A LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

It is my pride and pleasure to share this report with you about the vital social justice work that North Star Fund supports here in New York. With the continual rollout of federal policies that threaten the basic rights, safety, dignity, health, and livelihood of communities across the nation, our grassroots grantees are out in the streets—and in the courts and statehouses—demanding justice and fairness every single day.

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The organizations highlighted are relentless in building resistance and power in schools, workplaces, and living rooms across the boroughs. As neighborhood-based, community-grown activists with firsthand knowledge of our city’s most critical challenges, it’s imperative that our grantees lead the way in developing strategies and organizing communities to survive and thrive. With your support, we can work together to dismantle the predatory, discriminatory systems that perpetuate deep wealth inequality and racial segregation, and undermine the humanity of all our communities. And, together we can forge ahead in our vision for a more just and equitable New York.

North Star Fund is also taking action to strengthen our own work during these challenging times. In addition to continued expansion of our responsive, partnership-based grantmaking within New York City, we are currently supporting organizing beyond city limits to the Hudson Valley, where farmworkers, immigrants, and low-income residents are experiencing worsening conditions.

We are also listening to our grantees and networks to build and sustain social justice movements during the current administration and beyond. In May, we convened 300 community members, donors, grantmakers, and organizers at Resilient New York, a forum to advance grassroots organizing as a key strategy to protect the dignity and rights of all New Yorkers.

During these bleak times, we need a North Star more than ever. I take strength from the North Star Fund community, and I hope you will continue to stand with the movement for justice and equity at home, across the country, and the globe.

Yours truly,

Jennifer Ching
Executive Director
CATALYST GRANTS

North Star Fund invests in our grantees so they can respond nimbly to the political environment. Catalyst grants provide new formations in the social justice movement with seed funding to develop and deepen capacity and strategies to engage more community members in the fight. Grantees may receive up to six years of seed funding with annual renewals, as well as ongoing technical assistance and trainings to scale growth.

AF3IRM NYC

$5,000

Women of color across the global south and here in New York are disproportionately affected by systemic violence and exploitation through trafficking, commercial sex work, and disappearances. Through political education and culture work, AF3IRM NYC is currently expanding its reach and membership to lay the groundwork for a powerful movement to end sexism and patriarchy.

New York Campaign for Alternatives to Isolated Confinement (NY CAIC)

$5,000

NY CAIC is waging battle on solitary confinement through the Humane Alternatives to Long-Term (HALT) Solitary Confinement Act, which would ban the use of solitary confinement beyond fifteen days. NY CAIC brings together currently and formerly incarcerated people, their families, lawyers, advocates, individuals, and organizations in a long-term vision of ending the inhumane practice entirely.

The Parole Preparation Project

$10,000

The United States imprisons more people than any other country, and mass incarceration is one of the clearest examples of systemic anti-Black racism and its intergenerational impact. Women in prison have even less access to resources than men, including parole application support. Parole Preparation Project’s volunteers help people serving life sentences to apply for parole and return home, and is working to reform the Board of Parole, which is largely comprised of men and white board members, known for exceptionally low release rates. The organization recently helped to restore $2.6 million for prison visitation in the New York State budget through the Challenging Incarceration coalition.

S.O.U.L. Sisters Leadership Collective (SSLC)

$5,000

SSLC emerged from the need to build the leadership of young women of color; its effective peer education model is cultivating a new generation of activists to carry the torch in the fight for social justice. Through SSLC, middle school students learn and share the tools and skills they need to educate others and organize against punitive school policies like suspension and expulsion, gender-based violence, and incarceration.
Black Alliance for Just Immigration (BAJI)

$15,000

BAJI is a national organizing hub for African, Afro-Latina/o, Afro-Caribbean, and African American communities and co-anchor of Freedom Cities, a new initiative for the comprehensive safety, health, dignity, community control, and rights of communities living at the intersection of migrant rights and racial justice. BAJI also anchors the national Black Immigrant Network of nearly 40 Black-led organizations building towards social justice through policy and cultural change.

BronxPOWER

$10,000

BronxPOWER, formerly Women Organizing Neighbors, works to transform the public education system and create a borough where every resident has access to employment, quality education, and safe, affordable housing. In addition to training and education, BronxPOWER serves as a connector between different organizations to break silos, align, and build a strong grassroots movement in the Bronx.

Chinese Staff and Workers’ Association (CSWA)

$10,000

With nearly a third of Asian American New Yorkers living in poverty and facing mass displacement as a result of private development, CSWA is on the front lines organizing for worker rights and economic justice in Chinatown. Along with other members of a powerful citywide coalition, CSWA spearheads the fight for the Securing Wages Earned Against Theft (SWEAT) bill to ensure that workers can recover wages stolen by employers.

Crown Heights Tenants Union (CHTU)

$5,000

CHTU is a member-led, grassroots project of the Urban Homesteading Assistance Board in Crown Heights, Brooklyn, a neighborhood threatened by regulatory rollbacks that contribute to massive displacement of residents. CHTU builds the collective power of neighborhood residents through effective tenant associations—currently in nearly 30 buildings with 900 households—training, leadership development, and policy and media advocacy to fight inhumane conditions, displacement, and the loss of rent-regulated housing.
Families United for Racial and Economic Equality (FUREE)  
FUREE organizes low-income renters and NYCHA tenants to fight the rapid gentrification of downtown Brooklyn so that development includes rather than displaces them. Along with the other grassroots leaders of the #NoCuts Coalition, spearheaded by Community Voices Heard, FUREE is currently fighting a proposed $6.2 billion federal budget cut that would put more than 200,000 seniors, families, and differently-abled people at immediate risk of homelessness.

Flatbush Tenant Coalition  
Brooklyn Housing Court is the last place many tenants expect to get justice for escalating harassment, evictions, disrepair, and other tactics deployed by abusive landlords. Flatbush Tenant Coalition, housed at the Flatbush Development Corporation, is transforming that reality by uniting over 15,000 tenants through education, organizing, and mobilization to make the court more accessible and accountable in enforcing repair orders, all while strengthening the New York tenant rights movement.

Flushing Workers Center  
Flushing Workers Center organizes immigrant workers in Queens to fight for a living wage and against wage theft, abuse, misclassification, and other exploitation. Along with a powerful coalition of other grassroots organizations, Flushing Workers Center is working tirelessly to pass the SWEAT bill so workers can recover stolen wages from employers who use legal loopholes to evade payment.

La Colmena  
La Colmena’s worker-members are changing conditions and building the political power of Staten Island immigrants through local and transnational community organizing, youth leadership development, civic engagement, and economic empowerment. In a political climate marked by xenophobia and fear, La Colmena is also building the resilience and power of its members through community-based safeguards against deportation.

Neighbors Helping Neighbors (NHN)  
NHN protects residents of Sunset Park, a historic working class, immigrant Brooklyn neighborhood, by fighting for permanently affordable housing. NHN is part of a fierce coalition of social justice organizations demanding citywide special districts that would prevent against tenant harassment and displacement. In addition to its housing justice work, NHN is currently working to keep local manufacturing jobs in the area, despite rapid gentrification along the Gowanus Canal.

Sapna NYC  
Sapna NYC’s holistic framework includes physical and mental health, economic justice and security, skills building, and leadership development of its members. Its approach lays the foundation to engage and organize South Asian women living in Northeast Bronx who are isolated from other Bronx or citywide organizing efforts. Sapna NYC is currently conducting participatory research to identify and assess the needs of its membership base.

Street Vendor Project (SVP)  
SVP organizes New York City street vendors, a majority of whom are immigrants, veterans, and women of color who face police harassment and fines daily. To ensure that plans for sanctuary cities include keeping street vendors safe from state violence from the NYPD or current administration, SVP is ramping up its Lift the Caps campaign to increase available permits and licenses, vending space, and other protections for vendors who are exposed to greater policing and abuse on the streets of New York.

Teachers Unite  
Suspension, expulsion, arrests, and other police-like practices disproportionately push students out of school and can lead to a lifetime of exclusion from access to educational and other rights and opportunities. Through the Dignity in Schools campaign, Teachers Unite organizes educators in solidarity alongside youth and parents to advocate for and implement restorative justice in the classroom as a transformative alternative to punitive policies.
The BLK Projek

$8,000  The BLK Projek is bringing food justice to women of color, families, and youth in the South Bronx who are often excluded from mainstream conversations about food systems, farming, and nutrition. Through its mobile truck operation, the BLK Projek provides Bronx residents—where they live, work, and go to school—with both political education and healthy, affordable food along with its community-run partner Libertad Urban Farm.

Center for Third World Organizing (CTWO)

$6,250  CTWO is a racial justice organization that convenes and connects grassroots organizers and activists through cutting edge community organizing trainings and capacity building programs. From outreach, fundraising, and political strategy, CTWO gives organizers the tools they need to resist and transform unjust policies while building powerful relationships for individuals and organizations in the movement. Recently, CTWO has been focusing on training and building the capacity of Black-led organizations.

Hattie Carthan Community Food Projects

$8,000  Hattie Carthan Community Food Projects believes that economic empowerment starts with improving community health. Since 2009, this Bedford Stuyvesant community organization has created green jobs for Black youth in Brooklyn by expanding fresh food access and provided intergenerational trainings about food justice and healing from the profound impact of oppression through the building and preservation of Black culture and community.

Rise

$6,250  Along with practitioners, advocates, and other stakeholders, Rise’s parents are cultivating a powerful movement to transform the New York City Administration for Children’s Services. Currently, Rise is assessing the needs of parents and stakeholders through participatory research. Through public speaking trainings and writing workshops, strategic cross-sector partnerships, and a publication reaching thousands of readers nationwide, Rise is changing the story about parents and families who are profoundly affected by a broken child welfare system.

INNOVATIVE ACTIVISM GRANTS

Innovative Activism grants support groups that use the arts, culture, and technology to tell stories that challenge mainstream narratives, and groups building alternative institutions that make economic and social justice a lived reality for more New Yorkers. These grants grow the tools and tactics activists can use to creatively engage and strengthen communities.

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Sure We Can

$8,000

Canners, vulnerable New Yorkers who rely on discarded recyclables as their primary source of income, are often mistreated when they attempt to redeem their finds. Sure We Can is a Brooklyn cooperative of canners who provide a safe location and fair return for items that would otherwise wind up in landfills, promoting both environmental and economic sustainability for the most vulnerable New Yorkers.

Theatre of the Oppressed NYC (TONYC)

$6,250

TONYC fuses arts and activism so that people directly impacted by injustice can drive the solutions home. Through its expanding Legislative Theater program, participants create and perform interactive plays based on their stories and brainstorm policy solutions on the spot with an audience of community members, legislators, organizers, and advocates. Once agreed upon, a plan is created to make sure these concrete, lasting changes happen through direct action, accountability campaigns, and long-term partnerships.

Women’s Organizing Network (WON)

$6,250

Women organizers contend with sexism as they would in any workplace culture, from microaggressions like “mansplaining,” to sexual harassment and assault. WON, a Brooklyn-based organization, is a safe space for women organizers that values the labor, emotional and otherwise, of women fighting for social justice. Through training, leadership development, and helping social justice organizations create safeguards and participatory practices, WON is confronting patriarchy and creating a more inclusive movement.

Worker Owned Rockaway Cooperatives (WORCs) / The Working World

$6,250

WORCs provides invaluable support and technical assistance to existing and struggling businesses, largely owned and operated by people of color, in Far Rockaway, Queens, a neighborhood hit hard by Hurricane Sandy and the wave of private development that continues to impact the community. WORCs incubates worker-owned cooperatives—a more inclusive business development model for low-income people—which minimize the risk of debt accumulation and builds local wealth.

Since 2010, North Star Fund has awarded an annual grant in memory of C. Edwin “Ed” Baker, a long-time North Star Fund donor activist and legal scholar with a lifelong commitment to media and social justice. This year’s Ed Baker Award goes to North Star Fund grantee Rise. Through media accountability and public education, Rise works to change dominant narratives about the parents and families who are profoundly affected by a broken foster care system. See page 6 to learn more about Rise.
New York’s grassroots organizers draw on decades of experience fighting against inequity and oppression. For many of the communities where they live and work, the new administration has created a climate defined by fear that presents even greater challenges for the social justice movement. To rise up against escalating attacks on those living at the intersections of race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, immigration status, religion, and ability, our grassroots grantees need North Star Fund and our donors more than ever.

That’s why North Star Fund launched the Organizing Resilient Communities rapid response grant in January 2016 to move resources to the movement. Since then, we’ve awarded $31,200 to post-election community organizing led by the following organizations:

- **Black Trans Media** $2,000
- **Brandworkers** $2,000
- **CAAAV Organizing Asian Communities** $2,000
- **DRUM South Asian Organizing Center** $2,000
- **Damayan Migrant Workers Association** $2,000
- **Enlace/New York Worker Center Federation** $4,700
- **Equality Labs** $2,000
- **Flatbush Tenant Coalition** $2,000
- **Laundry Workers Center** $2,000
- **Movement for Justice in El Barrio** $2,500
- **New York State Youth Leadership Council** $2,000
- **Parole Preparation Project** $2,000
- **Street Vendors Project** $2,000
- **VOCAL-NY** $2,000