

Webinar: Race to Lead in the Milwaukee Area

22 September 2020 #RacetoLead

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

Alicia Lueras Maldonado: Hello and welcome. I am told that we have got some folks that are in our room now for our webinars. So thank you for joining us this morning. My is Alicia Lueras Maldonado, I am really happy to be here with you all this morning for our Race to Lead in New Mexico conversation and discussion. So thank you all for joining us. And yes, I didn't realize we were live and we were, so please, if you are in the webinar right now, please feel free to chat in your name, the organization that you work with and why you were interested in joining us this morning as a way to greet each other.

This morning we are going to hear from Ofronama Biu who's our Senior Research Associate with Building Movement Project. We're going to have our two panelists: Laura Harris, the executive director of [Americans For Indian Opportunity](#) and James Jimenez, the executive director of [New Mexico Voices For Children](#). Again, my name's Alicia Lueras Maldonado and also joining us this morning are the co-directors of the Building Movement Project. We have Frances Kunreuther here and Sean Thomas-Breitfeld. So we're just really honored to have them here as well. And just to congratulate you both on this really important work in pushing this conversation forward. So thank you. A couple of housekeeping notes, attendees are not visible for this webinar. So again, we're really using this chat as a way to get to know each other.

Please feel free also during this time together to chat questions that you might have for Ofronama or for the panelists as we start to move through the brief and the presentation of the findings from the survey and then the discussion from our panelists as well. This webinar is recorded and we will share the link as well as other materials and follow up after today's conversation. So a quick look at our agenda, we're going to review the findings from our survey from the [2019 Race to Lead survey](#). That was a national survey. We'll have some clarifying data and questions and then we'll have our discussion with our panelists and then a Q&A. So I think that's our agenda, I'm going to go ahead and hand it over. Here we go, sorry. Quick other introduction to our panelists. So Laura Harris is the executive director with Americans For Indian Opportunity. James Jimenez is the executive director of New Mexico Voices For Children. And again, from the Building Movement Project team, we just really want to thank you all again for joining us on this panel, taking the time out of your very busy schedules to have this conversation with us today. So thank you to our panelists as well. And now I am going to hand it over to Ofronama who will start to share a brief and the findings from the survey that we did. Ofronama, can you hear us?

Ofronama Biu: Thank you. Thank you so much. Awesome. Great. So first I'll tell you about the Building Movement Project. It is a national research organization that provides resources and tools to help the nonprofit sector engage in progressive social change. And our work is in three areas moving from right to left. The first is movement building. So that's looking at ways organizations collaborate to have a bigger impact than they would on their own. In the middle is service and social change, which is developing the capacity of human services organizations to address the root causes and the conditions clients are facing and engaging clients in that process. And then finally leadership, that's looking at how nonprofits can promote effective and inclusive practices, and that's where the [Race to Lead](#) work falls.

So back in 2016, the Building Movement Project launched a nationwide survey on race in the nonprofit sector. And it was designed to answer the question of why there are so few leaders of color in the

sector, and it's not a new question, but what BMP was really trying to find out was why things haven't changed even though there are all these leadership programs that were developed specifically to help leaders of color advance. What the survey results really made clear was that the focus on people of color as opposed to the systems and people and structures that are in place restricting opportunity was the wrong focus. And people of color were just as qualified and ready to lead but were in need of opportunity.

So out of that report, several reports were published. And we decided to do another survey in 2019 because it made a lot of sense. The first survey was done before the election, before ushering in a different agenda when it comes to race and racism. It was also a chance for us to see how things have changed since 2016 and ask them new questions. So we released a report [Race to Lead Revisited](#) in the spring that has results from the national findings. And we're also working with different regional areas to explore how race in the nonprofit sector plays out in those areas including of course New Mexico today, but also we've released reports from Austin, Texas. We're coming out with a report for Detroit, Michigan. We've done Memphis, Tennessee and Milwaukee, Wisconsin. So this report, the New Mexico report will be released next week.

And we'll be sure to share with panelists. The main findings from this report come from three sources. So the Race to Lead survey, there were 5,200 people who responded to the survey this time, including 261 nonprofit staff of New Mexico. We also did focus groups in December 2019 in Albuquerque organized around four demographic groups: millennial and gen Z people of color, millennial and gen Z white people, gen X and baby boomer people of color, and also gen X and baby boomer white people. We also did some individual interviews with nonprofit leaders in New Mexico.

So I'll tell you who took the survey. In New Mexico, there's a larger share of people of color compared to the national sample. So New Mexico, it is a 55% people of color compared to 41% nationally. And New Mexico sample also had a much larger share of respondents who identify as Hispanic or Latinx and Native American and indigenous compared to the national sample. And there are fewer black or African American respondents and Asian-American respondents and no Arab American respondents in the New Mexico sample. The Mexico sample had a larger percentage of respondents who indicated they were immigrants than the national sample with 17% compared to 10% nationally. And the New Mexico sample's older than the national sample. So for example, millennials made up 38% of the state's sample compared to 47% nationally.

Some of the top organization types that respondents worked for included advocacy, human and social services, health, and mental health education, housing, and homelessness, and also community organizing. In terms of the roles respondents had, as shown on the slide, New Mexican respondents were more likely than those nationwide to work in line or admin staff positions, that was 35% compared to 26% nationally. Respondents of color in New Mexico were somewhat less likely to be a [inaudible 00:09:47] admin staff positions than white respondents while the reverse was true nationally. On the other hand, New Mexico respondents overall were less likely to be in senior management or director roles, and also less likely to be an executive director or CEO roles than respondents nationally.

And when you look at people of color in New Mexico who responded to the survey, they were somewhat less likely to be executive directors or CEOs than white respondents. So the gap in New Mexico was just two percentage points compared to nine nationally. So I'm going to show you the key findings that will be highlighted in the report. So they'll cover economic wellbeing and nonprofit staff the leadership aspirations of staff and the importance of networks and the impact networks have on

careers, leads and funding. I'll also go through the racial composition of the nonprofits in New Mexico and the impact on staff experience and finally perspectives on how to make change at organizations when it comes to diversity, equity and inclusion, and also make change in the sector.

So first, survey participants were asked a number of questions related to their economic well being including their salaries, and as shown on the left, people of color were more likely to say that they were not being paid a salary that was high enough for their needs and that it was often or always a concern. So that was 41% of people of color compared to 34% of white respondents. And then on the right compared to white respondents, people of color were also more likely to say they often or always contend with being paid less than their peers for the same work. So that was 29% of people of color compared to 17% of white respondents. Survey participants were also asked about performance and cost of living raises. As shown on the right performance based raises were not common in New Mexico overall, but people of color and white respondents were similar in their reports of receiving a performance based rate.

On the other hand, people of color in New Mexico were less likely to report having received a cost of living increase, as shown on the left that was 33% of people of color saying they had gotten their cost of living increase in their time at the organizations compared to 38% of white respondents. Again, cost of living raises were less common in New Mexico, and there were some other findings that point to additional economic disparities between people of color and white respondents in New Mexico. So for example, when it comes to social economic class, people of color were more likely to say that they were low income or working class in childhood and currently, people of color in New Mexico were also much more likely report they were currently financially supporting family outside of their households. And those were at rates similar to the national sample.

And also in response to a question about whether respondents relied on another source of income to support their families, white respondents in New Mexico and nationally were slightly more likely to say that they were relying on another source of income whether another job or a spouse. So these disparities and salaries and raises could reflect both the failure to appropriately compensate people of color as well as broad disparities between funding for organizations led by and employing a large number of people of color compared to white staff. And one finding that relates to this is that people of color were more likely to report that their organizations had a budget of 1 million or less than white respondents both in New Mexico and nationally. So the next finding is on leadership aspirations and networks. The key finding of the national Race to Lead report series is that respondents of color were more interested in pursuing nonprofit leadership positions than their white counterparts.

And a similar pattern to be found in New Mexico we're half of respondents of color who are not already executive directors or CEOs wanted to be one day compared to just 22% of white respondents. So nonprofit executives and inspiring leaders, we know the career support, there were several positive trends that we found related to mentors and networks of people of color, there were present in New Mexico, there were different from the national findings. So for example, as shown on the right and in blue, people of color in New Mexico were more likely than their white peers to report having received internal mentoring so that's mentoring on the job, that was 52% of people of color and 44% of the white respondents. In contrast, nationally on the left, white respondents were more likely to have internal mentoring than people of color. Both nationally and in New Mexico, people of color were more likely to have mentors outside of their workplaces but the gap was larger in New Mexico.

People of color were 12 percentage points more likely to say they had mentors outside their organizations than white respondents in New Mexico compared to just three percentage points nationally. Additionally more people of color in New Mexico said that their networks had a positive impact on their career advancement than white respondents. In contrast, nationally white respondents were more likely to say networks had a positive career impact than people of color. So here's a quote from the survey respondent who said race or ethnicity only recently became a positive for them. And that was because the agency they were working for was culturally-specific and they wanted to reflect that by having the agency led by someone who's Latinx. So despite the positive trends of mentoring, New Mexico findings show that people of color still face racialized barriers and report that they lack other types of support that are key to professional advancement of the sector.

So, as shown on the left, people of color in New Mexico were more likely to say they often or always lacked role models than their white counterparts. This is noticeably lower for people of color in Mexico than nationally. As shown on the right, people of color were also more likely to say they often always lacked social capital or networks than white respondents. So again, both of these gaps between people of color and white responders were slightly smaller than the national sample but they were still meaningful. People of color in the focus groups said their networks opened access to employment and also connected them with organizations they could work with or partnerships. Many participants, including people of color of all ages, as well as the white millennials observed that New Mexico's professional networks are largely segregated and that the larger networks are dominated by white leaders. So for example, as seen in this quote, one participant shared that some networks are just not welcoming to people of color.

So getting into how networks can translate into outcomes, more people of color said race had a positive impact on advancement in New Mexico and people of color nationally. So 45% of people of color in New Mexico compared to 32% nationally saying race had a positive impact on their career advancement. And as shown here, 42% of people of color in New Mexico said that race had a negative impact on their career advancement and the figure is lower than people of color nationally, but dramatically higher than just the 5% of white respondents. Here's a quote from the survey participant who said she believes she was passed over for a program director position for a white man, and her predecessor was a woman of color wasn't taken seriously when she was in that role. And she didn't want that to happen again.

Another important aspects of networks and relationships has to do with fundraising. People of color in New Mexico and nationally who responded to the survey were more likely than the white survey respondents to say they often are always lacked relationships with funding sources. So in New Mexico, 32% of people of color said that was the case compared to 17% of white respondents in New Mexico. We also noticed that white respondents were eight percentage points as likely to report this challenge in Mexico than white respondents nationally. In the focus groups for generation X or baby boomer, people of color, the participants talked a lot about the challenge of raising funds in New Mexico and the lack of funding for organizations led by people of color.

Participants also described the conflict between wanting the opportunity to access corporate philanthropy on one end so that they could support their organizations. But on the other hand, feeling a sense of distress from corporations that have been inflicted harm on communities of color. So the next topic has to do with the racial composition of nonprofits in New Mexico. Survey respondents reported on the racial composition of the nonprofits they worked for and we, in particular, were interested in looking at who's on the board and who's in senior leadership. So to better look at differences across the nonprofit organizations, we categorize nonprofits into three groups. The first highlighted here is white

run in which the board of directors and senior leadership are at least 75% white. Next is people of color led where there are at least 50% of people of color both the board of directors and in leadership roles.

And that in gray is all others. So all the other organizations that don't meet the threshold for the other categories. So nationally, 45% of all respondents reported working organizations where the board of directors and staff and top leadership roles were white-run. So that's at least 75% white. In New Mexico, just 19% of respondents worked for white-run organizations. In contrast, 14% of all respondents, so that's nationally, worked for people of color led nonprofits in which at least half of the board and senior leadership are people of color. And that figure was much higher in New Mexico we're 39% of New Mexico respondents worked for people of color led organizations. As shown is this figure, people of color from New Mexico were much less likely report working for white-run organizations. So that was 17% compared to 33% nationally. And white people from New Mexico are more than twice as likely to report working for people of color led organizations. That's 19% of white respondents in New Mexico compared to just 7% nationally.

Survey responders were asked a series of questions about their workplaces. And we looked at how their experiences varied by organization type. So for example, as highlighted here in response to the statement, I would be happy if I worked at the organization three years from now, respondents in white-run organizations had an average level of agreement of 6.2 compared to 8.4 out of 10 for respondents in people of color led organizations and 8.2 out of 10 and all other organization types. And a similar pattern is visible for the statement I feel I have a voice in my organization, in which the average agreement in white-run groups for all respondents in New Mexico was 6.8 compared to 8.6 in people of color led groups and 8.2 out of 10 in all other organization types. And then finally, for this statement, my organization offers fair and equitable opportunities for advancement and promotion, the average level of agreement for respondents in white-run groups was just 5.2 compared to 8.0 in people of color led organizations in New Mexico, and 7.1 at all other organization types.

And these trends I've mention didn't mirror the national findings. So many people of color from the focus groups and interviews know that their boards and leadership were diverse already. But still they were really emphasizing that more work is necessary to build representation of people of color in top leadership roles and on boards and to support organizations led by people of color in New Mexico. And it's still the case, as we confirm in the Race to Lead data New Mexico that there are still more people of color among the community served by the organization in non-senior leadership staff than among board and senior leadership. So here's a quote from a focus group participant who, reflecting on the need for more people of color leadership said it's important to have people who really understand and can reflect community. There's also a need to support people of color who are already in leadership.

Several executive directors and CEOs of color described the frustrating experience of being the only leaders of color in the room when they're working in partnership with other nonprofits or government officials or even funders. And when we interviewed local leaders, they also said they have to prove themselves in ways that white leaders are not expected to and face unequal expectations. So for example, here's a quote from a woman of color interview who talked about how she faces doubt on whether she can deliver when she's working with new agencies. Leaders of color also have to deal with that doubt from funders. So for example, a woman of color who worked for decade-old organization said they have a great reputation, but still get asked a lot of questions and to fulfill many requirements from these funders that white-led organizations would not have to deal with.

Our last finding has to do with diversity, equity, inclusion efforts in our organizations and in the sector. So nonprofits in the United States are taking steps to become more diverse, equitable, inclusive. And this pattern is apparent in New Mexico. We asked people in the survey if their organizations had some type of DEI initiative or activity and 73% of responders overall said this was the case in New Mexico. Respondents who reported their organizations had ongoing DEI efforts were asked what specific actions their organizations were taking, so as shown here, what was most common in New Mexico was clarifying that diversity, equity, inclusion is central to the organization's purpose and its mission, addressing ways that racial inequity and bias, in fact issues the organization works on and working with the community on race, equity and inclusion.

Other strategies were less common in New Mexico than among the nationwide respondents. And those included increasing representation on board and advisory committees, providing training on diversity, equity, inclusion, developing your recruitment strategies to increase diversity and measuring organizational diversity. So that these latter strategies are focused on diversity tracking, recruitment and training, the fact that they're less common in New Mexico might reflect the higher organizational diversity being reported in the state compared to organizations nationwide. Focus groups participants in particular talked about recruitment strategies to address board and staff diversity. So many white focus group participants worked organizations with majority white boards of directors. They said they were considering efforts to expand, but weren't sure how to do so.

And then some of the white focus group participants said their organizations have recruited board members of color, but there was a lot of attrition because new members didn't feel welcomed. And that's reflected in this quote here from a white gen X baby boomer focus group participant who said that all the board members of color they recruited left. One focus group participant of color emphasized the need for a critical mass of people of color on the board. So not just one or two people in order to really have an impact. People of color and white focus group participants discussed strategies to increase staff diversity as well, like designing job descriptions that were open to the widest pool of applicants, emphasizing the organization's commitment to DEI, even changing requirements.

And as with reflections about board diversity, many of the white focus group participants said they had trouble with retention amongst staff of color. We asked for survey participants aside from having a DEI strategy or initiative if the organization and leadership was committed to DEI. And survey respondents working for people of color led organizations were significantly more likely to agree that their organizational leaders were committed to DEI than those white-run organizations. One final piece of data has to deal with strategies that would best address DEI, not only within individual organizations, but in the sector at large. New Mexico survey participants gave high ratings to leadership development programs for people of color. And we asked focus group participants about this, and they emphasized that leadership programs should focus less on developing the skills of individual people of color who are already prepared and talented and instead invest in making spaces where people of color can lead from their own life experiences and envision new systems and models for leadership.

Survey respondents in New Mexico also identified that enhanced philanthropic support for people of color led organizations is also an effective strategy to improve the sector's diversity. They rated that 8.1 out of 10 overall. Focus group participants echoed the need for more funding for organizations led by people of color and challenged funders to address their own leadership composition and their own internal practices that they believe contributes to the lack of diversity in operations and also decision-making among funders. So for example, there's a quote for a focus group participant who emphasized that when you give money to people of color led organizations, they will know how to use it effectively.

So I'll share the opportunities that Building Movement Project identified to make change within individual organizations. And that includes leadership taking a stand, assessing the experiences of people of color, making sure that all stakeholders understand the historic structures, that undergird racism and creating policies and practices that ensure equity and addressing racism and other forms of discrimination where it may occur. [inaudible 00:26:44] ensuring that leadership including boards reflect the community served and that leaders of color have real voice and power and finally creating benchmarks and continuously measuring results and making changes as needed. For the sector, a big opportunity we identified is funders financially supporting and scaling up people of color led organizations and funders and nonprofits in partnership with each other and with the community engaging in systems change work, and advocacy to address inequities. So I'll turn it over there and thank you so much.

Alicia Lueras Maldonado: Thank you Ofronama. I just want to, again, remind everyone to please use the chat box and if you have questions or reactions to this information, I know it's a lot that we're trying to share with you this morning, I just posted in the chat the website racetolead.org. If you go to that website, you can take a look at the findings and the reports as well as the initial survey, there's blog posts, lots of really great information. So please feel free to take a look at the initial findings that are coming out. Again, the New Mexico report, the complete report will be out next week. So what we're sharing with you today is a brief on the initial findings. But please go to racetolead.org, if you want to learn about the national survey and the information that is already up there. And chat in any questions and reactions that you have.

We wanted to do a couple of polls for you. So the first one, have you ever attended a diversity and/or equity training? So, if attendees want to do this quick poll for us, that would be fantastic. And then we'll move into talking with our panelists James and Laura. Okay. So it looks like a majority of folks have attended. 83% have attended, 15% no, and there's a few folks that aren't sure. So good information for us to know. Thank you for sharing that. We had another quick poll that we wanted to do as well before we move into... Conversations about race and equity are common in my workplace.

o another quick poll for you to respond to. And yes, it looks like 86% of folks are saying yes, that they are. So that is good news. 12% no, we definitely have some work to do to make sure that these conversations are having an impact, changing how we work together. So thank you for sharing in those two polls. I want to go ahead and open up our conversation with Laura Harris and James Jimenez. And just some initial reactions as to what stood out for you, from the findings that are Ofronama just shared with us. And maybe Laura, if you want to start, and then we'll go to James that way. Sometimes there's a lag, so we'll go that way. Laura, and then James.

Laura Harris: Thank you, Alicia. I'm really glad to be here at this great group and such a wonderful group of people who have tuned in today. This is really important work and I think it's funny what really stood out to me immediately in the report was that New Mexico, we are the majority, people of color are the majority in the state. I don't think we say that. I know I don't say it to myself enough. I don't think we really believe it yet. Maybe I'm just talking about me personally, so it's always really good to see that and for us to share that with others. And it really, really shines light on if we work collectively, if we work together, there really shouldn't be any problem that we can't solve together, any policy that we can't change.

And so I think that really calls on us to take advantage of that majority situation. The other thing that really stood out and I don't know why either because you know this intuitively is that white boards

appoint white senior staff, that's just a given. But to see it again, to see it see the numbers, things that we know anecdotally intuitively, to see it, to see the graphs, to see the actual numbers, to know that there were scientific research and that's what really makes this research so important. So I'm glad to be here to daily Alicia, thank you.

Alicia Lueras Maldonado: Thank you, Laura. James, will you share with us some of your initial thoughts and then folks, please feel free to send in your questions in the chat box in reaction to anything that you're hearing this morning.

James Jimenez: Well, Alicia there was a couple of things that stood out to me that I found really interesting. One was having to do with sort of the leadership aspirations. There seemed to be a really strong commitment from people of color within nonprofit network who have those aspirations to serve in those leadership positions. The second, the quote from the person that said that only recently it became a positive to be a person of color and in the network and in a leadership role and that tells me that on one hand that's very sad that a person has that feeling that maybe they didn't see themselves or were welcomed into these leadership roles in the past, but it also gives me a little bit of joy in this to think that maybe we are finally recognizing that people's lived experience does matter in the way that organizations are staffed and run.

And I think as Laura pointed out that the critical need to have people of color making executive level decisions whether it's on the board or at the executive level staff, I think is really, really important.

Alicia Lueras Maldonado: Thank you, James. And I'm looking at our chat now, and there's a question coming in related to philanthropic organizations and funding, right, donors and funding. And I know we wanted to talk a little bit about what do leaders of color need from collaborators and funders to actually have the power to make these executive decisions? And so this question was can black indigenous people of color leaders be authentically empowered in these philanthropic orgs if the donors and boards of these foundations are predominantly white? So maybe we can just jump into this conversation around what do you see happening? What do you all need to be more effective leaders in your work? How has that been and what lessons are we learning and what changes do we need to make? And so Laura and James, if you all want to reflect on that, we'd love to hear from you.

Laura Harris: James, do you want to start?

James Jimenez: Okay, sure. I'll go ahead and start. Yeah. That's a great question and something I was actually thinking about and what do we need? What we need is for philanthropy to be less prescriptive. What we need is for philanthropy to recognize that building strong, powerful organizations in which we're able to develop the staff that is going to succeed us and continue to do the work in powerful ways that we need the time, we need to be able to build relationships. Philanthropy needs to recognize that when we hire a new person, that person certainly comes to organization with some skills, but we need some time to make sure that we can bring them up to speed in the way that we do the work, like Voices For Children, we do our work subtly different than maybe some other organizations do.

My mantra to all of our national funders is significant, multi-year general support dollars that kind of grates in philanthropy a lot of times because they want us to be doing a specific type of work in a particular way. I don't think that that's effective in a place like New Mexico where the needs can be very, very different and the way that organizations do their work can be very, very different. We do a lot of

work with Somos un Pueblo Unido and the way that they do their work as a grassroots organization is very, very different than the way that we do it as a "grass-tops" organization. And that the same philanthropy can't overlay kind of the same sort of expectations on us that they would on Somos or on Somos that they would on us.

And recognizing that leaders of color particularly for those of us that know and understand kind of the landscape that we're working within, do have a great skills and great knowledge to effectively accomplish the work. And basically what I'm saying is they need to trust us more.

Laura Harris: Yes, I agree with James on all of that. New Mexico is such a unique place. And foundations really need to understand what New Mexico is, who we are. Several foundations do a really good job with that. Of course, the Kellogg, Marguerite Casey Foundation. But inherently philanthropy is based on the colonial system. I mean, even worse, it's based on the plantation economy. So in the United States, we don't just have capitalism, we have this plantation economy on top of it. Meaning that it's a very paternalistic system. And I think that's changing a great deal. I think foundations internally are looking at themselves and finding ways to change. That's really at the beginning stages. But it's a system itself. We collaborate with several Maori groups in New Zealand.

And we always have to explain to them this whole fundraising thing. And this need for philanthropy in the United States. They have social safety nets in place where the government helps take care of people in need and addresses inequities. It's not perfect but they don't have to have this paternalistic system where this wealth that was built on colonialism and colonial practices, it just set up for we have the money, we know what's best, here, follow these instructions. We're seeing foundations pivot and saying we're going to fund communities to do what they think is important. And those foundations I think are really helping to change philanthropy.

Alicia Lueras Maldonado: I'm forgetting to unmute myself. Thank you. I mean, I think what you both were saying from your own experiences and the work that you all have done in New Mexico is really resonating. We're seeing some questions come in. And I wanted to ask about what are the actual practices and strategies that we need to put in place, right, to make these changes and how have your work with other collaborators and relationships you have built helped to do this work that you all are doing around race, equity, inclusion, creating the strategies that you need to advance your work? And so I know relationships and collaboration in New Mexico, it's a unique place where so much of our work is done through that. And so if you could talk a little bit about how you all do that work and then thinking of how will then that up to sort of shift what funding will look like and resources for the work that we need done in the state.

Laura Harris: I would just say, first of all, that we are all victims of the US education system. So we don't know about each other. We don't know about ourselves. And I think one of the first steps that foundations could do is to educate themselves, to ask the community to come in and explain their history, explain their experience in the United States. And I think in order to create relationships across communities of color, we found that when we were doing anti-racism community organizing, it really began with groups coming together and sharing their experiences of oppression. Sharing their histories because our histories are not included in the education system. And in that way you created this foundation of a trusting relationship and as the work evolved and you moved forward or it became more difficult, more complex because you have this foundation of understanding each other, of knowing each other, the work didn't get bogged down or stopped because of these mistrust or this misunderstanding of cultural and historic issues.

And I think foundations could do that very easily. They could ask their grantees to come in and educate them. Sometimes foundations feel like they've already been that, they know that, but in New Mexico, in particular, we have such a unique history, unique experience that I think it's really important to people who want to fund us here should have what we call Indian 101. They should understand the difference of people who feel that they are directly descendant of Spain versus those who were of mixed blood and indigenous blood. So I think that's really important.

James Jimenez: Yeah. I couldn't agree more Laura that the whole notion of understanding relationship is built around an understanding of each other. I've come to believe that really the work that we do at Voices and anti-racism work requires two things. There's the [inaudible 00:43:57] piece of it, right? There's the intellectual understanding, the knowledge, the facts that you need to know, the way you do the work, what's good policy, what's bad policy? How does the data reflect the lived experiences of people of color versus white people? But there's also the heart piece. And that's the much more difficult piece. And that's what Laura is talking about is I think that having that intellectual understanding is necessary but it's not sufficient to do true anti-racism work. To do true anti-racism work, people have to bring an open heart in addition to an open mind.

That's one of the things that we've tried to do at Voices where we have been, I think, rightly criticized in the past for having too much of a deficit-based approach to data and information that we were providing. I think that was an accurate criticism. And to some degree it still is. What we've tried to do though, is take a step back and reflect on, well, how do we feel about the information that we are presenting? How is it impacting the communities that we say that we are advocating for? And so, first of all, asking those questions of our external friends and partners and colleagues. But about two to three years ago, what we really started doing was reflecting internally on how... You cannot be fully anti-racist in American society, I don't believe, because we have been so inundated, so trained about how we look at each other on a daily basis.

Our society is so deeply racist that I think it requires some really tough work that particularly when you have a mixed staff, that it can be very, very painful for people, but I think it's absolutely necessary if we're really going to do true anti-racism work, being willing to open up our own hearts and as Laura says, share our own experiences and listen to the experience of our colleagues. We've been through a fair amount of that at places. I know it's not always easy, it can be very difficult, but I really think it is necessary in order for us to understand how to better interact with the grassroots partners that we work with and to really understand racism in America and how it has impacted us.

Alicia Lueras Maldonado: I appreciate you sharing that James and Laura, and just what you're saying is really resonating with me. And there's some questions and reactions coming in from our chat that I want to share. Julia has shared, I moved here from North Carolina and I found BEI work in New Mexico is very different because of the cultural and historical context here. So I think both of you all are acknowledging that that is a challenge. And so oftentimes we get stuck, right, when we're trying to have conversations around race and equity and our mixed heritage, right? Many of us, myself included as a [inaudible 00:47:09], half Spanish, I have Native American, I have African, I mean it's like, you chop off one hand and like... I mean, you're trying to figure out how to make sense of this.

And so I think we often get stuck. And so there's a question here from Antoinette that I think is... How do we then take the learnings and teaching opportunities to advance this work so that we don't get stuck and shut down again because this is really work that does call for a lot... It's hard work, right? We

need a lot of grace. We need a lot of being able to listen to each other. So what have you all seen that is working for you to advance those conversations and the work within what you all are doing?

James Jimenez: Well, I want to add one little tidbit of information before I directly answer that question. I think that, well, our history of New Mexico is very, very different than say, North Carolina's. I really do not believe that we can truly understand race in America without understanding the black experience. And really, I made a trip to Montgomery, Alabama a year and a half ago, and visited the justice institute and the Legacy Museum and the National Memorial for Peace and Justice. And that was such a profoundly important experience for me to understand that even the way that I think about myself, even the way that New Mexico law was created was profoundly influenced by what Laura pointed out with the plantation economy and our whole perspective of black people's experience in the world, in America, even in New Mexico. To a large degree, we've somewhat denied that there were black people in the very first groups of Europeans that came to this part of the world.

Well, there were. Black people have always been part of the New Mexico experience yet we seemingly choose to ignore that experience. But getting to Antoinette's question, I think that one of the things that's really important is platforms like this for people to hear each other speaking about this and know that they're not alone, that there's a lot of power collectively. The work that Laura does is similar to but very different than the work that we do at Voices. But that doesn't mean... I mean, collectively, I think we have a power and an ability to frame these messages and to continue to speak about them openly and publicly and proudly and in a not-afraid way that really advances the knowledge. And it seems that the murders of black men and women that have been taking place and others that have been taking place more recently have really heightened the sensitivity of Americans to the deep racism in our society. And it feels to me like a fairly important time that we can't let pass that we've got to do it collectively with really powerful voices.

Laura Harris: I think James covered it. I think that's exactly right.

Alicia Lueras Maldonado: Yeah. And Laura, you and I were talking about this yesterday, so James, thank you for really recognizing the connection that we all have to support each other. There was a question from Allen around what other suggestions could be made to allow people who are on boards, right, black indigenous people of color folks to be able to, I'm trying to find it, okay. If you're in an organization, what are the suggestions for making new board members who are people of color feel welcome, engaged, and part of a mission? What are the things that you will have seen that are working or that need to be done in order to allow folks that are on boards that are people of color to advance the missions of their organizations?

Laura Harris: I think one of the things is, well, my parents were involved in integrating our hometown of Lawton, Oklahoma in the early '60s. And what they found worked is they created a Native American, African American and Anglo-coalition. And that included James's mother-in-law, his mother-in-law and my mother worked together quite a bit. So they began to socialize. They took turns meeting in each other's homes and they became really good friends. And again, it's that trusted relationship that allows you to be creative and innovative within that group. And what we ought to do more of, we should be very conscious and as James says, indigenous communities have issues with anti-blackness. They need to talk about it. But the best way to do that is invite other people to join your organization, make your organization already people of color friendly, and then your new board members are going to feel comfortable already.

I mean, even rotary club, [inaudible 00:53:06] invite, just very intentionally purposefully, invite folks, make them welcome and make sure that they stay and contribute to the thinking. Often corporations make silly mistakes that if they've had a person of color at the table, that person would have gone. You can't do that. So being there, just it's hard to articulate it for me, but I don't have all the answers, but I know that when we come together and collectively come up with ideas, we do a better job at addressing root causes, we do a better job of understanding each other. So it's not just one individual's idea of how to make people of color more welcome on the board, that organization has to do that internal work, creating relationships with themselves, and then bringing on other people to get better ideas of how you go about getting more people of color.

I mean, the most important thing is you hire people of color. We often get calls here at Americans [inaudible 00:54:29] opportunity. How do we get more people, indigenous people in the Peace Corps? How do we hire more Indians in this type of business? Well, the first thing you do is you hire Native American staff to recruit Native American staff, or you hire people of color to recruit and retain people of color.

James Jimenez: I agree with what Laura said and I want to add one other thing that I've served on boards where it really felt familiar like I was token brown person. And the board really made no effort to really try and find out who I am or what my thoughts or feelings are about. It was a health care organization. And while I learned a lot about the sort of the health care that that particular organization was engaged in, it really did feel to me like I was there to check a box. So in addition to what Laura was talking about, the building the relationships and recruiting people of color to talk to other people of color, it's also important for boards to recognize that a few kind words, a way of cultivating interest in an individual, learning more about their history and what they can bring, the perspectives that they can bring to a board, I think is really important.

And that doesn't happen during the board meeting, right? It's got to happen in a capacity outside of sort of the business portion of a board's time together.

Alicia Lueras Maldonado: Thank you for that. And there's some great comments coming in around how boards can do better work. I want it to think a little bit here and get your reactions on if you're thinking ahead in the next three to six months out and we're still dealing with the COVID pandemic and how that's affecting people of color disproportionately, particularly in New Mexico and our native communities really being impacted, nationally seeing our black brothers and sisters, those communities, immigrant communities, the Latino communities and rethinking out in terms of the types of work that you're doing now, what is trending? What do you think that you're going to need to be able to continue to advance your work in light of all of these things that we're seeing with regard to the social unrest, COVID?

What are you going to need? And if there are particular things that you're seeing that are trending or that are actually working that we need to lean into, I would love to hear from you all on that.

Laura Harris: James, you want to start?

James Jimenez: Sure. Well, I think that if we are truly going to see this time in America as being transformational, then philanthropy, the places where there are money and power need to continue to evolve and change. So I'm encouraged by... We are fortunate, very, very fortunate to get money from

national foundations. They, just really in the past six or seven months have changed the way that they are thinking about funding us. And they're doing two things. One is they're asking us how we are working with, because we are a grassroots organization, how are we incorporating the needs of community in the way that we think about and do our work? And for us at Voices, that's meant developing deeper relationships with organizations like Somos and [inaudible 00:58:44] and El Centro and partnership for community action and others.

So that's a piece of it. Philanthropy can help encourage building those kinds of relationships, but they also need to respect that the time that our partners commit to working with us, it's not free. They have to be willing to provide resources, whether that's to them directly or through us, either way, I think that that's vitally important. And if they want to help continue to build a stronger movement like different more so ideas, Somos talks about her 20-year power building strategies that they have. And I think that that's absolutely right, that if we're going to be transformational, that's one of the things that has to happen. And I think it is beginning to happen, but it needs to happen more. And at a bigger level.

Laura Harris: If this time is going to be transformational, I think we really have to think radically. The inequities, of course, that have been revealed to those who didn't know that those inequities existed has really provided us an opportunity to create new things. I mean, our systems were already failing this. And why do we want to prop up these old systems? Education should be changed forever out of this. Smaller schools, smaller classrooms, not this pretend smaller schools where [inaudible 01:00:24], I graduated from Siebel High School here in New Mexico along with James' wife. And I think we were overcrowded the first year it opened in 1975. And then my son graduated in 2016 and I think it was 1500, 1600 students in 1976, when he graduated, I think it was like 5,000.

They didn't enlarge the school. So we're seeing that already. We're seeing these one-room school houses popping up in people's garages. We're seeing community centers open so that kids can come in and do their online studies together in a physical space. But we really have this opportunity to change. And in particularly tribal governments who have really been on the forefront of changing governments styles. This is our chance to infuse our values, our cultural values into these old colonial systems and find ones that fitness better. I was on a webinar not too long ago where a tribal leader said, "Oh, we really have to ensure that the Indian Health Service gets fully funded." Well, the Indian Health Service has never been fully funded.

The federal government spends more on prison healthcare, federal prison healthcare, than they do on the average Native American. And we receive healthcare through treaties in exchange for our land, the United States said that it would provide us healthcare. So why do we want to prop up these old systems that don't work? This is our opportunity to really create change. But we get in these reactionary modes where we're trying to provide groceries and rental assistance to people right now. And that's sucking up our creative juices. We're an advocacy organization and we're trying to get out of the grocery business because for the last three months we were providing groceries to urban Indians in Albuquerque. So it takes away our chance to come together and really rethink some of those old systems and rethink them in a more compatible way to our indigenous values.

I think that's our opportunity and if we're not too busy reacting to crisis but that other folks service organizations, philanthropy, the government start taking up the Slack in our communities, then that frees some of us up to engage community and find out what's working and what would they like to see. But it's hard to engage community when you're in crisis mode and when they're in crisis mode.

Alicia Lueras Maldonado: Mm-hmm (affirmative). Thank you Laura and James for sharing your reactions and your thoughts to this report, but then also really sharing with us your experiences in the work that you're doing in community. I wanted to move us towards the close of our webinar and also invite Ofronama to just give us some last thoughts on this work and the continuation of it. And then I want to share another poll question before we finish, and then some information about the next webinar that we'll be doing in October. But if you could just before we finish today's conversation, share with us any final reactions or thoughts to this work, and to the work that you all are doing.

Ofronama Biu: Thank you so much. And really I'm grateful to everyone who participated in the research whether it was taking a survey, participating in a focus group or an interview and to our panelist here today. I think you really hit home on the major findings in this report. And again it will be released next week and everyone who attended will be sent the link. We want to continue to engage with you on the findings and continue to have these conversation. So thank you.

Alicia Lueras Maldonado: Let's share a poll question before we move to close, unless Laura and James, do you have anything else you want to share with us today?

James Jimenez: Just thank you. Thank you for this.

Laura Harris: Yes. Thank you. And thank you for this research and your presentation of it Ofronama. That really, really is insightful.

Alicia Lueras Maldonado: So, we've got a quick poll coming up to see what resonated the most with you. So while we're waiting for that to come in, I want it to, again, just thank all of you for joining us this morning. Everyone that was an attendee and all of the questions and comments that you have shared in the chat box. We're going to be looking through that as we continue to advance this work and wanted to share with you all that on October 13th, we will be having another webinar based on a survey that we conducted earlier this year after the COVID pandemic hit. And so this webinar is called [New Mexico and COVID-19 effects on leaders of color](#).

And I was really honored to be able to interview all of the folks that took part in that survey in New Mexico. And so we'll be having three panelists join us for that particular webinar. And we're going to share the link here, here it comes. You folks should see it. bit.ly/COVIDNewMexico. And so please be on the lookout for that. That'll be on October 13th at 1:00 PM Mountain Standard Time. We're looking at the results of our poll. It's pretty split. 29%, two tied, one at 26, two tied, structural analysis of race and racism especially for white dominated groups is a critical foundation for race equity work tied with organizations that are committed to diversity, equity and inclusion must establish thoughtful and measurable ways to access programs.

So thank you again for all your participation for joining us today. Ofronama, Frances, Sean, Catherine, our Building Movement Project team. It's a pleasure to work with you, Laura and James, thanks for being with us. We're going to sign off and be on the lookout for the follow-up information on today's webinar. Thank you. Be well. Be safe.