

**CONTACT:**

Lori Warren  
Director of Marketing & Communications  
[lwarren@redf.org](mailto:lwarren@redf.org)  
(415) 561-6683

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**REDF Receives \$7.5M Investment from Justice and Mobility Fund,  
Largest Institutional Grant in 25-Year History**

*Transformative gift will help scale employment social enterprise as a systems-level solution for economic and racial inequities*

SAN FRANCISCO (March 22, 2022)—The national venture philanthropy [REDF](#) is thrilled to announce the largest institutional grant in its organization’s 25-year history: a \$7.5 million investment, over three years, from the [Justice and Mobility Fund](#), a philanthropic collaboration that invests in boosting economic mobility and improving the life trajectories of people impacted by the criminal justice system.

Providing flexible, unrestricted support, the Justice and Mobility Fund’s investment will advance REDF’s transformative work as a leading investor in employment social enterprises, businesses that employ individuals overcoming steep barriers to employment.

Significantly, this three-year funding will support REDF’s strategic focus on investing in ESEs that address racial inequity in their programming and are led by people with direct experience with the justice system.

“This is an incredible milestone for REDF and our many employment social enterprise (ESE) partners—an emphatic statement of ‘you got this’ from some of the country’s most influential philanthropic leaders in the space of multi-generational poverty alleviation and social justice,” said Maria Kim, REDF President and CEO. “This investment will hold leaders and enterprises serving people with the lived experience of justice system involvement at the center - learning from and with them as we lift up employment social enterprises as a systems-level solution for inequity.”

Since 1997, REDF has invested in 238 ESEs across the country, collectively supporting more than 84,000 people through employment, training, and wraparound services, and generating nearly \$1.4 billion in revenue to be reinvested in employees, jobs, and communities.

Broadly, ESEs are a proven model for advancing economic security and mobility for people facing barriers to employment, helping them to earn a steady income, build skills, stabilize their lives, and develop a work history. Mission-driven and community-based, ESEs also help

address structural inequities by reducing incarceration, homelessness, and recidivism, and supporting communities of color, in particular, to build assets. Nearly [75%](#) of ESE employees are justice impacted and [71%](#) are Black or Latinx.

“Innovative social enterprises directed by leaders with firsthand criminal justice system experience have enormous potential to expand pathways to employment and upward mobility among people with prior criminal records,” said Mindy Tarlow, managing director at Blue Meridian Partners and Justice and Mobility Fund co-sponsor. “We’re pleased to provide the flexible capital and strategic supports that justice-impacted leaders need to grow their impact and scale while helping people released from incarceration secure jobs and transform their lives.”

Co-created by [Blue Meridian Partners](#) and the [Ford Foundation](#) and supported by the [Charles and Lynn Schusterman Family Philanthropies](#), the Justice and Mobility Fund invests in solutions that reduce convictions and incarcerations and mitigate the negative downstream effects on individuals, families, and communities, especially Black people and other people of color, who are disproportionately impacted. Integral to this effort is the Fund’s deployment of an employment strategy to dismantle barriers to the job market and boost economic mobility among people with criminal records.

“ESEs are leading the way in showing how mainstream employers, either for-profit or nonprofit, can support economic inclusion in ways that are good for business, employees, and communities,” said Maria Kim. “What’s thrilling about this major investment from the Justice and Mobility Fund is the opportunity to further invest in and establish ESEs in the marketplace as a sustainable, tried-and-true model for public agencies, private companies, and funders of all stripes. With every step we take toward that goal, we will see an economy that does more good for more people.”

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## **ABOUT REDF**

REDF (the Roberts Enterprise Development Fund) is a pioneering venture philanthropy accelerating a national movement of employment social enterprises—businesses achieving transformative social impact by investing the money they make into helping people striving to overcome employment barriers get jobs, keep jobs, and build a better life. Independent research shows this approach works. It leads to greater economic security and mobility and a significant rate of return to society—\$2.23 in benefits for every \$1 invested.

For more information, visit [www.redf.org](http://www.redf.org).