

TOWARD POWER-SHIFTING SOLIDARITY WITH BLACK-LED CHANGE

The State of Philanthropic Investments &
Transformative Invitations to Advance Racial Justice
in Minnesota & Beyond

A PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN THE **BLACK COLLECTIVE FOUNDATION MN** AND
THE **CENTER FOR EVALUATION INNOVATION**

WITH CONTRIBUTIONS FROM THE
PHILANTHROPIC INITIATIVE FOR RACIAL EQUITY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



LETTER FROM CO-FOUNDERS, BLACK COLLECTIVE FOUNDATION MN

Dear Reader,

This May of 2023, we commemorate the historic uprising for racial justice that was ignited right here in Minnesota and swiftly spread around the world. While almost three years have passed, the call still reverberates—and the need remains—for transformational change that honors the sacredness and dignity of Black life and advances the full possibilities of our dreams.

We believe power-shifting solidarity with Black-led change is the way. In the spring 2023 issue of *Nonprofit Quarterly*, we shared the story of the birth, evolution, and vision of the Black Collective Foundation MN, our state's first Black community foundation:

In the middle of the uprising, the three of us reached out to one another to consider how we could move the philanthropic sector beyond momentary sympathy into accountability, solidarity, and transformation.

It felt as if our connection was destined. We were building off of the work of previous generations of Black people. Our community, past and present, had paved the way for our power to be rooted in, multiply, and inspire a movement for new philanthropy. It was an intergenerational meeting of hearts and minds, all fully present and active in our communities and leading in the sector of philanthropy.

We put forward a vision of a loving world in which each of us and our families could be safe and could live with hope, dignity, and prosperity. And the Philanthropic Collective to Combat Anti-Blackness and Realize Racial Justice—now, the Black Collective Foundation MN—was born.¹

When we embarked on this research journey, we asked, “How much greater can philanthropy be?” Since our beginning, we’ve cast forth a sustaining vision for work that is rooted in a long history of aspiration and “calling,” a new model of philanthropy where Black people are seen, respected, supported, and heard. As reflected in the Bold and Courageous Joint Statement that follows, a critical component of shifting power is truth telling to courageously confront the sophisticated ways anti-Blackness shows up in our society—including within the philanthropic sector. Along with truth telling, the acts of accountability and solidarity are required to move us beyond temporary solutions to systems-change imperatives that usher in measurable, transformational change.

This requires that each of us fully commit in the being of the work. We must dare to confront the discomfort and thrill of the new world we want to bring in, and explore how we embody it from wherever we live, love, and lead.

Today, we share our first research publication, one that unapologetically centers Black-led change: the social, political, and economic change led by diverse groups of Black people that results in the well-being of Black communities and often benefits all people. While Black-led change continues to prove its impact and necessity, we are witnesses to the ways Black-led change has been targeted, under-resourced, and under-recognized. But we can bring in a new day. And three years after a world-changing uprising for racial justice, we invite you to engage in power-shifting solidarity and use the learnings of this research to take meaningful action, amplify, and invest in Black-led change for the genius work that it is so that it reaches its full capacity of impact for good.

— **REPA MEKHA, CHANDA SMITH BAKER, AND LULETE MOLA**
BLACK COLLECTIVE FOUNDATION MN

[1] Lulete Mola, Repa Mekha, and Chanda Smith Baker, “Toward a New Philanthropy: Advancing the Genius of Black-Led Change,” *Nonprofit Quarterly* (2023, May 11), <https://nonprofitquarterly.org/toward-a-new-philanthropy-advancing-the-genius-of-black-led-change/toward-a-new-philanthropy-advancing-the-genius-of-black-led-change>

Amid the 2020 uprising for racial justice, we called on philanthropic institutions to sign on to the following **bold and courageous joint statement** in order to demonstrate solidarity with the movement and to inspire public accountability of institutional philanthropy, past, present, and future. The intention is for it to act as a living agreement that will continue to inspire and invoke action long after it has been signed.

SOME TRUTHS RIGHT NOW

We are living through a historic community uprising, with national and international solidarity, in response to the murder of Mr. George Floyd. Mr. Floyd was a Black man—a father, a brother, a neighbor, a friend—whose life was cut short after Derek Chauvin, a Minneapolis police officer, pressed his knee on his neck for nearly nine minutes until he could no longer breathe. Three additional officers restrained Mr. Floyd and prevented bystanders from helping.

There can be no doubt that George Floyd's horrific death is a result of individual decisions on the parts of the four former officers involved and a consequence of foundational anti-Black racism and centuries of enslaved labor. This anti-Black racism saw Mr. Floyd as less than human. We must be as precise as possible. Euphemisms and vagueness mask and minimize the harsh reality that Minnesota is a state with some of the worst racial disparities in the nation in education, health, economic status, and overall well-being.

The death of George Floyd comes on the heels of the murders of Ahmaud Arbery of Georgia, Breonna Taylor of Kentucky, and too many more Black lives unjustly taken across the country. Today, we are unified in declaring that Black lives matter. We believe that all Black lives matter, including the lives of Black men, Black women, Black lives across gender and sexual identities, Black lives living with disabilities, and Black lives in cities, suburbs, and rural towns across the country.

We do not forget that we are living through the global climate crisis, growing income and wealth disparity, and the COVID-19 pandemic, just three of multiple issues disproportionately impacting Black people, Indigenous people, and people of color at the intersections of identities pushed to the margins. We recognize we are on Indigenous land, home of the Dakota and Ojibwe people, and honor the Native people for their strong solidarity while recognizing the distinct impact of this most recent demonstration of racial injustice on Indigenous and people of color.

WE MUST ASK OURSELVES: HOW CAN WE DO BETTER AND HOLD OURSELVES ACCOUNTABLE TO THE COMMUNITIES WE SAY WE SERVE?

Our community is rising, led by Black community members, through organizing, protest, and strategic movement-building for policy and systems change, love, and solidarity. We witnessed some righteous and productive protesting that came out of this community. Our statement here is rooted in and builds upon what our community has expressed. While our views here have been presented many times before by community voices, it is new, and long overdue, that a philanthropic coalition would make a public statement specifically condemning anti-Blackness, anti-Black police violence, and racism. We are willing to speak boldly and unequivocally because this can no longer be deferred, soft-pedaled, or ignored by the philanthropic and nonprofit community in Minnesota, a sector where white people are over-represented, especially in positions of leadership and high visibility.

And yet we know that statements from philanthropic leaders like this one will ring hollow if we do nothing else to combat the systemic issues and culture of white supremacy that got us here in the first place. Therefore, we commit to centering

Black voices, knowledge, and activism in this pursuit of justice.

The criminal justice system is only one of many systems that have failed Black people. After all, racism shows up in every aspect of our communities: in our homes, social networks, educational institutions, workplaces, places of faith, and government. We recognize that racism is both blatant and systematic, affecting the quality of life for Black people, Indigenous people, and people of color from the moment they are born. Our vision for racial equity is one where life outcomes are not determined by the color of a person's skin or the zip code of their birth, and where every person has exactly what they need to thrive.

PHILANTHROPY'S RESPONSIBILITY, ACCOUNTABILITY, AND ACTION

Philanthropy is meant to contribute to the greater good, greater access for disenfranchised communities and groups. Yet the field of philanthropy has not done enough to clearly name, disrupt, and eliminate racism.

The desire to give is a universal, human impulse. And within this generosity, philanthropy has sought to address community needs and societal ills. Martin Luther King, Jr., once said, "Philanthropy is commendable, but it must not cause the philanthropist to overlook the circumstances of economic injustice which make philanthropy necessary." Guided by this wisdom, as we recognize the progress created by philanthropy, we must also examine the ways in which some philanthropic practices have historically perpetuated anti-Blackness and racism—and those instances and institutions that still do so today. By naming this complicated truth, we can acknowledge the ways in which institutional philanthropy has caused to harm to Black people, Indigenous people, and communities of color. We are committed to facing this reality as we continue to learn and adapt to improve our processes in practice, policy, and fund disbursement.

We also acknowledge there is work to be done with foundation staff and donors: donor-advised

funds, boards, individuals of wealth—to alter the purpose of philanthropy from one of charity to transformation. We see this moment and its aftermath as an opportunity to take more powerful actions to realize our commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion and begin to expand our frame to justice in its most transformational form.

We understand that philanthropy can perpetuate socioeconomic disparities. We must ask ourselves: How can we do better and hold ourselves accountable to the communities we say we serve? The bigger question in regard to identifying our role and opportunity to support communities seeking justice is, What can philanthropy be? With the resources, influence, and positionality as cross-sector connectors, we have the opportunity to build, yield, and share power to elevate the voices of the most impacted people of systemic inequity.

We commit to transforming into practitioners who hold philanthropy accountable to the community by learning what it means to embrace the duty and opportunity to realize equity. We need to be willing to step out and be at the forefront of having these conversations and commit to take meaningful action in addition to signing on to this solidarity statement. At minimum, we are committed to engaging in critical internal work to change systems, practices, and policies within organizations, the field, and society. Finally, as a collective, we are committing meaningful investments in the short and long term to support Black movement, infrastructure, leadership, and responsive efforts, along with investments to serve the needs of Indigenous and people of color. We are committed to continuing this dialogue.

We understand that this requires philanthropy to stretch in ways that are new, uncomfortable, and innovative, and it requires us to engage in a full re-imagination of our institutions, policies, and practices. Those of us who are signing onto this statement call on additional philanthropic partners to join our movement for a more equitable, inclusive, and just world.

We can move forward in a radically different manner in pursuit of a society in which Black people, Indigenous people, people of color, and all people are served and protected by any and all systems intended for community safety and well-being. We need ongoing reckoning, repair, and healing.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS & ABOUT THE AUTHORS

We appreciate the many people who contributed to the research for this report. We thank the Black community leaders and philanthropy practitioners who are committed to racial justice for sharing their insights and wisdom with us. We also thank Dr. Vidhya Shaker for her contributions to this research, Domenica Trevor for her copyediting, and Trevor Messersmith for designing this report.

THE BLACK COLLECTIVE FOUNDATION MN

The Black Collective Foundation MN is working to create a thriving ecosystem of Black-led social, political, and economic change in Minnesota and beyond. The Collective engages in culturally grounded grantmaking, research, asset building, and convenings to advance the power, interests, and well-being of Black communities. The Collective also works to transform the philanthropic field to be in power-shifting solidarity to realize the promise of racial justice.

The vision of the Collective is to advance the genius of Black-led change and build a community where all Black people are holistically well, living in dignity and prosperity.



LULETE MOLA is co-founder and first president of the Black Collective Foundation MN. She leads the Collective in building infrastructure, practicing creative and innovative resource disbursement, growing assets, and expanding Black philanthropic power to advance a new model of philanthropy.



CHANDA SMITH BAKER is co-founder of the Black Collective Foundation MN. Chanda has proven success in leading complex organizations and is recognized for her entrepreneurial strategic leadership, creating and implementing innovative strategies that engage stakeholders with a focus on advancing racial equity and broadening social impact.



REPA MEKHA is co-founder of the Black Collective Foundation and president & CEO of Nexus Community Partners. Repa has over 30 years of experience in community-based leadership, community capacity building, asset- and wealth-building strategies, organizational leadership and development, and systems-change work.

THE CENTER FOR EVALUATION INNOVATION (CEI)

The Center for Evaluation Innovation's mission is to partner with philanthropy to provide changemakers the space and resources needed to advance racial justice and create an equitable future.

CEI partners with philanthropy on strategy, learning, and evaluation efforts that are intended to advance racial equity and justice. We lead evaluation projects, consult with foundations on strategy and learning, and support field building through convening, organizing, and research.



DR. CHERA REID (*she/hers*) is co-executive director of the Center for Evaluation Innovation. She has worked in the social sector for over two decades, anchored by a commitment to thriving Black people and communities.



DR. ALBERTINA LOPEZ (*she/hers*) is senior associate at the Center for Evaluation Innovation. She leads and supports projects in CEI's evaluation portfolio and field-building work, applying her knowledge and skills in justice-oriented evaluation and research, organizational development and learning, and inclusive facilitation.

THE PHILANTHROPIC INITIATIVE FOR RACIAL EQUITY (PRE)

The goal of the Philanthropic Initiative for Racial Equity is to increase the amount and effectiveness of resources aimed at combating institutional and structural racism in communities through capacity building, education, and convening of grantmakers and grantseekers.

PRE has directly engaged thousands of foundation representatives (including program staff, management, board members, and individual donors) in discussions of racial equity and racial justice, particularly in order to increase their investments in Black- and Brown-led efforts building power and transformative change. PRE is a fiscally sponsored project of the Tides Center.



LORI VILLAROSA (*she/hers*) is the founder and executive director of the Philanthropic Initiative for Racial Equity, bringing more than three decades of pathbreaking leadership at the intersection of racial justice and philanthropy. Through PRE, she works with a diverse board of racial justice leaders and other movement partners to significantly shift grantmaking strategies and practices.



BEN FRANCISCO MAULBECK (*they/them*) is a PRE senior fellow and a consultant, writer, and leader for social change. Their work includes eight years of service as president of Funders for LGBTQ Issues as well as leadership roles at the Freeman Foundation, Hispanics in Philanthropy, and several grassroots Latinx, LGBTQ, and HIV/AIDS organizations.



LYLE MATTHEW KAN (*he/him*) is the principal research consultant for PRE and an expert on trends, gaps, and opportunities in social justice philanthropy. He has held senior leadership roles at Asian American/Pacific Islanders in Philanthropy, CHANGE Philanthropy, Funders for LGBTQ Issues, and Stonewall Community Foundation.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Minnesota has a vibrant history of Black people living in close-knit, diverse communities. In and around the Twin Cities in particular, arts and cultural centers, family-owned small businesses, and houses of worship dot the landscape, providing a visual reminder of the beauty of the African Diaspora and how its many people remain resilient and hopeful despite systemic inequality and persistent racism. Amid this landscape, Black changemakers have long been organizing and building community power—work that positioned them to galvanize the 2020 global uprising for racial justice in response to the murder of George Floyd.

Across philanthropy, foundations and donors sought to respond to the moment. Foundation leaders and staff reflected internally, wondering how they might go above and beyond previous annual giving. Grantmakers pledged to direct new or increased funding to racial equity and racial justice efforts. Some coupled those pledges with promises to pursue internal learning journeys toward what it would take to become long-term stewards in service to racial justice. Philanthropy recognized its position as a powerful set of institutions and structures.

Black leaders working within philanthropy and in their communities were reaching out to one another for emotional and strategic support, asking what they could do together to energize and guide field transformation. Part of what emerged from these efforts was the Black Collective Foundation MN. Co-founded by Repa Mekha, Lulete Mola, and Chanda Smith Baker,

the state's first Black community foundation is advancing “the genius of Black-led change” with a mission “to build Black philanthropic power to strengthen the ecosystem of Black-led social, political, and economic change in Minnesota and beyond.”

In the spring of 2022, the Collective and the Center for Evaluation Innovation (CEI) formed a partnership to consider how to build power-shifting solidarity with Black people and communities across Minnesota.

Our intent is to expand and deepen philanthropy— which at its roots is about love for humankind— that is in power-shifting solidarity with Black-led change and communities.

To do this, we first needed to better understand our points of alignment and divergence. We needed to consider what philanthropic institution staff believe is possible, what will motivate courageous action, and how to support those who have made commitments to stay the course.

This report, and the research that informs it, considers that strategic question by analyzing and integrating multiple perspectives. We reviewed philanthropic literature, interviewed Black community leaders, and facilitated three focus groups with foundation leaders and staff who are committed to racial equity in Minnesota. In the fall of 2022, we invited the Philanthropic Initiative for Racial Equity to collaborate by analyzing and sharing data that would add to our respective local and national understanding of the state of racial equity and racial justice grantmaking.

WHAT WILL IT TAKE FOR INSTITUTIONAL PHILANTHROPY IN MN AND BEYOND TO MOVE AT THE SPEED OF COURAGE AND INVEST WHOLLY IN BLACK LIVES?

The questions guiding the Collective and the CEI for this study were:

- 1 How do communities of Black changemakers define racial justice for Black people, anti-Blackness, and Black-led Change?
- 2 What is the landscape of Minnesota's racial equity and racial justice grantmaking and practices? To what extent does that align with how Black changemakers define racial justice?
- 3 How can we shift the Minnesota philanthropic gaze so institutions are accountable to Black changemakers?

We collectively seek to answer: **What will it take for institutional philanthropy in Minnesota and beyond to move at the speed of courage and invest wholly in Black lives?**

PRE GRANTMAKING DATA SNAPSHOT FOR RACIAL EQUITY AND RACIAL JUSTICE IN MINNESOTA

The murder of George Floyd was a turning point for mobilizations for racial justice across the nation and the world. Foundations and corporations across the country released statements expressing solidarity with the movement and announcing pledges to support racial justice and communities of color. This, in turn, led to headlines like one from the *Wall Street Journal*: “At Nonprofits Focusing on Blacks, Donations Soared in Wake of George Floyd Protests.” This misleading coverage was based on exaggerated claims and inaccurate data, often including internal corporate spending related to diversity and vague commitments for future funding.

In this context, the Philanthropic Initiative for Racial Equity (PRE) produced *Mismatched: Philanthropy's Response to the Call for Racial Justice*. While prior reporting primarily drew on information available from public pledges and press releases, *Mismatched*, published in 2021, rigorously examined confirmed grants awarded for racial equity and racial justice work. With *Mismatched*—and an updated analysis this year based on more recent data—PRE found that while funding for racial equity increased in 2020, the

increase was much more incremental than had been previously reported. **And while funding focused specifically on Black communities rose sharply in 2020, it still was only 1.6% of institutional funding nationally and only 0.6% of funding in Minnesota.** An even smaller fraction was devoted to the Black-led grassroots groups leading the uprisings for racial justice in 2020 and beyond. In short: Despite pledges totaling billions for “racial justice,” the tally of dollars received by Black-led social change organizations measured only in the millions.

And, predictably, the exaggerations of philanthropic support for Black-led social change work have moved from possibly performative, opportunistic—or even benignly mistaken—to those that are clearly much more heavily tied to attacks on the mechanisms seeking to rectify racial injustice—part of a broader assault on critical race theory, trans youth, and perceived “wokeness.” These false stories came as many organizations began to see the initial support they received in 2020 coming to an end, funders declining to renew it, and a dropoff to the influx of new supporters. There is a real

danger that these inaccurate reports are convincing philanthropy that it has overcorrected its historic underinvestment in communities of color and racial justice work.

Over the past three years, funding for racial equity and racial justice did rise—both nationally and in Minnesota. But the overwhelming majority of dollars overall did not go to racial justice or to Black-led movement building; instead, they supported a broad range of strategies that were largely laudable, but lacked any in-depth analysis

of systemic racism or structural change. And in the time that has passed since the murder of George Floyd and the uprising it inspired, the overall picture of what philanthropy did—and did not do—in support of racial justice has become clearer. The data indicate that there is an opening for a deeper, longer-term shift toward greater investment in transformational racial justice. This possibility is of particular importance in Minnesota—the second-largest state for philanthropic giving in the Midwest.

PRE's analysis of funding for racial equity and racial justice in 2018–2021 found the following to be true in Minnesota:

- In recent years, **less than 4% of funding for Minnesota nonprofits was focused on racial equity, and only about 0.5% was focused on racial justice.**
- Racial equity and racial justice funding did rise, incrementally, in 2020; racial justice continued to account for a small fraction of funding.
- Funding for Black communities in Minnesota also increased, **but didn't keep pace with national trends.**
- **Racial equity funding was more likely to focus on economic development**, and top funders provided the vast majority of that support.
- **The state's top 20 grant recipients received a larger share of racial equity funding**, and racial justice funding was even more heavily weighted toward the top grantees.
- Several new organizations appeared among the top 20 grantees in 2020–2021; some of these grants had a strong analysis of structural racism and elements of deeper community engagement.
- Several major people of color-led organizations saw significant increases in funding in 2020–2021—as did intermediaries, **potentially reflecting an effort to channel more funding to these organizations through local social justice intermediaries.**
- Nevertheless—and true to a pattern that held across the nation—**Minnesota, the epicenter of the racial justice uprisings in 2020, saw only a tiny fraction of foundation funding actually invested in Black-led social change organizations.**

OUR WORKING DEFINITIONS

RACIAL JUSTICE

A definition by the Philanthropic Initiative for Racial Equity aligns with what we heard in our interviews:

*A **racial justice** lens brings into view the confrontation of power, the redistribution of resources, and the systemic transformation necessary for real change. Justice requires*

urgent fundamental changes that reposition communities of color in relation to power and resources, which includes being able to challenge and shape the many institutions that determine a community's conditions.

As defined by the Black changemakers we interviewed, racial justice for Black people must include healing, restoration, reparations, and transformation as key components, and encompass the past, present, and future:

- **PAST:** Requires the admission of and apology for historical and ongoing wrongdoing and harm by those who have profited intergenerationally from that wrongdoing and harm.
- **PRESENT:** Involves their making amends by ensuring the current ability among Black people and peoples to express their needs, feelings, and thoughts individually and collectively without fear of punishment, and by ensuring their current access to the means by which they individually and collectively develop their potential, their capacities, and their agency.
- **FUTURE:** Calls for the application and exercise among Black people and peoples of those resources developed to change the structural and systemic conditions that they experience and to shape the future.

ANTI-BLACKNESS

We offer two definitions for anti-Blackness that frame it in different dimensions:

- Reflecting an interpersonal level, the first originates in the Movement for Black Lives (M4BL) and honors the specificity of anti-Black racism and dimensions of white supremacy while leaving room for the possibility of interrelated experiences of racism within white supremacy. Anti-Black racism is the “term used to specifically describe the unique discrimination, violence, and harms imposed on and impacting Black people specifically.”
- The Collective uses a second definition, inspired by an op-ed piece in the *New York Times* that frames anti-Blackness at a systemic level: “a theoretical framework that illuminates society’s inability to recognize our humanity—the disdain, disregard, and disgust for our existence.”

BLACK-LED CHANGE

We note two definitions. One, by the Collective, defines it broadly:

Black-led change is social, political, and economic change led by diverse groups of Black people. It centers the power, interests, and well-being of Black communities and often benefits all people. Black-led change has a conscious politic and a commitment for outcomes that center the interests of Black people. The Black-led approach to change acknowledges the distinct ways Black people are impacted by issues because of anti-Black racism and solutions are rooted in Black culture and practices. Black-led change works in partnership with people most impacted by the issues at hand. It is rooted in cultural practice across generations and the diaspora; it reflects the inherent dignity and vision of Black people. While Black-led change continues to prove its impact and necessity, historically, Black-led change has been targeted, under-resourced, and under-recognized.

The Association of Black Foundation Executives: A Philanthropic Partnership for Black Communities provides an understanding of Black-led change within an organizational context:

Black-led change organizations are those with predominantly Black board and executive leadership, staff, and constituents and whose primary organizational purpose is to work to build the political, economic, and social power of the Black community. So, “Black-led” is about the demographic makeup and racial identity of the leadership as well as a political purpose of building power to ensure that the Black community thrives.

INVITATIONS TO POWER-SHIFTING SOLIDARITY WITH BLACK PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES IN MINNESOTA

While written in the present tense and informed by community and philanthropic leaders, these visions for Black futures have been dreamed of and contested for generations.

We are leading with invitations in recognition of your agency to choose to be in practice with us in building the organizations, culture, community, and world we urgently need.



TRUST, DEFEND, AND RECOGNIZE BLACK LEADERS.

Black leaders are critical to the work of transforming systems toward justice. Philanthropy must trust these leaders, recognizing the ways that they move between groups and networks to make a way, often while their efforts are underinvested. We must protect and defend Black leaders who regularly are subject to anti-Blackness, whose manifestation can range from subtle microaggressions to blatant, open-air racism. Black leadership is necessary for our movements and for organizational transformation.

We see a signal in PRE’s Data Snapshot that Minnesota philanthropy can build on: Most racial justice grants were distributed to organizations led by people of color. Trust is necessary, full stop, if Black community leaders are to be in relationship with philanthropy in ways that support everyone to advance their missions. But Black community leaders are wary of the vulnerability that can come when trust is not coupled with support for ongoing learning and realistic expectations. Systems change is not quick and linear; grantmaking requires long-term investment and commitment to be in relationship. Three years from the 2020 uprising for racial justice, Black leaders spoke of the need for opportunities to come together and reflect on what has been learned and refine or shift their strategies.



EMBRACE THE DUAL NEEDS FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND HEALING JUSTICE.

Black community leaders spoke of racial capitalism, the mutual dependence of capitalism and racism, as necessary to

interrogate racial justice efforts; the racial wealth gap is understood and present. But they also recognize that economic development alone is part of, and not the whole, of what it takes to create racial justice.

Philanthropic leaders reflected on what could be keeping Minnesota foundations from interrogating racial capitalism as a practice norm. Funders spoke of the need to normalize language that has been read as risky in “mixed company” because it could upset white donors and/or board members: “We need to be intentional about saying ‘Black-led work’ and ‘anti-Blackness.’” And they spoke to the desire for a widened aperture on what is required to advance power-shifting solidarity with Black community leaders. Expanding the aperture would hold necessary economic development efforts and widen to include repair and healing, which is grounded in justice for whole communities, including in the following ways as articulated by the [Healing Justice Foundation](#):

- Honor families and communities.
- Provide urgent and sustainable healing support.
- Address the direct and collateral consequences of racism and its intersection with other forms of oppression.
- Provide education and training that builds community power.



MEET BLACK PEOPLE AT THEIR INTERSECTIONS & ACKNOWLEDGE THE FORCE OF ANTI-BLACKNESS.

The racial hierarchy in the United States, long over-reliant on a Black-white binary, requires us to speak directly about anti-Blackness if we are to advance racial justice. Black community leaders and foundation staff widely

acknowledged anti-Blackness as a known force and something that largely is not spoken about in predominantly white spaces. Most Black changemakers we interviewed aligned their understanding of anti-Blackness with definition, grounded in specificity, originating with the MBL. While this be the case, we recognize the inherently intersectional and international nature of oppression—and the need for correspondingly intersectional and international movements for collective, adaptive action.

Community leaders encourage philanthropy to educate the field on anti-Blackness and to struggle with why it isn’t spoken as explicitly as it might be. Across focus groups and interviews, foundation leaders agreed that anti-Blackness largely is not in the lexicon of colleagues and peers: “We use the term BIPOC so much. ... What are we really talking about? It is about anti-Blackness.” The term can lump all people of color together as one group of intended grantee partners, inadvertently creating competition. Black community leaders want to work toward collective liberation. Meeting Black people and communities at their intersections will require us to make the pie bigger, approaching our work with abundance rather than scarcity.



SUPPORT SPACES OF RESPITE AND COMMUNITY BUILDING FOR BLACK CHANGEMAKERS IN PHILANTHROPY.

Black practitioners in Minnesota philanthropy are toggling between and among communities—an effort that has long been required for Black people in the workplace. These practitioners often do triple work—playing critical roles in their homes and cultural communities; leading organizational change around justice,

equity, diversity, and inclusion; while also performing their primary role—and all the while subject to institutional environments that can range from the inhospitable to the toxic. The additional labor, intellectual and emotional, often is without commensurate titles and compensation. Unsurprisingly, Black leaders and practitioners described themselves as exhausted.

Minnesota can lead the way in demonstrating to the country what it takes to ensure its leaders are well. The Collective's Rooting series and Nexus Community Partners' Sabbatical Program are creating spaces for respite and restoration, as well as more and new ways of celebrating and supporting these leaders. We encourage learning across these growing bodies of work so that a shared picture of the ways Minnesota philanthropy is showing up for its Black leaders can emerge and drive further investment.



INVEST IN RACIAL JUSTICE AT THE SPEED OF COURAGE.

Black community leaders in Minnesota are courageously showing up for racial justice, seeking fundamental changes to the ways power and resources are distributed. The historic uprising of 2020, which began in our state, demonstrates what is possible when we unite in power-shifting solidarity. We witnessed numerous private-sector and philanthropic organizations commit to redress past harms, name plans for organizational learning, and publicly pledge financial support to Black communities and Black-led change.

Philanthropy in Minnesota—exemplified in the multimillion-dollar investments by the Bush and Pohlad Family foundations—has begun responding to this urgent call. As noted in the PRE Data Snapshot, in 2021 racial equity

funding increased by approximately 13% against the average of the previous three years and racial justice funding increased by nearly a quarter compared to the average of the three previous years. However, for these kinds of efforts to have long-term impact, this must be the beginning of courageous investments. Systemic inequities are years in the making, and it takes time to shift to new ways of being and doing. We urge all of Minnesota philanthropy to invest in Black lives year-round and long term, in service to thriving people and communities.



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RECOMMENDED CITATIONS

Chera Reid, Albertina Lopez, Lulete Mola, Chanda Smith Baker, and Repa Mekha, *Toward Power-Shifting Solidarity with Black-Led Change*, Black Collective Foundation MN and Center for Evaluation Innovation (2023).

Ben Francisco Maulbeck, Lyle Matthew Kan, and Lori Villarosa, *Grantmaking Data Snapshot for Racial Equity and Racial Justice in Minnesota*, Philanthropic Initiative for Racial Equity (2023), in Chera Reid, Albertina Lopez, Lulete Mola, Chanda Smith Baker, and Repa Mekha, *Toward Power-Shifting Solidarity with Black-Led Change*, Black Collective Foundation MN and Center for Evaluation Innovation (2023), pp. 18–38.