

# Strategic Framework

2025 - 2028

NEW  
BREATH  
FOUNDATION

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# Introduction

**New Breath Foundation (NBF) is a public foundation and philanthropic intermediary that grants crucial resources to support Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, Pacific Islanders (AANHPI), and others affected by the unjust U.S. immigration and criminal legal system.**

Founded in 2017 by Eddy Zheng, New Breath Foundation is rooted in AANHPI grassroots movements to prevent community violence, end mass incarceration and mass deportation, and advance cross-racial solidarity and racial justice. Since its inception, NBF has added significant resources to the AANHPI movement and seeks to deepen this impact. To this end, NBF partnered with Frontline Solutions to develop a strategic blueprint to support the organization's direction for the next three years. This framework will support efforts to understand the Foundation's biggest impacts and clarify how future work will align with its values, mission, and vision.

## Mission

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New Breath Foundation provides pivotal grassroots organizations the sustainable resources they need to build new beginnings for AANHPIs harmed by incarceration, deportation, and criminalization in the U.S.

## Vision

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Asian American, Native Hawai'iian, and Pacific Islanders (AANHPIs) harmed by incarceration, detention, deportation, and criminalization have the power to embrace new beginnings and lead community transformation.

## Values and Founding Pillars

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### ► Hope and Healing

NBF invests in culturally relevant healing interventions for communities experiencing the impacts of the criminal legal system and deportation.

### ► Keeping Families Together

NBF strengthens work to prevent deportation and address family separation.

### ► Movement Building

NBF contributes to building sustainability, infrastructure, and strategic interventions that strengthen movements to advance systemic change. We are also committed to cross-racial solidarity and ensuring BIPOC communities are not pitted against one another.

## Our Approach

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New Breath Foundation envisions a world where AANHPIs harmed by incarceration, deportation, and its related violence in the U.S. have the power to embrace new beginnings and lead community transformation. We also understand that our liberation is collectively tied with the liberation of all historically oppressed communities and center cross-racial solidarity in our work. NBF provides pivotal grassroots organizations with the resources they need to create equitable change in their communities through:

- ▶ **Direct grantmaking** to AANHPI-led and movement-led organizations to advance cross-racial equity and justice.
- ▶ **Leading advocacy within philanthropy** to increase investments in historically under-resourced AANHPI communities and toward transforming how philanthropy engages grassroots movements.
- ▶ **Supporting leaders and organizations** in the field to center those who are directly impacted by criminalization, incarceration, detention, deportation, and the harms and violence of those systems.
- ▶ **Advancing narrative change** to more accurately amplify the diversity of AANHPI communities and their needs and strengths.

## The New Breath Foundation Difference

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New Breath Foundation (NBF) is a national funder that provides grants through subgrants from larger foundations, donor-advised funds, and individual donors to grassroots groups. NBF exists to fill a critical need in the philanthropic and social justice fields, delivering resources to historically under-resourced communities. NBF is leading the movement to fund grassroots groups that transform Asian American, Native Hawai’ian and Pacific Islander (AANHPI) lives and fight for the collective liberation of all Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) impacted by the criminal legal and immigration systems. We do this by practicing a more collaborative approach to philanthropy, where we center the lived experience and expertise of our grantees who are on the frontlines of community and change.

Conversations with NBF partners and grantees uplifted our relationship with grantees, commitment to cross-racial solidarity, and visionary leadership, which distinguishes the Foundation from others in the field.

- ▶ **Relationships with grantees.** Our staff and board members come to this work with lived experience and backgrounds in the social justice and philanthropic field. This is what is unique about NBF; we prioritize maintaining close connections to our communities and deep engagement with the grantees we fund. We show up for them through our organizing efforts and offer support in ways many funders typically do not.

- ▶ **Cross-racial solidarity.** While staying committed to resourcing the AANHPI movement, the Foundation understands that cross-racial solidarity is critical toward realizing collective liberation. NBF is committed to resourcing AANHPI organizations that organize and build power across BIPOC communities. This commitment is powerful, particularly as the vast majority of philanthropic dollars don't make it into BIPOC communities, forcing them to compete for resources.
- ▶ **Visionary leadership.** NBF was founded on the belief that every person deserves the opportunity to live an abundant life, heal from trauma, and repair hurt they may have caused others. Founder, Eddy Zheng, is widely known for having served over twenty years in California state prisons and immigration detention centers. He has leveraged his lived experience to become a staunch advocate for healing and transformation for AANHPI and all BIPOC communities harmed by the immigration and criminal legal systems. Eddy is the first formerly incarcerated AANHPI “juvenile lifer” to serve as president and founder of a philanthropic foundation. His lived experience and ongoing engagement in the community build trust among grantees and funders alike, and are foundational to the belief that the best solutions can be found in the communities that are most impacted. As a result, leadership building among grantees and community leaders remains a key priority in our work.



Photo Credit: Jean Melesaine

# Strategic Framework 2025 – 2028

Entering our eighth year, New Breath Foundation is solidifying our role as a key partner for grassroots and philanthropic organizations. NBF is here for the long run and this strategic frame is foundational to our future work. For this strategic framework, we engaged staff, the board, and some partners and grantees to consider how the Foundation might more strategically approach the next few years to advance our mission. Specifically, we sought to learn about what we are doing well that sets us apart from others in the philanthropic sector, what those in the community hope to see as our impact, and where to focus our energy in current and upcoming strategies given our capacity and the needs in the community. From these learnings and reflections is the following strategic vision and framework for the coming three years. NBF’s work remains anchored in the mission, vision, and values that have guided us from the very beginning, as well as our community-centered approach.

## Framing the Strategy

The core strategies that guide the Foundation’s work fall into four categories:

### Direct Grantmaking

New Breath Foundation drives resources from a network of funders and individual donors to AANHPI organizations that serve communities affected by the unjust U.S. immigration and criminal legal systems. Currently, two funds ground this work:

- ▶ **We Got Us Fund** (time-limited fund): The *We Got Us* Fund was established in response to rising anti-Asian violence. *WGUF* supports organizations that cultivate healing, promote cross-racial solidarity, and protect communities from state violence.
- ▶ **New Breath Fund** (evergreen or ongoing fund): The *New Breath* Fund offers entry points for organizations doing meaningful work in one of three pillars: Hope and Healing, Keeping Families Together, and Movement Building.

In the next three years, NBF will build upon the success of its current grantmaking programs to explore resources and efforts to build solidarity across BIPOC communities.



Photo Credit: VietRISE

## Philanthropic Advocacy

As a trusted leader in centering directly impacted communities, New Breath Foundation works to transform philanthropy and drive more resources to frontline AANHPI organizations that have often been overlooked by philanthropy. We model trust-based philanthropy and participatory grantmaking and advocate for more philanthropic resources to be allocated toward the movement for racial justice.

## Leadership Development

New Breath Foundation works to support and build leadership among directly impacted people and create a path into philanthropy. We aim to see more people with lived experience who intimately understand the strengths and challenges within the communities they serve and can lead efforts in the philanthropic sector.

## Narrative: Raising Awareness

New Breath Foundation has a powerful opportunity to advance a more holistic narrative of the AANHPI experience and community, particularly among those impacted by incarceration and violence. In the coming years, we are committed to deepening our ability to work with partners to uplift narratives that more fully represent the communities we serve and dispel harmful myths about AANHPI communities and other BIPOC communities. NBF aims to raise awareness and uplift the stories of the AANHPI communities that have been impacted by incarceration and violence by providing more opportunities for grantee partners and others with lived experience to share their stories with philanthropy and the general public.



Photo Credit: Inspired By Studio

# Strategic Priorities

NBF has identified the following as our strategic priorities for the next three years. Each of the priorities below is a core part of advancing our work in communities, with grantees, and among philanthropic partners. These priorities are: *We Got Us* Fund, Shaping AANHPI Narrative, and Exploring a Solidarity Fund. While this means that we will focus our efforts on these priorities, we will continue to advance our core strategies and build infrastructure and internal capacity to ensure a strong organization and team.

## Priority 1: *We Got Us* Fund

One of the Foundation's most significant efforts to date is the *We Got Us* Fund, a donor-advised fund that started in 2021 with a fundraising goal of \$10M in grantmaking funds. The *We Got Us* Fund supports cross-racial solidarity and healing through its grantmaking to AANHPI grassroots organizations nationwide and is a model for its trust-based participatory grantmaking process.



Photo Credit: Grassroots Asians Rising

## Goals for *We Got Us Fund*:

- ▶ Raise and grant out \$10 million to *WGUF* grantees in six-figure general operating support.
- ▶ Support and grow grantee capacity and leadership.
- ▶ Tell the story of *WGUF* to raise the platform of grantees, NBF, and the value of *WGUF* to racial equity and justice.
- ▶ Evaluate *WGUF* and continue learning to expand knowledge around leveraging grantmaking to build and sustain movements and advance systems change.
- ▶ Bring in additional philanthropic partners to resource the Fund and directly resource *WGUF* grantees.

## Our Impact:

- ▶ **Grantmaking:** Resources are allocated to grassroots organizations, and grantees are supported and able to advance their mission of serving AANHPI communities.
- ▶ **Grantee Sustainability:** *WGUF* grantees are able to make connections and access resources from new funders to continue advancing their work.
- ▶ **Leadership Development:** Grantees are able to cultivate individuals with lived experience to build power and lead their work.
- ▶ **NBF Leadership:** *WGUF* becomes a model of participatory grantmaking for other funders, motivating them to commit to funding grassroots-level organizations serving AANHPI communities, building deeper relationships, and making a difference in often-overlooked communities.

## Priority 2: Shaping Narratives

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It is critical for NBF to be able to tell our own stories from our perspectives toward influencing change. Narratives have a big influence on the way funders prioritize their resources, how society understands our communities, and how communities can access information and resources, build power, and win lasting change. As an intermediary funder with deep and trusted relationships with philanthropic and community partners, we have an opportunity to work toward shaping a narrative that more accurately reflects the communities we partner with and highlights the impact that our investments have.

### Goals for Shaping Narratives:

- ▶ Build internal knowledge of what narrative change is, what it looks like, and where the impact should be.
- ▶ Identify target audiences for narrative change and build a strategy that considers NBF's unique role in the movement ecosystem.
- ▶ Build awareness around the lack of funding to AANHPI movements, particularly those working at the intersections of immigration and justice movements, and the expertise that these movements and leaders bring to shaping solutions that can make a difference.
- ▶ Shift awareness around:
  - Why AANHPIs impacted by incarceration and deportation need support and resources.
  - How AANHPIs are used as a wedge in the fight for racial justice across BIPOC communities.
- ▶ Influence the narratives within philanthropy to reflect the importance of centering movement, directly impacting leaders, and what it means to be in relationship with grantees.

## Our Impact:

- ▶ **Narrative Building:** AANHPI communities are seen as diverse and powerful. Organizations, coalitions, and networks fighting to keep families together face fewer challenges in combating opposing narratives in their communities, on the policy level, and in popular culture.
- ▶ **Funding:** NBF becomes a key intermediary for funders, donors, and others who want to fund AANHPI grassroots organizations working at the intersections of immigration and justice reform, and toward racial solidarity. Changing narratives will lead to increased funding for AANHPI grassroots organizations and leaders and fewer challenges faced by grassroots groups in their campaigns and organizing work.
- ▶ **Uplift Powerful Narratives:** NBF highlights powerful narratives such as
  - History of solidarity among AANHPI and other BIPOC communities.
  - Healing practices among AANHPI communities that enable stronger support for community efforts.
- ▶ **Change Perceptions:** NBF seeks to change how target audiences think about AANHPIs as people, as communities needing access to resources, as important allies toward racial equity and justice, and as key contributors and experts toward addressing challenges within their communities.

NBF also seeks to challenge false narratives such as the “model minority” myth—the idea that AANHPI communities are doing well in all markers of social and economic mobility—and its use in creating wedges between AANHPI and other BIPOC communities. This is critical for the development of a shared understanding among decision-makers of the needs of the communities we serve.

## Priority 3: New Breath Foundation Sustainability

NBF is here for the long term. As a newer public foundation and intermediary organization, fundraising and building out the sustainability of the New Breath Foundation will be crucial to our continued success and impact and should remain a core area of work. In the coming years, establishing what long-term sustainability looks like for us and what is needed to reach those goals will be a priority. Among a number of possible efforts to explore sustainability, there is also some interest in raising funds to start an endowment; however, this will require deep inquiry and staff/board capacity.



Photo Credit: Lavender Pheonix

## Priority 4: Exploring a Solidarity Fund

Building on our values toward hope and healing and movement building, as well as leveraging the success of past grantmaking efforts, NBF is excited to begin exploring the concept of a solidarity fund that can serve as a bridge of movements for racial justice. While a number of similar funds exist, our work at the intersections of immigration and justice reform is relevant to many BIPOC communities and provides an opportunity to target and address key shared challenges.

### Goals for A Solidarity Fund:

- ▶ Explore solidarity opportunities with critical partners, and launch a brain trust or advisory board of leaders to set the strategy and build the fund together.
- ▶ Center and support the work of AANHPI, Black, Latin/x, and Native American communities that are already working together or are in relationship to each other.
- ▶ Uplift the importance of building cross-cultural relationships with an understanding that systemic and structural racism and anti-Blackness drive anti-Asian violence and other shared oppressions.
- ▶ Explore and develop a deeper understanding of approaches and practices to create a racial solidarity fund rooted in an abundance mindset.
- ▶ Build a team to lead and manage the solidarity fund.
- ▶ Ideate and build a road map.

### Our Impact:

- ▶ **Collective Healing:** Model a mindset of abundance and practice for collective healing and liberation to demonstrate the benefits of building collective power and healing from our collective traumas.
- ▶ **Authentic Long-Lasting Relationships:** Develop deeper relationships across BIPOC communities to build collective power toward liberation.
- ▶ **Collective Power Building:** Bolster and expand efforts to uplift and protect each other, e.g., combating anti-Blackness and showing up in solidarity against anti-immigrant and anti-Asian violence and the harm projected at BIPOC communities.



Photo Credit: Joyce Xi

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