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## **MEDIA ADVISORY**

# **A powerful coalition of philanthropic infrastructure organizations celebrates the launch of the **Level Up campaign** and shares an inaugural list of pledge signers**

CHANGE Philanthropy and [its ten partner organizations](#) are leading a strategic and timely philanthropic advocacy campaign that is rapidly gaining support with an influential list of endorsers and diverse swath of grantmakers pledging to “Level Up” and increase their endowment payout rates and/or grantmaking budgets for the next two fiscal years.

The Level Up campaign is centered on a pledge that calls on grantmakers to commit to the following three pillars of [the Level Up Pledge](#):

1. **Increase grantmaking by 20% or more *OR* deliver an endowment payout rate of 8% or higher for at least two fiscal years.**
2. **Strive to move these new dollars flexibly and nimbly to directly impacted communities and strategies designed to create an inclusive and thriving world for all.** Examples include:
  - Funding communities who have long been underfunded by philanthropy, including Black, Indigenous, Latine, and AAPI people; LGBTQ communities; immigrants; justice-involved individuals; low-income people; people with disabilities; and other marginalized communities
  - Supporting strategies such as organizing and movement building; legal services and community defense; narrative arts and storytelling; critical services and mutual aid; efforts to preserve, protect and advance democratic values and systems, including the right to participate in our democracy and uphold free and fair elections; and other elements of a strong ecosystem for change
  - Moving these dollars as general operating support, minimal application/reporting requirements, and other seamless, trust-based procedures.
3. **Securely share grantmaking data to verify the pledge commitments have been met.**

The Level Up campaign aims to align support for these goals while engaging grantmakers to collectively move over \$200 million new dollars to strategies for power-building and advancing inclusive democratic values, and expedite the deployment of these new resources to field before November 2027.

Speaking about the timely nature of the initiative, Susan Taylor Batten, president and CEO of A Philanthropic Partnership for Black Communities shared that "...[O]ur communities are facing the gut-wrenching impacts of the retrenchment of public dollars as well as the troubling pullback of foundation giving explicitly focused on Black communities and other communities of color...CHANGE Philanthropy's Level Up Campaign reminds us that community needs cannot wait. This is a moment for funders and donors to act decisively, harness our collective power, and invest in the solutions that communities deserve."

For its leaders, this campaign reflects both the urgency of this moment for the communities they are from and work with; and lessons from decades of advocacy to make the philanthropic sector more equitable. Jodeen Olguín-Tayler, who leads the programmatic and campaign work for CHANGE Philanthropy, shared, "Our campaign is designed to level up the sector by shifting philanthropic behavior, norms, narratives, and governance policies. The Level Up campaign reflects a tremendous breadth of collaboration to build and wield

collective power in ways that will shift both who decides and who benefits from philanthropic resources. Structural change in the philanthropic sector is necessary to effectively support social movement infrastructure to build the depth, scale and power needed for a more inclusive democracy and more equitable economy.”

### **INNAGURAL SIGNERS OF THE LEVEL UP PLEDGE:**

CHANGE Philanthropy celebrates the announcement of the inaugural list of grantmakers who have signed the Level Up pledge. Foundations with a range of structures and sizes are represented in this list of early pledge signers. The rapidly growing list includes large national institutional funders, regional funders with deep commitments to the regions and communities they serve; new commitments from a wide range of private foundations as well as community foundations with broad and diverse stakeholders and contributing philanthropies. Family foundations and donor advised funds are also represented on this list. The inaugural pledge signers include:

Akonadi Foundation	Masto Foundation
The Albert Pick, Jr. Fund	Eugene & Agnes E. Meyer Foundation
Arca Foundation	Mortenson Family Foundation
Arch Community Fund	The Movement Voter Fund
Black Feminist Fund	McKnight Foundation
Borealis Philanthropy	Nellie Mae Education Foundation
Butler Family Fund	New York Foundation
The California Endowment	Northwest Area Foundation
Four Freedoms Fund	Northwest Health Foundation
The Freedom Together Foundation	Open Horizon
Foundation for Child Development	Pink House Foundation
Fund for Santa Barbara	Sam McVeety & Jordan Goldwarg
The Grove Foundation	Solidaire Network
Headwaters Foundation	Saint Paul & Minnesota Foundation
Henry Luce Foundation	Stupski Foundation
iF, a Foundation for Radical Possibility	Wallace Global Fund
John M. Lloyd Foundation	Woods Fund Chicago
John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation	

Leaders of these institutions have taken a bold, necessary step towards the support and solidarity our communities deserve. As the Freedom Together Foundation says, "This is a moment for philanthropy to act boldly and courageously. The code-red moment for our democracy and communities demand that we move more resources aggressively — and to do so with urgency, flexibility, and accountability. Collective commitments, like those in the Level Up pledge, make clear that we intend to meet the scale of the crisis with the scale of our action."

### **The Level Up campaign is hosted by CHANGE Philanthropy, and supported by a rapidly growing list of endorsing philanthropic infrastructure organizations including:**

- Grantmakers for Effective Organizations
- Grantmakers Concerned with Immigrants and Refugees
- Solidaire Network
- Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in Philanthropy (AAPIP)
- A Philanthropic Partnership for Black Communities (AFBE)
- Emerging Practitioners in Philanthropy (EPIP)
- Funders for LGBTQ Issues
- Hispanics in Philanthropy (HIP)
- Movement Voter Project
- Justice Funders
- United Philanthropy Forum
- Trust-Based Philanthropy Project
- National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy (NCRP)
- Native Americans in Philanthropy (NAP)
- Neighborhood Funders Group (NFG)
- Philanthropic Initiative for Racial Equity (PRE)
- Women's Funding Network (WFN)

## **WHAT HAPPENS NEXT:**

Dozens of philanthropies are in the process of discussing the Level Up pledge and its impact goals with their executive teams and trustees. Several trustees of large foundations are working with the campaign and its partners to advance board-level conversations about payout rates and equitable grantmaking. The campaign anticipates pledge commitments from dozens more grantmaking organizations in the coming months.

With a well researched list of institutions and donors they plan to engage and align behind these commitments, the Level Up campaign is activating a powerful coalition to set a new baseline for the sector. Ben Barge, field director for the National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy shared that “Level Up campaign reflects the belief that philanthropy can and must choose a new normal – to stand by communities under threat, to fund transformational social justice work generously, and to offer the same transparency so often asked of grantees.”

The next phase of the campaign’s work will activate the wide-reaching memberships and networks connected to the ten CHANGE Philanthropy partner organizations, and includes programming that supports philanthropic trustees active in the CHANGE partner network and the UNITY Summit – one of the philanthropic sector’s largest conferences known for bringing together the sectors’ leading practitioners in equitable grantmaking.

CHANGE Philanthropy and their ten coalition partners are proud to lead this campaign. As Ana Marie Argilagos, President & CEO, Hispanics in Philanthropy put it, “[a]t Hispanics in Philanthropy, we see the Level Up pledge as more than a commitment—it’s a reflection of who we say we are. We’re energized by the institutions joining CHANGE Philanthropy in this work, taking steps that are both courageous and necessary. And there’s room for everyone who’s ready to be part of building something better.”

Reflecting on the large and diverse coalition supporting the campaign, Jodeen Olguín-Tayler commented that “the Level Up campaign builds on and supplements the work of many aligned philanthropic advocacy initiatives, and offers a vision for a new baseline. The Level Up pledge, programming and organizing of the campaign is designed to level up the sector by changing philanthropic behavior, norms, narratives, and governance policies. We aim to change both who decides and who benefits from philanthropic resources. The Level Up pledge commitments are a new floor, not a ceiling. Meeting the needs, supporting the vision and building the power of our communities requires the philanthropic sector to level up. Join us.”

Grantmakers can learn more about the Level Up pledge campaign and add their name to this list by visiting [www.levelupphilanthropy.org](http://www.levelupphilanthropy.org).

## **Additional Quotes from Supporters, Endorsers and Signers:**

"Stupski Foundation is proud to sign onto Change Philanthropy's Level Up pledge and commit an additional \$23 million to a number of our existing grantees—bringing our projected 2025 grantmaking from \$34 million to over \$57 million, our second-largest grantmaking year since we began our spend down. By joining the pledge, we are doubling down on what we believe: that resources must flow now, when communities need them most. We applaud CHANGE Philanthropy for putting humanity over perpetuity and rejecting the all-too-common urge in philanthropy to preserve wealth over the well-being of the people we are meant to serve. As funders, we are in a privileged and powerful position to act. Too often, philanthropy asks organizations with the fewest resources to do the most in the most

challenging moments. This is our time to show up fully—for them and for each other." — **Stupski Foundation**

"This is a moment for philanthropy to act boldly and courageously. The code-red moment for our democracy and communities demand that we move more resources aggressively — and to do so with urgency, flexibility, and accountability. Collective commitments, like those in the Level Up pledge, make clear that we intend to meet the scale of the crisis with the scale of our action." — **The Freedom Together Foundation**

"Neighborhood Funders Group (NFG) supports the Level Up campaign as a timely opportunity for funders to meet the moment and move more resources to support power-building and community-led strategies so that Black, Indigenous, and people of color communities, LGBTQ and low-income communities can thrive." — **Amanda Andere and Stephanie Chan, Co-Presidents, Neighborhood Funders Group (NFG)**

"The Level Up pledge asks funders to match this moment's urgency with meaningful resource shifts toward communities under attack. AAPIP stands with our partners in this campaign because cross-racial solidarity requires funders to act boldly when democracy and equity are at stake." — **Connie Chung Joe, President and CEO, Asian Americans/Pacific Islanders in Philanthropy (AAPIP)**

"As LGBTQ movement organizations continue to resist and organize, the Level Up Pledge is an important opportunity for grantmakers to lead with courage and to demonstrate their support for the organizers and activists working tirelessly against authoritarianism to create a truly liberated and just world. We hope all funders can find a way to join or otherwise support this critical campaign." — **Alexander Lee, Deputy Director, Funders for LGBTQ Issues**

"It's no surprise that our communities are facing the gut-wrenching impacts of the retrenchment of public dollars as well as the troubling pullback of foundation giving explicitly focused on Black communities, and other communities of color. It's in times like these that our resolve and intentions are truly tested. CHANGE Philanthropy's Level Up Campaign reminds us that community needs cannot wait. This is a moment for funders and donors to act decisively, harness our collective power, and invest in the solutions that communities deserve." — **Susan Taylor Batten, President and CEO, A Philanthropic Partnership for Black Communities (AFBE)**

"NCRP believes in the Level Up campaign because we know philanthropy can and must choose a new normal – to stand by our communities under threat, to fund transformational social justice work generously, and to offer the same transparency so often asked of grantees. We applaud the leadership of the inaugural pledge signers, alongside our CHANGE Philanthropy coalition partners. We also welcome the many more signers to come." — **Ben Barge, Field Director, National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy**

At Hispanics in Philanthropy, we see the Level Up pledge as more than a commitment—it's a reflection of who we say we are. We're energized by the institutions joining CHANGE Philanthropy in this work, taking steps that are both courageous and necessary. And there's room for everyone who's ready to be part of building something better." — **Ana Marie Argilagos, President & CEO, Hispanics in Philanthropy (HIP)**

“It’s time the philanthropic sector level up their grantmaking commitments and practices to take bold, accountable action. The Level Up pledge is a timely way for grantmakers to put their values into action and empower their teams to contribute to the pledge across all levels of their organizations.” —

**Emerging Practitioners in Philanthropy (EPIP)**

“The Level Up pledge is a timely call to action for the philanthropic sector to move strategically and with conviction as the attacks on our values and communities will just keep rising without much firmer and more urgent interruption.” — **Lori Villarosa, Executive Director of Philanthropic Initiative for Racial Equity (PRE)**

“The Level Up pledge, programming and organizing of the campaign is designed to level up the sector by changing philanthropic behavior, norms, narratives, and governance policies. We aim to change both who decides, and who benefits from philanthropic resources. The Level Up pledge commitments are a new floor, not a ceiling. The Level Up pledge commitments are a new floor, not a ceiling. Meeting the needs, supporting the vision and building the power of our communities requires the philanthropic sector to level up. Join us.” — **Jodeen Olguín-Tayler, Director of Campaigns and Programs, CHANGE Philanthropy**

“Native Americans in Philanthropy is a proud supporter of the Level Up pledge. This pledge stands on decades of work to support and challenge the philanthropic sector to align their values with their philanthropic commitments. Please join us in taking bold action.” — **Erik R. Stegman (Carry The Kettle First Nation - Nakoda), Chief Executive Officer, Native Americans in Philanthropy (NAP)**

“Open Horizon is pleased to join the Level Up pledge. We have been committed to showing up with right sized philanthropic commitments to meet the moment. The level up pledge is aligned with the type of reparative philanthropy that we center in our values and approach. Our partners and social justice leaders are experiencing federal funding cuts and a decrease in philanthropic support due to risk aversion; we hope that others join the Level Up pledge and can increase their funding commitments to be more meaningful, in the face of these attacks on human rights and justice, as we have been.” — **D’Lynn Jacobs, Executive Director, Open Horizon**

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