

The J.M.K. Innovation Prize

Resilient Leadership in
Times of Unrelenting Change

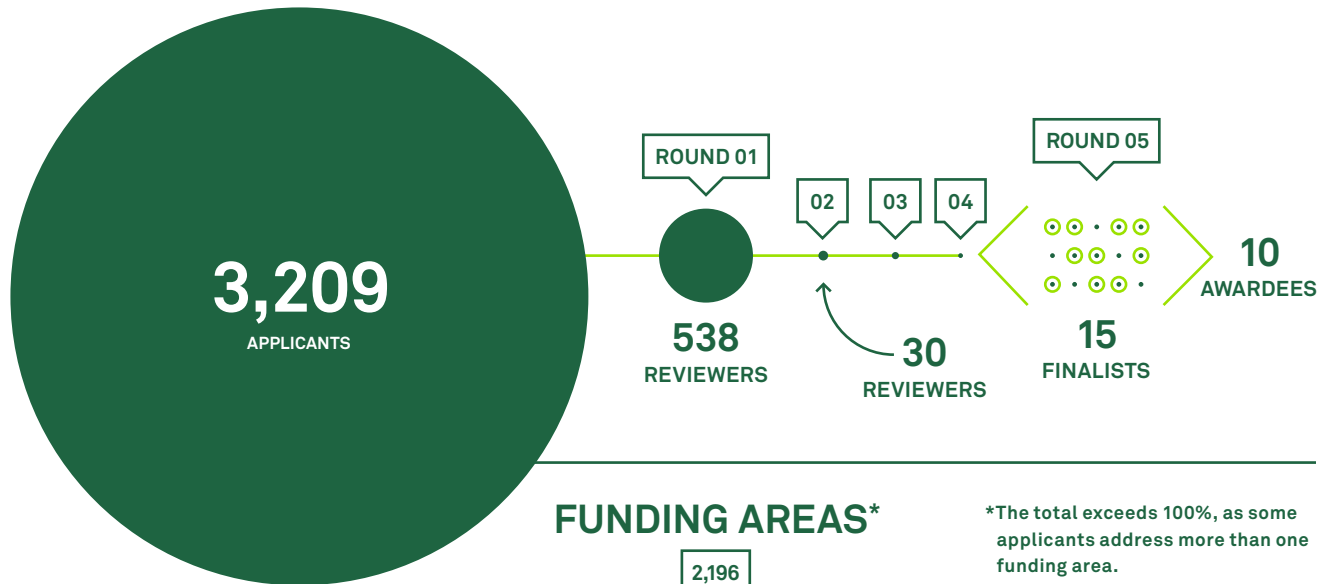


2023

**The J.M.K.
Innovation Prize
Resilient
Leadership
in Times of
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Change**

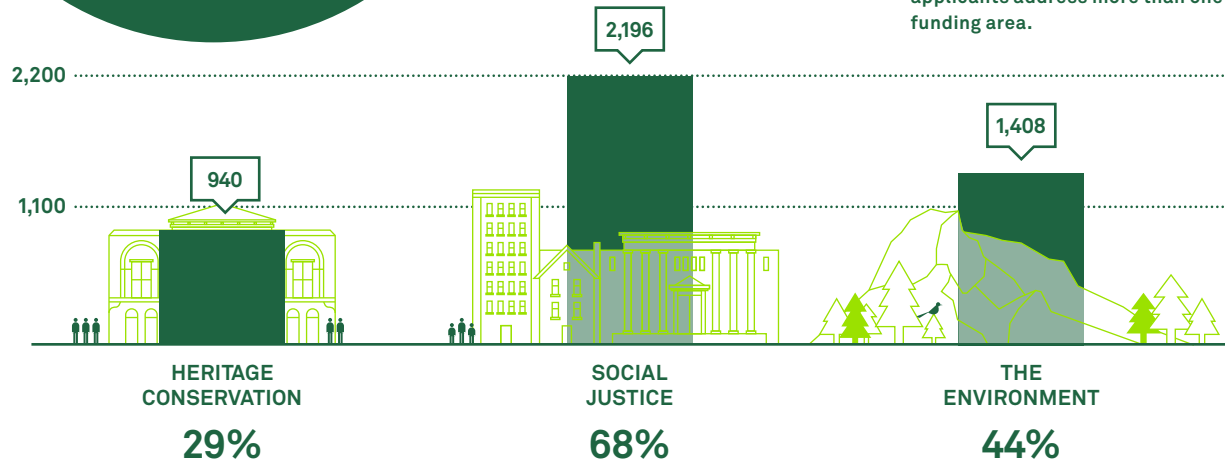
The J.M.K. Innovation Prize: An overview

Our fifth biennial Prize cycle garnered more applications than any in the Prize's history and set a new bar for geographical diversity across American states, territories, and Tribal lands.



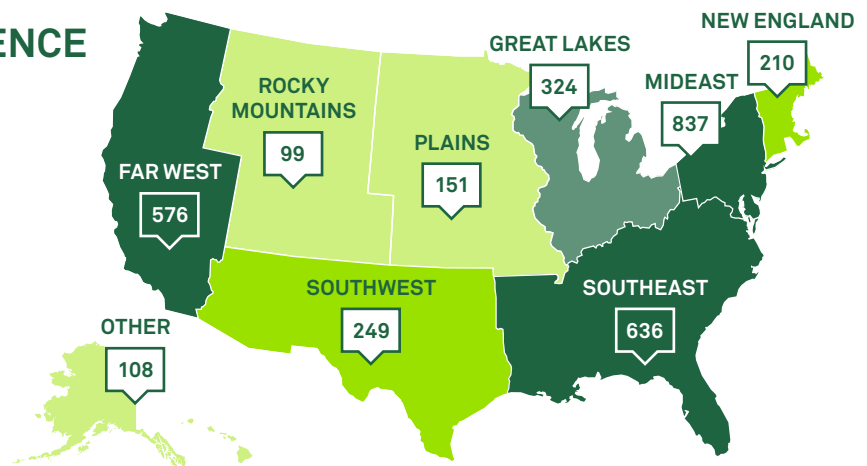
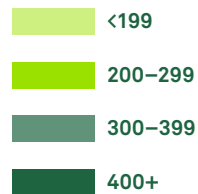
FUNDING AREAS*

*The total exceeds 100%, as some applicants address more than one funding area.



REGION OF RESIDENCE

APPLICATIONS PER REGION



Introduction

Bridging Past and Future

In January we issued our fifth biennial call for applications to the J.M.K. Innovation Prize, inviting change-makers across the country to submit their creative, risky, or simply under-funded ideas for social and environmental impact. Welcoming ten new awardees, we are proud to boast a cohort of innovators now fifty strong.

Since the Prize's inception in 2015, the circumstances of American life have changed dramatically, marked by volatility and turmoil not witnessed in generations. One constant, however, has been the impressive, thought-provoking array of applications we receive. Mounting challenges to the environment, social justice, and heritage conservation are met by people willing to take them on with imagination and perseverance.

This cycle, we received a record 3,209 applications, representing all fifty U.S. states, numerous territories, and Tribal nations. Through these applicants, we see the concept of "innovation" continuing to evolve in unexpected ways. While some are exploring how the cutting edge of tech and artificial intelligence can serve the greater good, more than ever we noted an interest in reawakening ways of thinking

and solutions rooted in long-established practices and community mindsets.

Certainly trust in the systems that make up American society has faltered, and social entrepreneurs and nonprofit organizations are stepping forward to fill gaps and offer alternatives where those systems fall short. Post-Roe and in the wake of an epochal decision on affirmative action, we find women forging networks of representation and empowerment. Defying the weight of industry consolidation and convention, up come innovators with elegantly simple solutions for sustainability. And in unlikely towns and across tremendous barriers, we see communities connecting, organizing, and advocating for something beyond what seemed possible even two years ago.

Our ten awardees will each receive \$175,000 over three years. In addition, they will have opportunities to learn from one another and illustrious Prize alumni. The Fund's resource network will offer additional support throughout their three-year participation. This report shines a light on their work, along with noteworthy themes from our review process and from the full pool of applicants.

The Takeaways

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1

Traditional ecological knowledge spurs environmental innovation.

As we bear witness to unprecedented storms, rising ocean temperatures, intense droughts, and raging wildfires, it's become impossible to deny that climate change is a defining issue of our era. The urgency of this challenge comes through in the remarkable number of Prize applicants—1,408 in total—taking innovative approaches to protecting the environment.

Continuing a trend we highlighted in 2021, a growing proportion of submissions intertwine environmental objectives with social justice and cultural heritage work. But 2023 brought a marked uptick in applicants turning to time-honored, ancestral, and inherited traditions as beacons for our climate future. A notable 19% of Prize applications that mention climate change also reference Indigenous peoples, territories, and practices. They're turning to Traditional Ecological Knowledge—local knowledge of a specific place or ecosystem gathered by generations of Indigenous people over the course of hundreds or thousands of years—to better address environmental challenges of the 21st century.

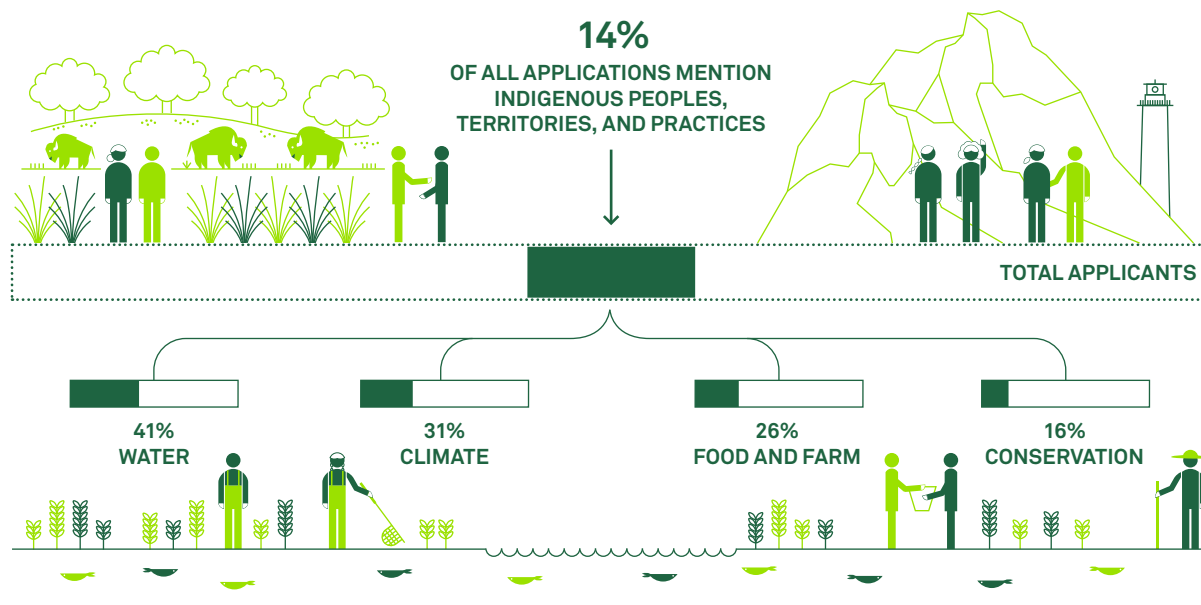
In Arkansas, a pilot program is underway that seamlessly combines the millennia-old Indigenous farming technique known as rice-fish co-cultivation

with contemporary agricultural practices, offering a more sustainable way to feed future generations. The work of Prize awardee **Fish in the Fields** may seem simple at first glance—they're introducing native fish to fallow rice fields in the winter—but its potential impact is huge. Rice-fish co-cultivation improves carbon cycling, helps preserve wildlife habitats, and reduces methane emissions by up to two thirds. Moreover, this method introduces new food sources and revenue opportunities. By adding fish to these fields, spaces previously unproductive in winter are transformed into thriving aquaculture sites. This dual-purpose system allows farmers to either directly sell the harvested fish or process them into feed and other commercial products—all without disrupting conventional rice growing practices.

For Prize finalists Alexa Sutton Lawrence and Dominique Daye Hunter, traditional ecological knowledge is much more than a strategy—it's a direct link to the Indigenous tradition. "What we're doing," says Hunter, "is simply trying to pick back up and continue the work that our ancestors have done for tens of thousands of years."

Indigenous projects confront environmental concerns

Among the 14% of Prize applicants who reference Indigenous peoples, territories or practices, environmental themes are a top concern, with many applicants focusing on water, climate, food and farming, and conservation. The total exceeds 100%, as some applicants reference more than one issue area.



Connecting land acquisition and heritage efforts from Maine to Florida, Lawrence and Hunter’s organization **Indigenous East** is working to create a conservation corridor of lands that will be stewarded, owned, and managed by Native communities. Ultimately, their ambitions span the length of the eastern United States, creating an “Indigenous version of the Appalachian trail,” preserving not just the physical landscape, but the history, tradition, and cultural heritage that have been developed and maintained on these lands for generations. By centering Native voices, the program also assists the upward movement of Indigenous and Afro-descendant scientists and leaders. Their goal: creating a new generation of conservationists with the knowledge necessary to protect long-marginalized communities and the landscapes, ecosystems, and wildlife they both depend on and sustain.

According to Hunter, “Traditional ecological knowledge doesn’t only benefit humans; it benefits all species when it’s applied in a respectful or reciprocal manner.” That principle is driving Prize applicants to envision a better future, in conversation with the past.



Fish in the Fields introduces fish to rice fields in winter, significantly reducing methane emissions. (Photo: Fish in the Fields)

2

Women of color confront healthcare injustice.

The COVID-19 pandemic exposed cracks in the U.S. healthcare system, shining a stark light on the ways that racism and systemic discrimination affect health outcomes for people of color. These disparities reflect complex and deep-rooted inequities that can be difficult to diagnose and even more difficult to address. Amid negative trends in mortality and chronic disease, healthcare justice in Black and brown communities is a strong focus among this round of Prize applicants. A third of all Prize applicants this year mention health and the healthcare system as a priority, and among these, 32% of applications focus on people of color. For women of color like 2023 Prize awardees Ashlei Spivey and Daniella Runyambo, these harsh realities, and the history of discrimination and oppression underlying them, aren't a cause for despair—they're a call to action.

“Black women and femmes are uniquely impacted by every system of oppression,” Spivey says, “making us uniquely positioned to create real, transformational solutions to the problems which plague our communities.” Spivey founded **I Be Black Girl** in response to the shockingly poor levels of maternal healthcare offered to Black families in

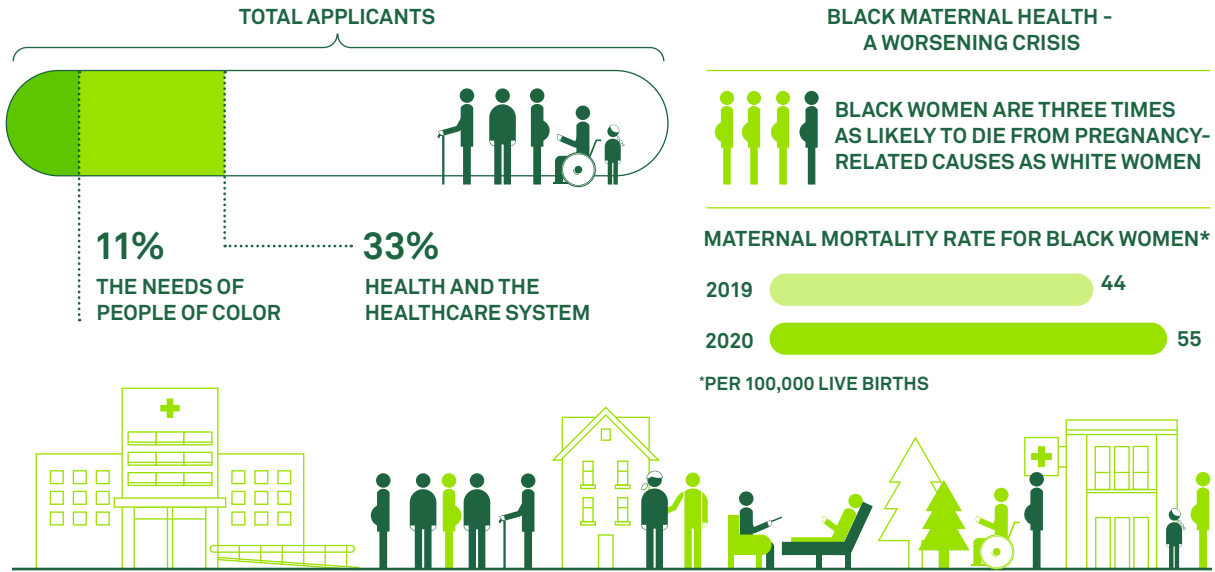
Nebraska, where the mortality rate for Black birthing people is three times higher than that of their white counterparts.

I Be Black Girl is working to close the gap in maternal healthcare outcomes by cultivating a network of Black birth workers and doulas across the state. By supporting expecting parents throughout their pregnancy and birthing experiences, they aim to deliver more positive physical and mental health outcomes. It's also vital to the mission of I Be Black Girl that these highly skilled birth workers receive fair compensation for their indispensable services. “We take a collective impact approach where we act as a backbone agency,” Spivey says, “bringing together community partners and individual institutional partners to have not only a shared agenda, but a shared approach.”

Awardee Daniella Runyambo roots her innovation in her lived experience and relationships with refugee communities in North Carolina: “In college, I became a medical interpreter for the Congolese community and saw firsthand the challenges faced by non-English speaking patients navigating the U.S. healthcare system. I then experienced biased

Imagining an equitable healthcare system

33% of all Prize applications focus on health and the healthcare system. Among these, 32% are focused on the needs of people of color, who, according to the CDC, experience higher rates of illness and death across a wide range of health conditions compared to their white counterparts due to systemic and interpersonal racism.



care myself when I became a mother, an experience that became the driving force behind my commitment to language translation to radically improve healthcare access.”

Runyambo founded **Voices for Advancement Until Language Transformation (VAULT)**, which leverages the power of direct experience to improve access to healthcare for refugee and migrant patients from non-English speaking communities. By providing patients with the tools to document their healthcare experience, VAULT is creating the first clearinghouse of language access data gathered from these underrepresented communities to drive reform. Housed within North Carolina nonprofit Refugee Community Partnership, VAULT uses the data gathered to raise awareness of accessibility challenges and hold major healthcare

institutions to account for shortcomings. Ultimately, these innovators show how lived experience can shape new approaches and create systemic change.



I Be Black Girl's Doula Passage Program provides education and support to Black doulas in Nebraska. (Photo: I Be Black Girl)

3

Heritage and sustainability converge in the circular economy.

This August, the U.S. set a sobering new benchmark: its 23rd natural disaster of the year, with the financial losses alone exceeding \$1 billion. These included droughts and severe storms, a Category 3 hurricane, and the deadliest U.S. wildfire in over a century. Beyond the staggering economic toll, these events have erased invaluable parts of our history. Take the fire that leveled the town of Lahaina, the former seat of the Hawaiian Kingdom, on the island of Maui. It took at least 115 lives, destroyed more than 2,000 structures, including homes, businesses, and houses of worship, and turned hundreds of years of Hawaiian history to ashes—centuries-old historic buildings, four museums, and thousands of objects overseen by local conservation organizations. This disaster illustrates a stark truth: our environment and our heritage are inextricably linked, and we risk losing both if we lose sight of that connection.

In our 2021 report, we highlighted a surge in applications crossing barriers between disciplines and breaking down traditional silos of knowledge. This year's Prize applicants continued that trend, envisioning ways to use the circular economy to create a new paradigm for conservation, protecting both the natural world and cultural heritage. Applications in Heritage Conservation and the Environment

both reached an all-time high in 2023, representing 29% and 44% of all applications, respectively. And 33% of all applicants that are pursuing environmental impact also integrate heritage conservation in their mission.

For Shanon Miller and Stephanie Phillips, members of the City of San Antonio Office of Historic Preservation and 2023 Prize awardees, this ethos comes naturally: "We are finding that the history of the material we are salvaging matters to people," Miller says. "They want to save it from being wasted." With a "circular heritage model," their **Material Innovation Center** serves as a hub for material waste from historically significant buildings undergoing demolition, and offers them a new life through reuse, reclamation, and re-imagination. The Center's climate-driven approach reduces construction waste going to landfill while preserving local architectural and cultural integrity. The Material Innovation Center also offers training courses focused on building a pool of tradespeople who can support future conservation efforts and affordable housing repair, furthering the initiative's contribution to the local community.

Putting “waste” to work through circularity

Many applicants seek to dismantle the linear economy, also known as the “take, make, waste” model, by finding ways to minimize our dependence on extractive practices and divert spent materials from landfills. Interventions like reducing, reusing, repurposing, and recycling are promoted by 23% of all Prize applications.



Awardee Yoni Ronn takes a more targeted approach to waste reduction and conservation. **Moby** seeks to reduce the amount of microplastic fibers entering waterways via laundry wastewater, a common source of microplastic pollution that negatively impacts the environment and the health of downstream ecosystems and communities. Moby is developing an innovative closed-loop system to capture and reuse microplastic waste that comes from the washing of synthetic clothes. With holistic and circular solutions, Moby intends to collaborate with governments, clothing manufacturers, and laundromats to implement its technology on a large scale.

These visionary projects demonstrate that the binaries we sometimes take for granted—construction vs. conservation, waste reduction vs.

commercialization—are actually opportunities to expand our horizons.



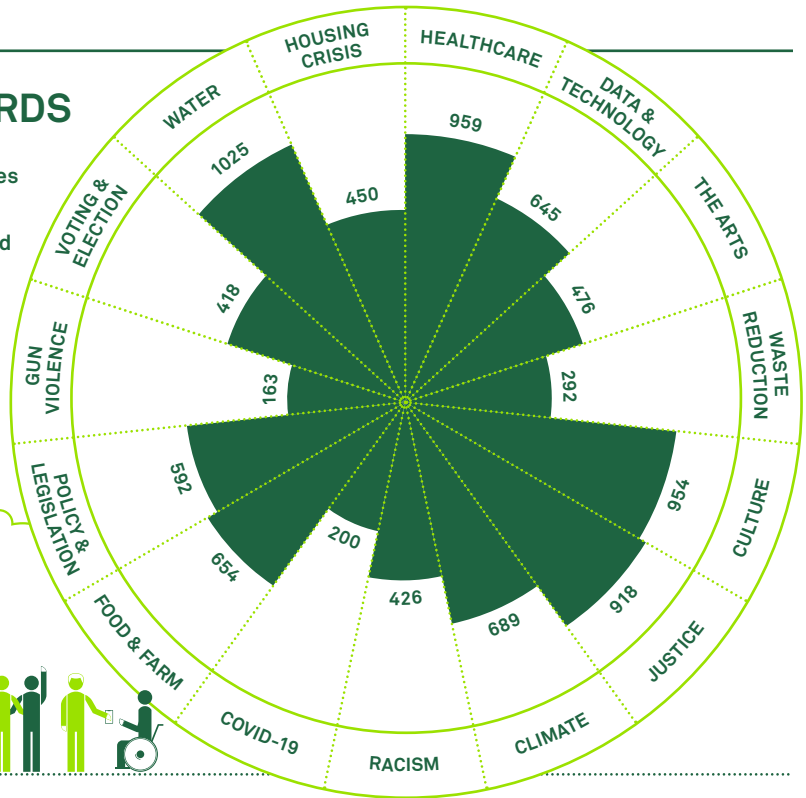
In addition to diverting construction waste from landfills, the Material Innovation Center in San Antonio offers hands-on courses in traditional trades. (Photo: Material Innovation Center)

The J.M.K. Innovation Prize: By the numbers

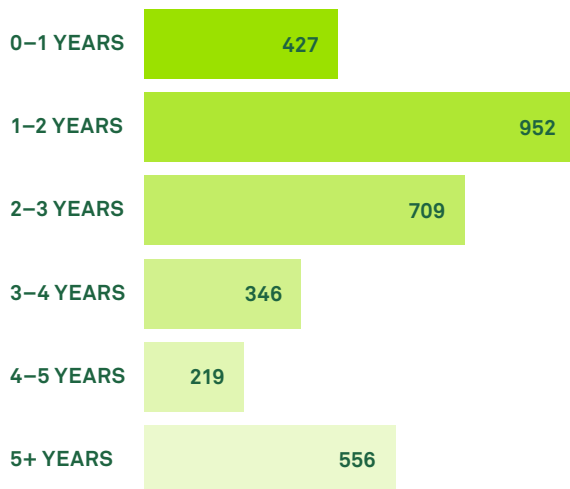
The 3,209 applications we received this cycle revealed that early-stage social entrepreneurs and nonprofits are using their talents to find solutions to some of our most pressing, and entrenched, issues.

APPLICATION KEYWORDS

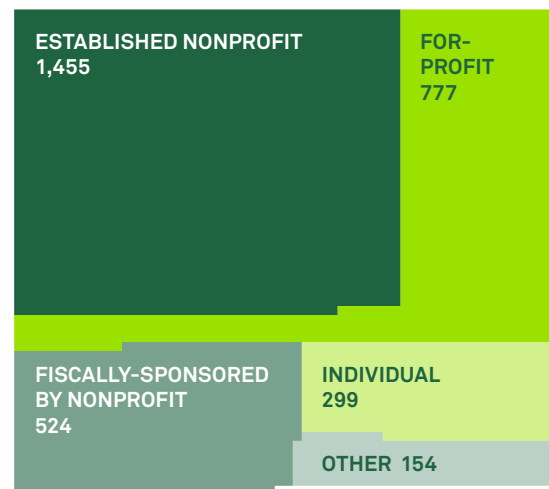
Applicants focused on a variety of issues spanning the Prize's target areas of the environment, heritage conservation, and social justice.



LENGTH OF TIME ON IDEA

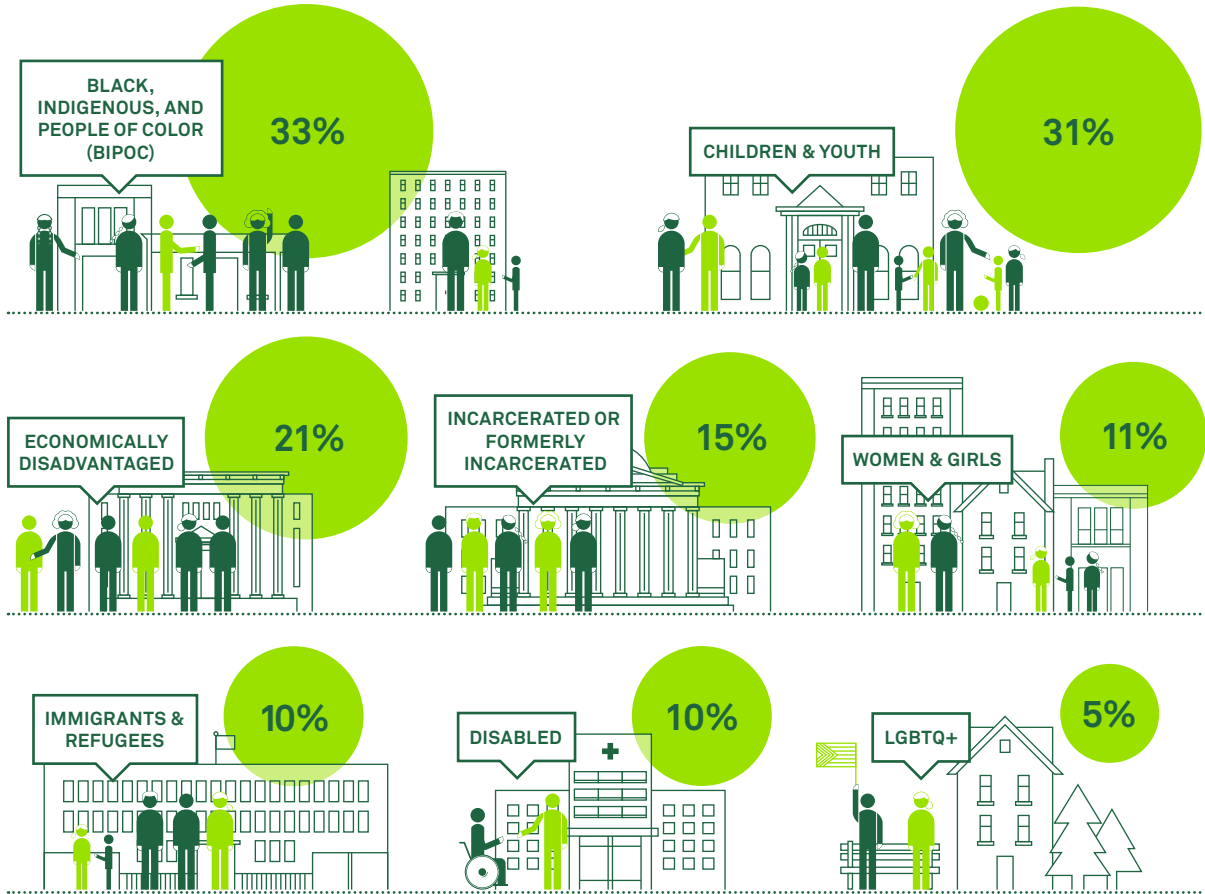


ORGANIZATION STRUCTURE

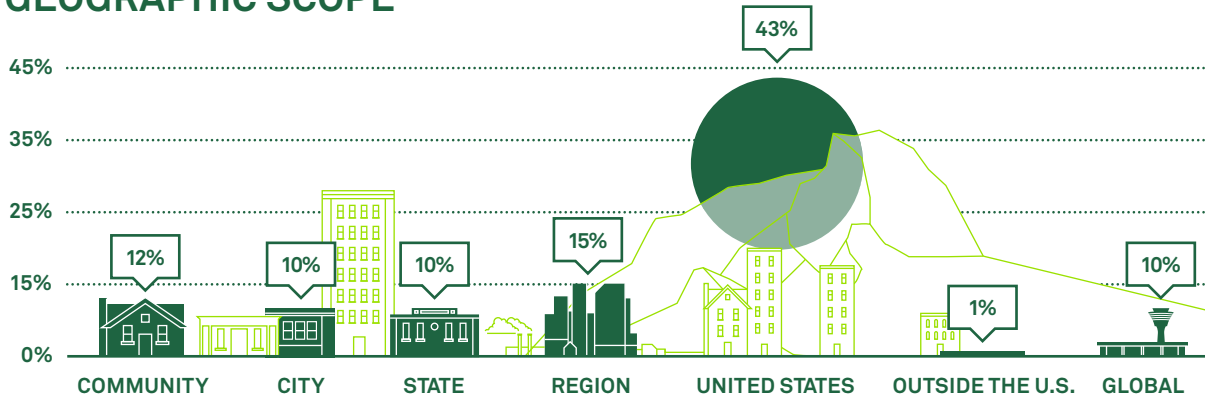


TARGET POPULATION

Percentages indicate the number of applications that reference each target population. The total exceeds 100%, as some applicants seek to impact more than one social or demographic group.



GEOGRAPHIC SCOPE



4

Public services remain inaccessible to many. New technology can help.

Wage theft is illegal in New York. Employers paying less than minimum wage, failing to pay for overtime work, not allowing workers to take a meal or break, requiring off-the-clock work, or taking workers' tips are violating the law, and state government provides a pathway to help workers report such crime and recover what's owed to them. Between 2017 and 2021, more than 13,000 cases were filed in New York State, representing \$203 million stolen from 127,000 workers. And yet, further analysis by federal and state investigators estimates that these numbers severely underrepresent the magnitude of the problem. In reality, employers in the state likely steal \$1 billion from workers every year.

"While some states and municipalities have developed online intake forms and methods for submitting wage theft claims electronically," says Mark O'Brien, Executive Director of Pro Bono Net, "none of these systems are designed for immigrant workers." Fortunately, a new wave of innovators is demonstrating that by leveraging new technology, even well-resourced solutions supported by public funds can reach more people and change more lives.

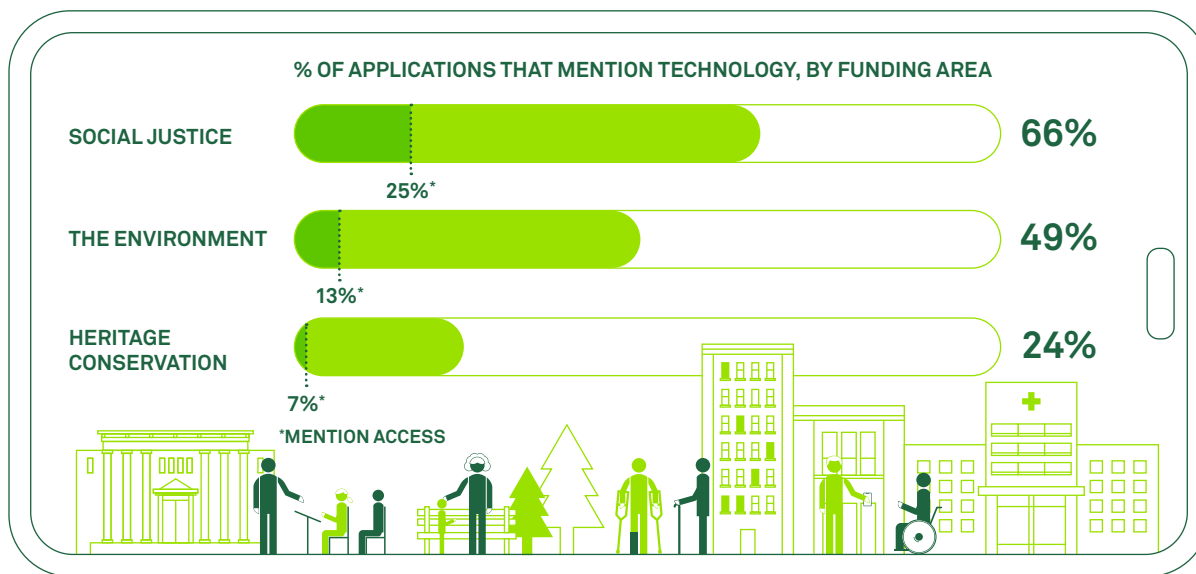
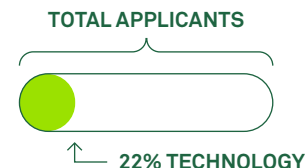
Awardee **¡Reclamo!** ("Reclaim" in Spanish) is making sure that every American worker has the tools necessary to protect against wage theft. ¡Reclamo! offers immigrant workers and their advocates a simple digital platform to legally file a claim for wage theft in New York State, with plans to expand nationally. Their app has been developed through extensive co-design workshops, ensuring that government claim forms are easier to access, and users are informed of their rights. ¡Reclamo! also employs data collected through the app to inform worker advocates of opportunities to support worker organizing, inform them of class-action lawsuits, and advance workplace justice advocacy.

¡Reclamo! is just one of many applicants leveraging new technology to ensure that public services are accessible to everyone. Of the 22% of all Prize applications that mention technology as an enabler for impact, 34% note access and accessibility as a critical feature.

Even a public service as ubiquitous as the 911 emergency telephone number remains broadly

Delivering on the promise of accessible tech

Of the 22% of all Prize applications that mention technology as an enabler for impact, 66% address social justice, 49% the environment, and 24% heritage conservation. Across these, 34% of all applications that mention technology also note access and accessibility as a critical feature.



inaccessible. Prize finalist **acesSOS** is using a free mobile app to connect people with hearing, speech, or language barriers to emergency services. Their product translates texts into 911 calls, enabling users to get the support they need in an emergency. acesSOS then uses the data collected across its system to advocate for nationwide accessibility to ensure everyone has access to life-saving services.

Other like-minded applicants from this cycle are deploying mobile chatbots to help housing applicants document discriminatory practices by landlords; connecting refugees with volunteer translators via artificial intelligence; and developing apps that demystify social benefits and help citizens navigate the application process.

In spaces where public services falter, these innovators are showing how tech can go beyond convenience to extend fundamental rights and services.



Rodrigo Camarena and his colleagues built an easy-to-use app that helps workers file wage theft claims with New York State. (Photo: ¡Reclamo!)

5

Social entrepreneurs transform the justice system from within.

Since our first call for applications, the J.M.K. Innovation Prize has been a locus of innovation in criminal justice—elevating initiatives that advance restorative justice practices, promote alternatives to incarceration, and help formerly incarcerated individuals to survive and thrive. That trend has only grown, with 68% of 2023 Prize applications addressing social justice, and nearly one in five engaging directly with the justice system.

This year, an exemplary group of applicants stood out for their approach to transformation; these innovators are working from within to challenge institutional racism and ensure more equitable outcomes. By finding ways to increase the diversity of employees across justice organizations in the United States, these applicants make a powerful case that justice can be delivered more fairly and impartially, particularly towards people of color.

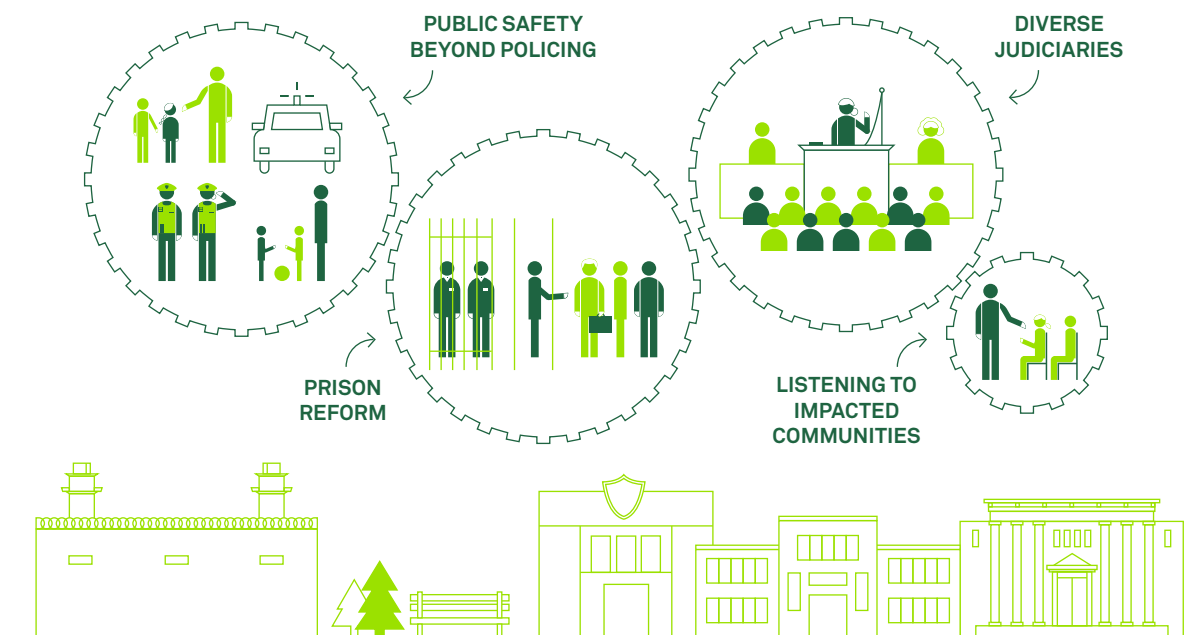
Consider Prize awardee Juvaria Khan. Khan found herself one of very few Muslim lawyers working in appellate courts in the wake of 9/11—arguing cases that had enormous significance for the broader American Muslim community. Two decades later, an overwhelming majority of appellate lawyers and

judges are still male and white. Take the U.S. Solicitor General’s Office, which represents the United States federal government in Supreme Court cases: no Hispanic lawyer has argued on behalf of the U.S. before the Supreme Court since 2016, and no Black lawyer has appeared in that capacity since 2012. That’s why Juvaria founded **The Appellate Project**, a program empowering law students of color to become the next generation of attorneys and judges in the United States’ highest courts. The Appellate Project provides legal writing workshops, networking events, and mentorship opportunities, and supports students throughout the process of securing internships and jobs. The end result: a more diverse court system that will be more representative of the people it serves, from the ground up.

Policing may be the most divisive and daunting arena for change. Prize awardee **New Blue** is taking on this challenge, working with reform-minded officers from Los Angeles, California to Zebulon, North Carolina, to shift policies and perspectives. This nationwide fellowship program supports current officers in identifying and reforming law enforcement policies and practices that

Many tactics, one goal: equitable justice

Applicants proposed diverse strategies for combating institutional racism across the criminal justice system, including promoting diverse judiciaries, engaging and educating police forces, advancing prison reform that supports upskilling, listening to impacted communities, and more.



may harm communities of color. New Blue fellows propose solutions to issues encountered while on duty and workshop them through an incubator that emphasizes community engagement. “We don’t want to see reform programs that are only focused on what’s going to benefit the police department,” says Kristin Daley, New Blue’s Executive Director. “We really want it to be what’s going to benefit both the department and the community and change the way that these two groups work together.”

That sincere desire to transform our institutions—for the benefit of both the people they serve and those who serve within them—stands to shape our future for the better and inspire a new generation of changemakers.



The Appellate Project offers support and mentorship to lawyers of color pursuing careers in appellate law.

(Photo: The Appellate Project)

6

Storytellers and artists fight erasure.

The Kaplan family’s passion for the arts, publishing, and the power of storytelling is woven into the very fabric of the Fund. The J.M.K. Innovation Prize has been an extension of this legacy: since 2015, we’ve heard thousands of entrepreneurs’ stories—stories of struggle and stories of hope; stories about unconventional partnerships and unexpected solutions.

Among the 15% of applications invoking the catalytic power of art this cycle, several projects demonstrate the transformative potential of storytelling within the creative economy. These social entrepreneurs are on a mission to give visibility to people often rendered invisible by discrimination, oppression, and disenfranchisement.

Prize awardee Rahsaan Thomas has modeled his project, **Empowerment Avenue**, on his own story and experience. Incarcerated in San Quentin Prison, Thomas was earning only \$36 a month writing for the *San Quentin News*, leaving him unable to offer support to family members outside of prison. He found his voice by co-founding the *Ear Hustle* podcast; his platform allowed him to help other incarcerated individuals to tell their

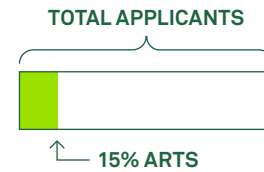
own stories. Eventually, his journalism and writing even helped Thomas gain early release from prison.

Now, Thomas is giving others the support they need to tell their stories. Empowerment Avenue helps incarcerated writers and artists publish and share their work externally in mainstream spaces—and receive fair compensation in return. “Our job is to normalize the inclusion of incarcerated voices in all venues,” Thomas says. “We’re trying to get at somebody in every publication that exists in America. That way, we can reach different hearts and different minds.”

Today, his program connects incarcerated writers and artists with publishers, editors, and arts organizations, where they can earn a market rate income for their publications. Soon, he hopes to expand the initiative to filmmakers, too. Empowerment Avenue helps incarcerated artists to directly shape the discourse around criminal justice, while also preparing them for life after incarceration by building a portfolio of published work and fostering industry connections.

Pathways to empowerment for incarcerated individuals

Empowerment Avenue’s mission is to normalize the inclusion of incarcerated writers and artists in mainstream venues by bridging the gap between them through education and advocacy. Harnessing this creative proximity, they aim to build a path to decarceration and public safety through several key tactics.



Another Prize finalist uses storytelling to uncover histories hiding in plain sight within a politically charged region. **ENTRE Film Center and Archive** is an artist-run cooperative that uses the power of film to capture and preserve the untold history of the Rio Grande Valley. “Historically,” says co-founder C. Díaz, “the Valley has remained a poorly-documented region, with little of its history and culture preserved in local museums and heritage centers, let alone taught in schools. As a result, much of the memory of this land is lost to time.” Díaz and co-founder Andres Sanchez founded ENTRE to combat cultural erasure through a place-based approach, highlighting the vast narrative of the U.S.-Mexico border via community-driven filmmaking and archival work. The center offers screenings, workshops, and other educational programming centered on the needs and wants of the

largely Hispanic communities that make up Texas’ Rio Grande Valley.

Refusing to let vital perspectives and experiences be relegated to the shadows, these projects underscore the potential of creative work to challenge presumptions and fight for cultural preservation and justice.



By connecting incarcerated artists, filmmakers, and writers with mainstream venues, Empowerment Avenue creates opportunities for these creatives to be fairly compensated for their work. (Photo: Empowerment Avenue)

7

Collective action continues to deliver outsized impact.

In a year marked by resurgent unionization efforts, nationwide worker actions, and organizing within new industries and spaces, the power of collective action is well represented by this pool of applicants. More than 20% of all Prize applicants mention the development of networks, coalitions, or collaborations as an essential means to achieve system-wide impact at scale, up from 5% in 2021.

“We’re better together than apart,” says Dom Kelly, Co-Founder, President and CEO of **New Disabled South (NDS)** and a 2023 Prize awardee. “We have struggled in the disability community to build power because we are so siloed. It’s critical to have our people together at the same table, communicating, strategizing, and sharing resources.” In their effort to amplify disability rights advocacy, community engagement, and research across the Southern United States, Kelly and his team are working to break through institutional silos to create the Southern Disability Justice Coalition, a tight-knit group of disability rights activists and organizations. “A unified organizing operation across the many stakeholders in our region,” Kelly says, “is crucial for achieving a vision of justice and liberation for

disabled people. There has never been a more important moment for this work.”

Through dedicated community outreach and organizing efforts across 14 Southern states, NDS aims to advance a variety of disability-informed legislative outcomes and social services, such as the creation of a Disabled Voters Bill of Rights to remove barriers that disabled people face when voting in specific states. The organization is also committed to eliminating the daunting waiting lists for home- and community-based disability services and decreasing disabled incarceration rates. NDS increases its reach among disabled voters by going beyond traditional campaign outreach methods, leveraging their network of support organizations and partners that have a strong rapport with the disabled community.

NDS is one of many applicants making change via collective action. Others have created an advocacy and knowledge-sharing network of Black-owned business districts across U.S. cities; strengthened an ongoing collaboration among social workers, hospitals, and shelters to provide comprehensive

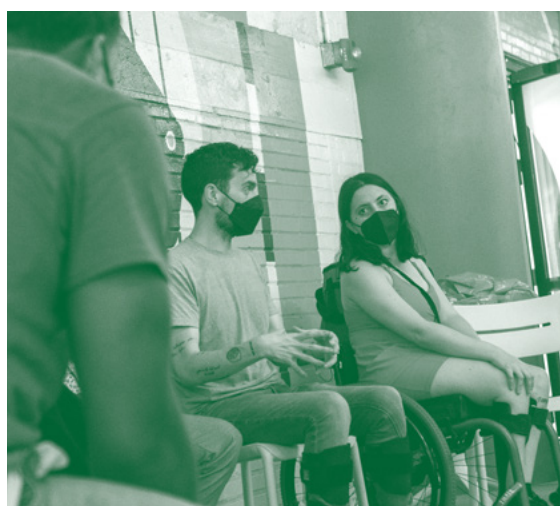
Progress through partnership

21% of all Prize applications mention networks, coalitions, collaborations, or collective action as a means to achieve their impact, raising the voices of minority and underrepresented populations at scale. By combining forces, these groups can pool resources, leverage diverse expertise, and build collective credibility.



support services for survivors of domestic violence and human trafficking across an under-resourced region; connected farmers in a knowledge and seed-sharing network to preserve heirloom crops; and coordinated collective action amongst hundreds of history museums, historic sites, and libraries across the U.S. to better inform young adults as they prepare to vote.

In the years since the J.M.K. Innovation Prize's inception, we've learned that there's no better catalyst for lasting change than dedication to collaboration and collective action.



New Disabled South is creating a coalition of organizations across the Southern U.S. to engage disabled voters and advance disability rights in the region. (Photo: New Disabled South)

The Awardees

The Appellate Project

JUVARIA KHAN

Washington, D.C.

theappellateproject.org

Empowerment Avenue

RAHSAAN THOMAS

California

empowermentave.org

Fish in the Fields

DEBORAH MOSKOWITZ AND CHANCE CUTRANO

California

rri.org/fish-in-the-fields

I Be Black Girl

ASHLEI SPIVEY

Nebraska

ibeblackgirl.com

Material Innovation Center

SHANON MILLER AND STEPHANIE PHILLIPS

Texas

sareuse.com/mic

Moby

YONI RONN

New York

mobyfilter.com

New Blue

KRISTIN DALEY

Massachusetts

newblue.org

New Disabled South

DOM KELLY

Georgia

newdisabledsouth.org

¡Reclamo!

RODRIGO CAMARENA

New York

reclamoapp.org

Voices for Advancement Until Language

Transformation (VAULT)

DANIELLA RUNYAMBO

North Carolina

refugeecommunitypartnership.org

About The J.M. Kaplan Fund

Established in 1945 by philanthropist and businessman Jacob Merrill Kaplan, the Fund has since its inception been committed to visionary innovation. Over four generations of family engagement, the Fund has devoted more than \$300 million to propel fledgling efforts focused on human rights, civil liberties, equality and justice, the arts and literacy,

and the conservation and enhancement of the built and natural worlds. The J.M.K. Innovation Prize continues the Fund's legacy of catalytic giving, reaching across America to provide early-stage support for entrepreneurs with 21st century solutions to urgent social and environmental challenges.

TRUSTEES

Peter W. Davidson
Chairman

Betsy Davidson

Brad Davidson

Matthew Davidson

Caio Fonseca

Isabel Fonseca

Quina Fonseca

STAFF

Julia Bator
Executive Director

Ann Birckmayer
Administrator, Furthermore

Angela D. Carabine
Grants Manager

Jack Carlile
Foundation Manager

William P. Falahee
Director of Finance and Administration

Justin Goldbach
Program Director, The J.M.K. Innovation Prize

Will Reynolds
Program Director, Heritage Conservation

Elizabeth Barthelmes Wolff
Program Director, Environment

In Memoriam: Jeff Byles

Since the inception of the J.M.K. Innovation Prize, our publications have been graced with the words and insights of Jeff Byles, who passed away in March 2023 at the age of 51. Jeff was a gifted writer, editor, urbanist, and community revitalization consultant—and a great friend to the Fund. He was the author of two books, *Rubble: Unearthing the History of Demolition* (Harmony Books, 2005), and *A History of Design from the Victorian Era to the Present* (Norton, 2011, with Ann Ferebee), and numerous articles and reviews in *The Architect's*

Newspaper, *The New York Times*, *The Village Voice*, *Metropolis*, *Modern Painters*, *Cabinet*, *The Believer*, and other publications.

We hope we have paid some small tribute in our attempts to emulate Jeff's curiosity, calm, and way with words over these last several months. The voice of the Fund, as it speaks through this report and beyond, owes a great debt to Jeff's brilliance and spirit. He is dearly missed.

Acknowledgments

Over the course of five cycles of The J.M.K. Innovation Prize, it has been both enriching and deeply gratifying to work with our esteemed peers in philanthropy and social entrepreneurship. We extend our heartfelt appreciation to Justin Goldbach, the Prize’s Program Director and the founder of Social Strategy Associates, whose unwavering dedication and leadership have been instrumental from the outset. The Prize has also significantly benefited from the expert guidance of Amy L. Freitag, Anthony C. Wood, Prachi Patankar, Danielle Sered, and Nick Turner, as well as invaluable support from Shaundra Cunningham, Rex Unger, Valerie Silverman Kerr, and Sean Devaney. In a year of transition for the Fund, hardworking and enthusiastic staff put in more time and energy to this initiative than ever before; we’re deeply grateful to Bill, Elizabeth, Will and Jack.

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Our sincere gratitude extends to the 538 first-round reviewers whose consideration and insights have

made this Prize an exemplary work of participatory grantmaking. Special recognition is due to the 30 subject-matter experts and second-round reviewers, whose invaluable expertise and thorough evaluations have immensely enriched our selection process:

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And in developing this report, the Fund salutes the spirited collaboration of Molly Brass, Sara Enright, Agnieszka Gasparska, and Min Jin Shin.

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