



A 10-Year Framework to Pursue Economic Justice in the Greater Washington Region



Letter from our PRESIDENT & CEO

For five decades, the Greater Washington Community Foundation has ignited the power of philanthropy, catalyzed community impact, and responded to critical community needs. As the region's largest local funder, we have invested more than \$1.4 billion to build racially equitable, just, and thriving communities where everyone prospers. Now, our strategic focus — rooted in economic justice — is to close our region's racial wealth gap so that people of all races, places, and identities reach their full potential.

In 2021, the Greater Washington Community Foundation staff and Trustees — led by Sean Morris and Artis Hampshire-Cowan — along with our local Advisory Boards and fundholders, embarked on a learning journey to chart a path forward for our collective future. After benchmarking ourselves against other community foundations around the country, asking fundholders, professional advisors, and community partners about their aspirations for us and our region, we landed on seven core goals for our 10-year strategic framework.



Community Leadership

To Lead in the Community and invest in strategies that close the racial wealth gap and increase economic mobility.



Racial Equity & Inclusion

The Community Foundation commits to leading with racial equity and inclusion in every aspect of our work.



Asset Growth & Sustainability

Double the assets of the foundation in order to respond to the scope of our challenges and opportunities, at scale.



Operational Excellence

We will work to maximize operational efficiency and offer excellent customer service.



Board Leadership & Governance

The Board of Trustees will offer exceptional governance and leadership to support the success of the plan.



Strategic Communications

We will powerfully communicate our work and the opportunity to create a more just and equitable Greater Washington region.



Regional Presence

The Community Foundation is fully aligned as a united organization serving the entire region, yet recognizing the unique needs and nuances of jurisdictions and neighborhoods.

The Community Foundation sits at the intersection of racialized wealth and racialized poverty. From that vantage point, we recognize that our region's biggest challenges stem from economic injustice, the root cause of persistent inequities which have been exacerbated by the pandemic and economic crisis. Our new strategic vision to close our community's racial wealth gap imagines a region that has moved beyond simply surviving and recovering to become a welcoming and inclusive place where we all prosper, together.

Our strategic vision is an expression of our love for people and community. We invite you to join us on this journey of personal and community transformation.



Sincerely,

Tonia Wellons

Tonia Wellons, *President & CEO*

► STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE:

Artis Hampshire-Cowan, *Co-Chair*
Sean Morris, *Co-Chair*
Marcus Braxton
Lia Dean
Lesley-Jane Dixon

Charlene Dukes
Melanie Folstad
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The Greater Washington Community Foundation's mission and work has always been centered on creating a just, equitable, and thriving community. But recent events have added an urgency to our mission.

In the face of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, persistent structural racism, and stark economic injustice, Greater Washington is facing a set of multifaceted and complex challenges. And the time is past due to address them in ways that are both intentional and aspirational.

In 2021, The Community Foundation developed a bold 10-year strategic vision that will leverage our resources and expertise to lead our community in addressing the most catalytic opportunity of our lifetimes: **closing our community's racial wealth gap.**

It's a big goal — one that requires us to align our business with our vision and advance racial equity and inclusion in all aspects of our work. It will also require us to partner with the community in new and meaningful ways. As we do so, we will direct our attention and investments on

communities that have been over-policed and underinvested in, as well as neighborhoods that are rich in cultural, community assets, and grassroots leadership.

We cannot do this alone. To achieve this vision, we must forge powerful partnerships with community leaders and institutions, philanthropy, the private sector, and government — partnerships that are shaped by community voices, strengthened with evidence-informed strategies, and supported by long-term commitments and investments.

Together, we can achieve this mission. Together, our entire region will prosper.



What We BELIEVE

- ▶ **BIPOC households in the Greater Washington region** – and across the U.S. – face systemic barriers that lead to disproportionately low educational outcomes, health conditions, and generational wealth.
- ▶ **Together, we have the power to take action** to eliminate the historic, racialized disparities in our community and set a national example of how tackling this issue can improve an entire community.
- ▶ **The time is now!** COVID-19 has further widened and amplified racial inequities. It requires bold, immediate action to reverse the damage caused by the pandemic and centuries of systemic inequities in our community.



Who We ARE

- ▶ **We envision a region where people of all races, places, and identities reach their full potential.**



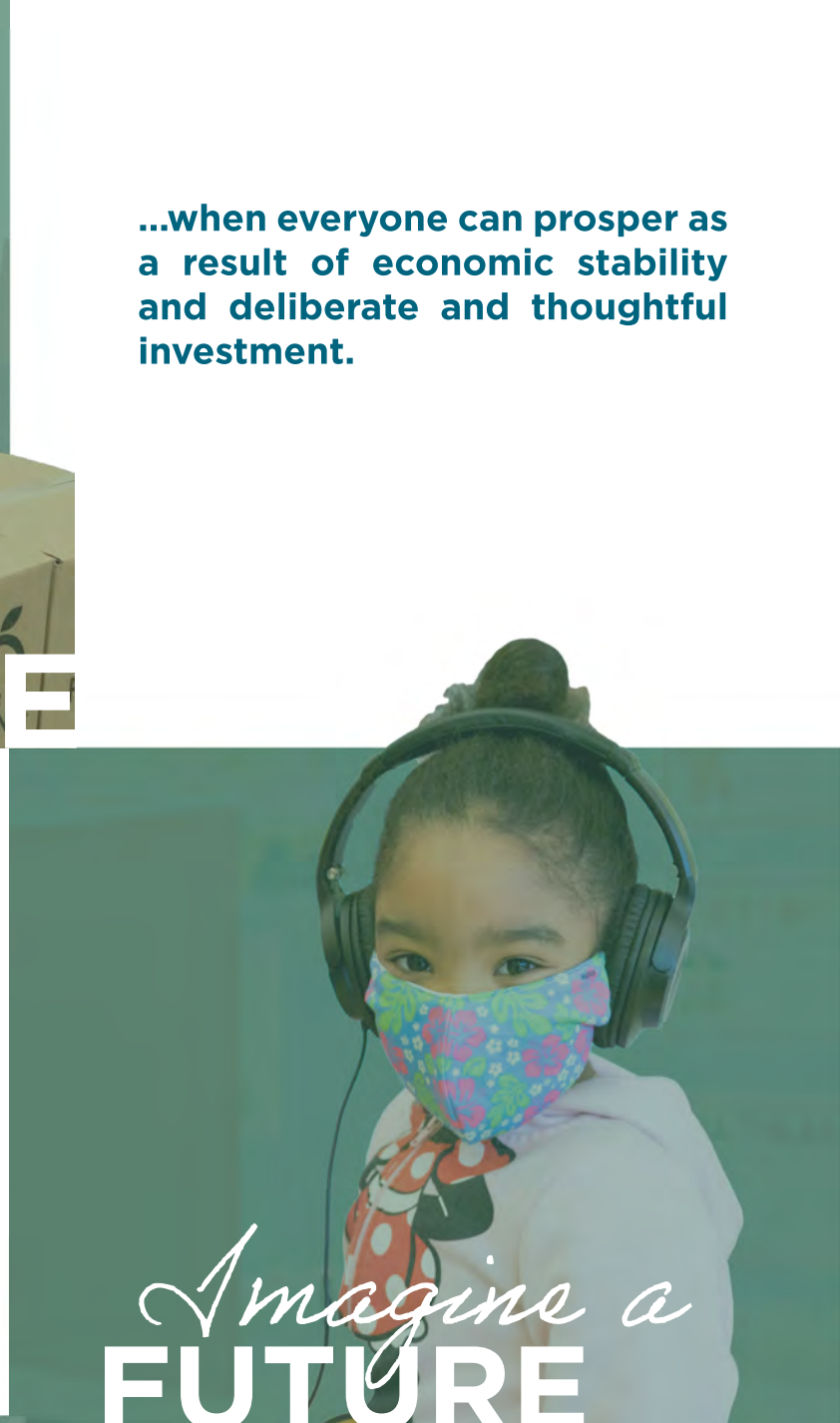
Where We STAND

- ▶ **Dedicated to Principles of Integrity, Respect, Dignity, Kindness, and Empathy:** We take seriously our responsibility to be the best stewards of our community's charitable resources and to uphold the trust our community has placed in us.
- ▶ **Passionate in Our Mission; Courageous in Our Work:** We believe in the power of community and the potential for creating deeper, more lasting impact together. We are ready to be bold to achieve our goal of closing the racial wealth gap.
- ▶ **Community-Centered Advocates:** We exist for the benefit of the communities in which we live and serve. We are committed to actively listening to our community partners to ensure their experience guides our work.
- ▶ **Committed to Justice:** We strive for a racially equitable, just, and thriving region. To advance these justice principles, we apply a racial equity lens to our mission, strategy, and practices.
- ▶ **Trusted Partners:** Our collaborations with donors and partners power our efforts. We are informed by decades of partnering with and serving our community and our efforts are grounded in research and community engagement.



Imagine what's
POSSIBLE

...where everyone can thrive through greater access to quality education, healthcare, and housing.



Imagine a
FUTURE



Imagine a
COMMUNITY

...where everyone can heal because barriers have been removed and they are able to fully express their talent and creativity in ways that benefit themselves, their families and neighborhoods, and our entire community.

Why the

RACIAL WEALTH GAP?

If we change the prospects for how Black and Brown people generate, sustain, and share wealth, we change every other disparity affecting Black and Brown people — and all of us.

Greater Washington is home to nine of the 20 wealthiest counties in the United States — but families in our community are not equally sharing in this wealth. By almost every measure — education, income, housing, health, and wealth — BIPOC communities are significantly lagging behind their White neighbors.

- ▶ In DC, White households have **81 times more** net worth than Black households.
- ▶ In Fairfax County, if racial income gaps were closed, its gross domestic product would increase by **\$26.2 billion** a year.
- ▶ Prince George's County has the **lowest median household income in the region**, despite being one of the wealthiest Black jurisdictions in the country.
- ▶ Montgomery County shows a striking differential in home ownership rates: **75%** of White residents own their home, compared to **50%** of Latinx people, **54%** for Asian people, and **46%** for Black people.
- ▶ **11.4%** of Black and **10.5%** of Latinx residents live below the poverty line in DC - compared with **4.3%** of White residents.
- ▶ Given how race and wealth intersect in all BIPOC communities (LGBTQ+, gender, ability), **if Black people are wealthier**, then everyone is better off — and wealthier in every way.

Greater Washington isn't unique in facing this challenge. Yet, what sets us apart is the stark inequities that have led to some of the nation's wealthiest zip codes being just a short drive from some of its poorest. As home to the nation's capital — and all the prestige, influence, wealth, and power it provides — we can and must do better. And that is what we intend to do by making closing the racial wealth gap our priority. We believe that by changing the prospects for how our Black and Brown neighbors generate, sustain, and share wealth, we will ultimately improve the quality of life for everyone who lives, works, and raises a family in this region.

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~ DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.



What is THE WORK?

PILLAR 1: LEADING WITH RACIAL EQUITY AND INCLUSION

Decades of working in the Greater Washington region have shown that many of us are substantially less likely to achieve prosperity simply because we live in neighborhoods that do not provide us with the conditions needed to succeed.

This isn't by coincidence. Research commissioned by The Community Foundation and conducted by Brookings finds those who live in such neighborhoods are disproportionately Black and experience negative racial disparities in life expectancy, income, unemployment, incarceration rates, and poverty. In other words, race matters.

These disparities are all closely linked. But we can begin to eliminate

them — and create a healthier and more prosperous community for all of us — if we work to address the root causes behind them and invest deliberately in strategies to address them. That's why The Community Foundation is making a bold commitment:

We will lead with racial equity and inclusion in every aspect of our work.

In other words, we will center all our work — including our grantmaking, our investments, our partnerships, our operations, and our leadership — around an equity frame that requires us to use data as we work with a spirit of shared humanity and in bold possibility.

PILLAR 2: ALIGNING OUR BUSINESS WITH OUR VISION

In order to achieve our vision for a more just and equitable Greater Washington region, we are reimagining how The Community Foundation invests in, partners with, and supports our community.

We are committed to nearly doubling The Community Foundation's assets over the next ten years so that we can respond to the challenges and opportunities in front of us, at scale. We will do this by leveraging our unique value and expertise to mobilize resources for this community and connect philanthropy to impact.

Our bold and aspirational vision for this community demands that we establish a legacy for lasting change. That means building an endowment for our Community Foundation that generates robust discretionary funds to support and sustain our operations and our targeted investments to serve the community today while preparing

for the needs of tomorrow.

To do so, we plan to offer a broader range of products to existing and new fundholders, including funds that are specific to fields of interest and geography. Donors will also have new tools to align their philanthropy with our vision of closing this community's racial wealth gap and to make deeper investments in organizations led by people of color.

We are also working with our Outsourced Chief Investment Officer to exercise competent and socially responsible stewardship in how our financial resources are managed and deployed. We have committed to retaining a diverse pool of investment managers working to achieve our investment objectives and to eliminating investments which work against our philanthropic goal for a just and equitable Greater Washington region.

What is THE WORK?

PILLAR 3: CLOSING THE RACIAL WEALTH GAP



Our community needs strong leadership to do the difficult but essential work of identifying the most promising ways to make progress toward closing the gap, and then mobilizing the resources and support to make it happen.

At The Community Foundation, we have framed our community leadership approach around the following goals:

- **Pursue Economic Justice** by investing in strategies to increase economic mobility and close the racial wealth gap.
- **Address Critical Community Needs**, including responding to crises, to stabilize and improve the quality of life for our neighbors and communities.
- **Strengthen Neighborhoods and Community Institutions** by using data to direct resources toward neighborhoods with the greatest needs and the BIPOC-led community organizations that serve them.

Levers for Change

We will leverage our leadership, relationships, voice and resources — developed through decades of ongoing work on initiatives like Putting Race on the Table, and sharpened through our concentrated work around COVID-19 emergency response — to focus on creating change at the neighborhood level.

- **Research:** Commission and disseminate cutting-edge research that grows our understanding of the racial wealth gap and racially equitable, reparative strategies to close it.
- **Community Engagement:** Center the lived experiences, leadership, and aspirations of our Black and Brown neighbors who have been most negatively impacted by the racial wealth gap.
- **Policy Advocacy:** Disrupt policies and systems that perpetuate the racial wealth gap, and advocate for and advance economic interventions that will produce more racially equitable and reparative outcomes.
- **Neighborhood Investment:** Organize and deploy innovative capital strategies for racially equitable and reparative grantmaking to close the racial wealth gap at the level of neighborhoods.

HISTORICALLY MARGINALIZED COMMUNITIES

fits all language when talking about race and we respect racial and ethnic differences. With that in mind, you will also hear us reference Black and Brown people when talking about the most marginalized in our community based on the data.

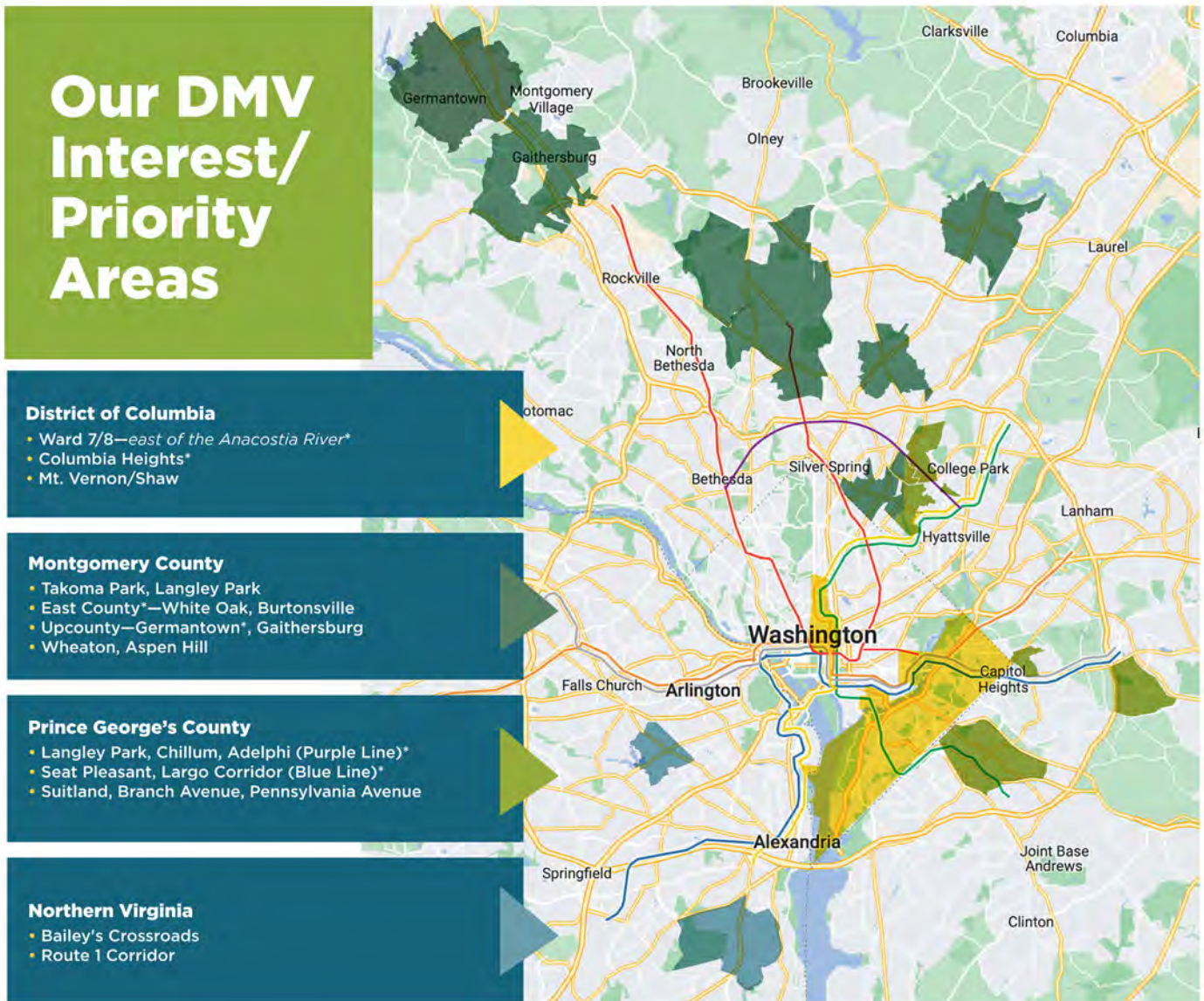
Who are the historically marginalized people and communities in our region? There are nuances based on geography but based on the data: Black people in our region are faring worse on almost every measure of well-being. We also recognize that other communities of color — especially Hispanic and Asian American and Pacific Islanders are also experiencing significant hardship. And admittedly, we need to do more to understand Indigenous communities in our region. You may hear us reference the commonly used term, BIPOC, which stands for Black, Indigenous, and People of Color and is inclusive of all marginalized groups. However, we recognize there is no one size

A Focus on NEIGHBORHOODS

Using data compiled by the Brookings Institution’s Race, Prosperity, and Inclusion Initiative and the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments, we have identified places in our region where Black and Brown people are experiencing the deepest disparities in homeownership and income.

As we begin the work of closing the racial wealth gap in the region, these places will serve as the primary areas where we will focus our grantmaking and broader community leadership capacity over the next decade. While all of these places will serve as focus areas for our place-based work over the next ten years, we have also identified priority areas. These places stand as the primary points of entry during the start-up phase of our efforts to close the racial wealth gap in the context of neighborhoods.

Our renewed commitment to racial equity and economic justice demands that we approach our work in this way—fiercely focused on the people and places in our region where they are struggling the most. We believe that our ability to listen, to be led by Black and Brown leadership on the ground, to support and activate cross-racial networks, to build public-private partnerships, and marshal sustainable investments in these neighborhoods will create greater prosperity for the people who live in these places, and it will have a positive impact on the entire region.



Interventions for Closing THE RACIAL WEALTH GAP

DOWNSTREAM

UPSTREAM



Basic Needs

- Housing Stability
- Education
- Workforce Training
- Equitable Recovery and Crisis Response
- Food Security
- Health Access



Economic Mobility

- Guaranteed Income
- Homeownership and Preservation
- Entrepreneurship
- Scholarships
- Savings, Credit, and Asset Building
- Financial Literacy
- Policy Advocacy



Community Wealth Building

- Children's Trust Accounts
- Strategic Economic Participation
- Broad Based Models of Ownership
- Financial Wellness and Health Equity

Our vision for closing the racial wealth gap will require that we—as a region—come together to expand our imagination, align our collective will, act more boldly, and direct our resources toward structural solutions with the greatest potential. In other words, we are inviting leaders from across our region to move with us beyond conventional thinking and to test and scale game changing ideas such as:

▶ CHILDREN'S TRUST ACCOUNTS:

This financial instrument provides young children with trust accounts that they can redeem at age 18 to pay for higher education, purchase a home, start a business, or take other steps toward securing their future. Researchers for the Annie E. Casey Foundation found, through economic modeling, that children's trust accounts with an initial deposit of \$7,500 could reduce the racial wealth gap in a community by as much as 28%.

▶ GUARANTEED INCOME PILOTS:

Both our recent work and pilots underway around the country have demonstrated that direct cash assistance for a limited period of time is one of the best tools to help low-income earners achieve self-sufficiency. Guaranteed income can enable a person to pay down a debt, move into permanent housing, further their education to secure a better job, or stop working a second job and instead be home for family dinner and homework time.

▶ COMMUNITY WEALTH BUILDING:

The Community Foundation will work to increase opportunities for Black and Brown people to create, influence, control, and benefit from the financial and corporate entities that produce and sustain wealth. This means expanding entrepreneurship, microenterprise, worker and employee ownership, community land trusts, and other shared equity practices.



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