The Alliance for Advancing Outcomes

Convening Takeaways

November 2026

Introduction

Leaders didn't just come together. They built practical, community-driven solutions that put community wisdom at the center of systems change.

In June 2025, leaders from across the country convened at the Morehouse School of Medicine to reimagine outcomes for African American children and families. The Forum on Advancing Outcomes for African American Children and Families was hosted by the Black Administrators in Child Welfare and the National African American Child and Family Research Center, with support from the American Public Human Services Association (APHSA) and Chapin Hall. Bringing together leaders from public systems, community organizations, advocacy, philanthropy, and research, the convening reflected a shared recognition: despite ongoing efforts, systems continue to fall short of offering what children, families, and communities need to thrive.

This convening was intentionally designed to do more than examine programs or policies. It created space to center community wisdom, living/lived experience, and relational power as essential drivers of systems change. Participants engaged across sectors to explore not only what must change, but how change must happen differently through shared power, governance, and collective accountability.

Grounded in APHSA's Community and Social Impact (CSI) approach (APHSA, n.d.) and supported by Chapin Hall's Blue Sky Possibilities (BSP) framework (Chapin Hall, 2023), the Forum connected systems thinking with living/lived experience, strengthening alignment across sectors while deepening a shared commitment to community-centered transformation.

This document captures key insights and takeaways from the Forum and suggests a path forward. It serves as both a reflection of collective learning and a call to action for sustained, coordinated change. We suggest advancing stronger alignment between systems and communities to cogovern, codesign, and collaboratively solve the complex challenges that shape outcomes for children and families and expand access to opportunity.

This document is intended to be a practical tool for leaders across systems and communities. It supports reflection, informs strategy, and guides action by helping organizations assess alignment, identify opportunities for shared work, and strengthen community-centered approaches. For public systems, it offers a framework for aligning policy and practice with community-defined priorities. For community-based organizations, advocates, and partners, it provides language, evidence, and strategies to support engagement, collaboration, and collective action. Across sectors, it serves as a shared reference point to advance coordinated, community-governed systems change.

This document was developed through a collaborative effort between APHSA and Chapin Hall, drawing on insights from the Alliance members and the Forum on Advancing Outcomes for African American Children and Families.

Background

Across the country, public system employees are trying to improve outcomes for children and families. While meaningful progress has been made, there remains a significant opportunity to strengthen outcomes for African American children and families across child welfare, education, health, economic mobility, and community safety. Strong families and thriving communities are the foundation of a strong nation. Achieving better outcomes requires collaboration among public agencies, community organizations, faith-based partners, businesses, and families to identify practical solutions that expand opportunities and strengthen community well-being.

Many of today's challenges have developed over time through a combination of historical circumstances, policy decisions, economic conditions, and barriers that can limit access to opportunity. Addressing these challenges requires approaches that are community-informed, data-driven, and focused on what works for children and families.

The Forum was convened to bring together leaders from across sectors to explore solutions grounded in partnership, innovation, and shared responsibility. Together, participants examined critical questions:

- How can public systems strengthen partnerships with communities to better support children and families?
- How can policy, practice, and service delivery evolve to promote family stability, well-being, and long-term success?
- How can the voices and lived experiences of children, families, and communities help inform better decision-making and more effective solutions?

The Forum was designed not simply as a conversation, but as the beginning of an ongoing commitment to strengthen partnerships, align public and private efforts, and advance practical, community-centered strategies **that improve outcomes for African American children and families while strengthening communities for everyone.**

Convening Overview

Convening Approach

The convening brought together leaders with diverse perspectives and experiences, including public agency leaders, community advocates, researchers, philanthropic partners, and individuals with living/lived experience navigating human services systems. The gathering was intentionally designed to support open dialogue, shared learning, and collective problem-solving. Participants engaged in facilitated discussions, small-group conversations, and structured activities aimed at identifying both challenges and opportunities for systems change.

Guiding Questions

Discussions were grounded in a shared set of guiding questions:

- What does success look like for African American children, families, and communities?
- What are the most significant barriers that systems must address?
- How can communities serve as true partners in designing solutions?
- What changes are needed in policy, funding, and practice?
- How can leaders work across sectors to create sustainable change?

Workgroups

Participants also engaged in small group work to explore specific areas of opportunity and identify actionable strategies. Each group focused on:

- Key challenges facing children and families
- Opportunities for cross-sector collaboration
- Strategies to center community voice and living/lived experience
- Potential actions that could be advanced collectively

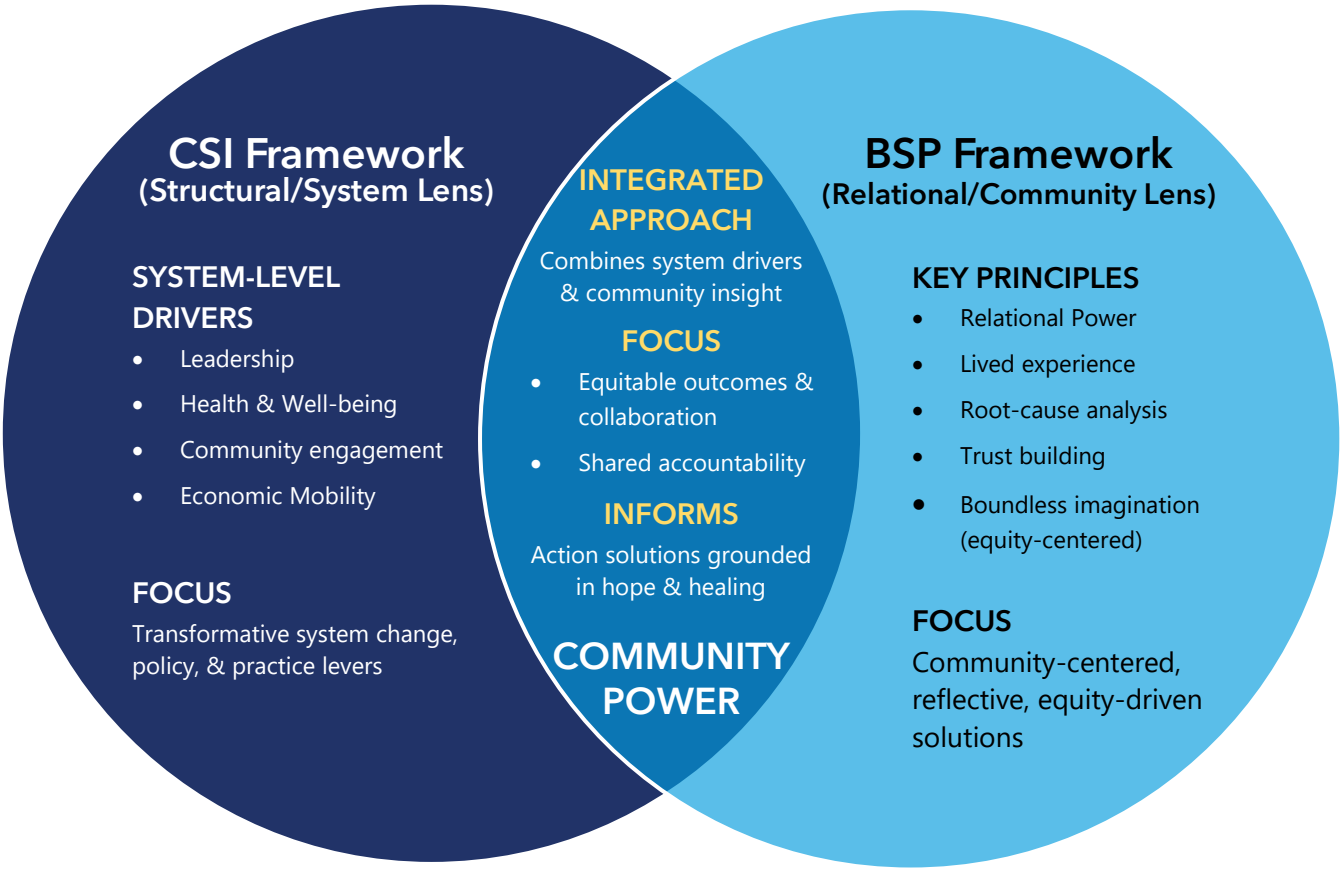
These discussions helped surface practical insights and informed the key takeaways that follow.

Activating CSI to Guide Structural Change Through Relational Practice

During the convening, participants engaged CSI's drivers through structured dialogue supported by BSP's facilitative practices. Guided questions surfaced real-world challenges, explored disconnects between formal policy and internal policies, and examined imbalances across child welfare, economic supports, education, and health system.

Figure 1 illustrates CSI as the foundational approach guiding the work, with BSP supporting activation through facilitative practices that strengthened relational engagement and informed actionable insights.

Figure 1. Integrated Approach of Community and Social Impact with Blue Sky Possibilities



During the convening, participants engaged with a series of guided questions that facilitated dialogue around real-world challenges. They worked on crafting a policy agenda, identifying disconnects between formal public policy and internal policies, and exploring imbalances across systems such as child welfare, economic supports, education, and health services.

In practice, this included:

- Small group discussions, in which participants explored challenges in service delivery, such as gaps between organizational practices and community needs, and drafted recommendations to improve coordination across agencies.
- Discussions of education systems and policies, in which participants identified ways to elevate family and youth voices in shaping discipline, curriculum, and support services.
- Participants reflecting on neighborhood safety and health initiatives, proposing strategies that integrated community input with system-level planning.
- Participants generated key takeaways from these discussions that reflect CSI's overarching approach to systems change, connecting structural drivers with living/lived experience and translating insight into action.

CSI served as the organizing strategy for the work, shaping how participants examined leadership, power, policy, and accountability across interconnected systems. BSP supported this process by facilitating relational dialogue, strengthening trust, and creating space for deeper reflection. This included:

- examining how agency policies and internal practices align, or misalign, with community-defined priorities;
- identifying cross-system opportunities to address misalignment and improve outcomes across child welfare, economic supports, health, and education; and
- integrating relational practices to ensure that community wisdom informs decision-making, not just discussion.

Participants connected high-level system drivers with living/lived experiences, surfacing actionable insights that directly inform policy, practice, and community engagement.

Anchored in CSI's approach and supported by relational facilitation, the convening helped participants:

- Translate community wisdom into shared decision-making structures
- Identify actionable shifts in policy and practice
- Strengthen shared accountability across systems

This approach moved discussions from abstract frameworks to concrete, actionable strategies, preparing participants to translate systems thinking into policies and practices that reflect community priorities and living/lived realities.

Seen through this integrated lens, the Forum became the launching point for The Alliance for Advancing Outcomes (the Alliance), a national, community-rooted movement bringing together families, community leaders, advocates, and service systems to drive meaningful change. The Alliance works to improve outcomes by aligning programs and policies, strengthening community leadership, and promoting shared responsibility across organizations.

Grounded in the living/lived experience and knowledge of communities, the Alliance combines practical systems strategies with community-driven approaches. For example, it supports collaborative decision-making where families and local leaders help shape policy priorities, identifies gaps in services like child welfare and education, and develops coordinated solutions that address these gaps directly. By connecting policy reform with on-the-ground practice improvements, the Alliance helps organizations and communities implement changes that are actionable, measurable, and responsive to local needs.

Together, these elements allow the Alliance to coordinate cross-system strategies, adjust policies and practices based on community input, and foster long-term change in mindsets and behaviors. Ultimately, this creates fair outcomes and expands access to opportunities for children, families, and communities.

The Alliance Work

The Alliance for Advancing Outcomes is a national, community-rooted effort designed to translate the Forum's insights into sustained, coordinated action. It brings together leaders and organizations committed to improving outcomes for African American children and families through aligned, cross-sector strategies.

The Alliance for Advancing Outcomes is a national, community-rooted movement advancing CSI's approach in action. It works to reduce barriers to opportunity and improve outcomes by aligning programs and policies, strengthening community governance, and promoting shared responsibility across organizations and systems.

Rather than operating as a traditional program, the Alliance functions as a platform for collaboration, shared learning, and collective accountability, advancing systems change grounded in community leadership and living/lived experience. It creates the conditions for systems and communities to cogovern, codesign, and solve complex challenges.

The Alliance focuses on three core functions.

Convening Leaders

The Alliance brings together leaders from government, community-based organizations, philanthropy, and research to build relationships, align priorities, and identify opportunities for coordinated action.

Supporting Innovation

Through collaboration and shared learning, the Alliance identifies and advances strategies that strengthen families and communities, with a focus on approaches that are community-informed, responsive, and scalable.

Advancing Systems Change

The Alliance works to influence policy, practice, and funding decisions by elevating community voice, integrating research and living/lived experience, and promoting alignment across systems. Together, these efforts establish the foundation for translating dialogue into coordinated action, enabling systems and communities to govern, design, and solve challenges together in real and sustained ways. Summary: From Discussion to Takeaways

Through guided dialogue and cross-sector workgroups, participants examined disconnects between policy intent and living/lived experience, identified misalignments across systems, and identified

opportunities for shared action. Conversations focused on child welfare, economic supports, education, health, and community empowerment. These were not discussed as isolated domains, but as interconnected systems shaping family and community outcomes.

These discussions generated a set of core takeaways that reflect a shared conclusion: Persistent gaps in outcomes and barriers to opportunities are not the result of isolated program failures. Rather, they occur because of systems designed without community governance, trust, and shared accountability. The takeaways that follow translate this insight into clear priorities for action.

Each takeaway is grounded in cross-sector evidence that explains ***why change is necessary*****, followed by a description of *how communities and systems can collaborate* to mobilize that change in practice. Together, these elements move the work from diagnosis to action by anchoring systems transformation into community cocreation, shared power, and collective accountability.**



Takeaway 1: Community is the centerpiece of change

Sustainable systems change happens when families and communities move from being recipients of services to creating, governing, and owning solutions with system workers. Fair and lasting outcomes across child welfare, economic supports, health, and family well-being require systems and communities to share power in defining priorities, shaping decisions, and governing solutions.

Supporting Data

- Cross-sector evidence shows that gaps in positive outcomes persist across child welfare, economic mobility, health, and education systems even after policy reform, increased funding, and program expansion, indicating that technical and systems-led approaches alone are insufficient to produce equitable outcomes (Lery et al., 2022; Organizing Committee, 2022)
- National and federal evaluations of community-level initiatives find that siloed, agency-driven strategies struggle to achieve sustained impact on complex social outcomes without community ownership and cross-system alignment (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2017; Riley et al., 2021)
- Research across health, economic mobility, and human services shows that lack of trust in public systems reduces participation, uptake of supports, and effectiveness of interventions, particularly in historically marginalized communities (Clinical and Translational Science Awards Consortium, 2011; Cyril et al., 2015)
- Meta-analyses and reviews of place-based and community-driven initiatives demonstrate that efforts incorporating shared decision-making and resident leadership are more likely to achieve durable improvements than top-down models (Cyril et al., 2015; O'Mara-Eves et al., 2015; National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2017)
- Taken together, this evidence indicates that systems fail to close gaps when communities are positioned as recipients or advisors rather than as co-owners of change (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2017; Riley et al., 2021)

What the data prove: Systems cannot close gaps in opportunities through policy and programs alone; lasting change requires communities to be cogovernors with real decision-making power, working alongside systems to design solutions and solve problems together.

How Communities Can Apply This Takeaway

Communities and systems make community the centerpiece of change by shifting power, roles, and accountability, not simply increasing engagement.

In practice, this collaboration looks like:

- Systems creating shared governance structures where community members hold decision-making authority alongside agency leaders
- Communities codefining priorities and success measures across child welfare prevention, economic stability, health access, and family well-being
- Agencies aligning policies, funding, and performance measures with community-identified needs and strategies
- Communities and systems jointly reviewing data, living/lived experience, and outcomes to adapt practice and course-correct in real time

This collaboration moves systems from delivering services to communities toward building solutions with communities.

Community & Social Impact Approach

This takeaway advances CSI by embedding shared decision-making and governance, while aligning with BSP's emphasis on relational power, living/lived experience, and root-cause understanding to position community as cocreator and co-owner of systems change.

Takeaway 2: Bridging the silos in Black advocacy and philanthropy

This takeaway reflects the Forum's recognition that fragmentation across advocacy, philanthropy, and systems weakens impact and places unnecessary burden on Black families and community leaders. Participants lifted up the need for shared strategy, aligned investments, and coordinated action across sectors rather than parallel, disconnected efforts.

Supporting Data

- Research on cross-sector and collective impact initiatives shows that fragmented systems and uncoordinated funding streams limit effectiveness in addressing complex social problems, particularly those shaped by systemic barriers affecting communities (Kania & Kramer, 2011)
- Evaluations of human services and community change efforts find that parallel initiatives operating without shared strategy often duplicate effort, strain community capacity, and dilute impact, reducing trust and sustainability (ORS Impact & Spark Policy Institute, 2018)
- Evidence indicates that alignment across policy, philanthropy, and community leadership is critical for addressing interconnected challenges across child welfare, economic stability, health, and education, rather than treating them as isolated issues (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2017; ORS Impact & Spark Policy Institute, 2018)

What these data prove: Differences in outcomes are not the result of isolated system failures, but of misalignment across systems, funding, and leadership, making siloed approaches structurally insufficient.

How Communities Can Apply This Takeaway

Communities and systems can bridge these silos by replacing parallel efforts with shared vision, coordinated strategy, and collective accountability.

In practice, this collaboration looks like:

- Advocacy organizations, philanthropic partners, and public systems aligning around shared priorities defined with community leadership
- Funders supporting braided or pooled investments that reinforce community-led strategies rather than competing initiatives
- Systems coordinating policies and practices across child welfare, economic supports, health, and education to reduce fragmentation
- Communities serving as connectors and conveners, ensuring efforts remain grounded in living/lived experience and local context

Community & Social Impact Approach

This takeaway advances CSI by strengthening alignment and shared accountability across sectors, while aligning with BSP's focus on collective action and relational trust to reduce fragmentation and amplify community-led impact.

Takeaway 3: Healing is a strategy, not a side effort

Forum participants emphasized that healing—individual, collective, and institutional—is foundational to sustainable systems change. Trauma, stress, and historical harm shape how families experience systems, how leaders lead, and how communities engage. Healing was lifted up not as a supplement, but as a core strategy.

Supporting Data

- Cross-sector research shows that trauma and chronic stress negatively affect outcomes across child welfare involvement, health, educational engagement, and economic stability, particularly in communities experiencing long-term structural barriers that fail to support thriving conditions (Bartlett & Steber, 2019; National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2019; Vivrette et al., 2023)
- Studies demonstrate that systems emphasizing compliance and surveillance without addressing trauma can compound harm and disengagement, undermining the effectiveness of policy and practice reforms (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2019; Vivrette, 2023)
- Evidence from education, child welfare, and health systems shows that trauma-informed and culturally responsive approaches improve engagement, stability, and well-being, supporting healing as a core strategy rather than a supplemental one (Bartlett & Steber, 2019; Vivrette et al., 2023)

What these data prove: Without intentional, healing-centered approaches, systems inadvertently reproduce harm, undermine trust, and limit the effectiveness of policy and practice reforms.

How Communities Can Apply This Takeaway

Communities and systems mobilize this takeaway by embedding healing into leadership, policy, and practice, not treating it as an add-on.

In practice, this collaboration looks like:

- Communities shaping definitions of healing, well-being, and success based on cultural and living/lived experience
- Systems integrating trauma-informed, culturally grounded practices into policy implementation and workforce development
- Shared spaces for reflection, restoration, and learning that support families, frontline workers, and community leaders
- Leaders modeling healing-centered leadership and creating conditions for sustainability rather than burnout

Community & Social Impact Approach

This takeaway advances CSI by embedding healing-centered practices into systems change, while aligning with BSP's emphasis on healing, human connection, and dignity as foundational conditions for sustainable transformation.

Takeaway 4: Data justice and transparency drive accountability

Participants consistently identified data as both a tool of harm and a tool for liberation. When data are inaccessible, misused, or divorced from living/lived experience, trust is eroded. When communities help shape how data is collected, interpreted, and shared, it becomes a driver of accountability and change.

Supporting Data

- Evidence shows that gaps in positive outcomes persist even when performance data is collected and reported, indicating that data alone does not drive accountability or change (Coleman et al., 2018; Cunningham & Harris, 2005; Moynihan, 2005)
- Research finds that communities often lack access to timely, relevant, and disaggregated data about outcomes that directly affect them, limiting their ability to advocate for change or hold systems accountable (Axelrod et al., 2022; Cohen et al., 2022)
- Studies of participatory data governance and community-engaged evaluation show stronger accountability and responsiveness when lived experience informs how data are interpreted and used, rather than relying solely on administrative metrics (Cohen et al., 2022; Torres Rodriguez et al., 2023)
- **What these data prove:** Transparency without community ownership fails to shift outcomes; accountability emerges when data is shared, contextualized, and governed with communities.

How Communities Can Apply This Takeaway

Communities and systems can move toward this takeaway by co-owning data as a shared accountability tool.

In practice, this collaboration looks like:

- Communities helping define what data are collected, how they are disaggregated, and what success looks like
- Systems creating accessible dashboards and feedback loops grounded in community priorities
- Joint data reviews that combine quantitative indicators with living/lived experience
- Communities using data to inform advocacy, policy alignment, and practice change

Community & Social Impact Approach

This takeaway advances CSI by promoting transparent, community-informed data use, while aligning with BSP's focus on shared meaning-making and power-aware data interpretation to strengthen trust and accountability.

Takeaway 5: Reclaiming and redefining power

This takeaway reflects the Forum's call to shift from "power over" to "power with." Participants indicated that gaps in positive outcomes persist not only because of policy gaps, but because decision-making authority is concentrated away from the families and communities most impacted by systems.

Supporting Data

- Cross-sector research demonstrates that barriers to opportunity persist due to how systems make decisions and those systems' discretionary practices (Baron et al., 2024; Girvan et al., 2017)
- Evidence shows that lack of community governance and family decision-making authority contributes to disparate outcomes across child welfare, education, health, and economic systems, particularly for Black families (Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2021; Casey Family Programs, 2024)
- Studies indicate outcomes improve when families and communities are meaningfully involved in decisions that affect their lives, reinforcing the need to shift from the "power over" model to the "power with" model (Chuah et al., 2018; Cyril et al., 2015)
- **What these data prove:** Without redistributing power, systems reforms alone cannot produce fair outcomes or expand access to opportunity.

How Communities Can Apply This Takeaway

Communities and systems can act on this takeaway by intentionally redistributing authority and leadership.

In practice, this collaboration looks like:

- Establishing shared governance and decision-making structures with real authority
- Elevating intergenerational leadership, including youth and caregivers
- Systems adapting policies and practices based on community-led decisions
- Communities holding systems accountable through collective voice and action

Community & Social Impact Approach

Reclaiming and redefining power can help CSI advance by redistributing authority and elevating shared governance, while aligning with BSP's emphasis on relational power and community agency to shift systems from "power over" to "power with."

Takeaway 6: Aligning policy and practice

Participants identified a persistent disconnect between policy intent and living/lived experience. This takeaway reflects the need to align formal policy reform with on-the-ground practice and community innovation.

Supporting Data

- Research shows that policy reforms frequently fail to translate into improved outcomes due to implementation gaps and misalignment with community realities, limiting impact despite formal change (Aarons et al., 2011; Weeks, 2021)
- Evidence demonstrates that frontline discretion and internal agency practices significantly shape outcomes, sometimes undermining policy intent and reinforcing disparities (Baron et al., 2024; Putnam-Hornstein et al., 2013)
- Cross-sector studies find stronger results when policy design and implementation are informed by lived experience and continuous feedback, rather than static compliance measures (Cyril et al., 2015; Ramanadhan et al., 2024)
- **What these data prove:** Policy change without aligned practice and community input limits impact.

How Communities Can Apply This Takeaway

Communities and systems mobilize this takeaway by connecting policy reform to community-driven practice.

In practice, this collaboration looks like:

- Communities informing both policy design and implementation strategies
- Systems supporting community-led pilots and practice innovation
- Continuous feedback loops between living/lived experience, data, and policy adjustment
- Shared accountability for translating intent into impact, with systems and communities codesigning and collaborating on implementation in real time
- Creating conditions for systems and communities to cogovern, codesign, and, together, resolve problems that directly impact families

Community & Social Impact Approach

Aligning policy and practice advances CSI by closing the gap between policy intent and living/lived experience, while aligning with BSP's focus on reflective practice and continuous learning to ensure policies work in real-world contexts.

Takeaway 7: Building economic power

Forum discussions emphasized that economic stability is foundational to child and family well-being and deeply connected to outcomes across systems. Participants framed economic power as a strategy to expand access to opportunity.

Supporting Data

- Persistent gaps in income, wealth, and poverty constrain access to stability, health, and opportunity across generations, shaping outcomes across child welfare, education, and health systems (Odgers, 2015; Perry et al., 2024)
- Research links economic instability to increased system involvement and poorer outcomes for children and families, particularly in communities facing structural disadvantage (Bald et al., 2022; Lery et al., 2024)
- Evidence shows that income supports, wealth-building strategies, and reparative investments improve long-term family and community outcomes, reinforcing economic power as a core strategy for fairness and access to opportunity (Huang et al., 2014; Shanks et al., 2024)

What these data prove: Differences in access to economic opportunity are a root driver of outcomes across systems.

How Communities Can Apply This Takeaway

Communities and systems can act on this takeaway by advancing economic strategies grounded in community priorities.

In practice, this collaboration looks like:

- Communities shaping economic policy priorities and investment strategies
- Systems aligning supports across housing, income, workforce, and family stability
- Philanthropic organizations and public agencies supporting reparative and community-driven investments
- Communities should lead wealth-building initiatives rooted in place and culture

Community & Social Impact Approach

By building economic power, CSI is advanced by prioritizing wealth-building and economic stability strategies, while aligning with BSP's emphasis on dignity, opportunity, and community-defined success to address root causes of systemic barriers.

Takeaway 8: Faith, culture, and storytelling as connective tissue

Participants lifted up faith leaders, artists, and cultural anchors as essential connectors across systems and communities, shaping identity, belonging, and collective action.

Supporting Data

- Research shows that holistic, community-grounded approaches improve engagement, trust, and resilience across education, health, and community systems, particularly in communities of color (Cyril et al., 2015; Griner & Smith, 2006)
- Evidence indicates that narrative and storytelling shape public perception, policy priorities, and collective action, influencing how systems respond to community needs (Niederdeppe et al., 2023)
- Studies demonstrate that faith and cultural institutions play a stabilizing role in community well-being and civic engagement, serving as trusted anchors across systems (Gilbert et al., 2022; Liu et al., 2009; McNeill et al., 2018)

What these data prove: Culture and narrative are not peripheral; they are core drivers of engagement and systems change.

How Communities Can Apply This Takeaway

Communities and systems mobilize this takeaway by partnering with cultural and faith leaders as costrategists.

In practice, this collaboration looks like:

- Systems recognizing faith and cultural leaders as trusted messengers and conveners
- Communities using storytelling to shape policy narratives and movement building
- Cross-sector partnerships that center culture, belonging, and identity
- Shared efforts to elevate community narratives alongside data

Community & Social Impact Approach

Using faith, culture, and storytelling advances CSI by leveraging trusted cultural and faith-based leadership, while aligning with BSP's focus on belonging, narrative power, and cultural grounding to strengthen connection and movement-building.

Takeaway 9: Leadership requires rest and renewal

The Forum emphasized that sustainable change requires leaders who are supported, well, and whole. Burnout and exhaustion were named as systemic risks to long-term transformation

Supporting Data

- Evidence shows high levels of burnout among educators, social service professionals, and community leaders, particularly in under-resourced settings, weakening system performance and continuity (Bottiani et al., 2019; Steiner et al., 2025)
- Research links burnout to turnover, reduced effectiveness, and diminished outcomes, threatening the sustainability of reforms focused on fairness and access to opportunity (Im et al., 2024; Morse et al., 2012)
- Studies demonstrate that restorative, trauma-informed leadership practices improve workforce well-being and long-term effectiveness, supporting rest and renewal as foundational to systems change (Morse et al., 2012; Vivrette et al., 2023)

What these data prove: Systems change cannot be sustained without investing in the well-being of those leading the work.

How Communities Can Apply This Takeaway

Communities and systems can encourage leaders to rest by embedding wellness and restoration into leadership structures.

In practice, this collaboration looks like:

- Systems investing in supportive workplace policies and leadership development
- Communities cocreating spaces for reflection, renewal, and collective care
- Funders valuing sustainability and well-being as measures of success
- Leaders modeling balance and healing-centered leadership

Community & Social Impact Approach

This takeaway advances CSI by prioritizing leader sustainability and workforce well-being, while aligning with BSP's emphasis on healing, reflection, and collective care as essential to long-term systems change.

Rationale

The scale and persistence of differences across child welfare, economic mobility, health, and education make clear that these challenges are systemic rather than program specific. Evidence documenting child poverty, wealth gaps, foster care overrepresentation, gaps in educational and health outcomes, alongside research demonstrating unwarranted differences in system decision-making, confirms that fragmented, siloed approaches are insufficient to produce lasting change.

Takeaways from the Forum reinforce this conclusion. Participants consistently identified misaligned systems, disconnected leadership efforts, and parallel initiatives operating without shared strategy or accountability. These dynamics dilute impact, strain community trust, and place undue burden on families and community leaders navigating multiple, uncoordinated systems.

The Alliance for Advancing Outcomes responds directly to these conditions by offering a coordinated, cross-sector platform for action, one that centers community governance, aligns leadership across systems, and translates shared values into collective strategy. Rather than adding another initiative, the Alliance is positioned to strengthen alignment, support shared accountability, and advance systems change rooted in community leadership.

In short, advancing fair outcomes and expanding access to opportunity requires moving from isolated efforts to aligned, community-governed action. The Alliance offers a mechanism to reduce fragmentation, build collective leadership, and translate shared values into coordinated strategies that are community-led, data-informed, and action-oriented.

Together, these insights point to a clear imperative: advancing fair outcomes and expanding access to opportunity requires coordinated, community-governed action across systems.

Call to Action

Insights from the Forum make clear that advancing fair outcomes and expanded access to opportunity requires moving from fragmented efforts to coordinated, community-governed action.

Improving outcomes for African American children and families requires more than conversation. It requires collective leadership, sustained partnership, and the courage to rethink how systems operate and who holds power within them. The Alliance for Advancing Outcomes invites leaders across sectors to join this shared effort.

Together, we can:

- Strengthen alignment and partnership between systems and communities
- Elevate the voices, leadership, and living/lived experiences of families
- Design and implement policies and practices that reflect community priorities and support long-term well-being
- Build systems that are responsive, accountable, and grounded in the strengths and wisdom of the communities they serve

- Build shared structures and practices that enable systems and communities to govern, design, and collaboratively solve challenges together

The work ahead is complex, but the path forward is clear. By working together, we can move from fragmented efforts to coordinated, community-governed action building systems that expand opportunity and support thriving children, families, and communities.

Next Steps

Building on the Forum's insights and shared commitments, the Alliance's next phase of work will focus on deepening learning, strengthening partnerships, and advancing action across the key takeaways. The Alliance will launch a series of in-depth learning engagements focused on putting the Forum's key takeaways into practice.

These learning series will be developed in partnership with public systems, community-based organizations, advocacy groups, and faith leaders, creating spaces to translate the Forum's takeaways into practical strategies, peer learning, and implementation support.

If you bring living/lived experience, system expertise, research, or practice-based knowledge in these areas, we invite you to collaborate with us. Together, we can deepen understanding, strengthen alignment, and accelerate systems change rooted in community leadership.

Closing

The Alliance for Advancing Outcomes reflects a shared commitment to reimagining how systems support African American children, families, and communities. What began as a convening of leaders has grown into a collective effort to align strategies, strengthen partnerships, and advance change grounded in community leadership and living/lived experience.

This work calls for more than alignment; it calls for transformation. It requires shifting how decisions are made, how power is shared, and how systems define success. It challenges leaders across sectors to move beyond isolated efforts toward coordinated action rooted in trust, accountability, and community governance.

This moment represents both an opportunity and a responsibility: to move from dialogue to sustained action, from fragmentation to alignment, and from intention to impact. In doing so, we can build systems where children, families, and communities not only succeed, but thrive with dignity, resilience, and freedom.

Statement of Independence and Integrity

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Chapin Hall partners with policymakers, practitioners, and philanthropists at the forefront of research and policy development by applying a unique blend of scientific research, real-world experience, and policy expertise to construct actionable information, practical tools, and, ultimately, positive change for children and families.

Established in 1985, Chapin Hall's areas of research include child welfare systems, community capacity to support children and families, and youth homelessness. For more information about Chapin Hall, visit www.chapinhall.org or @Chapin_Hall.

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