



Center for African American Recovery Development

RCO Toolkit

Resource 6.1

**CAARD Collective Guide:
A Community of Practice in Motion**



6.1 CAARD Collective Guide: A Community of Practice in Motion

Purpose

Black-led RCOs are not isolated sparks — we are a constellation. The CAARD Collective exists to bring those sparks together, creating a fire that cannot be ignored. This guide introduces the Collective: our tiers, our rhythm, our shared table.

Why This Matters

Movements are never built alone. Our ancestors survived because they organized. They passed buckets in church basements to send neighbors' children to school. They formed mutual-aid societies when banks shut them out. They turned porches, barbershops, and beauty salons into strategy rooms.

The CAARD Collective is that same spirit, reborn in recovery. It is where Black-led RCOs gather to share wisdom, build strategy, and remind each other: *you are not walking alone*.

How the Collective Moves

- **Affiliate Members** — New and emerging RCOs stepping into the work, equipped with starter tools, templates, and mentorship.
 - **Development Partners** — Organizations building capacity and sharpening their edge through advanced training, evaluation, and funding guidance.
 - **Advisory RCOs** — Legacy leaders anchoring the movement, shaping national strategy, and mentoring the next wave.
 - **Community of Practice** — Regular convenings, peer circles, and shared learning spaces where ideas flow across generations and geographies.
-

Benefits of Joining

- A seat at the table — and the ability to shape the table itself.
 - Shared toolkits, resources, and campaigns grounded in culture.
 - Mentorship from RCO leaders who've fought and won.
 - Collective advocacy that amplifies your local voice on a national stage.
 - Strength in numbers when negotiating funding, policy, and visibility.
-

The Collective in Motion

The Collective is not theory — it's alive in the work of our members. From NORA's legacy of funding strategies to **Detroit Recovery Project's legacy of re-entry and workforce support**, to **CRCC's bold community advocacy in Chicago**, to **MRCI's rise as a culturally grounded hub in Indianapolis**, to the **new energy of NOLA RC and ORRI**, these stories are proof: when we move together, we build what no one thought possible.

"Alone, we are voices. Together, we are a chorus."

How to Step In

Wherever you are on the journey — founding, growing, or leading — there is a tier for you. Contact CAARD to learn how your RCO can take its place in the Collective.