# Thrive As They Lead

*Advancing the Infrastructure to Support Black Women Leaders in the D.C. Metro Area Nonprofit Sector*

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# From the Desk of Washington Area Women's Foundation President & CEO

## October 2023

One thing is clear – Black women are leaders, architects of our movements, catalysts for change, and indispensable to the advancement of and flourishing of our communities. They have displayed unwavering dedication, resolve, and grace in the face of unprecedented challenges — a global pandemic, resulting in economic instability, and a "racial reckoning" that resurfaced tensions we've seen throughout history. The ramifications of these challenges on Black women and Black gender-expansive leaders in the Washington D.C. metropolitan area have been profound. We have observed a disconcerting pattern where Black women leaders are vacating their roles, with some leaving the non-profit sector altogether, citing hostility toward their leadership, strain on their health and well-being, unfair job expectations, and limited opportunities for career progression.

In the face of these realities, Washington Area Women's Foundation answered the call of a small group of concerned leaders to not only gain a comprehensive understanding of the depth of experiences endured by Black women and gender-expansive leaders but also create a safe space for them to speak unapologetically about the steps they believe are necessary to reverse this trend. They offer bold recommendations that the sector can take, including innovative approaches to investing in the growth and development of Black women leaders and our roles in building ecosystems of support within and across our organizations.

The message that reverberates throughout this report is simple yet powerful: listen to Black women, trust Black women, and invest in Black women. We have an opportunity to change course – disrupt racist practices, repair harm and invest in the leadership of Black women. This is long overdue, but thankfully, the candor, vulnerability, and leadership of the Black leaders featured in this report have illuminated the path forward. Their words call us to take collective responsibility for ensuring Black women and Black gender-expansive leaders have the resources and support they deserve to thrive in this sector which relies so heavily on their valuable labor.

In Solidarity,

Tamara Wilds Lawson, Ph.D.
President & CEO, Washington Area Women's Foundation

# Introduction

Black women and Black gender-expansive leaders continue to be at the forefront of innovation, movement-building, bold leadership, and strategy across the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area and the country. Yet at the same time, Black women leaders are operating in *unprecedented* times, with mounting barriers and challenges to their leadership—driven by systemic inequities deeply embedded in sectors and systems. The past several years have been marked by a global pandemic, public health crisis, shake-up of our care infrastructure, and a racial reckoning—each of which Black women and Black gender-expansive people have stood on the frontlines of while continuing to build and lead dynamic organizations.[1] This unique moment that the nonprofit sector has confronted has exacerbated pre-existing barriers and challenges for Black women's leadership across it.

More recently, as our country has faced a number of events that have compounded racial tensions, companies have embarked on initiatives to enhance diversity, equity, and inclusion, leading to the appointment and promotion of Black leaders into senior roles across the for-profit, public, and nonprofit sectors. However, without the necessary infrastructure to support their leadership, Black women have shattered glass ceilings, only to find themselves teetering on the edge of a *glass cliff*. The "glass cliff" phenomenon occurs when Black women are elevated into senior leadership roles with the expectation of addressing organizational deficiencies that their predecessors were unable to overcome without added support or resources.[2] Consequently, since 2020, there has been a significant exodus of Black women executives across the public and private sectors in the United States.[3] As they have departed from their positions, many have cited unsupportive work environments, overwhelming workloads, and experiences of microaggressions—circumstances uniquely created at the intersection of racism, patriarchy, and anti-Blackness in the workplace.

The Washington, D.C. metro area has seen both a recent increase in Black women and Black gender expansive leaders hired for roles across the public and nonprofit sectors, and an exodus of leaders, some of whom have been portrayed negatively in the media. An area historically rich in racial and ethnic diversity, particularly Black people and communities, with a long history of service-oriented nonprofits and philanthropic organizations, the D.C. region holds a unique obligation and opportunity to more deeply examine the support and sustenance of Black women leaders.

In response to mounting concerns around the support infrastructure for Black women leaders in the D.C. metro area, The Washington Area Women's Foundation commissioned a landscape analysis to thoroughly examine and assess the experiences and needs of Black women leaders across the public and nonprofit sectors. This process was prompted by the ongoing national dialogue around Black women's leadership and the unsettling stories about the sectors' failure to adequately support Black women as they lead across the city and surrounding counties. The findings, themes, and learnings from this analysis are discussed in this report and are anchored to the core question:

**What measures must be taken to provide Black women and Black gender-expansive leaders with the support, resources, and infrastructure they need to *thrive as they lead*?**

The unique challenges and barriers Black women face in the public and nonprofit sectors are profound and cannot be understated. The scarcity of Black women executive leaders in the nonprofit sector, coupled with limited support for their leadership, has taken a significant toll on Black women and Black gender-expansive leaders. They often experience overwhelming exhaustion, chronic stress, and burnout as they navigate their roles. The data garnered from hearing directly from Black women leaders in the region spoke volumes. Of 32 Presidents, CEOs, and Executive Directors in the region surveyed, **only 19% agreed that D.C. is a place where Black women leaders can thrive**. Similarly, **only one in five respondents felt the infrastructure to support Black women's leaders was improving**; twenty-one percent agreed it was improving across the country, and nineteen percent in the D.C. metro area. Nearly **70% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that Black women's leadership has been notably under attack** in recent years.

This data echoes other efforts to better understand Black women's leadership; a recent report[4] revealed that a striking 88% of Black women have experienced burnout in their roles. The reasons cited include a lack of personal time, limited opportunities for advancement, unclear work expectations, and toxic work environments. This data point closely aligns with what we heard from Black women leaders here in the D.C. metro area; over **90% of respondents expressed that their occupations have had detrimental effects on their health and well-being**, manifesting as chronic stress, fatigue, elevated blood pressure, and impacts on mental health. The detrimental effects of extreme exhaustion and feeling undervalued are evident in the mental and physical health of Black women and Black gender-expansive leaders. They commonly report experiencing elevated blood pressure, sleep disturbances, work-life imbalance, and weight gain.

> "[Black women] are not doing well. Three years into COVID, the racial reckoning of our nation, and the overturning of rights that were seemingly settled is concerning. It feels like our country is moving backward. We're just not doing well." *-Study Respondent*

This report arrives at a pivotal moment. The leadership of Black women, Black gender-expansive leaders, and those closest to the critical challenges in our nation is of utmost significance. Because of the nonprofit sector's vital role in serving our communities on the frontlines, it is imperative that this report serve as a blueprint for bolstering the necessary infrastructure to support Black women.
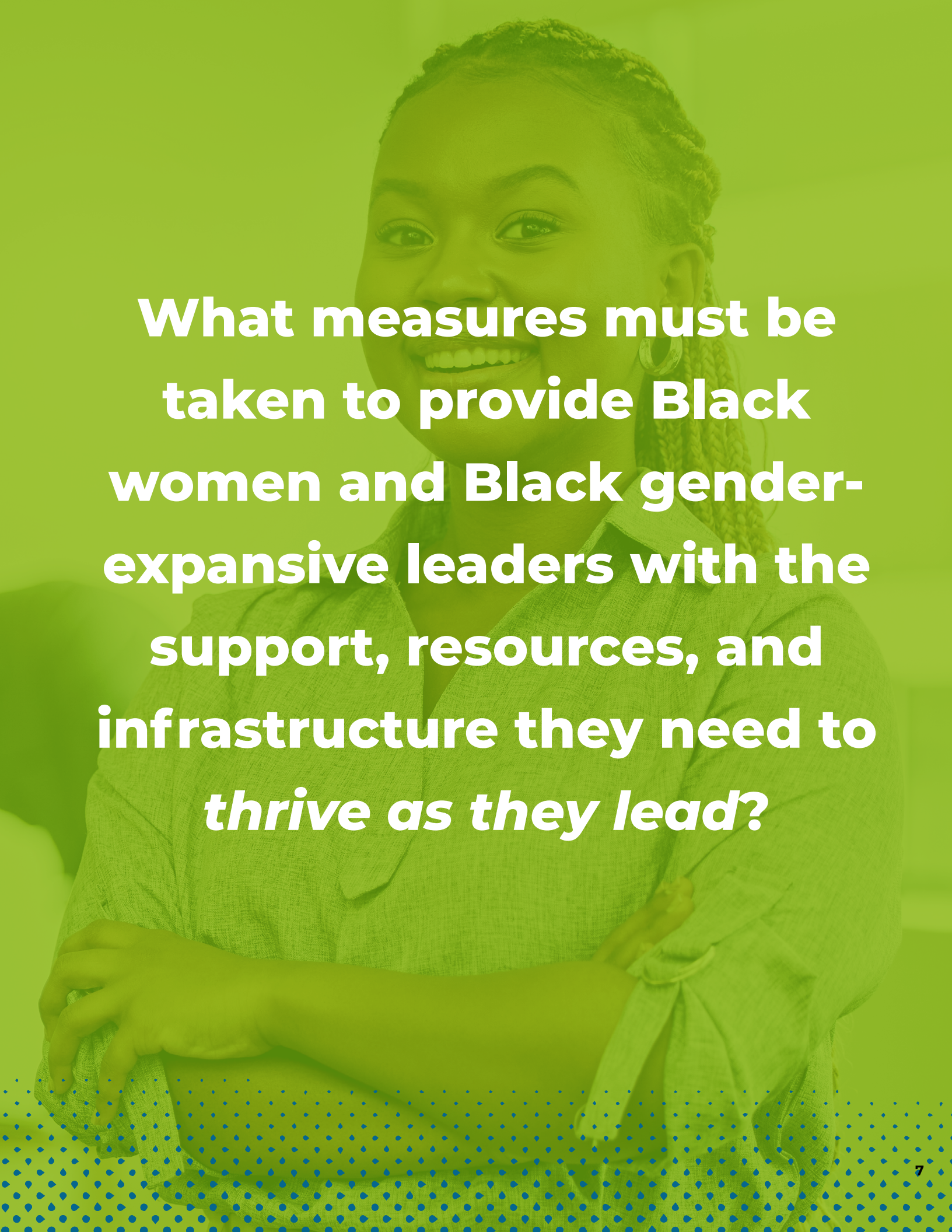
And it is important to act with urgency because the time for action is now. Black women and Black gender-expansive leaders deserve to lead from positions of abundance, where their authenticity is acknowledged, their value is recognized, and they are trusted to lead with their full potential.

[1]https://www.bls.gov/news.release/empsit.nr0.htm

[2]Alison Cook, and Christy Glass. "Glass Cliffs and Organizational Saviors: Barriers to Minority Leadership in Work Organizations?" Social Problems, vol. 60, no. 2, 2013, pp. 168–87. JSTOR, https://doi.org/10.1525/sp.2013.60.2.168. Accessed 14 July 2023.

[3]https://variety.com/2023/film/columns/black-women-hollywood-diversity-dei-executives-leaving-1235660463/
https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/social-issues/nonprofit-black-women-racial-discrimination/2021/07/11/e23cb810-d2da-11eb-a53a-3b5450fdca7a_story.html

[4]http://everylevelleads.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/Black-Women-Thriving-Report_2022.pdf?mc_cid=eaa5cdcd41&mc_eid=0a56f6df2a

What measures must be taken to provide Black women and Black gender-expansive leaders with the support, resources, and infrastructure they need to *thrive as they lead*?

# Research Design

Our approach to this work begins with a fundamental truth: Black women and gender-expansive leaders are agents of change and play pivotal roles in movements and nonprofit organizations. Rooted in their strong desire and motivation to bring about systemic change, Black women and gender-expansive leaders are capable, dynamic, and transformative in their leadership approach.

However, despite their significant roles in our communities, glaring disparities and persistent gaps remain in investment, resources, and leadership development directed toward Black women and Black gender-expansive leaders. Given the urgency of this moment, the objective of this research is to serve as a starting point in reversing this concerning trend. The ultimate goal is to create an environment where Black women and Black gender-expansive leaders in the D.C. metro area feel supported, affirmed, and celebrated in their leadership.

In this landscape analysis completed in the Spring and Summer of 2023, we spoke directly with 36 Black women and Black gender-expansive leaders—with a range of leadership tenures in the public and nonprofit sectors—most of whom have been leading for at least five years and many, up to three decades. All participants were at the helm of various organizations and initiatives in Washington, D.C.; Arlington County, Virginia; and Prince George's and Montgomery Counties in Maryland. To narrow our scope of research participants, we selected women and gender-expansive people leading organizations and initiatives—Presidents, CEOs, and Executive Directors across the public and nonprofit sectors. Sensitive to the transition of Black women from the public and nonprofit sectors due to lack of support, we included leaders who have held those titles and roles within the past three years.

While we know that women of color across racial backgrounds face challenges in leadership, we chose to focus on the experiences of Black women and Black gender-expansive leaders, cognizant of the fact that their experiences are uniquely positioned at the intersection of systemic racism, patriarchy, and pervasive anti-Blackness. Our mission was straightforward: to center their experiences, stories, challenges, and solutions, and to provide their expert perspective on the infrastructure that lacks true support for Black women in the public and nonprofit sectors.

Black leaders generously participated in a compensated, 60-minute in-depth interview that was anchored by core questions to better understand their leadership experience in the region. To ensure we created a safe space where leaders could speak freely, all participants were assured their contributions and analysis would be anonymous. Upon concluding the interview, participants were asked to complete a follow-up survey, which was sent to them via email. The survey aimed to gather additional demographic, quantitative, and qualitative data.

In the following pages, you will encounter the genuine voices of Black women and Black gender-expansive leaders in the public and nonprofit sectors of the D.C. metro area. Their narratives and perspectives offer compelling testimony of their present experiences and their aspirations for the future.

# Themes

No two leaders in this study had the same background, story, or set of experiences growing in their leadership; and each interview was grounded in rich data, and deep nuance. However, common themes around Black women's leadership were clear and resounding. This report distills ten core themes that emerged in speaking to Black women and gender-expansive leaders. These themes are meant to point to common sources of barriers and challenges—towards the goal of building stronger infrastructure so Black women and Black gender-expansive nonprofit leaders in the D.C. metro area can thrive.

The resounding sentiment echoed by Black women and Black gender-expansive leaders, cutting across the themes explored in this report, revolves around the ***fundamental absence of trust in their leadership***. This pervasive lack of trust materialized across multiple dimensions—including fundraising, board engagement, staff management, and wellness policies—wherein their leadership and decision-making were consistently questioned, challenged, and undermined. Participants lamented the enduring skepticism surrounding their capabilities in effectively managing organizational budgets, initiating new projects, proposing organizational policies, and securing trust from funders to deliver the outcomes they consistently achieve. Despite their demonstrated track records of success, Black women and Black gender-expansive leaders continue to contend with entrenched stereotypes about their financial capabilities, further exacerbated by intricate and burdensome fundraising application and reporting processes, which compounds their ability to authentically exercise their leadership. In the realm of board engagement, Black women and Black gender-expansive leaders expressed feeling undervalued and overshadowed. Their visions for the organization were often disregarded or sidelined by board members, as expressed at right:

"If I could talk directly to funders and board members, simply put, you need to trust Black women. You need to trust Black women to do the work because we've always done the work. Our record speaks for itself. And not only do you need to trust Black women, but you need to trust Black women that they know what's best with the resources coming in. Don't come to Black women when an issue comes up around race or anti-Blackness. Showing up for Black women means investing in Black women, investing in Black-led organizations who are actually on the ground doing the work, who are actually serving Black and brown folks. Simply put, you can't talk about racial equity if you have no investment in Black women."
*-Study Respondent*

If I could be in a room with funders and tell them one thing: I would just say trust us. I feel like white organizations get more trust—there's this concept that we don't know what we're doing or we're not as responsible, we're behind, we're not educated enough, or we just come out of the woodwork and do these things and we're just not ready to manage our own organizations." *-Study Respondent*

# LEADERSHIP

**Black women leaders face relentless scrutiny, challenges, and undermining of their presence. Their capacity to exhibit innovation and ambition is simultaneously expected and suppressed, constrained by societal expectations that limit their departure from conventional or traditional forms of leadership. Black women are not able to lead as their authentic selves.**

Black women and Black gender-expansive leaders confront significant pressures to lead authentically while being measured against the standards set by former white leaders or conforming to conventional leadership norms. These conflicting expectations create a challenging dynamic where Black women and Black gender-expansive leaders often feel constrained in fully expressing their brilliance in the workplace. They may be brought in to bring a "fresh" perspective or leadership style, yet their leadership is hyper-criticized and suppressed.

The constant questioning, doubt, and belittlement of their authority, credentials, and intellectual capacity lead to feelings of tokenization among Black women and Black gender-expansive leaders. They find themselves second-guessing their own credibility and limiting their innovative ideas for fear of negative reception or lack of support. The need to continuously prove their worth and value to colleagues is exhausting, and many leaders struggle to find sources of support, feeling isolated in executive leadership roles.

# Here is what we heard:

- "Don't hold Black women up as these strong people and then be pissed when they show up in the room as strong people."

- "I hear stories from other Black women who say that they were hired to be the CEO, but their board won't let them lead. They feel like they are a puppet."

- "The 'surprise factor' in the nonprofit space is exhausting and it's tied to this notion that if you are a Black woman leader in the nonprofit space, you have to be struggling. And if you're not, then that somehow invalidates the work that you're doing for communities of color. It's just this weird expectation, yet often when I get into my job, depending on who I'm sitting in front of, there's this element of surprise where it's like, 'Well, how the hell did you get here?' I have seen that it makes others uncomfortable because I'm encroaching on a space that they feel like only people like them are supposed to have."

- "There's a constant feeling of having to shift who I am depending on where I am and who I am with. I have to ask myself, which part of me can show up here? It can be a lot."

- "I tell folks all the time that the standard is different for us as Black women. The level of scrutiny is different. There is so much anti-Blackness that the task for Black women is fundamentally harder. It's just different being a Black woman, leading an organization, particularly in a predominately white space from how we show up, even physically, including our executive presence. Everything is different."

- "I think one barrier is not having the instant credibility that one's experience might lend itself to. So, I always used to say, when people see my resume, they don't believe I am who I say I am. And I often have felt like I've had to prove to them through others—leaders, executives, partners, peers—that I've done the things I've said I've done…people just don't believe that it's possible that I could have done some of the things that I've done. So, you have to create these proof points, over and over again, and it's exhausting."

- "I definitely think that there is a fear of Black women in leadership. I think that there is an uneven playing field of how we're received and the inauthentic or authentic way that we might show up, because I think we do both—Sometimes we show up inauthentically to keep the peace and if we show up authentically, then it's like, 'Oh, there she goes.' So, I think there's tension that we have to deal with that others don't."

- "I feel like there's something about these spaces that makes it feel like Black women have to follow white leaders in order to be deemed successful."

- "I think part of building the infrastructure to support Black women leaders is finding ways to not make Black women feel bad for showing up and being who they are."

- "I think as Black women in the nonprofit sector, we get tokenized and at the same time are also not taken seriously. The work we do is often dismissed as just being passionate. Our leadership is labeled as foreign and ungrounded because we have the ability to speak from our lived experiences."

- "I think that while we come to the table, and we're qualified for the job, we're often second-guessed in our leadership. It's always, 'Does she really know what she's doing?' When I was younger, this used to damage my confidence. However, as I have gotten older and more established, I was strong enough to say in response, 'Either you trust that I know what I'm doing or you don't.'"

# 02

# SUPPORT

**Mentorship, community, and support networks play crucial roles in facilitating, strengthening, and sustaining the leadership of Black women and Black gender-expansive leaders.**

The Black women and Black gender-expansive leaders emphasized the significant impact of mentorship, community, and support networks in their leadership journey. Their analysis was two-fold: They understood strong mentorship and support networks to be a positive difference-maker in supporting Black women's leadership and, at the same time, lamented the scarcity of mentorship and network opportunities that provide a platform for validation and shared experiences. The Black women had a strong sense of what effective support networks looked like. These networks extended across both formal and informal settings, were inclusive, allowing Black women to show up as their authentic selves; were multi-generational, supporting pipelines for Black women's leadership across age and experience; and offered a range of ways to engage.

Participants discussed the lack of robust pipelines for younger Black women and Black gender-expansive leaders, despite their expressed desire for such spaces—spaces that acknowledge that the current environment has become inhospitable and has deterred the very individuals it should be attracting. Participants emphasized the unparalleled significance of support networks specifically designed for and by Black women and Black gender-expansive leaders, the opportunity to learn from leaders who have been trailblazers in the field. They highlighted the profound impact these networks have had on their professional and personal growth throughout their careers.

# Here is what we heard:

- "And what saved me, or was a defining point, and the reason that I stand today, 15 years later, and especially the last three years with COVID-19 trauma, racial trauma, death, and all of it is **because of Black women**. Not women of color, not white women, not men, but because of *Black women in DC*. Because my circle is really deep."

- "Through it all, it was Black women within the nonprofit, corporate, business space who just said, 'I got you, what do you need?' Whether it was answering the phone at midnight or calling them in tears because I was so exhausted from trying to fight...or our organization needing emergency money, and someone saying, 'How much?' and just giving me a check. It was always Black women who showed up. They were and are my anchor. It was the village I knew that I could go to that had my back."

- "Connecting with other Black women regularly has been really important because it's given me language and affirmation to the fact that this isn't all going on in my head."

- "You know, I find my observation and my experience is that women of color are often mission-driven. And, because of our proximity to this work, it's easy to be taken advantage of. Whether it's our salary, promotion, or recognition, there is this perception that [Black women] do it because they love it and there's no need to invest in them the same way we might invest in others. This even includes mentorship, which is an area that I certainly historically have kind of felt shortchanged and wished that I had more opportunities for mentorship earlier in my career."

- "And I don't feel that there's enough opportunities or spaces for Black women to hold each other up and support one another. Our experiences are so different from what others experience, so it would be nice to have a place that recognizes this."

# 03 EXPECTATIONS

**Black women and Black gender-expansive leaders in the workplace encounter daunting obstacles, including navigating unrealistic expectations, microaggressions, and unacknowledged efforts, as they take on significant responsibilities without proper recognition, rewards, or promotions for their contributions.**



Astoundingly, all interviewed Black women and Black gender-expansive leaders expressed a shared sentiment: they face immense and distinct expectations in the workplace, with little recognition, reward, or consideration for the challenging circumstances they navigate. Repeatedly described as being expected to be a "superwoman," they are burdened with rescuing struggling organizations reeling from the pandemic, handling staff grievances, enduring microaggressions, and defending their leadership against constant undermining. At the intersection of race and gender, the Black women leaders felt that they were expected to meet unreasonable expectations—surpassing their job roles and responsibilities to repeatedly navigate through crises and turmoil with limited resources and support.

Despite achieving impressive results against daunting odds, the Black women shared that they receive minimal rewards, recognition, or promotions, as the standards for success are unfairly higher for Black women and Black gender-expansive leaders. These leaders further detailed the challenging situations they inherit—taking over organizations that are in dire circumstances and that oftentimes were previously led by white individuals, dealing with inactive boards, financial issues, employee grievances, and dwindling grant funding—yet are still expected to perform miracles that their predecessors did not achieve. Underpinning this reality, the Black women and Black gender-expansive leaders emphasized the inadequate recognition of the significant financial burdens they faced during the pandemic and the subsequent economic downturn that profoundly impacted the nonprofit sector as a whole. They highlighted the dissonance between being tasked with addressing financial challenges while being subjected to the same level of assessment, evaluation, and scrutiny as their counterparts. To deal with these circumstances, many Black women and Black gender-expansive leaders expressed having to shoulder additional labor, assuming multiple roles such as Chief Executive Officer, Chief Financial Officer, Human Resources, and development officer to salvage their organizations under their leadership and safeguard their reputation. These circumstances have had a compounding and detrimental impact on their physical and mental well-being, as they continuously navigate the double standards placed upon them.

# Here is what we heard:

▶ "It's almost as if boards start out with expecting that as a woman, and as a Black woman, you can do anything. You can just be a superwoman. It's just not possible."

▶ "There's also this phenomenon where we are looked at as 'mammies' in the workplace—where it's like Black women are expected to show up for others and expend emotional labor in countless ways but when we need support, it's overlooked. It's this tough dynamic where, in my nearly 10 years of experience in this sector, where it feels like we are being utilized for our labor and extracted from constantly but not poured back into."

▶ "This push to have people of color in leadership positions doing this work is so important, and we can have that conversation while acknowledging that the recent push to have more Black folks, especially Black women, in these roles coincides with the aftermath of a pandemic that wreaked financial havoc on the nonprofit sector. Therefore, while you express valuing Black women leaders, you are also bringing in these leaders who, in some cases, are cleaning up behind things that the organization didn't have much control over. In other situations, the organization itself may have played a significant role in the challenges they are facing. And in many cases, it's a combination of both factors. However, there needs to be a formal acknowledgment of these colliding factors and what that entails."

▶ "I have yet to experience not having to be the mule of organizations, not having to be a superwoman. I do so much, and it's almost like it increases every year."

▶ "It's exhausting seeing the double standard for Black women. Especially when you see your white peers getting rewarded for half the effort you put in."

▶ "The being undervalued piece is tied to some of the things I said bring me joy— when you are a Black woman leader in a majority white space—even in a space that even has lots and lots of folks of color—if you show up as a healthy leader, folks gravitate to you. And if you embrace that, which I do and have seen many other Black women leaders do, there is labor involved in that work. Yet, there isn't an acknowledgment of the value of this role and so I am often playing this role in addition to my actual codified roles and responsibilities and, you know, the emotional labor of that is exhausting. The emotional labor connected with operating at such a high level, knowing that the expectations are high, is hard. There's less room for error and sometimes it feels like I am not allowed to make an error."

# 04

# VULNERABILITY

**Black women and Black gender-expansive leaders encounter limited opportunities to seek support or display vulnerability in their workplaces without their leadership authority being undermined, as there are few available resources or individuals they can turn to.**

Across interviews, the Black women and Black gender-expansive leaders highlighted the scarcity of safe spaces where they can openly express vulnerability and seek support without facing doubts about their ability to handle their roles. They shared that they are not given the freedom or privilege to show uncertainty, fear, doubt, or any complex emotions. Doing so may lead to their competence being questioned and their professional credibility, undermined. The fear of failure and making mistakes haunts them. The repercussions could be detrimental to their careers. Consequently, they feel compelled to conceal their experiences, which erodes their sense of safety and humanity within the workplace. With limited, or absent, capacity to relieve stress at home, work, or even in certain support networks, this cycle perpetuates, leaving Black women and Black gender-expansive leaders feeling disconnected from themselves and their work, all in the pursuit of having their leadership taken seriously.

# Here is what we heard:

- "But we're tender human beings, too. And even though it seems like we got it all together, we're sometimes scared and vulnerable, too. Even when we don't have it all together, it feels like we have to put that out front in order to get through. Somebody once told me that I'm too hard, and I told them that I have to be hard in this environment because if I'm not, if I don't have my walls up, if I'm not constantly suspicious, if I'm not outperforming, then I will get passed over."

- "I don't feel like I have the space to be vulnerable, to say that I don't know and it won't be held against me in some future way. Even just to acknowledge that my expertise on running an organization may be very concentrated in one area and not another. It feels like I don't have the safety to show up as fully human."

- "I would say, unfortunately, it is my perception that I've never had radical support. I would like to see a day where I don't have to prove my worth in every space. And to reprove it the next day. And the next day. And the next day. The space to make mistakes."

- "I think for us, for Black women running nonprofits, a lot of times there's not necessarily—unless you build this network yourself—there's not always a place you can go to offload that stress."

- "Giving Black leaders the opportunity to fail and to do so without saying, 'Oh my gosh, this is the end of it,' is so important. Giving Black women the space to fail and to know that there's going to be support when the time comes."

# 05

# RESISTING SCARCITY

**The current D.C. public and nonprofit sector environment produces a scarcity mindset, causing Black women-led organizations to feel like they need to prioritize siloed and isolated work over the preferred collaborative work and partnerships to drive innovative strategies that attract funding, which they would otherwise prefer to do.**

The Black women and Black gender-expansive leaders described the workplace environment, characterized by limited grant funding and resources going towards Black women-led and Black gender-expansive-led organizations, as fostering a scarcity mindset that attempts to create competition and divisions among women of color leaders. Despite experiencing similar challenges and emotions in the workplace, they recounted being taken aback by the level of competition and lack of mutual support among peers. The competitive nature of the nonprofit sector in the D.C. metro area, where funders control limited grant dollars and numerous talented leaders vie for success, creates a sense that only one person can thrive while others are left with insufficient opportunities. Nevertheless, there are inspiring instances of sisterhood and support among Black women and Black gender-expansive leaders as they counter the inclination to compete by fostering a collaborative environment that helps each other succeed. These examples powerfully demonstrate the strains of the workplace and highlight the unique capacity of Black women and Black gender-expansive individuals to offer support in a setting where such solidarity is often lacking.

## Here is what we heard:

- "I want to be out of this space where there's this scarcity model that pits me against other Black and brown, queer folks, and women. Lately, I feel like we are accustomed to it now…it's the survival of the fittest."

- "I mean, fundamentally, the nonprofit model is broken. The [executive director] structure, the board structure, and everything else, the scarcity model is built in. The model needs to be upended totally."

- "And I think it's important that we come together as women so we can grow, but unfortunately in this field, because there's not many of us, people pit us against each other."

- "But I think the beautiful testimony here is that the amazing thing about Black women leaders, despite what the sector at-large perpetuates, is that we support one another. I can only think of one example where it felt like this sense of competition and scarcity. 99% of my experiences in this sector with other Black women leaders are us pouring into supporting each other. It's always 'How can I help you? What can I give to you to take a break?' And so, I think there's a real story here about the sisterhood that I'm seeing develop in the space to support each other."

- "I wish funders would bring people in the room together, bringing together all grantee partners, and actually resourcing them. Let them learn from each other. If the goal is to ultimately have a cohesive ecosystem of a movement of nonprofit organizations who are devoted to this common goal, then why are we not really thinking about the expansiveness of that sustainability by bringing folks together to eliminate this sense of competitiveness and silos."

# 06 BOARDS

**Black women and Black gender-expansive leaders experience varying levels of support from their boards, with a significant number facing obstacles, such as a lack of trust in their leadership, inadequate board governance capabilities, and misalignment with their organizational vision.**



The Black women and Black gender-expansive leaders shared diverse experiences in their relationships with their boards. Those who expressed negative experiences highlighted a lack of support for their visions, insufficient trust in their leadership, and a lack of attentiveness to their organizational needs. They also noted a deficiency in self-direction and a fundamental understanding of board governance, including roles, responsibilities, and protocols. Additionally, some board leaders exhibited entrenched attitudes of being "good people," which hampers meaningful examination of systemic challenges and equity goals for the organization.

Conversely, those with positive experiences emphasized board members who trust their leadership, actively engage in board responsibilities, select members based on skills and values, and prioritize diverse racial and gender compositions. Interview participants stressed the vital role their boards play in effecting meaningful transformation and demonstrating tangible impact.

Overall, what the leaders shared is that they feel the additional tax and burden of educating board members on racial equity while simultaneously building rapport and establishing trust. They asserted that the responsibility of educating uninformed board members on racial equity disproportionately falls on their shoulders.

# Here is what we heard:

- "And [my Board President] encourages me. He tells me to take care of myself. Once, I told him that I had to leave at a certain time to go to childcare. He said, 'I don't have to know that. You do what you need to do to take care of what you need to take care of, so that you can show up how you show up'...And that support in my leadership from his position has made a world of difference in this role."

- "I think setting clear expectations and articulating clear expectations are critical for the people who report to me and the people I report to. I do not think there is a standard that exists between organizational leaders and boards. And I think that because we don't have this standard, it causes a lot of problems. And so what happens is for many Black women leaders, the expectations become moving targets without any proper attention to developing systems, building accountability and assessment protocols."

- "I think that there's such great wealth in D.C., and many of the boards are white, wealthy people. I would call them do-gooders, really attached to that identity of doing good. However, when you start to raise issues with the board around some of the blind spots or even the way they might interact with you, there is a level of 'how could you say that I'm not a good person or I'm not racist. I like all people. I care about everyone.' And so the conversations are very surface-level around race, equity, and inclusion."

- "So, I think the board actually needs to take the time to sit down and talk to the Black woman [leader] and find out what her vision is. What does she envision for her organization? Why is that vision important to her? And with that vision, you need to fill those board seats with those skill sets and effort to support her. It should not just mean we have three seats open at our organization. Who do you know in your network? Who do you know in your network that adds value to her vision?...Don't just fill the seats to fill the seats. Fill the seats that add value to that woman as a leader that's going to be able to support her innovation and moving the organization forward."

- "I'm really glad that we have a board that does understand race equity, and they've done the work. And that's so important because I can't be spending my time trying to teach board members to get there. They've already done the work. They understand the vision, and they're deeply respectful and trusting of me, which is so important. It's never happened before."

- "Board support looks like going from 'you go, girl' to tangible things. It's saying these are the connections we're going to make, and these are the conversations we're going to have on your behalf. These are the rooms I'm going to be in and I'm going to mention your name. This is real support—putting my name in rooms that I have not been privy to."

# 07

# COMPENSATION

**Black women and Black gender-expansive leaders experience persistent underpayment and undervaluation, despite their significant contributions to their organizations, with some increasing their organizations' budgets substantially during their tenure.**

The vast majority of Black women and Black gender-expansive leaders who were interviewed and surveyed expressed that they are not adequately compensated for their work, despite often juggling multiple job responsibilities. Remarkably, interviewees shared instances where they achieved financial success for their organizations yet still encountered obstacles when seeking salary increases. Often having to fight for comparable compensation packages, many participants also highlighted the wage disparities they faced compared to leaders in similar positions with similar experience. **Shockingly, half of the survey respondents admitted to struggling to meet their families' financial needs, with a quarter strongly agreeing with this statement.**

# Here is what we heard:

- "It's challenging and even more frustrating to be in these spaces and be underpaid and be viewed as someone who would do a good job because, as a Black woman, that's what I am supposed to do. And seeing other folks, white women, white men in particular, sometimes showing up with a spirit of mediocrity or be unprofessional or lack impulse control and be paid more, I had to learn a long time ago that I don't have the privilege of behaving like that. Yet it's challenging watching some of these folks still ascend not only in terms of pay but also in terms of title and responsibility."

- "I think the biggest stress for most ED's is not being able to make a decent living. I know very few who don't have another gig or doing something else on the side. I don't think that we're well paid, and we're often paid the least."

- "I think the other major challenge for Black women leaders in the nonprofit space is that when it comes to salaries, Black women are not getting paid our worth."

- "I didn't have dental insurance for three years, but I paid out of pocket to go to the dentist. The cost was ridiculous for me and my son to go to the dentist, and I have to continue paying out of pocket. But yet I often get asked, 'What are you going to do with your vacation?' and it's hard just making ends meet. 'Vacation?' We're going to eat. We're going to just live. We're going to be in the house...that's all I can afford. I have to monitor everything, even gas usage to stay afloat."

# 08 FUNDING

**Black women and Black gender-expansive leaders encounter distinctive obstacles in accessing adequate funding for their organizations, including navigating complex application and reporting requirements, as well as the added burden of proving their worthiness as responsible stewards of funders' money.**

The Black women and Black gender-expansive leaders faced a range of challenges when it comes to accessing sufficient funding: arduous application processes, distrust, heightened scrutiny of their ability to manage financial resources, and foundations' and funders' inconsistent commitments to racial equity work. While these issues are common across the nonprofit landscape, they are wholly exacerbated by the lack of trust placed in Black women and gender-expansive leaders.

The leaders expressed that application procedures are frequently burdensome and unnecessarily lengthy, compounded by unreasonable reporting requirements. This issue is particularly pronounced for small organizations but extends to any organization with short-staffed or non-existent development teams. Black women, who often lead smaller organizations with limited capacity and resources, find completing these meticulous applications uniquely more difficult.

These circumstances shape an environment where Black women and Black gender-expansive leaders are frequently compelled to be highly adaptable and resourceful, stretching their limited resources to meet the needs of their communities.

While their resourcefulness is commendable, it comes at a cost. The increased responsibilities placed on staff and leadership go beyond their job requirements. Organizations feel pressured to expand their scope of work to fulfill grant stipulations that may fall outside their specific funding needs.

The Black women and Black gender-expansive leaders brought attention to the unequal levels of scrutiny placed on their ability to effectively manage resources and ensure the financial stability of their organizations. They experienced stricter requirements and expectations for equity-based work, with certain prescribed approaches being considered more valuable. Additionally, the reporting processes often fail to accurately capture the true impact of their programming. The Black women and Black gender-expansive leaders called upon funders to critically examine their underlying biases. These biases shape the structural processes hindering Black women-led and Black gender-expansive-led organizations from achieving the success they are fully prepared for and capable of attaining but lack sufficient funding to realize. A clear need exists for more funders to adopt trust-based philanthropy practices. By doing so, resource-strapped, Black-led organizations can concentrate on expanding their impact rather than being burdened with grant applications.

# Here is what we heard:

▶ "When you invest in Black women, in Black women leaders, and in Black-led nonprofits, you are really getting a higher rate of return for your dollars. We are more likely to be connected to the community to be able to match those dollars with the right resources and relationships."

▶ "I've had enough negative experiences and heard enough from my contemporaries to know that we, as Black women leaders in philanthropy, put up with a lot that other folks do not. I know that to be true. I've heard of stories from my contemporaries where, you know, [white men] get millions of dollars from their associates and friends without so much as a proposal. I would not be able to get this even with a proposal sometimes, yet I hear these stories where they submit a paragraph and receive this amount of money. I just know in my wildest dreams I'm not going to get a commitment of $1,000,000 based on two paragraphs because of who I am."

▶ "I feel like one of the biggest challenges is access to funding, resources, and institutional support. You know, I would say in the long-term, I would like to feel like we don't have to fight for a couple of coins or display all of our trauma and our community's trauma in order to get funds."

▶ "Being a Black woman, fundraising is extremely challenging. And there are definitely less barriers for a white woman than a Black woman because they often have the networks and access that we don't. There are biases and racism that come into play, whether it's covert or right in your face, it's there."

▶ "Who needs to be at that table? I think it can't just be Black women. We need our allies at the table as well. We need our funders at that table. They need to hear all of what is being said and done. And if they are funding initiatives, particularly coming out of George Floyd and the pandemic, they have to think big. It's not enough to just fund them, you also have to support their leadership as well. On a broader scale, I think the nonprofit sector needs a reckoning and all stakeholders need to be part of the conversation."

▶ "I would urge funders to seriously consider how they approach partnerships, particularly with Black women leaders, and how they provide resources to Black women-led organizations. It should not be solely about meeting grant deliverables or articulated objectives. Instead, the focus should be on how they can resource these organizations to sustain and thrive in the long run."

# 09 DONOR RELATIONSHIPS

**Black women and Black gender-expansive leaders highlight the existence of entrenched power dynamics in their relationships with donors. They face challenges in finding common ground and maintaining authenticity while navigating the unwritten rules and expectations of donor interactions. They also point out that the donor base and predominately white, affluent communities have established relationships that make it exclusive and difficult for Black women and Black gender-expansive leaders to gain entry.**

The Black women and Black gender-expansive leaders highlighted the presence of racial and gender hierarchies deeply ingrained in donor relationships, creating unique and distinct barriers for their success in leadership roles. These leaders pointed to the predominance of a hyper-white, masculine, and elite donor environment that poses challenges in establishing meaningful and mutually beneficial connections.

During interviews, leaders shared their experiences of encountering difficulties in building relationships with donors who have different interests, language, and environments than their own. They expressed the significant efforts required to establish common values and goals with these donors. Many leaders reflected that the investments made in themselves, or their organizations often felt like acts of charity or mere assistance, rather than being recognized as valuable contributions to the collective well-being of their communities. The Black women and gender-expansive leaders recounted instances where they have been made to feel less deserving of the same level of investment that is frequently fostered within exclusive relationships and networks primarily comprised of white, wealthy donors.

In order to thrive in such an environment, the leaders emphasized the constant need to strategize and dedicate considerable time to fundraising efforts.

This often entails attending events during weekends and after-hours to maintain legitimacy and access to prominent donors. For many participants, the task of preserving relational capital feels like a full-time job, particularly if they lack personal wealth or connections to donor networks that can provide necessary resources. Despite the challenges, some leaders have succeeded in navigating these dynamics, attributing their achievements to investments made in their skills and networks. They have learned to identify, cultivate, and sustain relationships with donors. However, leaders acknowledged that this kind of engagement can feel forced and unnatural, often infringing upon their work/life balance and overall well-being. Nonetheless, they recognized that developing these skills is fundamental for their success in their roles.

# Here is what we heard:

- "I have to engage with a lot of high net-worth individuals. Obviously, they're all white and it's hard sometimes. I can't relate to them in a lot of ways, and I don't think they can relate to me in a lot of ways. But I have to do the work to try and relate to them. Otherwise, I'm not going to be successful. I have to conform to their expectations, and I have to figure out how I fit into what's comfortable for them. Otherwise, I won't be successful in raising money for my organization or building the kinds of relationships I need to build."

- "I think my credentials, the way that I sound, and the spaces that I have navigated put white folks at ease. And I think that has enabled me to have some points of connections that maybe some of my contemporaries may not have had."

- "I'm not a multimillionaire. I don't have a family office that's running my stuff, managing my life and my finances and my multiple properties and all that sort of stuff. I don't come from that world. And so sometimes, I don't feel confident in these kinds of environments. It can be intimidating—the power of money, of whiteness, of masculinity."

- "It's like, I didn't come from wealth, and I don't know people from wealth. To excel in fundraising, you have to be comfortable with such individuals. So, I believe it's something I constantly have to work on—understanding that people are people, and authentic connections are authentic connections. However, this process can feel unreasonable at times, especially considering the power dynamics in relationships."

- "But many of us need the capital. So, introduce us to people, put us in the room with individuals who can provide support. When I think about my white counterparts, they have these connections to money, to people with money. However, many Black women don't necessarily have those connections. Therefore, how can we help Black women build those connections to foundations, funders, and people with financial resources? I believe that is truly important and would be one of the most vital components for our success."

# 10 WELLNESS

**Black women leaders express profound exhaustion in their roles. Many contemplate or are actively planning to leave their positions, citing few opportunities for uninterrupted rest and inadequate infrastructure to support their well-being. They emphasize the importance of sabbaticals as sacred moments for restoration and advocate integrating wellness practices into organizational cultures as a comprehensive system, rather than one limited to isolated activities.**



The Black women and Black gender-expansive leaders unanimously expressed a profound sense of exhaustion that deeply impacts their mental, emotional, and even physical well-being. They face tremendous stress and overwhelming challenges as they strive to effectively lead their organizations despite unimaginable obstacles. Many leaders shared instances where their mental health has severely deteriorated, and some have experienced physical health issues, such as elevated blood pressure and weight gain, due to job-related stress.

The Black women leaders commonly asserted that the solution to their exhaustion cannot be found solely through isolated "wellness-oriented" activities or events. Instead, they emphasized the need for a commitment to integrating systems of care into the workplace. A significant majority of leaders find sabbaticals to be helpful for their overall well-being. However, they stressed that this measure alone is insufficient if they have to return to work environments that perpetuate toxic practices, disregard racial equity work, or excessively depend on Black women and Black gender-expansive leaders to run day-to-day operations. They emphasized that prioritizing their wellness should involve treating them with respect, assigning manageable workloads, trusting their leadership without gaslighting, and recognizing the multifaceted roles they play within their families and communities.

Some leaders shared they have managed to establish structures and processes for leave, both for themselves and their employees. However, even during these times of respite, few feel that they can fully disconnect from work in order to recharge their energy and well-being. The persistent need to remain engaged in work activities prevents them from experiencing a complete sense of rejuvenation.

# Here is what we heard:

- "Supporting Black women leaders also looks like right-sizing our workload to make it more manageable for us to allow us the capacity to rest. If systemically the issue is that I'm just doing way too much work for my role, then one-time occurrences of support only mean so much to me."

- "Don't just give Black [women and gender expansive leaders] the time off. Don't just give them the resources to rest. Offer to pick up what they are doing—make it so that when they step away, things are taken care of...otherwise I feel like I can't actually rest. I always have to be on top of things. But if I got to come back and still pick up the work and do more because other people are not doing their part, then yeah, it doesn't really mean anything to rest or have wellness days or go to therapy."

- "I feel that structurally, our organizations and funders, almost like wellness reparations, need to invest in wellness in a real and tangible way. We need things like sabbaticals, wellness stipends, and pots of money where leaders can decide how they want to take care of themselves. This is the level of care and wellness that we need to be able to handle the amount of bullshit that we deal with."

- "I think there's a lot that is not being talked about amongst Black women leaders. I think a lot of us are trying to just push our way through. If I could speak with funders, I would tell funders quite frankly that the state of Black women leadership is in danger. Black women are tired, and they are tired because there's a fight at every level, at the micro, macro, and meso level. There is a fight, and no one is showing up to say they got our back. It's just us."

- "I think that my vision is that Black women can lead in these roles and still have our health and well-being."

- "We need to prioritize Black women leaders because our house is on fire right now. And the data is backing up that our house is on fire now for a multitude of reasons. And mental health is at the top of it, coupled with the impact that our jobs are having on our physical health."

# What Infrastructure is needed?

The conducted landscape analysis was aimed not only at better understanding the experiences of Black women and Black gender-expansive leaders across the public and nonprofit sectors and region but better understanding **what infrastructure they need to thrive.** True to the breadth of experiences, expertise, and identities brought to the table for in-depth interviews, the answers received also were rich in diversity. Still, many responses pointed to the common themes and infrastructure needs that partners across the D.C. metro area can come together and support.

Overall, the Black women leaders expressed their mixed experiences with leadership and professional development programs that they had experienced in the past, highlighting the lack of programs specifically focused on addressing the unique needs of Black women in leadership roles. One participant described the current support landscape as informal, relying on word-of-mouth and the natural inclination of Black women leaders to step up and step in to support one another through barriers. The current infrastructure relies on within-group, resources support—not a broad set of partners, together identifying the common barriers and solutions to supporting Black women's leadership.

The sections below summarize more of what we heard from Black women leaders when asked about the infrastructure they want to see to support their leadership.

## WHO SHOULD BE INCLUDED?

The majority of participants expressed that while there are benefits to programs that specifically look to support leaders of color more broadly, or even women of color leaders, more is needed. The specific experience of **Black women** in the region—at the intersection of racism, patriarchy, sexism, and anti-Blackness—deserved a focus, space, and strategy of its own. Participants strongly emphasized the importance of support resources—whether for retreats, trainings, convenings, sabbaticals, or events—being exclusively available to Black women. The Black women leaders emphasized the unique challenges they face in navigating the workplace, and they believe that access to a dedicated space where they can share experiences, support one another, and exchange strategies is necessary. Accessibility is a crucial aspect to consider, taking into account varying financial capabilities, travel constraints, health needs, childcare needs, and other factors.

While they envisioned a set of resources being available specifically for Black women leaders, many participants also expressed the need to bring a broad set of partners along with this work. This includes ensuring that:

- ▶ Those funding this infrastructure are not only Black or Black women leaders in philanthropy but also a diverse collection of donors and partners and

- ▶ Training to support Black women leaders is focused not only on Black women but also others (board members, funders, for example) to address bias in their engagement with Black women leaders.

Many participants expressed the desire for the initiative or program to bring together leaders from diverse industries, not just policy, politics, and government, which tend to dominate the D.C. area. They believe that learning from professionals in other fields can provide valuable insights and lessons.

## WHAT DO BLACK WOMEN NEED TO THRIVE?

During discussions with Black women leaders, numerous ideas emerged regarding the investment and development of infrastructure to support their leadership. A recurring theme emphasized the crucial need for a dedicated space where Black women leaders can gather, share experiences, and establish meaningful relationships with one another. They expressed a desire for a space where they feel heard, seen, and understood, fostering a sense of community among Black women with similar experiences. They want a space that was curated and convened **for and by Black women**, not by others who do not share the same experiences.

What was clear: Black women know what these spaces require and how they need to be shaped. There is no lack of vision; instead, there is a lack of resources to build the vision of support. Agency

and autonomy in leveraging resources for Black women to build infrastructure needs themselves was echoed throughout the analysis. Many participants highlighted the significance of a space where they are not instructed on what to do but instead trusted to manage resources according to their own judgment and preferences. This autonomy was seen as essential in empowering Black women leaders to make decisions that best suit their individual circumstances. By prioritizing the establishment of inclusive spaces, facilitating connection and understanding, and granting autonomy to Black women leaders, an infrastructure can be built that supports their growth, development, and success.

Another key theme that emerged when asked about infrastructure: one size does not fit all. Different Black women leaders will find support in varying ways. Participants encouraged the infrastructure to be multi-faceted and targeted at meeting a diverse group of Black women leaders where they are and at how they identify support. Participants stressed the importance of creating an initiative that is adaptable and responsive to the evolving needs of Black women leaders. They appreciated that while their barriers may have very common throughlines, their needs for addressing those barriers differ.

**They want a space that was curated and convened *for and by Black women*, not by others who do not share the same experiences.**

# The following are specific ideas discussed for shaping the infrastructure supporting the leadership of Black women and gender-expansive individuals:

## 1. Cohort Leadership Development Program:

A cohort leadership development program aimed at building support networks and fostering connections among Black women leaders. Because a one-size-fits-all approach is insufficient, this cohort program would be adaptable and flexible, accommodating different levels of leadership, time commitments, and varying needs of Black women leaders. This program could include:

► Skill-building and strategy-sharing sessions to equip Black women leaders with the necessary tools and institutional knowledge to succeed. Trainings on the following topics, specifically tailored to the experiences and needs of Black women and Black gender-expansive leaders: career planning, managing racism/sexism in the workplace, career transitions, navigating search processes, conflict management, fiscal management, and fundraising.

► Authentic leadership training to empower Black women to navigate workplace challenges while retaining their authenticity.

► Insights and introductions to fundraising practices, enabling participants to secure financial support.

► Learning from Black women leaders across various industries (philanthropy, corporate, nonprofit, etc.) to gain diverse perspectives and insights. Webinars on grant writing to enhance participants' grant acquisition abilities.

► Candid conversations with philanthropic leaders, providing valuable behind-the-scenes information.

► Informal gatherings like dinners and happy hours, creating space for play, fun, creativity, and celebration.

► Mentorship programs that bridge established and emerging leaders, providing support and guidance.

► Matching executive coaches with Black women and Black gender-expansive leaders who don't have access through their organizations.

## 2. Retreats:

Investing in the health and well-being of Black women leaders by funding sabbaticals, retreats, and opportunities for rest and restoration. These retreats could prioritize self-care and provide spaces for reflection, rejuvenation, and personal growth.

## 3. General Fund:

Establishing a general and unrestricted fund specifically dedicated to supporting Black women leaders. This fund would provide financial resources that Black women leaders can utilize based on their individual needs, including healing, executive coaching, training, and other necessary resources to support their growth and success. The fund could also be accessed through proposed activities, events, and infrastructure to support Black women leaders across the region, seeding Black women leaders with funding to fully develop the events needed for their networks to thrive.

**4.** **Learning Institutes:**

Creating graduate-level specialized training programs for Black women leaders who are unable to pursue traditional management education. These learning institutes would offer tailored courses and workshops to enhance their management, leadership, and conflict management skills.

**5.** **Training Funders & Philanthropic Leaders:**

Creating specialized training programs for funders and philanthropic leaders with a focus on comprehending the distinct obstacles and difficulties encountered by Black women when seeking funding. These trainings should be geared towards enhancing their understanding of the challenges Black women face in establishing relationships with funders, as well as the inherent barriers ingrained within the grant application and reporting processes.

**6.** **Regular Convenings & Events:**

Facilitating regular informal gatherings, such as dinners and happy hours, exclusively for Black women leaders to foster a collaborative and supportive environment that encourages playfulness, enjoyment, creativity, and celebration.

# Conclusion

Throughout the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area and across the country, brilliant Black women and Black gender-expansive leaders have been making headway—equipped with strategy, knowledge, and passion to spearhead innovation and change. However, systemically embedded disparities and barriers have forced Black women and gender-expansive leaders out of the public and nonprofit sectors. Fervent changemakers and pioneers with the deepest expertise in our toughest societal challenges are exiting this sector when they are needed the most.

**The call to action is clear.** Partners and strategists across sectors should be invested in what is happening, and leaders right here in the D.C. metro area should be invested in what has been shared in this report—directly from Black women and Black gender-expansive leaders. This report serves as a platform to amplify and validate the voices of leaders—to affirm and uplift their truths, stories, and experiences. This report also serves as a resource for boards and funders to step up, answer this need, and allow the D.C. metro area to pave the way in creating a sustainable support infrastructure for Black women and gender-expansive leaders. Black leaders call for an urgency to identify and dismantle systemic disparities within the public and nonprofit sectors in order to improve their ability to create positive and meaningful change so that they can not only lead but thrive. Let's follow their lead.

# Acknowledgements

# About the Researchers

This research was conducted by KDF Strategies, a Black-woman-owned and led research and policy consulting firm whose work focuses on racial and gender equity.

**For more information on the full report, head to:**
**wawf.org/BWL**