

THE **JPB** FOUNDATION

BEYOND the GRANT

A Decade of Philanthropy
at The JPB Foundation



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Foreword by Barbara Picower

AS I REFLECT ON THE PAST DECADE OF LEADING THE JPB FOUNDATION,

I am filled with an overwhelming sense of gratitude and pride for the work we have accomplished together. It has been a privilege to support visionary leaders and organizations that are on the front lines of tackling poverty, advancing racial and gender equity, and building a healthier, more sustainable environment. The progress we've made, including over \$2.7 billion in grants distributed, is a testament to the power of collaboration and the tireless efforts of our grantees, partners, and allies.

Throughout my time as president and chair of the board, I've been continuously inspired by the strength and resilience of those working to create meaningful change. From groundbreaking medical research to reproductive rights and environmental justice, each initiative has been rooted in our shared mission to uplift and amplify the efforts of communities across the United States. While the challenges are immense, I believe the work we've done together has built a strong foundation for a more equitable and just society.

I am confident that the future of The JPB Foundation is in excellent hands. Deepak Bhargava has been part of JPB's success over this past decade as a grantee and then a board member. He brings deep expertise from the field that will help us achieve even more in the next decade.

I look forward to continuing to advise the foundation as president emerita and supporting our work in key areas such as reproductive health and medical research to ensure a lasting impact for generations to come. As you read this report, I hope you are inspired by the resilience and ingenuity of the communities and leaders we've had the honor to support. May their stories and accomplishments serve as a reminder of what is possible when we work together toward a more democratic, inclusive, and sustainable future.

Foreword by Deepak Bhargava

IN EARLY 2023, BARBARA PICOWER LEFT A MESSAGE ON MY CELL PHONE,

asking me to call her back right away. There was nothing unusual about this. We had worked together closely for a decade when I led Community Change, a grantee of The JPB Foundation. We became and stayed close friends after I left. When I called her back, she asked when we could get together in person—she had something important to talk to me about.

I was totally unprepared for Barbara's news. She told me that she wanted to step down as president of the foundation. She had recently turned 80 and wanted to work at a slower pace. This surprised me, as she'd always said she wanted to "die at her desk." Then she looked at me and said, "I've found the perfect person to lead the foundation." As a board member, I was curious: Who might she have in mind? When she told me that she wanted me to become JPB's next president, I was speechless for several minutes. Barbara said that she saw the struggle to preserve and expand multiracial democracy as the defining issue of our times, and argued that I was the right person to lead the foundation in a new era to meet that challenge.

I had a different plan for the next decade. I was finishing a book on strategy and social movements, was immersed in research and teaching students, was happily supporting several organizing projects around the country, and was working with a team to establish a new leadership institute to train organizers. It took several months of conversation in which we got deeply aligned with each other about the future direction of the foundation before I said yes. (Barbara jokes that I made her work for it!) Barbara then took her leadership succession plan to the JPB Board of Trustees. I'm glad that I said yes, and I'm deeply grateful to Barbara for her confidence in me.

I've had a chance to see the foundation at work up close, as both a grantee and a board member. The JPB Foundation has had a huge impact on crucial issues of poverty, the environment, and medical research, due in large part to the foundation's dedicated staff and board. This report provides a window into the extraordinary work we have supported, making a difference in the lives of people, especially marginalized and vulnerable communities. It has been a whole team effort—including the program staff, grants management, finance, HR, operations, and investments. As I've gotten to know more of the members of our staff, I've been deeply moved by the depth of their commitment to the foundation's mission.

The foundation's distinctive approach to philanthropy reflects Barbara's vision and values. I was impressed when I first met Barbara that, unlike many people of wealth, she did not believe she had all the answers. She believes in listening. When I ran Community Change, she was one of a handful of donors who asked to meet and talk to poor people themselves, rather than rely solely on experts. One of my favorite Barbara stories is when she was honored by Community Change alongside Congressman John Lewis, a brilliant leader in the civil rights movement. In her acceptance speech that night, she told the story of giving her first charitable gift as a young person, long before she had come into wealth. It was to the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), led by John Lewis. It was a check for \$25, a lot of money to her at the time. That story tells you everything you need to know about Barbara's enduring commitment to equity, justice, and bottom-up social change. There may be more zeros at the end of the checks the foundation gives today, but the ethic is the same.

Barbara also believes deeply in collaboration, that nothing of value can be accomplished by any one grantee or any one foundation. She brought that ethic of collaboration into the way she supported grantees, and the many partnerships and funder collaboratives she initiated and supported.

Barbara is not afraid of change. She told me that she expected the foundation to change to meet the times. Values should be a constant north star, but the programs should adapt to changed circumstances.

As we launch into a new phase of the foundation's life, Barbara's enduring values of equity, justice, collaboration, and embracing change provide the compass for our future.

Introduction

HELPING TO BUILD THE JPB FOUNDATION DURING ITS FORMATIVE YEARS

has been an extraordinary experience and a significant responsibility. Together with our staff, we brought together diverse perspectives and capabilities toward a common purpose: connecting effective strategies with values and grantmaking that produced tangible results for people and communities. With the trust and support of JPB's president and board and an exceptional staff, we operated like a start-up, making countless decisions to shape a growing foundation capable of achieving ambitious goals.

Over the years, we saw meaningful progress in our respective areas—Environment, Poverty, and Medical Research—through close collaborations with grantees, partners, and each other. We tackled some of the most pressing challenges of our time, from economic insecurity and a democracy under contest, to extreme energy burdens on disinvested communities, environmental and climate injustice, and brain health and disease. Guided by a shared commitment to systemic change, we uplifted communities and amplified the efforts of those driving change on the ground through innovative approaches and deep partnerships.

This report offers not only a look at the programs we nurtured and funded but also the lessons we at JPB learned along the way. Philanthropy, as we have practiced it, requires deep listening, patience, and a willingness to learn from our failures as much as our successes. In sharing these insights, our hope is to contribute to a broader conversation about how the philanthropic sector can be more responsive, equitable, and aligned with the needs and visions of those we aim to benefit. Ultimately, it is through collaboration and an openness to new ways of thinking and practice that philanthropy can help catalyze long-term change in ways that communities determine, lead, and benefit from.

The outcomes realized through JPB's support over the last decade were possible because of our community partners and the talented, committed staff of the foundation. As we approached our work with a light touch and a lean structure, every staff member at JPB has been deeply invested in the mission and contributed to the organization's evolution and success. This includes the nimble finance and accounting team who were always looking for more efficient ways of operating; the investment staff, who took care to align our investments with our mission while supporting the growth of our grantmaking efforts; the grants management team, who continually sought to effectively serve our grantees and reduce paperwork for

everyone, especially during periods of increased grant approvals in response to emergencies and opportunities; and our respective teams, without whom building trusting relationships with the organizations receiving support from JPB would have been impossible. It was the people of JPB who enabled the ripples of our grant funding over the past ten years to reach deep into the communities we sought to serve and to whom we strove to be accountable.

The work is not over, and we hope the stories shared in the following pages help other foundations advance progress toward a more just and equitable society by and for the communities who stand to benefit the most.

— **DANA BOURLAND**
*former Senior Vice
President of
Environment and
Strategic Initiatives
2012–2024*

— **BETSY KREBS**
*former Senior Vice
President of Poverty
and current Senior
Vice President
2014 to present*

— **KEVIN LEE**
*Senior Advisor
Medical Research
2015 to present*

Author's Note

THERE'S AN OLD SAW IN THE FOUNDATION WORLD THAT IF YOU'VE SEEN one foundation, you've seen one foundation. The gist of it is that each foundation is different, with its own strategies, its own areas of interest, and its own specific way of doing business. Its own special snowflake, if you will.

That said, after having spent the past two decades or so working in and around dozens of big foundations, I find that most foundations are, in fact, actually pretty similar. They may work on different issues, but they operate more or less the same way, with obvious variations.

Large privately endowed foundations with donors who are no longer around to make decisions have professional staffs and are guided by boards of directors to whom the executive reports. That executive manages the day-to-day operations and helps guide the foundation's strategies. The intent of the founders often, but by no means always, informs those strategies.

Large foundations with living donors are necessarily more responsive to the donor's wishes, but the management of those foundations is almost always left to a chief executive and their staff.

This report is an attempt to capture the story of The JPB Foundation under Barbara Picower's tenure as founder, president, and board chair, and to help the field of philanthropy draw as many lessons as it can about what the foundation has done and how it did it, as well as to offer thoughts about how others might learn from these lessons.

Having been engaged by the foundation to write this report, I have attempted to do so with as much objectivity as I can muster under the circumstances. I will also offer a preview to the reader: This is an extremely interesting foundation with an even more interesting story to tell about how a relatively large foundation can make an outsize difference. I hope the lessons it contains will be useful for anyone who is interested in doing philanthropy better.

— ERIC BROWN



PART I

History and Culture

The Origins of JPB

The JPB Foundation was established in 2012 as the result of a bequest from the estate of the late Jeffry Picower. His widow, Barbara Picower, became president of the foundation and chair of the board of the new entity, which was dedicated to supporting medical research, reducing poverty, and protecting the environment.

The couple met in high school in working-class Long Beach, a barrier island off the south shore of Long Island, New York. After graduation, Barbara went to secretarial school and would eventually earn a bachelor's degree in political science from Hofstra University and master's degrees in history, secondary education, and nutrition from New York University. Jeffry proceeded to business school, then law school, while also earning an accounting certification. "Jeffry was an enormous talent," recalls Gerald McNamara, who met Jeffry in 1982 and is JPB's chief investment officer. "He had an innate sense of where value was—he could see several years into the future." Jeffry's investment skills paid off, earning billions, and in 1989, he and Barbara started The Picower Foundation with Barbara as executive director. "Jeffry made the money, and I spent it," says Barbara, with a smile.

Over nearly two decades, The Picower Foundation focused on education, medical research, and social justice and made grants totaling nearly \$300 million. In 2002, the foundation made its largest grant—a \$50 million gift to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology to establish The Picower Institute for Learning and Memory.

In 2008, The Picower Foundation lost nearly all of its \$1 billion in assets, which had been held in accounts controlled by Bernard Madoff, who pleaded guilty to multiple counts of financial fraud.

Jeffry passed away in 2009 at the age of 67, leaving the vast majority of his estate to be used for the purpose of creating a new foundation. When the trustees of the investors who had lost money in the Madoff scandal sought to reclaim money that Jeffry had withdrawn from his Madoff accounts over the years, Barbara returned the full amount to be distributed to the claimants. The United States Attorney overseeing the settlement was quoted as saying, "Barbara Picower has done the right thing."

The Early Days

In the wake of the tragedy of losing her husband and with the controversy of the Madoff scandal behind her, Barbara created The JPB Foundation with an initial gift from her late husband's estate of \$3.6 billion. After distributing over \$2.7 billion since 2012, the foundation's assets have nevertheless grown to more than \$4 billion as of 2024. Its annual grantmaking grew from approximately \$45 million in 2012 to \$420 million in 2023.

Barbara served as the president of the foundation from 2012 until February 2024, and currently serves as chair of the board. In April of 2023, she announced that she would step down as president the following year and would be succeeded by her friend and colleague Deepak Bhargava, a JPB board member and former CEO of Community Change, a longtime grantee of the foundation.

As president, Barbara was not your typical figurehead—she would edit the board materials, participate in every grantee meeting possible, sign every grant check (until the foundation went paperless during the COVID-19 pandemic), and call every organization whose grant was approved to give them the good news.

Indeed, Barbara would often say that she was a president, a board chair, and a program officer. She would regularly remark to anyone and everyone, without being at all maudlin, that she planned to “die at her desk.” This is not to say that she did it all, although Barbara kept the staff size very small relative to the size of the foundation's assets. In the first two years of the foundation, there were fewer than 10 staff who were responsible for over \$100 million in annual grantmaking. This lean staff size made it all the more important for Barbara to surround herself with a trusted set of talented colleagues who also served many roles at once and had a great deal of responsibility, managing large and complex grant portfolios.

She hired a small brain trust of expert practitioners. On the program side, Dana Bourland joined in 2012 to develop and run the Environment Program; Donna Lawrence and then Tana Ebbola were early leaders of the Poverty Program. Betsy Krebs joined in 2014 and was promoted to vice president in 2016. Kevin Lee joined the foundation in 2015 to advise the Medical Research Program. To help her manage the assets and the operations, she brought in Goldman Sachs banker Gerald McNamara as chief investment officer and April Freilich, who had been an associate of Jeffrey Picower, as chief operating officer. While Barbara is certainly an outsize figure in this story, the foundation's success is every bit a testament to these leaders and their teams, which after a decade stood at 48 people.

An Evolutionary Approach

The foundation continued to sharpen its strategies over the years, increasingly focusing on racial and environmental justice, listening carefully to the people who

would be most affected by JPB's grantmaking, and deepening its investments in organizations working on the root causes of poverty. The goal was to be a consistent funder of the causes the foundation cared about, but not to be too tied to a specific approach if it discovered new ways to be effective.

By most accounts, the foundation has been extraordinarily effective, achieving success in areas where it was often the largest donor but also an enthusiastic but silent partner, building deep professional and personal relationships with grantees and other foundations alike. At every step along the way the purpose was clear—improving the lives of people living in poverty across the U.S. who are underappreciated and underestimated, and who simply deserve better.

The program's approaches sharpened over time. Initially focused on creating opportunities for people to move and stay out of poverty, by 2022 the Poverty Program goal shifted to “transform the systems that perpetuate social and economic inequities so that all people and communities could thrive and have their voices heard.”

Across the Poverty and Environment Programs, the foundation made large multi-year grants, often following a “hub and network” model—granting large sums to major organizations and smaller amounts to related groups suggested by grantees. Collaborating with other funders where possible, JPB nevertheless often found that it was the largest or even the only funder of a strategy. Due to Barbara's commitment to maintaining a small staff and the need to distribute substantial funds, JPB frequently funded national organizations with strong local networks and intermediaries familiar with smaller community-based groups. The leadership and program staff at JPB placed a priority on listening and learning from experienced leaders, especially Indigenous communities, people of color, and women.

As the endowment and grantmaking amounts increased, JPB hired more staff and developed new systems for supporting a nationwide grantmaking strategy. The programs responded to societal changes and the needs of grantees by, for example, increasing funding for civic engagement during the 2016 and 2020 election years, providing emergency relief to communities after devastating weather events made more intense due to human-caused climate change, starting a fund to support the organizational health of its grantees, addressing the impact of COVID-19 on low-income communities, and responding to attacks on immigrant communities as well as to uprisings in support of racial justice.

Barbara Picower and the Foundation's Culture

I have a sense that Barbara might not be thrilled with this chapter, which may in itself reveal a lot about her. One of Barbara Picower's defining traits is her reluctance to seek the spotlight. She often told grantees not to thank her, as it

“She’s not intimidated or abashed about what other people might think of her. And she works tirelessly, absolutely running herself ragged to make it successful.” — DR. JEFFREY FRIEDMAN, ROCKEFELLER UNIVERSITY

was she who felt grateful to them. Yet any exploration of The JPB Foundation should start with its founder—her personality, her working style, and her deep commitment to the individuals and communities supported by JPB over the years.

STARTED SMALL AND WORKED HARD

Given the small size of the program staff during the early years, Barbara created specialized advisory committees to help guide the foundation. These committees were made up of experts in the field, signaling her seriousness about the work, and they provided her with access to extremely good thinking. She drew freely on the wisdom and expertise of these leaders as well as her leadership team to help guide her, but the final decisions the foundation made were invariably Barbara’s in her capacity as founder, donor, president, and board chair.

She is an indefatigable learner, burying herself in the minutiae of the work. According to longtime board member Susan Frunzi, “Barbara worked every day, 18 hours a day, seven days a week, and became a very serious force in philanthropy.” Barbara was familiar with the work of the Poverty Program area from her years running The Picower Foundation, but the Environment Program work was new to her, requiring extra study. The medical research activities were necessarily technical and specialized, but she made up for what she lacked in formal science education with hard work, as she collaborated with grantees to push the boundaries of science in research around Alzheimer’s, diabetes, and Parkinson’s disease. As the molecular geneticist, JPB advisor, and grantee Dr. Jeffrey Friedman put it, “She’s not intimidated or abashed about what other people might think of her. And she works tirelessly, absolutely running herself ragged to make it successful.”

HIGHLY ENGAGED

Dr. Friedman’s observation is no exaggeration. Barbara’s work style at JPB would set her apart from most foundation presidents or donors. For years, she read every grant proposal, hand-edited every board docket and Advisory Committee memo, and attended every meeting possible. Jeff Bradach, the co-founder and former managing partner of the Bridgespan Group, recalls the very early days of the foundation when his firm was brought in to advise on program strategies. Bridgespan was in the process of conducting discovery interviews with field experts when Barbara noted that the interviews were not on her calendar. “I said, ‘No, we’re doing the interviews and then we’ll come back to you,’” Bradach recalls, smiling. “And she said, ‘That makes no sense because I’m the one who has to make the decisions.’” Needless to say, she attended the interviews.

MODEST

The JPB Foundation is known—if it’s known at all—for being a modest foundation, far more interested in results than in accolades. The foundation did not employ a communications staff member during the first 10 years, its simple website has not fundamentally changed since it was launched in 2012, and under Barbara the foundation had virtually no social media presence. Some might wonder if Barbara has maintained a low profile because of the withering scrutiny of the Madoff scandal, but her reluctance to take center stage is genuine. As Geoffrey Canada, who was an early grantee of The Picower Foundation, notes, “You would have had no idea that Jeffry and Barbara had the kind of resources they had. Barbara was as low key and circumspect before Madoff as she was after.” Attempts to present her with awards were almost always declined. “Barbara was notoriously unwilling to do anything that honored her,” reflects Cecile Richards, former president of Planned Parenthood of America and a JPB board member from 2018-2023. “Barbara was never looking for the limelight. She felt that you should just do the work, and the work would speak for itself.”

HONEST, DIRECT, AND SHE TRUSTS HER GUT

Perhaps the trait that distinguishes itself more than any other has been Barbara’s ability to build personal relationships with staff and grantees and then provide them with the resources they needed to succeed. She treated the foundation like a family, especially in the early years, when the entire staff of the multi-billion-dollar organization could fit around a single conference table.

Grantees would become close friends of hers, and a few would eventually be asked to join the board after they left their organizations. Jeff Bradach recalls Barbara remarking, “Doesn’t it make sense that the people I think most highly of should serve on my board?”

Jonathan F.P. Rose, a developer of affordable housing and an advisor to the Environment Program, adds that Barbara’s gut was usually correct. “She could sense when she was being hustled,” he notes. “She has a real bullshit detector and a strong intuition about who the authentic people were who could make a difference in the world. She was backing ideas and people. And if you look at the work as a curated body of worldview, it’s amazing.”

Barbara’s intuition and faith in people certainly showed when one evening at dinner she asked Deepak Bhargava to take over the foundation to which she had devoted nearly every waking hour of the past 10 years. Barbara insists that the decision was a spontaneous one. “I looked at him and thought ‘He’s the person,’” she reflects. This combination of hard work, intuition, trust in others, willingness to be a leader or a partner depending on the situation, and a deep commitment to helping others has animated JPB since its founding. This approach to philanthropy was passed on to the staff, who brought these values to life in the grantmaking.



PART II

The Programs

As Barbara began to create the structure for The JPB Foundation, she drew on her previous decade running The Picower Foundation as an important starting point. She expanded that foundation's work on medical research and poverty and added a new program to address growing environmental concerns. These three programs—Environment, Medical Research, and Poverty—became the core of the foundation's work.

The Environment Program

From 2012 to 2023, the Environment Program significantly contributed to improving the lives of millions of Americans through close to \$1 billion in grants to enable resilient communities. It did this by investing in organizations and networks that focused on energy, environmental health, environmental justice, and green infrastructure. The Environment Program emerged from an important insight by Barbara, who, after substantial investments in education by The Picower Foundation yielded limited success, declared, "What good is it if Jane can read if she can't breathe?"

In 2012, Barbara tapped Dana Bourland to run the program. Dana had spent the previous decade at Enterprise Community Partners, the largest affordable housing and community development intermediary in the country. There, she led environmental strategy and pioneered what remains the nation's only green building program created for the affordable-housing sector, the Green Communities Initiative. To provide guidance and insight from the field, Barbara also created an Environment Advisory Committee chaired by Harvard climate scientist Dan Schrag.

When the foundation created the Environment Program, it did so with a few clear parameters. Understanding that there were other funders working on federal climate policy, it wanted to focus on systems change that would make a meaningful long-term difference in people's lives—particularly people living in cities and disinvested communities. It also understood that intermediary organizations that were trusted by communities would be important partners to assist in getting funding to the grassroots.



A key aspect of the program’s strategy was its integration with other JPB initiatives. By aligning with the foundation’s focus on poverty and health, the Environment Program sought to enable resilient communities that would directly improve health and well-being for people and the planet. This integrated approach was relatively uncommon, according to Ted Roosevelt IV, a member of the program’s advisory committee. “The environmental world generally didn’t focus on the connection between environment, health, and poverty,” he said.

JPB had the opportunity as a new funder to alter the trajectory of environmental philanthropy into communities often overlooked by foundations. The program sought to accomplish this goal by listening to, learning with, and partnering closely with people in the communities it was striving to support. Central to that commitment was an equally important commitment to being accountable to those communities instead of dictating to them. The team tried to work in ways that were accountable to disinvested communities, predominantly Indigenous and communities of color, with a growing awareness of the urgency to act much more specifically on climate change. “We knew,” reflected Dana, “that how we worked was going to be as important as what we funded.”

A key principle of the Environment Program’s approach was building relationships with its grantees. This strategy required staff to be responsive to what grantees needed when opportunities arose, such as large-scale public investments in energy and climate infrastructure. “The strength of our work lies in the trust we build,” said Yianice Hernandez, a senior program officer in the Environment Program. “When we’re in sync with grantees, we can move faster and enable them to make a bigger impact when opportunities arise.”

The Environment Program grew over time in terms of staffing, grantee partnerships, amount of spending, and recognition in the field. In 2022, Inside Philanthropy ranked JPB the 13th-largest environmental funder in the United States. JPB’s long-term investments have yielded significant results. Organizations supported by JPB were well-positioned to secure funding through the Inflation Reduction Act,

were better prepared for extreme weather events, and demonstrated resilience and responsiveness during the COVID-19 pandemic. This success was recognized in 2023 when the program received the inaugural Risk-Taker Award from the Environmental Grantmakers Association in the category of Visionary Teams.

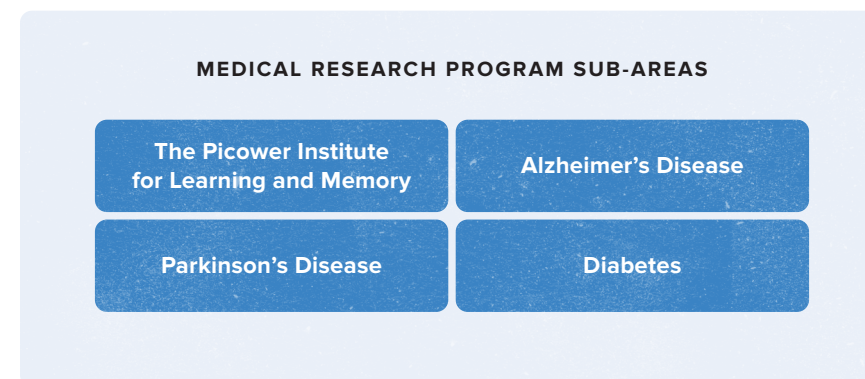
The Medical Research Program

From 2012 to 2023, the Medical Research Program significantly advanced scientific research through over \$250 million in grants targeting Alzheimer’s, diabetes, and Parkinson’s, and supporting The Picower Institute for Learning and Memory at MIT.

The foundation’s support for medical research carried over from its investments at The Picower Foundation, where its \$50 million gift to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology established The Picower Institute for Learning and Memory. The program has been managed since 2015 by Senior Advisor Kevin Lee, who had been executive director of the Lawrence Ellison Foundation as well as the chief scientific officer of the Grace Science Foundation.

The program is dedicated to enabling healthier, longer, and more productive lives through pioneering research on the brain and to finding cures or treatments for Parkinson’s disease, Alzheimer’s disease, and diabetes—advancing science that often lacks sufficient support from traditional funding sources. Unrelated to the Medical Research Program, as part of the Poverty Program, JPB supported scientific research to better understand the effects of adverse early life experiences on children.

The program puts a priority on collaboration and knowledge sharing—often across disciplines—aiming to help researchers connect in ways that advance scientific progress and develop effective treatments and health-promoting strategies that might otherwise go undiscovered. As part of this strategy, JPB supports collaborative research networks, providing funding for five to eight prominent



scientists in each targeted disease area. These researchers meet multiple times annually to share insights and pursue joint research. This model aims to transform the prevention, treatment, and cure of major chronic illnesses.

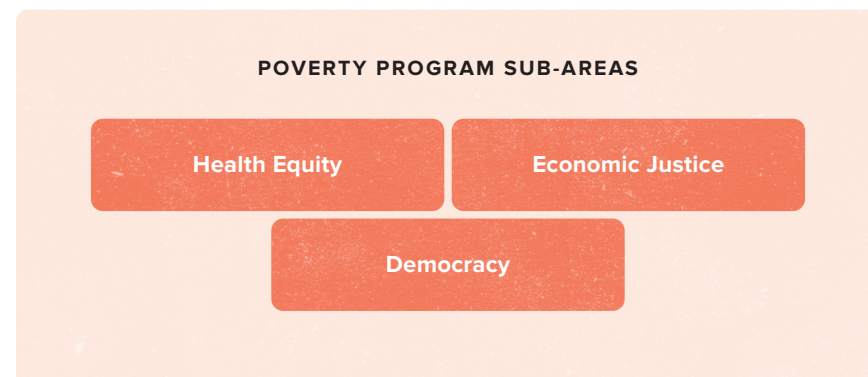
In addition to its focus on chronic diseases, the program supports research on learning, memory, and cognitive processes at MIT's Picower Institute for Learning and Memory. This research seeks to understand the mechanisms behind learning, memory, perception, attention, emotion, and consciousness.

JPB has played a key role in advancing medical research across various fields. Its support has led to new cell models for brain diseases and innovative stem cell treatments for conditions like diabetes and Parkinson's. Researchers have made breakthroughs in understanding how inflammation impacts the brain and metabolic diseases. They have also uncovered new disease mechanisms involving aging cells, gut bacteria, and cellular degradation and recycling processes. Studies have revealed how exercise benefits brain health, as scientists explore decision-making, attention, and social behavior. JPB's contributions extend to training the next generation of research leaders, ensuring continued progress in these vital areas of medical science.

The Poverty Program

From 2012 to 2023, the Poverty Program significantly improved the lives of millions of Americans through over \$1 billion in grants targeting health equity, economic justice, and democracy.

When The JPB Foundation was launched, Barbara Picower was determined to continue the work she began at The Picower Foundation to help people living in poverty. She insisted on naming the program the Poverty Program, noting, "That's what people are dealing with."



Betsy Krebs joined the Poverty Program in 2014 and became vice president in 2016. Krebs brought with her decades of work in social justice. A lawyer by training, she had represented young people in court, then co-founded the Youth Advocacy Center to work closely with teens to help them advocate for themselves.

Betsy shared Barbara's commitment to Americans living in poverty. As Betsy describes it, "We wanted to listen to people in communities and find ways to meet their needs." The guiding principle of the program was that everyone in the U.S. deserves financial security, good health, and a voice in decisions that affect them, recognizing that millions of people are affected by poverty due to deep structural inequities beyond their control.

The program landed on a set of urgent issues that disproportionately affect people in poverty, and which it would update and refine over time—health equity, economic justice, and democracy. For each portfolio area, it funded groups that approached an issue using both distinct and overlapping strategies—demonstration projects that provided direct action or services, community organizing, litigation, policy development, research, fellowships, and narrative change.



PART III

Lessons

While this report is certainly interested in what The JPB Foundation did and how they did it, it is just as instructive to understand what the foundation learned. As a present and engaged leader, Barbara would say things to staff and grantees that became mantras, guiding the growth of the foundation in its first 10 years. Anyone who worked with Barbara would be quite familiar with these phrases, which, as it turns out, provide an excellent way to organize what the foundation learned over the years.

They are:



“We can’t do it alone.”



“Philanthropy is about taking risks.”



“We’ll help you swim, not sink.”



“We have to talk about all kinds of equity.”



“How do we know what people need?”



“We want to hear the bad as well as the good.”



“So what?”

The following chapters offer examples and lessons based on each of these phrases.



“We can’t do it alone.”

JPB understood the power of partnerships. To be sure, not even the largest foundation can solve the seemingly intractable problems of society that JPB was interested in addressing. The only way to make a significant difference was to work with others—fellow funders, governments, re-granting intermediaries, and, of course, grantees.

JPB was thoughtful about three types of partnerships. First, JPB referred to their grantees as “partners” to acknowledge that they believed the relationship goes beyond writing (and cashing) a check. They recognized explicitly—and frequently stated—that the grantees were the ones doing the work, and that the foundation’s role was to provide the resources and support to do it. Second, JPB encouraged and funded partnerships between and among grantees, recognizing that it took multiple strategies, approaches, and leadership roles to achieve ambitious goals. Finally, the foundation developed deep relationships with other funders of all sizes and types to combine or align funding to ensure that the causes they cared about had sufficient resources.

At the same time, partnerships can be more challenging than going it alone, especially when money and power are at stake. They require compromise and a willingness to take a step back when it makes sense to do so or to exert leadership when necessary. Some funders may be quietly competitive with one another and may want to be seen as the lead funder in a particular area. They may be reluctant to take a more supportive role in a funding collaborative. Grantees who work in similar or aligned fields may feel like they are in competition with each other and may be unenthusiastic about sharing their insights concerning what works or what doesn’t. But if done well, the value of collaboration exceeds the cost many times over.

As JPB engaged in these various types of partnerships across its grantmaking areas, the team gained confidence that they were deepening relationships, exponentially increasing learning, and helping dollars go much further than they

would have if they had acted alone. They also saw what their grantees could accomplish when they worked together to create strategies, share information freely, and operate from their strengths.

In this section, we explore a few examples of how the foundation used partnerships as part of its strategy—either by pooling funds with other foundations for re-granting or by encouraging partnership among grantees.

FUNDING COLLABORATIVES

Even extremely large funders find that their money alone is unlikely to fix big or complex issues, and by pooling resources with other like-minded funders, they have a much better chance of succeeding. Within these partnerships, funders also can gain invaluable strategic ideas and creative insights from their colleagues, and reach grantees they wouldn’t otherwise, expanding their funding “footprint” and effectiveness.

The Collaborative for Gender + Reproductive Equity

The Collaborative for Gender + Reproductive Equity was created when Barbara and Carol Larson, who was president of the Packard Foundation at the time, invited a small group of women who were leaders in philanthropy to gather at Barbara’s dining room table. Frustrated by the failure of existing efforts to comprehensively address the persistent and increasing threats to women’s equality in the U.S., in 2018 JPB and the Packard Foundation set out to create a new partnership, which has exceeded expectations in advancing gender, reproductive, and racial equity.

Barbara and Carol were interested in doing more to address issues that affect women, particularly women of color and women struggling to make ends meet. In short order, they announced that their foundations would each commit \$10 million per year for five years to a new organization if they could get additional organizations to join them. They were soon able to convince the Ford Foundation and Schusterman Family Philanthropies to join.

A largely women-led team designed a strategy with three key components—a state-based power-building effort, a national strategy, and advocacy and judicial approaches that focused on state courts. The project was designed to attract new funding to the issues and worked with a fundraiser who had extensive experience at Planned Parenthood to attract new funding in Silicon Valley and elsewhere. Large institutional and individual funders began to join at different levels. These funders served on an executive committee that had important decision-making power, and access to learning sessions. This inclusive approach provided an incentive to donors to pool their funding. To date, the collaborative has raised over \$310 million, primarily through multi-year gifts, and gives over \$35 million per year.

As they created the strategy that would guide the collaborative, Carol Larson recalls that Barbara was adamant that the organization provide funding in ways that took into account the numerous factors that would improve women's lives in many ways—including childcare, family leave policies, pay equity, and access to contraception and abortion. "Barbara would say, 'Carol, you can't just be focused on uteruses,'" Larson reflects.

The Lead Funders Action Network

Lead poisoning is one of the childhood diseases that is completely preventable. JPB's Environment Program took an immediate interest in eliminating exposure to lead paint, because the issue stood at the intersection of its three program areas and was integral to JPB's work of providing funding to retrofit homes in low-income communities. They understood that it made no sense to make homes more energy efficient without ensuring that the indoor living environment was healthy. To encourage collaboration among grantmakers to close gaps in lead poisoning prevention, JPB founded the Lead Funders Action Network with the Joyce and Robert Wood Johnson Foundations, in partnership with the Health and Environmental Funders Network. The Lead Funders Action Network aims to eliminate lead exposure risks for children, ensuring healthier lives and communities. JPB's grantees working on this issue continue to make sustained and important progress in reducing lead exposure in housing through national, state, and local projects and programs. The impact is especially remarkable given that these organizations have relatively small operating budgets, and the scale of resources for housing-related lead work does not currently meet their needs or opportunities for bringing about change. The Lead Funders Action Network has also been extremely influential in increasing funding for lead remediation nationwide, drafting Lead Strategic Action Plans, and supporting stronger rental housing standards and enforcement in 36 cities and several states. This work is a testament to the power of funder collaborations for keeping attention on the matter and finding ways to sustain funding.

Reimagining the Civic Commons

The initiative launched nationally in 2016, when a diverse network of city governments, nonprofits, community groups, and national foundations came together to commit to an ambitious goal—to demonstrate that public spaces have the power to connect people of all backgrounds, cultivate trust, and create more economically and environmentally resilient communities.

Reimagining the Civic Commons had originally been conceived in Philadelphia in 2015 as a funding partnership of the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation and the William Penn Foundation. They supported a pilot project to create a new vision for what public spaces can be in cities and towns. JPB had previously worked with the William Penn Foundation to expand an equitable bikeshare program piloted in Philadelphia that was designed to serve residents in disinvested communities.

Due to her prior philanthropic activities in Florida, Barbara had become close friends with Knight's president at the time, Alberto Ibarguen. The three foundations soon turned to their colleagues at the Kresge Foundation to design a program that would launch demonstrations in four additional cities: Detroit, Akron, Memphis, and Chicago.

From the outset, the foundation partners were deeply involved in the project, co-creating strategies and being responsive to each other's focus areas. This collaborative process helped build strong relationships and trust among the partners, which was crucial for the initiative's long-term success. One notable success story (among many) is the revitalization of Summit Lake in Akron, Ohio. The lake was seen as a dangerous and polluted liability for the neighborhood.

The only way to make a *significant difference* was to work with others—fellow funders, governments, re-granting intermediaries, and, of course, grantees.

The project team worked to build trust with residents through community meetings and environmental assessments. They transformed the area by creating a beach, installing grills, and setting up a small gathering space, which redefined the lake as a community asset rather than a hazard. To date, the initial \$4 million invested through Reimagining the Civic Commons has helped unlock more than \$50 million in additional funding across the Akron team's three neighborhoods of focus.

Another significant project took place in Detroit's Fitzgerald neighborhood, where the local team transformed 26 vacant lots into a vibrant park. This initiative included a greenway for bikes and pedestrians, murals, and a mini-grants program to support local activities. These efforts not only beautified the neighborhood but also significantly increased social interactions and trust among residents. Between 2017 and 2023, the percentage of Fitzgerald residents who never socialize with their neighbors decreased from nearly 1 in 5 to just 1 in 20, and the percentage of residents who say most people can be trusted nearly tripled, from just 13% to 34%, countering the loneliness epidemic.

Since its national launch, Reimagining the Civic Commons has directly unlocked more than \$100 million and encouraged an additional \$300 million of additional investment in those communities with 10 out of 12 securing federal investments to accelerate or build upon local Reimagining the Civic Commons efforts. It has expanded to include seven additional cities in a formal learning network. Teams from the 12 cities share how they are advancing local systems change by

“The partnership was effective because we had a shared vision, open communication, and the benefit of working together over nearly a decade.” — ARLENE BLUM, GREEN SCIENCE POLICY INSTITUTE

innovating the design, management, and operations of civic life in ways that spur civic engagement, bring diverse people together, create value in disinvested communities, and promote environmental sustainability.

GRANTEE PARTNERSHIPS

As with funder partnerships, there is a great deal of value in bringing grantees together to learn from each other, create new and unanticipated partnerships, find new ways to share information, and identify how to find complementary approaches to their work, among many other benefits.

The Healthy Affordable Materials Project (known familiarly as HAMP)

The Healthy Affordable Materials Project was created in 2015 to improve the lives and health of affordable-housing residents by reducing toxic materials in building products. The project was a partnership of the Healthy Building Network (now known as Habitable), the Green Policy Institute, the Healthy Materials Lab at the Parsons School of Design, and the Health Product Declaration Collaborative.

Healthy Building Network founder Bill Walsh helped conceive of the partnership. “I requested a grant from Dana Bourland for the project, and she told me that the request was too small,” Walsh recalls with a smile. “She wanted to give me a larger, longer grant that would help knit together separate initiatives that address the green materials ecosystem.” They conceived an ambitious project to bring together four lead organizations to build a marketplace for affordable materials free of toxic ingredients. Some two dozen organizations were brought into the partnership. “The Healthy Affordable Materials Project, with funding from JPB, was transformational,” says Arlene Blum, who leads the Green Science Policy Institute. “The partnership was effective because we had a shared vision, open communication, and the benefit of working together over nearly a decade,” she adds. As a Himalayan mountaineer, Blum continued, “Our partnership was like climbing Annapurna. You select a worthy objective, find a route, and persevere through deep snow, storms, avalanches, and an occasional Yeti. Working together, our HAMP team, supported by JPB, made notable progress towards the summit of a healthier built environment.”

With sustained support from JPB, HAMP’s efforts have not only accelerated the adoption of healthier materials in affordable housing but also influenced broader industry standards, leading to healthier buildings for all, particularly for disinvested communities. Examples of key wins include the following: Many affordable-housing developers like California’s First Community Housing began using safer products, eliminating plastic products and toxic chemicals; the

Green Communities Initiative’s 2020 update included healthier materials requirements and manufacturer transparency, influencing affordable-housing product selection in 32 states; International WELL Building Institute is piloting informed guidance to use safer products in roughly 30,000 residential units of over 30 million square feet; and thousands of thousands of design and architecture students have accessed online learning opportunities about hazardous chemicals, sustainable building, and material health education.

Protecting Immigrant Families

JPB’s grantee National Immigration Law Center formed and co-chaired the Protect Immigrant Families campaign in 2017 in response to increased immigration enforcement measures as well as proposals from the Trump Administration that threatened the well-being of immigrant families and communities. The project was formed to defend and protect low-income immigrant families’ access to affordable health care, nutrition programs, and other critical public services and to provide economic support. Protect Immigrant Families sought to respond to the Trump administration’s “public charge” proposal that would target immigrants seeking critical care and safety net services such as the Earned Income Tax Credit, health and nutrition support, and housing assistance programs—making it even harder for immigrants to obtain permanent residency or become naturalized citizens. Today Protect Immigrant Families is a multi-sector coalition of 600+ members from 44 states, composed of community organizations, advocates, and experts in health care, public health, nutrition, economic security, child and family welfare, civil and immigrants’ rights, faith, and social justice. The deep partnerships formed through years of collaboration have produced an infrastructure that is helping people at the individual, community, and national levels.

RESEARCH CONSORTIA

Barbara Picower is a true believer in collaboration, and perhaps that commitment has been best expressed in the foundation’s support of medical research. Her motto was “Get the best minds to work together.” JPB chose Parkinson’s, diabetes, and Alzheimer’s diseases (in that order) as areas of support, and in each case funded researchers approaching the diseases from diverse perspectives to foster collaborations—a highly uncommon activity in the competitive world of biomedical research. As Kevin Lee, who directs JPB’s medical research grantmaking, observes, “Barbara got everyone around the table and put them on the spot. She asked them, ‘Who do you want to collaborate with?’ That set the tone.” Among other unconventional approaches, researchers were encouraged to share their work with each other before publication. JPB grantee and advisor Jeffrey Friedman admits, “Barbara is very insistent on collaboration. At the outset, I didn’t see the benefit of it to the extent that I do now. But it turns out when you put people together, ideas percolate and collaborations evolve that wouldn’t come otherwise.”

FUNDS

Barbara was committed to maintaining a small and collegial staff while maintaining ambitious goals and a large capacity for grantmaking. To accomplish this, the staff would make large, multi-year commitments to key organizations, but they would have to find a way to make sure that money would flow to the many smaller organizations that were doing important work in the communities the foundation wanted to serve. To do this, JPB identified and sometimes seeded a wide variety of funds that had the staff and expertise to identify smaller community-based grantees and administer those grants, and who would understand the dynamics in funding in states and communities. Partnership with these funds allowed JPB to become a stronger, better funder. The foundation also participated in a wide variety of pooled and collaborative funds, which allowed JPB to learn about and re-grant to thousands of smaller groups.

Barbara was committed to maintaining a small and collegial staff while maintaining *ambitious goals* and a large capacity for grantmaking.

NEO Philanthropy

Since its earliest days, JPB has assessed the role of intermediaries in philanthropy, including how they are accountable to the grassroots communities they intend to serve. NEO Philanthropy is an example of the kind of work that intermediaries can do.

Although we have seen a proliferation of funding intermediaries in recent years, NEO Philanthropy has partnered with foundations for the past four decades leading large-scale collaborative grantmaking efforts on a range of social justice issues; providing fiscal sponsorship and management to projects and campaigns; and developing initiatives to strengthen organizations and the fields they work in. JPB has been a major partner in three significant projects managed by NEO Philanthropy, selecting NEO as a partner because of their coordinated funding strategies across sectors to address problems in comprehensive and integrated ways, as well as the valuable learning opportunities it provides for funders and grantees alike. Through the Four Freedoms Fund, the State Infrastructure Fund, and the Youth Engagement Fund, JPB has provided over \$65 million to state and local organizations.

The Four Freedoms Fund was created to strengthen immigrants' rights and justice organizations across the United States. Over the last twenty years, the fund has raised more than \$280 million to support immigrant justice organizations

building immigrant power from the ground up in 45 states. It aims to build immigrants' power to strengthen our democracy and transform the U.S. into a place where everyone has the freedom to live and work without fear. The State Infrastructure Fund works to increase civic participation and advance voting rights among Black, Indigenous, and other people of color, as well as other historically underrepresented communities. Since its launch in 2010, the fund has raised at least \$180 million to provide ongoing, long-term core funding and capacity-building support to more than 120 groups in 15 states across the U.S. These nonpartisan organizations engage their communities year round to increase voter participation while reducing voter suppression and protecting the right to vote. The Youth Engagement Fund focuses on youth organizing in five states in the South and Southwest to support a new generation of leadership, particularly young people of color at the state level. Led by young women of color under the age of 35, the Youth Engagement Fund is the only donor collaborative dedicated to increasing the civic participation and electoral power of young people. Under Barbara's leadership and urging, both the Poverty and the Environment Programs dedicated resources to children, teens, and young people—some of the most vulnerable in our country but also some of the most powerful voices for change.



“Philanthropy is about taking risks.”

Risk is a word that gets bandied about a lot in philanthropy, but it’s often overused. For JPB, the biggest risk was in not going big enough or deep enough to make a difference. It was willing to make large grants to organizations because that was what was needed for the organization to achieve its goals. Countless organizations interviewed for this report explained that their grant from JPB was the largest they had received to date, and in many cases, it was more than they had requested. That said, the foundation also made large grants to intermediaries who would often make a number of smaller grants to organizations in their communities. But Barbara believed that JPB should avoid spreading itself too thin and should spend as little as it could on JPB’s own operations, noting, “Making a lot of small grants is not the most effective use of our time when intermediaries exist to do just that.”

The areas a foundation chooses to fund and the types of organizations it supports certainly reveal its appetite for risk. As former Poverty Program grantee and current JPB board member Alan Jenkins notes, “If your goal is to end poverty and you fund community organizing and root cause organizations, you’ve got to be willing to fail, as well as to succeed. You’re making a bet that this is going to have a major impact over time, but one has to understand that it might also fail miserably, or at the very least it might take decades of ups and downs. And that’s okay. In fact it’s the only way that transformative change gets made in philanthropy.”

The Environment Program put a focus on environmental justice, an issue that many large environmental organizations had failed to address adequately. This meant supporting smaller organizations and often funding through intermediaries.

JPB’s medical research grantmaking was a study in risk-taking, given the inherently uncertain nature of medical research. As Li-Huei Tsai, the director of The Picower Institute for Learning and Memory at MIT, explains, “Experiments really shouldn’t work. That’s the nature of research. From failure you learn what’s true and what’s not true. If you never fail, you never learn.” In other words,

philanthropists who are worried about failure should stay away from funding medical research.

One way to mitigate against risk is to be patient. JPB funded (at the time) small but promising organizations such as Harlem Children’s Zone, Color of Change, Grid Alternatives, Partnership for Southern Equity, Children and Nature Network, and the Chisholm Legacy Project and helped jump-start funder collaboratives like the Collaborative for Gender + Reproductive Equity, Funders for Housing and Opportunity, Partners for Places, and the Pop Culture Collaborative, among many others. Then JPB continued to provide support over time, enabling them to learn, grow, and mature.

Indeed, the foundation’s staff and advisors were realistic about the time it would take for their grants to bear fruit, and thus patience became a way to mitigate risk. As Rashad Robinson notes, “We’re addressing challenges like inequality and racism, and we weren’t going to solve them with one grant cycle.”

To be sure, no amount of research, patience, or preparation can eliminate the risk that a grant won’t succeed. Many of the foundation’s risks paid off handsomely, and some certainly didn’t.

We look at five risky investments—three of which were largely successful, and two of which were not.

RISKS THAT PAID OFF

Support for Eastern Kentucky

In the early days of the Environment Program, the foundation understood that rural communities like Appalachia would have to play an important role in the post-coal economy, and that this region would need opportunities that were more diverse, sustainable, and equitable. Moreover, it was sensitive to the need to invest in coal communities that continued to be affected by the transition to renewables. Dana Bourland recommended to Barbara that the foundation explore investing in Kentucky for this reason. She turned to her advisory committee for their input on the viability of that strategy. Bourland notes, “The best advice I got was from Ted Roosevelt IV [an Advisory Committee member]. He said that I should go on a road trip to Eastern Kentucky and interview people to see how they felt about the future of the region.” That trip proved invaluable. She was able to create relationships, better understand the history of the region, and get a close look at what people were fighting for.

One ongoing challenge was the repeating boom-bust cycles that occurred when industry would provide initial subsidies to a community, only to abandon the

region when profits declined, leaving communities reeling. Workers began losing their jobs in the Eastern Kentucky coal mines beginning in 1950 as the mines became mechanized. By 2012, the relatively few mining jobs that remained were eliminated as natural gas became very cheap with the advent of fracking.

To learn more, in 2014, Bourland traveled to Eastern Kentucky, the heart of an economically devastated region in the dead of winter. When she arrived, the economy's heart was barely beating, according to Peter Hille, the CEO of the Mountain Association, a Community Development Financial Institution that provides business consulting services and loans in Appalachian Kentucky to help build a new, post-coal economy. "In many of the former mining communities where we took Dana, the downtowns looked wiped out, and eighty percent of the storefronts were empty," Hille recalls. "It would have been very easy for a funder to say, 'This doesn't look like a promising place to throw good money after bad.'" Even the chair of JPB's Environment Advisory Committee cautioned against making a grant, arguing that the investment wasn't worth the risk.

Hille relates a story of taking Bourland on a site visit to meet a community member who had been in a long-standing conflict with coal companies and her neighbors—even her own family—trying to prevent the mountain she lived on from being strip-mined. "It was a tough place during tough times," he recalls. "There was a rifle propped up in the corner of the front room, a stark reminder that this is serious work. But Dana understood what we were trying to do here."

The foundation decided that the risk was worth it and proceeded to provide multi-year support to the Mountain Association and Kentucky Coalition. Progress was very slow, and the pandemic made a difficult problem worse. But the intervening years have seen significant change. Over that time, the Mountain Association has provided technical assistance and financing to help businesses and nonprofits install solar panels, including on several grocery stores, which are critical in preventing these communities from becoming food deserts. It even helped put solar panels on the roof of the Coal Mining Museum in Harlan County, Kentucky, amazingly. The Kentucky Coalition continues to organize Kentuckians to dismantle racism, strengthen democracy, and transform the future of the Commonwealth. "We're helping these communities re-create themselves as places people want to live, and can live, and we're seeing downtowns come back to life," says Hille.

The work is clearly succeeding. When Bourland returned to Hazard in the spring of 2024, nearly every storefront was occupied.

General Support for Medical Research

Barbara Picower had long experience funding medical research, dating to her days running The Picower Foundation. She and Jeffry helped create The Picower Institute for Learning and Memory at MIT with a \$50 million initial grant, and she worked

"It wouldn't be possible to bring this crazy idea to potential therapeutic intervention without this early-stage funding for such a high-risk, high-reward type of project."

— LI-HUEI TSAI, THE PICOWER INSTITUTE FOR LEARNING AND MEMORY

closely with the institute's directors over the years. She understood then, as she does now, the inherently risky nature of medical research, but also its rewards.

One of the key challenges for medical researchers is raising money to do their work. Federal funders like the National Institutes of Health are notoriously risk averse. The Picower Institute Innovation Fund, initiated with a \$4 million gift from The Picower Foundation and supported by JPB since 2012 with more than \$43.6 million, is dedicated to supporting high-risk, high-reward neuroscience research at The Picower Institute at MIT. The fund is designed to foster creativity and flexibility, encouraging scientists to pursue bold ideas and novel approaches in understanding brain function, learning, memory, and related neurological disorders.

Research supported by the fund has produced over 300 scientific publications, nearly 700 talks, as well as over 250 conference posters, and more than 200 invited distinguished lectures, and has been highlighted in a wide variety of press articles. Research supported by the fund has led to the Institute securing five patents, submitting 16 additional patent applications, and starting four new companies. The data generated by this research has helped bring in more than \$117.2 million in additional grant support from outside funding sources, demonstrating more than double the return on the overall investment and further support for the work. The program has also sparked more than 100 local and international collaborations and cemented The Picower Institute's position as a preeminent neuroscience institute.

Among the projects at MIT that were nurtured by support from The Picower Institute Innovation Fund is one that lays the groundwork for a highly unusual approach for treating Alzheimer's patients. The lab of Picower Institute Director Li-Huei Tsai found that exposing a mouse model of Alzheimer's disease to light and sound therapy significantly reduced Alzheimer's symptoms, improved cognition, and protected nerve cells from dying. Initially, the idea seemed too good to be true, and funding was hard to come by. Since then, MIT has published nearly a dozen research articles, and its findings have inspired global interest. A major biotech company, an MIT spinoff, is now in phase three human trials with this therapy. As Li-Huei Tsai notes, "It wouldn't be possible to bring this crazy idea to potential therapeutic intervention without this early-stage funding for such a high-risk, high-reward type of project."

Planned Parenthood's Big Investment in Telehealth Technology

When Cecile Richards became president of Planned Parenthood of America,

its 150 affiliates each had its own website and its own way of using technology. There were no centralized tools for patients to access their records, make appointments, or order medication. Richards notes that JPB was the first donor to see the potential of using the internet to communicate information and services for Planned Parenthood. This was a significant challenge for a legacy organization, given that funders tend to prefer funding services instead of back-office functions like technology. After conversations with JPB, the foundation committed to helping Planned Parenthood build a comprehensive information source. This allowed people to find a Planned Parenthood clinic by typing in their zip code, book appointments online, and order pills online—things that were simply impossible before.

“A remarkable thing about Barbara is that she was willing to take risks and fund unknown ventures,” Richards said. “Barbara and JPB took leaps of faith with us that no one else had.” Building on that success, the foundation supported Planned Parenthood’s efforts to create a chat/text program that allows young people in need of critical and confidential help to have real-time conversations with trained health educators via text, desktop chat, or mobile chat and get accurate information about their sexual health. This technology has been transformative, says Richards. She describes the story of a young person who was experiencing a medical emergency, but who wasn’t free to speak over the phone. With Richards’ help, she was able to arrange by text to see a medical provider the following day. As Richards recalls, “She texted the next day and said, ‘you have been a lifesaver,’ adding a happy face, just like a teenager does.” “A few minutes later she texts, ‘but will you still be here if I need you later?’ I don’t know who this young person was, but all I know is that the confidence that Barbara has shown, and being there for young people, has changed lives.”

RISKS THAT DID NOT PAY OFF AS HOPED

Apprenticeships

As the Poverty Program explored different ways to improve the lives of people living with low incomes, it took a close look at the role that apprenticeships play in helping people on a pathway out of poverty.

Apprenticeships combine employment with on-the-job training and help employers to train and keep a skilled workforce. Apprenticeships offer many benefits for participants, such as earning while learning, gaining valuable credentials, and receiving mentorship. This approach often results in higher starting salaries and improved employee retention compared to traditional hiring methods.

However, apprenticeships are not widespread in the United States and are mostly limited to a few industries. In 2016, less than one percent of the workforce

were apprentices. For apprenticeships to effectively reduce poverty, they would need to expand into more industries and reach a broader segment of the population, including women, communities of color, youth, and people facing employment barriers.

The foundation was intrigued by the potential for apprenticeship programs, especially because they offer individuals a chance to earn a living wage and attract both government and private sector investment. JPB staff researched this as a potential funding area, and to learn more, funded a number of organizations focused on helping nontraditional populations, particularly women of color, into trade apprenticeships, and groups working toward expanding apprenticeships to other fields. Despite the inherent promise of the strategy, program staff soon realized that dramatically expanding apprenticeships would be difficult, given JPB’s grantmaking style at the time. The work would require intense regional collaboration and building corporate partnerships that research suggested would

The areas a foundation chooses to fund and the types of organizations it supports certainly reveal its *appetite for risk*.

produce, at best, 10,000 jobs at a time. While the figure was significant, JPB determined that the effort wouldn’t produce the kind of systems-changing work the Poverty Program was focused on. Instead, the program shifted its focus to supporting organizations that deal with the most marginalized workforces—low-income immigrants and women of color. They concluded that improving wages, benefits, and job standards for these workers would have a greater relative benefit for their communities and their overall economic well-being.

Big Greens

The foundation launched its Environment Program with a commitment to focusing on addressing environmental issues that serve low-income communities, acknowledging that many of the big environmental groups—and their funders—had not made this a priority. At the same time, with a small staff and a large grants budget, it would be difficult if not impossible for JPB to identify and directly support hundreds of comparatively small community-based organizations. Moreover, the foundation thought that it might be able to use its influence to help encourage large environmental groups, commonly known as the “big greens,” to shift their own strategies.

The foundation funded research to help determine whether there might be big greens interested in doing more to work in cities serving low-income communities and disinvested communities of color. It examined 16 national environmental

organizations, which produced some challenging results. The research revealed that many of the major national organizations lacked the expertise needed to work effectively in cities and low-income communities, that there were historical tensions between community-based and national organizations, and that the leadership and boards of at least half of these organizations lacked sufficient racial and ethnic diversity—a problem that persists today. The research suggested that these organizations did have the potential to provide essential resources and technical expertise to local groups, but that local groups found partnerships to be most successful when they could play a leading role in the work with national organizations, among other factors.

As a result of the research, JPB concluded that there were only a handful of national organizations that it would be willing to experiment with to have more resources and attention directed to the needs of low-income communities. They funded these groups to work in cities, to re-grant to community-based organizations, and to provide technical assistance. Nevertheless, while some of these organizations shared how JPB's funding has amplified or slowly changed the trajectory of their work, and while most have made a stronger commitment to environmental and climate justice, JPB acknowledged that they were unable to significantly influence a few of the large environmental organizations that it had chosen to fund. In fact, one big green transparently shared that they would only do this work if it was funded by JPB, and that once funding stopped it would not continue the work. Those organizations often found it difficult to report on their activities specific to JPB's grant, did not raise additional funding for the work, and could not be entirely clear that their boards endorsed the work. JPB determined that it preferred seeding efforts of smaller community-based groups to expand and for some to become more national. Examples include early support or growth funding for organizations such as the Chisholm Legacy Project, the Climate and Community Institute, Elevate Energy, Grist, Native Movement, the NDN Collective, Partnership for Southern Equity, Right to the City, The Solutions Project, and Taproot Earth.



“We’ll help you swim, not sink.”

It’s one thing to write a check to a grantee—even a large one. It’s another thing to make sure that the grantee has everything they need to succeed. There are many examples where JPB provided supplemental funding or emergency or rapid response grants, supported additional organizations whose work complemented anchor grantees, or otherwise went beyond the check. As Senior Grants and Systems Officer Julio Bautista notes, “When we fund a proposal, we are in partnership to make the grant succeed.”

GOING DEEPER

From time to time a grantee or a key part of the strategy just needs more—more attention, more tools, more options. The following two examples don’t fit under a neat category, but they provide good examples of trying something less conventional.

The Energy Efficiency for All Initiative (EEFA)

This is a story that could just as easily go in the risk category or in the section on learning, but it is perhaps most instructive as an example of a project that threatens to go sideways but which the funder believes is too important to walk away from. Here, JPB decided to deepen its investment in its grantees by not opting out when the going got tough. The Energy Efficiency for All initiative was launched in 2013 through a partnership between the Natural Resources Defense Council, the Energy Foundation, and the National Housing Trust, with Elevate Energy joining in 2015. This collaboration aimed to work with local organizations in 12 states to reduce household energy burdens for low-income renters while building relationships with state energy offices and utilities. That work sought to improve programs serving customers who pay into energy efficiency programs through their energy bills, but who do not realize the same benefits as single-family households that can more easily make decisions about ways to implement energy efficiency measures.

EEFA brings together partners focusing on utility policy, energy efficiency, affordable housing, coalition building, and environmental justice. In roughly its first six years, EEFA secured \$769 million from utility companies and state energy offices to retrofit housing, improving comfort, health, efficiency, and affordability for hundreds of thousands, representing a dramatic return on the foundation's philanthropic investment. While the initiative has produced these important benefits, the going wasn't always smooth. Partner feedback to the national organizations from November 2020 to February 2021 revealed persistent issues such as power imbalances, coalition mismanagement, and a lack of transparency. These concerns were exacerbated by situations involving the mistreatment of a Black-led organization. Rather than simply shut down the program, JPB paused the operations of the initiative in October 2020 to explore reimagining EEFA. The foundation sought input from all partners while continuing to fund general operating support to those involved—most of which had staff solely reliant on JPB's grant support.

From time to time a grantee or a key part of the strategy just needs more—more attention, more tools, more options.

To address these issues, the team hired Keecha Harris and Associates to help it navigate the complex situation. Harris facilitated listening sessions for JPB with a wide variety of grantees. While it was hard to hear that its funding was enabling bad behavior, JPB staff including Dana, Barbara, and Yianice Hernandez actively participated in the reimagining process. They also conducted a series of interviews and surveys, leading to a report released in May 2021.

The process gave the foundation a better understanding of what went wrong and led to suggestions about how to repair the damage. The report also helped JPB share what they had learned with members of the network. The next step was to put what they learned into action to ensure that their grantees could continue to succeed in the face of the sort of challenge that might otherwise prove insurmountable. Some of those changes included putting a priority on grants to organizations led by and accountable to low-income and/or BIPOC communities; an expanded mission to advance not just affordable housing but housing justice, energy justice, and decarbonization beyond (but still including) energy efficiency measures; ensuring that technical assistance, research, and advocacy support work to advance solutions were developed and determined by those communities; not requiring participating in an EEFA-specific coalition if grantees had alternative ways to advance their goals; and advancing antiracist policies and practices—from grantmaking practices to the policies its grantees were advocating.

Junior Faculty

Over the years, Jeffrey and Barbara Picower donated significant amounts of money to advance medical research. The largest such investment was an initial gift of \$50 million in 2002 from The Picower Foundation to the Massachusetts Institute for Technology to create The Picower Institute for Learning and Memory. At the time it was the largest gift ever given to MIT by a private foundation. JPB has been a stalwart supporter of the institute ever since, acknowledging the need for continued support.

One particular challenge for medical researchers everywhere involves the early years of their career—especially making tenure at their research institute. To ensure that young researchers have every opportunity to succeed, the foundation helped launch the Junior Faculty Development Program in 2014 to improve the professional journey of junior faculty at The Picower Institute. When a new faculty member is recruited to establish an independent research program, typically at the assistant professor level, they are provided start-up funds from their institution. With those funds they have to buy equipment and supplies as well as recruit and provide salaries for their research staff and trainees. All the subsequent research costs (and often their own salary) must come from grants they obtain from outside funders such as the National Institutes of Health. Their success in receiving grants and publishing papers determines whether they receive tenure. (They typically become eligible for tenure after seven years or more.) Unfortunately, there is a period of vulnerability during years four to seven, after these start-up funds have been used to establish a lab, but before a researcher has a track record and a sustainable research program. This is especially true since research funding is so competitive—it typically takes multiple rounds of applying before a grant is funded. The program was designed to provide research funding and formal mentorship to early career faculty to help them succeed and flourish through this critical period.

An important part of the program includes formalizing mentorship and research support structures. This includes providing junior faculty with opportunities to engage with senior faculty through social gatherings, advisory sessions, and regular one-on-one meetings—all designed to build a more supportive and collaborative community. In these settings, mentors offered junior faculty guidance and honest feedback on key areas like teaching, research directions and funding, promotion and tenure procedures, and how to mentor students. Junior faculty were encouraged to attend workshops and courses to improve their skills in public speaking, leadership, and managing people, thus broadening their professional capabilities.

The program has been remarkably successful, with participants highlighting the program as a significant and positive influence on their careers, many calling it a career highlight. The accomplishments resulting from the program are impressive. Faculty members have made groundbreaking discoveries in understanding

diseases such as Alzheimer's, Huntington's, bipolar disorder, and autism. They have uncovered new insights into how memories are stored, consolidated, and recalled, and how behaviors caused by anxiety are encoded. Additionally, the creation of new high-resolution optical tools and the progress of several therapeutic targets to preclinical trials highlight the program's contribution to scientific progress.

Similarly, the JPB Environmental Health Fellowship was set up to support junior faculty researching the combined impact of social and environmental determinants on health inequities in underrepresented communities. Since 2014, the program has fostered over 30 research projects, involved more than 100 students, and produced over 100 peer-reviewed papers. Several Fellows have advanced to Associate or Full Professor positions, while three Fellows have contributed to the Biden Administration's Equity and Justice policy. Collaborating with 32 community groups across 15 states, the program's 44 Fellows work to generate knowledge and solutions that address critical health equity challenges. Without the Fellowship, these promising academic scholars likely would have been forced to focus on either the social or the environmental determinants of health to remain on a track to tenure.

EMERGENCY RELIEF

Many funders simply don't do emergency relief. If it's not a part of their program strategy, they will leave that work to disaster relief organizations. This was especially true when Superstorm Sandy caused widespread damage across several states, particularly in New York and New Jersey, in 2012. The storm hit just as JPB was starting its operations, and the foundation provided \$2.8 million in grants to communities across the region—including Barbara's own hometown of Long Beach—to assist in the response and recovery.

JPB's General Response to COVID-19

JPB moved quickly during the early months of the COVID pandemic. At Barbara's request to her board, the foundation almost immediately authorized additional spending of up to \$100 million, understanding that the scope and scale of the problem was not at all clear. What was clear was that this was a moment for philanthropy to move quickly and decisively. The foundation's experience with disaster funding in the aftermath of Superstorm Sandy in 2012, led to its understanding that basic safety net needs like food banks would be jeopardized. JPB's response included the immediate and immense task of shifting to work remotely and issuing electronic grant payments. (Up to that point, Barbara had personally signed every check that the foundation issued.) Program staff made personal calls to all grantees to check in and explore how JPB might be helpful. Staff from across the organization made recommendations for where support might be needed. The foundation converted many project grants to general support, streamlined its reporting requirements, and supported efforts to expand

access to the internet, pay for rent and mortgages at childcare centers, and provide legal assistance to prevent tenants from being evicted, among many other efforts. By the end of 2021, JPB made an additional \$90 million in COVID-related grants in addition to its normal grantmaking commitments for those years.

NYC COVID-19 Relief Funding

It is almost hard to recall how terrifying and devastating the early months of the COVID pandemic were in New York City. Hospitals were filled. People were told not to go to the hospital unless it was a life-threatening emergency. Thousands of New Yorkers died, unable to breathe, their bodies shutting down. Refrigerated trucks served as temporary morgues in the streets. Schools, businesses, theaters, restaurants all closed. The streets were quiet, except for ambulance sirens and the

Many funders simply don't do *emergency relief*. If it's not a part of their program strategy, they will leave that work to disaster relief organizations.

7 p.m. communal cheers out windows for front-line workers. Hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers were out of work, with low-income jobs particularly affected. The impact on poor communities was laid bare as they struggled to "isolate" to remain safe. For those who could not afford internet access at home, it was particularly difficult to get information or to log in to remote (a word with new meaning) classes.

When the depth of the COVID pandemic became clearer in the early days of April 2020, a group of New York foundations came together to respond. They launched a fund at the New York Community Trust to provide grants and interest-free loans to small and midsize nonprofits to help them respond to emerging needs, cover losses associated with the disruption of their operations, and help them continue their critical work. The initial commitment was \$75 million, but it soon grew to over \$100 million. It was considered a rare moment of very quick action by philanthropy. Darren Walker, president of the Ford Foundation, helped organize the response. "The first call I made was to Barbara," he said. "I told her that we were considering forming a consortium of New York City philanthropists. This group would make grants to organizations in the city—social services, those aiding immigrant workers, and similar groups. The organizations serving the populations most affected would be our priority. During that phone call, Barbara immediately said, 'Count me in.'" Betsy Krebs, the VP of the Poverty Program, single-handedly staffed that grant for the year, working with other foundations to review hundreds of grant requests weekly, and to guide funding to communities most in need.

“They just really listened and understood what was going on and responded.”

— PETER HILLE, MOUNTAIN ASSOCIATION

Funding for Researchers During the Pandemic

The pandemic was particularly difficult for laboratory researchers whose work required them to be in the lab, given that many universities and institutions shut down nearly all on-site activities and severely restricted access to most facilities. Virtually all non-COVID lab work was put on hold indefinitely. This was challenging in a variety of ways. Many experiments that involved keeping cultures, samples, or animals alive were terminated or suspended. International researchers on visiting work visas saw their immigration status put in jeopardy and were unable to travel, cut off from their families and home countries. Researchers with children or adult dependents needed to care for their family members while continuing their work. Many studies have indicated that the pandemic exacerbated gender disparities in publication and career progress. Many researchers supported by fellowships with a fixed term found themselves unable to continue their research and generate the results they needed to publish papers. Some researchers found that their funding was in danger of being eliminated, leaving them in psychological and physical limbo. The foundation responded with grant extensions and emergency grants that allowed researchers to wait until it was possible to get back into the lab, rebuild their experiments, and resume work as quickly and effectively as possible.

Responding to Climate Disasters

In 2017, Hurricane Maria’s severe impact on Puerto Rico spurred The Solutions Project, supported in part by JPB, to mount a significant response. This initiative focused on delivering immediate relief through solar and battery systems, water purification kits, and financial support directed to local grassroots organizations. These efforts were crucial in meeting the urgent needs of the Puerto Rican community, both on the island and in cities like New York and Miami. JPB provided funds quickly, helping The Solutions Project to be highly responsive. The success of these initial efforts helped The Solutions Project to incorporate organizations from Puerto Rico into their grantee network. Building on this, JPB helped The Solutions Project to design its Community Climate Resilience and Power-Building program. This initiative helps organizations across the U.S. boost disaster preparedness and develop long-term resilience strategies. It also aims to influence global climate justice efforts, ensuring that strategies are informed by those most vulnerable to climate impacts.

Over the past decade, the foundation was repeatedly called upon to respond to weather-related disasters made worse due to human-caused climate change. On average, the U.S. experiences about 10 to 20 extreme weather-related disasters annually that each cause at least \$1 billion in damages. In 2023, there were 23 such events recorded by September, setting a record for the number of billion-dollar disasters in a single year. As these events became more frequent, JPB responded to the needs of communities where its grantee partners were most invested.

When floods inundated eastern Kentucky in the summer of 2022, JPB moved quickly to support its grantees there. As Peter Hille, the CEO of Mountain Association, recalls, “We were in communication with the foundation about what was going on here. But we were really—I think ‘gobsmacked’ is probably the word—when they reached out and said, ‘We’re adding a half a million dollars to your grant to help you respond to this.’” The additional unrequested funding enabled the organization to set up a program that supported flood recovery loans, providing up to two years with no interest and even covered the initial principal payments for businesses that were struggling to reopen after the flood. “They just really listened and understood what was going on and responded,” said Hille.

From 2012 until the end of 2023, JPB made close to \$20 million in weather-related emergency response grants, mostly for hurricane damage.

Addressing the Racial Reckoning

While The JPB Foundation had been making grants to advance racial justice for many years, the murder of George Floyd inspired a moment in which foundations of all kinds sought to find ways to more deeply address questions of systemic racism. In 2020, a sub-group of JPB program staff began meeting to recommend a set of grants to respond to the moment. As they had many times before, Darren Walker and Barbara Picower came together to discuss what their respective foundations could do to meet an important need. As Walker reflects, “Barbara, as a white woman with a lot of wealth and privilege, was incredibly passionate, articulate, and authentic about the need to invest in racial justice organizations and the connection between racism and the bias of the criminal justice system. She was amazing and became one of the largest funders. We had a series of initiatives after George Floyd that summer, and Barbara was on every Zoom call, and fully engaged.” JPB also joined the Democracy Frontlines Fund, started by the Libra Foundation in 2020. This occurred in the context of the national outpouring of grief, rage, and demand for change after the murder of George Floyd by a police officer; the health and economic crisis of COVID-19; and an election year of unparalleled and historic importance. The fund initially supported 10 movement organizations at \$1 million per year, and it has since raised and granted \$39 million dollars from 2020-2023.

HELPING ORGANIZATIONS BE MORE EFFECTIVE

Quite often grantees of a foundation identify areas of their own organization that they’d like to improve—things like increasing diversity, upgrading technology, supporting staff mental health, and enhancing storytelling for fundraising, among many others. And even when they receive general support funding, many are loath to spend that money in these areas because they feel it might somehow be hard to justify to the funder.

Organizational Health Fund

The foundation's commitment to grantees' organizational health has been a signature of its approach—even though the forms that support takes has evolved over time. While the foundation was well aware of the many organizational needs its grantees were experiencing, in 2015 another deeper issue about organizational health that was bubbling under the surface revealed itself. A report by Bridgespan had identified a problem that JPB and other foundations were seeing firsthand—many nonprofit leaders were burning out, and a dramatic leadership transition was underway. Dana Bourland, who had started an annual survey of JPB's grantees, began noticing this concern in the survey responses. She organized a meeting with incoming leaders of JPB-funded organizations. At Barbara's encouragement, she held a separate meeting of the outgoing leaders of the same organizations to get both sides of the story. It became obvious that organizations needed flexible funding to manage these transitions, as well as additional funding to have the time and resources to ensure that their organizations were healthy—not just financially, but culturally as well. Successful leadership transitions, which have a profound effect on organizational culture, required a great deal of care and were a key part of organizational health.

JPB sought to address this challenge by creating the Organizational Health Fund, working with the Tides Foundation to administer the program to help grantees in the Environment and Poverty Programs. The fund made a total of 38 grants, totaling \$3.9 million as of 2024, and continues to use this vehicle to support its grantees. Tides managed the application process, distributed grants, and was able to make quick decisions to help organizations when they needed it most. Dawnette Zuniga, program manager in the Environment Program who led the recommendation process within JPB and coordinated with Tides, observed, "The majority of grants went to help organizations to navigate leadership transitions, staff development, and deal with crises." The project helped improve the long-term health of JPB's grantees and helped the foundation gain much greater insight into what their grantees needed most.

HUB AND NETWORK FUNDING STRATEGY

The JPB Foundation understood that complex social issues like poverty can't be solved by single organizations working alone. In many instances, the foundation adopted what they called a "hub and network" approach to funding. As Barbara wrote in an article for Stanford Social Innovation Review, "Rather than funding one organization and moving on, we place multiple bets on a centrally positioned grantee, the hub, that has the capacity to serve as the issue-area focal point of our grantmaking. We then build a constellation of additional investments around them, creating a network of organizations that work collaboratively toward a common goal."

Designating one grantee as the hub increases the reach of core grantees by ensuring they have partnerships with other organizations. Each network

organization has an independent mission that complements the hub's goals. The approach fosters a community where these organizations meet and interact, providing a structured space for leaders and other partners to think and plan together, each leading in their areas of strength. The hub and network approach also expands the variety of organizations the foundation can work with in a region or program area. It allowed JPB to experiment with collaborative models and pooled funds and participate in joint decision-making with other funders while taking advantage of what each organization does best. Perhaps without design, the foundation had channeled a similar approach in organizing each medical research consortium with the same philosophy—each researcher was supported independently but brought together into a community with a common goal.

Designating one grantee as *the hub* increases the reach of core grantees by ensuring they have partnerships with other organizations.

Community Change Economic Justice Network

The 2008 economic recession pushed the number of people living below the federal poverty rate from 12.5 percent in 2007 to 15 percent in 2011, with higher increases and absolute rates for Black and Hispanic households. The Occupy Wall Street movement placed income inequality at the center of public discourse in the early 2010s, and early on, JPB sought to identify organizations that had the leadership and reach to make progress on improving access to safety-net programs that keep people out of poverty. Some examples include JPB's Safety Net portfolio, which evolved from an early focus on specific poverty reduction targets. JPB also made an early large investment in the Center for Community Change (now called Community Change) and set a goal of reducing poverty by a specific percentage over a short period of time.

The first project that employed the hub and network strategy involved Community Change, a key grantee of the Poverty Program. Barbara decided to make a grant of \$20 million over four years to Community Change, but as Jeff Bradach recalls, she asked, "Why don't I fund the broader ecosystem around them to support the big ideas they're trying to pursue?" The foundation then provided an additional \$30 million to a set of organizations that could complement Community Change's work—organizations like the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, Food Resource and Action Center, the National Employment Law Project, and the Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law. JPB established what it called the Economic Justice Network, which met on a quarterly-to-semiannual basis to share priorities, identify challenges in the field, and, when possible, collaborate on responses. The

“Why don’t I fund the broader ecosystem around them to support the big ideas they’re trying to pursue?” – BARBARA PICOWER, THE JPB FOUNDATION

network also funded an evaluation partner to assess whether and how Community Change was reducing poverty in identified geographic areas.

This approach helped Community Change progress on its ambitious goals, with network grantees making important contributions to the comprehensive work needed to reduce poverty, including policy development, legal research, and advocacy. It encouraged the organizations to come together, solve common problems, and act in concert to advance social causes. A main focus was protecting and expanding the safety nets that lift people above the poverty line. This included income supports such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, Earned Income Tax Credits, and Child Tax Credits, as well as improving job conditions and quality for the lowest-paid workers, including gig workers and minimum wage earners.

After the 2016 election, the Trump administration launched a coordinated effort to undermine Medicaid and housing and food assistance. It did this by using the federal rulemaking process and granting waivers to privatize services and curtail eligibility. Community Change and the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities approached JPB about ways to help protect the safety net for low-income communities. The group decided to launch a new funder collaborative called the Safety Net Defense Fund to mobilize grassroots voices from affected communities, influential allies, state policy groups, health and human service providers, and other local organizations. The goal was to protect and, in some cases, expand access to Medicaid and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program in their states. The fund provided partners in 26 states with individualized assistance, tools, and opportunities for collaboration. This support ensured that public education efforts were coordinated with national messages, that they would also be tailored for specific audiences, and that state and local groups’ efforts were well timed and fit within a broad strategy.

At the state and federal levels, partners preserved access to Medicaid and supplemental nutrition funding by preventing attempts to impose harsher work requirements that might have disqualified vulnerable families. Partners conducted grassroots organizing, collected stories, did media outreach, and educated the public. This helped amplify the voices of people who directly benefited from these programs. The fund provided partners with help that included data and policy analysis, assistance with media outreach and placement, one-on-one consultation for directors and organizers, leadership training, strategy development, and subgrants to help them finance their efforts.

Finally, and perhaps most impressively, Community Change and the larger network of organizations played an essential role in the COVID-era enactment of the expanded Child Tax Credit, which reduced child poverty by 50 percent.

A Network to Understand and Mitigate ‘Toxic Stress’ in Young Children

There are many factors in a child’s life that affect whether a child is likely to thrive. One area that has been poorly understood is how violence in the home and community, mental health challenges, substance abuse, or other “adverse childhood experiences” might contribute to toxic stress in young children. In 2014 Barbara heard the pediatrician and community social justice leader Dr. Nadine Burke Harris speak about adverse childhood experiences. She met with Dr. Harris and other leading experts, including the head of Harvard’s Center on the Developing Child, as well as with community health leaders, to learn more.

JPB then developed a strategy to provide information about early childhood care systems, and to improve public understanding, policy development, and clinical practice related to early life stress. JPB funded clinical measures to identify children, youth, and parents who show evidence of excessive stress. The foundation supported screening tools for early identification of developmental concerns, and finally, it helped establish ways to link early childhood programs and services nationally.

While the early grants in this area reinforced the strategies led by Dr. Burke Harris’s Center for Youth Wellness, over time the strategy shifted to redesigning the early-childhood system itself. The focus on systems change driven by community participation positioned this portfolio area to reinforce other initiatives across the Poverty and Environment Programs. Among other long-term impacts, JPB’s investment over these years led to unlocking funds from additional foundations as well as millions of dollars in government investment across the country. One valuable result is California’s statewide initiative to work together across sectors to prevent and address the impact of adverse childhood experiences and toxic stress. Wally Patawaran, who led this work as senior program officer of the Health Equity portfolio, says, “We helped transform early childhood programs across the country as we built on the toxic stress grants and supported new approaches that centered families’ goals and put the parents in a more empowered position.”

Fund to Build Grassroots Power

Initiated by The JPB Foundation in 2018 as a project of the Windward Fund, the Fund to Build Grassroots Power is an intermediary fund that helps strengthen grassroots environmental and climate justice groups associated with four national networks: Climate Justice Alliance, Environmental Justice Forum, People’s Action Institute, and PowerSwitch Action. While the concept of environmental justice has been around for many decades, funding for the movement continues to lag. As Dorceta Taylor, a professor of Environmental Justice at Yale (and JPB grantee),

“Some of the communities that are most in need of funding are the ones getting the least funds to do environmental work.” — DORCETA TAYLOR, YALE UNIVERSITY

has noted, “Some of the communities that are most in need of funding are the ones getting the least funds to do environmental work.” Dr. Taylor conducted a research project commissioned by JPB that revealed that although more than half of the foundations surveyed funded organizations primarily focusing on people of color, less than 10 percent of grant dollars were awarded to these organizations. JPB sought to find ways to bring more funding to the field and to help deepen the abilities and influence of grassroots environmental justice groups.

The work was grounded in the belief that well-funded grassroots organizations, particularly those with ties to national networks, would be better equipped to engage effectively within these networks. This engagement not only benefits the individual organizations but also fortifies the networks themselves, creating a robust infrastructure for the environmental justice movement. This engaged and connected infrastructure would make it possible for grassroots organizations to wield more power at local, state, and federal levels, ensuring that decision-makers heed the voices and needs of communities that have traditionally been harmed by damaging policies and practices.

Anna Loizeaux served as a senior program officer in the Environment Program and helped expand the Environmental Justice portfolio. She notes, “Environmental Justice is a holistic justice movement that is focused on where people live, work, play, and pray. What moves people more than love of people or love of place? As we now see unprecedented national-level investments from the federal government, we can say without a doubt from our experience that place-based wisdom, strategies, and priorities will always be the most comprehensive and sustainable.”

To sustain this work the organization hired its first executive director to further organize and institutionalize its efforts. And to date it has distributed \$25.3 million among 136 organizations using funding from JPB and Waverly Street Foundation. These grantees are all members of at least one of four national organizing networks, with leaders from these networks serving on the advisory board and contributing to grant decisions. This relationship between the networks and their member organizations has been pivotal to the success of the fund. It not only supports the fund’s objectives but also reinforces network-grantee relationships.

Trust for Public Land—10-Minute Walk

As the Environment Program began to grow, JPB sought to counter the fallacy that the “environment” is only something that happens in wild, wide-open spaces, and that it is disconnected from people’s everyday lives. With a specific desire to benefit people living in cities whose neighborhoods were badly in need of quality

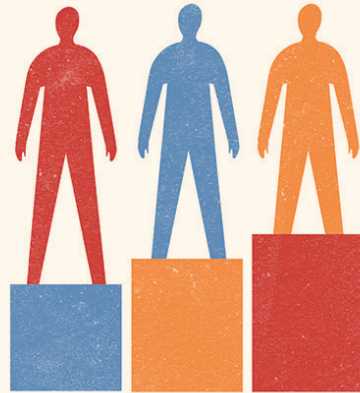
parks and open space, JPB embarked on a journey to support efforts to improve equitable access to quality parks.

JPB made its first grant to the Trust for Public Land in 2014 to help the organization design a vision for connecting people to parks. This led to a larger grant to launch the 10-Minute Walk Campaign. The campaign was designed to ensure that all residents in U.S. cities—especially those living in low-income and disinvested communities—had access to a quality park or green space within a 10-minute walk of home.

The project had its challenges. The project was initially structured around the hub and network model, with anchor institutions playing central, complementary roles. Trust for Public Land was the anchor grantee, partnering with National Recreation and Park Association and Urban Land Institute. However, the hub and network model came with drawbacks, and the initial vision of a nationwide, far-reaching, diverse movement for park equity did not materialize at the time. Several factors were at play, but one of the most important was that Trust for Public Land was undergoing an executive leadership transition, making it an inopportune time for the organization to advance its first-ever national issues-based campaign.

The scope of the project was extremely ambitious, and the organizations involved were only part of a much larger vision. It proved to be too difficult to integrate the project’s many components into one strategy. JPB was committed to making the project work, and exercised patience as the organization evolved, witnessing positive change on Trust for Public Land’s board to be more diverse and youthful, monitoring the departures and arrivals of staff, and challenging the organization to solidify its commitment to serving the communities JPB was focused on.

The patience was worth it. Today, more than 300 U.S. cities—large and small, urban and rural, across 49 states—have committed to Trust for Public Land’s vision to guarantee outdoor access for 100 percent of residents. The organization has reached more than 9 million people to date and remains committed to its goal to serve 100 million people, including 28 million children who still do not have a park within a 10-minute walk of home.



“We have to talk about all kinds of equity.”

While it’s now common for those in philanthropy to talk about the importance of diversity, equity, and inclusion, JPB has raised issues of representation and equity with its foundation colleagues as well as with its grantees from the very beginning. As Deepak Bhargava points out, “Barbara is deeply committed to justice. It’s in her bones. She sees the foundation as a crucial vehicle to accomplish that.”

Over time, the foundation sharpened its focus on race, racism, and injustice, funding organizations led whenever possible by women and people of color while it diversified its staff and connected issues of race, ethnicity, and gender throughout its work.

THE FOUNDATION ADAPTS OVER TIME

When the foundation began, grantmaking focused on helping people make choices that would improve their lives. This included supporting the Harlem Children Zone’s project to help children, families, and community members take better care of themselves and establish lifelong healthy habits, including increasing healthy eating, providing nutrition information, and encouraging physical activity in youth to prevent childhood obesity. In immigrant communities, the foundation supported programs that would help residents learn about their eligibility for citizenship and then help them apply.

JPB quickly realized that systemic changes were necessary to advance economic justice, and that providing improved individual choices, while important, was insufficient. They soon began making grants that addressed systemic challenges of access. This included access to voting, parks, energy efficiency, and health care, among other needs. The foundation gradually moved toward supporting organizations that worked to create systemic changes that improved “all kinds of equity” and justice, like increasing the minimum wage, in addition to a variety of other efforts to provide more equitable safety net benefits.

A Deepening Commitment to Racial Justice

The foundation had always had a commitment to racial justice, and to doing what it could to address the systemic inequities driven by racism that pervaded our society. The murder of George Floyd in 2020 became a call to action to do even more.

Rashad Robinson, the president of Color of Change, recalls hearing from Barbara during this time. “She really wanted to dig right into everything that she was seeing, and talked about her own journey on race,” he said. “I got off the phone and I thought, ‘What just happened?’ What I really appreciate is that Barbara was looking for human interaction and human engagement and trying to make good on the kind of opportunity that was in her hands with her resources and figuring out what to do with it.”

According to a September 2021 report from the Philanthropic Initiative for Racial Equity called “Mismatched: Philanthropy’s Response to the Call for Racial Justice,” between 2015 and 2018, The JPB Foundation was the 14th-largest funder of racial equity work and the 6th-largest funder of racial justice work in the U.S. In 2020, those rankings jumped to #6 and #3, respectively.

Across its programs, JPB had an interest in challenging the organizations it supported to incorporate racial justice into their mission, vision, and strategy, and in ensuring greater racial diversity in staff, board, and other leadership positions within the organizations. Central to this was an understanding that justice would play an important role—and in many cases the most important role—in the foundation’s grantmaking throughout its work. In both the Environment and Poverty Programs, grants specifically tackled the legacy, current impact, and future of anti-Black racism. Although not all grantees had racial justice as their primary goal, it often strongly informed their programs and strategies.

Donors of Color Network’s Climate Funders Justice Pledge

When the Environment Program was launched, very little environmental funding was dedicated to serving people of color, and even less was going to organizations led by people of color. The program began by finding ways to ensure that everybody could have easy access to a park and working to create better living environments for people in low-income communities, and it evolved to design a specific portfolio focused on increasing power and expanding the strength of the environmental justice movement. While much of JPB’s Environment Program grantmaking could be considered supporting environmental justice, it distributed over \$118 million from 2012 to 2023 for efforts to build community power and to strengthen the broader movement. In addition to making grants to build the environmental justice field directly, the program worked to encourage its fellow funders and the country’s major environmental organizations to pay meaningful attention to environmental justice. Lois DeBacker, a longtime environmental funder who led the Kresge Foundation’s environmental grantmaking, was especially

“They weren’t using the term racial justice, but they were a racial justice funder even if they didn’t call it that.” — RASHAD ROBINSON, COLOR OF CHANGE

impressed, saying, “The work they did, particularly environmental justice work, was brave and smart.”

The Climate Funders Justice Pledge was started in February 2021 by the Donors of Color Network. This initiative challenges the top climate funders in the U.S. to allocate at least 30 percent of their climate funding to environmental justice organizations led by Black, Indigenous, and people of color, while also advocating for greater transparency in funding. At the time Danielle Deane-Ryan was advising the Donors of Color Network to launch the Pledge, “Dana Bourland was my partner in crime,” says Deane-Ryan. Helping to lead the pledge efforts, Deane-Ryan reports that JPB was one of the first three large foundations to agree to join the Pledge and proved to be a strong evangelist across the field for a strong environmental justice movement. “JPB hired leaders who had a passion for justice,” Deane-Ryan adds. “They got a lot of respect from environmental justice leaders for being serious about economic and climate justice.”

Medical Researchers

The Medical Research Program never had a stated goal of advancing equity or justice, but its grantmaking nevertheless has served those goals. The program aimed to address chronic health problems that are often neglected and disproportionately affect marginalized groups. Over time, the foundation deepened its commitment to addressing the lack of diversity in the academy and in the laboratory—a key driver in inspiring research that can better improve the health of communities historically underserved by medical science.

It has incorporated lessons learned from the Poverty Program around the effects of early life adversity on young people’s mental health and well-being into its medical research funding, sparking new collaborations among the medical community that are leading to new research on the topic.

“The JPB Foundation is really committed to addressing poverty and early life stress,” said Li-Huei Tsai. “In collaboration with them for over a decade, we have organized symposiums to explore the impact of early life adversity on mental health. Our events feature speakers who are at the forefront of research on various aspects of toxic stress.”

The Picower Institute has also established a wide range of programs that are aimed to bring more diverse perspectives into the laboratory and yield groundbreaking medical research. The Research Scholars Program at MIT provides recent college graduates from historically underrepresented groups and/or economically disadvantaged backgrounds with additional academic

training as they earn graduate-level funding to become competitive PhD applicants. The MIT Summer Research Program offers undergraduates from underserved or disadvantaged backgrounds the chance to join the institute’s labs to engage in current research.

Moving from Serving Individuals to Transforming Systems

As the foundation’s thinking about justice changed over time, the goal of the Poverty Program evolved as well. This came about as the foundation listened to the needs of its grantees, and as its own thinking about the issues evolved. The initial goal was “to create opportunities for people to move and stay out of poverty.” Nevertheless, as Rashad Robinson observes, “They weren’t using the term racial justice, but they were a racial justice funder even if they didn’t call it that.”

By 2016, the revised goal of the program was “to promote justice and opportunities for people in poverty.” The addition of “justice” to the goal and to its application across the program was inspired by Bryan Stevenson’s well-known quote, “The opposite of poverty is not wealth. In too many places, the opposite of poverty is justice.”

Stevenson’s Equal Justice Initiative received over \$25 million from JPB to develop, launch, and support its memorial and the related work around it to educate the U.S. about the legacy of slavery and its connection to poverty. In 2018, the Equal Justice Initiative created two important ways to tell these stories. The Legacy Museum traces slavery’s evolution across racial segregation, lynchings, and mass incarceration, and the National Memorial for Peace and Justice pays homage to the thousands of Black Americans who were victims of domestic terrorism by way of sanctioned, racial terror lynchings. They have become a destination for over 2 million people eager to engage in conversations about how to address the legacy of racial injustice in the U.S.

Strengthening the Link Between Poverty and Democracy

As the Poverty Program’s work progressed, the foundation made a much more explicit link between poverty and democracy, which was inextricably linked with racial justice.

Poverty in the U.S. is the result of longstanding historical systemic issues, current policy choices, and decision-making at all levels. JPB saw its goal of reducing or eradicating poverty as linked to how Americans choose to engage in their communities, whether at the most local level or as they weigh in on national policies. Regardless of the issue that JPB tackled—from good jobs and fair wages to reproductive health care—the foundation believed that it was critical for people to have a voice in the policies, systems, and institutions that affect their lives. Civic engagement can take place at the local, state, and national levels, and can take different forms, from organizing with community-based organizations and voting in

elections, to taking part in actions that hold elected officials accountable between elections. The strategy was based on the belief that sustained civic engagement gives voice to the people regardless of the political party in power.

Protecting and defending voting rights, eliminating barriers to voting, and making voting easier, more secure, and safe were core investments of the Poverty Program, with the goal of having everyone's voice count. Voters of color, lower-income earners, new citizens, and younger voters are historically less likely to vote than others, due to systemic barriers. In addition to protecting voting rights and access, JPB supported voter engagement and mobilization to build movements and long-term power (including issue education and campaigns). The foundation recognized that reaching this vision would require ongoing commitments and large-scale funding, and that it wouldn't be sufficient to simply increase election turnout in a particular year.

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The foundation also made significant investments to grow the field and to build the power and ability of low-income people—especially low-income people of color—to change the policies and institutions that affect their lives.

JPB supported state and local organizations led by communities of color, immigrants, young people, as well as faith and rural communities, letting the communities determine which issues were most important to them. Groups like Alliance for Youth Organizing, Community Change, Center for Popular Democracy, Faith in Action, the Heartland Fund, State Voices, National Partnership for New Americans, and the National Korean American Service and Education Consortium ensured that the foundation's resources went to communities most affected by inequity. JPB made large grants to Define American to help that organization use storytelling to shift the narrative about the immigrant experience. Grantees also included the Pop Culture Collaborative and the Abundant Futures Fund, among many others. In 2023, JPB directed \$71 million through its democracy portfolio, totaling \$326 million since 2012.

PUTTING EQUITY STRATEGIES INTO PRACTICE

The JPB Foundation was one of many foundations that understood the importance of advancing equity. One way to learn from each other and help to bring new funding into the field was to join funder collaboratives and participate in affinity groups working to advance equity.

Here are just a few:

Funders for Housing and Opportunity

Funders for Housing and Opportunity is a national collaborative of philanthropies dedicated to ensuring that all renters, especially those with low incomes, have access to affordable, stable housing in thriving communities. This group combines resources and expertise from various foundations to tackle systemic issues affecting housing stability and affordability. Their mission focuses on addressing the root causes of housing instability, aiming to increase the supply of affordable rental homes. They also advocate for policies that support housing stability at federal, state, and local levels. The funder collaborative supports a range of projects, from housing development to advocacy campaigns and research studies, aiming to create systemic change and improve housing conditions for low-income renters across the United States.

Climate Breakthrough

While Climate Breakthrough was considered an international effort, the foundation joined to help the collaborative support awardees in the U.S. focusing on climate justice. The initiative identifies and supports strategies to combat climate change, with a strong emphasis on promoting equity and inclusion. Climate Breakthrough's core activity is the Climate Breakthrough Award, which provides financial support and strategic assistance to visionary leaders from diverse backgrounds working on projects that consider the needs and voices of marginalized and vulnerable communities most affected by climate change. The awarded leaders receive multi-year funding, mentorship, and access to a network of experts. To date, 60 percent of awards have been made to women or women-led teams, and more than 70 percent of awards have supported work in the global South.

The Families and Workers Fund

Mark Harris, a senior program officer in the Poverty Program, reflects on how the foundation moved quickly during COVID. "When the CARES Act (which provided emergency financial assistance to many Americans) passed that spring, immigrant families were left out," he said. "We were talking to many people to find out what the needs were, from North Carolina to Hawaii to Puerto Rico." The Families and Workers Fund was one such vehicle, a collaborative philanthropic initiative that was created to address the economic and social impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on workers, families, and communities. It focuses on three main areas—providing direct relief, advocating for policy changes, and building

long-term workforce resilience. The fund provides immediate financial assistance, including cash transfers, food, and housing support, to those severely affected by the pandemic. It also advocates for policies that protect workers' rights, enhance social safety nets, and ensure fair wages and benefits. By collaborating with policymakers and advocacy groups, the fund aims to drive systemic change. Investing in workforce resilience is another key objective, with programs that help workers adapt to changing job markets and economic conditions. This includes skills training, job placement services, and support for small businesses. The fund puts a priority on equity and inclusion, ensuring that relief and recovery efforts focus on marginalized and underserved communities, addressing disparities exacerbated by the pandemic.

Climate and Clean Energy Equity Fund (the Equity Fund)

The Equity Fund grew out of the Climate Education Fund at the Democracy Alliance. It was designed to fill a critical gap in environmental philanthropy, building power to address climate change, and JPB provided funding to the non-partisan activities of this fund. The fund is driven by a commitment to racial and social justice and the power of grassroots organizing to create lasting change. The values of equity and inclusion are embedded throughout the Equity Fund, and its multiracial staff is rooted in racial and social justice work. It works closely with grantee partners to advance equitable climate and clean energy policies, building community power through trust-based relationships. Working across 13 states, the Equity Fund re-grants to well over 100 grantee partners and coalitions to advance specific climate and clean energy initiatives.



“How do we know what people need?”

Perhaps one of the most challenging aspects for philanthropists is getting accurate information that will improve their grantmaking. It can be hard to learn what grantees really need, and harder still to understand how a grantmaking strategy will make a meaningful difference in the communities where those grantees work. Foundations often form their own hypotheses, sometimes based on imperfect information, about the kind of change that's needed and the activities required to succeed. Understanding this, The JPB Foundation tried their best to find ways to truly listen to grantees and the communities they serve.

Barbara acknowledged that it took time to get there. She noted, “We used to tell grantees how much money we had and what we wanted them to do. Now we ask them what they want to accomplish. We used to think we knew everything. But we don't.” The evolution of this philosophy was the result of years of experience and a willingness to challenge conventional philanthropic wisdom that the funder knows best.

DIRECT ENGAGEMENT WITH BENEFICIARIES

The foundation's commitment to listening extended beyond merely engaging with grantee organizations. Deepak Bhargava, who would later succeed Barbara as president, observed, “Barbara had a sensibility that everyday people should be at the table, not just highly paid nonprofit professionals. Barbara would often say, ‘I want to meet the direct beneficiaries of this. I want to hear from people who are actually affected.’ And she truly meant it.” This direct engagement with those affected by the grants became a cornerstone of the foundation's approach. By hearing directly from those people, Barbara and her team gained invaluable insights that shaped their grantmaking strategies and focus areas and often inspired very personal grantmaking.

During one board meeting, the foundation invited Lois Gibbs to speak. Gibbs was the executive director of JPB grantee Center for Health and Environmental Justice,

and is best known as the activist whose protests against the Love Canal in upstate New York led to the creation of the EPA superfund program. Gibbs brought with her colleagues receiving small re-grants from JPB's grant to the Center for Health and Environmental Justice, who were fighting for environmental justice in rural communities. One such colleague was Esther Calhoun, who ran an organization called Black Belt Citizens Fighting for Health and Justice. Calhoun, the child and grandchild of Black sharecroppers in rural Alabama, was fighting to close a coal ash landfill that was poisoning her community. The board was so moved by her presentation and that of Lois's other colleagues that they significantly increased the grant award amount to Gibbs's organization. In addition, staff present at the meeting directed their staff grants—a small grant each JPB staff person can award to an organization of their choosing—to Black Belt Citizens.

By bringing grantee voices *directly into the highest level of decision-making*, JPB ensured that the perspectives of those doing the work were part of strategic discussions.

Mechanisms for Listening

The foundation implemented a variety of tools to ensure that they were effectively listening to grantees and others in the field. They made extensive use of advisory committees in each program area. Jonathan F.P. Rose, a member of the environmental advisory board, recalls, "We met quarterly, and we knew each other from the environmental world. We helped identify Dana Bourland to run the Environment Program, then helped define the program and recommend potential grantees."

ADVISORY COMMITTEES AND BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Barbara surrounded herself with a combination of close trusted advisors and people with significant field expertise. She created advisory committees for the three programs, and eventually combined the individual committees for the Environment and Poverty Program into one, given the committees' overlapping strategies. The advisors brought expert knowledge to the foundation's decision-making process, helped identify emerging trends and needs in the field, and provided crucial outside perspectives that prevented the foundation from becoming too insular in its thinking.

The foundation also took the unusual step of inviting field leaders and grantees to serve on JPB's board of directors when they were no longer grantees of the foundation. These included Cecile Richards of Planned Parenthood, Deepak Bhargava of Community Change, and Geoffrey Canada of Harlem Children's Zone. The advisory committees contained many more field practitioners, including existing

grantees. This practice, while not unheard-of in philanthropy, was far from common. By bringing grantee voices directly into the highest level of decision-making, JPB ensured that the perspectives of those doing the work were part of strategic discussions.

As Dr. David Holtzman, leader of the Alzheimer's disease consortium, who joined the advisory committee in 2016, observed, "Barbara invariably listened carefully to the advisors' suggestions and guidance and made decisions that quite deftly balanced expert advice with her own judgment and instincts."

END-OF-YEAR SURVEYS

End-of-year surveys provided a structured way for grantees to offer feedback. These surveys went beyond typical grant reporting, asking grantees to share their honest assessments of their own accomplishments, challenges, and visions for the future. The foundation used this feedback not to evaluate past grants but to shape future strategies and encourage other funders to support grantees. They also asked grantees in their grant reports how they listened to the beneficiaries of their work. JPB then commissioned an analysis of the nearly 1,000 responses they received as another way of learning about the benefits of the foundation's work and how to do it better.

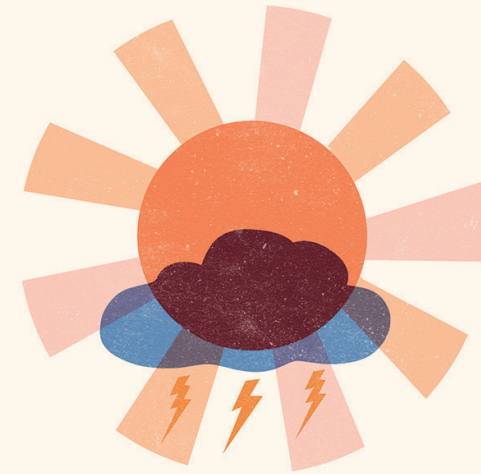
Finally, JPB started and continually supported the Fund for Shared Insight, a collaborative effort among funders aimed at improving philanthropy by enhancing the ways foundations gather, interpret, and act upon feedback from nonprofits and the communities they serve. This support demonstrated JPB's commitment not just to improve its own practices, but to advance the field of philanthropy as a whole. From that project, the organization Listen4Good was created, with the goal of amplifying community voices through programs that help organizations listen to their clients and advance equity.

In 2022, JPB commissioned two reports from a consultant, Lindsay Louie (now the CEO of the Enlight Foundation), to better understand the information they were collecting. Louie reviewed the answer to a question JPB asked on its proposals—"How do you listen to the people you impact or serve?"—to analyze how grantees received feedback and acted on it. Amy Minter, senior program officer in the Poverty Program, remarks that "Lindsay was impressed with JPB's serious commitment to the concept of listening to those directly affected by the grants, and to its grantees." Louie also reviewed nearly 1,000 grantee stories that had been submitted to JPB as part of the reporting process, which program staff had diligently read, but which had not been synthesized.

RESPONSIVE GRANTMAKING IN TIMES OF CRISIS

We have examined the foundation's response to periods of crisis in an earlier section, but central to those efforts was the ability to listen carefully to grantees' needs in order to make sure that grantmaking was effective.

For example, Serena Iacoviello, senior program associate in the Environment Program, joined the foundation the week that the country began to shelter in place. Part of her portfolio involved a small cohort of youth climate justice grants to organizations mostly led by youth who had little to no experience managing organizations or partnering with philanthropy. She soon began hosting unprogrammed, informal calls to give grantees the chance to connect with each other, and to get information that went beyond what she could learn from grant reports. Iacoviello would follow up by checking in personally. She recalls, “Then we could say, ‘What do you need at this moment? What is it that you’re missing?’”



“We want to hear the bad as well as the good.”

In the world of philanthropy, trust is perhaps the rarest and most valuable commodity. Given the inherent power dynamic between funder and grantee, it would be understandable for grantees to present only their best face, even when grappling with serious challenges. However, JPB made trust a priority, allowing them to build strong bonds with grantees, advisors, and fellow grantmakers.

BUILDING TRUST INTERNALLY

The foundation’s approach to grantmaking changed as they learned. At the beginning, the foundation required extensive reporting to learn about grantees and their work. This wasn’t merely a bureaucratic exercise—the foundation wanted to make these reports useful, carefully reading and responding to the information they received. This two-way communication helped establish a foundation of mutual understanding and respect, although it placed a significant reporting burden on grantees.

Initially, the foundation tended to provide project support, but gradually moved toward general support grants, which are widely recognized as the most valuable and flexible funding an organization can receive. Staff understood the grantees knew best and gave them the flexibility to use their funds as they saw fit.

JPB also experimented with grant duration, eventually settling on predominantly three-year commitments that were largely renewed at the end of that term. This evolution reflected a growing understanding that meaningful change takes time and that grantees rarely receive the kind of stable, predictable funding they need to plan more effectively, take on more ambitious projects, and focus on their mission rather than spend their time constantly fundraising. This approach required JPB to be more patient in seeing results and more flexible in their expectations.

Internally, the foundation conducted regular meetings in which program and grants management staff were encouraged to be honest about successes

and challenges. These candid discussions, while sometimes difficult, proved invaluable in building trust among teams and with senior leadership. By creating a safe space for open dialogue, the foundation tried to create a culture of continuous improvement, mutual support, and the free exchange of ideas.

Building trust did face some obstacles. Staff were encouraged to be in the office whenever possible, limiting travel. This made it more challenging to build personal relationships with grantees, and staff adapted as they could through remote meetings and maximizing in-person time. They tried to find creative ways to stay connected, such as virtual site visits and regular check-in calls. This adaptability would later prove crucial during the COVID-19 pandemic, when remote work became the norm.

CULTIVATING TRUST WITH GRANTEEES

Building trust with grantees is challenging but crucial for effective grantmaking. As Jen Patrick, a senior program officer in the Environment Program, noted, “When a grantee calls and admits they’re struggling with something, that’s a sign. A grantee doesn’t call you with a problem unless they trust you.”

The foundation learned to go beyond financial support, which became particularly important when the personal safety of individuals and organizations put them at risk because of their JPB-funded work. For example, as Black women climate leaders face increasing threats from the fossil fuel industry, the foundation responded to a request to fund efforts to provide personal and organizational security in close coordination with the Kresge Foundation.

Recognizing the broader implications of these challenges, the foundation identified potential areas of field-wide needs, including digital security, mental health, rest and spiritual well-being, organizational safety, individual and family safety, and community well-being and collective care. By addressing these often-overlooked aspects of nonprofit work, the foundation demonstrated a deeper understanding of what it takes to create sustainable change.

SUPPORTING GRANTEEES THROUGH CHALLENGES

The foundation’s commitment to trust was perhaps most evident in how they supported grantees that were experiencing challenges. They saw their role as much more than making grants—they positioned themselves as partners in the work, ready to offer support when the going got tough.

During the #MeToo movement, when many organizations were grappling with issues of sexual harassment and problematic workplace culture, the foundation stepped in supportively. They helped grantees navigate these sensitive issues with wisdom and thoughtfulness, providing resources and guidance without being prescriptive. Similarly, as some grantee organizations began to unionize, JPB helped

them manage this transition. JPB recognized unionization as part of the broader movement for workers’ rights and helped organizations approach it constructively.

JPB also assisted organizations facing management challenges and other internal problems that inevitably arise in complex organizations. The approach was to provide meaningful support, reinforcing the idea that the foundation and grantees were on the same team. This might involve allowing grantees to use funding from one grant for multiple purposes such as project support and strategic planning, considering the repurposing of funds to address pressing challenges, connecting grantees with consultants, facilitating peer learning opportunities, or simply offering a sympathetic ear and sound advice.

***By creating a safe space for open dialogue,
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and the free exchange of ideas.***

TRUST IN HIGH-STAKES RESEARCH

The foundation’s approach extended beyond traditional grantmaking to funding risky but potentially groundbreaking research. This was particularly evident during the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic. When vaccine manufacturers were working on potentially lucrative gene-based vaccines, Barbara Picower was eager to support efforts to find unconventional and affordable alternatives and worked with advisors and grantees to identify opportunities to make a difference.

Dr. Huda Zoghbi, a JPB advisor and later a member of JPB’s Alzheimer’s disease consortium, encouraged Barbara to support the research of Drs. Peter Hotez and Maria Elena Bottazzi at the Baylor College of Medicine, whose team was working to develop a safe, affordable vaccine that could be produced anywhere in the world with proven, accessible technologies and didn’t require expensive storage. The vaccine was patent-free and “open source,” making it accessible and affordable to those who needed it most. Barbara immediately offered \$1 million to kick-start the work.

This was a significant investment in an unproven approach, made at a time when every day counted in the race to develop a vaccine. This trust paid off spectacularly, producing 100 million vaccine doses for countries that couldn’t afford other options. The work of Drs. Hotez and Bottazzi earned them a Nobel Prize nomination, recognition from the National Academy of Medicine, and a place in TIME Magazine’s Top 100 in Health.

“That kind of flexibility was really helpful. I never felt like we would be punished for that. JPB created space for honesty.”

— KRISTEN CLARKE, LAWYERS’ COMMITTEE FOR CIVIL RIGHTS

EFFECT ON GRANTEE RELATIONSHIPS

JPB’s flexibility and openness to honest feedback created a relationship of greater trust between the foundation and its grantees. Grantees said that they were better able to share their true challenges and needs, rather than feeling pressured to present an overly rosy picture of their work. In fact, in almost every meeting Barbara attended with grantees, she would emphasize that the foundation wanted to hear about those challenges.

With better information about how a grantee was doing, what hurdles it was encountering, or what else it needed to succeed, staff could give grantees the time and space they needed to better achieve their goals. As Kristen Clarke, who was president and executive director of the Lawyers’ Committee for Civil Rights, and U.S. Assistant Attorney General in the Biden Administration noted, “I would tell my team that we’re not going to rush to spend down a grant. We might need more time, or we will revise the purpose or add another challenge. That kind of flexibility was really helpful. I never felt like we would be punished for that. JPB created space for honesty.”



“So what?”

Over the course of the first dozen years, The JPB Foundation can legitimately lay claim to a wide variety of truly meaningful outcomes. It is difficult, if not impossible, to attribute most of these outcomes solely to the foundation’s efforts, but there is no question that JPB contributed meaningfully to all of these that follow.

Funders are almost always seeking the holy grail of leverage—the great hope that their investment will inspire others, making their money (and ideas) go farther. This may mean that other funders realize that the work is valuable and dedicate their own resources to aspects of the work, or—even better—that governments, which can often apply much greater resources, take on the task. Some of the projects on this list certainly fall into that category.

In many cases, a grant or a strategy is a success in its own right. While what follows is not an exhaustive list, it should provide others with a sense of what a foundation of its size can accomplish in a relatively short period of time.

POVERTY

To be clear, poverty is a systemic problem that no one foundation (or group of foundations) can solve. At the same time, it is just as clear that philanthropy can do a great deal to address root causes of poverty and deliver significant successes. The following examples show how.

Helping New Americans Become Citizens

A JPB grantee since 2012, The New Americans Campaign has helped more than 650,000 lawful permanent residents become citizens, saving immigrant communities and their families over \$723 million in legal and application fees. It has provided over \$60 million in funding and built a national network of more than 200 trusted partners working in over 20 metropolitan areas. These partners provide free or

low-cost naturalization assistance to eligible immigrants from all over the world and help increase the number of people applying for citizenship. “The NAC is one example of how we helped immigrant families and communities while also supporting crucial policy advocacy and fostering a national network of organizations that promotes coordination, peer learning, and best practices at the local and national levels. By supporting people who may not otherwise have access to the naturalization process, the NAC is a catalyst for adding new Americans to the civic engagement continuum,” says Angela Cheng, a senior program officer in the Poverty Program, who led the Democracy portfolio for several years.

Forgiving Library Fines

This may not be an example of systems change, but it does show how a relatively small amount of money can make a big difference in people’s lives. In 2017, JPB gave a \$2.25 million grant to the New York, Brooklyn, and Queens library systems to forgive library fines for young people and to have their library cards unblocked automatically. Before this amnesty, nearly one out of every five youth with library cards was blocked from borrowing materials due to fines of \$15 or more. After the amnesty, there was a more than 60 percent increase in previously blocked children and teens checking out materials, especially in the lowest-income neighborhoods. This helped lead a movement to remove fines, and since October 2021, the Brooklyn Public Library, New York Public Library, and Queens Public Library no longer charge late fines on overdue materials. This change has led to a significant increase in library usage, with more people checking out materials, applying for new library cards, and attending library programs.

Reducing Burdensome Fines and Fees

JPB joined forces with Arnold Ventures as the initial funders to launch the Fines and Fees Justice Center in 2018. The Center has become an important part of the movement for reform, working collaboratively with affected communities to address gaps in the field. In 2019, JPB also began funding Cities and Counties for Fine and Fee Justice, a national network to advance reform. JPB’s funding helped incubate a highly effective movement of local reform. The work helped eliminate dozens of fees and led to the discharge of over \$100 million of associated debt for low-income individuals and their families. It has also helped restore thousands of driver’s licenses, allowing people to travel to work, helped obtain housing and health care, and sparked many jurisdictions to look critically at their fine and fee practices. As Annie Greengard, senior program officer in the Poverty Program, who created an Access to Civil Justice portfolio of grants, noted, “When we started funding these organizations we could never have predicted how quickly fines and fees reform would spread across the country.”

Protecting Renters from Evictions

Providing tenants with legal representation is a proven method to prevent evictions. JPB’s funding has been instrumental in advancing the Right to Counsel movement by supporting partnerships that offer assistance to various organizations working to protect tenants. Since JPB’s initial grant to the National Coalition for a Civil Right to Counsel and New York Law School, right to counsel protections have been implemented in dozens of jurisdictions.

The movement has strengthened its ties to racial justice and organizing communities. A complementary grant to Equal Justice Works established a corps of public interest attorneys and organizers to combat eviction in high-risk cities. This model, tested in Virginia and replicated in Maryland and South Carolina, achieved a 77 percent success rate for tenants, secured over \$1.58 million in benefits for 2,000 households at risk of eviction, and supported successful housing reform movements.

During the pandemic, which severely affected renters, JPB’s grantees launched initiatives like the Eviction Resistance Legal Network to mobilize housing lawyers. They also cultivated learning communities for housing organizers and trained lawyers to learn new ways to protect tenants.

Planned Parenthood’s Breakthrough on Technology

This is described in the chapter on risk, but it bears repeating here. The foundation’s support for Planned Parenthood’s two important technological breakthroughs has improved women’s health and saved many lives. One project helped Planned Parenthood create an online tool that would help patients find a clinic, book appointments, and order medication. The other created a chat/text program that helped young people speak to a health educator by text—a vital tool in helping young patients get the help they need.

Medicare Funds the YMCA’s Diabetes Prevention Program

In its early days, the foundation scored a significant success with the YMCA’s initiative to expand and replicate its Diabetes Prevention Program throughout its network. This initiative united various partners, including other foundations, managed care plans, and national commercial health insurers, and was eventually funded under Medicare—a dramatic expansion of the program. While there were eventually challenges with implementation, there are nevertheless many lessons to be learned about how to create a program that gets adopted and widely distributed with government resources.

Reducing Child Poverty

Addressing the impact of poverty on children and families was a constant across portfolio areas.

JPB-supported research revealed that even brief periods of poverty can cause children—especially young children—lifelong harm. Subsidizing income in less wealthy families helps children to have better health education and higher incomes later in life. The research revealed that the best way to reduce child poverty is a funding mechanism called a child allowance, which is a stable source of direct cash to supplement family income. JPB supported the leading groups researching and advocating to increase the Child Tax Credit along with the Earned Income Tax Credit, and implementation of these policies at the federal level during the COVID pandemic led to lifting millions of children out of poverty. The Center on Budget and Policy Priorities estimated that the Child Tax Credit cut child poverty for Black children by 52%, Hispanic children by 45%, and American Indian/Alaska Native children by 62%—an astonishing achievement.

Barbara was an early funder of Harlem Children's Zone, making grants through The Picower Foundation. During that time, the organization became a nationally-recognized service and education organization broadly addressing its community's challenges while sharing what works with communities around the globe. JPB's most recent grant to Harlem Children's Zone supports an economic mobility initiative aimed at closing the racial wealth gap caused by systemic racism. The project offers comprehensive financial assistance including cash aid, college savings accounts, investment funds for young adults, financial education, and career support for Black entrepreneurs and professionals. It also provides scholarships, debt reduction assistance, retirement account contributions, and improved access to financial services. Additionally, the initiative advocates for systemic solutions like affordable housing and the Earned Income Tax Credit. The project has raised over \$100 million.

MEDICAL RESEARCH

The nature of medical research often follows what might be thought of as a linear relationship in terms of risk and reward—in other words, the higher the risk, the greater the reward. Here are some examples of breakthrough research that would likely have gone unfunded but for JPB support.

Using Magnetic Fields as Non-Invasive Therapies

Dr. Jeffrey Friedman is a molecular geneticist at Rockefeller University and is an advisor to and a longtime grantee of JPB. His lab conducted a series of studies funded by the foundation that he admits “we never would have gotten funding for elsewhere.” They developed a method to control the activity of selected nerve

cells they targeted with a molecular switch that can be activated by exposure to a magnetic field. “It was like something out of Star Trek,” Dr. Friedman recalls. Dr. Friedman, who primarily studies diabetes, partnered with Dr. Michael Kaplitt, a JPB grantee working on Parkinson's disease (a partnership that was itself a product of the foundation's encouragement of cross-discipline collaboration). They used this “magnetogenetic” method to study brain circuits that control glucose metabolism and later showed they could use the approach in mice to stop nerve cells from sending pain signals, offering quick relief. In ongoing research, the team is developing the method as a non-invasive alternative to deep brain stimulation, a therapy for severe Parkinson's disease in which electrodes are surgically implanted in the brain to control movement symptoms. Their method might offer similar benefits just by using a magnetic field.

New Breakthroughs on Diabetes

An example of highly promising scientific research on diabetes that may prove to be groundbreaking can be found in the JPB-funded research by Domenico (Mimmo) Accili of Columbia University. One form of the disease, Type 1 diabetes, arises when a person loses their insulin-producing cells completely by autoimmune attack. Type 2 diabetes is different—it begins when the body stops responding to insulin properly, which is called insulin resistance. In response, the insulin-producing cells in the pancreas, called beta cells, struggle to produce more insulin to overcome this problem. Over time, the beta cells can fail, leading to severe diabetes. It was always assumed that these beta cells were dying. However, Dr. Accili's hypothesis, for which he's gathering additional evidence, suggests that the beta cells don't die but instead regress into a dormant phase. The exciting part is that this process may be reversible and their function might be restored. Finding ways to reverse this process would enable novel and powerful ways to treat diabetes.

Another transformative approach for diabetes treatment would be to replace the body's insulin-producing beta cells. With partial support from JPB and inspired by the diabetes diagnosis of his two children, grantee Dr. Doug Melton pioneered a process to convert human stem cells into insulin-producing beta cells as a treatment for patients with Type 1 diabetes. Previously, the only treatment for patients with the severest version of the disease was a pancreas transplant. In early-stage clinical trials, patients who have received the stem cell-derived beta cells are able to produce their own insulin and achieve healthy blood glucose levels. “We've been looking for something like this to happen literally for decades,” Dr. Irl Hirsch, a diabetes expert at the University of Washington, told the New York Times.

Using Stem Cells to Treat Parkinson's

Another grantee, Dr. Lorenz Studer, has also made important progress in stem cell research, in this case by developing a method to coax stem cells to become functional dopamine-producing neurons, the nerve cells that are lost in Parkinson's disease. This breakthrough, which took decades, has yielded promising results in early-stage clinical trials of patients with Parkinson's, and similar methods could be used for other brain diseases. His efforts helped him win a MacArthur Fellowship, among other awards, as well as additional support from the Aligning Science Across Parkinson's Initiative, a partnership with the Michael J. Fox Foundation.

A Nobel Prize Nomination for a Low-cost COVID Vaccine

We mentioned this in the chapter on risk, but it bears repeating here: Dr. Peter Hotez's team at the Baylor College of Medicine developed a safe, inexpensive vaccine that didn't require expensive storage, producing 100 million doses for countries that couldn't afford other options. Dr. Hotez's work earned him a Nobel Prize nomination, recognition from the National Academy of Medicine, and a place in TIME Magazine's Top 100 in Health.

ENVIRONMENT

As the Environment Program expanded, it developed new focus areas. This led to a series of larger and larger victories as communities secured more resources across several organizations to take on big challenges and do the kind of advocacy necessary to succeed. As with many aspects of philanthropy, there is often a brief window of social or political opportunity to secure big wins. In this case, JPB grantees were able to take full advantage when the opportunities presented themselves, leading to a set of very impressive achievements.

Networks

By working through networks, the foundation could support work that was aligned across various organizations, locations, and areas of expertise, rather than focusing narrowly on a single operational goal of any one entity.

These networks took different forms. Some were initially funded solely by JPB to accelerate proven practices across the country. These included the High Line Network, which is a group of infrastructure reuse projects, and Forests in Cities Network, which advances forested natural areas in cities across the U.S. JPB also funded the organizations that supported networks of community-based

organizing entities like PowerSwift Action, People's Action, Climate Justice Alliance, the Partnership for Resilient Communities Leaders of Color Network, Growing the Great Lakes Lead Elimination Network, the Sustainable Forestry and African American Land Retention Network, the Funders Network, the National Land Bank Network, and the Women's Earth and Climate Action Network. And networks like the Green New Deal Network were formed to accelerate systems change. Networks were a powerful tool for JPB to invest in because of their wide geographic reach. They also made it possible to better understand the dynamics of place-based work. This made it easier for the foundation to directly invest in certain communities as opportunities arose. When threats to those communities emerged, JPB could provide emergency relief funding.

Building a Market for Healthy Products

Success doesn't always come in the form of policy change or even behavior change. Encouraging businesses to change their practices can change markets in ways that protect consumers' health and the environment. The work of the Healthy Affordable Materials Project, which we write about in the partnership chapter, is a great example. Another is the "Mind the Store" campaign which involves several JPB grantees including the Ecology Center and Toxic Free Future. It convinced Home Depot to remove 12 toxic chemicals from various product categories, such as flooring, paints, adhesives, and cleaning supplies. These chemicals are linked to cancer, respiratory issues, endocrine disruption, and other health risks. Home Depot's effort includes working with suppliers to find safer alternatives and spurred them to be transparent about product ingredients. A host of other retailers have joined this commitment, including Lowe's, Amazon, Target, and Walmart, among others.

Eliminating Exposure to Lead Paint

Thanks to the advocacy work of many including JPB's grantees, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's Office of Lead Hazard Control and Healthy Homes received a significant increase in its budget—from \$110 million in 2014 to \$410 million annually—and another \$425 million was allocated for the 2024 Lead Hazard Reduction grant program. One of JPB's longtime grantees, the Green and Healthy Homes Initiative, played a pivotal role in securing the nation's largest health-care investment in lead abatement, with \$50 million from Penn Medicine/Lancaster General Hospital, leading to the remediation of 3,000 homes and the creation of opportunities for BIPOC contractors.

Several organizations played key roles in securing investments from health-care providers and advising government agencies on using funds for lead abatement

and asthma reduction. This work has extended to many cities and states, focusing on increasing lead remediation funding, improving housing standards, and developing more efficient service delivery models. Their advocacy led to stricter lead water standards in schools, more aggressive policies for replacing lead service lines, and a significant Congressional allocation aimed at eliminating all lead lines in the U.S. within a decade. In Maryland, these efforts contributed to a 55% decrease in lead poisoning cases between 2011 and 2021.

Setting the Standard for Park Equity

The work of Trust for Public Land's 10-Minute Walk program, which we reference in the section on supporting grantees, has produced significant benefits for the organization and for communities across the country. Thanks to its focus on underserved communities, building partnerships with local governments, creating data and mapping tools, engaging with communities, and advocating for policy change, the 10-Minute Walk is now considered a standard for equitable park access. In addition, JPB funded the ParkServe Geographic Information Systems mapping platform, a first-of-its-kind, free online tool to track urban parks, trails, and other outdoor spaces nationwide, which has become an essential resource to help agencies and communities set priorities. Cities across the country have adopted policies to increase park access for all residents, and more successes are in the works from coast to coast.

Cleaning Up Coal Ash Dumps Across the Country

In 2024, grantee Earthjustice and the JPB-established Coal Ash Fund achieved a significant victory with the EPA's new rule mandating the cleanup of hundreds of coal ash dumps across the U.S. The new rule requires comprehensive cleanup and monitoring of all coal ash dumps, including those at retired plants and inactive landfills. This change ensures that communities near these sites are better protected from hazardous pollutants, including arsenic and mercury, which are linked to serious health issues. Earthjustice's litigation and grassroots activism were crucial in bringing about this regulatory change, holding coal plants accountable to safeguard public health and the environment. JPB's funding helped make sure the grassroots groups necessary to participate in the litigation had the resources to do so.

Massive Victories for the Environmental Health and Justice Movement

Lois Gibbs helped alert the nation about the toxic waste problem at Love Canal in upstate New York in the late 1970s, leading to the creation of the Environmental Protection Agency's Superfund program. Perhaps as important, she is credited with helping start the environmental justice movement. Yet Gibbs and her

organization, the Center for Health, Environment, and Justice, struggled to attract funding from philanthropy. JPB has been one of the organization's stalwart funders, allowing them to provide training, resources, and support to over 15,000 individuals and grassroots groups fighting against environmental injustices in their communities. This support has empowered local activists and strengthened community-led environmental movements. The victories are too numerous to list, but they include shutting down landfills and hazardous waste incinerators, cleaning up contaminated lands, shutting down chemical plants, stopping gas pipelines, and many, many more. As Gibbs notes, "JPB was our only big money."

The value of this work, which would be carried out by a host of dedicated organizations, has many layers, according to Ogonnaya Dotson Newman, a senior program officer in the Environment Program who grew and managed the Environmental Health portfolio. "Environmental health is at the core of climate and environmental justice," she said. Understanding the interconnectedness between where we live, work, play, and pray and how it impacts our health is essential to understanding our connection to the planet and our fundamental survival. The Environmental Health portfolio made connections across energy, housing, ecology, design, research, training, organizing, and advocacy and engaged a wide array of people working to make the world a better place."

Creating Thousands of Clean Energy Jobs

When the Inflation Reduction Act was passed in 2022, it made nearly \$400 billion available for clean energy investments. Fortunately, communities across the country were prepared, thanks to efforts like the JPB-funded American Jobs Project, which was launched by Jennifer Granholm, former Michigan governor and current U.S. Energy Secretary. Granholm led the American Jobs Project at UC Berkeley to promote economic growth through clean energy innovation. She crisscrossed the nation to raise awareness, build support, and foster collaboration. The project developed state-specific strategies to boost local clean energy industries, creating jobs and fostering sustainable development. When the Inflation Reduction Act was launched, many communities were ready. The project spurred job creation in the energy sector through targeted state strategies, favorable policies, workforce development, and industry partnerships. Increased investments in clean energy projects, along with innovation in research and development, led to jobs in the solar, wind, and energy efficiency industries, including manufacturing, installation, and maintenance, significantly boosting local economies and advancing the clean energy transition.

Helping Renters and Tribal Communities Go Solar

GRID Alternatives is a national leader in helping economic and environmental justice communities nationwide get clean, affordable renewable energy, transportation, and jobs. The foundation provided long-term funding including support during COVID to keep the organization stable. In particular, the foundation has helped launch GRID's Tribal Solar Accelerator Fund, a grantmaking program supporting new solar projects in tribal communities across the country. JPB also helped provide funding that helped inspire the Biden-Harris Administration's \$7 billion Solar for All program.

Unlocking Billions of Public Dollars

As we noted in the section on helping grantees succeed, the Energy Efficiency for All initiative, which brings together organizations focusing on utility policy, energy efficiency, housing, coalition building, and environmental and housing justice, has achieved significant successes despite weathering internal challenges. Since its launch in 2013, Energy Efficiency for All has secured \$769 million from utility companies and state energy offices to retrofit housing, improving comfort, health, efficiency, and affordability for hundreds of thousands.

JPB supported organizations during an unprecedented increase in federal funding. JPB's strategy prepared its grantees to capitalize on this historic opportunity including seed funding for the Justice40 Accelerator, which helps Black and grassroots communities secure government funding. This project was created by several JPB grantees, including the Partnership for Southern Equity, Elevate, and The Solutions Project, and early funding to the Communities First Fund. With years of grant support to build organizational capacity, many grantees secured significant awards. American Forests received a \$50 million award from the USDA Forest Service for urban tree canopy expansion. The Institute for Sustainable Communities, partnering with other JPB grantees, secured \$50 million from the EPA's Environmental Justice Thriving Communities program. The U.S. Endowment for Forestry and Communities, collaborating with JPB grantees, obtained \$20 million from USDA Forest Service to help underserved landowners gain access to emerging markets.

JPB was the lead private funder enabling these transformational awards. In the Green Infrastructure portfolio alone, grantees secured over \$500 million in public funding. JPB's core support for Reimagining the Civic Commons helped participating cities tap into substantial funds. Since 2016, Reimagining the Civic Commons demonstration cities have directly unlocked over \$100 million in new funding and encouraged an additional \$300 million of follow-on investment

in Reimagining the Civic Commons communities. By early 2024, nearly every participating city (10 out of 12) had secured federal investment to accelerate or build upon local Reimagining the Civic Commons efforts. JPB's strategy of investing in networks, alliances, and collective efforts yielded millions more in funding opportunities for its grantees.



PART IV

Conclusion

BARBARA PICOWER DEVOTED NEARLY EVERY WAKING HOUR OF THE previous decade to JPB and to improving the lives of people who deserve better. While she was surrounded by a highly talented staff and board, she was the driving force behind JPB's success.

When she announced her plan to step down as president, it was another bold decision. But it was quite consistent with the way she ran the foundation since its creation. She identified areas she cared about and endeavored to go very deep on them. She often provided much more money than grant seekers requested, convinced that they could do more with more. She kept her issue areas fairly narrow, and continued to refine them over time, certain that more money given in more focused ways would be more effective. She almost reflexively shunned the limelight, always placing the focus on the grantee partners and the communities they served.

Her approach was highly personal—she placed an extraordinary amount of stock in her intuition and personal relationships. She identified leaders she trusted and gave them the resources they needed to succeed. She brought on a limited number of key senior staff and empowered them to shape strategies and transform fields. She invited leaders in the field to serve on her board, and she surrounded herself with advisory committees to help her make decisions. While she eagerly took their advice, she only did so after learning as much as she possibly could about a given subject. And she spent nearly every day studying, asking questions, talking, listening, and learning.

This singular approach to philanthropy reached what you might call its apotheosis when Barbara turned to her close friend and trusted colleague, Deepak Bhargava, and determined that the foundation's future should now rest in his hands. It was an audacious decision, but hardly an inconsistent one. She was narrowing her focus, concentrating her resources, putting trust in close colleagues, and following her gut. A classic Barbara move, if you will.

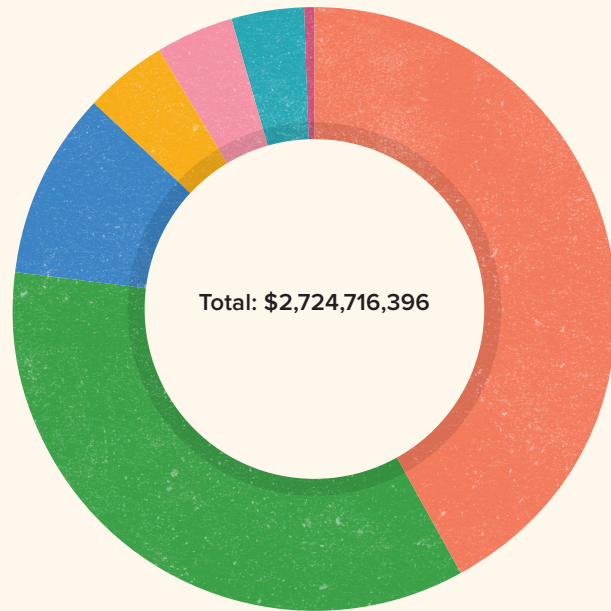
The fullness of Barbara's legacy, as well as the fruits of her team's labors, will unfold in its own time and in its own way. What is clear is that as JPB evolves under its new mission and carries out its updated program strategies, it will always embody the values of its founder.

—ERIC BROWN, November 2024

APPENDIX

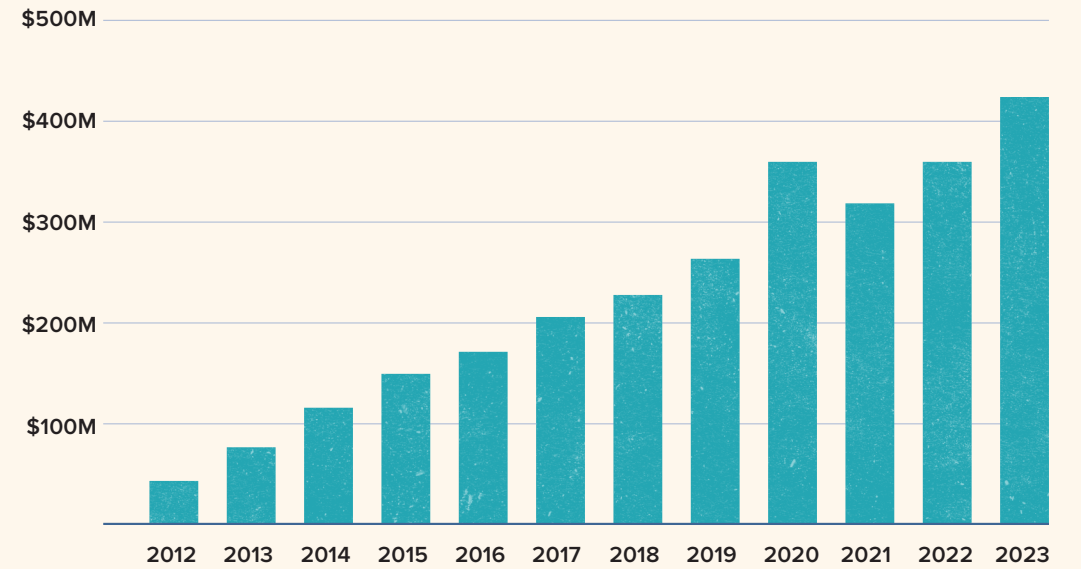
The Numbers

GRANT DOLLARS
PER PROGRAM AREA

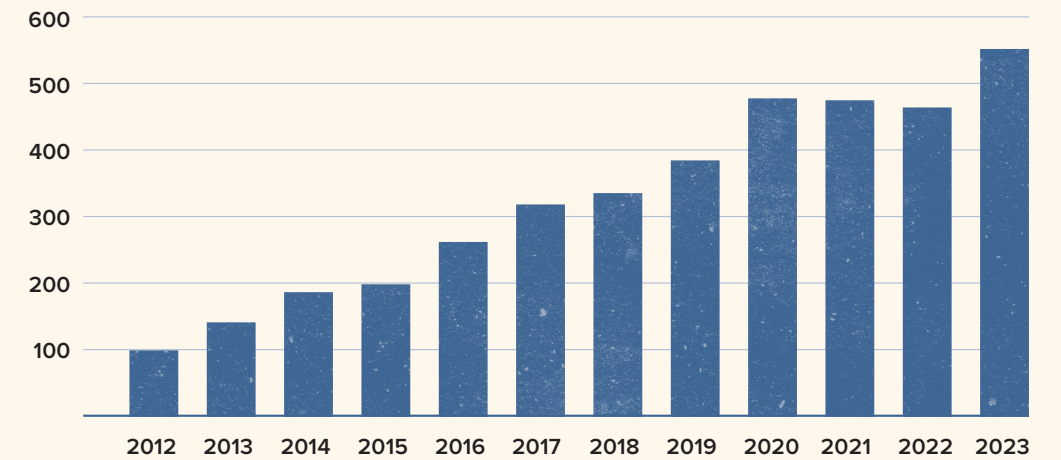


- Poverty: \$1,148,542,592
- Environment: \$953,107,040
- Medical Research: \$268,508,274
- Emergency Grants: \$119,658,770
- President's Fund: \$114,225,000
- Non-Program: \$106,255,720
- Sector Support: \$14,419,000

GRANT DOLLARS OVER TIME
Total: \$2,724,716,396



NUMBER OF GRANTS OVER TIME
Total: 3894



Among the hallmarks of The JPB Foundation was its highly talented albeit extremely lean staff, small board of trustees, and teams of long time advisors. Although we are not listing names here, we appreciate the ways everyone contributed to making the work of JPB possible. Thank you to all of those who have been part of this journey.

Over the past decade, JPB supported hundreds of organizations to reduce poverty, build a healthier, more sustainable environment, advance medical research, and further racial and gender equity. Only a very small set of those organizations are featured in this report.

If you would like to learn more about any of these stories or about all of the organizations supported by The JPB Foundation's Environment, Poverty, or Medical Research programs from 2012 to 2023, please email us at BTG@freedomtogether.org.

PROJECT CONCEIVED AND DIRECTED BY
Dana Bourland and Betsy Krebs, *The JPB Foundation*

AUTHOR
Eric Brown, *Brownbridge Strategies*

PROJECT COORDINATOR
Jennifer Patrick, *The JPB Foundation*

ILLUSTRATION
Nicolas Ogonosky

DESIGN
Underground Agency

THE  FOUNDATION