



2021 STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK



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 **re**
imagine
with WRAG

THE NEED

The current vision and mission of WRAG create a strategic foundation for all of its work. Guided by a commitment to impact and racial equity, WRAG used this timing of organizational change to reimagine its contribution and leadership within philanthropy in the Greater Washington region.

VISION

We embrace the vision of an equitable region in which all can participate and prosper.

MISSION

The Washington Regional Association of Grantmakers promotes increased, effective and responsible philanthropy to improve the health and vitality of the region and all who live here.

With this vision and mission in mind, understanding the current and future needs of the region, and building on its longstanding commitment to racial equity and justice, we present this strategic framework to guide WRAG toward new strategic priorities that will allow us to reimagine the philanthropic ecosystem of the Greater Washington region and our contribution to it.

OUR JOURNEY

To guide the development of this framework, Frontline Solutions engaged in a discovery process including an organizational survey, interviews and focus groups, and a benchmark analysis, with WRAG staff, board members, and external stakeholders in an effort to answer a set of interrelated objectives:

1. Understand the overall culture, values, and priorities of WRAG
2. Understand WRAG's current strategies, capacity, and growth areas
3. Identify intended and actual audiences and beneficiaries of WRAG's work
4. Identify opportunities to clarify WRAG's mission, and align that mission with WRAG's work and impact
5. Assess the current landscape of organizations



KNOWN FACTORS

WRAG understands that the status quo for philanthropy will not lead to a more just and equitable region.

WRAG insists that racial justice is not an aspect of our collective aspirations for this region; it is the anchor for our aspirations (healthy economy, safe and healthy communities, vibrant culture, etc.).

WRAG believes that philanthropy is uniquely positioned to leverage relationships across sectors to address the pernicious racial inequities that are entrenched across systems.

WRAG realizes the urgency of now requires philanthropy in the Greater Washington region to scale its commitment to leaders and organizations working for racial justice in and for the region.

WRAG recognizes that the agents and constituencies of the philanthropic ecosystem include nonprofits, impact investors, governments, and businesses.

WRAG commits to being accountable to all of its constituents for the quality and impact of its work and to the principles of integrity and transparency.



NORTH STAR



We believe that a racially just and equitable region must be the vision for all of philanthropy —across all funding priorities, geographic scopes, and types and sizes of giving vehicles.

WRAG is a place for us all....for all of us committed to a racially just and equitable Greater Washington region.

THE WORK

WRAG organizes, equips, invests in, and activates its members, partners, communities, and other stakeholders for a more racially just and equitable¹ Greater Washington region.

Our contribution to this vision includes:

- ***Shifting the practices*** of the local philanthropic sector to be anchored by racial equity;
- ***Creating spaces and opportunities for philanthropy*** to collectively learn, teach, plan, invest, and act pursuant to a racially just and equitable region; and
- ***Attracting and allocating more investments*** from all sectors to support the leadership of organizations in the Greater Washington region to advance racially just and equitable strategies and outcomes.

¹ Racial equity is the condition that would be achieved if one's racial identity no longer predicted, in a statistical sense, how one fares. When we use the term, we are thinking about racial equity as one part of racial justice, and thus we also include work to address root causes of inequities, not just their manifestation. This includes elimination of policies, practices, attitudes and cultural messages that reinforce differential outcomes by race or fail to eliminate them. (Source: Center for Assessment and Policy Development via [DC Policy Center](#))

CONVENE

Create spaces to learn about community issues from experts² and from each other

WHAT WE HEARD

- High level of interest and benefit from convenings/venues for learning and networking by members
- Desire to deepen and differentiate learning opportunities across continuum from learning to planning to action
- Provide learning opportunities around racial equity that meet funders' needs across a wide spectrum

WRAG'S ROLE: FACILITATOR FOR MEMBER/SECTOR LEARNING

- Sharing practices and lessons learned from how philanthropy advances racial equity
- Offering identity-centered and issue-focused learning forums (e.g., women of color in philanthropy, criminal justice, education)³
- Providing affinity learning opportunities and forums (e.g., corporate foundations, family foundations)
- Providing opportunities for funders to improve their practice (e.g., participatory grantmaking, approaches to learning and evaluation, trust-based philanthropy, etc.)
- Offering convening opportunities inclusive of all sectors including nonprofits, public sector, etc.

CHANNELS

- Affinity-based Learning Cohorts
- Convenings
- Webinars
- Partnerships with existing conveners
- Other resources

² Community members are **experts** in their lived experiences, neighborhood, and community dynamics. Community engagement recognizes the expertise of the people who are most affected by policies and actively employs them as main knowledge contributors. (Source: [Urban Institute](#))

³ Forums includes spaces for identity and issue-focused groups to center joy and healing as an aspect of equity-centered work

MOBILIZE

Harness philanthropic influences and partnerships to increase attention to and investments in neighborhoods, communities, and the region.⁴

WHAT WE HEARD

- High level of interest in uplifting local community voices and informing philanthropy to better understand and support the local nonprofit ecosystem.
- Increased interest in expanding WRAGs network to include the regional nonprofit ecosystem.

WRAG'S ROLE: INFLUENCER OF CAPITAL AND RESOURCES TO THE GREATER WASHINGTON REGION SOCIAL SECTOR

- Leveraging relationships with philanthropy nationwide to influence more philanthropic investments in the Greater Washington region
- Liaising with local and federal government to make case for more resources flow to equity-centered the Greater Washington region's nonprofits
- Aligning investments through public-private partnerships
- Building partnerships with other local and national PSOs in the region and conveners of nonprofits

CHANNELS

- Funder briefings
- Existing board membership
- Working groups and other WRAG platforms
- Strategic partnerships with influencers that are external to WRAG

⁴ WRAG considers itself to be a philanthropy mobilizing organization, no longer a philanthropy serving organization. As such, this aspect of WRAG's purpose is not to serve wealth, but rather to move dollars and people to solve systemic social issues.

ADVOCATE

Catalyze collective action of members and stakeholders towards systems change around key issues that impact the region

WHAT WE HEARD

- The high level of interest in advocacy for philanthropic members in general and specifically related to racial equity.
- Increasing interest in establishing policy priorities to help funders collectively support systems change.

WRAG'S ROLE: ADVANCE COLLECTIVE ACTION

- Organizing funders to exert collective influence⁵ and to be responsive to issues in the Greater Washington region's communities
- Creating platforms and support for collective philanthropic action
- Connecting funders with local organizers, policy advocates and other nonprofits to plan and execute initiatives addressing priority issues

CHANNELS: ACTION TABLES, LOCAL ORGANIZING AND ADVOCACY

ORGANIZATIONS, WRAG WORKING GROUPS, LIAISONS WITHIN CITY GOVERNMENT

- WRAG Board Policy Committee
- Collective Action Tables (Housing Justice, Excluded Workers)
- Regular liaising with Greater Washington public sector officials and agencies
- Policy Working Group with nonprofit advocacy leaders

⁵ **Influence** to refers to relational access to system leaders across sectors and leveraging the reputation of WRAG and its individual members