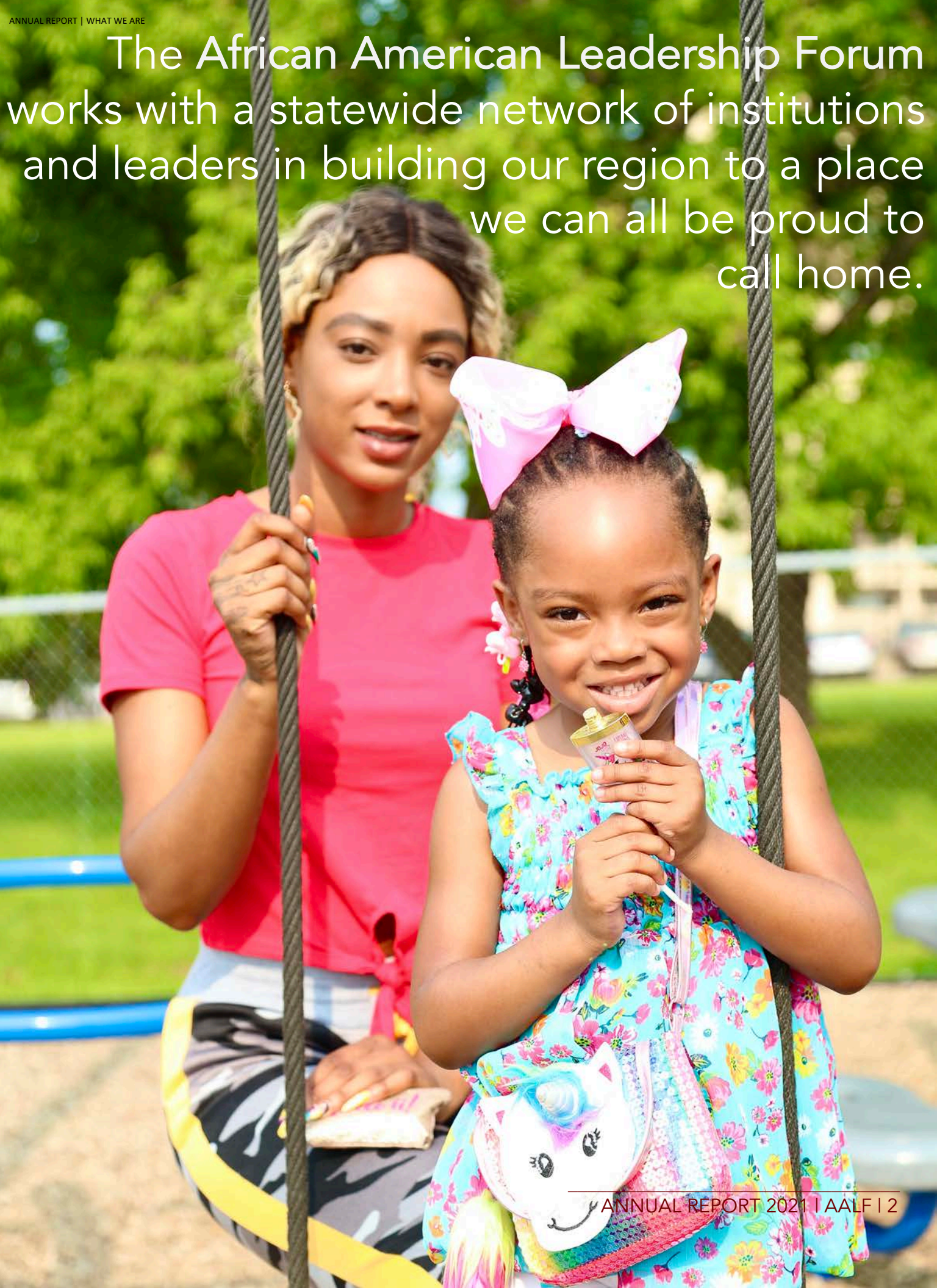




“A NEW DAY”

# ANNUAL REPORT 2021

The African American Leadership Forum works with a statewide network of institutions and leaders in building our region to a place we can all be proud to call home.



# CONTENTS

- 4 Letter from the CEO
- 5 15 Years of Impact
- 7 2021 Highlights
- 19 Auditor's Report
- 21 Funder's Summary
- 23 Looking Ahead at 2022
- 25 Directory

Photo @ Uzoma Obasi



**COVER DESIGN, "A NEW DAY":** A woman tearfully celebrates the conviction of Derek Chauvin found guilty of murdering George Floyd. A subtle border wall has been inset along the inner sides of the photo, running through the hands of the outstretched arms. It resembles a gesture of a juror shutting a window, that the case is now closed. Conviction on second degree and third-degree murder and second-degree manslaughter. The inner border at the top lined in gray, also represents the high bar that was set by the Minneapolis jury on this day, one that must be met now, in jurisprudence to follow.

Notice the orange tinge around the perimeter of the photo. This symbolizes, a ray of hope in Minnesota, that police reform is imminent bringing about an end to unlawful use of force, wrongful convictions and the unjustified killings of Black people. That same orange hue is the *one* consistent color in the outfits worn by all three women in this image. It reflects unity. Orange is a color that conveys uplifting, transformation and a motivating spirit. Look closely at the faces back on the cover page, to sense the release of emotion, within the different three reactions of joy and pain. The middle woman in full force with wonderment, openly cries "Hallelujah." The lady on the left, immediately overcome with emotion. The woman on the right in all orange cannot believe what her ears are telling her. As she feels herself welling up, she's determined to keep her eyes open wanting to stand tall remaining ever-present in this moment. An historical day.

Finally, below the bottom border, you'll see a reflection that has been cast towards the downside of the photo. This represents the coattails of Minnesota leadership, what will be repeated and a warning that foreshadows the fate of any police officer in the future who mistreats an African American person. They are not above the law. Not on this day. Not tomorrow. Never. We are, the African American Leadership Forum. Our voices. Our Future. It's a new day.

## MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

As we head into 2022, I'm grateful for the dedicated community supporters, staff, stakeholders, board, and all the leaders in our network who volunteer time, talent and treasure. I extend our deepest thanks to everyone for helping AALF champion solutions to improve lives for Black Minnesotans.

We strive to be the hub that aligns, accelerates and amplifies Black-Centered solutions. Our projects positively impact experiences for African Americans in public safety, housing, employment, education, healthcare and economic infrastructure. Our mission focus has never been sharper.

Dedicated we are, to elevating the collective brilliance of our community, respecting its diversity of authenticity and holding self-care along with healing as a priority for all. We remain steadfast in our commitment, operating with integrity and being accountable to our stakeholders as we march forward with community-led solutions, to effectuate systematic impact.

We hold equally as important our leadership development programs and convenings. We plan to conduct a wide array of collaborations with like-minded partners to harvest aspirations and sustainable solutions as we invest in a new era of Black leadership.

We encourage you to stay the course with us or perhaps jump on board as we shift into the new year. Make AALF one of your top nonprofit interests. People like you are at the heart of all that we do.

Thank you for helping us lead, a role we value as an action not a title, to transform our region into a place where everyone can achieve their full potential and be proud to call Minnesota, their home.

Sincerely,



Marcus Owens  
CEO, African American Leadership Forum



# 15 Years of IMPACT



## TRANSITIONING TO A NEW ERA



From the days when the meetings were held at a dining room table to now, a network forum membership of more than 5000, the African American Leadership Forum Twin Cities has certainly enjoyed immense progress in the past 15 years.



In 2021, AALF experienced its best year since inception in 2006. Impact, influence, funding, activation, expansion, notoriety and leadership development set the tone for a year like no other in the organization's history. At the very height of a pandemic that threatened to shut systems down, AALF's workload and commitment only got busier.

Powered by its drive for collective impact through Community Harvest events and Workstream Committees, AALF raised the bar in how to properly seek participant input in helping identify the most prevalent issues, and impactful solutions, for the Black community. Six of these such events were held in 2021's first ninety days.

Utilizing the virtual tool space to its advantage, AALF identified baseline problem statements faced by Minnesota's Black communities, by convening with people from different locales. Economic Development, Education, Family & Culture and Health & Wellness were four of the sectors of existence AALF homed in on, through its model of Black-Centered design.



More than two dozen innovators came forward with concrete proposals on how to address these inequalities. And from those two dozen, AALF listened intently with the help of its workstream committees, before deciding on which final four to activate; one for each of the core areas. With a region still reeling from the George Floyd uprising, and with disparities only widening, there's still an immeasurable amount of work that needs to get done. One thing Minnesota can rely on, is that AALF will be on the front line, ready to lead the charge, just as we did in 2021.

# 2021 HIGHLIGHTS

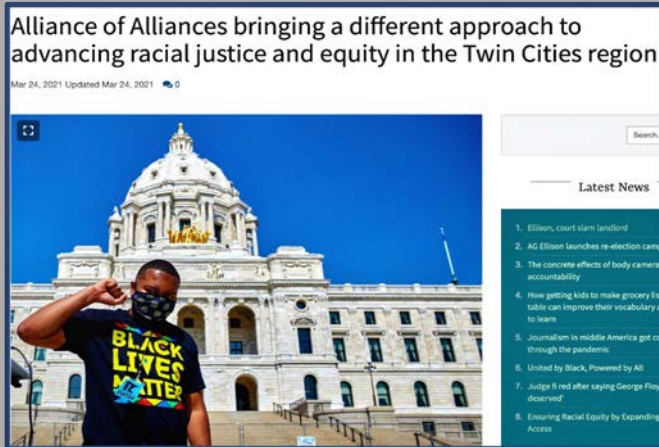
2021 started out with AALF's senior leadership team maneuvering behind the scenes. The news broke on March 24<sup>th</sup>. This would forever alter the shape of AALF.

#allianceofalliances



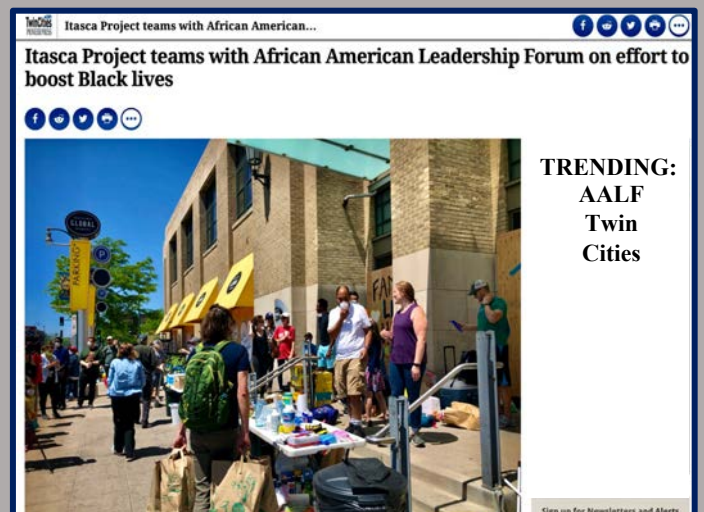
## ALLIANCE OF ALLIANCES: A CALL FOR ACTION


The **George Floyd murder** brought about a loud racial reckoning, in high definition, for the entire world to watch. Yet quietly behind the scenes in meeting rooms and via phone calls, a strategic alliance was in the works. And AALF was tapped to lead this effort. Business executives, Black leaders, and community groups across the Twin Cities announced the establishment of the, Alliance of Alliances, at the end of March. Some 80 organizations signed on. AALF, the backbone of this alliance, would coordinate work across eight areas critical to the well-being of Black communities, all people of color and the entire region.



Public safety, employment, education, shared responsibility, infrastructure investments, advocacy, healthcare and housing were then announced as the eight core focus areas that would lead the initiative. The imperative is to identify, address and resolve racial inequality through a comprehensive agenda that is Black-led and designed. This "Alliance" is a decade-long historical commitment with progress measured in multiyear increments. This initial phase allowed AALF to secure funding of \$4,500,000 over the next three years to build out infrastructural capacity in leading this movement. The immediate and long-term goal is a better future for all residents of the Minneapolis-St. Paul region.

*"Public safety, employment, education, shared responsibility, infrastructure investments, advocacy, healthcare, and housing were announced as the eight core focus areas."*



The African American Leadership Forum is truly honored that Sigma Pi Phi Fraternity--The Boulé, Greater MSP, The Itasca Project and the Minnesota Business Coalition for Racial Equity have entrusted AALF to oversee this alliance. Committed we are to helping the Twin Cities bridge connections with those whose life experiences are different from one another, to build our region to a place we are *all* proud to call home. 

By conducting regional and national talent searches, AALF strategically builds out its capacity and workforce. One by one the new foundation gets solidified.

#teamaalf



### THE FORUM FORTIFIES ITS LEADERSHIP TEAM

Enfranchised by the new directives accompanied with the Alliance of Alliances, 2021 would be the year of significant staff expansion allowing AALF to change the way it now operates. The organization bolstered its ranks across the board in the functions of administration, finance, programs, communications and marketing.



**Kenneth Scales**, a 2019 Josie Johnson Leadership Academy fellow was brought on as Director of Development. **Adora Land Tolefree** joined AALF as a Program Director who oversees leadership development and the Josie R. Johnson Leadership Academy. **Marla Etheridge** joined AALF as a Senior Director in events planning and marketing. **Niila Hebert** was hired as a Senior Program Director who leads network alignment. **Paula Neeley** joined AALF as an Executive Assistant. **Shanaya Dungey** already on staff was promoted to Vice President of Administration and **Marc Watts** was hired to be the Vice President of Communications and Narrative. The new team meshed well, rolling up its sleeves getting to work.



With Executive Director Marcus Owens, Dungey, Watts and Neeley assumed the helm of AALF's executive leadership team. With new staff, a new office, a new HR partner that had also come on board and an executive leadership team in place, the organization fortified its working structure to accomplish the challenges ahead. 





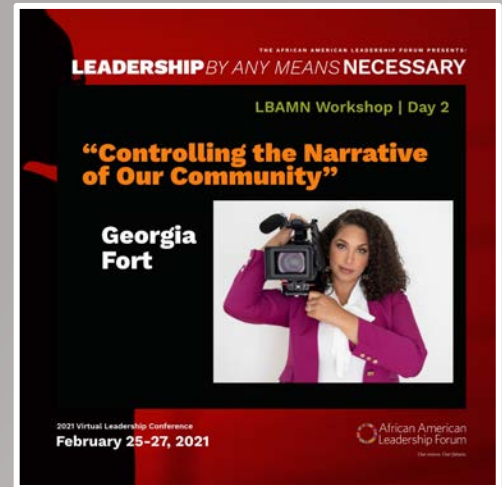
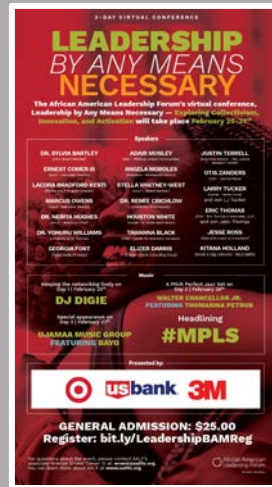
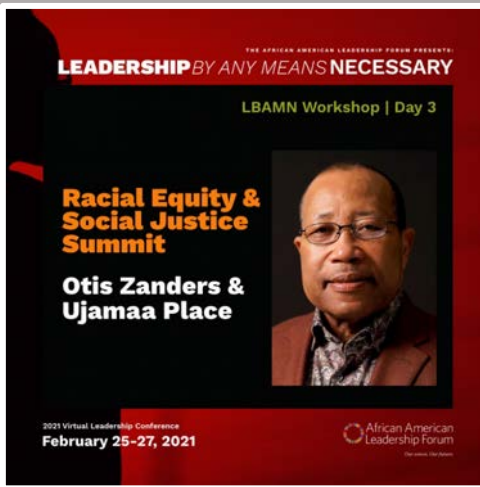
When convening AALF puts the word "Lead" into Leadership, as it did with its 2021 Leadership Conference. Leadership. It's in the organizational DNA.



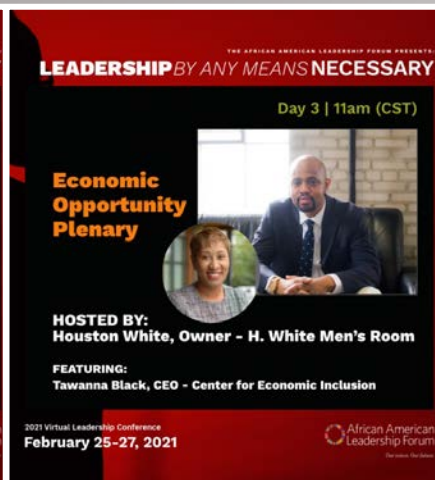
#leadershipconference

### 3-DAY VIRTUAL LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE EVENT

With Minnesota still reeling from a tumultuous 2020, AALF heard the call from communities on both sides of the river to develop a collective action plan to address the most pressing issues facing Twin Cities African American residents. With many hurting, uncertain and needing direction, *Leadership By Any Means Necessary: Exploring Collectivism, Innovation and Activation*, was the theme of the 3-day event. A consortium of Black leadership throughout the area addressed attendees on topics ranging from advancing justice and collective brilliance to developing an action plan while broadcasting the narrative.



Well attended throughout, AALF acquired event sponsorship from Target, U.S. Bank and 3M. Held February 25-27, the Leadership Conference served as a fitting wrap up to Black History month. AALF staff members, leadership academy members and board members were speakers for this event including Marcus Owens, Ernest Comer, LaCora Bradford Kesti, Georgia Fort, Angela Rose Myers, Dr. Sylvia Bartley, Dr. Nerita Hughes, John Taylor and Stella Whitney-West. Some of the other speakers were Tawanna Black, CEO of the Center for Economic Inclusion, Dr. Yohuru Williams, from the University of St. Thomas Racial Justice Initiative and Justin Terrell, Executive Director for the Minnesota Justice Research Center.



The attendees totaled 170 people for this event. And in a post-event survey, registrants awarded the Leadership Conference an average score rating of 8.8 (out of 10). This type of gathering is already shaping up to be a repeat event for us in 2022 with interest remaining high and plans underway for another leadership series sometime this year. The title of the February 2021 event proved only fitting, underscoring AALF's fortitude to carry out this conference, "By Any Means Necessary."



As the pandemic persisted AALF continued to be a resource for African Americans in Minnesota. When community needs guidance AALF provides direction.

#blacklifeamplified



### "BLACK LIFE AMPLIFIED" TOWNHALL: SEASON TWO

Having developed a loyal following in 2020, while serving as an instrumental source of information regarding the pandemic, AALF continued in 2021 with its bi-weekly townhall forum, **Black Life Amplified**. In partnership with Insight News, NorthPoint Health & Wellness, Minnesota Community Care, Minnesota Spokesman-Recorder and Children's Minnesota, AALF produced 50 more episodes of BLA in 2021.

Brittany Wright, a former Josie Johnson Leadership Academy fellow, served as host along with Adriene Thornton, an Infection Preventionist from Children's Minnesota. The two-year run of this program could not have been accomplished without the generosity of AALF's sponsors and the tireless work of many people behind the scenes on the production side. Much gratitude as well to the hundreds of guests and the input from Minnesota's healthcare community we received.

**Black Life Amplified**  
**"The Trial and Public Safety"**  
 A VIRTUAL TOWN HALL ON PUBLIC SAFETY & WELLNESS DURING THE DEREK CHAUVIN TRIAL  
 WEDNESDAY, MARCH 3RD, 2021 | 7:00-8:30PM

Brittany L. Wright Host, Black Life Amplified	Andrea Jenkins Mpls City Council Vice President, Ward 8	Jacob Frey Minneapolis Mayor	John Harrington Commissioner, MN Dept. of Public Safety	Sasha Cotton Director, Office of Violence Prevention	Adriene Thornton Infection Preventionist, Children's MN

Sponsors: African American Leadership Forum, Insight News, NorthPoint Health & Wellness, Children's Minnesota, MSR Minnesota Spokesman-Recorder, Minnesota Community CARE, Gray Matter.

**Black Life Amplified**

This virtual town hall is a partnership between The African American Leadership Forum (AALF), Insight News, NorthPoint Health & Wellness Center, Minnesota Community Care, The Minnesota Spokesman-Recorder, Children's Minnesota & Gray Matter.

Black Life Amplified is hosted by Brittany Wright, every other Wednesday.


**Black Life Amplified**  
 VIRTUAL TOWN HALL

PRESENTED BY: Insight News, NorthPoint Health & Wellness, Children's Minnesota, MSR, Gray Matter.

# We, at AALF, would like to thank our sponsors:

YOUR SUPPORT ALLOWED *BLACK LIFE AMPLIFIED* TO SERVE THE COMMUNITY WELL



All episodes of Black Life Amplified have been catalogued and are accessible on AALF's website page. 

Channeling the podcast narrative of African American leadership in an entertainingly provocative and informational way. Knowing what to say and how to say it.

#blackleadershipredefined



## "BLACK LEADERSHIP RE-DEFINED", SEASON SIX: STANDBY...YOU'RE ON THE AIR!

DR. SYLVIA BARTLEY, HOST OF BLACK LEADERSHIP RE-DEFINED & AALF BOARD MEMBER



Six years ago, when AALF wanted to launch a podcast, long before the word podcast itself had become a franchise such as it's known today, the organization knew it could count on one person. The reins of hosting the show were handed over to an AALF board member, Dr. Sylvia Bartley. Rarely will you find someone this dedicated to an informational channel and truly determined to make the podcast successful. Rarely will you ever find someone like this, holding the breadth and scope of knowledge that Dr. Sylvia has. More than 200 episodes later, the podcast host was still going strong as she embarked on season six in 2021.

Over the years Dr. Sylvia has interviewed just about anyone who is anybody, in the sphere of Black leadership, business, finance, health, science, technology criminal justice and politics. (And there are probably a few categories missing.) The Black Leadership Re-Defined podcast helped AALF establish a foothold in its core areas of leadership development, collective action, infrastructure, housing, healthcare, education, public safety and employment. The podcast explored the redefinition of leadership through AALF’s four leadership personas; thought leader, builder, influencer and ambassador. KMOJ-FM and Dr. Sylvia have been with AALF every step of the way. Their commitment never went unnoticed.



*Thank you, Studio Americana, KMOJ-FM and Dr. Bartley, for the great run with Black Leadership Re-Defined.*

At the end of 2021, Black Leadership Re-Defined signed off the air, after more than 275 shows. Dr. Sylvia can be found hosting a different show now on Apple Podcasts and Spotify. It’s called “The More We Know Community Show.” Each episode contains insightful strategies, resources and lessons that everyone can use to drive equitable outcomes for all. With much gratitude we wish Dr. Sylvia Bartley, the gem of the person she is, nothing but the best in her new venture. All previous episodes of Black Leadership Re-Defined going back to 2019, nearly 90 of them, have been catalogued and can be listened to on AALF’s website.

**Getting to Know Representative Ilhan Omar**  
Black Leadership Re-Defined

Release Date: 06/11/2021

SEASON SIX

African American Leadership Forum  
Black Leadership Re-Defined

The African American Leadership Forum's Podcast is for the African American community to come and learn about what is going on in our community and what we can do to make the Twin Cities better for us.

<https://pod.link/1462580482>

**Black Leadership Re-Defined**  
The Official Podcast of the African American Leadership Forum  
Today at KMOJ Noon CDT

Marcus Owens  
Executive Director  
AALF

Greg Cunningham  
Senior Executive Vice President,  
Chief Diversity Officer at U.S. Bank

Duchesne Drew  
President  
Minnesota Public Radio

**ALLIANCE OF ALLIANCES**  
Host Dr. Sylvia Bartley discusses with her guests a new Twin Cities initiative to address racial inequities in a new and transformative way.

With sights set on making even greater impact, AALF would eventually require a larger workspace. Sometimes things line up just right. That's when you know...

#aalfhdqtrs



## AALF RELOCATES ITS HEADQUARTERS FROM ST. LOUIS PARK TO THE CITY OF MINNEAPOLIS

With numerous projects on the drawing board and the workload ever expanding it became readily apparent that AALF was on the verge of outgrowing its office space, which at the time was located in the west side suburb of St. Louis Park. An internal search committee was formed, and wouldn't you know it. Around about the same time the AALF new office search committee was formed, the




1625 Hennepin Ave, Suite 200B

Minnesota Department of Commerce revealed that businesses had been making an exodus from their existing office spaces ever since the pandemic broke out. For AALF this was the ideal situation, as demand would soon meet opportunity. The decision was made to move the company now, while the deals were good, with business owners hungry to fill open spaces.

**In August AALF made its move**, relocating into an expansive airy new office space in the Loring Park area. Located at 1625 Hennepin Avenue, it's across the street from the Basilica of St. Mary. Buffered by cozy cafés, upscale restaurants and walking paths, we are proud to call this place home. The new location also comes with numerous options for parking and public transportation along with easy access to freeways.

The new AALF headquarters is spacious enough to conduct a large banquet inside. It's outfitted with four additional rooms sectioned within the larger office space, along with a bistro that stays readily stocked with beverages and snacks. The staff enjoys a picturesque view of the sunset to the west, overlooking the Minneapolis Sculpture Garden adjacent to the Walker Art Center. Each employee has their own workstation with all the accoutrements of a contemporary office, with surplus space for new staff! Shortly after AALF moved in, we conducted our 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter staff member retreat inside our new home.

Operating under a hybrid-remote work model, AALF employees come and go from the office at varying times throughout the week. Tuesday is the mandatory in-office workday for all staff. 

The name changed, but the direction and significance of the movement remains unchanged. Heading into AALF 2.0...United By Black and Powered By All.

#unitedbyblack



## THE "ALLIANCE OF ALLIANCES" NAME CHANGES TO "UNITED BY BLACK POWERED BY ALL"

The founders of the "Alliance of Alliances" had always planned for the title to be designated merely as a placeholder, for something more permanent and holding greater meaning, further into the year. That bold move came in September with the symbolic name change from the "Alliance of Alliances" to "United By Black Powered By All." Along with the new name, the abbreviation of UBB PBA rolled out, sometimes just UB for short. **UB**



Sept. 23, 2021

WE'VE CHANGED OUR NAME

(NOT AALF, BUT...)


The Alliance of Alliances  
is now  
United By Black  
Powered By All

Led by the African American  
Leadership Forum

*United By Black*, reflects AALF's commitment to systemic change that meets the needs of the Black community by leveraging the model of Black-Centered design. *Powered By All*, indicates the inclusive nature of those who are aligned with AALF's core values. Not only are these individuals, organizations and businesses welcome, but they have a meaningful role to play.

With the name change came an emphasis on six tenets of work that "*United By Black Powered By All*" will focus on. Those six are; public safety, employment, housing, education, economic infrastructure and healthcare. The public safety bucket is what AALF focused on first.

Four impact partners were selected from AALF's network, and those four now comprise AALF's "Public Safety Scoping Team." This unit provides thought leadership to AALF on inventive methods to combat violence and reform the criminal justice system. With input from the Scoping Team, AALF composed a *Public Safety Snapshot*; in essence a brief on what's not working, and what could work if properly activated, in the arena of public safety. More to come in 2022.

Instrumental in bringing about the name change, was a local BIPOC owned firm, The Brand Lab. This talented team of marketing specialists worked with stakeholders to seek out a name change and logo that would better reflect the growing movement of this allied commitment. Several of the labels and words didn't quite work, but when they proposed United By Black, that struck a chord. Those in the room knew they were on the right track. From that day forward in name only, the working group said goodbye to the Alliance of Alliances, and hello to United By Black Powered By All. 



Forced to carry out most of its experiential leadership academy virtually, this cohort only got stronger. This resolve reflects the perseverance of the academy's namesake.

#jrjla



## JOSIE R. JOHNSON LEADERSHIP ACADEMY, JRJLA. SIX STRONG YEARS OF LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Throughout the pandemic many Twin Cities organizations felt the squeeze to cancel their cohorts, because of the inability to deliver quality services within expected timeframes. The Josie R. Johnson Leadership Academy was *not* one of them. Not to say there weren't a few challenges, but once again the JRJLA came through. Referred to colloquially as "JRALL-UHH," a dozen distinguished fellows who've embarked on careers throughout a diverse spectrum of pursuits, completed their leadership journey with graduation from the academy in November.

For AALF, this cohort is an investment in the leadership of the community. Fellows for the academy are chosen for admission, after a rigorous selection process of how well they've already excelled as an emerging leader. The evaluation of an applicant as an "emerging leader," is not solely based on a person's age. Innovation, unique ways of leadership or whether a candidate has a new idea are also factors that constitute whether someone is an emerging leader. The academy fellowship helps them articulate their purpose and fellows are challenged to reach inside their own persona to elevate the rubric of their leadership.



CONGRATULATIONS TO THE JRJLA 2021 FELLOWS

For the 2021 cohort, the fellows received cumulatively more than 72 hours of one-on-one coaching. Each fellow was provided 12 hours of “Leadership Excursion” experiences. And the fellows made connections with 7 “Torch Bearers” (mentors) who provided further leadership development guidance to them. The stipends for fellows totaled \$10,500.



CONGRATULATIONS TO THE JRJLA 2021 FELLOWS

Since 2015, when the leadership academy began, 110 people have graduated from the program. Academy alums are working today throughout the Twin Cities corporate, private, government and nonprofit sectors. One of them, Anisha Murphy from the class of 2017, even sits on the board of directors for AALF.

**Managed by Adora Land Tolefree**, this hands-on path to personal leadership discovery involves hundreds of moving parts; facilitators, mentors, developmental tools and experiential learning opportunities among them. Each year has brought an improvement to the academy’s curriculum. As the pandemic appears to be subsiding, the 2022 JRJLA will likely take on a more in-person approach. This program continues to support a new era in Black leadership by providing leaders essential tools, training and resources needed to fulfill their potential. 🌿



The name of AALF’s leadership academy is an honor given to the trailblazing Minnesota civil rights pioneer, and distinguished leader, Josie Johnson. Josie is 91 years old and lives in Atlanta. She sends her best wishes to all JRJLA fellows. ❤️



Influence is not created overnight. It's a compliment to an organization's body of work. There's no doubt that AALF is on the map now, and it's here to stay.

#topblacknonprofit



## AALF'S UNDERGOES A SIGNIFICANT UPGRADE TO ITS BRAND AWARENESS

The announcement in March of the Alliance of Alliances generated thousands of mentions of the *African American Leadership Forum*. News of the alliance was even carried in a few major U.S. dailies, as word spread digitally of the transformative initiative. AALF's Executive Director became a frequent voice to Twin Cities radio and podcast listeners, as he fielded numerous interview requests to explain more about this movement, which is now known as United By Black Powered By All.

With the addition of more staff members by the end of August, the amplification of AALF's work took a noticeable uptick across its social media platforms, website and via other forms of owned media. With each impression seemingly came a new request for partnership from individuals and organizations.

AALF's work and accomplishments also caught the eye of an Ohio-based network marketing association called Jforme. This media marketing firm tracks and monitors Internet impressions, likes and progress of nonprofit organizations throughout the country. In its *"Top 35 Black Nonprofit Blogs and Websites to Follow in 2021"* list, the African American Leadership Forum Twin Cities, was named number one.



AALF Twin Cities named #1 Black Nonprofit Blog & Website To Follow

In addition to that, EveryAction, an organization based in Washington D.C. that provides CRM technology and other resources to nonprofits, named AALF Twin Cities, as one of the top "24 Black-Led Nonprofits Making History." AALF also received this same distinction by EveryAction in 2022. Although AALF is listed as #1 on this rundown as well, that top spot isn't garnered on merit, it's alphabetical. Still, we are honored to be in the top 24, of Black-led nonprofits making history!

In September, Minnesota Governor Tim Walz signed Executive Order 21-31 establishing the Governor's new "Council on Economic Expansion." The council consists of 15 labor, business, philanthropic and nonprofit leaders from across the state, hand selected by the Governor, to provide recommendations on expanding Minnesota's economy. One of the 15 people appointed to the Governor's new task force was AALF's top man Marcus Owens. He is one of two African American men appointed to this new panel.



# Black Business Support Collective



**Minnesota Black Chamber of Commerce**  
Working Together For Business

**WBC**

West Broadway Business And Area Coalition



**Social Impact STRATEGIES GROUP**




**BLACK WOMEN'S WEALTH ALLIANCE**  
CULTIVATING STRATEGIES. CREATING WEALTH. CHANGING LIVES.



**Linking Leaders PARTNERSHIP**  
AFRICAN AMERICAN LEADERSHIP FORUM • TIMABE FOUNDATION  
LATINO LEAD • COALITION OF ASIAN AMERICAN LEADERS



Much of AALF's influence has been grown organically, but it wasn't without design. The organization takes a measured approach to how it operates, and who it connects with. Numerous partners have been noted on previous pages, and we would like to recognize all of them, including our Black Business Support Collective, Linking Leaders, the Public Relations firm of Leverette Weekes, C.A. Ellis & Associates, Creative Mind Studios, MACC HR and Give Minnesota, just to name a few more. We are a collaborative organization, yet always emboldened to take the lead.

The past year served as a preview of what we've planned for 2022. We cherish this work we've taken on; the work community has placed in our hands. 

**THE NEXT FOUR PAGES ARE THE AUDITOR'S AND DONOR'S REPORTS**

## INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT

### To the Board of Directors of African American Leadership Forum

We have audited the accompanying financial statements of African American Leadership Forum (a nonprofit organization), which comprise the statement of financial position as of December 31, 2020, and the related statements of activities, functional expenses, and cash flows for the year then ended, and the related notes to the financial statements.

### Management's Responsibility for the Financial Statements

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of these financial statements in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America; this includes the design, implementation, and maintenance of internal control relevant to the preparation and fair presentation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

### Auditor's Responsibility

Our responsibility is to express an opinion on these financial statements based on our audit. We conducted our audit in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements are free from material misstatement.

An audit involves performing procedures to obtain audit evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. The procedures selected depend on the auditor's judgment, including the assessment of the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error. In making those risk assessments, the auditor considers internal control relevant to the entity's preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the entity's internal control. Accordingly, we express no such opinion. An audit also includes evaluating the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of significant accounting estimates made by management, as well as evaluating the overall presentation of the financial statements.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our audit opinion.

### Opinion

In our opinion, the financial statements referred to above present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of African American Leadership Forum as of December 31, 2020, and the changes in its net assets and its cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America.

## Report on Summarized Comparative Information

We have previously audited the African American Leadership Forum's 2019 financial statements, and we expressed an unmodified audit opinion on those audited financial statements in our report dated October 24, 2020. In our opinion, the summarized comparative information presented herein as of and for the year ended December 31, 2019, is consistent, in all material respects, with the audited financial statements from which it has been derived.

November 9, 2021

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "BWK Rogers PC". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

BWK Rogers PC  
CERTIFIED PUBLIC ACCOUNTANTS & CONSULTANTS  
Minneapolis, Minnesota

## FUNDER'S REPORT

The African American Leadership Forum is thankful for the gracious support of its donors in 2021.

3M Foundation  
Best Buy Foundation  
Blue Cross Blue Shield  
Bush Foundation  
Cargill Foundation  
Chase Foundation  
Code42 Foundation  
F. R. Bigelow Foundation Trust 555  
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GHR Foundation  
J.P. Morgan Chase  
McKnight Foundation  
Medtronic Communities Foundation  
Northwest Area Foundation  
Opus Foundation  
Otto Bremer Trust  
Pentair Foundation  
Pohlad Foundation  
Prosperity Now  
Saint Paul & Minnesota Foundation  
Securian Financial Foundation  
Target Foundation  
The Minneapolis Foundation  
The Toro Company  
The Travelers Companies Inc.  
Thrivent Financial for Lutherans  
U.S. Bank Foundation  
Wells Fargo Foundation

WE ARE FUELED TO CARRY OUT OUR AMBITIOUS WORK BECAUSE OF YOU.

With deep gratitude and thanks,  
the African American Leadership  
Forum recognizes its individual  
donors in 2021.

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PEOPLE LIKE YOU ARE AT THE HEART OF ALL THAT WE DO.

# AS AALF MOVES FORWARD

REALITY—SOMEONE MUST LEAD THE HARD CONVERSATIONS

“ Some may question if this movement is too Black. Others may wonder if it’s Black enough. When people ask us if we expect to get push back as we center Blackness. Yes, we do. At the same time, we can’t act like race doesn’t exist or color doesn’t matter. Not if we’re to rectify the evils of yesteryear or generate workable solutions for the future. ”



Marcus Owens, CEO  
African American Leadership Forum  
*Our voices. Our future.*



Paula Neeley  
Executive Assistant

African American Leadership Forum

*Our voices. Our future.*

*“With an immense network, we’re positioned to be an even greater force, in 2022.”*

PERFORMANCE—CAPACITY ON THE INSIDE TO DELIVER OUTSIDE

“ How we get there is as important as getting there. Internal infrastructure enhances what can be delivered. No matter how cutting-edge your solutions might be, if you can’t execute them, you’ll find that your organization is inadequate. As a systems builder I’ll always ensure we have the best processes and systems in place, to deliver. ”

# A BOSS HAS A TITLE: A LEADER HAS THE PEOPLE

**ASSURANCE**—MAINTAINING THE TRUST FROM STAKEHOLDERS

“ With funders and corporations making important decisions about where to donate their resources, transparency and compliance are necessary to maintain trust of stakeholders who believe in AALF's work. Stepping into the new year, with renewed hopes for our trajectory and good stewardship, AALF remains positioned to maintain and strengthen interest from those we rely on to operate.”



Shanaya Dungey  
VP, Administration  
African American  
Leadership Forum  
*Our voices. Our future.*



Marc L. Watts  
VP, Communications & Narrative

African American  
Leadership Forum  
*Our voices. Our future.*

**AUTHENTICITY**—CRAFTING THE STORY MAKING IT DIGESTIBLE.

“ The work we do at AALF is unique to any other nonprofit. And although it's different, our narrative must be communicated in a simple manner that's understandable, yet in a distinctive fashion that showcases the alternative approach to the work we do. There's an art to it. It's almost like a love language. You either figure it out, or you don't. I'm having a lot of fun getting it right. We plan on getting really loud in 2022. Standby!”



## AALF DIRECTORS & STAFF

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