Speaker 1:

The Disability & Philanthropy Forum presents Marq Mitchell, founder and CEO at Chainless Change.

Marq Mitchell:

Take some time to understand local policies and politics and how that impacts an organization's ability to operate in spaces and execute some of the strategies that they are wanting to have implemented in their communities. If we understand the practices and politics, then we will then be able to co-create solutions alongside folks who are the experts and understand what barriers they may be facing to quickly tie a story to that. We do a lot of advocacy work around our local behavioral health system. All of the behavioral health funding comes from that behavioral health system in our community. Because of our advocacy, which will not shift because we are about our people, it creates barriers. And if funders understood that then maybe their positions would be a little different.

Marq Mitchell:

Second, I would say, invest like you want justice. Investing largely, boldly, risky. Make risk and invest like you want justice. I've had a situation recently where someone gave us a thousand dollar investment that required over two days of reporting. And so really investing like you understand what people underground are experiencing and like you want them to have the resources to create the world that we want to live in.

Marq Mitchell:

Lastly, I would say contribute to creating a diverse network of funders for the organizations that you are supporting and the issues that you are working around because oftentimes the funding that we might be receiving, whether large or small from an individual entity is not enough to get us through the year or to accomplish our missions. And so creating a network of more supports would widely benefit us with moving the work forward.

Marq Mitchell:

And the last thing, I would say that advocacy and organizing takes time. And there's a lot of unexpected infrastructure needs that often need to happen if we are going to work towards really organizing and making an impact. We're fighting against systems, constructs, perceptions, stigmas that have been built over hundreds of years, and so change won't happen overnight. And be willing to truly be a partner and invest in the infrastructure as well as the work on the ground. And understand if it doesn't happen in a year, that doesn't mean that they didn't try. That just means that we're fighting systems that have been built for hundreds of years, and we need more support.

Speaker 1:

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