



US GULF SOUTH
2020-2024

GULF SOUTH FOR A GREEN NEW DEAL
**COMMUNITY
CONTROLLED FUND
REPORT 2024**



GULF SOUTH FOR A GREEN NEW DEAL COMMUNITY CONTROLLED FUND

2020-2024

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY PUBLISHED

NOVEMBER 5, 2024



TAPROOT EARTH





**GULF SOUTH FOR A GREEN NEW DEAL
COMMUNITY CONTROLLED FUND
REPORT 2024**

**EXECUTIVE
SUMMARY**



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Funding the Climate Frontlines: Gulf South for A Green New Deal Community Controlled Fund

The Gulf South for a Green New Deal (GS4GND) Community Controlled Fund (GS4GND CCF) presents a transformational model in climate justice investment. In this model, communities most impacted by the climate crisis lead in directing resources and shaping solutions that safeguard their futures.

Regional History And Context

From 2010-2015, more than five years of [People's Movement Assemblies](#), the [Gulf South Rising \(GSR\) Initiative](#) focused on building movement infrastructure and collective power in the Gulf South — a region targeted by extractive industry because of its geographical and demographic makeup, which is particularly vulnerable to climate disaster. In 2019, in response to the national call for a “[Green New Deal](#)”, the GSR Initiative birthed the [Gulf South for a Green New Deal \(GS4GND\)](#) formation to provide a rooted Southern analysis and vision. The GS4GND formation organized more than 400 Gulf South organizations

to advance climate justice across **Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, Florida, and Puerto Rico.**

The Gulf South for a Green New Deal (GS4GND) vision elevated frontline solutions rooted in a history of community leadership, collective self-governance, and climate, racial, and economic justice. The [GS4GND Policy Platform](#) formalized this vision and was put into practice by the GS4GND formation from 2019 - 2023. In 2023, the formation collectively affirmed moving together with frontline communities in Appalachia, to form **the Gulf South to Appalachia (GS2A) formation.**

Establishment of The Community-Controlled Fund

Like the formation itself, the [Gulf South for a Green New Deal Community Controlled Fund \(GS4GND CCF\)](#) emerged from the Gulf South Rising (GSR) Community Controlled Fund. It was **designed to pool significant philanthropic dollars and distribute them**



through a participatory budgeting process. This work recognized the deep structural barriers faced by individual organizations seeking funding in the Gulf South.

After the 2020 Gulf Gathering, GS4GND members launched a campaign targeting a three-year, \$15 million investment (a fund which was later raised to \$17 million to include Puerto Rico). For its first two years, Project South fiscally sponsored the fund, with [Taproot Earth](#) (formerly [Gulf South Center for Law & Policy](#)) assuming fiscal responsibility in the third year, 2023. All resource distribution decisions were made by the GS4GND Hubs participatory processes.

Goals And Objectives Of The GS4GND CCF

The GS4GND CCF was established with the goals to:

- **Support** grassroots climate solutions,
- **Advance** just transition policies,
- **Build** regional movement infrastructure, and
- **Uplift** collective governance as a model for sustainable change.

Through these means, **the GS4GND CCF proved once again that the frontlines of impact know best how to mobilize and distribute resources.** This approach challenges the status quo financial system that advances a more paternalistic and extractive approach that seeks to curtail community leadership and decision-making. Instead, the GS4GND CCF prioritized self-determination, equity, and collective governance in financial decision-making.

Key Outcomes

Over the three-year period, from 2021 to 2023, the GS4GND CCF effectively redistributed over \$14 million, including **\$10 million allocated to 100 organizations across six state hubs (TX, LA, MS, AL, FL and one occupied territory (PR))** through a participatory budgeting process. These funds sustained many groups through the COVID-19 crisis and expanded long-term community capacity by keeping critical organizations open and operating in building community power and mutual aid. During this time, GS4GND also mobilized more than 1,000 residents at

the [2022 Climate Justice & Joy community assembly](#) and engaged **more than 5,000 residents in Texas** and Louisiana on key energy and environmental issues.

GS4GND Regional hubs held gatherings and trainings, including two annual **Gulf Gathering Governance Assemblies, connecting 300 leaders from 100 groups for network building, policy engagement, and leadership development.** Hub-specific mobilization efforts ranged from Puerto Rico's focus on food sovereignty and Florida's hurricane recovery, to Mississippi's fight for clean water in Jackson and Texas's environmental justice tours.

Critical Learnings from the GS4GND CCF

The CCF highlighted both the **complexities of financial governance** within frontline communities, and **immense power and potential** that arise from collective governance of resources. The following are key wisdoms cultivated during the 2021-2023 period:

1. Communities in the Gulf South **excel at resource mobilization.**
2. Funders who **place trust in frontline leaders** — without imposing restrictive metrics — are investing in true autonomy and a commitment to democracy.
3. Navigating historical trauma around race, class, and power is essential. This requires **intensive facilitation to build accountability, trust, and healing** in financial decision-making.
4. Community leaders agreed to **collective agreements and processes with rigor and flexibility**, often needing to revisit agreements to heal patterns of harm, respond to emerging situations (such as disasters), and get resources to the places they are most needed.
5. Success is multi-faceted; establishing **shared definitions of financial success** and celebrating diverse achievements creates alignment and morale among participants.
6. GS4GND's foundational values of equity, frontline leadership, and mutual respect acted as **a living accountability mechanism** that strengthened unity and resolved conflicts.
7. The GS4GND CCF offers an **alternative to extractive finance** by using funds to attract further investment, foster sustainable projects, and build a culture of healing into its funding approach.

Looking Forward

Gulf South For A Green New Deal (GS4GND)

In 2023, the GS4GND formation collectively made the decision to merge with climate justice leaders from the Appalachian region, forming the [Gulf South to Appalachia \(GS2A\) Formation](#). This renewed formation builds on legacies of regional solidarity between the two U.S. regions most impacted by oil and gas extraction. This new region-to-region structure moves beyond individual state hubs to collectively advance climate justice rooted in Black Liberation and self-determination, based on the [#WeChooseNow Climate Action Strategy](#).

The future of the Community Controlled Fund

As affirmed by GS4GND, GS2A will steward the remaining CCF funds. In 2024 GS2A affirmed that the CCF should be used to strengthen regional governance across the Gulf South and Appalachia and support movement leadership among the two regions. Taproot Earth will continue to steward the CCF in 2024 and 2025, as the GS2A builds its new governance structure and explores opportunities for broader regional collaboration.

In Summary

As the climate crisis intensifies, the legacies of extractive financial systems fail to deliver real solutions in frontline communities. Communities most impacted by the climate crisis must direct resources and shape solutions that safeguard their own futures. Deep investment in frontline community control and self-governance practices liberatory resource mobilization.

Gulf South for a Green New Deal's Community Controlled Fund offers a replicable model for development that centers equity, self-determination, and collective governance.

The GS4GND CCF demonstrates that when frontline communities control their own resources, they shape thriving climate futures.

Follow the frontlines.



Full Report Coming 2025



TAPROOT EARTH

taproot.earth

