

## Transcript for Webinar “Security to Wellbeing Framework”

Host: Building Movement Project

Record Date: December 7, 2023 2:00pm ET

View Recording: <https://bit.ly/SWB-YT>

Héctor Malvido (00:55):

Hi everyone. I just really want to thank everyone who's here for joining from wherever you are. Please let us know what your name is, where you're coming from, and I want to thank our BMP staff who's helping us in the background with some tech support, our esteemed panelist, our wonderful moderator, and Emily Rogers with the Independent Sector for all giving so much of their time to make this a possibility.

(01:22):

So to start, my name is Héctor Malvido and I'm the senior manager of partnerships with the Building Movement Project, an organization dedicated to supporting and pushing the nonprofit sector to tackle the most significant social issues. I want to take care of a few housekeeping things. If you have any tech issues throughout the presentation, feel free to reach out to BMP Tech support or BMP Tech. They'll be able to support you in anything that comes up.

(01:53):

Throughout the presentation, please feel free to use the Q&A function. There's going to be a number of different ways to engage. So throughout the presentation from us or the Independent Sector and even throughout the Q&A portion of the panel, please feel free to include those questions there. We'll try to get to all of them. And if we cannot, we'll certainly follow up after the webinar is done.

(02:19):

You all learned a little bit about me, so as we head into the next hour, I'd love to know who's in the room. We take a quick moment to answer this poll question for us. Let us know, are you a direct service organization? Are you a capacity builder? Are you an advocacy group member, a funder? We'd love to know who's in the room today with us. Thank you so much. Awesome. Everyone's responding. That's great. Great, so yeah, this looks good.

(02:55):

So thank you so much for everyone for responding. It looks like we have a lot of people from a lot of different places, advocacy groups, nonprofit professionals and direct service org leadership, which is great. I'm happy to see that there is direct service staff here as well, frontline staff. Always good to see those folks here. So there is a ton of really good stuff to look forward to today. We're really excited to have the Independent Sector here with us who will be sharing some of their recent findings on the nonprofit sector so retreat from advocacy and lobbying in the recent report.

(03:29):

We're also really excited to hear from our esteem panel of service leaders who will share with us what their experience has been leading social change work as service providers. And finally the reason why we're all here, the security wellbeing framework as a tool for service and social change. We're excited to get into all of those details, but I'd like to take a second to explain to you all how this framework was developed and provide a bit of context on its purpose. So for the past 20 years, the Building Movement Project has been engaging with direct service organizations in a variety of ways that have always taken stock of the potential that these groups have to make a difference.

(04:09):

A few years ago, BMP convened a cohort of service providers in New Mexico to connect and learn from each other. And some of the members from this cohort were really interested in challenging their current lane of service provider work that they were always been doing. They wanted to think about how they could engage in social change work while also providing essential services. What would that

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look like? And how could this lead to positive change for communities they serve? Their conversations and their visioning and this new set of goals rather that refocus efforts to move clients and the people from security to wellbeing, which is what led to the creation of the framework.

[\(04:52\)](#):

In its most simple terms, it's a new visual tool and a framework that supports service organizations to begin or expand their social change work. The visual is to help orgs move from one end of the spectrum where you find social good on the left-hand side to the right-hand side where you see broad and social change. Traditionally, service providers have been focused on the social goods section, something we value and we see as indispensable.

[\(05:19\)](#):

On the left we see some of the things that provide security such as shelter and food, and those are the things that really just bring security to anyone really. The framework connects and looks at these factors like personal resources and the environments like systems and structures they're in and moves them across the spectrum towards broad social change where we see communities are given agency a sense of place and belonging and their culture and identities honored.

[\(05:45\)](#):

So I've been saying a lot of security and wellbeing and I just want to explain to you all what they actually meant by security and wellbeing. So when we talk about security, we're really speaking to what organizations already do so well. Activities that help stabilize their communities, such as providing affordable housing or rapid rehousing to people experiencing homelessness, services for immigrant communities, afterschool educational programs, food and childcare supports for families, and really all of the above.

[\(06:16\)](#):

When we talk about wellbeing, we think about what role service organizations can play. The role they can play in the liberation of systems of exclusion and oppression that create the need to stabilize communities in the first place. The role they can play in growing and thriving of those communities outside of the nonprofit Further enshrining their own self-determination. The potential role that they have in lifting up and centering their constituents voice to inform and have agency over how these systems are shaped. And then finally, what role they could potentially play in sharing the power they have and opportunities for the communities they serve to reimagine and steward the creation of a new and liberatory society.

[\(06:59\)](#):

The framework taps into the potential of service organizations to affect broad social change because of what they already bring to the table. It is worth mentioning that in this spectrum we understand that organizations are all in different places. Some people who are in this room today might have been engaged in social change work since their inception, while others might just be starting out and are curious and want to start thinking about ways to do that. To that end, we've broken down the framework into a series of engaging modules in which organizations will explore their current challenges and opportunities in different ways that they can integrate social change work into their programming in a way that makes sense for them.

[\(07:41\)](#):

It is designed to work again with what organizations already have at their disposal, like the trust in their communities and their knowledge of the needs and issues with the systems that they operate in so that

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they can find opportunities to engage in social change work. It also thinks through the ways that organizations can grow their understanding of root causes, build and deepen partnerships with the community and even how it supports the leadership of communities and the people they serve.

[\(08:07\)](#):

So what's the framework made out of? There are three core strategies that we're thinking about and some of them are really they all center around creating social change priorities. Having understanding of root causes, having understanding of what are the things that the organization that we're working with can do to affect social change and deepen the relationships they have with the communities they serve. When we identify those social change priorities, we have what we call the ABCs of becoming a service and social change organization.

[\(08:41\)](#):

We have internal alignment where generating buy-in in those social change priorities. Why are these important for us? How do they align with our mission and how can we as an organization bake this into our programming, dedicating resources so that we can expand on them? Client voice, centering the voice of the people we serve and how programs are developed. Sharing power, so they may help lead and co-design some of this social change work as well. And then finally, collective action.

[\(09:10\)](#):

We don't have to do this alone, there are many people in our community and our ecosystems that could be a great asset and ally in building our collective power to bring about broad social change. The strategies that I'm outlining, internal alignment, client voice and collective action are actually intended to support organizations increase their organizational and client's capacity so that they're both are able to work to form a strong foundation to engage in this type of work.

[\(09:39\)](#):

Let's quickly jump to the goals of the tool. Can we skip two slides, please? So firstly, its main goal is to work with what organizations are working with, tuning in on and aligning social change work to the mission and capacity and knowledge organizations already have. Secondly, it seeks to deepen the relationships organizations have in their ecosystems in a way that is framed around co-collaboration and collaboration. Thirdly, tapping into the power that service organizations already have. Their greatest strengths are what the framework hones in on, their insights, their trust and the connections to their communities.

[\(10:18\)](#):

And then finally, the shifting of the belief that service providers are just charities or like do-gooders that should stay neutral or passive when it comes to systemic and institutional issues and the transformational changes that they need. So why now? Well, we think the COVID-19 pandemic laid bare many of the inequities and resource gaps and exclusionary policies that are baked into our social safety net.

[\(10:46\)](#):

Service providers everywhere had to fill these gaps on top of the work they were already doing, all to keep the communities they serve from further harm, but also connecting to the resources that could help them navigate such an unprecedented time. These gaps and inequities existed well before the pandemic and just as we want our systems to change. So two, I think we must consider and reflect on what our role is as service providers and how that can change to meet the current moment.

[\(11:15\)](#):

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At BMP, just as a service providers who develop the framework, we strongly believe that we will not service our way out of these unjust and harmful systems. Now more than ever, we think that service organizations can play a critical role in changing the status quo and moving the needle closer towards liberation for all of our communities. And with that, I would love to pass it over to Emily Rogers with the Independent Sector to highlight what they've observed from our nonprofit sector and our current engagement in systems and social change work.

Emily Rogers ([11:48](#)):

Thanks Hector. So we did some research or we commissioned some research at Independent Sector to get at the current state of nonprofit advocacy and public engagement. The last research of this kind was done over 20 years ago, and a lot has changed since then that might impact how nonprofits engage in this behavior. One example just being social media. Next slide please. So we commissioned research from a team of academics at American University, George Mason University and the University of Massachusetts Boston. And the survey was fielded to a random sample of US-based nonprofits.

([12:32](#)):

So that is to say that this is a rigorous nationally representative study. Next slide. So diving into some of the definitions that we used in the survey, lobbying involves taking a position on specific legislation, local, state, or federal, and communicating this position to legislators or their staff either directly or indirectly.

([13:02](#)):

And then advocacy involves attempting to influence government policy again at the local, state, or federal level. This may include lobbying, but it's also involves educational and information sharing activities such as sponsoring events to raise public awareness of an issue, conducting research, educating the public about policies that affect your organization or participating in coalitions.

([13:24](#)):

Next slide please. So there were a lot of wonderful findings in this data, and six of our key findings, which I'll briefly highlight here, is that a lower proportion of nonprofits are engaging in advocacy than they were 20 years ago. Mission plays the largest role in determining nonprofit advocacy. Significantly fewer nonprofits know what advocacy activities they're legally allowed to do now than they did 20 years ago. Only 13% of nonprofits are doing voter engagement work.

([14:00](#)):

Nonprofits that belong to coalitions or collaborative groups, either policy focused or service delivery focused end up advocating at higher rates than those that do not. And then even though the majority of the sector reports having a DEI or diversity equity and inclusion statement, only 36% of those are engaging in advocacy to create these more equitable systems. Next slide please.

([14:27](#)):

So overall, about 31% of nonprofits are engaged in advocacy or lobbying activities or both over the last five years, which is less than half of the percentage of nonprofits that reported ever lobbying in 2000. So that's over two thirds of nonprofit organizations that are not engaging in advocacy or lobbying at all, which is a lot of power to leave on the table. Next slide please.

([14:54](#)):

So this research replicated a quiz from the last study that was done in the year 2000 that assessed nonprofit legal understanding. So what we found is that organizations today have a good understanding of what they're not allowed to do. However, significantly fewer nonprofits today know the advocacy

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activities that they are legally allowed to do compared to 20 years ago. And you can see that that difference between the blue bar and the gray bar on that slide is pretty striking.

[\(15:25\)](#):

For instance, in 2000, over half of 501(c)(3) charities knew they could support or oppose federal legislation compared to one third today. Next slide. So of the 31% of nonprofits that report advocating, what do we know? We know that while environmental organizations make up a small portion of the sector at about 5%, they're engaging more than any other sub-sector in advocacy and lobbying. And then human services organizations, which I think a lot of you in the audience might be, you make up the largest portion of the nonprofit sector at about 36%. But about less than a third of these organizations are engaging in advocacy or lobbying.

[\(16:09\)](#):

Additionally, organizational size in terms of annual budget is an important predictor with larger organizations being significantly more likely to engage than smaller organizations. So when we take these findings with some other findings from the survey, this translates to over half of the nonprofit sector being excluded from the policy process. Either through their lack of knowledge or from being factors related to being smaller in size. And because smaller organizations are the most prevalent across American communities, this disparity could have significant implications for the sector's voice and the communities that we serve. Next slide please.

[\(16:48\)](#):

So nonprofits working at the state level or regionally within a state are more likely to engage in policy advocacy than organizations working in other capacities nationally across multiple states, locally or internationally. I want to point out that even though organizations that work at the local or multi local level represent the largest segment of the sector at about 46%, they demonstrate the lowest level of policy engagement apart from international organizations. Next slide please.

[\(17:21\)](#):

So when we dig into human services organizations in particular, it follows the same pattern. Local level demonstrates the lowest levels of policy engagement falling slightly below the nonprofit sector overall. But interestingly, human services organizations working in states, across multiple states, nationally or internationally are slightly above the nonprofit sector overall. Next slide. When we consider why organizations do or do not engage in advocacy or lobbying, they engage because they perceive policy engagement to be related to their mission.

[\(18:00\)](#):

Policy engaged nonprofits, they also see organizational attitudes toward advocacy in general, help from coalitions and then organizational attitudes toward policy decisions as encouraging. Discouraging, however, our organizational capacity and current tax laws or IRS rules. Next slide. So when we look at these factors for human services organizations, again, it mirrors kind of what we see for the overall nonprofit sector with mission serving as the largest motivator and tax laws or IRS rules as the largest discouraging factor.

[\(18:38\)](#):

One notable difference is that receiving government funding is a motivating factor for human services organizations while it's a discouraging factor for the sector overall. And this could be related to the need to advocate to maintain federal funding or get grants. Additionally, organizational capacity appears to be

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a bigger discouraging factor for human services organizations than the nonprofit sector overall. Next slide please.

(19:08):

So this study also looked at elections engagement or civic engagement, and nonprofits that are engaged in advocacy are more highly engaged in these election related activities. So these findings here combined with other election related data from the survey suggest that while few nonprofits are engaging in elections work, when they do, they play a vital role, particularly promoting voter education and turnout. And that their efforts are important in low income and urban communities and when working with historically marginalized populations.

(19:45):

Next slide please. And then as with the nonprofit sector overall, human service organizations engaged in advocacy are more likely to engage in these elections related activities. Human services organizations, they engage in these at a similar rate to overall nonprofit sector, but they engage slightly less in voter education and get out the vote and slightly more in voter registration. Next slide. So I want to leave you all with this quote from Suzanne McCormick, the president and CEO of YMCA of the USA about the need for nonprofit organizations to engage in advocacy.

(20:26):

Nonprofits must engage in advocacy to share our stories of impact, community need, and how we can help solve critical social issues. Being advocates and engaging others in civic life helps ensure that every individual and family, regardless of their background or where they live, has the support they need to thrive. Our sector must engage in advocacy if we want to drive real change and equity for all.

(20:50):

So this research shows that the nonprofit sector is leaving a lot of power on the table, which is why Independent Sector is so excited about the development of the security to wellbeing framework. And human services organizations in particular, you all are uniquely positioned to understand the needs of the communities you serve and then to advocate for those positive structural changes to help meet those needs. Thank you.

Héctor Malvido (21:21):

Thank you so much, Emily. I really appreciate your time and you really gave us something to think about with this report, and I know everyone else here has a ton of questions. Feel free to ask any questions that you have on the report to Emily through the Q&A function. And just as a reminder, we will be sharing all the slides and more links with more resources after the panel in a follow-up email.

(21:49):

Now I wanted to turn it over to one of the more exciting and most exciting parts of our time today where we're going to be hearing from service leaders leading social change work where I'm really excited to introduce the wonderful, my colleague Mercedes Brown, who is a director of the race equity assessment and someone who's been working across sectors on policy and direct service for a long time. And honestly, I couldn't think of a better person to guide our discussion today. So Mercedes, I pass it off to you.

Mercedes Brown (22:22):

Thanks, Hector. I'd like to thank and introduce our panelists before we dive into this exciting panel discussion. I'll start by introducing Mileyka Burgos, who is with the Allapattah Collaborative. Thank you for being here with us Mileyka. I'll next introduce Hope Williams with the Sustainable Economies Law



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Center. Thank you, Hope. And then last but certainly not least, introduce Micaela Oer with the Hispanic Interest Coalition of Alabama or HICA for short. Thank you to the three of you for joining this exciting discussion.

[\(22:57\)](#):

We'll start with Mileyka, if you don't mind. Mileyka, I have a two-part question for you. Hi, there you go. I can see you on my screen. I have a two-part question for you, so we'll get through this together. Through your work in Miami, you support and serve your community in several ways. You are quite impressive. From your work in housing policy and land use as well as the work that you lead around in the areas of wealth building and economic development. So you are pretty busy.

[\(23:28\)](#):

In the work that you do in Miami, what role do you see direct service providers playing in our communities becoming more self-determined? And then there'll be a second part to that question, if you don't mind sharing with the folks who joined this webinar, what are the challenges you've come up against in realizing that vision yourself and the work that you've been leading?

Mileyka Burgos [\(23:50\)](#):

Yes, sure. So I feel that nonprofit organizations, social impact organizations play a pivotal role in our communities. Number one, because the civic infrastructure of our cities is so important, we need to make sure that we understand there's a private sector, there's a government sector, the public sector. But then there's always who's going to do this work in the middle? And that's where nonprofits come in. That we are the one that many times do the work that is too detailed for the city to do and not profitable enough for a company to do.

[\(24:29\)](#):

So we literally end up picking up the slack, and not only that, but be in that place of innovation in that place where you try out new things to see if they're going to stick and then we can make a policy or we can make it a new way of doing things. One of the biggest misconceptions, and I think that Hector mentioned this a little bit, is that nonprofit is not charity. Nonprofit is needed work in our communities for it to move forward. So that's something that I always say because when people are donating or helping our nonprofits, so giving us a grant, they're not doing me a favor. They're really moving our communities forward.

[\(25:16\)](#):

So I feel that that's where we got to have that stronghold. The other thing that is challenging is that nonprofit that was mentioned, it's not that we don't want to participate in this public advocacy mechanism that is needed, that policy advocacy platform happens to be very challenging many times. And we are not interested in playing politics, we're interested in delivering on our mission. And the level of hoops and things that needs to happen becomes challenging. So you find the most effective way to get your work done. And many times that is not getting as involved as you should or as you should bring your community to in order to get things done.

[\(26:06\)](#):

To close. I'll say this, the idea of nonprofits to find a problem in your community, the idea of nonprofits happens to be very grassroots. It's about community coming together and solving an issue that the for-profit sector or the public sector is unable to resolve. And we become this playground to find new solutions. I would love for people to see us as this playground to find new solutions and engage

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community in finding those solutions and many times finding those solutions and then moving on to the next thing. It will be great to eradicate an issue by working together and move on to something else.

Mercedes Brown ([26:51](#)):

Yes, thank you, Mileyka. You're right. You're right. That service organizations being more proximate to the issues that we're collectively seeking to address are more proximate to the solutions and should be able to navigate the red tape more easily. And should be able to navigate the political landscape. So I'm excited to hear your responses, hear from the fellow panelists and learn and explore ways together about how we can remove some of those barriers and services putting the experts in the seats they need to be in. Thank you for that. We'll be back to you shortly.

([27:24](#)):

Let's shift gears now and talk to Hope. Hopefully we'll see Hope show up on the spotlight soon. Hope, I have a two-part question for you too. Hi there.

Hope Williams ([27:24](#)):

Hello.

Mercedes Brown ([27:33](#)):

Hi there. So the Sustainable Economies Law Center works directly with constituents and other nonprofit service organizations that might be interested in doing more around public land, environmental justice housing, et cetera. You all also stay pretty busy. So I have a two-part question for you. What kinds of barriers or hesitations have you observed from organizations that want to step into this kind of work first? And then if you could share with the audience what's one way you support them in getting over that hump?

Hope Williams ([27:33](#)):

One way.

Mercedes Brown ([28:10](#)):

One of the many ways.

Hope Williams ([28:13](#)):

So I really appreciate this opportunity to join you all today. As a representative of the Sustainable Economies Law Center, our mission is rooted in the advancement of just and resilient economies through comprehensive efforts in legal education, research, advice, and advocacy. And at the heart of our commitment is the creation of a legal landscape that not only empowers communities, but also fosters grassroots economic empowerment on a global scale.

([28:45](#)):

So we understand the critical role that legal tools play in the development of sustainable sources for food, housing, energy, jobs, and other essential components of thriving communities. So in response to the challenges faced by communities and ecosystems under prevailing economic systems, we have developed a theory of change that focuses on filling gaps in legal expertise. And our programs strategically target key leverage points within existing economic and legal systems with a particular emphasis on dismantling entrenched legal barriers that are hindering the growth of resilient communities.

([29:25](#)):

And these efforts are multifaceted, encompassing the envisioning of just and resilient economic and legal systems, advocating for policies that will eliminate legal obstacles, and empowering community-based entrepreneurs, educating communities and lawmakers about innovative economic strategies and



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training the next generation of community-based lawyers. It's a little more than one, but so in order to make legal education accessible and engaging, we've initiated a program called the Resilient Communities Legal Cafe. It is a legal clinic where individuals receive free legal advice from our volunteer attorneys. We serve at least 500 people a year.

(30:11):

And also through this initiative, we complimented the cafe by creating what we call bite-sized legal resources. We have about 40 of them answering questions and making the law accessible on whatever it is that you're trying to do within your own communities. They offer quick insights for those seeking immediate information. And then for legal professionals, we provide ongoing learning opportunities through MCLE workshops, diverse webinars, covering various topics, and experiential learning opportunities at our legal cafes.

(30:50):

So recognizing the common barriers that organizations face and their pursuit of impactful work, we actively support them in navigating financial constraints, legal intricacies, a lack of expertise, community engagement challenges, hesitations and policy advocacy, risk aversion and concerns related to government relations. And through these targeted and collaborative efforts, our goal is to inspire and empower nonprofits, communities, people to take an active role in initiatives related to public land, environmental justice, housing, and more. So in essence, the law center strives. We try to be a catalyst for positive change, fostering resilient communities, and contributing to the development of a more just and sustainable world. So I'm going to keep it there. Thank you, Mercedes. Really appreciate it.

Mercedes Brown (31:49):

Yes, thank you, Hope. Very exciting to hear about the work that your organization is doing and hope that folks will scurry over to your website and learn more. It's very refreshing to hear the ways in which you all have pulled together this multi-prong comprehensive way to address something that the Independent Sector observed in their research too, which is a lot of misconceptions and fear around what's legal, what's allowable as it relates to policy advocacy. So thank you, Hope. We'll be back to you.

(32:20):

Let's turn now to Micaela Oer if we can. Hopefully I'll see you soon. Hi Micaela. The tech is teching. Hi, welcome. Thanks again for being here. While the Hispanic Interest Coalition of Alabama, or HICA, hope that's how you pronounce your acronym for short, is historically a direct service organization that supports immigrant communities in the South. What are the motivations for you and your team to dedicate resources to creating a policy and advocacy team? Because you don't see that a lot. So really curious if you could share what really did spur you all to put a strong stake in the ground and invest in those areas.

Micaela Oer (33:04):

Sure. Thank you so much. So I feel like there's so many reasons why we've decided to move forward with adding a policy and advocacy wing to the organization. But I will say in 2011, there was a law that came into place called HB 56, and essentially it was an anti-immigration law that was put into place here in Alabama. Things that it prohibited was basically if you were undocumented and let's say you were a student, you could not go to public university or college. You can't have a driver's license. Employers have to use E-Verify.

(33:55):

And at the time, schools were having to actually report undocumented families. And about a year later, there was some legislation that we were a part of to help get rid of some of the worst parts, although all

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of it was terrible, but we were only successful in getting rid of some of that law. Currently, there are still sections of it that are still in place, including the use of E-Verify by employers and undocumented students not being able to go to public college or university. And so HICA, as you mentioned, has been pretty much a direct services organization since its conception about 25 years ago.

(34:45):

Once this law came into effect, obviously a lot of our constituents were facing the barriers created by this law. And since then, nothing has changed. It has been completely stagnant. And I think that the experience of our community paired with our staff, walking alongside of them, seeing for ourselves as well, what these barriers actually look like and how it is really impacting our communities, our families, from being able to grow to feel safe all of those things has really pushed us to stay true to our mission, which is that we are an advocacy organization.

(35:42):

And to be honest, we were not fully living up to that. And we decided that now is the time, now is the time to really find funding to make this new change in the organization, to really invest in professional development and to help our staff really see themselves as part of advocacy and systems change. Because I feel like oftentimes direct services people tend to think that sometimes we're kind of putting a bandaid on it. But even in that, there's still opportunity and it's something that we are still working through. This is a current thing that we're trying to do right now, but we see that there's so much opportunity.

(36:40):

Our organization has so many different types of services from legal immigration services to community economic development, we do work around education. All of those things have an advocacy piece. And it's taken time because you do have to, I think our leaders can make decisions, but we are so connected within this organization that we also have to make sure that we bring along our staff and that they see themselves as part of this process.

(37:15):

And so with every program having their own advocacy piece, we are really working to just help them to have a better understanding of laws and policies that are affecting our constituents and helping them to find tools to better give context to these laws and policies to our constituents too. Because ultimately we want them to be empowered. We want them to feel confident and understand why certain things are the way they are and what they can do to change that. So that's pretty much what's motivated us to get to this point.

Mercedes Brown (37:59):

Yeah, thanks Micaela. Thanks for sharing that. And I think one thing I'll just lift up and as we shift gears is the importance of stories and reflections like HICAs in regards to shifting course and recognizing its responsibility in service of its mission and its goal-based work to step out into social change and advocacy and to swing into advocacy and systems change. Excuse me, work in service of that, recognizing your unique position in proximity. Thank you Micaela for that. We will. You all have been so fantastic. I do have another question for you all, and then it looks like we've been receiving a good number of questions in the Q&A. So thanks to folks for lighting the Q&A up.

(38:49):

Let's collectively come back together for a final question that I have for the three of you. So collectively, you all have deep insights and knowledge of the landscape that direct service organizations navigate

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daily. As we close our panel, could you share with us one big hope you have when it comes to direct service organizations engaging more directly in social change work in the way in which you all have spoke to with regard to what your organizations do? We'll start with you Micaela, if you don't mind.

Micaela Oer ([39:26](#)):

Sure. I feel like I'll try to keep mine short and sweet, but I think one of my biggest hopes for the nonprofit sector and as a trained social worker, I feel really passionate about just being able to push through neutrality. I feel like Hector said that earlier and that's exactly how I feel. So to push through neutrality and to be bold. This work is not meant to be done quietly. Systems change. We do have to make space for not only ourselves, but our community, the people who are most impacted, and also to our neighbors.

([40:10](#)):

I'm not originally from Birmingham, but I moved here about four years ago. And there is history all around where I am, rich history from the Black community and everything that they have gone through here. And we have to remember to be good neighbors and good partners to our other communities as well. And so that's my big hope for this work is that we continue to be bold with each other.

Mercedes Brown ([40:45](#)):

I appreciate that. Thank you, Micaela. The folks that we do this work in service of deserve more. We have to do this work loudly and proudly. Hope, how about for you? Same question.

Hope Williams ([40:55](#)):

Yeah, sure. So plus one, Micaela. I think being bold is important. I myself and the rest of the lawyers at our law center have a serious risk aversion to risk aversion. Fear of failure or negative consequences can be a significant barrier. And so organizations may be hesitant to take those risks associated with advocacy or projects in unfamiliar territory.

([41:27](#)):

And at the law center, we foster a culture of experimentation and learning. We can share with you case studies, successful endeavors, and also provide a safe space for sharing experiences. And we can even offer guidance to calculated risk taking and get you to have a serious risk aversion to risk aversion. So thank you.

Mercedes Brown ([41:49](#)):

Thank you, Hope. Risk aversion to risk aversion. I'll use that. Thank you. How about you, Mileyka? We'll close out with you.

Mileyka Burgos ([41:59](#)):

Yeah, I think that a big hope for me is alignment along the private sector, the public sector, and nonprofits. Number one, the recognition of the place of nonprofits in our community and really strengthening that civic infrastructure, but also that alignment to truly resolve and conquer the social challenges that we have. And I'm going to put the clear example of COVID. The moment that we all hit COVID, we came up with solutions around entrepreneurship and small business and healthcare. And so many solutions happened just because we were all aligned in solving this invisible evil.

([42:46](#)):

But I think that in order for us to get there, I'm going to quote Trevor Noah a little bit here when he talks about the conversation, the fact that we are at a point in our country where we don't even want to approach the conversation. Usually the challenge itself is the minefield. And now the conversation to resolve the issue is that minefield and that is paralyzing for nonprofits and for people in general. When

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people in your community say, "I'm not going to get involved in advocacy, I'm not going to get involved in politics." Because they feel the potential repercussion that that can have in their personal lives. So I think that really dismantling this thing about having the conversation and disagreeing and coming to consensus and really aligning to solve social challenges is my biggest hope.

Mercedes Brown ([43:48](#)):

Well said, Mileyka, well said. I won't even try to paraphrase. Thank you all for being part of such an important and thoughtful conversation. I do believe we have a little time, so we might be able to, Hector, I'm looking at my screen for you. We may be able to pull a few of the questions that have come in through the Q&A function. So thanks, a lot of answer questions and a lot of questions out there. Hector, are there a couple that you might want to lift up?

Héctor Malvido ([44:16](#)):

Yes, absolutely. There's this one that's coming from Andy Carroll, and the question is how can smaller place-based foundations and donors best support policy and advocacy for local or state-based service nonprofits? Is it gen ops, general operation support, multi-year funding, funding for advocacy work, other ways? Basically, what are the ways that these types of foundations can support service organizations who want to engage in this type of work?

Mileyka Burgos ([44:47](#)):

I can share something very quickly. And I'm glad that you picked this question, Hector, because many times big foundations, little foundations, community foundations, they support you with money. They give you funding, which is very much needed. But I think that sometimes we need that advocacy support. We need those resources that they can afford that smaller nonprofits are unable to afford.

([45:15](#)):

And sometimes we need an accomplice. We need an accomplice because for example, when I talk about small businesses and displacement and gentrification, I need someone that believes enough in our mission and in the work that we're doing to give us money, but also walk into city hall with me or walk into a meeting with me to say, "Yeah, we support that work and we align with that." So I feel that we've had large corporations who have done that and that is largely successful. But I think that's the next step that I think foundations and philanthropists needs to take is really being there not only financially, but in principle.

Micaela Oer ([46:04](#)):

I would love to add to this really quickly. The person who wrote the question, I think they listed a couple of different ideas, and one of them was general ops. And in my experience, that is one of the things that we spend a lot of money on throughout the year. You never know when the heating's going to go out or something, things are going to happen. And having free money that's a little bit more open that you can use for different things is so helpful to an organization.

([46:44](#)):

And so I think that that is, I know for us has been really helpful when it came to our donors or when we are receiving grants. And I think something else that I wanted to lift up was, I know that it's tricky to sometimes write grants for specific work around advocacy or civic engagement. We do a lot of civic engagement work, but I would say be creative. There are so many aspects to direct services that are either civic engagement related or advocacy related that we can really work into our grants.

([47:30](#)):

And one area that I feel like is really important that I've learned in the past four years that I've been working here, I rely heavily on volunteers. Volunteers are really the backbone of everything that we do.

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And we are always looking for ways to give back to them because they're giving up their time, they're doing all of this work for us. Sometimes the conditions are hot, all of those things.

(48:02):

And so finding ways to fund stipends or snacks and food, but I can definitely say volunteers really appreciate when we can give them a stipend. I really feel like that makes such a huge difference. So as a funder, that's really important too. So you might think, why are they asking for this? But it really is important. It's an important part to keeping our community engaged and helping us create change.

Hope Williams (48:33):

Yeah, free money. So I guess one of the things, I'm relatively new to the grant writing at the Sustainable Economy Law Center, and I've learned a lot. And one of the things that I'd like to offer is a lot of these nonprofits are really scared to reach out to funders, to big money. It's nerve wracking to ask for money.

(48:58):

And I think one of the ways in my ideal world is that some of these funders would kind of dive in deeper into their communities to see what these nonprofits are doing and then connect with them directly. I think it would be perfect. I don't think I've seen that happen yet. So I'm going to put that out there for the funders on this call. Thank you.

Héctor Malvido (49:21):

Thank you so much everyone for your thoughtful responses. I think we have time for maybe one more question just super quickly, and this is coming someone anonymously for how did you build that buy-in? What work did you do to help the board of directors or the leadership, the people who are stewarding the direction of the organization, move towards the social change worker advocacy that you all are involved in?

Hope Williams (49:52):

So speaking as someone who serves on three different boards, I'm sure we all do. The one thing that the Sustainable Economies Law Center has done is essentially take away the decision-making power from our board. Because part of what restricts a nonprofit and their vision is that overbearing board that takes forever to vote on things that really restricts what their vision is. And I feel like I can drop a resource in the chat so people can kind of take a look and see how we do things governance wise. But that to me, I feel like is really important so yeah.

Mileyka Burgos (50:39):

I think that for us, it's a little bit along Hope's line. We have a community board and the community board drives the mission of the organization. I mean, the Allapattah Collaborative CDC was born out of a community engagement process and the community created it and the community continues to lead, but we can't get ourselves. If the resources were in my community, then we wouldn't need the Allapattah CDC. So in order to have a board, what the board focuses more on is on bringing resources and bringing people into our board that could be influential in making sure that those changes can happen in our community in a successful way.

(51:23):

So making sure that we have the right developers and the right lawyers and the right accountants, so they are able to strengthen and beef up the things that we don't have the internal capacity as a community to do. So they can help us find investment vehicles. My community may not have the latest and greatest information on that, but if I bring people to be on my board to do that, they then come to the board to expand our mission as far as the implementation of the things that my community board wants to do.

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Micaela Oer ([52:04](#)):

I'm just taking notes for one on this question, but I will say I feel like taking your board along with you on the journey is just so important. Building the buy-in, it's kind of the same with staff. It's at a different level. But if we want to create change, we do have to find a way to really, I guess, to show them the actual impact of their decisions. And so I feel like that's kind of what we are currently working on too, is just seeing how can we get them involved when we need help with figuring out what a policy is actually trying to say. We have lawyers we can call on from our board or other connections. So yeah, I think so far that's kind of where we've been going, at least with that.

Mercedes Brown ([53:01](#)):

Yes, thank you. Thank you Micaela, Mileyka, and Hope. Thank you for the work that you all do daily. Thank you for the work of your organizations. It's truly important, inspirational, and I hope that the folks who joined us on this webinar will reach out to you. We'll learn more about how you've harnessed the power of your seat as an organization, a nonprofit service organization to drive change at the systems level through advocacy. And so thank you for taking time away from that important work to join us for this important conversation. How many times can I say important? Before I hand it back over to Hector to lift up some ways that folks can become more involved. Thank you.

Héctor Malvido ([53:45](#)):

Thank you again to all of our panelists and Mercedes for being such a fantastic moderator, really appreciate your voice and guiding us in this conversation. So there are a couple ways to get involved with the further refinement of our framework and what we're hoping to accomplish with it. We'd love to talk, request a one-on-one with BMP, with myself. I'm happy to hop on a phone call, respond to emails, send any resources that we have developed so that you can have everything at your disposal if you're interested in learning more. You could also visit our cohort blog.

([54:21](#)):

So I'm going to get into more detail about this community of practice. But if you are interested or know of other direct service organizations who might be interested in starting or continuing to expand your social change work, there is a community that we're building around that, feel free to reach out with questions as well. And then finally, well yeah, apply to join the cohort. We can go on to the next slide. This community of practice that we have going on that we're planning to launch in March, 2024 to further again refine this pilot. We want to test it out.

([54:56](#)):

This framework was developed by service providers, but we need to put it to the test so that we can then publish it and have it out in the world so that other organizations and capacity builders and everyone else could be essentially taking this framework and applying it to their work. Can we go to the next slide please? So this is open to all direct service providers who again, want to increase or introduce social change work and also learn more about and identify ways to implement the four key strategies of the framework, essentially learning in the community and also just connecting across issue areas.

([55:37](#)):

So what we're looking for is direct service providers who come from a variety of different issues that they're focused on, even regions and geographic scope that might be interested in supporting each other as they're exploring this type of work together. And the applications for the cohort are due on January 19th, 2024. And I can go a little bit more into what the schedule for the community of practice will look like. So it's going to be a total of four sessions of one session every three weeks between March, 2024 through May, 2024.



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[\(56:10\)](#):

And those sessions will be again, exploring all the strategies together and going through some content and again, learning as a group. And then afterwards, we are going to be offering high and low touch support for technical assistance for organizations who want to opt in to receiving a little bit more support in implementing these strategies to their work. So what does the content actually look like? So over the course of those three months, the organizations will participate in a series of modules. They'll all explore the different components.

[\(56:46\)](#):

We're really excited to create a space of learning that centers participants' voices, generates a network of peer support, and identify places where organizations can integrate and implement some of the key lessons into their programming. Our other hope again, is through that this pilot, we're able to just refine this framework and make it stronger because iron sharpens iron. And we want service providers to contribute to the development of this so that we can have it out available to, again, capacity builders, consultants, and others service providers who want to take on this work on their own.

[\(57:18\)](#):

So we will be sharing the link for the cohort that has more information on the cohort opportunity, and also within that link you'll find the application as well. And we'll be posting that in the chat. So as we come to a close, I just want to close this out again with just so many appreciations for our panelists for all taking the time to answer your questions and just being here in community with us. Emily Rogers with the Independent Sector for sharing such an invaluable research about our sector and sort of where we are. And then obviously our wonderful moderator, Mercedes, for being such a huge part of the conversation.

[\(57:59\)](#):

And then finally, all of the people who had so much to do with making this webinar possible, my BMP colleagues, Jazz, Maggie, and everyone else who was just big there for support. And then finally, you, all of the folks who took time out of their Thursday to join us today to learn a little bit more about our framework and yeah, have those important conversations about what role service providers can think about playing in developing and changing systems in their communities.

[\(58:30\)](#):

So I want to continue this conversation. It's not the end all be all. So if you sign off today, please save my email, reach out to us on [buildingmovement.org](https://buildingmovement.org) on Twitter, and also through the links that are being shared in the chat. We will be sharing all of the resources that we talked about, including the slide deck, information on our panelists afterwards. But again, we'd love to continue this conversation as we move forward with the project. So thank you everyone for being a part of this, and yeah, thank you. Have a great day everyone.