

PHILANTHROPISTS

Big Surprises as MacKenzie Scott Announces ‘Open Call’ Winners

The billionaire philanthropist announced 361 winners — and \$640 million in giving.

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MacKenzie Scott has announced the winners of her open call for proposals — and there were some big surprises.

The competition, which was overseen by Lever for Change, had been [described](#) as an effort that would award \$1 million each to 250 community-led organizations with budgets of \$1 million to \$5 million. Today, however, the billionaire philanthropist announced [361 winners](#) — 279 that received \$2 million and another 82 that got \$1 million.

Altogether, Scott awarded \$640 million to the winning organizations.

“Each of these 361 community-led non-profits was elevated by peer organizations and a round-2 evaluation panel for their outstanding work advancing the voices and opportunities of individuals and families of meager or modest means, and groups who have met with discrimination and other systemic obstacles,” Scott wrote in a [brief announcement](#) on the Yield Giving website.

Scott awarded grants to organizations across the country, though more than half went to nonprofits in the South and the West. Sixty-three groups work in the Midwest, while 80 work in the Northeast, 99 in the South, and 126 in the West.

[More than 6,000 groups](#) applied for the grants.

Grants went to organizations working in many issue areas that are longtime interests of Scott, including equity and justice, health, education, and economic mobility.

The list of grantees includes scores of organizations with little profile nationally. The Kenwood Oakland Community Organization received a \$2 million award for the Silver Fox Café, a social enterprise scheduled to open later this year to give seniors a place to gather and meet new people and provide employment opportunities for young people in the neighborhood.

“The Silver Fox is more than just a response to senior isolation,” Jaribu Lee, the organization’s deputy director, said in a written statement. “It’s a cornerstone for community revitalization and intergenerational learning. We envision it as a home for organizing, where the wisdom of our senior leaders meets the energy of our youth, shaping a collective future that is vibrant and inclusive.”

How Will She Give Going Forward?

Many philanthropy observers saw the open call as an answer to criticism that Scott’s grant making lacks transparency and overlooks some worthy organizations.

It will be interesting to see how the competition influences Scott’s giving style, Matthew Lee, an associate professor at the Harvard Kennedy School of Government [told the *Chronicle* earlier this month](#).

“She now has a process for accepting applications,” Lee said. “Moving forward, which channel will she use? Will she use the application process, or will she use the ‘inside out’ process that so far has accounted for most of her giving?”

Ben Gose and Drew Lindsay contributed to this article.