

Mosaic Movement Infrastructure RFP: Trends Snapshot

February 2021

INTRODUCTION & PURPOSE

[Mosaic](#) is a national initiative to amplify the power of the environmental field – the people and organizations who devote significant efforts to environmental protection and healthy and just communities – by bolstering the critical infrastructure all movements need to succeed. Mosaic invests in shared tools that empower people and organizations to work together, like communications, leadership development, advocacy tools and training, data, relationships, and philanthropic innovation.

Mosaic is underpinned by core [values](#) of being inclusive, co-creative, complementary, adaptive, and transformative. It is in this spirit that we have developed this trends snapshot, which summarizes the themes and trends from the proposals Mosaic received as a part of Mosaic’s inaugural [Movement Infrastructure RFP](#). Approximately 1500+ collaborating organizations across the country submitted 455 proposals, representing a significant snapshot of the infrastructure movement participants seek to improve the effectiveness of their work.

In developing this initial analysis, we hope to share knowledge and ideas about these needs back to the field and provide a broader, holistic view than is often available to individual movement participants and their allies. We also are motivated by a desire to help shift towards a new normal in which funder and field relationships are open and transparent. Ultimately, we hope that the themes and trends in this report can provide the grounds for catalyzing action for both field leaders in identifying connections and for funders in informing funding strategies.

CONTEXT & BACKGROUND

After more than eighteen months of co-generative development with more than 100 diverse environmental and justice organizations, Mosaic launched in May 2020, led by a 16-member [Governance Assembly](#) which reflects the diversity of the environmental movement.

To advance Mosaic’s overarching goal of strengthening field-wide movement infrastructure, in October 2020, the Governance Assembly opened a national funding round seeking proposals to fund project ideas that advance one or more of the six types of movement infrastructure (referred to as “honeycombs,” see figure 1). Mosaic invited proposals that were collaborative by design, engage and benefit multiple stakeholders, and create shared tools that are widely beneficial to multiple



Figure 1: Mosaic's Six Areas of Strategic Focus

movement actors. In response, over five weeks Mosaic received 455 funding requests collectively totaling \$126 million.

From this set of proposals, Mosaic's Governance Assembly made \$3 million in grants to 21 project collaborations in February 2021. As a whole, the full set of proposals, which cover a full range of environmental and justice issues and infrastructure areas, offers an incisive look at the needs of a significant set of movement participants, according to these advocates and activists.

METHODS

Mosaic collected the data included in this report through submissions to Mosaic's Movement Infrastructure RFP from September 2020 to October 2020. Proposal applicants were asked to provide information about their project through a short narrative form. Mosaic staff reviewed and analyzed all submitted proposals, with particular attention to assessing the relationship of proposals to the following key areas:

- Area of movement infrastructure (leadership development, relationships and trust, advocacy tools and training, data and information, communications, and philanthropic innovation)
- Primary environmental focus area (climate and energy, health and justice, systems, air, water, and land)
- Region (National, Northeast, Southeast, Midwest, Plains, Pacific West (including Alaska and Hawaii))
- Diversity information provided by applicants

WHAT WE HEARD

The following section outlines the response from applicants, our analysis on the themes, and trends from the proposals across geography, issue areas, frameworks, and areas of movement infrastructure. Included in this are an overview of priorities identified by the field, Mosaic's Governance Assembly's initial grantmaking approach, and potential gaps in our data.

OVERALL RESPONSE FROM THE FIELD

Over five weeks, Mosaic received 455 funding requests collectively totaling \$126 million. Covering a full range of environmental issues—from air to water, climate to land protection, and toxics to agriculture—the proposals came from existing and new collaboratives across the country seeking to build field-wide infrastructure. Grant requests averaged at \$275K, majority single-year requests, with an average budget size of \$11.2M. Applicants reported that about 54% of projects were majority BIPOC-led and 75% majority-women led.



Figure 2: Total grant requests & amounts

LED BY	
Project staff	Board
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 54% majority BIPOC-led 74.5% majority women/gender non-conforming-led 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 42% majority BIPOC-led 49% majority women/gender non-conforming-led

Figure 3: BIPOC & women/gender non-conforming led proposals

GEOGRAPHIC THEMES

Proposals related to projects that are national in scope constituted the largest portion, followed by proposals focused on the Pacific West and Southeast.



Figure 4: Geographic spread of 455

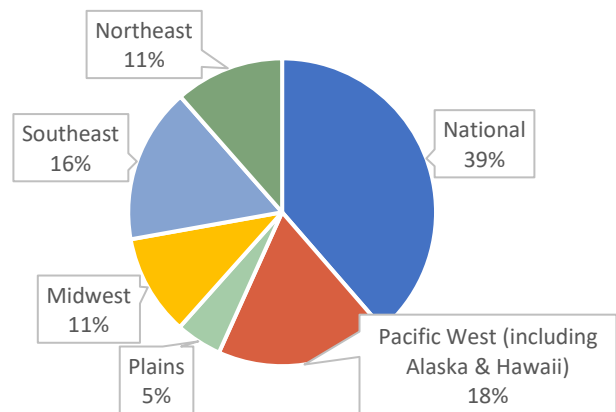


Figure 5: Regional breakdown of 455

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUE AREA THEMES

Recognizing that many organizations and collaborations work at the intersection of multiple environmental issues, applicants indicated their “primary” issue area of focus. The majority of projects focused on health and justice and climate and energy, followed by systems, water, land, and air.

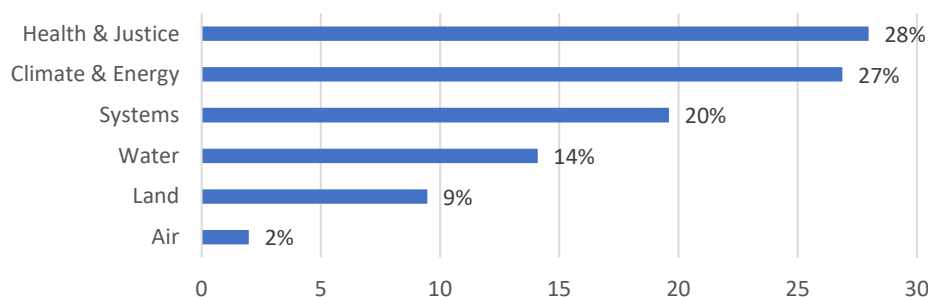


Figure 6: Primary environmental issue area

FRAMEWORK THEMES

Our analysis of the proposal set showed that in addition to geographic and issue focus areas, many proposals sought to build infrastructure to support campaigns, theories of change, or other substantive lenses on environmental protection. Among the most prominent:

- Green New Deal
- A Just Transition
- Energy Democracy
- Rights of Nature
- Youth Climate Movement
- Indigenous/Tribal Frameworks

The projects proposed implementing a variety of types of infrastructure to achieve the goals of each of these frameworks, from community planning, organizing, and engagement, to legislation and policy strategies.

INFRASTRUCTURE THEMES

In applying for a grant, applicants were asked to identify the type(s) of infrastructure for which they sought funding regarding the six Mosaic’s “honeycomb” focus areas: (1) communications, (2) leadership development, (3) advocacy tools and training, (4) data and information, (5) relationships and trust, and (6) philanthropic innovation. Given the interconnected nature of these areas of infrastructure, a vast majority of proposed projects indicated multiple types of infrastructure. For the purposes of analysis, Mosaic’s staff team identified the primary infrastructure focus for each project through a review of the proposal narrative. For example, projects that proposed building or amplifying networks or coalitions were tagged as primarily relationships and trust. However, we acknowledge that this analysis has its limitations. Nevertheless, we found that three types of infrastructure surfaced most across the requests:

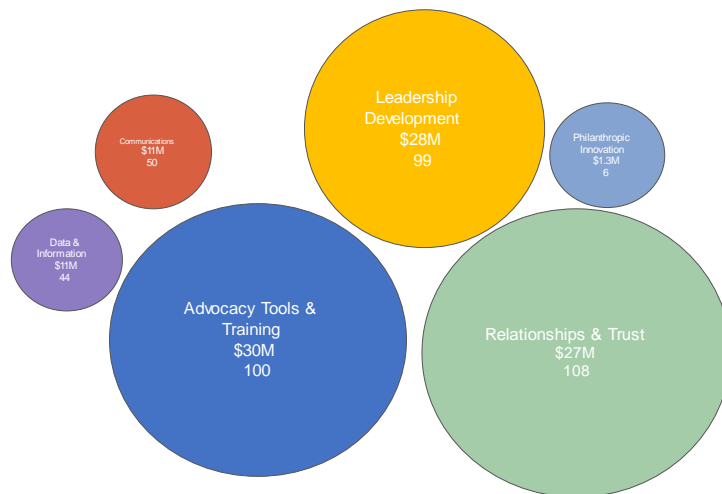


Figure 7: Mosaic honeycombs by requests

However, we acknowledge that this analysis has its limitations. Nevertheless, we found that three types of infrastructure surfaced most across the requests:

1. **Advocacy tools and training (\$30M):** Developing modern advocacy and organizing field-wide capacity to engage in enough broad, inclusive, multi-issue policy campaigns at the local, state, and national scale.
2. **Leadership development (\$28M):** Including understanding, attracting, supporting, and motivating a broad and diverse constituency.
3. **Relationships and trust (\$27M):** Building productive relationships are critical to being able to take advantage of the scale of the field in order to build power to advance environmental goals over the long run.

Overall, some of the common types and examples of infrastructure that we heard include, but are not limited to:

1. Leadership development

- o Fellowships & training programs for underserved communities in the movement (Black, indigenous, women, youth)
- o BIPOC Board members network

2. Data & information

- o Citizen science data apps
- o People, power & policy mapping
- o Polling & public opinion data
- o Environmental hackathons



3. Communications

- o Shared narrative development across campaigns / issue areas
- o Physical communications hubs & resource centers

4. Advocacy tools & training

- o Policy libraries
- o Organizing & advocacy replicable toolkits
- o Knowledge exchange platforms

5. Relationships & trust

- o General operating & scaling of existing collaborative networks, coalitions, infrastructure entities
- o Facilitation & staff for coalition building

6. Philanthropic innovation

- o Participatory grantmaking & evaluation best practices
- o Funder communities of practice & learning
- o Giving data

Our analysis also enabled us to correlate Mosaic’s infrastructure focus areas (leadership development, data and information, etc.) with an environmental focus (air, water, etc.) and also with a geographic region.



Top issue areas:

- **TOOLS & TRAINING:** Health & Justice
- **LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT:** Health & Justice
- **RELATIONSHIPS & TRUST:** Health & Justice
- **COMMUNICATIONS:** Climate & Energy
- **DATA & INFORMATION:** Water
- **PHILANTHROPIC INNOVATION:** Health & Justice



Top regions (after national):

- **TOOLS & TRAINING:** Pacific West
- **LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT:** Southeast
- **RELATIONSHIPS & TRUST:** Southeast
- **COMMUNICATIONS:** Pacific West
- **DATA & INFORMATION:** Southeast
- **PHILANTHROPIC INNOVATION:** Midwest & Pacific West

Lastly, we noted three different types of themes in the proposal set:

- Approximately half of the proposals were for projects working on the local scale (community- to state-level) on an issue or campaign-specific infrastructure with learnings intended to share with broader movement actors.
- Approximately half of the projects were regional or national networks and infrastructure organizations (coalitions, campaigns, etc.) seeking general support for scaling their current work.
- A remaining fraction of proposals were focused on field-wide, national infrastructure programs.



LIFTING UP PROPOSALS MOSAIC COULD NOT FUND: OPPORTUNITIES BEYOND MOSAIC'S GRANTS

Consistent with its focus on enhancing collaboration, Mosaic is launching an online sharing space in March 2021, called MosaicConnect, to lift up and provide information to funders and other stakeholders on proposals that it could not fund. With the permission of interested applicants, this platform will be publicly available to the field and funders in the hopes of creating opportunities for connection and collaboration across the field. This platform reflects Mosaic's recognition of the value of all of the work proposed, and its desire to support more transparent and accessible philanthropic relationships.

MOSAIC'S RESPONSE & GRANT SELECTION

In the context of this full set of proposals, Mosaic's Governance Assembly met throughout the Fall of 2020 to review all proposals and select grants. Our grant slate is helping create new tech hubs, bolster communications capacity, support and expand a range of networks, democratize access to data, cultivate advocacy by groups newer to the movement, deepen organizing capacity, lift leadership development efforts, and advance new ways of thinking about environmental protection. In addition to each project's lead steward, 91 co-applicants are directly collaborating on the 21 projects in the grant slate.

The grants Mosaic's Governance Assembly selected not only build connection, collaboration, and new tools, but they do so with a significant focus on ensuring the environmental movement is equitable, inclusive, and anti-racist. An end in and of themselves, these principles also create the conditions for the entire movement's progress and effectiveness. The Governance Assembly also included projects that expand the involvement of less well-represented constituencies in the movement, consistent with Mosaic's commitment to supporting and building bridges between organizations and approaches that reflect the political, geographic, and social diversity of the environmental movement.

CONCLUSION & NEXT STEPS

The response to Mosaic's Movement Infrastructure RFP underscores the degree to which advocates and activists see the need for movement infrastructure to enhance collaboration between organizations across the environmental community. In this context, Mosaic offers a few reflections on the potential implications for the environmental community:

- **Funders:**
 - The scale of the response over five weeks during the pandemic highlights the opportunity for scaled investment in systems-level solutions that support the field with equity at the center, particularly with a focus on tools, leadership, and relationships.
 - Infrastructure at all levels—locally based, with connections to national efforts—is critical to building and supporting the field at scale.
 - There is an opportunity to focus investments in the health and justice and climate communities, where we heard the greatest need for infrastructure support and reinforcement.

- **Field:**
 - There are opportunities to build greater connection and alignment across geographies, issue areas, and strategies. Mosaic seeks to support and catalyze that connection through the MosaicConnect platform where it is welcome and desired.

We hope that this snapshot report continues to catalyze conversation within the environmental field about the role of infrastructure that centers equity in our pursuit of building a more connected, effective, just, and inclusive environmental movement that is better equipped to achieve environmental wins. This inaugural RFP has been an opportunity for Mosaic to launch its main grantmaking and take the initiative from theory to action. It has also offered a deep sampling of the current state of the environmental field and what types of infrastructure it needs – both that were identified through Mosaic's co-generative design process and potentially beyond.

While this analysis provides an initial insight into the current needs of the field, further analysis is needed to truly unpack the current state of the movement. As a part of our commitment to realizing the positive and broad impacts of movement infrastructure to amplify the entire movement, Mosaic will be partnering with the [Johns Hopkins SNF Agora Institute](#) to conduct further analysis, with a deeper report expected in Summer 2021.

The response to this RFP underscores Mosaic's commitment to the indispensable value of infrastructure to enable people working on clean air and water, a safe climate, and thriving natural systems to generate the power and coordination needed to meet the scale of today's challenges. We look forward to continuing to share learnings and catalyze action towards these ends. Please feel free to connect with our team at info@mosaicmomentum.org with any questions, ideas, or thoughts on this report or opportunities to collaborate. Thank you!