

*JWC Foundation*  
Marketing strategy  
and research



The JWC Foundation, based in Richmond, recognized the systemic challenges facing Black entrepreneurs and sought to create a sustainable ecosystem to address them.

By building a robust support system, aligning internal processes with external growth strategies, and fostering relationships with external partners, we supported the foundation in building their internal foundation allowing for future cohesion for all marketing efforts.



# Our Approach

Our approach combined multiple research methodologies, including in-depth interviews (IDIs), focus groups, digital ethnography, and 'Man on the Street' (MOTS) interviews, to capture both individual insights and real-time community feedback. These methods provided a comprehensive understanding of behaviors, motivations, and perceptions, offering a well-rounded view of the organization's positioning and engagement opportunities.

We supported this with secondary research to explore trends, competitor landscapes, and donor behaviors, identifying potential collaboration and expansion opportunities aligned with the organization's mission. The project delivered a thorough internal assessment, market analysis, and a strategic roadmap designed to optimize internal processes, strengthen partnerships, and ensure long-term sustainability.



# External Research: Category and Culture Trends

## CLOSED DOOR CORPORATE PUSHBACK:

Two years ago, corporate support for DE&I initiatives that address Black and Brown issues was at an all-time high. However, in the wake of several high-profile scandals concerning the misuse of funds by DE&I administrators or financial recipients, there has been a steady yet persistent increase in pushback towards these programs among upper management and the C-Suite in the corporate world. This is leading to cutbacks, layoffs, and most importantly, a general shift in attitude towards race-based CSR initiatives, moving from unequivocal support to caution and doubt.

## DECREASING OPPORTUNITIES:

Additionally, the low interest rate and rapid expansion environment that fueled investment in non-essential aspects of the corporate balance sheet has faded. Now, industries like tech, marketing, and communications are laying off staff en masse and cutting programs almost as quickly as they started them, decreasing the total number of available grants and partnership opportunities.

## EXPANSION AND DIVERSIFICATION:

Today's racial equity-focused nonprofit environment hosts a wide variety of relatively new organizations, each with its own specific twist on the overarching mission. This state of affairs can be very beneficial for the JWCF if it carves out its own specific niche and aggressively explores partnership opportunities, but it also makes cutting through the noise of other nonprofits much harder.

## TECHNOLOGIZATION:

Whether it be generative AI, predictive analytics, SEO and SEM, or digital engagement, the nonprofit sector is rapidly becoming smarter and more tech-driven as advanced technologies become increasingly accessible. For the JWCF, this means carefully considering which new methods to adopt and being very intentional about the purposes of those actions.



**As you walk through Jackson Ward, a neighborhood paved brick by brick with the legacy of late greats like Maggie Lena Walker, you witness a history that has been slowly stripped away, minute by minute, year after year, decade upon decade.**

Saturated with newcomers, yet upheld by its neighborhood icons, Jackson Ward sits in the heart of Richmond—a city steeped in a complex history, marked by both joy and deep disappointment, sadness, and tragedy. "Recompense" is the word that comes to mind as you see the remnants of memories that once were, now part of ecosystems struggling to emerge. The JWC Foundation has a unique opportunity to reclaim this narrative, to rebuild the community brick by brick, starting with its history and expanding outward. In this strategic roadmap, we embark on a journey as the JWC Foundation house is rebuilt, founded on principles of legacy, storytelling, radicalism, and evolution. For too long, the best-kept secrets—like those of Maggie Lena Walker—have been overlooked. These secrets are embodied by the entrepreneurs of today who are also building their businesses brick by brick. The JWC Foundation is the starting point for these individuals and has the potential to serve many more. It's time to focus on resetting the JWC Foundation into something fresh and radical—something that will inspire action. Within these pages, you will find more than just roadmaps and swim lanes; you will discover pillars of change. This strategy is intentionally crafted not only to sustain the JWC Foundation but to revitalize it, because you can't pour from an empty cup. This is a season of recompense. It's time to build the BLCK Street Confederation, one brick at a time.

