THE FOUR SHIFTS · ALL FOUR MODULES AT A GLANCE

# Four Shifts Disaster Philanthropy Needs

One conversation with Ashley Lukens of Funder Hui. Four moves that turn scattered giving into coordinated response.

When disaster hits, fifty funders can share the same values and still read as chaos on the ground, because they run on different applications, timelines, and priorities. Coordination, not more meetings and not more money, is what turns care into impact. These four shifts are how, on infrastructure already moving money at scale.

## 1 One App, Every Funder

Standing up a shared Common Application for crisis response

Nonprofits drown in duplicate applications while funders cannot see who is funding what. **A shared Common Application is the single fastest fix a network has**, and the culture shift that makes an eighteen-page form the outlier, not the norm.

## 2 Track Aligned Giving

Turning trust into coordinated capital

Funding in isolation overlaps in some places and misses others. **Shared visibility turns scattered dollars into coordinated capital**, the way roughly forty funders coordinated Hawai'i's response instead of running forty separate efforts.

## 3 Trust the Frontline

Pooled funds built on community decision-making

The people closest to the crisis should hold the mic. **Pooled funds put grant decisions where the knowledge lives**, with JustFund as the compliant entity and an advisory committee making the calls.

## 4 Beyond Immediate Relief

Funding the full arc of disaster

Most dollars land in the first 72 hours. **Recovery and rebuilding, when communities are most vulnerable, get left behind.** Fund all three phases, not just the first, and know when government dollars arrive.

HAWAI'I RESILIENCE & RECOVERY COLLABORATIVE · MARCH–SEPTEMBER 2026

**$2,017,650**
in grants committed through the Collaborative since March 2026

**31**
organizations funded across 50 grants

**$17,500**
median grant size

> **"One of the most striking moments of that workshop was the 19-page application for the foundation that gave $5,000 grants. I don't think anybody in philanthropy would look at that illustration and think that's the right application for that fund."**
>
> **Ashley Lukens, Funder Hui**

RESOURCE GUIDE · PART 1 OF 4

# One App, Every Funder

## Standing Up a Common Application for Crisis Response

A conversation with Ashley Lukens of Funder Hui, hosted by Iara Peng of JustFund, on why shared intake, not another meeting, is the first infrastructure a disaster response needs.

## WHY THIS MATTERS

When disaster hits, nonprofits get buried in duplicate applications, and funders cannot see who else is funding what, so dollars overlap in some places and never reach others. A shared Common Application is the single fastest fix available to a funder network, and it is also the one funders resist longest. This guide covers both: what a Common App actually does, and what it takes to get a room full of independent funders to say yes to it.

**24 hrs**
to launch a compliant fund on JustFund's infrastructure

**81 yrs**
of applicant admin time saved network-wide, to date

**26,000+**
nonprofits already on one shared profile

## WHAT ASHLEY TOLD US

- The core problem: fifty foundations can share exactly the same values, but if they run on different technical infrastructure, timelines, priorities, and response speeds, it reads to people on the ground as chaos, not care.
- The resistance is real and specific: trustees who will not approve it, and institutions convinced their program is too special for shared paperwork, right up until the next disaster forces the sector's hand.
- Atlanta proved the model works beyond a single crisis: roughly thirty Greater Atlanta foundations adopted a shared Common App during COVID, then kept using it for other priorities long after.
- Technology never solves this alone. The culture has to shift too, so an eighteen-page application reads as the outlier, not the norm.

> **"One of the most striking moments of that workshop was the 19-page application for the foundation that gave $5,000 grants. I don't think anybody in philanthropy would look at that illustration and think that's the right application for that fund."**
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> Ashley Lukens, Funder Hui

## QUESTIONS TO SIT WITH

Take five minutes with these before you pitch a Common App to your own network or board.

1. If disaster hit your community tomorrow, how many separate applications would an affected organization need to complete to reach every funder who might help them?
2. Think about your own institution's application. Is its length actually driven by compliance requirements, or by history and habit, the way Ashley describes the 19-page form for a $5,000 grant?
3. Ashley says people were "still saying not yet" until another disaster forced the issue. What would it take for your network to say yes before the next crisis, instead of during it?

## THIS WEEK

**ACT**

**Audit one application against a real crisis timeline.**

Pull the application your organization or fund uses most often. Time how long it would take a grassroots group, with no development staff, to complete it during an active crisis. Then ask which sections you would actually need in the first 72 hours, and which could wait, or go away entirely.

From the field: JustFund's Common Application is the same infrastructure that helped Funder Hui coordinate the response to the 2023 Maui fires and stand up the Haven Fund in New York City.

RESOURCE GUIDE · PART 2 OF 4

# Track Aligned Giving

## Turning Trust Into Coordinated Capital

A conversation with Ashley Lukens of Funder Hui, hosted by Iara Peng of JustFund, on why shared visibility, not more meetings, is what turns scattered giving into coordinated capital.

## WHY THIS MATTERS

When disaster hits, funders often give in isolation. Without visibility into who else is funding what, dollars pile up in some places and never reach others. Shared visibility is what turns a room full of well-meaning funders into a coordinated response, and it is the difference between more money and more impact.

**~40**
funders coordinated one response in Hawai'i

**$434M+**
moved to the frontlines since 2017

**1,800+**
funders on one shared network

## WHAT ASHLEY TOLD US

- Coordination is possible at scale: roughly forty funders coordinated the response to Hawai'i's disasters through shared infrastructure, instead of running forty separate, overlapping efforts.
- Visibility changes where money lands. In one viral GoFundMe example, capital rushed to the organization with the loudest platform while quieter, high-capacity groups went unseen.
- More money is not always more impact. In the moment, coordinated funding was often about capacity building, not just direct response, and that distribution was only possible because funders could see one another.
- The first step is a map: know which funders in your network fund what, and where the gaps are, before the next crisis forces the question.

> **"More money is not always more impact. That distribution of funding across our community, in the context of disaster, was enabled through the Funder Collab."**
>
> Ashley Lukens, Funder Hui

## QUESTIONS TO SIT WITH

Take five minutes with these before your next coordinated response.

1. Right now, do you actually know which funders in your region are funding which organizations for the current crisis, or are you guessing?
2. One PIO director's entire pitch was an email titled "Who Funds What." Would that question be easy or hard to answer inside your own network today?
3. In Ashley's GoFundMe story, capital found the organization with the loudest platform while quieter groups went unseen. Where might that be happening in your response right now?

## THIS WEEK

ACT

**Map your funder network.**

List the five to ten funders you would most want shared visibility with in the next disaster. Note what each one already funds well, whether that is direct aid, systems change, policy, or capacity building. Then look for the gaps that nobody in your circle is covering.

From the field: JustFund's shared infrastructure has moved more than $434M to the frontlines since 2017, with over 1,800 funders coordinating on one network.

RESOURCE GUIDE · PART 3 OF 4

# Trust the Frontline

## Pooled Funds Built on Community Decision-Making

A conversation with Ashley Lukens of Funder Hui, hosted by Iara Peng of JustFund, on why the people closest to a crisis should hold the most decision-making power.

## WHY THIS MATTERS

Speed and visibility matter, but the deeper question in any disaster response is who decides. Pooled funds put grant recommendations in the hands of the people closest to the crisis, while the compliance and infrastructure stay with a partner built to carry them.

| $1M | 5–7 days | 0 |
|---|---|---|
| raised from 437 donors via one pooled fund | to disburse once the committee recommends | need to stand up your own 501(c)(3) |

## WHAT ASHLEY TOLD US

- Those most impacted should have the most time on the mic. Community members closest to the crisis are best positioned to decide where funding should go.
- Disaster does not happen in a vacuum. It happens inside existing systems of inequity, and a response that ignores those systems risks reinforcing them.
- A pooled fund lets JustFund serve as the compliant legal entity while an advisory committee closest to the community makes the actual funding recommendations.
- Infrastructure and compliance make delegation possible. Relationships, trust, and attunement are what make it real.

> **"The people without the relationships are never gonna get the money. That's the foundation of JustFund."**
>
> Ashley Lukens, Funder Hui

## QUESTIONS TO SIT WITH

Sit with these before you decide who holds the power in your next fund.

1. Who currently makes the final call on who gets funded in your response, the people closest to the crisis, or the people furthest from it?
2. What would actually change if an advisory committee of local leaders, not your board or program staff, recommended every grant in your next disaster fund?
3. Ashley says disaster lights up existing structures of oppression. Where in your own funding process might that already be showing up, unnoticed?

## THIS WEEK

ACT

**Sketch your advisory committee.**

If you delegated grant recommendation power tomorrow, who would sit on that committee? Name real people or roles, such as community leaders, past grantees, and frontline organizers, rather than job titles from inside your own institution.

From the field: JustFund serves as the compliant legal entity behind community-led pooled funds, so an advisory committee closest to the crisis can make the funding calls.

RESOURCE GUIDE · PART 4 OF 4

# Beyond Immediate Relief

## Funding the Full Arc of Disaster

A conversation with Ashley Lukens of Funder Hui, hosted by Iara Peng of JustFund, on the phase of disaster that philanthropy keeps missing.

## WHY THIS MATTERS

Most disaster dollars arrive in the first seventy-two hours, when the cameras are still rolling. But recovery and rebuilding, the phases when communities are often most vulnerable, are chronically underfunded. Funding the full arc means planning for all three phases, not just the first.

| 0–3 mo | 3–12 mo | 12 mo+ |
|---|---|---|
| Relief: the first days and weeks | Recovery: months in | Rebuilding: years out |

## WHAT ASHLEY TOLD US

- Disaster funding moves through three phases: relief in the first zero to three months, recovery from three to twelve months, and rebuilding at twelve months and beyond.
- The most common mistake is concentrating dollars in immediate relief and missing the longer, quieter phases where needs persist.
- Government and FEMA funding arrive on their own timelines. Knowing when they land tells you exactly which gap philanthropy needs to fill in the meantime.
- This is learnable work. Funder groups are bringing in experts to understand where philanthropic dollars make the most sense across the arc.

> **"We're able to bring in experts to help us understand where philanthropy makes the most sense in terms of allocating dollars for impact."**
>
> Ashley Lukens, Funder Hui

## QUESTIONS TO SIT WITH

Take five minutes with these before your next disaster response.

1. Looking at your last disaster response, which phase did your giving concentrate in, and is that where the need actually was twelve months later?
2. Do you know when government funding typically arrives for the kind of disaster you fund, and what gap philanthropy needs to fill while everyone waits?
3. If your network had visibility across all three phases today, which one would you discover is the most underfunded?

## THIS WEEK

ACT

**Draft a three-phase timeline.**

Take your most recent disaster response and sketch three windows: zero to three months, three to twelve months, and twelve months and beyond. Mark where your dollars actually landed, then mark where you now believe they were most needed. The gap between those two lines is your next planning conversation.

From the field: funder groups are bringing in experts to map where philanthropic dollars make the most sense across all three phases of a disaster.

## WHERE TO GO FROM HERE

**Ready to fund the full arc, not just the first 72 hours?**

Relief is only the beginning. Let's talk through how to plan and coordinate funding across all three phases of a disaster, so support does not disappear when the news moves on.

**Book a 1:1 Strategy Session with Iara Peng, Founder & CEO of JustFund →**

Learn more at **justfund.us**

Disaster Philanthropy, Reimagined is a JustFund × Funder Hui series. This guide accompanies the companion module, "Beyond Immediate Relief."