

# NLA's Vision

NLA imagines a world where the mobilization and enfranchisement of millions of people has realigned power in our country; where grassroots organizations led by impacted communities have the power to advance and protect social, racial, and economic justice policies that strengthen our democracy and liberate us all from systemic oppression.

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## NLA believes this vision will become reality when:

- The progressive ecosystem has the power and influence to win elections, hold elected officials accountable, and shape how policy is created and implemented.
- Those directly affected by harmful policies and inequitable systems are leading the movement for change through grassroots organizing and powerful advocacy.
- State ecosystems and grassroots organizations have the resources, capacity, and knowledge to utilize multiple legal entities—including 501(c)(4)s, 501(c)(5)s, PACs, and corporations—to build and sustain power and influence.
- Those with historical positions of privilege and power—namely white, socially and economically advantaged people—are using that power to disrupt and transform the ecosystems and structures that lead to systemic oppression.
- Funding practices have evolved so that progressive power-building organizations—including those led by communities most impacted by injustice—are healthy and fully resourced to sustain deep organizing year-round, every year.

# WHO WE ARE



## NEW LEFT ACCELERATOR — A 501(c)(4)

New Left Accelerator (NLA) runs capacity-building programs focused exclusively on supporting progressive organizations, movements, and state ecosystems that use multiple legal entities to build power, increase impact, and win.

### NLA runs three main programs:

1. **Accelerator Program:** A two-year, holistic capacity-building program specifically designed to meet the unique needs of multi-entity organizations
2. **Empower and Protect:** Cohorts and programs focused on legal compliance and operations
3. **Technical Assistance & Consulting:** Fee-for-service offerings and accompaniment



## THE CAPACITY SHOP — A 501(c)(3)

The Capacity Shop (TCS), NLA's separate but affiliated 501(c)(3), serves as an education and resource center that generates and shares knowledge about how to safely and boldly use multi-entity organizations to build sustained power.

### The work of TCS is non-partisan and includes:

1. **Research & Learning:** Document how multi-entity organizations build power
2. **Knowledge & Resource Hub:** Offer multi-entity focused learning communities, training, resources, and tools
3. **501(c)(3) Technical Assistance & Consulting:** Advise organizations, intermediaries, consultants, and funders that support multi-entity power-building work

# CENTERING EQUITY & LIBERATION IN OUR WORK

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## OUR COMMITMENT TO EQUITY & LIBERATION

We believe that commitment to equity, justice, and liberation requires constant interrogation of and endured practice in dismantling systems of oppression in all their forms – systemic, organizational, interpersonal, and personal.

We know that systemic change and building progressive power requires examining how power is used to generate and perpetuate oppressive systems. We also know that true liberation work requires us to be conscious of oppressive habits of dominant culture that show up in our organizations, relationships, work, and lives. And we know we must be bold in imagining what's possible so that we may transform ourselves, our communities, and society.

We strive to lean into our organizational values of equity, justice, and liberation by analyzing the deep historical and modern impact of the interlocking systems of racism, sexism, homophobia, ableism, and economic oppression; committing time and resources to personal and internal organizational practices; ensuring our values inform our work, programs, partnerships, relationships, and governance; and by centering those most impacted by systemic oppression in our work.

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## WHO WE WORK WITH

NLA and TCS center impacted communities in our work. This means we prioritize partnering and collaborating with organizations that center the experiences and voices of marginalized groups at the intersection of race, gender, and class.



# AN NLA PRIMER ON MULTI-ENTITY POWER BUILDING

## MULTI-ENTITY DEFINED

Multi-entity organizations use more than one legal entity—often 501(c)(4)s, 501(c)(5)s, PACs, or corporate entities, in addition to 501(c)(3)s—to build power and influence at every stage of the political and policy process.

## WHY MULTI-ENTITY WORK IS REQUIRED TO BUILD POWER

Although 501(c)(3)s do critical work, they cannot engage in the full range of strategies and tactics that build and sustain power. Only 501(c)(4)s, PACs, and corporate entities can participate in critical strategies like unlimited lobbying, political activity, independent expenditures, and/or the endorsement and funding of candidates. These strategies are central to achieving legislative victories that improve people's lives.

## MULTI-ENTITY CHALLENGES AND RISKS

Running an organization with multiple legal entities is dizzyingly complex. Leaders must navigate tax, employment, and compliance laws; build new systems to manage resources across legal entities; accurately track and report political activity; engage multiple stakeholders to coordinate strategy; and find new attorneys, accountants, and others with unique multi-entity expertise.

This complexity can limit the impact of our organizations and movements, endanger the tax-exempt status of the (c)(3), and expose nonprofits to costly investigations, lawsuits, fines, and bad press. Access to specialized multi-entity support ensures organizations can do bold work safely.

## NLA'S DEFINITION OF "POWER"

While there are many definitions of power, when NLA talks about power, we mean the power to effectively organize and mobilize a diverse base to:

- Elect and protect progressive majorities at all levels of government
- Pass and defeat ballot initiatives
- Co-govern with elected officials to draft, implement, and protect progressive racial, social, and economic justice policies
- Hold elected officials accountable



# NLA'S ROADMAP TO ECOSYSTEM CHANGE

NLA specializes in building multi-entity capacities that enable organizations and ecosystems to build power. The work of TCS is nonpartisan and focuses on multi-entity learning and providing technical assistance to 501(c)(3)s with affiliated 501(c)(4)s to ensure they can do bold work legally and safely.

## THE ECOSYSTEM'S CHALLENGE

The progressive ecosystem cannot build and sustain power with 501(c)(3)s alone. To win and protect critical political and policy battles, we must engage in a broad range of strategies that require 501(c)(4)s, corporate entities, and PACs, in addition to 501(c)(3)s. Multi-entity power-building work in our ecosystem—especially among organizations serving and led by communities excluded and impacted by injustice—is underutilized, grossly underfunded, highly complex, and little understood.

## NLA'S HYPOTHESIS

Shifting conditions within the broader progressive ecosystem to better support multi-entity power-building work will expand the strategies and tactics grassroots organizations can utilize to build power. With more power, progressives will elect candidates who are accountable to a diverse, enfranchised, and engaged base. Progressive organizations will have increased access to influence policy. Elected officials will pass and defend more progressive social, racial, and economic justice policies.

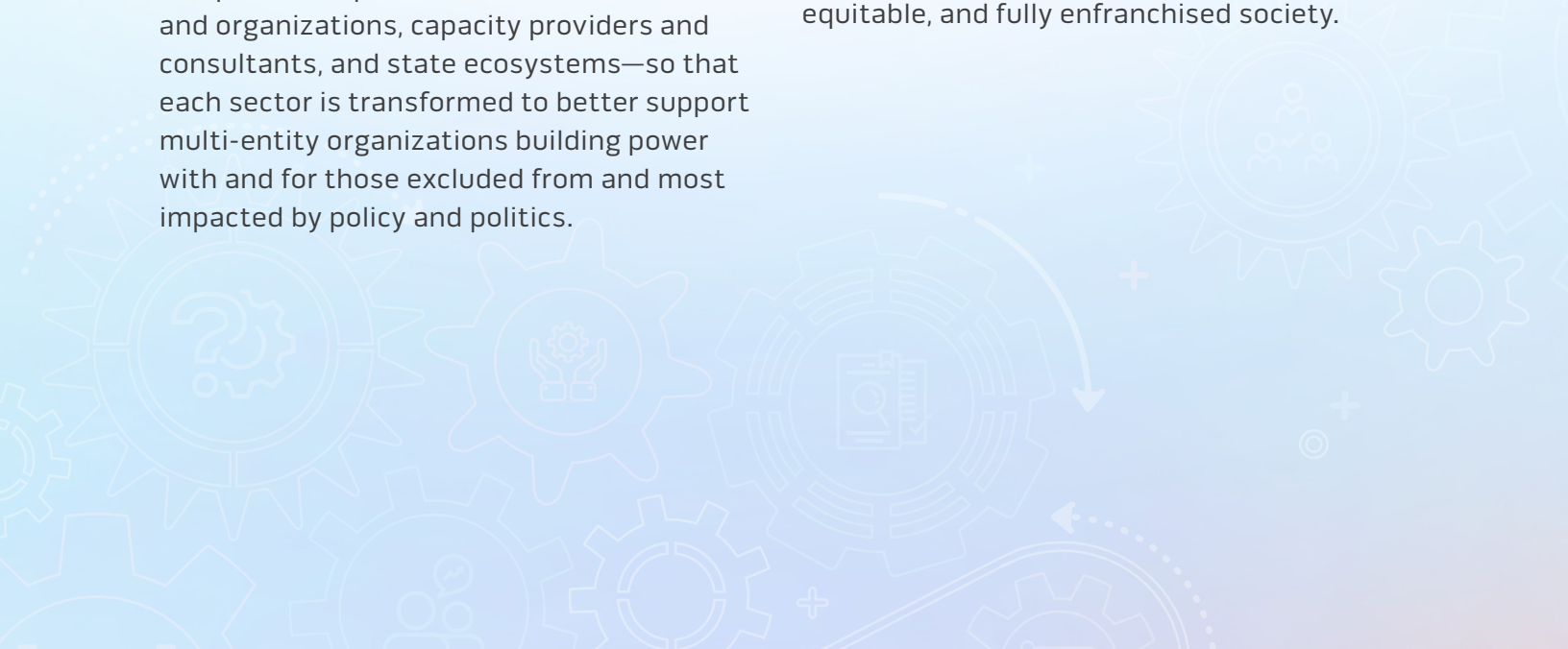
## NLA'S SOLUTION

Tackling this challenge requires NLA and TCS to take a whole ecosystem approach.

We must increase knowledge about multi-entity power-building work, change practices, and collaborate with four critical sectors of the progressive movement—donors and philanthropic institutions, leaders and organizations, capacity providers and consultants, and state ecosystems—so that each sector is transformed to better support multi-entity organizations building power with and for those excluded from and most impacted by policy and politics.

## NLA'S OUTCOME

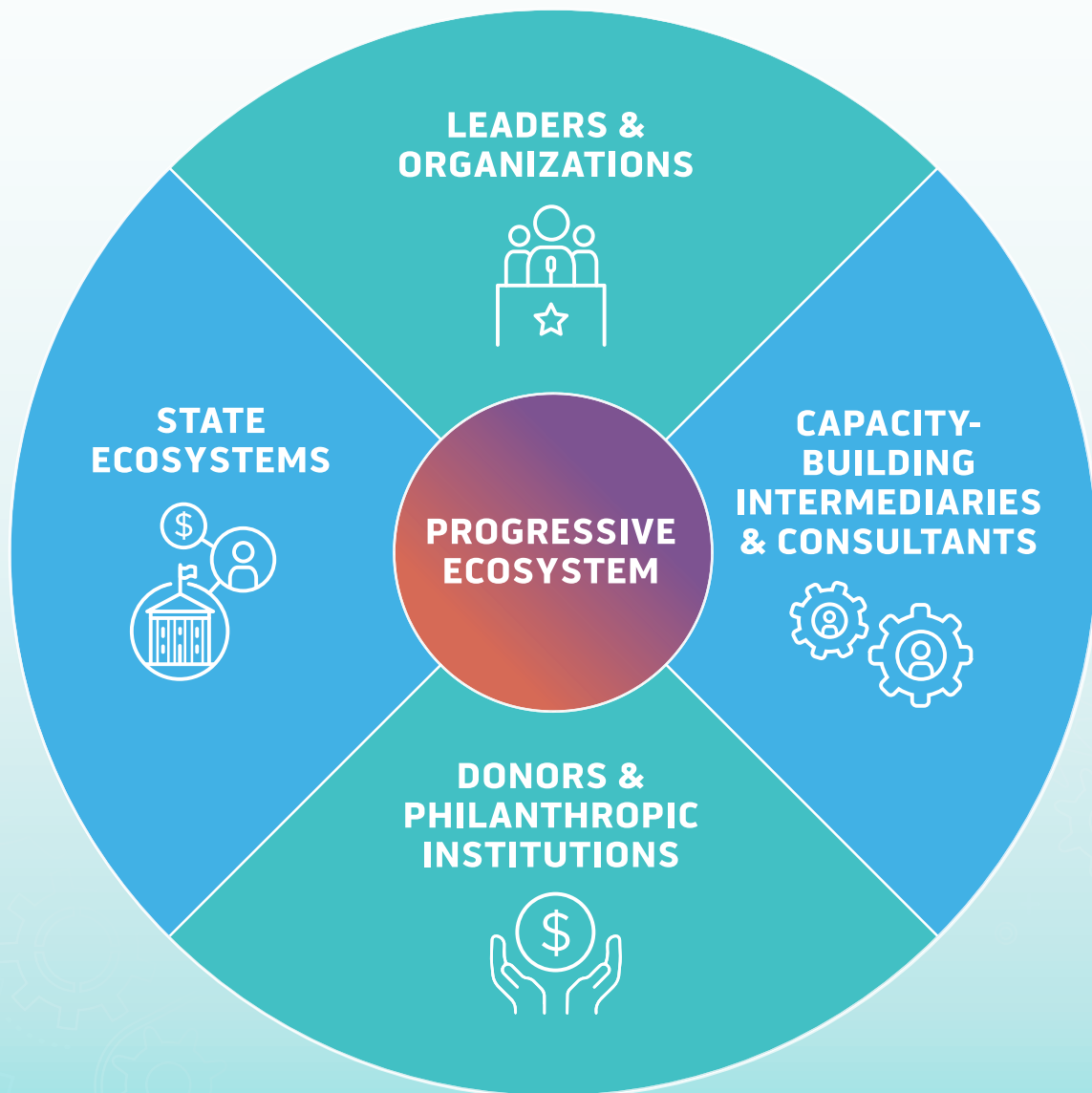
Organizations accountable to a community base and led by those most impacted by injustice are exercising power at every stage of the political and policy process. They have elected allies who are advancing a bold racial, economic, and social justice policy agenda. Those policies have created a more just, equitable, and fully enfranchised society.



# ECOSYSTEM SECTORS THAT MUST CHANGE

NLA and TCS believe that in order to create the change we want to see in the world, the entire progressive ecosystem must evolve to better support multi-entity power-building organizations led by the communities most impacted by injustice.

**NLA and TCS thus focus our work on four key sectors of the progressive ecosystem:**



# OUR CORE PROGRAMMATIC STRATEGIES

To achieve change, NLA and TCS engage in three core strategies.





# Provide Capacity Support

**Function of Strategy:** Strengthen Multi-Entity Organizations

**Focal Areas:** Leaders & Organizations

## Challenge

Running multi-entity organizations is hard, expensive, and lonely. Most progressive organizations are not sufficiently resourced or supported to use multiple legal entities effectively, and there are few to no multi-entity specific resources to support them. This limits their ability to do bold power-building work safely.

## Hypothesis

Providing capacity-building support to meet the unique and complex needs of multi-entity organizations will increase their capacity to win and defend critical policy and political victories.

## Solution—Key Programs

- **Accelerator Program** — 2-year holistic capacity-building accompaniment
- **Empower & Protect Cohorts** — Operations- and compliance-focused programs
- **Coaching & Technical Assistance Packages** — Fee-for-service accompaniment

## Tactics

- Provide capacity-building support specific to multiple-entity organizations
- Center and collaborate with leaders of color and communities most impacted by injustice
- Document, analyze, and measure how organizational infrastructure builds power
- Track and explore conditions that increase absorption of capacity support

## Outcome

Strong, healthy, and well-resourced multi-entity organizations have increased their capacity to build and wield power to accomplish their goals.





# Build Collaborative State Infrastructure

**Function of Strategy:** Increase In-State Capacity For Multi-Entity Work

**Focal Areas:** State Ecosystems; Leaders & Organizations

### Challenge

Campaign finance, tax, and employment laws vary from state to state. So do the strategies, tactics, and legal entities best suited to build durable power. Yet many states lack state-specific resources and infrastructure to meet the unique and complex needs of multi-entity, power-building organizations.

### Hypothesis

If state ecosystems develop infrastructure designed to meet the unique needs of multi-entity organizations, they will utilize resources more effectively, reduce the risk of multi-entity work for individual organizations, increase impact, and win more critical battles.

### Solution—Key Programs

- **State-Based Technical Assistance** — Specialized state-specific multi-entity programs, trainings, and capacity-building support
- **Ecosystem Infrastructure Projects** — Collaborative partnerships with in-state partners to build infrastructure that supports multi-entity power-building work

### Tactics

- Facilitate deep, value-aligned state partnerships, coalitions, and networks
- Improve resources for and reduce cost of bold, legally-compliant, multi-entity state work
- Build in-state pipelines to grow diverse staff with multi-entity expertise
- Engage and design programs with leaders of color and underrepresented communities

### Outcome

Infrastructure in key states has led to the growth of an influential mix of progressive grassroots organizations using multiple legal entities to build and defend power at all levels of government.



# Build Collective Wisdom

**Function of Strategy:** Develop Multi-Entity Knowledge & Resources

**Focal Areas:** Leaders & Organizations; Donors & Philanthropic Institutions; Consultants & Intermediaries; State Ecosystems

### Challenge

Our ecosystem does not meet the unique needs of multi-entity, power-building organizations. This wastes resources, burdens organizations, prevents sharing of innovation and best practices, and limits the impact and power of our movements and organizations.

### Hypothesis

Knowledge about how to build power with and meet the unique needs of multi-entity organizations will increase the impact of progressive organizations and movements. Education about multi-entity work targeted at key sectors of the progressive ecosystem will lead to improved practices, better infrastructure, and safer, bolder practices across the progressive ecosystem.

### Solution—Key Programs

- **Collaborative Learning Partnerships** — Build valued-aligned partnerships to engage in research and shared learning
- **Multi-Entity Resource Hub** — Provide a central home for learning and resources that increase the impact of multi-entity power-building
- **Technical Assistance & Consulting** — Advise 501(c)(3) organizations, intermediaries, consultants, and funders that support multi-entity power-building work

### Tactics

- Engage in research, build learning agendas, and document multi-entity knowledge
- Create and disseminate multi-entity specific resources, tools, and training
- Provide access to liberatory, alternative approaches to organizational development, intermediary support, and funding practices
- Run collaborative learning communities

### Outcome

All sectors of the progressive ecosystem have the knowledge and resources they need to support and/or grow healthy, equitable, and powerful multi-entity organizations.

# OUR VALUES

Our organizational values guide NLA and TCS shared work and document the commitment we make to ourselves and the leaders, consultants, funders, and partners we work and collaborate with.

## Equity, Justice & Liberation

**We believe** that disruption of oppression in all its forms — systemic, organizational, interpersonal, and personal — is required to achieve liberation for us all. **We commit** to centering racial, gender, and economic justice strategies core to that disruption in everything that we do, including our organizational practices. **We do** this by ensuring our values and anti-oppression principles drive our programs and partnerships, naming power dynamics and working to shift them, and committing our time and resources to this work.

## Personal Responsibility & Accountability

**We believe** that systemic change must begin with us. **We commit** to living our values, to holding ourselves accountable for the agreements we make, and to examining and addressing individual and collective habits that reinforce dominant culture. **We do** this by engaging in continuous learning as to how race, background, and experiences have affected us within systems of oppression, providing loving feedback, and building intentional accountability practices in all of our work.

## Communication & Transparency

**We believe** that open and honest communication is central to all trusted relationships — and that change happens at the speed of trust. **We commit** to transparency in all aspects of our work, and to investing in equitable long-term relationships beyond transaction. **We do** this by ensuring that our work and processes foster transparency — especially as to financial matters, time commitments, and power dynamics, utilizing non-violent communication practices, and by centering people and relationships above all else.

## Innovation & Learning

**We believe** that to build progressive power to transform our society, we must explore innovative ways to build capacity within our movement. **We commit** to doing the work of capacity-building differently by dismantling aspects of the dominant culture of nonprofit consultancy that often fail to value the diverse lived experience, expertise, and knowledge of community leaders. **We do** this by honoring leaders' wisdom, building intentional learning into our external work, internal practices, and partnerships, and co-creating innovative solutions to emergent challenges.

## Transformative Collaboration

**We believe** that transformative and radical collaboration within our movement is required to create and sustain systematic change. **We commit** to forming long-term relationships with diverse stakeholders across our movement, to building lasting organizational and ecosystem capacity, and to disrupting funding practices that divide us. **We do** this by forming deep, sustained, values-based partnerships, engaging partners to co-create solutions to shared challenges, and engaging in joint fundraising efforts to support the important work of collaboration.

## Resilience & Sustainability

**We believe** that the work of our movement must be sustainable. **We commit** to centering wellness, sustainability, and resilience in our programmatic work, policies, and ongoing organizational practices. **We do** this by creating intentional practices that support self care, building coaching into our programs and internal practices, and dedicating resources to support wellness and cultural and organizational sustainability.