

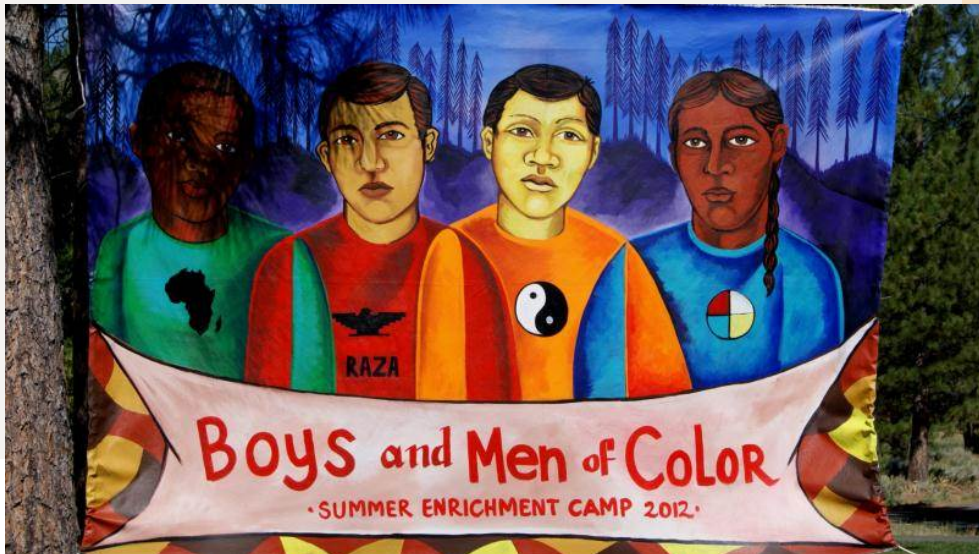
# Sons and Brothers

## Building Healthy Communities

Case Study

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November 2013



Discovering better ways  
to solve social problems

## Youth Leadership in Action



***“It was pretty cool. I felt I could make change that day, even if they [legislators] don’t agree with you. You try to sway them. You’re trembling, you are young, but you are still equals even if they sit in an office all day. You have the same power and the ability to make change happen.”***  
 – Young Leader

**Figure 1 - Young Leaders during one of the 2012 Select Committee Hearings**

Throughout the last two years, something unusual has been happening in Sacramento, CA. Hundreds of young men of color have been walking the halls of the state capitol, talking to policy makers, sharing their stories, making their voices heard. Youth are being invited to the capitol, organized, and assembled as part of the efforts of The California Endowment, the Alliance for Boys and Men of Color (the Alliance), and the California State Assembly’s Select Committee on the Status of Boys and Men of Color. Throughout California, thousands of young men of color have spoken at different events, including testifying at legislative hearings, to raise awareness about the unique barriers they face. The efforts of these young leaders, has led to policymaker support for several bills passed by the state legislature and signed into law by Governor Brown.<sup>1</sup> The youth and adults who support these new policies believe in the potential for transforming the lives of California’s boys and men of color.

The passage of these bills is evidence of the increasing appetite of policymakers throughout the state to address the needs of boys and young men of color. Prominent community voices, including elected officials, youth, and religious leaders, are speaking out on the positive effects of specific changes in policy and practice that improve the health and wellbeing of youth, especially youth of color. The Endowment has played a critical role in putting issues affecting young men of color, such as school discipline, on the state policy agenda and engaging communities in these conversations. For example, after the passage of the school discipline bills in September 2012, two of the biggest school districts in the state, Fresno and Los Angeles, took steps to end harsh school discipline policies, which will likely keep thousands of students in the classrooms learning and off of the street.

## An Emerging Focus on Boys and Young Men of Color

While there are many more fights for equality and social justice still to be won at the capitol and town halls across California, those involved have much to learn from the massive outpouring of support by the public and policymakers that has emerged around school climate and school discipline, juvenile justice reform, and jobs. In fact, this set of issues is just the tip of the iceberg when it comes to the statewide agenda for improving the lives of boys and men of color. Other salient issues involve access to healthcare, and trauma and healing. The California Endowment (The Endowment) plays a critical role in supporting a larger movement around boys and men of color in the state. This case study answers the question,

*How has The Endowment been supporting organizations statewide and locally to change policies and systems that improve the lives of boys and men of color?*

<sup>1</sup> TCE funding was not used for lobbying.

To answer this question, it is important to understand the origins of The Endowment's Boys and Men of Color work or BMOC work (now referred as Sons and Brothers) and how it has grown over the past decade.

A deliberate focus on boys and men of color at The Endowment originated during the planning process for its Building Healthy Communities (BHC) strategy was adopted by the board in 2009. Dr. Robert Ross, the foundation's CEO and President, and other leadership at The Endowment realized that its new strategy must account for California's changing population, and decided to increase its focus on equity.

## A Changing Demographic

The California population has been changing rapidly, and it is increasingly evident that young people of color are critical to creating a healthier and more prosperous state. According to Census data, 70% of California youth under 25 years old identify as people of color; yet, many of these young people are having trouble staying in school and out of prison.<sup>2</sup> California fails to graduate from high school 34.7% of its black youth, and 25.5% of its Latino youth, compared to 12.2% of its white youth.<sup>3</sup>

Furthermore, too many boys and young men of color live in neighborhoods marked by poverty, violence, lack of opportunity, and under-funded schools. Foundation leaders recognized that if they were going to work in communities to improve the health of Californians, the foundation would have to focus on vulnerable populations. In this case, it meant addressing the needs of young men of color ages 16-25. These challenges presented an opportunity for large scale social change that improves the lives of these young men and future generations.

## The Response of the Foundation's Leaders

The Endowment had been making grants to organizations primarily serving African American and Latino youth for several years. However, early on, this grantmaking was disconnected from the foundation's other programmatic work. As the new BHC strategy started taking shape, a population-level focus on young men of color started to grow in relevance inside the foundation. The foundation still had to determine how this population-specific focus was going to fit into its overall BHC strategy.

A turning point for The Endowment's work around boys and young men of color came when Dr. Ross began talking about it publically, as a programmatic effort of the foundation. According to Robert Phillips, a former program director at The Endowment, *"He wasn't just talking about it internally anymore. It was going to be given the same level of attention as the other initiatives, and it made the work legitimate."* While the boys and men of color grantmaking was still largely happening separate from other program areas, it was no longer in the realm of being considered a small project run out of the office of the CEO. Foundation staff recall the foundation's boys and men of color efforts starting to gain traction in late 2010.

In the summer of 2012, Dr. Ross decided to spend his sabbatical diving deeper into the issues affecting boys and men of color by interviewing a range of people "from preachers, politicians, and policy wonks to foundation leaders and felons."<sup>4</sup> Resuming office in September of 2012, he was even more inspired to use the foundation's position and influence to be a leader on this issue.

Since then, The Endowment's commitment to boys and men of color issues has continued to deepen. The board, in August 2013, approved a \$50M commitment to be put toward advancing issues related to

<sup>2</sup> The California Endowment. *Claiming the Promise for California's BMOC.*

<sup>3</sup> The Warren Institute. *Fast Facts: Status of Boys and Men of Color (National and California)*

<sup>4</sup> Dr. Robert Ross. (April 2013). *"Enough" and "Now."* Association of Black Foundation Executives' Annual James Joseph Lecture.

boys and men of color through 2020, and recently approved a new strategy under a new moniker: *Sons and Brothers*. In addition, The Endowment continues to demonstrate its leadership on the issue by partnering with other funders, such as Liberty Hill, the California Community Foundation, Dolores Huerta, and Sierra Health Foundation, to advance relevant work in California and encouraging foundations to get involved on a national scale.

## A Model of Collaboration & Alignment



Many foundation staff now refer to the Boys and Men of Color work as a model of collaboration and alignment between local and state BHC efforts. In this case, alignment can be defined as:

***An intentional effort between local and state-level foundation staff and/or partners and to coordinate, collaborate, or partner to achieve a common goal or objective.***

This is a testament to the perseverance of foundation staff, grantees, and partners in overcoming the initial confusion, uncertainty, and frustration of figuring out how to effectively collaborate. As a result, the efforts to improve the lives of boys and men of color have gained traction and interest from across the foundation – from work in the 14 Building Healthy Community sites to the statewide Health Happens Here campaigns.

In reflecting on the past three years, The Endowment has made a number of distinct, yet interrelated contributions to supporting a statewide movement around BMOC by:

1. **Building on local and statewide efforts already underway**
2. **Establishing an independent platform that can foster joint action**
3. **Partnering with systems leaders to capitalize on strategic opportunities**
4. **Leveraging the Building Healthy Communities and Boys and Men of Color platforms to pursue shared priorities**
5. **Harnessing the passion of youth to change the narrative**

As the foundation's BMOC strategy has evolved, The Endowment and its partners have been learning important lessons about how to use all of the foundation's assets to improve the lives of boys and men of color across the state.

### **Select Committee Hearings Raise the Profile of Boys and Men of Color Statewide**

The Endowment's relationship with the Select Committee on the Status of Boys and Men of Color is a good example of how the Endowment's BMOC strategies have coalesced and spurred collective action. When The Endowment began its boys and men of color work, it did not anticipate that a Select Committee would be created in 2011. The purpose of the Select Committee is to examine key issues affecting the health and well-being of boys and men of color in California and create a comprehensive state policy plan to address their needs. Initially, the Select Committee decided to address six main areas affecting this population: health, education, employment and wealth, violence prevention, youth development, and juvenile justice.

As the Select Committee considered how to structure its process of gathering data to inform a policy action plan on these areas, they decided to hold a series of hearings, and asked for the Endowment's support. *"At the end of the day what we really wanted was some action. We need laws, and we need to change the mentality of people about this problem,"* explained Larry Broussard, chief of staff to former Select Committee Chair Swanson. The foundation immediately recognized the partnership with the Select Committee as a strategic opportunity to harness the platform of the Alliance for Boys and Men of Color. The Alliance was an independent platform supported by the foundation which included youth, community organizations, foundations, and systems leaders. Rather than supporting the Select Committee directly, The Endowment decided to support the work through the Alliance and its partners. This was a unique opportunity for The Endowment to influence policy by building on a statewide effort already underway.

#### **Bringing Statewide and Local Partners Together**

The Endowment encouraged the committee to hold the hearings in different regions to allow more people to participate. This also capitalized on the growing local capacity of the 14 BHC sites to mobilize adult and youth leaders around an issue. Together, the Select Committee and Alliance members held a series of hearings in Oakland, Coachella, Los Angeles, Fresno and Sacramento. While the hearing planning process was underway, some of the Alliance statewide partners, including the Warren Institute and PolicyLink, began providing the Select Committee with information about the challenges young men of color were facing in the state.

The planning and implementation process of the hearings became a vehicle to strengthen the relationships between the Alliance's diverse set of members and state-level elected officials. Liberty Hill, PolicyLink, Warren Institute, and The Endowment became familiar faces at the state capitol. *"The Endowment was the one to give the Select Committee the statewide contacts, because they were funding these folks,"* said Opio Dupree, a legislative staffer at the time. He added, *"The Endowment was responsible for pulling all the necessary pieces together for the plan."* At the same time, the process of planning the local hearings provided a reason for local Alliance and BHC partners, including community-based advocacy groups, school districts, and city officials to work together.

#### **Creating a Place for Cooperation, Understanding, and Alignment**



The hearings started in Sacramento and continued all across the state. Each committee hearing was enlivened with the energy of hundreds of youth, parents, policymakers, foundation leaders, school officials, and community leaders. According to Broussard, *“Never have there been such a large number of community groups that came together on an issue. [...] The partnership that formed created a synergy between the nonprofits working on this issue and the legislature.”* During the hearings, it was common to see local school district officials in discussion with legislators and nonprofit leaders. The hearings served as a forum for policymakers to learn about the challenges affecting young men of color in different geographic regions, and to hear potential solutions.

The active and enthusiastic participation of hundreds of young men of color in the hearings created a direct dialogue with the legislators and other local systems leaders. Their lived experiences helped legislators better understand their plight and the urgency of their situation. A young leader stated during one of the hearings *“How can we be expected to achieve at a high academic level, if we are experiencing conditions that are more like a prison and less like a school?”* Through the hearings and the work of the Alliance and the local BHC sites, the voices of young men of color were at the forefront of the plan to support their future. In a statement announcing The Endowment’s commitment to its Sons and Brothers work in October 2013, Assembly member Steven Bradford, Steering Committee leader, said

*“What we saw was not just some young African American and Latinos, we saw the future leaders of California, we saw a group of young men that wanted to better themselves and their communities. I can speak on behalf of the entire committee when I say that hearing from these young men made us double down on our efforts to address this issue.”*

Having young leaders actively participating in the hearings was not only informative for the policy and systems leaders but also for youth themselves. *“It changes their thoughts on life, the people coming behind them, and transforms their whole perception of the world,”* a young community organizer observed.

### **The Beginning of a Movement for Young Men of Color**

The relationships between the Alliance, The Endowment and the Select Committee have continued to strengthen, and the unique role that each plays has become more clear. Yet, the influence of The Endowment and its statewide partners is undeniable. For example, the final action plan adopted by the Select Committee mirrors the goals of the Alliance and The Endowment’s Sons and Brothers strategy. The hearings have provided a platform of policymaker support for the movement for young men of color that has been gaining strength throughout the state. In a recent statement of solidarity, many Alliance partners, including dozens of young men wearing hoodies participated in the adoption of House proposition 23, as a tribute to Trayvon Martin, in August 2013. They used a national tragedy to call on California legislators to take action to ensure a more successful future for the state’s young men of color.

The Endowment, the Alliance, and its partners are continuing to work tirelessly to inform and support policy makers and systems leaders so they can advance policies that will improve the life of California’s young men of color.

## 1. Building on Local and Statewide Efforts Already Underway

In order to determine the best role for the foundation in supporting boys and men of color, The Endowment examined the landscape of organizations already working on issues affecting this population. Foundation staff learned that a variety of organizations were tackling issues such as school climate, law enforcement, and “the school-to-prison pipeline.” Some were longstanding organizations advocating for policy and systems change at a community level, while others were working across multiple places or focusing on state-level policy change in Sacramento.

### Convening Statewide and Local Organizations

A number of statewide advocacy groups had been pushing to change state policy to increase racial equity that would have a direct impact on boys and men of color, such as the Youth Law Center, ACLU of Northern California, Public Counsel, and Children’s Defense Fund. Many of these organizations had already worked together on specific issues, such as juvenile justice reform. Leaders from the Youth Law Center and Public Counsel collaborated on suspension- and expulsion-related issues in California for decades prior to when the legislation passed. These advocacy groups had acquired a wealth of knowledge, skill, and expertise over the years about their specific issues, and yet, many organizations continued to operate in isolation. For example, advocates that cared about juvenile justice reform rarely collaborated with their counterparts who were focused on access to health care or education.

To address this fragmentation, The Endowment convened a set of statewide and local actors to form the Leadership and Learning Network (the Network), which would later become known as the BMOC Network and currently is called the Alliance for Boys and Men of Color. The purpose was to bring together organizations that advocated on different issue areas, such as health or education, but might not focus on a particular population segment, such as boys and men of color.

Over time, The Endowment realized it needed help convening these stakeholders, and did not just want to have a consultant take charge. Instead, it wanted to create an independent organization to grow beyond The Endowment that could engage different types of players and leaders. In order to achieve this, the foundation supported the development of an independent coalition that would focus on policy and systems changes to improve the lives of boys and men of color. The following organizations became the statewide anchor partners for the work:

- **PolicyLink**, a national equity research and action institute, engaged to develop the BMOC strategy, and who is responsible for coordinating and convening members of the Network, and the Alliance for Boys and Men of Color. In addition to its role statewide, PolicyLink has become the regional convener for the BMOC work in the Fresno pilot site
- **Movement Strategy Center**, an intermediary that works closely with grassroots groups, which provides advocacy and coalition building support at a state, regional, and local level
- **Earl Warren Institute**, a center for policy research, which published studies and policy briefs that provides current research and frameworks for improving outcomes (health, education, economic) for boys and men of color
- **Fenton Communications**, experts in communications and public affairs, which provides advice and technical assistance around communications and branding to The Endowment and its grantees

Simultaneously, The Endowment was looking to pilot its own BMOC strategy in some of its 14 BHC communities. Program managers from five selected BHC sites asked to participate – Oakland, Fresno,

and three sites around Los Angeles – Boyle Heights, Long Beach, and South LA. The Endowment invited the following organizations to join the Network as regional anchor partners for the work:

- **Liberty Hill**, a nonprofit working for equality and opportunity in LA, which is the regional coordinator for the LA pilot sites (Long Beach, Boyle Heights, and South LA)
- **Urban Strategies Council** a community building support and advocacy organization in Oakland, which is the regional coordinator for the work in the Oakland-Alameda County pilot site;

Community-based partners were excited to be involved in the BMOC work and participate as equal partners with the statewide anchor organizations. The Endowment staff designing the strategy around boys and men of color suggested that Oakland, Los Angeles and Fresno were each a good strategic fit for BMOC. The geographic, historical, and demographic situations in the three locations were different. And, most importantly, each locale already had an infrastructure in place. According to Ray Colmenar, an Endowment program manager charged with carrying out the statewide BMOC strategy,

*“As much as possible we wanted to engage and build on existing efforts. We didn’t have the resources to start from zero. We wanted to start in places that had strong local partners that had the interest and capability to help us figure out how to do this locally and as part of a statewide campaign.”*

During the past five years, The Endowment has developed long-term relationships with each of these organizations. The partners offer expertise, local context knowledge and awareness and experience in diverse areas that contribute to a more holistic approach to addressing BMOC issues, including greater emphasis on grassroots organizing (“base building”), strategic communications, and data-driven advocacy.

## Solidifying the Foundation’s Support

The Endowment’s scan for organizations working on issues affecting boys and men of color also revealed many longstanding community-based organizations committed to promoting social justice and racial equity that operated at more local levels. Organizations such as Los Angeles Brotherhood Crusade; CADRE, Californians for Justice, Gay Straight Alliance Network, Restorative Justice for Oakland Youth (RJOY), and Khmer Girls in Action were functioning in communities that were selected to receive concentrated attention as part of Building Healthy Communities (BHC). For years, these organizations had been documenting the problem, rallying residents, and empowering youth to change policies and practices that had a negative impact on young people of color. For example, in 2007, RJOY teamed up with activists and the school district in Oakland to pilot an alternative approach to harsh school discipline.

The challenge for grassroots organizers and community advocates was influencing larger scale change. According to Ruben Lizardo, the foundation’s partner at PolicyLink, *“There were a lot of people that cared about the issue. The challenge is that we weren’t coordinated.”* Coordination was difficult in part because many community-based organizations were relatively small and had limited resources to bridge geographic boundaries. In addition, the focus of their efforts was different in each locale. In some places, partners’ activities focus on gang injunctions and neighborhood safety; in others trauma, immigration, or school climate. The community-based organizations could inform and influence policy at the local level. However, successfully influencing regional or state-wide policy would require greater resources and different skills.

There was already a robust advocacy infrastructure in place but the efforts were not necessarily connecting. During the first year of Network meetings, the local and state-level partners spent time establishing relationships, building trust, articulating the Network’s strategy, and finding ways to



collaborate with other efforts underway. The Endowment also invested more intentionally in building local sites' advocacy capacity. According to Phillips, *"The California Endowment had longstanding investments in the statewide advocacy infrastructure, but not local advocacy infrastructure."* State and local partners needed to be able to communicate effectively with one another.

In addition, The Endowment's statewide partners began supporting local sites in several new ways. Movement Strategy Center developed curriculum and provided technical assistance to several BHC sites to build their youth organizing capacity, which has been a critical component of the foundation's BMOC strategy. Similarly, the Warren Institute and Fenton Communications provided research and communications support to the sites. These efforts required patience and perseverance on behalf of The Endowment and its grantees, as state and local organizations clarified expectations for how to work together, learned from early mistakes and missteps, and developed more trusted relationships.

The Network represented a new platform for convening diverse but like-minded organizations and helping them overcome barriers created by their disparate geographies and separate issue areas. The Endowment's broader conceptualization of health based on a social determinants framework, created a more comprehensive framework for BMOC efforts than the one already in place. Phillips explains, *"If environment matters more than anything else, then we need solutions that will improve homes, schools and neighborhoods. And if these places operate as a system, then we need strategies that connect these solutions to each other."* As a result, The Endowment helped to broaden the scope of BMOC issues and made it easier for organizations to join together and take collective action. Organizations could now, for instance, work on school discipline issues as a collective, even if the issues they typically addressed were framed differently.

The fact that organizations had been working in their own siloes created a challenge that The Endowment had to overcome in order to spur collaboration among the organizations already working on issues around boys and men of color. The challenge, role of The Endowment in addressing it, and outcome of the foundation's efforts are summarized in Table 1.

*Table 1. The Endowment's Role in Building on Local and State Efforts*

The Challenge	The California Endowment's Role	Outcome
Fragmentation among organizations working toward outcomes that could improve the lives of boys and men of color by issue area and geography. Lack of a common framework for discussing BMOC issues broadly, so issues of relevance to BMOC were being pursued in silos.	<b>Convener:</b> The Endowment regularly gathered a diverse set of partners to develop a strategic plan using a comprehensive framework for understanding the variety of issues, policies, and practices that affect boys and men of color. Extended invitation to a broad set of organizations operating locally and statewide.	Organizations have started to recognize the interrelationship of the various issues they address and are communicating more regularly, sharing knowledge and information, and working together to achieve a common goal.

## 2. Establishing an Independent Platform to Foster Joint Action

Early on, The Endowment leaders were clear about two things. First, BMOC was not a foundation "initiative." Foundation staff involved in the initial strategic planning for BMOC advised against making BMOC a separate initiative, and recommended embedding it within the Building Healthy Communities plan. "Initiative" implies a time-limited and foundation-centered effort, whereas, The Endowment intended

for its BMOC work to strengthen and support a health equity focus as part of the overall implementation of Building Healthy Communities. Second, given the foundation's focus on policy and systems change, staff believed it was important to have external partners, including an entity independent from the foundation, which could carry forward the BMOC vision in a way that leads to policy change. As Colmenar explains,

*"If we wanted to make this just an Endowment thing, we would have created just an initiative. But because we believed that it needed to be a bigger than us in order to achieve policy, and systems change goals, we needed to support actors in the field who could build a constituency that would go beyond what we [as a foundation] would do."*

## Establishment of the Alliance for BMOC

As The Endowment's BMOC efforts has evolved, the Alliance for Boys and Men of Color, has emerged as a formal structure for bringing together statewide and local partners--many of which are grantees--to advance strategies identified by its predecessor, the Leadership and Learning Network. The Alliance has developed a range of policy objectives that includes increasing access to health services and reducing the number of youth entering the juvenile justice system (see callout box), among others.<sup>5</sup>

The goal of the Alliance has been to enable grassroots organizers to join with statewide advocates and take collective action. This goal was ambitious, and achieving it has been difficult. One of the major challenges was deciding which issues to address. According to a statewide partner, *"It took time for the Alliance partners to gel and figure out its objectives; those that are Endowment-specific and those that are Alliance-specific."* Partners wondered how much control over the strategies and objectives of the Alliance the Endowment would require. The Endowment staff consistently communicated that the work of the Alliance members should not be limited to Endowment-directed activities, yet it was difficult to discern where, if at all, the priorities of The Endowment and the priorities of the Alliance differed.

Endowment partners recognized that perhaps the biggest demarcation was that members of the Alliance could lobby (with funds from other sources) and The Endowment could not. The Endowment's nonprofit status prevents its funds from being used to lobby for specific legislation. Therefore, the Alliance has been an important partner for the BMOC work because of its ability to receive grants from other institutions that can be used to advocate for specific legislation, in addition to receiving grants for related policy activities such as educating, convening, and capacity building. According to an Endowment program manager, *"I think the Alliance has started successfully. They're identifying funding partners and putting in their own resources. We tell people they can't lobby with our money."*

As the Alliance for BMOC has grown, the foundation's partners are starting to perceive that the statewide work is becoming more

### Alliance for Boys and Men of Color Policy Objectives

1. Increase access to health services that recognize the strengths and assets of boys and young men of color while also responding to the trauma and chronic adversity that many face
2. Achieve 100 percent high-school graduation rates among boys and young men of color by strengthening the performance of public schools and reducing expulsion rates
3. Ensure boys and young men of color live in safe neighborhoods and can attend safe schools
4. Reduce the numbers of youth who enter the juvenile justice system and ensure those who leave the system have the skills needed to succeed
5. Increase access to the types of education and training that lead to meaningful employment

<sup>5</sup> Alliance for Boys and Men of Color. (March 2013). *Purpose and Policy Objectives* (PDF). Handout at Convening on Boys and Men of Color hosted by The California Endowment.

independent. Some Alliance partners have formed working groups and have begun to identify their policy issues separate from The Endowment's involvement. However, others still don't perceive the Alliance as totally independent from The Endowment. One statewide partner describes how current funding patterns limit their ability to differentiate: *"Although [The Endowment] wants the Alliance to thrive outside of the issues they're focusing on, it's hard when a large majority of Alliance members are TCE-funded."* Moreover, at the local level, organizations seem to be much more dependent on funding from The Endowment.

More than two years into convening state and local partners to work on issues related to BMOC, the Alliance has become a space where organizations had grown familiar with each other's work. Partners are organized in several work groups based on the Alliance's priorities (e.g., school discipline, health, employment). Several members of the workgroups are also engaged in the different BHC campaigns (Health Happens in Neighborhoods, Schools, and Prevention) which facilitates integration between BHC and BMOC work. The engagement of BHC grantees with the Alliance is helping grantees tailor the work they are doing to support young men of color or see the work with a BMOC lens.

In some cases it has been challenging to keep partners engaged and foster collaboration among The Endowment's grantees. For example, some BHC statewide partners are working with the Alliance's Health Workgroup to organize the work to remove barriers for men of color to enroll in affordable health plans supported by the new Affordable Care Act legislation. A statewide partner explains, *"The Workgroup agenda isn't about healthcare and insurance. The group talks about trauma informed care, healing places [...] there doesn't seem to be a strong interest in coverage issues."* Identifying common goals has proven challenging for some Workgroups, many of which engage a diverse set of stakeholders with varied missions and approaches. As a consequence, some groups continue to interact frequently, yet have largely continued operating independently from each other.

Currently, the Alliance plays an important role engaging BHC sites and their grantees in BMOC work. The Alliance, together with The Endowment organized the first BMOC & BHC Conference in Los Angeles in April 2013, where grantees from the 14 sites learned about the ways in which they could be involved in BMOC work. The Alliance is engaging partners through webinars and trainings in topics such as strategies to improve the health of California's undocumented young men of color, food policy, job training, among other topics. Currently, in addition to the pilot sites, there are local BMOC efforts in Santa Ana, Sacramento, Salinas, and Coachella. Also, with a strong presence in social media, the Alliance is also communicating with the public and mobilizing support for different policy actions.

One of the challenges in fostering an independent platform for collaborative efforts between local and state-level actors was distinguishing the agenda and activities of the Alliance for BMOC from The Endowment's own agenda. The role of The Endowment as it continues to overcome this challenge is summarized in Table 2.

Table 2. The Endowment's Role in Establishing an Independent Platform for Joint Action

The Challenge	The California Endowment's Role	Outcome
Distinguishing the work of the Alliance from the work of The Endowment given the substantial overlap between the two entities' priorities and member organizations that are also grantees	<b>Communicator:</b> The Endowment has communicated early and often that they expect the Alliance to grow in a way that is not overly reliant on the foundation's funding or support. For that reason, The Endowment has provided resources to further distinguish the work of the Alliance from its work	The Alliance is starting to build its own identity and brand apart from The Endowment, yet, different funding partners are needed to reinforce over the long-term, that the Alliance is not an Endowment-driven entity

### 3. Partnering with Systems Leaders to Capitalize on Strategic Opportunities

Another critical aspect of The Endowment's boys and men of color efforts has been its attention to developing relationships with systems leaders at a state and local level. As the Alliance was taking shape, another effort was underway in Sacramento by a bipartisan group of legislators to establish the Assembly Select Committee on the status of Boys and Men of Color in late 2011 (see vignette, pages 5-6). The Select Committee was tasked with developing a comprehensive set of state policy priorities to support young men of color.

The Select Committee was determined to use its statewide hearings to identify specific policy actions that could help to solve the problems that were preventing boys and men of color from thriving. *"It's uncommon for a committee like [the Select Committee on BMOC] to make a commitment to the field, to partner together and go deep on some issues,"* said Lizardo, the foundation's partner at PolicyLink. By pursuing a deliberate strategy that engages the legislature, The Endowment and its local and statewide partners have an opportunity to maximize their impact on the lives of young people in the state. The engagement in the hearings created formal relationship with the Select Committee. The Alliance now had a direct avenue to move policy from the different sites participating in the BMOC work to the state legislature. Also, many of the Alliance statewide partners supported the work of the Select Committee. The work of the foundation, the Alliance, and the Select Committee became highly aligned.

In addition to engaging elected officials through the statewide Select Committee process, The Endowment has been proactive in engaging local systems leaders in its local BMOC efforts. In Oakland, for example, the BMOC work is organized around two tables comprised of systems leaders and community partners. Its Public Systems Leadership Table includes leaders from five key local governmental agencies, including the Oakland Mayor's Office and Alameda County Department of Health. The Community Partners' Table includes key nonprofits and community organizations working with youth in Fresno, such as the Black Organizing Project and the East Bay Asian Youth Center. Urban Strategies is supporting both tables' collaborative efforts to determine their priorities and identify an issue they could work together to address. The Select Committee hearings provided an opportunity for both tables to come together. *"We saw the two tables acting together during the Select Committee hearing. All of the systems leaders testified, the community partners were very involved, and so were youth,"* said a foundation program manager.

At times, The Endowment's dual relationship with community organizers and advocacy groups posed a challenge to developing a strong partnership with public officials. The Endowment and its partners at the

Alliance wanted to ensure that advocacy groups and organized residents presented a united front, voicing concerns and solutions that policy officials could respond to. Because community and state-level groups represent the interests of different constituencies, they can also have different expectations for what constitutes a policy “win.” In some cases, community advocates have used tactics or language that puts public officials on the hot seat, isolating them, rather than bringing them along as partners. The Endowment’s role in fostering relationships with systems leaders is summarized in Table 3.

Keeping community-based organizations engaged in the ongoing work of the Alliance and its various policy workgroups and action teams will continue to be a challenge. The Select Committee hearings provided an opportunity for local groups to rally, and for youth and other community leaders to get involved in tangible ways. The Endowment will need to continue to manage the diverse interests and needs of state-level advocates and grassroots organizers as its work moves forward.

*Table 3. The Endowment’s Role in Partnering with Systems Leaders*

The Challenge	The California Endowment’s Role	Outcome
Leaders at the community and state-levels use different strategies and tactics to influence policy change. These groups represent the interests of different constituencies (e.g., community-specific versus statewide), and may have different expectations for what constitutes a policy “win.”	<b>Connector:</b> The Endowment connected public officials working in the Select Committee to the Alliance and its statewide and local partners so they could organize around common issues and collaborate; it is funding effective organizations to foster local collaboration between diverse groups.	Alliance partners gained credibility in the eyes of both state and local public officials, making it easier for the Select Committee to adopt a plan that largely reflects the issues, priorities, and framework that The Endowment and Alliance partners had identified.

#### 4. Leveraging the Building Healthy Communities and BMOC Platforms to Pursue Shared Priorities

The Endowment recognized early on that improving the lives of boys and young men of color was an effort that cut across the foundation’s place-based (Healthy Communities) and statewide (Healthy California) efforts, and staff worked hard to make sure boys and men of color were a core priority within the overall Building Healthy Communities (BHC) plan.

Since The Endowment’s BMOC and BHC efforts evolved in tandem, Endowment staff and grantees alike have wondered how to most effectively integrate the two strategies. The Endowment sees BHC as a platform for advancing BMOC issues moving forward. As an Endowment program manager explained, *“I view the Building Healthy Communities work as a big tent with lots of populations and strategies under it. And, I see our boys and men of color work much more as a scalpel. It’s more specific and targeted.”* While this view is held by some Endowment staff, integrating BHC and BMOC efforts has not been easy.

In part, the challenge comes from differences in how specific sites approach issues related to boys and men of color. For example, at the end of the BHC planning phase, only the three designated pilot sites — Fresno, Oakland, and LA—were explicitly developing strategies to target improvements in among boys and men of color. And none of the 14 BHC sites chose the Endowment-endorsed outcome — “Health gaps for boys and young men of color are narrowed” — as one of their community priorities for BHC during the planning process. Sandra Davis, an Endowment program manager in Oakland explains, *“In Oakland, we didn’t prioritize that outcome, but people were deliberate in saying that this is a population that needed to*



*be looked at. It was like an overarching priority.*” Other BHC program managers express a similar viewpoint, particularly in places where a large proportion of young people are people of color.

The understanding of the “overarching” nature of BMOC work was at play in other communities, as well. From conversations with local BHC site staff and program managers, The Endowment learned that that issues affecting boys and young men of color, such as violence, trauma, school discipline, and policing practices, were critical priorities for the community, but they were not defined as a specific priority area. Rather, these issues were seen as integral to every aspect of their work, particularly in places where the majority of adults and youth are people of color.

## School Discipline Brings Together BHC and BMOC

Some of The Endowment’s ongoing efforts to integrate its BMOC and BHC efforts have already begun to yield results. The greatest example is in the area of school discipline. Statewide program staff working to advance the BHC Health Happens in Schools campaign identified an opportunity to take concerns that were being voiced by youth in BHC communities including Fresno and Los Angeles and broaden the campaign to a statewide level.

A confluence of events made it possible to connect the BHC and BMOC efforts. The Assembly Select Committee hearings provided an opportunity for BHC and BMOC staff and grantees to work together to bring school discipline to attention of policymakers through rallies, testimony, and other communication channels. In addition, two of the BMOC pilot communities had already identified school discipline as a priority, and sent large numbers of youth to speak at the regional Select Committee hearings, as well as at the events held in Sacramento. The young people shared personal stories of how harsh school discipline policies had affected their own lives—presentations which were not only emotional and deeply moving but also very powerful. This set the stage for school district officials to then speak about the urgent need for policy changes to reduce unnecessary suspensions and expulsions. One such speaker was Tony Smith, former Superintendent at Oakland Unified School District, an early BHC partner.

By October 2013, several school discipline bills had been voted on and approved by the legislature, and signed into law by Governor Brown. The success of this BHC campaign has helped focus the attention of statewide – and some local – BMOC partners on an issue that resonated also for organizations working on the BHC Health Happens in Schools campaign. Endowment staff intentionally connected BMOC and BHC partners so that their efforts were coordinated, and resources were shared for maximum impact.

## Integrating BHC and BMOC Locally

Despite the success in advancing issues such as school climate and school discipline, efforts to integrate the goals of BMOC and BHC have been challenging. The Endowment had to overcome a number of structural and implementation hurdles in its quest to further align BHC and BMOC efforts.

The three BMOC pilot sites have engaged in an ongoing process of experimentation and learning to understand whether and how to best integrate the efforts of grantees pulled in through its BMOC and BHC strategies. Sites are experiencing ongoing tensions between local BHC and BMOC partners and grantees, which do not always perceive each other as collaborators working toward a common goal. As a result, organizations working locally may duplicate efforts, and some may even perceive others as competitors for funding or for involving youth in their work. For example, BMOC and BHC integration has been a priority in Fresno, and Endowment staff has spoken about the need to integrate efforts between the BHC and the BMOC Youth Tables. Fresno Program Manager Sarah Reyes explains, *“We wanted it to be one effort in Fresno. We didn’t want BHC and BMOC to be two separate initiatives or efforts. Our resources aren’t as great as other places. Our issues intertwine with each other.”* For example, Students

United to Create a Climate of Engagement, Support and Safety (SUCCESS), worked with the school district to implement restorative justice practices for three years. It led a successful campaign that ended in a decision by the Fresno Unified School District Board to scale up restorative justice practices district wide, and was accompanied by a \$500,000 implementation commitment from the district's Superintendent. In Oakland, youth-focused organizations supported through grants from BHC and BMOC are collaborating to ensure that these best practices around schools' restorative practices are becoming institutionalized and spread throughout the district.

The Los Angeles BMOC effort started later in the process, and they took a very intentional approach to aligning the BHC and BMOC work, as well. The Endowment decided that all the organizations supported by the boys and men of color funding, would also need to be anchor organizations for BHC. *"We knew BMOC had to be integrated in BHC so we chose organizations that are in both worlds,"* explained a foundation program manager.

In some cases, tensions arose due to the different ways of defining the local BHC agenda. On one hand, the BHC agenda includes a broad range of issues, from land use to violence prevention and health access; and on the other hand, the agenda focuses on very specific geographic target areas. By contrast, the BMOC agenda can be interpreted as narrowly-focused on specific issues that only relate to a subset of each site's population, yet can also include activities that are regional or statewide in scale. One benefit to bringing a population-specific lens to the local BHC work is the lack of a specific geographic zone. *"I consider it a good thing that BMOC doesn't lack the acute geographic restrictions that the BHC does,"* said a BHC grantee.

Integrating BHC and BMOC has created tensions within the Endowment as well. When the Endowment created a budgetary line item for BMOC, the intent was to provide program managers with additional resources to allocate toward advancing BMOC issues locally and statewide, and to create a greater focus on BMOC within Building Healthy Communities. In practice, this has yielded unintended tensions and confusion. In Oakland, for example, grantees distinguish themselves as working on either BHC or BMOC efforts. This language helps to create boundaries around the scope of grantees' activities in helpful ways, yet it also has been used to determine who might be "in" or "out" of an event or conversation. As an Endowment grantee explains, *"At the first statewide convening [...] there was a lot of confusion among BMOC and BHC grantees around who was doing what."* In some places, BHC and BMOC leaders may be working on the same issue, but with different organizations and strategies; for example, a BHC site might create a committee to work on school discipline comprised largely of BHC grantees, even though a BMOC committee is also working on school discipline. The Endowment is recognizing this challenge and has started to make sure that BMOC and BHC are integrated well enough to reduce duplicative (or even competing) efforts and structures, though it likely will remain a challenge.

So far, the approach that seems most effective has been integrating BMOC work into the BHC activities already underway, rather than dictating that BMOC activities must be carried out in addition to, or in lieu of, the BHC funded efforts. For example, in the BMOC LA coalition, Brothers, Sons, Selves, the major youth organizations leading the BHC youth work were asked to be part of the pilot sites and participate in the Alliance. Early on, youth-serving organization leaders identified issues that would align with both the BHC and BMOC work, and they chose school discipline as a primary focus for their local BMOC efforts. As a result, the BMOC strategy and campaign is also the BHC youth strategy and campaign.

Another factor that aids integration is The Endowment's partnership with Movement Strategy Center and other organizations that are able to serve as a bridge between sites or different types of organizations (e.g., grassroots advocates and state-level policy wonks). Movement Strategy Center understands the on-the-ground local grassroots organizing and advocacy efforts that are occurring across several BHC

sites, which; enables them to provide guidance on how to integrate BHC and BMOC efforts. It also positions them to provide technical assistance and capacity building for sites' youth leadership and youth organizing activities that has been well-received by local BHC grantees and program staff.

Partners are now starting to see some benefits of integration across BHC and BMOC. One outcome has been that local BHC sites are now more capable of identifying priorities on which local stakeholders can take concrete action. A mantra of one youth participant in the BMOC work is, *"no meeting without a mission, no committee without a campaign."* The local BMOC work is driven by community priorities, yet has a narrower focus than most sites' BHC work, making it easier for partners to determine their priorities.

## Integrating BMOC and BHC Statewide

The issue of school discipline spurred a greater recognition of the complementary nature of The Endowment's BHC and BMOC work, both locally and statewide. For The Endowment staff and anchor partners at the local pilot sites, this complementarity was already obvious. Yet, statewide BMOC grantees were not always sure how to support both BMOC and BHC efforts—in part because BMOC and BHC are structured differently. For example, organizations that receive grants spanning multiple communities may be expected to work with BHC sites and grantees. However, some statewide grantees have experienced strong pushback from local program managers, site staff, and grantees, particularly when the services or support they are offering do not directly align with the current understanding of community priorities. When program managers and Hub staff act as gatekeepers for a BHC site, it makes communication and collaboration between statewide grantees and local organizers more complicated and complex.

At the state level, The Endowment staff has aimed to strategically identify partners with a demonstrated commitment to issues that are also priorities for the boys and men of color agenda. For example, Endowment program managers have approached organizations such as the California Pan Ethnic Health Network, which focuses on increasing health coverage, in order to expand the number and types of organizations working on BMOC issues. This approach has worked best when statewide BHC partners are working on issues that align specifically with the priorities of local BMOC partners, such as increasing trauma-informed practices or providing support for youth the juvenile justice system.

Looking ahead, The Endowment is taking bold steps to further integrate BMOC priorities into BHC through the development of clear rules for cross-departmental collaboration around BMOC efforts. In addition, The Endowment is supporting the expansion of the Alliance to increase its reach (through a platform for BMOC statewide) into more of its BHC sites, and other communities in California that aren't currently part of BHC. In March 2013, The Endowment held the first convening of all its local BHC partners to learn more about the Alliance for BMOC and extend an invitation for more communities to get involved. The foundation's Sons and Brothers strategy explicitly links its boys and men of color work to the priorities and tactics of the three BHC campaigns.

The Endowment has played several roles to addressing the challenge of integrating its BMOC and BHC efforts locally and statewide, which are summarized in Table 4.

Table 4. The Endowment's Role in Leveraging Building Healthy Communities

The Challenge	The California Endowment's Role	Outcome
BHC and BMOC began as separate and independent internal efforts with different funding streams, which made it difficult to pursue an integrated approach to addressing BMOC issues within the context of BHC	<b>Connector:</b> Having The Endowment leadership and site-level program managers champion the integration of BHC and BMOC and communicate its importance to staff and grantees, has helped to connect organizations and reinforce the importance of working together toward a common goal	The Endowment's BMOC staff were able to identify similar objectives of Alliance for BMOC statewide and site partners, and the BHC effort overall around school discipline, which helped to change state policy
BHC and the BMOC partners and grantees do not always see themselves as collaborators or partners working toward a common goal	<b>Influencer:</b> The Endowment has reached out strategically to organizations that can support a shared BHC and BMOC agenda. Recently, The Endowment is asking statewide BHC grantees to include objectives related to BMOC as part of their grant renewal process	Organizations are learning how to integrate BMOC priorities into their BHC work

## 5. Harnessing the Passion of Youth to Change the Narrative



Figure 2 - Young leaders during BMOC Camp 2012

Youth have been central to the foundation's boys and young men of color (BMOC) strategy from the very start. As one young leader said, youth are being engaged *"not only as stakeholders, but thought partners and their own advocates."* Youth currently participate in a variety of activities, including sitting on local governing bodies (e.g., BHC steering committees), participating on Dr. Ross's President's Youth Council, attending BMOC Summer Camp, and leading the work of the BHC Statewide Steering Committee on Youth leadership.

Moreover, thousands of youth have shown up to advocate for better school discipline policies at local school board meetings and legislative hearings. Young people are passionate, they want to get involved, their energy is infectious, and their testimonies can change hearts and minds— especially those of key decision-makers and community leaders.

As part of the Los Angeles BMOC work, youth organizing groups are able to collectively mobilize young people for action on a specific issue, such as removing "willful defiance" as a legitimate rationale for suspending or expelling a student. With Liberty Hill managing the campaign and determining logistics for the various participating local youth organizing groups in the region, the efforts have been more effective. According to local organizers and school officials, the ability to mobilize such a large number of youth from across LA was an important factor in the passage of a new School Climate Bill of Rights for LA

Unified School District in spring of 2013, which eliminated “willful defiance” as a factor for suspensions and expulsions.

The statewide BMOC Camp also plays a critical role connecting and fostering the BMOC work in the different BHC sites. Over the last three years, youth from all over the state come together for a transformational experience where they learned about youth leadership, participate in healing circles, share their life experiences, and learn from each other. For example, one youth reflected, *“During the camp we discuss different policy issues in the state that affect us. During those discussions I felt I was really being heard when I was giving out information. People were truly listening to me”* mentioned a camp participant. The camp gives youth a broader perspective of how the work they are doing locally connects the statewide work and the work in other communities in California. They are able to see how the issues affecting them are also affecting youth in other parts of the state, and, most importantly, how youth in other communities are advocating for positive change. According to some foundation program managers, the camp has helped strengthen youth involvement in BHC in sites where it has been difficult engaging with you.

The Endowment is also funding grantees to build youths’ leadership skills so they can be more effective advocates for themselves and their communities. A young leader in Sacramento explained, *“I have grown into a better leader, and I can help others, I sit down with them and help them out. I’ve also become a better public speaker; I can stand in front of people without passing out and losing all of my words.”* When youth are properly trained, they are able to more effectively participate in the different local and statewide opportunities presented by the Alliance and BHC, such as immigration marches in Santa Ana or the efforts to engage with the school district in Fresno.

The ability of these enthusiastic and properly trained youth of color has been a pivotal factor in the early success of the BMOC work. As staffer in Sacramento explains

*“This morning, we saw something we don’t see very much: actual testimony affecting policymakers. Before a hearing, you usually know what the vote count is going to be. But in this case you can see the testimony of these young men impacting some of the decisions. It’s actually changing minds. That’s the impact I’ve seen.”*

The involvement of young men in the work is part of The Endowment’s commitment to change the narrative about this group. *“Most of the work with this community is focusing on the donut hole instead of the cake. We need to focus on the cake, we need to focus on youth as assets,”* said a foundation program manager. As the work has unfolded, numerous examples of how youth are changing the narrative in California have emerged. For example, youth in Fresno sat with the Superintendent of the Fresno Unified School District (FUSD) to discuss including restorative justice and alternatives to harsh school discipline policies. In May 2013, thanks to the involvement of Fresno youth, the FUSD Board of Trustees adopted a resolution to implement a school discipline framework of restorative justice. This is just one of example of how, through the Endowment’s BMOC work, Latino, African American, and Asian youth are changing how they are perceived. An increasing number of communities in California are seeing the contributions that youth of color are making and can make to society, rather than focusing solely on their vulnerabilities and needs. A participant in one of the youth programs in Sacramento said, *“I was being trusted, I was the youth representative for the steering committee. You go out there and speak in front of super intelligent people. It was great to see them look at me and understand what I was saying.”*

One of the major lessons learned through the Endowment’s youth leadership work for BMOC is the importance of engaging adult allies and developing a structured way of engaging youth. As an Endowment program manager explains,



*“Young people have been really successful, but not of their own accord. We need infrastructure, adult allies, and opportunities to excel. It doesn’t just happen by surprise. It takes a coordinated and organized effort to get youth to the places where they can make change. Without structure in place we don’t have youth leadership.”*

Developing trusted relationships with young people takes time. A number of the Endowment’s local partners have well-established track records working with youth. And it’s often based on these trusted relationships with adults that youth gain the confidence and skill to take on youth leadership or organizing efforts, whether they are part of building a new park in Santa Ana or organizing an annual BMOC Summit in Sacramento. These examples illustrate that boys and young men of color are not just being engaged in the pilot sites, but across the 14 BHC sites.

Another lesson learned in working with youth is that there is an urgent need to develop a greater number of young leaders. Particularly in places where youth organizing capacity has been historically low, local nonprofits end up in competition for the attention and involvement of the same young people. And where BHC and BMOC are not integrated well, this has created some confusion. *“Who is their allegiance to? The BHC group, the BMOC group, or the nonprofit we are working with?”* asked an Endowment program manager. *“Youth see all these different names doing work that’s of interest to them, but have no way to properly divide their time and decide whose meetings to attend.”* To help address this issue, the Endowment is supporting statewide partners, including Movement Strategy Center and the California Center for Civic Participation, to increase the capacity of the different sites to reach out more youth.

Developing youth leaders and supporting youth organizing has been one of the easiest connections to make between the BMOC and BHC work, because the strategy is largely the same. However, training youth leaders takes time. As a statewide partner said, *“You can’t just pull young people into a hearing and have them testify.”* In the haste of pursuing state-level policy changes, The Endowment has at times expected sites to send youth speakers a moment’s notice. A partner in Oakland reflects, *“They asked us to bring about 20 young men of color to engage with legislators during hearings. We [...] found ourselves having to respond without much advance notice.”* In order to help sites lay the groundwork for developing and training young leaders across the 14 BHC sites, The Endowment is promoting the sharing of best practices, and is piloting a BMOC toolkit in Santa Ana so that sites do not have to start from scratch and reinvent the wheel.

The Endowment has played a critical role in listening to and addressing the needs of youth involved in its boys and men of color campaigns, which is summarized in Table 5.

*Table 5. The Endowment’s Role in Harnessing the Passion of Youth*

The Challenge	The California Endowment’s Role	Outcome
Establishing an environment where youth can be fully active in, benefit from the BMOC work, and show society their great potential	<b>Enabler:</b> The Endowment has provided training to equip youth, opportunities for leadership locally and statewide, platforms for engaging with other youth, and stipends for youth’s active involvement in BMOC activities; The Endowment is attentive to making sure youth voice is being raised up and considered by foundation leaders and their partners (policymakers, nonprofits)	Youth are a central part of the BMOC work and their voices are being heard by policymakers and community leaders at local and state level. This is starting to change the way they are perceived by community leaders and elected officials

## The Role of The Endowment in the BMOC Movement

The Endowment's role in the statewide BMOC movement statewide has evolved tremendously over the past five years. The foundation went from being a supportive funder of a small number of promising organizations to being the primary funder of BMOC related-work statewide.

In carrying out its activities to strengthen the infrastructure and capacity around issues affecting boys and young men of color, The Endowment has played several critical roles beyond that of a traditional grantmaker (Table 6).

*Table 6. Roles The Endowment Is Playing in Supporting Boys and Men of Color*

Roles	Representative Quote
<b>Convener</b>	"The Alliance is allowing opportunities for real collaboration, particularly for local partners. [...] Many of our local partners, especially the base building partners (e.g., PICO), have a statewide infrastructure that allows them to participate. And for those organizations without the infrastructure, the Alliance has allowed them to expand their base of power in a way that would have been an unlikely if the Alliance were not around."
<b>Communicator</b>	"[The Endowment] is the big gorilla. They get people to pay attention to things that they might not pay attention to. They were critical in pushing the ball over the fence for school discipline."
<b>Connector</b>	"The Endowment was responsible for pulling all the necessary pieces together for the plan. They were the ones who funded the Select Committee to use the Warren Institute, they had PolicyLink, and they brought those academic elements together for [the Committee's] use."
<b>Influencer</b>	"As grantees come and renew their grants, our program managers are putting in their work plan specific objectives related to boys and men of color. That's how we're integrating our boys and men of color work with Building Healthy Communities."
<b>Enabler</b>	"The Endowment brought the youth to the Select Committee and made sure that their voice was heard. We had them testify. The youth already had stories; they just didn't have a forum to tell them."

In addition, The Endowment has placed important boundaries around its BMOC work. Its efforts focus on developing the capacity of organizations and collaboratives to impact and influence policy and systems change. This means that the many programs and services that meet the immediate physical, mental, emotional, and material needs of young men of color and their families must raise resources elsewhere.

As the evolution of the foundation's BMOC work illustrates, The Endowment's role as connector has been critical. The Endowment has fostered collaboration between local and state grantees and partners to advance policies on issues related to BMOC. They have brought together diverse stakeholder groups, including lawyers, activists, politicians, and youth, that had not worked together before.

The Endowment has influenced the direction of BMOC efforts, as well. Program managers are close to the work. As an Alliance partner reflects, *"The Endowment is always hands-on. They have never stopped being hands on, because they committed a lot of money to do this."* At the same time, the foundation realized that in order to have an impact on BMOC policy statewide, it needed to support actors in the field who could advocate, and lobby for specific legislation. A foundation-led initiative would not give the

partners the leverage required to achieve policy and systems change goals. As a result, the Endowment has positioned itself as a critical support for the larger movement around BMOC issues statewide.

Thus far, The Endowment seems to be navigating well the delicate balance between being directive about its priorities while providing flexibility for grantees to tackle issues that might not align perfectly with The Endowment's priorities, but are important for advancing boys and men of color work broadly.

According to an Alliance partner, *"There was an agreement between TCE staff and the state partners that we would not just work on the stuff TCE gave us."* Grantees were asked to take part in strengthening the boys and men of color network, rather than just accepting and executing on a specific grant agreement. As a BMOC grantee explains,

*"In the other [Health Happens Here] campaigns, The Endowment decides what the goals are. And while there is flexibility in the way the goals get done, there is a TCE-driven agenda in the three campaigns. But we [BMOC partners] have the Alliance that is actually surfacing and organizing folks and building an agenda."*

At the same time, The Endowment continues to fund the vast majority of Alliance for BMOC partners. This raises the question of how truly independent the statewide BMOC agenda really is, and how independent it will be without more funding partners coming on board.

## Looking Ahead

While the BMOC work offers a compelling model for the rest of The Endowment to consider, it is also unique compared to other campaigns or tactics within the Building Healthy Communities strategy. These differentiators include focusing on improving the livelihood and wellbeing of a specific population, rather than around a specific issue, such as safety, land use, or transportation, or in a targeted place (within California).

In addition, the statewide BMOC work has been informed by and designed in collaboration with community leaders since 2009. While many of the issues and policy solutions were identified early on, the process of building trust and bringing on partners was instrumental to establishing a level playing field where state and local level organizations could make decisions together, share resources, and take collective action.

A critical factor that is contributing to the early successes of The Endowment's BMOC strategy has been its relationship with PolicyLink and its commitment to establishing the Alliance. The Alliance has helped bridge the divide between state-level advocates and community activists, and has created a neutral space for different types of organizations to come together. *"One X factor we [BMOC partners] have is the Alliance and having PolicyLink as the designated convener for statewide work,"* described an Endowment program manager. *"We have a designated organization that can create on-ramps for other BHC sites to engage."* The Endowment has not identified such an intermediary to take the lead in its other statewide efforts.

The Endowment sees its role in BMOC as an area for continuous learning. *"We're entering into the space where our partners are occupying,"* described an Endowment program manager. *"We need to learn how to do that well, so we're not stepping on toes and we're emphasizing the change-making we're [achieving] with the values and resources and we have."*

As the Endowment looks to the future, staff working on BMOC efforts have started to ask whether it will be possible to replicate the success of school discipline in other domains, such as land use, safety, and health care. It's clear that there is much work left to be done, both in terms of the agenda outlined for BMOC, as well as The Endowment's broader Building Healthy Communities campaigns.

There are several indicators that the infrastructure and leadership capacity that The Endowment has helped create will be sustained, at least in the near term. *“If TCE or PolicyLink went away, [the BMOC] work would continue. We’ve created this tent so that people can get energy from one another without draining their other work,”* explained an Alliance partner. The tireless efforts by led by passionate, deeply committed leaders are not likely to cease any time soon. Similarly, the Select Committee will remain a public policy platform for issues affecting boys and men of color as long as the interest and perceived need remains within the Assembly.

Ultimately, The Endowment will continue learning into its strategy to improve the lives of boys and men of color. The future of this efforts and The California Endowment’s role in supporting the broader movement around boys and young men of color looks promising.







## FSG

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