

Finalist Report

Founded in 2017, the Fountain Fund increases economic opportunities for formerly incarcerated people (Client Partners) to improve their lives, support their families, and remain active in their communities. They provide low-interest loans, financial coaching, and access to reentry services, helping Client Partners build or repair credit and achieve self-determined goals - such as securing employment, affordable housing, transportation, pursuing education, and launching or expanding a small business. These loans go straight to the creditor, not the recipient. Since launching the Richmond site in 2022, they have provided 160 low-interest loans totaling more than \$959,000 to 147 formerly incarcerated individuals. They have also formed partnerships with local organizations offering complementary reentry services, including A Better Day Than Yesterday, Richmond Redevelopment and Housing Authority, Richmond City Community Health Workers, and Metro Community Ministries, leveraging community trust and resources to help Client Partners achieve their goals.

The 2026 Impact 100 Richmond grant would support the Fountain Fund's efforts to provide 72 low-interest loans, along with financial coaching and access to reentry services, to 72 Richmonders in 2026. Each loan will benefit not only the borrower but also their families and employees, multiplying impact across the community. With an 80% repayment rate, every repaid dollar is reinvested into a loan fund, creating a self-sustaining cycle that strengthens families, fosters economic stability, and drives lasting community change.

Formerly incarcerated individuals face systemic barriers to employment, housing, transportation, education, and access to capital, limiting economic stability and increasing the risk of recidivism. A stunning 97% of Fountain Fund's Client Partners are not re-incarcerated during the duration of their loan- far exceeding the average statistics. These loans not only help break individual and generational cycles of incarceration, but also help build opportunities for generational wealth and community growth. It is a hand up, not a hand out.