Research, solutions and inspiration, delivered.

The Bulletin

Discover new ways to advance equitable wealth building and economic mobility.

January 21, 2026

Make Plans Now for AFN's National Grantmaker Conference, October 6-8, Philadelphia

This October in Philadelphia, as the nation marks its 250th anniversary, AFN will host its 2026 Biennial Conference anchored in the theme ***Igniting Change for Inclusive Prosperity***—bringing peers together to advance bold, transformative solutions for equitable wealth building and economic mobility by reimagining the systems, stories, and structures that shape economic well-being.

The **funder-only conference** will center seven main-stage conversations that trace the full arc of this work—from grounding in place and history, to people-centered visions for what's possible, to the policy, evidence, and cross-sector innovations needed to ignite lasting change.

- **AFN Members: Early-bird registration opens March 1, 2026**
- **AFN Non-Members: Early-bird registration opens March 15, 2026**
  In recent years, AFN's biennial conferences reached capacity shortly after early-bird registration—early planning is encouraged.
- **For sponsorship opportunities**, contact Kristin Rennels, AFN Membership Director, at kristin@assetfunders.org

LEARN MORE

AFN In The News

AFN and Members Featured as *Inside Philanthropy* Explores Asset-Building Approaches

A follow-up *Inside Philanthropy* article published this week by Mike Scutari offers a broader examination of asset building as a philanthropic approach, featuring AFN and its members as critical leaders of that landscape.

As the piece notes, this moment offers "an opportunity to revisit how philanthropy has approached asset-building and survey emerging strategies for funders moving forward."

New Publications and Resources to Inform Your Work

When Days Matter: Wells Fargo and LiftFund's Partnership for Small Business Resilience

As climate-driven disasters accelerate, small businesses are increasingly caught in a race against time—often needing capital within days to avoid permanent closure.

In Texas—where more federally declared disasters occur than in any other state—**Wells Fargo's partnership with LiftFund** demonstrates how early, flexible funding and disaster-ready systems can protect small businesses, preserve jobs, and strengthen community resilience when it matters most.

Read the next in our Members Making Impact series.

AFN *Short Takes* - Insights and Perspectives from Recent AFN Events

Cradle to Capital: Philanthropy's Role in Advancing Baby Bonds and Early Wealth Building

Wealth gaps in the United States are deep, persistent, and structural—shaped less by individual choices than by unequal access to capital from the very start of life.

In a new AFN blog, **Joseph A. Antolin and David Radcliffe** reflect on AFN's recent webinar and brief, ***From Cradle to Capital***, drawing on insights from **Darrick Hamilton and philanthropic leaders** to explore how Baby Bonds and other early wealth-building tools can help shift our economy from managing poverty to investing in people—and the critical role philanthropy plays in turning vision into durable public systems.

Upcoming Events

NATIONAL WEBINAR ***Beyond H.R.1: Protecting and Rebuilding Our Care Infrastructure***
January 27, 2026 | 2:00 pm - 3:00 pm ET | REGISTER
H.R.1 pairs major tax cuts with deep reductions to programs like SNAP, Medicaid, and Medicare, with significant impacts beginning in 2026. Join this conversation on January 27 to explore how funders and advocates can mitigate harm and advance a more inclusive care agenda.

NATIONAL WEBINAR ***Beyond the Floodlines: A Three-Part Webinar Series on Funding Asset Preservation***
January 29, 2026 | 1:00 pm - 2:00 pm ET | REGISTER
The third and final webinar in the *Beyond the Floodlines* series examines how policy, systems, and investment choices can better protect household assets before and after disaster. The session will explore where current protections fall short, highlight emerging approaches that support asset preservation and recovery, and surface opportunities for funders to align climate resilience, housing stability, and economic security strategies.

NATIONAL WEBINAR ***Trump Accounts (530A Accounts) & Early Asset Building: Funder-Only Briefing***
January 30, 2026 | 2:00 pm - 3:00 pm ET | REGISTER
Child-focused savings and asset-building tools are gaining momentum—but are also generating confusion. Join us on January 30 for a **funder-only briefing** examining early childhood investment vehicles, with a focused look at how 530A accounts compare to tools like Baby Bonds and 529s, the key distinctions funders should understand, and the open questions shaping equitable wealth-building strategies.

IN PERSON ***(San Antonio AFN) Growing Together: Aligning Investment for Rural Early Childhood -- An AFN Summit***
February 6, 2026 | 8:30 am - 3:00 pm CST | REGISTER

VIRTUAL ***(AFN Northeast Regional Chapters) Renter Wealth Building: Defining the Field and Sharing Opportunities for Funder Engagement***
February 10, 2026 | 10:00 am - 11:30 am ET | REGISTER

NATIONAL WEBINAR ***Strengthening State Consumer Financial Protections to Preserve Assets Across the Life Cycle***
February 12, 2026 | 1:00 pm - 2:00 pm ET | REGISTER
Economic security depends on both building assets and protecting them—but gaps in federal consumer and medical debt protections leave many households exposed to financial loss. Join AFN on February 12 to explore how state-level policy solutions in Illinois and Texas are filling those gaps, and how philanthropy can support advocacy and systems change that preserves assets and strengthens long-term economic security.

VIRTUAL ***(Bay Area AFN) Funding the Evidence: Building the Economic Record as a Strategy toward Economic Justice***
February 25, 2026 | 10:00 am - 11:30 am PST | REGISTER

AFN UPCOMING EVENTS | RECORDED WEBINARS

Member News and Announcements

- Camille Emeagwali, AFN Board Co-Chair and Senior Vice President at **The New York Women's Foundation**, was honored with the 2026 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Humanitarian Award at the Malverne School District's annual MLK Day celebration—recognizing her leadership, commitment to equity, and lasting impact in communities.
- **The Meadows Foundation** recently announced that Monica Christopher has been named Chief Philanthropy Officer, continuing her role as a thoughtful, trusted leader in the philanthropic and asset-building space across Texas.
- **The Carl B. & Florence E. King Foundation** has opened its Community Grants cycle, inviting organizations doing meaningful work in North Texas, West Texas, and Arkansas to apply by February 1.
- **Gary Community Ventures**, in partnership with **Robert Wood Johnson Foundation** and other funders, has launched the Ignite Futures Fund—a five-year pilot providing teens from Medicaid-eligible families with $20,000 in invested capital, paired with tools to build financial literacy and investing skills. The initiative is featured in Gary Community Ventures' latest *Perspectives* piece.

Insights and News From the Field

- The **U.S. Department of Education** (ED) announced that it is pausing its plans to garnish wages and seize tax refunds from defaulted student loan borrowers after previously planning to send garnishment notices beginning the week of January 7.
- **Urban Institute** updated its Debt in America Tracker and Financial Health and Wealth Dashboard, providing timely, place- and race-disaggregated data that help decision-makers across sectors identify emerging challenges, target interventions, and advance financial stability and wealth-building where it matters most.

Careers at AFN

AFN Hires New Carolinas Program Officer

Kristy Teskey
Carolinas Program Officer

AFN is excited to welcome **Kristy Teskey** as the new Carolinas AFN Program Officer, officially joining the team on Monday, February 26.

Based in Charlotte, Dr. Teskey brings more than 30 years of experience across philanthropy, nonprofit leadership, and cross-sector strategy—including leading major portfolios in economic mobility and wealth building, launching and scaling data-driven education and workforce initiatives, and advancing place-based small business and opportunity zone efforts across North Carolina.

AFN is Hiring: Join Our Growing Team!

Asset Funders Network is looking for committed, talented individuals who want to make a meaningful contribution to achieving economic justice. Explore our job openings below and share with your networks!

- New York Program Officer
- North Texas Program Officer

Missed an Issue?

Catch up on past stories in our newsletter archive.

AFN NEWSLETTER ARCHIVE

The conversation doesn't stop here. Join us on LinkedIn for real-time ideas, conversations, and voices shaping the future of equitable wealth building--**follow AFN!**

ASSET FUNDERS NETWORK
Grantmakers Advancing Economic Equity

The Asset Funders Network engages philanthropy to advance equitable wealth building and economic mobility.

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