

## CRUO INITIATIVE KEY TAKEAWAYS

### *Climate Resilience & Urban Opportunity*

#### Purpose of CRUO

- In 2014, Kresge launched the CRUO Initiative, a five-year, \$29 million effort created to:
  - Strengthen the capacity of community-based non-profit organizations to influence local and regional climate-resilience planning, policy development, and implementation to better reflect the priorities and needs of low-income urban communities in U.S. cities; and
  - Strengthen the climate-resilience field by supporting new equity-centered methodologies and approaches to climate-resilience policy and planning.
- The initiative sought to “flip the frame” by funding equity-centered groups to deepen their leadership and expertise on climate change rather than funding traditional climate change organizations to develop their expertise on equity.
- CRUO was aligned with Kresge’s Environment Program strategy focused on building the capacity and commitment of urban leaders across sectors to advance equitable climate resilience.

#### Impact on the Field

- Collectively, 15 CRUO placed-based grantees and partners contributed to a shift in how climate-resilience work is framed – i.e., they expanded the range of issues recognized as relevant and elevated the profile of equity within the climate-resilience field.
- The evaluation affirms the significant value community-based organizations grounded in equity bring to climate-change work. When sufficiently resourced, each organization achieved meaningful policy wins in their local communities, regions and at the state level.
- CRUO brought attention to the needs and priorities of communities often underrepresented in conversation about climate resilience solutions and helped to elevate the voice of community members in local processes and policy change.

#### Impact on the Ground

- Community-led innovation, grounded in both place-making and equity, can result in cities and regions adopting climate-resilience plans and policies that are more attendant to equity and more responsive to community concerns.
- When community-based organizations grounded in equity partner with national organizations active on climate change, the array of solution sets is broader and more attentive to the social, economic, and racial-equity dimensions of climate change.

#### Observations on Philanthropic Practice

- Foundations can assist their grantee partners in significant ways by providing structured, yet flexible, non-monetary support. This includes facilitating peer exchange and learning, and by providing access to technical assistance and strategic consultation.
- The CRUO initiative benefited greatly from real-time evaluation and the support of an advisory committee of external experts from the fields of climate change and racial equity. These supports ensured adaptative management of the initiative, which included:
  - Helping to build relationships and trust among grantee partners while providing mechanisms for transparency, accountability, and engagement with grantees as thought partners.
  - Adjusting to emergent issues, such as shifts in political or social context and organizational changes within the community-based organizations.
- Achieving substantive policy change takes time. Philanthropic funding cycles of three-to-four years seed meaningful change, but longer-term funding is required to drive accountability in policy implementation.