

Alicia Lueras Maldonado:

... some calls. Welcome folks to our webinar today, The Long Arc of Building Power: Election Debrief with New Mexico Women of Color. I see folks starting to come into the room. If you would not mind dropping in your name, your organization, and where you're joining us from today, we'd love to see who's here with us.

Welcome folks. We're going to get started here in just a few minutes. Thank you for joining us on this Friday, the 11th day. We appreciate it. So, it looks like the chat is disabled. Jasmine, if you could take a look at that, so folks can chat into our webinar. Thank you folks for your patience. I know we've got a good group of folks in the house right now. I see a good chunk and I'd love to know who's in the room.

So as we're waiting for the chat function to come up and get our PowerPoint going, I'm going to go ahead and just start moving us forward as we've got an hour today, which is not a lot of time. I have four incredible guests in the room with us that are going to share what the outcome of Tuesday's election means for New Mexico, as well as a long term work they've been doing in New Mexico.

Again, this is a webinar. Our guest today are Laurie Weahkee, Adriann Barboa, Oriana Sandoval, and Andrea Serrano. So, thank you for saying yes, for being here today. I was mentioning earlier when we were talking that these four women to me, represent the heart and soul of New Mexico. I've had the privilege and honor of knowing and working with them for nearly 20 years, almost all of them. So, I'm just really grateful for the work that you all do for New Mexico and New Mexico families. So, thanks for joining me.

A couple of housekeeping things. So for those of you that are on the webinar as attendees, we won't be able to see you. You'll be able to see the hosts and our panelists today. If you want to tweet it out about this webinar, you can put #BuildingPowerNM. That will get some buzz going around our webinar. Also, want to take a quick minute to introduce Jasmine Leeward, who is our BMP admin and support tech for today. So thank you for being here with us today, really appreciate that.

Jasmine, if you want to advance to the next slide, that would be great. Thank you. Okay, so as I was mentioning, if you want to use the Q and A feature to ask questions, feel free to use that. I'm hoping that it's up. We're still trying to fix the chat issue as to why folks aren't able to drop in the chat. So, hopefully we can get that figured out really soon.

This webinar is being recorded. We'll share the link along with additional materials afterwards. As I've mentioned earlier, if you would like to tweet Building Power NM at Building Movement, we would appreciate it. Okay, moving on. I wanted to share just a little bit about Building Movement Project and the work that we do. If you want to advance our slide, Jasmine.

So, Building Movement Project is a national organization. We develop research tools, training, and opportunities for partnership to both nonprofit organizations and the sector to support voice and power to the people that they serve. Since its founding over 20 years ago, BMP has focused on three main areas, movement building, leadership and service, and social change.

For the movement building and transformational solidarity work, we help organizations and movements work collectively to build a bigger impact than they might. Towards the end of the webinar, we're going to share out some resources and some upcoming webinar in addition to our Race to Lead Survey, which is still live in the field and we hope that folks will be able to participate.

Yay, I see some chats coming in. It is up. Okay, so [inaudible 00:07:18] from Santa Fe. Thank you [inaudible 00:07:21]. Okay folks, please start dropping in your name, your organization, where you're calling in from. We'd love to see who's in the house and thank you for your patience with us. So, that's a little bit about Building Movement Project.

I want to share the amazing folks that we've got with us today on our webinar. Before we do that, the goals today, we want to analyze where New Mexico stands post-election, learn about the successes and

challenges of long-term power building in New Mexico, and looking ahead, preparing for 2023 and beyond. Okay, I'm starting to see our chat light up here. So, thank you folks for sharing where you're coming in from, really great to see you.

Okay. So, I'd like to introduce our panelists for today. We have with us Laurie Weahkee, who is a consultant and was formerly the executive director of the Native American Voters Alliance and New Mexico Native Vote. Laurie has led numerous issue and electoral campaigns in Native American communities for over 25 years.

She received a Cultural Preservation Award from the New Mexico Department of Indian Affairs for her work to protect Native American sacred sites. Miss Weahkee served on the All Pueblo Council of Governor's Legislative Committee, the New Mexico Governor Lujan Grisham Statewide Complete Count Committee, and the New Mexico Secretary of State's Native American Task Force. Laurie is Diné, Cochiti, and Zuni Pueblo, and has one son. Welcome Laurie.

Our next panelist is Adriann Barboa. She is a county commissioner for District 3 here in Bernalillo County and the policy director for Forward Together, which is a policy and culture shift organization. Commissioner Adriann Barboa is a generational New Mexican who has spent much of her life in Bernalillo County.

Her commitment to just and equitable policies and programs have continued throughout her lifetime: from starting a nationally recognized mentoring program for students of color, to passing legislation to support pregnant and parenting young folks, from leading campaigns for women and families to access the full spectrum of reproductive health, to mobilizing community voices for quality, affordable healthcare for all. Thank you for joining us today, Commissioner Barboa.

Next up we have Oriana Sandoval. She's the CEO of the Center for Civic Policy and the co-director of the New Mexico Civic Engagement Table. CCP is a non-profit organization based out of Albuquerque and strive to involve everyday New Mexican in the public policy decisions that affect their lives, specific engagement, legislative advocacy, and voter mobilization campaigns. Oriana receives her BA from Occidental College and has an MPP and a JD from the University of California, Berkeley.

Oriana has worked on environmental justice and civil rights issues for more than a decade, and served as the founding ED of New Mexico Vote Matters, a nonprofit organization committed to empowering the disenfranchised communities. She lives here in Albuquerque with her husband, and her son and daughter. Thank you, Oriana, for taking time today.

Last but not least, we have Andrea Serrano who is the executive director of OLE, and the co-chair of the Working Families Party National Committee. Andrea Serrano is a Chicana who was born and raised in the neighborhood of Duranes in Albuquerque and have been working in nonprofit and social justice organization since 1999. Andrea's experience spans decades beginning with her work at the Rape Crisis Center of Central New Mexico, where she was a community educator focused not only on violence prevention, but also interrupting and addressing rape culture, particularly with young people and college students.

Andrea began working at OLE in 2012 as the community organizer focused on BIPOC communities and urban conservation. She's now the executive director of the organization. She's also a published poet and an opinion writer, and she lives in the South Valley with her compañero, a slew of animals and plants. So, thank you to these four incredible leaders in our community for joining us today.

Before we get into our conversation, we wanted to run a quick poll to get a sense of how you all cast your vote in Tuesday's election. So, I believe that we've got a poll that we can share with you all to take here in a second. Welcome Robert Lopez, Henry Rael, Loretta Trujillo, Daniel Griego. Okay. We've got a poll going up now. How did you vote in Tuesday's election? Did you vote in person, by mail or absentee, or early voting?

Okay. Looks like we've got just a few more seconds on the poll. So if you haven't responded to the poll yet, you've got a few more seconds to do that. It looks like there's a very close tie by in person at 44% and early voting at 51%, a much lower mail and absentee voter turnout. So, thank you for sharing that. It's good to know that the early vote has made a difference in these election.

So, let's go ahead and dig into our conversation today. We do know that New Mexico stayed a solidly blue state. We had some big moments. There were some big wins, particularly looking at a constitutional amendment and folks that worked on that. I know that those of you here today were engaged at different levels on civic engagement projects and voter turnout. So, I wanted to start by asking Adriann, if you could share a little bit about what the results of Tuesday's election tell us about New Mexico.
Adriann Barboa:

Well, I'm so honored to be on this panel and shout out to all my strong fans, Forward Together folks who are on. Also, shout out to all the folks and includes all of us. I've been honored to lead in a lot of ways the fight for a full reproductive health access including abortion access. So many, I would probably say 90% of the folks on this call have put in work to make sure.

For me, it being center stage in our communities, the election that just passed reaffirms again that New Mexico is solid about supporting access to abortion care, access to all the needs of our reproductive lives, and that we also are here for healthcare and including healthcare for immigrants. So I feel like that is for me, the election reaffirms that solidly. So everybody knows, don't mess with us. I'll keep it short and sweet.

Alicia Lueras Maldonado:

Thank you, appreciate that. So Andrea, I wanted to ask. What is your response to what Adriann just shared? Then if you could also share with us what you think were the big moments leading up to the election and how did you all build leading up to Tuesday?

Andrea Serrano:

I just have a lot of gratitude in my heart for people who turned out to vote when there was all of this just punditry just going on and on about what to expect on Tuesday and what the outcomes were going to be. Pundits read polls and organizers talk to voters. So I think, what Adriann said is spot on. I think the buildup to this is you can't just engage folks like three weeks before Election Day and remind them to go vote. We're talking about years' long building in New Mexico and really building with communities who aren't your typical voter.

There's that piece as well, that New Mexico is 63% people of color and yet historically have made up between 36 and 38% of the electorate in statewide elections. So, we're not being represented in elections. If we start up just went about it business as usual, 50 plus one, the win is all that matters, then we wouldn't be hearing from our communities. So it isn't just the win, but it's how you win and with whom.

I think that's what's been really important is that we're seeing more engagement. We're seeing more youth engagement. We're seeing the work that's been laid out by Laurie and by NM Native Vote of really highlighting how difficult it is to vote on tribal lands, and how difficult it is to vote for people who live in rural areas, but also how voters of color are disenfranchised in lots of different ways.

So, all of these things you keep in mind as you're really thinking about who do we want to talk to? Who are the voters we want to be talking to? Voters are smart. If you're just showing up three weeks before the election and saying, "Hey, your civic duty, get out there and vote," none of us responds well to something like that. It really is about on the off cycle and you're still talking to folks and asking them what matters to you, what's important to you.

I think that voters really showed with the outcome of the election on Tuesday. Voters really showed up, and elected, and reelected the folks who have shown up for them. In New Mexico, we have expanded Medicaid. We have passed paid sick leave. We've increased the minimum wage. Early education is now a

constitutional right. Before that, there was the creation of the Early Childhood Education and Care Department. So, there's all of these wins.

The fact that we keep started saying like, "Oh, New Mexico is this terrible place." It isn't. It isn't this. We have free college in New Mexico. The only state that has that. So I think that, that's the buildup that got us to Tuesday. That's the buildup that got us to the outcomes. They weren't a fluke. It's great to see all of the pundits on Wednesday scrambling to make excuses for why they were so wrong, but organizers know. We do so with strength and confidence.

Alicia Lueras Maldonado:

Thank you for that, Andrea, and for sharing that perspective. I think it's important to understand that as you mentioned, this work doesn't happen overnight. It isn't just three weeks until election, but that there's work that has been going on for decades in community, and you four represent that to me.

I wanted to ask Oriana if you could share a little bit about the constitutional amendment. I know that you all worked on that. Give us some insights into what it took to build that in order to get, I think it was a 70% yes vote. So, that shows a huge support for something like early childhood education. So if you could just share a little bit about that, and any reactions you have to what Adriann and Andrea have shared so far.

Oriana Sandoval:

Yes, thanks Alicia. Obviously, that was a huge win. That was literally a decade in the making on Election Day. Like Andrea mentioned, we now do have a constitutional right to Early Childhood Education in New Mexico, which is amazing and really puts us at the forefront of the country. I'm not sure any other state actually enshrines that right in our constitution. So, that's huge.

It was a huge undertaking. Shout out to everyone here and the participants. This was a statewide community led effort. It started a decade ago with an idea, and of course it was way too radical for the New Mexico legislators, but community kept coming back, literally community. It was like toddlers and kindergartners showing up to the Roundhouse year after year saying, "No. This is our vision, and this is what we want. This is how we envision transformative change for New Mexico and for our families."

So, it was a wild ride. Showing up, getting shut down in the Roundhouse. I'm not even getting being able to get a hearing culminating into. We use all of the tools at our disposal. So on the C3 side, the civic engagement, and issue education, and lobbying. Also, on the C4 side, the accountability through elections. That happened in a big way. Was it only 2020 that we unseated a third of the senate? They had to go.

Again, this isn't about blue or red. We unseated Democrats to be able to open up the discourse for a true legislative discussion and we see the results. We saw the results in 2022. It was a huge undertaking. Like I said, this was really led by community. This was not the politicians. It wasn't the politicians being like, "Yeah, we really need to do this." It was community showing up undeterred, and showing up to vote, and showing up to hold electeds accountable.

It's just amazing. I think we're on the cusp of really amazing things now. The really hard work starts. So it's going to take us all again, and community all again to make sure that our impacted families are at the center of the policymaking discussions and not an afterthought. They need to be at the center and forming it all the way through, so that we're really building out a system that is by and for our families.

Alicia Lueras Maldonado:

Laurie, I wanted to ask you to share some initial thoughts on what you've heard from the other panelists in terms of that long arc of what it takes to do this work over time. What are the ingredients, if you will, that it takes to create these long term wins, particularly for communities of color?

Laurie Weahkee:

So, I just want to say thank to my sisters here on the panel. You guys are just so beautiful, and strong, and clear. So, I just want to say thank you first of all, to all your hard work and being bare knuckle brawlers. I guess for me and just thinking about the long arc, is we started a lot of this work on the shoulders of our own elders.

There was a lot of people back in the '40s, '50s, '60s, '70s that were doing a lot of really important work. I feel like it's important to acknowledge and to remember that there was a lot of work that happened in order for us to be able to have our own perspectives and outlooks on our political situations that we face today. I think one of the things is really keeping track of and continuing to do that power analysis because I think it really helps us to understand how we phase in our different strategic initiatives.

So, there was one point in time when we wanted to really be allied and helpful to the immigrant community. There was a whole bunch of us in a room talking about how do we really strengthen this effort? One of the things was we recognized that if people were not earning close to a living wage, I know there's a big difference, whatever. That wages was one of the battles that we needed to have first in order to then really make sure the work that we did with immigrant communities and alliance with immigrant communities, we would be able to sustain that battle once we were able to achieve it.

So I think it's important for us to continue, like I said doing that power analysis, understanding how we're phasing in these different strategic initiatives. Again, some of these battles have been for years, right? Years, and years, and years. I also just want to say a little bit about, I am really proud of the fact that a lot of the organizations here in New Mexico have really learned to deal with conflict both internally and externally.

It's something that I think we need to continue to work with our new up and coming folks. How do you really deal with conflict and how do we really, because it's important in terms of picking the right battles, because some of this stuff I feel we can get really caught up in this sort of liberation theology. I love a good inspirational speech. There's nothing like it. It does fill your soul, but it's also important to then say, well then how do we really do that? If we were to really work at that, how do we phase that in to make sure that those policies and people get like, "Ugh, we don't want to talk about policies."

I just think it's really important because we need to continue picking fights and picking the right battles. I just think that, that is really a true learning experience that strengthens us. So then we were like to the political phase of things, we're able to choose from our own memberships, our own community members, and they have had some level of vetting and some level of tempered capacity to become good county commissioners, to become good legislators, and knowing that it's going to be tough for them. They're not always going to be our personal Santa Claus and we have to be clear about that.

Just the last point I'll make, and then I'll shush for a bit more. I feel like need to be unabashedly political. I think on some levels, it gets nerve wracking like, "Why are you Democrat junior?" or whatever they want to put you in this camp or that camp. I think it's important in building power when you really look at those components that make up power and compare that against a list of powerlessness.

We start to see that power needs to include all those things that are political, but we also need to recognize that many of our people, they have very mixed feelings understandably about politics. I think if we disregard all that as political, then we really are just playing games with ourselves and our communities. So, we still will need to continue to hold our own accountable.

I think there are ways to do that, and that recognizing that if you're stepping up to be in that political situation. We all still have to push on ourselves and then also be understanding and mature about like, "Well, what's really possible at this point in time?" Because we just need to remember our elders, those generations that went before us, they never won everything in one fell swoop. It is very rare that, that happened.

Even the Early Childhood Education victory, and I'm so pleased about that. Thank you guys for doing all that work. That was many years in the making. It didn't happen just because we all demanded it should

happen, I guess without the effort, without the voting, without the pushing on our legislators, and we had to go around them. I'm proud of everybody's work on that.

Alicia Lueras Maldonado:

Thank you, Laurie, for sharing those thoughts that you bring up are a lot of important parts that over the long run will impact policies, will impact the outcome of elections. One of the things that you mentioned, I was looking at it, I was thinking about as you were talking is how do we then when we have win like we did on Tuesday around things like the constitutional amendment, when you do have elected to one that may support abortion rights, healthcare, free education. How do we hold folks accountable? How do we hold the electeds accountable?

I know, Adriann, you hold a unique position on this panel in that you're a county commissioner as well as the leader of a non-profit organization. I'd love to hear your thought on how you work within community in that delicate balance of being held accountable and then also still being able to push forward on the values that will support New Mexico families. If you could share with us some thoughts on that?

Adriann Barboa:

Thank you and thank you for this question. I feel I just had to, once again, Laurie always gives me chills. Her words are so needed for me right now, especially in this play, in this position you talk about. I'd like to say I was alongside the women on this panel and with many listening in today, is really where I learned how important that year round base building. You're going to hear it probably a million times today.

Like Andrea said, when I was first entering the game, it was like this 50 plus one, helicopter in, convince all your people. Then, I was not surprised why we had such low voter turnout or why my own families and communities like, "Eh, I don't want to vote," or why the grassroots, women of color that I was building with, the Young Women United at the time were like, "How much do we even want to get in this? Does our vote even matter?"

Being able to take those learnings and say, "No, we're going to do this year round. We're going to lead with our strengths, and we're going to lean on our partners for their strengths. We're going to build true bases. We're going to use the word power with our families. We're going to say building power for strong families year round." Part of that is also that year round part is about us having meaningful ways to contribute.

Before I used to hear, and I'm sure people still say it that, "Oh, New Mexicans are so complacent," or "Oh, but people don't get out to vote. Nobody cares." I actually know that when we put effort in, everybody is craving it. We have hundreds of people turning out to our stuff in McKinley and Doña Ana Counties because they're craving it. They want it, but they don't want somebody coming in and just telling them, "Vote this way." They want to understand. They want to be part of it. They want to help make the decisions.

That's why we've been able to be so successful even in our rural communities, if you think about how rural our communities are. Years ago, I would hear when we go to the legislature, so many of those legislators that represent rural communities would say, "Oh, my community's too Catholic, too rural, too indigenous, too Navajo. They don't support that. They don't ..." No, we said, "I know that's not be true one because my family lives all over this state. I know that's not true for my own family, but we're going to do the work to prove it." So, we've been building that base. We've been building those own voices, not in a way of feel sorry for me, but I'm powerful because I can represent this.

So yes, again, the base building year round. One time, I always have to share this story, especially thinking about elections. That I mentioned 50 plus one strategy. I'd always hear this. People look at, "What's the voting base and how do we get 50 plus one to win?" I think it was Andrea before that also said, "It's not just the win." I think that's what explains it all to me because after we can say, "Oh, with those stacks were against us." If we actually build the stacks to be for us, then we're not going and

complaining about all the things against us. We're actually building what our families and communities were asking for in the beginning.

The one story I'm going to share is that when we only have had our C4 status for Forward Together Action for two years now. So before that, we were always doing our election strategies through a C3 lens, get out to vote, voter education. So we do all the things but always building year round. We decided, "If everybody prioritizes likely voters, which are the people that vote all the time, let's just take the risk and prioritize unlikely voters."

So in both Doña Ana and McKinley counties, we prioritized unlikely voters. We have great statistics. The one that stood out the most was that in McKinley County, and I want to be really clear. We had our McKinley County leaders doing phone banking. I remember being like, "Ah, Leroy, you got to talk faster," or wanting to plug in that way, but just, "Take a step back. Nope, they know their own community."

Sure enough, they knew when they picked up that phone that it was Leroy, or Maria Gonzaga, or whoever they could recognize our community members. They weren't hanging up. They weren't trying to get off the phone. They were staying on the phone talking to them. Guess what? We only prioritized unlikely voters, and 80% of the unlikely voters that we reached out to, turned out to vote that year, that election cycle.

So, we have to extend our ways. I know all the other folks on this team have been for a long time extending beyond that just win mentality and into building the power we need for the long call, the long arc as this is described.

Alicia Lueras Maldonado:

Thank you for sharing those stories, Adriann. I think that every time I hear you speak about that base building work, that you all have done and continuing to go back to ask folks to speak for themselves and to lift up what they need. So to me, I've seen you do that and your organization do that. Thank you for sharing some of that.

I wanted to, Andrea, ask if you could share two of the things that Laurie mentioned, was picking the right fight and then picking the right partners to engage in that fight to create those wins. So when you're looking at some of the base building coalitions, doing statewide work, when you look at the constitutional amendment and things like that, what can you share with us in terms of what has worked for OLE and for the way that you all have taken a look at, at strategy and base building within your organization?

Andrea Serrano:

There's not just one organization who could do this work. It has to be in coalition. It has to be something that we're building together. It isn't enough to just say, "Well, we're all working toward the same things, so let's all work together." I think that there has to be a shared goal. There has to be a shared understanding of how we're going to get there.

I oftentimes make this joke that we should just have one meeting once a week eight hours, and talk about all the things because we all work together so often. I'm in coalition meetings all week long with the same folks. Sometimes you're like, "Are we meeting about voting rights?" "No, no, we're meeting about ..." "Okay." We have to keep it really clear of what we're working on because we all work together so much.

That comes from years of trust building. There has to be trust in these coalitions that we're building. There has to be this understanding that if we don't have this shared vision, then we're not going to make much movement. When you have to make that decision for your organization to actually step away from a coalition, there's a lot of thought that has to go into that. There's a lot of conversation that has to go into that. When you are deciding to join the coalition, there's even more. There's really taking into consideration all of the stakeholders, all of the personalities.

I really liked what Laurie said about folks learning how to work with one another and then also being really honest when we say like, "I don't think that this partnership is going to work for us," or "I don't think that this is something that we're going to move forward with." When we can be honest about those things, then we're less likely to get in each other's way.

It really is about what's the forward movement? Oriana for years has talked about resources are very few and far between in New Mexico. So, we have to work together in order to maximize that. I agree wholeheartedly with that because this is how we win these wins that have been built over time in New Mexico, and it's taken years to get these wins. It's always delicate, and it's always precious. So getting there, really meant we had to have faith in one another and faith in each other's work.

Now to the point where it's being able to say, "Hey, we have extra literature that we leave on doors. We have extra that we printed up. Does anyone else want it?" Feeling okay about that and not feeling this sense of being very territorial or being very like, "That was ours or our name wasn't on it." I think we partnered up with other organizations this year and sent out co-branded mailers because it was about maximizing our reach and not just having the spotlight on our organization by ourselves.

It's funny. I think that there was so much going on across the nation, and we still don't know the outcome of what's going to happen in Congress. All of the eyes are focused there and meanwhile, New Mexico's quietly building this super state, this super innovative state. I kind of dig that, and I feel like it's the same for our work. I'm really happy to be on this panel and talking about it.

When I was hearing all of the analysis by all these experts about the election and what the outcomes were going to be in New Mexico, it's so interesting to me that they discount the work that's being led by community. That's oftentimes being led by women and non-binary folks of color. I cannot stress that enough that so much of the work that we do in coalition is with folks of color, with our accomplices, with the folks who have traditionally been at the lead and then made space and said, "No, I'm going to follow the lead of community." I cannot stress enough how important that is to the big wins that we saw in New Mexico.

Alicia Lueras Maldonado:

Thank you for saying that Andrea. I know I had a question that I wanted to put out there around what these wins mean in particular for people of color in New Mexico and how do we sustain them, because I think that then is the next thing. So we've had this momentum. We've had these wins. We're also dealing with, we're now a big target. So we see a lot of influence from out of state coming in, a lot of outside money that we're having to deal with. You talked about limited resources that we have to grapple with.

So, I actually wanted to ask Oriana if you could share some thoughts on that? How do we sustain and then what is the strategy around dealing with the huge target that's on New Mexico and a lot of outside money that's coming into the state?

Oriana Sandoval:

Yes, thanks Alicia. Yes. I think we see that every election cycle. We thought this election cycle, especially as well with the industries. Gas and oil obviously have deep pockets. So I won't discount our side either though, the advocacy sector in New Mexico and voters. We may not have as deep of pockets, but we do bring a lot of resources into the state to help fund our work.

I think most importantly, we have the people power that all my other fellow panelists have been talking about. That is invaluable and that is the hard work that all of us have been investing and that really bears out fruit like we saw in this last election again as well. If you're Chevron, you want to buy your votes. You can put down \$100 per vote or whatever for voter outreach. Maybe we can't match that, but they can't match the 10, 20 years of relationship building and outreach building. We've been authentic conversations like Adriann talked about that we're having with our communities and engaging them.

So yes, I think the outside money, and packs, and all of that, we're never going to be on the same footing as the opposition. I think they can't match our resources in terms of building power by and for community and doing that year round. So, I don't think you can put a price tag on that.

Laurie Weahkee:

Can I jump in on that too?

Alicia Lueras Maldonado:

Yes, Laurie, absolutely.

Laurie Weahkee:

You know me. I also think in terms of how do we sustain what we're building. The other thing I think is really important is that I feel like a lot of our organizations have really begun to understand those structural junctures that we face collectively. So for instance, the census redistricting. Understanding that, that was a very important piece of the work that we needed to really deal with and engage.

So, the tribes got really involved in redistricting. We found ourselves up against a lot of our should be allies, they were like, "Oh dang, come on tribes. You should just ..." It was sort of like, "You guys should just accept that. We need to do it this way and it's not going to really go that way." The tribes really stood firm, and I was really proud of the way that all of the native redistricting efforts really kind of settled things.

The result is we now have three congressional representatives that are on the more progressive side of things. Again nobody really recognized that, but that was the work of all the different organizations trying to get the census out. I don't know how I ended up leaving right about that time, but just understanding that those are some of the processes that we really need to deal with.

The other thing is to say that I've been working a lot on water right now and just climate change, how that's going to affect our water over the next 50 years. They're estimating a 25% drop in our snow pack, our water, a lot of different things happening. The other half of that is the infrastructure in which to manage water, the infrastructure in which to deal with water is missing.

The State of New Mexico itself, again on one hand I've always been outside of the house and can advocate from outside, but having a glimpse at what's happening inside the house, so to speak the state agencies, it's really kind of shocking to me just how many of the agencies lack capacity. I always thought, "It's just the Indian thing. Indians don't have the capacity to do X, Y, or Z."

When you recognize like, "Wow, the state engineer under a less progressive administration lost over 100 staff people." When you count 100 staff people in the water state engineers office, that's a lot of hours. That's a lot of non-enforcement. That's a lot of things nobody's paying attention to. Nobody has the time to deal with those things. Suddenly I feel like, "Oh man, we got to help the state engineer's office."

So in that way, yes, we need to be holding our folks accountable, but on the other hand it is helpful to understand what it is that we're actually dealing with within some of our own agencies because that belongs to us as the people. So, I do think that it's important for us in terms of that capacity building. We do need to continue to elevate.

It's not just about, I don't think it ever was just about the voter, but about our communities being able to have that skills, those experiences, that understanding of how to manage those resources, whether that's dealing with the fires, dealing with water, dealing with quality of water, all these different things. We really do need to be owning New Mexico in a way that these are our leadership.

We need to make sure that we're also putting our own folks into those positions, so that way we have a strong understanding from inside the house to outside the house, and understanding if you go inside the house, things change. That's a part of the maturity I think we really need to push on our new up and coming younger organizers to understand that New Mexico is very unique in that manner.

Alicia Lueras Maldonado:

Laurie, thank you. As always, you gleam with them that I think we need to hear. That leads me to one of the last questions that I wanted to ask you all as you continue doing this work. When you think out five to 10 years, what needs to happen that hasn't? Laurie just shared some thoughts on what those things might be.

As we get close to the hour here, I'd love to hear from the other panelists in terms of your thoughts around what infrastructures needed? What can community provide? What do elected officials need to do? What do we need to be thinking of and preparing for, and building when we look out in the next five to 10 years?

Adriann Barboa:

I can start because I think some of the folks have more specific election stuff. I would just say like, "I think some of my greatest memories when we decided we were going to center rural, Indigenous People of color communities in the fight to repeal that abortion ban or in our fight for reproductive health full spectrum. That the voices and experience that actually my coworker Jessica Lopez Collins said this one time, and I say it all the time that our lived experiences are policy expertise.

So that wealth we bring about our own communities, our own fights, our own struggles, our own successes, the richness in our communities, that is the policy expertise. Then, we need a little resources and support to make it go. My proudest moments are that when we knew that centering the folks most impacted by reproductive oppression would get us the win. How every time when somebody from that community, when Senator Muñoz was yelling at Verna and Noreen Kelly in the hall telling two Navajo women that Navajos don't believe in abortion. They can't do that when our own people with our own stories are there. They get shut down and their lies can no longer continue on.

Right now, our families are fighting for full spectrum reproductive healthcare and healthcare for all. Because of that work, we can go beyond Roe in New Mexico. Because of that work, we're going to get healthcare for immigrant families and for all of us to be affordable in our state. I'm just base building, base building year round, my last words.

Alicia Lueras Maldonado:

Any other thoughts?

Andrea Serrano:

New Mexico is not a poor state. We are not a poor state. We have tons of wealth from oil and gas. I'm not just talking about the Land Grant Permanent Fund. Right now, state revenues in New Mexico, they're high and they keep climbing. It comes from extraction on stolen land. So in the next five to 10 years, the state needs to make big and bold investments in the people. That comes by way of schools, of early education, of healthcare including behavioral healthcare, and also in infrastructure, and building out infrastructure. Lots of folks have talked about broadband expansion.

There's so much to do, and New Mexico has the money to do it. So decades of austerity politics and decades of austerity practitioners would have kept us in last place. This idea that a state that is a majority, people of color state somehow deserve less than. In the next five to 10 years, there is an expectation that New Mexico, and by New Mexico I mean our state government, is going to make those big investments in our community because they can do so. So this era of being in last, that's over. It's over and done with.

Alicia Lueras Maldonado:

Thank you for sharing that vision, Andrea. I love the comment from Javier. "Are we allowed to call you Dre Dog," in the comments?

Andrea Serrano:

I said, "I'm Dr. Dre's."

Alicia Lueras Maldonado:

Oh, Dr. Dre Dog, okay. So, we've got about five minutes. I wanted to share some resources and some upcoming webinars that Building Movement Project is going to be hosting. Then, just hear some last thoughts from our panelists. I apologize that I wasn't able to open it up for Q and A from the audience. We didn't have a lot of chatter in the Q and A function, but lots of really great comments. I'm wondering, Jasmine, now if you'd be willing to share the slide and drop into our chat the links.

If you'll look at the chat, we've got some upcoming webinars that we're very excited about. On the 16th, Social Change Now. It's a book release and the talk from one of our BMP family. Then we've got on the 29th, Making and Taking Space: Preparing Organizations for Leadership Progression. These are featuring New Mexico leaders and that will be moderated by our co-director, Sean Thomas-Breitfeld. Then on the 1st, Movement Infrastructure Series: Building Capacity for Community-Based Nonprofits. So, that's some of what we're continuing to do with Building Movement Project.

Then I also want to just encourage folks to, if you haven't already responded to the Race to Lead Survey that is still out in the field. This is a national survey. When we did it a couple years ago, we've now produced the largest data set of race and leadership in the country. So, we'll continue with that. So racetolead.org, if you go there, you can respond to that survey.

We've got just a couple minutes left and I want to just open it up to our panelists to share any last words or thoughts with us. Again, thank you everyone who joined today and thank you to our panelists again for taking the time out of what I know are very busy schedules. So, any last thoughts in these couple last minutes we have?

Oriana Sandoval:

Alicia, I just 1,000% to what Adriann and Andrea said. We do have the expertise already living within our state and in our communities. We just need to double down on that and invest in it. We're working on what does the just transition piece of the climate bill look like for this session? So, we're all heading to HUD's tomorrow or coalition because that's where the solutions are from our leaders and our people that are on the front lines, not from high powered consultants from DC. It's here. So, I want to double down on that.

Then also, just like a practical type of systems change thing that a lot of us here are thinking about too is modernizing our legislature. Because if our elected bodies are not representative of the experiences of New Mexicans, it's going to be that much harder to pass laws and actually change the systems. So modernizing our legislature so that folks can actually get paid, have professional help year round, engage constituent at the level that we need to is going to be a priority for several of us, a lot of us here throughout the state.

Alicia Lueras Maldonado:

Thank you, Oriana. I know, Adriann, it looks like you were about to say something. Well, Andrea, sorry.

Anyone, any other thoughts you want to share before we-

Andrea Serrano:

Everybody knows that I can talk, but I want to give Laurie the last words.

Laurie Weahkee:

Here, I'm like, "I talked too much already." I want to hear from everybody else. No, I just want to say thank you for hosting this conversation. I do think we need to have more of these conversations, whether that's amongst our own community folks. I also just want to note that it's important to always be seeped in reality and the existing conditions that we face, and do our best to understand what is oncoming because I do think it was a little bit terrifying listening to the pundits, and Trump trying to make his comeback, and all that sort of nonsense.

I just keep thinking about my own parents and they would be like, "You don't have the guts to face reality. What's wrong with you?" This is what we're dealing with and all the denial. I wanted to tell Andrea, you should write a poem about arguing with the liar because I think that's really, in a very real

way, that's some of the stuff that we are having to assert. That we need to remain strong with our values, remain strong with the realities.

I also wanted just to give a little shout out to Frank Sanchez. I just saw he was one of our participants. He's one of who I considered my leadership back in the day. It's good to see you. I think Miguel Acosta is the other one, but just to say shout out to all those guys too.

Alicia Lueras Maldonado:

Thank you, Laurie, for always bringing us back to reality. I think that's a really beautiful message to end on in the midst of these times, and dealing with the pundits, and so much misinformation out there. I'm thankful to all of you for keeping it real, for doing the work in community. Thank you again to everyone who joined our panel today, Building Movement Project.

Thank you and please stay tuned. We'll send out the recording of today's webinar and have a post up on our website as well. So, thank you everyone. Go out, have a beautiful day, a safe weekend. Many blessings, thank you.