



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Funding Climate Action: Pathways for Philanthropy

MARCH 2023

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Climate change represents a critical challenge to humanity.

While there are still some that contest this fact, most of the world accepts that we must act now to reduce the worst impacts of climate change on society.

While climate-focused philanthropy has increased significantly in recent years, it is still insufficient relative to the size and urgency of the challenge. Less than two percent of global philanthropy is focused on climate-related giving.¹ In a recent survey, 85 percent of all U.S. foundation funders stated that climate change was a top three issue, but only about a third reported they were “open to considering funding efforts” to address climate change.²

The goal of this report is to inspire more philanthropists to act. The report provides tools, case studies, and encouragement to help existing and potential climate philanthropists overcome barriers to action.

The report begins by reviewing the full scope of tools available to climate funders, including donations, investments, grantee engagement, and external advocacy. We then offer a taxonomy of climate funders that is based, among other things, on how these tools can be used. The report describes five different climate funder archetypes that are complemented by profiles of actual philanthropic organizations and leaders. These case studies are designed to illustrate different pathways that funders can consider in their own climate journey. The five archetypes include:



“It is not that climate is more important than everything else, it’s that it is inextricably connected to everything else; if we fail on climate, we fail on everything.”

- LARRY KRAMER, HEWLETT FOUNDATION



Climate Explorer



Climate Lens Applier



Climate Philanthropy Leader



Investment-Led Philanthropist



Climate Action Integrator

¹ Funding Trends 2022 | ClimateWorks Foundation

² Report: Much Alarm, Less Action | Center for Effective Philanthropy



Interspersed throughout the report are profiles of organizations and networks that provide helpful resources to climate philanthropists. An appendix compiles these and other resources.

The report concludes by offering guiding principles for climate philanthropy that we believe are relevant to emerging and experienced climate philanthropists alike. These include:

- There *is* a right time to act: Now
- There is *not* a “right level” of engagement
- You are not alone; there are many resources out there
- Collaborate to increase impact
- Consider how your climate strategy impacts social equity – and vice versa
- Think about climate across your (financial) life



“You have to decide if you are more afraid of analysis paralysis or potentially wasting money. Err on the side of moving money sooner and learning from your experiences.”

– CHRIS KOHLHARDT,
KOHLHARDT FUND

Climate change is a global challenge that requires engagement from our global community.

Every little bit can help – especially if it leads to the systemic change that is ultimately required. So as the first guiding principle urges – start acting, now. **The planet needs all hands on deck – including yours.**

To read the full report, please visit this [link](#).

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