

Webinar: New Mexico & COVID-19: Effects on Leaders of Color

13 October 2020 #OnTheFrontlines

Presented by the [Building Movement Project](#) (BMP)

Alicia Lueras Maldonado: So welcome. Hello, folks. Thank you all, again, for joining us. My name is Alicia Lueras Maldonado. I do consulting and work with Building Movement Project and so again, I'm just very excited to welcome all of you to our webinar and panel discussion today, New Mexico and COVID-19: Effects on Leaders of Color.

One more time for everybody, we want to just let you know that the chat box is open, so feel free to put in your name, the organization that you represent, why you were interested in joining our webinar today. Again, thank you very much. Just some quick housekeeping notes. Attendees are not visible, again, use the chat. We also have our BMP admin so if there's anything that you're needing, if you can't hear or see the presentation, please feel free to send a chat to BMP admin. This webinar is being recorded and we will share the link, along with additional materials after today and if you would help us get the word out about this, you can Tweet #POCNonprofit and #OnTheFrontlines. So again, thank you for joining us all today.

Today, what we're going to do is we are going to review the data and findings of the latest report that Building Movement Project has put out called [On the Frontlines](#) and this report came out of a survey and one on one interviews that Building Movement Project did back in April and May just as the COVID-19 pandemic was hitting and we wanted to really get a sense of what people of color leaders were dealing with as the pandemic was taking hold and how they were having to shift and deal with their work. So we will be presenting those findings, we'll have some clarifying data and questions after the presentation and then we'll move into a panel discussion with our invited panelists today.

So today we're really excited to welcome our panelists who are some amazing non-profit leaders here in New Mexico. I had the great privilege and opportunity back in May to interview our panelists one on one after they had responded to our national survey. And so today, we'll be hearing from and talking with Angel Charley, she's the Executive Director of the Coalition to Stop Violence Against Native Women. We'll be hearing from Henry Brutus, he's the Executive Director of La Casa Inc., and also from Johana Bencomo, who's the Executive Director of NM CAFé. So we welcome all of you, we're really grateful that you've taken the time out of your busy schedules to join us today and share with us your thoughts.

So we're going to hear from Deepa Iyer, who will be presenting the findings and a PowerPoint, but before that I wanted to introduce our Co-Executive Directors of Building Movement Project who are with us today. Frances Kunreuther and Sean Thomas Breitfeld are on the call today, and just really want to acknowledge and recognize the work that they have been doing in the areas of race and leadership nationally. We did a webinar a couple of weeks ago on race and leadership in the non-profit sector and hopefully many of you joined us or were able to see those results. And so this is the second webinar in that series. Thank you, Frances and Sean, for all of your hard work that you have done to lift up these voices. Again, as I mentioned, we have our BMP admin, Catherine Foley, who is here to help and assist us and Catherine has been instrumental in all of the tech side of these webinars, so I just wanted to give a shout out to Catherine, as well.

So I am going to turn it over to Deepa Iyer to talk a little bit more about the Building Movement Project and then lead us into our data findings from the report on the frontlines. Again, please share your name,

the organizations that you're with, why you were interested in this ... Oh, okay, here we go, really quickly, before we get into about Building Movement Project and Deepa's presentation, we do have a quick poll that we'd like to share with you all and get some feedback before we get started. So I think Catherine's going to put our first poll up.

What are you concerned about in terms of community needs over the next three to six months? Food and housing instability, joblessness and loss of health insurance, mental health problems and trauma, resurgent outbreaks of COVID-19, need for PPE and safe working conditions, domestic violence, voter disenfranchisement, education losses or issues? So those are the choices you have for this first poll that we're sharing with you today.

And it looks like what we're seeing is 79% of folks are concerned about the resurgent outbreaks of COVID-19 and that is followed by a couple of highs around mental health problems and trauma, and food and housing instability. So thank you for responding for our poll and as we get into the data and findings, you'll be hearing more about each of these particular issues.

Deepa Iyer: Yes, thank you, everyone. I am really excited to be here. Thank you so much, Alicia. My name is Deepa Iyer. I'm the Director of Movement Building at the Building Movement Project where I also run a project called [Solidarity Is](#). And for folks who might not know, Building Movement Project or BMP is a national non-profit organization where we strengthen individuals, networks and non-profit organizations. We're in the business of making social change and we do that through reports, we do that through trainings and resource development, so please check out our website and check out the tools that we have that could help build the capacity for the work that you do.

Before I get started into the report, I also just wanted to thank all of you for the tremendous work that you're doing in your communities, particularly in a time of tremendous crisis. We're so grateful for the work that you do and are looking forward to hearing your thoughts on this report, which honestly, we hope is going to validate a lot of the experiences that you're having and can be another way in which you can get the word out to the stakeholders in your community about what you need in order to sustain your leadership and the work that you do.

I want to start off by saying a little bit about why we did this report in the first place. What were some of our learning questions? So in March when the lockdowns were happening and it was clear that non-profit organizations were really on the frontlines of responding to the crisis within communities of color. We had a couple of questions that we wanted to explore more deeply. They are listed on this slide but they include how were POC led non-profits responding, especially given the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on their communities. We also wanted to know, as we just did the poll with you all, what needs do POC led non-profits anticipate over the next three to six months. And while this was not a question that we asked in our survey because that was done in March and April, we did ask 41 organizational leaders that we interviewed over the summer about the uprisings against anti-black racism and how that was affecting their work.

We also had a particular interest, as Alicia mentioned, in race and leadership. So we wanted to know how is this environment affecting POC leaders, and then lastly, what are the changes that need to be made in order to rebuild a different future. So that's why as the next slide shows, our report really focuses on key findings, it focuses on testimonials and quotes from people like you around the country, and it also provides recommendations. And the report is the result of an online survey that was

completed by 433 non-profit leaders of color from around the country as well as 41 one on one interviews that our staff did over the course of the summer as well.

So what are, a little bit, I wanted to say a little bit about the non-profit leaders of color whom we interviewed. So as I mentioned we had about 433 people who responded and this is a breakdown in terms of their race and ethnicity. You can see here that Asian-American, Black, Latinx communities, leaders represented the largest numbers of people who responded to the survey, and on the next slide, you can see the types of organizations that were responding to the survey were not surprisingly organizations that are less resourced and under staffed. And I wanted to make a point that even before this crisis unfolded, these are the non-profits led by people of color, working in communities of color that were making do with very little to begin with, right?

And so we found that half of the organizations that we surveyed employed less than 10 staff members. We also found that over half were surviving on budgets of less than \$1 million to do the work that they do in their communities. And in terms of the types of work that the non-profit groups that we surveyed do, we found that this ranges from health and human services, to advocacy, to grassroots organizing, which includes mobilization, which includes organizing civic engagement. And in our survey, we heard from groups that primarily engage in service provision and systems change advocacy followed by grassroots organizing, as well as education and the arts and capacity building.

So what are the findings that we came up with as we did this report? There are five findings that we wanted to highlight. They're here on this list and I'll go through each of these in particular and then we'll hear, as Alicia said from the folks on the call about how the findings reflect in terms of the work that is happening in New Mexico. But the really kind of big picture, take away is that these organizations and people of color leaders are really straddling two realities. On one reality, they recognize that this crisis that they're in right now and the social upheavals of 2020 are really intense and in some ways going to get worse, and at the same time, they realize and recognize that there are opportunities for systemic change and solidarity. So those are really the book ends of this report and what we'll focus in on and I'll talk about each of these findings in particular.

So as we go to finding number one, also wanted to encourage you all, if you have any feedback that is coming up as you see some of this, please go ahead and put that into the chat or in the Q&A so that we can take those as they come along. The first finding that we made is that while organizations are surviving for now, they are deeply concerned that matters will get worse for their communities, as well as their organizations, and this is not surprising.

As we can see on the next slide, we already know, right, and you know that COVID-19 has exposed underlying and generational racial inequities that have been in place for generations for communities of color, and so it's not surprising then that most of the leaders that we spoke with are working closely with communities who are really bearing the brunt of COVID-19, whether it is around illness and death or whether it is around economic effects. This slide shows some of those economic effects. It shows that 87% of people of color led non-profits are working in communities hardest hit by one or more aspects of the economic crisis. Whether that is loss of jobs for 81%, losing health care benefits for 41%, 62% of constituents are losing housing or the inability to pay rent, and then of course basic services. So these are the economic ramifications that communities of color are facing, that these people of color led non-profits are working closely with.

In addition to that, as the next slide shows, communities of color, as you know are also facing racism, bigotry and Islamophobia and we found that 43% of the organizations that were surveyed were reporting that their community members are seeing an increased level of harassment and violence. This is most prominent among Asian-American and Latinx serving organizations, and Asian-Americans in particular, told us that their community members were most likely to report such violence and harassment, primarily because of the scapegoating of China and Chinese Americans from the highest levels of government since COVID-19 began.

It's not surprising then, as the next slide shows, that given these conditions, many of people color leaders identified mental health as an issue of concern for their communities. Three quarters of people of color leaders said that they were observing mental health consequences in the wake of COVID-19 and keep in mind that this survey was done in March. So those consequences have clearly increased over the last seven months or so. These are some of the quotes that I wanted to pull up and share that people of color leaders told us in the interviews as well.

And then finally, you all said much of this in the poll that Alicia launched earlier, but POC leaders that we talked to are clear that these issues are not just going to continue to increase but they're going to get worse, right? Particularly as relief packages don't come through from government and when government agencies are not providing services in language or to communities of color. It is clear that issues around food insecurity, housing instability, education losses, surge of illness, mental health issues, and surveillance are all ones that came up. I also wanted to point out that disenfranchisement and voting barriers came up as well as needs the POC leaders were anticipating would arise in their communities.

So as you can see and as the next slide shows, many of the people of color leaders that we spoke with told us comments like this. I can't even foresee the breadth and depth of the continued suffering at the community level. It's clear that POC leaders know that this crisis is going to get worse and that interventions have to be made in the form of systemic change.

So let's move on then to finding number two, which is related that a lot of non-profits led by people of color are making up for the inefficiencies and gaps left by government agencies and how are they doing that. So we found as the next slide shows that many POC led organizations are creating new programs, so whether that is direct service programs or mutual aid programs, or they're reshaping existing ones. The one that I wanted to point out in particular actually is that non-profit leaders of color are engaging in greater advocacy for their communities. So we found that advocacy work increased for about 48%, nearly half of survey respondents in the wake of the pandemic and in many cases, this was new work that organizations were taking on. Why? You likely know the answer to this. It's because these people of color leaders wanted to make sure that the voices and needs of the communities that they work with are being heard by decision makers and at policy tables. So we heard, for example, about how a coalition of indigenous groups work with companies and municipalities to obtain low cost internet for community members, digital literacy. We heard about how Asian-American and Pacific Islander groups advocated for public health responses to be provided in culturally and linguistically appropriate manner.

We also found that grassroots organizing decreased for many organizations, particularly in this climate. And that's not surprising, right? Because as we know people of color leaders are organizing, usually by going door to door or person to person work and given social distancing, it was not possible to do this work in the same way, so folks had to get more creative. And so as the next slide shows in this particular quote, what POC led non-profits found is that the practice of adapting and pivoting that they've always

been in just increased over the course of the pandemic and it's really demanded that they get creative during this time.

The next finding that we wanted to highlight is that this climate is taking an immense toll, psychologically and emotionally and physically, particularly on women of color. When we surveyed, we knew that 70% of the survey respondents were women of color leaders in the first place and women of color in particular. But all executive directors really expressed the sense of balancing way too much, more than they usually do, and they talked about how they did this in terms of more work, more fundraising, making changes in their organizations and also trying to take care of their staff.

And so on the next slide, I wanted to pull up a data point that we found, which was how leaders of color are making changes to the workplace and their workloads in order to account for this climate. So we found some examples such as many leaders have reduced the workday or work week, changed expectations around productivity, developed new policies around leave. And about half are providing resources to support their staff, such as access to mental health services and wellness stipends.

And in the next slide, just wanted to pull up a couple of quotes that really bring this finding home. One executive director told us, "I am holding the organization even more. Staff emotions, constant fundraising, worries about revenue, and balancing child care." So again the importance of sustainability and supporting leaders of color, particularly women, really came up for us as an important intervention.

The next finding is really around the long term financial stability of POC led non-profits. So we found back in March, in April that while most of the organizations surveyed were currently on somewhat stable ground, due to the flexibility and rapid response that we saw from foundation funders, and emergency response funds, that again many are concerned about their own longer term stability. And as the next slide shows, we asked about grant income and revenue sources and whether they were increasing or decreasing. So what we found again, not surprisingly is that for 62% of organizations, emergency revenue was on the rise, because of a lot of the rapid response grants, right? You can also see that earned income actually was on the decrease because organizations had to cancel fundraising events.

One income source that we are monitoring is government funding, because we've already heard that as states lose tax revenues, they're beginning to cancel or withhold contracts that they normally give to non-profit service providers. In particular this month, domestic violence awareness month, we've been hearing about losses of federal and state dollars that are usually given to domestic violence non-profits. In the next slide, we learn that, and we asked about the Cares Act, right, the emergency loans that were provided to small businesses and non-profits and we found that 52% of the people that we surveyed reported receiving these loans from the government and that that correlated with less overall stress. But as these loans don't continue to get renewed, again, there is a concern about long term financial instability.

As the next slide shows, we found that one particular organizational leader, talking about how they're running full force ahead but doing so with deep anxiety that the money might run out. The last finding that I wanted to highlight is actually around systemic change and solidarity. I mentioned that we asked organizational leaders about the uprisings of 2020 and it was clear that organizations led by people of color are, in addition to dealing with the pandemic are also responding to the call to end anti-black racism. And the uprisings have really provided more opportunities for community education and

organizing and cross racial solidarity. There were three particular points that I quickly wanted to highlight in this findings.

So as the next slide shows, for many non-black people of color leaders, there was a desire to engage in solidarity and political education and really building bridges with Black communities and other Black organizations. As the next slide shows, another point that we wanted to highlight is the importance of making sure that Black led organizations are receiving the funding that they need to lead in this struggle. So a lot of non-black community leaders actually that we talked about spoke about the importance of making sure that Black led organizations have the resources that they need.

So where do we go from here? I'm going to wrap up really quickly so we can actually hear from our panelists. We wanted to provide a couple of sets of recommendations very quickly and we do that in our report and we do that with the understanding, right, that oftentimes in crisis points, organizations led by people of color are usually stuck in this cycle of rapid response and recovery. And then oftentimes it's impossible to reimagine and rebuild but right now, there is this opportunity to act differently and so the sets of recommendations we have are first around systemic and policy changes that again are being opened up because of the pandemic, but also because of the uprisings.

A few of these are listed on this slide, around housing, around policing, around access to digital literacy and worker rights. We also wanted to highlight a set of recommendations for philanthropy, right? And this really ranges from making sure that philanthropy is committed to supporting Black and people of color led organizations, that they are aligning their internal commitments of racial equity with their external grant making. So for example, giving above the 5% payout requirement, right, or making permanent some of the changes they put into place, like simplified applications and the like, and really making sure that they're investing in people of color leaders, with an emphasis under long term sustainability.

Lastly, we have a set of recommendations for our sector, the non-profit sector. So we recommend that the non-profit sector and organizations create cultures of well being, really being honest about the effects of trauma and fatigue right now on their staff and on themselves as people of color leaders and also to listen and follow the knowledge and experiences of POC leaders for those organizations that are white led. I will stop there. I know that that's a lot of information but hope that that resonated with you all, right, and it validated many of the experiences that you have. We'll drop in the chat where you can find the report and where that is. You can also find short videos and testimonials, as well as these recommendations and an executive summary of the report as well. So with that, I'll turn it back over to you, Alicia.

And I think before, we actually go into the panel, we wanted to launch one more poll, really quickly to get a sense of how it is that you all are making changes in your workplace. We talked about some of those examples that we heard from organizational leaders, so does any of this resonate with you all, whether it's a reduced work week, putting together time off or regular check ins with your staff, or changes in your activities and programs, how have things shifted in the wake of the pandemic and the uprisings? All right, let's see what we have.

All right, it looks like the emotional well-being is something that is lifted up. It also looks like changes, organizations are making changes in their activities and programs, that those are kind of the biggest changes that people are making, and then we see some others around time off, and lowered

expectations for productivity and the like. All right, so thank you for sharing that. Looking forward to answering questions and hearing from you and I'll turn it over to Alicia again.

Alicia Lueras Maldonado: Thank you, Deepa, for sharing that report and the findings and just wanted to again let everyone know that they can chat in their questions or their reactions to what you have just heard from Deepa and the responses from the survey and the interview. So please feel free to chat those in and we will do our best to take a look at those and try to answer them.

I wanted to again, thank, Johana, Angel, and Henry for taking the time today to spend some time with us this afternoon, and I wanted to start by just asking you to share with us your initial reactions to what stood out in the report. And then as we may get some other questions and chats coming in, we might go ahead and try to get to some of those. That is if you could just start and maybe, Angel, you could start with sharing your initial reactions and then we can move on to Johana and Henry.

Angel Charley: Sure. Thanks, Alicia, and thank you for having this important conversation. My initial reaction to it was this is an authentication of our experience as people of color leaders in the non-profit sector, right? That we feel this, we work through it constantly, we're in community in these experiences and not very often do we have the data to support the experience. This type of information doesn't live somewhere readily available for us to draw upon, to really have tough conversations with other decision makers, stakeholders, and talking about the need for talking about race, talking about systemic inequities. So this is a great starting point. I find myself forwarding some of this information just for people to have, to read it, to know. So, yeah, it's authenticating our experiences is my initial reaction.

Alicia Lueras Maldonado: Thank you, Johana, do you want to share any thoughts that you have with regards to initial reaction?

Johana Bencomo: Yeah, thanks so much, Alicia, and thank you for everyone who's joining us and I feel really honored to be part of this panel, so thank you for having me. Johana Bencomo, I'm the Executive Director of New Mexico CAFe, Las Cruces, New Mexico. Honesty, when I first saw this report, I found myself really emotional as I was reading some of the quotes and some of the results. I found myself feeling an overwhelming amount of empathy for my peers and just... It gave me a pause and a moment of reflection. I obviously hadn't thought about this since the actual survey or the interview and so just reading it really made me feel seen. But it also just brought on a sense of sadness and I just, I was pretty emotional, but I really do feel like the overall report, I just felt very seen by it.

Alicia Lueras Maldonado: Go ahead, Henry.

Henry Brutus: I thought you were coming to me. Good afternoon, everyone. I'm glad to be here and thank you, Alicia, Deepa, and everyone at BMP for putting this together and thank you for our audience. For me the report, I mean I think I echo what Angel mentioned especially that the report was validating. I mean, we hear a lot especially in this time of COVID about we're all in this together but now we have something that actually proves that we're not alone. Because we all work in our bubble, if you will, and we're not sure that everyone else is experiencing what we are.

Initial reactions, I had many going through the report. I think what really stood out was the systemic inequality, right? So the non-profit sector makes up the, it's the third industrial sector in our country, yet we see that even in the non-profit sector, we have persons of color are managing organizations that

have less resources. I kind of pause reading that and ask myself, "Why is that?" So it's just something that's very pervasive in our society unfortunately and I'm glad we're having this conversation so that we can't have it all but we can at least debunk hopefully some of that and start some conversation.

Alicia Lueras Maldonado: There's some questions coming in but I wanted to take a moment to reflect on what we saw in terms of the reactions to the two polls that we shared. And in the first poll we saw that what folks were most concerned about was the resurgent outbreaks of COVID and then a real concern, secondarily to mental health problems and trauma and food and housing instability, and just thinking about the work that you all do within your communities and how you had to shift practices and what you're doing, what are you experiencing most prevalently in your work and how are you having to handle the differences in how you work on a day to day basis and looking at all those things like self care and staff care and what is shifting for you all in your work? And any one of you can start at any time.

Henry Brutus: I think I'll start. I mean COVID, really, it's impacting every single person, so it's not only at an organizational level. So I think it's really being sympathetic in looking at everyone from their own perspective, if you will. So it's not only what's going to work for our organization or a community, but first we have to make sure that people are whole, that people are taken care of, because, especially in the work that I do, people do the work. So if people are not whole and well, then they can't do that work. So I think that's been a real point of reflection for me and for our leadership at our organization is to make sure that we're taking care of our people first, because they're the ones that will take care of others and that continues and has that ripple effect.

Johana Bencomo: Yeah, that's beautiful, Henry, I totally agree with that. So for us at CAFE, we're community organizers. It is not in our nature to organize from Zoom, from a computer over phone. So I think just that alone has really impacted my staff, the organizing staff that has felt really disconnected from our leaders in Southern New Mexico. As the pandemic went on, I had one organizer who was telling me... He organized in Deming, in Lordsburg, where broadband is already an issue, right? And so connectivity was an issue on multiple levels, but he was just telling me like, "I want to go back, save people, implement these new safety protocols," right? And then I have another one on the other end who has asthma and her sister had got COVID, right, and so she's not ready to go back and do that one to one, personal face to face work.

And so really, I have this staff that's in many different places, so I think it's really about implementing policies that aren't blanket policies although this point. They're very individualized and really supporting and meeting staff where they are in this current moment. And then, just really taken moments to... I love the answers on the poll because I definitely tried to implement some of those. Even going as far as paying for an extra stipend for better WIFI now that they're home, right, and... But definitely implementing things like Friday Afternoons Off, right? There's definitely been a sense of like how do we... It feels like the work has doubled. So how do we ensure that we set really strong boundaries for ourselves, because as Henry said it beautifully, like we have to be whole in order to do this work, too.

Alicia Lueras Maldonado: Angel, are there any... Go ahead.

Angel Charley: Yeah, thanks, Alicia. To Henry's point, this touched everyone's lives. And for the folks on our staff, at the Coalition to Stop Violence Against Native Women, this definitely didn't happen in a vacuum and isn't happening in a vacuum, right? At one point, in New Mexico, cases of COVID in tribal community made up 60% of the total New Mexico number. So for our staff it wasn't COVID is happening in these communities. It's like, "COVID's happening in our family. My grandmother got COVID. My sister

has COVID." We had some real loss. Some of our staff's grandparents passed, and how do you expect them to carry this work for their community?

Because this isn't nine to five for us, like if you get into this work, if you get into these movements, it is because we are passionate and we're invested in the social change that needs to happen, and we don't do that in a Monday through Friday, nine to five way, right? We don't get to put this down. And so taking care of our staff and making sure that they are well enough to have the longevity to see some of these issues through, see some of the changes through, it's constantly evolving. And we've implemented some changes that we'll just never come back from because the wellness of our community, depends on the wellness of the staff.

Alicia Lueras Maldonado: I wanted to follow up on that Angel, and then also just acknowledge what Henry and Johana mentioned. As we know, COVID did disproportionately hit communities of color and in New Mexico our Native American Communities were really just devastated. And in terms of what you all need to continue to move your work forward, and really implement, and make some of the changes around staff care, around leadership care, around what your communities might need in order to advance your work for social justice and towards equity, what'd be unique in terms of thinking about your funding, in terms of thinking about how you support your staff? What are the things that could be placed in community? What is up to free will now as you're thinking about that?

Angel Charley: So I can start off. I think one of the biggest issues that come through this, Johana talked about, it's connectivity. It's broadband. This infrastructure does not exist in tribal community and so many of us depended on that and are depending on this, right, to get through COVID. At first, it was like, "How do we stay connected?" Then it became like, "How do we get information?" And now it's like this the longevity of how we do the work that we do. And some people just don't have access to internet and that's not acceptable. Access to broadband is a human right issue. It is a safety issue and that is now more apparent than ever, in addition to all of the other changes that need to happen, so much that need to happen.

Johana Bencomo: Absolutely, completely agree with that, I think rural communities in Southern New Mexico are also impacted by that lack of broadband connectivity. And I would add that there has been very little support for immigrant families, for very low income families and there needs to be some pretty serious structural change that happens at the state level. Because at this point the state and our local communities are going to be the ones that support some of these families, right? It's not going to come from the federal government, so in which ways do we, are we pushing for policies and programs that really continue to expand the safety net and protect so many of our families who were already vulnerable.

I think one of the things that I felt frustrated at the beginning of all of this was that folks were saying how all these things were being exposed. For a lot of us in this work, things were simply being confirmed. We knew that this pain and this struggle lived in our communities and COVID and the pandemic simply confirmed them and poured gasoline on them, right? So we need to see for sure some structural policies that come out of hopefully this upcoming state legislature.

Henry Brutus: I would definitely agree with what Angel and Johana said. I think, I mean, we're connecting to the entire world, so I think before, or while we're doing that, we also need to connect our communities. We also do work in the Southern part of our county and even for employees, I mean they had a hard time connecting so these are folks that have employment, that have income so we can only

imagine that it would be even worse for those who don't. I think the other piece, and Johana said it really well, it's in the survey, it talked about mental health. At least in this part of our country, mental health was already a sort of a much needed service or conversation that we needed to have and COVID just really exposed that. I mean we talked about it before, but I think now we know that we can't just talk about it. We need to have boots on the ground. We need to have programs, services, et cetera, specialists and actually address that.

The other, I think, bigger picture, so there's funding, obviously, we just heard in the report that government funding is probably decreasing and I think that's definitely amiss, because if we're expected to take care of all the government inefficiencies and what they're not doing, then how do we do that without funding? So I think definitely this is a time for funders and hopefully they're on this call today, that they need to talk to the leaders of color and people that are leading these types of organization and see what do you need and actually listen and support that.

And then just final note for me, it's really having conversations and action, right? So really seeing each other as persons and I think that's the only way we'll really start spanning these inequalities that exist is when we all see each other, no matter gender or race or what have you, that we're all equal and I think until we do that, we're going to continue to see some of these systemic inequality.

Alicia Lueras Maldonado: Thank you for sharing your thoughts, it just makes me reflect on what we just heard from Deepa earlier around how the non-profit sector is taking on the role of government in so many ways and filling the gaps and providing basic services to our communities and then the enormous stressors that that is on our organizations. There are a couple of questions coming in and I wanted to look at our chat box and we've got a question... Well, one, there's a legislative committee looking at the broadband issue. So this will most likely be something that is going to be on the call, I don't know if [inaudible 00:44:29] legislative session. And the question is are we POCs with our constituents organizing to be involved at the legislative level and can we partners or agitators help to move this issue? So if you all have any thoughts that you want to share or strategies that you're pursuing, anything kind of head towards preparing for the next couple of months?

Henry Brutus: I'll start with that. I think for anyone who's out there, I think it's important to talk to those who are in elected positions. I mean we, I believe all of us are going to be involved at some level, and we're constantly in communication with our legislators in terms of what's needed in our community. But legislators really need to hear from the folks that elect them. So obviously, if I managed an organization that deals with domestic violence, so if I go to legislator and talk about domestic violence needs, I have a biased interest, right? Whereas the community person is looking at this from, first a personal need but also the community need.

So I think that voice is very important and I'd also say, I mean, it's a time where we're voting, and to really research issues and candidates and make sure we're electing the right people. Because if not, we find ourselves that our community needs are not being met, but more so the personal needs of that elected official or the lobbying need. So it's very important that we research issues and get involved in that level.

Alicia Lueras Maldonado: Johana or Angel, did you have any thoughts on this? And then I wanted to take us to another question, but if there's things that are coming up for you in regards to that?

Johana Bencomo: Yeah, just briefly I'll say that New Mexico CAFE's involved with a couple of white partners in a coalition called Power [inaudible 00:46:22] that's really looking at Climate Change, the impacts of that on communities of color and rural communities, but also through a workforce development lens. And so much of what we discovered in the last year are looking at some of these aspects was that if we want to invest in New Mexico and a green economy, that broadband is actually one of the biggest barriers for rural communities to get some of these jobs. So I know that there's a couple of grassroots organizations that are definitely working on this issue that folks should get connected to.

Alicia Lueras Maldonado: I wanted to ask a question that we had talked about earlier around how we move, if we want to do this larger collaborative work and the relationship building work that would lead towards that greater systemic change that you all have talked about and that Deepa shared in terms of some of the results. What will it take to move past the transactional conversations around race and equity that we often have and there's a question that was just posed from someone up in [inaudible 00:47:33], asking how do they do that work within their organization, right? If they want to better equip [inaudible 00:47:43] leaders, respect or addressing systemic change and if much of this work has been led by people of color and young organizers? What are some approaches around trainings or conversations or how are you looking at engaging leadership and really looking at what is working beyond the transactional conversations of race and equity that often will shutdown forward movement in this type of work?

Angel Charley: So I can start, Alicia, and tell you a little bit about how we do at the Coalition to Stop Violence Against Native Women. We ensure that we have policies and procedures that support native survivor centers, native survivors. When I think about the finding that kind of women of color are carrying this, I think about the women who get into social change work. A lot of times, they're the hardest working, the most determined, and then we find ourselves in positions of leadership, because we were the hardest working. And then we don't necessarily have the tools now that we're in leadership positions, right? It's not a formal education to become a leader and there's what does that mentorship look like so I think that's another piece to kind of think about and ponder.

But if folks are thinking about ways to expand diversity, equity, and inclusion within your own organizations, it is find ways to put people of color in leadership positions in your organizations is probably the most simple of the way, and then really do support them in those roles.

Henry Brutus: And I think, Angel hit it right on. I think there's got to be that commitment to begin with. So you have to commit that, you know what your organization or our organization is going to be an organization that not only promotes diversity but also accepts it. Because I think that's very important, because the way I look at it... At least we're looking at it internally, diversity is many different things, so everyone's in a different place and even if you share a gender or race, sometimes we're also different within that same space, so it's really being able to meet people where they are. Be open minded. Listen to everyone's perspective, and I think that's probably the mindful listening and acceptance is probably something that all of us could actually work on.

Johana Bencomo: I would just add that, actually echo what Angel and Henry said and I think often also for people of color and leadership positions, right, yes, you're probably incredibly hard working and you're also probably directly impacted. And so you're leading work where you're coming from those communities and so perhaps the level of... There really also needs to be some sort of trauma informed health care that you're committed to helping your staff with. Because I think often, and someone... I

became an Executive Director this year in March actually and so I had this really big job in this pandemic and luckily I had folks who provided mentorship and support... and they were peers, people in similar positions and so I think that kind of support is really critical.

Alicia Lueras Maldonado: I wanted to ask how your boards and your funders can really help to create the space for those conversations and then implement those visions? What's coming up for you in terms of what you need from them and how they can be supportive?

Johana Bencomo: Part of me immediately goes to like from funders, as a new Executive Director, I consider myself a very good organizer. I was a good organizer, I loved it. I was good and now I'm in this position and I need to figure out all these other roles and responsibilities and learn all these new things and so often, honestly, simply what I ask from funders is just some grace, like to meet me where I am, right, and have a level of expectation of support that I'm going to ask a lot of questions, that I'm going to be curious, and to meet me in that place and be curious with me and support me as I really try to learn. I think for me, often, those relationships can be really intimidating and so I'm just... but I'm also really relational. So I really appreciated the funders that have met me there at that relational place as opposed to a transactional place and that to me has felt very supportive.

Alicia Lueras Maldonado: Angel and Henry, anything to share on that note?

Angel Charley: Yeah, so I think for board positions, especially if the issue, the board should look like the issue area, right, so whoever's impacted. So for the Coalition to Stop Violence Against Native Women, everyone on our board of directors in some shape or form of capacity also serves our constituency, so our member organizations and they represent them as well. And so that is an easy way to support leaders of color, when it comes to the pivots that need to happen. You don't really necessarily have to justify it in a different kind of way. They really understand the issue along with you.

And then when it comes to funding and funders, some of our most flexible funders, allow us to submit a grant report to them that we would also kind of talk about what we're doing with our federal money, right? So just being flexible about the time, our time, as leaders of color. So just being flexible when it comes to reporting, but also what we get to do with the money. Just let us have it, we're working in the best interest of our community, I promise, and let us get to work.

Henry Brutus: Yeah, I would definitely support that, I think... I'm sorry, I was just going to say for a board, it's just like our elected officials, we have to recruit board members that look like the community we're serving and also have a vested interest in the community we're serving. I think for many years the non-profit sector would go after those who may have the deepest pockets or best connections and that's not necessarily the best people to recruit because they don't have a vested interest in this, what we're discussing today.

As far as funders, I think the only piece I would add to what Johana and Angel said, which says it beautifully, it's really making more funding... and that's hard to say... more funding because they think about cutting but it's to make more funding available for administrative support. So I know in our case, we get a lot of funding come to us for programs and services, but there's a team of people that actually has to manage everyone else who's doing these programs and services, so where does that come from and where's that support, as we talked earlier about mentorship and that's sort of that we all need,

because we don't have all the answers. But where is that support coming from and there's not necessarily that space or that funding allowed or available to make that happen. Sorry, Alicia, that I cut-

Alicia Lueras Maldonado: Thank you. No you're totally, you're fine. Again, just want to remind anyone in the chat, just feel free to send in your reactions and any questions that you might have, as to what you're hearing from our panelists. And Deepa, I wanted to ask you as you're listening to our panelists and the questions that have come in from our attendees, if there are particular things of note that are resonating with you that you want to lift up or even address in terms of the questions?

Deepa Iyer: Yeah, well, I mean first of all, Angel, Johana, and Henry, thank you so much for sharing and it is validating for us to know that the report authenticates as you said, Angel, your experiences and what you're seeing, so we're glad that it can be useful. And just want to ask folks to utilize it, whether it is funder briefings, whether it is meetings with funders whether it is policy maker briefings, please feel free to utilize it and to note that there is strength in numbers as we are able to lift up not just our voices, but the voices of others, too.

I would say, that the one thing, I'll quickly say that resonated with me, I think it was Johana who said this was around being trusted. So particularly when it comes to philanthropy or policy makers, to know that communities of color know, leaders of color know what their communities need, they know how to get those needs met, and what they need is confidence, what they need is sustained funding and investments. What they need is to provide the tools and just to be left alone, right? So that they can do the work that is needed. So I think that whole theme around trusted community organizations on the frontlines know what they're communities need as a theme that came out throughout the report findings as well.

Alicia Lueras Maldonado: Thank you for sharing that. Yes, and we'll be... I think that Deepa actually put in the link to the report earlier so feel free to look at that and we'll drop that into the chat box again as we start moving to a wrap up. It's a great website, lots of information. There are testimonials, videos, just a really great resource out there. And in addition, I just wanted to remind folks that the Race to Lead report is also live and the recording from the session we did a few ago with New Mexico leaders. So I just wanted to remind folks to look at that as well.

When we were talking the other day, getting ready for this panel, we talked a little bit about this notion early on that folks were talking about, "We just can't wait to get back to normal," like, "When are we going to get back to normal already?" And it's now pretty clear that there is no going back to normal, particularly for people of color and folks that do that work that you do. And so I wanted to ask you as you're charting new paths for a systemic change and solidarity and the sustainability that you're doing what is coming up for you and how are you thinking about creating those spaces and places that will support that work? Not going back to normal, but really making the things that you've had to explore and experiment with part of the daily bread, if you will?

Johana Bencomo: I'm happy to jump in first. The other day, I read something about resiliency and how often we very much... See it is a very positive trait, and it is, resiliency's very positive. What we don't often do is reflect on why people were forced to be resilient and thinking about the systems that were created to inherently make some people suffer, and thus forcing people to become resilient. Instead, how do we really think about reconstructing in this moment, reconstructing systems that are going to ensure that people thrive, not despite of all the barriers but because it was a lack of barriers. So how do

we build up a next generation of people who are given that opportunity to thrive and not just be resilient.

And again, I say that knowing that resiliency is important and it is beautiful and powerful, and how do we really challenge the idea that a lot of us were forced to be. And I think this pandemic has really put CAFe certainly in a situation where we're saying, "What are the bolder policy acts? How are we intentionally building a multi racial, multi face, multi, multi people base that can really push for the systemic changes that we need in New Mexico?"

Henry Brutus: I think I'll add to that. I mean, why do we always have to be the resilient ones? So I think that's a good question I would follow up with what Johana said, and I like the way you framed the question, Alicia. I think normal is not great for all of us. So now I think we have an opportunity to create what we would like to see, versus just trying to get back to normal because that wasn't great for everyone.

Angel Charley: What this has brought up for myself and for the coalition in a lot of ways is that the issue of domestic violence or sexual assault doesn't happen isolated, that it intersects with so many other community issues that we've seen. And so to Henry and Johana's point, like all of this has to connect somehow. We have to be able to advocate for multiple issues simultaneously as they intersect with each of the issues that we take on as an organization. And then on a community level, I think about the shift that we've all made toward centering our values, right? So if there were ever anything positive that could have come out of this, when thinking about a just recovery, it really is where does our safety fall on our values scale now, where does education, perhaps your appearance? Where now does that fall on your value scale and we can kind of recreate what our lives get to look like, because I think a lot of us, do have the privilege of getting work remotely and hopefully that builds our work/life balance or some things that we can value now and hold and center those.

And then, lastly, I think about when it comes to the funding pieces of this and I had heard this a couple of weeks back. Like the Stock Market is going to come back, you're funding, like you have wealth, you will bounce back from this, but some of our community programs will not, right? Like in this moment, there is a chance that the programs that we have for our communities will not bounce back if we don't have the funding and that's heartbreaking.

Alicia Lueras Maldonado: Thank you for sharing that all of you and our thoughts and, Angel, that just leads me to the next poll question that we wanted to ask and if Catherine could queue that up. I think it really relates to what all of you just shared in terms of stability. So our last poll for today is how is your organization accessing its financial stability in the long run, assessing it's financial stability in the long run? So you've received a PPP loan, you did not receive it, you're concerned.

Looks like we will get our results here in just a little bit. So it looks like over 50% of folks did receive a PPP loan, which is great, but then a good 50% are concerned. Some concerned about the financials ability in the long run. Thank you for sharing those thoughts with us. I wanted to before we close share just a little bit. Again, to really just thank all of the attendees that joined in today to be part of this webinar and for chatting in your questions and your comments. We really appreciate it, but before we finish, I wanted to give a chance to our panelists and to Deepa to share any final thoughts or reflections before we share of some information and close.

Henry Brutus: I'll just say, and I echo that. Thank you for everyone who tuned in and thank you again for BMP for having this platform. Final thoughts or reflections from me would be even though the report was sobering to me, and it showed that there's a lot of work to be done, but the fact that we have this platform, to me, it's really uplifting in the sense that at least we're talking about these things. Because I think of 10 years ago, we didn't have these conversations, so that's definitely a start. My hope would be that these conversations don't end here, that there's actually the conversation continues, and that there's action that actually comes as a result of these conversations. Thank you for having me today. I really appreciate it.

Johana Bencomo: Yes, absolutely, thank you so much to all of you for having us and to my two colleagues here, it was an honor to meet you both. And I think my takeaway and I mentioned this in our prep call the other day, but, Henry, I didn't know Henry and we're both in Las Cruces, in a fairly small city and apparently small non-profit community, and for me, really creating spaces that aren't just work oriented and about what are we going to do next, right? But that we're creating spaces to just really hear and see and be with each other as leaders in our communities and I certainly really crave that and I crave some of those more relational conversations as opposed to work oriented, what's coming next. And so for me, I really want to be more intentional about reaching out to my colleagues and just having check in conversations.

Angel Charley: Thank you for that, Johana, and yeah, thank you for this. This is a great opportunity for us to kind of talk about these ideas and feelings and emotions that have come up for us so much over the past seven months now. And just kind of my final closing thoughts are we have this kind of pillar with the coalition which is the solutions to violence exist in the communities themselves. Meaning that our communities have the answers and that groups like the ones that we represent right here, are from community and are rooted in community and so the work that CAFE does, the work that Henry does at the La Casa and the Coalition to Stop Violence Against Native Women need ongoing support, so that we can continue to support those solutions.

Deepa Iyer: Thank you, everyone. I think I would just add that one of the fundamental findings of this report is what you know that in order for our communities to survive and thrive, right, our organizations and people of color leaders also have to thrive. So in order for our communities to survive and thrive, we have to be able to thrive and survive, too. So I would just say, if folks are able to, number one, maybe implement a best practice from the report when it comes to sustainability, that's one recommendation. A second is to please share with funders, your funders, and ask them to respond to some of the recommendations that are at the end of the report, in terms of their funding philosophy.

And then, finally, deepen your ecosystem in terms of partnerships, I think that came up in the chat several times, the importance of really building and strengthening and deepening our partnerships with each other so that we can build that, as Henry said, that interconnectedness with each other, and the ability to really build for systemic change that is long lasting.

Alicia Lueras Maldonado: Thank you, all of you, for sharing those reflections and it really speaks to me as I think about the work that we continue to do here in New Mexico and then nationally as well and what an opportunity to be able to work with our partners and our folks at Building Movement Project and being able to have folks like Deepa who take the time to create surveys and polls and digging into the data and producing these reports. It's such great tools and such important work.

So I'm really grateful to our panelists for responding to that initial survey back in April and May to the other folks in New Mexico that responded to that survey. I was very fortunate to be able to interview them one on one to really dig into what that meant and that was really fruitful. The responses and the information that you all shared with us really helped to create the report and the depth of the report, so that it is more than just data and findings, but it tells a story of how people of color leaders were being and still being impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and by the social uprisings that have happened in our country. So again just deep gratitude for all of the work.

We, I think, just shared in again the link and maybe we can drop it in one more time to the website if you want to download the full report, which is called [On the Frontlines](#) and additionally, we dropped in earlier the link to the report on the [Race to Lead Revisited](#). So please take a moment to go visit those websites, download those reports. As Deepa said, the more you can share those, talk with your own colleagues about them, talk with funders. Do funder briefs to really help support each other as leaders of color to really address the systemic changes that we want to make happen here in New Mexico and nationally and even beyond nationally.

So, we've come to the close of our session today. Thank you all for being a part of this and if you have any questions at all, feel free to reach out to us via email or through social media or through the website. Again, thank you all for being a part of today's session, we really appreciate it. Have a blessed day.

Deepa Iyer: Thank you, Alicia. Thanks, everyone.