

2024 ANNUAL REPORT

Making a Difference Together

Our Mission

We create positive social change in Eastern Massachusetts by engaging leaders, strengthening organizations, and building networks.

"History and data have convinced me that change, from the bottom up, is possible. I'm hopeful because I believe history is a story we're writing together, not something happening to us – which means we all get a say in how the story ends."

ANDRE HENRY

Message from the Board Chair and the Executive Director

DEAR FRIENDS,

We celebrate 2024 as a year of transition as SIF moves into its 21st year and welcomes its second Executive Director. In this report, we are pleased to share highlights of the year's wonderful accomplishments, as well as a preview of our future plans.

Our theme is "Hope in Action," a quality that animates our work and that of the incredible Social Innovators. They show hope by empowering youth, advocating for community gardens, supporting creative expression as resistance, and much more.

Among the year's exciting activities, we gave new nonprofit executive directors space for mentorship and peer support through ElevatED; published *Shifting Power*, sharing findings from our pilot participatory philanthropy track partnerships of 2021 and 2022; continued our work in CORE, a national peer network of place-based intermediaries; and of course, witnessed inspiring organizational presentations at the Social Innovator Showcase.

SIF will continue to innovate as we move forward — that's our name and practice. This process acknowledges and honors all that the organization has learned and the community that we have built across the sector while simultaneously being aware of the ever-changing landscape of community needs. As the new Executive Director, I am truly appreciative of the warm welcome I have received as I joined the organization to carry our work forward.

And as the Chair of the Board, I honor all of you who have supported us this past year, given us space to stretch and evolve, and delighted in our introduction of Wyona as our new leader. Since her very first day on January 2nd, you have not only embraced her with open arms but also linked arms with her in the work at hand.

As you will see in the pages of this report, this is collective work and would not be possible without the organizations, leaders and funders who are essential to our work. SIF needs champions and cheerleaders to ensure our community continues to grow broadly and deeply so we can fulfill our mission.

Sincerely,





JULIA SATTI COSENTINO Board Chair



VYONA

LYNCH-MCWHITE Executive Director

THE ACCELERATOR DREAMING AND MAKING

DREAMING AND MAKING

SIF's Accelerator transforms hope into action by connecting Social Innovators and philanthropic leaders to build a more equitable sector. This two-year program provides Innovators consulting, executive coaching, presentation advising, unrestricted funding, and networking opportunities. These resources boost visibility, expand networks, and connect Innovators with essential support to maximize their impact.

2024 Social Innovator Cohort

The 2024 cohort features nonprofits focused on youth and education, climate resiliency, mental and physical health in historically excluded communities, financial resilience, strengthening democracy, and disrupting cycles of harm. Serving communities from Cambridge to Lawrence and places in between, 63% of these nonprofits are BIPOC-led, and six of the eight have budgets under \$1M.

Social Innovator Showcase

At the annual Social Innovator Showcase, held at Artists for Humanity EpiCenter, the 2024 Innovators passionately presented their missions and cases for investment and support to an audience of 200 philanthropists, business leaders, and potential supporters. Post event, presenters and attendees mingled, exploring partnership opportunities and building collaborative relationships.

Modernizing Philanthropy

This year, we introduced a collaborative track for youth-serving organizations, where Innovator alumni, funders, and SIF staff worked together to select the three Innovators in the cohort. Partnering with three dedicated funders, we chose organizations championing youth empowerment and advocacy.

Additionally, in January 2024, SIF paid out the first year of grants from the new Innovator Fund — a pilot initiative to increase unrestricted funding for SIF Innovators. SIF raised and allocated a total of \$390,000 to the 2023 Social Innovators and finalists. Finalists received \$2,500, while each Innovator organization received an additional \$45,750 in unrestricted grants on top of the \$10,000 that was already included in the Accelerator.

The 2024 Social Innovator Cohort (Photo Credit: Margaret Belanger Photography)



FY24 ACCELERATOR \$241,062 **BY THE NUMBERS**

2024 INNOVATOR FUND PROGRESS TO DATE



INNOVATORS











ORGANIZATIONS VETTED/OUTREACHED

Spotlight: Beat The Odds

Founded in 2019, Beat The Odds (BTO) is on a mission to provide Boston's Black and Brown youth with a safe space to address mental health and trauma through the arts. After the 2019 death of rapper Nipsey Hussle, and reflecting on their own experiences growing up in Boston, BTO's founders recognized a dire need for creative outlets in their communities. Through programs like artist development, music production, and dance, BTO empowers young people to find their unique voice, develop talents, and build essential life skills.

Joining the Accelerator has been a game-changer for Beat The Odds. The partnership has helped the organization sharpen its vision and expand its reach. "SIF put us in the right rooms and gave us the tools to elevate BTO to the next level," says co-founder Camila Rojas Pagan. The experience has not only bolstered BTO's fundraising capabilities but also cemented its credibility and visibility in Boston's philanthropic landscape.

Looking ahead, Beat The Odds has big plans to expand its impact across Boston and beyond. "We're dreamers, and we're going to make it happen," Camila says. With SIF's continued support, BTO is poised to change the conversation around mental health and creativity.

▲ Beat The Odds (Photo Credit: Leise Jones Photography)



"SIF put us in the right rooms and gave us the tools to elevate BTO to the next level."

CAMILA ROJAS PAGAN, **CO-FOUNDER**



Boston Food Forest Coalition
(Photo Credit: Leise Jones Photography)

"You have a space that convenes community, that feeds community, that nurtures relationships, that grows relationships, and can be a voice for advocacy for further climate resilience initiatives across Boston."

ORION KRIEGER, BFFC EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

INNOVATOR PROFILES

MAKING CHANGE FOR GENERATIONS TO COME

Every day, we witness incredible work happening in communities, thanks to our close collaboration with Social Innovators. We're proud to be part of their journey.

Here are stories from a few of our recent Innovators.

Boston Food Forest Coalition: 2024 Social Innovator

Boston Food Forest Coalition (BFFC), a community land trust established in 2015, is dedicated to transforming vacant urban spaces into public parks that double as edible food forests. The group empowers residents of neighborhoods across Boston to create and steward these green spaces, promoting food security, community engagement, and climate resilience. BFFC buys underutilized parcels from the city for \$100 and partners with community members to design and maintain these spaces. Their goal is to establish 30 food forests by 2030.

With a food forest, says BFFC Executive Director Orion Krieger, "you have a space that convenes community, that feeds community, that nurtures relationships, that grows relationships, and can be a voice for advocacy for further climate resilience initiatives across Boston."

Orion says BFFC became part of the Accelerator to build partnerships with funders who can invest in the BFFC vision, refine their communications and strategy, connect with a supportive network, and ultimately scale their impact across Boston.

For him, the best part of the Accelerator has been the camaraderie. He says, "I really look forward to seeing other executive directors, learning that we share the same leadership and management challenges, no matter what our missions are. And I'll be part of an alumni network that will continue supporting me."



Young Man with A Plan: 2022 Social Innovator

Young Man with a Plan (YMWAP), a holistic mentoring program for young men of color, was at a critical juncture when it applied to the Accelerator. With the organization growing and gaining local attention, the team needed clear strategic direction to navigate the challenges ahead. "We were ready to grow, ready to learn," says Dr. Jaykyri Simpson, Executive Director. "SIF met us exactly where we were, providing the strategic coaching and professional development we needed to refine our vision."

The Accelerator offered more than just guidance it provided a nurturing environment that mirrors the wraparound support YMWAP offers its participants. Jaykyri describes the experience as being wrapped in a "blanket of love," where safe landings were provided throughout the challenging process. This support allowed the organization to sharpen its focus, improve internal cohesion, and confidently present their mission on larger stages.

The future for YMWAP is one of growth and continued impact. The organization is poised to pilot its program with seventh graders. They're also enhancing their wellness curriculum to include vital topics like cardiovascular health and mental wellness, addressing the critical needs of Black and Brown communities. Jaykyri considers the SIF experience transformative. "The process itself was the most important takeaway," he reflects. "We came out better, more prepared for the future, and with a deeper belief in the value of good people."

Justice 4 Housing: 2023 Social Innovator

Founded in 2020 by Leslie Credle, Justice 4 Housing fights against the harsh housing policies that keep formerly incarcerated women from reuniting with their families. "I started organizing as soon as I came out of prison... I saw the damage that had been done to some of my peers, and I knew I had to advocate for folks," she says. Leslie's advocacy began with successfully overturning dozens of housing denials and forming powerful partnerships with Harvard Law School's Tenant Advocacy Project and Greater Boston Legal Services.

When Leslie joined the Accelerator, she knew she needed support to lead Justice 4 Housing effectively and manage its rapid growth. Her primary goal was to lay a solid foundation for the group's future. "I wasn't familiar with being an executive director. I didn't have the skills, and I wanted to do things right," she says. The program helped her transform the organization from a startup to a thriving nonprofit with a \$1 million budget and a team of ten.

Now, Justice 4 Housing is aiming even higher. They're working with the Department of Housing and Urban Development to turn their recommendations into federal policy and create a statewide certification program for housing advocates. The Accelerator helped Leslie and Justice 4 Housing to sustain their impact and continue to expand their influence in the fight for housing justice.



▲ Justice 4 Housing (Photo Credit: Leise Jones Photography)

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BOSTON FOOD FOREST COALITION



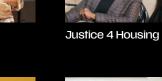


JUST A START FINANCIAL EMPOWERMENT COLLABORATIVE

2023 Innovators



chica project





The Latino Health Insurance Program



Lowell Parks & Conservation Trust



MissionSAFE



RIA (ready. inspire. act)



United Interfaith Action of Southeastern Massachusetts

G.A.

GenUnity



KIDS IN TECH



MASSACHUSETTS WOMEN OF COLOR NETWORK



LATINX COMMUNITY CENTER FOR EMPOWERMENT



TOP NOTCH SCHOLARS

▲ 2023 & 2024 Innovator photos by: Leise Jones Photography

2023 and 2024 Innovator Fund Donors

2024 marked the second year of the Social Innovator Fund, a dynamic five-year pilot initiative providing crucial unrestricted funds to Innovators. Funds raised throughout the year, added to an initial \$200K, are divided equally among the Innovators, fueling impactful change. Beyond these vital unrestricted gifts, the team also made a bold move toward equity by compensating Accelerator finalist organizations for the time and effort they invested in the application process.

*Donor of two or more consecutive years **Companies that have provided matching gifts in support of SIF donor contributions

- Anonymous*
- Anonymous George and
- Barbara Beal*
- The Beker Foundation
- BESS Family Foundation
- The Collective Change Fund
- Cheryl Duckworth
- Larry and Beth Greenberg
- Travis Kilpatrick
- Karen Pfefferle
- Havell Rodrigues
- Connor Schoen

- Steven and Ellen Segal*
- Nageeb and Fatema Sumar
- Lori Tsuruda
- Viney Wallach Foundation*
- Kathleen Wallace
- Wellington Management Foundation**



NETWORK ENGAGEMENT

SHARING POWER AND STRENGTH

The Network Engagement program provides a vital space for nonprofits and funders to keep growing, learning, and pursuing change together. This year, participants pursued pathways to knowledge and connections through SIF's offerings of skill-building workshops, learning cohorts, executive director circles, and networking events. SIF continuously gathers feedback about nonprofits' current challenges and concerns in order to create relevant programming.

ElevatED

ElevatED, a new SIF learning cohort, came out of a lunch conversation with a group of new executive directors who started during and after the COVID-19 pandemic. Discussing the challenges of nonprofit leadership, the EDs articulated a desire for mentorship and peer support in their new roles. In response, SIF created the learning cohort ElevatED. Through five cohort sessions and two one-on-one coaching sessions, EDs built peer relationships, received mentoring, connected with resources, problem-solved, and enhanced their knowledge of the nonprofit sector.



"Talking to other EDs and the speakers who have been in these roles for years was so helpful to contextualize the

work and understand which issues are extremely common and which are unique, and what resources exist."

ALI JACOBS, MILL CITY GROWS

Measuring What Matters

In this facilitated workshop that featured guest speakers from the Barr Foundation and The Boston Foundation, 20 funders gathered to discuss ways to engage in evaluation and measurement in partnership with nonprofits to truly measure what matters. Key takeaways included a focus on using data for learning instead of for proving, recognizing the need to match measurement requests with staff capacity, and thinking creatively when it comes to asking for and receiving information.

Funding for Equity

In April 2024, the workshop Funding for Equity: Bridging the Gap Between Funder & Nonprofit Understanding of Full Cost brought nonprofit leaders and funders together to discuss the concept of "full cost," a framework used to "name and claim all the financial resources it takes to run an effective organization for the long haul." Facilitators from the Nonprofit Finance Fund engaged participants in a lively half day of learning, role play, and honest discussion to build a shared understanding of all of the costs involved in running a successful nonprofit. Participants examined not only what's in the budget, but also things like cash reserves, savings for emergencies, equipment repairs, and fair salaries for staff.

8 - SOCIAL INNOVATION FORUM



"The one-on-one and small groups with the guest speakers were invaluable. I truly appreciate their authenticity, empathy, and kindness... I also loved how transparent and honest my peers were about their challenges (and wins too!)."

GREGORY CHERY, MINDS MATTER BOSTON

182 UNIQUE INDIVIDUALS PARTICIPATING

17 NETWORK ENGAGEMENT

EVENTS

Sonya White Hope

ALL SOCIAL SOCIAL FORUM





CORE: Community Organizations Reimagining Ecosystems

In 2021, SIF launched CORE (Community Organizations Reimagining Ecosystems), a peer learning pilot bringing together eight place-based intermediaries from across the US. These organizations bridge funders and nonprofits to enhance regional social impact. This year, CORE partnered with behavioral science firm ideas42 on a research project that provided key recommendations for scaling impact in the place-based intermediaries sector. A virtual forum shared insights and lessons learned. After wrapping up the two-year pilot in 2023, SIF transitioned program facilitation to another cohort member, embracing a shared leadership model, while continuing as an active CORE member.







5407 ENGAGED INDIVIDUALS

176

FUNDERS CLEARING PATHWAYS TO POWER

SIF brings together funders who value equity, continuous learning, and the growth of a thriving nonprofit sector in Eastern Massachusetts. Whether you're a family foundation, community foundation, giving circle, corporate supporter, or individual donor, you're a contributor to an active, hopeful movement making a real difference by empowering organizations led by those closest to the issues. Our funding partners understand that capacity-building is essential and go beyond just writing checks — they volunteer, offer in-kind support, and serve as invaluable mentors to Social Innovators.

A highlight of the '24 Accelerator was a pilot Collaborative Track, where three funders (Jim and Lisa Valone, the Move the World Foundation, and the Wellington Management Foundation) combined their resources to support three nonprofits focused on youth: Kids in Tech, Top Notch Scholars, and Beat The Odds. During the collaborative selection process, Track Partners and nonprofit consultants had an equal share in the decision-making process.

> Executive Director Olu Ibrahim and students from Kids in Tech (Photo Credit: Leise Jones Photography)

Funder spotlight: Liberty Mutual Insurance

Liberty Mutual Foundation's top priority is the stability and resilience of the individuals and communities it serves. Seeking a reliable and creative partner to advance that goal, the Foundation began engaging with SIF in 2017 and has remained an ongoing partner since then. Melissa MacDonnell, President of Liberty Mutual Foundation, says, "It's been a wonderful way for us to invest in the capacity of leading organizations working on the causes that we care deeply about. Because SIF's vetting is so rigorous, we know we are bringing superb expertise to really impactful, community-based programs."

Over the years, Liberty Mutual has supported various SIF initiatives, including the Accelerator, the Alumni & Nonprofit Network, and Capacity Camps. As a Track Partner, the Foundation has worked with Innovators ranging from Boston Food Forest Coalition, a 2024 Innovator on the Climate Resiliency Track, to Best Buddies, participants in a Capacity Camp. "We've seen the incredible impact on organizations through their access to the resources and expertise SIF makes available," Melissa notes.

Through their involvement with SIF, Liberty Mutual not only supports nonprofit growth, but also benefits from the learning opportunities provided by SIF's collaborative approach. Melissa emphasized that the partnership offers a chance "to be around the table talking about some exceptional leaders in their fields of expertise and getting to know them in a deeper way." Such engagement enables Liberty Mutual to strengthen its community impact while fostering a vibrant network of innovative leaders dedicated to social change.



"We've seen the incredible impact on organizations through their access to the resources and expertise SIF makes available."

MELISSA MACDONNELL, PRESIDENT, LIBERTY MUTUAL FOUNDATION

▲ Image from Liberty Mutual, used with permission

Summer 2024

SHIFTING POWER

The Social Innovation Forum's Participatory Philanthropy Pilot

Author Calah McQuarters

Contributors Aditi Dholakia, Melissa Dug

Shifting Power

In 2021 and 2022, SIF piloted a participatory philanthropy program in which we aimed to shift traditional power dynamics between funders and nonprofits. For this program, the team moved decision-making for the Accelerator selection process from funders to nonprofit leaders with lived and learned experience in order to have evaluators more proximate to the social issues. This year, we published "Shifting Power: The Social Innovation Forum's Participatory Philanthropy Pilot" to share our learnings about the key themes that emerged from this pilot.

BOARD



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MELISSA DUGGAN

Chief Operating Officer

WYONA LYNCH-MCWHITE Executive Director



Special Projects Manager & Executive



*Board and team lists are as of October 2024





Q&A WITH WYONA LYNCH-MCWHITE

WHAT EXCITED YOU ABOUT BECOMING SIF'S EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR?

I connect deeply with SIF's mission and values, including the long-standing commitment to equity and change in the nonprofit sector. My experience as a nonprofit leader, funder, and management consultant helps as we think about the next 20 years of the organization. It's an honor to take the baton from Susan Musinsky, the wonderful founding ED, and to join such an engaged team, thoughtful board, and supportive community.

WHAT HAVE YOU MOST ENJOYED ABOUT GETTING TO KNOW SIF?

Too many things to name! But connecting with the members of our community has been a highlight. Getting to know the 2024 Innovators, their organizations, and their coaches through the Showcase was a special part of that. In that process, I met impressive past Innovators, funders, and volunteers who champion SIF.

WHAT IS A KEY SIF ACHIEVEMENT OF THE PAST YEAR?

The Innovator Fund is such a milestone moment. It has allowed SIF to increase direct support to our Innovators and allows donors to contribute to the entire cohort. Providing unrestricted support allows the organizations to immediately implement things that they have identified as essential for their next phase of growth.

WHAT WERE SIF'S MAIN GOALS THIS YEAR?

A key goal was a successful leadership transition. SIF worked on the search and the transition planning for a year with a thoughtful firm, members of the board, and the staff. Another main goal was a review of the Accelerator through a racial equity lens. The team worked with the consultants at Strategy Matters to consider every aspect of the program, and develop short- and long-term goals to ensure the program remains relevant and honors SIF's values and commitments. Both efforts began before I joined SIF in January, and I valued contributing to the final stages. I'm pleased to have this completed as we look ahead to broader organizational planning.

WHAT ARE THE OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR SIF IN THE COMING YEAR?

We're embarking on a comprehensive strategic planning process, building on insights from our Accelerator program review and our pilot participatory selection process. We plan to expand our programs, balancing in-person and virtual programs to support the busy schedules of both nonprofits and funders. As an intermediary organization, we face the challenge of ensuring continued support for capacity-building work, which is essential to fulfilling our mission.

WHY IS HOPE ESSENTIAL FOR SIF'S WORK?

Hope is both a noun and a verb — it's central to our mission of creating positive change in Eastern MA. We're committed to being an active partner, advocate, and learner in this work. As Grace Paley said, "The only recognizable feature of hope is action." Planning for SIF's next 20 years, we will continue to take action to change systems and build relationships for lasting impact.

 Executive Director
Wyona Lynch-McWhite at the May 2024
Showcase (Photo Credit: Margaret Belanger
Photography)

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AS OF JUNE 30, 2024

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\$50,000-\$99,999

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LEAD BENEFACTORS

\$20,000-\$49,999

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BENEFACTORS

\$15,000 - \$19,999 The Allstate Foundation* Andrew and Suzanne Offit*

LEAD ANGELS

\$10,000 - \$14,999

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ANGELS

\$5,000 - \$9,999

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*Donor of two or more consecutive years

**Companies that have provided matching gifts in support of SIF donor contributions

Photo Credit: Leise Jones Photography

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ALUMNI COUNCIL

(Including the year the group was selected as a Social Innovator)

Renee Boynton-Jarrett, Vital Village Networks (2020) | Stephanie Cogen, Future Chefs (2011) | Alex Danesco, Citizens for Juvenile Justice (2017) | Musau Dibinga, OrigiNation Cultural Arts Center (2020) | Kayla Dorst, LEAP for Education (2019) | Erika Hernandez, ACT Lawrence (2018) | Colin Killick, Disability Policy Consortium (2019) | Michelle Liebetreu, Mystic River Watershed Association (2015) | Shavel'le Olivier, Mattapan Food and Fitness Coalition (2022) | Sarah Roxburgh, Veterans Legal Services (2014) | Connor Schoen, Breaktime (2021)

FUNDER LEARNING ADVISORY COUNCIL

Elizabeth Bouchard, Fidelity Charitable | Natanja Craig Oquendo, Boston Women's Fund | Kevin Fudge, American Student Assistance | Kate Grundy, Devonshire Foundation | Rory Neuner, Barr Foundation | Suzanne Offit | Karen Pfefferle, Wellington Management Foundation | Lawrence "Larry" Wallach, Viney Wallach Foundation

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SWETTBERG

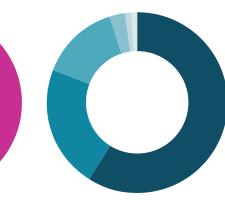
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Photo Credit: Leise Jones Photography

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Operating Revenue: \$3,523,427



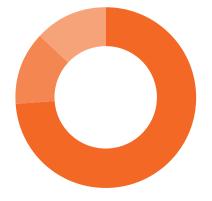
REVENUE BY SOURCE

- 52% Corporations & Foundations
- 29% Individuals
- 14% In-kind Support
- 3% Other Income
- 1% Special Events
- 1% Coworking Fees

REVENUE BY USE/PURPOSE

- **59%** Net Assets Released from Restrictions
- 22% Contributions & Grants
- 14% Contributed Goods & Services
- 3% Interest & Other Income
- 1% Special Events
- 1% Coworking Fees

Expenses: \$3,619,229



EXPENSES

- 74% Program Services
- 13% Fundraising
- 13% General & Administration

SIF's overall expense budget in FY24 was \$3,619,229, an increase of 31% over \$2,756,140 in FY23. Much of this growth can be attributed to two factors: 1.) the creation of the Social Innovator Fund, which raises funding to be passed through via grants to Innovators and will likely fluctuate year to year, impacting both revenue and expenses but has no impact on the net results; and 2.) annual fluctuations in contributed services from in-kind partners, also impacting both revenue and expenses, but with no impact on the net results. Removing these two factors, SIF saw budget growth of 18%, reflecting investments in staffing and programs and costs related to an executive transition.

> Photo Credit: Margaret Belanger Photography



SOCIAL INNOVATION FORUM

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socialinnovationforum.org

WRITING

Carisa Cunningham **DESIGN** Opus Design, Bost<u>on</u>____