

# THE HEALTH AND CLIMATE FAST-START FUND

Investing for innovation, scale and collaboration at the intersection of health, and climate.

---

“ClimateWorks Foundation and its Fast-Start Fund exemplify the partnership that helps make philanthropy more effective. Health and environmental funders need to work together to break down silos, to learn from each other, and to make effective grants at the vital intersection of climate change and human health. FSF (and the superb ClimateWorks staff) have been invaluable sources of networking, advice, and insight for us at Wellcome Trust.”

Howard Frumkin, Head, Our Planet, Our Health, Wellcome Trust

Dear Colleagues,

Climate change is the single greatest threat to human health facing humanity. Yet, two communities who care deeply about this cause and effect intersection – climate philanthropy and health philanthropy – have little history of strong collaboration to meet this challenge.

Recognizing an opportunity to deepen partnerships across these philanthropic communities, the ClimateWorks Foundation, the Packard Foundation, and other leading climate philanthropists convened a meeting in March 2017, bringing together a group of nearly 30 foundations from the health and climate sectors. Hosted by the MacArthur Foundation, the result was the launch of the Health and Climate Fast-Start Fund. The Fund was to serve as a two-year accelerator to provide philanthropy the opportunity to seed innovative, collaborative approaches to tackle the health impacts of climate change.

As this accelerator comes to a close, partners have learned there are many promising avenues available to make meaningful progress. For example, one grantee, Health Care Without Harm, has made important strides with its objective to scale promising models to reduce carbon in the health care system. Similarly, efforts to address air quality and the health benefits of reducing fossil fuel use have gained traction, particularly in India where the National Clean Air Plan affords opportunities to scale work on solutions leading to cleaner air.

The Health and Climate Fast-Start Fund awarded nearly \$2 million in grants around the globe, double our original goal. We are grateful to the participating funders for their generosity and collaboration over the past two years. Their partnership as well as that of many others, provided critical expertise and input to help shape the Fund and elevate the work of many in this field.

This report briefly highlights the Fund’s accomplishments and the critical bridges it has built across the health and climate communities. We hope it is a useful and inspirational guide to others looking for opportunities linking climate and health philanthropies. Thank you for your support and dedication in the fight against climate change and protecting human health.

With gratitude,



Chris DeCardy  
Vice President and Director of Programs  
The David and Lucile Packard Foundation  
and Health and Climate Fast-Start Fund Advisory Committee Member



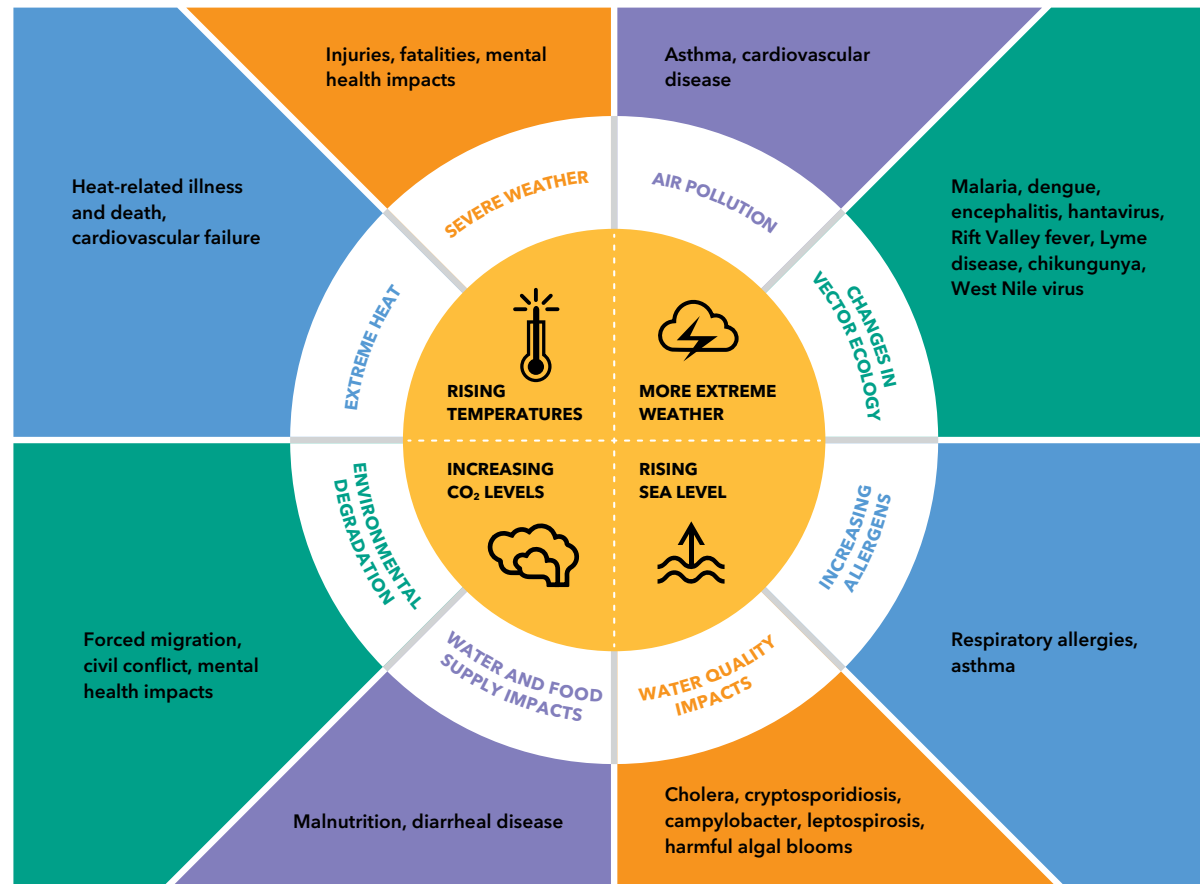
# The Challenge of Climate & Health

## Climate change is directly linked to the social and environmental determinants of health

Changing weather patterns, increased temperatures, and rising sea levels are just a few ways in which climate change is impacting our health and livelihoods, by causing draughts, floods, extreme heat, and air pollution. There is little doubt that the severity of global climate change and its toll on human health will only continue to rise. Taking action now on the underlying causes of climate change presents a path forward to prevent further massive public health emergencies from breaking out around the world.

The price tag of inaction on climate is incredibly high. Economic losses from extreme weather combined with the health costs of air pollution in the U.S. alone averages approximately \$240 billion/year. This cost is projected to increase to \$360 billion/year in the next decade according to a new [report](#) released by the Universal Ecological Fund. Air pollution alone has become a major public health issue in recent years. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), exposure to air pollution causes 7 million deaths worldwide every year and costs an estimated \$5.11 trillion in welfare losses globally.

### Impact of Climate Change on Human Health



Graphic sourced from Centers For Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)



“The evidence is clear that climate change is already having a serious impact on human lives and health. It threatens the basic elements we all need for good health - clean air, safe drinking water, nutritious food supply, and safe shelter - and will undermine decades of progress in global health. We can't afford to delay action any further.”

Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director-General of WHO

For lasting impact, health issues need solutions that will address the root causes related to climate change. Asthma in young children can only be effectively reduced through improving air quality; hunger and malnutrition due to crop failure will not be solved without reducing carbon in the atmosphere; and waterborne diseases such as cholera and diarrhea will only be controlled when we can address rising sea levels. Fortunately, strategies are emerging to ensure that the climate risks posed on human health are taken into consideration in order to advance long-lasting, scalable solutions.

# The Health and Climate Fast-Start Fund: Responding to the Challenge

The Fund leverages the collective power of philanthropy to solve the climate and health crisis



Launched in 2017, the Health and Climate Fast-Start Fund (FSF) was designed as a two-year initiative to bring together health and climate philanthropies to explore, test, and work together to address the damaging impacts of climate change on human health. Core objectives of the Fund included deepening collaboration among the health and climate funders, identifying opportunities for shared investments, and fostering broader engagement across grantees and geographies. Thanks to the generous support of the FSF participating foundations, funding quickly surpassed the FSF's original goal of \$1 million, reaching \$2.1 million. Other foundations also joined this effort, providing aligned funding to supplement the Fund's activities and offer additional resources to the field.

Program priorities for the FSF were developed by focusing on areas where the unique model of philanthropic collaboration would provide a catalytic impact:

- Improving air quality and health by reducing fossil fuel use;
- Reducing the healthcare system's carbon footprint;
- Humanizing health and climate issues by building a more compelling public narrative; and
- Promoting climate- and health-friendly food systems.

Selection criteria for FSF grants focused on those projects that could be fulfilled on a one-to three-year timeline and demonstrated the following characteristics: innovation (novel approaches for addressing health-related climate change impacts); scale (solutions/strategies which could be replicated in other geographies and regions); and collaboration (deepening collaboration and communications across the health and climate sectors).



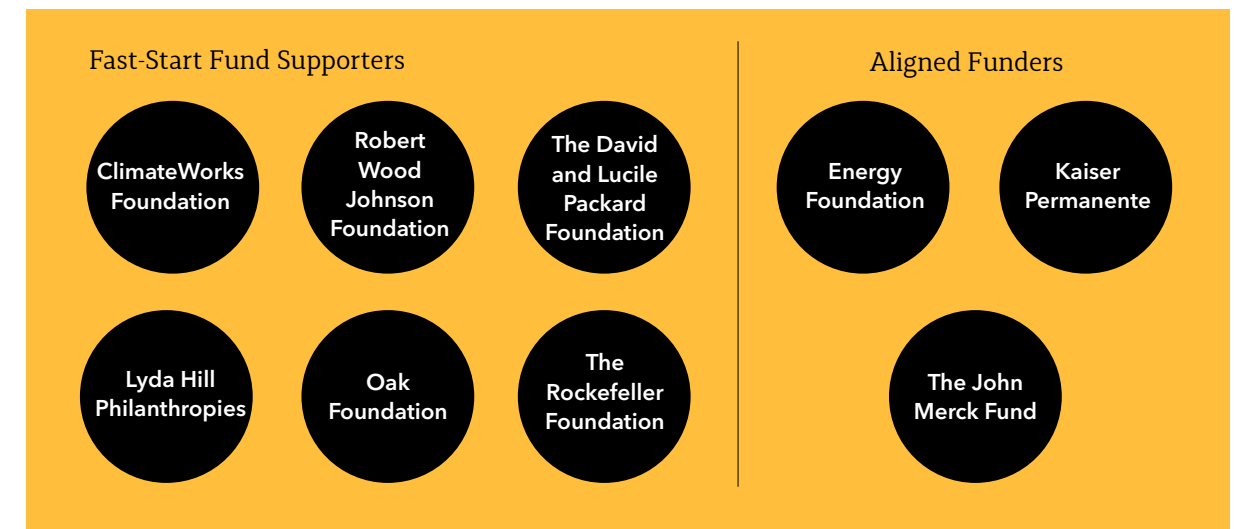
“Participating in the Health and Climate Fast-Start Fund provided opportunities for us to connect with other funders equally interested in scoping new projects leveraging the science behind climate change to advance systemic change.”

Matt Crommett, Lyda Hill Philanthropies



## Participating Foundations

Six foundations joined forces to launch the Fast-Start Fund. Three additional foundations came in as aligned members of the Fund



## Collaborating to Deliver Impact

### Reaching across organizations, sectors, and geographies

Collaboration was central to the Fast-Start Fund, building engagement in multiple ways across funders and grantees. This in turn helped generate momentum on key issues and identified new areas for further exploration and/or investment. The following Grantee Spotlights showcase examples of where cross-sectoral collaboration led to stronger and more wide reaching results.

#### The Global Climate and Health Alliance: Aligning for Solutions in India

In February 2019, the Health and Climate Fast-Start Fund led a convening of grantees and funders in India with the goal of building substantial momentum in the next three to five years to achieve cleaner air. Held in partnership with the Shakti Foundation, Clean Air Platform, and the Clean Air Fund, this meeting brought together representatives from nearly 20 funders and 30 organizations engaged in research, policy, advocacy, communications, or other initiatives to address the issue of air quality in India.

Key learnings from the meeting included:

- Reaching consensus that more research and data on air pollution in India is needed but should not be used to delay or defer action on air pollution.
- Identifying opportunities for strengthening alliances with government and health professionals.
- To address governance and implementation of clean air policies, it was useful to include public health professionals in policy and regulatory processes to put health at the center of all planning and decision making.

This initial kick-off meeting paved the way for participants to deepen existing relationships, forge new connections, and discuss important issues faced by their communities due to deteriorating air quality in India. Participants committed to continuing these meetings for better coordination between philanthropic and bilateral efforts to ensure rapid scale up of effective clean air solutions.



“This grant (from the Fast-Start Fund) has allowed us to bring in nontraditional partners at the intersection of health and air quality. Together we are able to more deeply understand and develop solutions to more holistically address problems related to children’s health and welfare, transportation, and the environment in urban areas. It is a great example of how philanthropy can help bring collaboration, innovation, and scale to solutions.”

Kathy Jack, Dallas Urban Conservative Associate,  
The Nature Conservancy

#### The Nature Conservancy: Studying Air Quality to Address Pediatric Asthma

A project of The Nature Conservancy (TNC), Breathe Easy Dallas tackles the persistent and growing issue of pediatric asthma and poor air quality in Dallas. While this is a widely recognized problem, the lack of sufficient data illustrating the connection has prevented stakeholders from effectively and equitably directing programs and resources to address it.

To bridge this gap and provide a clear path for the community to help address this issue, Breathe Easy Dallas is conducting a study to monitor air quality while also studying the impact of practical solutions like reduced car idling, campus-based health initiatives, and tree planting on air quality and asthma-related absenteeism at identified schools. Phase 1 of the project identified and installed air quality monitors at nine Breathe Easy Dallas schools that are sharing data via the city’s Smart City platform. Phase 2 of the project will implement and study the impact of health and nature-based solutions to asthma-related absenteeism at the Dallas Independent School District.

Funding from the Fast-Start Fund helped get the project off the ground and attracted other funders and city partners to the effort. It was a true collaborative effort as TNC partnered with the Dallas School District as well as the city government to achieve their desired cross-cutting goals and build a model that could be scalable across districts nationwide.

# The Fund at a Glance

Grantmaking was focused on seeding innovative projects that had the potential to scale

Ten grants awarded to seven organizations at the forefront of climate and health

## Fast-Start Fund Overview



### Columbia University's Mailman School of Public Health

To support the University's Global Consortium on Climate and Health Education that provide health practitioners with the knowledge base to address health-related climate issues

\$100,000

### Global Climate and Health Alliance

To expand their Unmask My City project to reduce air pollution in select cities and build a global campaign. Additional funding provided for cross learning opportunities and coordination between air quality advocates and donors

\$825,000 (3 years)

### Health Care without Harm

To develop a plan for decarbonizing the health sector. Additional funding provided to build capacity within the Indian health sector so they could tackle climate change and air pollution in select cities

\$450,000 (2 years)

### Health and Environmental Funders Network

To strengthen funder engagement on climate, health and equity projects and to strengthen capacity of communities to access and deploy funds

\$220,000 (2 years)

### Natural Resources Defense Council

To improve public health and contribute to building cleaner, safer, and more sustainable cities in Asia

\$200,000

### George Mason University for Climate Change and Healthy Babies Bright Future

To strengthen public and political will for clean energy by highlighting the harmful effects of fossil fuels across the human lifespan

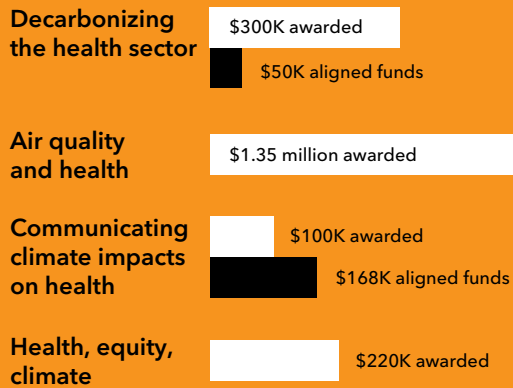
\$168,000

### The Nature Conservancy

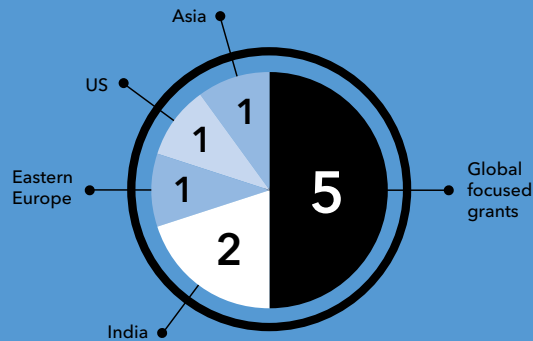
To support a collaborative model to study and design targeted interventions for air quality and asthma-related student absenteeism in Dallas, Texas

\$225,000

## Grants Awarded by Focus Area



## Grants by Geographic Focus



\*Updated August, 2019. Balance used for fund administration.

## Driving Towards Innovation and Scale

**Grantmaking focused on solutions and geographies that collectively would have the greatest impact**

Achieving tangible and actionable results was at the heart of the FSF in order to demonstrate success and identify opportunities for further expansion. The FSF's grantmaking approach targeted projects that offered concrete solutions and provided maximum potential for scale and replication.

### The Global Climate and Health Alliance: Building Alliances to Improve Air Quality

Air pollution has quickly emerged as one of the top health risks from climate change, leading to 7 million deaths per year. The Global Climate and Health Alliance (GCHA) is a leading organization building alliances with organizations across the health and climate sectors to address this issue.

#### Unmask My City Initiative

Unmask My City is an initiative of GCHA, connecting local health partners and their communities to work together in promoting practical solutions and creating tangible city level policy changes that drive a clear, downward global trend in urban air pollution by 2030. The campaign is now launched in 12 cities and calls for clean air for over 45 million people.

With the help of the Fast-Start Fund, the initiative was able to expand to three new cities over the past year: Sofia, Bulgaria (population 1.2 million); Fresno, USA (500,000); and Bengaluru, India (12 million). Funding will position the campaign to expand to two to three more cities in India in the next two years.

Some city-level highlights include:

**Sofia, Bulgaria:** The Unmask Initiative in Sofia was able to form a coalition of health professionals to lead an awareness campaign on the adverse impacts of air pollution. This campaign includes prominent institutions such as the local Public Health Institute and has been endorsed by the mayor of Sofia.

**Bengaluru, India:** The Unmask Initiative launched the Healthy Air Coalition. This coalition will install 40 monitors across the city to provide air quality data to the public and assess the health burden of air pollution in the city. This data will also feed into the policy advocacy process, as this will allow the coalition to make recommendations on measures for at-risk populations and pollution hotspots.



**“Support from the Fast-Start Fund has enabled us to increase alignment and collaboration with many funders and organizations in relationship to air pollution, climate change, and health.”**

Jennifer Miller, Executive Director, GCHA

**“This grant has given us the time to pursue larger funding initiatives that will facilitate the hiring of additional personnel and build upon what we started during the first year. The seed funding is positioning us to work at greater scale.”**

Debbie Rosenberg Bush, Senior Director, Corporate and Foundation Relations at GCCHE



GCCHE has 200 member institutions in 30 countries.

### Columbia University's Mailman School of Public Health: Educating Health Professionals on Impacts of Climate Change

Despite growing recognition of the climate-health threats, there are few developed educational programs offering curricula linking these two areas. Columbia University's Mailman School of Public Health is bridging this gap by spearheading the Global Consortium on Climate and Health Education (GCCHE) with the mission of helping more health professionals understand the health impacts of climate change.

Together, participants in this group have developed a set of core climate and health competencies for all health professionals, and the consortium has been instrumental in building a sense of community among the member institutions by publishing quarterly webinars, sharing best practices, and developing a virtual town square for members to engage on climate-health education. The work of the consortium has been recognized and published in prominent academic journals such as the Journal of the Association of American Medical Colleges, and media outlets including The New York Times. It has also been featured in leading reports including the 2018 Lancet Countdown on Health and Climate Change Brief for the United States of America.

GCCHE was able to grow and scale with the support of the Fast-Start Fund. Since July 2018, 12 additional health professions institutions from 6 countries have joined the GCCHE. All together the GCCHE includes nearly 200 member institutions in almost 30 countries on 6 continents, representing institutions with over an estimated 150,000 students.

## Looking Forward to the Next Phase of Climate-Health Funding

### New initiatives emerge as the Fund draws to a close

As shown through the stories of the Fund's grantees and partners, there is strong interest and enthusiasm among the health and climate sectors to work together and advance solutions leading to a more sustainable and healthier future. During the past two years, the Health and Climate Fast-Start Fund strengthened relationships across these fields and forged new partnerships for participating philanthropies.

We are grateful to the many partners who joined this effort, and for the generosity of the participating foundations who made this work possible. We're encouraged by the results and inspired by the strategies that have emerged over the past two years. Momentum is building for tackling health and climate together. Philanthropic, social, and local communities are working closely in new ways to address these issues. For example, collaborations continue to build and develop in India to address air pollution, and in the U.S, a new advocacy campaign, called the "Climate Campaign," aims to reframe climate change as a personally relevant and urgent health issue. Globally, the Clean Air Fund has launched and is helping to address these issues around the world.

These activities combined with the efforts from other partners across the globe will continue to forge progress and develop new approaches to shape a healthier future for people and the planet.

Moving forward, ClimateWorks Foundation will continue with its leadership role on climate, including advancing specific project areas around the food, health, and climate intersection. The Fast-Start Fund was a critical time-bound initiative to help catalyze global action and we are proud of its contributions.

Thank you to the many supporters, grantees, experts, and other partners whose participation in the Health and Climate Fast-Start Fund was instrumental in its success.



---

ClimateWorks Foundation mobilizes philanthropy to help solve the climate crisis and ensure a prosperous future. Since our founding in 2008, we've collaborated with foundations, NGOs, and climate leaders around the world to tackle climate change on a global scale. We're proud of what we've accomplished to date, and we're always seeking out new foundation partners that share our commitment to securing a stable climate.





235 Montgomery St., Suite 1300  
San Francisco, CA 94104

(415) 433-0500

[climateworks.org](http://climateworks.org)