Celebrating the Successes of the Inaugural Justice40 Accelerator Cohort

At the end of 2022, the Justice40 Accelerator celebrated its Inaugural Cohort organizations as 52 frontline groups completed the first year of the program and transitioned into the alumni community.

The Justice40 Accelerator was developed to support community-led organizations on the frontlines of climate action to increase their capacity, connections, and readiness to access the federal funding flowing from the Justice40 Initiative. Each organization that participates receives a $25,000 grant award to support their participation as well as technical assistance like grant support and network building.

The inaugural cohort of the Justice40 Accelerator began in September of 2021, and celebrated their journey with the program over the past 15 months at the end of December.

Throughout 2022, the group participated in 20 educational events such as an overview of navigating federal, state, and local public funding opportunities, and peer learning circles with opportunities to connect with other organizations. 42 organizations worked with the Justice40 Technical Assistance providers to access grant support and build their organizational capacity. In 2022 the cohort submitted an impressive 79 funding applications, and 25 organizations had successful applications receiving over $13 million in federal, state, local public funding.

Cohort Success Stories

Beyond the numbers, the stories and successes of each individual cohort member are remarkable.

Green Door Initiative

Green Door Initiative, a Detroit-based group that does environmental workforce development, was part of the Justice40 Accelerator’s first cohort. They applied for and received over $1.2 million to continue their work to increase solar access in affordable housing and create jobs installing and maintaining solar panels.
"Prior to being selected for the J40 Accelerator, we were struggling to reach our budget aims of around $300,000 annually. Now we’re at $3 million dollars annually... We are growing. Our staff has grown exponentially. We had a solid 4 to 5 full-time people; today we’re nearly 15 people. We’re able to really meet the needs of our community to ensure that environmental justice is achieved by all."

Donele Wilkins, founder of Green Door Initiative

**West Georgia Farmers Cooperative**

Another organization that participated in the first Justice40 Accelerator cohort is the West Georgia Farmers Cooperative, an agricultural collective designed to support local agricultural businesses and the production of affordable food. They applied for and received three grants that totaled over $1.1 million to support their business. WGFC used this funding to help finance their building consisting of a community-owned grocery store, commercial kitchen, and credit union to create a location for local farmers, producers, and culinary entrepreneurs to come together.

“It was really exciting to be part of Justice40 along with you all - it made us feel like we were a part of something special. Probably the most valuable takeaway for us was the technical assistance that we’ve been able to obtain. Because of that assistance, we’ve been able to write a couple of USDA awards, one of which we were recently awarded to fund our community-owned grocery store.”

Eric Simpson, member of West Georgia Farmers Cooperative
While their official time as a cohort has come to an end, these organizations will continue to participate in the Justice40 Accelerator community as alumni through the relationships that have been built and the network of resources available to them through the Accelerator.

Learn More

The Justice40 Accelerator team produced a short documentary to tell the story of the cohort members’ experience. [Watch it here](#)!