



## *2021 Annual Report*

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Economic Opportunity Funders is an informal network of nearly 500 funders at the national, regional, and local levels working to advance economic equity and opportunity in the United States. We believe in building an economy that works for all, regardless of race, ethnicity, immigration status, education, income, religion, gender identity, disability, or age. We support a strong public sector and policies that create a healthy, fair, and just economy where opportunity and prosperity are broadly shared. Economic Opportunity Funders (EOF) focuses its work in three key and intersecting areas: poverty and opportunity, protecting and supporting workers, and tax and budget policies. We provide a platform for funders to share information, exchange ideas and best practice, and collaborate around identified areas of interest.

Through its work, EOF aims to:

- **CONVENE:** EOF brings funders together through meetings and webinars to deepen their understanding of the cross-cutting issues of poverty and economic opportunity, support for low-wage workers, and adequate public resources.
- **CONNECT:** EOF makes connections among funders pursuing similar objectives or working in similar regions through strategic outreach, mapping efforts and a new award program recognizing organizations working to defend in law and social policy for low-wage workers' rights.
- **CATALYZE:** EOF supports the coordination and alignment of investments through funder networks and pooled funds.
- **COLLABORATE:** EOF regularly partners with other funder affinity groups on programming to highlight the intersectionality of our work, improve our reach, impact, and effectiveness, and to reduce duplication of efforts.

EOF is committed to building knowledge of racial, gender, and ethnic equity practices among funders. This includes dedicated programming on how race, gender, and ethnic equity play out in public policies, programs, and grantmaking as well as embedding an equity lens into our operations and events.

EOF is led by a Steering Committee that provides oversight and guidance for the group. Steering Committee members are volunteers and represent the needs and interests of the diverse range of philanthropic organizations that participate in EOF. Steering Committee members participate in monthly conference calls, plan and carry out events, provide financial oversight, and attend an annual Steering Committee meeting. Our 2021 Steering Committee members included:

- Anna Wadia, Ford Foundation
- Cassandra McKee, Wellspring Philanthropic Fund

- Erin Currier, W.K. Kellogg Foundation
- Jidan Terry-Koon, San Francisco Foundation
- Kit Judge, The Annie E. Casey Foundation
- Ria Puggeda, Consumer Health Foundation
- Stephanie Davison, The Kresge Foundation

In 2021, EOF held 21 events, supported two funder networks, and administered the EITC Pooled Fund and Law & Social Policy Legacy Award. Network participation significantly increased in 2021. EOF gained 160 new members, bringing total participation in the network to nearly 500 members, representing nearly 300 foundations, philanthropic advisory groups, and philanthropy serving organizations.

A list of major activities and accomplishments are outlined below.

**Outcome 1: CONVENE: EOF brings funders together through meetings and webinars to deepen their understanding of the cross-cutting issues of poverty and economic opportunity, support for low-wage workers, and adequate public resources.**

EOF hosted or cohosted three virtual series, four webinars, and nine working group video calls where EOF staff had a primary role in planning and implementation. Planning committees were formed for events to engage EOF members, funder colleagues, and other affinity group leaders in the development of program agendas. Notably, nearly all events engaged one or more affinity group.

Date	Event	Registrants
January - March	Five Post-Election Funder Strategy Room Video Calls (January – March 2021)	78
February	Post-Election Virtual Funder Learning Series: No Going Back -- Building for Better Future	222
April	Budget and Tax Briefing Virtual Series: Federal Policy, Budget, and Revenue Outlook	150
April	Budget and Tax Briefing Watch Parties	147
April	Budget and Tax Briefing Virtual Series: State Policy, Budget, and Revenue Outlook	102
April	Budget and Tax Briefing Virtual Series: Making the Case for Cash	97
April	Budget and Tax Briefing Virtual Series: Law & Social Policy Legacy Award - Meet the 2021 Winner	15
June	WEBINAR: Why Care About Care? Our Economy Depends on It	347
August	WEBINAR: Job Quality in 2021: Implications for Funders from the Gallup Great Jobs Survey	88

September	WEBINAR: Connecting Policy Advocacy & Grassroots Organizing to Improve Economic Security: A Conversation for Florida Funders	52
September	Fall Funder Learning Series: Tax Credits: The Anti-poverty Tool of the 21st Century	76
October	Fall Funder Learning Series: Building a More Robust and Equitable Unemployment Insurance System for a 21st Century Economy	33
October	Fall Funder Learning Series: Emergency Cash Benefits: Lessons from Innovation and Rapid Response	78
October	WEBINAR: Supporting Innovative State Policies: A Case Study of State EITCs	160
October – December	Four Building State Advocacy and Engagement Capacity Funder Strategy Room Calls	16
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>1641</b>

See a detailed description of each event below.

- Five Post-Election Funder Strategy Room Video Calls (January – March 2021)
- Post-Election Virtual Funder Learning Series: [No Going Back -- Building for Better Future](#) (February 4, 2021): Hosted by EOF in partnership with Funders’ Committee for Civic Participation, Grantmakers Concerned with Immigrants and Refugees, Grantmakers for Thriving Youth, Neighborhood Funders Group’s Funders for a Just Economy, and Workforce Matters, this event explored how funder colleagues are supporting policy advocacy, organizing, and civic engagement strategies to build a more inclusive and equitable economy and democracy.
- Budget and Tax Briefing Virtual Series: [Federal Policy, Budget, and Revenue Outlook](#) (April 8, 2021): Hosted by EOF and co-sponsored by Asset Funders Network, Children, Youth & Family Funders Roundtable, Early Childhood Funders Collaborative, and Workforce Matters, this event explored the key provisions in the federal budget and recovery package, upcoming budget debates, and strategies to advance worker justice, social protections and an economy that works for all.
- Budget and Tax Briefing Virtual Watch Parties (April 2021): Local watch parties were organized where funders gathered to view the federal budget and tax outlook presentation (live or as a recording on a later date) and engage in a discussion with local experts on how the current landscape impacts critical programs and services in their state. There were 5 watch party hosts in 2021: Florida Philanthropic Network, North Carolina Network of Grantmakers, Philanthropy Missouri, Grantmakers of Western Pennsylvania, and Workforce Matters.
- Budget and Tax Briefing Virtual Series: [State Policy, Budget, and Revenue Outlook](#) (April 15, 2021): Hosted by EOF and co-sponsored by Children, Youth & Family Funders Roundtable and Workforce Matters, this event included a discussion on key fiscal policy and narrative battles and opportunities in the states.

- Budget and Tax Briefing Virtual Series: [Making the Case for Cash](#) (April 22, 2021): Hosted by EOF and co-sponsored by the EITC Funders Network and Children, Youth & Family Funders Roundtable, this event explored how government, philanthropy, and advocacy organizations are making the case for cash.
- Budget and Tax Briefing Virtual Series: [Law & Social Policy Legacy Award - Meet the 2021 Winner](#) (April 29, 2021): Hosted by EOF, this event included a discussion with EOF's Law & Social Policy Legacy Award's first winner, Centro de los Derechos del Migrante, Inc. (CDM).
- [Why Care About Care? Our Economy Depends on It](#) (June 15, 2021): Hosted by EOF and AFN, this event featured a new video and report designed to deepen funders' understanding of the intersectional/intergenerational issues related to the care economy.
- [Job Quality in 2021: Implications for Funders from the Gallup Great Jobs Survey](#) (August 11, 2021): Hosted by EOF, Funders for a Just Economy, and Workforce Matters, this event included a discussion on the latest data and implications from Gallup's Great Jobs survey, an in-depth survey of nearly 8,000 adults shedding light on the impact of COVID on the labor force, and in particular job quality.
- Fall Funder Learning Series: [Tax Credits: The Anti-poverty Tool of the 21st Century](#) (September 22, 2021): Hosted by EOF and co-sponsored by the EITC Funders Network, Children, Youth & Family Funders Roundtable, and Philanthropy New York, this event explored the role of tax credits in building a just and equitable recovery.
- [Connecting Policy Advocacy & Grassroots Organizing to Improve Economic Security: A Conversation for Florida Funders](#) (September 29, 2021): Hosted by EOF, the EITC Funders Network and Florida Philanthropic Network, this event included a conversation with Florida funder colleagues to explore strategies to connect policy advocacy and grassroots engagement to create ecosystems of change.
- Fall Funder Learning Series: [Building a More Robust and Equitable Unemployment Insurance System for a 21st Century Economy](#) (October 8, 2021): Hosted by EOF and co-sponsored by the EITC Funders Network and Philanthropy New York, this event explored the role of unemployment insurance in building a just and equitable recovery.
- Fall Funder Learning Series: [Emergency Cash Benefits: Lessons From Innovation and Rapid Response](#) (October 20, 2021): Hosted by EOF and co-sponsored by the EITC Funders Network, Children, Youth & Family Funders Roundtable, and Philanthropy New York, this event explored the role of cash in building a just and equitable recovery.
- [Supporting Innovative State Policies: A Case Study of State EITCs](#) (October 21, 2021): Cohosted by Asset Funders Network, the EITC Funders Network and EOF, this event explored replicable innovations that state organizations are developing to improve economic security and lessons learned about what it takes to pass these policies.
- Four Building State Advocacy and Engagement Capacity Funder Strategy Room Calls (October – December 2021)

EOF also cosponsored five webinars led by partner affinity groups (where EOF staff had a primary promotion role).

- [David Vs. Goliath – The Story of Amazon Workers in Alabama](#) (March 26, 2021): Hosted by The Labor Innovations for the 21st Century Fund (LIFT) Fund and co-sponsored by EOF and Funders for a Just Economy, this event included a panel discussion with Southern labor experts and leaders moderated by Sarita Gupta, Director of the Future of Work(ers) program at the Ford Foundation.
- [State of Play: Local, National, and Intersectional Responses to Addressing Anti-Asian Violence and Building Durable AAPI Immigrant Power](#) (April 21, 2021): Hosted by Grantmakers Concerned with Immigrants and Refugees and co-sponsored by EOF, Asian American/Pacific Islanders in Philanthropy and Philanthropy New York, this event included conversation with local and national AAPI leaders to learn more not only about the narrative, policy, and solidarity efforts to address anti-Asian violence but also about opportunities to build durable AAPI immigrant power across the country.
- [Narrative + Culture Change Strategies to Build BIPOC Power](#) (April 22, 2021): Hosted by Funders' Committee for Civic Participation and co-sponsored by EOF and Philanthropy New York, this event included a discussion about distinguishing narrative strategies from communications, how to build the necessary infrastructure for long term change, and how to support narrative and culture change work that is meaningful to grantees.
- [EITC FN Funder Strategy Session: Seizing the Moment & Maximizing the Impact of the ARPA](#), (June 2, 2021): Hosted by the EITC Funders Network and Cosponsored by EOF and Children, Youth & Family Funders Roundtable, this event explored the importance of the American Rescue Plan Act on the field, strategies related implementation, and approaches to advocacy in order to maximize its impact.
- [Racial Inequities in Medical Debt: Causes and Potential Solutions](#) (December 9, 2021): Hosted by Grantmakers In Health and cosponsored by EOF and Asset Funders Network, this event shared expert viewpoints on the problem of medical debt, the people most at risk, and potential points of engagement for philanthropy.

**Outcome 2: CONNECT: EOF makes connections among funders pursuing similar objectives or working in similar regions through strategic outreach, mapping efforts and a new award program recognizing organizations working to defend in law and social policy for low-wage workers' rights.**

**Strategic Outreach:** EOF staff regularly updated the EOF website, Twitter account (@EOFnetwork), responded to requests for information, and published four member Q&A interviews to facilitate information sharing and collaboration among EOF members:

1. [Omar Woodard](#), GreenLight Fund (February 2021)
2. [Nomzana Augustin](#), WES Mariam Assefa Fund (June 2021)
3. [Mekaelia Davis](#), Surdna Foundation (September 2021)
4. [Ria Pugeda](#), if, A Foundation for Radical Possibility (October 2021)

**Web Site:** In 2021, the EOF web site received 8482 unique visitors (a 45% increase from 2020) and 18,867 pageviews. The web site continues to attract new visitors (84% new and 16% returning). The top five most visited pages of the website were: EOF website homepage (4401), Annual Budget and Tax Briefing (995), the bio page for Alejandra Gomez, LUCHA (685), EITC Pooled Fund (519) and the Our

Members page (518). EOF staff also responded to requests for information and maintained a private listserv to facilitate information sharing among members.

**Law and Social Policy Legacy Award:** This award program was established in 2020 to recognize organizations defending and advocating for low-wage workers' rights. The Public Welfare Foundation spent more than a decade supporting public policy and system reforms to improve the lives of low-wage working people in the United States. This prize will commemorate and build on Public Welfare Foundation's support to the field and honor the critical role law and social policy organizations play in building an economy that works for all. A \$10,000 award will be given by EOF with support from Public Welfare Foundation annually until 2030, as a part of their legacy investment in the Workers' Rights field. Centro de los Derechos del Migrante, Inc. (CDM) received our first Law & Social Policy Legacy Award in 2021. We received twelve nominations for 2022 Law & Social Policy Legacy Award. The 2022 winner will be recognized during the 2022 Budget and Tax Briefing in April.

### **Outcome 3: CATALYZE: EOF supports the coordination and alignment of investments through funder networks and pooled funds.**

**Funder Networks.** EOF supported two funder networks in 2021.

- **Post-Election Funder Strategy Room (November 2020 – February 2021):** Federal and state elections, regardless of outcomes, provide an important opportunity for philanthropy to assess the new environment and identify new windows of opportunity to work strategically and collaboratively. EOF established this funder strategy room to provide a table around which members can gather to share common questions, analyses of challenges and opportunities, and philanthropic strategies post-2020 election. Thirty-seven funders participated in the strategy room. Two video calls were held in 2020 and four video calls were held between January and February 2021. A google drive and listserv were created to support the working group.
- **Building State Advocacy and Engagement Capacity Funder Strategy Room (October – December 2021):** The Strategy Room provided 10 grantmaking institutions and 16 funders with an opportunity to engage in deep learning and conversation regarding their strategy and potential areas of alignment as well as opportunities for feedback on individual, emergent strategies via a mini case study. Four video calls were held and a google drive and listserv were created to support the working group.

**EITC Pooled Fund:** Economic Opportunity Funders and the EITC Funders Network administer and oversee the State EITC Rapid Response, Campaign and Policy Development Fund, and the Federal EITC Campaign Fund to advance tax fairness and economic opportunity for low-income workers and families through the promotion, protection, and expansion of the federal and state EITC, CTC and other tax credits. The four funds – together known as the EITC Pooled Fund – are guided by an advisory group, supported by five national funders, and administered by EOF and the EITC Funders Network in partnership with the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities and The Hatcher Group. Participating foundations in the EITC Pooled Fund include: The Annie E. Casey Foundation, The Bernard and Anne Spitzer Charitable Trust, The Rockefeller Foundation, W.K. Kellogg Foundation, and an anonymous donor. In 2021, The Fund awarded \$204,500 in Rapid Response Funds to organizations in seven states (GA, LA, MA, NM, OK, OR, WA), \$990,000 in State EITC Campaign Funds to organizations in eight states (CO, MS, MT, NC, NM, OK, PR VA); \$370,000 in State EITC Policy Development Funds to three states (FL, ID, PA), and \$360,000 in Federal EITC Campaign Funds to four national groups (RESULTS, NETWORK

Advocates for Catholic Social Justice, Center for Rural Strategies, and Parents Together). The remaining funds were allocated to support staffing the administration of the project, technical assistance contracts, and a series of activities to help build connections between economic security policy and grassroots funders including a landscape analysis, a [conversation for Florida funders](#), two case studies on successful EITC campaigns in [New Mexico](#) and [Washington](#) and an [infographic](#) on how policy and grassroots funders can come together to build ecosystems that advance economic opportunity. To date, \$6,453,000 has been awarded to 39 state networks and four national networks.

#### **Outcome 4: COLLABORATE: EOF regularly partners with other funder affinity groups on programming to highlight the intersectionality of our work, improve our reach, impact, and effectiveness and to reduce duplication of efforts.**

EOF staff worked closely with and built stronger relationships with several affinity groups in 2021, including Asset Funders Network, Children Youth & Family Funders Roundtable, Early Childhood Funders Collaborative, EITC Funders Network, Funders' Committee for Civic Participation, Funders for a Just Economy, Grantmakers Concerned with Immigrants and Refugees, United Philanthropy Forum, and Workforce Matters.

Notably, almost all EOF events were cosponsored with partner affinity groups. By jointly sponsoring events, EOF was able to leverage additional financial support and attract a larger and more diverse group of participants. EOF staff also regularly reached out to other affinity groups to publicize EOF programs on their websites and newsletters.

EOF also partnered with the Asset Funders Network and released a [funder primer](#), [webinar](#) and [video](#) to deepen funder's understanding of the intersectional/intergenerational issues related to the care economy and lift up key public policies while providing innovative strategies and opportunities for greater funder collaboration to build an equitable care infrastructure.

#### **Challenges and Lessons Learned**

We faced several challenges and learned several lessons in our administration of EOF this year.

- While going all-virtual created greater access for those who may not have been able to join us in person, virtual meeting fatigue resulted in reduced event attendance (about 50% of registrants participating) and there were fewer opportunities for relationship building and informal networking.
- Our extended virtual programming significantly increased network participation and membership. This gives us something to think about as we come out of the pandemic.
- Developing and implementing virtual programming takes as much, if not more time than in-person programming.
- In person meeting evaluations yield much higher response rates than virtual program evaluations (42-47% vs 1- 10%). We have stopped doing virtual program evaluations due to limited responses and are exploring additional ways to collect member feedback on programming (including member surveys, focus groups, and one on one calls).