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Webinar: Race to Lead in the Milwaukee Area
14 July 2020   #RacetoLead
Presented by the Building Movement Project (BMP)

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Sean Thomas-Breitfeld: Hello, everyone. Thanks so much for joining this webinar. We're really excited to share the findings from our research from the *Race to Lead* survey that was conducted last summer. We ended up having a really good representation of respondents from the Milwaukee area, so we're really excited to be able to share the report results and have conversation and dialogue with the panel that you see here. We're really excited to share the results of our *Race to Lead* brief on the Milwaukee area. My name is Sean Thomas-Breitfeld. I'm the Co-Director of the Building Movement Project. Even though I'm based in New York, I'm a Milwaukee native, graduate of Rufus King High School, so I'm really excited to be able to share these results with folks from my hometown. Tessa Constantine, who is our Research Analyst, is based in Milwaukee. As a national organization, we're really excited to be able to share these local results.

We're going to start with a review of the findings by my colleague, Tessa. Then we'll do a pause for some clarifying and data questions, and then we'll have this panel discussion and I'm really excited to have Meralis Hood, who is the Executive Director of City Year Milwaukee, Dr. Undraye Howard, who is a Senior Director at the Alliance for Strong Families and Communities with the primary responsibility around their internal diversity, equity, inclusion efforts. Really excited to have him here. And then Ashley Lee, Executive Director of Public Allies Milwaukee. We'll have a little bit of cross cutting conversation between the panelists and then we will open it up for Q&A at the end. Please stay on and keep submitting questions.

I'm going to give a very brief background on BMP. We're a national organization, we do research on the non-profit sector in three main areas. We look at leadership, particularly issues of race and equity in non-profit leadership. We also look at how human service organizations can and should be doing social change as a core part of their work. In particular, in a way that involves constituents, community, and organizing as a key strategy for changing the underlying issues that make it necessary for people to come to organizations for support. And then we also look at movement building: how organizations collaborate and build power together to make bigger change collectively. So, that's a little bit about BMP and the *Race to Lead* project is something that we've been working on for several years, which focuses on what we've called the non-profit leadership gap in the non-profit sector. Basically, the recognition that there are far too few leaders of color in the non-profit sector and we were really trying to understand why that was.

So, the Race to Lead survey is one that we did in 2016 and then again in 2019 with over 5,000 respondents nationally. We ended up having a critical mass of respondents in the Milwaukee area which made it possible to produce the brief that was released yesterday. I do encourage people to read that full brief and I also want to invite my colleague Tessa to provide some of the key findings from the report so that everyone can get up to speed on what we learn from the survey.

Tessa Constantine: Thank you all so much for joining us today and to start off, we'd love to hear a little bit more about who's here with us. We're going to ask you to answer our first poll question and let us know where you're joining from. To give you a little bit of context, though the Milwaukee sample included all respondents who work in Milwaukee, Waukesha, Ozaukee, Racine, and Kenosha Counties, 93% of the respondents indicated that they worked in the city of Milwaukee, so we're just interested to see how that compares to our attendees today.

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Sean Thomas-Breitfeld: So, 66% of the folks who have joined identified that they're joining from the city of Milwaukee. 18% from the suburbs in Milwaukee County. 5% from surrounding counties in southeastern Wisconsin, and then 11% are from outside of the southeastern Wisconsin area.

Tessa Constantine: Okay. Great. Well, thank you all so much. Great to have you all here with us and I'll go ahead and start on some of the details about the report. We had two main sources of data for this report and, thanks to the support from the Alliance for Strong Families and Communities as well as Frank Martinelli, over 220 people from the Milwaukee area took the 2019 survey and more than 5200 people took the survey nationally in 2019. The findings come from focus groups held in December of 2019 in Milwaukee, as well. They were organized around four demographic categories: Millennial and Generation Z people of color, Millennial and Generation Z white people, Generation X and Baby Boomer people of color, and Generation X and Baby Boomer white people.

Next, looking at race in terms of who took the survey, the Milwaukee area sample had a slightly larger share of respondents who were white compared to nationally. And, as you can see here, 65% of Milwaukee area respondents and 59% of the national sample responded this way. Of course, meaning then that 35% of the Milwaukee area respondents were people of color compared to 41% nationally. And more specifically, the Milwaukee area sample had a larger share of African American and Black participants. They made up 21% of the sample locally compared to 14% nationally. Additionally, the Milwaukee sample had fewer Latinx respondents, 6% of the sample, compared to 10% nationally. And fewer Asian American respondents at 1% compared to 7% nationally.

In terms of gender identity, women were a smaller share of the Milwaukee area sample. There were more men and there was the same percentage of gender non-binary, gender non-conforming, or genderqueer respondents. Furthermore, on the right side of the screen, you can see that in terms of race and gender, compared to the national sample, there were fewer women of color at 26% in Milwaukee and 33% nationally. There was a similar proportion of white women and a higher percentage of both men of color and white men. And, while there were slightly more gender non-conforming, non-binary, or genderqueer white respondents, there were no non-conforming people of color respondents in the Milwaukee sample.

The sub-sample of respondents from the Milwaukee area differed from the national sample in terms of age and generation, with a smaller share of Millennial and Generation Z respondents locally, while Generation X was a slightly larger portion of the population locally and Baby Boomers were a similar share between the two samples. And, in terms of education, the vast majority of survey participants in the Milwaukee area and nationally had at least a Bachelor's degree. Over 80% in both Milwaukee and the national sample said that this was the case, and this was also true for both people of color and white people.

Regarding the longevity of employees in the sector, likely due to the larger proportion of older participants, Milwaukee area respondents have spent more years working in the sector at an average of 15 years compared to 13 years nationally on average. And, as far as the roles, the most common type of job role held by respondents was Senior Manager or Director in Milwaukee, and this was true nationally as well with about a third of respondents in both samples. A smaller share of the Milwaukee area sample was in the position of Executive Director or Chief Executive Officer than nationally, and they were about the same percentage of middle managers and minor administrative staff.

In the Milwaukee area as well as nationally, people of color were about twice as likely to say that they were working or lower class during their childhood at 72% compared to 38% of white respondents in Milwaukee. However, we do see upward socioeconomic mobility overall with almost half of people of color currently identifying as middle class. Though the percentages are much lower for all our respondents currently than they were during their childhood. Regarding finances, though there were no large differences in salary across race, we did find differences in who received raises. White respondents nationally and locally were more likely to receive cost of living raises and performance-based raises than their people of color counterparts. And while we see that Milwaukee area respondents fared better than national respondents in receiving performance-based raises, we still see that people of color were less likely to receive this additional compensation.

All right. Now we're going to move on to some of our key findings, which cover aspirations to lead, supports and opinions on respondents' workplaces, and the effectiveness of DEI efforts. And to get your perspectives on how the Milwaukee sector is faring, we're going to launch our next poll question, which asks, "Do you think initiatives to support leaders of color in Milwaukee are better, worse, or the same compared to the national nonprofit sector?"

Sean Thomas-Breitfeld: We have a slight majority saying that things are worse in Milwaukee than the national nonprofit sector with 54%. 42% saying that things are basically the same. And then a very small proportion (4%) are saying that initiatives to support leaders of color in Milwaukee are better than what's happening in the national nonprofit sector. So, thanks so much for weighing in there, I think that creates an opportunity for something for the panel to be thinking about and responding to as we move into that portion of the webinar as well. I'll turn it back to you, Tessa.

Tessa Constantine: Thank you so much. A key finding in the national *Race to Lead* report is that respondents of color were more interested in pursuing nonprofit leadership positions than their white counterparts, and a similar pattern was found in the Milwaukee area as well. More respondents of color aspired to nonprofit ED or CEO roles than white respondents in the area. Half of respondents who were not already Executive Directors or CEOs wanted to be one someday, compared to 35% of white respondents. And, of course, we do think it's important to note leadership aspirations of people of color and how the sector can work to be more supportive of these. Respondents of color reported barriers to accessing these executive roles, notably regarding the impact of race on their career advancement, which we can see on the next slide.

About two thirds of respondents in Milwaukee and nationally said that their race had a slightly more positive impact on their career advancement. However, people of color were far more likely to say that their race, had a slightly or very negative impact on their career advancement and this was even more prevalent in the Milwaukee sample, in which people of color were nine percentage points more likely to say that their race had a negative impact compared to the national sample. And, further illustrating the national leadership gap, we can see that regarding the makeup of organizations, we see that for both leadership and board composition, many people of color and white respondents reported working for organizations with less than 50% people of color in these roles. This was true in the Milwaukee area as well as nationally. And, in both the national and Milwaukee samples, we also found that white respondents were more likely to work at these organizations with 80% of white respondents and 65% of people of color reporting this for their leaderships and 84% of white respondents and 67% of people of color indicating this for their board of directors.

In focus groups in Milwaukee, the discussion of organizational demographics led participants to discuss how to change the low proportion of people of color in leadership roles. One of the topics noted was that older white leaders need to center race equity in their succession planning to change the sectors leadership demographics going forward.

Moving on now to our next key finding: survey respondents were asked about their access to mentors and role models and the importance of social capital and networks in the nonprofit sector. So first, taking a look at respondents' access to mentors, we found people of color in the Milwaukee area were less likely than white respondents to say they had mentors at their workplace with 45% saying this compared to 65% of white respondents. There was also a wider gap between people of color and white respondents who said this locally than there was nationally. And people of color were more likely to indicate that they needed these mentors as well. Regarding external mentors, although a relatively equal percentage of people of color and white respondents indicated that they had mentors outside of their organization, people of color were more likely nationally and locally to say that they needed more external mentors.

Moving on, survey respondents were asked to rate their level of agreement on a 1 to 10 scale with three statements on their nonprofit workplaces. The first being, "I would be happy if I worked at this organization three years from now." The second, "I feel I have a voice in my organization." And finally, "My organization offers fair and equitable opportunities for advancement and promotion." So here we showed an average level of agreement with the three statements for people of color and white respondents. In all three statements you can see people of color both nationally and locally indicated a lower level of agreement. We see this for the statement, "I would be happy if I worked at this organization three years from now," where people of color had an average level of agreement of 6.9 compared to an average of 7.5 for white respondents.

In line with the previous discussion concerning the nonprofit racial leadership gap, people of color respondents in the Milwaukee area had a fairly lower level of agreement with the statement, "My organization offers fair and equitable opportunities for advancement and promotion." And finally, you can see that though it was highest rated overall, people of color agreed less with the statement, "I feel I have a voice in my organization," with an average score of 7.0 compared to 7.8 for white respondents. In the focus group, we also see that concerning not having a voice in their organization, one person of color focus group participant in Milwaukee mentioned only having a voice when someone with power gives them one. This was temporary and was often used to make a point rather than share power.

Finally, our last finding has to do with DEI efforts in respondents' organizations. But, before we move on to the data, we're going to launch our final poll question which is, "Which DEI initiative are you currently engaging in at your organization?"

Sean Thomas-Breitfeld: It looks like we've got almost two thirds saying that their organizations are looking at addressing ways that racial inequity and systemic bias impact the issues the organization works on. That looks to be followed by using the representation of particularly people of color on boards of directors. Providing training on equity and inclusion and clarifying that DEI is central to the organization's purpose and mission is coming up next.

Tessa Constantine: Thank you, everybody. On the DEI initiative data, you can see that nonprofits are taking steps to become more diverse, equitable, inclusive workplaces, and this was also apparent in the Milwaukee area. We asked people taking the survey if their organizations have some type of DEI

initiative or activity and almost three quarters, or 72%, of area respondents work for organizations that did have DEI initiatives. Respondents with ongoing DEI initiatives were asked what their organization was currently undertaking and most common in the Milwaukee area was addressing ways that racial inequity and systemic bias impacts the organization's work and mission, with 66% of respondents indicating that this was a current initiative. Furthermore, for respondents who did not have an ongoing DEI initiative at their organization, on the next slide, you can see they were asked to indicate what would be most helpful.

One of the most helpful initiatives indicated by people who did not have any ongoing DEI work was to provide training on DEI to staff, leadership, and the board of directors, with 45% of the local sample and 59% of the national sample indicating this. And, in the focus groups, we also asked people what the initiatives at their organizations were and the topic of DEI trainings came up here as well. So, while participants felt that these trainings were a good first step, they also noted that follow up and additional action afterwards was necessary to create lasting change. And, back to the data, the initiative that respondents in the Milwaukee area said would be most helpful overall was to increase the representation on the board of directors, with 55% of all Milwaukee area respondents indicating this. This initiative was also in the top three of the current initiatives for people who did engage in this work.

One focus group participant in Milwaukee indicated that funders are a part of the reason that this push for board diversity is occurring and, though they noted that these changes are slow moving, this quote emphasizes the value of funders implementing DEI into their requirements and the effect that it can have on making the sector more inclusive and representative. So finally, we've identified some opportunities for organizations in the sector, which includes: leadership taking a stand, which means assessing the experiences of people of color; ensuring all stakeholders understand historic structures undergirding racism; creating policies and practices that ensure equity; and addressing racism and other forms of discrimination where it may occur. Other recommendations includes assuring that leadership, including boards, reflect the community served, ensuring that leaders of color have real voice and power, as well as creating benchmarks and continuously measuring results.

Now, I'll outline some opportunities for the sector, which include funders financially supporting and scaling up people of color-led organizations, as well as funders and non-profits in partnership with each other and the community engaging in systems change work and advocacy to address inequities.

Sean Thomas-Breitfeld: Thanks so much, Tessa. Really great to have the insights and findings from the report be reviewed. Just because we got started a little bit late, we're going to go directly into the panel discussion. I'm really excited to start the conversation with our panelists. Again, we're joined by Meralis Hood, who is the Executive Director of City Year Milwaukee. Dr. Undraye Howard, who is the Senior Director of equity, diversity, inclusion, and engagement for the Alliance for Strong Families and Communities. And Ashley Lee, who is the Executive Director of Public Allies Milwaukee.

I'm going to start us off with Ashley. Thanks so much again for joining us and I'm curious what your response and reaction was particularly to the data points finding that people of color in Milwaukee were more likely than people of color nationally to report that their race had negatively impacted their career advancement. If you're willing to share what sort of challenges have you faced or observed in Milwaukee's nonprofit sector, particularly as a woman of color and how have you overcome them?

Ashley Lee: First of all, thank you so much for having me. I'm really grateful to be with such an awesome panel today. And I think that's a really big question and there are so many answers to that question. We

encourage leaders of color from Milwaukee to aspire for leadership positions but we don't intentionally train them to fundraise, nor do we educate the philanthropic community to adjust their expectations about folks who aren't raised in or trained in or mentored in the philanthropic network. And one of the data points from the report that was really staggering to me was the amount of folks of color who are in leadership positions who came from poverty are very connected to the issue. I think it's really interesting that we want people who are connected to the issues, but we look at philanthropy and the need for leaders of color to really do well in that space, that is a subject that is not connected to the issues.

Without a doubt, I think being trusted to lead my city has been the biggest challenge. And I face it as a multiracial, light-skinned privileged leader. So, I think it's really important to note that I am a woman of color. I'm a young woman of color, so I've definitely faced that. But I have no idea what it means to navigate the world of philanthropy and that's something that I've had to learn, and it's been a really steep learning curve. I had a white male colleague once tell me that I had to stop thinking that people with money thought about money the way that I think about money, and that was really good advice but I don't know how they think about money. You know? And I also have not had access to the spaces that really teach you how to navigate that world. And, I would say that the imposter syndrome as a young woman of color is real and you feel it every time you have to talk about your organization.

I believe so much in Public Allies and our ability to bring young people of color and young LGBTQ leaders into the foreground in Milwaukee and, at the same time, when I have to talk about this work in the suburbs or in super fancy offices downtown or in the university clubs, that automatically puts us in a space where we have to really think about describing the nature of our work outside of our work. And I think that knowing that I'm a strong leader is different from having to fundraise in a world that feels so disconnected. I would say that I feel like I have had to really learn the skills to fundraise from white people who have had access to those folks in their families, who were raised, who have friends and family who have money, and who don't have to prove themselves in order to reach that point.

I would say also that the weight of having to navigate this really difficult and challenging world of having to ask for money, when that's super uncomfortable for me culturally in my relationships and in our family, from people who have a lot of money and are expecting me to show up in a particular way, to look a particular way, to speak a particular way, to flash my VW Madison and Marquette credentials. Those kinds of things are really challenging and I really just want to say that I know we're going to talk more about mentorship, but I think specific to folks of color in the philanthropic world, there have been phenomenal people of color, specifically women of color, like Cecilia Gore, who intentionally make sure that people of color and that women of color are elevated in their leadership and that's the only thing that's kept me here.

Sean Thomas-Breitfeld: Thank you so much, Ashley. The valuing of lived experience, whether or not people are trusted to lead, and all of the dynamics around the power of funders are really great insights. Thanks for setting us up for the second question to Meralis around mentorship. That was clearly from the data we were seeing, the hunger for that kind of support. Can you talk about what impact mentorship has had for you in your own career and what insights you have to share about what makes mentors particularly effective and supportive of people who are aspiring to become leaders?

Meralis Hood: Thank you so much again for having me. I'll start with what makes mentors particularly supportive and valuable. For me, it's mentors who see you and see you for all that you are and are able to call out the things in you that make you a strong leader. Mentors that connect you to some of what

Ashley talked about, right? Real networks that are tangible and there's real networks particularly in Milwaukee, and I know we're going to talk about the fundraising landscape in Milwaukee a little later, but mentors who are able to make those connections for you have proven really valuable for me, and this is a little bit about also what Ashley was saying is, I've learned the science of fundraising at the same time of the art of leading.

One of the interesting things is that in the science of fundraising, the mentors that have been invaluable for me are those that have been able to make the introductions, to pull up a seat at the table for me, to validate my leadership and lend credibility. The mentors that have really been valuable for me in the art of leading have actually been young people. And so I think this idea of intergenerational mentorship can go both ways and it's something that we need to talk about more because I learn so much from the young people that I'm surrounded by and honestly, for me, that is what makes me keep coming back to this work. The young people that are constantly pushing me, asking me questions, really thinking about what I represent and who I am, not only for them, but who they are for me. So, I think it's really important to think about this mentorship idea intergenerationally as well.

Sean Thomas-Breitfeld: Thanks so much. I'm just curious, what are the things that you learn about leadership from the young people in particular? What is it that young people are looking for from organizational leaders now that may be different from the models of leadership that we inherited from previous generations?

Meralis Hood: Young people are unapologetically themselves all the time. If you're ever around a young person, you'll see that right away. And I think for me, young people have pushed me to stop code-switching. To be unapologetic in my leadership, to ask more questions, to not just accept things the way they are. They're just very unwilling to accept things the way they are and very unwilling to just think about the system as the only answer. So they've really helped me think about just new ways of fundraising. Right? When I bring young people into the fold, they're like, "Well, why do we have to take that money? We don't have to. We can do this." And I'm like, "That's a good point. We can do that." Right? Why are we beholden to this structure? We're beholden to the structure because I'm older and I don't tend to be as flexible in my thinking as they are and so that's definitely one thing that I've learned from them.

Sean Thomas-Breitfeld: Thanks so much. Yeah. I think that willingness to take risks and think outside of the box is a great contribution. I'm going to turn it over now to Dr. Howard. The data really showed that respondents in Milwaukee were focused on diversifying their organizations, particularly at the level of board leadership and I'm curious, from your vantage point, given that you are in a role where you support the race equity efforts of Alliance members, can you talk a little bit about why the board and the strategy of changing board composition is really critical to paving the way for deeper organizational cultural and structural change in terms of making organizations more equitable workplaces?

Undraye Howard: Thanks again for having me, Sean. Being a fellow King graduate, I appreciate that as well. I'm just pleased to be on the panel with the great experts of knowledge here. Absolutely. Boards should make DEI a strong strategy across not only the nonprofit sector, but across sectors for that matter. We know that diverse boards can bring to the table different voices, perspectives, innovation, lived experiences, which are so very important particularly as you're thinking about building a DEI board, right? And with the diverse board, an organization certainly is in a better, stronger position to plan for the future, to manage and mitigate around risk, make solid decisions, take advantage of opportunities in our disruptive environment. Also, as we think about the quotient for a diverse board, it makes it more

sensitive to cultural differences, a stronger capacity to perhaps attract and retain other board members as well as team members of the organization as well they're serving, able to access resources, I think is another important part of diverse boards, members can bring to the table through connections, powerful donors. Just the ability to really respond to disruptive and external forces that are ever constantly changing in our environment.

The bottom line is diverse boards have been shown to make organizations more creative, more innovative, with the ability to meet maximum impact on missions. So, I think those are some important reasons as we think about the quotient for a diverse board. But I think we also have to acknowledge that diverse boards are not everything. Right? That's the beginning. That's not enough. Boards must pay particular attention to how each of the members on that board treat each other in terms of practice and policies behind closed doors in the board room, who are we allowing to have a voice in that room and to be able to be inclusive of respective board members in that room is also important. I am a big proponent as we think about ways to make boards even more impactful around DEI is to certainly think about our onboarding processes and practices, how we acclimate new board members to become an authentic part of that board as well.

Big proponent of learning and agendas, as well. Agendas that allow us to be able to have discussions around relevant and pertinent issues that directly impacts the mission of the organization, I think are all important pieces. I think just a few other things if I can just add as I think about, not only for the board but for the organization itself, I think basic assessments in terms of measuring where folks are, staff and board members are in terms of their own EDI, DEI journey. I look at the DEI as a journey, right? We all start in different places, it's not a perfect journey, it's tough sometimes, but a necessary one. I think having some sense of assessment and level set of where folks are, is very important. I think it's very important for the board and for the organization to make sure they make very public that we are about DEI. That should come out in that values statement that's posted on the website. And by the way, what does your website say about DEI? Is it inclusive? Is it welcoming? Is it warm? Does it say we are DEI? I think that's important as well.

I think we always have to look for different pathways to recruit talent, right? Those non-traditional ways. Visiting the churches on Sunday morning. Our local social justice organizations and asking for help as we think about how to diversify our staffing as well as our board. Budgets are key. People often forget about budget. If we're going to get serious about this work, budget needs to be attached. Dollars have to go into this process as part of that piece as well. And really becoming that self-inclusive leader and being aware of that. And it's not just a 9:00 to 5:00 kind of thing, and I take off my DEI hat. But I need to live this DEI life even after work is over with. Right? On the weekends and the evenings and those kinds of things. But I think the key is to start the journey, understand the journey is necessary, and I love to plan. If anything really solidifies all of this, it's about putting together an impactful and effective results-based DEI plan as we think about our trajectory moving forward. Those are just a few things I would add to the discussion.

Sean Thomas-Breitfeld: Thanks so much. I think a question for all of us as leaders and for our boards, is are you really about that equity life? So, I want to pose a question to all three of you. We did want to have a conversation about the funding landscape and about the dynamics, power dynamics between organizational leaders who are in the grant seeking role and those who may be in the grant making or funding or donating role. So, this is a general question if you can start us off, how are you seeing the funding landscape in Milwaukee impacting race equity issues in the area's nonprofit sector? What is the

contribution, but also in what ways might there be things that need to be changed in terms of the funding dynamics and the funding landscape? Anyone want to take a first crack at it?

Ashley Lee: I can start us off. I would say that what's been interesting to watch, both between COVID and also between the uprising and the Movement for Black Lives, is just the way that all of a sudden it seems like the funding landscape is more interested in funding mutual aid organizations. To me, when you think about equity, I think it's great to fund organizations that are doing work and have staff and all that, but what are the most equitable ways to get resources directly into the hands of people? By people who know those people best through mutual aid efforts. Like Love on Black Women is doing a phenomenal job of that. I think what's been interesting to watch is how that happens. A lot of organizations are prioritizing DEI in their mission statements, board diversification, and I think that's great. It takes so long for that to result in a change for people that we're serving. So, I think language is great, but I think if you're not acting, what do your people say about you?

What do the people that you're working with and working for say about how you make them feel like they belong in your buildings or your spaces? I know that there have been some folks in the philanthropic world who are trying to make their spaces more accessible, who are trying to relocate in different neighborhoods, and I think that's all really great. And I think we have to take it a step further and ask, one, how can we directly fund people who know people who will just give people money? Because people could be trusted to do what's best for them with the money that they receive. And then I think we should ask, beyond our mission statements and our board composition, what does our work make people feel like?

Undraye Howard: I'll just chime in and say, in a very hyper segregated city such as Milwaukee and our surrounding areas, I mean, race is what it is. As I think about the funding landscape, I think we've got a number of foundations who are doing some great work in pushing boards and organizations to certainly look at things and deliver programming and to live in a race equity lens and fashion. I think that's important. But I would go a bit further. I would say that if we are truly going to try to achieve population level impact, and advanced social change around the issue of race, that we need to invest in leaders who are Brown and Black, period. Who are leading these organizations, who are doing this front line work.

It's important that we certainly think about supporting them as they think about it. And what better way, Brown and Black folks are leading these organizations who are leading this work in their communities. Folks who have real lived experiences and can give a real lens and a real interpretation of what's taking place and what we need to do to resolve those issues. Now, it's not to say that white-led organizations can't do that. But I'm saying that we need to do more around the funding landscape when it comes to investing in our Brown and Black leaders to really lift them up, to support them and give them what they need to really move and advance social change forward within their communities. I think that probably is to me a critical piece that we need to certainly consider as we move forward in this funding landscape.

Meralis Hood: Yeah. I really appreciate that and when I think about the funding landscape in Milwaukee, the work that comes to mind immediately is small. It's a very small, very close-knit community. Similar to the findings in the report, where it showed that white leaders spend more time in their role. I can see that in Milwaukee as well. There's just a very long-standing philanthropic community on the private and on the foundation side. If you have the right connection, you can certainly get some traction but without that, it's going to be very, very difficult and so I think when you ask the question about race and the funding landscape, what is that intersection? I think about the limitations. We're really limiting

ourselves. We're not seeing what's possible as a community because we are very tied to the old way of fundraising. The correct way to write a grant. And put that in quotes, right? You have to have the very polished presentation. You have to have the very polished leader. You have to have the perfect budget. The risks need to be all responded to and mitigated. And so it's just really important for us to think about that as a community and the way that we're limiting, frankly, the young people who really, really do have solutions. The people from our community that have the energy to do this work and we're really placing limitations on them by keeping the structure so closed.

Sean Thomas-Breitfeld: Thanks so much. We did get a question related to the evolving vocabulary of these conversations around race equity in the nonprofit sector. And Dr. Howard, you said EDI, sometimes we say DEI, I think the question is just like, what might the distinctions be between say D&I, DEI, EDI, or should we be calling it something entirely different? If we really want to center equity. I'm just curious what all of your takes are around, how do we think about and talk about the kind of change that we're going to be bringing about in organizations themselves, but also in our communities more broadly?

Undraye Howard: Yeah, I think language makes a difference. I mean, DEI, EDI. I go back and forth between the two. I shudder against the words D-I-E, that's what you don't want in this equity journey. Certainly thinking about making sure that we have diverse differences, that we have people coming from different backgrounds, whether it's age, or race, or whatever, education level, I think is important. But I think the "I", for me, is important as well, right? Because we have to give people an opportunity to have their voice heard at the table and so you need to be inclusive and aware of that and the "equity" is just about really allowing all of us to have fair and equal access to promotions whether it's in the workplace, to opportunities, and so I do go back with EDI, DEI but I think making sure that we understand the difference between the three and the language getting it right is important within an organization as well.

Ashley Lee: Yeah, I may have an unpopular opinion here: diversity and inclusion is one of our values as an organization, but I don't want to talk about diversity ever. Because diversity is the baseline, how many black people do you have in the room? Let me check that box. And in a city like Milwaukee, where not only are we segregated, but a lot of our folks of color who have made it no longer live in the city. And so, when we think about the connections to those experiences day to day, certainly everyone still experiences what it means to be a person of color, a Black person, an Indigenous person. But I think it's important to recognize where equity is important in making sure we are thinking about the lived experiences and perspectives of people who are most on the margin.

I think sometimes when we put the language at the forefront, it is super important, and it can be really inaccessible. It can be an additional barrier for people who are from the hood, who don't know what it means to talk about inclusion or equity. That stuff is not super critical for them, but they do know how to live it. They do know what it means to show up at a table and ask for things to be better for them. So, I think it's also exclusive sometimes for leaders, particularly when you look at the fact that the nonprofit sector in Milwaukee is half white women, right? And we look at the age dynamics and breakdowns of that. So the number of times I have to have conversations with middle aged white women who are from the suburbs about equity and inclusion, that takes a great amount of energy and a lot of it is just like, how do we strip it down to what do you need to know about the ways that your experiences make you not see other people or make you not create space for other people. So, language is really important but I think it's an easy thing for an organization to put out a mission statement and say, "We really believe this." The number of black lives matter emails we got from organizations who do not live the values of

black lives matter, astounding. So, I think language is important. D&I, fine. EDI, fine. Don't call it diversity work because that's really base level for me. Anti-oppression, great. Let's call it anti-racism. Great. Let's call it what it is. But I think it has to go beyond language.

Sean Thomas-Breitfeld: Thanks so much. Meralis, anything that you wanted to add on the language question?

Meralis Hood: Yeah. At City Year, we look at it as a continuum. Again, diversity is the baseline, so it's diversity, belonging, inclusion, to equity. And we talk about those words in a continuum-sense of how do we get from where we are, right? And where are we and how do we assess where we are in a real way as individuals, and then also interpersonally, and also as an organization? And then how do we get to where we want to be, which is this equity idea and what does that really require of us? Right? And for some of us, it's going to require a great sacrifice that we have to be willing to speak and to really live out, and for some of us it's going to require really getting out of the way and that's something really important for us to think about.

Sean Thomas-Breitfeld: Thanks so much. I know that we're coming to the end of the hour, but we got a really important question that I think speaks to how real the equity is, related to this question of the underbelly of too many nonprofits being reliant on the low wage workforce and not actually providing livable and living wages for the people doing key critical work in our communities. So, as we think about equity, how do you all think about equity in terms of internal staffing compensation structures, things like that? Meralis, can I have you weigh in first and then we'll go around to the rest of the panel as well?

Meralis Hood: Yeah. I think about this so much and so the difficulty in that is that the organizations that tend to be led by people of color and kind of started these grassroots organizations, for lack of a better word, tend to have the smaller budgets to begin with. Tend to have the smaller boards to begin with. Tend to have less of the bigger funders supporting them and so it's hard to draw from that. I think for us at City Year Milwaukee, we have quite a bit in leeway in terms of the things that we do. We're constantly looking at how much our folks are getting paid and certainly not where we need to be, but one thing that we've started to do in this year, actually, is pay our people of color whenever they're involved in any type of diversity work or any type of work towards teaching others about it.

So, whether you're facilitating a session or in a specific committee, then we are looking to pay you for that. And really make sure that we're compensating you. We're not going to be able to compete with private companies. Right? That's clear for us. We're not going to be able to pay you what companies downtown pay you. So it's really important for us to really think about what other ways can we provide support for your life? What other ways can we be flexible? What other ways can we prioritize your wellness that are not necessarily financial, but the financial is really, really important for us and it's something that I'm thinking about all the time as a leader.

Sean Thomas-Breitfeld: Thanks so much. Ashley, do you have thoughts on this issue around nonprofit workers often being lower wage workers?

Ashley Lee: I have thoughts about everything. I think this is a really great question and it's a strange question because it puts the burden on the nonprofit sector which is already overburdened with scarcity. Right? Scarcity is a huge through-line in nonprofit organizations and I don't think you'll find a nonprofit organization that pays its people so little because it likes to. Since I joined Public Allies, we've raised staff salaries, we've raised ally stipends. I wish we could triple them. To be honest. But I think we

have to ask ourselves, why is it acceptable to pay folks in the for-profit world so much and to have that disparity so wide without question, as though the work that nonprofits do is less or less important or less valuable? I think that's a really important question and often times folks in the nonprofit sector are treated like it's patronizing like, "Oh, that's so cute" or, "That's so nice." And I think we have to look at why nonprofits are founded. They were founded for middle class white women to do work. And they had security networks. They had safety networks. As we see nonprofits try to bring in folks of color who are from the communities we work in, it becomes more and more important that we recognize that we don't have those safety networks. White folks historically inherit wealth. We inherit the immense responsibility of taking care of our parents. I just think it's an important question. I would say we need funders to fund more general operating dollars to be able to do this because so often we're being funded on expanding programs which makes you add more staff, pay people more, add more burden and then there's this constant churn. I think if there's a way to solve it, increase the amount of money that you pay organizations for just existing. There are some funders that do that, but so few do that. Will just give you the money to make sure you can pay your people and take care of them.

Sean Thomas-Breitfeld: Thanks so much, Ashley. So, we'll end with your thoughts on this, Dr. Howard. And we've talked about the responsibility of funders and their complicity in this dynamic that does leave some organizations being strapped for cash, limited budgets, far too much to do with far too little resources. What else would you add to this conversation?

Undraye Howard: I think Ashley and Meralis hit it on the head there. I think it is important to really become innovative in our funding streams as well. Again, push against nonprofits, we really should be about profit if we're going to continue the work that we have to do in terms of meeting our mission. So, I'm a big proponent in terms of thinking about how we can get innovative in terms of funding streams, maybe that's a social enterprise. Identify additional dollars to support the work and the folks who work within these organizations. I think it's important to certainly push against our wonderful funders, right? Six, seven percent overhead administrative ain't going to do it. We need 30%, 40% to support the talent to make this work happen and the other caveat to all of this, of course, is that as we think about the work that we do in the sector, as a viable career path, a lot of folks have just turned away. Especially those we could recruit, persons of color who would love to be able to work in wonderful nonprofit human-serving organizations, community-based organizations, but looking at it as a viable career pathway, sometimes it is because those dollars are low in terms of salaries and we can't compete. I think challenging those who help support and fund us and being innovative in our approach, I think might be a few ways to think about that.

Sean Thomas-Breitfeld: Thank you so much. We've gone over by a few minutes. Really appreciate everyone staying with us. There was one final question that came in that I think relates to this theme and I think it's something for all of us to think about. The fundamental question was, particularly in the current context and the movement for black lives and the demand to defund the police, what might the possibilities be for the sector if that actually were to happen in terms of reinvesting in community-based work and in nonprofit organizations that are doing the kind of work that we all want to see? My hope is that we can also all tap into that possibility, but also support those kinds of demands for systemic change because they're the right thing to do and if that potentially leads to reinvestment in organizations that are providing critical services, critical work in communities, that would be all the better. So, I just want to thank everyone for joining this webinar and participating in this conversation and I'll invite the panelists to do final departing thoughts and appreciations if you have anything that you'd like to add as we wrap up.

Undraye Howard: I'll just say that again, the DEI journey is real and I invite everyone to start this journey as we think about how we make our sector much more DEI prepared, much more ready, much more able to deliver from a DEI lens. I think it's really critical. The last piece I'll say: it's important to make sure we have all voices in this conversation and I know I'll get pushback from that, but I think it's really critical to make sure we hear Brown, Black, white voices in this journey. That's the only way we truly move this ahead is if we work collaboratively together and make that happen. So, it's got to be an all-in, all-inclusive approach if we're going to continue to move the journey forward. That's what I will leave us with today.

Meralis Hood: The comment that stood out for me in the report was one around no real strategy around succession planning, and I would push us all, that's something we can all have control over, our own succession planning for whatever our role is in our organization and it's something that we need to talk more about. Succession is a word that we need to talk more about anyway and we need to start thinking about how we replace ourselves with somebody that can take it to the next level. Right? You brought it here. Who can take it to the next level and be really, really thoughtful about the profile of that candidate?

Ashley Lee: I would just say one of the things that really stood out to me, and we talk about a lot of the times in Public Allies, is how this gap between who aspires to leadership and who gets to leadership is so staggering and there are so many reasons for that but I think if everyone who is on this call who has a tremendous amount of power, if you're on this call, you have some privilege, probably. You are maybe in a position of leadership. We should be making all of the rooms that we are in very uncomfortable so that people who feel uncomfortable, too uncomfortable to get into those spaces, or too far away to get into those spaces, have a shot at it. I think keep pushing, keep asking questions of yourself, of your peers, talk about the things. We are in Wisconsin and so people don't like to talk about uncomfortable things. I'm from Central Wisconsin so I know all the things we're not supposed to talk about. But if we're not making everyone uncomfortable, lovingly, you can do it with love, then we aren't going to advance anything.

Sean Thomas-Breitfeld: Thank you all so much. Deepest appreciation to the panel, I also want to thank my colleague Tessa for presenting the results of the report. I want to encourage everyone who is joining to check out and download the report. Also, visit the organizational websites for the Alliance for Strong Families and Communities, Public Allies, City Year. Learn about the work that these organizations are doing in your community and please don't hesitate to be in contact with any of us. Thank you all for joining us.