philanthropy.

Point b(e) Strategies utilized a mixed-methods evaluation to gather grantee and advisory council feedback about the Women & Girls of Color Fund and how it impacts women of color leaders, organizations, and communities. The following data collection methods were utilized:

- **Grantee Survey.** Point b(e) Strategies conducted a grantee survey to better understand the fund's impact on grantees and outcomes. The survey was administered online through Survey Monkey to 51 grantees. A total of 20 grantees completed the survey, for a response rate of 39%.
- **Grantee Focus Groups.** Point b(e) Strategies facilitated five focus groups with grantees via Zoom, engaging with a total of 18 grantees. Additionally, Point b(e) Strategies conducted one interview with a grantee that included the same questions from the focus group protocol and was analyzed with focus group data. The focus groups represented perspectives from women of color executive director grantees and one board chair serving as interim executive director.
- **Advisory Council Member Survey.** Point b(e) Strategies conducted a survey for advisory council members to better understand the fund's impact on them as leaders of color. The survey was administered online through Survey Monkey to 18 council members. A total of 7 members responded, for a 39% response rate.
- **Advisory Council Member Interviews.** Point b(e) Strategies conducted five interviews with advisory council members to better understand the council's impact on them and to gain feedback on areas for improvement.

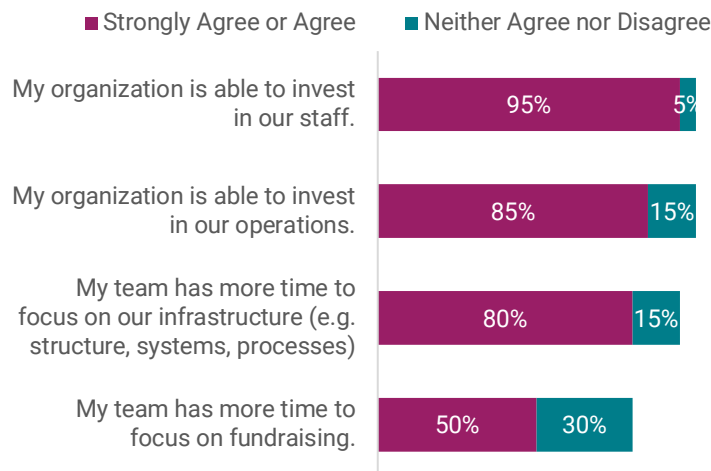


## Outcome: Women of color grantees are able to more deeply support their organizations and communities.

Again, in its second year, the Women & Girls of Color Fund centered around providing women and nonbinary leaders of color unrestricted funds that they could choose how best to use. By providing unrestricted funding that allowed for flexibility, the Women & Girls of Color Fund sought to support grantees' ability to more deeply support their organizations and communities.

Survey respondents were asked to provide feedback on their organizational capacity. As illustrated in Figure 1 below, nearly all (95%) of respondents were able to invest in their staff, an increase from 81% from Year 1, and 85% of respondents were able to invest in their operations, a decrease from 93% from Year 1. Additionally, 80% had more time to focus on their infrastructure, and half (50%) had more time to focus on fundraising. These findings indicate that grantees were able to focus internally on their staff more in Year 2 than in Year 1.

**Figure 1. Feedback on Organizational Capacity**



Since receiving funding from the Women & Girls of Color Fund, how strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements? Please rate on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 = Strongly Disagree and 5 = Strongly Agree.

*"By investing in resources—including training and individual coaching for our staff—our team is better equipped to do community organizing with highly impacted communities, including those facing eviction, homelessness, retaliation and unhealthy living conditions."*

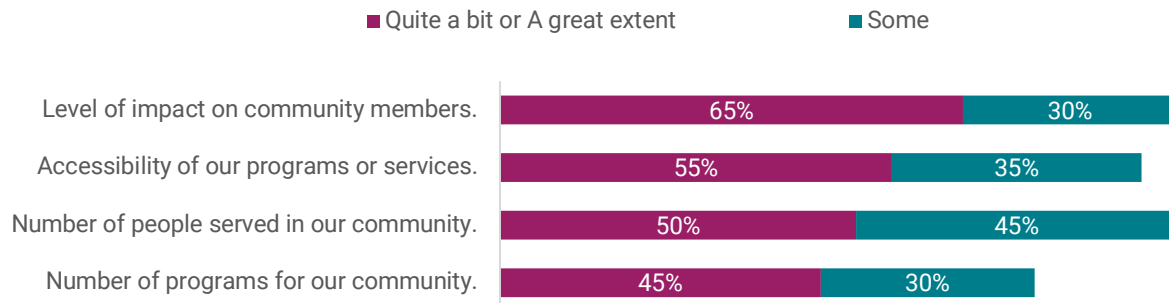
*"Funding from Women & Girls of Color Fund has allowed our organization to streamline our systems and our ability to communicate smoothly with our community. It also provided opportunity for leadership development."*

*"The Women's Foundation makes a big effort recognizing our BIPOC leadership and the struggles and satisfactions that come along with it. It serves as a motivator to continue our work."*

Grantees were also asked the extent they were able to increase efforts to more deeply serve their communities since receiving funding. As illustrated in Figure 2 below, 65% were able to increase the level of impact on community members, and 55% were able to increase the accessibility of their programs and services. Additionally, 50% were able to increase the number of people served, and 45% were able to increase the number of programs for their community. Findings on increasing accessibility of programs or services and increasing the number of people served are slightly lower compared to Year 1 findings. However, survey respondents who did not report increases shared feedback that they focused on streamlining existing services and staff support.



**Figure 2. Extent Organizations Have Been Able to Increase Efforts**



Since receiving funding from the Women & Girls of Color Fund, to what extent has your organization been able to increase the following? Please rate on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 = Not at all and 5 = A great extent.

*“The funding enables our organization to persist in its commitment to prioritize the well-being of Black women and youth in terms of their overall health, encompassing economic, mental, and physical aspects. Additionally, it serves as a powerful reminder to a team of Black women that when we are prioritized philanthropically, it grants us the space to dream and aspire even further.”*

*“The people who attended our youth leadership conference, more of them were young women—that was really impactful that some of the money got to go toward develop our ideas about these Chicano youth conferences. And we got to do that in conjunction with our elders and to pass on to our younger generation because many young folks don’t have access to that, to their indigeneity.”*

*“It has given us the ability to serve our community in a whole new way.”*

Additionally, focus group participants shared additional feedback on how they were able to invest in their organizations or community. The following themes emerged:

- **Grantees were able to invest in their communities and in women and girls.** Focus group participants shared how they were able to provide responsive programming and events for community members, including a women’s retreat, legal clinics, and youth leadership conferences.

*“We internally moved our mission forward and it allowed us the opportunity to have access to certain things we wouldn’t have had access to. We’ve been able to expose young women to things. We started a program, “Girls with Altitude,” to introduce aviation, pilot training, and aviation experience to girls of color and for them to see that as a possible career in their future.”*

*“We lost many leaders from covid. We went on a women’s retreat in New Mexico. Many of us have linkages to New Mexico and Southeast Colorado. We talked about healing ourselves from these losses in community and being the bearers of all this. As women, we come in solidarity, we cook, we organize, and have to think about how we celebrate and remember these women. How do we hold community in these spaces? That is what we did to relax and learn. The Pueblo Indian women in Taos made us a meal and we would eat it in indigenous ways. We don’t get to do that usually because we are code switching in our regular lives. We liked being able to humanize us as women through this funding.”*

*“We used the funding to support the recent opening of a new office. We offered resources such as language justice, educational programing for ages 0-8, legal clinics, and an attorney who goes there weekly to provide legal assistance.”*

- **Grantees were able to address burnout and provide self-care.** Focus group participants also shared how they recognized the fatigue, burnout, and second-hand trauma experienced by their staff and how they were able to invest in their staff to address this. Focus group participants shared that they have brought in speakers and healers, provided paid mental health days, planned staff appreciation activities and lunches, and held staff spa days.

*“We invested in our staff. After 2020 and 2021 and this year we have seen a lot of fatigue from staff members. We have done some activities together as a staff—we did our own circles to talk about issues and share food. We are getting someone to come and talk about nonprofit fatigue and trauma. A lot of people that come here are from immigrant communities so there is a lot of stuff that we as humans absorb. We’re trying to invest in our own wellness especially in a role that is so hard.”*

“

*“Being a newer organization and bringing a team together, we appreciated having unrestricted funds. We realized when you’re running an organization of color and working with people of color internally, there’s a lot of trauma within the organization itself. Us being able to, we poured funding back into our employees and staff. In terms of self-care and non-traditional healing modalities, insurance will cover some but people of color approach healing differently, and we were able to provide resources to navigate that healing journey with them. It’s hard to be in a space to help people and recognize there’s a lot of secondary trauma.”*

“

- **Grantees were able to support staff development.** Focus group participants shared how they were able to invest in their staff by providing and offering professional and personal development opportunities.

*“We went to Colorado Health Foundation Symposium. We were able to take all staff and closed the office. All of us were able to go, not just one or two staff members like in the past. It was a nice way to get away as a staff with everyone so busy.”*

“

*“We used it to empower women employees—professional development, staff development, and using it wherever it makes sense to plug in.”*

“

One focus group also discussed how they were able to provide increased pay or stipends for their staff to ensure their salaries were appropriate for their positions.

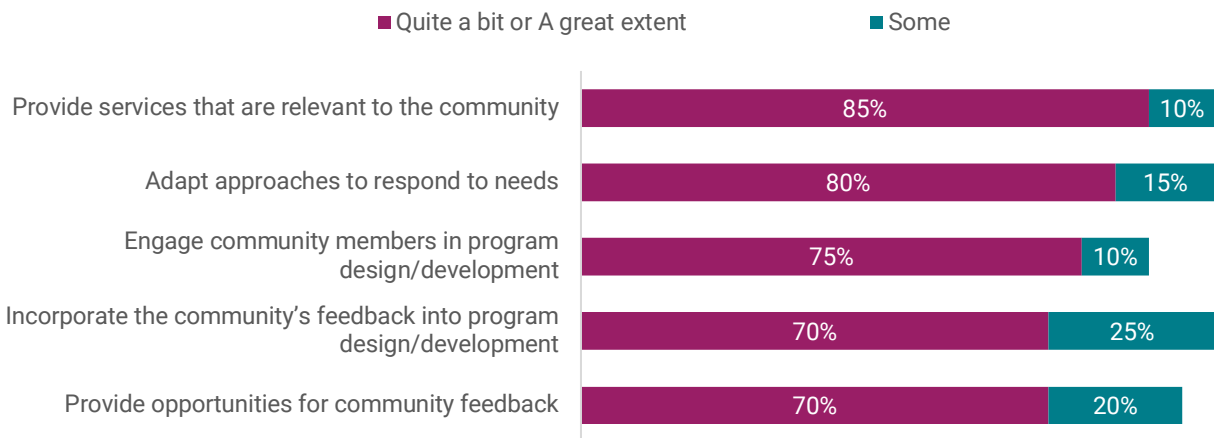


**Outcome: Women of color grantees are able to provide relevant, dynamic approaches to advancing the economic security of women and girls of color.**

Through unrestricted funding, the fund sought to support more capacity and flexibility in order for grantees to respond to community needs in dynamic, responsive ways.

Grantees were asked to share feedback on the extent they were able to provide relevant, dynamic approaches. As illustrated in Figure 3 below, 85% of respondents were able to provide services that are relevant to the community, and 80% were able to adapt approaches to respond to needs and engage community members in their program design/development. Additionally, 70% indicated that they were able to incorporate the community’s feedback into program design/development and provide opportunities for community feedback.

**Figure 3. Extent Organizations Have Been Able to Provide Relevant Approaches**



Since receiving funding from the Women & Girls of Color Fund, to what extent has your organization done the following? Please rate on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 = Not at all and 5 = A great extent.

Focus group participants were also asked how their leadership—whether their leadership style or having the identities they have—impacts their community’s experiences working with their organization. The following themes emerged:

- Grantees are able to advocate for community members and cultivate safe, accessible spaces and programming.** Focus group participants shared how they understand what their community members and participants are going through because of their shared experiences, identities, and community-centered lens. Focus group participants were able to provide culturally relevant and accessible programming for their communities, including prioritizing language justice and bilingual programming and creating safe spaces where community members can feel comfortable to learn and discuss needs.

*“Me being a woman of color and cultivating a space for the doula community and realizing there are not a lot of doulas of color in Denver metro. Being able to be a doula and run an organization has left a beautiful space. As an executive director I understand what doulas are going through when finding space, working with families, etc.—being on that same wavelength helps and makes families more comfortable to know the executive director is hands on and in community.”*

*“Our office used to be open two days a week which meant people had to miss work to obtain a driver’s license. Now we can have the office open every day. 99% of the immigrant community here is from Mexico—we’re able to support them in obtaining documentation, and support them when they need a password, residency, etc. People were taking advantage of our community members, for example selling appointment slots for up to \$1500 dollars for something that is actually free. We are building for the community a safe space to learn about our rights, workers’ rights, tenant rights.”*

*“Because we are a grassroots organization, the ideas come from the community. Because of the work we have done before, we have good relationships with other organizations and the community. Our community decides what the gaps are that we need to fill, and we design that. It is really challenging because it’s not that other organizations haven’t done it because they don’t want to, it’s that as a grassroots organization we find ways to do them. Sometimes there is no funding, sometimes it’s not something that that community is actually ready for, and it is culturally appropriate because we are from the community. We don’t hire people who don’t understand what it is to be a person of color or a Latina. We don’t have to do trainings to get them to understand our cultures.”*

- Grantees can model leadership to other women and girls of color.** Focus group participants shared that they are able to model for other women and young girls that a woman of color with their identities can be a leader and run an organization or a business. Additionally, a couple focus group participants shared that they are able to model positive, healthy leadership styles and practices for their staff and community members.

*“Women spoke their truth because I spoke my truth out of love. It’s an act of rebellion—speaking truth and love, to take calculated risks, to mitigate harm, while centered on truth and love. People become empowered themselves.”*



*“My students haven’t really seen a black queer woman coming into their schools as a boss that runs their own business—just being able to model that to our young girls.”*

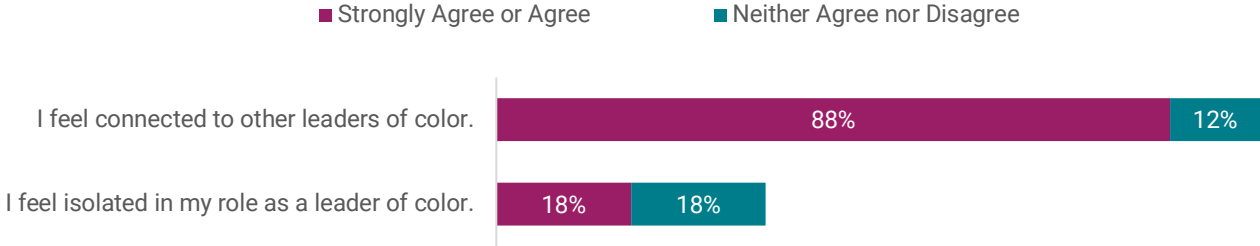


**Outcome: Women of color grantees feel more connected to other women of color who are also leading organizations.**

The Women & Girls of Color Fund is designed to specifically support women and nonbinary leaders of color. Additionally, in Year 2, WFCO held executive director meetings to provide more opportunities for grantees to connect with each other. Through the design of the fund and meetings, an outcome is that women of color grantees feel more connected to other women of color who are also leading organizations.

Grantees were asked to share feedback on their level of connection with other leaders of color. As illustrated in Figure 4, 88% of respondents agreed that they feel connected to other leaders of color, a 24% increase from Year 1. Additionally, 18% of respondents agreed to feeling isolated in their role as a leader of color compared to 40% in Year 1. Year 2 findings indicate further progress toward building connections between leaders of color has been positive.

**Figure 4. Feedback on Connection to Other Leaders of Color**



*Since receiving funding from the Women & Girls of Color Fund, how strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements? Please rate on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 = Strongly Disagree and 5 = Strongly Agree.*

The evaluation also sought to understand the impact of the executive director meetings (hosted by WFCO) on building connections. WFCO held the executive director meetings for Women & Girls of Color Fund grantees monthly via Zoom. These meetings were optional opportunities for executive directors to meet other grantees and discuss topics. As illustrated in Figure 5 below, 59% of respondents attended a monthly meeting.

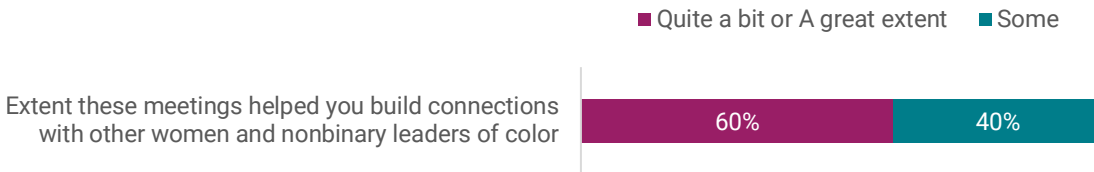
**Figure 5. Grantees Attending a Monthly Executive Director Meeting**



*Did you attend a monthly Zoom meeting with other Executive Directors from the Women & Girls of Color Fund hosted by The Women's Foundation?*

Of those who attended a monthly executive director meeting, 60% indicated that the meetings helped them build connections with other women and nonbinary leaders of color to a great extent or quite a bit, and 40% indicated the meetings helped them build connections to some extent, illustrated in Figure 6 below.

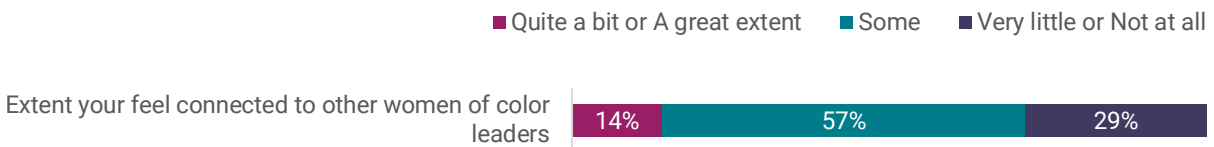
**Figure 6. Extent Executive Director Meetings Helped Build Connections**



*If yes, to what extent did these meetings help you build connections with other women and nonbinary leaders of color? Please rate on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 = Not at all and 5 = A great extent.*

As the Women & Girls of Color Advisory Council consists of women of color leaders who meet regularly as a part of the grantmaking process, members were also asked to share their feedback on their sense of connection. As illustrated in Figure 7, 14% indicated they feel connected to other women of color leaders to a great extent or quite a bit, whereas 57% indicated feeling connected to some extent, and 29% indicated feeling no connection at all or very little.

**Figure 7. Advisory Council Member's Sense of Connection**



*Since joining the Advisory Council, to what extent do you feel connected to other women of color leaders? Please rate on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 = Not at all and 5 = A great extent.*

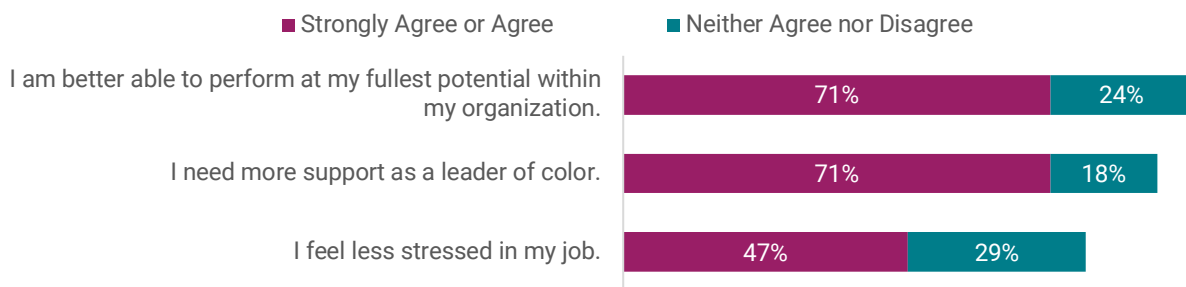


## Outcome: Women of color grantees feel they are better able to perform at their full potential.

The fund provides grantees with complete flexibility to determine how best to use the funds for themselves, their teams or their organizations, with encouragement from WFCO to use funds to support themselves. For example, grantees can choose to use funds for their own healing and self-care, their staff’s healing and self-care or operational and programmatic needs. Through this flexibility and emphasis on trust with the individual leader, an outcome of the fund is that women of color fund grantees feel they are better able to perform at their full potential.

Grantees were asked to provide feedback on their ability to perform to their fullest potential. As Figure 8 illustrates below, 71% agreed that they were better able to perform at their fullest potential within their organization, a slight increase (3%) from Year 1. Additionally, nearly half (47%) agreed that they felt less stressed in their job, an 11% increase from Year 1. However, 71% agreed that they need more support as a leader of color.

**Figure 8. Feedback on Ability to Perform at Fullest Potential**



Since receiving funding from the Women & Girls of Color Fund, how strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements? Please rate on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 = Strongly Disagree and 5 = Strongly Agree.

*“It has allowed me to take a moment to breathe and recalibrate. The self-care requirements help remind me that I need to be well to lead well.”*



*“It has enabled me to make critical decisions that can shape the future of our group. Thanks to the funding I feel I have the skills to continue my leadership. This funding has help me to not burn out—I have been able to find ways to help me take care of myself to be a better leader and an example to others. Knowing that there is an organization out there that thinks about me as a leader of color and ways they can support encourages me to continue with my role.”*



The evaluation also sought to understand liberatory leadership practices by grantees related to their ability to perform at their fullest potential. Grantees were asked to provide feedback on their ability to better focus on several liberatory leadership practices. As illustrated in Figure 9 below, 88% of respondents were able to better focus on leading authentically and leading from a place of possibility to a great extent or quite a bit, and 82% were able to better focus on supporting their organization. Most notably, 53% were able to better focus on self-care, and 47% were able to better focus on other areas/responsibilities outside of fundraising, a 17% and 11% increase from Year 1, respectively.

**Figure 9. Extent Able to Focus on Liberatory Leadership Practices**



Since receiving funding from the Women & Girls of Color Fund, to what extent are you better able to focus on the following? Please rate on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 = Not at all and 5 = A great extent.

Focus group participants were also asked to provide feedback on how the fund has supported them as a leader. The following themes emerged:

- Supporting the work supports grantees as leaders.** Focus group participants shared that they have not been able to support themselves personally as leaders with the funding and instead have invested in their organizations and communities. Focus group participants stated that by being able to support their community and community members, they are able to have peace of mind.

*“I haven’t invested in myself. There is so much need and we have this great opportunity to provide the needs for the community. I think of myself as last—and maybe I shouldn’t. but I haven’t invested anything in me.”*

*“The only thing I can say is that having funding for my organization does give me piece of mind—I don’t want to downplay that. I appreciate that I don’t have to overly stress about the application process, I know that this is not going to take up a lot of time and that I can get funding without jumping through a ton of hoops and I can use it however I see fit.”*

- Taking a retreat.** Several focus group participants did share how they were able to take a retreat and take time off to then come back recharged, such as taking retreats by themselves and retreats with other community members. Focus group participants shared how being an executive director can be challenging and mentioned the value of being able to step away for some time.

*“I went away for 10 days. It rejuvenated me.”*

*"I took a break and was able to take some time away and tap out for a second. It does get rough being an ED sometimes."*



*"I was a participant of a women's retreat and got to talk about grief in a community way that we were not able to because we were the servers, so I never got to unpack the loss or impact on my mental health. We just had to keep going even when we lost one of our leaders. It just never stops. We got to pause and be with women who had gone through journeys like this and practice our medicine."*



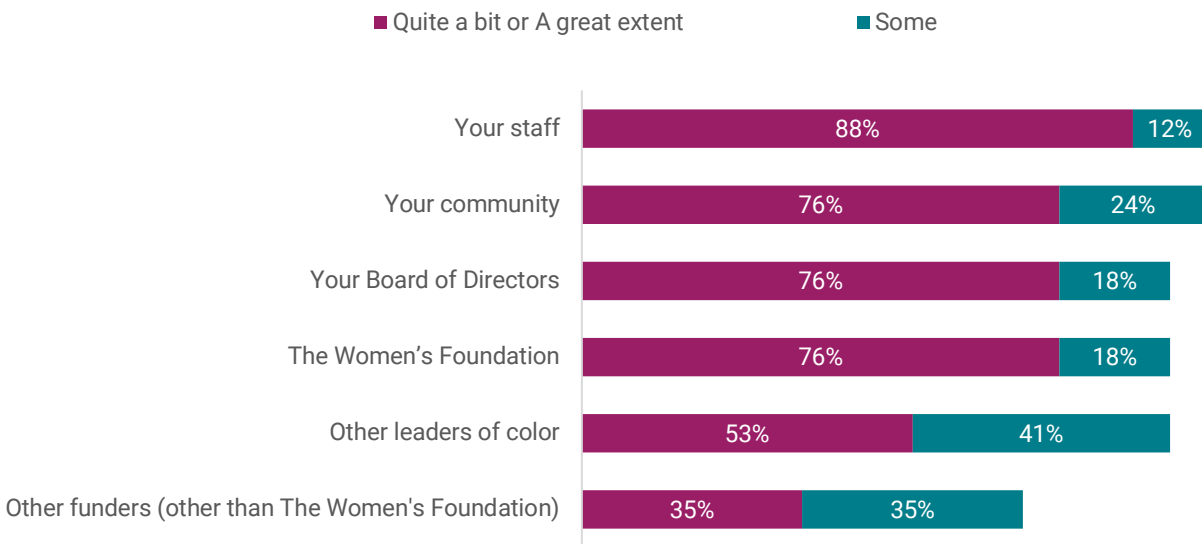
- **Learning and growing for their community.** Several focus group participants shared how they were able to support their own growth, including attaining training and certification, joining a network of other women, and working with a counselor.

*"One of the things I have been doing is educating myself to do more and do better. Getting flight certification so I can teach black and brown girls to fly airplanes. That is one of the things that this fund allows me to do. This funding opens doors and opportunities we would have never been able to experience."*



As illustrated in Figure 8 previously, 71% of respondents agreed that they need more support as a leader of color. To better understand support that may be needed, grantees were asked to provide feedback on the extent of support provided by several groups. As illustrated in Figure 10 below, 88% of respondents felt supported by their staff to a great extent or quite a bit, and 76% felt supported by their community, board of directors and WFCO. However, only half (53%) felt supported by other leaders of color to a great extent or quite a bit, and fewer (34%) felt supported by other funders.

**Figure 10. Extent of Support Provided**



*To what extent do you feel supported by the following groups as a leader of color? Please rate on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1=Not at all and 5=A great extent.*





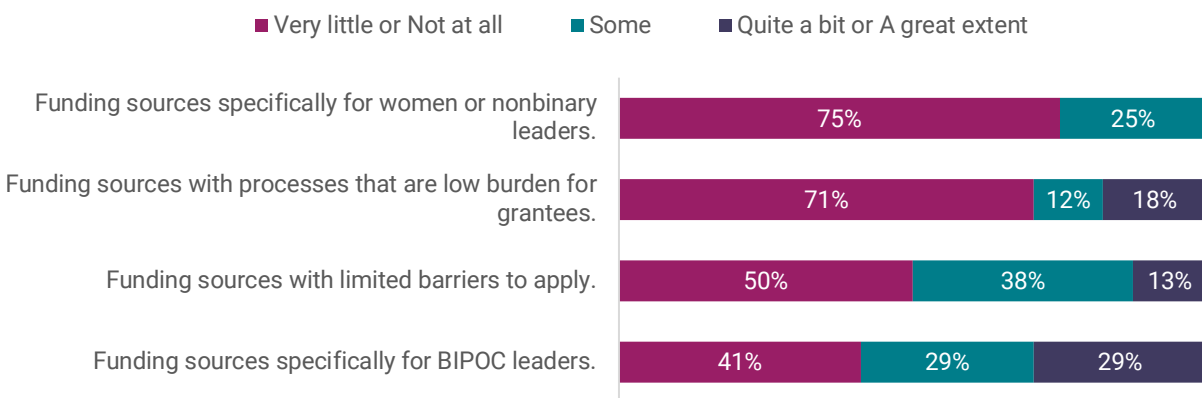
## Outcome: Women of color grantees have equitable access to funding.

While the Women & Girls of Color Fund provides access to funding for women of color leaders, WFCO recognizes that the fund is just one source of funding. WFCO understands that other funders and funding opportunities may not prioritize women and nonbinary people of color leaders and may not be as accessible to grantees. WFCO also recognizes how the political and social climate impacts philanthropy’s priorities that then impacts grantees. To better support grantees and understand the fundraising landscape for grantees and other women of color leaders, the evaluation sought to measure grantees’ equitable access to funding.

Since its inception, the Women & Girls of Color Fund has supported 88 women of color leaders and their organizations, distributing more than \$1.8 million in grants. WFCO has also focused on making the eligibility, the application process and reporting accessible to leaders of color by not having strict and cumbersome requirements.

Grantees were asked to provide their feedback on the extent they have access to certain funding. As illustrated in Figure 11 below, three-fourths of respondents indicated that they have very little or no access at all to funding specifically for women or nonbinary leaders, and 71% indicated that they have very little or no access at all to funding sources with processes that are low burden for grantees. Half (50%) have very little to no access at all to funding sources with limited barriers to apply. Lastly, 41% indicated having very little to no access at to funding sources specifically for BIPOC leaders, while 29% indicated having a great extent or quite a bit of access.

Figure 11. Access to Funding



To gain a deeper understanding of the fundraising landscape for grantees, focus group participants were asked to share feedback on their experiences with other funders and access to funding specifically for BIPOC leaders. Focus group participants shared the following feedback:

- **Funding is not as accessible as the Women & Girls of Color Fund.** Majority of focus group participants stated that there is not much funding that is accessible to them in the ways that

the Women & Girls of Color Fund is. More specifically, focus group participants shared the following:

- **Funding goes to “mainstream” organizations.** Several focus group participants shared that they feel funding is still going to the same organizations that have been getting the funding for the past 10–20 years, those that aren’t led by BIPOC executive directors or leaders, and larger organizations.

*“We don’t have too many unrestricted pots of money. I’ve applied but haven’t been successful in applying for grants. There’s a lot out there but tapering off for those specific to BIPOC families. Sometimes I feel like funding goes to organizations that they know or have worked with before. Being a newer organization it’s harder to secure those funds.”*

- **Criteria and eligibility make funds inaccessible for newer organizations.** Some focus group participants also stated how funding criteria and eligibility requirements exclude their organizations because they are newer and haven’t been in existence for the 3–5 years required by many grants.

*“There are a lot of parameters especially as an up-and-coming organization. We don’t even qualify to apply because we haven’t been in operation for 3-5 years and don’t have a budget of more than \$300,000 or whatever the eligibility. It automatically disqualifies organizations like ours from even applying. It is very discouraging. This fund is very encouraging but realistically these dollars can only take a full-time organization so far.”*

- **Funds are restricted.** Focus group participants shared that the funding that is available and designated for BIPOC leaders or BIPOC-serving organizations is often restricted and doesn’t allow them to spend the money as needed. Additionally, focus group participants shared how they have experienced a shift since COVID, where funders who were providing unrestricted funding have started to tighten up their restrictions again. Focus group participants shared how the flexible, unrestricted funds through the Women & Girls of Color Fund allows them to meet the needs of their communities in responsive, culturally relevant ways that other restricted funds and grants do not.

*“I think there are some grants for leaders of color, but then the programming or specific eligibility doesn’t work for our communities. The money is there, but I think, ‘Oh, should I apply for this?’ But it is for funding that is restricted and wouldn’t work for our communities. We really listen to our communities. Funders are saying, ‘Yes we have funding if you do what we want you to do,’ but that doesn’t work for our community. There is too much pressure. One that is this trust based and flexible and to take care of ourselves and our leaders—there is nothing else like that. We are losing leaders, losing talent—recruiting is a problem. Something this unique and trust-based, I haven’t seen it.”*



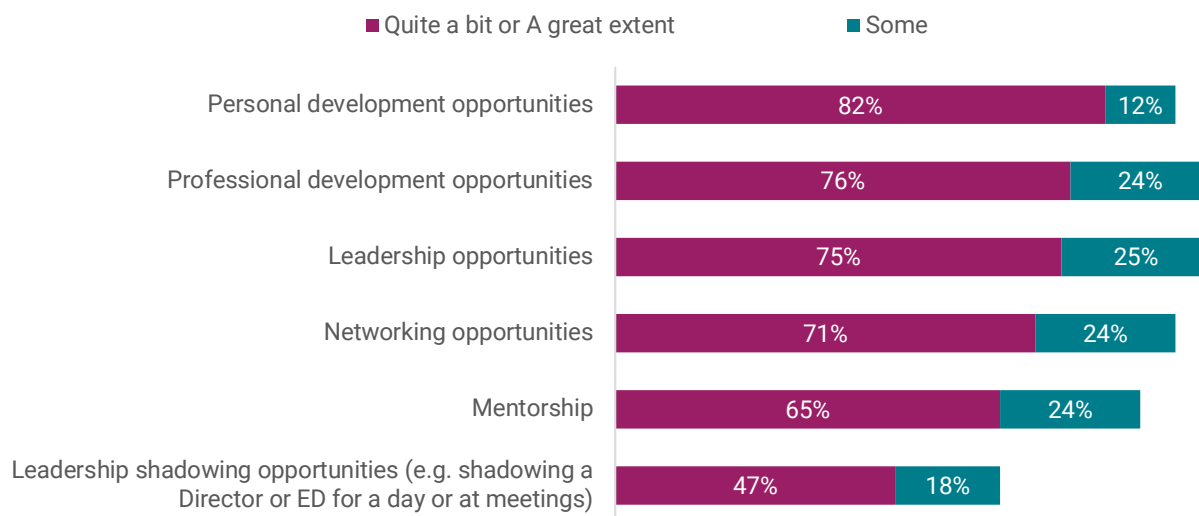
### **Outcome: Women of color leaders are sharing and building power for and with other women of color.**

Many of the Women & Girls of Color Fund grantees are leading other team members and supporting participants who are Latiné/x/a/o, Black, Indigenous and people of color. Through their leadership and work with communities, an outcome of the fund is that women of color leaders are sharing and building power for and with other women of color.

Grantees were asked to provide feedback on the ways they are supporting other women of color within their organizations. As Figure 12 illustrates below, 82% have been able to provide

personal development opportunities to a great extent or quite a bit, 76% have been able to provide professional development opportunities, and 75% have been able to provide leadership opportunities.

**Figure 12. Extent Providing Opportunities for Other Women of Color Within Their Organizations**



To what extent have you been able to provide the following to other women of color within your organization? Please rate on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 = Not at all and 5 = A great extent.

Focus group participants were asked to share additional feedback on the ways they are supporting other women and nonbinary people of color within their organizations, communities and networks. Focus group participants shared the following feedback:

- Supporting women and girls of color through their missions.** Many of the grantees and focus group participants are supporting other women and nonbinary people of color through their programming and efforts. Focus group participants shared how they are empowering mothers, queer, trans and nonbinary young people, and girls of color. Focus group participants shared how they are helping them advocate for themselves, providing scholarships, supporting women’s businesses and supporting families.

*“One of the strengths of the region is its ability to collaborate. Empowering each other and getting the message out—we are still here, we exist. Just supporting one another to move forward. And supporting for us is a lot about supporting people who we are serving, our community, to be empowered to do what they want to do.”*

*“We did a scholarship fund so that if one of the doulas wanted to take continued education they could. We helped them build their businesses and we helped them invest. We support anything—their wellbeing or business. The barriers to getting resources like registering for conferences or getting licenses for their businesses, we were able to help and support with that.”*

- Leading by example and shifting mindsets.** Focus group participants shared how they are trying to model what leadership can look like for other women and girls of color, such as passing knowledge to their younger staff around self-care, encouraging them to believe in themselves and their value, and showing what a healthy team looks like.

- **Lifting up those within their organization.** Focus group participants shared how many of their staff are women and nonbinary people of color and how they were able to support them more through the fund. Focus group participants stated they were able to provide salary increases, bonuses and stipends, and were able to offer positions or promotion within their organization, have more shared leadership, and provide a staff retreat.

*"A participant went on and became a facilitator for the camp program at our organization, and now I trust her enough to delegate things to her. She became the assistant camp director. She's a junior in college and being able to offer those leadership opportunities for her is so cool."*



*"We have more shared leadership in the organization so people feel like they can speak up and identify what some of those barriers are, those cultural barriers."*

One grantee also shared how they have supported other leaders of color by encouraging them to apply for the Women & Girls of Color Fund.



### **Outcome: Advisory council members build their skills to lead conversations about more liberated approaches to philanthropy.**

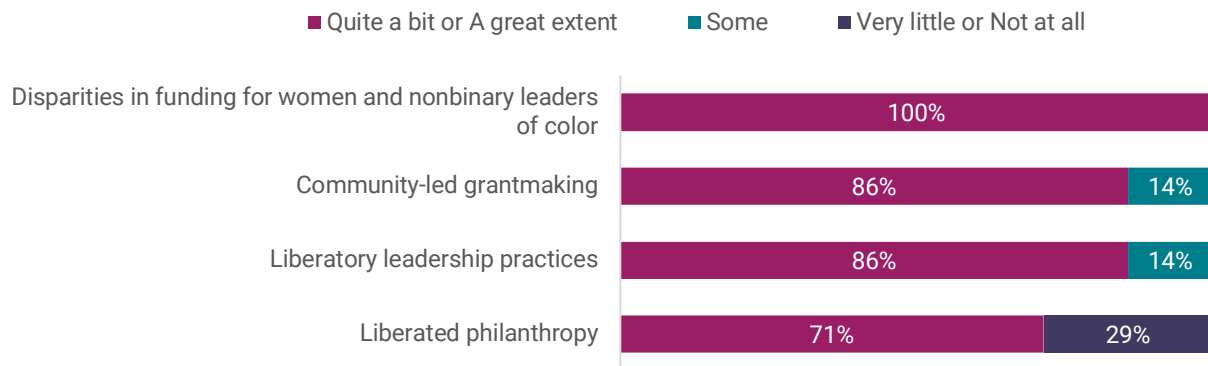
In addition to outcomes focused on grantees, the evaluation sought to understand the fund's impact on advisory council members. The Women & Girls of Color Fund provides an opportunity for advisory council members to learn about and design a liberated, equitable approach to philanthropy. Through their involvement on the advisory council, WFCO hopes members can support shifting philanthropy to better support women and leaders of color. Therefore, an outcome of the Women & Girls of Color Fund is that advisory council members build their skills to lead conversations about more liberated approaches to philanthropy.

Council members were asked in a survey how serving on the advisory council has impacted them. Survey respondents shared the following feedback on the impacts of the advisory council:

- **Gained knowledge of inequities within philanthropy and the sector.** Several council members shared that serving on the council has helped them gain knowledge and insight, including knowledge about inequities within philanthropy and insight into the grantmaking side.
- **Helped them find their voice.** A couple of council members shared that the council has been a self-discovery experience and has helped them find their voice.
- **Helped them feel more a part of their community.** A couple of council members shared feedback related to feeling more engaged, aware of and connected to a community with other women of color.

Council members were also asked the extent they understood liberated philanthropy and related concepts. As illustrated in Figure 13 below, all respondents (100%) understand disparities in funding for women and nonbinary leaders of color to a great extent or quite a bit, and 85% understand community-led grantmaking and liberatory leadership practices. Slightly fewer (71%) understand liberated philanthropy specifically.

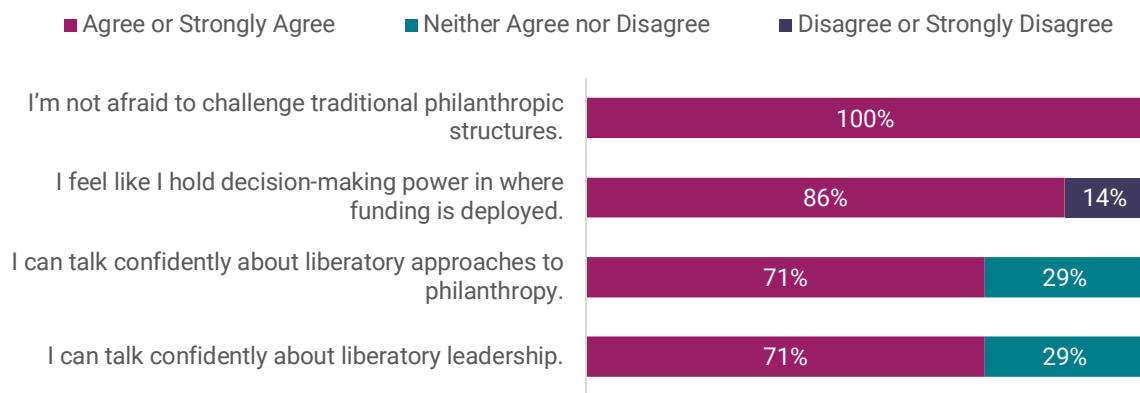
**Figure 13. Extent Understand Liberatory Practices**



Since joining the advisory council, to what extent do you understand the following? Please rate on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1=Not at all and 5=A great extent.

Advisory council members were also asked to share their feedback related to talking about liberated philanthropy and liberatory leadership. As Figure 14 illustrates below, all respondents (100%) agreed that they are not afraid to challenge traditional philanthropic structures. Additionally, 86% feel like they hold decision-making power in where funding is deployed, and 71% can talk confidently about liberatory approaches to philanthropy and liberatory leadership.

**Figure 14. Confidence to Talk About Liberatory Practices.**



How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements? Please rate on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1=Strongly Disagree and 5=Strongly Agree.

*"I feel that serving on the Advisory Council has helped me to find my voice and confidence to feel unafraid to use my experience on issues where women of color are overlooked/silenced."*



Additionally, advisory council member interviewees were asked to share further feedback on if they've increased their understanding of liberatory leadership and women-of-color-led organizations. Interviewees' feedback varied in regard to whether they have increased their understanding or not. For example, one interviewee shared that they have increased their understanding as they didn't have as much experience in their previous opportunities/work,

whereas a couple of interviewees shared both yes and no as there weren't many opportunities to discuss or explore what liberatory leadership means.

Lastly, interviewees were asked to share feedback on how being a part of the council has impacted the way they think about philanthropy. Three interviewees shared feedback that the council has further highlighted the systemic issues and challenges within philanthropy and participatory grantmaking. However, one interviewee shared that the council has helped them see and challenge white supremacy culture within the philanthropic sector.



In addition to measuring outcomes, the evaluation sought to understand what is working well, what can be improved, and ways WFCO can further support grantees and women and nonbinary leaders of color.

## Strengths of the Fund

Grantees and advisory council member interviewees were asked to share feedback on the strengths of the fund. Similar themes to Year 1 emerged and are as follows:

- **Prioritizing women and nonbinary leaders of color.** Grantees and advisory council interviewees shared that a key strength is the fund's focus and emphasis on BIPOC leaders specifically rather than or in addition to their programs. Additionally, several grantees shared feedback related to the focus on liberatory leadership and WFCO's understanding of social justice trends.

*"The strengths of the Women & Girls of Color Fund is the focus on BIPOC, women, and/or nonbinary leaders, which is far less common to find among other funders."*



- **The trust placed on leaders.** Grantees shared that the fund trusts the leaders and programs it is supporting to use the funds as they see best, especially through the flexibility of the fund.
- **Making the process accessible and low burden.** Grantees shared the fund is accessible and low burden, such as the ease of filling out the application, very little to no reporting and data collection requirements, and easy grantmaking process.

*"I think the strengths of this fund is its commitment to making funds accessible and honoring that in real ways."*



- **Connection and community provided.** Several grantees shared that a key strength is the connections made by fostering a sense of community among BIPOC leaders.

A couple of council members also shared that a strength is the push for radical grantmaking.

## Strengths of Advisory Council

Council members also shared what has worked well with and the strengths of the advisory council. Interviewees and survey respondents shared the following feedback:

- **The Women & Girls of Color Fund staff does well with support, facilitation and organization.** Council members shared positive feedback about the WFCO staff's (Camisha) work and efforts, including making the process accessible and organized, keeping members informed and up-to-date on current issues related to liberated philanthropy, listening and responding to feedback to make the fund better, and facilitating council member discussions.
- **The advisory council has autonomy.** Several council members shared that they liked the autonomy given to the council to make it their own and to make their own decisions. However, several council members also stated that while the autonomy provided is a

strength, it is also a weakness or area for improvement, and based on this, there were significant differences between Year 1 and Year 2 councils.

- **Members provide valuable lens and perspective.** Several council members shared that they have appreciated the diverse lens and experiences that some members bring into the conversation.
- **The council reflects grantees.** Several members shared that a strength is having a council that is all women and nonbinary people of color, that it is representative of those the fund is supporting, and allows members to connect with other BIPOC leaders.

## Opportunities for Improvements

Grantees were asked to share feedback on ways that WFCO can better support them or their organizations. The following are themes that emerged from the focus groups and survey:

- **More opportunities for connections.** Similar to Year 1, grantees shared a desire for more opportunities to connect with each other, share information, and learn what services other grantees provide. Additionally, several focus group members shared positive feedback about the executive director meetings that WFCO held in 2023, and some stated they were unable to attend or wanted more opportunities. One grantee suggested providing intentional space and time for leaders of color to connect at the annual luncheon; one focus group suggested WFCO financially support grantees to attend the luncheon or other in-person events, such as travel and lodging costs, so they don't have to use their grant funds to do so. Lastly, a couple of grantees shared positive feedback about the opportunity to connect with WFCO staff in person when they traveled throughout the state.

*"I don't know who else exists in this circle and what kinds of services they provide. Being able to share information, fill gaps, connect with each other so we know who else exists."*

*"At the luncheon, I was so excited but there was no time to connect. It was an event that fulfilled the purpose, speak to people with money to ask for money. But so many leaders of color were invited, and we didn't get a chance to actually connect with each other as leaders of color. Now I know that I need to plan for this event for me to travel but the only way for me to get there is to use their funds to get to the event. How can they ask the funders to sponsor people who are far away to get there, to stay overnight? How can we be funded to travel and to stay, bond, and to get to know each other more?"*

*"They had an annual in person meet up to meet other organizations and what they do. It gets lonely and hard as an executive director of color and being able to bridge that gap with those who have the same struggles in organizations, being able to connect in person with other executive directors of color would be cool."*

- **Provide multi-year funding.** Similar to Year 1, grantees shared the positive impacts of multi-year funding for their organization's planning purposes. Additionally, a couple of advisory council members who were interviewed shared positive feedback on WFCO's efforts to shift to multi-year funding and stated it would also help with the year-over-year turnover on the committee.
- **Keep funding women and girls of color and provide more funding opportunities.** Several grantees shared that they would like for WFCO to keep funding their organizations and women and girls of color, including rural organizations and leaders. A couple of grantees



also shared that they would like more funding opportunities, both through WFCO and outside sources.

*“Keep us funded to not only continue making a difference within our community, but to keep striving to empower organizations of Women and Girls of Color.”*



- **Provide trainings on fundraising and sustaining the work.** Several grantees shared the need for trainings on how to sustain the work after the grant runs out, scaling their organizations, sustaining strong team cultures, and how to fundraise.
- **Share WFCO’s efforts and support of BIPOC leaders and organizations.** Grantees shared that they would like WFCO to have conversations with other foundations to highlight BIPOC leaders and organizations and ensure they aren’t left out. Additionally, an advisory committee member shared the need to engage with community members more, especially the younger generation, to share WFCO’s impact.

Additional, less common feedback included providing more communication on upcoming events and opportunities by WFCO, a stipend for professional development, technical assistance for marketing and promotions, and feedback that the grant requires a bit of time given the funding level and size.

## Opportunities for Improvements for Advisory Council

Advisory council members were also asked to provide feedback on ways the advisory council can be improved. The following themes emerged from interviews and survey respondents:

- **Back up what the Women & Girls of Color Fund and WFCO is trying to address.** Council members shared feedback about the need for the advisory council to also reflect the values of the Women & Girls of Color Fund and the foundation overall. More specifically, council members shared the following feedback regarding the council:
  - **The stipend should be increased.** Council members shared that the stipend provided is not enough for the effort and time and energy members are asked to commit. Council members suggested increasing the amounts given to members.
  - **The workload and process are heavy and fast paced.** Similar to Year 1, council members shared that the workload is heavy, overwhelming and a fast timeline. Council members also shared feedback on concerns of council member burn-out. One council member suggested a retreat for members, so it doesn’t feel as heavy.
  - **White supremacy culture and nonprofit industrial complex are present.** Council members shared that white supremacy culture and nonprofit industrial complex still show up in council member discussions and decision-making.
- **Create space for collective learning and understanding of the work.** Council members shared that they would like more front-loading and opportunities for building a collective understanding of various concepts related to their role, such as liberatory leadership versus traditional leadership practices, the purpose of the fund, white supremacy culture, and liberated philanthropy and practices. Additionally, one council member suggested a process or structure for holding members accountable to what they have learned.
- **Address varying involvement levels among council members.** Council members shared feedback that there were varying levels of involvement among council members, and that

this impacted the review process. Council members shared suggestions for building in accountability and further emphasizing expectations.

- **Improve member recruitment and membership.** Several council members stated that there can be better recruitment for council members, including recruiting more gender non-conforming and trans people of color, Native and Indigenous people, past grantees, working-class people, and those one-the-ground with their communities.
- **Create more of a community.** A few council members shared that they would like the council to be more of a cohort, fellowship or community. Additionally, one council member shared feedback that there should be a way to engage past council members, whether inviting them back or helping them stay engaged.
- **Create clearer decision-making structures and process.** Several council members shared a need for more clarity, structure and coordinated approach on the decision-making criteria, scoring and process. Interviewees shared that WFCO can help clarify and set guidelines for the process.

# Conclusion & Recommendations



The Year 2 evaluation illuminated the various ways the Women & Girls of Color Fund has continued to be a valuable fund for women and nonbinary leaders of color and their communities. Overall, the Women & Girls of Color Fund provides flexible, unrestricted funding to leaders of color that further helps them to lead their teams and support their communities in authentic, culturally relevant and accessible ways. The evaluation also provided insight into the positive trends toward outcomes related to grantees performing at their full potential, supporting their organizations and teams more deeply, and building connections between women of color leaders. To strengthen the Women & Girls of Color Fund, Point b(e) Strategies recommends the following based on the evaluation findings and feedback:

- **Continue providing ways for grantees to connect with each other.** Although findings illustrated increased sense of connection, grantees would like additional connection opportunities. WFCO should continue to find ways to build connections and supportive networks across grantees, especially in person.
- **Continue working toward multi-year funding.** WFCO should continue its efforts to provide multi-year funding to support grantees and the advisory council.
- **Share WFCO's efforts and advocate for additional, unrestricted funding for women and nonbinary leaders of color.** As the evaluation illuminated, eligibility for and access to funding that is truly unrestricted and flexible is limited and difficult to access for grantees. WFCO should continue sharing the impact of its work and approach with other funders and advocate for more unrestricted funding for women and nonbinary leaders of color, especially for new organizations and leaders and smaller organizations.
- **Support grantees with trainings to sustain the work.** WFCO should consider providing training or connections to training opportunities that help grantees sustain their work, such as trainings on how to fundraise and secure funds, building and maintaining strong teams, budgeting, and scaling their organizations and operations.
- **Continue to improve the Advisory Council to reflect the fund's values.** WFCO should continue refining and improving the advisory council to better reflect the priorities of the fund, such as ensuring members reflect the identities of the fund's grantees, increasing stipends, helping mitigate stress, workload and burnout from the review process, and building connections between members. Additionally, WFCO should provide more opportunities for advisory council members to learn about council member expectations and discuss liberated philanthropic practices, liberatory leadership and the purpose of the fund prior to the review process.
- **Provide more support to the Women & Girls of Color Fund.** Grantees and advisory council members shared positive feedback about the support from and relationships built with the Women & Girls of Color Fund staff and recognized that the staff can only do so much with the capacity they have. WFCO should consider ways to further support the Women & Girls of Color Fund's staff in order to strengthen the fund and advisory council.

Overall, the Women & Girls of Color Fund is a unique fund that is positively impacting grantees and their communities and is helping lift up women and nonbinary leaders of color as models for other women and girls of color.