



POWERED TOGETHER



A Pulse Check for Coalition
Power, Equity, and Strength



85%

of nonprofits are part of a coalition to advance their advocacy strategies.*



Coalitions are the most used strategy for nonprofit organizations working on advocacy change. Increasingly, **coalitions are centering and growing the leadership of those most affected by the issues** they are working on: communities of color or historically marginalized identities.

Coalitions are **changing to include more grassroots- and equity-focused organizations**. When power is shared more equitably, this grows the **collective power** of the coalition and leads to more transformational visions where success means social change over a policy win.

**Amplifying Nonprofit Voices: Bridging the Advocacy Evaluation Gap (2023)*

Coalitions want to shift power within their coalitions but **don't have tools to help.**



Advocacy evaluation is a rapidly growing field that has seen the emergence of several **frameworks for building power** for social change, measuring equity, coalition effectiveness, collective impact and creating communities of practice. While these frameworks give insight into collective power, they are **disconnected** and fail to address coalitions centering equity.

In the winter of 2022, the Collective Impact Forum published five strategies for centering equity in coalitions, including shifting power within the collaborative.* **This article is the latest of several unanswered calls for improving measurement frameworks to include equity.**

**Centering Equity in Collective Impact (2022)*

JOIN THE CAUSE



Find out how!



We developed a
tool to measure

COLLECTIVE POWER.

In the past three years, we've begun to understand and amplify collective power within child care coalitions. We wanted a way to help coalitions understand the extent to which they were sharing power equitably across their member organizations

Our innovative tool **Powered Together: A Pulse Check for Coalition Power, Equity, and Strength** is the result of collaboration with the Alliance for Early Success, advocates in 6 state coalitions, and a review of relevant frameworks on coalitions and racial equity.

Although born in child care coalitions, we believe this tool **could support all coalitions who embrace equity to build collective power**, particularly those who:

- Are willing to disrupt traditional dynamics to build collective power,
- Receive at least some designated funding, rather than being volunteer-run,
- Have shared responsibilities, such as established committees to lead their work,
- Are taking shared actions to achieve a goal.

We define **Collective** **Power** as:

The **joint strength** of a diverse group (organizations, communities, and individuals most affected by the issue) working for a **shared goal of transformational social change**, who has been able to realize the full knowledge, abilities, and actions of all people in the group.

Collective power requires **shifting power** to and centering the people most affected by an issue, who are often people of marginalized identities, allowing **their needs and leadership to shape the use of funds, strategies, and priorities of the group.**



Funders have an opportunity to improve **Collective Power** in their coalitions and everywhere.



By using the Powered Together tool, funders, like you, could:

1

See how the coalitions you are working with are building collective power and find new opportunities.

Snapshots can show how your coalition is building collective power and give information the coalition can use to be more inclusive and create greater impact.

2

Create a cohesive story about what it takes to build collective power.


This tool makes collective power concrete, and easier to tell a coalition's story to other funders, decisionmakers, and the public.


3

Test and refine a tool that other state coalitions can use to improve their collective power building.

By using the tool with a coalition, you will help make it relevant for more coalitions centering equity.


Interested in applying the tool to a coalition you work with? **Basic measurement** you would get with our team's support would include:


 Implementation of the **standard Powered Together tool** in one coalition

 **Collective Momentum Snapshot** of how your coalition is building collective power


By testing the tool in new contexts, you are contributing to the improvement of the tool for all coalitions seeking to build collective power.

If you wanted to explore collective power further, **additional options** could include:

 Facilitated reflection (virtual or in-person) on your coalition's results

 Implementation and analysis across multiple coalitions

 Detailed findings report


 Custom tool design

We can help you understand **Collective Power** in coalitions.



With **additional funding**, we can continue working with CC NEXT to learn from their experience with the evaluator-implemented version to develop a **self-assessment version** of the Powered Together tool

For coalitions with **limited resources**, **a self-assessment version can open conversations** about how to improve collective power **on their timeline** with the **skills on hand**. It can become a sustainable tool for CC NEXT coalitions and coalitions everywhere.

A self-assessment version
of the Powered Together tool can
build **Collective**  **Power** everywhere.

HOW WE MEASURE COLLECTIVE POWER



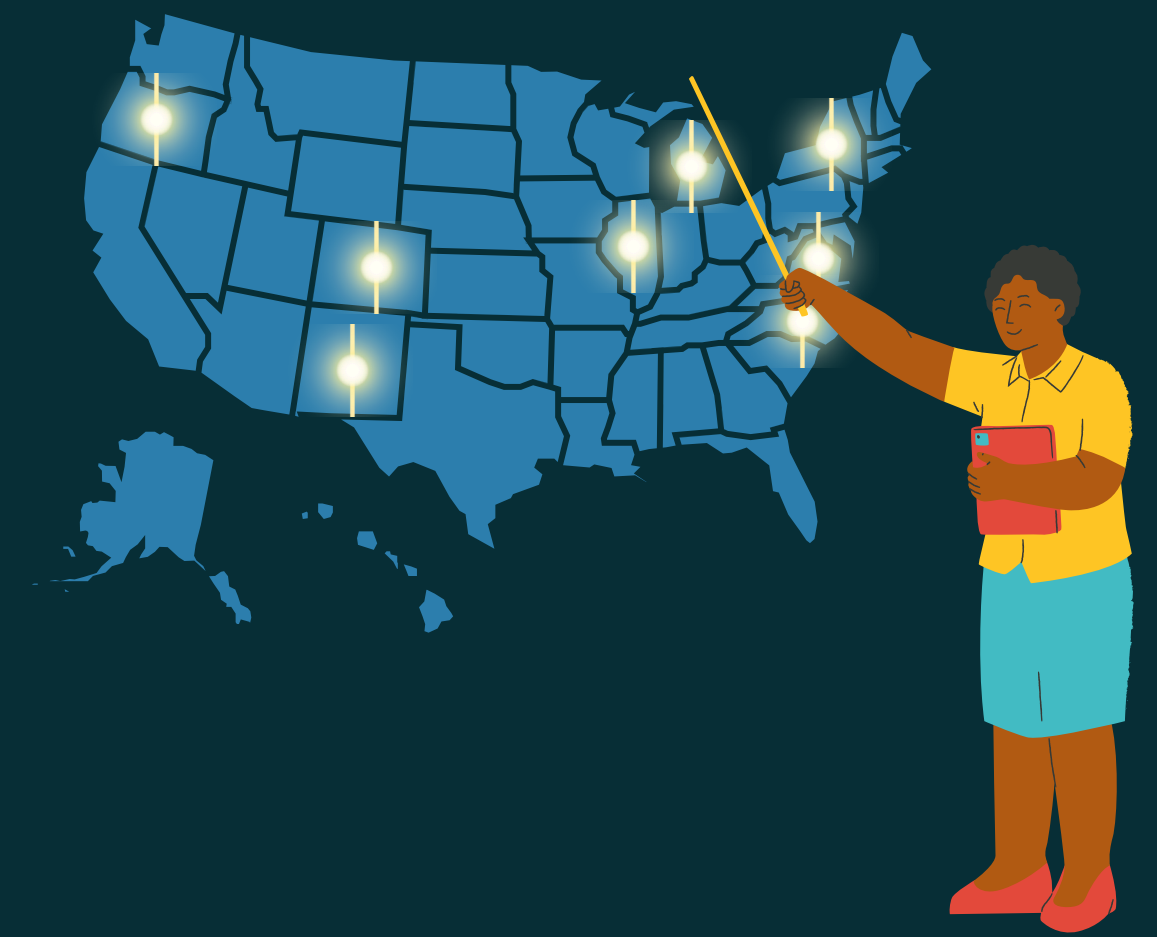
The Powered Together Tool takes from knowledge grounded in the innovations within real coalitions.

In the past three years, we followed **two collectives** – Towards Equity in Electric Mobility (TEEM) organized by the Greenlining Institute and Forth Mobility, and Child Care NEXT (CC NEXT) organized by the Alliance for Early Success – who brought together traditional policy organizations with equity and grassroots organizations, and local community leaders, representing those most impacted by policies

Representing a total of **11 state advocacy groups in 8 states**, they are changing the ways in which policies are created and advocated for, starting first with their internal structures.

Using **insights from these two collectives and a review of relevant literature**, we drafted a Collective Power Framework and continued to work with advocates in CC NEXT to identify 7 Milestones for Collective Power and initial indicators. The Powered Together tool measures coalitions' collective power along these indicators.

We learned from
advocates and coalitions
across the country.



Advocates contributed to the framework in several ways.

Coalition members help
define the collective
power milestones. >



Because there are no existing frameworks for collective power that centers equity, we looked to the advocates who are building collective power as part of their regular practice.

- **Defining** collective power through interviews
- Identifying **milestones** for collective power in focus groups
- Identifying **indicators** for the milestones in a facilitated activity
- Piloting the collective power **tool** with a subset of advocates

Equity

The recognition that everyone at the table holds different levels of power, and there needs to be a concerted, intentional effort to shift and build the power of members who come in with less. While all these components are important, co-creation and transformation rest upon the presence of equity in a group and would not be possible without it.

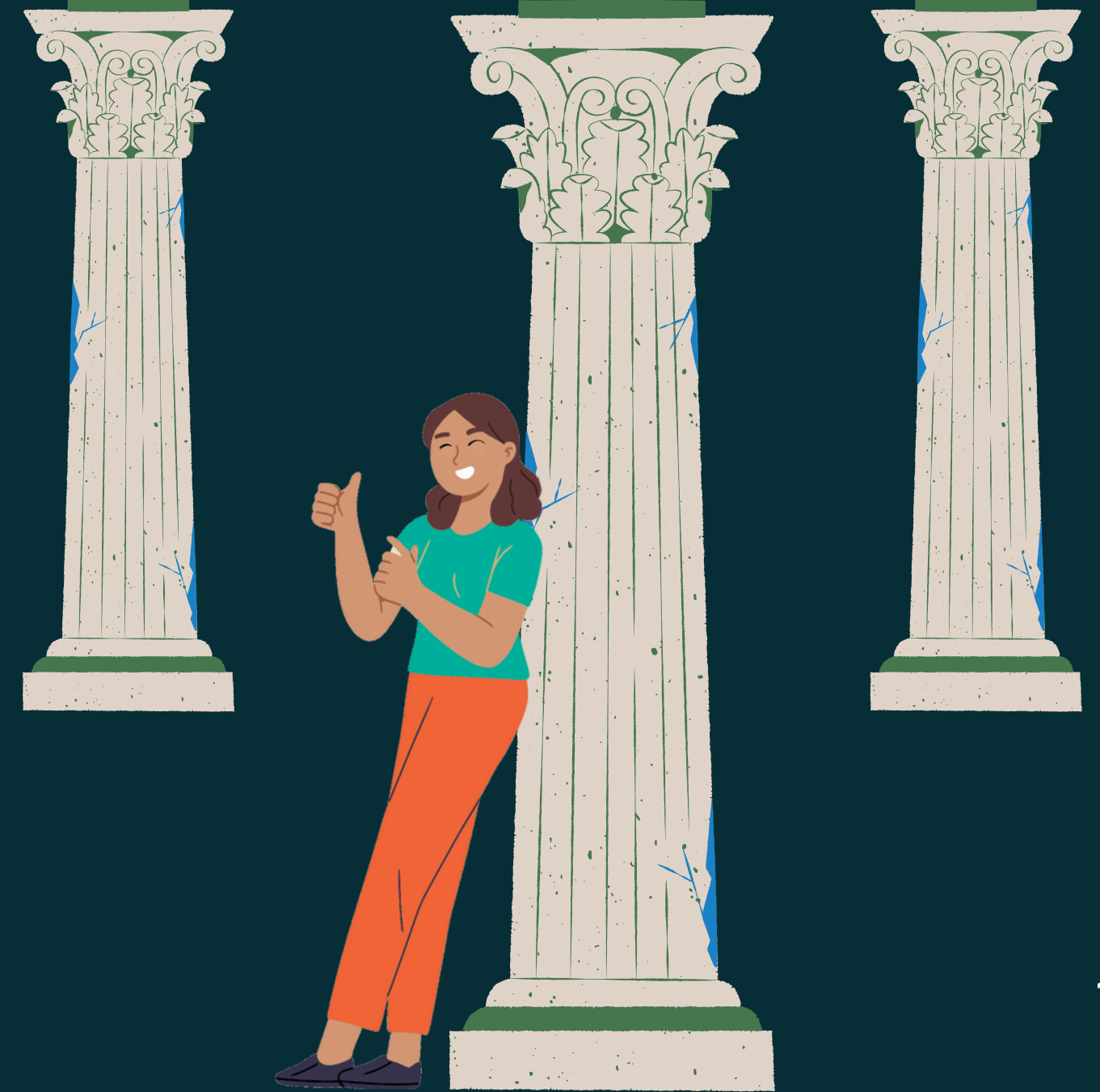
Co-creation

The space is owned, shaped, and created by members in collaboration with each other. This shows up not just as a function of effectiveness, but as shared decision-making and a spirit of collaboration in the coalition.

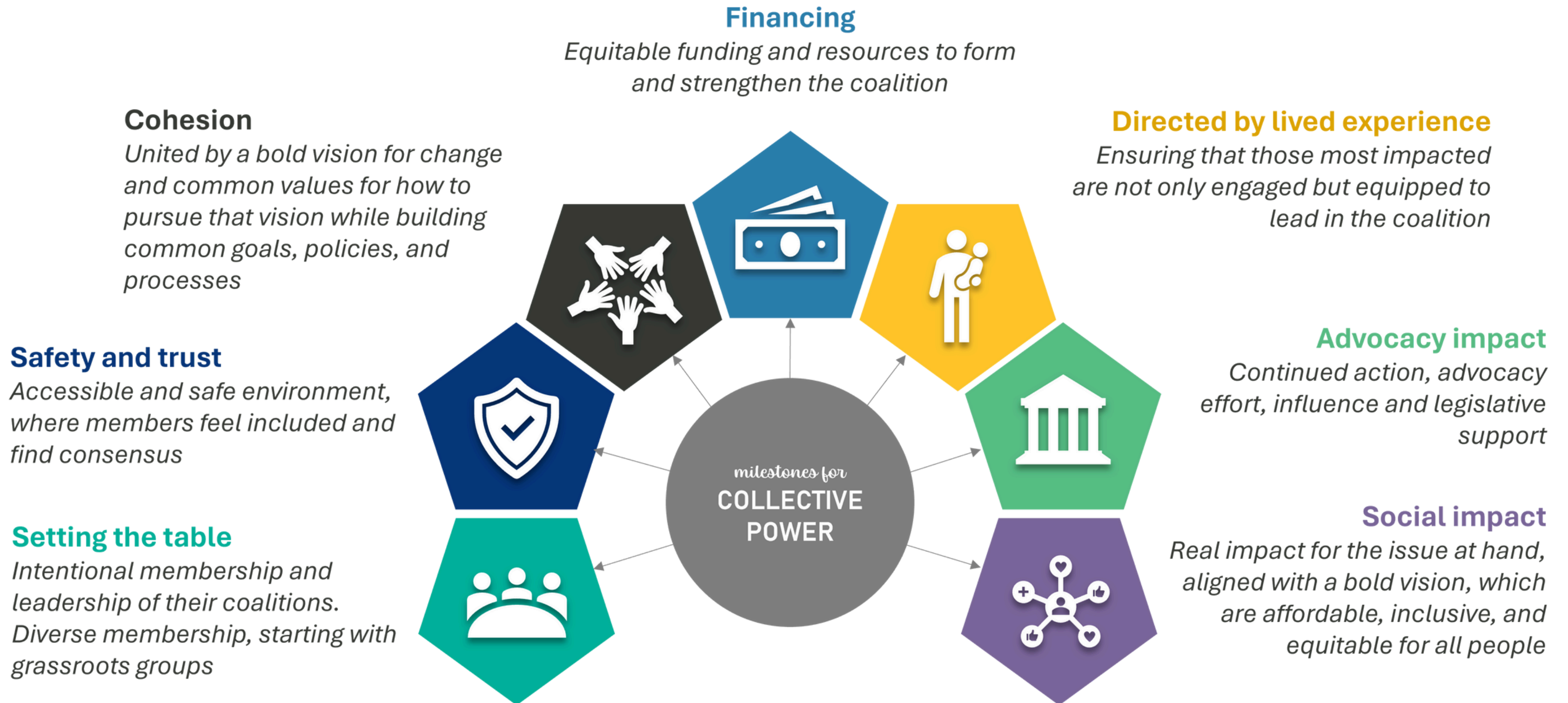
Transformation

Not only are members of the group striving to affect their chosen issue (i.e., electric mobility, childcare), they are changing the way the work is done and looking at long-term social change. The coalition sees policy wins as a tool for improving the experience of and impact for those most affected by the issue.

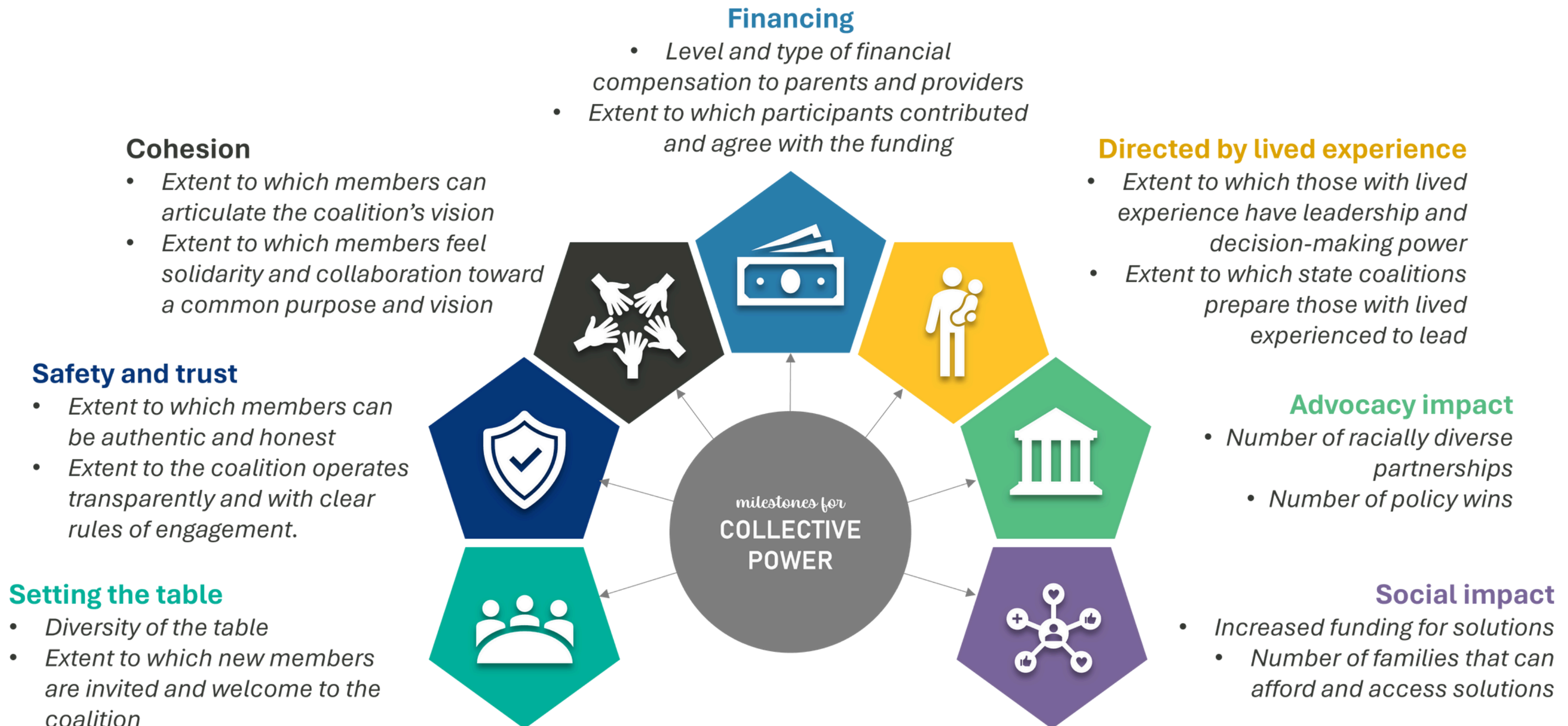
Through our work,
we distilled three
principles for
Collective  Power...



...and milestones as both goals and outcomes of building **Collective Power**.



We have also developed **indicators** to track change and progress in each milestone.



WHY WORK WITH INNOVATION NETWORK?



We specialize in advocacy evaluation efforts, strategy, and facilitation. **We believe that evaluation should be a tool for social justice**, and work with clients who have social justice-centered missions. Our diverse client portfolio includes health equity, early childhood, civic engagement, and advocacy and social movements.

Innovation Network has facilitated meaningful learning and evaluation for over 30 years. We were among the first to measure advocacy efforts, and since 2021, we have sought to understand collective power.



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tool for social justice.

LET'S WORK TOGETHER

We are thankful for the support of the Alliance for Early Success for funding our initial work to understand the milestones for collective power, piloting an initial tool to measure collective power, and for believing in an approach that centers the parents and advocates at the center of collective power.

We are actively exploring potential funding partners to scale the tool outside of the child care advocacy space and create a self-assessment version of the tool. By supporting the Powered Together Tool, you will contribute to the evidence base about what collective power looks like in coalitions, and what advocates need to be successful.

We look forward to speaking with you. For more information, contact Alissa Marchant, Director, amarchant@innonet.org.

