

Press Release following Youth on the Frontlines

Released by the National Collaborative for Transformative Youth Policy

Young People Are Leading the Charge—Now Funders Must Follow

“Youth at the Frontlines” Virtual Event Centers Youth Voices and Urges Philanthropy to Meet the Moment

WASHINGTON, D.C. — On April 9, 2025, young leaders from across the country came together for *Youth at the Frontlines*, a powerful virtual conversation hosted by **Grantmakers for Thriving Youth (GTY)** in partnership with the **National Collaborative for Transformative Youth Policy (TYP)**. The event brought funders and field leaders face-to-face with youth changemakers organizing on the frontlines of today’s social and political crises.

In a moment defined by rising hostility toward marginalized communities, the dismantling of key federal programs, and attacks on diversity, equity, and inclusion, young people shared how they are showing up—in protests, in the press, and in their communities. They reflected on what it means to lead in this political climate and made an urgent call to action to the philanthropic community: **invest in youth and grassroots movements, now.**

“Young people have always been on the frontlines of change—from lunch counters and the civil rights movement to today’s fights for racial justice and climate action,” said Luis Hernandez, the event’s moderator and Power-building Strategist at TYP. “In 2025, it might look quieter. It might be digital. It might be underground. But it’s still powerful, and it’s still happening. Our responsibility is to listen and support—not just in moments of visibility, but in the everyday work youth are doing to survive, imagine, and organize.”

Youth leaders in California, Rhode Island, and Arizona spoke about their lived experiences: organizing protests on college campuses, confronting anti-immigrant sentiment, navigating the erosion of LGBTQIA+ rights, and facing surveillance and violence. One student journalist highlighted the increasing dangers facing young reporters, especially under a political climate that suppresses press freedom.

Still, these leaders found power in community, joy in small moments, and strength in collective action.

They also made a direct appeal to funders: **be transparent, be bold, and fund young people and their movements.** “Support grassroots journalism. Support community-based organizations. Invest in us. Hear our concerns. We are the next generation—and investment in us is an investment in hope,” said one youth panelist.

Ayeola Kinlaw, Co-Director at Grantmakers for Thriving Youth, reflected on the event’s impact:

“On behalf of the GTY community, we are thankful to the young people who shared their wisdom with us. It was a powerful demonstration of the work they’ve already done and the promise they hold to continue building a more just society. I’m so moved by everything they shared and inspired by their commitment to justice.”

This timely event is part of GTY’s ongoing commitment to uplift youth voices in conversations with philanthropy, and to ensure that young people are not only heard—but resourced.

For press inquiries or interviews with youth leaders or event organizers, contact Stephanie Flores at florececonsulting@gmail.com