

NINA MOINI: Four Black-led Twin Cities nonprofits have come together to form something they hope will help them continue to serve those in need. The Legacy Stabilization Collaborative is a new joint effort between the Aurora St. Anthony Neighborhood Development Corporation, the Halle Q. Brown Community Center, Phillis Wheatley Community Center, and the Urban League Twin Cities.

Together, these nonprofits have over 300 years of experience helping families in the Twin Cities. Here to tell us about the collaborative is Tatiana Freeman, president of Aurora St. Anthony Neighborhood Development Corporation. Thanks so much for being with us, Tatiana.

**TATIANA
FREEMAN:** Good to be with you, Nina.

NINA MOINI: 300 years of combined service. And as I was listing the names of these four different entities and organizations, they all stand on their own, obviously, with all that they've contributed. For people who might be unfamiliar, could you just tell us a little bit about how these organizations have evolved over the years?

**TATIANA
FREEMAN:** Sure. So I want to just note that we're the baby of the four. And so it's such an honor as a neighborhood organization to be mentioned amongst these powerhouse organizations that have really serviced Minneapolis and St. Paul for a combined 346 years.

And so for many of us, we've stepped into the gap when there was nothing else. There were no other institutions servicing the needs of community. And so it's such an honor for me to help convene these organizations to really highlight our strengths as well as build the necessary infrastructure for the next 100 years.

NINA MOINI: Yeah, tell us a little bit about what roles. I mean, these are holistic places. These are helping people on many levels of life. Could you talk a little bit about the different services that are kind of encompassed here, and why it makes sense to pool resources in a way.

**TATIANA
FREEMAN:** Sure. So Aurora St. Anthony has historically been a neighborhood development corporation. And so we've done a little bit of development work. We were instrumental in bringing four stops to the Rondo neighborhood along the Green Line Corridor. Halle Q. Brown has serviced over 63,000 families last year. They're kind of known as the lighthouse of the community in St. Paul.

Urban League is known for their century of advocacy for economic empowerment and racial equity. And Phillis Wheatley is also in the process of reviving the legacy of Camp Katherine Parsons. And so each of these institutions has been cornerstone organizations in their respective neighborhoods.

And again, being a place for where community Black residents, as well as other communities of color can come to when they need when they need artistic expression, when they need community programming, when they need childcare, a food shelf. And so they really have been the first stop where Black community could come and feel safe as well as build a sense of community.

NINA MOINI: How difficult was it, or was it difficult to come to this kind of conclusion that it was a good time to join resources in this way and join efforts?

TATIANA FREEMAN: It actually was really easy. I think I've been so amazed at the trust that each of the leaders have placed in me. I've been at Aurora St. Anthony for over two years, and what I found is that there was a real need to invest in the infrastructure of the organization.

And looking at the kind of strain that can put on you as a leader, you're trying to stabilize finances, modernize operation, as well as keep that trust you have with community. And so when I went to each organization, they were all open to the opportunity to collaborate together and really figure out how we can continue the legacy of our organizations and strengthen the impact that we have on community through our collective work.

NINA MOINI: Is it going to be funded collaboratively, or was this an issue of funding at the core, or were there other ways that you saw a lot of good things could come from these partnerships?

TATIANA FREEMAN: Yeah, so Benny Roberts and I came in around summer of 2024. And so I found a lot of similarities with him and his experience. And so one of the things that I was really adamant about was convening and leading the fundraising element for this work because I didn't want that to be a barrier for any of the leaders.

NINA MOINI: At the Halle Q. Brown, just Benny.

TATIANA FREEMAN: Yep, Benny Roberts and I. And so we came in within about a month of each other. And so I was kind of amazed that he was having some of the same experiences. And so when I started to put this concept together in fall of last year, I really wanted to take the burden and not have any barriers to participation.

And so that's why we're convening the work. That's why we're leading on the fundraising so that the leaders can just show up and give their full selves to the experience and not have to worry about tons of emails or being burdened by not having funding.

But there certainly is a need to invest in each organization. Having working capital is critical, especially right now when you see changes at philanthropy and in the federal landscape. And so being able to provide working capital to each organization is definitely a core element of the collaborative.

NINA MOINI: Are there any other collaboratives like this that you maybe looked to, or do you feel like this is something that people are increasingly turning toward to continue to have some of that robust strength amid all of these different changes you mentioned?

TATIANA FREEMAN: Sure. So I mean, I think the desire for partnership is happening everywhere. Lincoln Leaders was something we certainly looked at and got introduced to by Alf, but I definitely think that more organizations are really trying to figure out how they can not only magnify impact, but really just be more strategic in how they go about funding opportunities as well as just think about the collective agency you have when you come together.

A lot of times, there is this mistrust or kind of pursuit of the same funding sources, but instead of looking at that as a hindrance, we are really approaching it as something that we can come to together and be able to create greater impact as a shared collaborative.

NINA MOINI: What are you hoping can be accomplished together? You mentioned I think people can just picture all of the paperwork and all of the tasks that leaders have. We all know what it's like to be like, I wish I could do the heart of my job instead of what I'm doing back here. But is there anything else you're looking forward to that you think you all could do together? Maybe it's even bigger events, or maybe it's something, a new campaign of some sort.

TATIANA FREEMAN: Yeah, honestly, it's all of the above, right? I'm not originally from here. And so I go back and forth between the Twin Cities all the time. But even just getting more movement between Minneapolis and St. Paul. I would love to invite St. Paul residents over to North Minneapolis for an event and vice versa.

And so I think just opening our neighborhoods to one another and just having more conversations instead of working in these silos is really important to me. And then also being able to look back and say that I gave something back to these institutions that have really been at the forefront of supporting community for so long would be a huge honor for me, being able to provide necessary funding instead of organizations having to put in countless hours on grant applications and really thinking about how do we sustain after this initial phase work.

How can this collaborative even continue on five years from now, 10 years from now? And maybe potentially invite other legacy institutions into the conversation. So I think it's really about highlighting the beauty and power of partnerships, as well as just creating a little bit more activity between St. Paul and Minneapolis residents.

NINA MOINI: Tatiana, what have you heard from community members about this convening and coming together?

TATIANA FREEMAN: Yeah, so this is our first launch publicly. So we really haven't shared it beyond the partner organizations and some of those funders that have seeded it. And so I'm really actually excited to get the story out so that we can have community react and maybe get some input from them in terms of what would it look like for Halle Q. residents to go over to Camp Parsons, and how can we create or strengthen existing programming so that if you're a family in North Minneapolis and you work and you live or you go back and forth that you have a more cohesive experience and you can call someone at Halle Q. or you can go over to the food shelf, just the possibilities of integrating partnership, I think, are endless.

And so I'm really excited to bring even the community engagement into how we think about how we approach what we learn from this experience and what we can do with even some of the funding that we're hoping to raise as a part of that \$960,000 phase-I goal.

NINA MOINI: All right, Tatiana. Well, everybody heard it here first, then. Breaking the news. Very happy for you. Thank you for coming by and sharing about this. We really appreciate your time.

TATIANA FREEMAN: Thank you so much. Have a great day.

NINA MOINI: That was Tatiana Freeman, President of Aurora St. Anthony Neighborhood Development Corporation on the newly formed Legacy Stabilization Collaborative.