

Overview Case Study

I. OVERVIEW

When the COVID-19 pandemic first hit, children were out of school, businesses were temporarily closing, performances were shuttered and workers were being laid off. Representing a combined 185 years of serving our region, both United Way of Greater Atlanta and Community Foundation for Greater Atlanta are committed to an equity agenda to support the emergence of a Greater Atlanta where every child, family and community has the resources and opportunities they need to thrive.

When faced with the health, economic and social crises of the COVID-19 pandemic, both institutions knew immediately that we must quickly respond to our communities' needs. On Monday, March 16, Community Foundation for Greater Atlanta and United Way of Greater Atlanta launched the Greater Atlanta COVID-19 Response and Recovery Fund.

Together we seeded the Fund with \$1.5 million, and assembled a joint staff team and a joint Advisory Committee made up of board-level

volunteers with significant contributions to the Fund from organizations listed [here](#).

Initial grants from the Fund were determined by the Advisory Committee and were focused on providing crucial services to high-risk audiences including seniors, families with children who normally receive free or reduced meals at school, front line workers and other families in need of childcare, homeowners and renters at risk for eviction, and hourly/low-wage workers.

As the pandemic continued to hit our communities hard, we adjusted our strategies to help those neighborhoods.

For the sixth round of grants, we solicited grant applications via an open process. More than 650 nonprofit organizations applied for funding and 245 received grants. The grant review committee placed strong consideration on racial and gender equity in their decisions. Geographic spread and the ability to reach underserved communities and neighborhoods with vital support were first considerations.

Preliminary Impact Reporting for Rounds 1-6*

3,931,953	12,017	294	\$16,821,025
Number of interventions	Number of small businesses served	Number of nonprofits reporting	Grant dollars represented from NPs

We recognize that as a sector, philanthropy has a long way to go to bring an increased equity lens to our work. The impact of COVID-19 is inarguably inequitable. And structural racism, especially in the philanthropic sector, is a critical issue. Battling it will require long-term, systemic change. With our COVID-19 Fund, we were challenged to think about long-term change and instigating new equitable processes, while simultaneously balancing immediate community needs.

Recently, the Fund's seventh round of grants focused on administering emergency rental assistance with ATL neighbors particularly vulnerable to eviction.

As of August 31, the Fund has provided more than \$18 million to 321 nonprofits across the 23-county region ([complete list here](#)).

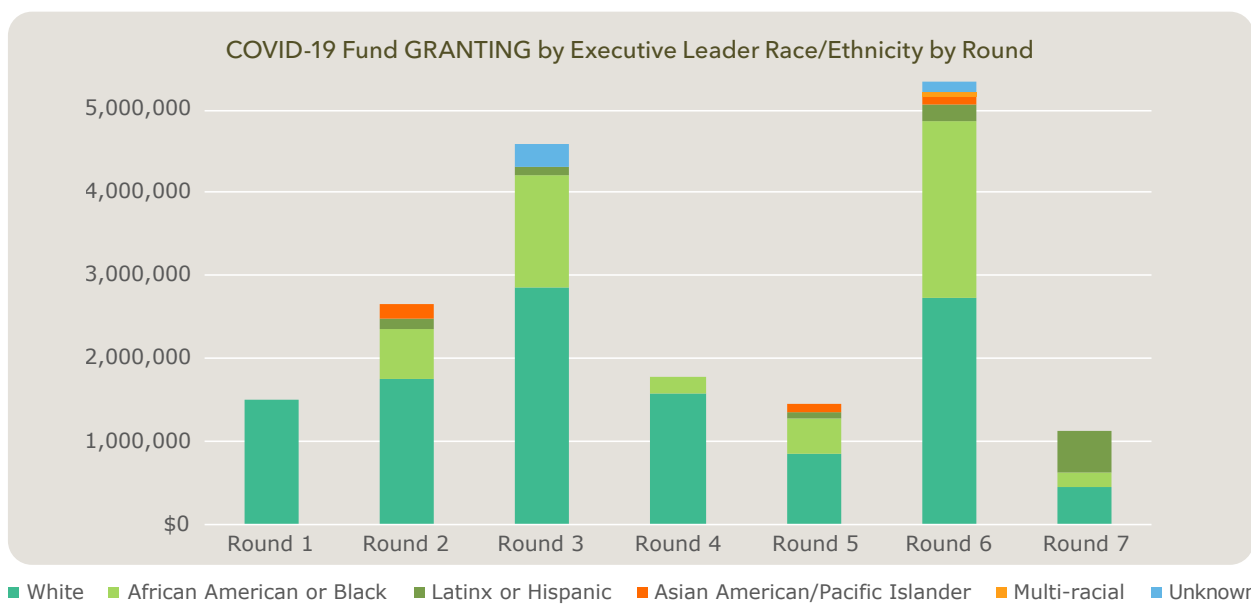
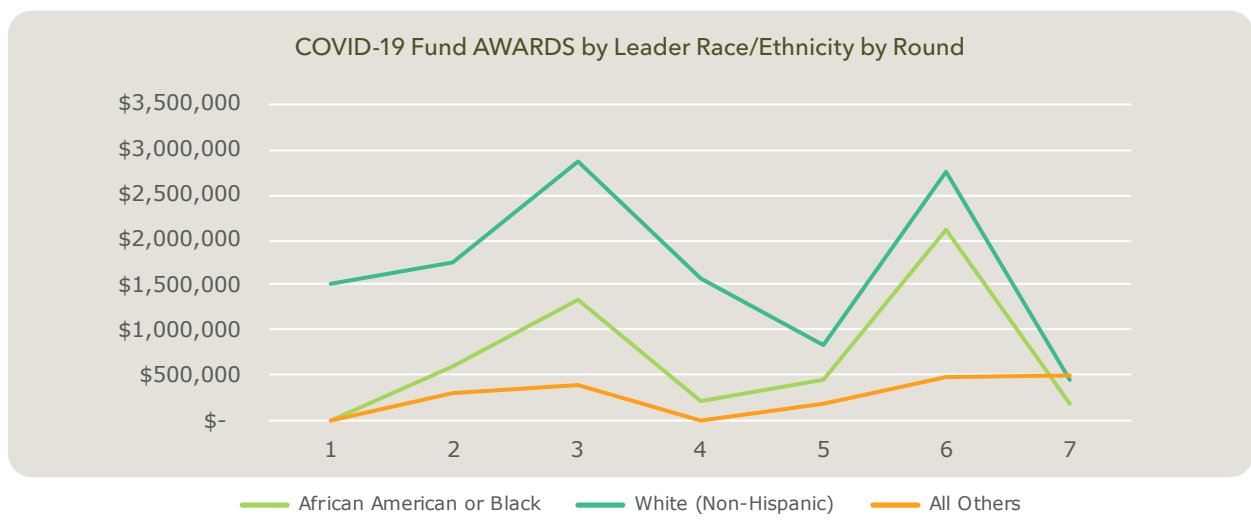
**Preliminary impact report data reflects final report data from 92% of nonprofits funded in rounds 1-6. Based on reported impact by Fund grant recipients that reported delivering nearly 4 million interventions, which include everything from families who received rental assistance or boxes of food, to students who were given a laptop or provided online tutoring. Total cost of delivering these interventions and serving 12,000 small businesses is over \$177 M.*

II. KEY LEARNINGS

The coronavirus pandemic presents a moving target from a philanthropic standpoint, but our focus is on the people in need. At the onset of the pandemic, changes happened by the minute. Since March, United Way of Greater Atlanta's 211 Contact Center has received 14,858 requests for food, financial and rent assistance among other basic needs. But as the pandemic evolved, so did our funding.

In the initial 60 days of the Fund, rapid response aimed to get the money to nonprofits that could immediately turn dollars into support for our neighbors who needed services most. Distribution and scale for impact was required. As the weeks progressed, evidence showed specific populations disproportionately impacted – Black, Latinx, undocumented and immigrant populations.

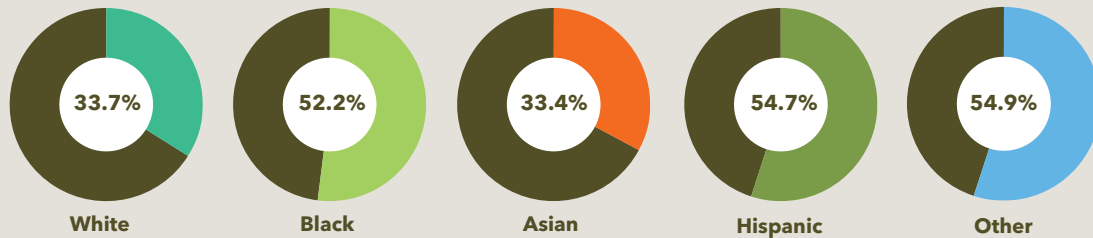
The summary chart below details the rounds, ethnicity of the CEO and priority area:



Of the 321 grantee organizations awarded funds as of 9/30/20, we believe that 27% are Black-led, 2% are led by Asian Americans and 4% are Latinx-led. In total, 64% of funds distributed thus far have gone

to white-led nonprofits while 36% went to Black, Indigenous and other People-of-Color led organizations (known as BIPOC).

Race/Ethnicity in Region in Households Making Less Than \$60,000



Percentages of households by race/ethnicity who make less than \$60,000, the closest income breakout provided by the U.S. Census to 80% of Area Median Income (AMI). Data provided by [Neighborhood Nexus](#).

We also have seen the salient decision the committee made to provide general operating support come to fruition. The Federal CARES Act does not allocate for staffing salaries, benefits or operating costs to deliver the services nonprofits

provide. As a result of grants from the COVID-19 Fund, grant recipients were able to retain staff to provide services during the pandemic, when many saw a severe reduction in unrestricted operating revenue.

III. MOVING FORWARD

Focus on community need

While we are still in response mode, we've shifted to thinking ahead about recovery. What grants can we make now that both respond to immediate needs, while also setting up a foundation for recovery down the road? Research and data has led us to the following observations and predictions:

- Low-wage workers and renters continue to be the most at-risk of the health and economic impacts
- An eviction "tsunami" is coming that threatens to displace thousands of families across our region; even with a federal moratorium on evictions until the end of 2020, tenants must still pay back rent and utilities or face the consequences
- Black and Latinx families need financial assistance
- Childcare centers are struggling to not permanently close
- Low-income students lack the technology and online access and supports needed to prevent widening education gaps
- Mental health is a growing concern for all ages across the region

Fund principles

As fundraising continues through the response and recovery phases of the crisis, and as we continue to listen to and learn from our nonprofit partners, the Fund will adapt to emerging needs as the situation evolves and follow these principles:

- Move dollars rapidly and provide flexible resources
- Address direct needs
- Utilize a racial equity lens and target resources to disproportionately impacted communities
- Support community-based organizations with deep trust and a history of serving disproportionately impacted communities, particularly for communities where language, resources and other factors create barriers to accessing support
- Trust-based approach to funding; the grants are flexible in use and require minimal reporting
- Identify places where philanthropy can add value and coordinate with public-sector aligned and parallel efforts