



**THE
NEW YORK
WOMEN'S
FOUNDATION**
Radical generosity.

**HISTORY
OF**

**A VISION FOR
GENDER, ECONOMIC
& RACIAL JUSTICE**

**OUR
FUTURE**

At a consequential time for women, girls and gender-expansive people across New York City, and across the country, The New York Women's Foundation (The Foundation)—consistent with our mission and values—engaged in a participatory strategic planning process to collectively, and boldly, envision a new future.

In the past five years, we've seen unprecedented backlash on racial and gender justice movements; a global pandemic and public health crisis that exposed inequities in our healthcare system, labor force, and care infrastructure; a racial reckoning that shook the core of our country as Black lives continued to be less valued by law enforcement and our legal system; an economic recession that upended women's labor force participation and ability to balance care for their families with the reversal of a Supreme Court decision that guaranteed the right to abortion. These real attacks on movement building require us to take stock, to deepen our commitments, and to ensure that our future course will allow women, girls, and their families to thrive.

At the end of 2022, The New York Women's Foundation embarked on a participatory, forward-looking strategic planning process to understand

the **History of Our Future**. We began with administering a survey to a wide range of stakeholders and supporters, asking about their vision for our future—what realizing gender, racial, and economic justice would look like for our communities and our country. We collected stakeholder responses and weaved them together to make a collective vision, ten years into the future.

We continued our process by assembling 13 intensive **History of Our Future** conversations with the foundation's closest stakeholders—former and current staff, board members, grantee partners, policy partners, and philanthropic partners. Starting each conversation with our collective vision statement, we time-traveled ten years into the future, and asked stakeholders one fundamental question: **How did we get here?**



HOW DID WE GET HERE?

The enclosed report distills the data collected from this multi-layered process. It begins with our collective vision statement and moves to the key strategies that stakeholders named as the strategies most likely to move us toward that vision.

These are the strategies that The New York Women's Foundation will resource in the years ahead.



A BOLD FUNDER.

Arriving at a bold vision for gender, economic, and racial justice requires a long-term commitment to transform philanthropy through strategies that shift power, dismantle inequitable structures, and center the leadership of women, girls, and gender-expansive people.

It will continue to take collective efforts to generate policies that push past the status quo and seed true progress. It will require us to think critically about who we've engaged in advancing equity and justice, and who we have not. And it will require us to step up—not back—when threats to this vision emerge. It will take the necessary pairing of hope and action, and steadfast trust in people *from the communities most impacted* to lead the way.

For more than 35 years, The New York Women's Foundation has advanced a dynamic philanthropic strategy based on unwavering and fundamental beliefs:

- 1** problems and solutions live in the same place; and
- 2** when women, girls and gender expansive people thrive, their families and communities thrive too. **We all do.**

As one of the largest women-led grantmaking organizations in the world, The New York Women's Foundation has rooted its work in gender, racial, and economic justice: employing strategies of radical generosity, believing in the power of community, making early investments that have set the stage for community leaders to build transformative movements. Being first, being consistent, being reliable, and providing funding in scale and scope that can accelerate the leadership of movement leaders—these strategies are core to our theory of change.

WE ARE COMMITTED TO THIS VISION.

The New York Women's Foundation has become a powerful force in philanthropy, not only shaping policy conversations, cross-sector partnerships, and funding strategy here in New York City, but across states, and the whole country.

We've become a powerful force by investing in grantee partners who have embarked on journeys of **powerful leadership**, and unprecedented movement building. These partners have soared from identifying the "unmet needs" of women, girls, and gender-expansive young people in New York to moving forward on national stages to reimagine how women and girls truly prosper.

While we are confident that we are heading in the right direction, we also know that it is necessary to assess and evaluate how to maximize, grow, and accelerate our impact for the future. **This moment calls for it.**

“ One of the most important winning strategies that I think The New York Women’s Foundation has implemented for as long as I’ve been aware of it, is they are really the first responders. They are the ones who— not only do they build leadership in the people that they fund—but they are leaders in the funding world, so they model to others.”

—Soffiyah Elijah, grantee partner
Executive Director, Alliance of Families for Justice



“ The Foundation focuses on supporting individual organizations’ programmatic areas—but still individual institutions—and then puts a concerted effort to harness the collective power of these leaders and of these organizations to push for a policy agenda that centers economic justice and gender justice.”

—Saru Jayaraman, grantee partner
President and Co-Founder, One Fair Wage



“ The New York Women’s Foundation walks into a situation where no other funders have gone. Really, no other funders have gone. Where government left and where The Foundation came in and said: ‘You know, we can do something here. Here’s a place we can take a chance.’”

—Nancy Biberman, grantee partner
President, Women’s Housing and Economic Development Corporation





A BOLD VISION.

THE YEAR IS 2033.*

Women, girls, and gender-expansive people across New York are living healthy, safe, and prosperous lives, filled with joy. They feel powerful in the present and hopeful about their future. They are closer to equality, to freedom, to liberation. Their communities and their families are thriving. And while unraveling century-long histories of sexism and racism in policy and in structures is a long-haul effort, we have broken through barriers and made significant leaps towards gender justice.

WE'RE GETTING THERE.

*This vision statement was curated through input from over 150 stakeholders through mixed-method survey responses collected from former and current grantee partners, staff, board members, and partners of The New York Women's Foundation.

IN 2033...



Women are not just economically secure; they are more economically prosperous than they've been at any other juncture in history. They are valued for their work across industries, inside and outside of the home—caregivers, service workers, business leaders, mothers. New York's gender wage gap closed by over 50% just in the past eight years, including the double-pronged gap for women of color. We have raised the minimum wage, eliminated the subminimum wage, and helped women earn a living, dignifying wage. There is a robust care infrastructure to support New York women and their families. Statewide paid family and parental leave. Affordable, accessible, high-quality childcare. As a result, women in New York can thrive in the workplace. And in their workplaces, they are treated more fairly. They are freer from discrimination, from harassment. They are breaking glass ceilings, and our businesses, our systems, our economy—they are all better for it.

IN 2033...

Women, girls, and gender-expansive people feel safer in this city than ever before. Reports of sexual assault and harassment on New York public transportation are at a record low. So are reports of intimate-partner violence. The irreplaceable network of culturally competent and accessible domestic-violence shelters continues to support women and girls but have been housing 40% fewer people in the city consistently over the past six years. Our efforts to end gender-based violence have seen significant gains, too. A decade and a half ago we acknowledged the public health crisis that is sexual violence. Every school and every workplace now teach consent. Survivor healing and justice are centered in cross-movement work. And every community—people of all races, all genders, all backgrounds in all sectors—have stepped up to play their role to create a world free of sexual violence.



WE'RE GETTING THERE.



There is no longer a crisis of violence against transgender women and girls of color. **Rikers Island is closed.** The incarceration rate of women of color in the state of New York hit an all-time low, and Black women are the fastest-decreasing population of incarcerated people. New York State prisons are being replaced by community-informed restore-and-re-enter programs that focus on root cause and provide wraparound services to those convicted of a crime. And just last year, the very last juvenile justice facility in the state closed. **No girls in New York are incarcerated.**

NOT ONE.

IN 2033...



Immigrant women and girls live in safety and dignity. Immigration policies support their access to well-paying jobs and services. Detention centers have been closed. Schools are police-free. Suspensions and expulsion rates are the lowest they've been in 20 years. Disabled girls are no longer restrained, or secluded, in the education system. And as a result, girls—Black girls, girls of color—in schools across the city are excelling more than ever: in science, in technology, in the arts, regardless of race, class or disability.

IN 2033...

Women, girls, and gender-expansive people are healthy, and autonomous over the bodies that belong to them. They have unrestricted access to reproductive care—the ability to make choices about their own futures. Women have a constitutional right to abortion, codified by federal law. And New York continues to lead in expanding abortion care access. There is universal healthcare, which has narrowed health disparities for women of color. Including significant gains towards ending our maternal health crisis. In any hospital across the state, women, and birthing people—regardless of race—are dignified and safe in pregnancy and childbirth.



IN 2033...

The footprint of New York's civic infrastructure is rich. And women and girls—they are unapologetically leading. They are leading, and they are voting. More women are voting—in local elections, in midterms, in primaries—than ever before. And more women are on the ballot, too. An unprecedented 60% of the New York City Council are women—including women of color, queer women, disabled women, trans women. New York is a bastion of democracy, having taken the lead at a critical moment of crisis decades ago to show the rest of the country what it means to protect, reform, and preserve our democratic infrastructure.

IN 2033...

Funders across the sector approach their grantee partners from a place of trust, humility, and transparency. Movements and affected communities are at the center of foundation and government grantmaking as they decide *who and what to fund* to make our collective world stronger.

A BOLD ROADMAP

Together, we have identified how The New York Women's Foundation will lead to achieve that vision.*

*This vision statement was curated through input from over 150 stakeholders through mixed-method survey responses collected from former and current grantee partners, staff, board members, and partners of The New York Women's Foundation.

A STRONGER DEMOCRACY

By leading & voting

1

MAKING BOLD INVESTMENTS AS A TRUST-BASED FUNDER

2

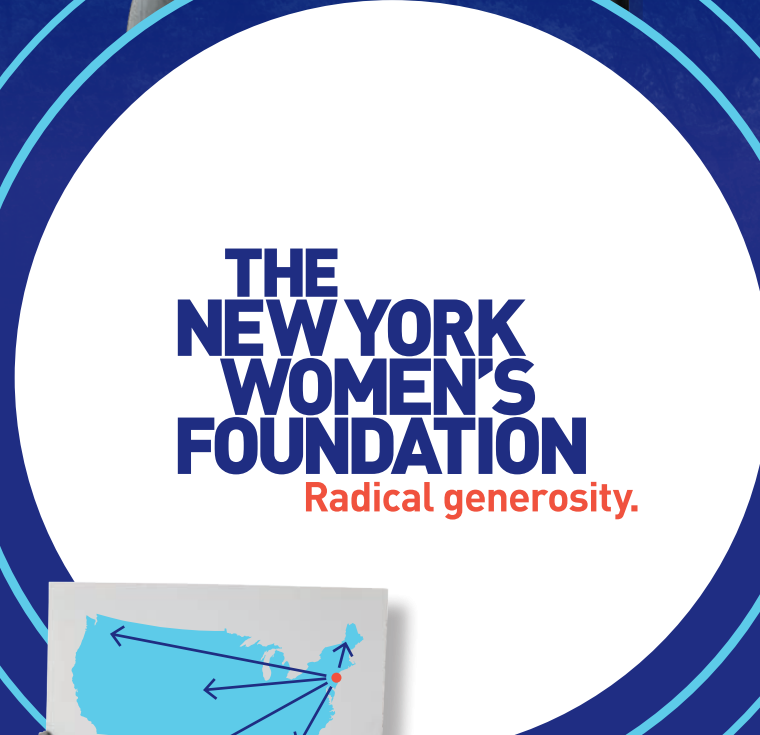
INVESTING IN THE LEADERSHIP OF MOVEMENT BUILDERS WHEREVER THEY GO

4

STRATEGICALLY CONVENING AND DEEPENING RELATIONSHIPS

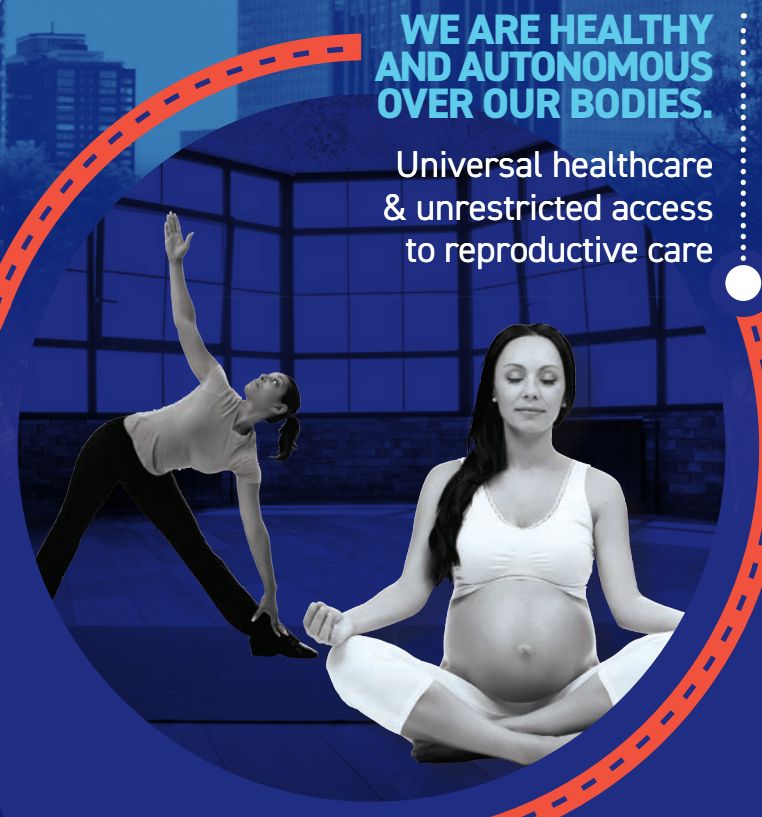
3

INFLUENCING DECISION-MAKERS ACROSS SECTORS



BEYOND ECONOMIC SECURITY, WE ARE ECONOMICALLY PROSPEROUS.

Valued and supported in home and work life



WE ARE HEALTHY AND AUTONOMOUS OVER OUR BODIES.

Universal healthcare & unrestricted access to reproductive care

INCARCERATION IS REPLACED WITH COMMUNITY-INFORMED RESTORATION PROGRAMS



WE WILL expand our trust-based philanthropic practices and our commitment to transforming the role of philanthropy.

We recognize gender, racial, economic, disability, and political inequities manifested in our current systems and institutions, and across industries—including philanthropy. We promote practices and behaviors that transform how wealth and power are shared. And that means we will continue to resource solutions created by those closest to the problems. **In our work ahead, we will continue to double-down on trust-based practices.**

WE WILL prioritize healthy, open, honest, flexible relationships with grantee partners that can help us navigate the complexity of our work with greater effectiveness.

WE WILL be a partner, a supporter, and collaborator that leads with trust, respect, and humility.

WE WILL follow the lead of the community leaders closest to the problems. We will increase the number of our community-centered advisory councils and other engagement models to bring in new voices and expertise.

WE WILL reduce the burden on our grantee partners through more streamlined processes. Periodically, we will evaluate the systems and processes we established with grantee partners and determine ways to make them more aligned with trust-based philanthropy.

WE WILL expand the reach of our convening power—and our strong relationships across local and national philanthropy—to bring local and national funders together to learn from each other, build strong trust-based strategies, and resource gender, economic and racial movements together.

WE WILL hold ourselves accountable to our goals of deepening trust—not just between community and The Foundation, but community and the philanthropic sector. As we deepen our trust-based work, we will call on others across the philanthropic sector to do the same.

As we examine inherent power and wealth imbalances, **WE WILL** explore other mechanisms (besides grantmaking and investments) to use capital to accelerate our mission.

WE WILL support the leadership of movement builders and the growth of their solutions as they grow outside the geographic boundaries of New York City.

WE COMMIT to funding the leadership of women across New York City's five boroughs and *will also*—true to the core values of The Foundation—follow grantee partners wherever their movement building takes them, whether across city limits, state boundaries, or around the globe.

WE WILL boldly invest in the leadership of women, girls, and gender-expansive people. We will increase our grantmaking and numbers of grantee partners, while continuing to identify innovation, promising solutions, and transformative leaders *early*, well before others do.

WE WILL invest in the leadership of women of color in moments of crisis—doubling down on radical generosity, showing up with trust and with abundance, always exploring new and innovative models for resourcing their leadership. Never retreating.

WE WILL deepen our strategic partnerships across movements, sectors, New York, and the country.

We are committed to the power of collaborations and collective impact. We want to increase coalitions of people—across a diverse range of backgrounds, lived experiences, sectors—to support women and families across New York.

Through strategic convening, thoughtful partnering, breaking down barriers and silos, and building influence across sectors, we know that power can shift. We broker relationships. We know that it is not only the ability to lead, but the ability to influence; the ability to make decisions; the ability to know where decisions are being made.

WE WILL grow our strategies for supporting grantee partners through the power of convening, including connecting them with resources to bring people together to support movement-building work.

WE WILL identify, build, and leverage thoughtful partnerships, across sectors—and we will support our grantee partners in deepening strategic partnership to advance their work, too.

WE WILL continue to expand the role we play in national partnerships and collaboratives, and will commit to bringing the lessons learned in New York to other regions of the country. True to our commitment of following the lead of grantee partners, we will be intentional in resourcing our grantee partners beyond the five boroughs of New York.

WE WILL build women's power and influence decision makers in government, philanthropy, academia and the private sector.

Tables of influence need to be authentic in their representation and inclusivity. Women, girls, and gender-expansive people have been underrepresented for too long. New York has seen significant progress in years past, and our goal is to build on and continue that progress. As we do so, we will continue to advocate for women and girls across New York to have a voice at every major decision-making table, across the private, public, and philanthropic sectors.

WE WILL fund leaders, movements, and organizations focused on building women's power and strengthening our democratic infrastructure.

WE WILL deepen our work to educate women, girls, and gender-expansive people across the city on pressing issues that impact our vision toward gender justice. This includes educating them on the leaders working to advance and stifle equity and justice.

WE WILL leverage a range of communication strategies to shift narratives and better center and celebrate the leadership and innovation of women, girls, and gender-expansive people.

WE WILL investigate the feasibility and potential pros and cons of a separate 501(C)(4) entity to leverage additional forms of building women's power.

OUR THANKS

Writing the **History of Our Future**—thinking boldly about a collective vision for gender, economic, and racial justice and the strategies to get there—took the thoughtfulness, creativity, and innovation of a broad group of participants.

We have deep gratitude for the of over 150 stakeholders—former and current grantees, board and staff members, philanthropic and policy partners—who participated in this process.

Above all, we are grateful to our grantee partners who have shared their wisdom and wins with The Foundation.

**THE
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WOMEN'S
FOUNDATION**

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