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Amplify's Learning Visit in

Dear Friends,

In July, we kicked off NFG's biannual convening in Nashville with a powerful learning visit led by Odessa Kelly of Stand Up Nashville (SUN), Jess Williams and Rachael Spriggs of The Equity Alliance (TEA), and Lisa Sherman Luna of the Tennessee Immigrant and Refugee Rights Coalition (TIRRC). Those powerful leaders taught us about corporate overreach and state preemption, inequitable development, and the expanded transit system in Nashville.



Inequitable Development

We also stopped at Silver Sands, a 75 year old restaurant in North Nashville, a historically Black community with a deep civil rights legacy. Silver Sands was forced to relocate their kitchen's exhaust pipe from the back of their building to their roof because a developer built a new apartment building mere feet from the restaurant. This forced the restaurant to close and cost them over \$9,000 to rectify the code violation. Silver Sands also had to fix their roof and foundation after the developers' construction workers damaged both. Thanks to organizing support from TEA, which has deep connections in North Nashville, the restaurant has reopened, but worries about development and potential displacement remain.

Corporate Overreach & State Preemption

Our first stop on the learning tour was Nissan Stadium, or rather, stadiums. As we stepped off the bus, the sound of heavy machinery surrounded us. Construction crews were working on what will be the largest NFL stadium in the country...right next to the still-functional Titans stadium. The new stadium will receive more than \$1.2 billion in public subsidies without a Community Benefits Agreement (CBA); a law passed at the state level bans cities from requiring CBAs in public-private deals. State preemption on this topic comes on the heels of a historic win. In 2018, SUN helped negotiate a legally binding CBA for GEODIS Park, the city's soccer stadium. That agreement secured local hiring, affordable housing investments, and opportunities for minority-owned small businesses. This time, however, SUN and other organizations were shut out of negotiations.





Expanded Transit System

Another stop on the learning tour was the Rip Patton Transit Center. This 10-bay facility in North Nashville with airconditioning, free Wi-Fi, and live route displays, connects riders to schools, medical centers, and universities, and expands job access. It was made possible by the “Choose How You Move” referendum, championed by SHIFT Coalition members TIRRC, TEA, and SUN. Their vision extends far beyond buses: affordable housing at major transit hubs, jobs that sustain working families, strong labor protections, small business investment, and climate-resilient infrastructure. Here, as well, state power looms large. Lawsuits went all the way to the Tennessee Supreme Court in an attempt to overturn the referendum and derail SHIFT’s plans.

The lesson is clear: in Nashville, corporate power, state preemption, and displacement, are deeply intertwined, so we need to continue funding in the region to challenge those powers.

For more than six years, Amplify has supported racial justice organizing in Nashville, moving over \$1.5 million. In 2025, we engaged in a participatory local strategy process that has resulted in an up-to-date, relevant, and bold grantmaking strategy. Look out for our final strategy in the next few months, or reach out to amplify@nfg.org to learn more about our process, our strategy, and potential for partnership.

Best,

Amplify staff

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