

The Tamarack Institute

ANNUAL REPORT 2025



OUR ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In the spirit of respect, reciprocity, and truth, we honour and recognize that our work occurs across Turtle Island (North America) and around the world. We do this in acknowledgment of the legacies of colonialization, slavery, and racism and with accountability so that our work for community change promotes more equitable futures for all.

Land Acknowledgement

We recognize that most of our work occurs on the ancestral homelands of Indigenous Peoples including the First Nations, Métis, and Inuit. We recognize the contributions of Indigenous people and support their ongoing struggle for self-determination and sovereignty. We work to understand the history of the lands upon which we are guests and to contribute to justice for all Indigenous Peoples.

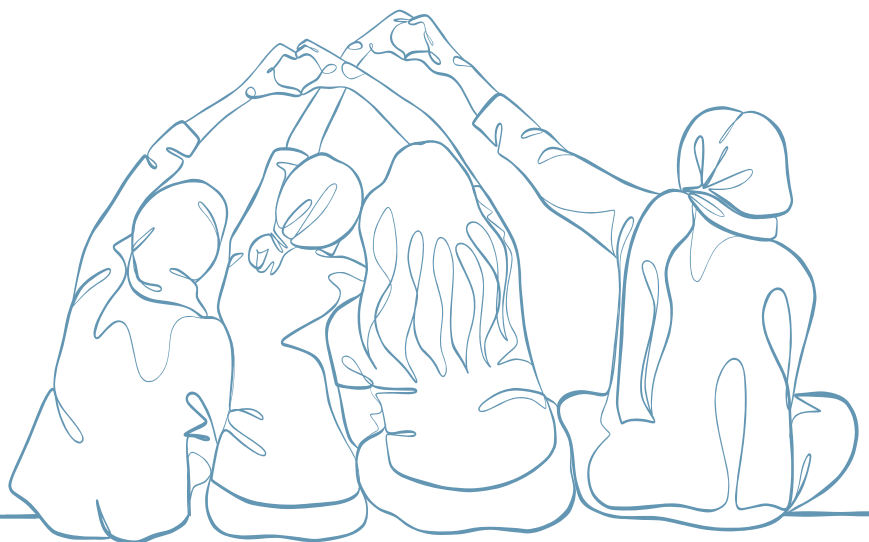
African Ancestral Acknowledgement

We also wish to acknowledge those who came to Turtle Island – as migrants either in this generation or in generations past – and those of us who came here involuntarily, particularly those brought to these lands as a result of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade and Slavery. Tamarack pays tribute to those ancestors of African origin and descent and thanks them for their contributions toward transforming systems in ways that promote everyone's sense of belonging and safety. At Tamarack, we are taking action that allows us to be aware of, recognize, and address the systemic ways in which anti-Black racism manifests.

Black and Indigenous communities demonstrate that we can work together in solidarity toward peace and equity as we use collective wisdom, knowledge, and gifts that promote healing within our communities.

Reconciliation Commitment

We recognize that, across this land, Indigenous rights holders continue to endure systematic oppression and inequities that have resulted from widespread colonialist systems and ideologies. Recognizing the importance of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit perspectives, knowledges, and sovereignty, we commit to building intention, respect, reciprocity, collaboration, and cultural humility into the relationships we hold with First Nations, Métis, and Inuit rights holders. We seek to create opportunities for shared learning, co-creation, and collective action that honour First Nations, Métis, and Inuit values, traditions, and aspirations and that honour reconciliation. Through our commitment to reconciliation, we will also incorporate Indigenization and decolonization frameworks into our work. While connected, each are distinct in their goals and approaches, and each are equally important in fostering equity and justice for Indigenous Peoples. In recognition of Tamarack's position as guests on the ancestral homelands of Indigenous Peoples, we commit that work related to reconciliation will be led by individuals who self-identify as First Nations, Métis, and Inuit, seeking external support where internal team member capability is limited.



LETTER FROM THE TAMARACK INSTITUTE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

From a Board perspective, meaningful systemic change is driven by strong organizing, shared leadership, and a deep understanding of community and institutional dynamics. It is through the lived experiences, relationships, and leadership of people that priorities are grounded and solutions take shape. It is through collective leadership and coordinated effort that momentum is sustained, and the status quo is effectively challenged. And it is through a clear understanding of place that this work remains responsive to the unique strengths, histories, and realities of the communities we serve.

Sustained progress also depends on having the resources and conditions necessary to support this work over time. While passion can spark and energize action, it is the alignment of people, strategy, and resources that enables change to endure. This is reflected in our partners' commitment to staying engaged, adapting, learning and unlearning, and continuing to advance equitable outcomes even when progress is complex or incremental. This enduring drive is what makes the Tamarack Board unique and helps move efforts beyond isolated initiatives toward coordinated, systemic solutions that create lasting impact.

Ana Gonzalez Guerrero captured it well in our Spring Tamarack board meeting, where we affirmed our commitment to a framework and actions that centres equity, anti-racism, and reconciliation. "Changing systems at this moment requires doubling down. And doubling down will provide reassurance and strength to others looking to do the same."

We are committed to transparent and effective governance, recognizing it as the stabilizer that enables strong, consistent, and accountable operations. This year, we rewrote our bylaws to clarify how decision-making is distributed across the network, expand the composition of our committees, and formalize leadership roles. We also supported an open call for Board members, strengthening transparency and accessibility, and updated key policies on gift acceptance and financial investments to better align with our values and long-term sustainability.

In 2025, we also offered a [platform](#) for social purpose organizations to share their vision for powerful partnerships with philanthropy. This is critical and timely, as it helps shift traditional power dynamics, ensuring that those closest to the work have a stronger voice in shaping funding priorities and partnership approaches. By centring these perspectives, we foster more equitable, responsive, and impactful collaborations with diverse people - where resources are aligned with real community needs, and solutions are co-developed rather than imposed.

This year marks a period of significant change for the Board. We are grateful for the generosity of both incoming and outgoing members, who have given their time, shared their expertise, and led with care. Their contributions have strengthened our governance, balancing fresh perspectives with continuity in our values and direction, and helping to steer the organization through a complex and changing landscape.

We are deeply grateful to our departing Board colleagues - Sunshine Chen, Ana Gonzalez Guerrero, Lori Hewson, Precious Ile, and Mary Pickering - for the tenacity, experience, and care they brought, and the community they nurtured. Like so many community changemakers, they poured themselves into the quiet, daily work that makes collective efforts possible. Thank you for your dedication and leadership.

To our incoming board members - Louise Adongo, Scott Graham, Anna Hardie, Hisham Abu-Abdel, and Krystal Renschler - welcome! You join at an energizing moment in our work - strengthening partnerships across philanthropy, national networks, and international coalitions working to localize and scale our shared impact. Most importantly, you join alongside local communities who are acting with clarity and determination to advance the future they envision.

And to the tens of thousands of you who shape and define who and what Tamarack is, you embody the power of people, the grounding of place, and the enduring momentum of passion. You inspire our action - thank you for being part of this journey and for the collective impact we create together.

With appreciation and resolve,
Nation Cheong, Outgoing Board Chair / Chair Emeritus
Colleen Cote-Christopherson, Incoming Board Chair

[View our board members](#)

PLACE-BASED CHANGE HAS NEVER MATTERED MORE

During the late 2025 Tamarack staff quarterly team retreat, we reaffirmed our commitment to ending poverty in all its forms. While our context and approaches have shifted dramatically since we set this intention in 2020 – our commitment to the goal is unwavering.

In 2025, a framework grounded in love anchored our contributions to systems change. We asked: How do we show love to ourselves? How – in nurturing collaboration – do we show our love for others? How are our collaborations prioritizing trust, learning, and community-driven impacts? How are we fusing love and power to shift policies, narratives, and other systems?

We amplified community experience, learning, and aspirations, to scale impact, discern questions and priorities, and mobilize individuals ready to work through them.



We supported the growing number of communities and changemakers grappling with how to end poverty in its many forms – economic, environmental, intergenerational, and relational. We celebrated the growing number of partners (including the World Economic Forum, National Advisory Council on Poverty, the Public Health Agency of Canada, and the Government of Manitoba) who centred the idea that lasting change begins in communities, with those who most acutely experience what’s not working, and with networks that bring communities together.

The stories ahead highlight how communities and changemakers sought, sparked and celebrated local wisdom, strengths, and dreams of communities in 2025. They elevate how communities modeled collaboration across sectors and scales in service of meaningful change. They also reflect on the three priorities that shape Tamarack's contributions to ending poverty in all its forms

1. Creating spaces for people to build connections, practice new skills, and share new ways of thinking and working
2. Catalyzing places to coordinate their numerous assets toward transforming systems, and
3. Nurturing movements that bring many places together to shift policies, offer new narratives, and build collective power.

And we celebrated you. In tumultuous times, you moved us into Tamarack's next era – one unshakeable in its commitment to ending poverty in its many forms. And one where gets there through by building community and working together, centring equity, anti-racism, and reconciliation in visible and specific ways.

Everyone has gifts to contribute to building equitable outcomes for communities.

Community is a verb.

We are thrilled to be in action with you.

Tamarack's 2025 alignment team: Danya Pastuszek (she/her), Bobby MacPherson (they/them), Jana Harris (she/her), Jorge Garza (he/him/il), Justin Williams (he/him), Lisa Attygalle (she/her), Rochelle Ignacio (she/her), and Ruté Ojigbo (she/her).

[Learn more about the Power of Place](#)

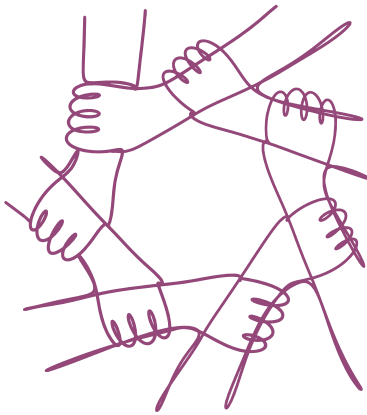
WHAT WE LEARNED IN 2025

Tamarack exists to end poverty in all its forms. Economic poverty. Social poverty. The poverty of education inequity. The poverty of our relationships with our planet and other living things.

We convene and build the capacity of 40,000+ changemakers every year through webinars, workshops, courses, cohorts, and 1-on-1 coaching. We work alongside over 150 cities, regions, and First Nations, mostly in rural and remote areas and small cities. We recognize communities as key to solving most complex social problems, and we bring local communities together to shape public policy and narrative.

In 2025 – halfway through the decade of action and Tamarack's 2030 strategic plan – our work alongside communities deepened our understanding that::

- **Belonging is the foundation upon which thriving communities are built.** It is core to our civic life; when we feel connected to our communities, we're more likely to contribute positively to their futures. Belonging is the foundation of democracy. Achieving conditions that nurture belonging requires putting diverse lived experiences at the centre of decision-making and developing approaches that are community-led, equity-focused, and informed by local context and data. To ensure lasting change, belonging must be embedded within policy, practice, and systems through approaches like a Canada-wide Belonging Strategy. Tamarack's 2025 From Dialogue to Action: The Strategy for Belonging Midpoint Report highlights more on how communities are boldly advancing belonging.



- **Relationships are the engine of change.** Our work with local communities reaffirmed that how we do our work matters. We saw consistently how relationships - both within and between communities - are not a “soft” byproduct of collaboration, but the foundation of how we move from awareness of an issue into action. We witnessed profound and systemic shifts as communities moved toward reciprocity. In Yellowknife, the Yellowknife Youth Network transformed its leadership structures to centre a collective agency, proving that youth engagement is most impactful when rooted in mutual accountability. In London, we saw climate resilience built as partners work one conversation at a time to centre lived experience and, move beyond planning to implement strategies that truly reflect local needs. These communities remind us that the strength of our connections is a form of systems change; systemic change grows through trust, not just transactions
- **We can’t achieve our goals without centring equity.** In 2025, after a two-year consultation and design process, we named our commitments to equity, anti-racism, reconciliation, and belonging in [Seeds of Transformation: A Loving Framework for Equity, Reconciliation and Belonging](#). We took steps in seven areas focused on culture, governance, policy, relationships, and decision-making in service of ending equity disparities in communities. We focused on expanding our understanding of anti-racism and reconciliation, testing an equity analysis tool, and launching a decision-making framework.

- **Ending working poverty will strengthen every aspect of wellbeing.** Nearly half of people who live in poverty in Canada work; of this group, a third hold full-time, full-year jobs. Working poverty is pervasive and strains people, families, communities, economies, and our collective well-being. Seeing this, Tamarack, alongside communities in Chatham-Kent, Drumheller, Saskatoon, Trail and Winnipeg undertook a three-year project to create and begin implementation of ending working poverty strategies. We worked with the Open Policy Institute to understand the local labour markets, service gaps, and access to amenities in each place. We shared the process, learnings, early impacts, and roles that each of us can plan in the [Ending Working Poverty Roadmap and Toolkit](#). The patterns that emerged informed insights about how financial capital flows and narratives must shift - and became the basis for community-driven public policy priorities related to financial inclusion, basic income, income support and belonging.



In 2025, Tamarack convened 139 members across Canada and the USA. Collectively, our network reached more than 500 communities.

10% of members were new to Tamarack in 2026 (14 members)

13% included French as a preferred working language (18 members)

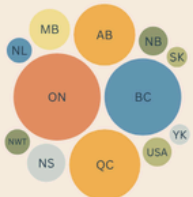
40% were deeply engaged through peer learning cohorts (55 members)

81% were accessing learning from more than one Network for Change (112 members)



The provinces with the most Tamarack members were Ontario (36), BC (28) and Quebec (24).
Four members were based in the USA.

Distribution of Members by Province, Territory or USA



42,748 people in the Tamarack network

4,504 people who learned with us



22 workshops



806 workshop attendees



148 consulting clients

Population Reached



21% of members reached rural areas, 57% urban, and 22% both

Tamarack Member Since



14% of members joined before 2015, while 68% joined after 2019

Countries Represented



Learners joined us virtually from 120 countries around the world

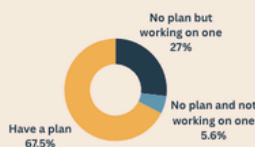
Stage of Development

Members were relatively evenly distributed across stages



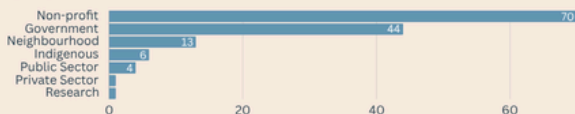
Community Plan

95% of members either had a plan or were working toward one



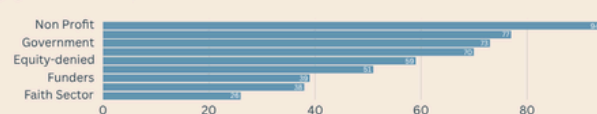
Sector of Convening Organization

82% of members were convened by non-profits or governments



Sectors Members Engage in Leadership Roles

64% of members engaged more than one sector as part of leadership tables



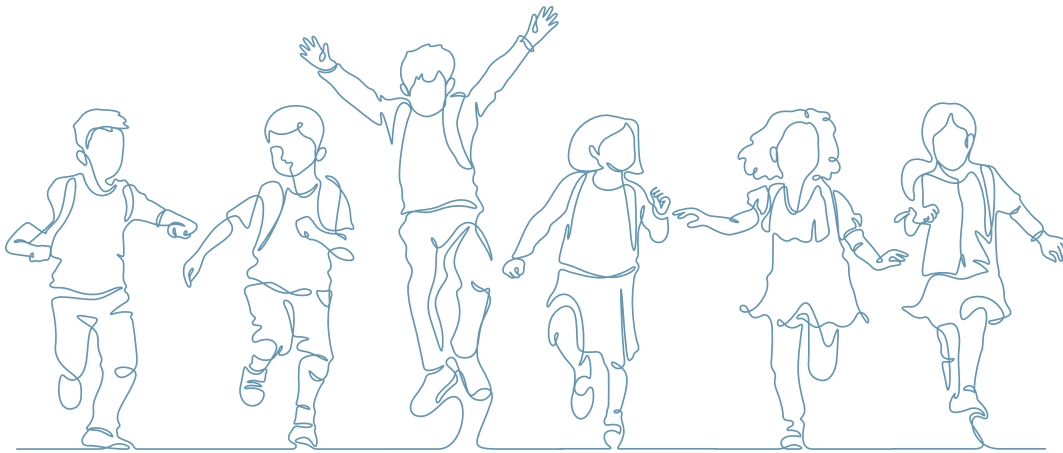
- Financial capital is critical to the transformations we need.** In 2025, we supported local communities to diversify revenue sources, and we explored what it would take to access and influence new types of financial capital. Through the Learning Centre, we partnered with a dozen funders in moving toward more participatory granting practices, building community engagement frameworks, and exploring capacity to fund collaborative efforts. We brought non-profits, charities, funders, and others into a shared message about the role of collaborative, honest, and purpose-driven relationships between funders and organizations in achieving community-driven results. We grounded in the multiple roles that those who direct financial capital have in the work of community change.

Explore the tools, resources, and stories shaping this work

STORIES OF ACTION AND IMPACT

The stories below are but a few examples of communities embracing bold action. These stories show how innovation starts locally with people who can see the need for change and who come together to mobilize it. They also should have the opportunity to invest more deeply in place-based collaboration and leadership.

- **Catalyzing Collective Well-being: A Multi-Level Approach to Systems Change.** Ending poverty and social fragmentation requires more than isolated interventions; it requires a multi-layered approach that bridges People, Places, and Policy. Two partnerships show what we can achieve when we weave these layers: Tamarack's collaborative work with the Public Health Agency of Canada's Intersectoral Action Fund and our deep work with the Tri-Cities Intergenerational Belonging Project, an active Tamarack member. While these projects address different dimensions of poverty, both build the relational infrastructure required for a society where everyone can thrive. With Public Health and local communities, we witnessed how amplifying the wisdom of cross-sector leaders can reshape public health to be more equitable and community-led. Simultaneously, our journey with the Tri-Cities team proved that bonds across generations defend against loneliness and inequity.
- **Advancing Equity Through Trust-Based, Participatory Grant Making in Region of Waterloo.** The Region of Waterloo demonstrated institutional courage through a trust-based, participatory grantmaking that places equity-denied communities at the forefront of decision-making. As an active Tamarack member, the Region adopted practices and tools designed to shift power directly to community partners and beneficiaries, specifically First Nations, Inuit, and Métis, African, Caribbean, and Black, and racialized communities. Leveraging its Community Safety and Wellbeing Plan through this participatory approach, the Region directed \$2.89M in funding, contributing to nearly \$15M invested in housing supports, culturally relevant services, mental health programming, and other initiatives that strengthened connection and well-being. By reducing application barriers and inviting community members into grantmaking panels, the Region has deepened cross-sector partnerships and demonstrated what can happen when trust and relationships are prioritized over transactional investments.



- **20 Years of Impact: How Calgary and Hamilton Shifted Systems and Reduced Poverty.** For two decades, Vibrant Communities Calgary and the Hamilton Roundtable for Poverty Reduction have demonstrated the transformative potential of long-term, community-driven systems change. As Tamarack members since the very beginning of the Vibrant Communities network, these local partnerships have modeled the persistence required to shift the mental models, power dynamics, and resource flows that sustain poverty. By convening diverse actors around a common agenda, from Hamilton’s focus on centring lived experience to advancing bold policy like Basic Income, to Calgary’s success in aligning municipal leadership to influence provincial poverty reduction plans, both partnerships have used data, storytelling, and deep relationship-building to shift local narratives. Supported by Tamarack’s frameworks, coaching, and relational infrastructure, their journeys prove that sustained cross-sector collaboration and an ongoing commitment to place-based action are vital ingredients for accelerating systems change and ensuring it takes deep root.

- **The Power of Cohorts: Accelerating the transition from awareness to action.** Tamarack’s learning cohorts demonstrate when collective wisdom is harnessed, it becomes the ultimate catalyst for community transformation. Through our cohorts, collaboratives moved from theory to practice, embedding belonging into local priorities, advanced youth employment pathways, drove population-level poverty reduction, strengthened rural economies, and bridging the gap between climate planning and practical implementation. They build relational infrastructure, accelerate action, and strengthen the capacity of changemakers to lead through uncertainty. Grounded in foundational frameworks like [Seeds of Transformation](#) and the [Community Changemaker Self-Assessment Tool](#), Tamarack is supporting individuals and collaboratives, from neighbourhood associations to cross-sector roundtables, to navigate their change journeys with unyielding courage, authenticity, and a relentless focus on advancing a more equitable future.
- **[Supporting Youth Innovation in the North](#).** The collaboration between the Tamarack Institute, Youthful Cities, Hazhǫ̀ Eḻex̱è Łets’e̱zhe (Yellowknife, Northwest Territories), and [Territorial Youth Collective](#) is addressing systemic barriers to youth employment in the Northwest Territories and Yukon. Grounded in research from the [DEVlab project](#), which highlighted that youth, particularly Black, Indigenous, and racialized individuals, experienced 15% greater disruptions to education during the pandemic, this partnership focuses on shifting institutional mental models from deficit-based views to relationship-centered systems. By recognizing the distinct contexts, histories, and realities of remote and Indigenous communities, this partnership is contributing to reimagining systems in a way that prioritize relationships, value diverse strengths, and create opportunities for youth leadership and influence.

[View more stories of impact](#)

OUR FINANCIALS

Much of Tamarack's financial resources support the staff team to engage directly with communities and advance the work. The next largest investment is in our community partners, ensuring they are well-resourced to do this work.

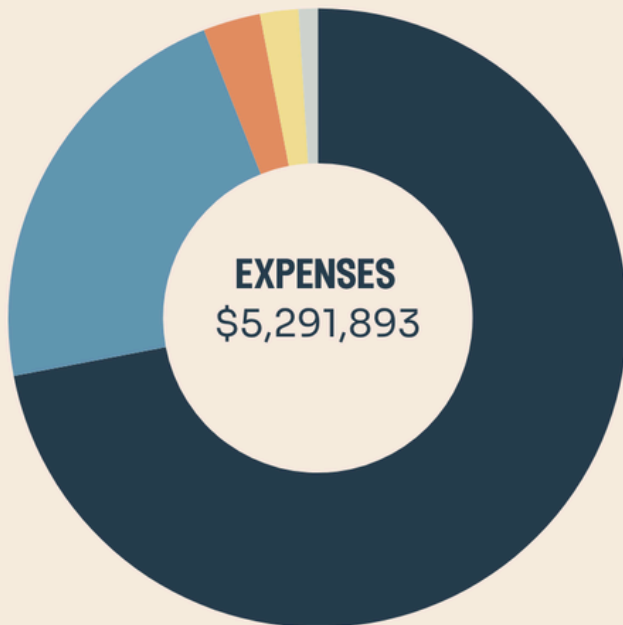
Staff: \$3,791,982 – including staff salaries and benefits for the members of Tamarack's teams: the Learning Centre, Networks for Change, Digital Sales Engagement and Learning, Public Policy and Resource Activation, Equity, Anti-racism, and Reconciliation, People and Culture, and Finance and Operations.

Translation, Interpretation, and Communications: \$101,669 – including translation and interpretation costs and publication and technology expenses, as we work to make resources increasingly accessible.

Learning, Evaluation, and Collaborative Improvement: \$170,204 – including travel, evaluation, coaching and workshops.

Community Compensation and Contributions: \$1,149,024 – including honoraria for changemakers who contribute to webinars, workshops, tools, and publications; compensation for lived experience experts who participate in cohorts and communities of practice; operational grants for local communities; and innovation funds for local communities.

Administration: \$79,014 – including audit, insurance and banking, revenue generation, and general operating expenses.



- 72%** Staff
\$3,791,982
- 22%** Community Compensation and Contributions
\$1,149,024
- 3%** Learning, Evaluation, and Collaborative Improvement
\$170,204
- 2%** Translation, Interpretation, and Communications
\$101,669
- 1%** Administration
\$79,014

The organization continues to maintain its' \$3.53 million Sustainability Reserve which was not accessed in 2025. There are no intentions to do so going into 2026.

[View the full audited statements](#)

WHAT THIS MOMENT REQUIRES OF US AS WE MOVE TO A NEW YEAR

We are living through a period of deep uncertainty, widening inequity, and a fraying of trust and connection. Community – and coordinated action across systems – is not peripheral to the solution. It is essential. And so, in the years ahead, our work will continue to bridge divides, amplify the answers that live in communities, and build a new form of collective leadership – one that operates within communities and reaches into institutions, systems, and policy.

People

- We will strengthen a connected community of practitioners who are grounded in our practice areas and continuously provide support to steward change.
- We will experiment with learning formats like asynchronous courses, in-person gatherings, and spaces focused on provincial policy and content (i.e. shared measurement, equity and anti-racism, and accessing and influencing diverse types of capital) that enables transformative, community-driven change.
- We will work to strengthen connections and support philanthropists and policymakers to see, celebrate, and bring their full assets to community-driven efforts.

Place

- Through long-term relationships, we will catalyze progress toward systems change in 150 place-based communities.
- We will work to advance the voice, leadership, and influence of people with lived and living experience, ensuring their participation in leadership tables and policy discussions – and building infrastructure for compensated, recognized leadership roles.
- We will continue to build reciprocal partnerships with First Nations, Métis, Inuit, and equity-denied communities.
- We will cultivate shared learning and action across networks

Policy and Movements

- We will advance policy change in community-defined priority areas (e.g. basic income, the power of place, and belonging).
- We will work with our community partners to generate alignment on strategy and set benchmarks committed to similar end goals.
- We will continue to deploy stories and other types of evidence and data to champion the power of place, so that it becomes a powerful, well-resourced component of all transformational change strategies.
- Our equity analysis tool will continue to guide strategy, resource development, and governance decisions so that equity is embedded in how we view change.

With the existing instability and deep grief in our system, we are grateful for the community of changemakers including our donors, partners, members, and learners, for continuing to stand with us in this work. We are encouraged by your continued commitment to supporting place-based leadership and the relationships that make change possible. We are honored to be in this work with you.

[Collaborate with us](#)