

Focus Group Report

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SUMMARY

A companion to our
4th edition Blueprint Report



PURPOSE OF THE FOCUS GROUPS

Throughout 2024 and 2025, The Fund led a series of focus groups to learn from **women and girls of color in our community** including Black and Hispanic women; first generation and immigrant women and girls; single mothers; and teens.

The **focus groups explored barriers to opportunity and access** to education, mental health care, childcare, housing, language access, and more.

Their voices shed light on the **challenges they face every day**, and on the changes needed to create more equitable opportunities and support systems.



WHAT WE HEARD (ADULTS)

Struggles with gender/racial bias, job insecurity, and housing barriers.

Transportation challenges that limit access to work and childcare

Language barriers

Distrust of nonprofits, insufficient resources, experience of needs not being met.

Unavailable or culturally mismatched supports including mental health support.

Strong reliance on faith-based organizations and peer networks.

WHAT WE HEARD (COLLEGE STUDENTS)

Feelings of isolation, being tokenized, and lack of support.

Concerns with mental health resources (lack of inclusivity or cultural sensitivity.)

Imposter syndrome and lack of mentorship from faculty of color.

Gaps in leadership and lack of mentors who reflected their identities.

Bias in classrooms, dormitories, and leadership roles.

Frustration with college clubs for being unsupportive or performative.



WHAT WE HEARD (TEENS)

Lack of cultural identity support such as clubs for girls of color.

Reports of unfair disciplinary practices and lack of cultural sensitivities.

Anxiety and feelings of being overwhelmed from school, family pressure, and expectations.

Absence of role models/leaders who looked like them in school or community.

Importance of mothers and older siblings (and other family members) as main role models.

BARRIERS ACROSS ALL GROUPS



Discrimination



Mental Health Access



Childcare & Housing



Transportation



Language access



Lack of Representation

Nonprofit Trust Gaps

Financial Insecurity

Limited Mentorship

Unfair Discipline

Cultural Disconnect

SUPPORT SYSTEMS

Support System

Family & Friends

Faith-Based Communities

Formal Nonprofits

Perceived Effectiveness

Strong and trusted across all groups

Important for adults

Mixed reviews; some praised, others distrusted

WHAT THE COMMUNITY IS ASKING FOR

Need



Mental Health Services

Specifics

Timely, affordable, culturally & LGBTQIA+ competent.



Childcare & Housing

More flexible, affordable, and safe options.



Mentorship

Programs that reflect their racial, cultural, and life experiences.



Bilingual Navigation

Support to access services and clear systems.



Accountability

Nonprofits and schools must reflect community values and needs.



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The project was completed by the work of The Fund's staff, board members and volunteers under the direction of Dr. Chasity Riddick, Fund board member and Temple University professor.



See the full report:



www.thefundcc.org/research