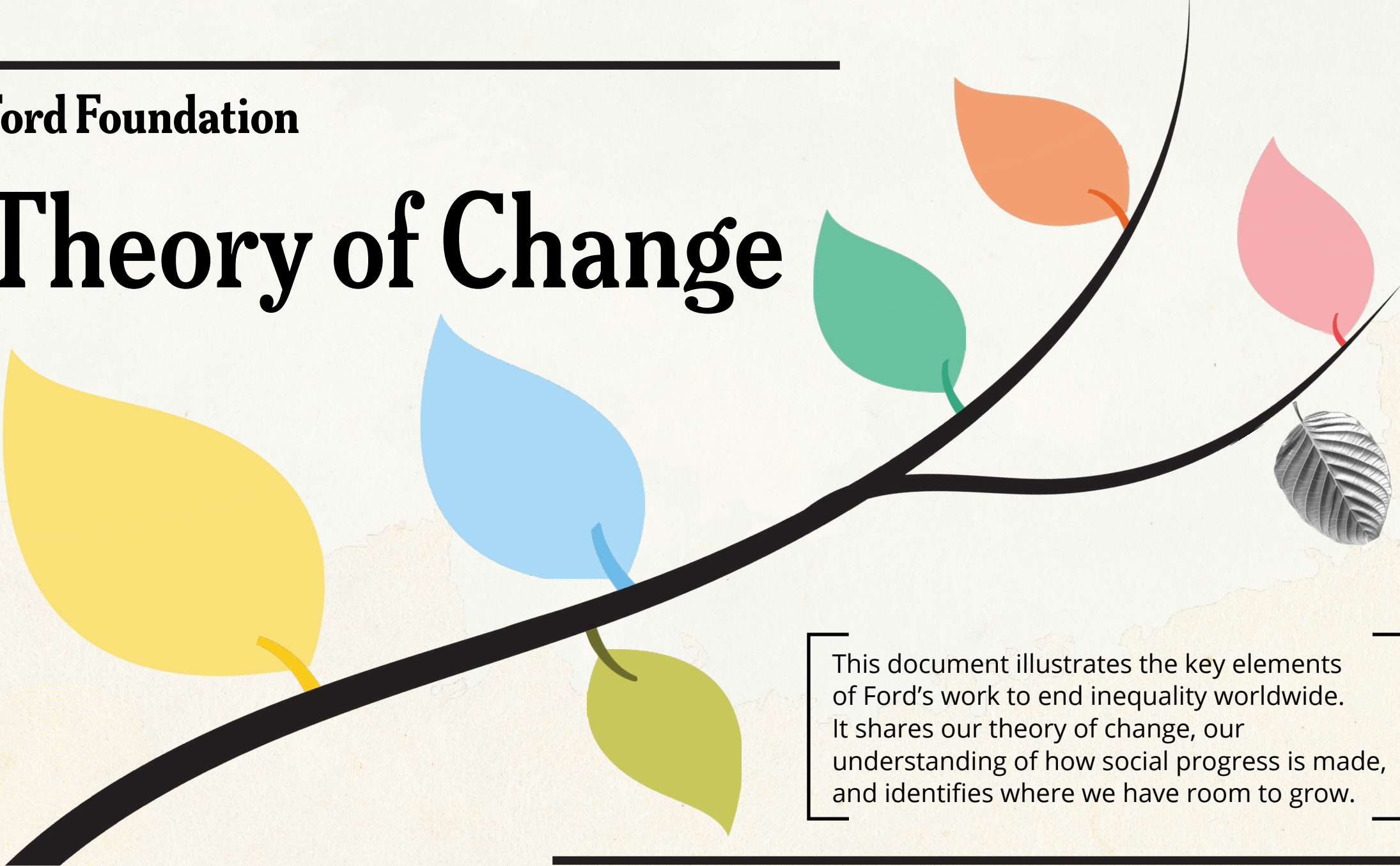


Ford Foundation

# Theory of Change



This document illustrates the key elements of Ford's work to end inequality worldwide. It shares our theory of change, our understanding of how social progress is made, and identifies where we have room to grow.

# Ford's commitment to disrupting inequality

At Ford, we envision a world in which all people uphold human rights, engage in decision-making that affects them, enjoy equitable access to resources, and realize their full potential.

Around the world, inequality persists as the result of imbalances in power between people, communities, countries, and regions, and of historical hierarchies based on identity. These systems are deeply entrenched and upheld by those seeking to preserve power and sow discord for their own gain.

We believe that our work can be catalytic when strategically implemented. We invest in “3 I’s”: Individuals, Institutions, and Ideas, each of which are vital to supporting change. The voices of powerful, compassionate leaders combined with the support of innovative organizations allow beneficial new ideas to flourish and reshape our world.

Addressing inequality is at the center of everything we do.



Primarily providing multiyear general / core support grants.

Connecting across social justice movements.

Mobilizing other funders.

Facilitating connections between grantees and powerful decision-makers.

Amplifying the goals of our grantmaking through mission-related investments.

# Our strategies

Ford recognizes that transformational social change takes time, requires collaboration, and are often nonlinear. Therefore, we combine many strategies into our work, including community organizing, building alliances, and engaging with decision makers. We engage with policy advocacy, budget analysis, evidence-building, strategic litigation and corporate

engagement, involving civil society, government, and the private sector.

We also believe that changing society means changing values. This requires deep ending prejudice and discrimination and spread diversity and inclusion. Much of this is done through shifting narratives across society and culture.

# Our work supports partners to push for change in any of the following ways:

Ensure fields are representative of those most impacted by inequality.

Support capacity building of individuals, institutions and movements.

Research and share evidence with key decision-makers.

Advance strategic litigation.

Advocate for the passage and implementation of public policies and international standards.

Support cultural interventions to shift norms and values.

Build and strengthen intersecting alliances.

Engage and connect private sector and non-state actors to embrace equity.

Create space to innovate and reimagine the fields in which we work.

## We focus on three root causes of inequality:

Unequal access to and representation within governments, their institutions, and services.

Unfair rules of the economy that preserve the interests of an elite.

Cultural norms and beliefs that entrench inequality and reinforce persistent prejudice and discrimination.

# How change happens

Disrupting inequality requires many actors, and Ford is one small actor in this effort.

Governments must be accountable, transparent, accessible, and free from elite influence. Political power should represent and respond to diverse voices.

Companies must prioritize all stakeholders and the public good in matters of sustainability and equality. Economic actors require

regulations and oversight; they must be accountable to labor and serve society's long-term interests.

Culture must represent diverse voices and uplift marginalized perspectives, shifting norms towards inclusion and equity.

Across all areas of society, and in every decision-making process, the people who are closest to the issues at stake should be engaged and trusted to shape decisionmaking.

# Our theory of change aims to disrupt inequality through support for these goals:

Government policies & practices are representative of and accountable to diverse communities.

Deep forms of prejudice are dismantled, ensuring identity does not dictate inequitable life outcomes.

Communities thrive, regardless of identity or politics, as government protects basic rights.

Powerful economic actors increasingly act in the interests of labor and broader public interests.

Communities, governments, & corporations protect & sustain our natural environment.

Marginalized voices & diverse perspectives are uplifted through culture, reducing toxic polarization.

Technology is designed, governed, and maintained in broader public interests.

# Ford works in nine interconnected program areas that challenge inequality

Creativity and Free Expression

Natural Resources and Climate Change

Technology and Society

Disability Rights

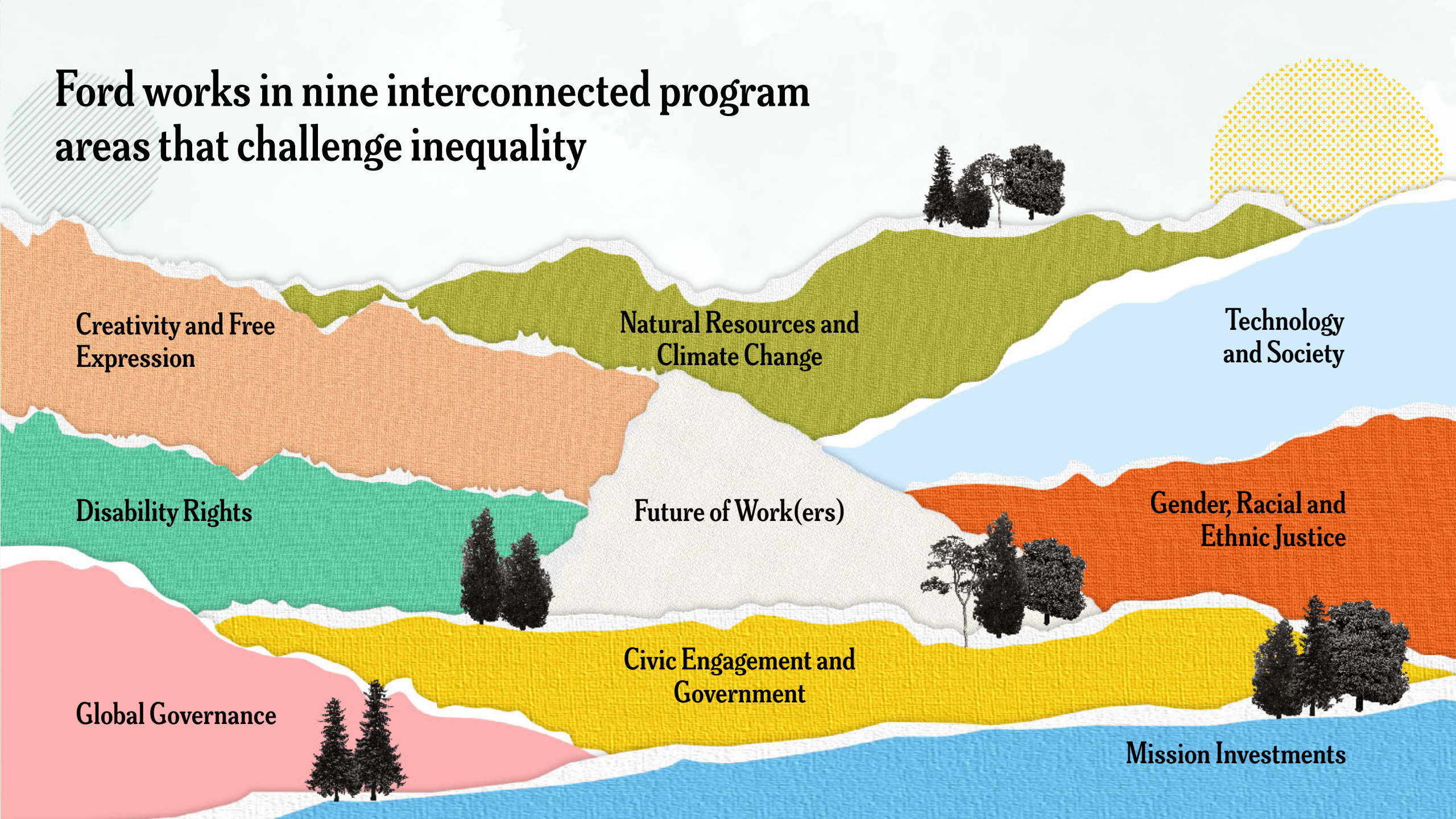
Future of Work(ers)

Gender, Racial and Ethnic Justice

Global Governance

Civic Engagement and Government

Mission Investments





# Who we support

In each area, we develop strategies that identify specific avenues for change and articulate our assumptions for how we believe change can be realized.

As a funder committed to disrupting inequality, it is critically important to think about who we support and how we do it. On the “who” front:

- We fund organizations with strong reputations that are important to an ecosystem, or
- We support organizations and leaders with diverse experiences and identities, with an eye toward seeding a strong “bench” of emerging leaders who have bold, transformative ideas for change.
- We seek to support organizations that are accountable to and representative of communities most impacted by inequality.