



**THE PHILANTHROPIC COLLECTIVE TO COMBAT
ANTI-BLACKNESS AND REALIZE RACIAL JUSTICE**

STRATEGIC DIRECTION

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CONTENTS:

3. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

5. BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION

Strategic Goals: The Community, The Collective, The Field

7. METHODOLOGY

Phase I: Launch and Planning

Phase II: Research and Discovery

Phase III: Stakeholder Visioning

9. FINDINGS

Stakeholder Interviews

Survey Findings

Community Focus Group

Collective Partners Focus Group

21. RECOMMENDATIONS

Community Facing Efforts

Internal Structures and Practices

Field Facing/Additional Roles

25. APPENDIX I: PLANNING WORKSHEET

26. APPENDIX II: LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS OF SIMILAR FUNDS



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

BACKGROUND

The Philanthropic Collective to Combat Anti-Blackness and Realize Racial Justice (the Collective) was launched in response to the murder of George Floyd and subsequent community and national uprisings to denounce anti-Blackness and racism and advance racial justice in Minnesota, specifically in its philanthropic sector. To this end, the Collective contracted with Frontline Solutions to provide strategy and planning services to help the Collective:

- Understand the opportunities and obstacles in Minnesota's funding ecosystem
- Identify strategic opportunities to have impact in combating anti-Blackness and advancing racial justice
- Refine the goals and structure of the Collective.

METHODS

Through surveys, interviews, and focus groups Frontline Solutions and the Collective engaged individual key stakeholders, including the Collective's current co-chairs, Collective members, community organizers, and field leaders in the sector of philanthropy and non-profit to answer the following questions:

1. **What are the unique needs and potential non-traditional philanthropic investment opportunities for Black-led movement work in Minnesota?**
2. **Who are the intended and actual audiences and beneficiaries of Minnesota's philanthropic sector?**
3. **What is or should be the purpose of the MN Philanthropic Collective, and what**



can it achieve?

FINDINGS

Interviews and surveys revealed what leaders saw as key issues in funding Black-led movement work and what unique role the Collective could play in the sector.

- **An overwhelming response to what leaders saw as one of the biggest needs in the community was building and supporting the infrastructures and capacities of Black-led organizations.** A significant aspect of building infrastructure and capacity includes promoting leaders and the growth of leaders within community organizations.
- **Another theme that emerged from the interviews is the need for—and difficulty in funding—healing work, or work that feels more “intangible” to philanthropy.** Leaders shared that philanthropic indicators and outcomes don't always value or include the health and well-being of program participants or community leaders. Leaders expressed a need for a shift in how philanthropy determines success and asserted that the



intangibles—such as an individual’s well-being—must be a part of it.

- **Leaders named a variety of areas that were essential to Black-led movement work in Minnesota, yet for which it is difficult to find funding.** Among these are community engagement, organizing and power building, wealth building, and direct support to individuals.
- We also asked Black leaders what unique role the MN Philanthropic Collective could play in the state and sector. Interviewees were aware of the Collective’s goal to establish a Black-Led Movement Fund, but had additional questions about what anti-Blackness and racial justice meant to the Collective and its members, as well as about whether it aligned with how the community defines those notions. Still, **leaders believed that a transformative Black-led fund—that is not beholden to traditional institutional philanthropy and its practices—would be a powerful statement and a game-changer in the field.**

RECOMMENDATIONS

Taken together, Black leaders and the Collective’s philanthropic membership provided feedback and recommendations for the Collective that touch on developing its structure and shifting cultures within philanthropic institutions (internal facing efforts) and how the Collective needs to engage with community and shift the philanthropic practices (external facing efforts).

- 1. One goal of the Collective must be to shift power towards community, reorienting the role community members have in decision making and evaluation,**

and the overall goals and priorities of local philanthropy. The Collective’s efforts will ensure the community is understood as a space of big ideas, teachings, and expertise.

- 2. Secondly, how the Collective develops its structures and practices that combat anti-Blackness and advances racial justice should be intentional and designed to be a model for the philanthropic sector.**
- 3. Finally, the Collective should support the creation of a more equity competent philanthropic field.** The Collective plays an important role in influencing that shift by demonstrating equitable practices, sharing knowledge and lessons, and by creating measures of accountability.

It is important to recognize that the Collective is part of a larger wave of change within philanthropy -- increasingly communities are demanding greater accountability from funders to ensure that their resources are responsive to community needs, transparent in how they address racial justice, and challenge the gatekeeping of philanthropy. The intentionality of the Collective and its work has been central to the uniqueness and future impact of this work. It is important that the next steps are to continue solidifying the structure of the Collective in partnership with its existing partners and community leaders with intentionality. As these efforts unfold, it is important that the process holds sacred the brave spaces that must be created. This means that intentionally designed, small group discussions among partners and community members may be necessary to solidify the Collective’s structure, learning sessions, and next steps.



BACKGROUND & INTRODUCTION

The Philanthropic Collective to Combat Anti-Blackness and Realize Racial Justice (the Collective) was launched in response to the murder of George Floyd and subsequent community and national uprisings to denounce anti-Blackness and advance racial justice in Minnesota. The Collective is a Black-led initiative that engages a collective of philanthropic and community partners by:

- Establishing a visionary and historic Black-Led Movement Fund at \$25 million
- Facilitating the signing on and activating a bold and courageous joint statement positioning philanthropy's responsibility in anti-racism work
- Create a long-term transformation table to establish and enhance policies, procedures, and practices to address anti-Blackness and work toward racial justice within participating foundations.

One unique aspect of this Collective is the organic nature of its creation when the three co-chairs, Chanda Smith Baker, Lulete Mola, and Repa Mekha, came together in a time of need, to build something different that specifically addresses the needs of the community. As philanthropic leaders who are also steeped in community wellbeing, the intentionality of merging these two worlds in this effort is critical to its strategy and impact.

The Collective is not a traditional funders Collective; instead, it is working to transfer power to Black-Led social change in Minnesota.

The Collective is committed to centering Black liberation and understands it as the cornerstone of freeing all people. Centering Black liberation is a method, not exclusive, and is critical in shifting the lives of indiginous, brown people, and all Minnesotans.

To this end, the Collective contracted with Frontline Solutions to provide strategy and planning services to help the Collective:

- Understand the opportunities and obstacles in Minnesota's funding ecosystem
- Identify strategic opportunities to have impact in combating anti-Blackness and advancing racial justice
- Refine the goals and structure of the Collective.

STRATEGIC GOALS

Our recommendations coalesced into three strategic goals for the collective: **Reorienting the role of community, developing structures and practices that combat anti-Blackness, advancing racial justice, and supporting the creation of a more equity competent field.**



The Community - Reorienting the Role of Community

Working towards Black liberation means reorienting how power currently exists and functions. One goal of the Collective must be to shift power towards community, reorienting the role community members have in decision making and evaluation, and the overall goals and priorities of local philanthropy. The Collective's efforts will work to ensure the community is understood as a space of big ideas, teachings, and expertise.

The Collective - Develop structures and practices that combat anti-Blackness and advances racial justice

The goal of the Collective, as a body, is to expose the barriers and break the walls that exist between philanthropy and community. How the Collective develops infrastructure and functions should be intentional and designed to model for the larger field of philanthropy.

The Collective can begin to do this by:

- 1. Establish Working Agreements and Values of the Collective***
- 2. Develop a plan for long-term leadership***
- 3. Create and implement small-group communities of practice***
- 4. Design and create a support group for Black leaders within philanthropy***

The Field - Supporting the creation of a more equity competent field

Lastly, combating anti-Blackness and advancing racial justice requires a major shift in the field of philanthropy. A goal of the Collective must be to influence that shift, by demonstrating equitable practices, sharing knowledge and lessons, and by creating measures of accountability.

The Collective can begin to do this by:

- 1. Build relationships and trust in the community***
- 2. Create a pipeline of community centered Black leaders into philanthropy***
- 3. Create a community review panel for grants targeted toward Black community well-being***



METHODOLOGY

We engaged individual key stakeholders, including the Collective's current co-chairs, community organizers, and field leaders in the sector of philanthropy and non-profit to answer the following questions:

1. What are the unique needs and potential non-traditional philanthropic investment opportunities for Black-led movement work in Minnesota?
2. Who are the intended and actual audiences and beneficiaries of Minnesota's philanthropic sector?
3. What is or should be the purpose of the MN Philanthropic Collective, and what can it achieve?

PHASE I: PROJECT LAUNCH AND PLANNING

Phase I of this effort was centered around building relationships with the project team and to develop a clear consensus around the scope and nature of the work. In this phase, we also worked together to intentionally determine who the internal and external stakeholders are to engage in the following phases.

PHASE II: RESEARCH AND DISCOVERY

Frontline and the Philanthropic Collective's co-chairs identified a number of leaders within the community, nonprofit organizations, government, and philanthropy and invited 26 of them for an interview. Ultimately the 13 leaders who responded provided input on how philanthropy is currently serving their organizations and communities. We also spoke with them about how philanthropy can take meaningful action in addition to investing and engaging in transformational work to support Black-led movements and realize racial justice in Minnesota.

To allow for deeper conversations with key individuals, we simultaneously conducted a broader community survey (described further below) to gather key information and better understand priority areas to hone in on:

- Understand the overall cultures, values, and priorities of their work in the community.
- Understand the overall experiences of Black-led movements and the opportunities and challenges they face, especially as it relates to their partnerships with philanthropic organizations in Minnesota.



- Identify systems-change efforts that Black leaders in community see as necessary to engage in the full re-imagination of philanthropic institutions, policies, and practices.

Frontline also launched a community survey of the Collective members as well as Black-led grassroots and community-based organizations within Minnesota to gather information about community needs and potential community investment opportunities. This survey casted a wider net, beyond the interviews, to gather perspectives of those serving in the community as well as those who are a part of the Collective. The surveys collected key information to help the Collective understand what the field currently looks like. The surveys focused on understanding:

- The makeup of organizations on the ground that are working toward racial justice.
- The Collective and how it can center their voices toward creating systems change.
- The current opportunities and challenges for Black-led movement work.
- How philanthropy can show up differently to meet the needs of communities and strive to realize racial justice.

Together, the survey and the interviews paint a more complete picture of the work being done in Minnesota to address anti-Blackness and realize racial justice. They also help to inform the efforts of the Collective moving forward.

PHASE III: STAKEHOLDER VISIONING

Frontline and the Philanthropic Collective's co-chairs identified a number of leaders within the community, nonprofit organizations, government, and philanthropy and invited 40 of them to participate in two focus groups. Of the 40, 16 agreed to participate. One focus group was composed of Black-movement leaders in Minnesota, while the second focus group was composed of Collective members and philanthropic leaders in Minnesota. The focus groups were aimed at:

- Sharing initial findings from the survey and interviews to understand priority areas that have been identified.
- Providing thought partnership toward developing possible actions to recommend toward addressing priority areas.
- Understanding how stakeholders identify growth areas as well as barriers to achieving the priorities identified.



FINDINGS

We conducted interviews between May 17 and June 4, 2021. It is important to note the timing of these interviews, which took place after an exhausting year for community leaders, who spent a full year working through pandemic response in communities, and supporting and leading the movements against police brutality and racism after the murder of George Floyd. Even more recently, they faced—yet again—the death of more Black men at the hands of police, with the killing of Dolal Idd on December 30th, 2020, Daunte Wright on April 11th, 2021, and Winston Smith on June 3rd, 2021. This context is significant, as it shows the urgency of this work, and serves as a useful backdrop to the feedback that we received.

Two individuals declined to be interviewed. While many of those we did interview were not familiar with the Collective, a number of them expressed excitement about the work *because* it is Black-led and/or because they knew of or had relationships with the Collective's co-chairs—individuals they know and trust.

The first part of the interviews focused on understanding the current needs in the community. Specifically, we wanted to understand what leaders felt in terms of what issues were hardest for funders to support and where there is a need for investments in Black-led movement work. Consistently, leaders articulated a need to support the infrastructure and capacity of small Black-led organizations. Leaders also shared the need to fund healing work in the community and to support individuals. The second part of the interviews asked participants about what unique role the Collective plays in the sector and what they hoped the Collective could achieve.

The Black leaders we interviewed worked on many issues and areas including: housing, youth development, education, trauma-informed care, suicide prevention, community development, government, leadership development, racial and social justice, food security, and rebuilding in the areas impacted by the 2020 uprisings.

STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

Infrastructure and Capacity Building

An overwhelming response to what leaders saw as one of the biggest needs in the community was building and supporting the infrastructures and capacities of Black-led organizations. A significant aspect of building infrastructure and capacity includes promoting leaders and the growth of leaders within community organizations. Leaders noted that, often, partners and government and philanthropic entities ask Black-led organizations and Black leaders to play a variety of roles, and those requests tend to be beyond their capacity to effectively respond. Community leaders expressed feeling that they were often “overtapped.” Although there is an increasing desire and effort from philanthropy to be more representative and work toward diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI), philanthropic organizations seek to engage the same community leaders time and time again. To this point, respondents pointed out the need to invest and build a pipeline of Black and Brown leaders.



Interviewees stressed the capacity needs of smaller and emerging organizations. Many community-based organizations lack the resources and infrastructure to do the essential work that is required of them. For example, many do not have dedicated development staff, and leadership and staff must stretch to do the work that multiple staff would typically do in organizations with more capacity. Leaders pointed to the need for funds and practices to help smaller grassroots organizations that may need stronger administrative support to set up finance, legal, technology, and fundraising structures during their initial years.

For middle and maturing organizations, respondents pointed to more funding needed to support and retain staff, such as: better benefits, pay, and professional development opportunities, including coaching and leadership development. This is an area where organizations have found it difficult to obtain funding for and as a result, there are high turnovers as staff gain experience and leave for higher paying jobs.

Healing Work

Another theme that emerged from the interviews is the need for—and difficulty in funding—healing work, or work that feels more “intangible” to philanthropy. Leaders shared that philanthropic indicators and outcomes don’t always value or include the health and well-being of program participants or community leaders. For instance, funders supporting small businesses may want to see an outcome of growth or an increase in revenues, as opposed to outcomes about the health and well-being of the business owners themselves—who often have started a business not merely to grow profits but to gain greater flexibility for their families and lives. Leaders expressed a need for a shift in how philanthropy determines success and asserted that the intangibles—such as an individual’s well-being—must be a part of it.

In addition, interviewees noted the extent to which organizational leaders and their staff are “stressed out”. They are not only working to address the needs of communities, but many are also a part of the communities they are serving—which creates additional stressors. Healing work is necessary to support Black leaders, their staff, and the organizations they lead, but funders do not often recognize this area as having a great deal of measurable impact. Community healers do much of their work on a voluntary basis, because it is largely unfunded. Though their work is labor intensive, the time, effort, and impact they make in communities goes uncompensated.

Investing in Black-Led Movement Work

Leaders named a variety of areas that were essential to Black-led movement work in Minnesota, yet for which it is difficult to find funding. Among these are:

- **Community engagement:** Activities that include building community relationships
- **Organizing and power-building:** Activities that include advocacy and systems and policy change work to address root causes of disparities
- **Wealth building:** Reparations-focused investment, efforts that support entrepreneurship, building small business through grants, and creating a physical space for this work



- **Direct support to individuals:** Direct grants to and funds for leaders and individuals, including youth and small business owners; funding that supports Black leaders in accessing Black and brown consultants who can support them in their leadership growth—in the same ways that leaders do within corporations. Often, philanthropic funding is restricted to 501c3s and fiscally sponsored organizations, creating additional barriers for individuals to access funding if their organizations are structured in other ways.

What Gets in the Way?

Leaders expressed that, historically, philanthropy has more deeply funded white-led organizations and this contributes to the present disparities between white-led and Black-led work. As a result, white-led organizations have established deeper relationships and built more trust with foundations and wealthy donors, which often translates to more time for them to mature and build out the organizational infrastructure needed to survive in the nonprofit sector.

Additionally, Black leaders often feel they have a heavier burden with foundations to prove their ability to “deliver” on grant outcomes. A common perception shared by Black-leaders is that foundations perceive Black-led organizations as “riskier” to fund, and as a result they are often more prescriptive in their funding to Black-led organizations. Consequently, funding constraints and financial dependency on philanthropic funding means that Black-led organizations are less able to be innovative or take advantage of opportunities to create transformational change. One leader remarked, *“We find ourselves doing small pilots and picking off small pieces of the work. Not at the pace our communities require or need.”*

Other leaders mentioned that donors are good at “surging” and responding to current events, but not at providing sustaining support to address organizations’ long-term needs. Interviewees mentioned that philanthropy “changes its mind all the time,” which leaves organizations grappling for funding to sustain their capacity or maintain their level of investment in programs and communities. Common among those interviewed was an expression of appreciation for the philanthropic investments directed towards racial equity, accompanied by skepticism about how long these will remain a priority for funders.

Lastly, leaders shared the opinion that philanthropic funding in Minnesota has a tendency to support sustaining the status quo by funding white-led organizations that are good at making the case for DEI, instead of funding Black-organizations that are doing transformational work. Leaders noted a culture of philanthropic paternalism that is prevalent in Minnesota’s funding ecosystem. Institutional philanthropy often regards Black communities as the beneficiaries of their funding rather than as the experts who are closest to the issues. One leader shared, *“I think the challenges are where the wealth [at foundations] lays with trustees and their decision-making. Proximity to the issues are so distant to [the trustees] that oftentimes it's hard to get the transformative solutions adopted because they don't feel the pain at the same level. When you don't feel the pain at the same level, you're not as bold or courageous about what you're willing to do to solve it.”*



The Role of the MN Philanthropic Collective

We also asked Black leaders what unique role the MN Philanthropic Collective could play in the state and sector. While quite a few leaders had personal connections or relationships with the Collective's co-chairs, many felt they didn't know enough about the work of the Collective. Specifically, interviewees were aware of the Collective's goal to establish a Black-Led Movement Fund, but had additional questions about what anti-Blackness and racial justice meant to the Collective and its members, as well as about whether it aligned with how the community defines those notions.

Still, leaders believed that a transformative Black-led fund—that is not beholden to traditional institutional philanthropy and its practices—would be a powerful statement and a game-changer in the field. Interviewees felt strongly that the fund should be bold and unabashed in its investment in strategies and movement work that center on the Black community. They also believed the fund should be Black-led and advised, including young people and community members who are not from the philanthropic sector. In addition, a number of leaders believed that the Collective should think about raising funds through individual giving in the Black community, to ensure that community members feel invested and have a voice in this effort. As one leader pointed out, **“Black folks give money; how can we make this feel like this is something they can invest in?”**

Likewise, leaders said they see the Collective as a place to build power for and with Black organizations. There was excitement from leaders who felt that the Collective could have a strong influence on the philanthropic community, with the Collective serving as an example of participatory grantmaking, naming the culture of whiteness in philanthropy, and igniting support for smaller Black-led grassroots organizations.

Further, leaders wanted the Collective to be a home to cultivate Black-led thought and innovation that funders and community members alike could hear, invest in, and share. This includes the role of the Collective as a place where the community could create and disseminate research on and tools for philanthropic giving in Minnesota's Black communities.

Another opportunity interviewees identified for the Collective was to build leaders and support young people in its work. Leaders saw the Collective as a space to support young people as emerging leaders, build a pipeline, and amplify their voices and solutions in the community.

SURVEY FINDINGS

The community survey was open from May 5 to June 18, 2021, and a total of 11 respondents completed the survey for their organizations. Some 90% of respondents identified themselves as affiliated with funding/philanthropic organizations, while 10% identified as leaders of nonprofit organizations.

Reflecting on Institutional Philanthropy in Minnesota

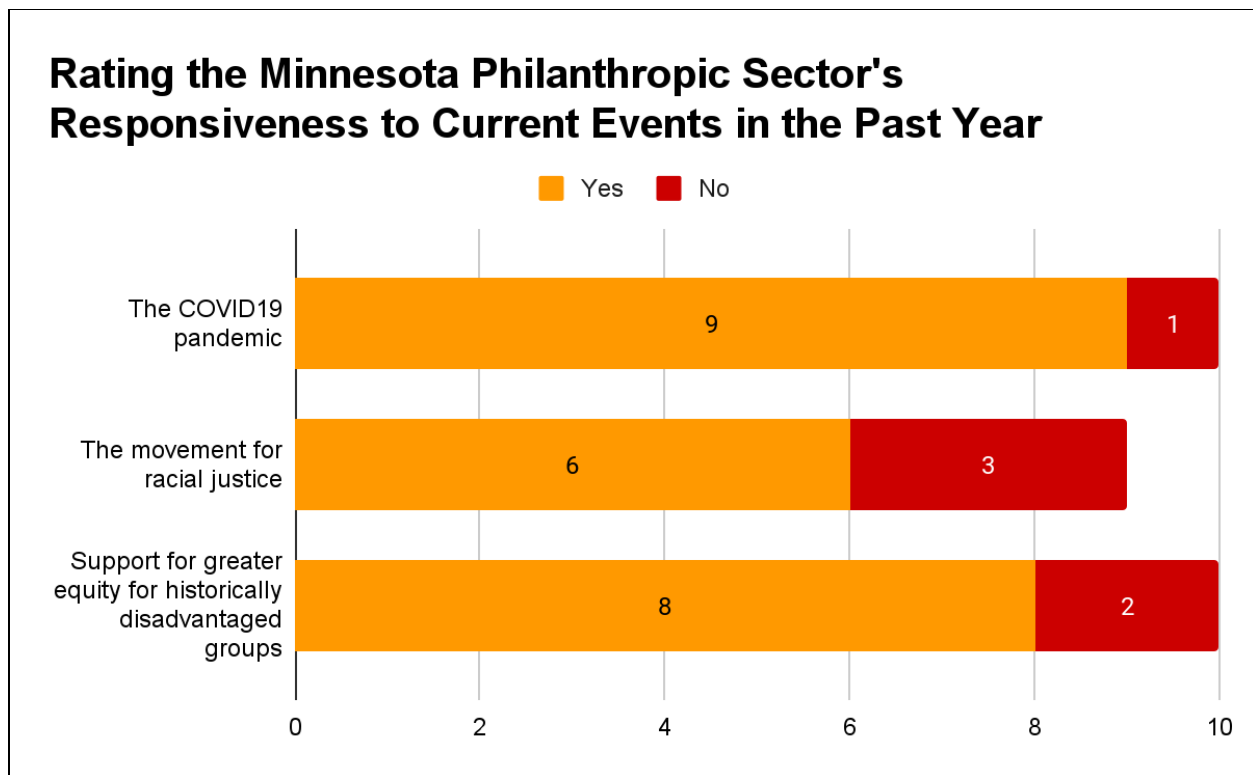
With regard to institutional philanthropy in the state overall, 75% (n=6) of respondents believed that Minnesotans have benefited from support from the philanthropic sector. However, when



disaggregated by race, white respondents were more likely than Black respondents to believe that Minnesotans have benefited from this kind of support.

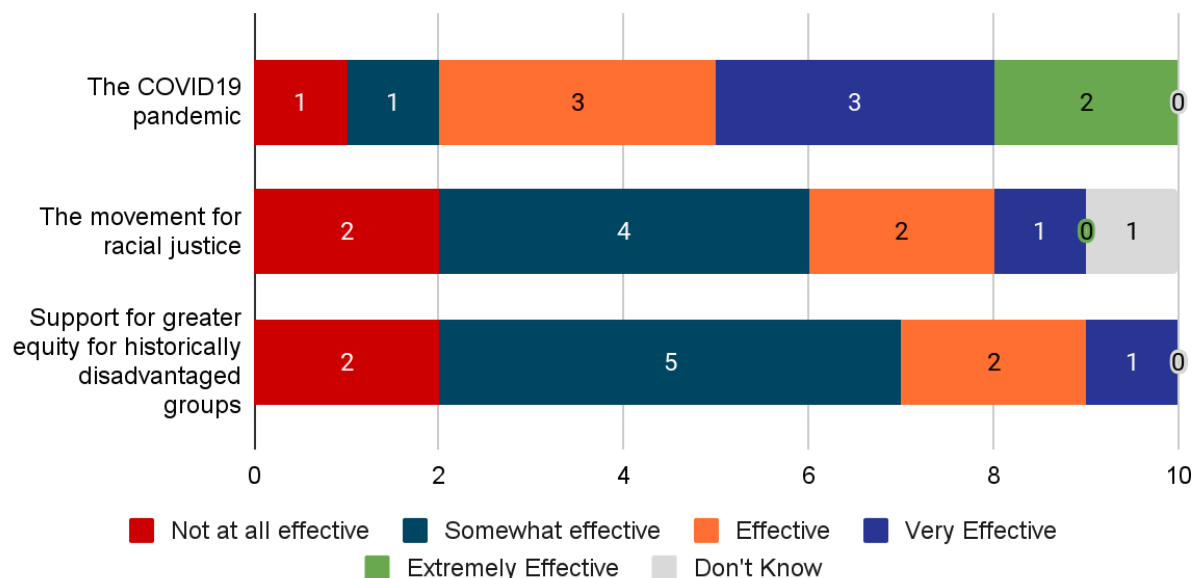
Survey respondents were divided on whether Minnesota institutional philanthropy has demonstrated a commitment to DEI within their institutions and programming. Still, 90% of respondents agreed that philanthropy boards were not substantially diverse. Respondents were also divided on whether philanthropy had made racial justice a clear priority in their grantmaking: 50% (n=5) believed philanthropy had not made racial justice a clear priority, whereas 20% (n=2) felt neutral, and 30% (n=3) believed philanthropy has made racial justice a clear priority. Despite this, 90% (n=9) of respondents agreed that the philanthropic sector is a critical partner in addressing racial justice in Minnesota.

Respondents also reflected on Minnesota’s philanthropic response to current events over the past year, including the COVID-19 pandemic and the movement for racial justice. Some 90% (n=9) believed philanthropy has been responsive to the pandemic, and 80% believed that response to be effective. On the other hand, only 60% (n=6) of respondents believed that philanthropy has been responsive to the movement for racial justice, and 20% (n=2) believed that response was not effective. Additionally, white respondents were more likely than Black respondents to believe that philanthropy’s response to the movement for racial justice was effective.





Rating the Effectiveness of MN's Philanthropic Sector's Response to Each of the Following



Respondents believed philanthropy could improve its efforts toward racial justice by:

1. Targeting institutional practices within their organizations
2. Prioritizing their grantmaking to focus on racial justice efforts
3. Increasing relationship-building and healing with community

Respondents were divided about which of the first two of these efforts were the top priority: BIPOC respondents ranked grantmaking to racial justice efforts as most important, while white respondents ranked addressing institutional practices around DEI as most important.

Supporting Black-Led Movement Work

Of survey respondents, 44% (n=4) did not believe that the philanthropic sector supports Black-led organizations toward their mission and vision. BIPOC respondents were more likely to say that philanthropy does not support Black-led organizations and movements. At the same time, 44% (n=4) of respondents did not agree that the philanthropic sector supports Black organizational and movement leaders to thrive as leaders.

To address this, respondents believed that philanthropy needs to become more educated about the need for Black-led movement work and prioritize relationship-building with the Black community. Additionally, respondents pointed out the need to re-examine foundation practices and policies and to change those structures as needed in order to support Black leadership and more equitable outcomes. Respondents shared that power-sharing from philanthropy and trust-based decision-making are needed to support Black-led movement work.



Respondents also identified opportunities and challenges for Black-led movement work. Respondents believed that the philanthropic sector has more Black leaders now, and they also believed that many funders have a stronger community focus now than in the past. However, this moment is also filled with challenges, including the fact that donors, boards, and foundation leaders are still persistently white. Others were concerned that this moment was just “a phase” for the philanthropic community, resulting in the lack of ongoing support for Black-led organizations and movements.

Purpose of the MN Philanthropic Collective

Lastly, the survey asked respondents how they understood the work of the Collective and what unique role the Collective could play in the state. In all, 87% of respondents had heard of the Collective or participated in one of the Collective’s webinars.

Respondents believed the Collective has a unique role in elevating Black voices in philanthropy and in holding philanthropy accountable to community.

“Continue to elevate voices of Black leaders and help us educate board members about the need for change, and help provide practical tools for doing so.”

“Lift up and empower rural Black leaders and potential leaders, provide skills and training opportunities for BIPOC to pursue leadership roles locally (elected or nonprofit boards).”

Respondents believed that, if the Collective were successful in achieving its vision, this could result in more Black leaders in executive roles in the philanthropic sector as well as in increased funding and support for Black-led organizations in the long run.

“More people of color are visible and assuming leadership roles, AND the current dominant culture sees BIPOC people as their leaders, too, not just dismissing them or starting their own group/initiatives.”

“Increased ongoing support to a large number of Black-led organizations.”

COMMUNITY FOCUS GROUP

A community focus group was held on August 3, 2021. The invite for participation was sent out to 16 individuals, and 4 leaders agreed to participate. Additional one-on-one interviews were offered for those who were not able to participate in the focus group, and had not been interviewed previously to ensure that all interested individuals had an opportunity to share feedback.

The goal of this focus group was to hone in on some of the key themes that came out of the interviews and survey to get actionable recommendations for next steps. Specifically, we wanted to focus on what capacity building looks like in action, what big ideas community leaders have for healing work, and what a space that centers Black-led thought leadership requires. We shared these goals with the participants at the onset of the focus group, but also kept an open ear for where leaders naturally want to gravitate to ensure that the prioritization of issues and ideas are centered around what is important to them.

We started the focus group sharing some of the high-level themes we heard from the surveys and interviews so that participants got a sense of how and why we were focusing on the selected themes. It was unanimous that the themes gathered from the interviews and survey resonated



with each participant, however, they also expressed that these are issues that have already been raised by community over the years. One participant shared,

“They’ve been messing up for a long time. It is disrespectful to keep asking us how to fix it. We’re not going to do that no more.”

Participants were eager to get into the conversations around the actions -- what is philanthropy going to do about this?

“If they want to address issues in the Black community, figure out what got you to where we are at. Fund organizing. Provide general operating support for those doing advocacy and mobilizing in community. Find ways to tangibly build people’s wealth. Find ways to give directly to people. Use your influence to get behind policies that build wealth rather than ways to preserve what you got.”

While all participants indicated that the findings resonated with them, the group focused on supporting Black leaders and highlighted the need to consider intersectional identities of Blackness, gender, and class. Emphasizing what was shared in the interviews, participants shared the challenges of being over-tapped because, as leaders, they are playing multiple roles. In addition, Black leaders and in particular, Black women leaders shared the challenges of navigating those roles and the need for supports for leaders. Participants further elaborated,

“When Black folk get in leadership positions they are in positions where a lot of wrong has been done and you have to work magic...this happens a lot to Black women.”

“I have been paying out of pocket for my own leadership coaching...I found this space of executive leadership that has been helpful around navigating the leadership space and other levels of hierarchy and how I claim my space in where I want to be in that.”

“We need people to become champions for Black leadership, equity, and justice. You support those most impacted being a part of change and you take a back seat and support.”

In addition to supporting leaders, participants discussed helping Black leaders grow their network and connect with high wealth individuals who could potentially support the work.

“With individuals, typically, our organizations don’t have the boards to go out and cultivate those relationships. Because we don’t have that same connection with wealth, we are at a disadvantage.”

As shared across the interviews and focus groups, there is uncertainty for how long philanthropy’s interest and targeted investments in Black communities will last. A deep investment in leaders within the community could be long lasting because these are the people who will continue the work.

Pressed further about what solutions could be pursued, participants shared that in addition to supporting Black leaders and providing resources to Black-led organizations, philanthropy needs



to do a lot of internal work among themselves. The tone of participants shifted when asked about what actionable recommendations they had for the Collective. The link to the Collective list of signatories to the statement on the website was shared, and from the discussion it was clear that participants felt a lack of trust and a need to see shifts in how philanthropy currently operates.

“Looking at the list, they have to try to stop trying to be puppet masters....they will co-op all the language we are spitting out right here and because they have the resources and communications teams, they will regurgitate it and not give you credit and they will make millions off of doing that.”

“Tell them to stop removing the people who have started to drive the exceptional change within their organizations. They need to get that message -- there's so much internal stuff they need to do.”

“They were always coming with ‘what can you do with the money?’ It felt like a mining of ideas - I have the ideas, but I don't have the capacity to do it. And now there's something identical that's been created but I have nothing to do with it. That's a trust issue. What can I anticipate out of a funder like that?...They want to be the ones to rebuild the city but they don't actually know how to do that.”

Participants further elaborated that while some philanthropic institutions have hired Black community leaders who have been able to do things differently, it is important that those leaders are the ones being credited for their work, and not the entire organization. There's a recognition that Black leaders within philanthropic institutions carry the added challenges of working to shift those systems. Even within those institutions where Black leaders have excelled, working with other staff members, whether it is other program officers, support staff, or leaders can still be challenging. This points to the work that institutions need to do to ensure that there is competency across the entire organization toward advancing equity.

Participants urged the Collective to get clear about its strategic direction and goals, keep the momentum, and be transparent with community about its work. All participants were unclear about Collective's efforts, but were committed to being supportive of the efforts to come, largely because of their trust in the three co-chairs.

COLLECTIVE PARTNERS FOCUS GROUP

A focus group with Collective partners was held on August 5, 2021. The invite for participation was sent out to 23 individuals, and 9 leaders agreed to participate. We shared high level themes from our findings with the survey and interviews. Similar to the community focus group, the findings were familiar feedback to the partners. In fact, they shared that they hope philanthropy does not keep spending resources collecting this information on what the communities need, not because it is not valuable, but because these are things that are already known and documented. As one participant shared,

“The point of this collective is for philanthropy to actually do something. We've been hearing this...this isn't new news. We keep asking the same questions and getting the same things.”



Our discussion started off with how some of the Collective partners are already deeply focused on addressing community issues highlighted through the interviews and how there are opportunities for sharing and learning across organizations. Participants shared,

“This is what my foundation does. Supporting community and lifting up Black voices and yielding to them is important. We wanted to be a voice of influence to those who are supportive in this work in a more realistic way.”

“We’re an anti-white supremacy culture....sharing more stories about how we are doing assessments and what we consider impact or a good leader is the most helpful.”

Participants further shared what the Collective can help with to move equity within their organizations,

“This is a great opportunity. We're going to learn so much that we will be able to mitigate some of the things we've done poorly. I felt being in a space with other folk, seasoned folk, would add more credibility to the stuff I want to do. This is an opportunity for more sharing of information.”

“Less about strategies, more of mindset sharing.”

“As for white accountability, if the Collective could help with that, we need to be the one pushing and holding my white organization accountable. We are working on that.”

“I believe it [the Collective] should be a place of accountability and we should have to report back in this space.”

There is opportunity for this Collective to create space for partners to share the knowledge as well as the successes and setbacks they have experienced on their equity journeys with each other. For those who are navigating their own institutions to advance equity, they can gain valuable insights and support from their colleagues on how to move the work internally. For partners who have a more developed equity strategy, there’s an opportunity for them to support the work by helping to design and lead learning sessions.

While Collective partners continue to share that it is the trust in the co-chairs that brings them into this work, they also recognize that the Collective cannot be sustained in its current structure. Participants discussed whether the co-chairs could be compensated for their work and whether the Collective would eventually have its own executive director and governing board. Additional recommendations were that the co-chairs help to grow an emerging leader into leading this work, and that it is important that the Collective structure itself in a way that supports Blackness, not based on white supremacy culture, and not on white dominant culture. This includes developing shared agreements about how each partner shows up and how to structure itself.

Like leaders in the community focus group, the partners that we connected with expressed an eagerness toward action. Many shared their readiness to engage, some even indicating that they have no or few barriers to active participation and commitment to the Collective,

“We all have time, money and staff...my barrier is that while the Minnesota Philanthropic Collective is making change, my board and foundation is making change.”



RECOMMENDATIONS

It is clear from this assessment that there is a great deal of interest, momentum, and eagerness from community leaders and Collective partners to engage in this work together, and to see movement. What we saw throughout the assessment were committed leaders who shared recurring, key themes and recommendations for the Collective that touch on developing its structure and shifting cultures within philanthropic institutions (internal facing efforts) and how the Collective needs to engage with community and shift the philanthropic practices (external facing efforts). The following recommendations are made through the feedback received throughout this assessment.

The intentionality of the Collective and its work has been central to the uniqueness and future impact of this work. It is important that the next steps are to continue solidifying the structure of the Collective in partnership with its existing partners and community leaders with intentionality. As these efforts unfold, it is important that the process holds sacred the brave spaces that must be created. This means that intentionally designed, small group discussions among partners and community members may be necessary to solidify the Collective's structure, learning sessions, and next steps. It is recommended that these discussions not be recorded in order to build trust among one another, and to ensure the safety that many community members and staff still need in these spaces and institutions. Throughout this assessment, we heard and saw how ensuring confidentiality allowed individuals and groups to really open up and share their perspectives.

The following are recommendations that the co-chairs should prioritize for next steps with Collective and community partners.

COMMUNITY FACING EFFORTS

Build relationships and trust in the community. Trust building is critical to engaging community and while many within the Collective may have relationships within the community, it varies. What could building relationships and trust within the community look like for this Collective as a whole? And, how could that support individual relationship and trust building between Collective partners and community leaders and organizations? Some of the ideas include:

- The Collective, in partnership with community organizations, developing and leading community learning engagements for philanthropic leaders (including board members and wealthy donors). This can include trips that philanthropic leaders can take into communities to better understand the challenges communities face and the strengths they bring to addressing community needs. It may also include walking entire neighborhoods to understand the broader impact that resources to the community can have. These efforts would need to be very intentionally planned, in partnership with organizational leaders and community members to ensure that it is mutually beneficial. It may include a small planning grant to community partners to allocate the staff time and



resources to co-designing such efforts. These should be planned to ensure they are not on-time or check-the-box type of events.

- Developing a community calendar of events, that community leaders can update with things that are happening in their communities and ensuring that Collective partners commit to attending a certain number of events. Establish a process for learning and how Collective partners can share their learnings from being in community.

Support and grow Black leaders. One of the consistent topics that community leaders raised was the need for support of Black organizational and community leaders, and for growing emerging leaders into the field, including:

- Fund professional development of Black leaders. Provide grants that allow them to be used for the development of leaders, both established, and emerging leaders within their organizations.
- Create opportunities for Black leaders to be in support groups with others.
- Share and help Black leaders to build and foster relationships with individual donors of high wealth.
- Support the growth of Black leaders in the philanthropic sector. This could include bringing in new and emerging leaders through fellowships, and/or developing professional support groups for Black leaders within philanthropy and providing mentorship.

Engage community members in the grant review and selection process. One consistent feedback heard was for more participatory grantmaking. As the Collective raises funds and considers any grantmaking efforts, they should engage the community in the review and selection process, including:

- Engaging non-philanthropic community members in the review and selection process. This includes engaging community leaders who are not affiliated with organizations.
- Engaging young people in the review and selection of grantees.

These efforts may require some professional development to take place in order to train cohorts of reviewers. Reviewers should be compensated.

Raising funds from community. Community leaders also asked, “*what could it look like to raise funds from the community?*” Are there ways for community members to contribute to this work, and feel more deeply connected to it? In addition to diversifying how the Collective raises funds, this model could:

- Employ some of the language, strategy, and functions of a mutual-aid organization.
- Create opportunities for power-sharing and deeper engagement with community members.



INTERNAL STRUCTURE AND PRACTICES

Establish shared working agreements and values with the Collective partners. This critical step can start with a call out to partners to invite participation in a workgroup to draft a set of working agreements and values. Working with partners to develop these working agreements and values can create a sense of ownership and accountability among partners. Once drafted, all Collective partners should have an opportunity to review and provide additional feedback before being finalized. These working agreements should also consider what is expected of each Collective partner and may also answer any of the following questions:

- Should Collective organizations make a financial contribution to its fundraising efforts?
- What is expected of partners, especially as they are to engage in more Collective learning and actions? Is there an expectation of organizational leaders to participate?
- What is the ask for culture shift, and a shift in practices, within each Collective partner agency? At the very least, what is the expectation that partners can have from their participation in this Collective for how their agencies will be challenged to shift their culture and practices?
- What does accountability look like for all partners? And, what does white accountability look like among partners?

Develop a plan for long-term leadership. This may first involve the co-chairs having a discussion about what they envision could be their involvement -- whether as continued co-chairs, advisors, mentors, and/or in other leadership roles.

From the Collective partners focus group, among the possible structures that may be considered include having:

- An executive director and board
- A co-leadership model that includes a community leader not from within the philanthropic sector
- Co-chairs mentor an emerging leader from within the Collective

Create small-group communities of practice with Collective partners to teach and learn with each other. Part of establishing these communities of practice should also include developing clear community agreements and building trust.

Possible topics as shared through focus groups:

- Participatory grantmaking
- Board diversity and involvement in advancing equity and justice
- How to measure toward equity
- What white accountability can look like in philanthropic institutions
- Sharing how individuals have helped to move their institutions toward more a equitable culture and practices
- How to make funds to C4s and grants to individuals



FIELD FACING/ADDITIONAL ROLES

Be a thought leader on philanthropy and its contributions to Black communities. Participants shared that they believe there's a wealth of information that philanthropic organizations hold, but that they often don't share it with the communities they serve. How is philanthropy serving Black communities? What do their data say? How are they addressing what they are learning through practice? There's an opportunity for the Collective to lead as a thought leader in putting out information that is helpful for both, philanthropy and communities. This may include doing a scan of what each Collective partner is putting out and how they are putting information out. What information is being collected, and what is being shared?

Investing in healing work. From philanthropic leaders to community members, the long term effects of white supremacy and white supremacy culture was a consistent theme raised by participants. Black philanthropic leaders often carry the additional burden of "pushing" their institutions to do better, often in the face of challenging and toxic work environments. Community leaders must navigate these same challenges as they seek to secure funding, develop initiatives, and do the work of dismantling racism. One critical role the Collective could play is to develop and support spaces and opportunities for healing work for Black philanthropic and community leaders. This could include:

- Creating space and opportunities for Black folk in philanthropy to be in community with one another.
- Funding sabbaticals and retreats for philanthropic and community leaders.
- Bringing together people who are doing this work and allowing them to talk about obstacles and opportunities.
- Investing in efforts that intentionally support healing and employing anti-racist organizational practices.



Appendix I: Planning Worksheet

Action Plan for [Community or Initiative Name]

Strategy: _____

Collaborating Organization(s) Group(s): _____

ACTION STEPS

Action Steps	By Whom	By When	Resources and Support Available/Needed		Potential Barriers or Resistance	Communication Plan for Implementation
			Resources Available	Resources Needed (financial, human, political, and other)		
What needs to be done?	Who will take actions?	By what date will the action be done?	Resources Available	Resources Needed (financial, human, political, and other)	What individuals and organizations might resist? How?	What individuals and organizations should be informed about/involved with these actions?
Step 1:						
Step 2:						
Step 3:						



Appendix II: Landscape Analysis

To better understand the Minnesota Philanthropic Collective's unique role, opportunities, and challenges within the broader giving field, Frontline researched other similar initiatives and pooled funds that have also emerged in the wake of George Floyd's murder and subsequent uprisings across the country.

The Collective's Unique Mission and Role

It is important to recognize that the Collective is part of a larger and growing wave of change within philanthropy -- increasingly communities are demanding greater accountability from funders to ensure that their resources are responsive to community needs, transparent in how they address racial justice, and challenge the gatekeeping of philanthropy.

This is a non-exhaustive examination and desk research of the structures and practices that exist within comparable funding organizations and is intended to serve as a starting point to examine the Collective's own practices.

- **Supporting Black-led and Black-founded organizations.** Many of the initiatives and funds we researched stated an explicit strategy and commitment to invest in Black-led organizations to advance racial justice. Somewhat unique to the Collective, is its focus on Black-led movement efforts in Minnesota.
- **Addressing racial justice competency within philanthropy.** Efforts to address inequity within philanthropy and funding organizations varied across each of the initiatives and pooled funds researched. It was not clear if funding members had further engagement with the funds beyond their initial funding pledges in support of racial justice. The Minnesota Philanthropic Collective has a unique opportunity to leverage its membership, in that many of the partners that have signed on to its joint statement are eager to continue engaging with the Collective to push a bold agenda.
- **Challenging philanthropy to engage communities.** Some of the funds researched also challenged the gatekeeping of philanthropy by including community advisory groups and/or incorporating participatory grantmaking processes in disbursing their funds. Some of the funds also challenged philanthropic grantmaking by making their application processes as simple as possible for grantees. Already, community members and leaders within the Collective are also advocating for similar practices.

Highlight of Other Similar Racial Justice Initiatives and Pooled Funds:

The following are a non-exhaustive list of a number of efforts announced recently. While some of these efforts are targeting funding toward community-led work, some are also looking to shift the culture of philanthropy in how they give and to whom. Some of these efforts appear to be time-limited, while others announce a specific dollar amount without time frames.



- **(International) Black Feminist Fund.** This fund fiscally hosted by the Global Fund for Women provides “grassroots Black feminist organizations, groups and collectives, long-term, core, flexible and low barrier support, including start-up funding” across Africa, the Americas and Europe. The fund also brings together Black women in philanthropic communities to build a base of funders and donor allies.
- **(National) Democracy Frontline Funds.** A group of grant makers led by the Libra Foundation, pledged \$36 million to push for more support for smaller grassroots organizations working to help improve the lives and build the political power of Black people. Additionally, grantees selected by the fund were advised by 10 women of color with experience working with national racial justice movement groups.
- **(National) Give Blck.** This database was created to connect funds to Black-founded organizations on a wide-range of issues from animals, arts, and health to technology. Since its founding it has funneled \$400,000 to nonprofits in its database and has since announced a new ambitious goal of moving \$1 billion to Black-founded nonprofits.
- **(Regional) Southern Power Fund.** This pooled fund exceeded its initial \$10 million dollar goal by \$4 million, to invest in grassroots Black-led organizations. The fund raised money primarily from foundations and donor networks and gave over 250 unrestricted grants to organizations often overlooked by philanthropy.
- **(State) California Black Freedom Fund.** Launched in February 2021, the California Black Freedom Fund is a \$100 million initiative to provide abundant resources to Black-led power-building organizations in the state over the next five years. Co-created with Black leaders and organizers, the first-of-its-kind fund will ensure that California’s growing ecosystem of locally rooted Black-led organizing efforts have the sustained investments and resources they need to eradicate systemic and institutional racism.
- **(State) Resourcing Radical Justice.** This fund located in greater Washington focuses on three strategic areas to advance Black liberation: 1) Advocating for philanthropic sector transformation; 2) Coordinating capacity building and funding to Black and POC-led grassroots organizers; and 3) Lifting up and learning from radical organizers.



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