

THE Climate + Clean Energy EQUITY FUND

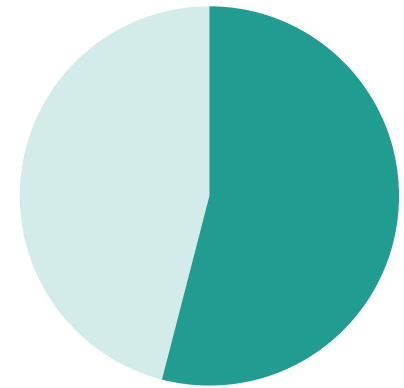
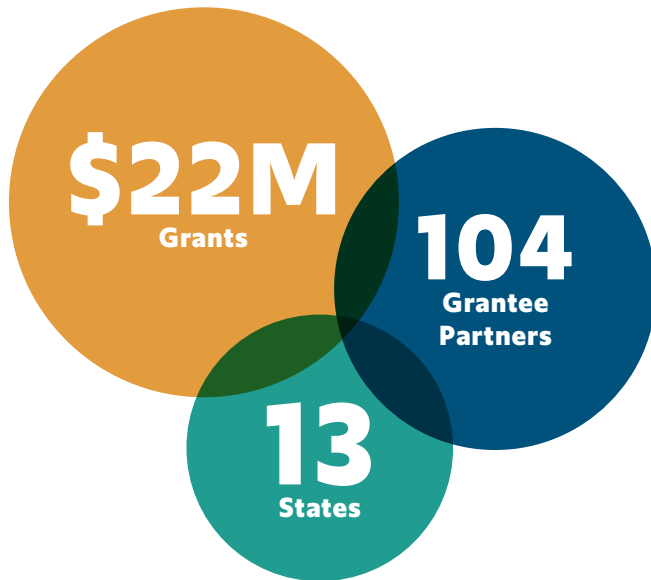


photos courtesy of NAVA Education Project,
Soulardarity, Make the Road Pennsylvania,
and Virginia Organizing

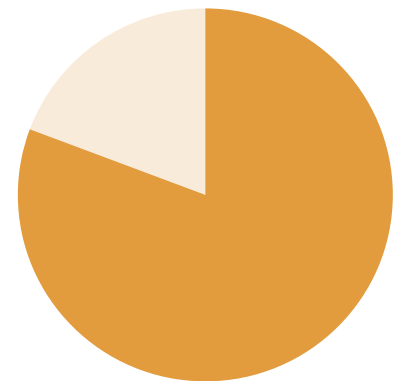
2021 Impact Report



The Climate and Clean Energy Equity Fund is building a powerful movement to stop climate change and create an equitable clean energy future.



54%
grantees led by
Women of Color



80%
grantees led by
Directors of Color



114%
increase in
grantmaking
compared to 2020

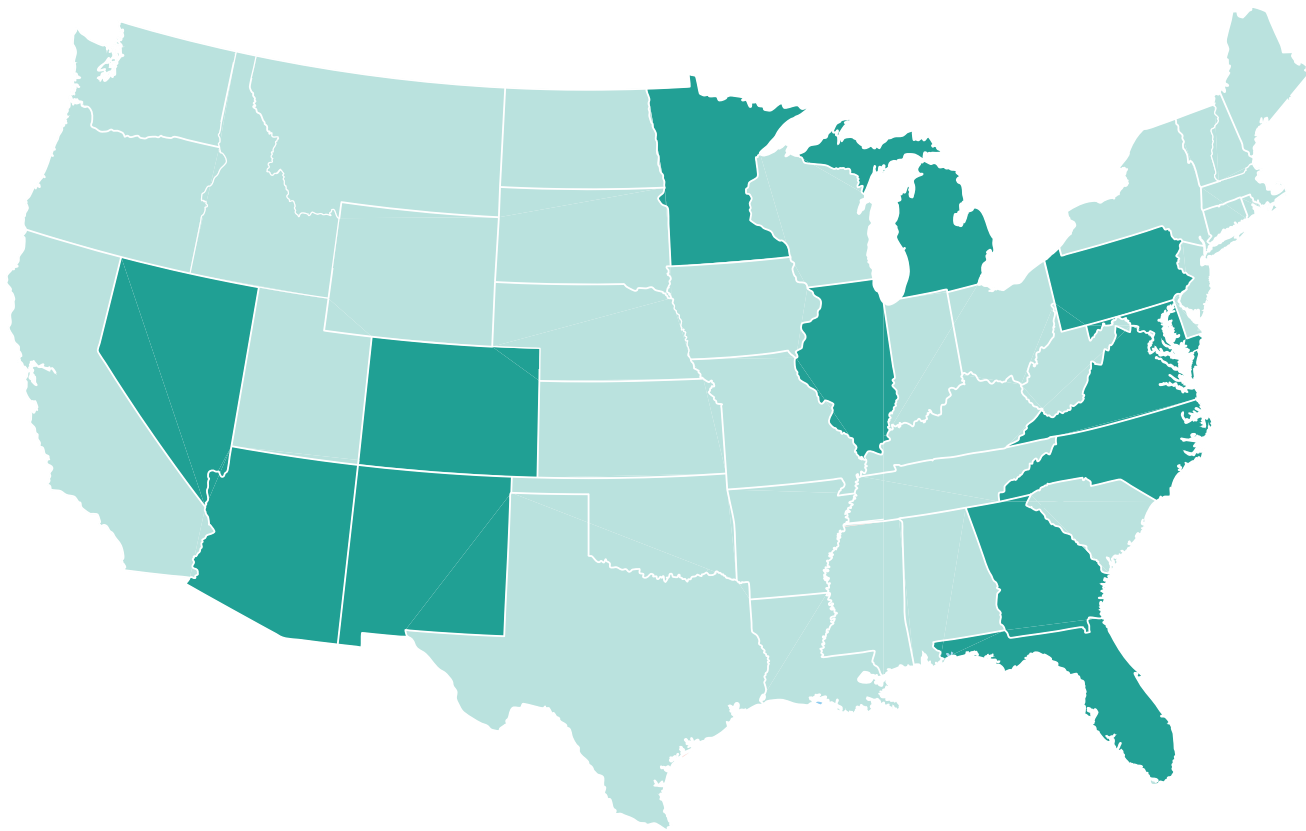
2021, A Year of Expansion

The Equity Fund’s grantee partners continued to maneuver through an ongoing pandemic while vigilantly advocating and innovating in their communities to push forward important equitable climate policies and expand civic engagement programs to build community-based power. Our grantee partners repeatedly show us that when they are supported to organize their members and engage in community-driven equitable climate policy campaigns, the results come quickly, and the foundation is set to continue growing impact over time. We’re excited to share the many wins from the incredible work of our partners in what was again a trying and challenging year. We are grateful for our funders who deepened their investment in the Equity Fund this year. Their support further advances our target states’ goals of adopting ambitious and equitable climate and clean energy policies that will help avert the worst impacts of climate change while facilitating a just transition away from fossil fuels.

Grantmaking

In 2021, with a \$27M budget, the Equity Fund significantly scaled up our grantmaking and grantee partner support programs to deepen our work in existing target states and broaden our support to an additional five new states, bringing our portfolio to a total of 13 states. The Equity Fund doubled its grantmaking, awarding \$22M in total grants to 104 grantees across 13 states. At the end of 2021, the Equity Fund’s state portfolio consisted of **Arizona, Colorado**, Florida, Georgia, **Illinois, Maryland, Michigan**, Minnesota, Nevada, New Mexico, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, and Virginia.

This year the Equity Fund awarded our largest grant dockets ever, including support for nonpartisan voter education and GOTV efforts, our Communications and Policy Accelerator programs, and the new Climate Disinformation War Room. This significant investment in civic engagement provides early resources for 2022, allowing our grantees to ramp up their voter engagement operations as soon as possible.



State Strategies

Arizona grantee partners organized community members to implement an aggressive nonpartisan GOTV effort to educate voters on the climate ahead of the 2022 election cycle. Many of our partners came together to form Activate 48, a BIPOC alignment table, where they will develop a shared climate and energy equity policy platform addressing potential policy priorities such as community solar and robust just transition legislation.

Colorado grantee partners worked to ensure that equity is a vital component of the state's future climate and energy policies. The Polis administration and the Colorado Energy Office (CEO) recently released a new study, *Pathways to Energy Affordability in Colorado*, based on technical research Physicians, Scientists, and Engineers for Healthy Energy (PSE Healthy Energy) did for the Equity Fund. The study assessed existing energy cost burdens to inform strategies to achieve energy affordability for all Colorado households while supporting the state's clean air and climate goals.



NAVA EDUCATION PROJECT

Grantee Spotlight:

Clean Energy Workforce & Economic Opportunities

NAVA Education Project's staff serves on the Energy Transition Act Advisory Committee (ETAAC), which offers recommendations to three state departments—NM Department of Workforce Solutions, NM Economic Development Department, and NM Indian Affairs Department—about how to allocate the \$20M they received as a result of the historic 2019 Energy Transition Act (ETA). NAVA Education Project hosted information sessions for their community on the ETA and ETAAC. These information sessions resulted in community leaders and community groups submitting proposals for utilizing the funds to accelerate the just transition to a clean energy economy and create economic opportunity in Native Country.

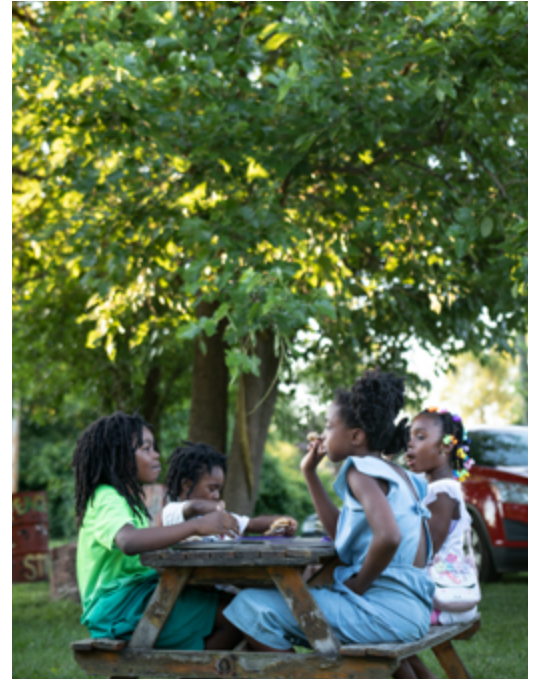
Florida grantee partners in South Florida collaborated to gain a local victory in Miami-Dade for outdoor workers through a worker heat protection bill. Statewide grantee partners also worked with the Communications Accelerator to fight disinformation about a proposed rate increase by Florida Power & Light. Partners continue to coordinate and build a long-term power-building strategy at the Climate Equity Table.

Georgia grantee partners led large-scale GOTV and vote-by-mail education strategies, resulting in a record turnout of BIPOC voters in the 2021 U.S. Senate runoff elections. Multiple partners also teamed up through the Pro Georgia Environmental Justice Workgroup to tackle energy burden through rural organizing and youth engagement on social media.

Illinois grantee partners contributed crucial policy insight, strategy, and political muscle to secure the passage of the Climate and Equitable Jobs Act (CEJA). The bill is a triumph for equitable climate legislation, doubling down on the promise of equitable economic and workforce development, retirement of coal-fired power plants, and expansion of programs to ensure solar power access and affordability. Our partners made sure that the equity provisions of the legislation remained intact and are now looking ahead to implementation.

Maryland grantee partners joined our inaugural cohort based on their grassroots leadership and power-building records with and by low-income, frontline, and BIPOC communities. They have advanced immigrant rights, environmental justice, and the interests of Black, Latinx, and low-income Marylanders in the legislative and regulatory processes. As they launch their partnership, we are looking to their leadership to elevate Black, Latinx, immigrant, and multi-faith community voices in the fight for clean public transit and against trash incinerators and fossil fuel facilities in already disproportionately impacted neighborhoods.

Michigan grantee partners focused on creating statewide policy agendas around environmental justice and energy democracy priorities. They anchored the new Michigan Alliance for Justice in Climate (MAJIC) to bridge state and federal climate work and established an Environmental Justice and Grassroots Caucus in the state legislature. Their successes included launching solar job training programs with pathways to employment and leading community-serving solar projects. Through their Work for Me, DTE! campaign, grantee partners advocated for health and safety, affordability, and community solar at the Michigan Public Service Commission.



SOULARDARITY

Grantee Spotlight:

Soulardarity

Soulardarity is building a brighter future for residents of Highland Park, Michigan, through education, organizing, and the development of people-powered clean energy. Soulardarity pushes for community self-determination and is at the forefront of the energy democracy movement in Michigan.

In partnership with the Midwest Renewable Energy Alliance, they launched a public education and solar bulk purchase program to increase access to solar. The partnership included a solar job training program that residents can access free of charge. Over the past year, Soulardarity also installed several community projects, including solar-powered street lights that will provide free Wi-Fi in community spaces. In partnership with the Union of Concerned Scientists, Solidarity members developed a report and case study showcasing how solar power and other distributed energy resources could meet 100% of the community's energy needs, providing a model for other communities to build on.

Minnesota grantee partners and allies successfully pushed the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency to adopt the Clean Cars MN standard, reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 8.4 million tons over the next decade after receiving thousands of public comments. They also prevented the construction of a new gas plant in the city of Becker. Minnesota's climate and clean energy advocates helped secure \$5.35 million for soil health programs to support regenerative agriculture and farmers and create an Emerging Farmer Office for BIPOC, disabled, and veteran emerging farmers. Additionally, our grantees continued engaging in the Native-led fight against constructing the Line 3 pipeline on Anishinaabe land, including sending more than 4,300 emails to elected officials, which escalated to a nationwide call for President Biden's intervention.

Nevada grantee partners organized BIPOC and faith-based communities around climate justice issues across the state. They established the NV Environmental Justice Coalition (NEJC) and resolved to use that space for alignment and coordination around a shared climate justice agenda. The coalition currently includes PLAN, Mi Familia Vota, Make It Work NV, Chispa NV, Faith in Action NV, and Make the Road NV—all Equity Fund grantees. Grantee partners and allied organizations also created a new campaign, Breathe Free NV, to raise awareness around climate inequities, links between fossil fuel pollution and public health, and the urgent need to lower energy costs for low-income communities of color. They released the *Equity-Focused Climate Strategies for Nevada* report, which is part of an equitable decarbonization series. In addition, during the 2021 legislative session, partners won important equity provisions in SB448, such as doubling the utility's energy efficiency initiative for low-income customers and requiring that 40% of infrastructure expenditures benefit underserved communities.

New Mexico grantee partners executed a sophisticated legislative advocacy campaign through the Power4NM Coalition, leading to the Sustainable Economic Task Force bill (SB112). This legislation focused on ensuring that workforce development is a core element of New Mexico's transition to clean energy, reflecting our grantees' unrelenting focus on promoting a just transition. Our partners, led by Somos, OLÉ, and CCP, also secured a spot on the agenda of the climate summit hosted by the New Mexico Speaker of the House. Building on the release of the *Equity-Focused Climate Strategies for New Mexico*, our grantee partners brought in Elena Krieger to present key findings and recommendations, centering the conversation on just transition and community voices.



MAKE THE ROAD PENNSYLVANIA

Grantee Spotlight:

Power-Building for Immigrant Justice

Make the Road Pennsylvania (MRPA) builds power for justice in Latinx, immigrant, and working-class communities of color. They worked with the Pennsylvania climate equity table on a series of workshops that addressed the root causes of the climate crisis, allowed members to connect their personal experiences of why they migrated to this country with the climate justice fight, and helped frame for non-immigrant-led organizations what is at stake for communities of color. Members also led campaigns for immigrant justice at the local and national levels. They ended family detention in PA alongside members of the Shut Down Berks coalition and formed and led a coalition that got national representatives and senators to commit to passing comprehensive immigration reform for all 11 million undocumented immigrants. Unifying all these campaigns was the leadership of Black, Latinx, immigrant, low-income residents from Allentown, Reading, and Philadelphia who spoke at press conferences, shared their stories, planned rallies, led 30+ actions, and built their base to strengthen the people power needed to win much-needed progressive policy change.

North Carolina grantees served in leadership roles in various workgroups and stakeholder gatherings to push for equitable implementation of North Carolina's new clean energy law (HB 951) and various other Public Utility Commission proceedings. Grantees also secured a veto on a fracked gas preemption bill (HB220) through a targeted media and grassroots advocacy campaign led by Advance Carolina. Grantee partner Blueprint North Carolina received funding from the Equity Fund to commission a landscape analysis of the state to form a collaborative power-building campaign housed at their Environmental Justice Workgroup.

Pennsylvania grantee partners formed the Pennsylvania Climate Equity Table to coordinate statewide popular education on environmental and climate justice, build grassroots power to reduce the stranglehold of the fossil fuel industry on local and state politics, and reduce the harmful health impacts of petrochemical industries on communities throughout the state. Our grantee partners collaborated across immigrant rights, rural organizing, environmental justice, and labor movements through the Climate Equity Table. They successfully advocated for the U.S. Steel Corporation to abandon its oil and gas fracking plans at its Pittsburgh steel mill. They were also at the forefront of a year-long effort that resulted in Governor Wolf's executive order in October 2021 to strengthen the state's Office of Environmental Justice and ensure that low-income communities and communities of color are no longer adversely affected by the health impacts of climate change.

Virginia grantees focused on community education campaigns for climate justice, covering utility accountability, just transition, transportation and transit equity, electrification, and workforce development to advance clean energy progress. They helped get the Environmental Justice Act signed into law and supported the codification of the state Environmental Justice Council, which reports to the governor. In addition, more than 10 legislators attended an EJ Legislative Summer Summit.

The Virginia Climate Equity Working Group (CEWG) hired a full-time state coordinator to support the development of their climate and justice priorities. With the change in gubernatorial leadership this year, the group is prepared to defend community voices and environmental justice goals from anticipated policy or regulatory changes. The overarching focus for grantees is the support of legislation that identifies environmental justice impacted areas, ways to mitigate against sources of pollution, and how to prevent utility shut-offs during extreme weather events.



VIRGINIA ORGANIZING

Grantee Spotlight:

Collaborative Statewide Organizing

Virginia Organizing is a non-partisan, intersectional grassroots organization dedicated to challenging injustice by empowering people in local communities to address issues that affect the quality of their lives. They have a Statewide Environmental Justice Committee composed of directly affected people from frontline communities. Their Eastern Shore Chapter held forums attended by hundreds of local residents to pressure broadband providers and state government to make high-quality Internet access available to everyone, not only those who live in wealthy communities. As a result, Virginia committed funds to reach universal coverage on the Eastern Shore and statewide by 2024.

Virginia Organizing also provided administrative support for more than 50 other organizations. Some of them fought new pipelines and other destructive, polluting projects that harmed communities of color. In 2021, chapter leaders in Danville and Martinsville/Henry County spoke, wrote letters to the editor, and organized actions that resulted in the Virginia State Air Pollution Control Board denying a permit for a compressor station in Pittsylvania County that would have been part of the Mountain Valley Pipeline.

Strengthening the Movement

The **Policy Accelerator** ensured that working-class communities and communities of color advanced climate and clean energy policy agendas and advocacy strategies through our grantee partners' work. The Policy Accelerator provided coaching, technical briefs, research, and resources to the Equity Fund's grantee partners. Beyond this type of direct support, the Policy Accelerator also accomplished the following:

- + **Educating on Federal Resources:** The Equity Fund provided information and regular updates on federal policy and potential future opportunities for direct investment to grantee partners. This work included the commissioning of a report outlining principles to ensure the implementation of the Biden administration's Justice40 pledge, explainers on the Infrastructure Bill, and coaching and support on federal policy.
- + **Launching the Research and Technical Assistance Program:** The Policy Accelerator partnered with PSE Health Energy to connect research expertise with grantee partners' on-the-ground research needs. Nine projects were underway by the end of the year, from energy equity analyses to oil and gas waste mapping. The fast uptake of this technical assistance program reflected an overwhelming need for flexible, quick, and equity-centered research from our grantee network.
- + **Growing the Policy Learning Community:** After one full year of piloting the Policy Learning Community as a venue for policy staff in grantee organizations, we expanded our reach to bring in organizers and other staff from our network of grantees. These policy learning calls have varied in topics, including state legislative roundups, the discussion of movement at the federal level, and workshopping of our technical assistance partnership with PSE Healthy Energy.
- + **Equitable Decarbonization Reports:** The Equity Fund is changing the nature of the tools and methods the climate movement uses to inform policy, making them more equitable and accessible to organizers.

In Colorado, Nevada, and New Mexico, we supported an equity overlay to already-proposed economy-wide decarbonization studies in all three western states. By basing the research on concerns on the ground, the studies were very successful tools for organizing communities traditionally excluded from these types of policy discussions. The equitable decarbonization reports demonstrate the links to impacted communities more explicitly by addressing equity up front and identifying solutions that reduce emissions and begin to address environmental, economic, and health inequities.

Through strategic grantmaking and capacity support, the **Communications Accelerator** has continued to focus on supporting grantee partners to develop strategic communications capacity and strategies to combat fossil fuel disinformation and accelerate the pace and scale of change. In particular, the purpose of the Communications Accelerator is to increase grantee partner capacity to more effectively communicate and scale capacity and strategies that reach, engage, mobilize, motivate, and empower communities of color in the Equity Fund's target states. In 2021, the Communications Accelerator grew and strengthened the communications capacity of grantee organizations and the field by integrating robust communications and narrative strategies into organizations, coalitions, and civic engagement and policy campaigns in target Equity Fund states.

As part of this effort, the Equity Fund's new **Climate Disinformation War Room** was launched in 2021 in partnership with the team at A/B Partners. The launch included partnership building, narrative strategy, content development, and threat analysis with Florida, New Mexico, Pennsylvania, and Virginia partners. The War Room is an essential piece of movement infrastructure for the 2022 election cycle to ensure voters of color are well informed on climate and armed to recognize and push back against disinformation from the fossil fuel industry.

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Connecting and collaborating with **Philanthropic Partners** is a critical area of activity where the Equity Fund engages closely to share wisdom and insights from our grantees with the funder community. We provide an open, educational space for our funding peers to understand better the unique challenges that BIPOC communities consistently face, while also working to catalyze more equity-focused climate philanthropy investments in these same communities.

Stay in touch with us at
partnership@theequityfund.org

**THE Climate +
Clean Energy**
**EQUITY
FUND**
theequityfund.org

List of Current Grantees

ARIZONA

Chispa AZ
Corazón (Faith in Action)
LUCHA (AZ Center for Empowerment)
Our Voice, Our Vote
(AZ Coalition 4 Change)
Rural Arizona Engagement (RAZE)
Tó Nizhóní Àní

COLORADO

9to5 Colorado
COPA
Cultivando
ProgressNow CO Education
Together Colorado
Voces Unidas de las Montañas

FLORIDA

Alianza
Black Voters Matter
Catalyst Miami
Central Florida Jobs with Justice
Family Action Network Movement
Florida Farmworker Association
Florida for All SWAG
Florida Immigration Coalition (FLIC)
Florida Rising
Florida Student Power Network
Jobs with Justice
Miami Climate Alliance

GEORGIA

9to5 Georgia
AAAJ
Black Voters Matter
Georgia Conservation Voters
Georgia WAND
New Georgia Project
Partnership for Southern Equity
ProGeorgia

ILLINOIS

Chicago Frontlines Funding Initiative
Illinois People's Action
ONE Northside
Southsiders Organized for Unity and Liberation (SOUL)
The People's Lobby
United Congregations of Metro East

MARYLAND

Brandywine TB Southern Region
Neighborhood Coalition
CASA
Centro de Apoyo Familiar
MD Interfaith Power and Light
Progressive MD

MICHIGAN

Michigan EJ Coalition
Michigan United
Soulardarity
We the People

MINNESOTA

100% Campaign
Black Visions
Comunidades Organizando el Poder y la
Acción Latina (COPAL)
ISAIAH
Land Stewardship Project
MN 350
MN Interfaith Power and Light
Navigate
TakeAction MN

NEVADA

Battle Born Progress
Chispa
Faith in Action
Faith Organizing Alliance
Make It Work NV
Make the Road NV
Mi Familia Vota
Progressive Leadership Alliance
of Nevada (PLAN)

NEW MEXICO

Center for Civic Policy
Comunidades en Acción y de Fé (CAFé)
Diné C.A.R.E.
NAVA Education Project
Organizers in the Land of Enchantment
(OLÉ) Education Fund
ProgressNow NM
Pueblo Action Alliance
Somos un Pueblo Unido

NORTH CAROLINA

Advance NC
A. Phillips Randolph Institute
Appalachian Voices
Blueprint NC
Climate and Jobs Roundtable
Down Home NC
NCAAT
NC Black Alliance
Siembra
Solnation

PENNSYLVANIA

Asian Pacific Islander Political Alliance
CASA
Make the Road PA
One PA
PA Climate Equity Table
PA Stands Up
Philadelphians Organized to Witness,
Empower and Rebuild (POWER)
Philly Thrive
Pittsburgh United

VIRGINIA

Appalachian Voices
CASA
Chesapeake Climate Action Network
(CCAN)
New Virginia Majority
ProgressNow VA
Virginia Interfaith Power and Light
Virginia Organizing

EQUITY FUND COMMUNICATIONS

ACCELERATOR

Advance Democracy
Hip Hop Caucus
IllumiNative
ReFrame
RCN/We Make the Future

theequityfund.org/grantmaking