

CARE Fund Learning Meeting (Virtual) June 28, 2021

The [Care for All with Respect and Equity Fund \(CARE\) Fund](#) is bringing together a diverse range of philanthropic partners to invest \$50 million over five years in movement building for a universal publicly supported care infrastructure that will fuel the economy, improve outcomes for kids, promote equity and enable people with disabilities and older adults to live independently with safety and dignity. The growing table of partners includes the Ford Foundation, Heising-Simons Foundation, W.K. Kellogg Foundation, Open Society Foundations, Perigee Fund, Pivotal Ventures, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and Schusterman Family Philanthropies.

The new Administration and composition of Congress present significant opportunities to advance a robust agenda across the care spectrum. Responding to the urgency presented by the pandemic and the historic opportunity for national progress across the care agenda of the moment, the CARE Fund made **rapid response grants** to support:

- **Alignment tables** at the forefront of collaborative policy advocacy efforts, with a focus on universal paid leave, quality care jobs, and robust financing for both home and community based services and early care and education.
- **Movement building and grassroots leadership** efforts that ensure the diverse voices and expertise of parent leaders, family caregivers, and care workers are at the center of narrative change and federal policy reforms.
- Organizations bringing an **aging and disability rights lens** to care policy - especially home and community based care and paid leave - and integrating racial, ethnic, LGBTQ and gender justice.

On June 28, 2021, the CARE Fund held a dynamic learning session among CARE Fund grantee partners, donors contributing to the fund, and other philanthropic professionals with an interest in the care agenda. A meeting agenda and list of CARE Fund grantees can be found at the end of this document. Following is a summary of the key points from each session. You can watch a complete video recording of the meeting [here](#).

Introductory Plenary Panel: Seizing the Moment for Care

Nicole Jorwic (Senior Executive Officer of Policy, The Arc)

Natalie Keen (Senior Staff Attorney, Justice in Aging)

Sade Moonsammy (Interim Executive Director, Family Values @ Work)

Ai-jen Poo (National Domestic Workers Association & Caring Across Generations)

Panelists stressed the historic nature of the recent gains made on the care agenda. Sade outlined a confluence of factors that brought us to this moment, including: **political will** on the part of the

Administration and Congress; **newly committed funding streams**; and the appalling and inequitable **toll of the pandemic**. But another main factor – and a theme that echoed through the learning session – was that movement leaders across the different parts of care infrastructure work have committed, despite myriad and often intentional barriers, to **breaking down the traditional silos that separate them**. **Instead they have promoted a unified and synergistic vision for care across the life-cycle and communities**. Supporting coalition and movement building towards this holistic vision has been a main focus of initial CARE Fund funding.

Building an integrated care economy – With Congress engaged in the budget negotiation process, **advocates have been striving to arrive at a holistic budget proposal that contains most pieces of the care agenda**. They seek to ensure that any efforts to pit care issues against each other and horse-trade for resources, be unsuccessful. Ai-jen discussed the importance of **Care Can't Wait (CCW)** as a national vehicle for collective action across the care agenda, and as a space where leading organizations and experts can collectively grapple with strategic choices. Natalie observed that this holistic approach has led to the **most transformative investment in aging infrastructure in decades**. She lifted up the shared work among organizations focused on disability, aging, and labor rights to promote Home and Community-based Services (HCBS), and collective participation in the care infrastructure table.

Disrupting the individual responsibility narrative – Another important theme was how important it has been to **break the narrative around care that centers individual responsibility**, especially of women, and characterizes an inability to manage care responsibilities as a personal, not systemic, failure. Ai-jen discussed how the pandemic has exposed the fallacy of that narrative, making it evident that care infrastructure is a public good and that the undervaluing of care work is rooted in racism and sexism. As Nicole detailed, it has spotlighted the **essential, yet structurally undervalued nature of the direct care workforce**. We now more clearly see our overreliance on unpaid family caregivers, and how the decades of under-investment in the HCBS workforce has led to such negative consequences. Of course, the lack of pay, respect, and dignity for family caregivers and/or workers cuts across the full care economy, which further reinforces the need for groups to work together and do shared messaging.

Expanding public education – Despite real gains, an ongoing challenge is educating the public, including the media, on the component parts of the care agenda across states and populations. Public communication campaigns require a dramatic uptick in donor support so that **people can be informed and engaged before they actually need care services**. As Nicole noted, currently HCBS beneficiaries are disproportionately white. This means there must be more and better work to inform other populations about available services. There is also **urgent work to educate members of Congress** before and during their August recess, and to demonstrate the level of constituent support for a comprehensive care package.

Linking and resourcing state and federal advocacy – The importance of state-based work was emphasized. This included the vital work to implement federal funding, both from the American Rescue Plan (ARP) and from future packages, as well as the complexity of complementing state-based work with federal advocacy. Ai-jen noted that **building connective tissue between federal and state organizing is a piece of work on its own** and needs to be deliberate and directly resourced at a high level. Sade described the complexity of state-based and federal advocacy. While organizing and movement-building has been going well across the country – with wins for paid family and medical leave in 10 states – there remains no federal policy and no clarity on the standing of existing state laws once there is a federal policy. There is also real urgency for more support to **build the capacity of state-level groups**. Most of these groups do not have enough organizers, nor do they have sufficient resources to carry out their

core work and additional activities, such as data-gathering to ensure equitable use of the ARP's \$50 billion in COVID relief for childcare.

Modeling best philanthropic practice – Another main theme was **how philanthropy can best resource the integrated care agenda**, and what funders should be thinking about when supporting groups to address systemic challenges. One key approach is represented by the CARE Fund. Through the fund, donors pool new money to get critical funding to the field in a timely manner. Other suggestions were: ensure that donor support for the care agenda reaches state and city levels; provide funding to explicitly reinforce respectful engagement with users of these programs early and often; and ensure that grassroots organizations have the resources needed to engage busy low-income caregivers, for example by providing child care and meals at meetings.

Breakout Sessions

The four 30+ minute breakout sessions centered on four levers to achieve equitable care infrastructure. Main highlights follow.

Breakout Session #1: Federal Policy Advocacy

A main theme was the importance of the care agenda movements working together as a whole.

- Looking to budgetary reconciliation in Congress, **it's vital that groups continue to band together for power-building and resist falling back into the scarcity mindset**; it's a long-game, and while all might not see progress at the same time, a win for one is a win for all. If the care agenda movements remain united, there's no long-term economic growth that can leave out care. Nonetheless, it is important to acknowledge that the budgetary process can bring a lot of stressors to bear within and among movements, and that holding on to the care piece of the full progressive agenda in the face of what can seem like competing claims from important allied movements, such as climate, will be critical.
- Given all that national advocates ask of state organizations, and how much they in turn ask of organizers, a question is how donors can help the field to build up, and track, a **more robust care infrastructure within states**, and how best to deploy the resources that are there.
- People talked about how this isn't going to be the end of the fight, and **the need for more champions on the Hill**. While champions can be plentiful within issue silos, it'd be great to have more champions carrying water for the whole agenda.

Breakout Session #2: State to National Organizing/Grassroots Mobilization

In this session, grantees and funders shared thoughts on effective funding for state/federal ecosystems, especially given a common underestimation of the effort required to translate state organizing for federal policy and policy advocacy.

- There's a common **assumption that state and federal organizations can just team up; they can, but to do so effectively requires "connective tissue"** in the form of extra time, strategy, and money. Some essential needs that could benefit from increased donor attention include state and local organizations having dedicated staff for national advocacy, implementing current ARP

funding well and documenting those stories, and bringing grassroots leaders into federal spaces in a non-tokenized way to share their stories with policy makers.

- It's essential to recognize all that it takes in terms of **time and resources to organize and relationship-build in the field**. Also critical is for donors to recognize that groups need to have **funding for their internal infrastructures**, including for such bread-and-butter items as human resources, such that there's the capacity internally to implement – and model – things like paid leave.
- Especially at junctures like the current one in the federal budgetary process, when the capacity to rapidly seize opportunities, build out advocacy and address false narratives has been critical, participants identified **rapid response funding**, such as what the CARE Fund has been able to provide, as being critical. Funders can also help to **flank care agenda leaders** – who can suffer in the public mind from gendered and racialized biases – against narratives of a relative lack of sophistication vis a vis other (mostly male) leaders, such as in the climate fight.

Breakout Session #3: Communications/Narrative Change

In this session, people talked about the stories they're trying to advance, how funders can support getting that narrative out, whether there are specific audiences they haven't been able to reach, and barriers to messaging.

- What tends to grab popular attention is the hard stuff, like stories on the ongoing burden of care on family members of disabled people, so **stories and messaging should focus on why there are the holes in care, and why a big investment is needed**.
- Stories are vital to moving the policy needle, and it's essential to make beneficiaries and families feel safe in sharing them. For some communities, **storytelling is deeply personal, especially around the painful topics that the care agenda tends to engage**. Funders should recognize – and groups communicate more forcefully in their fundraising – that gaining the necessary trust takes time and resources, and that trying for short-cuts in personnel and relationship-building will backfire. In that sense **communications work is not just communications work** and requires real capacity in terms of staffing and experience.
- Especially for local, less-resourced, funders with interest in interfacing with the Fund, communications may be a place to begin, linking knowledge around local efforts with state and national groups. **Communications offers an opportunity to effectively align national, state and local funding**.

Breakout Session #4: State and Local Implementation

This session addressed lessons learned and ongoing gaps for funders to consider how federal resources can be used most effectively at the state and local levels to reach the populations that they're designed for.

- Even if a comprehensive package of care supports is passed at the federal level, there are **many silos at the state and local level that will present challenges to holistic implementation**. Funding will flow to states through siloed federal and state bureaucracies; state and local organizations and coalitions tend to be siloed by issue; and organizing and advocacy groups do not always have good working relationships with relevant agencies. Furthermore, drawing down and allocating funds often requires advocacy on state budget processes, and the fiscal policy advocates are not always at the same tables as the care advocates. Targeted **funding to help**

break down these silos and coordinate all these entities could be very impactful, as could work with groups to explicitly build capacity for translating local gains and remaining challenges for federal advocacy.

On a concluding note, over the next several months CARE Fund partners will be engaged in planning and determining priorities for the next several years. This will include deliberately thinking through state and local strategies, including whether to focus on particular states or regions; how best to align and coordinate with funders in those areas; and how best to welcome geographically-specific funders to the table. Partners will keep meeting participants updated, and make sure that everyone is informed about ongoing learning opportunities and any other follow-up from today.

CARE Fund Learning Meeting Agenda

**The Care for All With Respect and Equity (CARE) Fund
June 28, 2021**

***Purpose:** Convene funders and grantee partners doing work to support universal, publicly supported care infrastructure -- and share field and policy developments, and discuss strategic needs and opportunities.*

Monday, June 28th, 1 pm - 3 pm ET // 10 am - 12 pm PT

<https://fordfoundation.zoom.us/j/87020703852?pwd=d3lwempWZ0RqQ2hhTGw0NVk0VHdNQ09>

Meeting ID: 870 2070 3852

Passcode: 132318

*If you are having trouble connecting to the meeting, please email Antoni Scarano
(a.scarano@fordfoundation.org)*

1:00 -1:20 pm ET **Welcome and Introductions**, Erin Currier, W.K. Kellogg Foundation

1:20 - 2:10 pm ET **Panel session: Seizing the Moment for Care**, Anna Wadia, Ford Foundation

Nicole Jorwic, Senior Executive Officer of Policy, [The Arc](#)
Natalie Kean, Senior Staff Attorney, [Justice in Aging](#)
Sade Moonsammy, Interim Executive Director, [Family Values at Work](#)
Ai-jen Poo, Executive Director, [National Domestic Workers Alliance](#) //
Director, [Caring Across Generations](#)

2:10 - 2:50 pm ET

Breakout Sessions: Levers for Change

Federal Policy Advocacy

- Sasha Bruce, [Care Can't Wait](#)
- Dawn Hucklebridge, [Paid Leave for All](#)
- Natalie Kean, [Justice in Aging](#)
- Stephanie Monroe, [UsAgainstAlzheimer's](#)
- Whitney Pesek, [National Women' Law Center](#)

State to National Organizing

- Sade Moonsammy, [Family Values at Work](#)
- Erin Moore, [United Parent Leaders Action Network](#)
- Ai-jen Poo, [National Domestic Workers Alliance](#) // [Caring Across Generations](#)
- Kristin Rowe-Finkbeiner, [MomsRising](#)

Communications and Narrative Change

- Quyen Dinh, [Southeast Asia Resource Action Center](#)
- Nicole Jorwic, [The Arc](#)
- Jason Resendez, [UsAgainstAlzheimer's](#)
- Diann Rust-Tierney, [Caring Across Generations](#)

State and Local Implementation

- Maria Antoinetta Jandres, [United Parent Leaders Action Network](#)
- Josephine Kalipeni, [Family Values at Work](#)
- Stephanie Schmit, [Center for Law and Social Policy](#) (CLASP)

2:50 - 3:00 pm ET

Closing, Brook Kelly-Green, Schusterman Family Philanthropies