

In Pursuit of Liberatory Organizing

Organizational Strategy of
re:power and re:power Fund

2023–2027

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Preface

Many in this country envision our democracy to be free and fair—a meritocracy in which anyone can thrive if they try hard enough. But the reality we all know to be true is that, when it comes to the basic promise—health, economic security, safety, and freedom—outcomes are systematically worse for people of color than for white people, and systematically worse for women, trans, and gender expansive individuals than for men. The narrative of the free and fair American meritocracy would conclude that these people—our people—are less motivated to earn and therefore less deserving of a safe, joyful and fulfilling life as compared to white cisgender men.

Like many others who are fighting for social justice, we at re:power categorically reject this conclusion. People, no matter what race, ethnicity, gender identity, or sex, have inherent human worth and potential that is deserving of dignity and respect. And the rights and fruits of this democracy, a democracy built from stolen land and stolen human labor, belong equally to us all.

We, who are collectively fighting for social justice, hold such truths to be self-evident. But it is far from evident precisely how we might come to experience these things as true—that is, how the democracy we envision might be brought into existence, and what role we each must play in the struggle for that future. These are the questions we set out to answer for ourselves as we formulated re:power’s first formal organizational strategy in 2021 and 2022.

Today, as I look back on our collective investment of hundreds of hours of rigorous analysis and strategic thinking; emphatic and impassioned debate; collective learning and growth; and brilliant co-creation, I’m so proud of the way in which our team embodied the principles of liberatory organizing—which we define as organizing practice that is pro-Black and grounded in community, collective action, and abundance—to formulate a strategy with the power to shift our country’s trajectory toward our north star: a liberated, multi-racial democracy, free from the oppressive systems of white supremacy and patriarchy.

When we began our journey to articulate this strategy, our objective was clarity. We were confident in our values, in who “our people” were, and in our general direction. But we often found ourselves wondering: How aligned are we, really, in our desired change and our understanding of how that change might come about? Should we be something more than a “training provider,” and if so, how might we conceptualize that identity? Are we focusing on the most impactful programming and priorities in light of our ultimate goal? We longed for clear answers to these and other questions to guide our day-to-day decisions—and that’s what we designed our strategy process to accomplish. The strategic clarity we have gained is already helping us to design our programs, make difficult resource tradeoffs, and envision in concrete terms the re:power we want to be five years from now.

The strategy we describe in this document doesn’t change who we are; it helps us more concretely name and more confidently and unapologetically express who we are, what we stand for and why we matter. It’s not a strategic plan, per se, because no written plan will ever remain relevant for five years. Rather, it clarifies, for both ourselves and our stakeholders, our intent and direction as an organization. We *can* achieve a liberated, multiracial democracy, free from the oppressive systems of white supremacy and patriarchy. Let’s build that future together.

Karundi Williams



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, RE:POWER
DECEMBER 2022

Our Purpose

For over a century, the Progressive Movement has been fighting for material changes in the lived experience of the most marginalized populations. The “Movement” has served as the umbrella construct encompassing the many powerful American grassroots movements fighting for progress on Labor Rights, Civil Rights, White Women’s Suffrage, Marriage Equality, Immigrant Rights and many others. At the core of each of these battles for freedom have been fierce leaders, strong organizations, and collaborative networks that built their power together to overcome the odds.

re:power supports these movements and the leaders, organizations and organizing formations that comprise them. In this context, our purpose clarifies “our why”—why we’re here, why we do what we do, and why we matter—via our vision and mission.

OUR VISION

Over the last several decades, many in our Movement have begun to hold up the concept of a **multiracial democracy** as the “north star” of our work—the guiding vision toward which we should all be striving. We at re:power embrace this north star. We also believe that a full conceptualization of a multiracial democracy must explicitly acknowledge race-based oppression and must explicitly account for the most fundamental forces preserving the status quo. Specifically, it is our conviction that a multiracial democracy cannot exist while the systems of white supremacy and patriarchy continue to oppress those who are not white cis men. As long as these systems remain dominant within our society, progress toward a multiracial democracy will remain limited.

When we envision the north star of our Movement, we view it through this lens. Accordingly, at re:power, we are guided by the clarity that we seek a liberated, multiracial democracy, free from the oppressive systems of white supremacy and patriarchy.

In a liberated multiracial democracy, the dignity and worth of each individual will be respected, and decisions about our people will be made by our people at all levels of government and society. In this future, our governing system will work for all of us, not just some of us.

This vision describes the future state we are ultimately fighting for, alongside so many others in the movement. It names race as a focal construct in our analysis, and it asserts our liberatory orientation. Ultimately, this vision serves as our “north star,” establishing the overall direction of our work and delineating our most important stakeholders: the social justice movements and leaders who are actively fighting to reach the same destination.

OUR MISSION

Large-scale social change has only ever been achieved through the efforts of social justice movements, organizations and organizing formations (which we may refer to simply as “social justice movements” or “movements” for convenience throughout this document) and the leaders within them. To realize a liberated, multiracial democracy that is free from white supremacy and patriarchy, progressive social justice movements, organizations and organizing formations must prevail in their respective endeavors to rebalance power for Black, Indigenous, Native, Latine, Asian, Arab, Pacific Islander and other marginalized people.

Analysis: Shortcomings in current approaches to building and wielding power

There has, however, been a major shortcoming in the Progressive Movement’s collective effort thus far. Social justice movements have been inadvertently reinforcing white supremacy and patriarchy, even as they seek to dismantle them, because they often work within the norms, mental models and tools of the dominant white supremacist, patriarchal system.

For example, white supremacy and patriarchy operate within a framework that places the highest value on whiteness and maleness and the lowest value on Blackness and femininity, and these same values are present even within progressive social justice movements.

OUR VISION

We seek a liberated, multiracial democracy, free from the oppressive systems of white supremacy and patriarchy.

ANTI-BLACKNESS

Notably, anti-Blackness remains rife within our Movement. The structural reality of whiteness in our society creates a hierarchy even among people of color in which proximity to whiteness is rewarded while proximity to Blackness is punished. One quantifiable approach to observing this disparity within our movement is to examine the difference in financial support for Black-led nonprofits versus their white-led counterparts: Black-led nonprofits have 24% lower revenues and only 76% of the unrestricted net asset reserves compared to their white-led counterparts.¹

Yet, we cannot achieve a multiracial democracy without a strong coalition of people of all backgrounds and races, Black people perhaps especially so. In building such a coalition, naming white supremacy as the “enemy” will not be enough to bind people of different races together. As Heather McGhee wrote in *The Sum of Us: What Racism Costs Everyone and How We Can Prosper Together*, “For when a nation founded on the belief in racial hierarchy truly rejects that belief then and only then will we have discovered a new world. That is our destiny. To make it manifest, we must challenge ourselves to live our lives in solidarity across color, origin, and class... We are greater than and greater for the sum of us.”

We must explicitly and actively name, address and combat anti-Blackness within our movement if we are to build the coalition we need.

COMPETITION, INDIVIDUALISM, AND SCARCITY

As another example, white supremacy and patriarchy have arranged the functioning of our society around the values of competition, individualism, and scarcity as a means to facilitate the continued hoarding of power and wealth by white cis men. Today, even as our Movement fights against inequality and oppression, the values of competition, individualism, and scarcity tend to shape how we work.

We see this clearly in our movement’s partisan focus on winning elections rather than building a commitment and accountability to shared values. This also appears in how our movement views the mobilization of voters—which is today a transactional effort that serves the narrow purpose of winning an election but is often disconnected from longer-term strategies for movement building and co-governance.

Indeed, the default mindset in our Movement is often that we are competing for funding and recognition. We often fixate on rockstar individual leaders over building leaderful organizations. We often operate under the assumption of scarcity in money and time. This all ultimately reinforces the patterns of oppression produced by a white supremacist and patriarchal system.

Continuing to fight through strategies and tactics that reinforce oppression is like attending to symptoms while feeding the underlying cancer. A future that is free from white supremacy and patriarchy must be built upon an entirely different foundation.

Is Representation Enough?

Currently, the strategies for bringing about a multiracial democracy within our movement have focused primarily on representation—more Black, Indigenous, and other people of color and more women exercising their right to vote, entering the political arena, and taking the mantle of public leadership. While representation is critical, this alone will not be enough to dismantle and untangle white supremacy and patriarchy from our institutions, government, and society.

For example, when we increase diversity numbers without directly confronting anti-Blackness in our organizations and institutions, we leave in place power inequities that center whiteness and marginalize Blackness, resulting in tokenization at best and personal harm at worst.

Moreover, representation as a strategy centers the individual—the charismatic leader, the civically-minded voter, the well-funded candidate. It is premised on the hope that if enough people take action individually, that these individual actions will amount to change in the aggregate. The realities of our political infrastructure support a culture that privileges the individual over the community, competition over collectivism, and a scarcity mindset over one of abundance. We become hyper-focused on winning the race rather than winning the long-term change we seek.

Thus, when we focus solely on representation, we risk upholding the structures and practices of white supremacy and patriarchy and undermining the multiracial coalition we need to defeat them. When our key objectives are not to dismantle white supremacy and patriarchy and critically, within that, anti-Blackness, our work will always fall short.

¹ Echoing Green and The Bridgespan Group. “Overcoming the Racial Bias in Philanthropic Funding.” *Stanford Social Innovation Review*. <https://ssir.org/articles/entry/overcoming_the_racial_bias_in_philanthropic_funding>.

THE PATH FORWARD: A DIFFERENT WAY OF WORKING

If white supremacy and patriarchy are sustained on anti-Blackness and the values of individualism, competition, and scarcity, we believe they must be dismantled with the converse of these values: strategies and tactics for building and wielding power that are pro-Black and grounded in the values of community, collective action, and abundance. We call this response “liberatory organizing.”

Liberatory organizing employs strategies and practices for building and wielding power premised on a different set of values and assumptions than the dominant paradigm. For example, in the current approach to electoral politics, each race is viewed as an end unto itself. A liberatory organizing perspective goes beyond electoral cycles and takes the long view of movement-building, one where communities not only elect their representatives, but also have the power and the tools to co-govern with them. Likewise, the culture of traditional organizing is largely transactional and siloed, whereas liberatory organizing focuses on shared values to promote relational ways of working that cut across demographics and issue areas.

OUR MISSION

To build a critical mass of social justice movements and their leaders who embody the ideology and practice of liberatory organizing, an organizing practice that is pro-Black and grounded in community, collective action, and abundance.

Only by adopting a fundamentally different set of strategies and practices for pursuing our communities’ interests can we hope to successfully dismantle white supremacy and patriarchy to achieve a liberated, multiracial democracy.

This, therefore, is our mission. re:power exists to build a critical mass of social justice movements and their leaders who embody the ideology and practice of liberatory organizing, an organizing practice that is pro-Black and grounded in community, collective action, and abundance.

This mission explains our intended contribution to the collective fight for our north star. We believe re:power’s impact, in service of our vision, will be maximized if we focus specifically on popularizing liberatory organizing and building a critical mass of practitioners, ultimately making liberatory organizing the “new normal” among social justice movements.

When we at re:power ask ourselves, “to what end?,” when designing our programming or making tradeoff decisions, this mission provides a clear answer: bringing about this change in the world is the ultimate intent of our work, and everything we do should be designed accordingly.

Liberatory Organizing: An Example

In 2021, re:power partnered to develop a year-long training program with a national network of youth-led organizations fighting for climate justice. From the outset, the partnership felt different. National networks tend to operate with a top-down, transactional approach fueled by the urgency to hit campaign timelines and deliverables. This partner, however, put community at the center and people first, before the deliverables. They deeply respected their coalition partners and held national meetings that weren’t just about asking partners to do things, but were instead oriented first towards building relationships and developing trust, and then co-strategizing towards a shared goal.

Many organizations also ask a lot of their members and volunteers without investing in them in return, but this partner had an abundance mindset about leadership development. They invested

heavily in their youth leaders through intensive trainings, political education, and individualized coaching. And unlike many other organizations, this partner paid their leaders to attend trainings, because they believed that movement work is valuable labor and should be compensated as such.

When it came time to execute a Day of Action, they achieved 40 on-the-ground actions, 113 phone calls and 1,775 emails demanding a Fossil Free Future. The effort they expended upfront to build community and trust led to a shared strategy that then enabled coordinated, collective action to happen. While different priorities within the organization ultimately led to a change in direction, we look back on the nature of this partnership as something we aspire to replicate in the future.

2

Our Diagnosis

We have diagnosed what we believe it will take to achieve this mission. Specifically, our diagnosis explains the *problem-to-solve*, which frames the challenges standing in the way of a broad-based shift to liberatory organizing, and it articulates our *theory of change*, which proposes how those challenges can be overcome.

PROBLEM TO SOLVE

The good news is that liberatory organizing practices—the key to dismantling white supremacy and patriarchy—already exist. Over the centuries, communities with the least power to use the prevailing systems to their advantage have had to learn to fight in their own ways. In a system which rewards proximity to whiteness and maleness, the most marginalized individuals have been people of color and individuals who identify as women, trans or gender-expansive. Because marginalization is compounded at the intersections of identity, women of color and trans and gender-expansive people of color have been situated furthest away from power in our society. Out of necessity, these communities have developed organizing practices that are pro-Black and grounded in community, collective action and abundance. Thus far, however, a broad-based shift in ideology and practice from traditional organizing to liberatory organizing has not occurred. The challenge has three dimensions.

First, a critical mass of leaders practicing liberatory organizing has not arisen. Because they are marginalized in the current system, women leaders of color and trans and gender-expansive leaders of color have lacked access to investment in their leadership, keeping them isolated and unrecognized. When they do receive capacity building and leadership development, the approaches they learn are rooted in the dominant culture, thus suppressing liberatory organizing and perpetuating white supremacy and patriarchy.

Second, changing entrenched values, mindsets and ways of working within an organization is incredibly difficult, and women of color and trans and gender-expansive people of color have generally lacked access to the tools, infrastructure and moral support to successfully lead such change campaigns within their organizations.

Third, women of color and trans and gender-expansive people of color experience high rates of burnout amidst the extremely taxing job of organizing within a hostile system. Constant leadership turnover causes major setbacks in change processes that take years dedicated, planful work to bear fruit.

The result is continued self-perpetuation of the status quo.

THEORY OF CHANGE

If addressed thoughtfully, these challenges can be overcome, triggering a chain of outcomes that will lead to the fulfillment of our mission and vision. Our theory of change outlines how we believe the causal logic works, articulating the outcomes we seek to directly influence and those that logically follow.

Specifically, we believe that IF...

- Women of color and trans and gender-expansive people of color build a community of co-conspirators who are deeply aligned in their knowledge of and skills in liberatory organizing,
- Co-conspirators put the theories of liberatory organizing into action within their organizations and formations, and
- Co-conspirators are honored and respected as their whole selves, and can access the support they need to sustain them in their leadership...

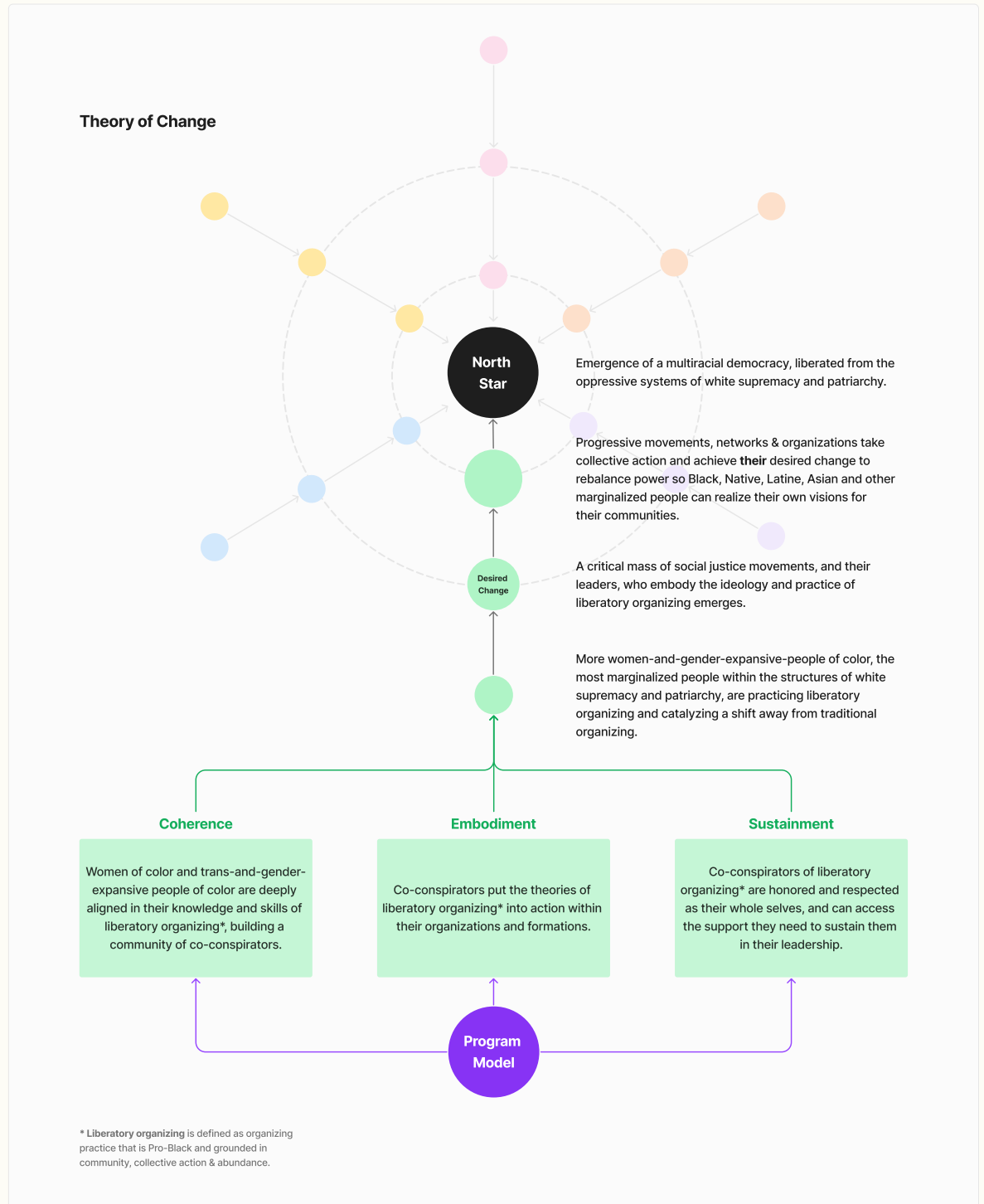
... AND IF this happens at scale...

... THEN a critical mass of co-conspirators will catalyze a broad-based shift from traditional to liberatory organizing...

... AND THEN the ideology and practice of liberatory organizing will become the “new normal” among social justice movements and their leaders...

... AND THEN social justice movements will succeed in their efforts to dismantle white supremacy and patriarchy, thereby rebalancing power for their communities...

... AND ULTIMATELY we will witness the emergence of a multiracial democracy, liberated from the oppressive systems of white supremacy and patriarchy.



This is our theory—meaning it is our belief about how our desired change can be brought about. It is informed in part by theories that have been articulated by others—for example, on liberation, critical pedagogy, Black feminist thought, and paradigm shifts—and in part by the collective thinking of the Progressive Movement and the collective lived experience of staff and leadership at re:power.

Our theory of change helps to guide our work by clarifying the outcomes we must design our programming to produce—namely, the outcomes of coherence, embodiment, and sustainment detailed above. It clarifies that our threshold of success—what it means to fulfill our mission—is that liberatory organizing becomes the “new normal” among social justice movements and their leaders, which guides the scale at which we must be thinking and planning. It also clarifies our focus on women of color and trans and gender-expansive people of color, as well as on the organizations they lead, as the subjects of our capacity building and leadership development. While our mission ultimately requires that white leaders and men also adopt liberatory organizing (required for liberatory organizing to become the “new normal” among social justice movements), we believe re:power’s most appropriate contribution to this outcome, based on our unique superpower, will be to build a critical mass of women of color and trans and gender-expansive people of color who then help to spark broad adoption of liberatory organizing via the force of their numbers and the compelling power of their leadership example.

Our theory of change will also guide how we measure and evaluate our work. Our vision and mission are too conceptually abstract and temporally distant for it to be of practical value to attempt to measure them directly. However, because we have articulated the logic of how our outcomes of coherence, embodiment, and sustainment ultimately lead to the fulfillment of our mission and vision, we can measure these more immediate outcomes while articulating why we believe that, in doing so, we are moving the needle on our mission and vision. A useful measurement capability will ultimately require us to specify the theory at a greater level of detail—that is, to articulate the drivers of and observable evidence that would indicate coherence, embodiment, and sustainment—but the theory of change we put forth in this strategy provides the guidance necessary for us to do so.

As with other elements of this strategy that explain how we expect to pursue our mission and vision, we expect our theory of change will evolve over time, as we test innovations, learn from them and refine our understanding of what it will take to succeed.

3

Our Identity

re:power's identity describes how we will show up in the world to activate our theory of change. It asserts our superpower, which makes our work so powerful. It explains our value proposition, which names our key stakeholders and the value they seek when they engage with us. And it lays out our intended program model, which details the programs and services through which we will deliver this value.

SUPERPOWER

re:power's superpower is to deliver transformative capacity building and leadership development programming, specifically for women of color and trans and gender-expansive people of color. This power flows from our approach to the spaces we create, our pedagogy, and our curriculum, which, by delivering a personally transformative experience, helps participants unlearn old mindsets and habits and learn the mindsets and habits of liberatory organizing.

SPACES

We create safe, affirming spaces for Black, Indigenous, Native, Latine, Asian, Arab, Pacific Islander and other women of color and trans and gender-expansive people of color. In a re:power space, the acknowledgement and celebration of a collective shared identity and lived experience leads to a sense of validation and safety. It feels different than traditional capacity building and leadership development spaces, which privilege the white, male experience. In a safe and validating space, participants can engage deeply in critical discussions about race, gender and power in ways that are not possible in white-and male-dominated spaces. This is a necessary condition for participants to explore and embrace the liberatory political ideology we promote.



When I got home to unpack and all the books and shirt and tote bag fell out, I cried. I felt so lucky. I felt happy to be alive, to have witnessed the joy and vulnerability of women of color. The stark change of my mood made me realize how miserable I was. Thank you for putting together a program that made me feel happy to be alive, happy to [breathe]. Your work felt like a love letter just to me and I'm sure everyone feels like that. Thank you.

Women of Color Leadership Cohort participant

PEDAGOGY

We design our programming to shift participants' mindsets, so they come to see the world through the lens of liberatory organizing. We do this in two primary ways. First, our programming centers the history and experiences of our people—women of color and trans and gender-expansive people of color—in the delivery of our capacity building and leadership development. For example, in the first session of our digital and data courses, participants learn about Ida B. Wells, a journalist, activist and researcher in the late 19th and early 20th centuries who used data in powerful ways to organize within the early civil rights movement. Participants learn that, despite the fact that we did not have terminology like “data scientist” back then, she was nevertheless a data scientist. Through this and other examples we highlight from the experiences of women of color and trans and gender-expansive people of color, participants develop a very different perspective on who is a leader and what leadership looks like, when compared to the dominant narrative. Participants come to believe that they, too, are leaders, and they become better able to embrace and harness the leadership power within themselves. Second, we shift the context of learning from an individual to a collective process in the context of their organizing efforts, using team and cohort-based models in which participants take responsibility not only for their own learning, but also for the learning of their fellow participants. When participants experience first-hand what the values of community, collective action and abundance look and feel like in their re:power experience, they emerge convinced of the power of this approach.

CURRICULUM

Our programming builds capacity in organizing practice that is pro-Black and based in community, collective action and abundance—which is of course the pivotal component of our theory of change. Our curriculum confronts head-on the challenges of leadership by women of color and trans and gender-expansive people of color in a white supremacist and patriarchal world. Our trainers are women of color and trans and gender-expansive people of color themselves, and they tap into the wisdom of their communities to offer concrete strategies and practices for building and wielding power accordingly. Our curriculum is also designed to help participants identify and disrupt the ways in which the dominant culture shows up in how they themselves operate. As a result, participants emerge prepared to practice liberatory organizing, and to successfully and sustainably navigate their leadership journey in a hostile environment.

This superpower is what most powerfully anchors re:power in our own organizational history as we evolve over time. It's what has made us so special, and it's the beating heart we will harness to power our strategy going forward. Our ability to deliver transformative capacity building and leadership development programming, specifically for women of color and trans-and-gender-expansive people of color, is precisely what enables re:power specifically to pursue the unique opportunity for major transformation that we articulate in our theory of change.

VALUE PROPOSITION

re:power has two primary target stakeholder audiences: (i) movement leaders who are women of color or are trans or gender-expansive people of color, and (ii) progressive social justice organizations and organizing formations.

Our target movement leaders are women of color and trans and gender-expansive people of color, because our superpower is to deliver transformative capacity building and leadership development specifically among this group. This is where our unique capabilities can make the greatest impact. Specifically, we focus on the women of color and trans and gender-expansive leaders of color who recognize that their learning and leadership development needs are not well-served by the prevailing leadership models derived from white supremacist and patriarchal culture. In this context, our target leaders are seeking both learning opportunities that center their experiences—as opposed to those of the dominant culture—and a sense of community as they pursue the grueling work of organizing within a hostile system. re:power is a good match for these leaders because we (i) help them achieve their goals through highly respected capacity building and leadership development programming, (ii) deliver programming through viscerally relevant, safe and affirming experiences, and (iii) welcome participants into a community of co-conspirators holding one another through the difficult work of organizing.

Our target social justice organizations and organizing formations are those whose leadership share our north star. Their aspiration, if not their current organizational reality, is to be pro-Black and to eliminate the patterns of white supremacy and patriarchy in how they build and wield power. Their leadership already shares or quickly endorses re:power's analysis of what it will take to dismantle white supremacy and patriarchy, as well as why we focus on women of color and trans and gender-expansive people of color. In service of their long-arc organizing goals, these organizations and formations are seeking to develop the organizing capacity of their staff and they want to do so in deep relationship with an organizing partner, as opposed to a transactional engagement with a “training service provider.” For these organizations and organizing formations, re:power is that organizing partner, helping to develop the skills, knowledge and attitudes of their people through deep, values-aligned partnership.

PROGRAM MODEL

We deliver this value through six programmatic avenues tailored to different stages in a leader's engagement with liberatory organizing.

Activation

Programming for newly activated and/or newly politicized individuals, including **1 Open Source Learning Resources** (free online tools, guides, videos and webinars that introduce the ideology and practice of liberatory organizing).

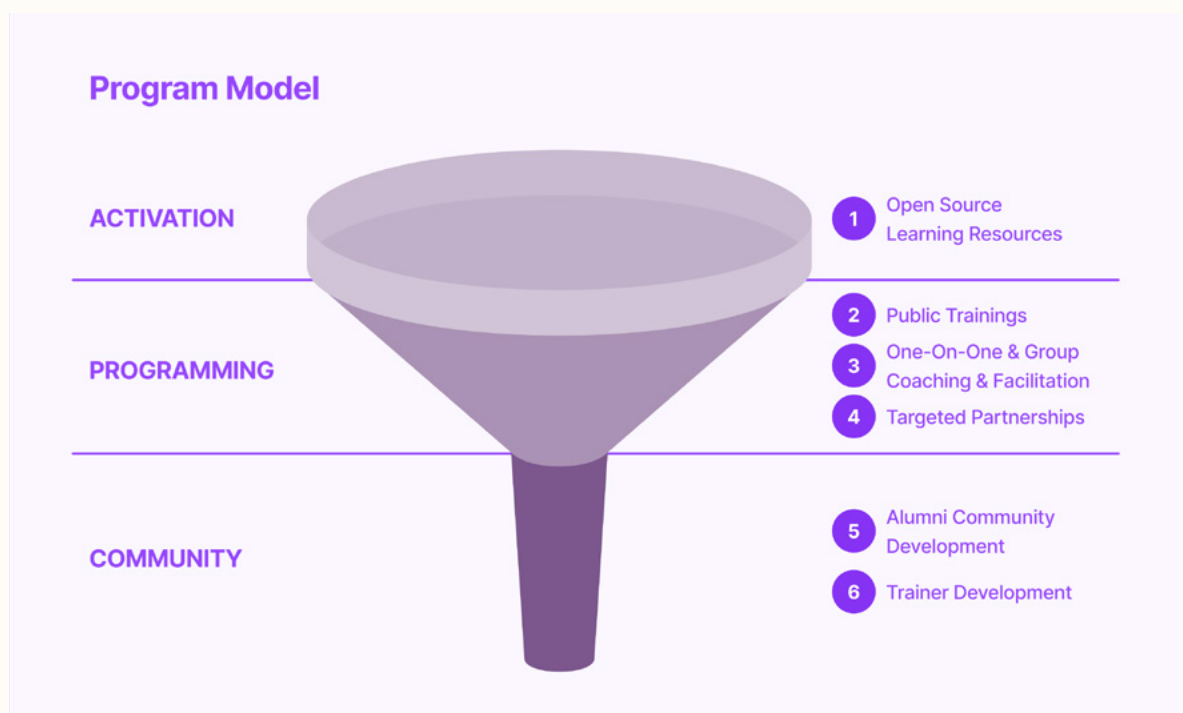
Programming

Programming for active movement leaders and organizations who share re:power’s north star, tailored to the context of their organizing work, including:

- 2 **Public Trainings** (structured, intensive skills development as well as the right environments for deep relationship-building and collaboration);
- 3 **One-on-One and Group Coaching and Facilitation** (providing personalized support to individuals and groups, giving them space to share their specific challenges, to receive direct feedback and guidance, and to identify pathways and strategies that advance them towards their goals);
- 4 **Targeted partnerships** (deeper partnerships with movement partners to come together to skill-up their people and to strategize and plan together).

Community

Programming for individuals who have participated in re:power’s programming and who embrace the ideology and practice of liberatory organizing, including 5 **Alumni Community Development** (nurturing a strong alumni network/community) and 6 **Trainer Development** (funneling alumni with an aptitude for training into roles as re:power trainers themselves, helping to enrich and refine our curriculum and expand our reach.)



Our program model describes how we will deliver our value proposition to target leaders and organizations. It is depicted as a funnel to indicate (i) that we tailor our offering to the needs of leaders and organizations at different stages in their engagement with liberatory organizing, (ii) that we intend to maintain relationships with these leaders across our program offerings as they deepen their engagement with liberatory organizing, and (iii) that we must support a high-volume pipeline of leaders from left to right through the funnel of engagement in order to produce our targeted critical mass of co-conspirators of liberatory organizing. Indeed, it is through engagements with leaders and organizations, via this program model, that we believe our theory of change will be activated. The program model represents a high-level vision of what we are in the process of building—not exactly what we have today—and we expect that it will evolve as we test, learn and refine over the coming years.

4

Our Roadmap

Our roadmap describes our path forward. Specifically, it structures the action we will take over the next five years to live into our identity, in the form of two strategic priorities and related goals.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1

Build out, test and refine our next-gen program model

Our first strategic priority focuses on realizing our vision, described above, of a program model that fully activates our theory of change as it delivers the value that our target movement leaders and organizations are seeking.

We have the foundations of such a model today. We acknowledge, however, that to build a program model that fully activates our theory of change, we will be required to both evolve our current programming and develop new program areas. We refer to this future model as our “next-gen” program model. We also recognize that a next-gen program model cannot be designed perfectly up-front—that we will have to envision possibilities, develop hypotheses, test those hypotheses, learn from our experiments, and refine our vision accordingly in an iterative process over time.

Below, we articulate seven goals related to building out, testing and refining our next-gen program model.

GOAL 1.1

Specify our next-gen program model in further detail

In this strategy document, we outline a high-level vision of a program model that we believe can fully activate our theory of change. At this stage, this model is based largely on our creative vision, the expertise and experiences of our program teams, and deductive reasoning about what it will take to activate our theory of change. Early in this strategy period, we intend to develop our thinking further, specifying more concretely what the model might look like and clarifying and pressure testing our assumptions. This exercise will include, among other things, further learning on our part about how we can support trans and gender-expansive leaders of color. Ultimately, this specification exercise will set us up to successfully build out, test and refine the various components of the model.

GOAL 1.2

Build out our online learning resources for newly activated and/or newly politicized individuals

We will build on the programming we have referred to internally as our “public education” resources, designing a library of free online tools, guides, videos and webinars to introduce the ideology and practice of liberatory organizing to newly activated and/or newly politicized individuals. Serving as the “top of the funnel” in our program model, this set of resources will be thoughtfully designed to “hook” newly activated individuals and launch them on their journey in liberatory organizing.

GOAL 1.3

Evolve our suite of public trainings for movement leaders and organizations

We offer a highly-respected suite of public trainings today. To support our priority of building out, testing and refining our next-gen program model over the next five years, we will pursue two objectives. First, we will adjust our current public trainings, as necessary, so they fully embody our theory of change as articulated in this strategy document. For example, we may adjust the selection criteria for our public trainings, prioritizing women and trans and gender-expansive people of color more intentionally than we do today, and perhaps selecting for leaders who have a baseline affinity for liberatory organizing. Second, we will work to revise our curriculum and pedagogy so that we more fully address the capacity building and leadership development that organizers, specifically women and trans and gender-expansive people of color, need to become co-conspirators in liberatory organizing, to put their knowledge and skills to work, and to sustain themselves in the movement.

GOAL 1.4

Build out one-on-one and group coaching and facilitation services for movement leaders and organizations

To the extent we provide coaching and facilitation today, it is more a component of a broader program than a deliberate and scalable mode of value delivery in its own right, as we envision it to be in the next-gen program model. In other words, today, we have neither the appropriate engagement models nor the operational capability to deliver coaching and facilitation services in a formal manner. Over the next five years, we will work to build these services out.

GOAL 1.5

Evolve how we partner with movement organizations

Historically, our partnership with movement organizations has been via fee-for-service contracts, under which we design and deliver trainings based on each partner's needs. Generally speaking, these partnerships have historically been most appropriately characterized as more transactional, as compared to the highly relational organizing partnerships we envision in the future. (An example of an exception to this, which has helped to inspire our vision for our future partnerships, was our partnership with a national network of youth climate justice organizations in 2021, which is described earlier in this document in a sidebar). Under this goal, we will re-envision our orientation toward partnership to move in this direction.

GOAL 1.6

Build out alumni community development programming

To date, we have invested very little dedicated resources in engaging and building community among alumni of our programming. Going forward, cultivating an active, thriving community of co-conspirators of liberatory organizing is absolutely critical to the activation of our theory of change. We envision this community development programming to be a central lever through which we will offer abundant support to co-conspirators, sustaining them in their organizing work over the long-term. Over the next five years, we will work to build this programming out and nurture a thriving community of re:power alumni.

GOAL 1.7

Build out trainer recruitment and development programming

Our trainers are the conduits through which we build capacity in liberatory organizing. Our ability to recruit the right individuals and create deep alignment with our ideology and pedagogy is thus a strategically critical capability. To date, we have not had a formalized process for strategically recruiting and developing our trainers. Over the next five years, we will work to build this capability out to support the development and scaling of our next-gen program model.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 2

Build the internal infrastructure required to support our impact

Our second strategic priority focuses on the organizational evolution we will need to support the evolution in our program model.

GOAL 2.1

Evolve our business model to increase revenue by 2.0x and program spending by 2.3x, largely driven by growth in foundation funding, while maintaining indirect expense levels

To fulfill our mission, we must support the development of a critical mass of co-conspirators, such that liberatory organizing becomes the norm across social justice movements. This implies that we must ultimately support many more women of color and trans and gender-expansive people of color than we do today. Based on our financial modeling, we believe we have achieved an appropriate balance of boldness and realism in setting a target of increasing revenue by 2.0 times and program spending 2.3 times (versus 2022 actuals) within five years, even as we pursue significant evolution in our program model. We estimate that this will equate to more than doubling the number of leaders we support today, while significantly deepening our support to each leader (doubling, on average, the resources we spend on each leader).

We expect 70% of this revenue growth to come from foundations—in the form of both restricted project work and unrestricted grants—because foundations have become more aware of how to invest in the infrastructure of this movement over the last decade and whenever possible, we want to pull money from the most abundant resources as opposed to charging our fellow partner organizations. In addition, we will pursue this growth while maintaining indirect expense levels at roughly their 2022 levels.

GOAL 2.2

Design our operating model (structure, process, culture) to support our evolved program model

As our program model evolves, our operating model—comprised of our structure, our processes and our culture—must evolve as well. As we begin this five-year strategy period, we have no preconceived notions of exactly how the operating model might evolve. This is work we must do during the strategy period, to determine the changes that may be needed depending on how the program model is built.

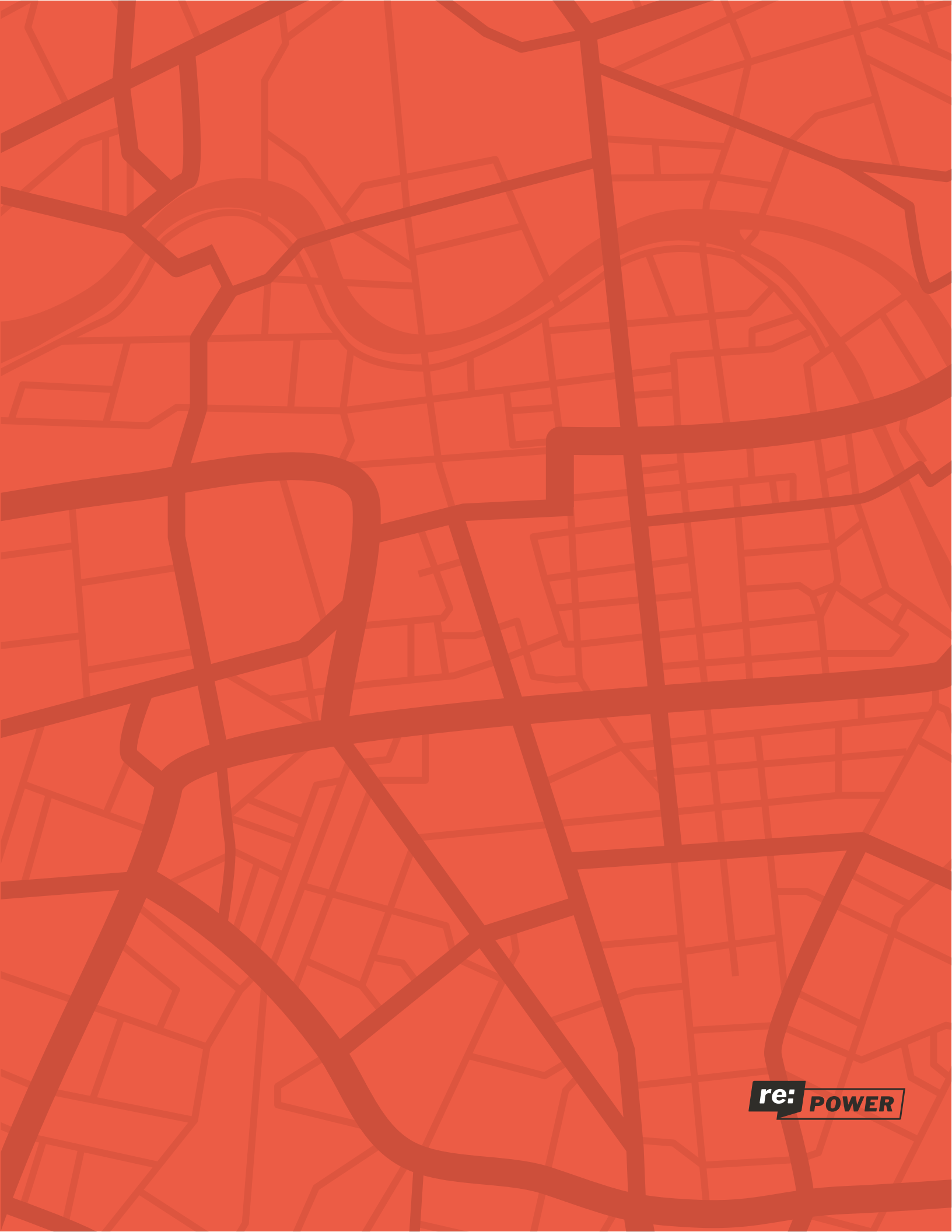
GOAL 2.3

Establish an ability to collect and learn from strategically relevant data

The ability to collect and learn from data about our programmatic outcomes will be central to our ability to manage the organization on this strategic journey. The high-level theory of change we articulate in this document lays a strong foundation for us to measure whether and in what ways we are making the impact we think we must make in order to fulfill our mission. Over the next five years, we will specify the theory of change in more detail, develop ways to measure its components and establish processes for organizational learning based on this data.

Conclusion

This strategy clarifies both for ourselves and for our external stakeholders who we are, why we matter and how we approach our work. By articulating coherent decisions across our purpose, our diagnosis, our identity and our roadmap, it establishes a clarity in intent and direction that will enable us to be bolder, more effective and more efficient in our fight for a liberated, multiracial democracy, free from the oppressive systems of white supremacy and patriarchy.



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