# The First Chapter of Investment

## A Retrospective on the Learning & Evaluation Partnership Supporting the Early Stages of Allegany's Climate Justice & Care for Creation Initiative

Prepared by: Collaborators Consulting Group & EPSA Research Team (UM)

**August 2025**

# Table of Contents


| | |
|---|---|
| I. Introduction | 3 |
| II. Scope 1: Learning the Landscape | 9 |
| III. Scope 2: Evaluation Activities | 35 |
| IV. Scope 3: Theory of Change Refinement | 40 |
| V. Scope 4: Reporting & Synthesis | 43 |
| VI. Scope 5: Learning Hub | 46 |
| VII. End of Chapter, Start of the Next | 50 |

# I. Introduction

## Purpose of the Report

*The First Chapter of Investment* offers a retrospective on the Learning & Evaluation (L&E) Partnership that has accompanied Allegany Franciscan Ministries through the early development and launch of the Climate Justice & Care for Creation (CJCC) initiative. This report covers activities conducted from July 2024 through June 2025, while also acknowledging the foundational work carried out during the prior year to help shape Allegany's initial strategy and field understanding.

The purpose of this report is to document what has been learned, produced, and supported through the L&E Partnership to date. It captures the contributions of Collaborators Consulting Group (CCG), in collaboration with the University of Miami's Engagement, Power, and Social Action (EPSA) research team, across several key roles, including knowledge mobilization, evaluation design and implementation, strategy and thought partnership, and critical reflection to support the initiative's development and direction.

This is one of two end-of-contract-year reports submitted by the L&E team. The companion report, *Rooted in Relationship, Growing Toward Justice: Evaluation Activities and Key Learnings from the First Year of the Climate Justice & Care for Creation Initiative FY25*, presents detailed findings organized by learning frame and key evaluation question. In contrast, *The First Chapter of Investment* serves as a broader historical record of the partnership's evolution, an archive of deliverables and decisions, and a shared reference point for the next phase of work.

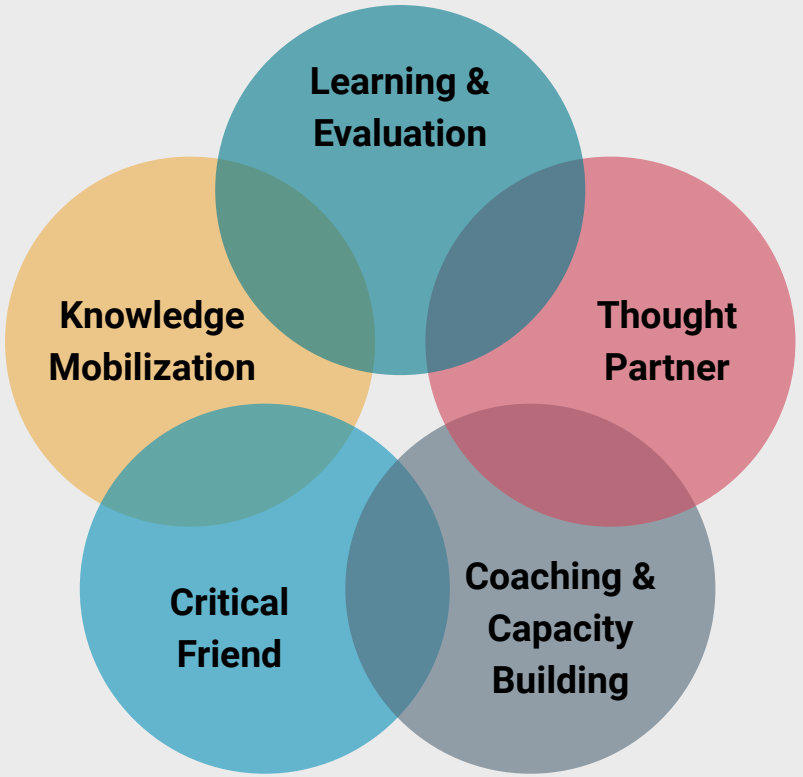
As the CJCC initiative continues to grow, this document is intended to support continuity, reflection, and adaptation across people, strategies, and time.

## Overview of the Learning & Evaluation Partnership

The Learning & Evaluation team joined forces with Allegany in April 2023, just as the initiative was getting off the ground. In that pre-grantmaking stage, our primary role was to support the development of the initiative from the ground up, helping Allegany define its strategy, better understand the climate justice landscape in Florida, and lay the groundwork for meaningful evaluation over time.

In the first 14 months of partnership (April 2023 to June 2024), our focus was squarely on foundational research and strategic design. We supported Allegany in articulating an early version of its external theory of change, conducted a first iteration of a Florida-wide landscape scan of climate justice actors, reviewed literature related to climate justice, equity-informed philanthropy, and the intersections of the two, and adopted a trust-based learning framework that would ground future evaluative work. These activities helped clarify key concepts, identify potential grant partners, and establish a learning infrastructure for the initiative. At the tail of that first year, we worked closely and collaboratively with Allegany to identify L&E priorities and co-developed a series of guiding questions to be explored throughout the second year of partnership.

### Learning & Evaluation Team Roles



The second year of partnership (July 2024 to June 2025), the focus of this report, marked a transition into more blended work, where strategic research and developmental support continued alongside the introduction of formal evaluation activities. In close collaboration with Allegany, our team carried out a baseline stakeholder survey of climate justice actors across Florida, shared learnings from both the network mapping and stakeholder survey with a subgroup of grant partners, facilitated a participatory SWOT analysis of the landscape, and conducted in-depth end of year interviews with the first cohort of CJCC grant partners. We also continued contributing to strategic sensemaking through field-level research activities such as network mapping (slides 42-48) and updates to the climate justice actor database, and deepened our relationship with Allegany through participation in the in-person board retreat.

Throughout this second year, we paid close attention to the initiative's evolving direction and decision points, while also soliciting input from various interest holder groups about priorities for future evaluation. As in the first year, we continued to reflect critically on how best to evaluate the initiative as it unfolded, both at the level of individual grant partners and with respect to its longer-term impact across the broader climate justice landscape.

The remainder of this report focuses on the work conducted during this second year, the key learnings that surfaced through each activity, and how those learnings have been used (or could be used) to inform future decision-making and strategy. As the initiative matures, the partnership will shift more fully into evaluation of long-term impact and philanthropic strategy, building on the strong foundation we have developed together.

## Guiding Values and Approach

Over the past two years, we have approached this partnership with clear intention: to align our learning and evaluation work with Allegany's values and relational approach to philanthropy. From the beginning, our role has been shaped by Allegany's commitment to trust, dignity, and justice, values rooted in Catholic Social Teaching and embedded throughout the Climate Justice & Care for Creation initiative.

Rather than position ourselves as detached evaluators, we have worked alongside Allegany and its partners as collaborators. Our approach is equity-oriented, utilization-focused, and grounded in learning. We aim to produce insights that are timely, actionable, and responsive to the evolving context in which this initiative lives. Throughout, we have prioritized human connection, adaptability, and care, values that mirror Allegany's own.

In practice, this has meant building authentic relationships, staying nimble and responsive, and embedding ourselves as participant observers in the life of the initiative. We have attended retreats and convenings, facilitated strategic conversations, and offered behind-the-scenes support to help surface meaning and align learning with decision-making. At times, we have served as thought partners, helping to connect dots and lift up emerging patterns. At other times, we have taken on the role of critical friend, offering honest reflections in the spirit of shared accountability and trust.

Our systems and processes are structured and organized but never rigid. We have intentionally designed them to be flexible and right-sized for the work, ensuring that data collection and reporting remain useful rather than burdensome. And we have stayed grounded in relationships throughout, creating space for humor, reflection, and care even amid complexity.

This values-based alignment has made the work stronger. It has also made the partnership feel real, reciprocal, and grounded in shared purpose.

### CCG's Values

- Collaboration
- Quality & excellence
- Advancing equity & justice
- Respect
- Honesty & transparency
- Ethical practice

### Allegany's Values

- Reverence
- Justice
- Stewardship
- Integrity
- Safety
- Commitment to those experiencing poverty

## Organization of the Report

This report is organized around the primary scopes of work outlined in the Learning & Evaluation Partnership agreement for July 2024 through June 2025. Each section corresponds to a major area of activity or contribution and is intended to provide a clear and accessible record of what was done, what was produced, and what was learned.

The scopes are as follows:

- **Scope 1: Strategy Support via Landscape Learning** – Covers contributions to the development and refinement of Allegany's climate justice strategy, including statewide landscape analysis, facilitation, thought partnership, and values alignment.
- **Scope 2: Evaluation** – Summarizes the evaluation framework, data collection and analysis methods, key findings, and major deliverables from this year's formal evaluation process.
- **Scope 3: Theory of Change Development** – Documents early-stage planning and design work to support future refinement of Allegany's internal and external theories of change.
- **Scope 4: Reporting & Sensemaking**– Details the reporting products, presentation materials, and communications developed to support internal learning and cross-stakeholder engagement.
- **Scope 5: Learning Hub** – While no formal activities were launched under this scope during the 2024–2025 contract year, its importance has been affirmed by both Allegany and the L&E team and informally discussed. In this report, we reflect on initial ideas, open questions, and possibilities for co-developing this work going forward, especially as infrastructure decisions continue to take shape.

The final chapter closes this year's story with reflection, gratitude, and a look toward what's next. It honors the contributions made across the initiative, shares hopes for the future, and invites continued commitment to climate justice through prayer, planning, and shared purpose.

# II. Scope 1: Learning the Landscape

## Background

In the first year of the Learning & Evaluation Partnership (2023-2024), we began the work of mapping Florida's climate justice landscape by asking a central research question: **Who is doing what, where, why, and with whom?** This initial phase of mapping-oriented research aimed to identify, inventory, and visualize key actors (i.e.,organizations and coalitions) engaged in climate justice work across the state. Drawing on data from grant applications, existing landscape reports (such as Nile, 2022), online searches, and limited follow-up outreach, we developed a searchable actor database and 'network' map that captured key characteristics of the field, including common strategies, geographic concentrations of activity, and the presence of early partnerships or alliances. Click here for a summary of research activities and key findings.

What?

where?

Why?

With Whom?

This foundational research was designed to support Allegany's early strategic decisions, including the identification of prospective grant partners, the refinement of the CJCC theory of change, and the establishment of network-related baselines for future evaluation. It also marked the beginning of what we understood would be a multi-year research effort that would require direct engagement with interest holders to more fully understand the dynamics, strengths, and gaps within Florida's climate justice ecosystem.

This second year of mapping-oriented research built directly on this foundation. The sections that follow describe how we expanded and deepened our understanding of the landscape through Network Mapping 2.0 and a participatory SWOT analysis, along with the insights these efforts generated and how they have been used to date.

## Network Mapping 2.0

### Overview: Purpose, Research Questions, and Use of Findings

Building on the initial actor geo-mapping completed in Year 1, the second phase of landscape analysis focused on updating, refining, and expanding our understanding of Florida's climate justice ecosystem. While the first year helped surface who was engaged in climate justice work and where, this next phase sought to begin to explore how these actors were connected, what kinds of collaboration existed between them, and whether the conditions necessary for long-term coordination and collective impact were taking shape.

The findings from this research were designed to help Allegany assess whether a defined climate justice network exists (or is emerging) in Florida, understand if and where strong connections already exist, and identify potential areas for intervention or support. In particular, this work aimed to clarify whether Allegany, as a funder, might play a more intentional role in strengthening network health by investing in the infrastructure, relationships, or capacity-building required to sustain collaboration over time.

Network Mapping 2.0 was guided by the following research questions:

**Connectivity**

**RQ 1.1:** (How) are climate justice organizations and coalitions connected to one another? Which, if any, organizations or coalitions emerge as strong network hubs?

**Collaboration**

**RQ 1.2:** What is the nature and extent of collaboration across the network? Are organizations currently exchanging value, and what is the level of interest, desire, and capacity to increase collaboration?

**Health**

**RQ 1.3:** What do organizations and coalitions believe is needed to strengthen the network's overall health?(How) are they creating and maintaining the collaborative conditions crucial for long-term success and sustainability?

## Methods and Approach

To answer the research questions outlined above, we gathered data through two primary sources:

The **Climate Justice Stakeholder Survey – Baseline (CJSS-B)**, administered in Fall 2024 to both grant partners and non-grant partners engaged in climate justice work across Florida. Key informants from 36 Florida-based organizations completed the survey.

A **collective sensemaking process** facilitated with a small group of grant partners during an in-person retreat convened by Allegany in early 2025. This session served both as an interpretive space and a supplemental data collection opportunity.

Note: To increase accessibility and reduce barriers to participation, the survey was also offered in a structured interview format, allowing participants to talk through responses with a member of our team. This format enabled deeper engagement with representatives from several organizations who opted in to be interviewed rather than complete the survey independently.

## Initial Analysis

A network is a set of relationships - in this case across a set of organizations in Florida working in the area of climate justice. Social network analysis (SNA) measures the structure of these relationships which can be represented visually using illustrations called sociograms.

Data from relevant CJSS-B survey questions were used to create a network database and sociogram on Kumu.io. The sociogram shows each actor (n=111) in circles (nodes) and their ties in connecting lines (see Figure 1). The organizations that were directly surveyed/interviewed (n=36) are identified by the existence of a logo in their circle. Nodes are sized by the total number of connections an organization has in the network. For example, Catalyst Miami is connected to 67 organizations and is represented as a larger node than Beyond the Bars with 21 connections. The legend provides information about the type and strength of relationship between nodes (networking, cooperating, coordinating, collaborating[1]).

Figure 1. Baseline Social Network Analysis Sociogram

[1]This scale implies increasing degree of connectivity from networking to collaborating. Networking (occasional connection to share/seek information); Cooperation (informal interaction without any clear shared goals, structure, or planning effort); Coordination (some formal affiliation with some shared goals, planning and some shared resources); Collaboration (a more durable and pervasive relationship - working closely together with a commonly defined mission & structure, shared resources, & joint planning)

## Collective Sensemaking at the January 2025 Summit

Following initial analysis of the CJSS-B survey responses, we facilitated a collective sensemaking session with a group of grant partners. During this session, participants examined the draft geomaps and preliminary social network analysis (SNA) maps and results together, identified key gaps in the data (such as unrepresented organizations or coalitions), and shared reflections on what the patterns revealed (or failed to capture) about the field. This process helped us update and enrich the actor maps and surfaced critical insights about the network's structure and limitations in our data that may affect interpretation.

Our initial search for organizations in Florida engaged in climate justice action yielded 70 organizations. The CJSS-B survey identified an additional 36 and Summit participants added another 36. The updated database includes 142 orgs and 45 funders.

The sensemaking session also raised questions about how we are "bounding" this network. For example, how is climate justice being defined? What types of organizations/entities/ groups qualify as "network actors" (i.e., communities, fiscal sponsors)? How are focus areas and outcomes being defined? And since our geomapping of organizational actors is only based on the physical address of organizations, it is challenging to get an accurate picture of types and degrees of "reach" without more in-depth information from key informants. Refining and updating the database to further establish shared definitions and inclusion criteria could be an ongoing strategy for more accurately mapping climate justice action in Florida.

## Key Findings

The findings from Network Mapping 2.0 include both an updated location-based actor map (geomap) and a baseline social network analysis (SNA) of Florida's climate justice field. The geomap expands on the initial directory developed in Year 1, offering a broader view of who is engaged in climate justice work across the state, where they are located, and the primary strategies they are employing. The SNA builds on this foundation by illustrating how these actors are connected, highlighting patterns of collaboration, and offering insight into the network's structure, strengths, and potential points of intervention.

The findings that follow are organized by the three core research questions guiding this phase of the landscape analysis: connectivity, collaboration, and network health. Together, they offer a snapshot of the emerging climate justice ecosystem in Florida and raise important questions about its current configuration and capacity to sustain long-term, coordinated impact.

## Actor Maps

**RQ:** Who is doing what, where, why, how, and with whom?

### *Where?*

The updated geomap helps identify where the **142** climate justice organizations identified are physically located in Florida.

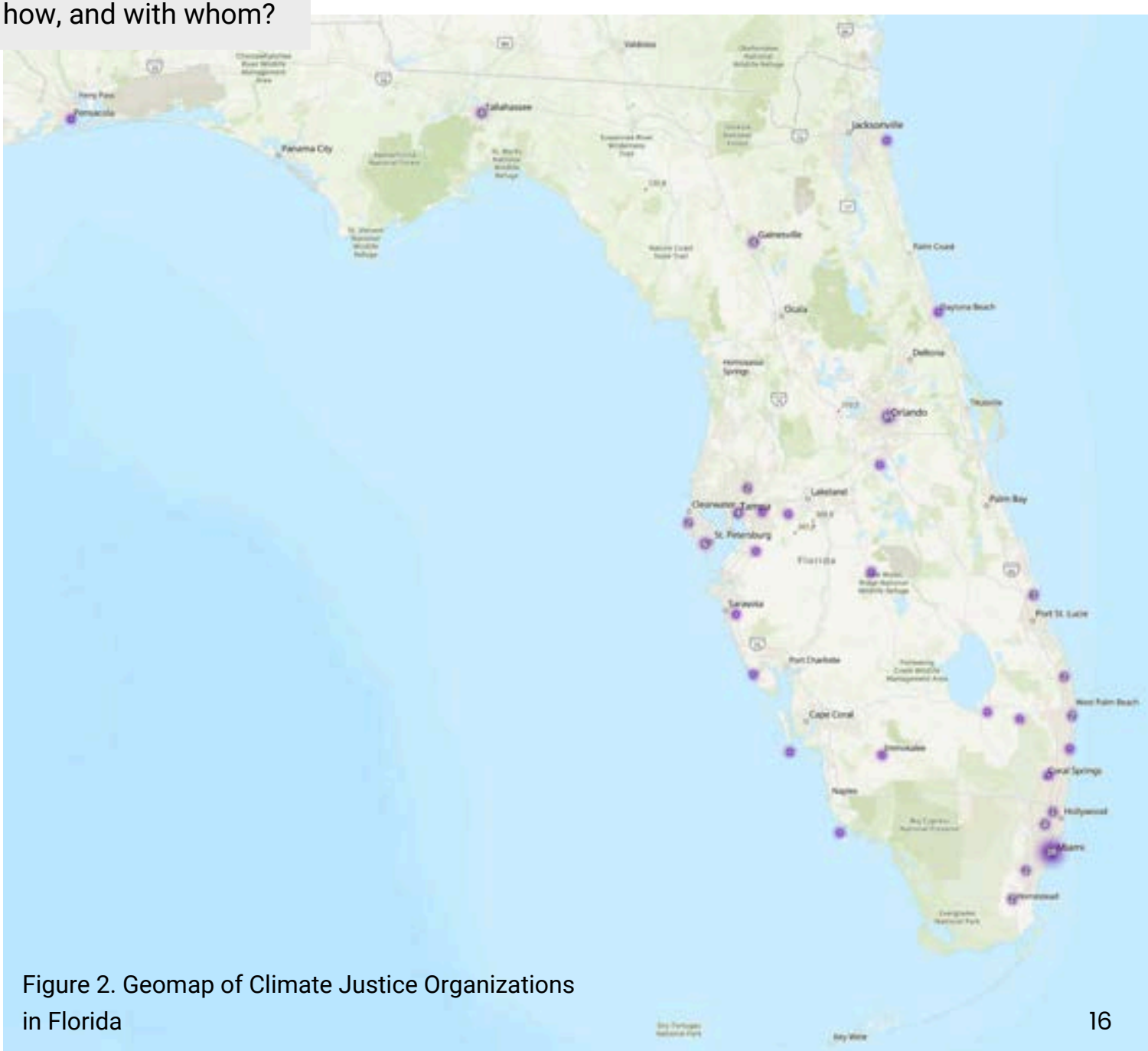


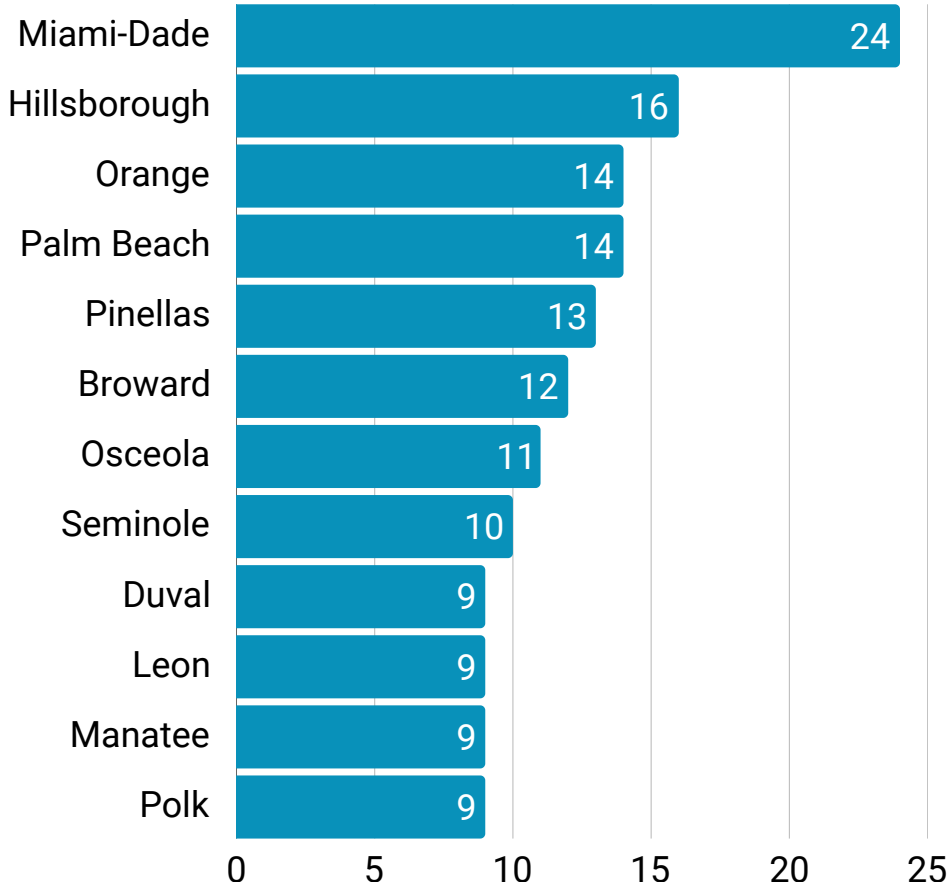

Figure 2. Geomap of Climate Justice Organizations in Florida

Additional responses from the survey also helped to identify which counties were being served by climate justice organizations. These data reveal that, at the time of the survey, all counties were being served by at least 5 organizations.

**Miami-Dade County** is served by the most organizations (n = 24), followed by **Hillsborough** (n = 16), **Orange** (n = 14), **Palm Beach** (n = 14), and **Pinellas** (n = 13) Counties.

Figure 3. Density of Climate Organizations Serving FL Counties

Figure 4. Total Organizations Serving Top Counties




*Note. These figures reflects data aggregated across grant and non-grant partners.*

### *What?*

The most common climate focus area reported was e**xtreme heat** (85%), followed by **climate gentrification/housing** (56%), **extreme weather/storm intensity** (51%), and **pollution** (49%).

Figure 5. Climate justice focus areas

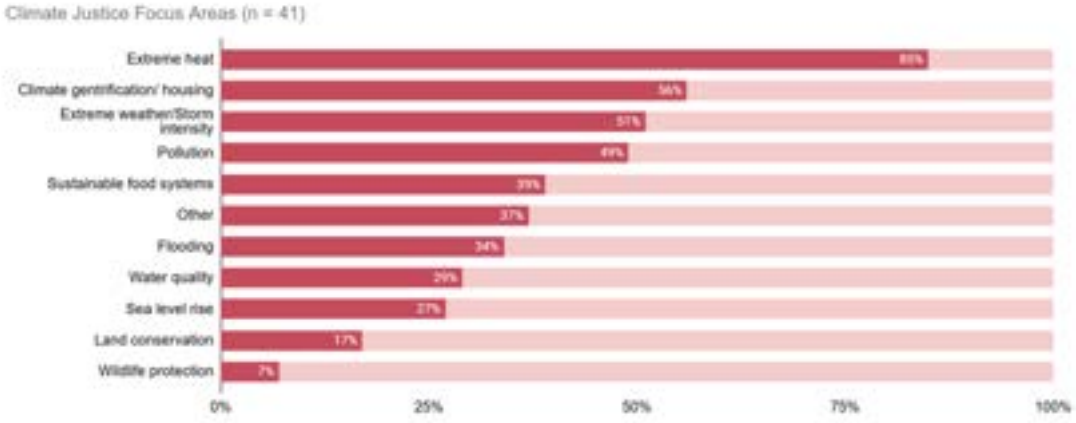
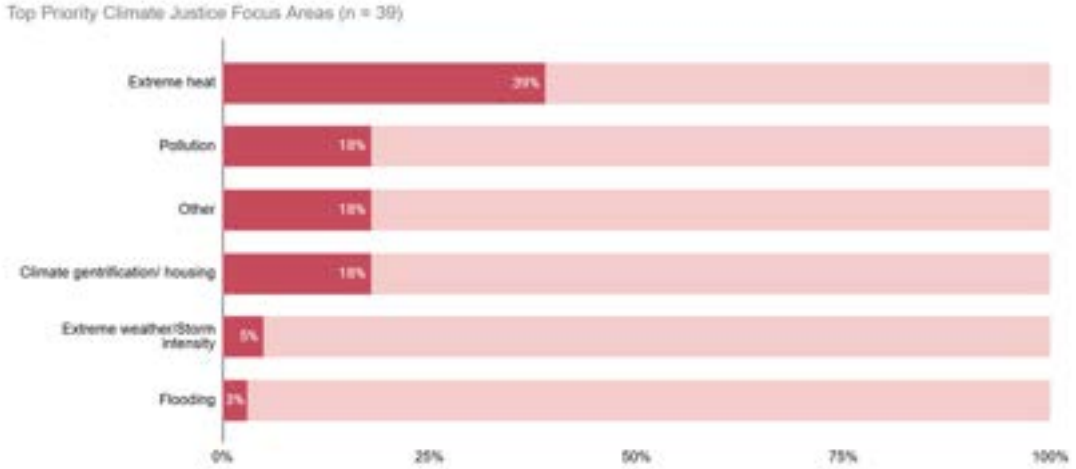



Figure 6. Top priority climate justice focus areas




39% of organizations cited **extreme heat** as their PRIORITY focus area, followed by **pollution** (18%), **climate gentrification/housing** (18%), and **another focus area** (18%). Water quality, sea level rise, sustainable food systems, land conservation, and wildlife protection were not top priority focus areas for any of the 39 organizations responding to this question.

The geomapping process also allows us to combine the what and where questions to see where organizations are located filtered by “top priority climate justice focus areas.” In this example (figure 5), we see that organizations with a priority focus on extreme heat are located in South Florida, the Orlando area, the Tampa Bay area, and Tallahassee. This map also reveals areas where organizations with a priority focus on extreme heat are lacking (e.g., Jacksonville, Gainesville, Pensacola, etc.). Figure 6 overlays a map of a “heat severity index”[2].

Figure 7. Priority is extreme heat

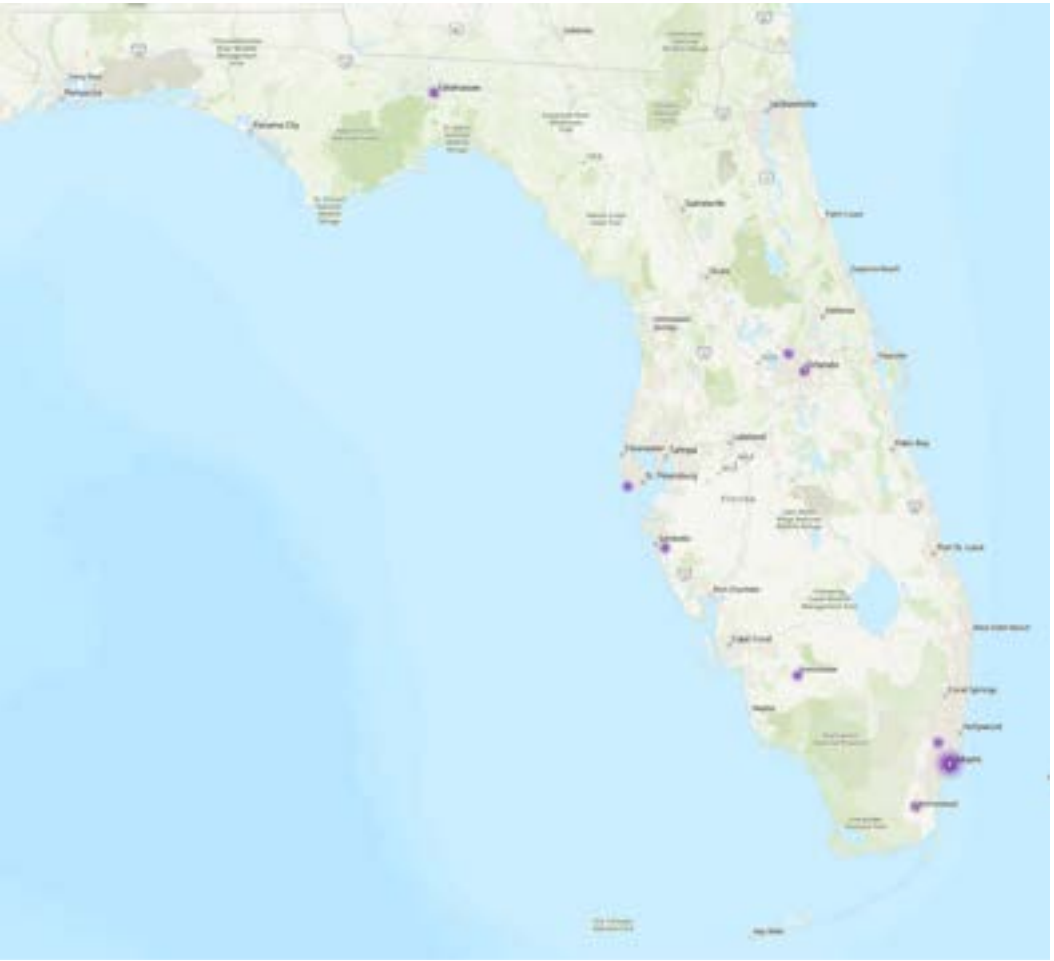
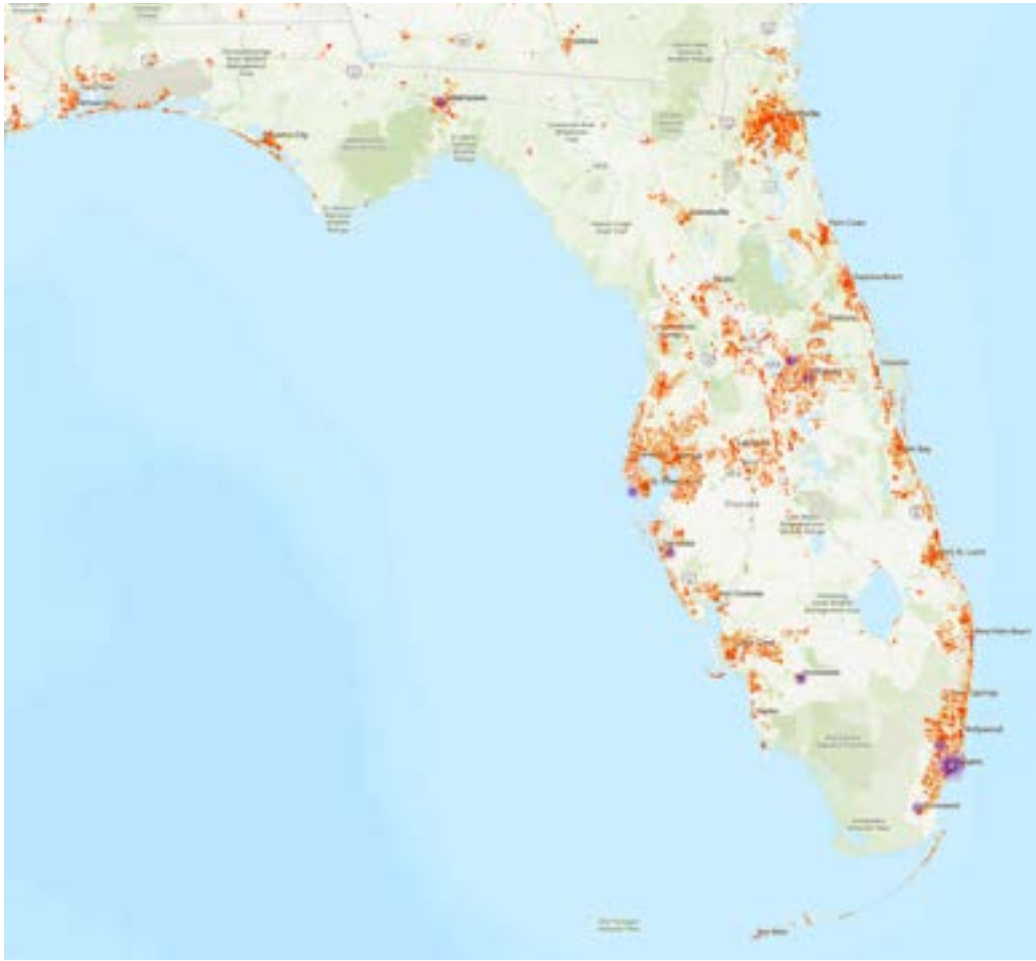


Figure 8. Heat severity index overlay



[2]Source: The Trust for Public Land. The map was derived from Landsat 8 imagery band 10 (ground-level thermal sensor) from the summer of 2023.

## Network Analysis

### *Whole Network Density*

Social network analysis uses the metric of density to gauge the overall level of "connectedness" in a network. Density measures the proportion of all the ties in a network that have actually formed relative to all that could possibly form. Another way to think of this is the probability that any two organizations picked at random are connected with one another. Density is usually represented as a number between 0 (0% of possible connections made) and 1 (100% of possible connections made).

The density of the informal climate justice network in Florida is 0.11 meaning that 11% of all the possible connections between organizations are being made at all degrees of connectivity from networking to collaborating. The average degree - or the average number of organizations each organization is connected to - is 12.

When we use "collaborating" as the measure of connectivity (the highest level of connectivity) and eliminate the other levels, the density drops to 0.04 meaning that 4% of all the possible connections between organizations are being made at this high degree of connection (collaboration: working closely together with a commonly defined mission & structure, shared resources, & joint planning).

**RQ 1.1:** (How) are climate justice organizations and coalitions connected to one another? Which, if any, organizations or coalitions emerge as strong network hubs? (*Connectivity*)

Of the organizations that responded to the survey, the 22 organizations reporting that their priority climate justice focus was the issue of extreme heat appear to be the most closely connected (Figure 9). The density of this sub-network in Florida is 0.51 meaning that 51% of all the possible connections between organizations are being made at all degrees of connectivity from networking to collaborating.

Figure 9. Network of Organizations with a Priority Focus on Extreme Heat

SNA can reveal where there are opportunities to strategically connect organizations with each other—in order to bridge clusters and engage disconnected actors. Deliberate network weaving can go a long way towards creating a more connected and aligned network, allowing information and resources to flow more effectively. Supporting coalition-building could be a key part of AFM's current and future strategy.

### *Centrality Measures*

In addition to providing information about the network as a whole, SNA allowed us to explore each organization's unique position relative to the other organizations in the network. Social network analysis can help identify the key influencers in a network—the organizations others commonly turn to for information, guidance, or support. Meanwhile, the organizations on the periphery of the network are the least engaged, and may need some additional attention or support to find ways to plug in.

Centrality measures are used to describe the prominence of an individual organization within a network. *Degree centrality* is the simplest of the centrality metrics, counting the number of connections an organization has. In general, organizations with high degree centrality are the connectors or hubs, but aren't necessarily the best connected to the wider network.

Our findings indicate that out of all the identified organizations, Catalyst Miami can be considered the most central actor (value=67) followed closely by the CLEO Institute (62), FLIC (56), Farmworker Association of FL, Inc. (53), and Florida Rising (49).

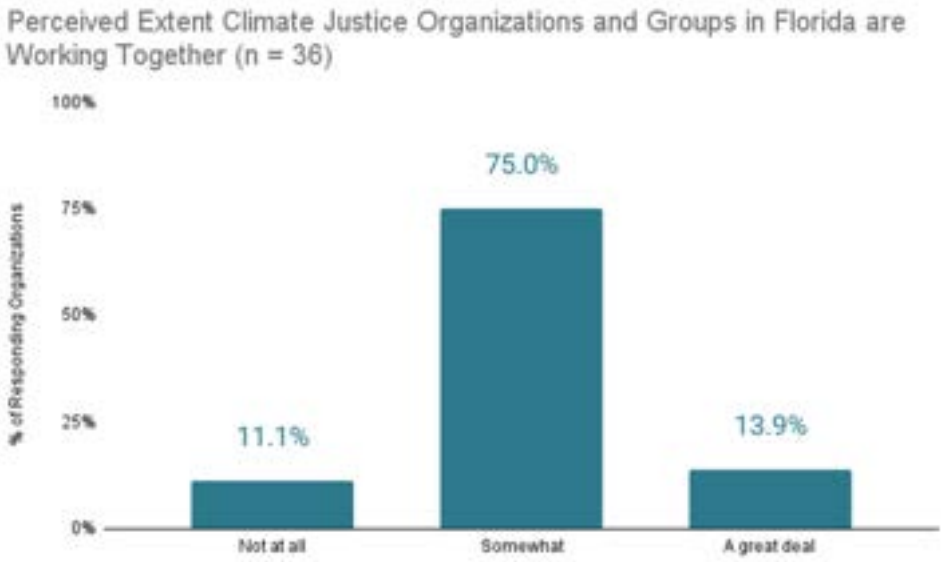
*Eigenvector centrality* measures how well connected an organization is to other well connected organizations. In general, organizations with high eigenvector centrality are the leaders of the network, though they may not have the strongest local influence. Our analysis revealed that Catalyst Miami had the highest eigenvector centrality followed by the CLEO Institute, FLIC, Farmworker Association of FL, Inc., Central FL Jobs with Justice, and WeCount!.

*Betweenness centrality* measures how many times an organization lies on the shortest path between two other organizations. In general, elements with high betweenness have more control over the flow of information and act as key bridges within the network. They can also be potential single points of failure. Our analysis revealed that Florida Rising has the highest betweenness followed by Catalyst Miami, the CLEO Institute, Farmworker Association of FL, Inc., and Florida Clinicians for Climate Action.

**RQ 1.2:** What is the nature and extent of collaboration across the network? Are organizations currently exchanging value, and what is the level of interest, desire, and capacity to increase collaboration? (*Collaboration*)

As stated above, when we use "collaborating" as the measure of connectivity (the highest level of connectivity) and eliminate the other levels, only 4% of all the possible connections between organizations are being made. The majority (75%) of CJSS-B survey respondents (n=36) said that climate justice groups are "somewhat" working together while 14% said they are working together "a great deal" and 11% said "not at all" (see figure 10).

Figure 10. Perceived level of connectivity




The SWOT Analysis conducted at the in-person Summit revealed that attendees believed there are opportunities to increase collaboration, better align shared values, and engage in peer learning/education to find solutions and strategies with collective knowledge and lean into existing knowledge and networks. There are opportunities to strengthen connections across the state, within regions, and within action areas (e.g., extreme heat). These findings echoed what we heard in our end-of-year interviews with grant partners and what we learned from the Climate Justice Stakeholder Survey. Partners expressed a desire for more opportunities to connect, collaborate, and learn from each other. Many shared that they valued the network mapping work and especially appreciated the inventory of climate justice actors, which helped them see who else was doing aligned work across the state. In some cases, these resources were actively used to facilitate new introductions and spark emerging collaborations.

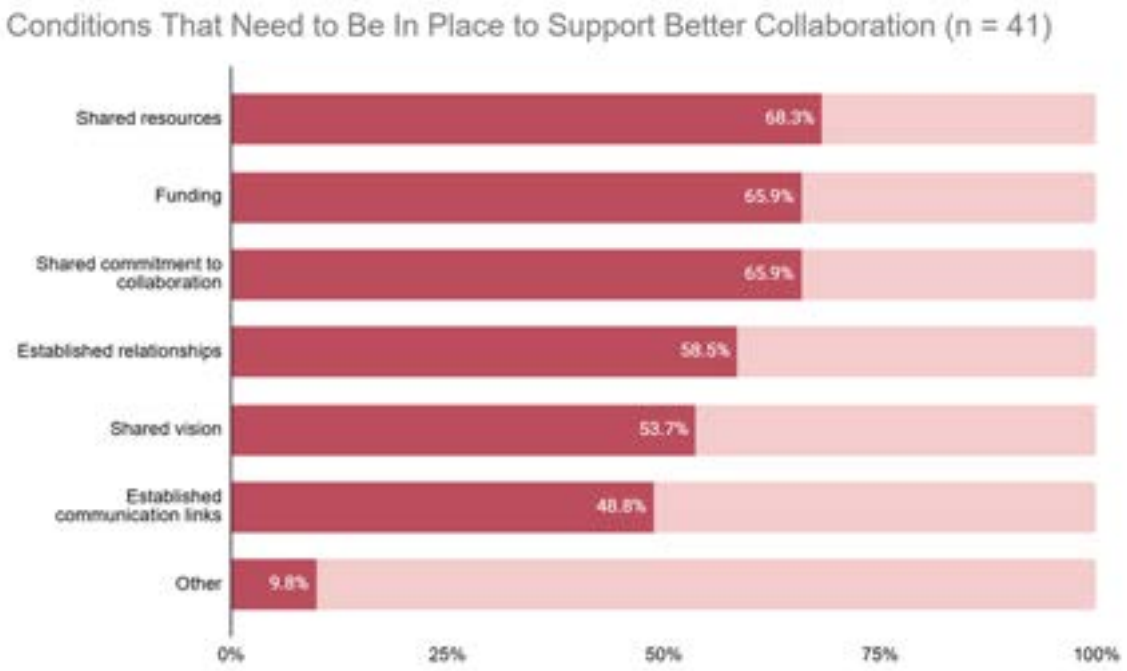
However, this benefit was largely limited to those who were invited to and able to attend the in-person SWOT Summit. Partners who did not participate in the retreat had less access to the mapping insights and fewer opportunities to leverage that information for connection. This points to the importance of future dissemination strategies and more inclusive access to network-level learning tools.

As collaboration continues to grow across the initiative, we see a strong opportunity to revisit this research question with richer data in future years. In particular, it will be important to collect more detailed information about the quality and type of collaboration taking place, what value is being exchanged, and how organizations are experiencing the benefits and challenges of working together. These data will be essential for understanding how the CJCC initiative is supporting not just individual organizations, but a more coordinated and connected climate justice ecosystem across Florida.

**RQ 1.3:** What do organizations believe is needed to strengthen the network's overall health? (How) are organizations and coalitions creating and maintaining the collaborative conditions crucial for long-term success and sustainability?

When asked about what was needed to better facilitate collaboration, CJSS-B survey respondents reported that shared resources, funding, and a shared commitment to collaboration were among the top conditions needed to support stronger partnerships.

Figure 11. Conditions Needed to Support Better Collaboration



The SWOT Analysis, as discussed below, added important depth to these findings. Participants raised concerns about barriers to collaboration, including a lack of shared language, definitions, goals, and values. Some highlighted the ways in which a competitive funding environment can discourage transparency and limit opportunities to share learnings or failures. There was also a perception that funding intermediaries or backbone organizations may sometimes complicate, rather than support, genuine collaboration. Participants expressed a desire for more structure and intentional coordination across the state, including the potential for a shared strategy and clearer roles for different actors.

The second part of this research question, whether and how organizations are actively creating and maintaining these collaborative conditions, was not a primary focus of data collection during this first year. This remains an important area for future learning. If Allegany plans to invest in activities that support network-building or collaborative infrastructure, future evaluation efforts should be designed to assess whether those investments are contributing to stronger, more durable, and more equitable collaborative conditions over time.

# Participatory SWOT Analysis

## Overview: Purpose, Research Questions, and Use of Findings

The second phase of landscape analysis work focused on a participatory SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) process designed to build on the findings from Network Mapping 2.0. While the network maps and SNA provided a structural view of Florida's climate justice ecosystem, the SWOT process created space for collective interpretation, critique, and reflection. Guided by the core research question: What are the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats associated with Florida's climate justice network?, this phase of work invited interest-holders to explore the network from within.

This SWOT analysis focused specifically on internal factors shaping the health and function of the climate justice ecosystem. These include the conditions, relationships, and dynamics that grant partners, coalitions, and funders such as Allegany may be able to influence, strengthen, or sustain. The goal was to surface insights that could inform Allegany's decisions about whether and how to invest in supporting the network over time. External forces such as political, economic, or environmental conditions were intentionally out of scope. These broader systemic factors will be addressed through a future PESTLE analysis planned as Phase 3 of the landscape analysis research process.

## Methods and Approach

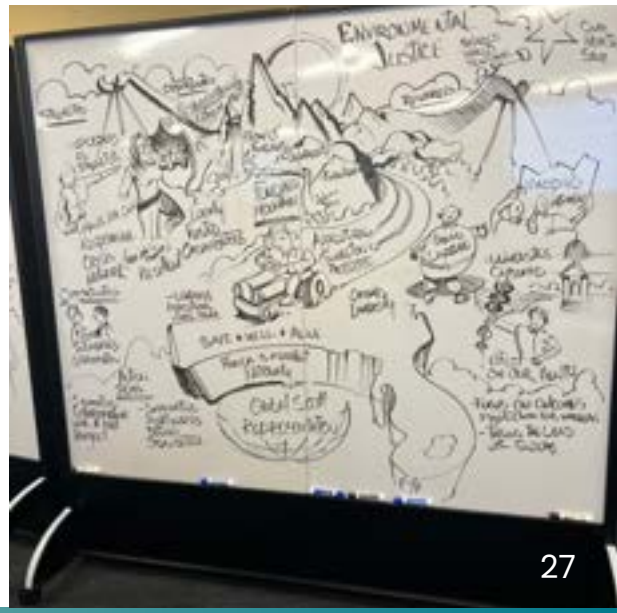
To carry out the SWOT analysis, we facilitated an in-person retreat at the Collaborative Labs at St. Petersburg College in early 2025 with a sub-group of grant partners. Allegany played a central role in helping us plan and prepare for the session, including identifying potential participants and supporting outreach and logistics. The selection process began with a general invitation for organizations to express interest in participating. Because space was limited, not everyone who responded could be included. We worked closely with Allegany to ensure the group reflected a diverse cross-section of the climate justice ecosystem. This included representation from different regions of the state, a range of organizational sizes and focus areas, and both highly connected and less connected actors, as identified through the preliminary SNA data.

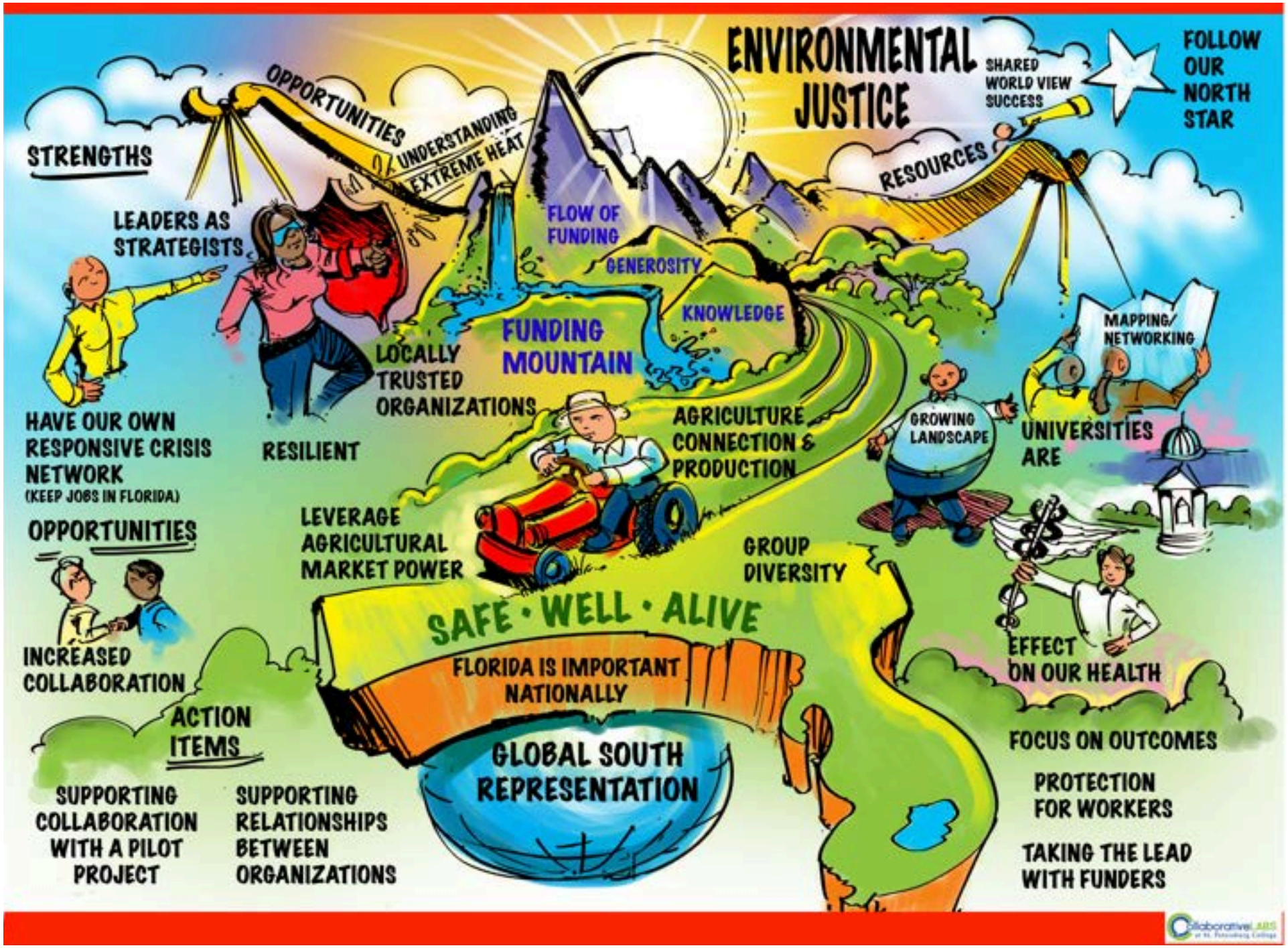
Importantly, CJCC leadership, Allegany staff, and members of the board were also intentionally invited and encouraged to participate, not simply to observe or receive findings, but to engage directly in the analysis alongside grant partners. This decision was rooted in both practical considerations and alignment with Allegany's values. The SWOT process had already been delayed due to natural disasters across the state, and it was important for Allegany to gain real-time insight to support timely decision-making. Just as important, their participation reflected a commitment to shared learning and trust-based philanthropy. Allegany sees itself as part of the ecosystem it supports, and this session offered an opportunity to engage in relationship-based research that honors the voices and experiences of its partners.

The session began with a collective review of draft network maps and preliminary social network analysis results. Participants worked together to identify missing actors, surface data limitations, and offer context to the patterns we observed. This shared sensemaking laid the foundation for a structured SWOT exercise, which focused on internal aspects of the climate justice network such as collaboration, trust, leadership, communication, and resource flow. Reflections were documented through facilitation notes, small group worksheets, and open dialogue.

We were also fortunate to have a graphic notetaker from Collaborative Labs accompany us during the participatory SWOT analysis. Their presence added a unique dimension to the process, helping to visually capture the reflections, priorities, and ideas shared by grant partners in real time. The resulting visual record, shown on the next page, not only documented the conversation, but also helped illuminate connections and insights that might otherwise have been missed.

The following section presents the main themes that emerged from the participatory SWOT process. These findings highlight both the internal assets that can be leveraged and the challenges that may require further attention or investment to strengthen Florida's climate justice network over time.




ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE
SHARED WORLD VIEW SUCCESS
FOLLOW OUR NORTH STAR
STRENGTHS
OPPORTUNITIES
UNDERSTANDING EXTREME HEAT
RESOURCES
LEADERS AS STRATEGISTS
FLOW OF FUNDING
GENEROSITY
KNOWLEDGE
FUNDING MOUNTAIN
MAPPING/ NETWORKING
LOCALLY TRUSTED ORGANIZATIONS
HAVE OUR OWN RESPONSIVE CRISIS NETWORK (KEEP JOBS IN FLORIDA)
RESILIENT
AGRICULTURE CONNECTION & PRODUCTION
GROWING LANDSCAPE
UNIVERSITIES ARE
OPPORTUNITIES
LEVERAGE AGRICULTURAL MARKET POWER
GROUP DIVERSITY
SAFE · WELL · ALIVE
EFFECT ON OUR HEALTH
INCREASED COLLABORATION
FLORIDA IS IMPORTANT NATIONALLY
ACTION ITEMS
GLOBAL SOUTH REPRESENTATION
FOCUS ON OUTCOMES
SUPPORTING COLLABORATION WITH A PILOT PROJECT
SUPPORTING RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN ORGANIZATIONS
PROTECTION FOR WORKERS
TAKING THE LEAD WITH FUNDERS

## SWOT Findings

The findings below reflect the key themes that emerged from the participatory SWOT process facilitated during the in-person retreat. These insights are grounded in the reflections of grant partners, Allegany staff and board members, and members of the evaluation team. Together, they offer a field-informed view of the internal conditions shaping Florida's climate justice network.

| | |
|---|---|
| **Strengths: What's Working Within the 'Network'?** | **Weaknesses: What Internal Challenges Are Holding the Network Back?** |
| **Opportunities: What Can Be Strengthened or Leveraged?** | **Threats: What Could Undermine Network Strength or Sustainability?** |

## Strengths: What's Working Within the 'Network'?

Participants identified a range of internal strengths that can be built upon to grow and strengthen the climate justice ecosystem in Florida:

- **People and Leadership:** The network includes knowledgeable, seasoned, and creative leaders who bring passion, resilience, and strategic thinking to the work.
- **Diverse Composition:** The presence of a wide array of organizations using different strategies (i.e., organizing, education, civic action, policy advocacy) was seen as a strength. Participants also noted meaningful representation from communities in the Global South.
- **Focus on Extreme Heat:** This issue emerged as a shared priority across many organizations and regions, representing both alignment and momentum.
- **Resilience and Responsiveness:** Despite political, social, and environmental challenges, organizations are still standing and adapting quickly to changing conditions.
- **Place-Based Assets:** South Florida, especially the Miami area, was identified as a hub of activity. Florida's geographic and political context was also seen as strategically important nationally due to its unique climate challenges and organizing opportunities.
- **Existing Funders and Collaborations:** Some funders are already working together, such as through FERN, and several organizations have strong relationships with the communities they serve.

## Weaknesses: What Internal Challenges Are Holding the Network Back?

Participants named several internal barriers that limit the network's ability to collaborate, align, and grow:

- **Fragmentation and Gaps in Representation:** The landscape is broad and sometimes disconnected. Many rural communities are underrepresented, and some populations are missing altogether.
- **Lack of Shared Language and Strategy:** Participants highlighted a lack of common definitions, values, and goals. Misalignment between funders and organizations was seen as a challenge to coordination and collaboration.
- **Overreliance on Education as Strategy:** Many organizations are focused heavily on education and awareness, but there is a need to support more direct action and policy change.
- **Limited Organizing Capacity:** The number of organizers is small, and many are stretched thin. Survival-mode operations are common, leaving little time or energy for power-building or systemic advocacy.
- **Governance and Infrastructure Gaps:** There is no clear structure for how organizations collaborate or make decisions together. Participants noted the absence of a statewide strategy and the influence of power dynamics across the field.
- **Competition and Funding Pressures:** Participants described a funding environment that incentivizes competition and discourages transparency. Intermediary funders were mentioned as sometimes creating unnecessary complications.
- **Limited Knowledge Sharing:** There are not enough mechanisms in place to support regular and open exchange of insights, resources, or lessons learned.

## Opportunities: What Can Be Strengthened or Leveraged?

Participants surfaced several opportunities to build on current assets and make strategic progress:

- **Increased Collaboration:** There is momentum and appetite for deeper collaboration across regions, action areas, and organizational types.
- **Peer Learning and Storytelling:** Participants want more opportunities to learn from each other and to share strategies and successes across the network.
- **Organizing Funders:** Allegany could play a key role in convening other funders and shifting funding culture in Florida toward one that supports long-term, collaborative work.
- **Pilot Projects and Shared Infrastructure:** There was strong interest in launching collaborative pilot efforts that test strategies, build alignment, and create shared definitions and goals.
- **Statewide Coordination:** Participants expressed the need to build infrastructure for statewide learning, communication, and coordination to increase impact at the local level.
- **Expansion into Underserved Areas:** There is an opportunity to extend organizing and support into rural regions and communities that have been left out of climate justice work so far.

## Threats: What Could Undermine Network Strength or Sustainability?

Participants named a range of threats, many of which are structural or cultural in nature:

- **Burnout and Turnover:** Many organizations are experiencing staffing challenges, including burnout, labor shortages, and loss of experienced leaders. This affects capacity and continuity.
- **Political Environment and Safety Concerns:** The political climate in Florida is increasingly hostile, especially for marginalized communities. Fear, self-censorship, and safety concerns are causing people to leave the state or disengage from organizing work.
- **Funding Instability:** Financial uncertainty was a recurring theme, with concerns about limited funding pools, short-term investments, and the impact of losing funder support.
- **Lack of Shared Strategy:** Without clearer alignment around goals and strategies, participants worry the field may struggle to coordinate or respond collectively to opportunities and threats.
- **Digital and Physical Vulnerabilities:** Organizations noted cybersecurity risks and the lack of capacity to respond. Climate disasters and regulatory rollbacks also pose direct threats to organizational stability and impact.

## Reflections on Use of Landscape Analysis Learnings

The previous section summarized key findings from the landscape analysis and network mapping work conducted over the past two years. These findings were designed to inform strategy, strengthen alignment, and support Allegany's role in cultivating a more connected and resilient climate justice ecosystem in Florida.

In the spirit of shared learning, we now turn to a reflection on the intended and actual use of these data and insights. As a Learning & Evaluation team, we know that generating useful information is only one part of the work. Equally important is understanding whether and how that information is taken up. This kind of reflection helps us learn not just about the field, but also about the conditions, formats, and relationships that make learning actionable. Because Allegany and the evaluation team are both committed to learning in practice, it feels important to name where this work has met its potential and where there may be opportunities to grow.

As discussed above, this body of work included multiple phases of data collection and meaning-making, from initial network mapping to a social network analysis and participatory SWOT process.

Each phase was designed to support decision-making, strategy refinement, and long-term learning about the structure and health of Florida's climate justice ecosystem.

Findings were expected to help Allegany identify prospective long-term grant partners, refine the CJCC theory of change, sharpen its approach to future grantmaking, and establish baselines for evaluating the strength and efficacy of the network over time. The SNA in particular was intended to assess whether and how the network is functioning, identify actors with high or low connectivity, and help determine whether further intervention might be needed to create, maintain, or improve collaborative conditions. The SWOT process was envisioned as a way to generate additional guidance on how to support the network's internal capacity and cohesion.

In practice, however, we are unsure how much of this work has been taken up or used in Allegany's decision-making processes to date. Timing has been a persistent challenge. Data collection, analysis, and sensemaking often unfold on timelines that do not align neatly with funding decisions or internal planning windows.

Changes in CJCC leadership also created moments of discontinuity, which made it harder to build shared ownership or sustained engagement with the data. At times, it has not been entirely clear that there is a shared understanding of how this work could inform strategy or what decisions it is meant to support. While we have worked hard to present findings in accessible and meaningful ways, we also see opportunities to strengthen this piece of the work. Going forward, we are eager to improve how we deliver findings into strategic conversations and to take a more active role in co-interpretation and application. Our goal is to ensure that data are not only available, but genuinely useful.

Importantly, we also heard that this body of work was deeply valuable to grant partners. In end-of-year interviews, many of those who participated in the in-person retreat reflected on how helpful the network data and landscape analysis were for understanding the broader field, seeing new connection points, and thinking more strategically about collaboration. There is clear potential for this type of analysis to support coordination, relationship-building, and strategy at the grassroots level, not just within the walls of philanthropy. That said, we have not yet developed a shared plan with Allegany for how and when these insights might be disseminated more broadly. We believe this is an area of significant untapped potential and one we hope to explore further in partnership. We revisit this question in the next section, under Scope 4: Learning Hub.

## Zen Break

We want to acknowledge that this is a long report, and by this point, you've already covered a lot of ground. So before diving into the next phase of the story, we invite you to take a brief Zen Break.

This is a great moment to pause, stretch, and refill your coffee, or simply enjoy a moment of delight. Research shows that looking at images of baby animals can actually improve focus, support sustained attention, and reduce stress. So go ahead and give yourself permission to slow down for a minute. May we suggest a photo of a baby sloth, duckling, or tiny goat?

When you're ready, the next section picks up with an overview of the CJCC initiative's first-year evaluation. Let's get back to learning!

# III. Scope 2: Evaluation Activities

Before turning to the next section, we want to briefly acknowledge the shift in focus and role. In the previous section, we shared findings and reflections from our landscape analysis work. That body of research was designed to support Allegany's understanding of the climate justice ecosystem in Florida and to inform its philanthropic strategy. In that context, our role was primarily that of researchers and strategic learning partners, helping surface patterns across the field to support Allegany's positioning, investment decisions, and engagement with the broader ecosystem.

This next section focuses on our role as evaluators, offering an overview of this year's formal evaluation of the CJCC initiative itself. While learning is a throughline across all scopes of work, the evaluation described here focused specifically on the implementation and experience of the initiative during its first full year of grantmaking. These activities were designed to support reflection, accountability, and strategic decision-making for Allegany, CJCC staff, and the broader initiative community.

The evaluation activities and findings described in this section are presented and discussed in much greater depth in a companion report titled *Rooted in Relationship, Growing Toward Justice: Evaluation Activities and Key Learnings from the First Year of the Climate Justice & Care for Creation Initiative (FY25)*. What follows here is a high-level overview of that work, including a summary of the evaluation framework, key learnings, and core deliverables.

## Evaluation Framework and Methods

The 2024–2025 evaluation was guided by the Trust-Based Framework for Learning & Evaluation in Philanthropy, with a focus on partner experience, values alignment, and early learning. In alignment with Allegany's commitment to learning first, the evaluation prioritized accessible, utilization-focused methods designed to strengthen relationships, inform decision-making, and support long-term strategy development.

This year's evaluation activities focused on two of the three learning frames:

**Learning Frame A:** Accountability: How are Allegany's values showing up in practice, and how are they experienced by grant partners?

**Learning Frame B:** Decision-Making: Whether Allegany is effectively helping grant partners achieve their goals and how it is contributing to the broader ecosystem of climate justice work.

While Learning Frame C, which focuses on long-term impact, was not a primary area of inquiry this year, the evaluation did help surface early signals and infrastructure needs that will inform future work in that area.

To answer key evaluation questions associated with each learning frame, our team systematically collected and analyzed both qualitative and quantitative data including:

**Climate Justice Stakeholder Survey (CJSS)**, completed by 28 of 31 grant partners and 13 non-grant partners

**In-depth interviews** with 25 grant partners, conducted via Zoom and transcribed for analysis

**Review** of grant materials, meeting notes, and initiative artifacts

**Participant observation** during events, convenings, and staff debriefs

Qualitative data were coded thematically in Dedoose using a hybrid approach. Deductive codes were aligned with the evaluation questions, while inductive codes emerged from partner reflections and language. Quantitative data from the CJSS and structured interview questions were analyzed descriptively in SPSS to identify trends and support triangulation across sources.

This mixed-methods approach allowed for rich insight into both partner experiences and patterns across the initiative while minimizing administrative burden and centering the voices of those closest to the work.

## Key Findings

**Allegany's values are widely felt and deeply appreciated**
Grant partners consistently described Allegany as values-aligned, relationship-centered, and courageous in its funding approach. They felt seen, trusted, and affirmed, often in contrast to more transactional funder relationships.

**Flexible funding enabled adaptation, responsiveness, and real progress**
Partners used CJCC funding to strengthen internal capacity, deliver direct support, and advance advocacy efforts. All partners reported making progress toward their goals, and many exceeded expectations despite limited resources and challenging conditions.

**Trust was built and sustained through consistency, care, and responsiveness**
Strong relational practices, including regular communication, flexibility, and personal engagement, helped build trust over time. A few newer partners noted challenges connecting, which highlighted the importance of clear onboarding and consistent staffing.

**Non-financial supports were meaningful but not always accessible**
Partners appreciated offerings such as wellness grants, convenings, and visibility opportunities, but some were unsure how to access them or learned about them too late. Many expressed a desire for (more) access to peer learning, funder connections, research expertise, communications guidance, and evaluation support.

**Short-term, modest grants limited the scope and scale of what was possible**
While partners valued the initial investment, many noted that the grant size and timeline limited their ability to plan long-term, scale strategies, or fully document results. Several had to pause or reduce parts of their intended work.

Across all learning frames, the evaluation found that values-based philanthropy is not only possible, it is working. Allegany's commitment to trust, equity, and care is being experienced in meaningful ways. At the same time, partners are calling for stronger infrastructure, sustained investment, and more intentional ecosystem supports in order to deepen and extend the impact.

## Deliverables and Emerging Insights

Deliverables from this year's evaluation and learning activities included:

- Full-length evaluation report with findings organized by learning frame and key evaluation question
- Coded qualitative dataset and internal analysis memos
- Summaries of grant partner interviews, highlighting key themes, quotes, and organizational-level insights
- Data visualizations and partner snapshots, capturing progress toward goals, funding allocation, and key characteristics
- Partner briefings and summary decks to support discussion and reflection with Allegany staff
- Updated partner profiles and database entries to inform Allegany's network analysis and strategic planning

The evaluation also surfaced several emerging insights that may guide future work:

- Partners want more structured support for evaluation and learning.
- Many expressed interest in culturally responsive evaluation methods, practical tools, and shared learning platforms that support reflection and documentation.
- Differentiated support is needed to ensure equity.
- Newer and smaller organizations highlighted the need for clearer onboarding, more tailored guidance, and supports designed with their contexts in mind.
- Momentum is building toward ecosystem-level connection and visibility.
- Several partners requested more opportunities to collaborate, share stories, and access aligned funding opportunities. Many viewed Allegany as a potential bridge to other resources and networks.

These insights are already informing evaluation planning for the next phase of the initiative. They also point to broader strategic considerations as CJCC grows from a responsive funding initiative into a long-term, values-rooted strategy for systems change in Florida.

# IV. Scope 3: Theory of Change Refinement

## What is a Theory of Change

A theory of change is a visual and narrative tool that outlines the core beliefs, strategies, and conditions that guide an initiative. It helps make explicit the "why," "what," and "how" behind a funder's approach. It also identifies the assumptions that underlie those strategies, including beliefs about cause and effect (how and why change will happen), implementation (what is feasible given available capacity and resources), and context (what conditions are expected to hold true). These assumptions may be clearly stated or may operate in more implicit ways.

For an initiative like CJCC, which is rooted in values and committed to systems change, a theory of change is especially important. It serves as a shared roadmap for staff, partners, and collaborators, helping to align strategy, clarify priorities, and support learning and adaptation over time. A well-articulated theory of change also lays the groundwork for evaluation by offering a structure for asking whether the initiative is doing what it set out to do and whether those efforts are leading to the intended outcomes.

## Internal Vs. External Theory of Change

As the CJCC initiative has evolved, so has the need to distinguish between two interconnected but distinct theories of change: an external theory of change, which describes how community-driven action leads to climate justice outcomes in Florida, and an internal theory of change, which reflects how Allegany intends to support that change through its philanthropic strategy. The two are closely connected.

The external theory, which Allegany began shaping through a theory of change process facilitated by our Learning & Evaluation team, served as a foundational tool for strategic decision-making during the initiative's first year. It helped guide funding priorities, surface early preconditions for systems change, and frame the initial round of investments. As the initiative has matured, there is increasing value in also articulating the internal theory. This includes clarifying Allegany's role as a funder, collaborator, and ecosystem participant, and examining how its strategies, structures, and values contribute to its desired impact.

## Theory of Change Development

To date, our work has focused primarily on supporting the development and refinement of the external theory. This past year, however, we have also begun mapping what is emerging as Allegany's internal theory of change. This work has been largely behind the scenes. Drawing on what we have learned through evaluation, document review, and participant observation, we have been gathering insight into how Allegany understands its role, what it prioritizes, and what assumptions appear to shape its decision-making. This includes patterns in funding structure, types of non-monetary support, the use of specific theoretical frameworks, and how relationships are built and maintained. We have kept a close ear to the ground for both stated and unstated assumptions, as well as moments when key decisions signaled shifts in strategy, intent, or values in practice.

At this point, we are awaiting Allegany's guidance on when and how to move forward. This includes revisiting the external theory in light of what has been learned during the initiative's first full year of implementation and reviewing our team's initial articulation of the internal theory of change. We see this as a critical opportunity to support alignment, deepen shared understanding, and clarify how Allegany's evolving strategy fits into the broader climate justice ecosystem in Florida.

# V. Scope 4: Reporting & Sensemaking

High-quality reporting products are a critical part of this kind of learning partnership. As the CJCC initiative evolves, so does the need for clear, timely, and accessible documentation that can support both internal reflection and external learning. Throughout the year, the Learning & Evaluation team has invested significant energy in producing reporting products that are not only accurate and grounded in data, but also visually engaging and easy to use. This includes slide decks, discussion tools, synthesis memos, and year-end reports, all designed to support decision-making, deepen understanding, and help Allegany tell the story of the initiative as it unfolds.

## Rapid Reporting

One of the core strategies of our partnership is rapid reporting. Throughout the year, we produced a series of mini reports in the form of presentation decks, internal briefings, and visual data summaries as soon as preliminary findings became available. These products did not reflect complete datasets or finalized analyses, but they were developed in response to Allegany's need for real-time insight. Our goal was to analyze, visualize, and share emerging themes in ways that could support ongoing planning conversations and strategic choices. Rapid reporting allowed us to support learning in motion while continuing to collect and synthesize data in the background.

## Year-End Reports

The two primary reporting products for this contract year are this document and the Rooted in Relationship evaluation report. Together, they provide a full picture of the Learning & Evaluation Partnership's work between July 2024 and June 2025. This report focuses on documenting activities and deliverables across all five scopes of work. The evaluation report provides an in-depth analysis of the initiative's first full year of implementation, including findings organized by learning frame and key evaluation question. Each report was designed not only to reflect on the past year, but also to support strategic learning as the initiative continues to evolve.

## Reflections on Challenges

As discussed earlier in this report, timing has been a consistent challenge when it comes to using data and insights to inform decision-making. While rapid reporting allowed for some real-time learning, the more comprehensive year-end reports were completed after several important decisions had already been made, including those related to the next round of CJCC funding. In a fast-moving initiative like this one, it can be difficult to align learning cycles with grantmaking timelines. We also recognize that not every insight needs to translate into immediate action. Some findings require deeper conversation, reflection, and time to take root.

Looking ahead, we are eager to work with Allegany to explore ways of improving the alignment between reporting and decision-making. We also hope to continue refining how findings are shared and discussed, so that learning can be more immediately useful when needed, and more reflective when that serves the work best.

# VI. Scope 5: Learning Hub

## Importance of Dissemination

From the beginning of this partnership, Allegany and the Learning & Evaluation team have shared a belief that learning should not remain siloed. The Learning Hub was originally envisioned as a space—physical, digital, or relational—where insights from across the CJCC initiative could be curated and shared with partners, funders, and other climate justice stakeholders. This included findings from landscape analysis, evaluation activities, grant partner reflections, and external research. The goal was not just to disseminate information, but to support shared learning, amplify community-driven strategies, and strengthen the field as a whole.

While this scope of work was included in earlier contracts, formal activities related to the Learning Hub have not yet moved forward. Conversations between Allegany and the L&E team acknowledged the importance of this work, but it remained on hold as both teams focused on immediate implementation and reporting needs. There were also questions around infrastructure, including where and how the Hub would live, who it would be designed for, and how it would be maintained. As a result, much of the thinking about dissemination has remained informal or aspirational.

At the same time, interest in sharing and connecting has only grown. Grant partners, especially those who participated in the in-person retreat, consistently expressed enthusiasm for learning from each other and from initiative-wide findings. They described the value of seeing themselves in the broader landscape, identifying potential collaborators, and learning how others are approaching similar challenges. Several expressed a desire for translated findings, discussion tools, or learning sessions that make evaluation data more usable in practice. We believe the Learning Hub remains a promising vehicle for meeting these needs and fostering greater equity and alignment across the ecosystem.

## Landscape Analysis

As described in earlier sections, the multi-phase landscape analysis, including network mapping, social network analysis, and the participatory SWOT process, generated insights that could be valuable far beyond Allegany. These findings could support partners in understanding the structure of the field, identifying gaps or opportunities, and making more intentional choices about collaboration and strategy. Yet there is not yet a clear plan for how and when this information will be shared more broadly. We hope the next phase of work includes space for co-developing dissemination strategies that center accessibility, transparency, and usefulness for the network itself.

## Evaluation of CJCC

The formal evaluation of the initiative has produced a wide range of findings and deliverables, including survey data, interview themes, goal progress summaries, and recommendations. These insights could support not only internal reflection, but also collective sensemaking and capacity-building across the cohort. Many grant partners expressed interest in seeing findings in formats that support peer dialogue or local application. To date, most evaluation products have been tailored for Allegany's internal use. As we prepare for the next phase of evaluation, we are eager to explore how evaluation findings can be shared more regularly and meaningfully with the partners who help generate them.

## Grant Partner Peer Learning

While some efforts have been made to support connection and exchange among grant partners, a more intentional strategy for peer learning has yet to emerge. We heard clearly from grant partners that the opportunity to connect with others doing similar work is both rare and highly valued. Several participants noted that seeing each other's strategies, successes, and challenges helped reduce feelings of isolation and sparked new ideas. The retreat surfaced a strong appetite for informal peer learning, thematic clusters, and opportunities to co-lead or shape shared learning spaces.

The Learning Hub could serve as an important structure to support these kinds of connections. Whether it takes the form of a curated resource library, a rotating learning series, a digital platform, or facilitated peer exchanges, the Hub represents an opportunity to bring grant partners into deeper relationship with each other and with the knowledge being generated across the initiative.

# VII: End of Chapter, Start of the Next

## Other Contributions and Reflections

While this report has focused on the five formal scopes of work, the Learning & Evaluation team also contributed to other meaningful activities that helped deepen the partnership and strengthen shared learning. One of the most valuable experiences this year was participating in Allegany's in-person board retreat. The retreat offered a unique opportunity to learn more about Allegany's history, values, and broader areas of work. It also gave us the chance to connect more personally with board members and staff, grounding the partnership in greater trust, care, and mutual respect.

As part of the retreat, Dr. Kesten, our team's lead, facilitated a reflection activity with board and staff to begin surfacing early thinking about the future of CJCC evaluation. We posed several framing questions to guide the conversation:

- What do we want or need to learn from the evaluation of the initiative, both in the short term and the long term?
- How will evaluation findings be used, by whom, and when?
- In what ways might the current political context in Florida affect the evaluation or grant partners' ability to participate in learning activities?

These questions helped generate a thoughtful conversation about expectations, opportunities, and the role of evaluation in shaping the initiative's next phase. The retreat also reminded us that evaluation is not just a technical task, it is a relational and strategic practice that reflects the values of those who shape it.

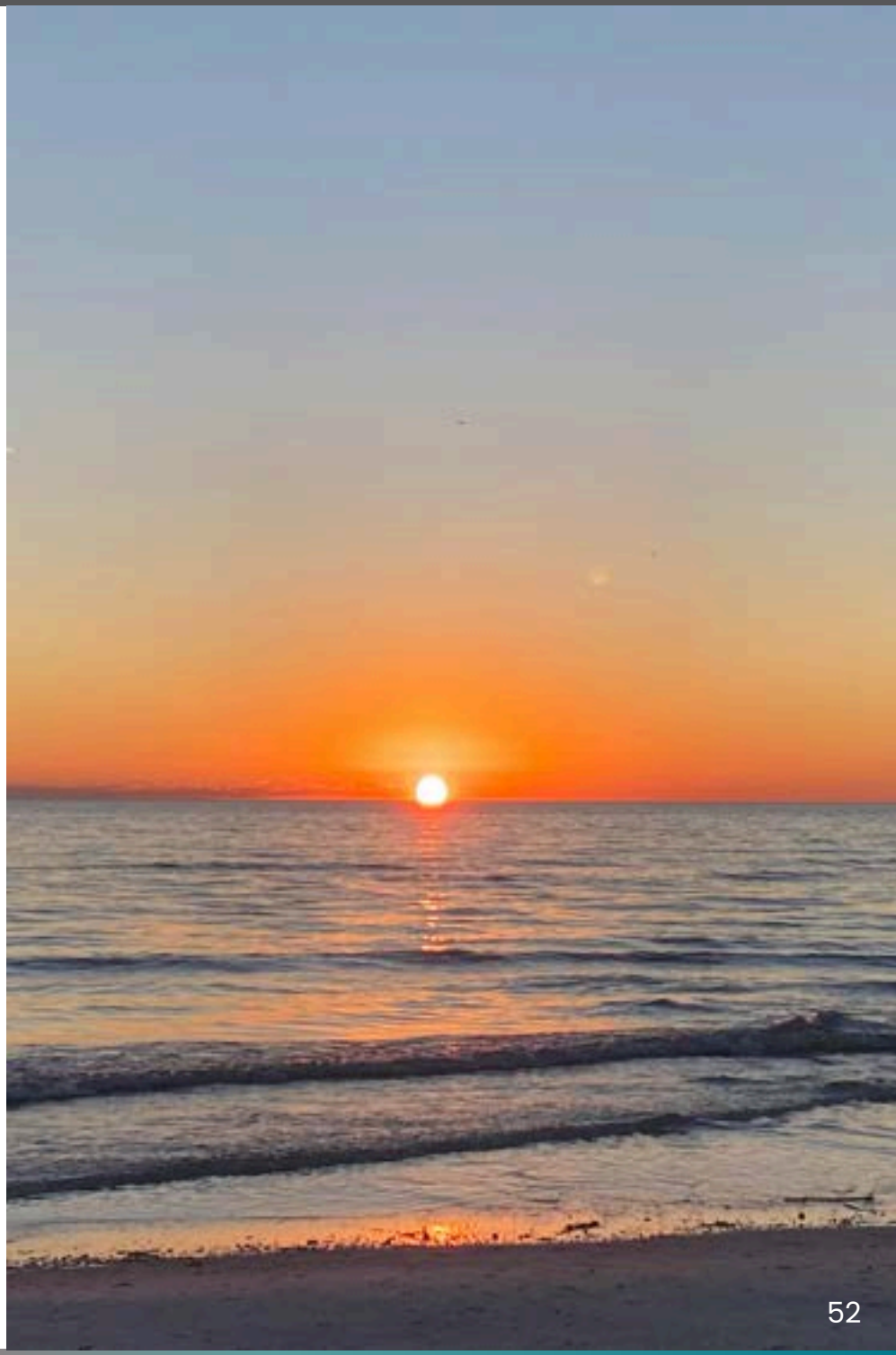
## Planning for the Future

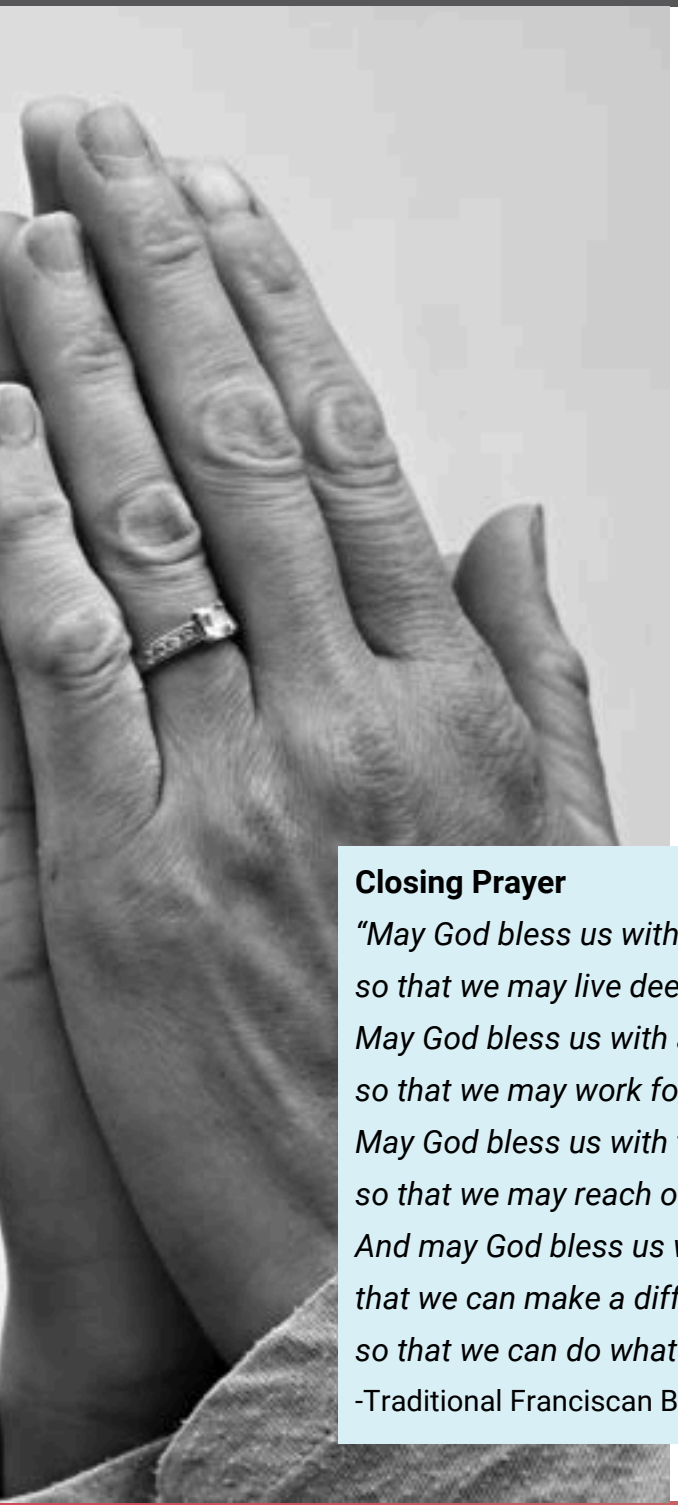
Throughout the year, our team invested considerable time thinking about how to carry this work forward in a way that remains responsive, rigorous, and aligned with Allegany's vision. We drew on what we learned from partners, board members, and staff, observed across the field, and experienced within the collaboration itself. That reflection process ultimately culminated in the development of the 2025–2027 scope of work, which outlines a path forward for deepening learning, expanding support for grant partners, and strengthening field-level strategy. The next phase will build on this year's foundation, with renewed attention to long-term impact, ecosystem learning, and more intentional support for evaluation capacity across the initiative.

## Looking Ahead

This past year has been full of learning, relationship-building, and adaptation. We are proud of what has been co-created and deeply grateful for the trust and collaboration that made it possible. As we look ahead, we are excited to put the lessons of this first year into action. The foundation is strong, the questions are rich, and the possibilities are many.

The next chapter starts now.





## With Gratitude

As we close this chapter, we want to extend our deep gratitude to Allegany Franciscan Ministries for the opportunity to walk alongside you in this work. Thank you for your trust, your courage, and your commitment to leading with values. Thank you to the CJCC staff and board for your generosity of spirit and openness to reflection, even in moments of uncertainty. And thank you to the grant partners who continue to lead this work on the ground with boldness, clarity, and care.

We offer this report in the spirit of shared learning and collective purpose. May the insights it contains support your next steps, may your relationships remain strong, and may the work ahead continue to be guided by justice, compassion, and joy.

**Closing Prayer**

*"May God bless us with discomfort at easy answers, half-truths, and superficial relationships,*
*so that we may live deep within our hearts.*
*May God bless us with anger at injustice, oppression, and exploitation,*
*so that we may work for justice, freedom, and peace.*
*May God bless us with tears to shed for those who suffer,*
*so that we may reach out our hands to comfort them and turn their pain into joy.*
*And may God bless us with enough foolishness to believe*
*that we can make a difference in this world,*
*so that we can do what others claim cannot be done."*
-Traditional Franciscan Blessing (author unknown)