

# Understanding the Needs of Women in Central Texas



**Women's Fund**  
AUSTIN COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

# What We'll Discuss Today

/ About the Women's Fund

/ Our evolution of understanding our community's needs

/ What we've learned & how this has informed our grant-making

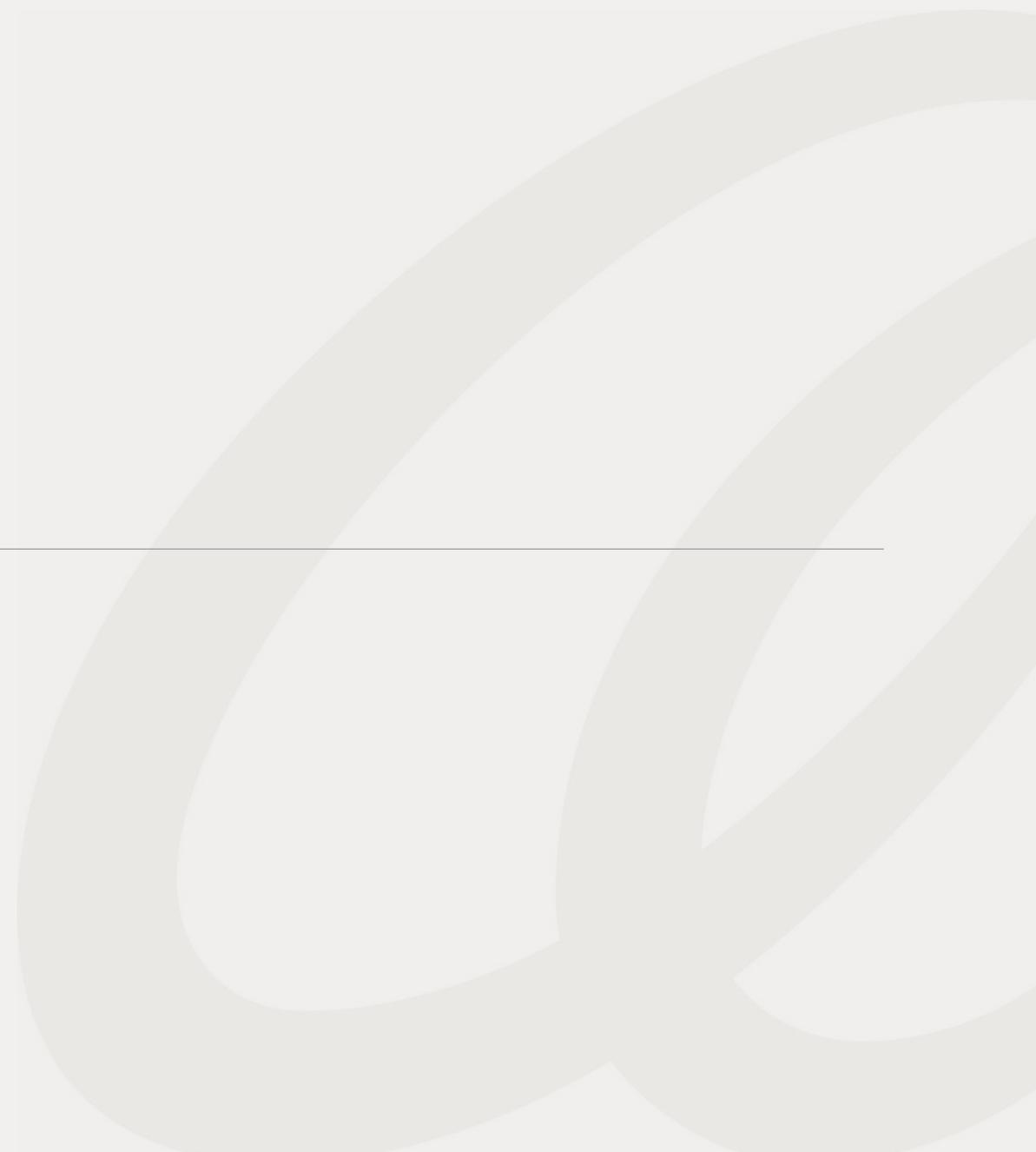
/ Recommendations for the Commission

/ Questions



# ABOUT US

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# The Women's Fund

- / We are a collective giving network that annually grants out \$400,000 to nonprofits advancing women's economic security.
- / Founded in 2004 to address the needs of women and children in Central Texas - since founding we have granted out over \$2.4 million.
- / At the time, there was a lack of philanthropic support targeting the unique needs of women and no comprehensive data tracking their well-being.
- / Since then, we've seen that the most pressing issues in our community are the racial wealth and health divide faced by women of color.

# Our Strategies

The Women's Fund invests in programs and organization that ...

 **Housing** – Support affordable housing for women that includes a network of support and/or opportunities for long-term wealth building.

 **Child Care** – Expand access to safe, quality, culturally competent, and affordable child care that is conveniently located for families with low-incomes.

 **Education** – Provide access to an ecosystem of support – financial, emotional, and academic – for women pursuing educational dreams.

## Women's Health

 **Tackling Health Disparities** – Reduce health disparities faced by women of color.

 **Unintended Pregnancy Prevention** – Increase access to consumable, unbiased, pregnancy prevention resources.



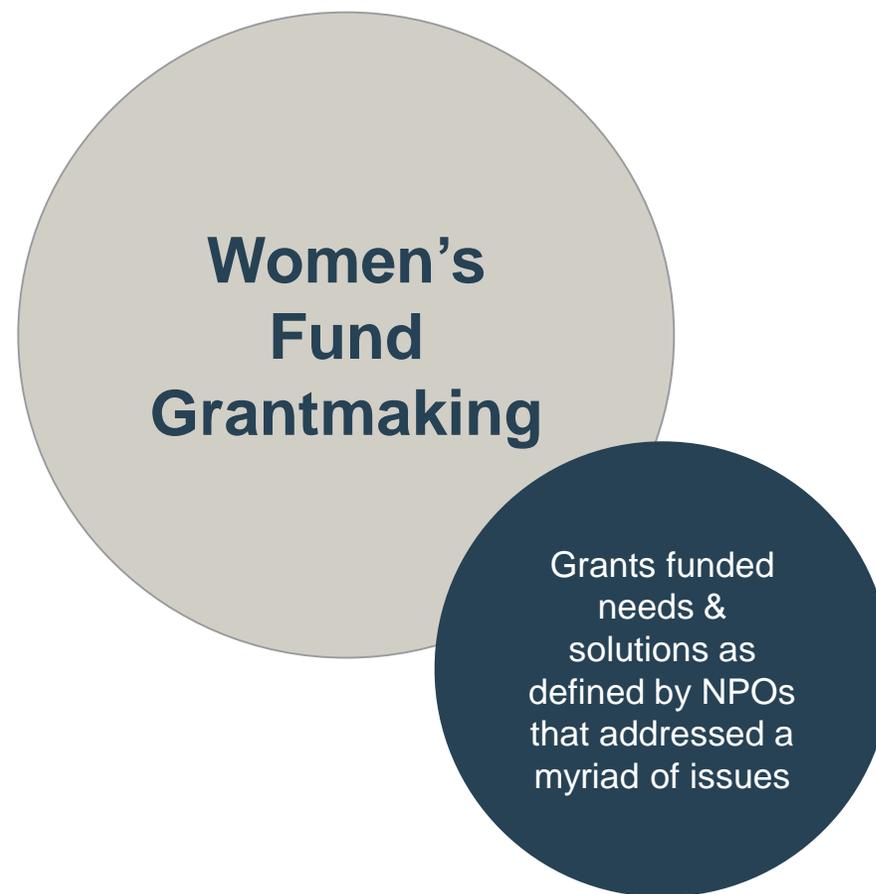
# UNDERSTANDING NEEDS

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# Strategy Evolution

/ Committed to supporting nonprofit organizations that benefited women and/or children

/ There was not a defined strategic focus beyond intended beneficiaries



# Strategy Evolution

/ Committed to supporting the **economic security of women in Central Texas**

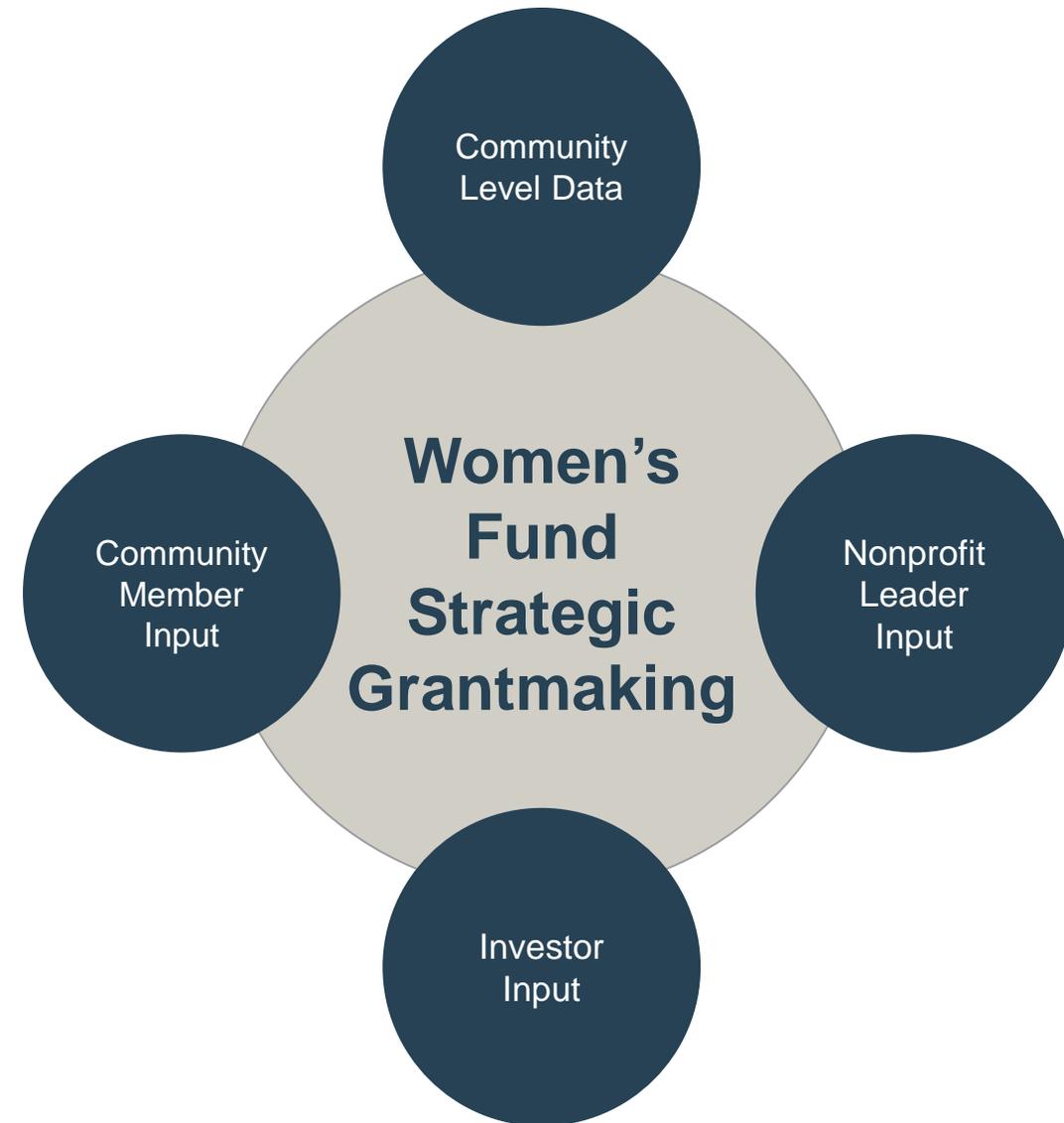
/ Used data and Investor input to define strategies in 4 areas of impact:

- / Housing
- / Child Care
- / Education
- / Unintended Pregnancy Prevention



# Strategy Evolution

- / Recognition that focus on the economic security of women must be explicit in its focus on women of color
- / Acknowledgement that processes can favor larger, white-led nonprofits and that leaders of color are often best positioned to serve communities of color
- / Incorporate community voice and nonprofit leader input, along with data and Investor input to refine grant policies and strategies



# Strategy Evolution



# Partners & Data



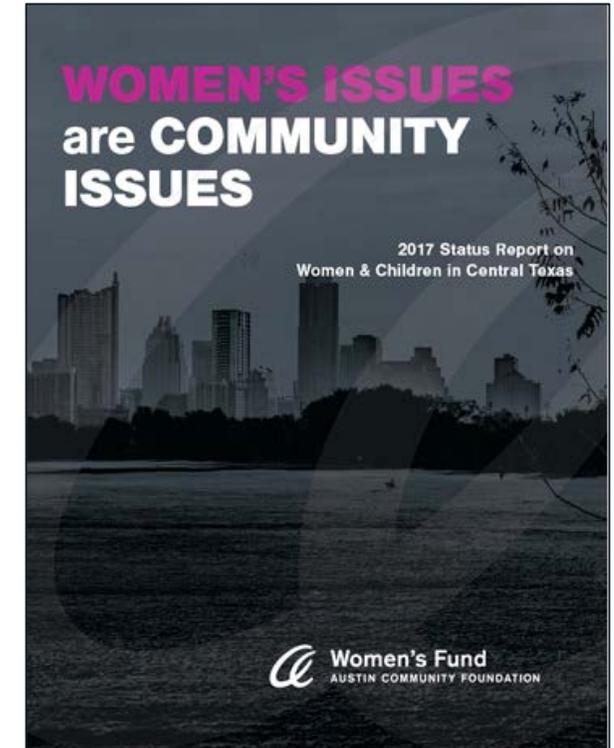
## MEASURE

/ Infused community voice and feedback into our work



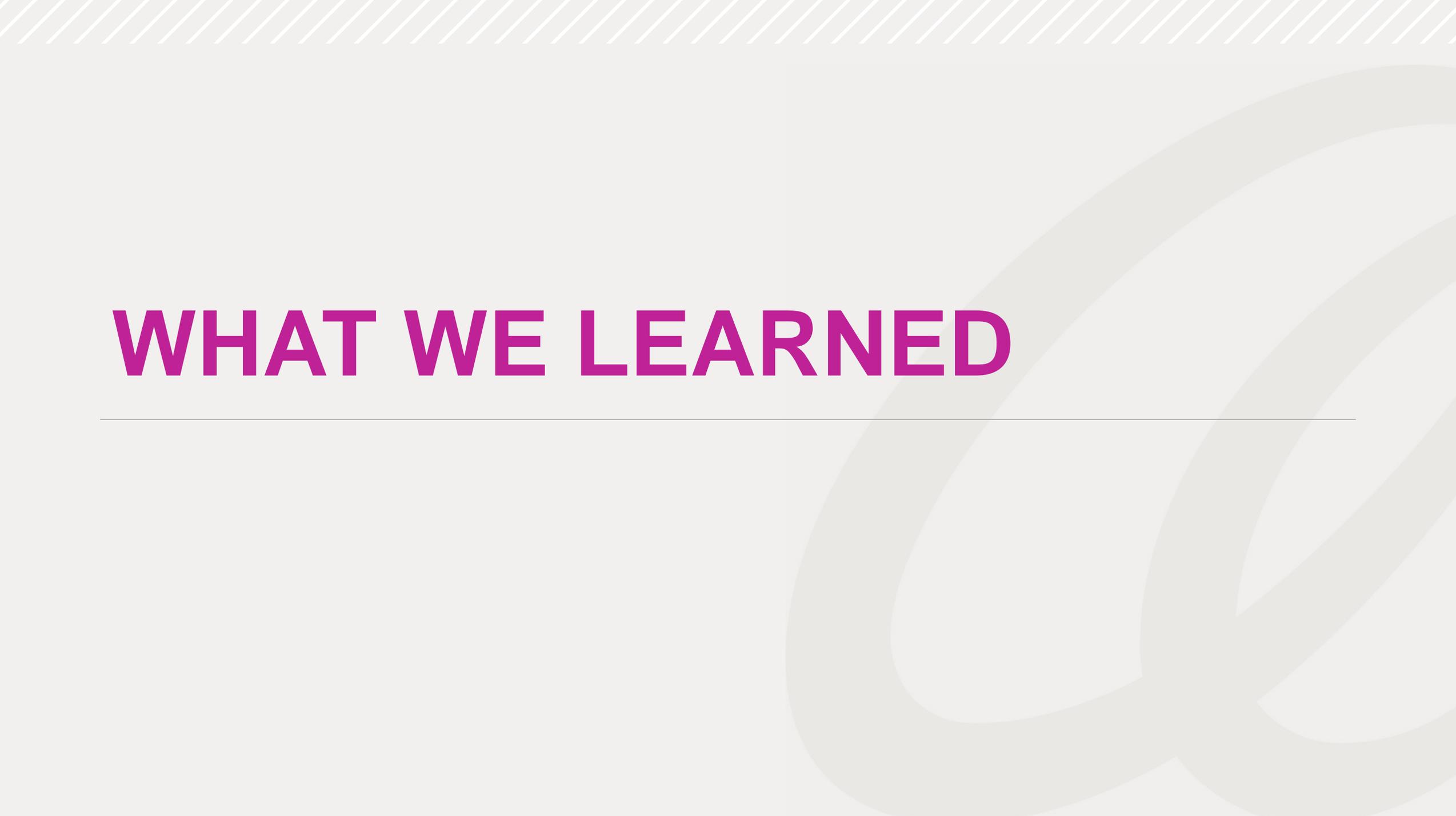
## Nicholas Jayanty & his team of design researchers

/ Collected investor & nonprofit leader input



## Status report on women & children

/ In partnership with RGK Center for Philanthropy at UT-Austin



# WHAT WE LEARNED

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# Housing

/ When asked, “**what threatens your security at the moment?**” the most cited issue was **housing**, followed by child care, education, and health.

/ Our region has one of fastest increasing housing markets – increased by 29% this year

/ 60% of single mother households that rent in Austin are housing cost burdened – mean they spend more than 30% of their monthly income on housing.

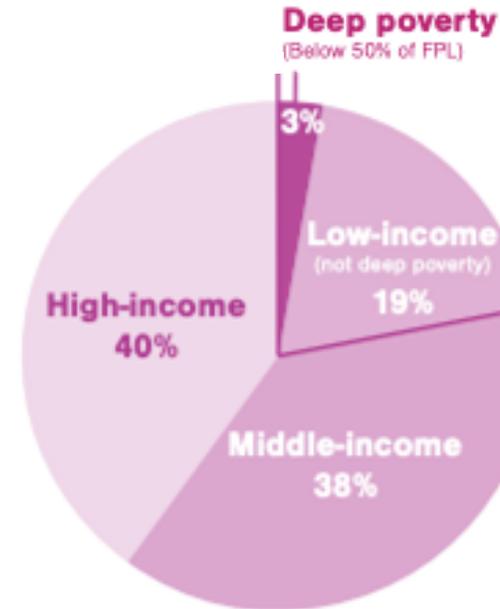


# Child Care

/ Even before the pandemic, Central Texas was lacking quality child care options for low-income families.

/ Child care is not affordable for most and completely out of reach for many.

/ Nearly 70% of non-working middle-skill (HS graduate, but less than a 4-yr degree) parents cite child care as one of their top 5 reasons for not participating in the workforce.



**22%** of Central Texas families are **low-income** with annual household earnings below 200% of the Federal Poverty Line (FPL).

For a low-income family of four earning \$50,200/year, **child care for an infant & toddler can cost 36%** of their total income in Central Texas.

Source: American Community Survey, 2012-2016

# Education

/ The wealth and wage gaps are major contributors to women being disproportionately burdened by student debt.

/ Only 1 in 10 low-income graduates completes college within six years of finishing high school.

/ Women consistently have a higher rate of poverty across each level of educational attainment.

| <b>TOP WORKFORCE SECTORS FOR WOMEN IN 2015<sup>31</sup></b> (by total employment) | <b>MEDIAN INCOME</b> | <b>TOP WORKFORCE SECTOR FOR MEN IN 2015<sup>32</sup></b> (by total employment) | <b>MEDIAN INCOME</b> |
|---|----------------------|--|----------------------|
| Management  | \$62,950             | Management   | \$85,544             |
| Education, training, and library  | \$44,637             | Computer and mathematical  | \$85,232             |
| Business and financial operations   | \$53,990             | Business and financial operations  | \$71,422             |
| Health diagnostics and treating practitioners                                     | \$67,242             | Architecture and engineering   | \$90,801             |
| Arts, design, entertainment, sports   | \$46,136             | Arts, design, entertainment, sports  | \$52,691             |

# Tackling Health Disparities



/ The pandemic is disproportionately impacting families of color.

/ When asked, “**how can the Women’s Fund help combat racism?**” participants overwhelmingly agree that investing in mental health services **with professionals who can engage in mental health issues within communities of color** would help women of color feel more secure and economically empowered.



# Unintended Pregnancy Prevention

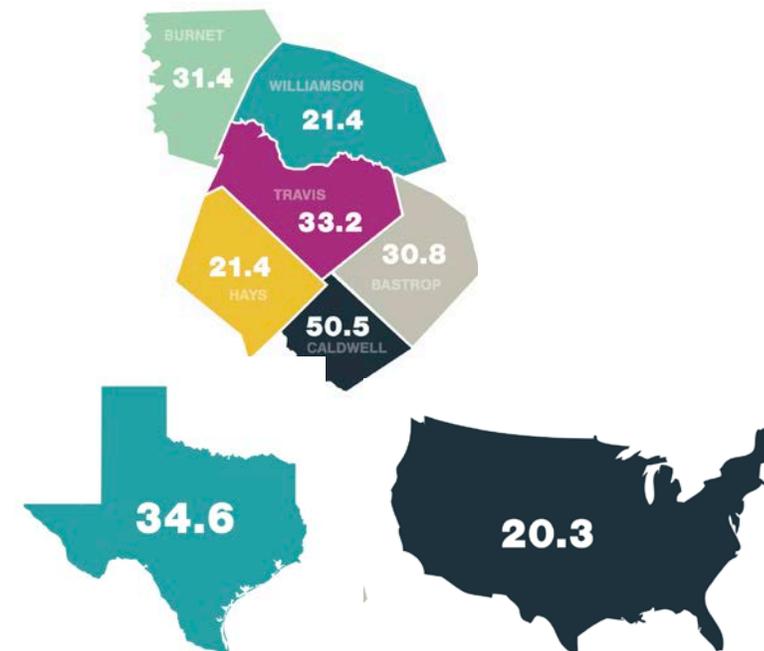


/ The pandemic has limited access to reproductive health care, especially in rural areas.

/ Teen birth rates in Travis County vary drastically by race/ethnicity. Adolescents who identify as Hispanic account for 77% of all teen births.

/ 1 in 5 babies born to female teens under 19, were born to teens that were already moms.

**TEEN BIRTH RATES** (births per 1,000 females ages 15-19):<sup>39</sup>



# Women in Central Texas Need

/ Access to **affordable housing**

/ Access to **mental health services and support groups**

/ Access to **less restrictive funds**

/ Increased access to **resources & technology**

/ **Representation and diverse staff**

# How This Has Informed Our Work

/ We've applied a **racial equity lens** to evaluate applications for funding

- Scoring rubric that prioritizes representation and diversity
- Removed barriers to applying
- Implicit bias training and removing identifying info during voting

/ Launched a **new funding opportunity in women's health**

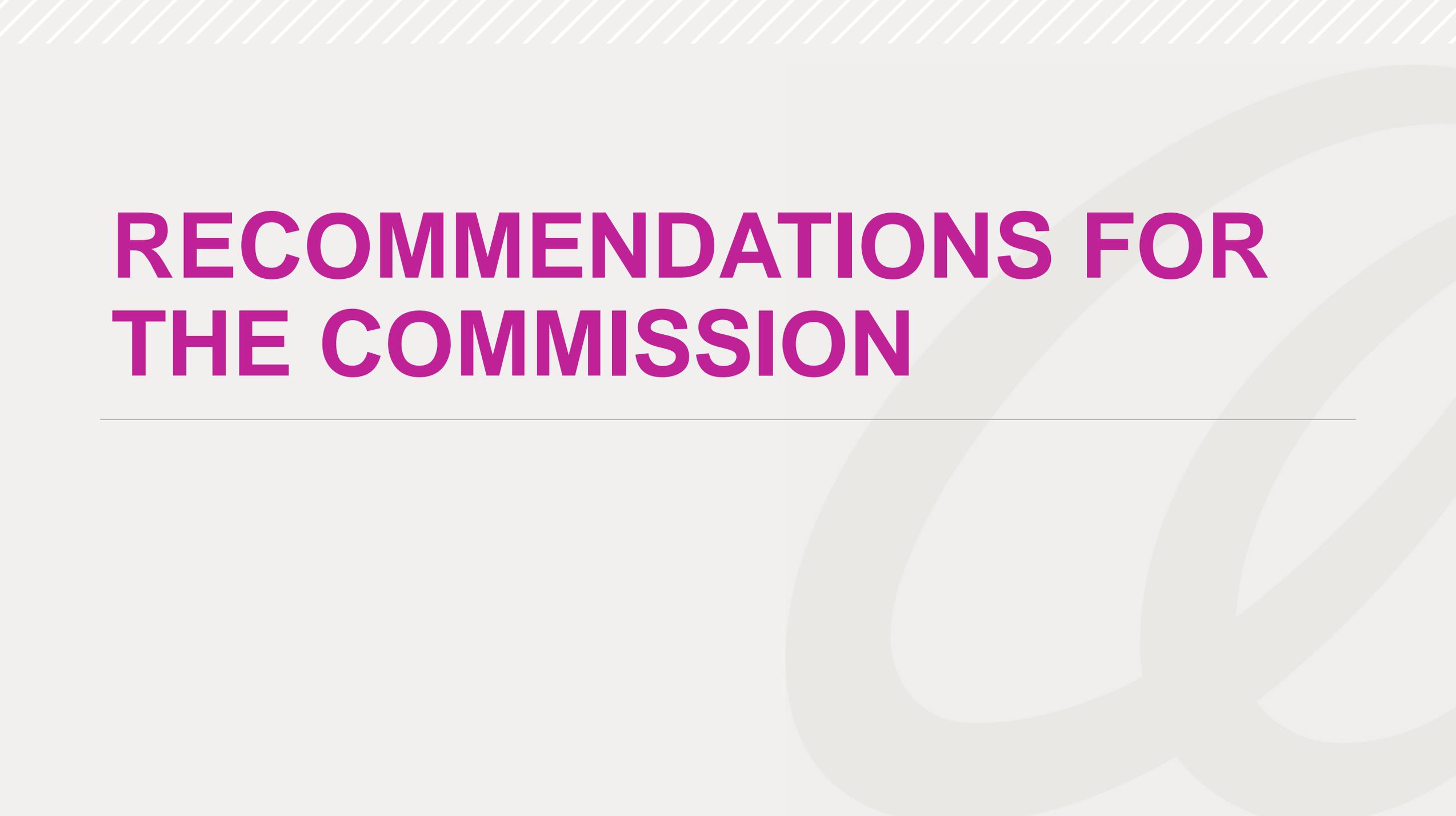
/ Increased **flexible funding, transparency** and **diversity of decision-makers**

- Inclusion of community reviewers who received stipend
- Publishing equity data and scoring rubric
- All grants are for general operating support

/ **Better data collection** – Track data on funding women of color-led NPOs

# Equity Data for 2021 Grant Partners

- / **55%** of grant partners are led by a CEO/Executive Director that identifies as Black, Indigenous, or Person of Color (BIPOC)
- / **70%** of grant partners have boards where the majority identify as BIPOC
- / **90%** of grant partners report that the majority of their staff identify as BIPOC
- / **100%** of grant partners report that the majority of their clients identify as BIPOC



# **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE COMMISSION**

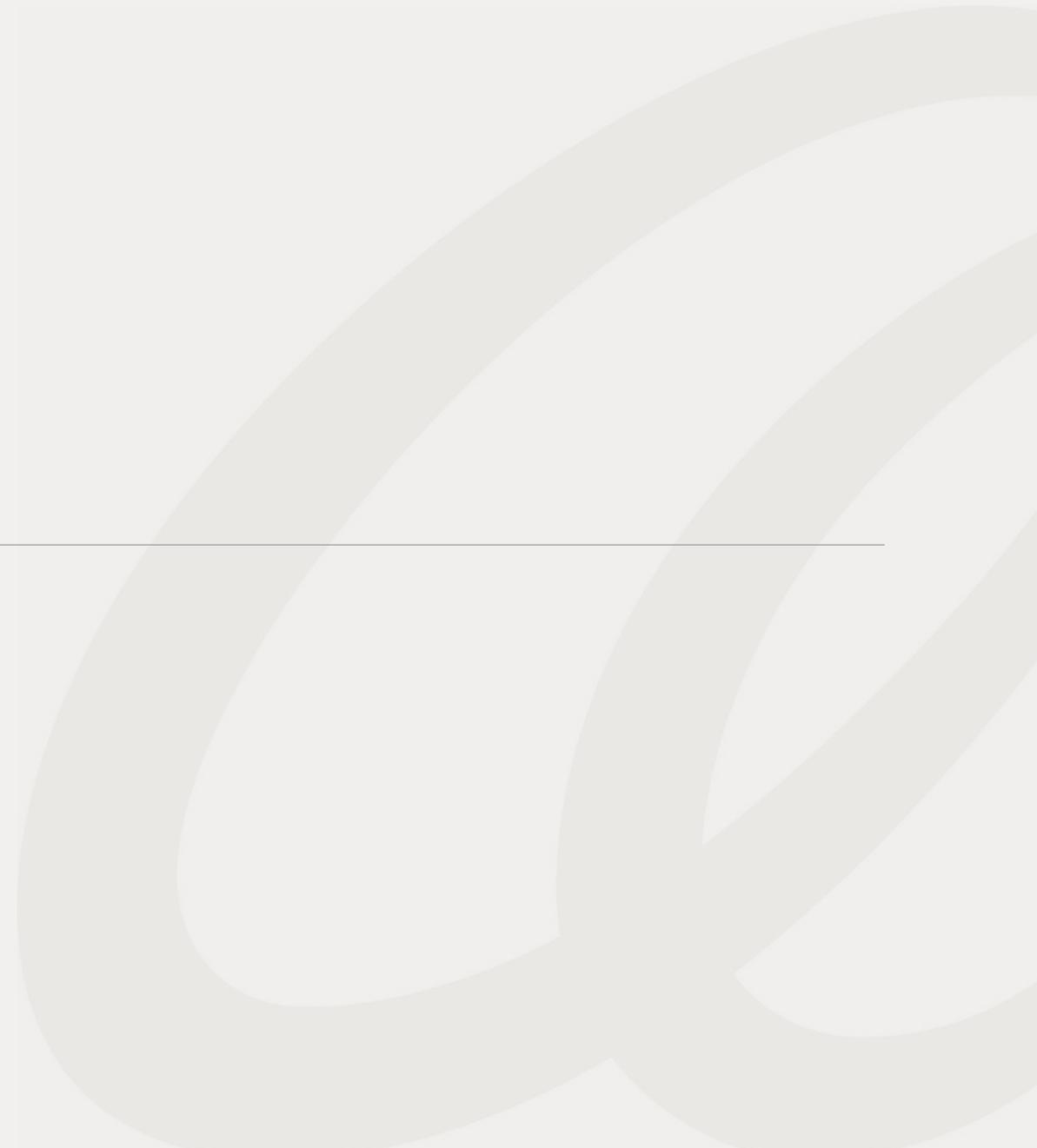
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# Recommendations

- / Listen and seek out the opinions of women of color, who are the experts on the needs of their communities
- / Encourage an intersectional approach (race and gender) to understanding community needs
- / Support and champion City of Austin policies and initiatives that increase funding targeted for women of color, especially those that increase access to services for affordable housing, mental health, child care, education, and health disparities

**QUESTIONS?**

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