

**WILDSEEDS
FUND**

**2023 IMPACT
REPORT**

**MOVEMENT LED GRANTMAKING TO
EMBOLDEN COMMUNITY POWER**

In 2023, Wildseeds Fund deepened our commitment as movement partners to uplift frontline stories, build power, and embolden transformative food and farm systems change.

As we faced the pain and grief of global strife and a growing climate crisis, we grounded ourselves in the collective vision and action of our grantee partners who are creating a new “ancient future” for our food and agricultural systems. In our effort to honor their courageous and influential work, **we renamed our primary grant program to mirror who they are to us, the wildseeds of hope and resilience. Inspired by the visionary wisdom of Octavia Butler, the Wildseeds Grants Program** speaks to our community’s dedication to ensuring thriving communities for generations to come, particularly for diasporic and displaced communities.

Our grantee partners show us that when the world is in crisis, neutrality is not an option. In philanthropy, navigating spaces of power and capital often means navigating contradictory relationships and politics. Spaces where funders resource groups advocating for power shift but also feel threatened by, and reactive to, that shift. This has bred a culture of fear, avoidance and silence. We cannot transform our food and agricultural systems and return land back to the people if we are so afraid of those very systems that we let them silence us. **Funding others to take risks, speak up and do that work is not enough. Our liberation is tied together. We must take that risk together.**

The only way to overcome the fears of conflict, of lacking expertise, of saying or doing the wrong thing, is to try and try again. Have courage. Be compassionate. Create space for dialogue. This is a requirement for all of us and our collective liberation depends on it.

Our 2023 Impact Report highlights how we are working with grantee partners to do exactly that through participatory processes, innovative communications, emerging media projects and creating place and belonging. In this report, you will learn about our community of practice of 70+ network partners, our significant year of growth and giving—

WE MOVED \$1.1 MILLION TO 28 GRANTEE PARTNERS

—and the amplification of frontline narratives and innovative partnerships to further resource our growing national community of land based practitioners and food system advocates.

We are proud and humbled to be a part of this vibrant community of wildseeds. We invite you to learn about the change we are working towards with our collective community of funders, farmers, food systems workers, healers and organizers across rural and urban communities nationally. Thank you for your continued support.

With hope and gratitude,

Esperanza Pallana & **Shavaun Evans**
Executive Director & Director of Programs & Movement Support



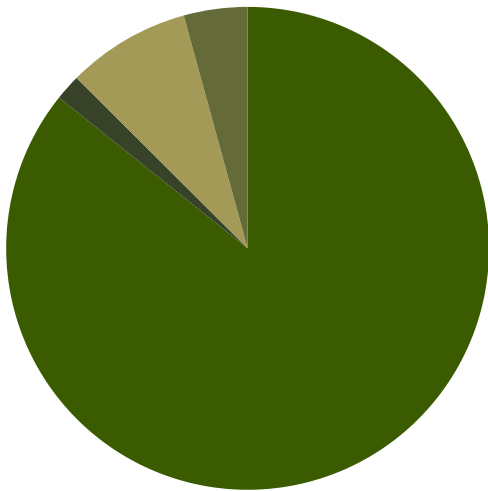
**THE ONLY WAY
TO OVERCOME
THE FEARS OF
CONFLICT,
OF LACKING
EXPERTISE,
OF SAYING
OR DOING THE
WRONG THING,
IS TO TRY AND
TRY AGAIN.**



IMPACT

Since 2022, we have **increased our grantmaking pool by over 30%**. In 2023, we invested **\$1.1MM in grantee partners**, marking our most significant year of support to date. By the end of the year, we had welcomed **five new funder partners** into our work.

\$1.1MM INVESTMENT IN 2023



- \$985k Wildseeds Grants
- \$20k Impact Media Awards
- \$69k Capacity Grants
- \$49k Partner Network Training

OUR PARTNER NETWORK GREW FROM 35 INAUGURAL MEMBERS TO OVER 70 IN 2023.

REGIONAL FOCUS

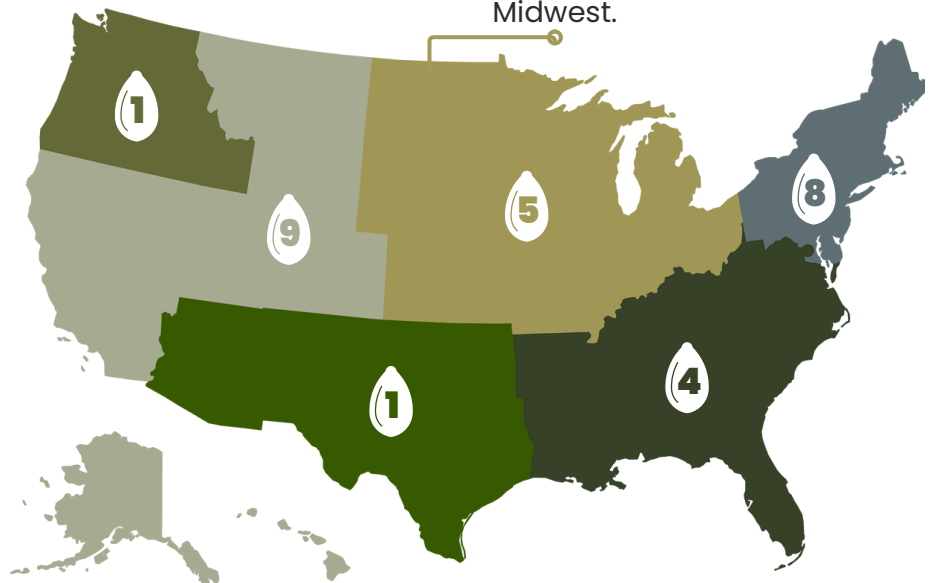
30% of our cumulative total \$5 million investment has occurred in the last two years alone. And in 2023 alone we resourced 28 strategic leaders, 90% of whom are BIPOC led and serving, 55% are located in rural areas.

FUNDING BY REGION

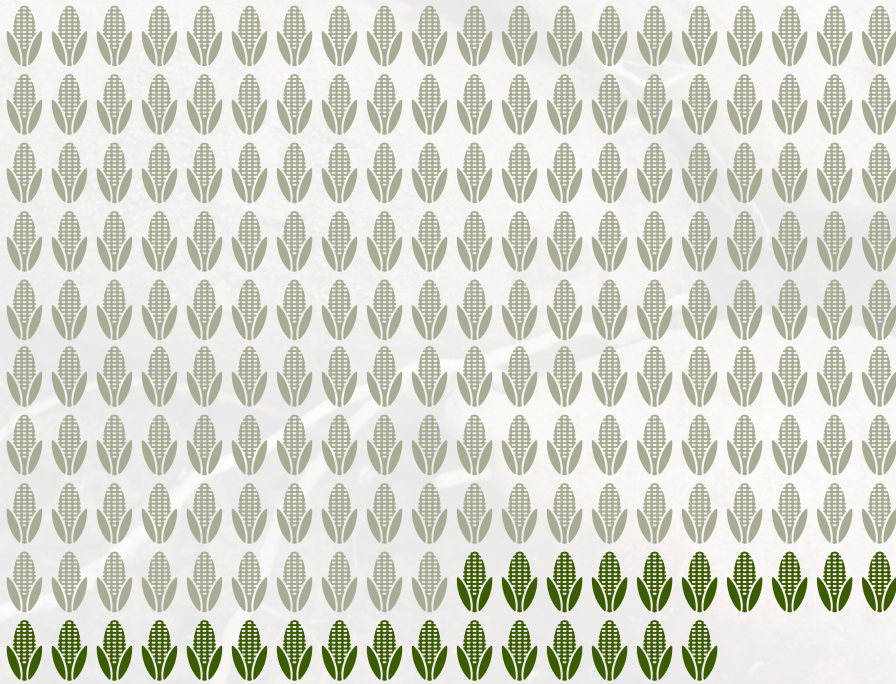
- Pacific Northwest (\$50,000)
- Western (\$321,000)
- Southwest (\$74,934)
- Midwest (\$213,400)
- Southeast (\$77,000)
- Northeast (\$271,305)

 Num. of grantees in region

25% of the 2023 total Wildseeds Grants project funding was directed to the Midwest.



2023 STATS



**196 UNIQUE
PROJECTS
YTD; 28 IN
2023**

99%

99% of our 2023 portfolio represents projects that are natural-based, sustainable, regenerative and/or battling climate change.



**90%
ARE BIPOC
LED AND SERVING**



**55%
ARE WITHIN AND SERVING
RURAL GEOGRAPHIES**

2023 STATS

UNIQUE PARTNERSHIPS

In 2023, we leaned further into our role as movement partners by leveraging access to funder relationships, resources and opportunities for our greater community of frontline movement leaders. This included partnering with the [Regenerative Agriculture Foundation](#) to obtain funding for the [Kansas Black Farmers Association](#) and [Texas Tribal Buffalo Project](#).



70+

70+ participants engaged with Wildseeds Fund's Partner Network. Launched in 2022, our Partner Network is a community of practice that offers space for virtual connection, sharing, and learning between grantee partners.

25 grantee partners participated in communications workshops led by [Yates Creative](#)



9 grantee partners received digital organizing coaching from [Social Movement Technologies \(SMT\)](#).



6 grantees and movement partners participated in [Social Movement Technologies' \(SMT\)](#) weeklong digital organizing intensive



"IIRC joined the SMT coaching partnership because we needed to have more coaching on using the communication tools we had as well as expand those to ensure that our members and the general public were able to know what campaigns and programs IIRC is working on. We are so glad to have Deivid (SMT) provide the support we were looking for and plan on using these skills moving forward."

Irene Ruiz

Executive Director, Idaho Organization of Resource Councils

2023 GRANTEE PARTNERS

ALL PROGRAMS

[4DaSoil](#)

[A.C.R.E.S.](#)

[Across Our Kitchen Tables](#)

[AfriThrive Inc](#)

[Agroecology Commons](#)

[Black Farmer Fund](#)

[Center for Mississippi Food Systems](#)

[Central Coast Alliance United for a Sustainable Economy \(CAUSE\)](#)

[Dakota Rural Action](#)

[Federation of Southern Cooperatives](#)

[Food Chain Workers Alliance](#)

[Food For the Spirit & Kentucky Farm Organizers](#)

[Hui Kaloko-Honokohau](#)

[Idaho Organization of Resource Councils](#)

[Justice Through Food](#)

[Kansha Open History Project](#)

[La Semilla Food Center](#)

[Lakeshore Flavor](#)

[Minnow](#)

[Mississippi Center for Cultural Production](#)

[Pocasset Pokanoket Land Trust](#)

[Rock Steady Farm](#)

[Southeastern African American Farmers' Organic Network \(SAAFON\)](#)

[Sewa Yuli](#)

[Sicangu Co](#)

[Sweet Freedom Farm](#)

[The Descendents Project](#)

GRANTEE SPOTLIGHTS



ROCK STEADY FARM – POLLINATE VIDEO

Rock Steady Farm aims to disrupt and address the interconnected systemic barriers that QTIBIPOC folks face and do so through training and supporting marginalized farmers and their work. Rock Steady, located in Millerton, NY, is a queer-owned and operated cooperative vegetable farm rooted in social justice, food access and farmer training. In the Spring of 2023, Rock Steady Farm released their newest documentary film, Pollinate! "Pollinate!" weaves together personal reflections on race, gender, sexuality and healing with the land from their 2021–2022 training program class.



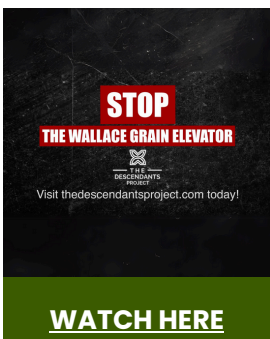
SIČANǴU – PODCAST STUDIO & PREMIER EPISODE 1

Sičanǵu Co. is the economic engine for the Sičanǵu Lakota nation and grounded in their ancestral, cultural wisdom. It intends to support the financial and social well-being of their community. Using a Wildseeds Grant, The Sičanǵu Co. just released the first episode of "Our Sacred Roots" podcast. The podcast tells the story of local producers, their experiences and their knowledge obtained through their connection to the land. It is a platform to discuss land sovereignty and inclusivity in land and agriculture.



KANSHA OPEN HISTORY PROJECT

A volunteer history project, Kansha Open History Project, documents and publishes the losses of Nikkei (Japanese American) farmers during WWII. Kansha Open History Project works in service to land justice and historical memory through data preservation and activism. In 2023, they engaged over 30 volunteers who transcribed over 700 records and proofed over 900 records across eight CA counties. They are currently hoping to get 200 volunteers in the next round of data proofing.



THE DESCENDANTS PROJECT – WALLACE GRAIN ELEVATOR CAMPAIGN VIDEO

The Descendants Project (TDP) is an emerging organization committed to the intergenerational healing and flourishing of the Black descendant community in the Louisiana river parishes. The lands of the river parishes hold the intersecting histories of enslavement, settler colonialism, and environmental degradation. With a Wildseeds Fund capacity grant, TDP partnered with Resource Media on a campaign of targeted digital ads and media outreach to challenge the development of a large grain terminal and educate the community around the illegal zoning, and potential pollution and worker abuses from the terminal.

2023 IMPACT MEDIA AWARDEES

The Wildseeds Fund's Impact Media Award spotlights emerging influential media makers who utilize documentaries, journalism, books, and other forms of media to take on big issues. Impact Media Award recipients are challenging attitudes and beliefs, fostering collective empathy and understanding, and activating audiences to take part in transformational food and agricultural systems change.

Congratulations to the 2023 Impact Media Award recipients:



SEWA YULI

Sewa Yuli was recognized in 2023 for their work in progress, **Siembra**, a documentary on indigenous food sovereignty from across both sides of the so-called border. **Siembra** features voices from Indigenous farmers, seed keepers, medicine people, midwives, foragers and professors. Sewa has traveled to communities in Mexico, California and Arizona to share the experiences of people—living on their native lands, as well as those who have migrated or been detribalized—and their relationship to food. This is a story about struggle, resistance, and abundance for generations to come. Rooted in Mexican curanderismo, Sewa is a queer, community cook, student midwife providing body, and traditional Mexican postpartum care, and food justice advocate. We encourage you to view the **Siembra trailer** (no subtitles).



FEDERATION OF SOUTHERN COOPERATIVES

The Federation of Southern Cooperatives has been selected as a 2023 Impact Media Awardee for their video campaign, **Farmers As First Responders**. This campaign shares the unjust reality that family farmers and rural communities suffer disproportionately in times of disaster and economic hardship. By working with community-based organizations such as The Federation and its member cooperatives, farmers have the capacity to organize, coordinate, and monitor these efforts via established partnerships. Founded in 1967, the Federation serves as a catalyst for the development of self-supporting communities through cooperative economic development, land retention, and advocacy. They envision sustainable rural communities supported by a network of family farmers, landowners, and cooperatives based on local control and ownership. Please **view the documentary** short featured in the video campaign.



OUR GRANTMAKING

2023 WILDSEED GRANTEES

Wildseeds Fund's **Wildseeds Grants program** is our primary offering for non profit, grassroots organizations. The Wildseeds Grants program, formerly known as Core Grants, funds community organizations, strategists and media makers working toward food and farm systems change in order to resource communications infrastructure and narrative change.

Wildseeds possess a resilience that enables them to resist, spread, and flourish, just like our movements. We are committed to resourcing movement organizers by investing in long-term solutions that support the development of their ideas and movement infrastructure. Our team utilizes a participatory grantmaking framework to ensure community-led solutions, narratives and innovations are centered in capital allocation decisions.

2023 CAPACITY GRANTS

Wildseeds Fund's capacity grant is an invitation-only program that is an additional resource for strengthening capacity building within grassroots organizations. We are committed to funding permanent infrastructure and communication strategies that elevate narratives that possess the power to cultivate systemic change. Our team focuses on helping grassroots organizers build trust with our communities by uplifting and emboldening their stories of transformative change within our food and agricultural systems.

MOVEMENT INFRASTRUCTURE

With Wildseeds Fund's focus on changing the food and agricultural system through communications strategies and infrastructure, we are focused on building power. We do this through four key activities*:

- Narrative shift, human infrastructure with staffing and/or skill training people, building interconnected leadership and strategy;
- Relational infrastructure through collaborations and our Partner Network;
- Hard infrastructure and tools such as digital tools, platforms, data, research, media production; and
- Providing and facilitating increased financial resources to support ongoing communications work.

**We credit our knowledge of these terms to the publication, Million Voter Project's Narrative Power. Accelerating Narrative Change from the Ground Up.*

OUR GRANTMAKING

GRANTEE CROSS-POLLINATION AND COLLABORATION



A critical part of Wildseeds Fund's work is to build power knowing that communications is the key tool of organizers to connect, educate and base build. One of the key strategies behind this work is to build narrative power by sharing unified narrative strategies across the organizations and leadership within the greater movement community. Our intention is to facilitate the amplification of critical voices and strengthen the mobilization toward vital climate solutions, community nourishment, and land justice across the nation.

We accomplish this across multiple programs and practices, including supporting opportunities for cross-organization collaborations and skill sharing to foster strategic narrative alignment. This cross-pollination also leads to even more impact and visibility for frontline communities.

In 2023, Wildseeds Fund supported several grantee partners, including the **Black Farmer Fund**, **Black Church Food Security Network**, **National Black Food and Justice Alliance**, and **Sweet Freedom Farm**, in a collaborative session and activation tent at the Martha's Vineyard African American Film Festival. Together, they were able to shed light on the legacy of Black farmers and highlight their collective work in food justice.



COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE

PARTICIPATORY GRANTMAKING

At Wildseeds Fund, our commitment to participatory grantmaking is driven by the priority we place on community-led solutions. We believe frontline communities most impacted by inequities need to be supported in their leadership and that marginalized communities need to be centered in the decision-making structures that affect their resources, rights and opportunities. As an extension of these values, we believe communities should make capital allocations that directly impact critical grassroots initiatives and frontline narratives across the nation. Our approach has evolved Wildseeds Fund into a deeper ecology of relationships and accountability. Combined with our co-governance model and ceded grantmaking power, our community partners decide how to use and leverage philanthropic capital to build community economic power and political leadership. This approach has also enabled our ability to build partnerships in often under/unfunded rural geographies.

We continue to foster inclusion in our co-governance by building partnerships within our grantee and collaborative networks. In 2023, we welcomed two new grant advisors to expand our reach and engagement to new potential grantees and partners. We are ecstatic to have Onyx Ramírez and Juan Santiago!



Onyx Ramírez (she/her/hers) is a passionate advocate dedicated to empowering and centering BIPOC folks and the LGBTQIA+ community. Originally from Washington Heights, NYC, she has devoted her life's work to fostering equity and amplifying underrepresented voices. Onyx is currently the Senior Communications Manager at Black Farmer Fund. She believes in the transformative power of sustainable agriculture and its potential to create a more just and inclusive society.



Juan Santiago is a Zapotec-indigenous immigrant and lives in Madera, California. Juan has a deep understanding of the challenges faced by the immigrant communities on both sides of the US/Mexico borders and the importance of empowering these communities through economic development initiatives. Currently, Juan works as a loan officer at Feed the Hunger Fund, where he assists food entrepreneurs in under-served and low-resourced rural communities.

COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE

PARTNER NETWORK



In 2022, we formed a Partner Network, formerly known as Grantee Network, with current and former grantee partners to connect narrative and culture shift work of food and farm systems work. In 2023, we set out to develop and improve the skills of our grantee partners. More often than not, our grantee partners' communications teams are teams of 1 or wearing other official hats. For collective movements to be strong, we understand the importance of equipping organizations in the field with the tools needed to make an impact.

In April & May 2023, Yates Creative developed a series of workshops to help grantees build and update their communications strategy. Each grantee partner received digital toolkits with resources from each workshop. Yates Creative's workshop series included:

- The **Website Messaging Workshop** was created to help participants craft values-based language that they can use to connect with audiences online.
- The **Digital Strategy Workshop** was created to help participants strategically utilize social media to further their movements.
- The **Media Skills Workshop** was created to help participants strategically interact with the media and learn how to develop and launch a media campaign.

Later in October, Wildseeds Fund held its first virtual Partner meet-up, an opportunity for grantee partners to share their communications and organizing skills, challenges and needs across organizations. The communications workshop with Yates Creative is just the beginning for grantee partner skill development! We hope to provide and publicize useful training opportunities in years to come.

WILDSEEDS FUND

RESOURCES

[Creating a Partner Network](#)

[Get Out of The Way](#)

[Our Framework for Change](#)

[Finding Purpose in Philanthropy](#)

[Decolonizing the Food System](#)

[Unapologetically Reclaiming The Land](#)

[Foodways and Wordways](#)

[Narrative Power and Belonging](#)

[Power of Participatory Grantmaking](#)

[Rematriating the Narrative in the UK](#)

OUR PEOPLE

We use a co-governance model made up of a Grants Advisory and a Steering Committee to collaboratively make decisions about our strategic direction, core values, and growth. The Steering Committee is responsible for Wildseeds Fund's operational well-being, while the Grants Advisors guide Wildseeds Fund's grants process, programs, and funding determinations. We are extremely grateful to you for your leadership, generosity and courage.



Sarah Bell
Steering Committee



LaVon Colhour
Steering Committee



Chris Griffiths
Steering Committee



Masika Henson
Steering Committee &
Grants Advisor



Adam Hymans
Steering Committee &
Grants Advisor



Rubi Orozco Santos
Grants Advisor



Onyx Ramirez
Steering Committee &
Grants Advisor



Juan Santiago
Grants Advisor

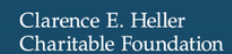


Megan Saynisch
Steering Committee

GRATITUDE

We want to extend our gratitude to each and every brave community member, frontline leader and funder making our work possible. Through our program and movement support, organizations are enabled to creatively and strategically amplify their voices for transformative change. In this way, we are emboldening new, thriving food and farm system narratives in the world. Thank you for being an active part of necessary change in honor of our ancestors and for generations to come as we imagine the new ancient future.

2023 FUNDERS



We also want to give a special thanks to our anonymous funders!

CALL FOR GIVING

We are incredibly thankful to our funding partners for continuing to support our work, and in turn, making it possible for grassroots organizers to create equitable and economically just food and agricultural systems. We have deep gratitude in our ability to align with partners and community leaders who are so fully committed to community nourishment, climate resilience, and sustainability.

Still, in this current political moment, the need to mobilize resources for increased grantmaking and movement support is critically urgent. By investing in Wildseeds Fund, you are leveraging your giving power by supporting coordinated movement leaders across rural and urban regions who are building political and economic power through food and agricultural systems.

As movement partners and funders committed to the systemic and cultural transformation required to achieve just, equitable, and climate resilient communities, Wildseeds Fund remains committed to ensuring that grassroots organizations have the tools they need. Community-focused offerings like Wildseeds Fund's Wildseeds Grant program and our Capacity Grants make this possible.

We invite you to join us as a funding partner. To start a conversation contact our executive director, Esperanza Pallana at esperanza@wildseedsfund.org.



**WILDSEEDS
FUND**

2023 IMPACT REPORT

**MOVEMENT LED GRANTMAKING TO
EMBOLDEN COMMUNITY POWER**