

fundraising capacity while sustaining or growing existing programs. It could offer more direct support for grantee's fundraising efforts, such as introducing organizations to prospective funders early in the grant term or offering technical fundraising support. Supporting grantees to diversify funding streams may help cultivate organizational confidence and foster leadership's ability to sustain growth through additional philanthropic investments.

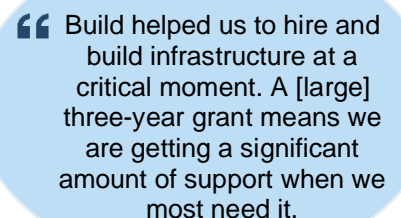
JJF could develop strategies to clarify expectations around post-Build relationships with grantees early in the process. Despite JJF's efforts to explain post-Build opportunities, this topic was a consistent source of confusion and anxiety for grantees. This concern was particularly pronounced in organizations with relatively newer relationships with JJF. An increase in direct, clear communication could ensure that grantees have a clear sense of what support, if any, they might continue to receive from the foundation after their Scaling Build Grant expires. This would require communicating whether or not a Scaling Build Grant is a one-time grant without the option of renewal or further funding, or the future paths that might be available. Establishing these expectations clearly and firmly at the beginning of the grant process or before a Scaling Build Grant is awarded will help grantees plan more effectively.

• **Build Grant Strategy Successes**

The Build Grant strategy has achieved many successes to date. This section details the elements of the Build experience that grantees reported as effective. Some of these successes came from the structure of the grant itself, while others were the result of the grant empowering organizations to build internal capacities, and pursue large-scale growth. The grant's significant investments and support from JJF staff created opportunities for grantees to increase their programmatic reach and develop their internal infrastructures effectively.

Effective Elements of the Build Grant Structure

Through the design of the Build Grant structure, JJF has succeeded in supporting current grantees to make notable progress on their strategic and organizational growth goals. In line with field-wide best practices, Scaling Build Grants are a significant, multiyear investment of general operating funds.³ The effectiveness of Build Grants also relies on supportive and trusting relationships between program officers and grantees and offers a low-burden selection process for prospective partner organizations.



“ Build helped us to hire and build infrastructure at a critical moment. A [large] three-year grant means we are getting a significant amount of support when we most need it.

The core grant structure of making significant, multiyear, general operating investments has been highly effective. Build Grants have supported long-term organizational health, reducing financial pressure and giving organizations the space and resources needed to grow. The Scaling Build Grant structure is largely aligned with field-wide best practices for capacity building.⁴ Grantees reported that JJF's grants enabled them to build operational capacity and largely cover the full cost of scaling - both in

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

terms of programmatic and infrastructure growth. Likewise, JJF's tactic of providing general operating funds while asking for specific deliverables in the Capacity Build Grant phase, such as evaluations and strategic plans, before moving forward with a Scaling Build Grant, helped provide a useful framework and foundation for grantees.

The grant's focus on general operating funds has offered flexibility and freedom for grantee organizations. The increase in general operating funds has given organizations agency to invest in areas they believe have the potential for the biggest impact. Grantees expressed gratitude for the confidence JJF has in their organizations and its leaders, demonstrated by trusting those closest to the work to make those financial decisions. One grantee shared, "the greatest gift you can give is general operating support. It shows that [the grantor] trusts you and your staff to best allocate these resources." This financial freedom allowed organizations to put energy and focus toward achieving strategic growth goals.

The multiyear structure of the Scaling Build Grant was helpful for long-term organizational planning. Stakeholders reported that one-year grants are often burdensome and include stressful reporting processes for their organization and staff, sometimes for relatively small financial support. In contrast, the three-year grant allowed leaders to plan for multiple years. Grantees also recognized the multiyear commitment as a sign of trust and partnership with JJF. One grantee shared that the Scaling Build Grant was "life-changing for the organization and life-giving for me."

JJF program officers built strong, supportive, and trusting relationships with Build grantees.

“ I have extremely positive things to say about the foundation staff, they deserve recognition. They bring a lot of commitment and integrity into the process.”

The grant structure fostered a sense of trust between grant recipients, program officers, and JJF. JJF staff created a transparent process for designing the grant in collaboration with grantees. As one grantee shared, there was a "partnership even at the level of designing the grant together. It felt like a very transparent process. [It was] collaborative - not a black box." JJF program officers met with grantees every six weeks to check in as thought partners, helping grantees navigate various

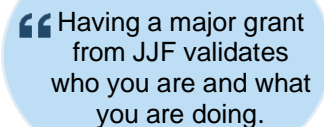
challenges and opportunities. Grantees reported feeling comfortable describing challenges to program officers and asking for insight into solutions. Grantees with previous funding relationships with JJF described significant levels of partnership and support, such as networking opportunities with funders and board members. All grantees reported helpful thought partnership on strategic plans, evaluations and/or positive publicity. Grantees reported that JJF staff were "generous with time and relationships."

The Build Grant utilized a low-burden assessment and application process. Grantees felt that the process for receiving a Build Grant was straightforward. When grantees were initially contacted, they understood they were potentially eligible for this new type of grant and worked with program officers to envision how to effectively use potential grant funds. During the selection and decision-making process, JJF requested existing planning materials and budget projections rather than a traditional grant application, which saved organizations significant time and resources. One grantee reported that their strategic plan, which they received feedback from JJF program officers on, became the "spine" of their scaling and growth plan. Similarly, JJF staff used conversations with grantees to answer additional

questions about their readiness instead of asking for written responses or formal assessments. Grantees felt that this process respected their time and was not overly burdensome.

JJF's reputation and the size of the Build Grants have built legitimacy with other donors. The financial commitment and JJF's reputation helped grantees build trusting relationships with new investors, donors, and foundations. Build Grants increased grantees' confidence and credibility when approaching other funders. According to one grantee, it was a "feather in our cap" and a bridge to bringing other funders to the table.

Build Grants inspired grantees to develop ambitious, strategic goals. The potential for a Scaling Build Grant inspired grantees to pursue more ambitious goals during their strategic planning processes, many of which were supported by JJF's Capacity Build Grants. In the words of one grantee, the potential for a Scaling Build Grant alone "allowed us to dream a lot bigger than we would have been comfortable with otherwise." Grantees worked with JJF program officers to consider long-term visions and set organizational goals, ensuring that they sought significant yet achievable benchmarks. This process provided a context in which grantees were given the opportunity to consider how significantly growing their organization could drive further impact toward meeting organizational missions. In addition, the monetary size of the grant - both in absolute terms and as a notable percentage of each organization's budget - has allowed grantees to pursue ambitious growth.

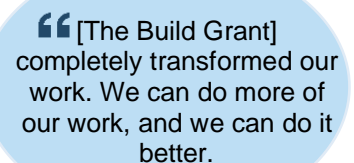


“ Having a major grant from JJF validates who you are and what you are doing.

Successful Impact of Build Grant Implementation

Build Grants enabled grantees to deepen organizational capacity and scale programming to reach more people. As a result of an increased investment into operating budgets, grantees significantly expanded infrastructure and pursued ambitious, strategic growth. This included hiring additional staff and/or consultants for specific projects, increasing program offerings, investing in data collection, and building out technical platforms. The quantitative data points shared below reflect both information shared in interviews and reported staff and participant growth numbers available through grant reports.

Grantees increased staff size and organizational capacity. Grantee organizations hired a significant number of new staff members, including full-time development, communications, and program staff. One grantee reported doubling their team, while another increased their full-time employees by roughly 35%. These hires changed the day-to-day operations of these organizations and enabled organizations to better leverage the existing skill sets of their leadership team by hiring people to own logistical or administrative elements of the work. More staff helped one organization to prioritize brand-building activities in addition to programmatic ones. Organizational leaders were able to focus on strategic thought leadership due to this increased staff capacity. One leader devoted more time to writing materials aimed at changing fieldwide practices, broadening their impact beyond their program participants. The investment in people enabled organizations to pursue strategic goals more effectively.



“ [The Build Grant] completely transformed our work. We can do more of our work, and we can do it better.

Scaling Build Grants helped some organizations substantially increase the reach of their programming efforts. Increased staff capacity allowed organizations to offer programs to more participants while also broadening their audiences or program offerings. Some organizations described significant audience growth. One grantee reported growing by nearly 6,000 participants, while another grew by 20% (nearly 1,500 participants) in the first year of its Scaling Build Grant. Other grantees reported smaller gains or appeared to have lower participation rates in some programs over the course of their grants. These decreases are likely, at least in part, the result of the COVID-19 pandemic disrupting participation, particularly for in-person events.

Virtual engagement formed a key part of some organizations' growth strategies - allowing grantees to expand their audiences with a less burdensome financial toll. One grantee invested in social media content, resulting in a significant increase in the number of people who signed up for their email list, a first step toward deeper engagement with the organization. Overall, grantees reported that their growth had largely matched their initial goals with the Scaling Build Grant. However, it is too early in the reporting process for Third Plateau to validate sustainable growth trends, as more projected goals than actuals have been reported to date.

Grantees improved internal infrastructure by using funds to update operational systems and processes. Grantees invested in a variety of internal supports to better position themselves for growth. They invested in databases, staff for finance and human resources, and marketing tools. Grantees utilized consultants to identify and support specific infrastructure needs. In some cases organizations prioritized consultants or term-limited staff over full-time staff to avoid a significant budget shortfall in anticipation of the Scaling Build Grant coming to an end.

Capacity Build Grants create the strong foundation necessary for organizations to scale. Grantees appreciated funds provided for strategic planning or evaluations. These foundational processes highlighted new growth areas for grantees which they could then address with the scaling grant funding. This process also offered grantees an opportunity to align with JJF staff on metrics and goals for future growth. Grantees also shared that these grants provided an opportunity to develop or deepen a relationship with JJF before moving into a scaling phase.

• **Build Grant Strategy Challenges**

This section outlines the various challenges grantees faced while building-up internal infrastructure and pursuing large-scale growth. Some of these challenges stemmed from the structure of the grant, while others arose during implementation. Grantees named grant timelines, COVID, unexpected needs that come with staff growth, and the lack of clarity around post-Build opportunities as challenges to meeting established growth goals and future organizational financial sustainability. Many of the identified challenges in this section are not unique to the Build grantee experience but are common issues for organizations observed across the nonprofit ecosystem.