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# Philanthropic Support for Funding Climate Resiliency and Environmental Justice in CT

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Philanthropy through Connecticut's community foundations, private foundations and corporate giving programs can play a flexible role in supporting climate resiliency and environmental justice

*Next generation stewards plant trees in a New London park.*



# Environmental Funders in Connecticut

## Community foundations with a commitment to environmental funding:

- Connecticut Community Foundation
- Community Foundation of Greater New Haven
- Middlesex Community Foundation
- Community Foundation of Eastern Connecticut

## Private and Corporate Foundations include:

- Emily Hall Tremain Foundation: *environmental equity*
- Common Sense Fund: *sustainability and climate change*
- Newman's Own Foundation: *food justice*
- Hampshire Foundation: *transition to a clean & sustainable future*
- Leon Lowenstein Foundation: *bringing innovative ideas to scale*
- The ZOOM Foundation: *climate change*
- Bank of America (charitable funds and corporate giving): *various environmental causes*
- Eversource: *clean energy*
- Dominion: *science education*

## Programs typically funded:

Conservation and stewardship of significant lands, clean water projects, environmental education, especially for urban youth, environmental justice in our urban neighborhoods, advocacy

## **Assets of community foundation funding/engagement:**

- Flexible and responsive funding
  - o Can provide matching funds to meet state or federal grant requirements
- Can fund demonstration projects to show efficacy of a project
- Will support coalition-building, especially among grassroots groups
- Ready to engage in advocacy on the local and legislative levels

## **Leadership roles for community foundations:**

- Convening of a variety of community groups
- Deep knowledge of community and its citizens
- Direct access to donors with non-competitive funds
- Can mobilize board members, committee volunteers and donors on issues of importance
- Can provide leadership and key partnership on local issues
- Strong commitment to equity in their community
- History of working closely with other funders to bring greater resources to an issue
- Collective Impact—can bring together multi-disciplinary partners to support a common vision





## The Community Foundation of Eastern Connecticut

### Vision

A healthy, thriving, sustainable Eastern Connecticut with greater equity for all.

### Mission

Collaborating with partners to put philanthropy into action to address the needs, rights and interests of our community in Eastern Connecticut.

### Values

Integrity, Equity, Respect, Courage, Empathy

### Year End 2019

Assets: \$99,818,189

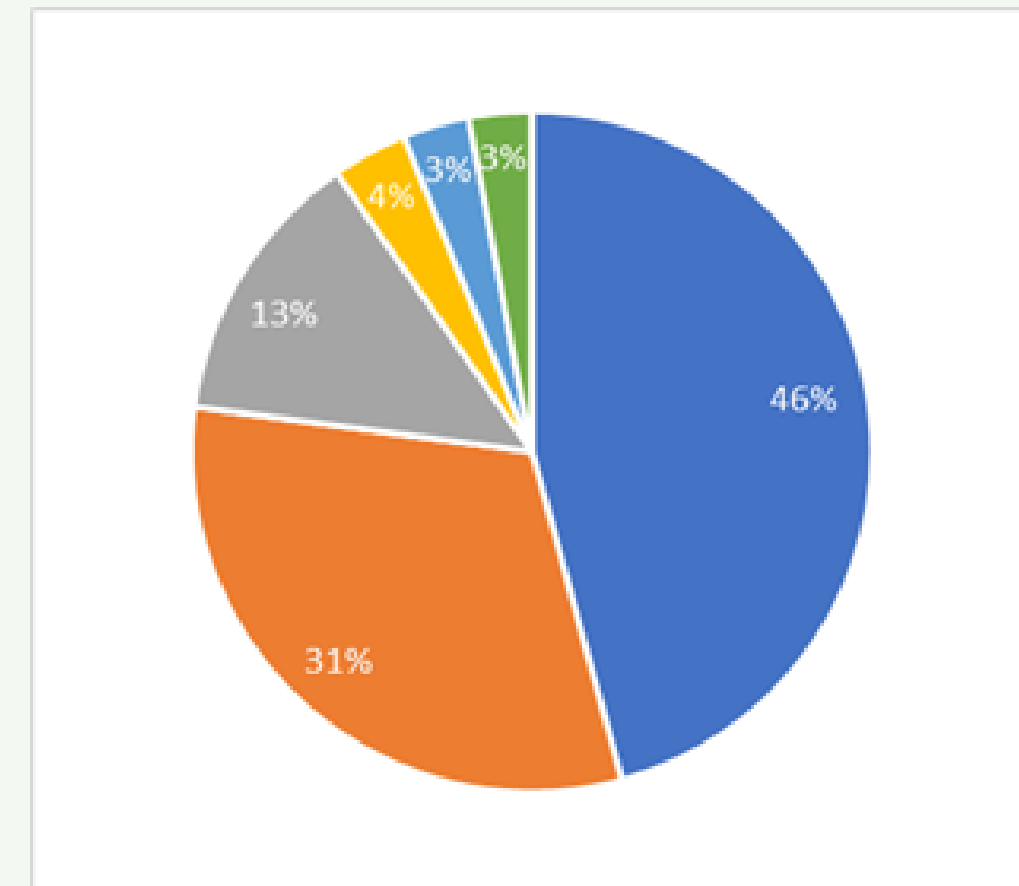
Gifts: \$6,380,110

Grants: \$5,901,125

### Grants by interest area

Basic Needs & Rights	\$2,699,656
Youth Empowerment	\$1,850,938
Environment	\$777,309
Women & Girls	\$210,261
Animal Welfare	\$187,120
Other	\$175,839

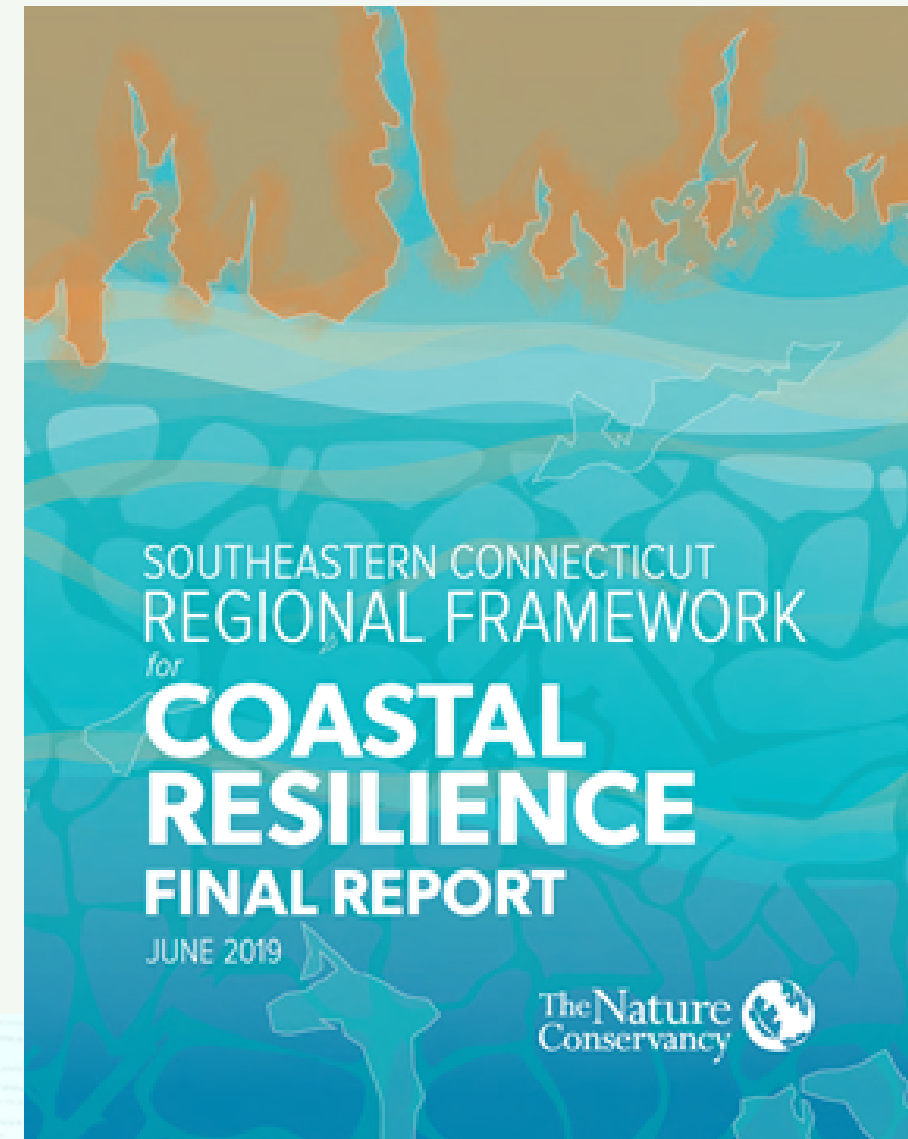
Grand Total \$5,901,125





## Funding Resiliency Planning

A grant of \$70,000 supported The Nature Conservancy's *Strengthening Regional Resilience via Design and Projects that Protect the Environment and People of New London County*. Planning sessions with municipal leaders, nonprofits and interested community members informed a final document created by the Conway School.





Civic engagement on critical issues:

A small grant sponsored an education program on climate change hosted by St. James Church in New London in partnership with the Inter-religious Environmental Justice Network in 2019. A diverse group of climate activists and educators drew 70 people from a variety of faiths to discuss how to respond to the threat of climate change.







### **Community Foundation of Greater New Haven: Protecting the Q River**

In 1990, The Quinnipiac became the first river in the state of Connecticut to have an endowment at a community foundation that generates income to protect it and its surrounding environment. The fund was established as part of a court settlement of litigation brought by the Connecticut Fund for the Environment and the Natural Resources Defense Council against the Upjohn Company concerning wastewater discharges from the Upjohn Company's plant in North Haven

Since then, The Community Foundation has managed the Quinnipiac River Fund, which grants about \$100,000 annually to research, restoration, and recreation projects on the Quinnipiac River and surrounding watershed. Learn more at [www.thequinnipiacriver.com](http://www.thequinnipiacriver.com).



## Racial Equity in our Work

The Community Foundation is dedicated to integrating the values of equity and social justice into our grantmaking and community initiatives. Currently, our board is undergoing a listening, learning and planning process to encourage work that eliminates inequities and racism in our region. The Community Foundation is engaging the voices of constituents in this process, including youth voices, for our priority grantmaking areas: Basic Needs & Rights, Youth Empowerment, Environmental Conservation and Education, and Animal Welfare.

The Community Foundation will prioritize funding for programs which seek to eliminate racial and economic disparities in our region. The Community Foundation also seeks to fund organizations which engage clients and end-users of services in program planning and improvements so that the voices of constituents of color and others are represented. Examples would include youth-led social change and environmental justice programs.







## Developing the Next Generation of Environmental Stewards

Nearly one-third of CFECT's environmental funding goes to promoting environmental education in schools and in communities. Grow Windham, pictured here, is a youth-led program that connects teens with growing food and entrepreneurship.





## Community Conveners

CFECT hosts numerous community discussions and focus groups throughout the year on a variety of topics. The purpose can be to solicit community feedback, encourage collaborative among organizations, and advocacy. At the Pomfret Audubon Center in 2017, we gathered 75 environmental leaders, volunteers, town officials and other interested parties to gather their input and inform our environmental grantmaking.





## Disaster Philanthropy

Community foundations can react quickly in the face of disaster to mobilize resources.

*The Superstorm Sandy Fund* was created by a coalition of funders to respond to the crisis

- Funders included CFECT, United Way, Pfizer, and many individual and corporate donors
- Nearly \$300,000 was quickly mobilized and distributed
- Support was directed to individuals and non-profit organizations with capital losses and need for emergency funds

*CFECT established the Neighbors for Neighbors Fund in response to the pandemic*

- Fundraising ongoing, close to \$1 million raised since March
- Partners include local United Ways, corporate funders and CF's donors
- \$475,000 distributed to nonprofits for food security, PPE, technology upgrades and rental assistance in May
- Round 2 of grants planned for early fall

**CFECT is ready to work with community agencies short and long-term solutions when a crisis presents itself**







## Encouraging Collective Action

Grants to Sustainable CT have focused on their equity work in their eastern Connecticut communities, where they serve over half of the Foundation's towns and 109 in total across the state. Each town committee determines their certified actions to improve resiliency on a local level.



Help remove harmful aquatic invasive water chestnut for the health of communities and ecosystems along the Connecticut River.



Fight climate change and beautify your town by launching a tree planting effort.



## Foundations Moving into Advocacy Work

Foundations as a group have increased their advocacy efforts in recent years. Community foundations see the clear benefits of encouraging policy change on long-standing obstacles to equity for their constituents. CFECT has established a public policy task force currently focused on women's issues. We offer community trainings with our expert partners and ways for our volunteers and supports to get engaged, including a lobby day at the capital. We also have made grants directly to organizations such as the CT Roundtable on Climate and Jobs, as well as The Nature Conservancy, to support climate change efforts.







### *Recommendations for Funding Climate Resiliency*

#### **Engage Community Foundations on Equity**

- Foundations can be partners on civic conversations with diverse audiences
- Foundations have relationships with grass roots organizations serving Black and Brown populations
- Bring Foundation staff and constituents into projects in the early planning stages
- Take advantage of CF's multi-disciplinary approach to combine resiliency projects, job training, education and food security, e.g. (collective impact model)

#### **Look to foundations for flexible support**

- Planning grants
- Matching funds
- Emergency funds
- Coalition-building, with funders and/or citizens
- Demonstration projects



**Additional Resources:**

Long Island Sound Funders Collaborative: <http://www.lisfc.org/>

Environmental Grantmakers Association: <https://ega.org/>

Connecticut Council for Philanthropy: [www.ctphilanthropy.org](http://www.ctphilanthropy.org)

Community Foundation of Eastern Connecticut: [www.cfect.org](http://www.cfect.org)

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