Unlock Ownership @ IMPACT CHARITABLE

Year One Review: Executive Summary

Unlock Ownership was founded to meet the complexity of ownership opportunities with patient, flexible catalytic capital—unlocking models that build wealth and stability for households historically excluded from ownership and overlooked by conventional capital structures.

The urgency of this work is evident in today's wealth imbalance. In the United States, the top 10 percent hold nearly 70 percent of total wealth, while the bottom half hold just 2.5 percent. This imbalance limits opportunity, widens divides, fuels political volatility, and weakens long-term market resilience.

Unlock Ownership was built to meet this moment. From the beginning, the vision was to be first, fast, and fearless.

> "In our first year building UO, **we've witnessed a growing breadth of funds creating real ownership in communities U.S.** Innovators are expanding existing models or designing new ones specifically optimized to build greater wealth for historically underinvested households. However, **for these ownership transitions to succeed, the capital must fit the purpose.**
>
> **— Brian Boland, Co-Founder, The Delta Fund**

In this report, **we share our key learnings from our inaugural year, highlighting the patterns emerging from our portfolio, the insights from our Investment Committee, and the needs of the visionary entrepreneurs we support.**

What the Portfolio is Showing Us In Our Inaugural Year

$5.4M	$2.55M	$1.75M	8	24+
raised	invested	currently under diligence	portfolio organizations	opportunities reviewed

Our Learnings

- Strong early traction on approved deals.
- Clear demand for flexible investment support and timing-sensitive tools.
- Early evidence of how committed, values-aligned capital strengthens investees' operating position.

Viewed through a where-you-live and where-you-work lens, our Year One investments include the following ownership models and partners.

Where you live:

- Trust Neighborhoods
- Chainbreaker Collective
- The Guild
- Homes for the Future Fund

Where you work:

- Common Trust Groundwork Fund I
- CFNE
- Seed Commons
- Essential Owners Fund

Year One Report

Unlock Ownership was founded to capitalize and accelerate the ownership economy and expand pathways to wealth for more people.

Ownership transitions are complex. They require patient capital, flexible tools, and partners willing to move differently than traditional markets. This year, Unlock Ownership demonstrated what becomes possible when catalytic capital meets community-rooted opportunity. The need is urgent, the ideas are strong, and the field is shifting toward models that expand wealth and stability for households historically excluded from ownership.

We back ideas that traditional capital is not designed to fund, deploying catalytic capital to absorb higher risk and unlock ownership transitions constrained by systemic capital gaps.

By blending flexible, aligned tools with a community-centered investment process, we're helping build the foundation of a more inclusive economy where ownership and asset-building become widely accessible.

What the Portfolio is Showing Us.

The demand for flexible, impact-first capital is substantial. A wide range of organizations are poised to launch ownership transitions, test new models, and prove out structures rooted in community voice.

Across more than two dozen opportunities reviewed and multiple approved deals, several early patterns emerged. These insights begin to illustrate what ownership-centered investments require and how catalytic capital unlocks transitions that would otherwise stall.

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- Clear demand for flexible investment support and timing-sensitive tools.
- Early evidence of how committed, values-aligned capital strengthens investees' operating position.

How We Build Ownership and Power Where You Live and Where You Work

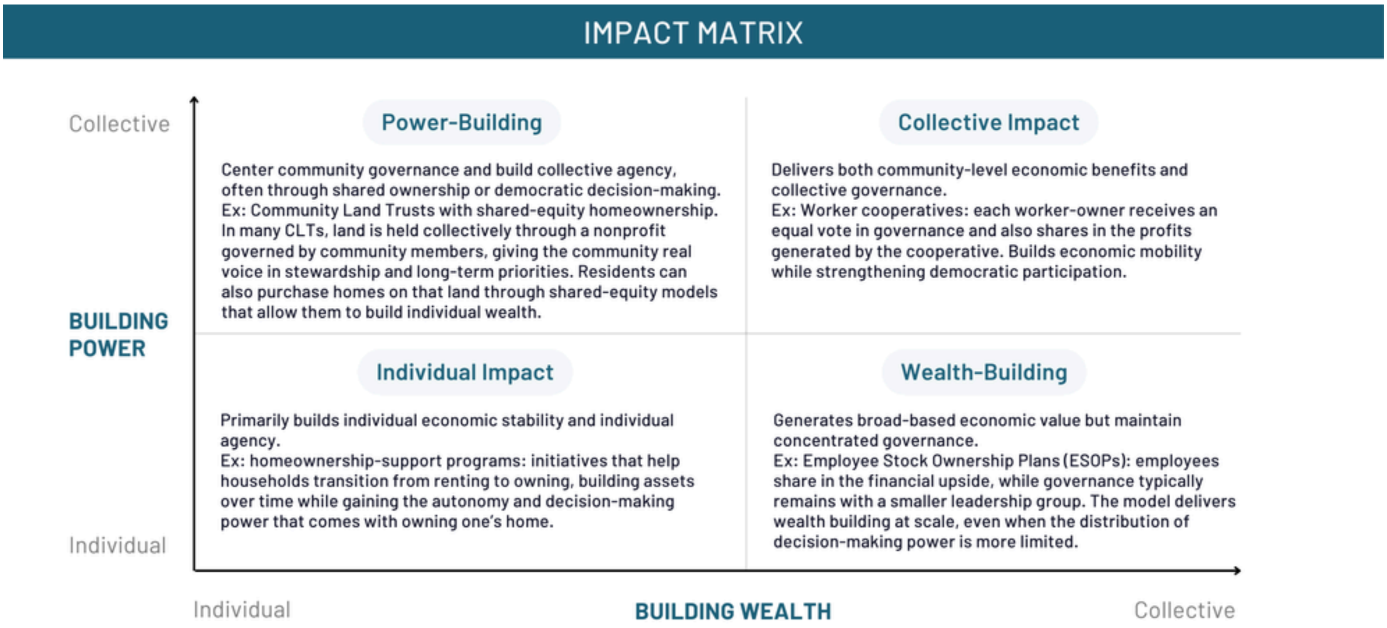
When we assess ownership opportunities, we look beyond financial returns to understand how impact is created and sustained.

At Unlock Ownership, we evaluate investments through two core lenses: **where people live and where they work,** and **how ownership is building both wealth and power for those it serves.**

Ownership that lasts must do more than generate assets. It must also expand agency. That means increasing not only financial participation, but also influence over business direction, land use, governance, and long-term outcomes. Without that decision-making power, wealth-building opportunities remain fragile and incomplete.

This framework guides how we track our portfolio and how we think about impact. We assess each opportunity based on whether it contributes to wealth-building, power-building, or both, recognizing that these dynamics show up differently depending on place and context.

Some investments primarily build wealth, others expand decision-making power, and many do both.



Because a healthy ownership economy requires multiple approaches, we plan to fund organizations across all quadrants of this framework over the life of the fund. Each plays a necessary role in building an ecosystem of ownership opportunities that is resilient, inclusive, and responsive to community needs.

> "There's a lot of talk these days about providing catalytic capital to support deep impact. But then investment committees get stuck in old habits: burdensome due diligence, habitual risk assessments, sluggish decision-making. By contrast, Unlock Ownership starts and ends the investment process in the spirit of trust, speed, and true partnership with its investees—while maintaining rigor. The goal is to find the wisest way to get to yes."
>
> **— Deborah Frieze, Founder: Boston Impact Initiative**

What the Investment Committee is Teaching Us

The inclusive governance structure of Unlock Ownership is one of its greatest strengths. **Investment Committee members bring lived experience, field expertise, and a commitment to questioning habitual due diligence processes and conventional investment structures that slow or stop community-rooted opportunities.**

Their reflections this year highlight how Unlock Ownership works differently:

> "What stood out most... is the sheer breadth of approaches and the variability of solutions that fund managers are bringing to the table. The diversity in models... has been striking and energizing. I've especially appreciated seeing how much innovation, creativity, and imagination is emerging in this space, because that's exactly what it will take to shift our current economic system into one that truly works for a larger share of people."
>
> **— Henry Noel Jr. Investment Director, Boston Impact Initiative**

Smitha Das deepened this theme:

> "When governance centers community voices and those closest to the work, our discussions become more honest, more nuanced, and ultimately more effective. It keeps us rooted in and accountable to the impact and purpose of this work."
>
> **— Smitha Das Senior Director, Investment World Education Services**

What Das points to shows up in tangible ways through due diligence processes created by Impact Charitable.

Together, the Investment Committee's reflections reinforce how essential creativity, flexibility, and trust-based rigor are in ownership transitions. The committee has talked about how this funding in particular can amplify parts of ownership that might be left behind in traditional investments, such as asking where the employees sit in the waterfall of both upside and downside financial flows, and how we might structure investments to encourage exits of companies in values aligned ways such as sales to other community-led groups or investors who will hold the values of ownership in the next stage of development.

What Investees Are Telling Us They Needed

Investees consistently echoed the same needs: capital that matches the timing, structure, and risk realities of ownership deals that traditional finance rarely touches.

- **Responsive capital** that works at the speed of the investment process instead of the speed of the investor and their traditional meeting schedule.
- **Flexible tools** that reduce early-stage risk and unlock transitions. Unlock Ownership uses its full set of catalytic capital tools to structure investments around the specific timing, risk, and ownership needs of each deal.
- **Catalytic capital must be measured to ensure it is truly catalytic.** Everything we do has impact, but catalytic capital requires a higher standard. We assess it using the five Ps from the Catalytic Capital Consortium's Addressing Capital Gaps framework: **purpose, patience, price, partnership, and power.**

These insights confirm what the portfolio already shows: ownership deals require an entirely different form of capital than the market typically offers. UO aims to enter into projects early to signal support and encourage others to engage. We work to commit investment as early as we can even if the funds won't be drawn immediately. We hear from our investees that this gives them the confidence to find and execute the mission-aligned projects they want to build.

Where the Field is Going — And Why Catalytic Capital Matters

The broader field of ownership investing is gaining measurable momentum. Employee ownership continues to expand, with roughly 300 new Employee Stock Ownership Plans created annually, bringing the total to 6,548 plans holding over $1.8 trillion in assets. Community land trusts and shared equity homeownership programs have grown by 30% over the past decade, now serving more than 300 communities nationwide.

Yet despite this momentum, a massive capital gap remains. Transform Finance estimates $1 trillion could be productively deployed to finance employee ownership transitions, while only $500 million is currently available across specialized funds. Philanthropic and catalytic capital are increasingly recognized as the necessary "first movers" to bridge this gap—taking on higher risk, de-risking deals for traditional lenders, and unlocking capital flows to underserved markets

> "For these ownership transitions to succeed, the capital must fit the purpose. Traditional financing often misapplies risk assessments to these deals or demands short-term returns that threaten long-term sustainability. Flexible, impact-first capital is essential because it provides the 'patient capital' necessary for sustainable growth. By stepping in where traditional markets fail, we can de-risk these unique ownership structures, preventing reliance on extractive debt and acting as a catalyst to attract additional funding sources."
>
> **— Brian Boland, Co-Founder, The Delta Fund**

Together, these reflections show a field on the cusp of broader adoption — and a window where catalytic capital must continue leading.

Year One Traction Snapshot

> "Catalytic capital matters so much because the rhetoric too rarely meets the reality of the investments required to successfully launch a truly pioneering imortunities and confront market failures that we have seemingly surrendered to. The pact-focused venture. Capital deployed with intention can unlock extraordinary oppabsence of reasonably attainable, cost-efficient capital stifles innovation, dissuades many of the bright minds who could spearhead pursuit, and smothers tremendous potential."
>
> **— John Green, Managing Principal, Blackstar Stability Fund**

By the end of Year One, Unlock Ownership built meaningful traction with both funders and investees to fill this gap.

The Impact Matrix in Practice

Viewed through the where-you-live and where-you-work lens, our Year One investments include the following ownership models and partners.

We have invested across community land trusts, community stewardship trusts, Mixed Income Neighborhood Trusts (MINTs), Shared Equity, Employee Ownership Trusts EOT, Perpetual Purpose Trusts (PPT), and worker co-ops.

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Over 2.55M Invested Across 8 Portfolio Organizations

Where you live:

Trust Neighborhoods

Grounded Solutions Network

Groundcover powered by The Guild

Chainbreaker Collective

Where you work:

Seed Commons

Essential Owners Fund

CFNE Funding the Future

Common Trust

This is the work of catalytic capital: taking on disproportionate risk or accepting returns below traditional market expectations in order to create positive change and open the door for investments that might not otherwise happen.

Year One traction confirms both the demand for this approach and the readiness of the field to scale. Combined with growing demand and a deepening pipeline, this traction signals a strong foundation for Year Two.

What's Next: Build On Momentum

After a successful pilot, we're gearing up for our first $20M milestone.

Unlock Ownership is hiring its first **Director of Unlock Ownership,** a critical milestone that reflects both demand and the need to scale outreach, deepen pipeline development, and accelerate catalytic deployment.

Managed by Impact Charitable — an intermediary with 50+ active investments, more than $100M deployed, and a toolkit of 19 catalytic financial structures — Unlock Ownership gives **DAF holders and donors an easy, credible pathway to move flexible capital into the models advancing equitable ownership and closing racial wealth gaps.**

This next chapter will expand our capacity to move faster, structure more creatively, and partner more deeply with fund managers and community-rooted organizations.

Conclusion

Year One confirms a simple truth: community-rooted ownership transitions require catalytic capital — capital that adapts to timing gaps, embraces new structures, and moves in partnership with organizations building wealth for their communities.

The opportunity to accelerate this work has never been greater. Donor-advised funds now hold $326 billion in assets—capital that has already received tax benefits but has yet to reach working charities.

Hundreds of billions of DAF dollars remain undistributed while the need for catalytic, community-rooted capital grows more urgent. Unlock Ownership offers a proven pathway to put these resources to work immediately, transforming dormant assets into active investments that build wealth, expand ownership, and strengthen communities. Every dollar moved through a DAF to Unlock Ownership becomes flexible, patient capital that adapts to timing gaps, embraces new structures, and moves in true partnership with community-rooted organizations.

Unlock Ownership is demonstrating what's possible: real deals, real traction, real insights — and a path forward for expanding ownership as a cornerstone of economic mobility.

Connect with Us

Whether you are a DAF holder, foundation leader, or impact investor, Unlock Ownership offers a proven pathway to deploy flexible, catalytic capital into community-rooted ownership transitions.

Let's talk about:

- Moving DAF assets into catalytic investments
- Co-investing alongside our portfolio
- Partnering to expand ownership pathways in your community

To support the fund click here, or connect with Payton@impactcharitable.org to start the conversation.

Together, we can build an economy where ownership—and the wealth it creates—is accessible to all. Visit www.unlockownership.org.