

FRONTLINE RESOURCE INSTITUTE 2024 IMPACT REPORT



FRI

**Frontline Resource
Institute**



Pictured: Colibrí Sanfiorenzo Barnhard [left], HASER, and B. Preston Lyles [right], Toxic Prisons Campaign

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A LETTER FROM FRI'S ACTING DIRECTOR

Leading with joy is a choice we can make every day when working to address environmental and climate injustices. It can seem hard to choose joy when we are facing so many setbacks and challenges in environmental justice work. But stopping to celebrate our progress—and one another—can strengthen our ability to keep driving change, even when the odds against us seem great.



We had much to celebrate in 2024. By providing resources to a network of 450 community-based organizations (CBO's), we achieved \$212 million in grants for these organizations. We created a new strategic plan, guided by FRI's Conceptual Committee of environmental and climate justice leaders. They called the plan a "radical concept"—a meaningful partnership between a mainstream environmental organization and frontline activists and advocates. The wisdom and strength of our Conceptual Committee is the backbone of FRI. Their guidance positions us to move forward in a polarized political climate. While we may face setbacks, we can look at those as set-ups for a comeback. No matter what we face, we remain grounded in our mission and vision for a just, sustainable future.

IN 2025, FRI WILL CONTINUE TO BE A RESOURCE, SUPPORT-SYSTEM, AND ADVOCATE FOR FRONTLINE COMMUNITIES THAT ARE WORKING TO ENSURE A THRIVING FUTURE FOR US ALL.

I want to thank everyone who has given their time and effort to FRI—the Conceptual Committee, donors, our contractors, the FRI team, our grantees, and members of our growing network. We know the journey ahead will not be easy, but we must make the conscious decision to choose joy. We also know that if you want to go fast, go alone—if you want to go far, go together. Rooted in FRI's foundation of strength and trust, we cherish the opportunity to move forward together with old and new partners who seek to make environmental and climate justice a reality for all.

MARGOT BROWN, ACTING DIRECTOR OF FRI

Margot Brown

MEETING FRONTLINE PRIORITIES

FRI's Five-Year Plan

In 2024, FRI released its first [strategic plan](#), setting the course for our work through 2029. FRI's Conceptual Committee of 11 frontline leaders shaped the plan, which establishes four strategic priorities. Every aspect of the plan centers frontline advocates as leaders and upholds the priorities of communities that experience and struggle against the first and worst impacts of environmental harms and climate change.

| | FOCUS AREA | STRATEGIC GOALS | TRANSFORMATIONAL RESULT |
|----------------|---|--|--|
| EXTERNAL GOALS | MOVEMENT BUILDING <i>Keeping Frontline Communities Front and Center</i> | Connect people, policies, and practices through collective action to create transformative and durable well-being for frontline communities. | Frontline advocates are leaders of a strong, transformative, and victorious environmental and climate justice movement. |
| | SHARED LEARNING <i>Channeling Collective Wisdom</i> | Create opportunities for frontline advocates to learn alongside each other to amplify shared knowledge and cooperative action for environmental and climate justice. | Frontline advocates have increased knowledge, abilities, and skills to advance environmental and climate justice. Our work will nurture and channel the collective wisdom and consciousness of the environmental and climate justice movement. |
| | TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE <i>Building Frontline Capacity Through Knowledge</i> | Expand access to technical assistance, organizational and administrative capacity building, legal, and scientific support for frontline advocates. | Beneficiaries have increased capacities and capabilities to achieve environmental and climate justice in their communities, as well as at the state, regional, national, and international levels. |
| | FUNDING ACCESS AND DEVELOPMENT <i>Building Frontline Capacity Through Resources</i> | Increase access to resource development and funding opportunities for frontline advocates. | Frontline advocates have the necessary resources to build a more just, equitable, and sustainable future. |
| INTERNAL GOALS | FRI GOVERNANCE <i>Strengthening FRI as a Participatory Organization</i> | Develop an effective governance framework to move FRI toward becoming an independent nonprofit organization. | FRI becomes a freestanding institute that is valued and trusted by frontline advocates and the environmental and climate justice movement. |
| | FRI DEVELOPMENT <i>Endowing FRI to Provide Long-Term Benefits</i> | Secure durable and sustained funding and resources for FRI. | Frontline advocates rely on support from FRI over the long term. |

AMPLIFYING SHARED KNOWLEDGE THROUGH PARTNERSHIPS

SECURING TRANSFORMATIONAL FUNDING FOR FRONTLINE GROUPS WITH WRITING FOR GREEN

FRI's partner [Writing for Green](#) (WFG) equips community-based organizations with the tools and knowledge to secure and manage grant funding for their environmental justice work. In 2024 FRI and WFG:

- Developed a comprehensive 40-hour grant writing training course, including an interactive, self-directed/online course, used by more than 200 individuals.
- Provided grant writing-training and coaching to 1,000 frontline groups from across the country through a contract with the Institute for Sustainable Communities.

Since 2022, we have helped more than 250 frontline CBOs and other EJ organizations raise \$353 million.

250 *frontline CBOs supported since 2022*

\$353 *million dollars for frontline groups*

INCREASING COMMUNITY-LED CLIMATE ACTION WITH MAKE JUSTICE NORMAL

FRI partners with [Make Justice Normal](#) (MJN) to creatively engage people in climate action. At New York Climate Week, we hosted Street Works Earth, a public arts festival, in Jackson Heights, Queens, a microcosm of global communities that are currently enduring the worst of climate change impacts. The festival provided an intergenerational space for community members to participate in art, learn about New York climate policies, and find ways to act towards a safer climate. Hear from the various artists, organizers, and participants in [this video](#) recapping the incredible day.



[Click here](#) to watch a video recap of Street Works Earth.

75+ *participating artists and activists*

2500 *visitors and participants*

200 *get out the vote letters sent*

INSPIRING SOLUTIONS THROUGH SHARED LEARNING

CHARTING A PATH FORWARD BY BUILDING COMMUNITY

In 2024, FRI convened the recipients of our inaugural grant cycle to network, share solutions, and report on progress. The convening responded to a need expressed by our community partners for spaces to come together and build collective strength. To celebrate these leaders' accomplishments, FRI presented each grantee with a superhero cape, to acknowledge and uplift their amazing efforts as leaders and heroes in their communities. Below are just a few examples of what our grantees accomplished this year.



CHESTER RESIDENTS CONCERNED FOR QUALITY LIVING



Pictured: Zulene Mayfield, CRCQL

Chester Residents Concerned for Quality Living (CRCQL) used grant funds to obtain their 501C3 status and support three community events. One event led to attendees creating **23 handmade air purifiers** that community members took home.

HACIENDO ACCIONES SOCIO-ECOLÓGICAS RESILIENTES



Pictured: Colibrí Sanfiorenzo Barnhard, HASER

Haciendo Acciones Socio-Ecológicas Resilientes (HASER) used the grant funds to more than double the number of community groups they support through their Network of Actions program. They now serve **16 groups**.

LA MUJER OBRERA



Pictured: Hilda Villegas, La Mujer Obrera

La Mujer Obrera advocated for Ruben Salazar Apartments, an affordable housing unit in their community, to reopen. The apartments are undergoing a **\$93 million** renovation, paid for with federal funding that La Mujer Obrera fought for.

TOXIC PRISONS CAMPAIGN OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS COALITION



Pictured: B. Preston Lyles, Toxic Prisons Campaign

Toxic Prisons Campaign completed their 43-minute documentary, "I Can't Breathe: The Toxic Prison Campaign's Fight for Environmental Justice" and held **8 screenings**.

CREATING A PLATFORM FOR COMMUNITY VOICES

Community-based organizations need spaces and platforms to share their stories, on their terms. FRI's original blog series, *Stories from the Frontlines*, aims to help fill this need. In 2024, we highlighted the story of **La Mujer Obrera** and their work to make the Chamizal community healthier and stronger. To prepare for 2025, we featured a story by **Environmental Protection Network** that **provides strategies** on how individuals and organizations can prepare for the new administration and how federal funding for frontline communities may be impacted.



[Click here](#) to read about La Mujer Obrera's story, highlighting their history organizing for employment, housing, education, nutrition, health, peace, and political liberty in the barrio Chamizal of El Paso, Texas.

[Click here](#) to hear from EPN about the landscape of federal funding under the Trump administration.



We also supported the production of an upcoming documentary film, **Let No One Lose Heart**. The film follows **Ms. Sharon Lavigne**, a special education teacher turned environmental justice advocate, as she sets out to take down the poisonous and polluting petrochemical industry in the Gulf South. Her quest is long and difficult, but she battles on because the stakes—her health and home—are too high to lose heart.

[Click here](#) to watch a preview of *Let No One Lose Heart*.



Pictured: Ms. Sharon Lavigne, Rise St. James



Pictured: Neely Snyder [left] and Bryan Henry [right], Dream of Wild Health

Our Hope for 2025

Our work is more important than ever. Ensuring all Americans have access to clean air, clean water and products free of toxic chemicals is critical in improving the health and quality of life for everyone. In 2025, FRI will remain steadfast in our unwavering commitment to supporting the needs of frontline organizations and uphold the progress made with our partners and allies. We will continue to center their full agency and validate their lived experience by:

- Supporting the capacity and power of communities to create and control their own narratives, document, and protect lived experiences, and share knowledge and stories on their own terms.
- Deploying an organizational development training course, developed with our partners Writing for Green, to help frontline organizations build their capacity to diversify their funding portfolios.
- Developing accessible, mutualistic information technologies to curate, organize, and disseminate real-time knowledge, empowering frontline organizations and their ecosystems to thrive through precise and well-timed action.

To learn more and stay connected, please visit [our website](#).



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