



# Funding Proposal

Team: South Boston

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## Part 1. Our Focus

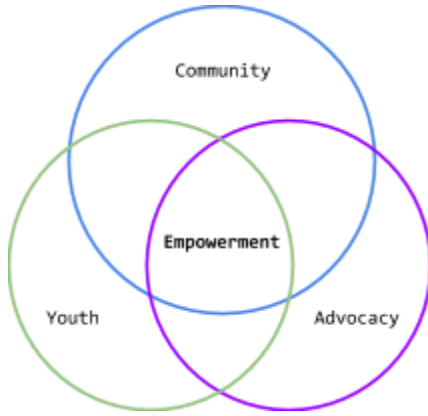
Low-income communities of color face unequal exposure to environmental hazards. In Boston, the communities of Roxbury, with a population that is 53% African American and 29% Latino<sup>1</sup>, and Chelsea, with a population that is 7% African American and 66% Latino<sup>2</sup>, have been particularly impacted. Eight of the twelve landfills in Boston are located in Roxbury and the nearby Dorchester<sup>3</sup>, and the hospitalization rate for children with asthma in Roxbury is six times the state average<sup>4</sup>. Air and water quality in Chelsea are being polluted by the industrial businesses located there<sup>5</sup>. 60% of Chelsea's borders are at risk of coastal flooding and flooding from storm surge will dramatically rise in the next ten years<sup>6</sup>.

With climate change, problems caused by socio-economic inequality and systematic racism are becoming more prominent and pressing. Youth living in communities that are disproportionately affected by environmental impacts have the best understanding of the interconnected issues, but often lack the tools to take action. Our team believes that the best way to create change is through a bottom-up approach. We want to teach and empower youth because community members should have the autonomy to make decisions on behalf of their own community. Our team feels that education and advocacy are critical tools in enabling this vision.

## Part 2. Our Approach

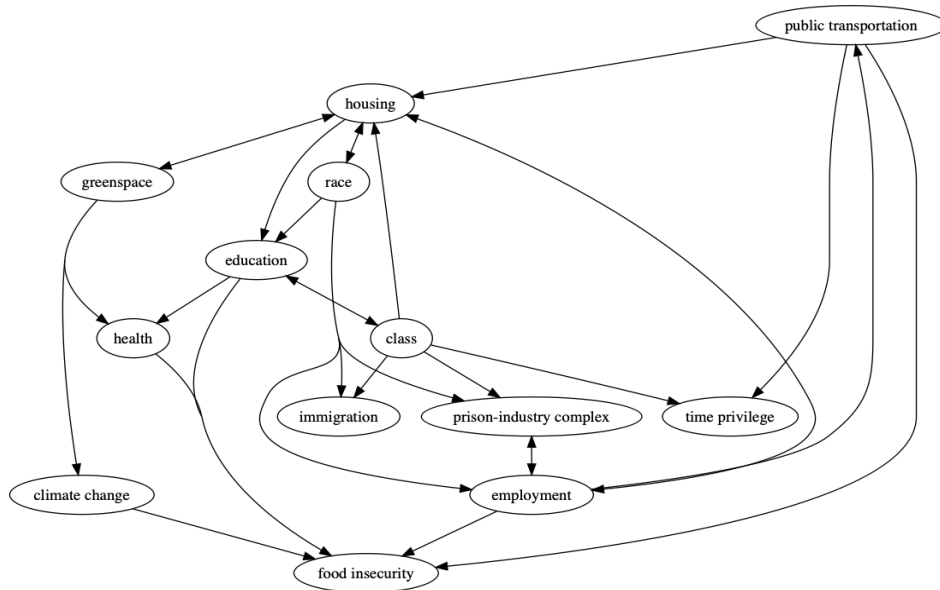
Our approach is guided by every team member's background and upbringing. Amongst the six of us, half of us grew up outside the United States and half of us identify as people of color. With a common understanding and value for diversity in mind, we honor each other's personal narratives and allow them to inform our grant allocation process.

Our team comes from diverse academic backgrounds spanning from business, design, economics, urban planning to computer science. We are brought together by a shared aspiration to apply our skillset toward important social issues that will impact our lives and those of future generations, as Rev. Mariama said.



Each team member reflected on their own narrative and what issues they can relate to the most. To accomplish this, we used the Theory of Change framework: “If we identified community, youth and advocacy as three pillars of empowerment, then we will be able to help co-create a city and an economy that is more sustainable, just and inclusive.

With our funding proposal, we aim to strike a balance between sharing our own narratives and analyzing the impact of the participating nonprofits. With the common goal of creating maximum impact with our grants, we have decided to take a “portfolio approach” to allocate the funding with a 2:2:1 split. We use time-tested financial concepts of risk management and diversification. Typically, a more risk-taking investor will receive a higher return but in a less predictable fashion. With philanthropy, we have taken a risk averse approach to our portfolio, selecting established organizations with a track record of success. In order to identify critical issue areas addressed by those nonprofits, we first created a systems map. It was clear to us that focusing on *housing* could “disrupt” multiple connected problems under the environmental inequity umbrella.



## Part 3. Our Recommended Grantees & Allocations

### Organization 1: GreenRoots

We chose to include this organization because their efforts on combating environmental injustice involve a development of youth leadership. Their vision is based on the assumption that members of underrepresented communities have the right to influence the process of environmental decision-making - and young people can learn and develop personally while working on informing and mobilizing members of that communities for that challenge. This model has already proved its effectiveness as there is a list of

projects realized by this organization, they have a constant revenue, coming from multiple individual contributors; but even more they are looking for achieve.

This organization has a variety of projects planned for realization and they cover all the range of Chelsea, MA community's needs - from fighting against hazardous Eversource substation to developing community gardens as one of means of combating food insecurity. However, the critical part remains the involvement of youth in all these activities. As youngsters participate in organization's life and campaigns, they develop their engagement with the community they live in, become more educated about environmental justice issues and acquire real-life experience of fighting for their rights. The organization's close relations and care about the community they work in reflects even in the bilingual videos they have on their website, as they have both English and Spanish ones.

We allocated **\$20,000** to Green Roots because we believe in experiential learning. We feel as these money will have the double power by addressing urgent issues of Chelsea's residents, and, moreover, helping young members of this vulnerable community to become better selves and get the opportunities they deserve.

## Organization 2: Alternatives for Communities and Environment

We chose to include this organization because ACE focuses on the youth in its community through its *Roxbury Environmental Empowerment Project* which runs programs whose goal is "to transform a sense of powerlessness into leadership – a voice and a sense of agency – toward community activism." They also focus on environmental health issues like asthma related to diesel engine exhaust, and hearing damage due to loud train cars. This aligns perfectly with our tri-prong goal of youth, advocacy, and community empowerment in Roxbury. As residents of Roxbury, we are disheartened by the disconnect between the Northeastern community and rest of Roxbury, we are angered by the adverse effects that gentrification has had on communities of color, yet we are hopeful that people care about each other and institutions are inherently made of people, as Dr. Martin mentioned in her remarks so poignantly.

We allocated **\$20,000** to this organization because we felt that this organization is really understanding the issues of environmental justice. They were the ones who pushed Massachusetts to enact its first Environmental Justice Policy. They are doing a lot to educate the youth which belongs to low income class or community of color, by giving them voice and letting the youth know that even their voices hold a space in this society. ACE has a large amount of youth programs, and they spend around 80% of their income on programs. We felt they have a good use for the money, and that any less than \$20,000 would not significantly help them in their mission.

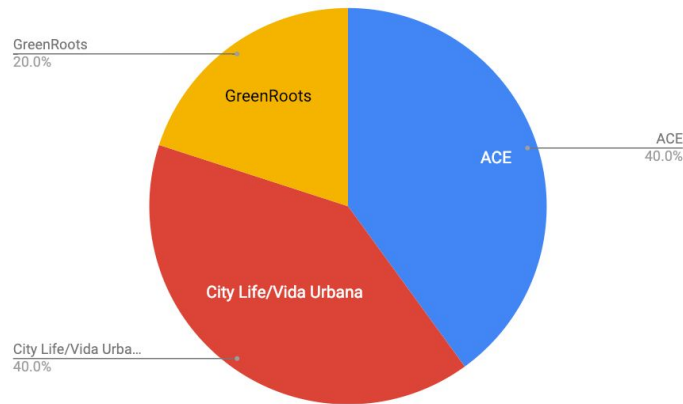
## Organization 3: City Life/Vida Urbana

City life/Vida Urbana, based in Jamaica Plain, has a 45 year track record of helping tenants by protecting them against big businesses. City Life gives individual community members access to free legal consultation, and focus strongly on fighting gentrification and displacement. With gentrification and displacement happening in the neighborhoods surrounding our campus, we feel an obligation to support an organization that protects the families with which we rub elbows at grocery stores. Having stable and affordable housing enables tenants the ability to build relationships with neighbors and form resilient community. Additionally, youth with stable environments have a better chance of doing well in school, and being active in their communities. City Life also works to teach community members how to navigate

political spheres; teaches organizing skills that make their work sustainable; and connects with other strong organizations to give their people a strong voice.

We allocated **\$10,000** to this organization because we think that protecting affordable housing can disrupt some of the socio-economic barriers that minorities face and help strengthen these communities.

Compared to the other two organizations, City Life takes a broader and more systematic approach to tackle environmental injustice. They have also clearly defined the intended use of funds being hiring a second full-time organizer to address the new wave of tenants from East Boston and Chelsea. In addition, they have demonstrated prudent management of financials with a projected revenue over six figures for the first time ever.



## Team Grant

Organization: COGdesign

Message: We allocate our **\$1000** grant to this organization as they are doing extremely important job by showing people why they should take care of their community. Professionally designed green spaces can not only change the perception of the community by its members, they positively affect the mental health and decrease the level of violence in the area. COGdesign responds to the needs of low-income and minority communities within Boston area and give them a sense that someone else is actually caring of them.

## References

<sup>1</sup>[https://docs.google.com/document/d/1KzSo4vEMcQJi2N\\_3eqk2A9rTQjOioKn7LhtfktRpLc/edit](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1KzSo4vEMcQJi2N_3eqk2A9rTQjOioKn7LhtfktRpLc/edit)

<sup>2</sup><https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/chelseacitymassachusetts>

<sup>3</sup>[https://subjectguides.lib.neu.edu/ld.php?content\\_id=46317895](https://subjectguides.lib.neu.edu/ld.php?content_id=46317895)

<sup>4</sup><https://ace-ej.org/toxictour>

<sup>5</sup><https://www.wbur.org/news/2017/07/26/environmental-justice-boston-chelsea>

<sup>6</sup>[https://www.chelseama.gov/sites/chelseama/files/uploads/20170215\\_chelsea\\_va.pdf](https://www.chelseama.gov/sites/chelseama/files/uploads/20170215_chelsea_va.pdf)