“In order to change/transform the world, [we] must change/transform [our]selves.” - Grace Lee Boggs

The United States is a country rife with injustice. In the current climate, systems of oppression continue to harm and divide our communities and our movements. These compounding systems of control are extractive to people, destroying the planet, and weighing on the spiritual fabric of all communities. In this current moment, a global pandemic has swept across the world, further exacerbating these conditions for the most vulnerable and marginalized communities.

With the imperative to flatten the curve, our grantees are faced with impossible decisions. Many struggling themselves to meet their basic needs and are still developing creative ways to engage with and support their communities. Physical isolation is the necessary path forward, and yet, work that is fundamentally social—that strengthens our most vulnerable communities—can not stop. Worse still, many of the critical non-profit organizations holding this work are in a precarious position with limited cash flow. Strict requirements that do not account for major disruptions such as a viral pandemic are causing a strain and philanthropy is being called to action.

Philanthropy’s mission should always be to invest in creative and effective solutions to our most pressing social issues. In this moment of growing crisis, we believe in the visionary leadership of the groups we fund and it is our role to make our grantees’ work more possible. We must continue to transform our expectations, ideals, and requirements as funders and lean into trust and experimentation. As our friends from the Center for Economic Democracy have said, “The fragility of our economic system has never been more apparent. ‘Perpetuity’ may not be possible, even with the most conservative financial management. Can we use this moment to lean into a liberatory and creative intervention for wealth redistribution rather than retreating into a strict (and diminished) 5% distribution?”

Therefore, in the spirit of leaning into liberatory and creative interventions, we pledge the following:

We commit to resist endowment and market pressure to reduce overall grantmaking, and will instead maintain or increase funding levels during the pandemic and recovery period.

We commit to communicating directly with grantees to listen and be responsive to their needs.

We commit to taking one or more of the following steps to ease the financial and fundraising burden:

1. Release unrestricted rapid response funds to our grantees and simplify the request process
2. Transition currently restricted grants to unrestricted for current grantees
3. Waive reapplications and automatically renew grants that cycle during the pandemic
4. Waive reporting requirements, site visits, and grant application deadlines

We, the undersigned, pledge swift action on these commitments. You can pledge here.