

'Green' Funding Seen Tilted To Bigger Advocates

Philanthropy Journal

March 26, 2012

Environmental funders are spending too little money on advocacy work to protect low-income areas and communities of color from environmental degradation, a new [report](#) says.

From 2007 to 2009, only 15 percent of environmental grant dollars were classified as benefiting "marginalized" communities, and only 11 percent were classified as advancing "social-justice" strategies, a "proxy for policy advocacy and community organizing that works toward structural change on behalf of those who are least well off politically, economically and socially," says Cultivating the Grassroots, a report from the National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy.

In the same period, the report says, grant dollars donated by funders who committed over 25 percent of their total dollars to the environment were three times less likely to be classified as benefiting marginalized groups than were grant dollars given by environmental funders in general.

Environmental funders "are expending tremendous resources, yet spending far too little on high-impact, cost-effective grassroots organizing," the report says.

In 2009, it says, half of all environmental grants went to environmental organizations with annual budgets over \$5 million, a group that represents only 2 percent of the nearly 29,000 environment and climate public charities in the U.S.

That suggests a "predominantly 'inside-the-beltway' top-down fundraising strategy," Sarah Hansen, author of the report, says in a statement.

"There are many effective pro-environment organizations on the ground that are under-resourced and underutilized," she says. "By overlooking these grassroots groups and

communities ripe for mobilizing to protect our environment from harm, philanthropy is marginalizing proven vehicles of social change and thus seeing less impact and progress."

[Read the full article](#) .