

Ms. Foundation for Women

Building women's collective power to ignite change



THE MS. FOUNDATION FOR WOMEN BUILDS WOMEN'S COLLECTIVE POWER TO IGNITE CHANGE ACROSS THE UNITED STATES.

OUR VISION

Our work is guided by a vision of a **just and safe world** where **power and possibility** are not limited by gender, race, class, sexuality, disability, citizenship or age. We believe that **equity and inclusion are the cornerstones of a true democracy** in which the worth and dignity of every person are valued.

OUR BELIEFS

We believe in feminist organizing rooted in social justice values.

That's why we support activism that makes connections between race, class and gender in women's lives.

We believe that women and girls most affected by a problem are best positioned to create just solutions for all.

Many of our grantee organizations are led by and for low-income women and women of color who confront multiple forms of discrimination and are most impacted by flawed policies that perpetuate poverty and inequality. That's why they're best positioned to create inclusive and just solutions that benefit everyone.

In the last two decades, the number of new HIV cases among women has quadrupled. Women of color and low-income women make up the majority of women living with HIV/AIDS.

In 1996, the Ms. Foundation was the first to create a fund solely dedicated to advocacy by and for HIV positive women in the U.S. In 2005, our grantees formed the National Women and AIDS Collective, the first policy coalition of its kind. Because of their own

lived experience, they see HIV as a women's issue and a community issue—and one that's impacted by gender, race and class. That's why they're demanding that the CDC collect data on connections between HIV, poverty and other factors that put people at risk. Their solutions won't just save women's lives—they'll protect families and communities nationwide.

We believe that change starts at the grassroots.

That's why we invest in over 150 grassroots organizations each year to build women's power from the ground up.

Domestic Workers United, an organization made up of nannies, housekeepers and elderly caregivers, started in a small office in the Bronx, NY in 2000. In just three years, they succeeded in getting the NYC council to pass the first bill in the country to expand labor protections for domestic workers. They wrote and continue to lobby for passage of state legislation, the Domestic Workers Bill of Rights. In 2008, they hosted the first Domestic Workers Congress which convened domestic workers from around the U.S.

With help from the Ms. Foundation, Domestic Workers United is building a movement led by and for some of our nation's most invisible and exploited workers.

OUR APPROACH

We're movement builders, change-agents and experts in the field.

We've consistently pioneered and supported cutting-edge strategies within and across feminist and other social justice movements—from women's safety and reproductive justice, to living-wage campaigns and a just and equitable recovery on the Gulf Coast.

“Ms. absolutely gets what we are about—empowering our community to make systemic change and connecting policies to community.”

Rocio Cordoba, Executive Director
California Latinas for Reproductive Justice



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We deliver more than money. In addition to grantmaking, we provide capacity-building and leadership development to community-based, state, Tribal and national organizations. We bring grantees together to learn from one another and to create powerful alliances that strengthen and build social movements.

We're strategic. We deliver support where and when we know we can make a difference. We identify places where change can happen and support groups poised to act.

Over 90% of parents support comprehensive sexuality education. Even so, an abstinence-only approach is still taught nationwide. A few years ago, we saw that with strategic funding and capacity-building, state-level coalitions could help bring about key legislative victories to ensure the implementation of true sexual health education.

Today, our support is making a difference. Grantees in 6 of 10 targeted states have had policy wins in the last two years. More and more states are refusing federal abstinence-only funds—in New Mexico and Washington the advocacy of our grantees was crucial.

We know that all issues are women's issues. That's why we seek lasting policy and culture change across four broad areas: Women's Health, Economic Justice, Ending Violence and Building Democracy.

CREATING CONNECTIONS: STRATEGIES FOR STRONGER MOVEMENTS

For over 35 years, the Ms. Foundation has connected activists, funders and organizations to build women's collective power to ignite change.

Today, we're creating new and deeper connections of all kinds.

We're working harder than ever to link community-based solutions to state and national advocacy, to bridge issues and movements, and to support groups that make connections between race, class and gender in their organizing.

Linking the power of community-based organizing to national advocacy builds stronger movements.

We support New Orleans-based Safe Streets/Strong Communities, a key Gulf Coast member of the Right to the City Alliance. In coalition with community-based groups across the U.S., including four other Ms. Foundation grantees, they're building a movement to oppose criminalization and gentrification policies that exacerbate poverty and displacement among women and families nationwide.

Organizing across issues and movements builds greater power to drive policy and culture change.

Our grantee, Colorado Organization for Latina Opportunity and Reproductive Rights (COLOR), partnered with labor rights groups to oppose a state ballot initiative that would have assigned personhood to a fetus and threatened women's reproductive rights. Their strategy, which framed reproductive rights as an economic and social justice issue that affects families and communities, helped them at the polls and built a broader base for change down the road.

Making connections between the multiple challenges people face creates more holistic and sustainable solutions.

Hurricanes Katrina and Rita exposed longstanding inequities in the Gulf Coast. The Ms. Foundation moved quickly to support groups led by and for women of color and low-income women who were disproportionately affected by the storms and understood the many barriers to security and well-being that women, in particular, faced. They know that it's only by organizing across race, class and gender that we'll ensure a truly just and sustainable recovery for everyone.

JOIN US!

Become a key partner in creating the connections that build stronger movements for women and girls everywhere. With the support of foundations, corporations and individuals like you, we continue to be at the forefront of social justice, feminist movements.

Realize your vision for a more just and equitable society by supporting the work of the Foundation and its grantees. By attending an event, joining a funding circle or participating in one of our special learning opportunities, you can ignite progressive social change.

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