Research, solutions and inspiration, delivered.

The Bulletin

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

May 15, 2026

> Investing in the ownership economy creates systemic change. **When philanthropy backs ownership strategies, it reshapes who gets to build wealth and influence the design of the economy itself.**

—ANNIKA LITTLE

May 2026 Blog, *The Next Frontier: Pairing Financial Stability with Ownership*

For years, philanthropy and impact investors have rightly focused on strengthening families' financial security and stability. Through financial coaching, emergency savings, credit building, and income supports, funders have expanded households' capacity to weather economic shocks and meet everyday needs. These interventions matter. They keep families from falling off a financial edge and allow them to plan for the future.

But stability alone isn't the destination. And the way we often measure progress through income gains doesn't fully capture what real economic mobility requires.

Continue reading Annika's May message >>>

The 2026 Conference Lineup Is Taking Shape

We're honored to share an early look at the speakers who will be joining us at AFN's 2026 National Grantmaker Conference, October 6–8 in Philadelphia. Together, they anchor three points in the conference's seven-conversation arc—from honest reflection, to the policy currents reshaping our field, to the transformative actions philanthropy must take to meet this moment.

Julián Castro, CEO of the Latino Community Foundation and former U.S. Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, will join us for Igniting Change Requires Naming Truths—pressing funders to move beyond treating symptoms toward reimagining the systems, structures, and narratives that shape economic opportunity today.

Ida Rademacher (Aspen Institute), **Darrick Hamilton** (The New School), and **Rashanda Perryman** (Vanguard) will lead Engineering Equity: Scaling Equitable Wealth Infrastructure & the Policies We Need—a plenary on the policy levers reshaping wealth-building for working families.

Carla Thompson (W.K. Kellogg Foundation), **Santhosh Ramdoss** (Gary Community Ventures), and **Bill Bynum** (HOPE) will close the convening with Becoming the Philanthropy this Moment Demands—a challenge to leave Philadelphia with the clarity, courage, and commitment to ignite lasting change.

These are just three of the seven main-stage conversations shaping the convening. Visit the conference page to view the full agenda and register today.

REGISTER NOW

New Publications and Resources to Inform Your Work

The Tax System as a Wealth-Building Lever: How RWJF Is Making the Case for Reform

Few foundations have treated tax policy as a wealth-building strategy—but the **Robert Wood Johnson Foundation** argues it belongs at the center of one. Drawing on years of listening to families and partnering with researchers, advocates, and communications strategists, RWJF has built a portfolio that treats tax reform as inseparable from health, care, and economic security.

The latest Members Making Impact case study traces how the foundation got there, what it has learned about funding the underlying intellectual debate, and why state-level engagement matters now—offering a practical entry point for funders weighing where tax policy fits in their own portfolios.

A Living Wage Floor: The Bet That Turns a Generation of Cash Evidence into Policy

A generation of direct cash pilots has delivered a consistent answer: when families receive unconditional, sufficient cash, they stabilize, pay down debt, and choose work that fits their lives. The harder question is how to turn that proof into durable policy.

In a new guest blog, **Hannah Thomas** and **Rachel Black** of **Incevia Policy Partners** make the case for a living wage floor—a regular, unconditional cash transfer for working-age households—and lay out where philanthropy is uniquely positioned to act: funding the policy research, state-level pilots, and delivery infrastructure that can make a federal floor politically viable and administratively achievable.

Upcoming AFN Events

NATIONAL WEBINAR: **Inclusive Prosperity for All: An Asset Funder's Guide to Supporting Immigrants and Refugees**
May 19, 2026 | 2:00 pm - 3:00 pm EST | REGISTER

AFN and Grantmakers Concerned with Immigrants and Refugees will introduce *An Asset Funders' Guide to Supporting Immigrants and Refugees in an Era of Harm*—covering how funders are moving resources now, which organizations are ready to receive capital, and how to make the case for immigrant-inclusive grantmaking. Featuring **Kevin Douglas** (Grantmakers Concerned with Immigrants and Refugees), **Laura Speer** (Annie E. Casey Foundation), **Sarah Pacilio** (Appleseed Network), and **Rebeca Rangel** (AFN, moderator).

MEMBER-ONLY BRIEFING: ***Defining "Enough" – A New Benchmark for Measuring Wealth-Building Impact***
June 11, 2026 | 1:00 pm - 2:00 pm EST | REGISTER

What level of wealth is enough for a household to thrive, and how should philanthropy measure progress? AFN, the Aspen Institute Financial Security Program, and funder partners are convening a pre-publication preview of *Essential Wealth*, a new data-driven benchmark for household wealth sufficiency. Featuring **Annika Little** (AFN), **Paula D'Ambrosa** (Prudential Financial), and **Julie Stone** (Gary Community Ventures).

NATIONAL WEBINAR: ***From Surviving to Thriving: What Gender-Based Violence Survivors Say Funders Need to Know About Economic Security***
June 25, 2026 | 12:00 pm - 1:00 pm EST | REGISTER

Up to 99% of gender-based violence survivors face economic abuse—damaged credit, depleted savings, stolen income, and debt they did not incur. AFN and FreeFrom are releasing *Advancing the Economic Security of Gender-Based Violence Survivors*, a new brief offering a survivor-informed roadmap for investing across the full arc of healing.

NATIONAL WEBINAR: ***Asset Protection Under Threat: Philanthropy's Role in Combating Financial Scams Across the Lifespan***
June 30, 2026 | 12:00 pm - 1:00 pm EST | REGISTER

Financial scams are eroding hard-won assets and undermining decades of wealth building, with older adults among the most frequently and severely targeted. AFN will convene a conversation on the scale of the threat, the current landscape of consumer protections at the federal, state, and institutional levels, and where philanthropic investment in education, prevention technology, advocacy, and victim support can have the greatest protective impact.

NATIONAL WEBINAR: ***Redefining the Important Role Employee Benefits Play in Financial Health & Asset Building***
July 9, 2026 | 2:00 pm - 3:15 pm EST | REGISTER

A job alone is increasingly insufficient to build financial security, let alone sustainable wealth—especially for low- and moderate-income workers. On July 9, AFN will convene a conversation on the workplace benefits landscape, employer strategies to strengthen workers' financial health, and where philanthropy can catalyze action. Confirmed speakers include **Malavika Krishnan** (JPMorganChase) and **Don Baylor** (Worker Solutions).

AFN UPCOMING EVENTS **RECORDED WEBINARS**

Member News and Announcements

- Welcome new AFN member, **Healthcare Foundation of Northern Lake County**. HFNLC's focus on expanding healthcare access for uninsured, underinsured, and medically underserved residents strengthens our cross-sector network advancing health, financial well-being, and inclusive wealth building.
- **The California Wellness Foundation** has released Building the Power to Be Well, a new strategic framework grounded in the conviction that race, money, and power shape who gets to be healthy. The framework centers community power building so more Californians can take action together for what they need to thrive.
- Advocacy efforts led by **AARP** resulted in fifteen states enacting laws in 2025 to protect Americans from having medical debt unfairly reported on credit reports, bringing the total to fifteen states since 2023, with more expected in 2026.
- **United Way for Greater Austin** released the first post-pandemic Early Childhood Education Landscape Report, **sponsored by AFN's Central Texas chapter funders.** The report arrives as Travis County voters approved $75 million a year through Raising Travis County to expand child care and out-of-school programs—findings that will help shape how those dollars reach kids and families.

Field Insights

- A new Scorecard from Goodman Philanthropies grades how the U.S. has done over the past five years in delivering financial services to low-income households across banking, credit, savings, investing, homeownership, insurance, and legacy planning—finding banking access the clearest success while savings, property insurance, and estate planning remain flat or declining, with most barriers tied to awareness, behavior, or product quality.

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.

We're sharing this email with you because you registered for an Asset Funders Network event or are interested in asset building news & events.

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