INVITATION: A SHARED SPACE FOR NONPROFIT LEADERSHIP

A COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE DESIGNED WITH AND FOR NONPROFIT LEADERS

The Challenge We Face - The nonprofit sector is facing a growing crisis of leader and staff burnout, executive turnover, and strained infrastructure. Nonprofit leaders, in all of their brilliance, are navigating increasingly heavy demands, mission delivery amid funding loss and uncertainty, staffing pressures, along with political and social headwinds, often without adequate support or time to pause and recharge.

Without a structured space for reflection, mutual support, and shared problem-solving, the emotional and organizational toll of this crisis can undermine the wellbeing of leaders, their teams, and their collective impact.

Our Response - We are co-creating a space that invites nonprofit leaders to pause, reflect, connect with peers and exchange stories, surfacing effective strategies and new opportunities for navigating shared leadership demands.

Design Principles: Hope, Peer Support & Resilience

We are stronger together - This community of practice is designed as a supportive, intentionally sized cohort of up to 15 nonprofit leaders who want space to think together, learn from one another, and feel less alone in their leadership.

The group will be co-created with input from nonprofit leaders, beginning with a **discovery phase** to identify key discussion topics and garner input on the structure design. The cohort will then launch as a **six-month pilot**, focused on facilitated, small-group engagement, shared reflection, and practical collective learning.

If this resonates, we invite you to help shape what this community of practice becomes by providing input during our discovery phase and/or joining the inaugural cohort.

Goals & Intended Outcomes

This community of practice is designed to support nonprofit leaders while also contributing insight and learning to the broader field.

For Participating Leaders

- Create a safe space for honest dialogue, reflection, and peer support
- Surface the most pressing leadership challenges and wellness needs nonprofit leaders are facing in the current moment
- Co-create a cohort-driven agenda, shaped by participant priorities and lived experience
- Strengthen resilience, reduce isolation, and build capacity to sustain mission-driven work over time

For the Broader Field

- Inform funders about the systemic conditions and support needs shaping nonprofit leadership today
- Share best practices and bright spots emerging from the cohort's work
- Identify potential pathways for navigating challenges and advancing more sustainable, resilient nonprofit leadership models

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Evaluative Insights

- What conditions help nonprofit leaders feel supported, connected, and able to lead sustainably?
- What challenges most impact leaders' wellbeing and effectiveness in this moment?
- How does peer connection influence leaders' sense of resilience and capacity over time?
- What themes and patterns emerge across leaders' experiences and needs?
- How might these insights inform funder strategies, field-level supports, or future community-based approaches?

POTENTIAL COHORT DISCUSSION TOPICS

Burnout & Emotional Resilience Explore strategies for coping, recovery, and burnout prevention. Discuss how leaders can sustain themselves emotionally while carrying complex organizational responsibilities.	**Workplace Wellness & Systems of Care** Examine organizational cultures, policies, and practices that support mental health, healthy boundaries, self-care, and sustainable workloads across teams.
Leading with Integrity Exchange learnings and experiences about navigating political, economic, and funding uncertainties while staying grounded in mission, values, and accountability to community.	**Staffing, Retention & Org. Capacity** Address challenges related to staff burnout, vacancies, and weakened infrastructure, and identifying innovative approaches to rebuilding capacity and supporting teams.
Evolving Employee Expectations Explore shifting expectations—particularly among early-career staff—regarding workplace culture, flexibility, wellbeing, and organizational responsibility.	**Funding & New Revenue Approaches** Surface strategies for responding to funding loss and volatility while going after diversified and sustainable sources of support.
Partnerships & Structural Sustainability Explore how leaders and boards are considering partnerships, collaborations, shared services, mergers, or other structural strategies to strengthen long-term viability.	**Equity, Inclusion & Centering Community** Discuss how leaders are embedding equity and inclusion into decision-making, organizational culture, and program design, while ensuring that leadership practices reflect and respond to the communities they serve.

ANTICIPATED TIMELINE

December 2025 – January 2026
DISCOVERY PHASE
Conduct interviews, listening sessions, and survey dissemination

February 2026
DATA ANALYSIS & SYNTHESIS
Aggregate, analyze and share feedback

February 2026
RECRUITMENT
Identify up to 15 leaders to participate in first cohort

MARCH 2026
DISSEMINATION & COHORT LAUNCH
Share data insights from discovery phase and convene cohort

MARCH - JULY 2026
COHORT CONVENINGS
Host monthly sessions and collect survey data

APRIL - JULY 2026
EVALUATION
Synthesize data and share monthly learning and insights in real-time

JULY - AUGUST 2026
COHORT CONCLUSION
Assess cohort outcomes and share learnings

JOIN US

We invite you to be part of shaping this initiative. Whether you'd like to contribute to the discovery phase or join the inaugural cohort, your voice and experience matter.

For more information or to express interest, please contact us via email: nonprofitleaderscop@gmail.com

FACILITATORS & CO-CREATORS



Nineequa Blanding (she/her/they/them)is a heart-centered, public health strategist and skilled facilitator working at the intersection of health equity and social justice. She brings deep experience convening cross-sector leaders, guiding complex conversations, and fostering peer learning to create systems change for collective wellbeing.

She has held executive positions and senior leadership roles across philanthropy and health nonprofits, including Social Impact Exchange, Health Resources in Action, the Boston Foundation and the Boston Public Health Commission. Nineequa brings a collaborative, co-creative leadership style grounded in trust and shared learning.



Kathryn Henderson (she/her) is a seasoned nonprofit leader with deep operations, employee engagement, and general management expertise. A through-line of her career has been work that that lifts others up, advancing their own leadership, and ability to make an impact. She brings significant facilitation experience including LeadBoston, a Community of Practice for DEI and Human Resource practitioners, and professional development workshops.

Most recently serving as Interim-CEO at YW Boston, Kathryn has held senior leadership and management roles at YW Boston, Reach Out & Read, Massachusetts Office for Victim Assistance, and Literacy Volunteers of Massachusetts. She's a graduate of the College of the Holy Cross and recently completed Cambridge Health Alliance's Mindful Behavior Change Group Leader Training.