

The Redlich Horwitz Foundation has engaged local leaders, lived experience experts, and advocates across the state in candid conversations about their needs, challenges, and priorities. Through these discussions, we recognized the value of expanding partnerships and access to philanthropic support for grassroots organizations and coalitions working to build the family justice movement — particularly in communities of color disproportionately affected by child protection investigations.

### Acknowledging Unintentional Harm

Since developing our mission “to improve foster care in New York” in 2013, RHF chose to primarily focus grantmaking and attention on improving permanency for children in foster care across the state, first through adoption and kin guardianship and later by supporting efforts to expedite family reunification. Over the years, our work has expanded to ensure better care for children in the system by minimizing institutional placements, improving family-based and kinship care, and providing educational support for young people. Although our investments did improve conditions for many youth in foster care, the choice to only support the backend of the system was shortsighted, as it wrongly assumed that the system’s decision to remove a child from their family was necessary to achieve safety.

After careful evaluation of our philanthropy over the past decade, we see the shortcomings of our approach and deeply regret the missteps we have made that supported a system that causes profound harm to many children and families. In hindsight, we realize the pitfalls of seeking grantmaking guidance from a circle of trusted advisors, researchers, and partners that was too narrow and too connected to the system’s hold on power. As a result, our grantmaking strategy lacked diversity, and we failed to incorporate the perspectives of people with lived experience in determining which priorities and strategies would most positively impact children and families.

We know we missed opportunities to strengthen under-resourced communities historically targeted by CPS investigations and ignored the root causes of racial disparities and systemic racism that subject families of color to threats and surveillance tactics that rarely affect their white counterparts.

Moving forward, RHF plans to rectify previous actions by refining our grantmaking strategy to center on achieving equity and justice for New York families. We pledge to focus more intently on strengthening the growing movement to build power for families impacted by the system, end family policing, and reimagine community-driven support for New York families. We have begun to take the necessary steps to become a more thoughtful, responsive, and transparent partner. We will continue to listen, learn, and evolve our strategies to meet the moment.

## ADDRESSING KEY ISSUES

- ✓ **Internal equity audit** and a **DEI strategic plan** to identify and integrate core values that will guide the Foundation’s future practices and grantmaking policies.
- ✓ First-ever **open call for proposals from grassroots organizations** to support community organizing, advocacy, and direct services to strengthen efforts to help New York’s children and families heal, remain intact, and thrive.
- ✓ Appointed **new Board Trustees** with diversified expertise and lived experience to help fulfill the new strategic funding vision and grantmaking priorities.

## ACHIEVING THE VISION

- Create a more transparent, inclusive and equitable grantee process that allows us to diversify our portfolio, connect with the community, and better support the growth and development of our grantees.
- Strengthen our board governance, creating policies and procedures that are transparent, inclusive and equitable. We will also diversify the board, bringing in additional voices of those who have been impacted by the very system we seek to transform.
- Revamp internal processes that demonstrate transparency and better align with our values and our commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion and anti-racism.