Mapping the Moment: Challenges and Opportunities for Building Movement Power

Insights from Mosaic's 2025 Open Cycle

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ABOUT MOSAIC

Mosaic is a national collaborative fund and field catalyst that boosts the collective power of the environmental movement in the United States, inclusive of climate, conservation, and environmental health and justice, to achieve durable, population-level wins. A participatory grantmaker created by and for the field, Mosaic supports the connectivity and shared tools — also known as movement infrastructure — needed to build and exercise power across demographics, geographies, and issue silos.

ABOUT THIS REPORT

In February 2025, Mosaic launched an **open call for concept notes** for collaborative projects, coalitions, and networks aimed at building bridges and scaling the influence of the environmental movement. The grant opportunity specifically addressed three critical strategies for defending five decades of progress nationally, while accelerating momentum at the state and local levels: Breaking down silos within the movement and with other intersecting movements; building narrative power; and leveraging the environmental movement to defend democracy.

The open call generated 965 applications spanning a broad range of issues and sectors. Mosaic conducted an in-depth quantitative and qualitative analysis of these submissions to understand both the challenges and the solution sets being put forward by the field at all geographic levels. **This analysis reveals a clear need for increased investment in essential power-building work to move the needle on climate, conservation, and environmental health and justice goals.** The data highlights key strategies and funding opportunities for building a powerful, pluralistic, big tent movement as a vehicle to defend progress and advance change.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- State and regional approaches are central to how groups — including national organizations — are implementing their strategies.

- Over a quarter of projects emphasized rural communities, highlighting a gap in movement-building support for this sector.

- Movement fragmentation continues to be a major impediment to success, leading to siloed advocacy, inefficient resource use, and ultimately, limited collective impact. Groups have clear strategies to mitigate this, and are actively seeking resources to bolster collaboration, inclusive decision-making, and pluralism as ways to build their power.

- Deep fragmentation and siloed coordination also weaken the movement's ability to develop cohesive narrative strategies, reinforcing the need for collaborative infrastructure in this area.

- Social change leaders often operate with limited resources and are organizing within increasingly authoritarian political landscapes. They need skills and shared infrastructure for effective organizing, advocacy, and program implementation.

- Community resilience and a just transition to clean energy continue to be major focus areas as groups seek to build on momentum created by Biden-era climate and infrastructure investments, even as federal funding is rolled back.

The challenges faced by groups across climate, conservation, and environmental health and justice are tremendous, and the need for scaled up funding to support the solutions they are bringing to the table is urgent. We hope this analysis will help guide funding strategies and unlock additional resources to bolster movement power and advance the critical work to confront the climate crisis, protect our communities, lands, water and wildlife, and protect our democracy.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Introduction

In February 2025, as a new federal administration began to dismantle decades of environmental policy and roll back the groundbreaking Biden-era climate and infrastructure programs, Mosaic launched an **open call for concept notes**. Based on data and input from the field and the expertise of Mosaic's leadership council of grassroots, national NGO, and philanthropy leaders, the grant opportunity focused on solving the most fundamental challenges facing US-based climate, conservation, environmental health and justice movements through support for collaborative projects, coalitions, and networks aimed at **building bridges and scaling movement influence.**

The open call generated 987 applications spanning a broad range of issues and sectors, providing an important window into movement strategies and needs at a critical moment in history. Mosaic conducted an in-depth quantitative and qualitative analysis[1] of these submissions to understand both the challenges and the solution sets being put forward by movement groups across the country. **This analysis reveals a clear need for increased investment in essential power-building work to move the needle on climate, conservation, and environmental health and justice goals.** The data highlights key strategies and funding opportunities for building a powerful, pluralistic, big tent movement as a vehicle to defend progress and advance change.

The data informing this analysis is a snapshot in time and only represents the segment of the movement reached by Mosaic's grant opportunity. This report is therefore not a comprehensive assessment, but rather an indicator of broader trends, challenges, and opportunities for action that we hope will unlock additional resources to bolster movement power and advance the critical work to confront the climate crisis, protect our communities, lands, water and wildlife, and defend democracy.

Strengthening Movements: Challenges, solutions, and opportunities for action

Mosaic's **2025 grant cycle** focused on **building bridges** to advance a powerful, aligned, and broad-based front across climate, conservation, and environmental health and justice that defends five decades of progress nationally, while accelerating momentum at the state and local levels. The call for proposals focused on three core focus areas:

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1   Mosaic used a variety of data tools for this analysis, including R and a proprietary, secure AI tool. All submissions were anonymized, with organization names and other identifying details removed. Quantitative methods included generating broad descriptive statistics on the dataset (such as counts by geography and issue area) and reviewing the frequency of words and multi-word phrases to surface recurring language. Qualitative methods involved grouping responses into common themes, reviewing narrative content, and coding proposals by issue area, grant focus area, and geography.

1. **Breaking down silos**: Fostering coordination within climate, conservation, and environmental health and justice movements or between environmental and other movements;

2. **Building narrative power**: Developing and deploying shared narrative resources and strategic communications to widen the environmental movement tent and catalyze action; and

3. **Leveraging the environmental movement to defend democracy**: Building diverse constituencies and shared resources to protect democratic institutions, processes, and leaders essential to the success of our movements.
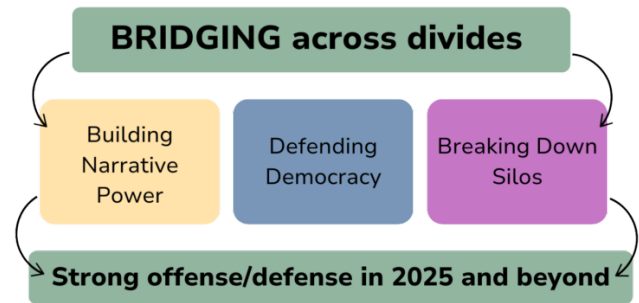
Building bridges was interpreted by applicants in a variety of ways, and project submissions focused on a range of bridging types. Some focused within the environmental movement — connecting grassroots groups, large NGOs, and other advocates around core environmental issues like climate and energy; land conservation; air and water pollution; and environmental justice. Others focused on bridging to other intersecting issues like civil rights; racial and economic justice; labor; transportation and housing; education; consumer advocacy and protections; legal advocacy; and more. Still others focused on bridging to new audience demographics, like rural communities. **These trends highlight movement organizations' emphasis on bolstering collaboration, inclusive decision-making, and pluralism to strengthen their ability to advance environmental and climate goals and collectively deflect attacks on civil society and democratic norms and institutions.**

Most proposed projects incorporated elements from all three focus areas. When asked to identify a priority focus, applicants most often selected breaking down silos (48%) or building narrative power (41%), while a smaller share focused on defending democracy (11%). Within each of these areas, we identified some key challenges and opportunities for further investment.

Perecentage of projects by Grant Cycle Fous Area
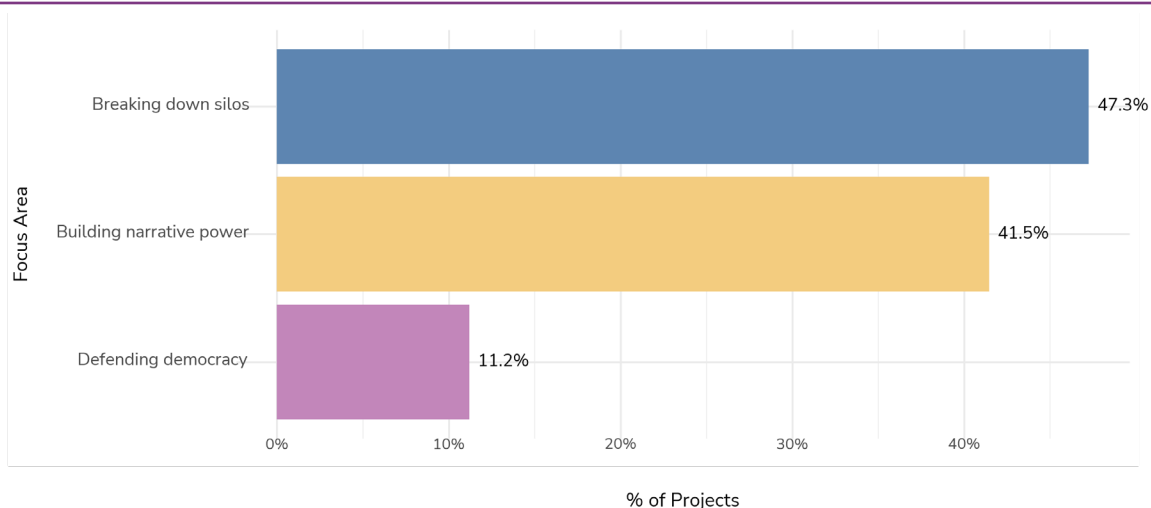
BREAKING DOWN SILOS

Breaking down silos within the environmental movement and between the environmental movement and other sectors was identified as a core strategy for building movement power across issue areas. Health and justice (34%), climate and energy (28%), and systems (23%) were the leading issue focus areas for projects oriented toward breaking down silos.[2] Geographically, most requests targeted national efforts (33%), followed by the Pacific West (22%), and Southeast (16%)[3]. The map below shows the states most frequently identified in these projects. Total funding requested reached $120.5 million — the highest among the three core focus areas.

State Distribution of Projects (Defending Democracy)
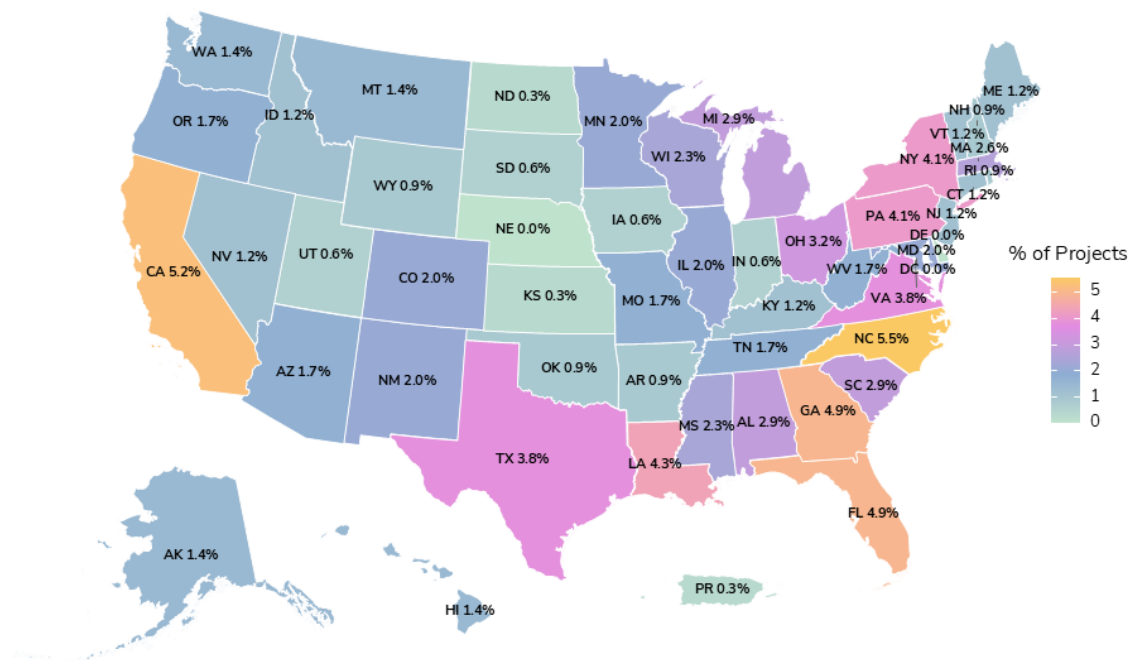
CORE CHALLENGES IDENTIFIED IN BREAKING DOWN SILOS SUBMISSIONS

Deep-seated ideological, geographic, political, and cultural divides exist within and between climate, conservation, and environmental health and justice movements, as well as with other sectors like labor, housing, public health, and business. Projects identified that **this fragmentation leads to siloed advocacy, inefficient resource use, and ultimately, limited collective impact, pointing to a clear need for more coalition and network support.**

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2   See Core Project Characteristics, page 14, for definitions of these categories.

3   See discussion of national projects in Core Project Characteristics, page 17.

The following chart outlines key challenges identified across submissions[4]. The percentage reflects projects that selected "Breaking down silos" as their primary or secondary focus, and in which this theme aligned with the content of the narrative text through one or more of the keywords.

Challenges: Breaking Down Silos Projects
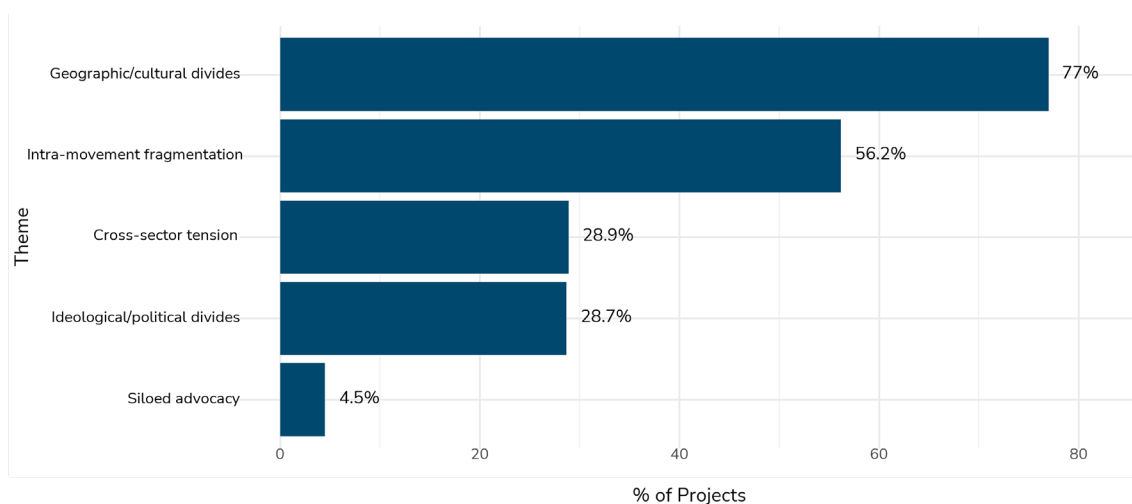
RANGE OF PROPOSED SOLUTIONS/OPPORTUNITIES FOR BREAKING DOWN SILOS

- Skill building to support relationships and trust is a central strategy, with many projects emphasizing coalition management, shared decision-making, and healing spaces as tools to build trust.

- Issue-focused mechanisms, including cross-sector coalitions, multi-issue alliances, and shared policy agendas, are commonly proposed to align actors around shared issues.

- Movement power building is seen as a core strategy, particularly through base building, grassroots organizing, and leadership development efforts that transcend sectoral boundaries and create shared movement infrastructure.

- Place-based coordination structures such as state-based coalitions, regional alliances, and local government partnerships are frequently proposed to build infrastructure for collaboration across geographies, though less often when compared to other approaches to breaking down silos.

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4   See Appendix A for a detailed table with definitions and keywords used in the analysis.

Solutions & Oportunities: Breaking Down Silos Projects
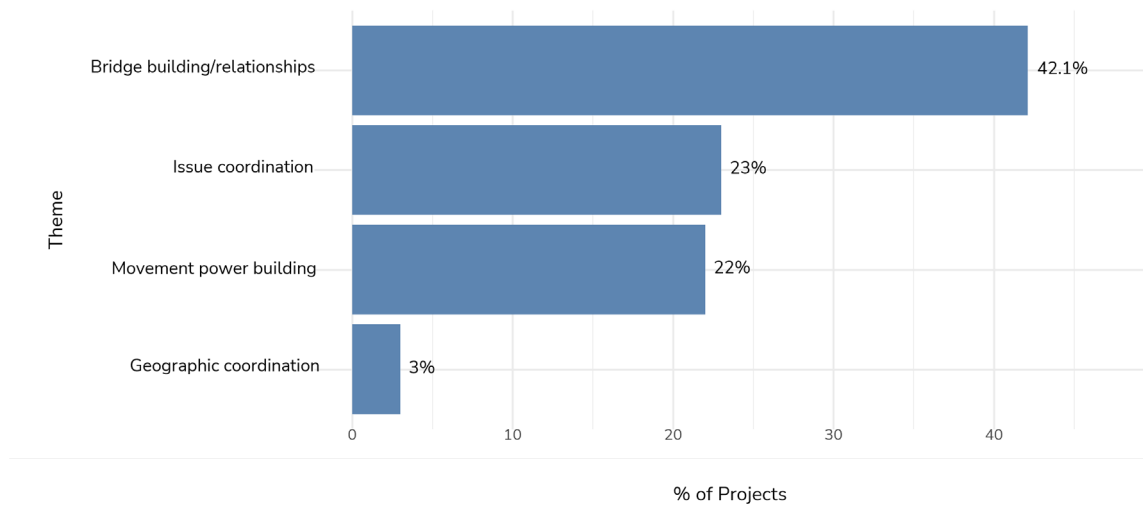
BUILDING NARRATIVE POWER

Narrative power projects also crossed issue areas, primarily focused on health and justice (38%), followed by systems (22%) and climate and energy (22%). Most initiatives targeted national efforts (35%), with an additional emphasis on the Southeast (18%) and the Pacific West (17%), as shown in the map below. In total, $96.6 million was requested for these projects. As with other national projects, many of those focused on narrative power building also targeted specific states/regions or demographics.[5]

State Distribution of Projects (Building Narrative Power)

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5   See discussion of national projects in Core Project Characteristics, page 17.
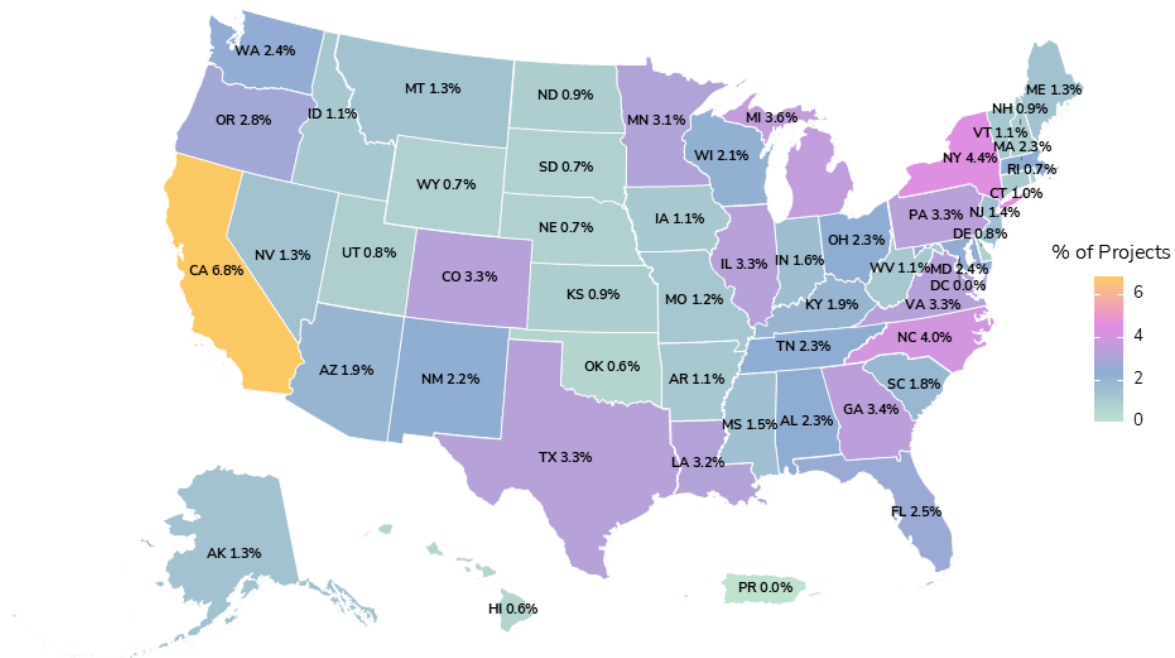
CORE CHALLENGES IDENTIFIED IN BUILDING NARRATIVE POWER SUBMISSIONS

- **Systemic/Strategic Challenges:** Projects identified that deep fragmentation and siloed coordination weaken the movement's ability to develop cohesive narrative strategies, reinforcing the importance of building collaborative infrastructure in this area. Many initiatives struggle to build lasting narrative infrastructure capable of sustaining long-term cultural change. In addition, justice-centered perspectives — particularly those of frontline communities — remain underrepresented in dominant climate and energy storytelling. Prevailing ideological narratives often reinforce the status quo and obscure systemic causes of the crisis.

- **Messaging Challenges:** The movement faces pervasive misinformation and disinformation; a lack of shared, compelling narratives; and fear-based or sometimes overly technical messaging that can alienate diverse audiences. Proposals referenced powerful, misleading rhetoric from the fossil fuel industry that pits communities against each other, and a public knowledge gap around the tangible benefits of climate action.

The following chart outlines key challenges identified across submissions[6]. The percentage reflects projects that selected "Building narrative power" as their primary or secondary focus, and in which this theme aligned with the content of the narrative text through one or more of the keywords.

Challenges: Narrative Power Projects

Theme	% of Projects
Fragmentation/silos	84.3%
Lack of justice framing	62.6%
Lack of infrastructure	52.3%
Dominant frames	43.2%
Lack of shared narrative	28.6%
Env/public health disconnect	22.9%
Knowledge gap	13.1%
Misinformation	12%
Fossil fuel industry rhetoric	11.2%
Fear-based/tech language	0.8%

Legend: Messaging Challenges, Strategic Barriers

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6   See Appendix A for a detailed table with definitions and keywords used in the analysis.

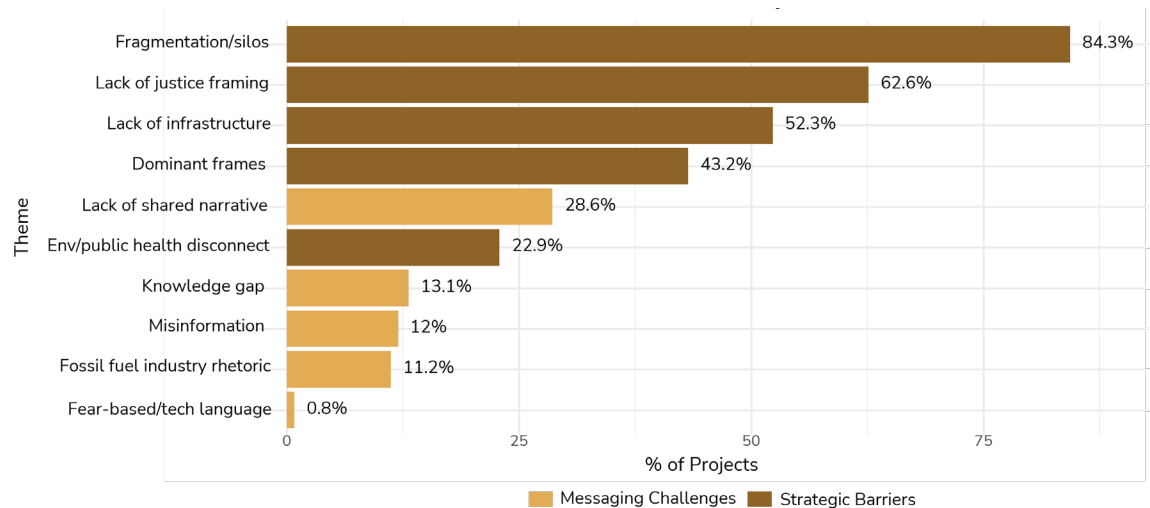**RANGE OF PROPOSED SOLUTIONS/OPPORTUNITIES FOR NARRATIVE POWER BUILDING**

- Narrative collaboratives and other mechanisms to develop and deploy shared narrative resources and strategic communications at a larger scale or across common audiences.

- Skill-building for authentic, culturally relevant storytelling that amplifies lived experiences and depolarizes climate issues. Strong appearances of "cultural" and "infrastructure" suggest applicants are increasingly thinking about long-term, community-rooted narrative systems, not just short-term campaigns.

- Training and shared resources in strategic storytelling, digital campaigns, media engagement, and cultural organizing.

- Opportunities to connect environmental issues with public health are underleveraged, presenting an opportunity to resonate with broader audiences.

- Youth-led and intergenerational storytelling is emerging as a distinct narrative strategy, offering a way to connect movements across generations and cultivate long-term narrative leadership.

Solutions & Opportunities: Narrative Power Projects
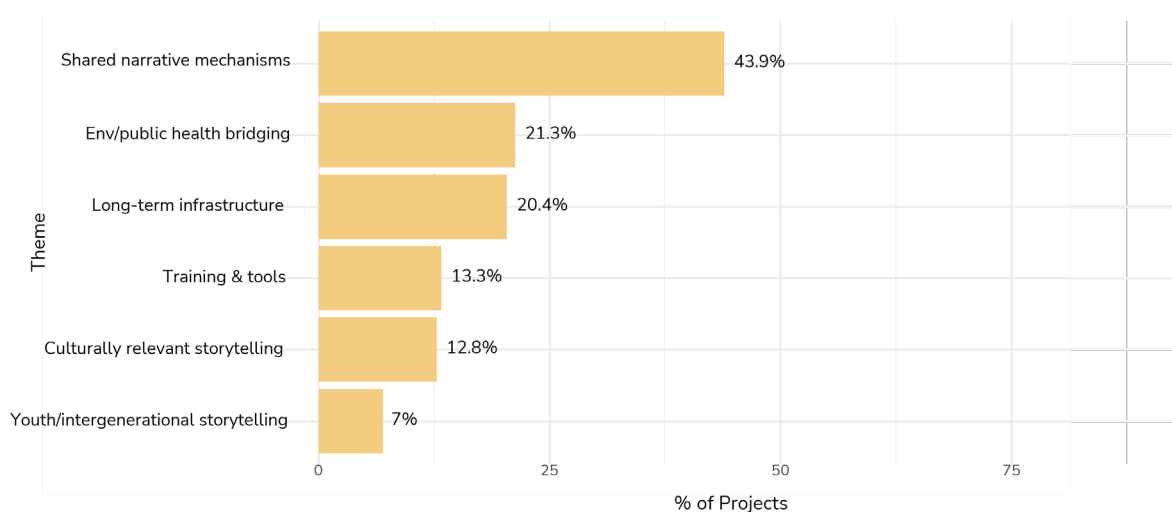
DEFENDING DEMOCRACY

Defense of civil society, public participation, and democratic norms and institutions were strong themes across the full body of submissions. Among projects focused more squarely on defending democracy, the primary issue area selected was health and justice (40%), followed by climate and energy (30%) and systems (20%). National efforts led geographically (43%), aligning with the threats posed by federal attacks and rollbacks, with additional concentration in the Southeast (22%) and Northeast (11%). At the state level the highest percentage was in South Carolina, with a notable number from Florida and Georgia. Total funding requested amounted to $29.7 million.

State Distribution of Projects: Defending Democracy
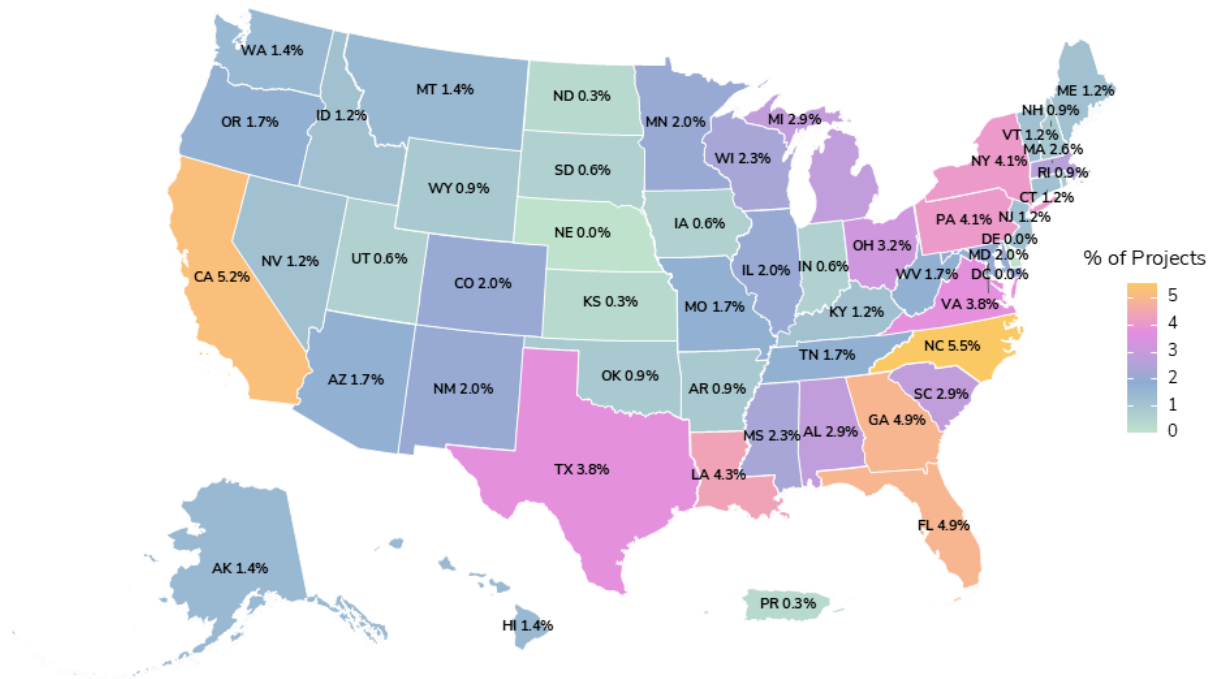
CORE CHALLENGES IDENTIFIED IN DEFENDING DEMOCRACY SUBMISSIONS

Many projects discussed the ways in which democratic institutions and processes are under attack, leading to policy rollbacks, anti-environmental legislation, and (to a slightly lesser degree) corporate influence that undermine environmental and social progress. This includes a "federal funding freeze" and hyper-polarization of climate issues that create "low information environments," underscoring the connection between communications and narrative work and democracy.

Challenges: Defending Democracy Projects
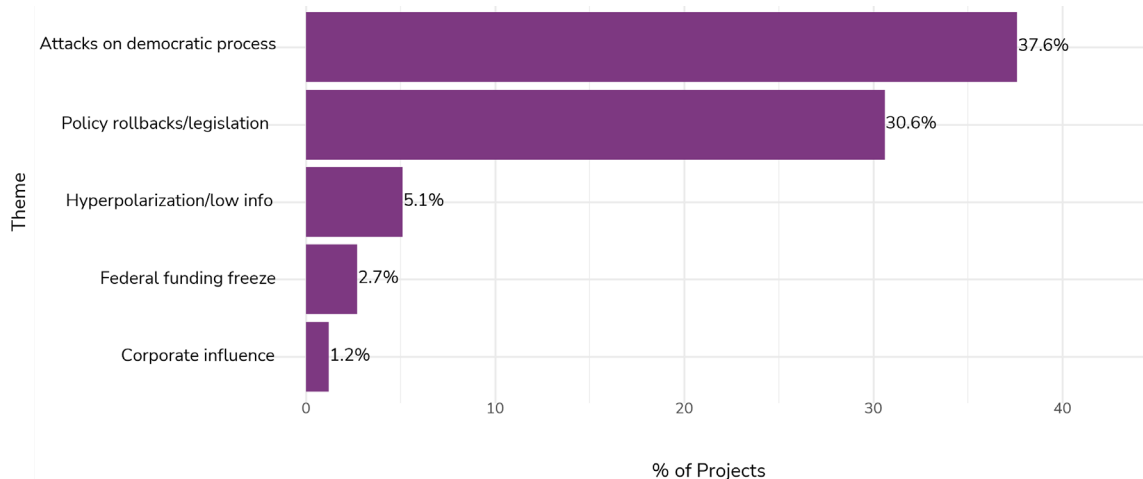
The chart above outlines key challenges identified across submissions[7]. The percentage reflects projects that selected "Defending democracy" as their primary or secondary focus, and in which this theme aligned with the content of the narrative text through one or more of the keywords.

RANGE OF PROPOSED SOLUTIONS/OPPORTUNITIES FOR DEFENDING DEMOCRACY

- Justice, particularly environmental, climate, and racial justice, is a unifying narrative frame to advocate for protecting and expanding democratic systems.

- Energy and climate governance are emerging as strategic areas for democratic engagement highlighted by just transition frameworks.

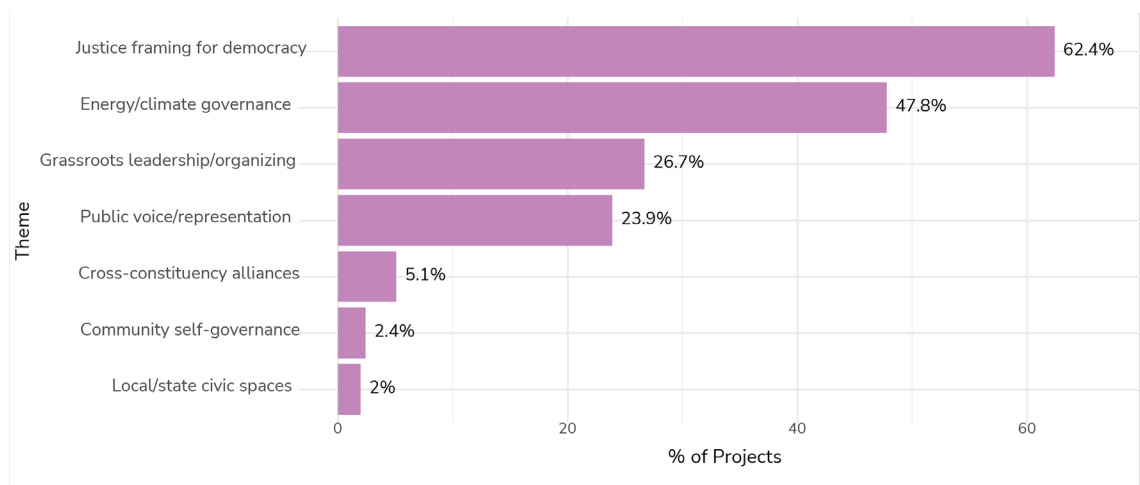- Grassroots organizing and leadership development remain core strategies for defending democracy, especially through base building, building leadership capacity, and other movement infrastructure approaches.

- Building power by centering public voice and civic representation can restore trust and shift decision-making power.

- Alliances across diverse constituencies for collective action (legal, advocacy, etc.) help protect democratic institutions, processes, and leaders.

- Replicable models of community self-governance reflect a desire to reimagine democratic structures through localized, participatory decision-making.

- Civic spaces at the state and local levels provide opportunities for constituents to find common ground and engage in dialogue and direct advocacy across issues.

Solutions & Opportunities: Defending Democracy Projects

Horizontal bar chart. Y-axis labeled "Theme", X-axis labeled "% of Projects".
- Justice framing for democracy: 62.4%
- Energy/climate governance: 47.8%
- Grassroots leadership/organizing: 26.7%
- Public voice/representation: 23.9%
- Cross-constituency alliances: 5.1%
- Community self-governance: 2.4%
- Local/state civic spaces: 2%

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7   See Appendix A for a detailed table with definitions and keywords used in the analysis.

Other Trends

In addition to the three grant cycle focus areas, several other strategic focal points emerged from the submissions, representing both movement infrastructure gaps and specific issue focus areas.

Percentage of Projects Representing Additional Themes
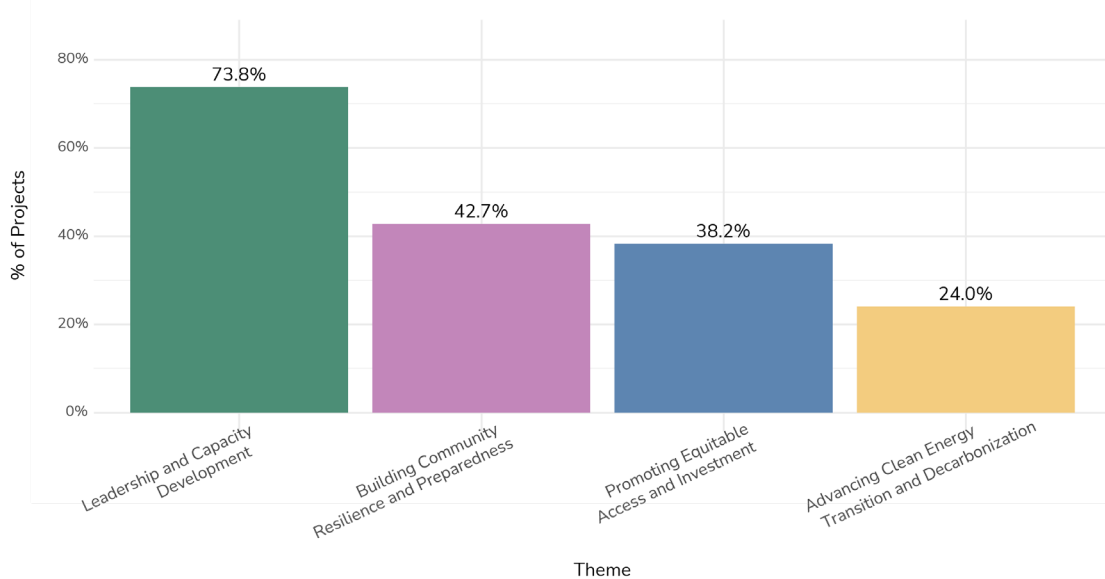
LEADERSHIP AND CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

Although leadership development was not a specific focus of Mosaic's 2025 grant opportunity, it was top of mind for many applicants and is a pillar of Mosaic's **strategic framework.** See Appendix A for key words used in the analysis.

CORE CHALLENGES

Social change leaders often operate with limited resources, face firsthand experiences of injustice, and are organizing within increasingly authoritarian political landscapes. There is a persistent lack of training, skills, and infrastructure needed for effective organizing, advocacy, and program implementation, particularly for grassroots leaders and mid-career professionals.

Challenges: Leadership Development Projects
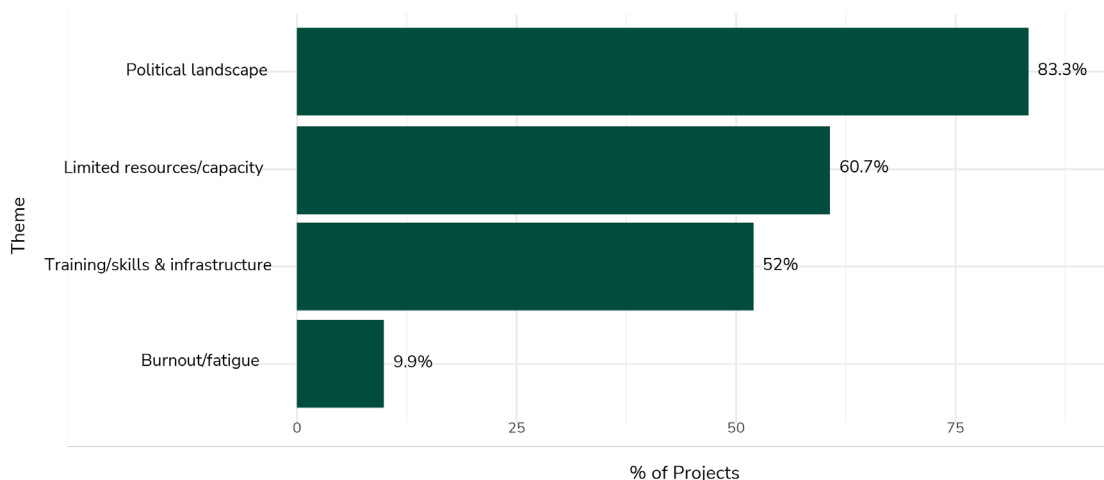
RANGE OF PROPOSED SOLUTIONS/OPPORTUNITIES

- Shared backbone support, tools, and technical assistance for grassroots organizations.

- Leadership development programs and fellowships that provide training and support in effective organizing, advocacy, and program implementation for leaders, staff, and community members.

- Healing spaces and resources for movement leaders.

Solutions and Opportunities: Leadership Development Projects

PROMOTING EQUITABLE ACCESS AND INVESTMENT

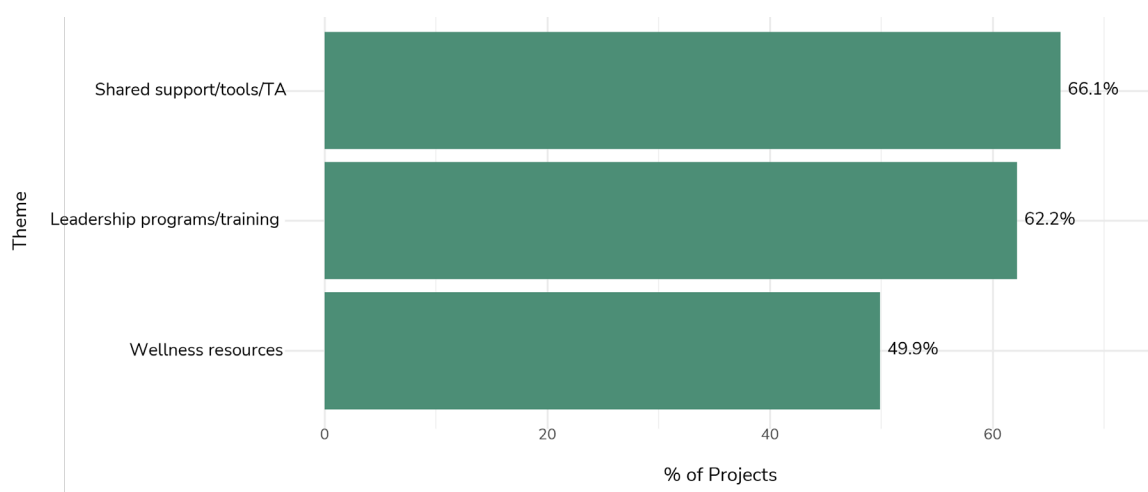**CORE CHALLENGES**

Historically underserved, low-income, and frontline communities are often excluded from or disproportionately burdened by clean energy transitions, economic opportunities, and access to critical funding and resources due to systemic barriers.

RANGE OF PROPOSED SOLUTIONS/OPPORTUNITIES

- Building power to increase representation in decision-making positions and ensure equitable distribution of funding and resources.

- Catalyzing and redirecting private capital and business incentives towards community-led, equitable clean energy and resilience projects.

- Developing innovative and inclusive public financing models and providing technical assistance for communities.

- Sustaining the momentum created by the Inflation Reduction Act and Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act by supporting projects already underway and building on relationships developed.

BUILDING COMMUNITY RESILIENCE AND PREPAREDNESS

CORE CHALLENGES

Communities, especially frontline and low-income populations, are highly vulnerable to escalating climate impacts and disasters such as hurricanes, wildfires, extreme heat, and flooding. There is also a concern about the "dismantling" of existing infrastructure and institutions meant to support communities, such as FEMA, and funding and policy rollbacks under the new federal administration, which impact these communities disproportionately.

RANGE OF PROPOSED SOLUTIONS/OPPORTUNITIES

- Establishing community-based resilience hubs and trusted spaces for gathering, programming, and resource sharing that reflect local culture and needs and leverage local relationships.

- Developing holistic toolkits and strategies for innovative crisis response.

- Integrating climate adaptation into local planning and securing public investment for resilience projects.

- Developing community self-governance models for management of resources and infrastructure.

ADVANCING CLEAN ENERGY TRANSITION AND DECARBONIZATION

CORE CHALLENGE

There is significant resistance to renewable energy adoption, perpetuated by the influence of the fossil fuel industry and a knowledge gap among government leaders and landowners. This is compounded by energy affordability issues for working-class communities, who are often left out of the clean energy transition.

RANGE OF PROPOSED SOLUTIONS/OPPORTUNITIES

- Neighborhood-scale solar, electrification, and home retrofitting to improve energy efficiency, reduce emissions, and lower energy burdens, while creating local jobs.

- Organizing cooperative utility memberships to push for investments in clean energy.

- Leveraging state-level relationships and economic storytelling to protect federal clean energy incentives and programs and shift perceptions.

- Cross-sector organizing, particularly with labor, housing, and health care, to protect and advance state and local clean energy projects and programs.

- Investing in clean energy workforce development and ensuring well-paid, community-sustaining jobs in the clean energy industry.

- Develpoing shared data tools to support advocacy and narrative campaigns.

Core Project Characteristics

POPULATION SERVED

The projects in this dataset propose to engage a wide range of populations through vehicles ranging from hyperlocal grassroots groups to nationally networked organizations. This diversity reflects a broad movement ecosystem rooted in both place-based and identity-based strategies. The table below highlights the top 25 most frequently engaged populations included in the submission narratives. A majority of projects focused on Black, Brown, Indigenous, and other communities of color, as well as low-income and environmental justice communities. **Notably, 27% of projects emphasized rural communities – a share that rises to about 30% when including farmers – highlighting a gap in movement-building support for this sector.**

Top 25 Most Frequently Engaged Populations

Population Group	% of Projects
BIPOC / Communities of Color	74.1%
Low-income communities	72.7%
Environmental justice communities	62.4%
Youth/young people	46.4%
Labor/workers	29.8%
Rural communities	27.1%
Urban communities	24.1%
Indigenous communities	22.1%
Faith-based communities	15.4%
Immigrant communities	13.1%
Government agencies	12.7%
High-risk communities	11.7%
Healthcare workers/professionals	11.5%
Elderly/seniors	10.3%
Academic/research communities	9.8%
Disability communities	5.4%
Business/private sector	5.4%
Lgbtq+ communities	4.3%
Frontline communities	4.1%
Veterans	3.5%
Farmers	3.1%
Community-based organizations	2.6%
Black communities	2.6%
Policymakers	2.5%
Students	2.2%
Grassroots organizations	2.2%

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUE AREA

Recognizing that many organizations and collaborations work at the intersection of multiple environmental issues, applicants were invited to select their "primary" and "additional" issue areas of focus for their proposed project. The most frequently selected primary environmental issue area was health and justice (36%), followed by climate and energy (26%), and systems (22%). Compared to past Mosaic grant cycles, there was an increase in health and justice projects (up from 28% in 2021), an increase in systems projects (up from 20% in 2021), and a slight decrease in climate and energy (down from 27% in 2021), land (from 9% in 2021 to 6.2% in 2025), and water (from 14% in 2021 to 8% in 2025).

Distribution of Environmental Focus Areas
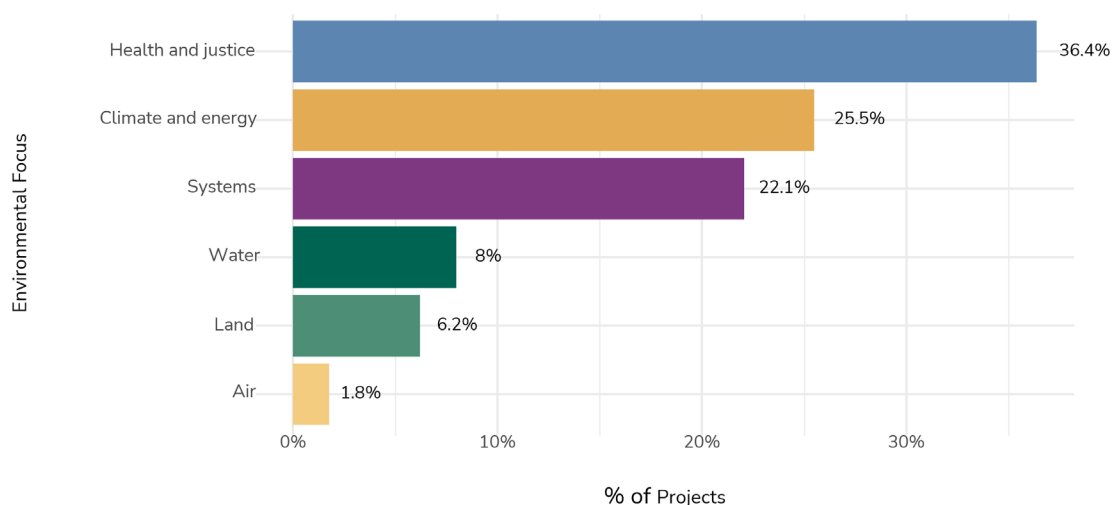
DEFINING ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUE AREAS

Air – air pollution, air quality

Climate and energy – climate & atmosphere, energy, transportation

Health and justice – environmental justice, toxics, environmental health, and indigenous populations/communities

Land – biodiversity & species preservation, terrestrial ecosystems & land use

Systems – sustainable agriculture & food systems, sustainable communities, material consumption & waste management, trade & finance, population

Water – coastal & marine ecosystems, freshwater & inland water ecosystems

Across the issue areas, there was a notably **strong association between health and justice, and climate and energy projects.**

- 67% of projects that primarily focus on health and justice also include climate and energy as a secondary selection.

- 80% of projects that primarily focus on climate and energy include health and justice in their secondary focus.

This mutual selection rate, especially the nearly 80% overlap from climate-focused projects, is substantially higher than what would be expected by chance if secondary issue areas were randomly distributed. This suggests that organizations working on one of these areas almost inherently see the other as integral, reflecting a deep interconnection between environmental justice, health equity, and climate.

Cross-Issue Associations Between Health/Justice and Climate Projects
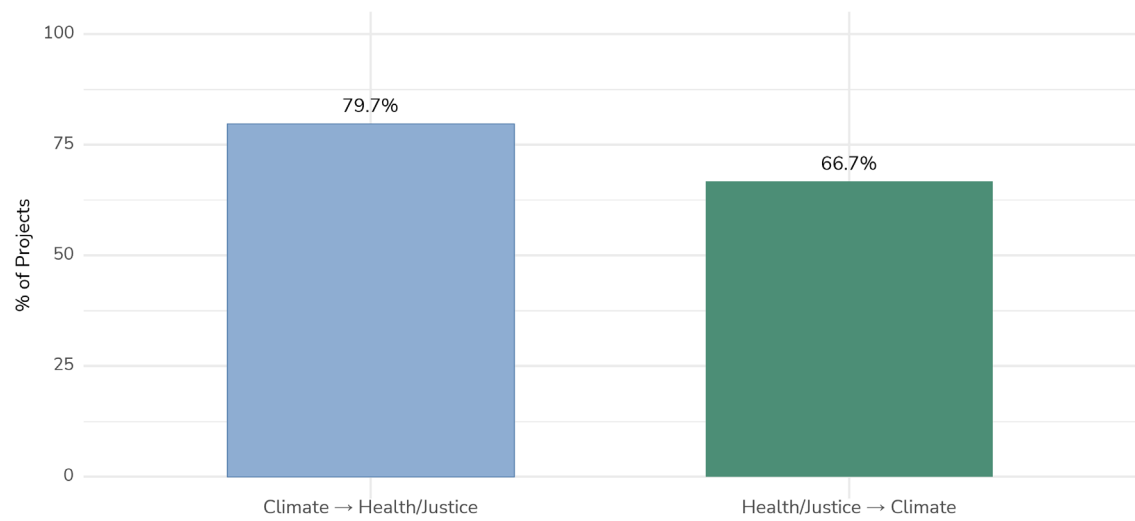
The chart below highlights the most over- and under-represented combinations[8]. The blue bars illustrate the strong relationship between health and justice and climate and energy, as discussed above, as well as additional connections between these two main issue areas as related to systems. Potentially less expected are the low associations between water with air projects and climate and energy with land projects.

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8   See Appendix B for further analysis and graphics on the associations across issue areas.

Top Over- and Under-Represented Primary-Secondary Combinations

Standardized Residuals from Chi-Square Test
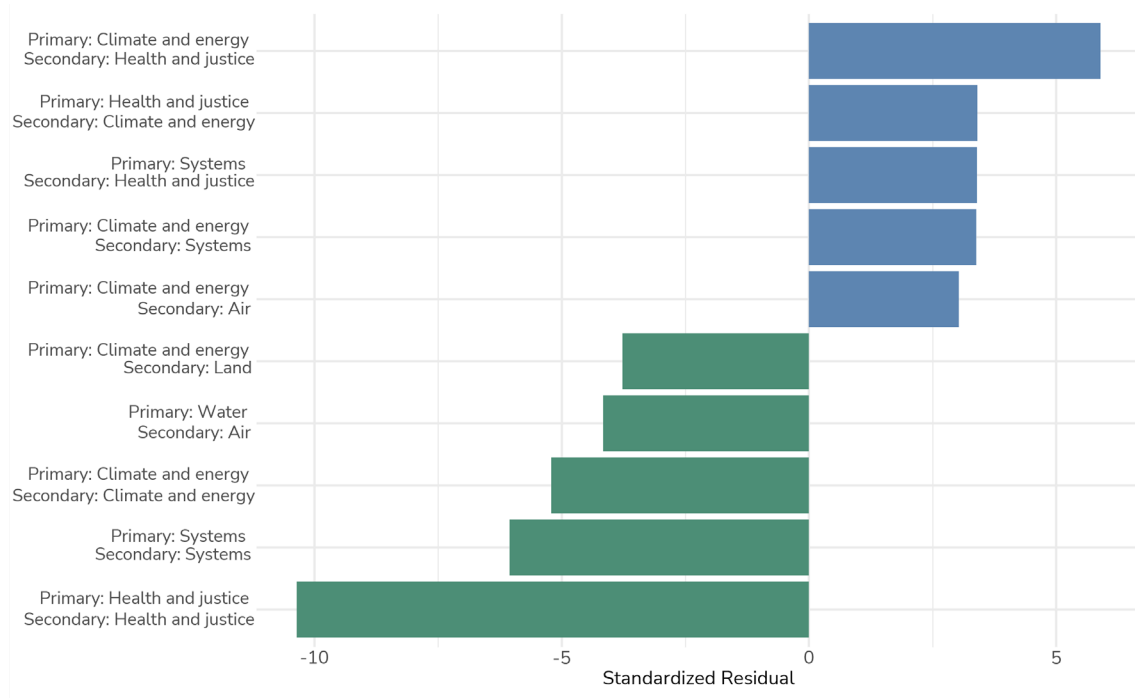
In **Appendix B: Issue Area Details** we can see these correlations play out further in the prevalence of certain keywords across the issue categories, and also get insight into some of the other key concerns and focal areas of groups in each bucket.

GEOGRAPHY

Geographically, the largest portion of concept notes proposed national projects (35%), followed by the Pacific West (20%) and the Southeast (17%)[9]. This trend aligns with past Mosaic grant cycles, which consistently feature a large proportion of nationally focused projects. Compared to past cycles, there has been a slight increase in submissions from the Plains, up from 5% in 2021 to 6.5% in 2025, and the other regions remained similar in proportion of submissions.

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9   See Appendix B for a breakdown of which states are included in each region.

Percentage of Projects by Geographic Location

## Percentage of Projects by State
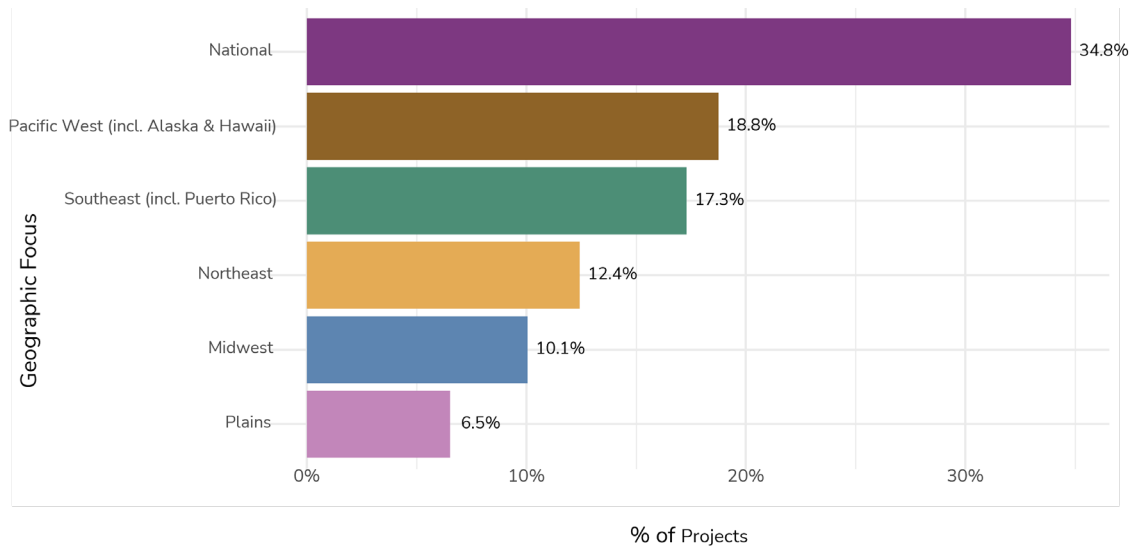
Applicants were also asked to identify the states where their projects would focus. The map below illustrates the distribution of project efforts by state, with higher concentrations illustrated in yellow and lower in blue. California had the most projects proposed, with about 7.7% of the total applicant pool, followed by New York with 4.5%, as well as a stronger representation in the Southeast, including North Carolina (3.9%), Georgia (3.6%), and Texas (3.5%). The Plains states represented the smallest percentage of overall project activities, which aligns with past cycles. It is important to note that of the 336 submissions that selected "national," about 64% also identified specific states or target regions[10]. **This suggests that even when a project frames its work as national in scope, state and regional approaches remain central to how it implement its strategies.**

Percentage of Projects by State

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10   See Appendix B for focus states of national projects.
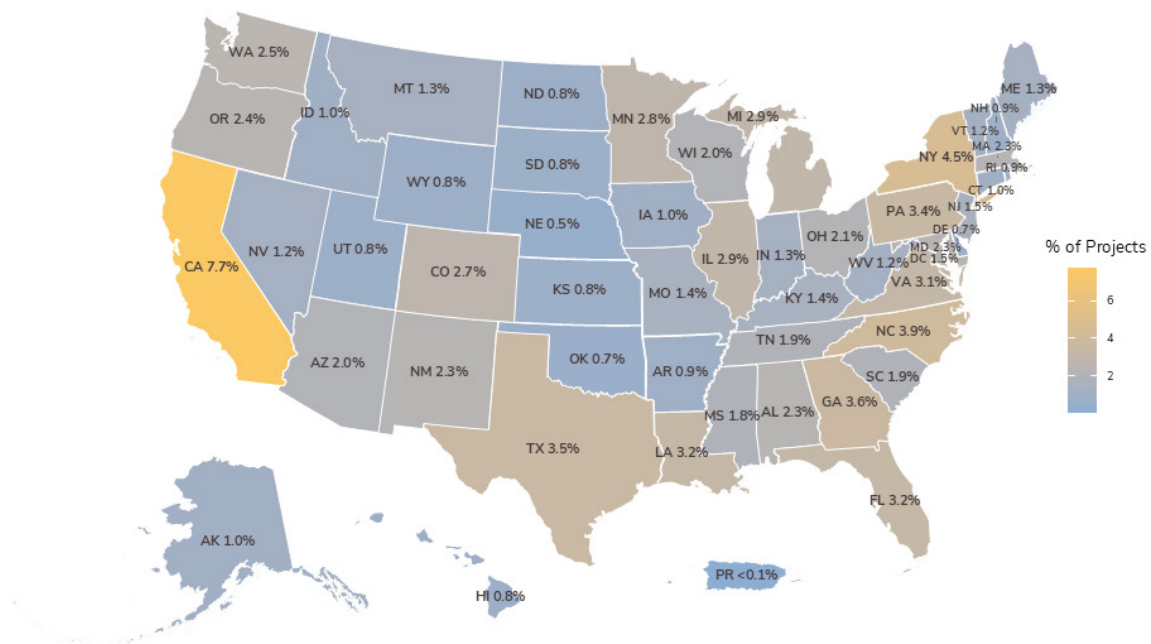
Among applicants, there is a notable trend toward state-based collaboratives, networks, and coalition efforts. **We estimate that approximately 22% of the submissions represented state-based coalition efforts.** Among the top states proposing such initiatives were California, Michigan, New York, and Texas. **The strong presence of state-based projects reflects a broader shift in policy leadership from the federal to the state and regional level**, reinforced by recent rollbacks of core Biden-era policies such as the Inflation Reduction Act, executive orders expediting fossil fuel projects, and withdrawal from the Paris Climate Agreement[11].

Top 10 States with Most Proposed State-Based Collaborative Projects
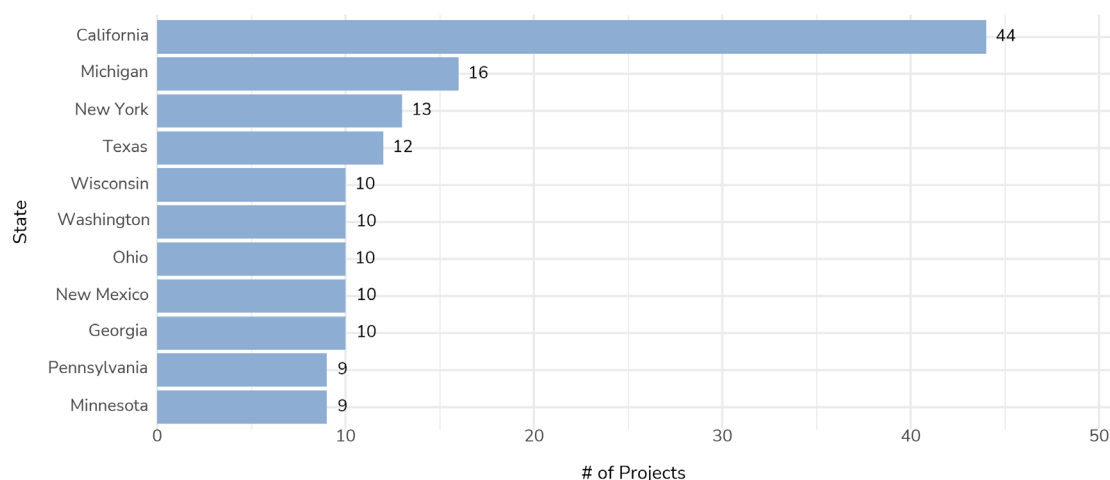
In the heatmap below, we see how the projects are distributed geographically by issue area, with the strongest confluence being health and justice projects in the Pacific West, and the weakest being land-focused projects in the Northeast.

Heatmap of Projects by Environmental Focus and Geographic Focus

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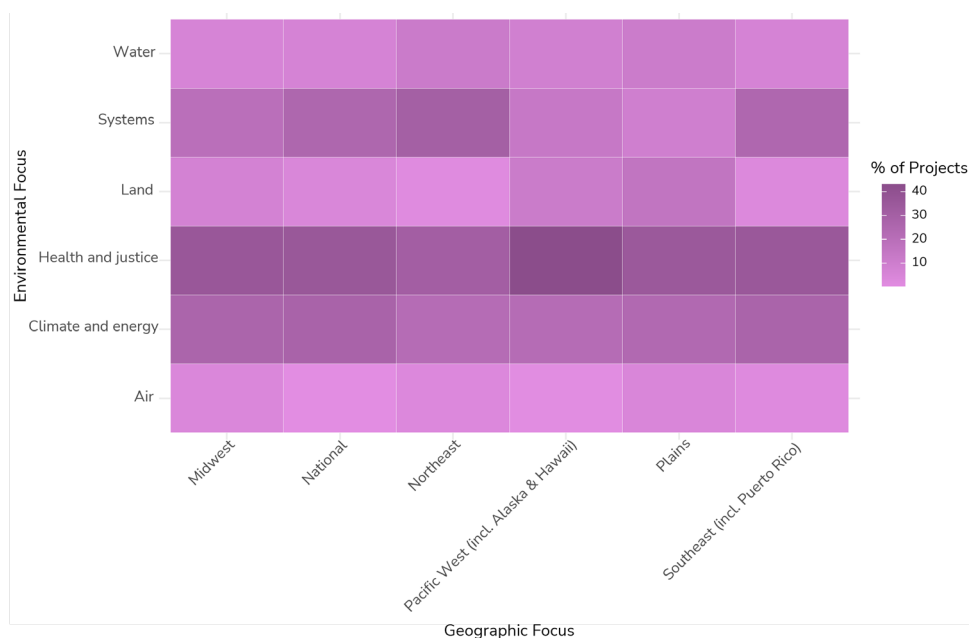
11   Garcia-Soto, C. Reversing climate progress: consequences and solutions in the wake of U.S. policy rollbacks. npj climate action 4, 63 (2025).

Conclusion & Next Steps

The challenges faced by groups across climate, conservation, and environmental health and justice are tremendous, and the need for scaled up funding to support the solutions they are bringing to the table is urgent. At the highest level, our analysis reinforces what we've heard from our grantee networks over the past several months: There is a clear need for **increased investment to strengthen essential power-building work** to both defend bedrock environmental protections at the federal level and build on state and local momentum to make continued, durable gains. This includes aligning and de-siloing funding streams by cultivating engaged and collaborative funders who can support pivots with greater flexibility, and expanding investment in core environmental movement building and infrastructure needs, including resources for stronger coordination, leadership development, narrative power, and organizational capacity.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- State and regional approaches are central to how groups — including national organizations — are implementing their strategies.

- Movement fragmentation continues to be a major impediment to success, leading to siloed advocacy, inefficient resource use, and ultimately limited collective impact. Groups have clear strategies to mitigate this and are actively seeking resources to bolster collaboration, inclusive decision-making, and pluralism as ways to build their power.

- Deep fragmentation and siloed coordination also weaken the movement's ability to develop cohesive narrative strategies, reinforcing the importance of building collaborative infrastructure in this area.

- Social change leaders often operate with limited resources, face firsthand experiences of injustice, and are organizing within increasingly authoritarian political landscapes.

- There is a persistent lack of training, skills, and infrastructure needed for effective organizing, advocacy, and program implementation.

- Community resilience and a just transition to clean energy continue to be major focus areas as groups seek to build on momentum created by Biden-era climate and infrastructure investments even as federal funding is rolled back.

- Organizations working on climate and/or environmental health and justice see the other as integral, reflecting a deep interconnection between environmental justice, health equity, and climate resilience.

- Over a quarter of projects emphasized rural communities, highlighting a gap in movement-building support for this sector.

In our **2025 grantmaking**, Mosaic invested $6M in new and renewed grants for 61 infrastructure projects that advance a powerful, aligned, and broad-based movement. Responding to a shift toward state and regional work, these grants focus largely on state- and cross-state networks and coalitions and the tools to resources to amplify their efforts and

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connect them to national-level work. Mosaic's funding, while significant, represents just a fraction of what's needed at a critical juncture for the environmental movement. We hope this analysis will help unlock additional resources at scale to support the movement in coalescing and building its power to safeguard civil society, protect hard-fought wins, and continue pushing progress toward clean air and water, healthy and just communities for all, and thriving natural systems.

Appendix A: Key word charts

BREAKING DOWN SILOS

Breaking Down Silos Projects: Challenge Theme Definitions & Keywords

Theme	Definition	Keywords Used
Cross-sector tension	Gaps and tensions between environmental groups and other sectors like labor, housing, public health, or business.	labor and climate, housing and climate, public health and environment, business and climate, sectoral divide, cross-sector, inter-sectoral
Geographic/cultural divides	Divides based on region, place, or culture — such as rural/urban splits or culturally distinct communities.	geographic divide, rural urban, regional, local, cultural divide, culturally distinct
Ideological/political divides	Conflicts rooted in ideology, partisanship, or deeply held worldviews that divide actors within and beyond the environmental space.	ideological, political divide, partisan, polarization, worldview, belief system
Intra-movement fragmentation	Fragmentation between climate, conservation, justice, and environmental health movements.	within the movement, between movements, climate and conservation, climate and health, environmental justice, environmental health, justice movements
Siloed advocacy	Inefficiencies or lost potential caused by working in silos, duplicating efforts, or failing to collaborate.	siloed advocacy, working in silos, fragmented, limited collective impact, duplication of effort, inefficient resource use

Breaking Down Silos Projects: Solutions Theme Definitions and Keywords

Theme	Definition	Keywords Used
Geographic coordination	Place-based or regional coordination structures that support collaboration across geographies — e.g., state-based coalitions, tables, and alliances.	bridging geographic divide, state-based coalition, regional coalition, place-based coordination, local alliances, state tables, geographic collaboration, state local, state federal, statewide coordination, regional coordination, county level, tribal coordination
Issue coordination	Issue-focused mechanisms that align diverse stakeholders around shared policy agendas and cross-sector strategies.	cross-sector collaboration, multi-issue coalition, joint strategy, issue alignment, shared policy agenda, movement alignment, local government, government partnership, local government
Bridge building/relationships	Skill-building in relationship repair, conflict transformation, shared decision-making, and coalition governance.	building bridges, bridge building, coalition management, shared decision-making, relationship repair, conflict transformation, healing justice, interpersonal trust, trust-building, collaboration skills, relationship-building, bridging differences, relational work, coordination, network-building, network-weaving, collaborative leadership, conflict resolution, bridge-building, relationship-centered, shared purpose, equity-centered collaboration
Movement power building	Organizing strategies that unify movements by building shared bases of civic power, grassroots leadership, and infrastructure.	movement power, power building, base building, grassroots organizing, organizing infrastructure, shared base, constituency building

BUILDING NARRATIVE POWER

Narrative Power Projects: Challenge Theme Definitions & Keywords

Theme	Definition	Keywords Used
Messaging Challenges		
Fear-based/tech language	Use of fear-based or overly technical language that alienates or confuses target audiences.	fear-based, technical messaging, jargon, overly technical, wonky language
Fossil fuel industry rhetoric	Fossil fuel industry rhetoric that divides communities or misleads public opinion.	fossil fuel, industry narrative, industry rhetoric, divide communities
Knowledge gap	Lack of public understanding of the real-life, tangible benefits of climate action.	public knowledge gap, lack of awareness, tangible benefits, co-benefits, benefits of climate action, metrics, measurement
Lack of shared narrative	Absence of a cohesive, emotionally resonant, shared story across the movement.	lack of shared, compelling narrative, shared narrative, common story, common narratives, aligned
Misinformation	Harmful falsehoods or intentional disinformation—especially around climate—undermine public understanding.	misinformation, disinformation, false information, fake news
Strategic Barriers		
Env/public health disconnect	Underused opportunity to connect environmental issues with public health to broaden appeal.	public health, health impacts, health outcomes, health and environment, health benefits
Fragmentation/silos	Lack of coordination across movements and sectors due to fragmentation and siloed efforts.	fragmentation, silos, disconnected, coordination, collaboration, lack of coordination, reach, coordinated campaign
Dominant frames	Dominant ideological frames that reinforce the status quo or obscure systemic causes.	ideological, political narrative, dominant narrative, frame, worldview, paradigm
Lack of justice framing	Limited representation of justice, equity, and frontline community voices in climate and energy storytelling.	climate justice, environmental justice, justice-centered, frontline communities, equity
Lack of sustained infrastructure	Insufficient investment in lasting narrative infrastructure to support long-term cultural change.	narrative infrastructure, long-term, durable, sustained, long haul, narrative capacity

Narrative Power Projects: Solutions Theme Definitions & Keywords

Theme	Definition	Keywords Used
Shared narrative mechanisms	Developing and deploying shared narrative tools, resources, and strategies to align messaging and widen movement reach.	shared narrative, strategic communication, message alignment, aligned messaging, narrative tools, common story, narrative strategy, communication infrastructure, building narrative power, strategic narrative, shared messaging, narrative ecosystem
Culturally relevant storytelling	Building capacity for authentic, culturally grounded storytelling that amplifies lived experience and bridges divides.	authentic storytelling, culturally relevant, amplify lived experiences, depolarize, community voice, personal stories, story-based strategy, underrepresented voices, bipoc voices, indigenous voices, place-based communications
Long-term infrastructure	Creating durable, community-rooted infrastructure for long-term narrative power beyond short campaigns.	narrative infrastructure, communication capacity, movement infrastructure, long-term storytelling, community-rooted, durable narrative, sustained narrative
Training & tools	Providing training and tools in storytelling, digital campaigns, media, and cultural organizing.	strategic storytelling, digital campaign, digital organizing, media engagement, campaign communications, communications training, cultural organizing, narrative training
Env/public health bridging	Connecting environmental issues to public health to enhance resonance and accessibility of climate messaging.	public health, health equity, health framing, climate and health, health and environment, health narrative, health benefits, environmental health messaging, public health crisis
Youth/intergenerational storytelling	Elevating youth-led and intergenerational storytelling to shape climate and justice narratives across generations.	youth voice, youth-led storytelling, intergenerational narrative, youth leadership, next generation, youth storytelling

DEFENDING DEMOCRACY

Defending Democracy Projects: Challenges Theme Definitions & Keywords

Theme	Definition	Keywords Used
Attacks on democratic process	Erosion or undermining of democratic institutions and processes such as voting rights or civic protections.	democratic institutions, voter suppression, attacks on democracy, undermine democracy, eroding democracy, anti-democratic, disenfranchisement,protest, rights
Corporate influence	Corporate control of politics through lobbying, dark money, and influence over environmental decision-making.	corporate influence, corporate control, industry power, dark money, corporate lobbying, special interests
Federal funding freeze	Cuts or blockages of federal funding for environmental and democracy-related work.	federal funding freeze, funding cuts, blocked funding, withholding funds
Hyperpolarization/low info	Highly polarized discourse and information voids that hinder civic participation and climate understanding.	hyper-polarization, low information, misinformed public, disinformation, uninformed voters, information void
Policy rollbacks/legislation	Efforts to repeal or weaken pro-environment or pro-democracy policies and protections.	policy rollbacks, anti-environmental legislation, rollback of protections, reversing policy, weaken regulations, institutions

Defending Democracy Projects: Solutions Theme Definitions & Keywords

Theme	Definition	Keywords Used
Local/state civic spaces	Use justice frameworks (climate, racial, environmental) to expand or reimagine democracy.	state level advocacy, local civic engagement, direct advocacy, community forums, public dialogue, constituent convenings, civic space, democracy at local level
Community self-governance	Link clean energy, energy justice, and climate transition to civic engagement.	community self-governance, community-led decision making, local governance, replicable democracy model, democratic self-determination, participatory governance
Cross-constituency alliances	Build civic leadership, base-building, and organizing capacity to defend democratic systems.	cross-constituency, broad coalition, shared advocacy, multi-racial coalition, multi-sector advocacy, cross-issue alliances, movement alignment, intersectional alliances
Public voice/representation	Center public voice, civic trust, and participation in representative processes.	public voice, civic representation, civic trust, public participation, representative democracy, civic agency, civic engagement
Grassroots leadership/organizing	Form alliances across diverse groups for shared advocacy and movement alignment.	grassroots organizing, organizing capacity, organizing infrastructure, leadership development, base building, civic leadership, movement leadership, organizing pipeline
Energy/climate governance	Create community-led or participatory governance models that can be replicated.	clean energy, climate justice, energy democracy, energy justice, just transition, climate and democracy, climate governance, energy transition
Justice framing for democracy	Provide forums for dialogue and direct advocacy at the local and state level.	environmental justice, justice-centered democracy, racial justice and democracy, climate justice, equity and democracy, justice-driven civic action

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Leadership Development Projects: Challenges Theme Definitions & Keywords

Theme	Definition	Keywords Used
Burnout/fatigue	Burnout, fatigue, and exhaustion among grassroots and mid-career leaders that undermine sustained movement leadership.	burnout; movement fatigue; overworked; exhaustion; grassroots leaders; mid-career professionals; turnover
Limited resources/capacity	Chronic lack of funding, resources, or organizing capacity that constrains leadership work and advocacy efforts.	limited resources; underfunded; scarce resources; resource constraints; lack of funding; needed for effective organizing; needed for effective advocacy; capacity gaps; capacity limitations; funding cuts; resources
Political landscape	Challenging political environments shaped by injustice, authoritarian landscapes, anti-democratic power, or threats to democracy.	injustice; authoritarian political landscapes; attacks on democracy; threats to democracy; anti-democratic; power
Training/skills & infrastructure	Persistent gaps in training, skills, and infrastructure needed for effective organizing, advocacy, and program implementation.	persistent lack of training; lack of training; lack of skills; gaps in skills/training/infrastructure; infrastructure needed for organizing/advocacy/program implementation; insufficient training; insufficient skills; skill building; organizational capacity; movement capacity; need for training; training

Leadership Development Projects: Solutions Theme Definitions & Keywords

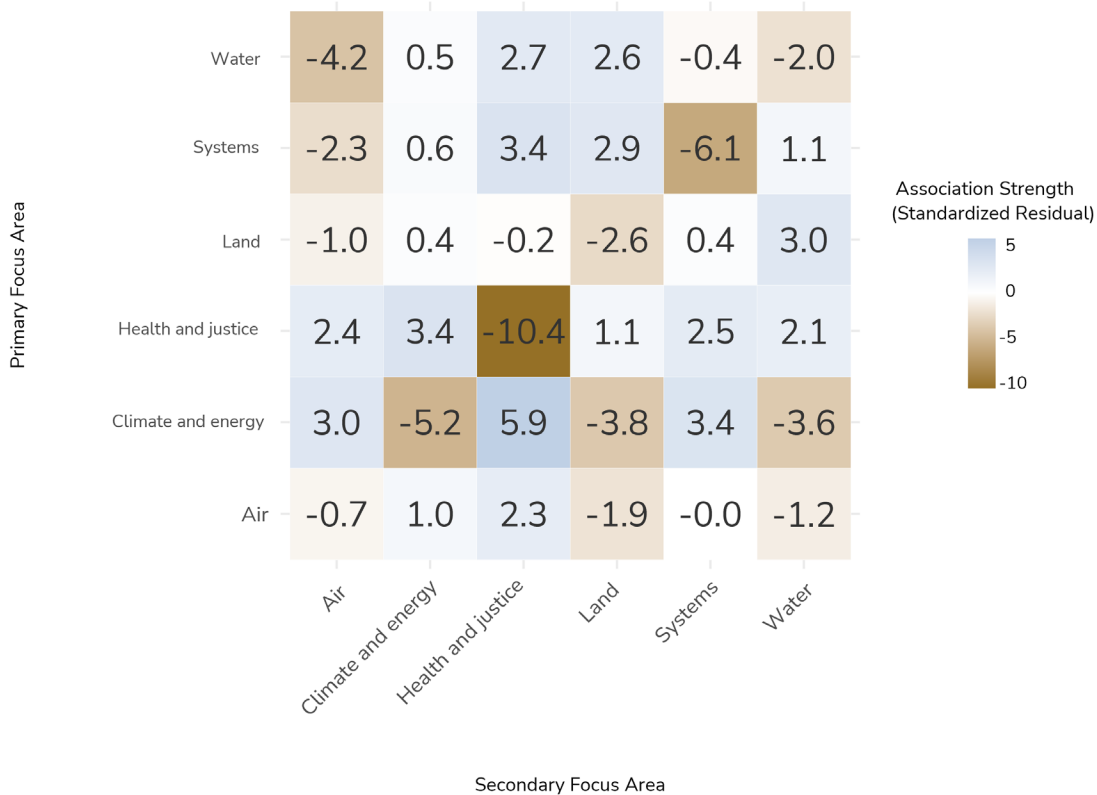| Theme	Definition	Keywords Used
Leadership programs/training	Cohort-based programs, fellowships, and trainings that build skills for effective organizing, advocacy, and implementation across staff, community members, and movement leaders.	leadership development, leadership program(s), fellowship(s), cohort(s), mentorship, coaching, training(s), skill building, capacity building, organizing training, advocacy training, program implementation support, professional development, pipeline (of) leaders, movement leadership, base building
Shared support/tools/TA	Shared infrastructure, services, tools, and technical assistance that strengthen organizational capacity and reduce duplication for grassroots groups.	shared backbone support, backbone support, shared infrastructure, shared services, technical assistance, ta\b, tool(s), resource hub(s), data systems, crm, communications support, fiscal sponsorship, grant writing support, organizational development, administrative capacity, capacity support, implementation support
Wellness resources	Wellbeing and restorative supports (e.g., healing spaces, peer support, retreats) that sustain movement leadership and reduce burnout.	healing spaces, restorative practices, rest, regenerative (support/practices), trauma-informed, well-being, peer support, community of practice, sabbatical(s), retreat(s), care for organizers, leader wellness, organizational wellness

Appendix B: Core Characteristics Additional Data

PRIMARY AND SECONDARY ISSUE AREA ASSOCIATIONS

The table below provides a detailed heatmap illustrating the associations between each primary issue area selection and its corresponding secondary issue area selection. Here you can see the strong association between "health and justice" and "climate and energy" indicated by the darker blue cells. The brown cells indicate a negative association; that is, concept note submissions that selected health and justice as a primary focus were less likely to include health and justice again as a secondary selection, which is expected. You can also see that health and justice are a frequent selection for the other issue areas, except for land, where it is slightly negative but essentially neutral.

**Association Between Primary and Secondary Issue Areas**

Standardized residual from the Chi-square test show which issue pairings appear more or less often than expected if choices were unrelated. Larger numbers (positive or negative) mean a stronger difference from what we'd expect by chance - indicating a possible connection between issues.

Primary Focus Area	Air	Climate and energy	Health and justice	Land	Systems	Water
Water	-4.2	0.5	2.7	2.6	-0.4	-2.0
Systems	-2.3	0.6	3.4	2.9	-6.1	1.1
Land	-1.0	0.4	-0.2	-2.6	0.4	3.0
Health and justice	2.4	3.4	-10.4	1.1	2.5	2.1
Climate and energy	3.0	-5.2	5.9	-3.8	3.4	-3.6
Air	-0.7	1.0	2.3	-1.9	-0.0	-1.2

Secondary Focus Area

Association Strength (Standardized Residual)
5
0
-5
-10
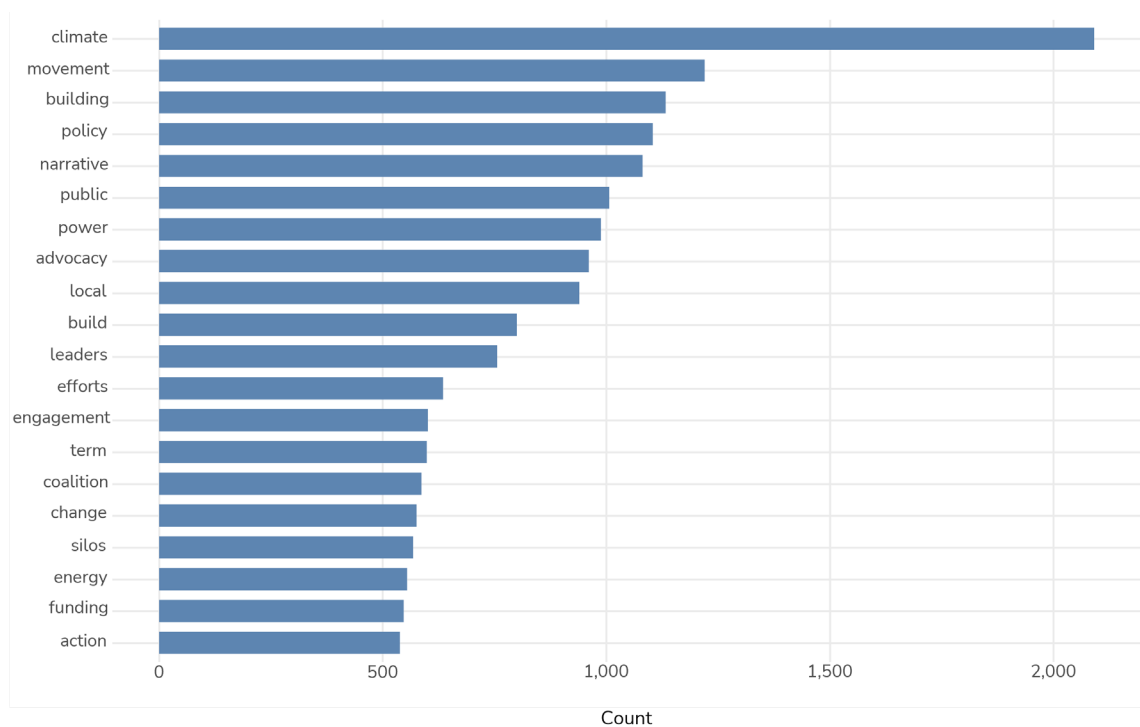
ISSUE AREA KEY WORDS

Top Words in Proposal Text (Climate & Energy Projects)

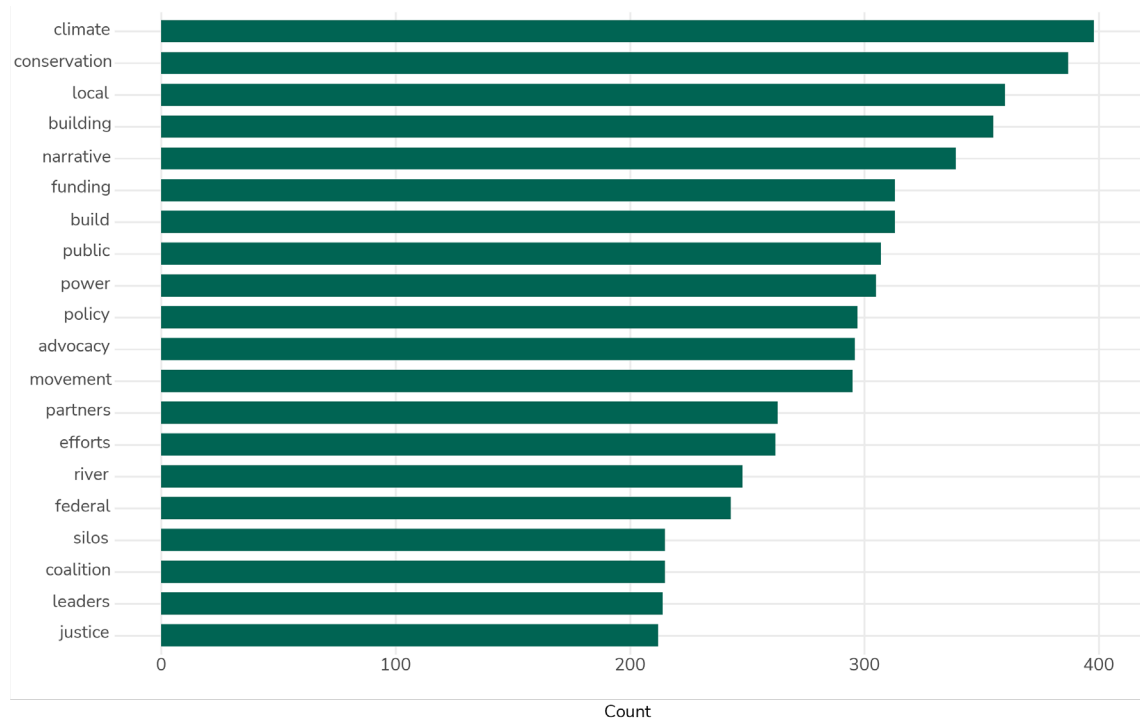Filler words + key terms like ('climate', 'energy') removed
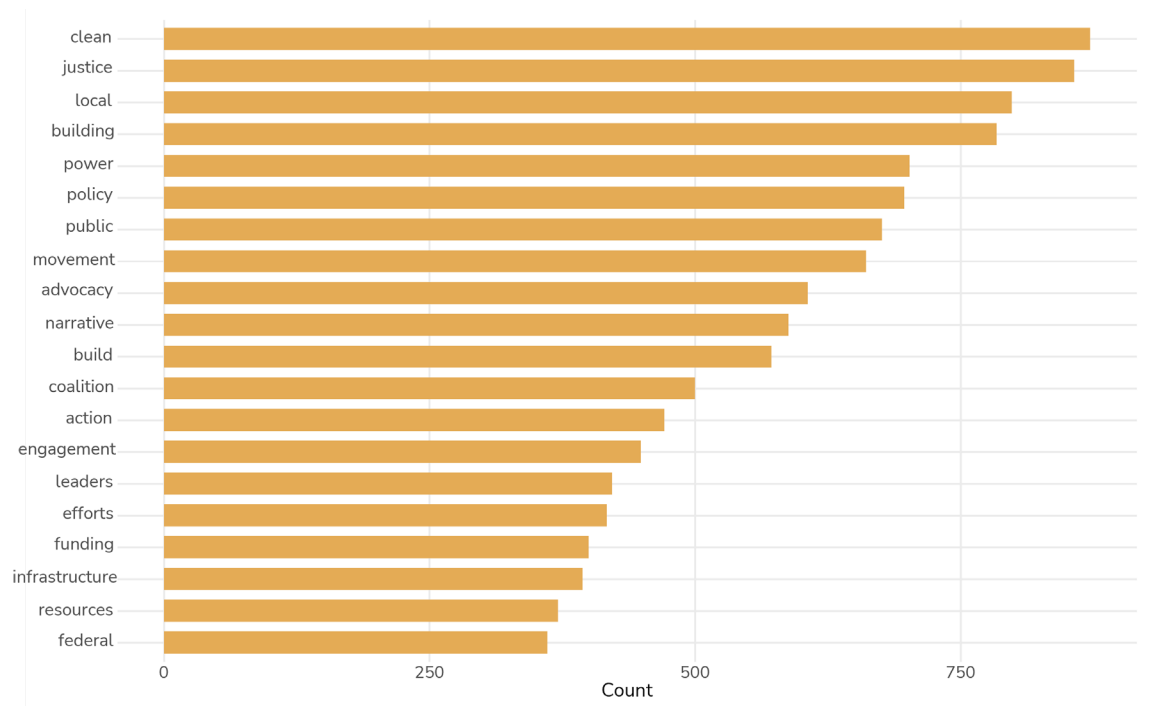
Top Words in Proposal Text (Health & Justice Projects)

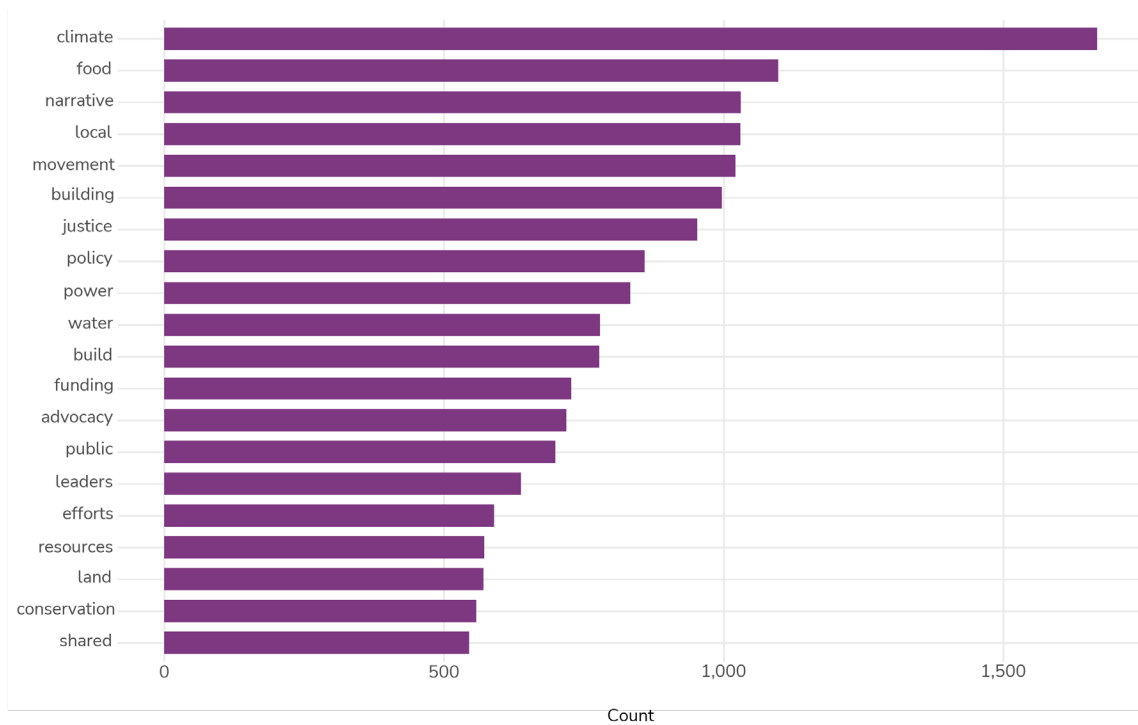Filler words + key terms like ('health', 'justice') removed

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Top Words in Proposal Text (Water & Land Projects)

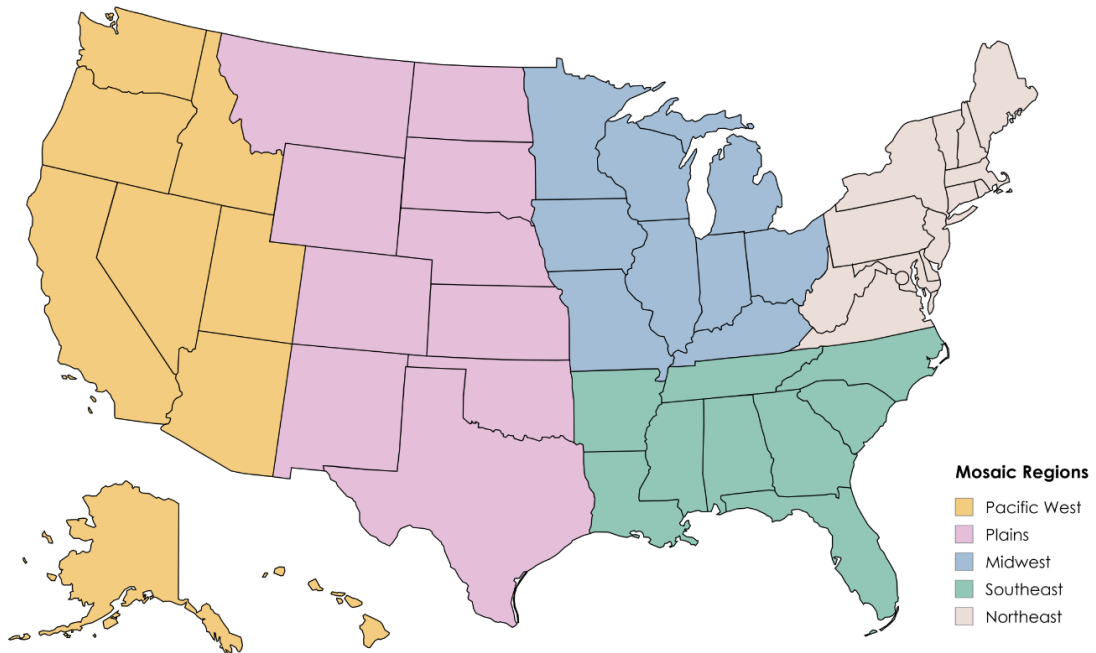Filler words + key terms like ('water, 'land') removed

Top Words in Proposal Text (Systems Projects)

Filler words + key terms like ('systems') removed

GEOGRAPHIES DEFINED

Mosaic Regions

- Pacific West
- Plains
- Midwest
- Southeast
- Northeast

STATE FOCI OF NATIONAL PROJECTS

Top 10 States Mentioned in National Projects

State	# of Projects
California	106 (55.5%)
New York	84 (44%)
Illinois	67 (35.1%)
Pennsylvania	64 (33.5%)
North Carolina	64 (33.5%)
Texas	60 (31.4%)
Florida	59 (30.9%)
Colorado	57 (29.8%)
Michigan	55 (28.8%)
Washington	54 (28.3%)

# of Projects