

# Windfall Wisdom: Learning from Nonprofits and NGOs That Have Put Large, Flexible Gifts to Work

by Preeta Nayak, Lindsey Waldron, Carmita Semann, Katrina Frei-Herrmann, and Zach Slobig

Out on Indian School Road in East Albuquerque sits an unassuming two-story stucco building—the home of the [Native Forward Scholars Fund](#), the largest direct scholarship provider to Native students in the United States. For many years, the organization rented space close by for \$9,000 a month. When the stucco building went on the market a couple of years back, the organization bought it outright.

Native Forward has helped fund the education of over 22,000 American Indian and Alaska Native students from all 50 states, including some of the most influential Native leaders. Despite that legacy of impact, the organization had never been in a financial position to own the space where they do their work. This all changed in 2020 when MacKenzie Scott [selected Native Forward](#) for a no-strings gift of \$20 million.<sup>1</sup>

Angelique Albert, CEO of Native Forward, was stunned. “The impact of this gift, not only on Native students but also on Indian Country as a whole, is so profound that we will feel its effects for generations to come,” she said shortly after getting the news.

Facing a range of options for how to spend the remainder of the funds, Native Forward decided to shore up its operational infrastructure, invest in marketing, and grow its development team. “We know what it takes to get Native scholars to not just access college but also to graduate from college,” says Albert. “Our numbers are phenomenal—the impact we make. We just needed more money to do the work.”

The past decade has seen a rise in windfall gifts—large, flexible (meaning few restrictions, if any), and sometimes multiyear influxes of funding.<sup>2</sup> It’s important to note that “windfall” in this context does not connote luck or a lack of intention. These gifts are testaments to organizations’ long track records of impact—making them sure bets that, given flexible funding (and seasoned leaders), can bring more meaningful change to the communities they serve.

In recent years, MacKenzie Scott and her Yield Giving grantmaking have thrust this funding approach into the spotlight.<sup>3</sup> Though this kind of giving across large portfolios remains an outlier in the philanthropic landscape, some evidence suggests that funders are trending toward less-restrictive giving. The Center for Effective Philanthropy (CEP) found that [2020 was an inflection point](#)—after which 67 percent of funders increased general operating support funding.<sup>4</sup> Two-thirds of those funders say they plan to continue that practice.

## Growing Research on Windfall Gifts

This work adds to a growing base of research and findings on windfall gifts published in the philanthropic field, including:

- The Bridgespan Group published research in 2023 on the five-year impact of [Ballmer Group's large, unrestricted grants](#) to 21 nonprofits working to advance economic mobility. Bridgespan also periodically updates a [database of "big bet" large gifts](#).
- Panorama Global published a [90-day roadmap](#) and [playbook for nonprofit leaders](#) navigating decisions of allocating a windfall gift and planning for the future. This playbook includes valuable guidance surrounding stakeholder communications and financial management.
- Humberto Camarena of La Piana Consulting shared in *Stanford Social Innovation Review* tips on [navigating the opportunities and risks](#) that come with unexpected funding.
- The Center for Effective Philanthropy shared findings from [year one](#) and [year two](#) of a three-year study on the impact of MacKenzie Scott's large, unrestricted gifts.

Those who receive windfall gifts are entrusted to use this funding in whatever way they see fit to accelerate their organizations' impact in the world. That's an unusual reality for leaders, especially leaders of color, accustomed to operating in an environment of scarcity in which they face so many [barriers to capital](#).<sup>5</sup>

This article aims to help nonprofit and nongovernmental organization (NGO) leaders—and their boards—navigate the choices and related decision-making processes that follow the receipt of a windfall gift.<sup>6</sup> The Bridgespan Group, which received its own [windfall gift from Scott](#), has supported many organizations in developing plans to strategically deploy windfall funding.<sup>7</sup> Building on Bridgespan's earlier experience supporting windfall grantees of Ballmer Group and others, we have supported some MacKenzie Scott and Yield Giving grantees in that capacity.

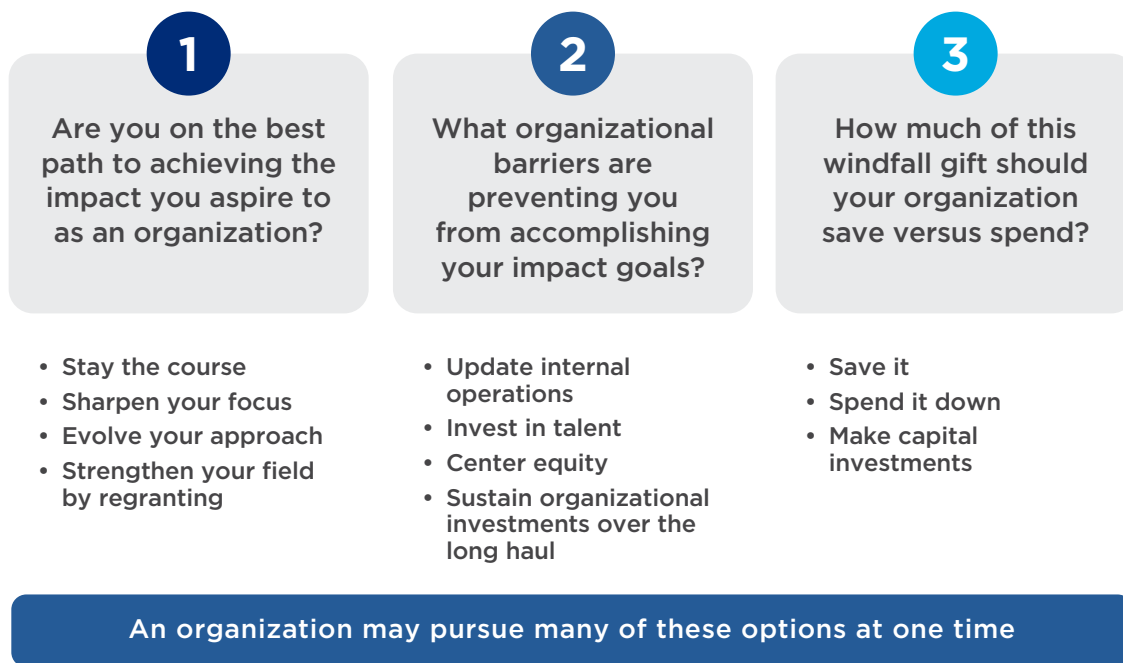
From the breadth of that work, we've learned a lot about the magnitude of opportunity these gifts can help unlock, as well as the intense responsibility and pressures tied to the tough decisions and trade-offs that accompany them. To validate and give life to that learning, we reached out to a subset of Scott and Yield Giving grantees to hear more about their experiences; some of them graciously agreed to share their perspectives. To be clear, in this article we are sharing the wisdom of nonprofit and NGO leaders—leaders demonstrating that their organizations are fully capable of absorbing these funds, strategically deploying them to build their capacity and sustainability, and to increase the impact of their work.

Below, we outline a series of “big questions” and considerations (see Figure 1), synthesized from what we heard, that can help you assess how, where, and when to invest windfall funding. The sequence in which organizations tackled these questions differed depending on circumstances, and many considered them simultaneously. Each deserves careful consideration:

- **Are you on the best path to achieving the impact you aspire to as an organization?**
- **What organizational barriers are preventing you from accomplishing your impact goals?**
- **How much of this windfall gift should your organization save versus spend?**

As illustrated by the stories and reflections below, there is no “right” answer or simple flowchart for recipients to follow. The investment decisions of each windfall recipient will be unique to its history, its needs, its priorities, and the impacts it aspires to achieve. Upon interrogating these questions, most leaders we spoke with elevated a handful of priorities to focus on, three to five big-ticket items across programming and infrastructure.

**Figure 1. Windfall wisdom at a glance**



Source: The Bridgespan Group.

# Big Question #1

## Are You on the Best Path to Achieving the Impact You Aspire to as an Organization?

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When met with a windfall gift, organizations may find themselves at very different places in their strategy evolutions. For organizations already in the process of seeking large gifts, the windfall can accelerate their existing strategies. But many nonprofit leaders we interviewed used the gifts as opportunities to pause, take stock, and refine their paths forward. It led some to broaden their scopes and others to narrow them. In all cases, the windfall necessitated strong alignment among board and staff on the best use of resources.

***Recent CEP data show nearly 80 percent of leaders whose organizations received Yield Giving grants are using some portion of the funds to engage in new programmatic initiatives or to improve existing initiatives.<sup>8</sup>***

### Stay the course

An organization may already have a clear strategy in place, aligned to its goals for impact. Consider [The Jed Foundation](#) (JED), which works to promote mental health and prevent suicide among teens and young adults across the United States. Shortly before it received its windfall gift, leadership had finished a five-year strategic plan—a balance of what it called “aspirational but achievable.” So, the funding came at a point where staff and board had already reached alignment.

“Does this change everything—should we be looking to do new things, like research?” asked a board member. “No, we have a plan,” John MacPhee, CEO of JED responded. “The goal here is to figure out how to best use this money to increase the probability of success on our plan.”

To address the mental health crisis in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, the plan called for significant growth in their work and their organization. “We were a \$10 million organization in 2021, and we modeled out that we needed to be two to three times larger to accomplish everything we wanted to do,” says MacPhee. “When the gift came through in early 2022, it gave us more confidence in our ability to fulfill our five-year plan, to move into that plan in a more definitive way.” With the windfall gift in hand, they regrouped as a staff and board, updated the plan, and significantly progressed their trajectory.

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JOHN MACPHEE, CEO, THE JED FOUNDATION

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## Sharpen your focus

JED was clear eyed from the outset about what it would do—and not do—with its windfall gift. However, it's not uncommon for a nonprofit to consider expanding its portfolio of work—and risk trying to do too much. We understand why this happens: ever increasing and evolving community needs, thorny social challenges, and attractive funding opportunities tied to specific outcomes.

A windfall gift can be an opportunity for organizations to first sharpen their strategic focus before deciding on those new investments. Consider [Ushahidi](#), a Kenya-based nonprofit technology company, which launched in 2008 with the deployment of an open-source digital civic organizing platform to monitor and map election-related violence. Ushahidi develops online tools and services to mobilize communities around issues of good governance, humanitarian and disaster relief, and human rights protection.

When Angela Oduor Lungati, Ushahidi's executive director, found a Yield Giving email in her spam folder, she flagged it as a possible scam. "Holy smokes," she remembers saying once she realized it was real. "We have never received a grant of this size before!" It wasn't immediately clear what the best use of the dollars would be. "I felt like this money was an injection to advance the impact that we've started to create," she says.

Ushahidi had reached a turning point, a reconsideration of what impact meant for the organization and how to communicate it clearly. To better understand options and agree on a path forward, Ushahidi used the windfall gift to create a five-year strategic plan that built alignment across the team and board. That involved evaluating several programmatic possibilities: expanding its election integrity work or even leaning into movement building around technology to enable social change.

"Many people didn't have the historical knowledge of our impact as an organization," says Lungati. "Was it the tech that we build? Or the actions of the people using the tech? And the outside world only knew us for crisis and elections."

The windfall gift gave Ushahidi the space to grapple with a range of opinions and to think hard about its long-term goals and vision for impact. It allowed Ushahidi to land in a place of far greater clarity, to reinvest in its core platform.

As Lungati describes: "We decided to focus on key impact areas and grow our reach in enabling access to data and technology—to put our tools in the hands of those who need it the most to generate insights that help tackle issues that matter most to them."

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The Ushahidi example underscores how important it can be to build board and staff alignment around strategic decisions. For a deeper dive into approaches for unlocking board effectiveness after a windfall gift, see [“Three Tips for Unlocking Board Effectiveness After a Windfall Gift”](#) from Carmita Semaan, former Bridgespan fellow and founder and CEO of the [Surge Institute](#).

## Evolve your approach

Some organizations are at a point in their evolution where they realize that their current course and speed are unlikely to achieve their aspirations for impact. They may feel drawn to develop new solutions that can extend their impact much further, and an evolved approach can become the path forward.

[UpTogether](#) began in 2001 to facilitate direct, unrestricted cash investment to families facing financial hardship. It began as a structured series of investments to demonstrate that, given the power to chart their own course, families with low-income will manage money wisely to improve their circumstances.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, there was a surge of interest in UpTogether’s work and the potential of cash transfers. UpTogether saw a dramatic growth in the volume of capital it was able to distribute. Since 2020, it has transferred more than \$210 million to over 200,000 members across every US state. “And by 2022, I’ve got to say, we had done everything we’d ever set out to do in regard to our 2019 action plan,” says Jesús Gerena, the organization’s CEO.

Then came two Yield Giving windfall gifts. UpTogether scaled up its cash transfer work with one of the gifts and leveraged the other to support its long-term vision to ensure that all people in the United States are seen and invested in for their strengths, that families with limited incomes are able to build power and drive their own economic and social mobility.

The other windfall gift gave them permission to think big—an opportunity rarely afforded to nonprofit leaders, particularly leaders of color. “Ninety-eight percent of funding goes to my white counterparts—I know that equation,” says Gerena. “All of a sudden, all restrictions are lifted. And as a person of color, as a Latino, I’ve never received that from somebody using the language that mirrored our values and the way that we think about our work.”

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JESÚS GERENA, CEO, UPTOGETHER

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Gerena and the UpTogether team took that space to pivot. They aligned with their board on the mandate to move toward a systems-change approach—one that continues the direct, unrestricted cash transfers and couples that with advocacy, policy change, and narrative work to fundamentally reshape the systems that keep too many hardworking families from getting ahead.

They could have taken the Yield Giving funding and passed it all through as cash transfers, but Gerena, his leadership team, and their board agreed on a different approach. “It gave us the framework to be able to think and aspire enough to this greater work in the pursuit of the systems change,” says Gerena. “We really wanted to build out the research component to lift up the evidence, to help people understand the value of those who faced financial hardship and their own abilities.”

## **Strengthen your field by regrating**

Some organizations exist to strengthen and support the work of other actors rather than do the work themselves. These can be place-based organizations focused on a given zip code, central offices of large network organizations that accelerate the work of affiliates, or field catalysts who work to mobilize myriad actors across a movement or field to achieve a shared goal for equitable systems change. Their success is dependent on the success of those they support. Therefore, when met with a windfall gift, the animating questions these organizations face are around how best to direct this funding, to whom, and to what end.

The [Maine Health Access Foundation](#) (MeHAF) is the state’s largest private nonprofit health care foundation dedicated to promoting access to high-quality health care and improving health. Much of its work focuses on building the capacity of community-led organizations to create equitable health outcomes. The first thing MeHAF thought about after receiving its windfall gift was how to strengthen the health equity infrastructure in the state.

MeHAF wanted to spend the funding without delay and to regrant \$9 million without restrictions, in the same spirit with which they received it. “The board decided we’re not going to roll it into the endowment,” says Barbara Leonard, president and CEO of MeHAF. “We’re really going to try to spend these dollars in the next three to five years and use them in a way that gives us opportunity to try things we’ve never ever done before.”

While it passed through a portion of the funds directly as general operating support to build grantee capacity, it also took a new approach. MeHAF engaged key stakeholders in collaborative decision making to direct \$2 million of the gift to building a movement that advances health justice statewide. In November 2023, 42 health equity and advocacy organizations convened to align on a shared vision for the pathway to health equity. “That’s the stuff of movement building,” says Jake Grindle, senior program officer at MeHAF. “Whatever that decision, the allocation, and the next steps, they are the final decision makers at that level.”

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This was a departure from philanthropy’s typical top-down decision-making process. “If we’re going to bring people together and ask them to tell us what we ought to do with these funds in particular areas, they need to know that we’re not just picking their brains and then going to go in a black box,” says Ruta Kadonoff, vice president for programs at MeHAF. In a similar vein, other organizations—many place based—pushed portions of windfall funding from central offices to affiliates or chapters to strengthen their network.

## Big Question #2

# What Organizational Barriers Are Preventing You From Accomplishing Your Impact Goals?

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The scarcity environment that has long been the status quo for the vast majority of nonprofits puts them on a diet so lean that [starvation](#) is a constant looming (if figurative) threat. Fundraising for a sustainable organization infrastructure (see our [pay-what-it-takes](#) work) remains a challenge for most.

With a windfall gift, organizations may find themselves in a place of abundance for the first time, a place where they can invest more holistically in the infrastructure required to deliver on their strategies. Particularly for leaders of color, who face stark disparities in funding compared to their white peers, a windfall gift can be equal parts affirming and liberating.

***Recent CEP data show that more than 80 percent of leaders of organizations that received Yield Giving grants invested in their organization’s long-term operational capacity—both internal systems and structures as well as staff capacity.<sup>9</sup>***

Many of the organizations we spoke with invested in three interrelated areas—operations, talent, and equity—and found ways to sustain that new capacity for the long haul.

### Update internal operations

Basic investments in systems, operations, and infrastructure are critical—and often an area of underdevelopment because of funder restrictions. Windfall gifts are free of those constraints.

Native Forward immediately devoted some of its windfall funding to an updated branding strategy, internal systems infrastructure, and the development of a fundraising team to keep the organization out of the dreaded starvation cycle. “It’s one thing to do that

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ANGELIQUE ALBERT, CEO, NATIVE FORWARD

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market research and to rebrand,” says Native Forward’s Albert. “It’s another to invest in communications and get the word out in a way that’s meaningful.”

Albert saw that some of the funding should go to updating internal operations—increasing capacity by realizing efficiencies in the way the organization does its work. “It’s crazy how many processes we’ve streamlined and systematized,” says Albert. “Now we have software systems to do payroll, to do accounts payable. Before, it was paper copies and old processes. Now we have portals to track our procedures instead of a Word document that gets updated every few years. Access to funding allows you to implement those best practices. Before, we were just making do.” These investments unlock team capacity to focus on higher-value tasks like recruiting and supporting scholars and building relationships with key partners and funders.

The decision making around how to spend the funds came with a bit of push and pull. Though Albert noted that staff and leadership were well aligned on decisions around marketing and their operating model, when it came to eliminating programming, agreement was slower. “We were doing a lot of college prep programming, but that’s not our core competency,” says Albert. “So, there was a very mindful pivot from that, and it was a little hard to streamline some of those processes.”

## Invest in talent

Many organizations underscored the importance of investing in people and reflected on talent strategies—building capacity, enhancing benefits and compensation, or even providing one-off stipends as a gesture of appreciation and to build morale.

[Jan Sahas](#) is a 23-year-old NGO that works in India to ensure social protection for informal migrant workers, prevent gender-based violence, and help build the power of survivors of such violence. Its windfall gift allowed it to invest in a human resources team and organizational development. It also redesigned its salary structures and invested in benefits like employee insurance and mental health counseling to improve workplace well-being and to help attract and keep talent. “We needed to make relatively basic investments,” says Varun Behani, strategy director at Jan Sahas. “We’ve set a big program goal and now we need to build the organization to support that. It felt like we’ve always been playing catch up. Now it’s not always going to be firefighting.”

Native Forward has also devoted some of this new funding to talent acquisition and building benefits packages that attract high-quality individuals. “As part of our strategic pivot, instead of hiring more people, we prefer to hire fewer individuals with exceptional talent,” says Albert. “Initially, we hired quickly but not always the right people. We looked at our recruitment and retention practices and learned that investing in exceptional employees at a higher salary is more effective.”

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JAN SAHAS

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## Center equity

Windfall funding can offer a nonprofit the ability to lean into its organizational equity goals, many of which are directly embedded within the categories noted above. Consider [FoodCorps](#), which along with its 200 AmeriCorps members, works in schools in 17 states and Washington, DC, to improve hands-on food education, ensure healthy school lunches, and work to correct historical inequities in the school food system. With its windfall gift, cofounder and co-CEO Curt Ellis and president and co-CEO Dr. Robert S. Harvey, worked to shift FoodCorps to a self-described “justice organization.”

Immediately, FoodCorps increased its stipends to the corps members who serve in these schools for a one-year commitment. “One of the lingering structural inequities that was baked into how FoodCorps was operating was that we didn’t have the resources to pay our corps members enough money to live on,” says Ellis. “From an equity standpoint, that was not acceptable.”

Of the \$15 million gift, FoodCorps devoted \$5 million to advancing its justice efforts. “By the end of this three-year period, we will have a service corps that demographically mirrors the students we serve—82 percent of whom are BIPOC,” says Ellis, meaning Black, Indigenous, or people of color. “We’ve invested in a movement-building team to build alliances with Black-led justice organizations to find intersectional opportunities to advance our mission alongside the missions of those justice organizations. There’s also internal work we need to do to set ourselves up to fulfill the identity and mission we’ve carved out for ourselves.”

## Sustain organizational investments over the long haul

In considering all these organizational investments, leaders found themselves facing the tensions of balancing one-time costs with recurring costs. They asked not just, “What do we need?” but also “How can we sustain these investments over time?”

Nonprofit leaders cautioned that some of these organizational investments may require a clear pathway for ongoing funding rather than one-off investments. Others cautioned that rapid growth in an organization comes with its challenges and costs, some unexpected.

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“Seeing the experiences of some of the other nonprofits that got large sums of money, it feels like there’s a cliff coming,” says Lungati of Ushahidi. “Because if you grow very fast, at some point you ask, ‘How am I going to be able to sustain this level of an annual budget?’”

Organizations should have a clear vision for tapping into new streams of revenue to keep up with new recurring costs once the windfall funding is gone. As part of this work, it’s wise to take a close look at your [funding model](#) to ensure it enables a sustainable path forward. Some organizations, like Native Forward, may need to build or evolve their capacity to pursue the funding model that will carry them into their next phase of growth and impact.

## Big Question #3

### How Much of This Windfall Gift Should Your Organization Save Versus Spend?

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There’s a fundamental question anyone who suddenly receives an unexpected, large gift of cash faces: How much should I sock away for a rainy day, and how much should I spend right away? Organizations that had been stuck in a chronic starvation cycle—those with no reserves—will want to set aside a three- to six-month cushion. Organizations already with that level of liquid reserves may have greater appetite for spending—and risk. The reality of the save versus spend decision is that it’s a balance unique to each organization, but it’s almost always driven by the goal of long-term financial resilience.

***Recent CEP data show that over 90 percent of leaders whose organizations received a Yield Giving grant believe it will strengthen the long-term financial sustainability of their organizations.<sup>10</sup>***

#### Save it

Most organizations use a portion of a windfall gift to build up their reserves. Some take saving a step further and use a windfall to create or fund an endowment, one that both helps preserve the long-term viability of an organization and can generate working capital each year to support targeted investments. For example, the [California Community Foundation](#) put its Yield Giving windfall to work as the [LA Arts Endowment Fund](#), and much of Scott’s funding to historically Black colleges and universities went into [building endowments](#).<sup>11</sup>

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FoodCorps has prioritized building up its reserves by putting aside one-third of its Yield Giving windfall. Now it's an organization with over a \$20 million budget and a \$5 million reserve. "You almost never get a chance to bank resources like that to protect the long-term health of the institution," says Ellis. "We partnered with BIPOC-led investment firms on a strategy that's about growth for long-term reserves and near-term capital preservation for funds being spent between now and 2030."

As for the decision-making process on how to deploy these funds, Ellis notes that it was important for FoodCorps to proceed deliberately and not be swayed by the impulse to branch out its programming. "We have moved at a pace that is appropriately patient for the gravity of the responsibility we've been handed," he says. "We were entrusted with these resources because we are committed to making decisions with child well-being at the center, and that includes not moving recklessly to come up with something that was an exciting, shiny object."

### **Spend it down**

Organizations with a healthy reserve in place will likely have a greater appetite for spending. Many of the leaders we interviewed reflected on the enormity of the issues their organizations work to address. The problems facing the communities they serve are only growing, they reminded us, the urgency compounding. In that context, many leaders felt that sitting on the majority of this windfall funding would be irresponsible.

Some articulated a time frame to spend the funding down over three to five years—putting the windfall to work for the communities they serve. Others structured a timeline for the decision points for spending: an organization might commit to spend it down but allow for a change of course in *how* to spend after a three-year pull-up to be responsive to changing conditions and community needs.

Recall JED's "aspirational but achievable" five-year strategic plan? The unexpected \$15 million windfall gift gave it the necessary fuel to follow that path with confidence. The leadership team decided to spend about \$3 million per year to execute against that plan. "The gift allowed us to add infrastructure and strengthen our leadership team," says MacPhee. "The idea was to spread it out and to be measured in our approach to growth."

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JOHN MACPHEE, CEO, THE JED FOUNDATION

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## Make capital investments

Some organizations may see a ripe opportunity that triggers a decision to spend windfall funding immediately. An advocacy organization may see a unique chance to influence a critical policy decision that requires immediate investment, for instance. That ripe opportunity could also be an organizational investment that once seemed purely aspirational—a big bet that would require a windfall.

In addition to Native Forward, at least one other organization we interviewed decided to purchase property with a portion of the Yield Giving funding. [Kingmakers of Oakland](#), which grew out of the Oakland Unified School District's [Office of African American Male Achievement](#), is a leadership development and systems-change organization—a three-year-old 501(c)(3) that aims to transform the education system to improve the lives of Black students.

“That investment for us was about legacy,” says Christopher Chatmon, founder and CEO of Kingmakers. “We took that money and bought land, bought the building I’m in right now across the street from the Acorn housing projects in West Oakland. We weren’t even eligible for a loan because we didn’t have three years of financials. Having that cash gave us the ability to literally lay roots in this community.”

At a time when both rents and real estate pricing are skyrocketing in the San Francisco Bay Area and local nonprofits are feeling the squeeze, Kingmakers is now firmly anchored in this place. “Demographics are changing. And with gentrification, folks are moving further and further away,” says Chatmon. “Now we have brick and mortar, where we can accelerate some of our revenue-generating work. We need to be in closer proximity to this urban environment, so we can be much more needs responsive.”

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CHRISTOPHER CHATMON, FOUNDER AND CEO, KINGMAKERS OF OAKLAND

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## Looking Ahead

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With a sudden unexpected no-strings gift, that moment of giddy celebration can quickly morph into an amplified sense of responsibility over weighty decisions to come. To that end, we've created a brief conversation starter intended to help those leaders—and their boards—explore the array of options before them and think carefully about how to deploy their windfall toward the greatest impact (see "[Deciding How to Invest a Windfall Gift](#)"). And one of us, Carmita Semaan, shared her thoughts about how she worked with her board after Surge Institute, of which she is founder and CEO, itself received a windfall gift (see "[Three Tips for Unlocking Board Effectiveness After a Windfall Gift](#)"). We hope this guide will support a thoughtful, structured, and strategic decision-making process to help recipients of windfall gifts arrive at the best answer—or set of investment decisions—for their organizations.

The three questions we explore in this article and the conversation starter may seem simple:

- **Are you on the best path to achieving the impact you aspire to as an organization?**
- **What organizational barriers are preventing you from accomplishing your impact goals?**
- **How much of this windfall gift should your organization save versus spend?**

But most nonprofit leaders haven't had the space to step back and ask them systematically because funding typically comes incrementally and with many more restrictions. This may be doubly true for nonprofit leaders of color who face higher barriers to funding than white leaders.

The opportunity to stretch themselves and their teams in new ways energized the leaders we interviewed. They felt empowered, and they felt a deep responsibility to be thoughtful with the funding. The ultimate gift of a windfall may be that it allows leaders the freedom to think ahead and think big as they tackle some of our world's most complex challenges.

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## Endnotes

- 1 Michael T. Nietzel, ["With New Name and New Funding, Native Forward Aims to Double Its Impact for College Students,"](#) *Forbes*, July 19, 2022.
- 2 Katarina Malmgren, [\*Before and After 2020: How the COVID-19 Pandemic Changed Nonprofit Experiences With Funders\*](#), Center for Effective Philanthropy, 2024.
- 3 Bridgespan has had the privilege of advising MacKenzie Scott. Some of the organizations and funders mentioned in this report are also current or prior Bridgespan Group clients. The Yield Giving grants we refer to throughout this article include giving documented on the [Yield Giving website](#) as of March 2024.
- 4 Malmgren, [\*Before and After 2020: How the COVID-19 Pandemic Changed Nonprofit Experiences With Funders\*](#).
- 5 Cheryl Dorsey, Jeff Bradach, and Peter Kim, [\*Racial Equity and Philanthropy: Disparities in Funding for Leaders of Color Leave Impact on the Table\*](#), The Bridgespan Group, May 2020.
- 6 The perspectives shared in this piece are based on conversations with 13 nonprofits whose windfall gifts represented at least 30 percent of their annual budget.
- 7 ["Statement on Bridgespan's Grant from MacKenzie Scott,"](#) The Bridgespan Group, January 10, 2023.
- 8 Ellie Buteau, Elisha Smith Arrillaga, and Christina Im, [\*Emerging Impacts: The Effects of Mackenzie Scott's Large, Unrestricted Gifts. Results from Year Two of a Three-Year Study\*](#), Center for Effective Philanthropy, 2023.
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