

Evaluation of the CFBMoC

Submitted by:



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Introduction

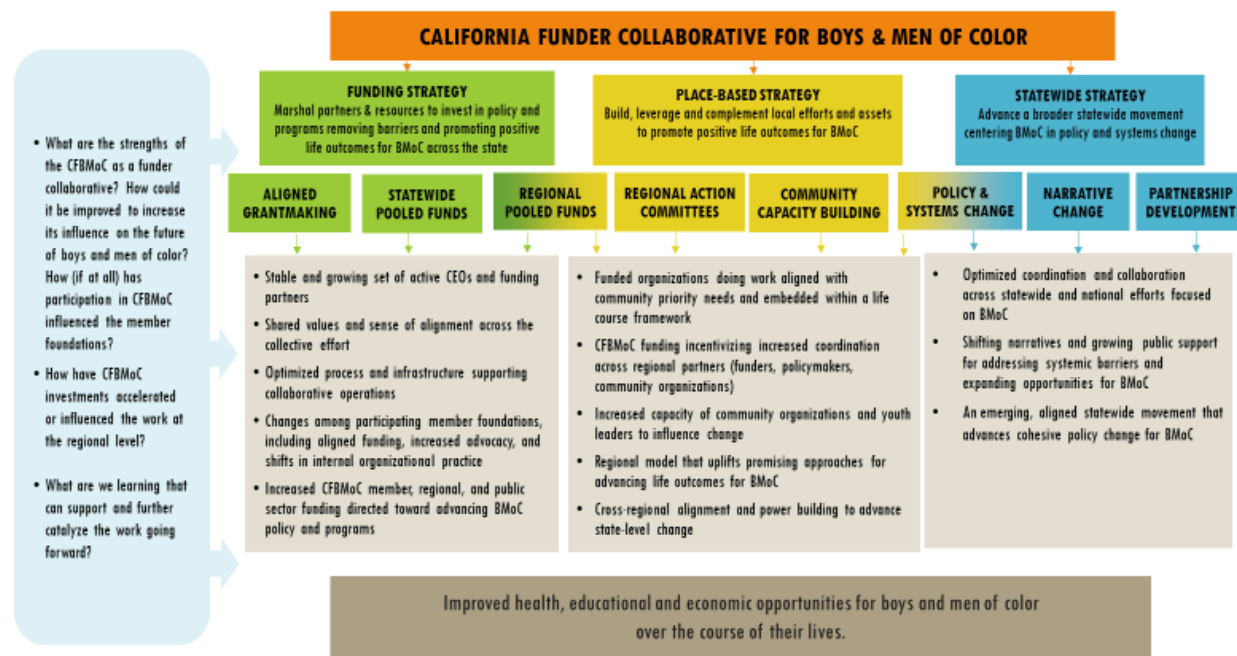
The California Funders for Boys and Men of Color (CFBMoC) was formed in 2014 with the goal of bringing together CEOs and staff from the state’s leading philanthropic institutions to shape a better future for boys and men of color. Earlier that year, President Obama launched the My Brother’s Keeper (MBK) Community Challenge, which asked local places across the country to commit to advancing policy and addressing opportunity gaps for boys and men of color. California-based CEOs who were engaged nationally with MBK and the Executive Alliance for Boys and Men of Color recognized that California was in a unique position, both from a political and a policy and systemic change perspective to, as one of the founders shared, “do some extraordinary things related to boys and men of color.” While continuing to learn from and contribute to what was happening nationally, founders engaged philanthropic partners from across the state-- family and private foundations, statewide and issue-based funders, and regional community funders—in support of this vision.

Seven years later, the CFBMoC continues to align the resources, networks and voices of California’s foundations—from family and private foundations to corporate and community funders—with a vision that California’s African American, Latinx, Asian Pacific Islander and Native American boys and young men enjoy full inclusion in the state’s opportunities. Since its inception, the CFBMoC has engaged in collaborative efforts within three regions in the state and at the state level to influence policies and support regional collaboration toward this end.

Overview of this Evaluation

In fall 2020, Social Policy Research Associates (SPR) was engaged to conduct an evaluation for the CFBMoC, focused on generating recommendations for improvements to the CFBMoC, documenting lessons learned about the CFBMoC model, and sharing outcomes rising from CFBMoC investments. Guiding this evaluation has been a framework designed to articulate the three integrated areas of focus of the CFBMoC. Shown in Exhibit 1 below, this framework describes the core activities and their connection to the CFBMoC’s goal of “improved health, educational and economic opportunities for boys and men of color over the course of their lives.”

Exhibit 1. CFBMoC Evaluation Framework



With the CFBMoC evaluation framework at its foundation, the evaluation pursued the three high-level lines of inquiry captured on the left-hand side of the framework, in two distinct phases:

- **Phase 1: Member funder Data Collection.** The first phase (January-March 2021) encompassed one-hour interviews with 13 CFBMoC member funders to get their perspectives on the CFBMoC structure, processes, and future directions; these findings were presented to the CFBMoC backbone team in March 2021 and summarized in an accompanying memo.
- **Phase 2: Regional Data Collection.** The second wave of data collection took place in Summer 2021, and encompassed interviews with two Regional Action Committee (RAC) leads, interviews with seven RAC grantee partners, and review of available grantee reports.¹

This evaluation report summarizes key findings organized by the three integrated strategies laid out in the CFBMoC Framework, then closes with key considerations for the CFBMoC going forward.

CFBMoC Funding Strategy

The 16 funders and partners that currently comprise the CFBMoC represent a powerful network of organizations committed to pooling time, expertise, and resources in support of transformative change that advances life outcomes for boys and men of color in the state. Coordination of collaborative activities are supported by The Center at the Sierra Health Foundation (The Center) and a backbone team made up of staff from eight philanthropic organizations and partners, which provide daily management and oversight, regional and statewide coordination, and support and overall program management. This section offers reflections on the CFBMoC funding model, largely through the lens of member funders themselves.

Reflections on Funder Engagement

After six years of activity and investment, this evaluation provided an opportunity for member funders to reflect on the collaborative as a vehicle itself: What brings CFBMoC member funders to the table? What do they gain through their participation? How could they be better served through CFBMoC processes and structures? Their responses offer insights for both sustaining their participation and bringing more funders to the table into the future.

What Brings Funders to the Table?

Overall, the CFBMoC table was described as an important one for member funders. The comprehensive focus on boys and men of color is one that resonates with participating funders, all of whom articulate a strong alignment with their own organizational missions and priorities. Notably, multiple funders described the alignment not in terms of a direct mapping to existing issue-based portfolios, but rather more in terms of a connection to broader north star goals of advancing racial equity and racial justice. One funder described it as alignment at the “30,000-foot level” versus with named foundation priorities.

¹ Note: SPR interviewed four out of five grantee partners in Los Angeles, one out of two grantee partners in Northern California, and one of two grantee partners in Sacramento/San Joaquin. As such, due to this limited sample, information from grantee partners should be interpreted accordingly.

For some funders, this is the appeal that motivates their participation, as the focus on boys and men of color provides an opportunity to think outside of issue-based silos in different ways.

The opportunity to lean into this alignment and amplify investments with like-minded organizations and CEOs is what brought many to the CFBMoC table. As one funder shared, "There is this acknowledgement, that collectively, this group of foundations can make a big impact if they align funding behind a series of strategies." A couple specifically shared that they were drawn in by the opportunity to pool resources and make a bigger impact within specific regions, and one regional funder saw the opportunity to connect and extend its resources statewide.

Finally, a few also emphasized the uniqueness of the CFBMoC table, and the value of a space centered on boys and men of color. One funder juxtaposed this to other issue-based or regional tables where their effort is expended ensuring that boys and men of color are even considered and included. One framed it as, "The space and opportunity to just be a lot more intentional in our focus of being able to talk about boys and men of color, right? There's tremendous value in having a space that's designated that way versus having to think about how it [happens] outside of that space."

"The table brings like-minded CEOs around the table to talk about both the opportunities and challenges, to build the common understanding of those opportunities, and challenges, and to think about how best to organize themselves...the goal [is] to think, learn, and act together."

–CFBMoC member funder

What Do Funders Gain Through their Participation?

Across-the-board, reflecting on their experience thus far, member funders emphasized a deep appreciation for the table itself, with many describing a camaraderie with other philanthropic leaders of color and a real value for the bond of personal relationships forged or deepened through the CFBMoC. Member funders also highlighted some key areas where they have been deriving specific value from their participation.

By far, member funders reported benefitting most from the opportunity to engage in learning with others. While a few described gaining insights from specific consultant experts engaged by the CFBMoC, most described enjoying the opportunity for "cross-pollination" through information exchange with other funders with a fundamental shared interest in advancing life outcomes for boys and men of color. Funders appreciated hearing from others working on interventions in different fields (i.e., educational equity, criminal justice, and economic mobility), delving into place-based models and considering how the work translates across regions, as well as statewide funders learning from the work on the ground being supported by community foundations. As one shared, "You get a sense of how other foundations do their work...and what they are looking to move...It's just a really cool to get that larger sense about what's moving both from a policy organizing perspective and narrative change."

Some also offered insights into how this learning experience has influenced their respective organizations. For example, one funder described their CFBMoC participation as "affirming we are on the right path" with a focus on boys and men of color while another framed it as reinforcing for their foundation to "be bold" in this area. Still others described specific examples of shifts to grantmaking as a result of their participation (e.g., moving to more of a divest-invest frame to support youth, doubling down on commitments to racial equity and racial justice, reflecting on the degree to which BIPOC-led organizations are adequately represented within the foundation's portfolio, or exposing them to new organizations or partners to support). Finally, one member funder described their participation as allowing them to engage in advocacy for the first time, co-drafting and signing on to letters of support.

Also notable is what member funders did *not* mention in their interviews. Specifically, despite it being a named reason for why funders joined the CFBMoC, very few talked about a financial return on

investment as a benefit of their participation or articulated a clear sense that their dollars were being amplified through their participation in the CFBMoC.

How do member funders find specific value in the Life Course Framework, if at all?

The CFBMoC was particularly interested in member funder perspectives on the Life Course Framework, an organizing frame for the work that provides a cohesive set of guiding principles mapped to the life trajectory of boys and men of color. Overall, funders reported seeing immense value in the Life Course Framework, describing it as a clear articulation for key points of targeted funding that will make the most impact on boys and men of color, as well as a means for funders to have conversations around existing gaps and intervention points. As one funder shared, "I think [the Life Course Framework] helps to make the work more cohesive. It makes sense to me to try to avoid just a shotgun approach... having a theoretical model of any type, and one that has such research grounding, I think makes the work intentional and focused on outcomes."

Other Funders appreciated the framework for centering the focus on the individual, versus on the various systems that touch upon and influence their lives, as one that influenced their organizational investments as well. One described, for example, how the Life Course Framework served as a useful tool for conceptualizing social determinants of health and allowing them to use this frame to focus organizational investments on justice reform. Another described the Life Course Framework as a valuable tool for getting their foundation's board buy-in by being able to "zoom out" and show how their foundation's investments operate in concert with a broader statewide movement. Still another described leveraging data pointing to outcome disparities at various states of a young person's life to reinforce an overarching and sustained racial lens to their investments. The framework, emphasized one, "is a reminder for philanthropy that this is a continuum, that you can't just fund one and assume that the rest of the dominoes will fall, that it really should be intentional and understand the intersection between the different life cycles."

Given the power of the framework, many also offered suggestions for how to maximize its utility to CFBMoC's collaborative investments. Given its "daunting" nature, some suggested more directly lifting up implications for action agendas or areas of funding and focus, with one explaining "It's not always clear how to operationalize the Life Course Framework. I think providing clear, tangible examples of how one can actually execute on the Life Course Framework both from a programmatic point of view and from a policy and legislative point of view would be a great value add." Another leader observed that the framework tends to stress deficits that BMoC populations face and highlighted an opportunity for this table to "begin to visualize and to create a picture of what happens when you actually are successful in moving these men out of the bottom side of it...when they can get into sort of the opportunity leading and the success in education, and employment, and advocacy and policy. How do we articulate and how do we visualize what those values mean for the communities that they're in, and in some ways collectively, for the state of California and for the state of those young men?"

"What the life course framework does is provide both data and evidence to support our intuition around the current state of affairs for boys and men of color and where the key pressure points are that can kind of influence whether and individual or family will head in one direction or not...it just provides a good organizing mechanism and framework for the members of the collaborative to get around the table and stay."

—CFBMoC member funder

What More do Funders Need?

At the request of The Center, another key line of inquiry focused on getting member feedback on the processes and structures of the CFBMoC. While appreciative overall, member funders offered limited feedback about The Center and their role in supporting the collaborative. Notably, many seemed to lack

clarity on current structures and processes to offer clear feedback, particularly with regard to CFBMoC’s decision-making and information sharing processes. Several were unsure if they were personally remiss in keeping track of all the moving pieces of the CFBMoC’s statewide and regional work and pointed to opportunities to streamline communications and offer greater transparency through regular updates. Especially as new people come on board, multiple member funders suggested that The Center may want to invest in onboarding such that it is clear what to expect and where to plug in.

Notably, interviews also suggested a potential opening for increased engagement. A couple respondents suggested that meetings could be structured to promote exchange that better draws upon the expertise of funders at the table, and one encouraged thinking through how to engage smaller funders whose voices might be “drowned out by bigger players in the room.” One person sensed a tension around engaging but not burdening member funders, with the collaborative often erring on the side of not burdening members. While there was no across-the-board call for greater engagement, a subset seemed to be looking for ways to be more engaged, suggesting there might be an opportunity to think about a framework for scaffolded engagement where member funders—or CEOs or staff within organizations—have a clear way to be involved at a level that makes sense for them.

"A lot of times it doesn't feel like we're making decisions. It feels like the decisions are made and they're being brought to us and it's like, 'Do you support it, or is it just want to make sure that you know.' I'm actually not clear where decisions get made."

—CFBMoC member funder

CFBMoC Regional Strategy

One of CFBMoC’s signature strategies has been its place-based strategy in three major regions of the state: Los Angeles County, Sacramento/San Joaquin, and the Oakland/San Francisco Bay Area. Building upon local assets and in concert with the CFBMoC’s statewide investments (described next), the vision behind this strategy has been to invest in Regional Action Committees (RACs) and support a bold and courageous network of local leaders and organizations to transform policies, systems, and institutions that most deeply impact boys and men of color, their families, and their communities. This section is structured around three key areas of inquiry: (1) the regional work happening on the ground, (2) key outcomes across the RACs, and (3), the emerging learning through participation in the regional strategy. The core data sources that informed insights on the regional strategy include interviews with member funders, RAC lead funders, RAC grantee partners, and grant narrative reports.²

Insights on the Regional Work Happening on the Ground

In each of the RACs, there has been an array of work taking place that was all either strengthened by or born out of participation in the CFBMoC. Through direct support from the CFBMoC regional pooled fund, there are three key streams of work that are continuing to take place on the ground: direct services programming for the key communities of each region, policy and funding advocacy around each region’s focus, and coalition-based work that encompasses both direct services and policy advocacy work.

- **Direct services programming.** RAC lead funders and grantee partners across each RAC have been heavily involved in accelerating direct services programming relevant to each of the RAC focal

² It is important to note that the outcomes and learning lifted up in this section draw from a limited sample of interviews respondents and grant reports and should be interpreted accordingly.

areas that had been underway prior to the CFBMoC's inception. Such programming includes enhancing existing youth and community centers to provide youth development support in addition to crisis response services for youth in South Los Angeles and expanding scholarship programs for boys and men of color in Sacramento by increasing the numbers of workshops and adding additional services to these programs such as housing and mental health support services. Additionally, the CFBMoC supported each region with launching *new* direct services programming such as multiple new job-readiness programs and events in the Bay Area to connect opportunity youth with the growing demand for employment among corporations in the region. The Southern California and Sacramento/San Joaquin Valley RACs also developed similar new programming in the youth diversion and higher education services areas respectively.

- **Policy and funding advocacy work.** Another key component of the work happening on the ground through the CFBMoC has been the policy and funding advocacy work in each of the RACs. The advocacy work in the Southern California RAC has been focused on funding leadership development and community-based organizational coaching for youth justice advocates, accelerating existing models for community-based policy change, and supporting various workgroups and advocacy committees that each focus on various facets of youth justice in Los Angeles County. Policy advocacy has also been a critical part of the work happening in the Bay Area and Sacramento/San Joaquin Valley RACs: in the Bay Area, grantee partners have collaborated with corporate entities that work to advocate for equitable workforce development, economic access, mobility, and opportunities across public and private sectors. In the Sacramento and San Joaquin Valley region, member funders have supported The Justice Collective to work with community-based organizations to convene a policy working group that has developed a blueprint of education-specific policy recommendations for opportunity youth in the region.
- **Coalition and partnership-based work.** Finally, a significant portion of regional work has been coalition- and partnership-based work that encompasses both direct services programming and policy advocacy. In the Sacramento/San Joaquin RAC, member funders and grantee partners have been collaborating with community housing partners, the Sacramento County Offices of Probation and Education, and CSU and UC program leaders to implement the Reemerging Scholars program that prepares opportunity youth for higher education and college completion. In the Bay Area, CFBMoC support facilitated multiple public-private partnerships between RAC members and prominent corporations in the region – these partnerships led to multiple employment and economic mobility opportunities for youth through hiring summits, job training expositions, and network-building events. In Southern California, support from the CFBMoC has led to an array of partnerships, coalitions, workgroups, and committees that have both strengthened direct service programs for youth and have actualized local policy changes around the youth justice system. Los Angeles County's Youth Justice Work Group is one such partnership that the CFBMoC supported to have youth serve as leaders in the youth justice advocacy movement in Los Angeles County.

"One achievement is how we were able to build community, including collaborations between organizations that didn't know each other before. Folks were supporting each other, resourcing each other, sharing approaches to the work, and helping incubate new efforts"

–CFBMoC member funder

Sacramento/San Joaquin RAC: Educational Equity for Young Men of Color

Across California, young men of color have disproportionately faced barriers to higher education – this is particularly an issue in the Sacramento/San Joaquin region. As such, the Sacramento/San Joaquin RAC selected educational equity and access to higher education for boys and men of color as the key focus area for the region. The RAC, led by the Sierra Health Foundation and College Futures Foundation, includes multiple community foundation partners and grantee partners. With an anticipated goal of ensuring equitable access to higher education and college completion for young men of color in the region, the Sacramento/San Joaquin RAC engaged community-based organizations, local government offices, and private entities came together to develop a regional educational blueprint that would ultimately increase the number of young men of color accessing pathways to higher education – from accessing community college programs and technical certificate programs, to enrolling in bachelor’s degree programs. RAC partners and grantee partners were also engaged in advocacy efforts to bring forth local equitable education policies. For example, while working with The Justice Collective, RAC grantees drafted policy recommendations to support the goal of educational equity for young men of color.

Northern California RAC: Increasing Access to Economic Mobility for Young Men of Color

The Bay Area has become a region of economic growth with employment opportunities fueled by the ever-expanding technology sector in the region. Nevertheless, men of color have continually been excluded from these opportunities. Therefore, the Northern California RAC, which focuses its work in this region, selected economic opportunity and mobility as its key priority area for boys and men of color in the region. This RAC is led by the East Bay Community Foundation and the San Francisco Foundation with LeadersUp, PolicyLink, Urban Strategies Council, and the United Way Bay Area partnering with corporations to create career pathways for young men of color. The key anticipated goal for the Northern CA RAC is to establish career pathways, foster economic security, and increase employment opportunities for boys and men of color in the region. Further, RAC partners also advocated for policy changes that would facilitate the removal of barriers to economic mobility for young men of color. To date, the RAC’s partnerships and advocacy have helped thousands of young men of color to engage with Bay Area employers for entry-level work and mid-level careers.

Southern California RAC: Ending Incarceration of Boys and Men of Color

At the time of the CFBMoC’s inception, Los Angeles County had one of the highest rates of youth incarceration and arrests in the nation. Incarcerating youth at such a high rate results in immense human and economic costs for Los Angeles – from taking up a significant portion of county expenses, to creating stifling economic and educational barriers for young men of color. Thus, this RAC selected youth justice and transforming the youth legal system as its priority area. The RAC is led by the Liberty Hill Foundation and was further supported by The California Endowment, The California Wellness Foundation, and the Weingart Foundation. The key goals for this RAC are to close youth prisons, invest in community-based alternatives to incarceration, and create a “streamlined youth-centered system rather than siloed programs.” To that end, this RAC and the multiple partnerships that came out of it, have already led to transformational changes for young men of color in the region: from successful community organizing to re-allocate Los Angeles County’s budget to invest in community programming, to reducing the number of incarcerated young people.³

³ California Funders for Boys and Men of Color. *Taking Action Across California*. 2018. <https://cafundersforbmo.org/new-report-taking-action-across-california>

Key Outcomes Across the RACs

Reflecting on their collective efforts, member funders, RAC lead funders, and grantee partners shared key outcomes that they see as bringing significant changes for boys and men of color and for the community-based organizations in each region. Key findings include:

- **Strengthened partnerships among RAC grantee partners.** RAC participants underscored that a clear outcome has been the strengthened partnerships and collaborations that came out of their work. Grantee partners described how they were able to partner with organizations they were already familiar with, organizations they had not worked with beforehand, and groups across the public and private sectors. These partnerships and collaborations not only had a lasting impact on the organizations themselves, but also contributed to impacts for boys and men of color in RAC regions. For example, newly established public-private partnerships among organizations in Southern California resulted in long-term collaborations via work groups and committees, and in increased funding to directly support programming for young people in the Southern California RAC region.
- **Increased funding and programming for RAC policy areas.** In reflecting on outcomes, RAC participants also named overall increased funding and programming for the specific policy areas and communities their RACs were established to serve. Throughout the CFBMoC participation period, regional partners perceived that funding for programming related to youth justice and diversion, economic mobility and job-readiness, and higher education access and college preparation increased in Los Angeles County, Bay Area, and Sacramento/San Joaquin regions respectively. The funding increase subsequently led to increased programming – both direct services and advocacy programming – in each of the policy areas.
- **Actualized impacts for boys and men of color across the RACs.** Finally, one of most significant achievements according to RAC participants was the actualized positive changes for boys and men of color. The Southern California RAC’s work in the advocacy and organizing spaces resulted in major policy changes at the local level including the passage of Measure J (which will directly allocate Los Angeles County’s locally controlled revenue to community investment and alternatives to incarceration) and having the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors vote on shifting funds from probation services to community-based youth development programs. They have also witnessed improved numbers of youth being diverted from the justice system and lower recidivism rates for young men of color. Further, in the Northern California RAC, the strong support for economic mobility programming led to increased employment opportunities for opportunity youth – LeadersUp estimated that over 9,000 young men of color had been connected to employment opportunities in the Bay Area. Additionally, the Sacramento/San Joaquin RAC’s work has led to increased higher education preparatory programming that is based on evidence of successful outcomes for young men of color in the region.

"This opportunity that the CFBMoC provided to shine a light on organizations and issues was incredibly meaningful and became [our] top priority. It's ending youth incarceration as we know it and building a youth development system in its place. As a result of organizing funders through the CFBMoC, we were able to raise millions of dollars and make it a top priority for many funders, including those who never would have touched anything like this."

–CFBMoC member funder

Emerging Learning from the Place-Based Model

Along with detailing the key outcomes from each RAC’s regional work, RAC partners also provided insights on challenges, facilitators and lessons learned from their experience.

Implementation Challenges

During interviews, RAC stakeholders offered specific examples of challenges faced in their place-based implementation. Key findings included:

- **Lack of organizational capacity to gather and fully engage with data proved challenging for RAC partners.** RAC partners expressed that capacity across organizations was a challenge – particularly capacity to collect data on the status and progress of the RAC’s priority areas. Grantee partners also noted that it has been difficult to understand the landscape for young men of color without adequate data from county departments such as Los Angeles County Probation Department and without additional support for organizations to conduct data collection themselves. Therefore, RAC grantee partners communicated how having more support for evaluation and data collection is a lesson learned for similar work in the future and highlighted an opportunity to engage youth advocates in data collection as a way to extend capacity in this area. Further, RAC partners described how the context of COVID-19 further reduced capacity, especially because the place-based model was put in place before the COVID-19 pandemic.
- **RAC partners required more structured resource and support coordination at the regional level.** RAC lead funders and grantee partners across the regions expressed that there was a lack of clarity on the structure of support, which made resource coordination for the regional work challenging. During interviews, funders and grantees often communicated confusion about who the key funders were in each region. Thus, RAC partners encouraged further communication among the multiple entities involved in the place-based work, especially communication between the CFBMoC backbone, funders, and those who are working on the ground.
- **RAC partners learned that there is a need to further embed regional equity within the place-based model.** Finally, RAC partners expressed that as they were implementing the work supported by the CFBMoC, they learned that there was an increasing need to further embed regional equity across the RAC regions and within the regions themselves. RAC partners from the Bay Area region shared how the work continues to be a challenge, as there is still “somewhat of a void as to Northern California being able to be as fully functioning and supporting as [they] would want to be across the region.” RAC grantee partners in Sacramento/San Joaquin expressed a similar challenge with how parts of the region, particularly Stockton, still require an immense amount of support and resources for young men of color. Further, RAC partners in Southern California expressed that ensuring equity in outcomes for young men of color outside of particular regions, such as South Los Angeles is an additional challenge that has led them to “start to ask [themselves] scale and equity questions around blind spots and gaps” within their RAC’s work.

Regional Facilitators

RAC partners offered examples of regional facilitators that supported their work through the RACs. These facilitators include:

- **The CFBMoC place-based model itself.** When asked about regional facilitators in their RAC regions, RAC partners described how having the place-based model through RAC participation had been a key facilitator for policy change and positive impacts for young men of color. RAC partners noted that with the place-based model, they felt supported by RAC and CFBMoC partners to “really weigh in and help navigate the larger, bigger politics of transformational change” at the local level. RAC grantee partners also expressed how the RAC model supported accountability to implement changes at the local level. Further, multiple RAC partners described

themselves as advocates for such place-based models as they allow for a hyper-focus on and offer specific support for their respective regional needs.

- **The landscape of and support for racial equity and justice.** Multiple RAC partners also expressed that the landscape of and support for racial equity and justice was a key facilitator for supporting their work and leading to policy changes. In particular, RAC partners in the Bay Area described that the opportunity for corporations to speak on racial justice in 2020 immensely supported their work for economic mobility and connecting young men of color to employment opportunities. Other RAC partners stated that the gradual awareness of racial equity, economic justice, educational equity was also a facilitator for changes at the local level. Additionally, RAC partners in Los Angeles noted that strong support for work in the justice space, and how this work had been a priority for organizers for over 10 years, was a key facilitator for the transformational youth justice policy changes taking place locally.
- **Visibility of the pressing needs for boys and men of color in the RAC regions.** An additional named regional facilitator was the visibility of the pressing needs for boys and men of color in each region. RAC partners expressed how barriers to employment and education opportunities, and emerging evidence for the challenges that boys and men of color face, were facilitators to garner support for funding, organizing, and direct service programming around each of the key issue areas. Further, the context of the pandemic and the added urgency to organize employment and education opportunities for the thousands of people who were released from incarceration in California during the pandemic resulted in increased support for the regional work.
- **The network of community-based organizations and funders in the RAC regions.** Finally, RAC partners expressed how the network of community-based organizations, funders, and other relationships they built in their regions were key facilitators in driving their work forward. In the Southern California RAC, coalition-based work supported by the CFBMoC accelerated local policy changes for youth justice in the region – especially through the Youth Justice Work Group which consists of community stakeholders, organizations, and youth who have been involved in justice-related work. In the Northern California and Sacramento/San Joaquin RACs, existing public-private partnerships among local government, corporations, organizations, and universities supported by the CFBMoC also bolstered positive impacts for young men of color in the regions.

CFBMoC Statewide Strategy

The third strategy of the CFBMoC centers on advancing a statewide movement of policy advocacy and systems change that is centered on boys and men of color. This statewide strategy brings together key partners, such as the Alliance for Boys and Men of Color and the Assembly Select Committee to advance policy change alongside BMoC-focused organizations. Recognizing the importance of narrative change, the CFBMoC has also engaged Change Consulting to lift the voices and stories of BMoC across California through the “Here to Lead” storytelling initiative.

To this end, this section shares insights from member funders and community-based grantees on the statewide policy advocacy strategy. In this section, we draw from interview data to share insights around three specific areas of inquiry: (1) statewide policy advocacy, (2) narrative change and storytelling, and (3), the connection between regional efforts with broader statewide policy change. The primary data

sources that inform this section are interviews with member funders, RAC Lead Funders, and a subset of supported organizations working in Los Angeles, Sacramento/San Joaquin, and the Bay Area.

Statewide Policy Advocacy

A key component of the CFBMoC model is to lead and partner on statewide policy efforts that are centered on boys and men of color in California. One way that the CFBMoC encourages this is by partnering with the Assembly Select Committee on the Status of Boys and Men of Color to advance policy and budget priorities that aim to dismantle barriers and expand opportunity for boys and men of color. The CFBMoC also partners with the Alliance for Boys and Men of Color (ABMoC), which is a national network of organizations that come together to push for policy solutions, build power, and engage in shared learning, with the ultimate goal of dismantling “racist and unjust systems that fail and harm boys and men of color and other vulnerable people.”⁴ Lastly, several CEOs from member foundations in the CFBMoC have used their positionality to engage in advocacy efforts—using their influence to publish Op-Eds and urging statewide agencies in shutting down the Division of Juvenile Justice in the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR).

Key findings in this area revealed:

- **Perspectives were mixed on whether there is a shifting statewide policy narrative to support BMoC policy.** Evaluation respondents were asked to share whether they had seen shifts in the policy narrative toward advancing policies that impact BMoC. While a couple of member funders did note that attention to BMoC communities were not on “anyone’s radar years ago,” President Obama’s My Brother’s Keeper Alliance kicked off this movement and the CFBMoC continued building on this focus in California. Several others noted seeing a rise in philanthropic partners focused on racial equity and funding more power-building and movement-building efforts across the state to support policy advocacy efforts for BMoC communities. At the same time, however, several evaluation respondents (both member funders and grantees), also have seen a sharp increase in reactionary conservative actions—noting the recall election of Governor Gavin Newsom and broader backlash across the nation--that could threaten and hinder future policy efforts.
- **The ABMoC and the Assembly Select Committee have been critical partners connected to policy wins impacting boys and men of color.** Several member funders and funded organizations expressed admiration for the work of the ABMoC, particularly in how they connect with organizations around statewide policy advocacy, but also for the technical assistance they provide to grantees directly. Grantees also cited examples of engaging directly with ABMoC policy efforts, such as serving as sponsors and supporters to numerous senate and assembly bills. For example, one Los Angeles-based grantee, shared that they have co-sponsored a variety of bills aimed at ending willful defiance suspensions, use of force, and police decertification. A few member funders also lifted the importance of having an Assembly Select Committee of legislators who bring the “BMoC lens” to planned and active legislation. They added that while “policies may sound great

“We’re much more active in statewide policy through the ABMoC because we push for the policies that directly affect our young people. They serve as the vehicle that allows us to connect our local work to statewide policy—our local work becomes a lot easier to do.”

–CFBMoC grantee partner

⁴ Alliance for Boys and Men of Color. 2021. <https://allianceforbmoc.org/about-alliance>.

on paper” having legislators that understand the unique challenges and impacts on boys and men of color is critical for equitable policymaking.

- **The ABMoC is seen as a connector by mobilizing and bringing together BMOC-focused organizations around policy priorities.** In addition to serving as a technical assistance provider to community organizations, over the last three years, the ABMoC has held annual networking opportunities through policy summits that have offered space for relationship- building, joint reflection and agenda setting opportunities for all members. The Alliance also maintains a listserv that connects over 1,000 partners and serves as a platform to connect and share information around campaigns, issues, and calls-to-action for policy efforts for boys and men of color. As one member funder noted the ABMoC brings organizations around a shared agenda for advancing equitable outcomes for boys and men of color. They added: “The Alliance brings organizations that are in different communities—East Oakland, Los Angeles, and Sacramento—and bands them together to push for policies. Everyone benefits and they all mobilize together.”
- **While respondents noted that there are examples and “pockets” of policy change, many also lifted up the need to focus on policy implementation as a way to ensure that systems are accountable to boys and men of color.** This theme was particularly most prominently raised by grantee partners who noted the need to focus investments and resources on implementation after the passage of policies. Of particular note, grantees from all three regions brought up challenges associated with implementation—ranging from needing to be actively engaged in and aware of “what happens on the ground” after policy wins, to having to navigate County officials who do not readily respond to new policies and who quickly revert back to “protecting the status quo” for young people. Notably, one LA-based grantee also noted that while they will dedicate their focus to the County’s Youth Justice Reimagined Youth Advisory group, there is “rarely money, time, capacity and effort dedicated to this level of policy implementation.”

Finally, several member funders noted the critical role that the CEO-led CFBMoC table has in engaging and pushing state-level government on policies for boys and men of color. In particular, they noted the [Op-Ed](#) that Liberty Hill and Sierra Health Foundation’s leaders published which urged Governor Gavin Newsom to pass SB 823, which would close the state’s youth prison system and prioritize a locally-focused youth development model that provides community-based supports for youth. As one Member funder noted, having two member funders co-write this Op-Ed was “quite brilliant” as it allowed regionally focused funders to serve as leaders and ambassadors in influencing state-level decisions for boys and men of color.

Narrative Change and Storytelling

Narrative change and storytelling are powerful tools for policy advocacy initiatives. They can shift public opinion and serve as a means for influencing policy. Narratives and the telling of personal stories can be effective in illustrating the impacts of policies on individuals and sparking change in public support. As such, in partnership with Change Consulting and the ABMoC, the CFBMoC launched a storytelling initiative, known as the Here to Lead Campaign to celebrate the

"I think we're going to need to focus more on systems. We've been very focused on policy and at times conflating that with systems-change, but the implementation side is critical. As a group, we might want to start asking ourselves - are we sufficiently focused on how systems are shifting to achieve a greater scale of change?"

-CFBMoC member funder

"It's the quiet behind the scenes work that gets this done. The CFBMoC crew was ready with a communication strategy and a deep analysis of the policy impact for this bill. All of that is just a tremendous amount of expertise and strengths that then makes doing this advocacy through writing these op-eds easy."

-CFBMoC member funder

“leadership, power, and voice” of boys and men of color across California. While the evaluation did not center on the success and impact of the “Here to Lead” storytelling campaign to date, evaluation respondents offered the following insights:

- **Member funders were mostly positive about the communications and storytelling campaign, but several expressed a desire to assess its effectiveness.** Several funders shared that the CFBMoC’s focus on narrative change is what brought them to the table and a few others noted that the Here to Lead Campaign has been critical in changing the “people perspective.” One funder noted that the storytelling aspect has been essential in lifting up the success stories of boys and men of color. However, a couple of member funders expressed curiosity around the effectiveness of the storytelling—not to discount the work, but more to hear about its potential reach and impact.
- **The storytelling campaign offers a powerful opportunity to empower youth to tell their story, while also lifting up regional work.** A couple of funders, particularly those that are more locally focused, shared that the Here to Lead Campaign has been able to highlight personal stories of young men of color across the state. Recent stories have ranged from engaging men of color in writing about a broad range of issues, such as education equity, health, and civic engagement to the importance of engaging young people as leaders. The storytelling campaign also served as a platform to spotlight investments in the most recently established RAC.

Connection Between Regional and Statewide Efforts

A third area of inquiry focused on gathering insights about the interplay between regional efforts and statewide policy. To this end, the evaluation brought in perspectives from grantee partners to understand how, if at all, statewide policy impacts their regional work on the ground. The following offers key insights from RAC grantee partners in addition to member funder perspectives:

- **Statewide efforts open up local work.** Perhaps unsurprisingly, a majority of interviewed grantee partners shared that statewide policy wins help to energize local coalitions and organizing efforts. Grantee partners in Los Angeles shared several recent examples of this taking place, noting that they are using the passage of SB 1421: Right to Know Act⁵ to hold the LA County Sheriff’s Department accountable and organizing around SB 439: Setting a Minimum Age for Juvenile Court Prosecution⁶ as precedent to raise the minimum age of youth prosecution in the juvenile justice system from 12 to 16. As one partner put it, “our primary work is at the local level or at the regional level, but the statewide work helps to make regional organizing that much more powerful. We need the statewide work to happen in order to open up our local wins even more.”
- **Local efforts have a sharper analysis of the issues facing youth of color.** Interviewed member funders and grantee partners also shared that that place-based work

“Funders should be ready to leverage local and statewide work because I miss how we are advancing more broadly as a state and how these regional pieces are funneling up and leveraging all these regional victories into more statewide efforts.”

–CFBMoC member funder

⁵ SB 1421: The Right to Know Act was passed in 2018 and “gives the public the right to see certain records relating to police misconduct and serious uses of force.”
https://www.aclusocal.org/sites/default/files/aclu_socal_sb1421_right_to_know_act.pdf

⁶ Signed by Governor Brown in 2018, SB 439: Setting a Minimum Age for Juvenile Court Prosecution ends the prosecution of children younger than age 12 in the juvenile justice system for most offenses.
https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=201720180SB439

provides an opportunity for understanding the issues and barriers that boys and men of color face. Grantee partners were also representative of the communities they serve and are also trusted organizations that provide a wide range of services to youth, including community-supports, youth development and leadership opportunities, and direct policy advocacy. This experience and presence in local communities have facilitated a key awareness of not only issues, but also the potential policy opportunities that exist for BMoC. Recognizing the agency of boys and men of color, Los Angeles partners have also engaged youth as leaders and partners in defining and advocating for themselves. Notably, several regional funders also shared that more could be done to leverage local work to inform policymaking at the statewide level and noted the importance of “infusing additional resources to groups that were poised and ready but may need additional dollars to fuel this work.”

Considerations

This last section offers considerations for the road ahead, focusing specifically on ways to continue and improve the CFBMoC collaborative table, Regional Action Committees, including considerations for scaling to other regions, and the statewide strategy. These considerations were informed primarily by the reflections offered by member funders and grantee partners.

The CFBMoC Table

Several member funders acknowledged that the COVID-19 pandemic created a moment to critically rethink and evaluate the CFBMoC structures and processes as the group comes back together.

Considerations for the CFBMoC Table clustered in three areas:

- **Extending the table and strategically bringing on other funders.** Especially with the life course framework as an overarching umbrella, an opportunity exists to further engage a range of different sector- and place-based funders. One member funder felt that the CFBMoC has yet to meaningfully explore where new relationships might be forged, sharing “Where are the different partners, and how can we leverage them?” Another suggested that the intensified focus on racial justice within the philanthropic field offered an opportunity for the CFBMoC to articulate “how the work plays into a bigger equity agenda” and seek opportunities for finding solidarity with a larger movement. At the end of the day, resources matter. As one member funder who expressed disappointment that significant new dollars were not raised, “if you are not raising new additional dollars, what's the point?”
- **Fostering greater funder engagement.** Feedback suggests that an opportunity exists for considering strategic ways to scaffold funder engagement among existing funders such that those who want to lean in and engage more deeply in strategy can do so, while others can still stay abreast of how to plug in. Some noted that other funder collaboratives in which they participate offer different ways of engaging, such as sharing grantee lists or tools, or more explicitly encouraging aligned grantmaking as a strategy. A few encouraged The Center to share agendas in advance and push member funders to “do homework” between meetings as a means for maximizing productivity of discussions at meetings and fostering meaningful dialogue. Related, another respondent encouraged the CFBMoC to share a clear strategic workplan so that the participating Member funders could clearly see how they can best support and plug in.

- **Extending The Center’s capacity for management and coordination.** As summarized earlier and shared in a separate deliverable, while expressing appreciation for the role that The Center plays as “the glue that keeps it all together,” member funders offered concrete suggestions around structures and processes to improve CFBMoC operations with most signaling a need for greater staff capacity. These encompass process-related suggestions such as increased written communication and transparency, greater investments in onboarding, a stronger focus on funder recruitment, to larger structural changes such as have a separate staffing for each RAC. A couple observed that The Center staff seemed “stretched,” suggesting an opportunity to consider how to more optimally manage the diverse activities and priorities of the CFBMoC.

Scaling Place-Based Work

In reflecting on opportunities going forward, a range of interview respondents— member funders and grantee partners—all discussed the importance of the place-based component of the CFBMoC model. Place-based work allows for contextualization of not only the people within communities, but also the political climate and opportunities that allow for transformative change. To further inform this section, grantee partners and RAC leads were asked to share considerations for potential expansion of place-based work. Specific considerations in this area included:

- **Aligning funding strategy to support the needs of grantee partners and policy implementation.** Evaluation respondents underscored the importance of funding support that bolsters policy implementation in local areas—particularly one that aligns with recommendations from grantee partners. Others noted the importance of funding organizations to engage in both direct service *and* policy advocacy. As one grantee partner shared, “philanthropy in particular decouples direct services from advocacy and systems-change work, when we all know that the results on the ground are the ones that make policy successful. Policy is only as useful as it is executed, and this is why funding organizations to do both is critical.”
- **Expanding funding to support capacity building, including organizations that provide technical and data capacity.** Explained by one grantee partner, the work of the CFBMoC could be amplified by supporting organizations in strengthening their organizational capacity to engage in the work. For one grantee partner, this revolved around supporting data capacity, by connecting with research centers—USC’s Equity Research Institute or Million Dollar Hoods at UCLA—to provide the “data ammunition for advancing our work with boys and men of color.” He added, “give us the reports, give us the quotes, and we’ll frame it and run with it.” Other grantee partners lifted up needs around communications and budget and administrative support. Lastly, as noted in previous sections, grantee partners hoped to see increased clarity on the types of resources and support that the CFBMoC, The Center, or the backbone team can provide to grantee partners to advance regional work on the ground.
- **Increasing opportunities for cross-regional connections.** Across the board, both member funders and grantee partners expressed a desire to engage in cross-regional connections to share lessons learned around strategies. Some suggested having annual or biannual convenings or meetings where regional partners can talk about progress, challenges, and learnings about local work and opportunities to come together around statewide policy advocacy efforts. These could also foster strategic relationships, which were described by a few grantee partners as critical for organizations and coalitions to “movement build together, scheme together, and imagine freedom together.”

Lastly, beyond providing dedicated funding support, RAC lead funders and grantee partners offered several considerations for the CFBMoC to guide and inform any potential scaling of the RAC-model into new regions.

- **Leveraging lessons from establishing previous RACs to inform expansion.** Grantee partners and member funders urged that the CFBMoC not “reinvent the wheel.” They noted that there is much value to using the lessons learned and established blueprints from other regions that can help inform new regions. One grantee partner also emphasized the opportunity to engage current funded organizations in existing RACs to provide technical assistance or partnership to new organizations and stakeholders.
- **Taking stock of existing work and local efforts in new communities.** Grantee partners specifically shared that the best approach is to dedicate time to understand local contexts—either through doing an ecosystem analysis or by connecting with existing organizations and stakeholders that can share their needs and identify their priorities. One grantee partner specifically noted that “there’s a different world outside of the Bay Area, LA, and Sacramento/San Joaquin,” and that new regions will require a different approach.
- **Ensuring communities drive and lead RAC work.** The most frequently noted consideration was around engaging and listening to communities. As one Member funder put it, “we are much more transformational when we’re working with our community partners to guide this work.” To allow this to happen, grantee partners suggested spending time to establish relationships with long time community leaders and organizations prior to entering new communities.

“Philanthropy needs to learn from community wisdom and take that wisdom and leadership from communities to consult on decisions—this needs to be a community-centered strategy from the ground up.”

-Grantee partner

Improving Statewide Policy Advocacy

The CFBMoC is rooted in a model that recognizes the critical importance of statewide policy advocacy and place-based work. A notable finding was that while evaluation respondents have seen movement and examples of policy wins for boys and men of color, furthering a statewide agenda that is inclusive of policy implementation is needed to reach more widespread change. Some considerations offered by interviewed respondents included:

- **Investing in refining strategy to further a statewide agenda.** As the CFBMoC moves into its eighth year, a subset of interviewed Member funders expressed a desire to come together to understand how to best advance a statewide agenda that supports boys and men of color. For one member funder, this meant establishing a set of evaluation metrics that would track progress toward anticipated outcomes for boys and men of color and support continued strategy refinement. Another funder also wondered about the effectiveness of the narrative change strategy, as she pondered: “what has been the reach of the narrative change campaign? Are we seeing shifts in how the public sees boys and men of color? How do we know?” For a regionally-focused member funder, advancing a statewide agenda would have to include a more deliberate process in engagement within the CFBMoC on how to best *collectively* establish and advance a statewide agenda. She added:

“If we want to move in the direction of working collectively toward a statewide agenda then [we] need to find ways to not just tell each other what we're doing within the CFBMoC, but also sort to engage each other in sharing perspectives. I think for someone

like me who's a little disconnected from the state work, then I would need to sort of figure out what's my role... How can I help?" – CFBMoC member funder

- **Strengthening the connective tissue between local and statewide efforts.** Especially given the importance of the local work that supported organizations are embarking on in each region, many respondents saw the opportunity to strengthen the connection between local work and a statewide policy agenda. As shared in the previous section, grantee partners noted that statewide policy advocacy has facilitated local efforts, but that an area for potential improvement is in lifting up regional work to help inform statewide policy making. Respondents shared that this could range from investments and resources to local organizations that can be poised to inform statewide policy, to continued engagement of the ABMoC in supporting local grantee partners. For others, this might simply be developing a clearer articulation of the interplay between the two—through the Here to Lead storytelling initiative and within quarterly meetings.
- **Aligning funding and strategy with a broader social justice movement.** Recognizing that systems change is a long-term endeavor, several member funders and grantee partners noted the critical importance of dedicated funding to support the goals and vision of the CFBMoC. A regionally-focused member funder noted that the statewide policy advocacy might not have the “right amount of resources to make it fully effective” nor to support key leaders engaged in this work. A subset also lifted up opportunities to leverage growing movement-building efforts taking place in the state and the potential to connect with other partners. As an example, one member funder shared that there might be an opportunity to align with existing funding efforts, such as the California Black Freedom Fund. He pondered, “What’s the relationship between the Black Freedom Fund and the CFBMoC? There might be an opportunity to have greater alignment and greater allyship, particularly as we’re seeing a California that’s infusing a deep investment in power-building.”
- **Engaging the ABMoC more closely.** A couple of member funders wanted to see more clarity in how the CFBMoC leverages and complements the policy priorities of the ABMoC. Several member funder respondents also saw an opportunity to bring in the ABMoC to CFBMoC quarterly meetings to support knowledge sharing and sense making on statewide policy fronts that are led by the ABMoC. They noted that while they hear about the progress that RACs are making in regional areas, bringing in the ABMoC might help to inform the statewide strategy with the collective of funders in the CFBMoC.

"For me, it's getting to that coordination—how are we leveraging what's happening in local regions to create something bigger? There's clear expertise, but how do we really maximize the impact of that? What would be taking this to the next level?"

–CFBMoC member funder

"I think it'd be great to make a more intentional effort to talk about aligned strategy policy efforts with the Alliance, and these may be already taking place in other ways, but they should be a bit more inclusive and happening within the CFBMoC meetings as well."

–CFBMoC member Funder

In closing, the CFBMoC has been a critical voice for African American, Latino, Asian Pacific Islander, and Native American boys and young men in California. The insights and reflections highlighted in this report illustrate the progress that has already been made toward advancing policy change for boys and men of color and the opportunities for moving this work forward. We hope that the findings from this report support the Sierra Health Foundation and the CFBMoC as they work to ensure that boys and men of color continue to thrive.

Appendix A: List of Interviewees

Member Funders

- **Fatima Angeles**, Former Vice President of Programs, The California Wellness Foundation
- **Luis Arteaga**, CEO, Y&H Soda Foundation
- **Linda Beech-Cutler**, CEO, Sacramento Region Community Foundation
- **Judy Belk**, President and CEO, The California Wellness Foundation
- **Fred Blackwell**, CEO, San Francisco Foundation
- **Demitrius Burnett**, Program Officer, San Francisco Foundation
- **Efrain Escobedo**, Vice President of Immigration and Education Programs, California Community Foundation
- **Sophie Fanelli**, President, Stuart Foundation
- **Shane Murphy Goldsmith**, President and CEO, Liberty Hill Foundation
- **James Head**, Former President and CEO, East Bay Community Foundation
- **Chet P. Hewitt**, President and CEO, Sierra Health Foundation
- **Joanna Jackson**, Vice President of Programs, Weingart Foundation
- **Angie Junck**, Director of Human Rights, Heising-Simons Foundation
- **Ken Spence**, Senior Policy Advisor, NextGen Policy

RAC Lead Funders

- **Sergio Cuellar**, Senior Program Officer, Sierra Health Foundation
- **Debrah Giles**, Senior Program Officer, East Bay Community Foundation
- **Carmen Ross**, Program Manager of Impact Strategy, Sacramento Region Community Foundation

RAC Grantee Partners

- **Nicole Brown**, Senior Policy Associate, Urban Peace Institute
- **Shimica D. Gaskins**, Executive Director, Children's Defense Fund – California
- **Scott Richards**, Executive Director, Teach for America – CA Capital Valley Region
- **Brooklynn Pham**, Senior Director, Teach for America – CA Capital Valley Region
- **Mel Saavedra**, Senior Consultant, The Justice Collective
- **David Turner**, Brothers, Sons, Selves (BSS) Manager, InnerCity Struggle
- **Jeffery Wallace**, President and CEO, LeadersUp
- **George Weaver**, Program Director, Brotherhood Crusade