JUSTICE OUTSIDE

HEALTH & WELLNESS FUND

Our Health and Wellness Fund supports programs that harness the **healing power of nature** to strengthen community wellbeing, address health disparities, and provide activities that lead to prolonged and healthy lives. **In a thriving and healthy community, there is equitable access to quality nature experiences, including neighborhood parks, gardens, and nearby wild areas.**

To this end, Justice Outside invests in organizations that provide nature access to promote mental, physical, social, and spiritual wellbeing. This includes initiatives that integrate outdoor experiences with mental health support, honor traditional and cultural healing practices connected to nature, and build food sovereignty through community-led farming, forestry, and gardening projects.

WHAT WE FUND

Activities in Nature

Organizations working to increase nature activities that promote, maintain, and manage health and wellbeing. Grants in this category include group walks, swims, rides and other forms of outdoor recreation in natural outdoor environments (NOEs) such as a forest, along a river, or around an urban park. Justice Outside has a special interest in projects that incorporate traditional healing practices in nature.

Nature Based Health Interventions

Organizations focused on specific health concerns that can benefit from regular nature access. These nature based interventions (NBIs) include 'Green Prescriptions' from healthcare providers for weight loss, diabetes management, stress reduction, cardiovascular health, depression management, memory loss for elders, and many more.

Community-led Forestry, farming & gardens

Community-led growing projects that support urban greening and healthy nutrition, especially in historically segregated tree and food deserts.

Healthcare-Nature Partnerships

Developing a network of healthcare providers who are joined with community partners to help underserved communities reap the many benefits of NBIs and wellbeing activities in natural outdoor environments (NOEs), as well as wildflower gardens, natural soundscapes, and urban greenspaces near medical and healthcare centers.

ANTICIPATED IMPACT

- To measurably maintain & improve the mental and physical health outcomes for Black, Indigenous, and communities of color via nature interventions.
- To reverse the erasure of Indigenous practices that connect people to the health benefits of exposure to natural lands and water.
- Models of nature-based projects supporting health and wellness for communities of color that can be scaled locally, regionally, and nationally.
- To build food sovereignty and power for Black, Indigenous, and communities of color through community-led growing projects, especially in historically segregated food deserts.
- Greater data findings arising from the fund's projects.
- Advocacy and policy changes based upon these projects and data findings

Out of Scope for This Fund

- *Park and facility maintenance*
- *Environmental justice organizing (see our Grassroots Organizing & Mobilization fund for this work)*

2026-2030 GOALS

$5 Million invested across
30 organizations in 5-10 states

Initial phase: ***$3 million supporting 18 organizations***

THE RESEARCH IS CLEAR NATURE IMPROVES HEALTH

Strategic investment can address access barriers facing communities of color

AN EVIDENCE-BASED STRATEGY FOR HEALTH EQUITY

The evidence reveals both a crisis and an opportunity.

While communities of color are disproportionately exposed to environmental risks like pollution and toxic sites, they have the least access to nature's increasingly documented health benefits—a gap created by historic segregation.

Recent studies show nature-based interventions deliver outsized health benefits for underserved communities, making equitable green space investment a high-impact strategy for addressing health disparities.

WHAT NATURE CAN DO: PROVEN HEALTH BENEFITS

- Reduces stroke & heart disease
- Lowers blood pressure
- Decreases diabetes risk
- Improves mental health
- Prevents pre-term births
- Reduces stress hormones

THE PATH FORWARD

We have the evidence, the strategy, and the community partnerships. What we need is strategic investment to translate this research into **measurable health outcomes for communities where the impact will be greatest.**

The Health Benefits of the Great Outdoors

Twohig-Bennett & Jones. Environmental Research. 2018.

This groundbreaking review of 143 studies established the foundation:

- Greenspace linked to reduced stroke, hypertension, asthma, heart disease
- Significant reductions in blood pressure, cortisol, cholesterol, heart rate

What is the Impact of Nature on Human Health?

Nejade, Grace & Bowman. Journal of Global Health. 2022.

This meta-analysis documented overwhelming evidence:

- **92% of 952 studies showed improved health outcomes**
- Documented effectiveness of nature-based interventions for mental, physical, and cognitive health

Racial & Socioeconomic Disparities in Access

Klompmaker, et al. Environmental Health Perspectives. 2023.

- Lower-income and minority communities have significantly less access to quality natural areas
- Disparities directly linked to historical segregation
- **Solution: Target green space interventions equitably**

Green Space & Health Equity

Rigolon, et al. Int'l Journal of Environmental Research. 2021.

- **Public green spaces provide greater benefits for disadvantaged communities**
- Privileged communities have wellness opportunities beyond public spaces
- Provides roadmap to address health disparities

LET'S COLLABORATE!

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