



**SOUTHERN
VISION
ALLIANCE**

MAY 2017- MAY 2018 ANNUAL REPORT



ORGANIZING TO TRANSFORM THE SOUTH



SOUTHERN VISION ALLIANCE

“MONKEY WRENCH”

The Southern Vision Alliance logo is a quilt square, a pattern commonly known as “monkey wrench.” In abolitionist folk tradition, quilt patterns helped guide fugitive slaves to find their way to freedom along the Underground Railroad, which ran through Appalachia to Ohio. The “shoofly” pattern symbolized a person who could help guide a fugitive slave; a “sailboat” indicated a body of water up ahead; “drunkard’s path” warned fugitives to take a zigzag route in order to evade slave catchers.

SVA adopted the monkey wrench to honor traditions of anti-racist resistance in the US South.

“Monkey wrench” has a dual meaning. The pattern signalled that fugitives should gather the tools they needed to get free. In contemporary culture, “monkey-wrenching” also means disrupt. In our case, we seek to disrupt the systems of injustice, inequality, and oppression.

CORE PROGRAMS

Youth Organizing Institute
Ignite NC

FISCALLY SPONSORED MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS

Books and Black Youth - Greensboro
Comité de Acción Popular – Raleigh
Community Alliance for Public Education
Greensboro Mural Project
Greensboro Participatory Budgeting
Movement to End Racism and Islamophobia
Muslims for Social Justice
NC Queer Youth Power Coalition
QTPOCC – Charlotte
Trans Pride in Action – Greensboro
The Tribe – Charlotte

FRONTLINE LEADERS FUNDS

Community Rapid Response Fund
Millennial Voter Engagement Fund
Queer Mobilization Fund
Toppling Racism Fund

SVA also offers short-term fiscal sponsorships.

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March 2018 • Raleigh • Students at Leesville Highschool walk-out protesting gun violence in schools

SVA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Babette Cromartie- *Communications and Development Associate*

Femi Shittu- *Program Coordinator*

IGNITE NC

D'atra Jackson- *Co-Director*

Holden Cession- *Co-Director*

Nhawndie Smith- *Triad Field Organizer*

Alx Griffin- *Charlotte Field Organizer*

Mary Lyons- *Western Field Organizer*

Femi Shittu- *Eastern and Triangle Field Organizer*



OUR GROWTH: SCALING UP TO DEFEND OUR COMMUNITIES

The Southern Vision Alliance (SVA) began as an experimental model that blossomed out of supporting the work, voices, and leadership of young people. SVA is committed to better understanding the history and role that young people have played in advancing change, and our organizational aim is to create entry points to the movement that connect to that legacy.

SVA is an organizational intermediary that supports youth organizing, including maintaining institutional memory, which is crucial for sustaining youth movements. SVA's model created a space and an infrastructure for people to come together and feel supported in reaching their goals while maintaining their autonomy.

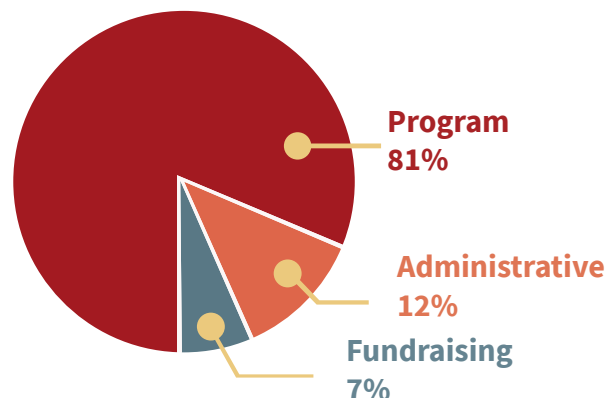
As we continue to grow, we see community defense as an overarching necessity for our work as a whole. This past year we supported many movement mobilizations including reverberations of the Charlotte Uprising, resistance to organized white supremacy in Charlottesville and Durham, and the latest mass resistance in the United States led by young people demanding safe schools. Community defense is not just about the most visible results of our work like direct actions and massive demonstrations. Highly visible moments are important, but rarely tell the full story and can quickly fizzle out. We push beyond short-term visibility to lay the groundwork for long-term, systemic change.

Ella Baker, brilliant civil rights leader, organizer, and North Carolinian, often spoke about organizing as 'spadework.' We must tend to resilience, leadership development, and political education to give our organizations and movements fertile soil and strong roots. We must direct resources, financial and otherwise, to advance the work and to sustain the people doing it. This tending to the ground, in addition to the more visible moments, makes our movements more vibrant, powerful, and prepared to take on the fights ahead of us. This is the multifaceted work that SVA member organizations do.

After practicing this model for several years, we were ready to invite more people into the SVA family. Our ensuing growth has proven that our model works: from 2016-2017, SVA grew by 20% overall, and from 2017-2018, SVA grew an additional 40%. As we grapple with the growing scale of our work, our expansion signals that what we're doing not only works, but it's resonating.

2017 FINANCIAL SUMMARY

Revenue Total: \$1,137,582



OUR MISSION

The Southern Vision Alliance (SVA) is a “grassroots intermediary” organized to provide infrastructure, capacity-building, coaching and technical assistance to groups and projects led by directly-impacted communities, with a special emphasis on youth-led and youth-centered programs.

SVA supports leadership development, organizing, and base-building programs with a pro-democracy agenda that work for social, racial, economic, gender, education, LGBTQ and environmental justice, in the US South.

WHAT WE DO

SVA Supports Directly-Impacted Communities



To Become Organized Movements Able to Effect Change



SVA BY THE NUMBERS: OUR IMPACT

\$18,000

Amount regranted
by Community Rapid
Response Fund



48+

mini-grants
awarded by the
Community Rapid
Response Fund

14,900

number of teachers in Raleigh on May 16-
CRRF supported delegations of teachers
from 12 counties across the state



10



new SVA fellows:
Community Rapid
Response, Internal
Operations, Research,
Community-Labor

30+

mini-grants awarded
by the Toppling
Racism Fund totaling
over \$20,000

4

Freedom
Schools in
Chapel Hill,
Durham,
Raleigh and
Greensboro



96

youth
leaders paid



85%

identify as people
of color



18

mini-grants awarded by Queer Mobilization Fund

5,000

students walking out
during March for Our
Lives, YOI supported 20+
student organizers at 15
different high schools
across the state



15

SVA partners
attended our
All Member
Gathering

OUR STRATEGIES: TILLING THE SOIL AND TENDING TO OUR ROOTS

RESILIENCE, LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT, AND POLITICAL EDUCATION

“There have been so many shifts—nationally and internationally, statewide and locally— that to imagine that we’d go through 2016–2017 unscathed... that’d be impossible. What does it mean for us to be resilient and not discard of people moving in trauma when we’re in disagreement? Emerging from a deeper desire to do that & move with resilience—as black folks, as queer and trans folks, as Southerners—there’s been lots of learning & growing.”

– Holden Cession, Co-Director, Ignite NC

At the time of our last report, in April 2017, we were four months into the new year and experiencing increasing escalation of racist violence at the hands of various law enforcement agencies across the nation. In North Carolina, a partial HB2 repeal not only took away Charlotte’s protections for trans residents and prevented local wins for LGBTQ people, but effectively left HB2 in place.

Since then, the attacks have continued both at the hands of the state and by an emboldened militant far-right white supremacist movement that burst into the wider public awareness in Charlottesville last year. Young survivors of the mass shooting in Parkland, FL brought the issues of school safety and gun violence to the forefront of the political discussion nationally.

“What does it mean for us to be resilient and not discard of people moving in trauma when we’re in disagreement?”

– Holden Cession, Co-Director, Ignite NC



Emerging Candidate Summit • June 2, 2018 at Fayetteville State University

Holden Cession, co-director of Ignite NC, reminds us in the face of all these attacks that community defense work includes: “...defending access to spaces where folks feel that they can bring their voice, fullest self, and be welcomed in their dignity.”

They continue:

“Coming out of 2016, when we had HB2 & the Charlotte Uprising, with more overt community defense work for myself and folks involved, was draining people’s energy. How do we hold our communities together after going through hard stuff and how do we build resilience as a unit, so we don’t feel like we’re being picked and torn apart as we go up against the beast—and so we don’t become it? This year has been a big year to see resilience and self-care as how we defend our communities. It’s there but wouldn’t been seen as overtly what it means to defend our communities.”

One way that Ignite NC has practiced resilience as an organization is by incorporating embodied leadership in their work. D’atra Jackson and Holden Cession became Co-Directors of Ignite NC in January 2017, bringing a major shift to the organizational leadership structure. They ground their leadership in their relationship with BOLD (Black Organizing for Leadership and Dignity) and by incorporating somatics into their organization.

At the end of Youth Organizing Institute participation in Dignity in Schools' National Week of Action, the organization held their annual Queernival event with attendance from 100 students, parents, and community members. Queernival, "a southern celebration of queer youth liberation," is a festive atmosphere and a safe space for LGBTQ students, who don't always get safety and acceptance in their schools.

Mirroring the growth of SVA, Ignite NC and YOI's youth leadership development pipelines are scaling up their work and building a broader base. In addition to their semester-long fellowships, Ignite NC is doing its first-ever summer fellowship in Summer 2018, called Our Freedom Summer, rooted in electoral politics for young Black people ages 18 through 35 to have a broad and nuanced perspective in voting, using political education and highlighting local efforts.

After last year's successful Freedom Schools, YOI is expanding to a third location in Greensboro in addition to holding sessions in Durham and Raleigh. YOI also started a new fellowship to honor the contributions of NC HEAT, an organization that grew out of YOI's Freedom School a few years ago with the goal of training up young organizers and investing in campaigns that reflect their lives.

The six-month NC HEAT fellowship, with a cohort of 5 fellows, all young Black and queer students, started in January 2018 and ran until June 2018. The fellowship is a series of political education sessions on topics such as Media and Commu-



March 2018 • Students walk out in Raleigh during national protest against gun violence in schools

nications, Direct Actions and Civil Disobedience, and Global Solidarity. Additionally, fellows read and discuss Adrienne Maree Brown's book *Emergent Strategy*. Next year the second cohort of the NC HEAT Fellowship will expand into a year-long fellowship.

Training up more youth and student leaders is vital for supporting vibrant, powerful, and flourishing movements that work to defend communities facing oppression. As Ignite NC Field Organizer and YOI Program Coordinator Femi Shittu shares, "Inherently, student movements have taken care of the movements around them. I think of SNCC and their role in the movement—it's that type of framework."



"I have the notion and belief that everyone can get sustained in this movement. I hope that everyone stays an organizer for the rest of their lives, that there's an influence. You have a social justice and equity lens because of everything you're exposed to in your time at Ignite, including learning about intersectionality and racism in higher education. I hope it stays with everyone who builds with us, no matter how it looks like for them."

— Femi Shittu, Ignite NC Field Organizer and YOI Program Coordinator



December 2017 • The first cohort of NC HEAT (Heros Emerging Among Teens) Fellows started in December 2017. NC HEAT grew out of YOI's Freedom School with the goal of providing political education to youth leaders.



Ignite NC is a social justice and organizing fellowship program for college-age youth run by young people of color. Ignite NC believes in young people's capacity to lead movements for social change. From voting rights to LGBT equality, Ignite NC is dedicated to defending the gains made by previous generations and building a more just future.

Formed in 2013 • Founding SVA Program



Formed in 2010 • Founding SVA Program



October 2017 • Winston Salem State University • Black University Summit

YOI/IGNITE NC ALUMNI: WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

My name is Jorge Luis Ramos. I was a part of YOI Freedom school in the summer of 2014 I believe. I continue to live in Raleigh, NC. And I am a part-time youth program coordinator at El Pueblo, Inc. My time with YOI was impactful in the sense that it helped me build my analysis of intersectional issues on a more local level. It helped me connect with other folks doing work around different issues from my own in the area. And it helped to foster long lasting relationships that I still hold to this day. I really enjoyed my time as a freedom school participant.

Current job:
Youth Program Coordinator
El Pueblo, Inc.



Jorge Luis Ramos
YOI Freedom School, Summer 2014

I was involved with North Carolina Heros Emerging Among Teens (NC HEAT) working to end the school-to-prison pipeline in Wake County in 2014-2015. I was involved with Ignite NC since my senior year of high school in 2015 until my sophomore year of college. I currently live in Durham, NC and I am a student at North Carolina Central University double majoring in Political Science and History. I am a member of BYP100, Black Workers for Justice, and currently an intern with the SNCC Digital Gateway Project at Duke University.

My time with YOI/NC HEAT engendered my idea of student power and my understanding of young people's contributions to the southern freedom struggle. At the YOI freedom school in 2014, I learned about the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian people and the solidarity that existed between Black people and Palestinians. Since then I have spoken at numerous events on the need for Black and Palestinian solidarity. My sophomore year I



Ajamu Dillahunt
YOI 2014-2015 and Ignite NC 2015-2017

spoke at UVA to honor the life of Julian Bond and how we are organizing in SNCC's tradition. Ignite NC helped me understand the Board of Governors and their attacks on public education and their underfunding of Historically Black Colleges and Universities.

MAKING IT RAIN

REGRANTING AND FRONTLINE LEADERS FUNDS

“When I think of community defense, I think about relationship building and skill building, of empowering people to take care of each other and themselves. I think that our role within that is finding the resources—with the Queer Mobilization Fund, financial resources—to empower people.” – Dolores Chandler, QMF Project Coordinator

There are three core areas to SVA’s work. The first is SVA’s youth leadership development pipeline with YOI and Ignite NC. The second is providing technical assistance and fiscal sponsorship to grassroots groups. The third area is Fronlines Leaders Funds: the Queer Mobilization Fund, the Community Rapid Response Fund, the Millennial Voter Engagement Fund, and the Toppling Racism Fund. These funds are designed to respond to “movement moments” by moving small amounts of support and resources to directly-impacted communities organizing around big political shifts, strategic battles, and to the frontlines of the moment for justice and change.

The **Queer Mobilization Fund (QMF)** was formed in the wake of HB2, in a period when young queer and trans people of color were taking to the streets and organizing on the frontlines in North Carolina. QMF has a goal of diverting and redirecting funds to queer, trans, and gender non-conforming people of color who are from directly impacted communities and excluded from traditional funding streams. The last QMF mini-grant period (2016-2017) gave out 34 grants totaling close to \$30,000, with an average grant of a little over \$700.



Queer and trans organizers taking the streets in Raleigh post HB2

As QMF prepares to re-launch in 2019 and identify the most effective ways to support people on the ground, it has pulled together a field team to engage in a community needs assessment and listening project. The aim of the project is to learn more about what trans and gender non-conforming people of color are dealing with in their daily lives and how organizers are responding to these issues. The fund is launching an online survey in mid-May of 2018 and planning to host listening circles in five key areas across North Carolina in the summer and fall. Ultimately, QMF is aiming to make the fund a sustainable, long-term funding source for grassroots groups as a way to resource the work of protecting and defending queer and trans communities of color in North Carolina.



“A truth for me in the events of the past 2.5 years, is that we are the ones who are going to have to take care of ourselves, because nobody else is gonna take care of us. We are living in a time where there’s constantly assaults on our rights—not just legal rights, but our rights to our humanity. We are the ones who have to take care of ourselves and protect each other.”

– Dolores Chandler, QMF Project Coordinator



Alongside the ongoing attacks on queer and trans communities that disproportionately impact queer, trans, and gender non-conforming communities of color, an emboldened far-right white supremacist movement has been on the rise. In the aftermath of the events in Charlottesville in which white supremacists terrorized the community, harming organizers, and killing an anti-racist activist, SVA formed the **Toppling Racism Fund**.

White supremacy and white supremacist movements didn’t emerge with the most recent election—they have been present since the founding of the US on the genocide of indigenous communities and enslavement of Black people, a history that remains at every institutional level in this country. Our current political moment represents a white supremacist backlash to anti-racist movements resisting this historical and contemporary violence. Our people have responded with bold and sharp organizing to remove badges, symbols, and sites of white supremacy in the South and across the country, from the Confederacy to Columbus’ genocidal legacy.



“Too often our communities are not sanctuaries for poor people, people of color, queer people. There are too few places where people feel safe and many others where people are daily subjected to violence. White supremacy, patriarchy—all these institutions are interconnected; so many campaigns we do are connected to these systems and institutions.”

– Elena Everett, SVA Director

MAKING IT RAIN: CONTINUED

Since its founding last fall, the **Toppling Racism Fund** has given out 24 mini-grants and granted over \$16,000. In Durham, activists used direct action to take down a Confederate monument in downtown, receiving international attention. The Toppling Racism Fund not only supported and defended the local activists who were facing criminal charges, state repression, and white supremacist vigilante backlash, but furthermore became a platform to support other communities to “Do it like Durham!” The TRF advisory board is a multi-racial group of young people who were charged in response to the actions in Durham.

In February 2018, Durham activists scored a major victory. In response to political pressure and organizing work, the Durham DA dropped all charges in relation to the statue coming down. Elena Everett reminds us: “Removing symbols of white supremacy is not a crime. Toppling racism is not a crime. We hope it inspires other people and it has.”



Above: August 2017 • Toppling of Confederate Statue in Durham.

Below: September 2018 • Toppling Racism Fund supports National Week of Action to Topple White Supremacy with thirteen solidarity actions across the United States.



In addition to supporting the work in Durham, the Toppling Racism Fund has given out mini-grants to support groups holding demonstrations in their own cities, towns, and campuses at sites and symbols of white supremacy. Examples include:

- Take ‘Em Down NOLA, a group with a long history of organizing to remove white supremacist monuments
- Roanoke People’s Power Network, a coalition working on issues of jail conditions and how that relates to white supremacy
- Smash White Supremacy Coalition (Chicago), a collective working to remove a Confederate monument in a cemetery where Ida B. Wells is buried and to replace it with a monument to Ida B. Wells
- Shut ‘Em Down NYC, an organization that held an action in Columbus Circle that sought to draw attention to Columbus’ legacy of genocide and white supremacy

“The Toppling Racism Fund encourages experimentation with teach-ins, art projects, demonstrations. There needs to be multiple tactics and strategies. If a little pot of \$500 help means that something is happening or not, we’re happy to be playing a role.” – Elena Everett, SVA Director

FRUITS OF OUR LABOR

DIRECT ACTION, MASS RESISTANCE, AND POWER

The dismissal of all charges against local activists in Durham related to community members taking down the Confederate Monument was not the only victory or showing of movement power connected to SVA's work and member organizations this year:

Ignite NC Fellows at UNC-Charlotte won their campaign to get an LGBTQ Center. Fellows at NC A&T, while working to get their own LGBTQ Center, held a powerful Pride Week and started a community needs assessment on campus so people can define what they need and what safety means to them. Ignite NC fellows worked to challenge white supremacy on their campuses—from Appalachian State students proactively countering white supremacists organizing on their campus, pushing the administration to actually respond and engage, to students at UNC-Chapel Hill working to take down the Silent Sam monument.



September 2017 • Ignite NC's Fall 2017 cohort of fellows at a three-day training retreat.

After **YOI** held a community meeting with students from five schools in Durham in preparation for the March for Our Lives walkout on March 14, 2018, three out of the five schools participated in the walkout. In Raleigh, 700 students at Leesville High walked-out. The March for Our Lives created an opportunity for Ignite NC and YOI to collaborate, listen to each other, and share political analysis and skills. YOI held another successful National Week of Action Against School Pushout. They collaborated with Dignity in Schools to make videos that put faces and stories to the issue of school pushout and the school to prison pipeline.



March for Our Lives walkouts on March 14, 2018



Greensboro Mural Project convened listening sessions with community members, crafted a democratic selection process with submissions from community members, and painted its newest mural, the Tough Love Letters Mural in downtown Greensboro, followed by a great community celebration.



Movement to End Racism and Islamophobia waged a successful two-month campaign to free Raleigh-based Palestinian immigrant Mosa Hamadeesa from ICE detention.

Community Alliance for Public Education won a raise for classified staff and coverage pay for extra-duty work to help de-privatize Durham Public Schools custodial services. CAPE also launched the Durham Community Schools Campaign to provide wrap around services in public schools which will pilot at 5 DPS schools in the fall.



“The work of building resilient leaders and organizations, deep listening to prepare for the fights ahead, and resourcing groups to move nimbly in this political moment, creates the conditions for the growing power of SVA, our core programming, and member organizations. As we continue to scale up our work, we will continue to build power to transform the U.S. South—this beautiful, complicated region we call home.”

SVA AROUND THE WORLD



This year, SVA helped leaders travel to **Cuba**, **London**, and **South Africa** to connect with organizers and strategists, swap stories, and build power and solidarity across the Global South. We sat down to chat with two of the people who traveled to South Africa in December 2017, Dee Dee and Femi, who participated in this exchange between the U.S. and South African organizers, convened by the Movement for Black Lives.

Why did you go to South Africa?

D’atra ‘Dee Dee’ Jackson: A lot of it was part of a convening that Movement for Black Lives built as an exchange with organizers and organizations in South Africa that brought together 25 US organizers and 25 South African organizers. The convening was a space of political education—one day was on socialism, another was on apartheid and post-apartheid South Africa, as well as an opportunity to compare structures and conditions that organizers face, and sharing experimentation strategies—an example from the U.S. was the Black Mama Bail Out campaign. We also wanted to build comradery and comradeship together.

For Ignite NC, we wanted to share stories of student organizing, especially with the #FeesMustFall campaign that won, as well as drawing connections between the tearing down of Confederate monuments in the U.S. and the tearing down of the Rhodes Statue that was in front of the school.



U.S. and South African Organizer Exchange convened by the Movement for Black Lives

Femi Shittu: It was a way to really invest in what we really believe in, the collective liberation across the globe and diaspora that is held with youth leadership. And to learn from the #FeesMustFall and #RhodesMustFall campaign, which was an uprising in higher education after tuition hikes, that pushed out Black South Africans and catered to white South Africans. It was a chance for us to meet, spend time together, and share our culture, history, and experiences.

What were some of your big takeaways?

Dee Dee: In this political landscape we are in, basically fascism, we need to build intentionally with other countries and organizers, because things are gonna get worse before they get better. It’s also about understanding the U.S. as an imperialist country that is sucking the lifeblood out of countries around the world. It’s about showing up intentionally to build comradery and solidarity across the Global South. It’s also about growing our political lens, things that apply here do not apply other places. Like, people look at racism differently there, as there are black folks in power, and in that context, it’s different. Most black people live in the Global South, and we can draw on the historical practices of building solidarity because the work’s been done in the past. For example, the Black Panthers had good relationships with folks in the anti-apartheid movement.

Are there more collaborations to come in the future?

Femi: We want to have an exchange between Ignite NC and South African student organizers, to have some Ignite NC organizers on the ground in South Africa to learn from their work and for some South African organizers to come to North Carolina and learn from our work. It’s something we want to see happen in 2019.

FOUNDATIONS, ORGANIZATIONS, AND INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT

Amy Mandel and Katina Rodis Fund
Anonymous Fund of Triangle Community Foundation
Ben & Jerry's Foundation
Bend the Arc
Blueprint NC
Borealis Philanthropy Transforming Movements Fund
BYP100 Education Fund
William T. and Amy J. Conway Fund at the Cleveland Foundation
Common Stream
Communities for Just Schools Fund
Democracy NC
Dignity in Schools Campaign
Edward W. Hazen Foundation
Emergent Fund
Ford Foundation
Freeman Foundation
Fund 4 Democratic Communities
Funders for LGBTQ Issues - Out in the South
Greg & Maria Jobin-Leeds Fund of Tides Foundation
Groundswell Fund Rapid Response Fund
Hill-Snowdon Foundation

Hispanics in Philanthropy
The Honeybee Fund of the Common Counsel Foundation
Laughing Gull Foundation
LGBTQ Racial Justice Fund and Astraea Lesbian Foundation for Justice
Mary Reynolds Babcock Foundation, Inc.
The Nandu Fund
NEO Philanthropy's Youth Engagement Fund
Noyes Foundation Resilience and Protection Fund
Open Society Foundation
Mario Savio Young Activist Award Fund of Tides Foundation
Resist
Solidaire
Third Wave Fund, a hosted project of the Proteus Fund
Urgent Action Fund for Women's Human Rights
Wellspring Philanthropic Fund
Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation

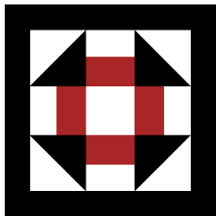
OUR DONORS

SVA and its member organizations appreciate all the support we receive from our community.

SVA recieved generous support from more than 2,000 individuals over the past year. In order to protect their privacy and safety, we have chosen not to list individual names this year.



“We are proud to support and be in community with Southern Vision Alliance. We are so inspired by their work to provide infrastructure, leadership, and vision to movement organizations across North Carolina. They make organizing possible and sustainable for so many in this state.”
-Maggie Heraty and David Roswell



**SOUTHERN
VISION
ALLIANCE**

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Learn more today at
southernvision.org