



Building Leadership Now **A Focused Literature Review and Landscape Analysis**

Prepared for Barr Foundation

June 2023

By Consulting Team:

Melissa Mendes Campos, Linda Wood, and Shiree Teng

Introduction

Since 2020, the unprecedented convergence of a global pandemic, national racial reckoning, and climate emergency has profoundly changed communities, organizations, and the context in which leaders lead. With this, we have seen the emergence of new challenges—but also of new insights, opportunities, and innovations. To better understand the evolving needs and implications for how the sector invests in its leaders, Barr Foundation commissioned a focused literature review and landscape analysis training its eye on research and practice of the past three and a half years.

This research is not presented as being comprehensive in scope, as it does not reflect the full breadth of thought leadership or leadership programs, but rather it seeks to offer some representative examples. It is hoped that this publication will help shed new light at the same time that we expect that it will inspire suggestions of many other resources that could have been included.

Following an Executive Summary of key takeaways, this publication is presented in three parts:

- I. Literature Review**, providing a synthesis of recent knowledge products to elevate lessons and gaps in leadership development;
- II. Landscape Scan**, offering a bird’s-eye view of leadership development resources available to leaders in Greater Boston and beyond; and
- III. Model Alumni Programs**, a special section highlighting a few fellowships with active alumni networks.

While this research was conceived in the context of informing a strategic review of the Barr Fellowship, its scope is not limited to fellowships and its findings are applicable to leadership development more broadly. It is in this spirit that the Foundation will be applying its lessons as well as sharing it with others in the field to add to the accrued and evolving knowledge of how to support more effective, resilient, and sustainable leadership.

Executive Summary

While the breadth and depth of this report is focused and somewhat limited, it begins to suggest some key takeaways about how leadership development programs can best meet evolving needs as well as potential strengths and gaps in the current ecosystem.

The literature emphasizes the challenges and opportunities presented to leaders in today’s context of peri-pandemic recovery, the fight against racial injustice, and the unfolding climate crisis. These include, but are not limited to:

- ▶ More being demanded of leaders than ever before, making what is already an isolating role less and less sustainable;
- ▶ Workforce issues related to the “great awakening” of workers reevaluating their careers and work-life balance in the wake of the worst of the pandemic;
- ▶ An increasing need for leadership development that centers healing and wellness, particularly for BIPOC leaders;
- ▶ The growing focus on DEI is—in many cases—not yet translating to deep culture change within organizations (among board and/or staff) or systems; and
- ▶ BIPOC-led organizations are still seeing underinvestment from funders and have less opportunity to experiment with innovations like more inclusive leadership structures.

The Foundation will be applying the lessons of this research as well as sharing it with others in the field to add to the accrued and evolving knowledge of how to support more effective, resilient, and sustainable leadership.

LESSONS

Overall lessons have to do with being clear about a program's purpose, being intentionally inclusive in both intent and execution, and being particularly cognizant of the unique needs and opportunities when serving BIPOC leaders and their organizations.

- ▶ Define leadership broadly and *be explicit about why you are doing so*.
- ▶ Leadership is about unleashing *power to influence and change* organizations and systems to operate in equitable ways that enable all individuals to thrive.
- ▶ Race is not the only difference leaders must be skillful in navigating; within organizations, there are *generational, class, gender, and other dimensions* that can come into dynamic conflict.
- ▶ Racial equity work is too often done on the backs of leaders of color; BIPOC leaders who are newly hired to replace white leaders in mainstream organizations face particular hurdles.
- ▶ Leaders of color who lead (often smaller) identity-based organizations also face unique sets of challenges, including persistent underinvestment and distrust from philanthropy.

GAPS

While there are an increasing number of programs turning attention to the needs of BIPOC leaders, the field is still nascent in this area, especially in programming that takes an intersectional approach or that offers peer-based mentoring and networking opportunities specific to BIPOC leaders. Other potential gaps include programs for early-career leaders, that serve blended cohorts of leaders at all phases of their careers to capitalize on cross-generational learning and support, or that engage board members along with executive leaders. Gaps were also observed in:

- ▶ Development for BIPOC, queer, trans, and disabled leaders that gives them what they say they need;
- ▶ Investment in early- to mid-career leaders (onramps);
- ▶ Support for succession planning for late-career leaders (offramps);
- ▶ Intergenerational programs matching early leaders with late-career leaders in bidirectional peer mentorship;
- ▶ Capacity builders with skills and experience in equitable and inclusive practice;
- ▶ Peer-based mentorship, supports, and networking opportunities for BIPOC leaders;
- ▶ Follow up support and continued engagement after participants graduate from the fellowship or other leadership program; and
- ▶ Few board development programs go beyond basic governance to look at the changing context for system-level change.



I. Literature Review

PURPOSE: Synthesize recent knowledge products to elevate lessons and gaps in leadership development.

INTRODUCTION

This literature review and analysis is informed by more than a dozen sources published since 2021. (See **page 9**).

The greatest difference between this and previous such scans is the life-altering **convergence of a national racial reckoning, a global pandemic, and climate emergency** on our collective doorstep. These three intersecting and interrelated crises have created a pressure cooker environment for change leaders and their organizations at a time when the stakes have never been higher.

On one hand, this has led the field to respond with **new and different supports for leaders and organizations**, as we saw in relaxed COVID-related funding practices (though some have been short-lived) and in burgeoning health and wellness-informed resources for BIPOC leaders.

At the same time, **the tension has revealed fracture points in our roles, relationships, and structures with which we organize ourselves**. While this poses another leadership challenge, fractures can also illuminate—cracks are “how the light gets in.”

DEFINING LEADERSHIP: Who do we mean and what do we mean?

There are many dimensions that could be used to define **the “who”** of leadership.

- ▶ **Positional:** Executive leaders. Other executive level staff. Leaders at ALL levels of organizations.
- ▶ **Contextual:** Leaders of organizations AND movements. Community leaders.
- ▶ **Career Stage:** Early-career, emerging leaders. Mid-career leaders. Late-career leaders.
- ▶ **Identity:** BIPOC, LGBTQ+, women and nonbinary, people with disabilities, and other underrepresented leaders.

Equally relevant are questions about **the “what”** of programs for leaders.

- ▶ **Purpose:** Leadership for effective organizations. For systems change. For social change.
- ▶ **Sector:** Nonprofit sector. Public sector. For-profit social enterprises. Cross-sector.
- ▶ **Geography:** Local place-based. Regional. National. Global.
- ▶ **Focus:** Different forms of leadership (e.g., collective, equity-based, healing-centered).

1. From Leonard Cohen’s “Anthem” (1992)

These three intersecting and interrelated crises have created a pressure cooker environment for change leaders and their organizations at a time when the stakes have never been higher.

Roger Nozaki's 2021 blog post "Investing in Leadership for Racial Equity" asserts that: "By 'leaders,' we mean staff across an organization, not just those at the 'top,'" and this is in keeping with advice from Community Wealth Partners' 2021 research summary to: **"Define leaders broadly and be explicit about why."**

Despite a growing recognition of the importance of defining leadership more inclusively, leadership development programs have yet to catch up. Mandela Change Group, in its 2022 Healing Justice report, finds that **"The current dominant framework of leadership development is not reflective of what BIPOC, queer, trans, and disabled leaders say they need to thrive and be effective in their leadership."** Community Wealth Partners also notes that current **gaps include an underinvestment in early- to mid-career leaders as well as a dearth of support for succession planning for late-career leaders.**

The Community Wealth Partners' analysis also offers a view of the "what" of leadership: **"Leadership is about unleashing power to influence and change organizations and systems to operate in just and liberating ways that enable all individuals to thrive."** It is important that they name the use of power, as both the Healing Justice report and Amira Berger's 2023 article on "The Business Case for DEI" argue that leaders working toward racial equity, in particular, must be ready to take on shifting power and creating new ways of being and doing that are more inclusive and participatory. The Community Science report for Bush Foundation also lifts up the importance of building leaders' capacity to "navigate power and effect systems change."

TODAY'S LEADERSHIP CONTEXT

As described by Maurice Mitchell in the 2022 article "Building Resilient Organizations," **many leaders today are finding their organizations "stuck" and their roles "untenable."** He argues that this is fueled by fallacies about how power is wielded and how change happens, which serve to undermine leadership and impede real progress.

But Mitchell identifies opportunities to strengthen the structures, ideology, strategy, and emotional maturity of our organizations for greater resilience. One principle for moving forward echoes the lesson, called out above, to **define leadership broadly:** "We must adopt a more comprehensive understanding of leadership that recognizes that leaders and leadership exist at all levels of our organizations."

This suggests the importance of building more leader-full organizations where all are able to contribute to the best of their ability, while at the same time being **"clearer and more transparent about where hierarchies exist, why they exist, and where and how decision making lives."** This suggests a potential gap among leadership development programs that focus only on top executives or only on individual development without involving leaders in analyzing the distribution and use of power within their own organizations, let alone larger systems.

In 2023's *"Paving a Better Way,"* Rebecca Epstein and Mistinguette Smith build on Mitchell's article, observing a "fundamental cycle of disconnection" occurring between leaders and staff when power goes unaddressed and when people don't recognize their own leadership. The authors suggest that these schisms can be healed by building shared understanding around core concepts, including the mutuality of the employer/employee relationship and the organization's unique history and positioning within the larger ecosystem. Again, this **calls on leaders to be increasingly clear about the organization's work and how it works.** The article also identifies three skills needed to bridge the disconnect, which include: the **capacity for engaging in productive conflict;** understanding **how organizations build power toward a purpose and how to use one's own power in service of that aim;** and **emotional intelligence** that includes the "ability to skillfully engage with racial, generational, class, gender, and other dimensions of identity and experience."

Importantly, they also lift all this up as crucial not only for leaders and staff in organizations, but for **the coaches, consultants, and capacity builders who work with them**. This point is echoed in Nozaki's "Investing in Leadership" blog post, which highlights the Institute for Nonprofit Practice and Third Sector New England's finding that the ecosystem needs more "consultants with the experience and knowledge to effectively integrate diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging (DEIB) practices into their engagements." Capacity builders, too, must consider their roles as leaders in the larger ecosystem.

SUPPORTING BIPOC LEADERS

Building Movement Project's "*Race to Lead*" research series describes the experiences of leaders of color, both nationally and locally in Massachusetts, revealing **persistent gaps in compensation and esteem** (relative to white counterparts) at the same time that their work is growing more complex and burdensome.

As racial equity gets lifted up across the sector, it's too often done on the backs of leaders of color who are facing not only the challenge of fighting against inequities they themselves are affected by, but of changing systems within which they need to work, move, and lead. **Leaders of color taking over organizations from white leaders face particular hurdles, as do leaders of color who lead (often smaller) identity-based organizations.** This issue is reiterated in Open Society's "*In Support of Those Who Take the Leap*" report and in "*Avoiding the Glass Cliff*," published by Building Movement Project in partnership with BoardSource. Building Movement Project's research also finds that BIPOC leaders and their organizations continue to be underinvested in and **recommends funding more peer supports for leaders of color (e.g., affinity groups, communities of practice, and cohort-based leadership development programs)** as well as more significant—and consistent—investment in BIPOC-led organizations.

The research finds that BIPOC leaders and their organizations continue to be underinvested in and recommends funding more peer supports for leaders of color.

OTHER NOTES AND RELATED TOPICS

While this literature review and ecosystem scan is not meant to focus exclusively on leading for racial equity, DEI capacity building has become increasingly important for organizations and their leaders. As noted in the three *Readings on DEI Advancement and Backlash*, education and leadership development for equity may well be complemented by favorable Federal policy under the current administration, yet is at the same time being threatened by state-level legislative backlash and U.S. Supreme Court rulings in what is, as of this writing, a constantly shifting political and policy environment. This will require that funders, leadership programs, capacity builders, and organizational leaders be aware of both national and local developments, particularly if trainings are funded by public dollars or involve public sector agencies.

Lessons



- ▶ Define leaders broadly and **be explicit about why**.
- ▶ Leadership is about unleashing **power to influence and change** organizations and systems to operate in equitable ways that enable all individuals to thrive.
- ▶ Race is not the only difference leaders must be skillful in navigating; within organizations, there are **generational, class, gender, and other dimensions** that can come into dynamic conflict.
- ▶ Racial equity work is too often done on the backs of leaders of color; BIPOC leaders who are newly hired to replace white leaders in mainstream organizations face particular hurdles.
- ▶ Leaders of color who lead (often smaller) identity-based organizations also face unique sets of challenges, including persistent underinvestment and distrust from philanthropy.

Gaps



- ▶ Development for BIPOC, queer, trans, and disabled leaders that gives them what they say they need;
- ▶ Investment in early- to mid-career leaders (onramps);
- ▶ Support for succession planning for late-career leaders (offramps);
- ▶ Intergenerational programs matching early leaders with late-career leaders in bidirectional peer mentorship;
- ▶ Capacity builders with the skills and experience in equitable and inclusive practice;
- ▶ Peer-based mentorship, supports, and networking opportunities for BIPOC leaders;
- ▶ Follow up support and continued engagement after participants graduate from the fellowship or other leadership program; and
- ▶ Few board development programs go beyond basic governance to look at the changing context for system-level change.

List of Publications Reviewed

1. *The Burden of Bias in the Bay State: The Nonprofit Racial Leadership Gap in Massachusetts* (2020), Building Movement Project's Race to Lead series
2. *Trading Glass Ceilings for Glass Cliffs* (2022), Building Movement Project's Race to Lead series
3. *Investing in Leadership for Racial Equity*, September 13, 2021 blog post by Roger Nozaki
4. *Racial Equity Leadership Discovery Project Research Summary* (2021), Community Wealth Partners for Barr Foundation
5. *Healing Justice for Transformative Leadership* (2022), Mandela Change Group
6. *Catalyzing Leadership for Equity* (2022), Urban Institute
7. *Building Resilient Organizations: Toward Joy and Durable Power in a Time of Crisis*, Maurice Mitchell, NPQ, November 29, 2022
8. *Paving a Better Way: What's Driving Progressive Organizations Apart and How to Win by Coming Together*, Rebecca Epstein and Mistinguette Smith, NPQ, May 1, 2023
9. *In Support of Those Who Take The Leap* (2021), Open Society Foundation
10. *Avoiding the Glass Cliff: Advice to Boards on Preparing for and Supporting a New Leader of Color* (2022), Building Movement Project and BoardSource
11. *Giving Boston and the Twin Pandemics: From Moment to Movement* (2022), New England Blacks in Philanthropy
12. *The Business Case for DEI Reinforces Anti-Black Sentiment*, Amira Barger, NPQ, May 11, 2023
13. *Key Lessons from Developing a Leadership Development Program with Racial and Other Forms of Equity at the Core* (2022), Community Science for Bush Foundation
14. *Fellowships Alumni Network Study* (2023), IREX for the W.K. Kellogg Foundation
15. Readings on DEI Advancement and Backlash:
 - a. "President Biden Signs Executive Order Advancing Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility in the Federal Government" (Fact Sheet), The White House, June 25, 2021
 - b. *State Anti-DEI Initiatives Explained*, Perkins Coie, April 25, 2023
 - c. "Nonprofits Scramble to Comply With Fla. Law That Limits DEI Training," Jim Rendon, *The Chronicle of Philanthropy*, June 27, 2022

Additional notes and excerpts are included as [Appendix A](#).



II. Landscape Scan

PURPOSE: Gather the landscape of organizations, programs/initiatives, and resources related to leadership development (organized by a framework/ecosystem map), with a particular focus on Greater Boston and Massachusetts, but including relevant national resources accessible to local leaders.

The following pages provide a high-level mapping of leadership development programs and offerings, emphasizing those addressing equity and inclusion. This mapping is illustrative of the range of programs but not comprehensive, and it draws only on information publicly available online. While it suggests strengths and gaps in the ecosystem of resources, there will no doubt be ways it could be augmented, corrected, or refined.

HOW TO READ THE MAP

The first part of the map is organized as two tables: one for programs in the Greater Boston and Massachusetts region, and one for programs serving a nationwide audience or other regions that may or may not be available to local leaders. In each table, online descriptions have been used to summarize in columns with colored, numbered circles identifying the primary target audience and eight programmatic features or components: **1**) fellowship, **2**) sabbatical, **3**) learning circle, **4**) training program, **5**) alumni network, **6**) coaching, **7**) organizational grants, and **8**) healing/wellness focus. Program names are linked to their respective websites.

The second section of the map is a graphic illustration of programs relative to their similarity to the Barr Fellowship. Within the circle are local and regional programs; outside the circle are national programs. The four quadrants correspond to key audiences, with early-career to the left, mid-career to the right, BIPOC leaders at the top, and other types of leaders and/or programs below.

Overall Observations

- ▶ **Foundations, Capacity Builders/Trainers, and Partnerships Between the Two:** Some programs reflect partnerships between one or more funders and a capacity building organization, while others are run as consultancies or training programs without direct funder involvement. In all cases, funders must be cognizant of the power they hold relative to grantees and capacity building partners.
- ▶ **The Leadership Development Ecosystem is Always Evolving:** As capacity builders experiment with new approaches, adapt to COVID, and as new programs and providers enter/exit the field, the list of leadership development programs shifts and changes. While this list may have some overlap with previous landscape scans, different programs have come to the fore and others seem to have become less visible or prominent.
- ▶ **Outliers and Ecosystem Notes:** In addition to fellowships, sabbaticals, and other programs for executive leaders, the landscape also includes supports for neighborhood and movement leaders, sector-specific leaders, capacity builders, etc.

Strengths

- ▶ **There is a Lively Focus on BIPOC Leaders:** Rightly so, several programs are tailored to leaders of color (particularly women of color). As outlined in the literature review, BIPOC leaders are grappling with a compounded set of challenges and are also uniquely positioned to make significant community impact for racial equity—but only if they are properly resourced and supported.
- ▶ **There is Likewise a Growing Focus on Healing and Wellness:** Given the twin pandemics of racism and COVID, the sector has begun to embrace the role of healing and wellness in sustaining leaders and their work toward racial equity and social justice. This is reflected in a number of program descriptions. At the same time, the increase in sabbaticals must also be accompanied by real change from within systems. As noted in the Healing Justice report: offering up healing without justice “does not change the conditions that make healing necessary in the first place.”

Gaps

- ▶ **There is Less Focus on Emerging Leaders than Mid-career Leaders:** Many leadership programs continue to seek to capitalize on the skills and experience of established leaders and support them in their careers; less so in lifting up the innovation and energy of new or emerging leaders. None appear to intentionally build learning bridges across generational/experiential cohorts, which may be a gap to be explored.
- ▶ **Board Education and Development:** Offerings that go beyond basic governance to look at the changing context for organizations and their leaders appears to be a potential gap but is addressed briefly in a separate section following the map.

Mapping the Ecosystem: Developing Leadership for Racial Equity and Social Change

Boston and Greater Massachusetts Region

PROGRAM	AUDIENCE	Fellowship 1	Sabbatical 2	Learning Circle 3	Training Program 4	Alumni Network 5	Coaching 6	Organizational Grants 7	Healing/Wellness Focus 8
The Barr Fellowship is a two-year program recognizing diverse executive leaders for their exemplary contributions and their continuing commitment to the Greater Boston community. The program includes a learning journey, three-month sabbatical with grant support for the fellow's organization, and facilitated retreats.	Leaders at all phases of their careers and ages (including under 40)	1	2			5		7	
Institute for Nonprofit Practice - Community Fellows Program invests in emerging social sector and community leaders to meaningfully advance social justice and their leadership and become part of a growing network of change leaders.	Early-career	1			4				
Trinity Boston Connects - Racial Equity Emerging Leaders Learning Circle offers a 6-month workshop series and peer learning community exploring tools and frameworks to incorporate racial equity and trauma inclusion into leadership practices (2021).	Early-career			3	4				
New Sector Alliance - Leadership Longevity Fellowship: Greater Boston Cohort (in partnership with The Boston Foundation) engages 12-15 mid-career social sector leaders in a five-month hybrid (in-person and virtual) fellowship to grow their individual capacity for well-being and impact.	Mid-career						6		
Institute for Nonprofit Practice - Core Certificate 3-year program equips established nonprofit, public, and social impact leaders with the skills, knowledge, and networks to make strategic, mission-driven decisions that center diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging, and effect meaningful change in their organizations and beyond.	Mid-career				4				

Boston and Greater Massachusetts Region

PROGRAM	AUDIENCE	1 Fellowship	2 Sabbatical	3 Learning Circle	4 Training Program	5 Alumni Network	6 Coaching	7 Organizational Grants	8 Healing/Wellness Focus
Trinity Boston Connects - Racial Equity Senior Leaders Learning Circle is a program of monthly sessions on principles of building a restorative culture, trauma-inclusion, and facilitation skills to create more healing, racially equitable organizations.	Mid-career				4				
Boston Women's Fund Women of Color Leadership Circle is a six-month cohort program that supports up to 15 women and gender-expansive leaders of color in monthly facilitated sessions curated as a safe space for belonging, fellowship, learning, unlearning, self-care, and restoration.	BIPOC, women			3					8
Institute for Nonprofit Practice - Black Leadership Institute (Boston cohort) supports Black leaders in senior roles across sectors and issues with significant outcome disparities for Black people. 18-month program.	Black, mid-career	1					6		
Black Mass Coalition - Sabbatical Program for executive leaders who identify as Black and/or Indigenous and who lead social justice organizations rooted in BIPOC communities in Massachusetts to take space and time for reflection, review, and renewal, absent the stress of financial concerns and operational demands. The one-year sabbatical program is also committed to helping to support the applicant organization's needs (i.e., \$25K grant) during the sabbatical period.	Black and Indigenous		2					7	
TSNE - Nonprofit EDs of Color Capacity Support Pilot remote cohort (with funding from Barr Foundation) provides 22 leaders with adaptive, flexible, and integrated support (i.e., peer support and networking, participatory training, facilitated discussion, one-on-one coaching, project-oriented technical assistance, and access to critical tools and resources).	BIPOC			3	4		6		

Boston and Greater Massachusetts Region

PROGRAM (SPECIALIZATIONS OR OTHER AUDIENCES)	AUDIENCE	1 Fellowship	2 Sabbatical	3 Learning Circle	4 Training Program	5 Alumni Network	6 Coaching	7 Organizational Grants	8 Healing/Wellness Focus
Community Leadership: The Boston Foundation - Boston Neighborhood Fellows provides funding (i.e. two-year grant) and training to local grassroots leaders.	Community Leaders	1						7	
Consultant Pipeline: TSNE (with Institute for Nonprofit Practice) DEIB for Consultants Program for honing skills and confidence in integrating racial equity into client work. Eight virtual sessions.	Consultants				4				
Leadership Succession: TSNE Leading a Thriving Transition cohort-based program to build the capacity of nonprofit leaders to address succession and executive transition issues.	Late-career				4		6		
Mentoring: Conexion – Advancing Latino Leadership offers 1:1 mentoring programs for Early Career and the Mid Career Hispanic and Latino leaders.	Latinx, early- & mid-career				4		6		

National Programs and Resources

New Sector Alliance - Leadership Longevity Fellowship (national program) focused on career and life design, health and wellness, and creating a supportive community of peers.	Leaders at all phases of their careers	1			4		6		
The RISE Fellowship (Institute for Nonprofit Practice) is designed for early career individuals who are passionate about social justice, racial and gender equity work, and community change. Five-month program.	Early-career	1			4	5	6		
The San Francisco Foundation’s Multicultural Fellowship Program is a two-year fellowship for emerging leaders of color working in the philanthropic sector toward racial equity and economic inclusion in the Bay Area. Each year, four fellows engage in experiential learning within the Foundation.	Early-career, BIPOC	1				5			

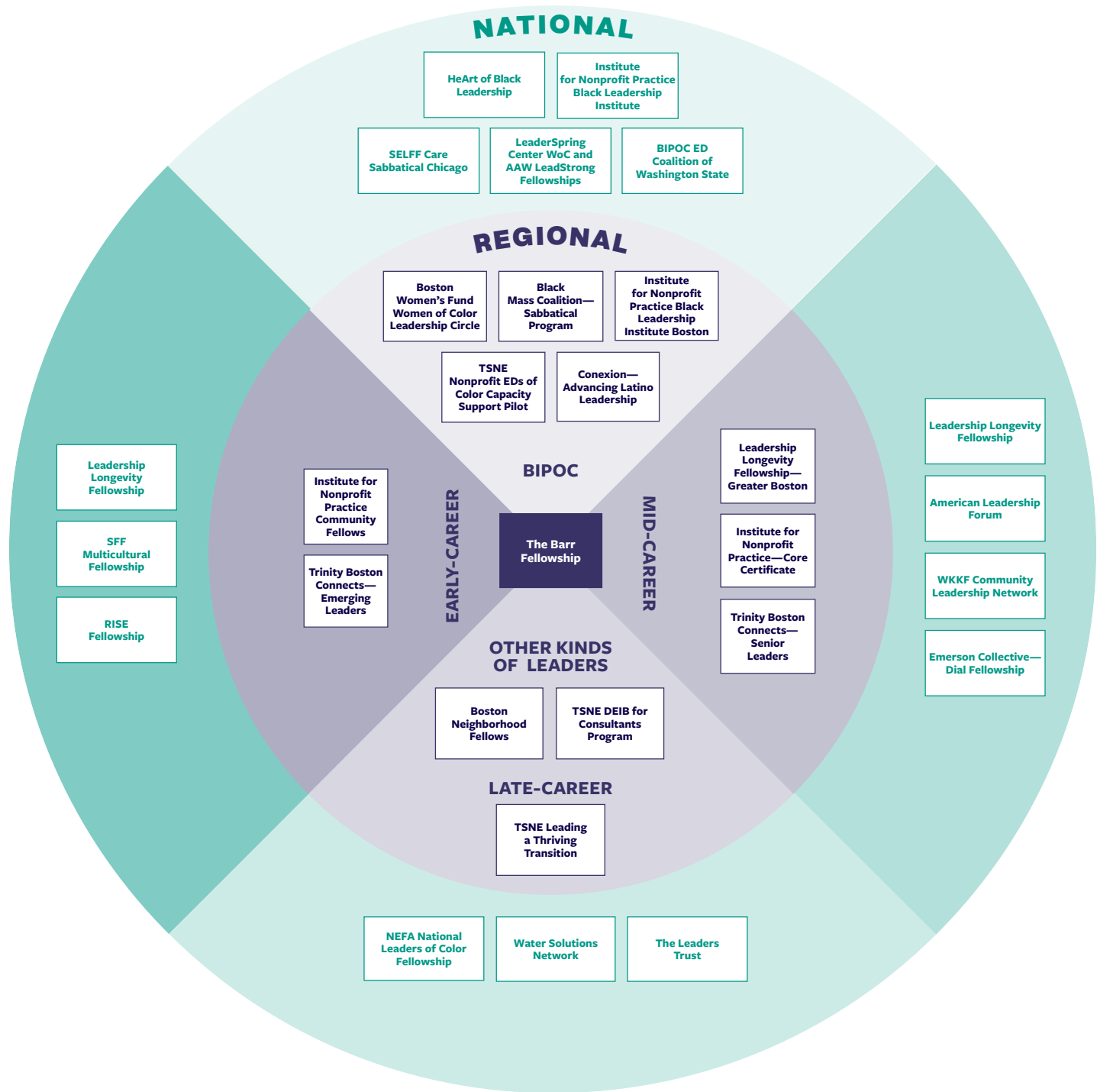
National Programs and Resources

PROGRAM	AUDIENCE	Fellowship 1	Sabbatical 2	Learning Circle 3	Training Program 4	Alumni Network 5	Coaching 6	Organizational Grants 7	Healing/Wellness Focus 8
The WKKF (Kellogg) Community Leadership Network (with Center for Creative Leadership) is an 18-month fellowship for 80 local leaders in Michigan, Mississippi, New Mexico, and New Orleans to gain knowledge and skills for advancing racial equity and racial healing, community engagement and collective leadership.	Mid-career	1				5	6		
American Leadership Forum is a year-long fellowship program of 20-25 established cross-sector leaders strengthening their collaborative capacity and networks to affect positive community change. The program emphasizes trust building and includes monthly seminars and a weeklong wilderness experience.	Mid-career	1			4	5			
Institute for Nonprofit Practice - Black Leadership Institute supports Black leaders in senior roles across sectors and issues with significant outcome disparities for Black people. 18-month program.	Black, mid-career	1					6		
LeaderSpring Center’s Women of Color LeadStrong Fellowship and African American Women LeadStrong Fellowship elevate and strengthen the vision, voice, power, and leadership of women of color working for social justice and racial equity in the social sector.	BIPOC, women	1							8
BIPOC ED Coalition of Washington State provides 20 nonprofit leaders with 3-month sabbaticals. Includes \$60K award to support salary and benefits of the leader and unrestricted funds. Also offers 12 one-month respite sabbaticals.	BIPOC		2					7	
Supporting Exemplary Leaders & Freedom Fighters (SELFF) Care Sabbatical (Chicago Community Trust) provides Black and Latinx women nonprofit and public sector leaders who serve Chicago’s most traumatized, disinvested communities with rest, renewal, and up to \$10,000 in unrestricted personal development funds.	Black and Latinx, women		2					7	
HeArt of Black Leadership (Rockwood) 5-day institute invites participants to center their Blackness in working towards transformational leadership and collective liberation in a space of intimacy, personal vulnerability, and authenticity.	Black				4				8

National Programs and Resources

PROGRAM (SPECIALIZATIONS OR OTHER AUDIENCES)	AUDIENCE	Fellowship 1	Sabbatical 2	Learning Circle 3	Training Program 4	Alumni Network 5	Coaching 6	Organizational Grants 7	Healing/Wellness Focus 8
Sector Specific: NEFA National Leaders of Color Fellowship for the advancement of cultural equity in the arts. Using a cohort structure, the 8-month program emphasizes experiential learning, community building, and service to the field.	Arts Leaders, BIPOC	1							
Narrative Focus: Emerson Collective - Dial Fellowship provides remarkable leaders sharing a vision of a more just world with communications tools and resources to use storytelling to shape narratives and extend the reach and impact of their work.	Mid-career	1							
Partnering with Funders: The Leaders Trust works with funders to provide custom leadership development programs including multi-year grant support, coaching, and peer learning. Working across the ecosystem of funders, nonprofits, and consultants, it also maintains a directory/community of capacity builders bringing a racial equity lens to their work with organizations.	Funders, leaders, consultants						6	7	
Public/Private Partnership: The Water Solutions Network (Coro Northern California, DIG IN, Water Education for Latino Leaders, and Celeste Cantu Consulting) engages cross-sector leaders in community- and coalition-building to understand and grapple with water management issues in the state.	Black and Latinx, women			3					

Mapping the Ecosystem: Developing Leadership for Racial Equity and Social Change



PROGRAMS FOR BOARD LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Looking at a focused set of leadership development resources for nonprofit and philanthropic boards, the Race to the Board (R2B) model, described immediately below, offers a helpful framework: readiness, recruitment, and retention. Many programs focus on readiness and recruitment—i.e., training, preparation, and placement for prospective or new board members. Fewer appear to be geared toward established boards or board members and developing their awareness of systems issues or the board’s role in advancing equity in their organizations and communities.



Race to the Board (R2B)

(InDEEP Initiative, led by the Institute for Strategic and Equitable Development, in partnership with Keecha Harris and Associates, Inc.)

The goals of R2B—which is climate focused—are to:

1. identify successful diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) strategies implemented by environmental and conservation boards to inform research and actionable steps that can be replicated by other entities;
2. illustrate current board challenges to building and maintaining inclusive culture; and
3. develop a set of recommendations for the field based on readiness, recruitment, and retention (3Rs) to increase Black leadership and representation on environmental nonprofit boards, developing a two-way conduit between green NGOs and those communities most affected by environmental racism.

The program focuses on three “Rs”: Readiness (including a board culture of and capacity for DEI), Recruitment (including equitable strategies for candidate engagement), and Retention (including policies and practices that promote inclusivity).

<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/582a3bdf6a4963a0eccfee40/t/61659c9c6a305409f4ffe81/1634049183148/InDEEP+R2B+Final+Report+v2b.pdf>



Board Leadership Institute

(United Way of Metro Chicago, in partnership with the Northwestern University Kellogg School Center for Nonprofit Management)

This is a robust “board match”-type offering to prepare and find board placements for interested business leaders based in the Chicago area. In seeking to ensure participants have a strong grasp on the opportunities and challenges facing Chicago neighborhoods, it goes beyond the basic fiduciary and governance responsibilities and digs deeper into issues such as:

- ▶ Social impact of income inequality
- ▶ Impact of Chicago’s housing crisis
- ▶ Defining racial equality in Chicago
- ▶ Impact of systemic inequalities connected with the challenges facing various Chicago neighborhoods

<https://liveunitedchicago.org/get-involved/programs/board-leadership-institute/>





HBS OnBoard

(Board preparation program for Harvard Business School alumni, designed and presented by its Social Enterprise Initiative)

Launched in the Summer of 2021, HBS OnBoard is a program aiming to: “develop leadership skills critical for modern governance, with a focus on the evolving role of nonprofit boards from one of fiduciary and organizational performance oversight to a role that encompasses the broader perspective of systems impact.”

“OnBoard will include virtual synchronous sessions with HBS faculty, social impact practitioners, and board leaders to discuss cross-sector topics including systems thinking, driving change, mergers and collaborations, succession planning, and the nonprofit racial leadership gap. Each session is interactive with opportunities to collaborate with HBS alumni peers. OnBoard will also include designated sessions for new or prospective nonprofit board leaders, as well as for board chairs.”

Its launch was attended by hundreds of HBS alumni and featured a conversation between SEI Faculty Co-Chair Kash Rangan and Anne Wallestad, CEO of BoardSource, on the shift to purpose-driven leadership.

<https://www.hbs.edu/socialenterprise/alumni-engagement/onboard/>



Board Leadership Institute

(Offered by Center for Nonprofit Leadership at California Lutheran University)

This program brings together existing board members and the CEO/executive, for a team-based learning experience. It is a five-month certificate program to enhance the knowledge and skills among such leadership teams. While the team approach is somewhat fresh, the curriculum is six sessions that don't appear to go much beyond board basics: e.g., Strategy, Planning, and Strategic Recruitment; Board / Staff Partnership; Financial Oversight October; Development & Fundraising.

<https://www.callutheran.edu/centers/nonprofit/programs/board-leadership/>

Other

- ▶ Campus-based programs for MBAs, etc. – Various institutions of higher learning, like **Wharton**, **Columbia**, etc. have fellowships or similar in-depth trainings for students, preparing them for board service.
- ▶ Succession planning – Boards have an important role to play in **preparing the organization for successful leadership transitions**, and while this is usually recognized through the lens of CEO transitions, board leadership succession is also an area that could use more intentionality.

III. Model Alumni Programs

PURPOSE: Identify successful alumni programs that serve BIPOC leaders, gathering information about their purpose, practices, and engagement and support strategies.

The landscape of fellowship and other leadership development program alumni networks (not including academic alumni networks) is somewhat limited, and there are few that are social-sector specific and tailored specifically for BIPOC leaders. The examples below include BIPOC leadership networks as well as global alumni networks with diverse international membership. Also included is a non-BIPOC specific but culturally informed alumni network with a regional membership and focus. The short profiles provided here are informed by publicly available information found online. As such, they do not include great detail and may not reflect the most current status or activities.



The BMe Vanguard

Audience: The BMe Vanguard is an invitation-only award, enrichment program, and membership that provides inspired Black leaders from government, nonprofit, business, and financial sectors additional Knowledge, Influence, and Networks (K.I.N.) for their work fulfilling Black aspirations to Live, Own, Vote, and Excel (L.O.V.E.).

Approach: This national program provides expert-designed skill-building experiences and each Fellow receives a \$10,000 grant for charitable activities that advance this ethos. The cohort-based program lifts up **Black Excellence** using the award-winning cognitive framework called “**Asset-Framing,**” which equips leaders to “have greater social impact, raise more money, engage broader populations, and make fundamentally stronger cases for equity and systems change.” It refocuses from fixing problems to fulfilling Black aspirations, centering L.O.V.E., pride, and community.

Alumni Experience: Graduates of the program become part of a vibrant community of **over 400** Black entrepreneurs, executives, activists, and community-builders who all care, share, and dare to build a society wherein black people and all people are able to Live, Own, Vote, and Excel.

<https://bmecommunity.org/>

In 2019, the Skillman Foundation began partnering with BMe Vanguard to create and offer the Skillman BMe Vanguard Fellowship to support Detroit area leaders from various fields and systems that impact young people. This Fellowship augments the core BMe Vanguard coursework with a deep dive into the regional history of southeast Michigan and its movements for social change. Since the 2019 pilot, the program has hosted three additional cohorts (2020, 2022, and 2023), engaging 59 Fellows in total. In 2022, the Fellowship narrowed its focus to young leaders in their 20s, “in recognition that young people are drivers of cultural and social change—and thus political change—and yet tend to be excluded from leadership fellowships because of their early-career status.” Participants’ \$10,000 award as part of the program is provided as “seed capital” to support them in their social change endeavors, and all become part of the national alumni community.



<https://www.skillman.org/blog/2022-skillman-bme-vanguard-fellows/>



The Aspen Global Leadership Network

Audience: The Aspen Global Leadership Network is a global community of **more than 3,000** leaders from business, government, and the nonprofit sector in more than 50 countries who have, due to their demonstrated accomplishments and abilities, been selected to be part of one of 14 geographic or sector-specific Aspen Fellowships around the world.

Approach: The spirit of the Aspen Global Leadership Network is to move an emerging generation of leaders “from success to significance” and “from thought to action.” We hope to activate a global cadre of highly entrepreneurial, creative leaders to step “out of their box” and **to act to address the foremost challenges of our times**— wherever these challenges may lie and however big they may be. As part of every Fellowship, each Fellow is required to start a Leadership Venture of his or her choosing that tackles a social or environmental challenge.

All Aspen Fellowships are modeled after the Aspen Institute’s flagship values-based leadership program, the Henry Crown Fellowship. Each year, programs choose classes of 20-22 leaders to engage in a thought-provoking journey of personal exploration – to move beyond success to a place of growing significance in the world. Through the Aspen Institute’s signature Leadership Seminars, Fellows are provided a forum for deep introspection and probing dialogue with a diverse cohort of trusted peers, while the required the leadership venture offers a way for Fellows to stretch their leadership in new ways in order to take action on a pressing societal challenge.

Alumni Experience: Aspen Global Leadership Network Fellows are engaged through Fellow-led reunions, multi-class regional gatherings, alumni seminars, and annual events like the Resnick Aspen Action Forum, designed to keep them connected to the network for life.

- ▶ **The Resnick Aspen Action Forum** is an annual gathering offering readings-based seminars, interactive dialogues, leadership problem-solving workshops, networking sessions, and more.
- ▶ **Continuing opportunities for learning include Alumni Seminars.** (Past topics have included “The Heroic Spirit: Lessons in Leadership and Life from Homer and Other Ancient Greeks,” and “Pursuing the Good Life.”)
- ▶ **The John P. McNulty Prize** is a \$100,000 award that enables the awardee to further their own leadership venture.
- ▶ **The Braddock Scholars Program** is open to US-based Fellows leading organizations that are primed to scale and provides access to topflight mentors, Aspen Institute events, and discretionary professional development funds.

<https://www.aspeninstitute.org/programs/aspen-global-leadership-network/>





W.K. KELLOGG
FOUNDATION

global
fellows
network

The W.K. Kellogg Foundation's Global Fellows Network

Audience: The WKKF Global Fellows Network was launched in November 2022 to bring together **more than 1,000** participants and alumni from 17 of its signature leadership programs across the U.S., Southern Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean for:

- ▶ **Connection** between members and with the foundation to share ideas, resources and inspiration;
- ▶ **Collaboration and continuous learning**, as well as the chance to engage in multi-generational and cross-cultural partnerships; and
- ▶ **Action**—with and independent from the foundation—on important issues impacting communities around the world.

Approach: Blending in-person and virtual learning and networking, the Global Fellows Network is a continuing investment in leaders working to **transform systems, policies and practices that create conditions for thriving children, working families, and equitable communities.**

Alumni Experience: Over the years, past alumni opportunities have included convenings and events such as a 2018 Summit on Food Security and Thriving Communities, which hosted a plenary of regional, national, and international speakers. In early 2020, WKKF transitioned the support and management of the network from the Kellogg Fellows Leadership Alliance (KFLA, a separate nonprofit created by the foundation in 2002 for that purpose), to bring it in-house, seeking to create a more direct relationship between the fellows and the Foundation. In doing so, WKKF hopes to leverage fellows' expertise, knowledge, and influence on Foundation priorities on the ground in communities. The Foundation also seeks to draw upon fellows' experience and wisdom related to its mission to create lasting, transformational change for children and in its commitments to racial equity, community engagement and leadership.

<https://globalfellowsnetwork.org/>



OPEN SOCIETY
FOUNDATIONS

The Open Society Foundations Fellowship Advancement Fund

Audience and Approach: The Open Society Foundations award several Open Society-US fellowships, each with a different purpose, audience, and approach: Baltimore Community Fellowships; Leadership in Government Fellowship; Puerto Rico Youth Fellowship; Soros Equality Fellowship; and Soros Justice Fellowships. Eligibility for all awards requires alignment with Open Society values of justice, equity, and expression.

Alumni Experience: While not an alumni network, the Fellowship Advancement Fund provides continuing support to past Fellows by offering grants between \$1,000 and \$75,000. **This program deepens the Foundation's investment in past Open Society-U.S. fellowship recipients by supporting their ongoing leadership, the elevation and expansion of their work, and their sustainability and impact in movements and organizations across various fields.** The fund promotes education of communities and individuals working to end inequality and injustice within the United States and the world beyond.

Understanding that after their fellowship, alumni continue to have needs, confront challenges, and find themselves in positions to advance their work, the Foundation created the Fund as a mechanism to resource these needs and opportunities. (Funds cannot be used to support sabbaticals.)

<https://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/grants/fellowship-advancement-fund>



Omidyar Fellows

Audience: Since its launch in 2012, the Omidyar Fellows program has engaged eight cohorts of emerging and more seasoned leaders with a demonstrated record of service to Hawai'i. The program appears to be on an indefinite hiatus at this time.

Approach: The 15-month Omidyar Fellows curriculum is designed to build critical skills, allow for self-reflection and personal growth, and create a strong peer network, resulting in stronger leaders, more effective organizations, and the cross-sector connections necessary to collectively create broad and durable improvements in Hawai'i. The commitment includes: one full-day session each month; three two-day retreats; and a two-month window during which Individual Learning Excursions take place. Individual coaching occurs between sessions.

Alumni Experience: Graduates of the program become part of the Forum of Fellows. The Omidyar Fellows program indicates that it is currently “evolving” its offerings for this alumni community, the vision for which is that of “a vibrant network of courageous leaders who take risks to address vexing societal problems, model accountable leadership with aloha, and support one another to improve the quality of life in Hawai'i.” Fellows share a set of four community-minded values grounded in Native Hawai'ian tradition (Aloha Āina - to uphold a healthy and balanced relationship between human and natural environment; Aloha Kekahi i Kekahi - to nurture the quality of our relationships with others through reciprocity of kindness, empathy, respect, and support; Imi Na auao - to seek knowledge, be curious to what we do not know, and open to new or different ideas and perspectives; and Auamo Kuleana - to recognize and act towards collective transformation through individual excellence), and are eligible to receive both ongoing supports and special project supports.

Ongoing supports include: workshops and gatherings; a biannual summit; stipends to help cover inter-island travel costs associated with convenings; coaching around leadership transitions; and access to the resource library and meeting space at the Hawai'i Leadership Forum (HLF), the hosting organization of the Omidyar Fellowship.

Project supports may include: seed funding (by application) for impact projects; coaching and facilitation support; other content expertise and consultation; and team development opportunities through HLF's other signature program, SMALLIFY. The Omidyar Fellowship lists over 40 alumni projects that have received support, including collaborations for systemic impact (e.g., clean energy, digital access, etc.) as well as COVID-19 specific responses (e.g., workforce resilience, basic needs relief, etc.).

<https://omidyarfellows.org/>



Relevant Reading

The Fellowships Alumni Network Study (2023), conducted by IREX for the W.K. Kellogg Foundation (<https://www.irex.org/sites/default/files/node/resource/Fellowships%20Alumni%20Network%20Study.pdf>), summarizes findings from surveys, interviews, and focus groups with over 1,000 alumni from 17 distinct fellowship networks from around the world about the impact of such networks on alumni, their institutions, communities, and systems. Measuring “instances of change” at each of these levels, the highest impact was reported at the individual level (42%), with fewer instances of change reported at institutional (23%), community (27%), and systems (8%) levels.

- ▶ Individual impacts included benefits in building relationships, advancing their professional development, and sharing learning from diverse perspectives.
- ▶ Institutional benefits focused largely on increased funding and partnership opportunities.
- ▶ Community and systems level benefits were most often shared by alumni who completed their fellowships at least five years before the study period, suggesting that sustained alumni network connections are important for achieving this level of change, examples of which included making inroads on racial equity.

Asked how to increase alumni engagement in these networks, study participants most commonly cited:

- ▶ Leadership opportunities within the network (e.g., being part of the fellowship selection process or sharing skills and experiences in formal activities);
- ▶ Connecting with other alumni across cohorts to share knowledge in peer workshops, webinars, or even informal networking events; and
- ▶ Deepening relationships with alumni in the same country or region in ways that allow for direct coordination and do not rely on formal program administrators.

Summary

Observations

While many of the descriptions above provide more information about fellowships in their active phase than what occurs as part of the alumni experience, following are some key takeaways relevant to alumni experiences.

► **Values Based:** All of the programs have a foundation in shared values, rooted in the goals and priorities of the hosting organization. Some have broad, overarching values such as Open Society’s commitment to justice, equity, and expression or WKKF’s focus on thriving children, working families, and equitable communities. Others integrate a specific set of values into the fellowship curriculum itself—as do BMe Vanguard (L.O.V.E.) and Omidyar’s Forum of Fellows (Aloha Āina, Aloha Kekahi i Kekahi, Imi Na auao, Auamo Kuleana)—in ways that offer a frame for fellows’ individual and collective aspirations and may provide a **shared sense of identity and community** that encourage them to stay connected with other fellows over time as alumni.

► **Cash Grants:** Whether provided as part of a fellowship itself (as noted in the Landscape Scan section of this report) or as a competitive award for alumni, cash grants are important components for strengthening leaders’ organizations and existing work during the active fellowship phase and/or **supporting leaders in exploring innovative projects and collaborations in their alumni phase**. Awards, and selection processes, vary greatly. For example: all BMe Vanguard fellows receive \$10,000; Open Society’s Fellowship Advancement Fund awards \$1,000 to \$75,000 as decided by staff; and the John P. McNulty Prize awarded in partnership with Aspen Institute is now \$150,000 and decided by a jury of renowned international leaders.

► **Regional Focus:** Most of these examples are either national or global in scope, with some (like Aspen and WKKF) mentioning regional subsets of alumni in countries or regions. The Skillman Foundation BMe Vanguard Fellowship and Omidyar Fellowship have a more local place-based focus, **choosing leaders with a demonstrated commitment to the community** (Hawai’i and Detroit, respectively) to help them deepen and enhance their work there. For example, the Omidyar Forum of Fellows website lists some 40 projects and collaborative efforts in which alumni have served as leaders and received support. Online information does not describe in detail how the Skillman or Omidyar programs keep alumni engaged as a regional leadership ecosystem and/or address network resilience as leaders leave the area for other geographies.

Appendix: Literature Review

Detailed Notes and Excerpts

- 1. The Burden of Bias in the Bay State: The Nonprofit Racial Leadership Gap in Massachusetts**, October 2020. Race to Lead, an initiative of Building Movement Project. [Based on 2016 and 2019 survey data and 2020 focus groups.] <https://racetolead.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Race-To-Lead-2019-Massachusetts-Final.pdf>
 - ▶ **Good news:** more leaders of color in ED/CEO positions; increased **awareness** among white respondents about the obstacles facing leaders of color.
 - ▶ **Bad news: ongoing toll on leaders of color** who take on the top role in historically white organizations (e.g., taxed with responsibility to diversify boards and senior management teams while also appeasing funders' concerns and insecurities); white leaders are often at a loss for how to make their DEI intentions a reality.
 - ▶ **Bottom line:** the labor toward achieving more equity often falls to people of color, while **POC-led organizations remain underfunded** and undervalued.
 - ▶ **Barriers:** More than half (51%) of Massachusetts respondents of color who were not already ED/CEOs indicated that they *definitely* or *probably* **wanted to pursue a nonprofit ED/CEO role**, compared to 38% of white respondents; at the same time, 41% of people of color reported that they *often* or *always* **faced a lack of advancement opportunities**, compared to 27% of white respondents. Reasons, per focus groups: organizations lack career ladders, succession planning, mentoring; favoritism and inconsistent standards yield unfair outcomes for staff of color (e.g., internal candidates of color are often overlooked for open senior-level roles).
 - ▶ **Needs:** There is a dearth of **mentorship** for staff of color within their own organizations AND respondents of color are about twice as likely as white respondents to say they *often* or *always* experience a **lack of role models** (20% of white people and 45% of people of color) and are also more likely to say they *often* or *always* face challenges related to a lack of **social capital and networks** (30% of people of color, compared to 13% of white respondents). The contrast in responses by people of color affirming their access to mentors outside their organizations and their agreement that smaller professional networks limit career advancement suggests that **the networks and mentorship available to people of color and white people in Massachusetts have distinctly different capacity to contribute to professional advancement**.
 - ▶ **DEI:** Eighty-two percent of respondents in Massachusetts indicated that their organization was engaged in DEI efforts. Leaders of color appear to play an outsized role in this work. Both people of color and white respondents in focus groups talked about the **ambiguities between what DEI work was change-making and what was simply talk**.
 - ▶ **Funding:** Not only are there comparatively fewer POC-led groups, but those that exist contend with smaller budgets. Funders routinely convey to leaders of POC-focused nonprofits that their organizations deserve **smaller grants**, either because they're seen as being able to do more with less, or because they're understood to be working on niche issues that are not of general concern, or because their organization's work is generally not deserving of larger support. Leaders of color routinely confront the assumption that they are incompetent, and that in order to be heard and have their work seen, they may need a white person who can open doors, facilitate introductions, and communicate that the leader of color is "safe" to work with.
 - ▶ **Staff Satisfaction:** Staff working at POC-led organizations report higher levels of satisfaction in response to survey statements such as: being able to see themselves staying with the organization, feeling they have a voice in the organization, and confidence that the organization offers equitable opportunities for advancement. These results hold true for the Massachusetts subset as well as the national dataset and hold true across respondents of all races.

- ▶ **Generational Tensions:** Among focus group participants of color, the overarching feeling about DEI efforts was skepticism. Across generations, participants of color discussed the limits on diversifying leadership without a commitment to change organizational culture and practice. Several Millennials of color interpreted this dynamic of diverse leaders maintaining the organizational status quo through a generational lens.
- ▶ **Power:** DEI in action requires more than recruitment/hiring, but **shifting power** by listening to staff and board members of color and changing organization policies and practices accordingly.

2. **Trading Glass Ceilings for Glass Cliffs**, 2022. Race to Lead, an initiative of Building Movement Project. [Based on 2019 survey data and 2019-2020 focus groups.]

<https://buildingmovement.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/Race-to-Lead-ED-CEO-Report-2.8.22.pdf>

- ▶ **Different types of organizations, so different experiences:** : Nearly 6 in 10 executive leaders of color worked for identity-based organizations (i.e., nonprofits focused on particular racial/ethnic groups, immigrants, the LGBTQ+ community or other identity categories) compared to just 2 in 10 white EDs/CEOs. **EDs/CEOs leading identity-based nonprofits have very different leadership experiences** than those running non-identity-based organizations.
- ▶ **Leader-shift:** Nearly half (46%) of **leaders of color took over organizations that had been white-led**. Data showing that these leaders of color had higher levels of educational attainment than white EDs/CEOs add evidence to anecdotal reports that leaders of color are held to higher standards. Only 77% of EDs/CEOs of color who succeeded a white executive leader reported that their board *often* or *always* trusts them (compared to 90% of Eds/CEOs who founded their organizations or took over leadership from a previous ED/CEO of color); these leaders of color also feel less support from their staff.
- ▶ **Compensation:** Data demonstrating that **pay concerns are racialized** (43% of EDs/CEOs of color, compared to 31% of white counterparts reported *often* or *always* being frustrated that their salary is not high enough; 34% compared to 21% reporting that they were *often* or *always* frustrated by inequities in their pay) is particularly salient in light of the other findings about the added stresses and burdens people of color often take on when assuming executive leadership positions (e.g., shouldering the burden of DEI work). These challenges are accentuated for leaders of identity-based organizations..
- ▶ **Workload:** 79% of ED/CEOs reported that their workload was *often* or *always* a challenge or frustration, compared to 63% of respondents in staff roles. This is amplified for leaders of identity-based organizations. Over four-fifths of EDs/CEOs of identity-based organizations reported that they were *often* or *always* **challenged by their demanding workloads** (84% of EDs/CEOs of color, 82% of white EDs/CEOs). By contrast, roughly three-quarters of EDs/CEOs of non-identity-based organizations expressed feeling this challenge *often* or *always* (77% of EDs/CEOs of color, 76% of white EDs/CEOs).
- ▶ **Succession:** Approximately half of EDs/CEOs of color (52%) and white EDs/CEOs (46%) reported that they were either **thinking about transitioning** or planning to move on from their role. However, too few white EDs/CEOs are factoring race equity into their succession plans, such as by actively mentoring staff of color, actively recruiting leaders of color, or encouraging their boards to consider hiring leaders of color.
- ▶ **Opportunities:** Support on-ramps and off-ramps for nonprofit leaders; factor race into executive transitions; invest in organizations that already center identity; **fund peer supports for leaders of color (e.g., affinity groups, communities of practice, cohort-based leadership development programs such as fellowships)**.

3. Investing in Leadership for Racial Equity, September 2021 blog post by Roger Nozaki, Vice President for Strategy and Programs, Barr Foundation.

<https://www.barrfoundation.org/blog/investing-in-leadership-for-racial-equity>

- ▶ **Defining Leadership:** by “leaders,” we mean staff across an organization, not just those at the “top” (and still: the definition of who is a “leader” and who is the focus of “leadership development” is another key question to examine).
- ▶ **Recognizing that hiring for diversity is not enough:** our goal cannot be simply to try to advance BIPOC leaders in organizations and structures that remain unchanged.
- ▶ **Co-create** the learning agenda with participants.
- ▶ **Include Boards:** we have identified a critical need to include and strengthen supports for boards in these leadership development efforts overall
- ▶ **Leaders are overwhelmed and they need visioning/dreaming/experimental space:** We know organizations are stretched with just managing their ongoing work, particularly in a pandemic. Organizations need time, space, and support to question and experiment with how they operate at a fundamental level: testing new approaches to leadership, organizational structure, services and programs, financial resources and sustainability.
- ▶ **Organizations need funding/resources.**
- ▶ **Question about taking an ecosystem approach:** Is there a way to build more of an ecosystem approach, across organizations, with a focus on racial equity? Is there a **geography** where organizations might come together around a people development agenda in a collaborative way, investing collectively in the sector workforce and creating pathways across organizations? Are there examples can we learn from where a **field** has sought to do this?
- ▶ **Questions about focusing on racial equity:** There are also questions about capacity in the field to support organizational and leadership development centered on racial equity. The Institute for Nonprofit Practice (INP) and Third Sector New England (TSNE) found that even when organizations had resources or funding for organizational development, they could not find **consultants with the experience and knowledge to effectively integrate diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging (DEIB) practices into their engagements**. INP and TSNE are collaborating on the development of a cohort-based certificate program that equips organizational development consultants with the tools and practices to apply and integrate a DEIB lens in their work with clients.

4. Racial Equity Leadership Discovery Project Research Summary, 2021. Community Wealth Partners for Barr Foundation (as highlighted in *Leadership Development Programs Need an Upgrade: Five Ways to Advance Racial Equity*) <https://www.barrfoundation.org/blog/leadership-development-programs-need-an-upgrade-five-ways-to-advance-racial-equity>

- ▶ **Defining Leadership:** Leadership is about unleashing power to influence and change organizations and systems to operate in just and liberating ways that enable all individuals to thrive.
- ▶ **Importance of voice, visibility, practice:** Making leadership heard and seen for real, through narrative change, public statements, and everyday practice.
- ▶ **Racial equity leadership** has to be about self in relationship to systems and with others, center BIPOC leader well-being, and invest in organizations as well as their leaders.
- ▶ **Cohorts as an ecosystem strategy** can be powerful and seed collaboration.
- ▶ **Need more investment in early- to mid-career leaders.**

- ▶ **Define leaders broadly and be explicit about why.**
- ▶ **Expanding Equity and Justice-Centered Forms of Leadership:** There is a growing interest in the nonprofit sector to understand and pilot forms of leadership that are equity- and justice-centered. However, organizations that want to try new forms often can't afford the risk of experimentation. Also, there is little information available on tested models, best practices.
- ▶ **Needs:** The report cites findings from Race to Lead regarding workload/burnout, dearth of professional development supports, barriers to internal advancement, and low compensation. It also calls attention to funder practices, noting that only 41% of foundations fund competitive salaries and benefits, demonstrating themselves more likely to support paid internships, fellowships
- ▶ **Succession planning is needed** for facilitating a fruitful transition into positional leadership!
- ▶ **Gaps include:** More alumni networks for engagement over time; cohort/ecosystem model that encourages collaboration and diffuses philanthropy's cultures/systems of competition; pipeline of skilled capacity builders with lived and professional experience in racial equity

5. Healing Justice for Transformative Leadership, 2022. Mandela Change Group

https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5ff46fcb22d6d7736e1badac/t/641b25e9ba15c21975871f85/1679500778912/HealingJusticeReport_5.10.22+%281%29.pdf

- ▶ **This paper invites us to reimagine leadership that is restorative and humane**, specifically with respect to supporting the leadership development of QT-BIPOC and disabled leaders. [Excerpt (p8): “The current dominant framework of leadership development is not reflective of what BIPOC, queer, trans, and disabled leaders say they need to thrive and be effective in their leadership.”]
 - “Healing Justice is a framework that originated in 2005 when artist and organizer Cara Page, meeting with healing and spiritual practitioners in the South, saw an urgent need to address the crisis of trauma, violence, and social conditions in the region.” (For more information, see: <http://kindredsouthernhjcollective.org/our-history/>)
 - Traditional leadership models create harm as they manifest power-over, top-down approaches, grind culture, fetishize the personality leader, and keep leaders in a constant state of crisis and reactive stance. Healing justice, on the other hand, supports leaders and leader-full organizations in prioritizing rest; trauma-informed care; power-with, shared, and distributed leadership.”
- ▶ **Offering up healing without justice “does not change the conditions that make healing necessary in the first place.”** (p13)
- ▶ **The recommendations include:**
 1. Building healing justice capacity and infrastructure by investing place-based healing justice practitioners and healing justice organizations or programs (also recommends funding through intermediaries who have more knowledge of these practitioners and programs);
 2. Field building, peer to peer learning and knowledge sharing, by supporting research and practice to advance an agenda for creating systems of integrated care and wellness that are rooted in culture, place, and justice with an eye toward liberation;
 3. Restorative and trust-based approaches to funding by incorporating and operationalizing healing justice practice and processes in grantmaking, policies, etc.); and
 4. Investing in under-resourced and underserved leaders by focusing on QT-BIPOC and disabled leaders and building in healing, accessibility, flexibility

6. *Catalyzing Leadership for Equity*, 2022. Urban Institute (with funding from Robert Wood Johnson Foundation) <https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/2022-12/Catalyzing%20Leadership%20for%20Equity.pdf>

- ▶ **Recognition of both institutional and movement leadership:** While leaders of color have long championed racial equity in government, nonprofit, philanthropic, and corporate sectors, there have also long been leaders at the community level who have advanced racial equity through organizing, advocacy, movement building, and other local efforts.
- ▶ **The challenge of leading for equity** is not only that issues are complex, deeply entrenched, systemic, and require radical transformation. Leaders are often embedded in organizations where organizational systems are incompatible with equity goals and often face difficulty navigating the double burden of liberating communities from the same racialized harms that they themselves may have experienced.
- ▶ **Limitations and assets:** The vast majority of 28 identified equity-driven leadership programs focus on professional leaders, are individual focused (not cohort based), and integrate collective leadership frameworks and components into the training model.
- ▶ **Recommendations for leadership programs** include centering equity and using cohort-based approaches and extending support beyond program participation (such as through a program alumni network). Others include leveraging collective leadership models to support grassroots and community leaders and looking beyond elite or traditional leadership roles, spaces, and pipelines.
- ▶ **Recommendations for funders** include supporting existing programs to maximize reach as well as to be aware of how power is organized in communities.
- ▶ **Context:** Since the racial reckoning and broader social movement catalyzed after George Floyd’s murder in 2020, there has been a renewed focus on the need to engage, support, and provide training and resources to equity-focused leaders of color.
- ▶ **Leadership and advancement:** There are still too many white people in top positions, and leaders of color in C-suite occupy positions less likely to see advancement to the top job.
- ▶ **Higher education:** The increase in legislative efforts to hamper teaching about race, in addition to the underrepresentation of Black, Indigenous, and other persons of color in U.S. higher education, has implications for faculty recruitment and retention, for the academic success of students of color, and for people of color pursuing professional careers and leadership roles in traditional institutions or sectors
- ▶ **Collective leadership:** Leadership programs have long focused on building the skills of individuals. But recently, a growing interest in collective leadership—which embraces the idea that many individuals within a system may lead or that groups, structures, and processes may exercise leadership to help networks advance toward a shared goal—has contributed to the emergence and growth of racial equity-focused leadership programs that promote diverse models of leadership.
- ▶ **Leaders leading for equity are essentially now doing two jobs:** In many instances, leaders who were hired into demanding, full-time roles have been asked to take on the additional responsibilities of managing racial equity initiatives and commitments while continuing to fulfill their role’s ongoing responsibilities without additional compensation or bonuses. Several of the nonprofit and community-based leaders interviewed discussed the double burden of liberating communities from the harms and trauma that the leaders themselves have suffered.
- ▶ **A real bind:** equity-focused leaders find themselves navigating institutions in their current form while attempting to do transformative work within them, often with insufficient support and resources.

► **Gaps in how leadership programs support equity-focused leaders of color:**

- Inequities in recruitment (e.g., favoring leaders that have had elite educational and professional experiences as well as connections to established networks)
- Inadequate attention to leaders' differentiated needs
- Limited follow-up with leaders over time
- Failure to account for culturally supportive approaches (e.g., more collective, less individualistic) to leadership development (instead, stuck and centered in traditional white leadership structures)
- Replication of traditional (individualistic) models of leadership development
- Lack of support for targeted programs that specifically provide support to leaders of color

► **Intersectionality:** Centering accessibility while acknowledging leaders' multiple identities and intersections (e.g., age, race, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, socioeconomic status, immigration status) is critical to supporting leaders

7. Building Resilient Organizations: Toward Joy and Durable Power in a Time of Crisis, Maurice Mitchell, NPQ, November 29, 2022 <https://nonprofitquarterly.org/building-resilient-organizations-toward-joy-and-durable-power-in-a-time-of-crisis/>

► **Tensions:** The hurt and anxiety of this multi-pandemic age we find ourselves in is manifesting in tension within our organizations and movements for good. We are turning on one another.

► **The cause is lack of ideological grounding:** Over the past 50 years, many of our leaders have prioritized hard skills and pragmatism over developing their ideological orientation or running transformative campaigns. Other organizations have an ideological analysis but lack the skills to develop an effective strategy and execute a campaign in a way that builds large bases.

► **The author names ten barriers, or fallacies, that get in the way:**

1. **Neoliberal identity** - identity without the political and power analysis “reaffirms the individualistic principles of neoliberalism instead of challenging them” - *work, instead, toward “collective power and accountability”*
2. **Maximalism** - “holding on to tactics and overly idealistic demands that keep us small”
3. **Anti-leadership attitudes** - “social change requires experience, rigor, and study” which “can take years of development”
4. **Anti-institutional sentiment** - a reflexive resistance to positions and structures without leaving room/ possibility for them to prove themselves different
5. **Cherry-Picking arguments** - using information and ideas out of context, inaccurately, or without understanding nuances
6. **Glass houses** - “internal contradictions” and working through them are part of the ongoing work
7. **The small war** - “tensions playing out between junior staff and leadership” is one example
8. **Unanchored care** - “Discerning what is yours to hold and what is the collective’s is an essential skill and fundamental to organizational work, collaboration, and meaningful engagement of others.”
9. **Disproportionality** - over-exaggeration of minor oppressions that renders the egregious oppressions less meaningful by association

10. Activist culture -“We must adopt a more comprehensive understanding of leadership that recognizes that leaders and leadership exist at all levels of our organizations and movements.” This could look like: “a large group of leaders, across a number of organizations and sectors, joining forces to advance a collective shift in our practices.”

- ▶ **His remedy is to call for:** resilient organizations that can weather internal conflict and external crises. Resilient organizations are structurally sound, ideologically coherent, strategically grounded, and emotionally mature.
- ▶ **Implications for leaders:** “People in leadership are finding their roles untenable, claiming it is ‘impossible’ to execute campaigns or saying they are in organizations that are ‘stuck.’ ...Identity and position are misused to create a doom loop that can lead to unnecessary ruptures of our political vehicles and the shuttering of vital movement spaces.”
- ▶ **“Leaders should be clearer and more transparent** about where hierarchies exist, why they exist, and where and how decision making lives.”
- ▶ **“Less experienced leaders or staff should have clarity** as to where they are expected to collaborate, contribute, follow, learn, or lead”...as well as “be developed emotionally, strategically, and ideologically.” For example, “senior leaders tasked with training and supporting less experienced people to execute, learn, and become leaders themselves.”

8. *Paving a Better Way: What’s Driving Progressive Organizations Apart and How to Win by Coming Together*, Rebecca Epstein and Mistinguette Smith, NPQ, May 1, 2023 <https://nonprofitquarterly.org/paving-a-better-way-whats-driving-progressive-organizations-apart-and-how-to-win/>

- ▶ **Disconnection:** This piece builds upon Mitchell’s article (above) to reflect on a “fundamental cycle of disconnection” between leaders and staff of our organizations and how to bridge that gap.
- ▶ **The authors advise making explicit three core concepts for mutual understanding:**
 1. While nonprofit organizations are PART of social movements, they are not the same thing.
 2. Work is a social contract between employer and employee, both of whom have responsibilities they must fulfill (clarify expectations of this relationship).
 3. Each organization has its own history, ideology, positioning within a broader movement or field. “When leaders are not explicit about what underlies and informs the organization’s work, individuals understandably project their own beliefs or assumptions onto that organization.”
- ▶ **They also identify three key skills needed to do this:**
 1. Develop the ability to engage in productive and transformative conflict (i.e. move beyond binaries, engage in “principled struggle” and emerge whole and ready to act in aligned strategy).
 2. Understand how organizations build power and “prioritize” putting our own self-interest behind what helps the organization itself build power.” This requires “self-awareness about our own power.”
 3. 3. Value and cultivate emotional intelligence (self-regulation, ability to build and maintain healthy relationships/connections and “ability to skillfully engage with racial, generational, class, gender, and other dimensions of identity and experience”).
- ▶ **This is not only crucial for leaders and staff in organizations but for the coaches, consultants, and capacity builders** who work with them.

9. *In Support of Those Who Take The Leap*, 2021. Open Society Foundation https://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/publications/in-support-of-those-who-take-the-leap#publications_download shares findings from eight years of supporting more than 130 leadership transitions and new leaders globally, and echoes the finding (mentioned in *Race to Lead*) that BIPOC leaders are often set up to fail when taking the place of white leaders by being expected to champion racial equity when the board and staff have not done the work to disrupt white supremacy culture internally.

10. *Avoiding the Glass Cliff: Advice to Boards on Preparing for and Supporting a New Leader of Color*, 2022. Building Movement Project and BoardSource <https://boardsource.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/Avoiding-Glass-Cliff.pdf?hsCtaTracking=4d7c0221-61b1-41d1-8213-bo89bf74a2d7%7Caaa3515a-aob2-40a6-a60d-09e3158b8329> delves into the above challenge through the lens of how boards can better support new executives of color.

11. *Giving Boston and the Twin Pandemics: From Moment to Movement*, 2022. New England Blacks in Philanthropy <https://www.nebip.org/2022/02/28/giving-boston-and-the-twin-pandemics-2/> highlights the importance of developing and preparing for racial equity leadership within foundations and across philanthropy (staff, boards, and donors). It also encourages more investment in Black-led organizations and community organizing—suggesting investment in leaders of those organizations and movements.

12. *The Business Case for DEI Reinforces Anti-Black Sentiment*, Amira Barger, *NPQ*, May 22, 2023 <https://nonprofitquarterly.org/the-business-case-for-dei-reinforces-anti-black-sentiment/> argues against a capitalist-defined business case for DEI that drives us to focus on unpacking individual biases and interpersonal interactions and instead shift to greater emphasis on changing institutional policies and societal narratives and power dynamics that keep us stuck in inequity. “The work of DEI is about the balance of justice—not bottom lines and not benevolence.”

13. *Key Lessons from Developing a Leadership Development Program with Racial and Other Forms of Equity at the Core*, 2022. Community Science for Bush Foundation <https://www.bushfoundation.org/sites/default/files/CN%20Key%20Lessons%20Report%202022.pdf> lifts up, among its lessons learned, that “Leaders need training and skills to understand how to navigate power and effect systems change,” including in their own organizations. It also notes the importance of diverse mentors in aiding leaders along their racial equity leadership journeys.

14. Readings on DEI Advancement and Backlash:

- a. *President Biden Signs Executive Order Advancing Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility in the Federal Government*** (Fact Sheet), The White House, June 25, 2021 <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/06/25/fact-sheet-president-biden-signs-executive-order-advancing-diversity-equity-inclusion-and-accessibility-in-the-federal-government/>

In June 2021, President Biden signed an Executive Order to advance diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (DEIA) in the Federal workforce which:

- Charges all agencies with assessing the current state of diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility within their workforces, and developing strategic plans to eliminate any barriers to success faced by underserved employees.

- Directs agencies to seek opportunities to establish or elevate Chief Diversity Officers within their organizations.
- Expands diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility training throughout the Federal workforce.
- Requires a government-wide, comprehensive plan to address workplace harassment, including sexual harassment.
- Reduces the Federal government’s reliance on unpaid internships, which can create barriers for low-income students and first-generation professionals.
- Advances pay equity to ensure that all public servants are fairly compensated for their work and their talents.
- Advances equity in the workplace for individuals with disabilities (e.g., by ensuring that all Federal workplaces and technologies are fully accessible; improving the process for requesting reasonable accommodations; and ensuring that all Federal employees understand their rights to request reasonable accommodations).
- Advances equity in the workplace for LGBTQ+ public servants, including by expanding access to comprehensive gender-affirming health care, equitably administering federal benefits like sick leave and life insurance for families with diverse family structures, and ensuring the usage of chosen pronouns.
- Builds a more diverse pipeline into public service through new recruitment partnerships with HBCUs and other minority serving colleges and institutions.
- Expands Federal employment opportunities for formerly incarcerated individuals.
- Advances equitable access to professional development for Federal employees.
- Improves the collection of demographic data about the Federal workforce.

b. “State Anti-DEI Initiatives Explained,” Perkins Coie, April 25, 2023

<https://www.perkinscoie.com/en/news-insights/state-anti-dei-initiatives-explained.html>

Since Biden’s executive order, backlash at the state level has been fierce, with more than 19 states signing anti-DEI legislation into law. Much focuses on what can be discussed in public schools and universities or made part of hiring processes or training programs at any state agency.

c. “Nonprofits Scramble to Comply With Fla. Law That Limits DEI Training,” Jim Rendon, *The Chronicle of Philanthropy*, June 27, 2022 https://www.philanthropy.com/article/nonprofits-scramble-to-comply-with-fla-law-that-limits-dei-training?sra=true&cid=gen_sign_in

Florida’s “Stop WOKE Act,” signed into law last year, is currently blocked in the courts. As described in *The Chronicle of Philanthropy* soon after its passage, “the law is vague in some areas and subjective in others,” in seeking to ban “the discussion of unconscious bias and many forms of systemic racism in training, certification or any other activity that is required as a condition of employment or certification.” Though its enforceability has been in question from the start, with violations potentially resulting in “penalties of up to \$100,000,” nonprofits and foundations were rightfully concerned about running afoul of the law, whether in their training programs (the stop-gap solution being to make any such discussions entirely optional) or even in the course of their day to day work (though how a service agency could avoid talking about “thorny problems” touching on race, gender, etc. in the course of their work led one leader to muse, “I worry that not having those organic conversations may limit our capacity to do...our best.”).

Authors

Melissa Mendez-Campos | melmmc@outlook.com | <https://www.linkedin.com/in/melissamendescampos>

Linda Wood | lindawood222@gmail.com | <https://www.linkedin.com/in/lindawoodprofile>

Shiree Teng | shireeteng@gmail.com | <https://shireeteng.org/>

Design

Queridomundo Creative | querido@queridomundo.com | <https://queridomundo.com/>