



MOVEMENT INFRASTRUCTURE SERIES



Reckoning with Sustainability: Black Leaders Reflect on 2020, the Funding Cliff, and Organizing Infrastructure

February 2024



Building Movement Project

Activating Nonprofits | Fueling Change



Contents

Introduction and Context	03
<hr/>	
The 2020 Peak and Trends that Followed	
The Funding Wave and Retreat	
The Perpetual Funding Challenges for Black Leaders	
Black Leaders on What Has – or Hasn’t – Changed Since 2020	08
<hr/>	
The Politics and Nuance of Leaders’ Blackness.....	09
Black Leaders In Their Own Words - Identity and Leadership	
Black Leaders Anticipated the Funding Cliff.....	11
Black Leaders In Their Own Words - Experiences with Funders	
Black Leaders Made Strategic Investments for Futures Beyond the Funding.....	14
Black Leaders In Their Own Words - Strategic Investments	
Black Leaders Face Increasing Organizational Challenges.....	17
Black Leaders In Their Own Words - Organizational Challenges	
Support and Encouragement for Future Black Leaders.....	20
Black Leaders In Their Own Words - Wisdom for Future Leaders	
Call To Action	22
<hr/>	
Black Organizing Infrastructure Requires Sustained and Flexible Funding	
Black Organizing Infrastructure Requires Investing in a Robust Movement Ecosystem	
Black Organizing Infrastructure Requires Funding for Training and Skills	
Black Leaders In Their Own Words - Call to Action	
Appendix 1: The Research Process.....	27
Appendix 2: List of Interviewees.....	28
Endnotes.....	30

Acknowledgments

Sean Thomas-Breitfeld, Co-Executive Director at the Building Movement Project, and Adaku Utah, BMP’s Senior Manager of Movement Building Programs, authored this report and conducted the interviews with Black leaders for this project. Frances Kunreuther, Co-Executive Director, and Deepa Iyer, Senior Director of Strategic Initiatives, provided editorial guidance. Additional support came from Tessa Constantine, Research Manager, UyenThi Tran Myhre, Coordinator of Movement Building Programs, and Jasmine Leeward, Communications and Operations Associate.

BMP thanks each of the 54 interviewees for being willing to share their candid reflections and insights.

BMP is also grateful for the support of consultants who contributed to this report. BMP partnered with Mirror Group LLC, a Black-owned and led consulting firm, to conduct a qualitative analysis of anonymized transcripts from the more than 50 interviews conducted for this project. Mirror Group LLC’s rigorous coding of the transcripts offered invaluable help in identifying and tracking themes from the interviews. BMP also thanks Eseosa Eke and the IconiQ Creative Group for the design and layout of this report.

This report was funded by the Wellspring Philanthropic Fund; BMP thanks Rachel Herzing for the support and thought partnership on this project.



Introduction and Context

While the long arc of history in the United States may bend toward justice, the struggle for Black liberation has followed repetitive cycles of progress and backlash. From the abolitionist movement to reconstruction to the classic Civil Rights era to today, movements for racial justice have organized across racial lines to galvanize awareness and solidarity, and eventually win change. But these wins have also been followed by racist backlashes that reassert the old racial and economic hierarchies.¹

The last few years, particularly since 2020, have been marked by wide and rapid shifts in public sentiment and political opportunity related to racial justice and the concerns of Black people in the United States. This period of progress and backlash has wrought particular havoc for Black-led organizing groups. Through interviews with more than 50 Black leaders across the country, the Building Movement Project explored how leaders and their organizations understood the brief moment of “racial reckoning” in 2020, how their organizations have fared in the years since, and what they see on the horizon. By centering the wisdom of Black leaders, we hope this report will bolster advocacy efforts to sustain funding and investment in the capacity of Black-led organizing groups that are building power in communities across the country and critical to the broader struggle for Black liberation.



The 2020 Peak and Trends that Followed

In response to the collective trauma and grief over the murders of Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, and George Floyd during the first five months of 2020, an estimated 15 to 26 million people participated in demonstrations in more than 500 locations across the United States.² While millions took to the streets at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, widespread news coverage touted record sales of books about racism, shifts in polling on Americans' views about the pervasiveness of anti-Black discrimination, and anodyne public statements about racial justice. Despite some worries that the summer's protests would boost support for conservative "law and order" candidates in the 2020 election, there is evidence that the Black Lives Matter movement encouraged more swing voters to join the coalition that elected President Joe Biden and other progressive elected officials that November.³

But much has changed in the years that followed the "racial reckoning" of 2020. The period of growing public consciousness, political support, and direct action was short-lived.

The mass mobilization in support of racial justice was supplanted in 2021 with media coverage of the January 6th insurrection and the right-wing's ongoing disinformation campaign against critical race theory (CRT). The anti-CRT protests at local school boards and statehouses demonstrated the right's success in making CRT "a new bogeyman for people unwilling to acknowledge our country's racist history and how it impacts the present."⁴ This campaign also had real policy impacts; more than half the states in the country adopted at least one anti-CRT measure.⁵ On top of battles over critical race theory, Supreme Court rulings also rolled back progress in the period since the racial reckoning. Rulings that overturned and restricted abortion rights and affirmative action in 2022 and 2023 contributed to the threats facing all people of color.



The 2020 Peak and Trends that Followed

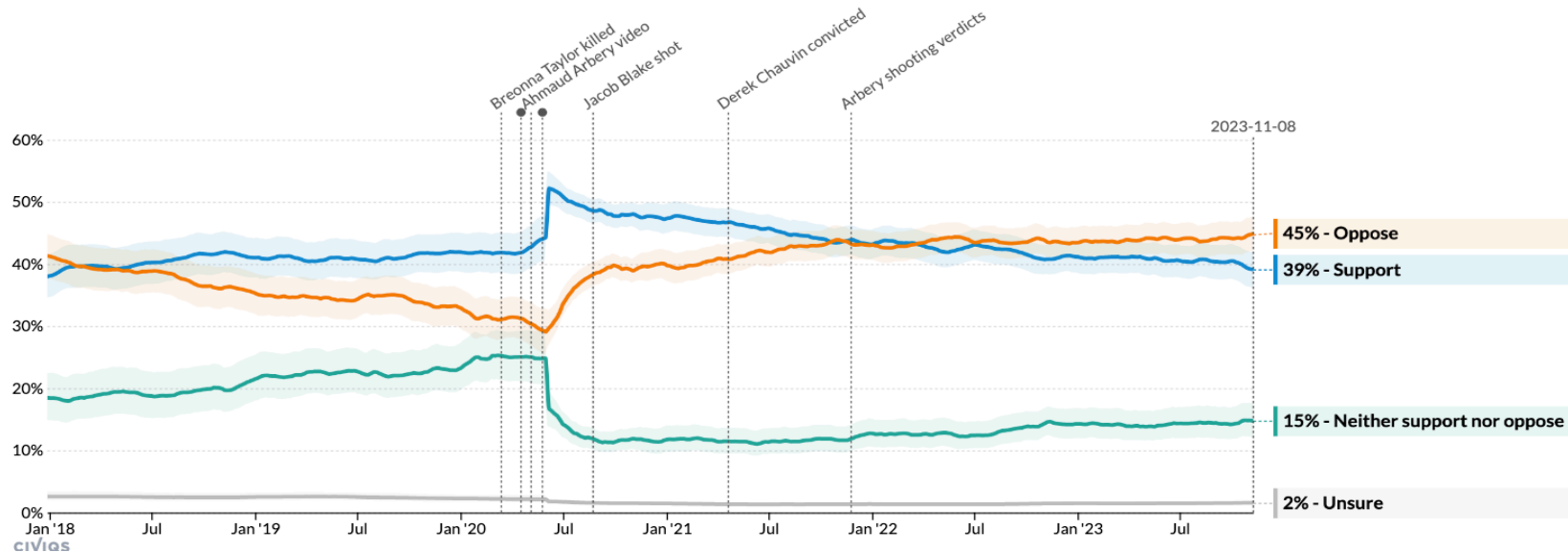
The pendulum swing in the political landscape mirrored shifts in public sentiment. According to data from Civiqs — an online polling company that has asked whether respondents “support or opposed the Black Lives Matter movement” since 2017 — there was a notable increase in support during 2020, but opposition to the movement overtook those levels of support by April of 2022 (see Figure 1 by Civiqs).⁶ Academics who analyzed the Civiqs data found that support among the growing coalition of people of color has remained stable. However, the decline in support for the movement was driven by volatility in the opinions of Republicans and white Americans, two groups whose support peaked in the immediate aftermath of George Floyd’s murder and then swiftly declined.⁷

The external threats from right-wing movements and general shifts in public sentiment have also accompanied a period of internal reflection (and critique) within progressive movement organizations, including Black-led groups. Recent articles and thought-pieces have explored “meltdowns” in progressive organizations and asserted that recent progressive movements failed to achieve their ambitions.⁸ While these articles often lacked a historical perspective and centered policy change as the only measure of movements, there were clear internal conflicts threatening to undermine the functioning of organizations and the power of movements. Maurice Mitchell, a prominent Black leader in the progressive movement, released an influential article late in 2022 that offered his analysis of why movement organizations on the left were “stuck” and a framework for building “resilient organizations that can weather internal conflict and external crises.”⁹

Figure 1

Do you support or oppose the Black Lives Matter movement?

NATIONAL, Registered Voters: April 25, 2017 – November 8, 2023



The Funding Wave, and Retreat

Although the brief “racial reckoning” in 2020 was accompanied by news coverage touting the financial pledges made by corporations and wealthy donors towards racial equity, the momentary largesse of these temporary philanthropic efforts actually highlights the perpetual funding challenges faced by Black-led organizations. Multiple sources have revealed that many of the corporate “blackwashing” efforts in 2020 amounted to empty promises, and that the philanthropic sector is currently going through a “great retrenchment” from the investments made during the height of the public pressure to demonstrate solidarity with struggles for Black liberation.

In 2021, *The Washington Post* analyzed corporate commitments toward racial justice. The Post found that of the \$49.5 billion pledged by America’s 50 biggest public companies and their foundations, 90% of that amount was in the form of profit-generating loans, investments or mortgages.”¹⁰ Similarly, the McKinsey Institute for Black Economic Mobility noted that even though companies in the finance industry had publicly committed \$340 billion to fighting racial injustice by the end of 2022, it was unclear how funds were actually allocated.¹¹ A study by the Association of Corporate Citizenship Professionals (ACCP) – in partnership with both the Building Movement Project (BMP) and Leverage Philanthropic Partners (LPP) – highlighted concerns among people of color working in the CSR field that the commitments their companies were making to racial equity would be fleeting.¹²

Parallel trends were observed in philanthropy. Following the 2020 protests, many private foundations that previously avoided taking a stand on racial justice started directing more philanthropic dollars to Black-led organizations. But by 2023, there was widespread worry, if not outright skepticism, that philanthropy was retreating from commitments to fund racial justice efforts.¹³

The Chronicle of Philanthropy explored the unprecedented philanthropic efforts to confront racism at the height of the racial reckoning but found three years later that foundations were reverting to their normal practices, that grants were declining, and that the consensus was “an unsurprising one: that philanthropy has made progress, but not enough.”¹⁴





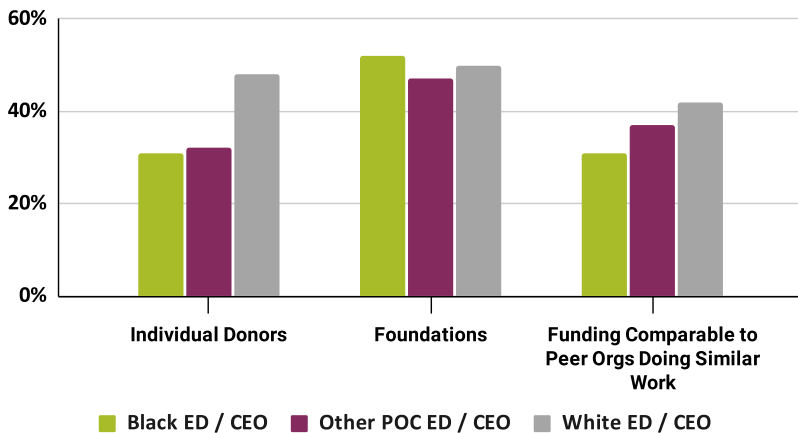
The Perpetual Funding Challenges for Black Leaders

Although there are some foundations, funder collaboratives, and individual donors with a track record of consistently directing significant resources to racial justice groups and Black-led organizations across the United States, the Building Movement Project’s *Race to Lead* Initiative has found that fundraising is a common frustration and stressor for nonprofit leaders. Roughly three out of five Executive Directors, regardless of race, reported that they “often” or “always” experienced raising money as a challenge in their role.

In the 2022 *Race to Lead* Survey, there were no clear racial differences in the percentage of EDs who reported that they “often” or “always” had access to foundations. However, Black EDs reported more difficulty gaining access to individual donors, and were less likely to report that they received “funding that is comparable to peer organizations doing similar work” (see Figure 2).

Figure 2

Percent of EDs / CEOs reporting they “often” or “always” have access to...

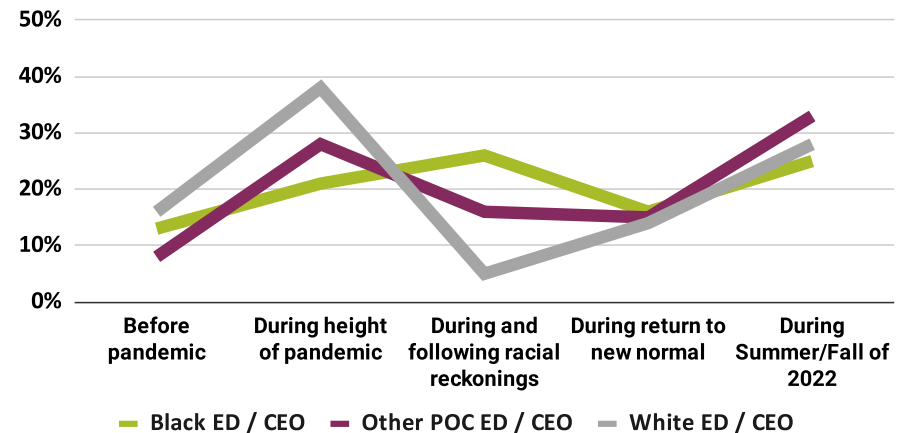


The 2022 *Race to Lead* Survey also asked executive leaders when since 2020 they had the most success “securing funding” for their organization. As Figure 3 shows, a larger share of Black Executive Directors reported that the moment when they had the most success with funding was during the “racial reckoning” while that was the point where the smallest percentage of white EDs reported success in their funding efforts.

This momentary break from the fundraising struggles routinely experienced by Black leaders offered the opportunity for Black-led groups to move important work during the height of the racial reckoning. But in tandem with the shifts in public opinion and rising threats to racial justice efforts, many organizations find that donors have moved on and foundations are returning to their usual reticence to invest in Black-led groups and organizing efforts for Black liberation.

Figure 3

When had greatest success securing funding to meet org’s budget?





Black Leaders on What Has – or Hasn't – Changed Since 2020

To understand how the broader context of the “racial reckoning” and subsequent backlash impacts Black leaders and their organizations, the Building Movement Project conducted more than fifty hour-long interviews. The majority of interviewees were leaders of organizations that center organizing and power-building. The interviews explored how these leaders made sense of their own work running organizations, particularly in the face of funding challenges, rising external threats and complex workplace dynamics. Interviews also touched on Black leaders’ perspectives about the broader progressive movement.

Many of the interviewees recalled prior points in the history of resistance and organizing that provided important – and sobering – context for how leaders made sense of the opportunity for funding, public support, and political opportunity in 2020.

One of the older leaders observed that “the sixties rebellion was really rooted in anti-police violence”; drawing a connection between the half-century that has transpired since the Civil Rights Movement and the legacy of social and policy change alongside persistent inequities and unfinished work being tackled by today’s movements. For other leaders, their experience working in different movement spaces shaped their analysis of the momentary “reckoning.” One leader recalled her time working in gender justice spaces during the Women’s March in 2017, where she had observed a cycle of “flashpoints” when people and funders on the sidelines were wowed by the three million people who turned out for the women’s marches,¹⁵ followed by “backlash” and having to “beg for the funding again.”

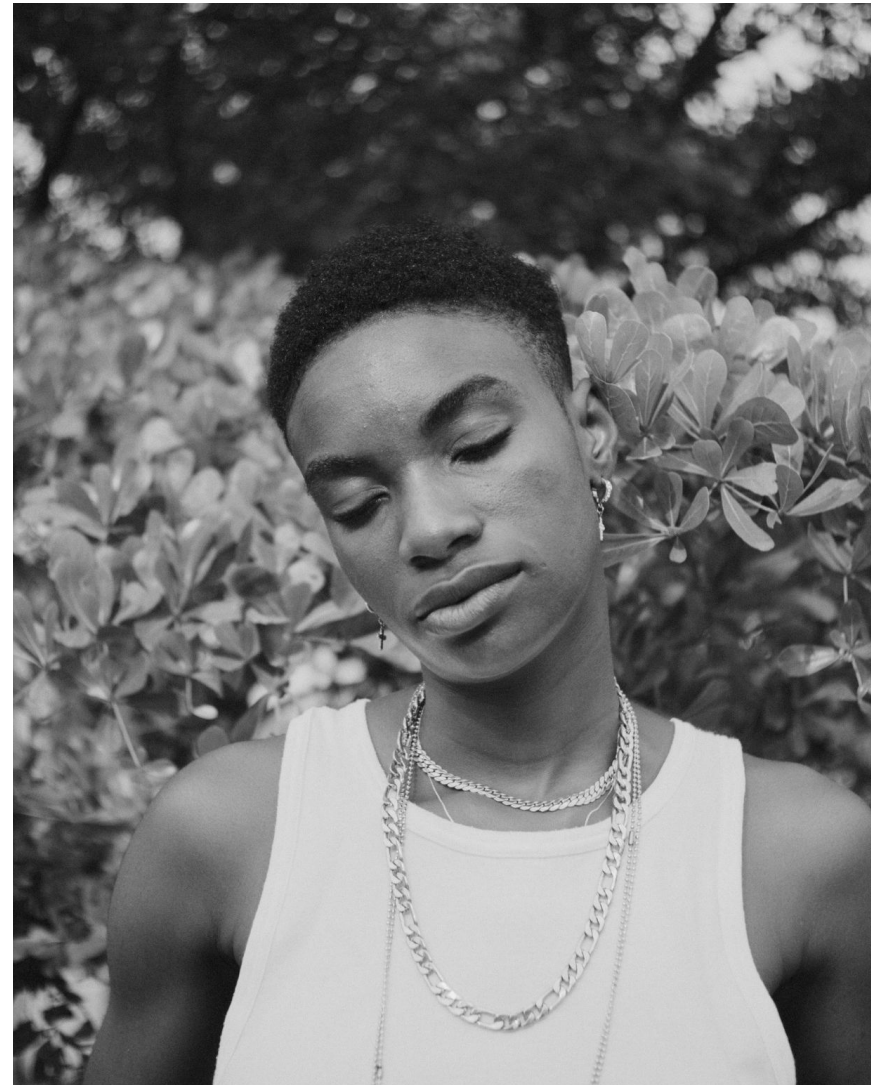
These analyses of the 2020 “racial reckoning” within a longer movement arc informed the strategic decisions that leaders made in the moment in service of campaign wins and critical investments in organizational and movement infrastructure. But in many cases, the funding cliff was still unavoidable and is creating real concerns among Black-led organizing groups.

The Politics and Nuance of Leaders' Blackness

For most Black leaders, Blackness is not just central to how they identify; it is a fundamental political stance that underscores their commitment to organizing. This stance continues a historical lineage of Black radical freedom that serves as a guiding principle for building collective power.

One of the first questions asked of the interviewees was: “What identities are salient to you, and how does this affect how you lead?” The leaders talked about their Blackness as both an ancestral torch and a call to action — a legacy and a strategy. Being Black is a North Star, a commitment to honor and extend the organizing work of predecessors who fought for Black freedom and dignity. For Black leaders, embodying Blackness extends beyond personal or collective identity; it harnesses a shared history to fuel transformation and to assert the inherent value of Black life within institutional and systemic structures that have historically devalued Black people.

While Blackness is a central and defining identity in how leaders live their lives and lead their organizations, it is also intricately interwoven with many intersecting identities. Black trans, non-binary, and ciswomen leaders, in particular, often have to confront challenges that transcend singular dimensions of race or gender. Each of them often has to contend with multiple sites of oppression, including socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, and ability, which give rise to increasingly intricate obstacles within their organizations and in movement landscapes, ranging from nuanced biases to pronounced systemic inequities. These intersecting identities inform their leadership styles and strategies, shaping the ways Black leaders navigate and challenge patriarchal norms, white supremacy, and other systemic barriers.





So I identify as a Black trans woman. So I think that my identity, it depends. Obviously it's tied and married to my project in particular, which focuses on empowering the lives and the wellbeing of trans people. I think in terms of leading an organization and engaging with philanthropy, I still think there is a way that people forget that I am not just one thing. And I think that is a very particular experience that I see a lot of Black trans women leaders going through is in the LGBT space, we are very much made aware that we are Black.

—
Black Trans Woman
Leader of State/Local Organization

I think the identity that most impacts how people perceive my leadership is as a Black woman. ... I think to see Black women with power, it engenders a lot of responses that basically people don't like it. Everybody thinks I'm power tripping and I'm literally just trying to run an organization. And I see how that's really just about me being a black woman. And then I think it's really about, I think being able to just show up as myself and show up in my integrity and my values and do the things that need to get done.

—
Black Cis Woman
Leader of State/Local Organization

I live with a principle that the generations of my family that survived here from the late 1700s and on under conditions I can't even imagine, didn't get us to this place to disregard the Black radical project in this moment, but to carry it forward. ... I expect my staff, regardless of their backgrounds, to hold and understand the importance of that.

—
Black Cis Man
Funder/Intermediary

I lead in the world as a Black person and that's critical to me. I never identify as African-American. I am Black. And for me, it's a statement about both my racial identity, but also my politics. I was raised in the Black power movement in this country, and I've never changed my sensibilities or my locus of control, if you will. I was born Black. I'm living Black. I'll die Black. And hopefully along the way I'll have some moments of personal liberation and freedom, but if not, I'll come back and do it again.

—
Black Cis Man
Leader of National Organization

I am trans. I am from the South. I'm nonbinary. I'm femme. All of those identities inform my organizing. It's how I'm assessing the broader political terrain, the dynamics inside of the movement, and the conditions of the organization that I'm in. It's going to be with a feminist lens and a black trans lens. It's going to be thinking about how we're operating as an organization within the national scope, the international terrain, what's happening in the South. Those things are constantly at play for me. That's what I carry in my body. It informs how I will power and share power in organizations.

—
Black Trans Nonbinary
Leader of National Organization

Black Leaders Anticipated the Funding Cliff

The increased funding to Black-led organizations during the “reckoning” of 2020 certainly provided some – but not all – Black leaders with new, more flexible funding opportunities. The leaders who benefitted, expected that the flow of funding was a temporary response by donors and foundations. But the return to normal for philanthropic grants – project-specific, short-term, lots of reporting requirements, etc. – was faster than many interviewees expected.

While Figure 3 (on page 7) showed that many Black leaders across the nonprofit sector experienced greater success in their fundraising efforts during the “racial reckoning,” there were certainly Black-led organizations across the country that did not gain new funding or visibility during 2020. Several of the interviewees reported that their organizations experienced “no boom,” as one leader of a statewide organization put it. These leaders often explained that funding bypassed their organizations due to the nuances of the issues they organize on. For example, organizations doing intersectional work on issues that are not immediately identified as “Black issues” – like immigration, gender justice, LGBTQ rights, education – were, therefore, under the radar of the donors and foundations who were looking for new Black-led organizations to support.

Another leader of a local organization described how “troubled” she was by the way the geographically-targeted strategies of institutional grantmakers had the effect of pitting Black-led organizations against each other. She described being told by funders “it’s not you, it’s the South,” but then hearing from Black colleagues in the South that they had not received additional support from that funder. Similar frustrations were described by other local leaders who believed that national funders were shifting their grantmaking focus to new states

even though the needs that animated their local organizing were still unmet.

Acknowledging that the financial benefits of the “racial reckoning” were not evenly distributed, half (52%) of the interviewees offered clear and compelling accounts of how their organizations benefited from the increased attention paid to racial justice causes during 2020. One of the leaders of a national multi-issue organization noted that year was not only his organization’s “biggest year as far as individual and institutional donations” but it also gave his organization an unprecedented level of exposure to talk about the intersection of Black liberation with the multiple issues his organization focused on.

For many leaders, the influx of funding came largely from individual donors. One leader of a local organizing group recalled how her organization received over \$50,000 in “new online donations; they were anywhere from \$5,000 to \$500 or \$5 a month ... it was a range.” This was a marked shift from the normal lack of access to individual donors for Black-led organizations. BMP’s *Race to Lead* surveys in 2019 and 2022 asked EDs/CEOs about their access to different types of funding and more than a third of Black EDs/CEOs reported “rarely” or “never” having access to individual donors; in contrast to only one-quarter of white EDs/CEOs reporting the same difficulty.¹⁶

In the midst of unprecedented donations, Black leaders seized on the momentary opportunity to gain the attention of individual donors for the benefit of the racial justice field, not just their own organizations.

Several interviewees described efforts to educate individual donors about the broader ecosystem of Black-led organizations. As one leader of a national organization explained “we didn’t say ‘stop donating,’ but we said ‘here are other organizations that also need support.’”

Black Leaders Anticipated the Funding Cliff

The local leader who described the wide range of online donations was also surprised that there was not a “mass mobilization from the philanthropic space” during 2020. For some leaders, the shifts in institutional philanthropy were less about the number or amount of grants, and more the types of grants. One local leader emphasized that her organization benefited from new “self-care funds” that foundations distributed in 2020 as a response to both the COVID-19 pandemic and the concerns about burnout among organizations who were mobilizing communities during that summer. One leader of a national organizing group reported that his organization moved “significantly from project-based funding where your major funding partners are giving you money to do X, Y and Z, to general support.”

This shift that some Black-led organizations experienced from project-based to general support grants was notable because multiyear general operating support is regarded as “good grantmaking” practice, and yet far too rare. Organizations like the Center for Effective Philanthropy (CEP), National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy, the Trust Based Philanthropy Project, and Grantmakers for Effective Organizations have long made the case that multiyear general operating support grants are key to enabling grantees to both plan ahead and adapt to changing realities and programmatic needs. However, research by CEP has shown that before the COVID-19 pandemic, very few grants were multiyear general operating support.¹⁷ For leaders who did experience new opportunities for more flexible foundation funding, by the time BMP conducted the interviews in 2023, it was more than two years after organizations had received the grants. In many cases, leaders already had been informed the funding was not being renewed or that the flexibility of the funding was being curtailed.



Many of the interviewees observed that the funding landscape in 2022 and 2023 was vastly different from the time period of the “racial reckoning.” One local leader was not sure whether to attribute the shift to politics of the economic uncertainty of the moment, but was clear that he had experienced a “noticeable pulling back, particularly from institutional funders over the past year.” Another national leader reported that her organization’s “foundation’s revenues have dropped by about 175%,” and added that “the cliff has been steeper than I thought, and faster.”



Financial solvency in a nonprofit community is freeing in a way that it is difficult to fully explain. It gives us the ability to be able to show up the way we want to show up, to say the s**t we want to say and not worry about whether or not funders are going to pull away from us. Because what we know for sure at this point is that for everyone that is put off by our messaging and our tactics, there are three others that are like, “hell, yeah!”

—

Black Cis Woman
Leader of State/Local Organization

Our budget is probably almost three times larger than what it was [before 2020]. We’ve been around for a very long time, and I feel like we’ve definitely pushed a lot for general multiyear funding and general support funds. We definitely were recipients of larger funding than we had before. And that’s also really interesting, because I never really wanted to be a million-dollar organization because of the sustainability demands around that. But we made it to that point.

—

Black Cis Woman
Leader of State/Local Organization

We definitely saw a huge temporary influx of attention, support, donations, grants from some sources in the months following George Floyd’s murder, and throughout the back half of 2020. ... But it was, in some ways, a repeat of what happened in 2014 and 2015; we grew a lot in that period and sort of gained a lot of notoriety in that period ... and then it receded again. And then there was quite a lot of backlash, particularly around our abolition work, around our defund work, and related political work.

—

Black Cis Man
Leader of State/Local Organization

We ended up having a fundraiser hosted by some white women of wealth where everyone gave \$500, and I was like ‘Wow, these people who’ve never heard of us all gave!’ We clearly were tapping into a space that we had never been in before and people were willing to listen and also donate their dollars. So I do think we saw a boost in the individual donor category ... but I think those blanket statements of ‘We’re going to fund Black women’ didn’t materialize.

—

Black Cis Woman
Leader of State/Local Organization

The individual donors, they’re individuals and they’ve moved on, right? But what we’re finding was that the drop in funding is mostly new foundations who started with ‘This is our first time doing racial justice work,’ and now were like ‘We’re going to step back and think about our strategy.’

—

Black Cis Woman
Leader of National Organization

Black Leaders Made Strategic Investments for Futures Beyond the Funding

Black leaders were clear-eyed and savvy about the momentary opportunity for funding and visibility during 2020. While the funding cliff may have come faster than many leaders anticipated (within two years, rather than three), Black leaders anticipated and planned for the likelihood that funders would pull back from commitments made to racial justice during the height of the “reckoning.” Their understanding of the short-term nature of the funding opportunity informed what kinds of investments leaders made in their organizational infrastructure.

For most organizations, the first investment leaders will make is in their staff, whether by increasing pay for existing staff or hiring new staff to boost capacity. However, hiring carries particular risks for leaders during a moment when both the funding and the demands on organizations are booming. When organizations hire staff in response to one year’s temporary increase in funding, they have to maintain those funding levels in future years to avoid budget shortfalls that would limit the financial feasibility of pay increases (which were key to retention during the years of high inflation following the “reckoning”) or ultimately lead to layoffs that undermine staff cohesion and an organization’s public reputation.

Black leaders certainly made strategic hires during the moment of increased funding, but they also talked during the interviews about their considerations related to containing staff growth for the sake of future financial sustainability. One national leader described intervening with his senior team “before we got out of control with the growth.” While he recognized that the organization had been operating for years at less-than-optimal capacity, he said they “would have been really screwed if we were just like ‘Keep on hiring more full-time employees.’”

Several leaders expressed worries about having to do layoffs in future years if grant renewals did not come through. A few leaders had already grappled with reducing staffing in the face of declining revenues and described the difficulty of those decisions during the interviews. One national leader chose to forego their own salary for a portion of a year in order to avoid making layoffs. Another leader of a national organization talked about providing severance packages to enable a few employees to voluntarily leave the organization in order to avoid wider-scale layoffs.

Leaders also described innovative strategies for simultaneously addressing capacity needs while planning for future declines in grants and donations. One local leader’s strategy for avoiding the pitfalls of hiring permanent staff was to expand their organizing training program that provided local community members with temporary paid internships as organizers. Multiple local leaders described these kinds of paid training programs as established rungs on leadership development ladders for their organization’s membership. In addition to the benefits of “growing our own” organizers, as another local leader put it, these programs can adapt such that temporary funding enables larger cohorts for a time but the number of trainees can also contract as funding decreases.

The risk of hiring was particularly acute for organizational leaders who received an influx of philanthropic grants rather than individual donations. As leaders acknowledged the philanthropic sector responded to the moment in 2020 with new grants, although often lagging behind the one-time donations from individuals. The benefit of grants is that many foundations made multiyear commitments that helped leaders anticipate revenues that would cover staff expenses for future years. However, even general support grants carry the expectation that the dollars will be spent prior to a grant renewal.



Black Leaders Made Strategic Investments for Futures Beyond the Funding

This may explain why several leaders mentioned grants from MacKenzie Scott as key to their hopes or strategies for the future.

Beginning with the COVID-19 pandemic earlier in 2020, MacKenzie Scott's funding has been notable because the grants had no restrictions on how or when the funding had to be used.¹⁸ In five out of the forty-three (11%) interviews, leaders invoked MacKenzie Scott by name. But it was striking that the national leaders who mentioned Ms. Scott talked about the transformative nature of the grants their organizations received while local leaders expressed their dreams and wishes of benefiting from Ms. Scott's funding.

The contrasting quotes about MacKenzie Scott reflect the particularly difficult funding landscape for Black-led organizing groups in many local communities, as well as the fact that Ms. Scott's funding strategy was largely weighted towards national groups in the beginning. However, while BMP was conducting the interviews, the charitable organization established by MacKenzie Scott launched an "open call" for community-led, community-focused organizations. One local leader who was planning to submit a proposal worried about the competitive grant process, saying "with the MacKenzie Scott money, everyone's going to be applying; so how do we make ourselves unique and stick out?"

Even though many local organizations did not benefit from the wave of funding to the extent of national ones; local leaders who did receive an influx of funding — particularly flexible individual donations — were particularly creative in how they managed those resources.

One local leader utilized the opportunity of additional funds to educate staff about the challenges of unsustainable growth. His organization experimented with a participatory budgeting process

to work together to determine how to allocate some of the influx of funding. This leader said the process was a good learning experience for his staff about "the kinds of trade-offs that leadership is attuned to and dealing with all the time, but that aren't always clear [for staff not used to] making those decisions."

The infusion of flexible funding also created new possibilities for local organizations that they could not have contemplated otherwise.

For some leaders, the kinds of strategic shift needed in the current political moment required a pause in the usual pace of their organization's work, which would not normally be an option for organizations with limited funding or restrictive grant requirements. One local leader described their organization's commitment to "slow down" to strategize for the future. Given their political analysis that "there's not a lot that can be passed with the current mayor and city council," their organization focused on narrative building and community education efforts that may be more time-consuming but are crucial to developing a "long-term strategy that is less reactive to the political conditions and more about the type of power that we want to build over the next 10-plus years."

Leaders in multiple localities also talked about the importance of owning their physical infrastructure for the long-term. Multiple leaders described their plans to direct the reserves established during the "reckoning" to buy land or a building to establish a "movement hub."

The visions for these "hubs" extended beyond simple office space. One leader described their plans to purchase a building as critical for creating "space for our work to manifest ... and supporting the manifestation of more work." Other leaders spoke in a similar way about plans to pool resources from multiple organizations to not only co-locate their organizations but deepen their collaboration and movement alignment.



We got money from Rihanna and I was like ‘What? How did this happen?’ But I also knew that this was a one-time thing. So we spent it slower, we stayed inside of our budget, and then the next fiscal year we made a plan that allowed us to identify ways to generate more revenue to hold us in that growth spurt. I think we actually handled it really well, understanding that it was going to be a one-time thing. So we paced ourselves.

—
Black Cis Woman

Leader of State/Local
Organization

We bolstered our reserves for longer-term planning. We’re now putting some of those reserves toward investment in a permanent home for the organization. We are actually working with other organizations on that effort to do some co-locating and developing a movement hub locally ... There was some portion that went towards staffing up, but otherwise we built up reserves for later investments.

—
Black Cis Man

Leader of State/Local
Organization

We did get a really significant gift. We were in the first round I think of the MacKenzie Scott gifts and ... even though it was a one-time gift, we understood that and we basically decided to think of it as a three-year gift so that we could manage it in a sustainable way so that we didn’t make foolish decisions like scaling up something in the first six months that then we couldn’t pay for in two or three years. And I will say it was very helpful for us in terms of some really deep infrastructural investments.

—
Black Cis Man

Leader of National Organization

We went viral on social media on a list of Black-, trans-led organizations and we started getting celebrity endorsements from people like Dan Levy, Christina Aguilera, Kelly Rowland ... The only regret that I have is not creating an endowment. We ended up having to use all that money to get through 2021 and 2022, and now in 2023, all that money is gone because people stopped giving. We knew that eventuality would come because none of it was long-term; none of it was an investment. MacKenzie Scott didn’t descend from the heavens and give us a 10-year grant.

—
Black Trans Woman

Leader of State/Local
Organization

Black Leaders Face Increasing Organizational Challenges

Black-led movement-building organizations are navigating a complex array of challenges and opportunities that are current and historical. While funding loss is a significant factor, it often coincides with movement-level demands, external threats, and internal challenges. Though distinct, internal challenges are often as impactful as external ones.

Many interviewees talked about grappling with internal conflicts that they felt eclipsed and detracted from their core work of organizing and movement building. These internal struggles went beyond differing tactics and strategies; at their core, they revolved around the values that organizations and movements upheld and embodied, where they were aligned and misaligned, and who got to assess this. Internal tensions increasingly led to polarization, retraumatization, isolation, and burnout among staff within their organizations, raising concerns about the well-being of Black leaders and the sustainability of Black movements.

This tension was exacerbated in organizational contexts where Black leaders were often engaged in continuous battles to define power: who held it, how it should be acquired, and how it should be wielded. One leader shared, “As a leader who was trying to reshape how we oriented to hierarchy and developed more decentralized leadership and shared decision making, the ways that people had been conditioned to default to power and hierarchy, in very particular ways, was a challenge.” Another leader observed, “There were ways that we would constantly be in some battle of understanding power. I think that’s just a piece that we had not resolved ourselves collectively on defining, and who had it, and where we were going to get it, and how we were going to get it.”

This struggle was particularly evident in organizations with limited staffing and decision-making structures. In contrast, organizations that were more deeply rooted in their membership base tended to have more clarity and direction around power dynamics. One leader of a national organization explained that in contrast to organizations with staff that was less representative of the base, “organizations that were rooted more in their base had a little more certainty and clarity of where they were trying to get to and weren’t engaged in some of these circular conversations around power.”

Black leaders also spoke in the interviews about the complexity of managing their organization’s culture. Several observed that striking the right balance between formality and informality, structure and autonomy, and democracy and hierarchy had become increasingly difficult. One national leader shared “as we have grown and matured and built a kind of reputation as an organization, I would say that it has been a challenge to continue to be a kind of scrappy, experimental, innovative, responsive org, and provide people who come to work here with all of the things that they want and expect from an employer that is more established.”

Leaders described their challenges navigating these trade-offs while prioritizing the needs and interests of their staff, board, movement partners, funders, and the community they serve. One example of the kinds of difficult decisions that leaders were considering was implementing a four-day workweek in response to staff demands while balancing the impact on service delivery and organizing. One leader emphasized, “We care a lot about staff experience and we care a lot about staff interests.” But this leader also described tensions between the interests of staff, community and the institution. They saw their role as “being aware of those tensions, of keeping track of where we are sort of along the spectrum and making sure that the priority always has to be serving the interests of the people that we serve.”

Black Leaders Face Increasing Organizational Challenges

Additionally, some Black leaders grapple with strategic planning and capacity building, particularly in the face of crises and the need to adapt to changing circumstances. This challenge was especially acute in organizations with less experienced staff. Leaders often take on the most challenging tasks due to having more experience and skills, even when they are already at the limits of their capacity. For some, this dynamic led to an unsustainable working pace for themselves and their teams, illuminating the need for a more balanced and equitable workload throughout the organization.

The changing nature of roles and expectations placed on Black leaders also impacts how they are able to lead. For one Black leader, the transition from peer to leader was notably challenging. They described the rapid shift in perception, noting “how fast you go from being a coworker to basically now not being a human, you’re just the director.” For some, ascending to leadership positions led to isolation and feeling overwhelmed, due to the increase in workload and responsibility coupled with a decrease in support and connection.

Black women and femmes, who face the double bind of resisting white supremacist and patriarchal work cultures, expressed frustration with being held to unrealistic standards of perfection and infallibility. Many are trying innovative ways to nourish and support their teams authentically and generously. But the high expectations that Black women and femmes in leadership will be able to reshape entrenched hierarchical structures and foster decentralized decision-making is often not realistic when their organizations are receiving declining philanthropic support, on top of deeply rooted power dynamics and resistance to Black women’s leadership.

The challenge of balancing organizational demands with personal needs and commitments was a common theme among leaders who

are mothers and caretakers of elderly parents. They spoke of the tension and emotional toll of trying to lead organizations while fulfilling family care responsibilities. This often led to resentment and personal sacrifices made for the sake of movement-building work. One leader shared: “So I was angry. I was really angry during that whole period [of a particularly important campaign] because I couldn’t work to be with my father ...it was just another moment of it feeling like I couldn’t be human.” This tension points to a profound and deeper challenge for the progressive movement; honoring the humanity of Black leaders while asking them to take on increasingly demanding organizational and movement-building work.





If we had a police murder to the level of Mike Brown or Trayvon Martin, I just knew that we were going to implode in a lot of ways because we didn't have the organizing infrastructure to support people. And we had some really harmful [peer] organizations that were going to show up in the spotlight. And I said this years ago [before 2020]. Then to see it happen, I was inspired by the energy, but I was also nervous about what were we going to do with this? How were we going to see this through to long-term victories?

—
Black Cis Woman
Leader of State/Local Organization

So, I saw young people show up, but I also saw young people be really harmed and really suffer. We've had three people that were in movement work, Black men [who died from] suicide, murder, things that are just very suspicious. ... And it's like, what happened? What did we not do? So, I just saw so many organizations capitalizing at the moment, but had no infrastructure and no intention to do long-term organizing work.

—
Black Cis Woman
Leader of State/Local Organization

I feel like, at least in my corner of the ecosystem, we ain't ready to fight the right. We over here beating each other up, looking at each other sideways, as if the other people in our camp are the same as these people who are literally legislating violence against our people's bodies. ... A lot of the staff drama and conflicts that are happening, a lot of the leadership burnout that's happening – I think that is all of us wrestling with the question: What really are the values that we stand on?

—
Black Queer Man
Leader of State/Local Organization

Quite frankly, I think that there have been times where we've had to help people unlearn, white supremacist, even work culture ... Even our job descriptions had to be written differently where we were more so talking about the experience of working for us as opposed to the actual work of working with us. So usually we would lean into, "Oh, you'll be doing this programmatically," and now it's more about, "Well, what's the culture like?" Which I don't think is a bad thing, it's just a transition that we had to make.

—
Black Cis Man
Leader of State/Local Organization

How do we continue to, not falsely keep our people uplifted and happy, but what does it look like to center joy in our organizing when we're going against so much negativity?

—
Black Trans Man
Leader of National Organization

As a leader, I struggle with or feel challenged by the unrealistic expectations that are put on leaders, especially Black femme presenting leaders. Yeah, it's kind of wild, the ways that I'm asked to be perfect, to not be vulnerable, to have to convince you why you should believe in me and be led by me are definitely one of the biggest challenges.

—
Black Cis Woman
Leader of State/Local Organization

Support and Encouragement for Future Black Leaders

For Black leaders, the struggle for liberation is multigenerational. Leaders not only invoked the wisdom of organizers who had paved the way for them, but were also committed to supporting future Black leadership.

One of the final interview questions asked of the leaders was: “What advice would you give someone wanting to lead an organization doing movement and power-building work in this moment?” While some leaders jokingly responded “Don’t” at first, each of the interviewees was very thoughtful in considering their response and the wisdom they shared for future leaders.

Over and over, Black leaders emphasized the importance of reflective practices, robust support systems and self-care as keys to sustaining future Black leaders. Leaders frequently advised staying “grounded in your purpose,” reflecting on “my why,” and leaning into “your most authentic self.” They also emphasized the importance of having reliable support both from within the organization and outside of it. They lifted up the importance of strong leadership teams to share the workload, having a squad of peer leaders who can do rigorous – but loving – accountability, and support from family and community. Several leaders talked about doing inner work — whether in the form of therapy and other social/emotional support, or through Somatics and other bodywork — in order to do the work of leading organizations.

The leaders we interviewed also encouraged aspiring leaders to be continual learners. Several interviewees talked about understanding the basics of organizational finances and budgeting as a key learning edge for many people when they move into their first senior leadership position.

But more than the practical training on organizational management, the Black leaders we interviewed also emphasized that people who aspire to leadership roles need to be rigorous students of movement history, political and economic theory, and organizational management. Multiple interviewees invoked the proverb that ‘steel sharpens steel’ to describe the need for leaders to sharpen each other’s analysis and hold space for ideological debate in movement spaces.





Acknowledge the edges of your gifts so that you can build a team that can joyfully do what their gifts are. Because at the highest levels of leadership, I think it's not possible to be on a path of excellence unless you're in love with the craft that you are cultivating.

—
Black Nonbinary
Leader of State/Local Organization

The people are worth it. The people, the communities, people who are struggling, they're worth every minute of your time. And so do it with integrity, and honesty, and lead by example. I would give that kind of advice. Please don't exclude anyone whether they're LGBTQ, whether they're Black, brown, don't exclude anyone because we're people, we're human beings

—
Black Cis Woman
Leader of State/Local Organization

As a Black person leading an organization in any field, they have to come to it with a highly developed sense of how to organize reality ... as a Black person running an organization, you cannot run it on autopilot. You can't run it the way it's always been run because the minute you step forward and occupy that leadership role, everything changes. Whether it's acknowledged, whether it's always engaged and accommodated in the most appropriate and helpful and practical ways, it is nonetheless a truth.

—
Black Cis Man
Leader of National Organization

You will experience movement heartbreak. It's inevitable. You're going to experience it. It's going to really suck, and it's probably going to be one of the more painful things that you've gone through, like heart-wise. But it's going to teach you a lot of lessons. I would definitely prepare for movement heartbreak. I think it's just one those inevitable things. It's not because someone did you wrong, but just like when you get your heart broken in real life, it gives you lessons. But this movement is going to break your heart.

—
Black Cis Woman
Funder/Intermediary

I would say move at pace with the people in the communities you serve. Your analysis could be light-years away, but your presence in community needs to be right where the community is at. That means that sometimes, even though you may be super sharp, you come off dull, right, and it's okay because you're moving at pace with the community. And I think for me, I feel like that is a tendency that I feel like folks got to get into, so that movement isn't here and community is over there, right?

—
Black Cis Woman
Leader of State/Local Organization

Listen, listen, listen. Ask questions. Be curious. Even if you think you know the answer, you should still form it in a question, because if not, you'll silence people who aren't used to speaking up. But when you come in curious and you listen, people will share more with you. ... The journey is about getting to the right question, not the right answer. So, enjoy the journey and be curious. Because once you get to the right question, you'll know the answer.

—
Black Cis Woman
Leader of State/Local Organization



Call to Action

The Black leaders interviewed for this project had a clear analysis of what their organizations need for the future, as well as what it will take to support Black leadership in the community organizing field and strengthen Black-led power building infrastructure in this moment of backlash and retrenchment.

Black leaders are clear that their organizations need robust infrastructure, without which even the most talented leaders struggle to achieve their visions and longings. They emphasized the importance of developing leadership skills that align with political conditions and organizational values. They recognized that effective leadership in today's context requires adapting to changing political landscapes and a strong alignment with organizational values. Leaders are also focusing on building long-term strategies that are less reactive to immediate political conditions and are more geared towards developing the depth of collective power and influence needed to hold onto wins in the face of likely backlash.

Investments in infrastructure are inherently political, at both the organizational and movement levels. Decisions about governance and resource allocation are inevitably decisions about power. The decision by too many donors and foundations to cut-off or scale-back funding to Black-led organizations is political. Black leaders in movement organizations need real partnership from individual donors and the philanthropic sector to recognize and support these efforts in sustained and impactful ways to develop the kind of infrastructure for their organizations that is key to building power for their communities and the broader racial justice movement.

The Black leaders we interviewed are determined in the face of a resurgent right-wing, attacks on racial justice and the funding cliff. They are focused on what it will take to strengthen the infrastructure of their organizations and the movement for Black liberation. They are clear about what this moment requires and are calling on peer leaders and funders to revive and sustain the support, trust and commitment that was shown during 2020 and the height of the racial reckoning. The future of this nation's multiracial democracy and the aims of movements for justice depend on their collective efforts.

Black Organizing Infrastructure Requires Sustained and Flexible Funding

Funding was certainly the need on the top of the minds for the leaders, their organizations and the movement. The funding cliff that is looming for far too many Black-led organizations threatens to force organizations to scale back their staffing and campaign capacity at a time of rising stakes for communities and the nation.

Multiyear, general operating support is often held up as the gold standard for funding. However, the experiences of some Black leaders with an infusion of donations from individuals and large gifts from new donors, like MacKenzie Scott, have highlighted the limitations of the dependence of organizations on foundation funding.

In contrast to traditional grants, the funding some Black-led groups received during the height of the racial reckoning had no restrictions on how or when the dollars must be spent, and with few (if any) reporting requirements. There may be some reasonable trade-offs between one-time gifts with maximum flexibility on one hand, and multiyear, ongoing grants on the other. Nonetheless, the failure of many foundations to renew funding commitments made in 2020 mean that those one-time gifts are what will enable organizations to survive this latest funding cliff. Reliable and consistent partnership from funders is necessary to sustain organizing for racial justice and Black liberation. Cycles of booms and busts in funding corrode the infrastructure of organizations and movements.





Black Organizing Infrastructure Requires Investing in a Robust Movement Ecosystem

The rising external threats of the moment weigh on many of the interviewees. Leaders frequently talked about rising authoritarianism and fascism, attacks on democracy and assaults by neoliberal forces.

Over and over, leaders articulated a sense of urgency for greater collaboration between leaders and organizations, and solidarity across movements, especially in these times. One leader's "biggest worry for our movements is that we are not collaborating to the degree that we need to be." Another leader emphasized that solidarity needs to continually be maintained and strengthened, which takes work "not because we don't think about other movement struggles." They went on to explain that "if the Left isn't constantly struggling to cohere" it is far too easy to lose the relationships between leaders and organizations that must be brought to bear in times of shared struggle.

The relationships that leaders craved were also at the interpersonal level. A leader of a local organization said that her city "used to have more of a connected organizing community." She lamented the loss of that community because of the isolation that can be a feature of organizational leadership. She said "There are a lot of times I'm struggling with things in isolation and I feel like I really don't have anyone to talk to." A leader of an intermediary/funding organization also talked about the importance of peer networks as an enduring strategy for supporting Black leadership because "we've always leaned on tribes and folks and people to check in with, I feel like I see that even more."



Black Organizing Infrastructure Requires Funding for Training and Skills

Many of the interviewees talked about a range of skill gaps within their staffs that made their roles less sustainable and their organizations more vulnerable. Several leaders also talked about elements of movement culture that often make it difficult to prioritize skills when making hiring and retention decisions.

One leader of a state-based organization observed that there has been a “binary between care, and diligence or rigor” in movement organizations. This leader said that the sector needs to embrace a both/and approach so that teams can both show care for each other and “really care about the results.” A leader of a national organization focused more squarely on cultural factors that can lead to ruptures in movement and organizing groups, adding “everything is not harm; discomfort is not harm ... all power does not equal oppressive power.” Another interviewee referred to Maurice Mitchell’s article about the roots of the problems movement organizations face when explaining their own challenges and the struggles of other Black leaders. This leader said organizing and movement building groups have prioritized hiring staff who connect with their organizational values, but “everybody I know is struggling around getting the skills you need.”

For some leaders, the skill gaps their organizations face related to finding non-organizing staff to fill critical roles like human resources, finance, technology, etc. One leader of national organization explained that “our movement has not done a great job in developing Black folks with administrative infrastructure skills.” Another state leader talked about having to spend their own time on operations and HR infrastructure, explaining “I’m filling that gap even though that is not my calling, it’s not my ministry but I’m filling in ... and I think that is a drain for me rather than a regenerative thing.”

For many of the leaders interviewed, engaging with their organization’s core organizing and programmatic work is grounding, but they struggled to find staff who understand and value core practices of community organizing — particularly one-on-ones, leadership development, and campaigns aimed at changing policy and delivering material wins for communities. One leader of a state-level organization said “the pandemic had people believing that you can really make something happen on Instagram or a livestream.” This leader concluded that when it came to staff who don’t want to do one-on-ones, phone calls or talk to people they potentially don’t agree with, her organization would have to “promote them back to the community and they can find some other way to be part of the movement.” She explained that the organization could not afford to have staff who were “rejecting the very fundamentals of organizing.”

Several leaders reported doing more internal training and professional development to compensate for skill gaps. One leader of a statewide organization explained that Black-led organizations “have had to make more investments in people, bring them in at a lower level and build [people up] rather than expect them to be ready-made.” Another leader of a national organization also acknowledged that hiring skilled organizers can be hard and explained that “we sometimes have to grow our own [organizers] and develop people, which it’s hard to do.” Several leaders of local and state organizations also described efforts to grow their own organizers; sometimes through formal training or fellowship programs (as described on page 14). But as a different local leader explained, “it takes a lot to really train organizers and not just do the regular training ... [but] the reality is funders don’t really fund organizing; organizing is still not as valued as it should be.”



No one is offering me the ability to figure out how to save any of this money or rematriate land ... there's nowhere that is really talking about the grief, the difficult decisions of picking and choosing which parts of my family I'm going to resource. Especially for folks [like me] who are in their mid twenties to thirties, there are some really large life jumps that happen in this time and no one is saying 'Hey, we actually have coaching around this.'

—

Black Trans Nonbinary
Leader of National
Organization

[Our people are] tired of dealing with the same crises and the same issues and I think that's pushed us to be bolder, more systemic in what we are trying to push ... [It's about] dealing with disillusionment. How do we keep folks from just being completely anti-institutional and anti-government when we really want folks to build a government that works for them, not just tune out?

—

Black Cis Man
Leader of State/Local
Organization

In the 21st century, social movements are the only reliable vehicle that are going to have the will and the power to transform not only civil society, but the global death march that society's on in terms of the climate, in terms of the rising authoritarianism, in terms of the increasing economic precarity and collapse. Social movements are going to be the only force that we can really depend on to offset that trajectory and really create a new reality.

—

Black Cis Man
Leader of State/Local
Organization

There's a lack of creativity in philanthropy around how to actually engage movement folks. Everybody's like 'Bring movement folks to the table, create participatory grantmaking.' But it's like 'Yo, they have s**t to do; it actually takes them away from the thing that they need to do.' There have to be other models of moving cash in a way that actually is directed by movement leaders without taking so much of their time.

—

Black Cis Woman
Funder/Intermediary

There's generally this big celebration that 'We got the bill passed' not knowing that immediately after that, it goes into implementation, into rules and regulations and that's where [a bill] actually gets watered down. There's been an abundance of radical policies moved; the challenge is that we don't have the capacity to actually hold it past the win ... And we're not funded at a scale for me, as an ED, to be in a relationship of co-governance with our mayor.

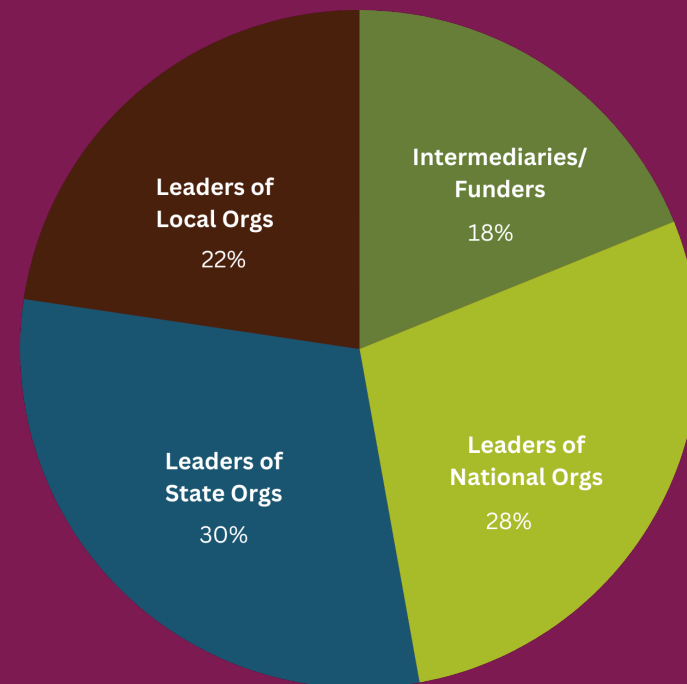
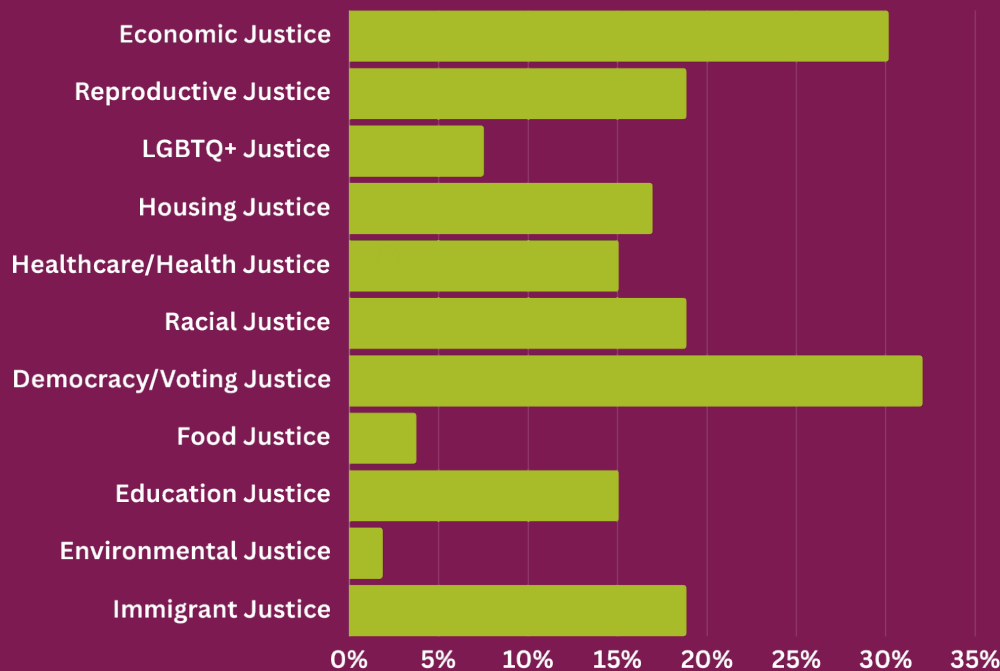
—

Black Cis Man
Leader of State/Local
Organization

Research Process and Profile of Interviewees

This report is based on 53 one-hour interviews conducted by the Building Movement Project. Most of the interviews were conducted in the spring of 2023. BMP recorded the interviews, with the consent of the interviewees, and had the recordings transcribed. BMP staff anonymized the interview transcripts before sharing them with the team of qualitative researchers that oversaw coding of the interviews, using a narrative analysis lens to capture and uplift key themes.

Out of the 54 Black leaders interviewed for this project; 43 were executive directors or co-directors of Black or multiracial organizations, centering organizing and power-building. Ten of them were Black leaders in intermediary or funder organizations. The interviewees identify as Black cis-women (32%), Black cis-men (22%) and Trans and nonbinary (12%). The issue areas of their organizations ranged from abolition to reproductive justice, economic justice, disability justice, and more.





Appendix 2

The Building Movement Project conducted the bulk of the interviews in the Spring of 2023. The quotes from the interviewees were anonymized in the report to protect the privacy of Black leaders. This list reflects the organizational affiliations of leaders at the time of the interview. Sean Thomas-Breitfeld and Adaku Utah thank each of the interviewees for their wisdom, leadership, and critical contributions to the ongoing struggle for liberation and justice.

LEADER	ORGANIZATION
1 Afua Attah- Mensaha	Community Change
2 Aislinn Pulley	Chicago Torture Justice Center
3 Alicia Hurlé	Kentucky Civic Engagement Table
4 Rev. Alvin Herring	Faith in Action
5 Amaha Kassa	African Communities Together
6 Andrea Ritchie	Interrupting Criminalization
7 Angela Lang	Black Leaders Organzing for Communities
8 Anthonine Pierre	Brooklyn Movement Center
9 Aria Sa'id	The Transgender District
10 Blake Strode	ArchCity Defenders
11 Brianna Brown	Texas Organizing Project
12 Cara Page	Changing Frequencies
13 Dawn Blagrove	Emancipate NC
14 Denise Perry	Black Organizing for Leadership and Dignity
15 Dorian Warren	Community Change

LEADER	ORGANIZATION
16 Ejeris Dixon	Vision Change Win
17 Emery Wright	Project South
18 Eric Ward	Race Forward
19 Erika Washington	Make It Work Nevada
20 Erin Grant	Abortion Care Network
21 Erin Smith	Kentucky Health Justice Network
22 Faron McLurkin	Race Forward
23 Gina Womack	Families and Friends of Louisiana's Incarcerated Children
24 Glenn Harris	Race Forward
25 Ingrid Benedict	Independent Consultant and Director of the Daphne Foundation
26 James Lopez	Power U
27 James Woodson	California Black Power Network
28 Jasmine Gripper	Alliance for Quality Education
29 Joanne Smith	Girls for Gender Equity
30 Juanita Lewis	Community Voices Heard



Appendix 2

LEADER	ORGANIZATION
31 Judith Browne Dianis	<u>Advancement Project</u>
32 Kamyon Conner	<u>Texas Equal Access Fund</u>
33 Kandace Montgomery	<u>Black Visions Collective</u>
34 Kayla Reed	<u>Action St.Louis</u>
35 LaDon Love	<u>Spaces in Action</u>
36 Laura Martin	<u>Progressive Leadership Alliance of Nevada</u>
37 Linda Campbell	<u>Detroit People's Platform</u>
38 M Adams	<u>Movement For Black Lives</u>
39 Maurice Mitchell	<u>Working Families Party</u>
40 Merle Mcgee	<u>EveryDay Democracy</u>
41 Monifa Bandele	<u>Mom's Rising</u>
42 Nelima Sitati Muene	<u>ACER</u>
43 Oluchi Omega	<u>Black LGBTQI Migrant Project</u>
44 Oriaku Njoku	<u>National Network of Abortion Funds</u>
45 Paris Hatcher	<u>Black Feminist Future</u>
46 Renee Bracey Sherman	<u>We Testify</u>

LEADER	ORGANIZATION
47 Rev. Rhonda Thomas	<u>Faith in Florida</u>
48 Richard Wallace	<u>Equity and Transformation</u>
49 Sendolo Diaminah	<u>Carolina Federation</u>
50 Shaketa Redden	<u>Causa Justa</u>
51 Shanae Calhoun	<u>Willow Consulting</u>
52 Tamika Middleton	<u>Women's March</u>
53 Toni-Michele Williams	<u>Solutions NOT Punishment Colaborative (SNaPCo)</u>
54 Woods Ervin	<u>Critical Resistance</u>

- 1** Hakeem Jefferson and Victor Ray, “White Backlash Is A Type of Racial Reckoning, Too,” FiveThirtyEight: January 6, 2022, <https://fivethirtyeight.com/features/white-backlash-is-a-type-of-racial-reckoning-too/>.
- 2** Larry Buchanan, Quoc Trung Bui and Jugal K. Patel, “Black Lives Matter May Be the Largest Movement in U.S. History,” The New York Times: July 3, 2020, <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/07/03/us/george-floyd-protests-crowd-size.html>.
- 3** Julie Sloane, “The Black Lives Matter Movement, but not COVID-19, Encouraged Voters Toward Biden in the 2020 Election,” University of Pennsylvania Annenberg School for Communication: March 2, 2022, <https://www.asc.upenn.edu/news-events/news/black-lives-matter-movement-not-covid-19-encouraged-voters-toward-biden-2020-election>.
- 4** Rayshawn Ray and Alexandra Gibbons, “Why are states banning critical race theory?,” Brookings: November 2021, <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/why-are-states-banning-critical-race-theory/>.
- 5** Taifha Alexander, LaToya Baldwin Clark, Kyle Reinhard and Noah Zatz, “CRT Forward: Tracking the Attack on Critical Race Theory,” UCLA School of Law: April 2023, https://crtforward.law.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/UCLA-Law_CRT-Report_Final.pdf.
- 6** See survey results since April 2017 on the question “Do you support or oppose the Black Lives Matter movement?” at https://civiqs.com/results/black_lives_matter.
- 7** Jennifer Chudy and Hakeem Jefferson, “Support for Black Lives Matter Surged Last Year. Did it Last?,” The New York Times: May 22, 2021, <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/05/22/opinion/blm-movement-protests-support.html>.
- 8** See Ryan Grimm, “The Elephant in the Zoom,” The Intercept: June 13, 2022, <https://theintercept.com/2022/06/13/progressive-organizing-infighting-callout-culture/> and David Leonhardt, “The Failure of Progressive Movements,” The New York Times: September 26, 2023, <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/26/briefing/me-too-black-lives-matter-occupy-wall-street.html>.
- 9** Maurice Mitchell, “Building Resilient Organizations,” The Forge & Nonprofit Quarterly: November 29, 2022, <https://forgeorganizing.org/article/building-resilient-organizations>.
- 10** Tracy Jan, Jena McGregor and Meghan Hoyer, “Corporate America’s \$50 billion promise,” The Washington Post: August 23, 2021, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/interactive/2021/george-floyd-corporate-america-racial-justice/>.
- 11** Megan Armstrong, Eathyn Edwards and Duwain Pinder, “Corporate commitments to racial justice: An Update,” McKinsey & Company: February 2023, <https://www.mckinsey.com/bem/our-insights/corporate-commitments-to-racial-justice-an-update#/>.

12 Association of Corporate Citizenship Professionals, “Advancing Equity in the Corporate Social Impact Profession,” April 2022, <https://accp.org/news/accp-news/new-research-from-accp-highlights-lack-of-diversity-in-corporate-social-impact-industry/>.

13 Stacey Abrams and Julián Castro, “It’s Open Season on Civil Rights. Philanthropy Must Not Retreat.” *The Chronicle of Philanthropy*: October 2, 2023, <https://www.philanthropy.com/article/its-open-season-on-civil-rights-philanthropy-must-not-retreat>.

14 Alex Daniels, Marc Gunther and Sono Motoyama, “3 Years After George Floyd, Foundations Say They’ve Changed. Many Racial-Justice Nonprofits Disagree.” *The Chronicle of Philanthropy*: May 31, 2023, <https://www.philanthropy.com/article/3-years-after-george-floyd-foundations-say-theyve-changed-many-racial-justice-nonprofits-disagree>.

15 Erica Chenoweth and Jeremy Pressman, “This is what we learned by counting the women’s marches,” *The Washington Post*: February 7, 2017, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2017/02/07/this-is-what-we-learned-by-counting-the-womens-marches/>.

16 According to data from the Building Movement Project’s Race to Lead surveys of 2019 and 2022, 38% of Black EDs/CEOs indicated they “never” or “rarely” had “access to individual donors” in 2022, and 34% reported the same in 2019; among white EDs/CEOs, 26% and 25% indicated this lack of access to individual donors in 2022 and 2019, respectively.

17 Ellie Buteau, Satia Marotta, Hannah Martin, Naomi Orensten, and Kate Gehling, “New Attitudes, Old Practices: The Provision of Multiyear General Operating Support,” *Center for Effective Philanthropy*: 2020, <https://cep.org/portfolio/new-attitudes-old-practices/>.

18 Ellie Buteau, Elisha Smith Arrillaga, and Christina Im, “Emerging Impacts: The Effects of Mackenzie Scott’s Large, Unrestricted Gifts,” *Center for Effective Philanthropy*: 2023, <https://cep.org/report-backpacks/emerging-impacts-the-effects-of-mackenzie-scotts-large-unrestricted-gifts/>.

Image Credits

Photo by Clay Banks on Unsplash

Photo by Heather Mount on Unsplash

Photo by Malu Laker on Unsplash

Photo by Mike Von on Unsplash

Photo by Gayatri Malhotra on Unsplash

Photo by Sushil Nash on Unsplash

Photo by Tandem x Visuals on Unsplash

Portrait of a Queer Person Outdoors by Rachel Seidu on Canva

AI Image generated and edited by IconiQ Creative Group



Building Movement Project

Activating Nonprofits | Fueling Change

For more information, please visit The Building Movement Project at www.buildingmovement.org or contact us at info@buildingmovement.org



2024