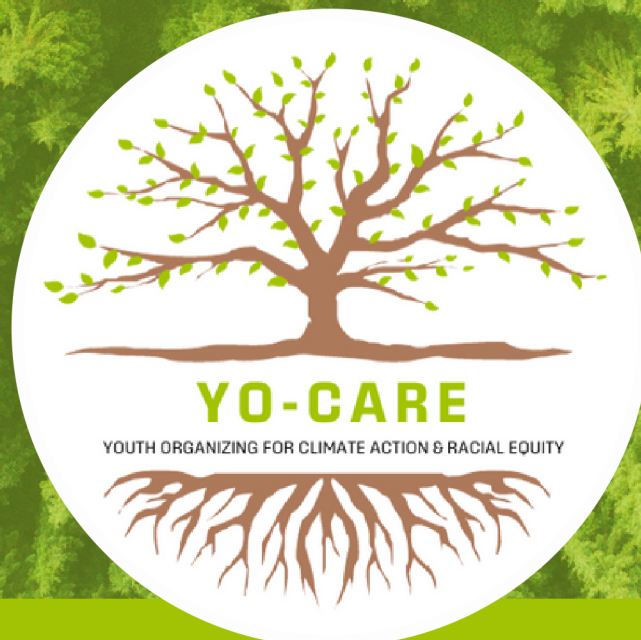


FCYO

**YOUTH ORGANIZING FOR
CLIMATE ACTION &
RACIAL EQUITY
CAPACITY-BUILDING FUND
(YO-CARE 2)**

RFP OVERVIEW





Context

Amid an ongoing global pandemic, increased wealth disparities, attacks on gender and reproductive justice, and a growing climate crisis, the past several years have demonstrated that the dominant system of racial capitalism, in its relentless pursuit of profit via extraction and exploitation, cannot support the full humanity of people nor commit to sustaining our planet. There is perhaps no one who understands this more clearly than young people - specifically, BIPOC youth whose communities face rampant environmental and social injustices. From staging mass walkouts to negotiating local, state, and federal action, young people are in no way sitting silently by. They are organizing en masse to demand that we confront the widespread harm happening at the intersections of a climate crisis and deep-seated racial inequities.

However, to truly contest these threats and advance deep structural change, the youth-led social justice movement will need to seriously increase its capacity, strategy, alignment, and to bank resources that can support this long-term work. Importantly, the leadership of youth organizers from the communities most harmed by environmental injustice and racism is and will continue to be essential to finding and implementing solutions that are meaningful to all. This is why the Funders' Collaborative on Youth Organizing is excited to launch the next iteration of the Youth Organizing for Climate Action and Racial Equity (YO-CARE) initiative – a bold effort to grow the power of youth organizing at the intersections of racial justice and climate justice.

History

FCYO launched the first iteration of YO-CARE in April 2022, providing grantmaking and capacity-building resources to young people of color and young people from other frontline communities who are collectively organizing to address the climate crisis. The cohort of 40 local and state-based organizations from across the country underwent a 14-month educational and capacity-building program designed to sharpen their organizing approaches towards achieving real wins for their communities and provide opportunities to cultivate lasting relationships with their sectoral peers. Designed as a lighter-touch introductory program, YO-CARE was received with great enthusiasm and resulted in a directive from its participants that FCYO create a follow-up program that would allow for deeper relationship building, deeper shared analysis concerning what it takes to build the Power to Win, and opportunities to showcase cohort organizations' expertise.

The Power To Win Framework: The Guiding Compass of YO-CARE 2

Built off lessons from our previous initiatives, the Power to Win Framework is the strategic orientation guiding all of FCYO's grant-based programming. The foundation of the Framework makes clear that movements must achieve the power to transform economic and social conditions for our communities and society as a whole. Specifically, the Framework puts forward that to build this kind of power, youth organizing must build bases at a significant scale, develop broad strategic alliances, and elevate public narratives that promote our vision of social justice and true democracy. All of FCYO's programming aims to support organizations in using the Framework to assess their work, build new capacities, and create organizational shifts to build power. The Power to Win Framework is constituted by four pillars:

- **Long-Term Strategic Orientation:** organizations must develop a long-term strategy rooted in an analysis of the economic and political structure of society.

- **Transformative Leadership Development:** organizations must have clear leadership pathways with programmatic work that supports young leaders to develop the skills and capacities to lead long-term movement building.
- **Organizing for Power:** organizations must develop and test a plan to build the power needed to achieve their long-term vision, rooted in their understanding of their terrain.
- **Assessment and Experimentation:** organizations must engage in honest ongoing organizational and movement assessments to reflect what methods and infrastructure work best for building power with young people.

Leveling Up: The YO-CARE 2 Initiative

Building on the lessons and enthusiasm of its first iteration, we have intentionally designed the YO-CARE 2 program to support the application of FCYO's Power To Win Framework to the daily work of cohort organizations while intentionally strengthening relationships between emergent and legacy climate and environmental justice groups. Specifically, YO-CARE 2 is constructed to advance several key goals:

- Strengthen organizations' ability to implement the transformation necessary to secure wins that allow their communities to thrive. This includes reaching clarity on the base-building strategies, leadership development programs, and advocacy campaigns that best achieve their vision.
- Support organizations' execution of a short-term experiment that aims to shift organizational practice toward building social power and securing greater influence in their local ecosystem.
- Cultivate a pro-intellectual, pro-collaboration learning environment that encourages grantees to see both theoretical study and peer learning as critical components of power-centric organizing work.
- Create opportunities for funders to learn about the work of grantees directly alongside standard approaches to funder learning.
- Bolster greater awareness of and commitment to movement building as integral to sound organizational strengthening strategies and overall sustainability

PROGRAM DESIGN

Similar to FCYO's other grantmaking initiatives, YO-CARE 2 will comprise a multi-year capacity program. Over 24 months, YO-CARE 2 will support selected youth and intergenerational climate and environmental justice organizing groups to engage - both individually and collectively - in three core activities:

1. Groups will undergo a capacity-building program centered on applying the Power To Win Framework to expand their reach and influence.
2. Each group will carry out one short-term experiment that will test their ability to build the social power needed to secure a real win and enhance their influence within their local ecosystem.
3. Groups will share what they have learned with other youth organizers in the climate and environmental justice sector by co-developing and co-facilitating educational webinars with FCYO program staff.

FCYO will select 15-20 organizations rooted in climate and/or environmental justice work to take part in this immersive capacity-building program. In building the cohort, we will prioritize continued relationships with organizations that have been part of FCYO's most recent cohort-based capacity building programs (GenPower Labs, YO-CARE) while ensuring opportunities to welcome new organizations into the cohort that are strongly aligned with the program's approach and purpose. To be eligible, all grantee organizations must have a youth-led or intergenerational membership structure with a history of waging grassroots organizing campaigns to advance the interests of their respective communities. Groups must also agree to be part of the program for two years, with the first year focused on identifying organizational shifts followed by a second year of experimentation and co-facilitating political and practical education trainings involving peer organizations.

PARTICIPATING REPRESENTATIVES

FCYO requires two (2) representatives who can consistently participate in YO-CARE 2. Each organization must identify one person in formal leadership and one program staffer with decision-making power. Selecting the Executive Director and the Director of Organizing could be one representative combination/pairing. We strongly encourage you to select staff directly tied to program work who have decision-making power if you are opting for a second individual who is not director-level staff (i.e. no development or secretarial staff).

GRANTMAKING

Selected organizations will receive a two-year general operating grant of \$150,000 to be disbursed in two payments of \$75,000. The first disbursement will occur in April 2024, with the second following in April 2025. Additionally, organizations will be eligible to apply for funds that will support their time-based organizational experiments as well as an optional peer learning exchange.

IN-PERSON CONVENINGS

FCYO plans to host at least three in-person convenings over two years – including a May 2024 kick-off convening taking place as part of an “All Programs Convening” with FCYO’s GenPower Labs cohorts. This convening will provide an opportunity for groups to build relationships and establish shared grounding for the work ahead. There may be additional in-person opportunities available in conjunction with funder learning and fundraising programming. All other programming, including political education sessions, peer learning dialogues, capacity-building training, and project support, will occur virtually.

POLITICAL EDUCATION

Each month between June 2024 to September 2024, grantees will be required to attend two monthly virtual sessions. One session will be a 3-hour political education webinar, and the other will be a 90-minute session dedicated primarily to peer learning and engagement. After September 2024, additional political education webinars will be pursued based on group needs, though the peer learning spaces, or “dilemma clinics,” will be held every month until the end of the program.

PEER TO PEER “DILEMMA CLINICS”

Grantees will have the opportunity to take part in monthly 90-minute peer-learning spaces. During these sessions, organizations will have time to share dilemmas they are faced with – either tied to their short-term experiments or general operating concerns – and receive feedback from cohort peers.

FCYO SUPPORTED EXPERIMENTS

To expedite their application of the Power To Win Framework, each organization will agree to launch a short-term experiment that strengthens their organization’s capacity to achieve a real win while simultaneously enhancing their standing amongst allies and opponents in their local ecosystems. The experiments must be designed to respond to two different levels of power and relevance. They must help the organization achieve both the scale needed to win concrete gains and the scale needed to influence the players in their local ecosystem. For example, if groups want to focus on improving their base-building, they must aim to do two things: (a) establish an approach to base-building that helps them secure the social power needed to win a real-time campaign and (b) utilize that effort to enhance their standing with allies, which improves their ability to exert leadership locally.

With this in mind, when it comes to short-term experiments that could do those two things, there are three primary activities grantee organizations can explore to build up their capacity and test scale:

1. Nonpartisan electoral season voter engagement
2. Nonpartisan policy change campaigns
3. Mass-based direct action campaigns aimed at critical disruption and prevention of harmful governance or policy.

TIME COMMITMENT

Excluding the work conducted to carry out individual short-term experiments, the total time commitment for virtual components will be 40-50 hours throughout the life of the program. Selected organizations are required to take part in the following activities:

- 3-day in-person cohort convening in May 2024
- 3-day in-person cohort convening in 2025
- 3-day in-person closing convening in 2026
- 4 3-hour monthly virtual political education sessions, between June and September 2024
- 16 90-minute monthly virtual peer-learning dilemma clinics, between June 2024 and April 2026
- First-year program mid-point evaluation survey in November 2024
- Organization capacity-building experiment (developed and carried out between 2025-2026)
- Second-year program mid-point evaluation survey in November 2025
- Final program report in June 2026
- [Optional] Consultant support sessions between October and November 2024
- [Optional] First-year virtual funder learning session
- [Optional] Self-organized peer learning exchanges
- Plus, additional activities for the groups who have agreed to co-create/facilitate educational curricula

SELECTION CRITERIA & CONSIDERATIONS

Selected organizations will exhibit the following characteristics and qualities:

- Display recent solid base-building and membership development abilities
- Conduct work that falls within FCYO's Definition of Youth Organizing
- Operate as youth-led or intergenerational organizations with youth (ages 13-24) in leadership (as staff, decision-makers, board, or program/campaign leadership)
- Be place-based or community-based
- Engage in local and/or state-wide organizing efforts
- Align with FCYO's Power to Win Framework
- Maintain an annual organizational budget under \$3,000,000
- Can identify two (2) individuals who can commit to participating for the duration of the capacity-building program (one person in formal leadership and one programmatic staff with decision-making power)
- Demonstrate a willingness to engage in political education and ideological discussions

Preference may be given to:

- Organizations with a strong grasp of the interconnected nature of racial justice and climate justice
- Groups that participated in recent iterations of YO-CARE and OWL 1 & 2 (Organizations currently participating in LUL and P4P are prohibited from applying; however, program grantees can partner with them on peer learning exchanges.)



Application Process

If your organization is interested in applying to participate in YO-CARE 2, please follow the instructions on how to apply via the [Survey Monkey portal](#). The deadline to submit your application is December 20, 2023, at 11:59 pm PT. The application will require you to provide basic information on the organization, answer some demographic information, upload attachments, and respond to narrative questions.

Submission of a proposal does not guarantee approval of and receiving a grant. All applications will be reviewed by FCYO staff and partners from the field. We anticipate that your organization will be notified in late March 2024 regarding our decision concerning your application. Should you have questions about the program, please contact Program Manager, Kaleia Martin at kaleia@fcyo.org

We will host an informational webinar on November 29, 2023, at 3:00 pm EST / 12:00 pm PDT. Please refer to our website to register.

Follow these steps to begin the application process;

1. Go to https://fcyo.smapply.io/prog/yo-care_2
2. Click "Register" to create an account or click "Log in" to access your account
3. Click on YO-CARE 2 to begin the application process
4. Be sure to save your work if you choose to return to it at a later time
5. Remember the portal will close on December 20, 2023, at 11:59 pm PDT

Should you experience technical difficulties navigating Survey Monkey, please refer to the [SurveyMonkey FAQ](#) and/or this helpful [video](#). If you continue to experience technical difficulties, please contact Operations and Finance Manager, Jen Stevens at jen@fcyo.org

NARRATIVE QUESTIONS

The following questions should encourage you to move beyond standard grant-writing pleasantries and offer an authentic and grounded assessment of your organization's work and movement-leadership potential. We at FCYO want to know the real successes and struggles of your organization to determine the best possible cohort composition. This may mean that answering these questions authentically requires some teamwork or broader dialogue with staff and leadership. With that in mind, keep it real and leave no stone unturned. We sincerely appreciate your vulnerability and commitment to building stronger movements.

- **Organizational mission and purpose:** Share your organization's formal mission and organizational purpose. (250 words max)
- **Key developmental moment(s) of your organization:** Please briefly describe how your organization was founded, and since then, how key crises or opportunities prompted shifts or changes in how your organization conducted its work. (500 words max)
- **Campaign work success and lessons:** Share any important campaign victories and lessons tied to losses experienced during the past 3-5 years that helped strengthen your organization. (1,000 words max)
- **Applying the Power To Win Framework to your work:** Select one of the pillars of FCYO's Power To Win Framework that you believe your organization needs to strengthen in terms of practice in your organization. Share the first three steps you would take to make the changes that strengthen your organization according to the pillar you selected. (500 words max)
 - Pillar One: Long-Term Strategic Orientation
 - Pillar Two: Transformative Leadership Development
 - Pillar Three: Organizing for Power
 - Pillar Four: Assessment & Experimentation

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NARRATIVE QUESTIONS (CONTINUED)

- **Preliminary organizational experiment ideas:** As part of Phase I of YO-CARE, the selected groups will be asked to develop and carry out a time-based organizational experiment that will potentially expand the organization's long-term capacity. Each group's experiment will fall into one of the three categories listed below. Please select the one you will focus on as part of this cohort.
 - Electoral season voter engagement
 - Policy campaigns
 - Mass-based direct action campaigns aimed at critical disruption and prevention of harmful governance or policy.
- **Preliminary organizational experiment ideas:** Given your current assessment of the organization, share an example of an experiment you'd be interested in testing. (500 words max)

DOCUMENTS NECESSARY FOR UPLOAD

- 501(c)3 IRS Determination Letter (for your organization or fiscal sponsor)
- Most recent IRS 990 form (for your organization or fiscal sponsor)
- Fiscal sponsorship agreement or letter (if applicable)
- List of Board of Directors
- Organizational budget for the current year
- Most recent financial statement (audited if available)
- Signed & completed IRS W9 form

ADDITIONAL SUPPLEMENTAL DOCUMENTS

Along with the standard requested documents, we wanted to offer up the opportunity to share more about your work and organizational functions. If you have the below documents available, please share them to help us learn more about the nuts and bolts of your work:

- One written example of a political education agenda used in sessions with members (youth and/or adult)
- An example of a written campaign summary or evaluation
- Map of organizational structure (including administrative, program, and membership roles)

PROJECTED TIMELINE

November 9, 2023: Release request for full proposals

November 29, 2023: Informational Webinar - 3:00 pm EST / 12:00 pm PDT

December 20, 2023: Full proposal due

March / April 2024: Cohort Announcement

May 2024: Virtual Orientation and In-Person Convening

About FCYO

The Funders Collaborative on Youth Organizing brings funders and youth organizers together to ensure that young people have the resources, capacities, and infrastructure they need to organize for a more just and democratic society. Over the last twenty years, we have helped to build a strong and vibrant youth organizing field across the United States. We have deep relationships with both youth organizing groups and philanthropy, the capacity to move resources to grassroots groups across the country, and the ability to help groups connect and build the capacities needed to address the challenges of this moment.

