



Enterprising Ventures of Color
Inaugural Fellowship Cohort

Final Report
Flint, Michigan
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Enterprising Ventures of Color Inaugural Fellowship Cohort

Executive Summary

Enterprising Ventures of Color

At Enterprising Ventures of Color (EVC), we imagine a future where nonprofit leaders of color deliver impact from a place of abundance and opportunity rather than scarcity and limitation. In pursuit of this goal, we combine capacity building and enterprise capital to create financially resilient organizations able to overcome three of the most pressing economic and social barriers nonprofit leaders of color face as they catalyze change and disrupt systems of inequity. These gaps include:

- **Racial Leadership Gap:** Systemic biases and barriers – not individual deficits – limit opportunity, access, and advancement for leaders of color who aspire to executive leadership roles.
- **Racial Organizational Capacity Gap:** Disproportionately, nonprofit leaders of color are forced into a vicious cycle of attending capacity-building training but receiving smaller grants as a precondition for more desirable multi-year unrestricted dollars.
- **Racial Funding Gap:** Over the last 20 years, only 10% of philanthropic dollars have gone to organizations led by people of color, despite giving increasing nearly 400% over the same period.

The EVC Flint Program

The EVC Flint Program provided transformational capacity-building experiences for a cohort of fellows and organizations in the following sectors in Flint, MI:

- **Housing:** nonprofits focused on housing supports, be they HUD-certified housing counselors or generally supporting people in their pursuit of homeownership
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- **Comprehensive Social Services:** organizations that provide holistic service support to families (housing, employment, healthcare, childcare, tax services)
- **Community Development:** nonprofits that act as real estate developers in their communities and/or provide a wide range of services to support a designated community
- **Workforce Development:** nonprofits that focus on employment placement as a primary service area and mission project

- Youth Engagement: nonprofits that have programming targeted almost exclusively to those below 25 years old (career, leadership, and college preparation)

Specifically, EVC Flint’s target beneficiaries included 15 diverse nonprofit executives; their eight (8) nonprofit organizations serving Flint residents; and funding entities, including banks, private foundations, corporations, funder advisory groups, and funder-led networks. **The selected diverse-led Flint nonprofits included Big Brothers Big Sisters, Center for Higher Educational Achievement, InvolvedDad, Literacy Network, MADE Institute, Motherly Intercession, Sylvester Broome Empowerment Village, The Flint Center, and Voices for Children.** Note: Center for Higher Educational Achievement opted out of the Fellowship and Flint Center for Educational Excellence invited to engage with the leadership transition of Angela Hood.

The EVC Flint Program’s transformational capacity-building activities included tailored and culturally specific coaching, consulting, and training in key areas:

- Personal Leadership Development and Organizational Capacity Building
- Enterprise Capital and Financial Management Training
- Racial Economic Equity Profile Development
- Racial Economic Equity Workshops Rooted in Data
- Leveraging In-City Networks
- Community Wide-Engagement

Cohort Selection: The rigorous cohort selection process included interviews with dozens of organizations, site visits, and a formal written application. EVC invited eight organizations to comprise the Inaugural EVC Flint cohort.

Strengthening Organizations: EVC Fellows committed to 18 months of learning, coaching, and building – both collectively and for their individual organizations.

Strengthening Racial Economic & Racial Equity Across Greater Flint: Throughout the engagement period, EVC integrated action-based principles centered on Fellows’ abilities to transform not only their individual organizations but also the nonprofit ecosystem, their city, and their society at large.

EVC Flint Program Final Assessment

At the end of the 18-month fellowship, EVC performed an assessment of the Flint cohort, to assess developments across Fellows’ leadership, organizational capacity and funding.

EVC administered surveys of Fellows to collect insights on: (1) the frequency with which they implement practices from their Breakthrough Action Leadership coaching; (2) the extent to which they’ve met the capacity-building goals outlined by EVC Staff and Coaches across Effective Communication, Strategic Planning, Revenue Generation, and Financial Management; and (3) their budgets and major gifts since starting in the cohort.

High-Level Insights

- Progress in Addressing the Racial Leadership Gap: EVC has worked to narrow the gender wealth gap since fifty-seven percent (57%) of the cohort fellows of women of color. This intentional investment in leadership development, cultivation, and empowerment has proven to benefit organizations by increasing their organizational financial positions, allowing executive directors to advocate for increased annual salaries and benefits. **Two (2) EVC Fellows reported that their participation in EVC gave them the confidence to negotiate higher wages. The EVC Fellows reported increased visibility and participation in conferences and events.**
- Progress in Addressing the Racial Organizational Gap: EVC's approach has pivoted nonprofit organizations' program designs to be data and outcomes-oriented. **One hundred percent (100%) of Flint, MI cohort leaders have engaged in new programming efforts with other organizations in the cohort. Eighty-two percent (82%) of organization leaders have implemented new practices to serve the residents across Flint better. Seventy-three percent (73%) report engaging in new programming efforts with other organizations outside the cohort due to their participation in EVC.**
- Progress in Addressing the Racial Funding Gap: EVC has worked to improve organizations' financial capacity. EVC Fellows have reported increased funding opportunities. They are expanding their networks within and outside the cohort to identify new grants and fundraising avenues. **Four of the eight organizations (50%) reported receiving unrestricted, multi-year grants from new funders for the first time.**
- Among the most important themes emerging to date centers on nonprofit leadership. It is rare, for instance, to have an effective, charismatic nonprofit executive who isn't also a strategic thinker and a great fundraiser. **Our findings in Flint highlight nonprofit leaders of color lacking the confidence to diagnose and seek support to address the technical gaps they identify to advance their organizations.** The restrictive nature of funding primarily drives this. Our findings highlight the critical role of nurturing personal leadership capacities to achieve increased programmatic outcomes.

Final Assessment Insights

Closing the Leadership Development Gap in Flint

The Racial Leadership Gap

Systemic biases and barriers – not individual deficits – limit opportunity, access, and advancement for leaders of color who aspire to executive leadership roles.

- 79% of board chairs and executive directors are White, despite being 60% of the population, and while 68% of the nonprofit workforce is non-White
- All White boards govern 16% of nonprofits that primarily focus on serving people of color and 38% of organizations that do not primarily focus on people of color
- Only 21% of executive directors and board chairs are people

EVC Flint Progress

The cohort has shown substantial progress, especially in leadership development. Namely, they have experienced increased connectedness to cohort members and power brokers in the community, an increased sense of responsibility and capacity to self-reflect and give feedback to others, and increased visibility in the ecosystem.

Increased Connectedness: The EVC Fellowship has successfully increased the connectedness of its cohort members, fostering a sense of collective power. Leaders have established new relationships with power brokers in the community, which is crucial for their roles in effecting systemic change.

Sense of Responsibility: The Fellowship's principles, including responsibility, have taken root among participants. Leaders are now demonstrating a stronger sense of responsibility, which is a foundational element for successful leadership.

Self-Reflection and Feedback: Leadership development, especially in the area of self-reflection and feedback, has seen significant progress. Leaders have gained greater insight into their strengths and areas for improvement, which contributes to their personal and professional growth.

Increased Visibility and Conference Participation: Leaders have reported increased visibility and participation in conferences and events. This suggests that EVC Fellows have grown as leaders and gained recognition for their expertise and contributions in the field of racial equity. Their development allows them to show up differently in their organizations, both as stronger leaders and by creating space and opportunity for increased leadership amongst staff members.

Strategic Planning and Critical Thinking: While there has been progress, some leaders still require more substantial strategic planning support, especially those with fewer years in nonprofit leadership roles. Providing additional coaching and training in these areas could be beneficial.

Marketing and Marketability: The subcommittee focused on marketing could enhance its efforts to promote the cohort's work. This could include improving the marketability of individual leaders by sharing organizational posters and opportunities for their delivery of elevator pitches that effectively showcase their leadership abilities.

Quantitative Highlights

- 91% reported they implement Responsibility practices at least weekly, 55% report implementing Self-Reflect practices at least weekly, and 45% implement Collective Leadership practices at least weekly
- 92% experienced improved credibility to engage in issues of racial wealth inequality in the city, compared to 46% who reported so at the midpoint
- 67% experienced improved visibility as a leader of color in the city, a 21% increase from what was reported in the midpoint assessment
- 64% have been invited to speak at conferences and other events due to participation in EVC

Qualitative Highlights

Upon completion of the EVC Fellowship, Fellows report “improved credibility to engage in issues of racial wealth inequalities” and “improved visibility as a leader of color” in their city. Similarly to the development seen in their communications strategies, growth in these areas strengthens the leaders’ capacity to represent those most marginalized and bring to center stage issues that have been deprioritized by leading interests.

EVC Fellow Spotlight: Leon El Alamin, Executive Director of MADE Institute, was appointed to fill Flint’s first ward City Council seat, where he will serve until the next election. A Flint native, from a zip code with one of the lowest life expectancies in the county, Leon is uniquely positioned to use his power to transform the conditions of citizens whose circumstances are often seen as irrelevant or intractable.

Beyond results-based accountability training, cohort leaders also worked to build their social capital. For example, the cohort attended the Just Economy Conference in Washington, D.C., hosted by the National Community Reinvestment Coalition with leaders from around the nation; made elevator pitch presentations to volunteer judges from the nonprofit ecosystem; and was featured at the Capstone Salon Dinner, an ABC12-covered event, where leaders presented their solutions to improve social determinant of health outcomes and livelihood in the city. The leaders now leave the program having earned their own greater internal confidence, plus their cohort's and broader community's confidence.

Leaders' Development of Collective Power

In their final assessments, leaders demonstrated increased adoption of local power-building activities, setting them up for a more significant impact on the city. Upon their entry into the program, EVC introduced the Fellows to its three action-based principles:

- Courageous and Transformational Leadership in the face of an uphill battle for racial equity;
- Building Collective Power with the awareness that they are stronger and more capable together; and,
- Pay it Forward by building bridges for those barred from opportunity.

The cohort resonates strongly with the Building Collective Power principle, consistently demonstrating its commitment to creating a united front to improve the lives of its constituents and the broader community.

Insights from expert coaches:

- *EVC has given these leaders back self-worth, the right to believe and fight for what they need to make their organizations great, and most importantly, the tools to trust themselves. They also have the communication skills to speak what matters to the audience they are addressing, to show that each EVC fellow organization belongs and has something for their community. – Andrea Levere*
- *The leaders have worked to grow their networks, with clear knowledge of the gravity of what they have undertaken. A truly safe, healthy and strong community can only be won if they work collaboratively. – Kayla Williams*
- *Their collective power building tendencies are seen routinely in their cohort wide communications. Pictures consistently flow of leaders' presence at the events and programs being held by their cohort members. They are present, encouraging, and always open to collaborate. They see that their missions, though distinct, are inextricably linked, and thus, so are their journeys. – Lillian Singh*

Insights from EVC Fellows:

- *I'm feeling good about my coaching sessions. David has been supporting me with my supervision role. Being in a new leadership role, he's coached me through a lot of talking situations. Before, if the job wasn't getting done, I'd do it, but he's empowered me to share with my organizations that they are capable, talk to them as leaders themselves.*
- *David's sessions have helped me take an inward look at my leadership (before outwardly) and in the long term helps me to communicate with my team and have a more cohesive team based on leadership style. It also helps me identify weaknesses in the team from both angles.*
- *If any time I needed those sessions, it was then—in this transitional period. It's been key in me knowing my worth and power. There is an opportunity to make some changes at this time.*

- *I've never had a personal bio before. Doing that work made me talk about myself. David has also been a big piece in trying to help us sell ourselves- I've been selling myself short when it is not about the organization and questioning my self-worth in the ecosystem—but people want to know about my leadership style.*

Closing the Organizational Capacity Gap in Flint

The Racial Organizational Capacity Gap

Organizations with leaders of color disproportionately have their capacity under scrutiny by funders, despite executing above and beyond, both objectively and in comparison, to their white counterparts. Too often, diverse-led organizations are disproportionately forced into vicious cycles of capacity-building training focused on their deficits rather than assets.

- 64% of BIPOC led organizations developed services to better support people of color compared to 52% of White-led organizations
- 81% of BIPOC led nonprofits saw an increase in service demand during the pandemic compared to 67% of White-led organizations
- 57% of BIPOC leaders have lived experiences representative of the communities they serve compared to 18% of White leaders
- 59% of BIPOC led organizations took a system-level approach to problem-solving through policy advocacy compared to 41% of White-led organizations

EVC Flint Progress

The Flint cohort has worked intensively to strengthen the visions, strategies, and practices of their organizations. From human resources best practices to financial management training and resources, the coaches, especially, have played a key role in the increased capacity of the organizations since the program launch.

Collaboration and Program Expansion: A noteworthy development is collaboration and program expansion. EVC Fellows have engaged in new programming efforts both within the cohort and with other community leaders. This reflects their commitment to building collective power and their growing influence within the nonprofit ecosystem.

Strategic Planning: Progress in strategic planning is evident. Fellows have focused on developing value propositions and strategies across their programs. The cohort's work in this area demonstrates a commitment to long-term organizational sustainability.

Effective Communications: Leaders need further support in developing and refining communication strategies for their organizations. Especially in the face of limited resources and human capital, they need efficient communication strategies that allow

them to say more with less. However, they also need trust from funders in their fields of expertise so that they don't need to create strategies tailored to granter's desires in terms of what they want to see and hear more of.

Quantitative Highlights

Collaboration and Program Expansion

- 100% reported they have engaged in new programming efforts with other organizations in the cohort
- 82% of organization leaders have implemented new practices to serve residents across Flint better
- 73% reported engaging in new programming efforts with other organizations outside the cohort due to their participation in EVC
- EVC fellows reported three (3) new connections per leader on average
- Additionally, the average number of organizations outside of the cohort with whom they reported collaborating on programming rose from one (1) to three (3)

EVC FELLOW SPOTLIGHT: Lisa Humphrey from Big Brothers Big Sisters and Nicole Hayes from Motherly Intercession benefited from additional capacity building to build proposal content inventories—a compilation of content focused on the most frequently asked questions in grant applications. They worked with an EVC consultant (a narrative development expert) to build their content inventories. This resource contributed to more persuasive cases and greater efficiencies in securing two grants to work together to advance the missions of both organizations, totaling \$190,000.

Strategic Planning Development

- 70% established/refined a clear strategy across programs and activities
- 70% solidified their organization's value proposition
- 50% identified the organization's revenue generation strategies
- 70% undertook a strategic planning process
- 50% began operationalizing a strategic plan
- 66% experienced maintenance/proper use of the board to maximize their positive influence in the organization

Effective Communications Capacity

Communication capacity holds the highest reported increase in scores on average, with

- 50% reporting strong proficiency in Acknowledgement of Reputation and Brand Awareness
- 50% achieving a satisfactory level; 33% report strong proficiency in Communication Strategy, with another 33% at a satisfactory level; and 33% report strong proficiency in Advocacy, with the remaining 67% reporting a satisfactory level.
- Together tis reflect establishment and implementation of sound communications strategies, increased familiarity with their work in the community, and active roles as community leaders and decision-makers.

During the program, Fellows engaged in a full day of effective communications training during the EVC Training Institute (March of 2023), extensive coaching webinars and one-on-one tailored technical assistance through [SpitFire Strategies](#).

- 64% developed an effective communications plan and framework for strategic efforts
- 73% operationalized an effective communication strategy through clearly outlined practices

EVC FELLOW SPOTLIGHT: *Claudynyse Holloman from the Voices Center for Children credits the communications work as a critical factor in driving record donations from individual donors, reaching \$692,566 in gifts in fiscal year 2024 from \$300,000 reported at the midpoint for fiscal year 2023—a 130% increase for the organization. In their application to the EVC program, Voices Center for Children specified a “marketing and advertising strategy” as a top need—and EVC met that direct capacity-building need with concrete solutions.*

EVC Fellows final assessments demonstrate notable progress within the finance area on resource mobilization (their strategic capacity to identify and activate partners), and resource efficiency (the sufficiency with which their funds meet their institutional and programmatic needs). Regarding proficiency in resource mobilization, their final average score was 3.2 out of 4, as it was for resource efficiency, a satisfactory level. Most notably, their final average financial and accounting management score was 3.8 out of 4, a strongly proficient level. Thus, the changes seen in their funding are more likely to be sustained, as they report that they are more adeptly able to attract and utilize resources for their organizations and manage and account for them.

Qualitative Highlights

Insights from expert coaches:

- *Communication success weighs heavily on the executive director’s mind, and they know it is important but rarely have the time or capacity to do this in a proactive manner. Solution – having a strong and realistic communication strategy that focuses mainly on their priority audiences, allows them to be intentional about the stories they collect and share and when. – Mark Dessauer*

Insights from EVC fellows:

- *Expanding our training into staff would be helpful – like I’m thinking of Mark’s presentation, while they are not a fund development team, they are sharing the work in the community. I want them to be in a place where staff members can give presentations, and I’m not the one doing it all alone. My staff already knows I’m a part of the cohort – I’ve shared with staff that my leadership style’s changing on course of fellowship.*

- *We're adding tools in the trunk that even if not being used now will be needed in the future.*
- *We're finalizing our HR piece...We got advice from Valeria to do assessments – that has been transformative!*
- *Our last session was a breakthrough – allowed me to see we were doing cart before the horse like thinking of a framework for implementation, but work needs to be done before that. I'm able to see through conversations with Valeria that we need to dig deeper and do some things first.*
- *We got a grant to hire two new people. Two out of the three interviewees didn't show up to the interview. The person that did show up is someone that we have a relationship with already. We're trying to stop hiring people based on relations and more based on skill set.*

Closing the Funding Gap in Flint

The Racial Funding Gap

Over the last twenty years, only 10% of philanthropic dollars have gone to organizations led by people of color, despite giving increasing nearly 400% over the same period.

- Access to Unrestricted Funding: White-led organizations were twice as likely to receive more unrestricted funding in FY21 vs BIPOC led organizations
- Surplus at the End of the Fiscal Year: 66% of White-led organizations ended FY21 with a surplus vs 49% of Black-led organizations
- Donations from Corporations: 71% of White-led organizations received corporate donations in 2021 vs 58% of BIPOC led organizations

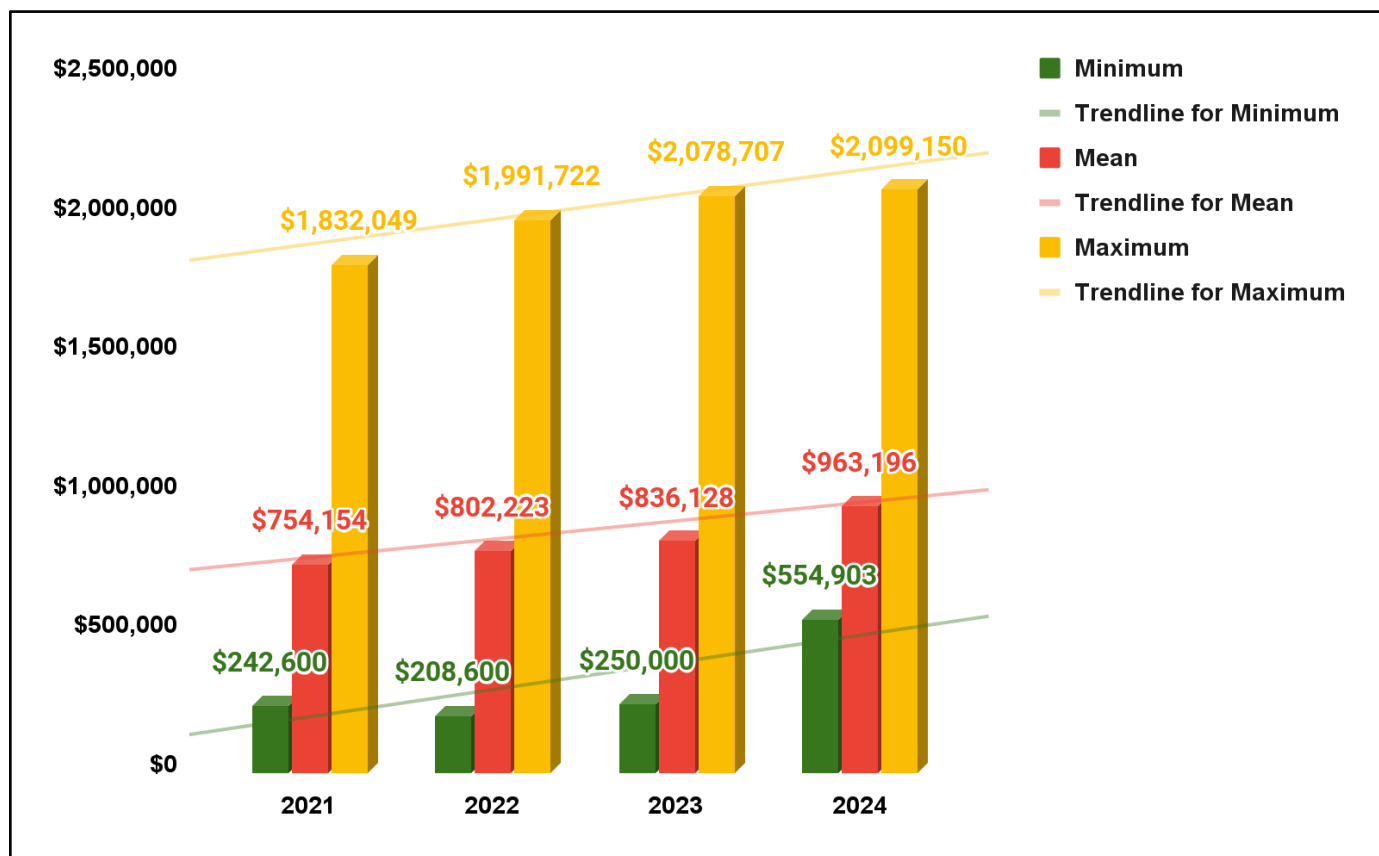
EVC Flint Progress

At the beginning, middle, and endpoints of the program, EVC Fellows were asked to report their annual budgets, the funding amounts and funding types (restricted or unrestricted) from their top funders, and the funding amounts and types primary funders for this initiative. The final round of budget reporting for the cohort revealed upward trends in their funding in May 2024 relative to what was reported upon their entry to the program in October 2022 (Figure 1).

Quantitative Highlights

Increased Funding Opportunities: EVC Fellows have reported increased funding opportunities. They are expanding their networks within and outside the cohort to identify new grants and fundraising avenues.

Figure 1: Spread of Cohort Budgets 2021 - 2024



Sources: EVC RFP, EVC Midpoint Financial Assessment, EVC Final Financial Assessment

- At the top of the 18-month fellowship in fiscal year 2022, organization leaders reported budgets, of which the minimum (or smallest budget in the cohort) was \$208,600; the average of the cohort was \$802,223 and the largest budget was \$1,991,722.
- Eighteen months later, those values were \$554,903, \$963,196 and \$2,099,150, respectively. Thus, the cohort's smallest budget saw a 166% increase, while the cohort saw a 20% increase on average.
- Notably, the smallest budgets grew faster than the largest budgets and faster than the average overall.

Revenue Generation & Fundraising

- 80% received funding from new funding sources
- 54% reported engaging in new grant/fundraising efforts with organizations outside of the cohort due to their participation
- 64% engaged in new grant/fundraising efforts with other organizations in the cohort

Financial Management and Revenue Generation Capacity

- 50% established a proper business model
- 50% experienced increased adeptness with Balance Sheet and Revenue and Expenses statements
- 50% solidified the organization's revenue generation strategies due to EVC trainings

Financial Assessment and Revenue Generation: Fellows have undertaken solidified revenue generation strategies and improved upon financial management skills, especially with the support of Andrea Levere’s organizational financial assessments. Despite the progress, leaders still have meaningful work and need substantial investments to increase their sustainability.

EVC FELLOW SPOTLIGHT: *EVC serves exceptionally well as an accelerator for leaders and organizations at critical stages in their development. For example, Shon and Leah Hart, the executive director and controller of InvolvedDad, not only saw a 231% increase in their annual organizational budget between fiscal years 2022 and 2024, but they also successfully fulfilled a capital campaign. They benefited from the expertise of 2 EVC Coaches through one-on-one support. InvolveDad opened doors on a property leased to house their work for father empowerment.*

Funding Types: Fellows report that a large fraction of their funding is restricted, and the final assessments reveal that while some progress has been made in the city, this is an area for ongoing improvement, especially as it disproportionately tends to be for nonprofit leaders of color.

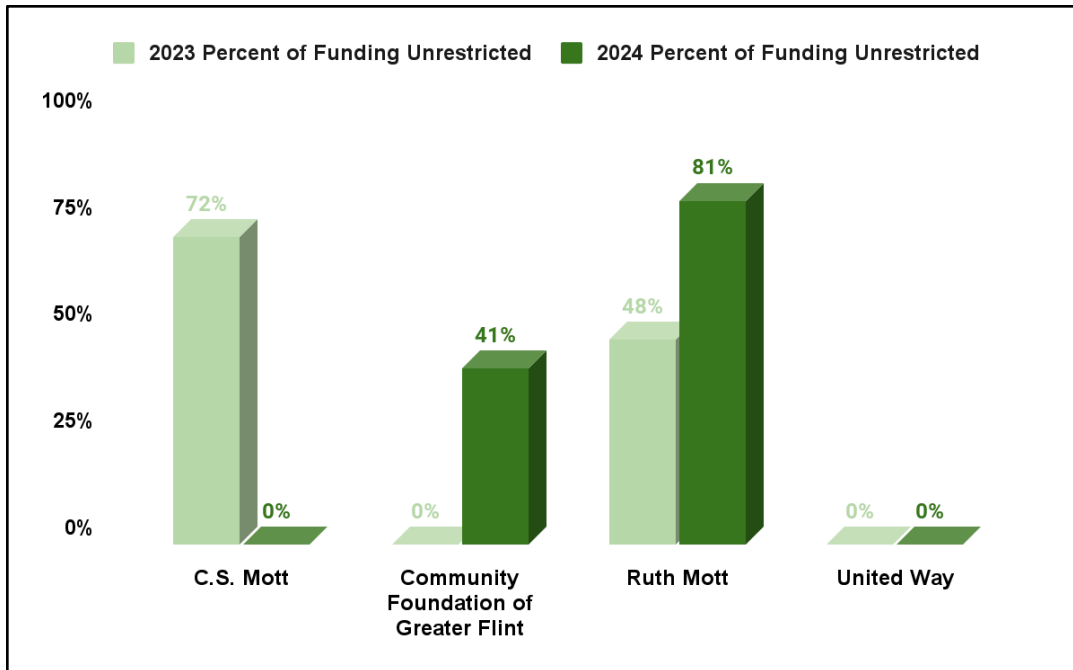
Figure 2: Breakdown of Funding Types from Top Funders of FY 24

<i>Funding Type</i>	Sum of Funding from Top Three Funders FY 24	Percent of Funding from Top Three Funders FY 24
Restricted	\$2,299,087	71.92%
Unrestricted	\$897,566	28.08%

Sources: EVC Final Financial Assessment

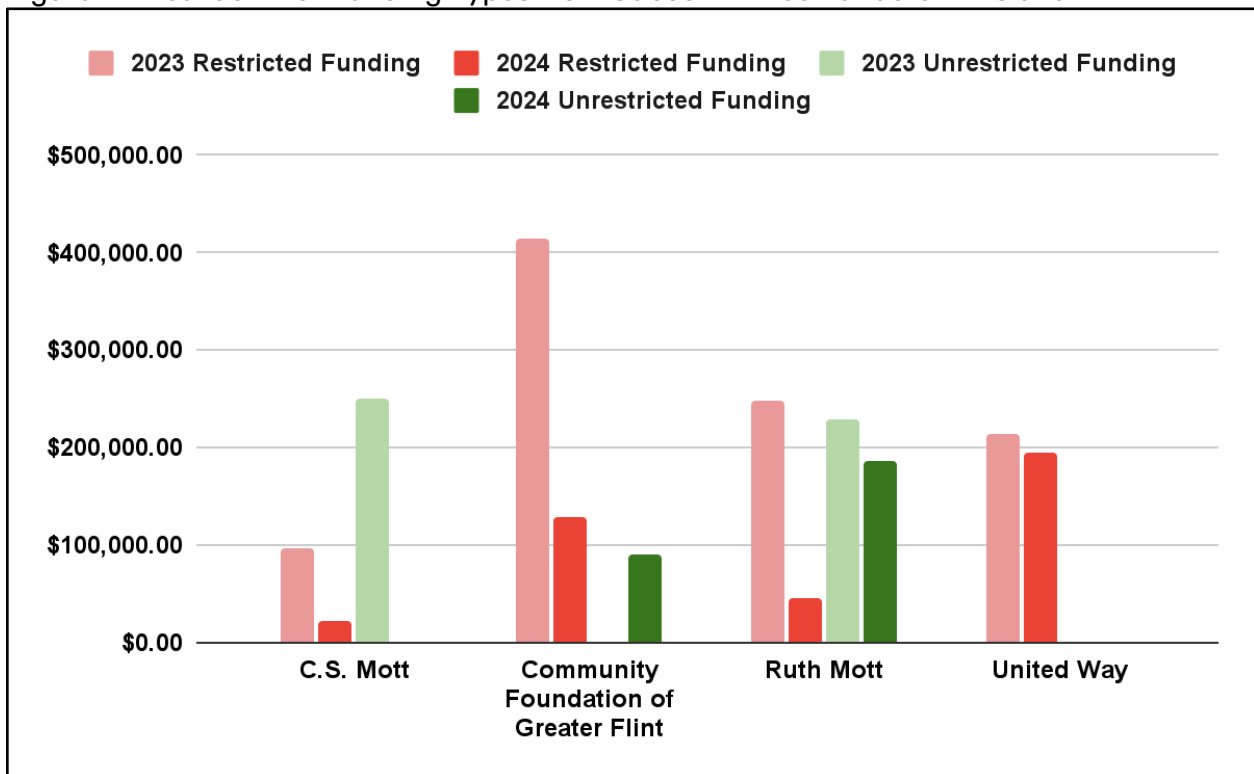
In contrast, funding from the Flint Cohort project investors was more likely to be unrestricted. More than 40% of Flint Cohort investor's grant funding was unrestricted, compared to 28% from the cohort’s top funders.

Figure 3: Percent Unrestricted Funding from Subcommittee Funders FY 23 and FY 24



Sources: EVC Midpoint Financial Assessment, EVC Final Financial Assessment

Figure 4: Breakdown of Funding Types from Subcommittee Funders FY23 and FY24



Source: EVC Midpoint Financial Assessment, EVC Final Financial Assessment
Funding and Financial Capacity

Qualitative Highlights

Insights from expert coaches:

- *Fundraising is never stable and certain and [is] critical to their future, so funders remain a priority audience. The lack of stable and long-term funding means that organizational strategy will often chase new grants, programs and foundation's priorities over community needs. This is a difficult balance that is baked into our nonprofit system. Solution – that the nonprofit is doing such a responsive and authentic job at serving the community – and their communication reflects this – funders and decisionmakers value and respect the trust and impact between nonprofit and community and fund it with their lead rather than external funders strategy. – Mark Dessauer*

Insights from EVC fellows:

- *Funding organizations need to really understand us as individuals and leaders in the community—the blood, sweat and tears put in. They have a surface level and linear understanding of what their organizations do... There needs to be clear communication of how both parties fit into their ecosystem and long-term vision, communication if they fit into their values and vision.*
- *It's important for funders to be more intentional and intimate about learning what they do as individuals and on a community level.*
- *We've increased outreach outside the community alongside a few Flint funders, working on building new relationships. We never want to be dependent on certain funders, we aim to be diverse—we're networking, building relationships with elected officials and potential funders. These funders do not know what the organizations are doing deeper than the website.*
- *Local funders need to support the organizations longer term.*
- *A major bank reached out to us because we're part of the fellowship—they read about EVC and that's what made her come to our organization.*
- *Mark helped me realize if I can get someone through the door, I can likely get them as a funder.*

Onward: A Journey of Transformation

The EVC Flint cohort of leaders embarked on a journey driven by a shared commitment to community empowerment and personal growth. Each participant arrived with a unique background and set of experiences, yet all shared a common goal: to transform their leadership capabilities and, in turn, their communities.

Here is a summary of their motivations and aspirations as they began their journey with EVC:

Who They Were When They Came In

Purpose-Driven Individuals: Many nonprofit leaders were motivated by a deep desire to leave a positive impact on the world. They aimed to provide equal opportunities for youth and create sustainable, community-centered organizations.

Experienced Yet Seeking Growth: Leaders with extensive experience felt they had reached a plateau. They sought new insights and innovations to advance their organizations further and ensure their longevity and sustainability.

Educational and Professional Development Enthusiasts: Nonprofit leaders aimed to leverage the EVC experience to enhance their skills in financial management, strategic planning, and organizational growth.

Advocates for Holistic Leadership: Many recognized the need for personal development alongside professional growth. They were eager to integrate self-care and personal well-being into their leadership practices to sustain their efforts in the long run.

What They Aimed to Gain

Enhanced Leadership Skills: Nonprofit leaders sought to evolve from programmatic to organizational leadership, gaining skills in nonprofit management, financial planning, and strategic communications.

Revenue Generation Strategies: They aimed to understand various approaches to revenue generation, including philanthropic grants, government contracts, and capital campaigns, was a key goal.

Effective Communication Techniques: They aimed to improve their storytelling abilities and engage stakeholders and funders more effectively.

Holistic Development: Leaders came with hopes of integrating health and well-being into their leadership practices, overcoming imposter syndrome, and maintaining a healthy work-life balance.

Progress Closing the Gaps

Racial Leadership Gap: The training has empowered leaders to step into their leadership roles with increased confidence. They have developed the skills to navigate and dismantle systemic barriers, ensuring more equitable representation within their organizations and communities.

Racial Organizational Capacity Gap: Leaders have implemented best practices to enhance their organizations' operational efficiency and sustainability. They have built stronger, more resilient organizations capable of achieving long-term impact and stability.

Racial Funding Gap: Leaders have made significant strides in developing strategies to secure diverse revenue streams. They have learned to effectively communicate their mission and impact, attracting more funding opportunities that were previously out of reach.

The journey through the EVC Training Institute has profoundly impacted nonprofit leaders. They have evolved into more empowered, knowledgeable, and connected leaders. The skills and strategies they acquired are theoretical and practical tools they are already implementing to drive meaningful change.

Looking Ahead: Recommendations for the Future

The barriers to which the EVC Fellows are responding are multifaceted and interconnected due to the city's historic deindustrialization and capital flight. Flint residents contend with poverty rates double that of Genesee County, in which they are located, bachelor's degree rates nearly half that of Michigan, and higher violent crime rates per capita than what is seen at the county, state, and national levels. Flint residents experience grave inequalities across areas determined to be social determinants of health, and they result in lives lost. While this was especially visible during the Flint Water Crisis and then the pandemic, it's a reality every day that Flint residents die younger than those in counties with increasingly White populations.

Eliminate the scarcity mindset: Investing in cohorts is the fastest way to bring about comprehensive change in a community. We need to eliminate the scarcity mindset that often exists at the local level. These organizations knew of each other 18 months ago but were not actively working together for change. By increasing cohesion through collective power-building strategies, this cohort has been completely transformed. Just imagine the future of collective power building when organizations don't feel like they are competing for resources available only through specific funders. Build trust and partnership through grant-making by allowing for risk, pilot programming, and innovation.

Build trust through local grantmaking: How can Flint's frontline leaders respond to these dire circumstances without proper funding, support, and trust? Not only do programs and facilities require funding, but creative and innovative solutions require even more, and they require it in a less restricted fashion. Despite the growth in funding, still in the end, leaders shared that most of their funding from their top funders came with restrictions. Their top funders, government agencies, local philanthropists, and more awarded \$3,196,653. Of this, only \$897,566 were unrestricted, as seen in Figure 2. You, as the funder, are the best advocate for additional future pipeline funding for the organizations in your city.

Create bi-directional learning opportunities: Transformational relationships are required for sustained community change. The EVC Fellows demonstrated a need for increased trust, understanding, exposure, and investment. As more than one leader emphasized in their feedback, funders do not understand their work. Be curious about the entire organization not just the program you are interested in funding. Create spaces so that you can share more emerging learnings from the field from your “eye-bird view” as grantors with grantees to help inform their program strategies and better equip them to approach other funders.

*Sources for data on Racial Leadership Development Gap, Racial Organizational Capacity Gap, and Racial Funding Gap:

- The Bridgespan Group, “Unleashing Philanthropy’s Big Bets for Social Change,” 2019.
- Nonprofit Finance Fund, “2022 Survey: A Focus on Racial Equity”
- Urban Institute, “Nonprofit Leadership is Out of Step with America’s Changing Demographics,” 2021.
- Race to Lead. “Trading Glass Ceilings for Glass Cliffs: Report on Nonprofit Executives of Color,” 2022.