

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion at Arbor Brothers

Winter 2017

Foreword

This document was drafted as a shareable synopsis of the Arbor Brothers staff and Board’s reflections on the connection between race and our mission. It includes our plans for incorporating diversity, equity and inclusion (“DEI”) principles into our organization’s DNA along with some of the media resources we have found informative for our conversations. Beyond serving as a potential reference for other folks wrestling with these issues, we hope this publication provides a backdrop for more face-to-face conversations on this topic (with you, if you are interested!).

Context

Arbor Brothers’ mission is to fund and support organizations that address a root cause of poverty in our local region. As such, we have invested considerable time discussing particular grantees and how best to support them. That has been and will continue to be central, but in our view we have historically spent too little time examining the complex web of factors, including the treatment of race, which have contributed to intergenerational poverty. This is important because our individual and group views on these causes directly influence whom we select as grantees and how we can best help them to be successful.

With this as background, we and our board spent much of 2016 explicitly examining race in America and its relationship with poverty. Together, we investigated the themes of institutional racism and unconscious bias, how they have shaped our current landscape and the forms in which they exist today. We also explored what—if anything—Arbor Brothers should do differently to actively combat the forces of institutional racism and thereby advance our mission.

Rationale for DEI Efforts

1. We view investing resources specifically focused on promoting DEI in our portfolio organizations and within Arbor Brothers as an important part of our mission to provide opportunity for low-income families because we believe:
 - a. Grantees with more diverse leadership are uniquely equipped to serve our community. To the degree entrepreneurs share the background of the children and families we hope to serve, they are on average more likely to:
 - i. have a nuanced understanding of the problems these communities face – allowing them to design and refine programming accordingly,
 - ii. build trust quickly and deliver messages credibly, and
 - iii. remain committed to addressing these thorny challenges over the long haul.
 - b. The more diverse AB’s staff and board are, the better we’re able to serve our portfolio. This will enable us to:
 - i. minimize any unconscious bias in our selection process (giving leaders of color the fairest shake),
 - ii. provide grantee consulting support which can better build capacity across lines of difference,
 - iii. serve as an inclusive model for our philanthropic peers (thus in turn reducing the institutional biases within philanthropy).
2. We are publicly declaring our commitment to promoting racial equity because this statement:
 - a. Binds us to “walk the talk” of resource commitment, rather than letting it slip into mere positive intention.
 - b. Clearly signals our values to potential grantees and job applicants of color.

- c. Applies positive peer pressure to other philanthropic and nonprofit actors to make similar commitments.
- d. If accompanied by a detailed plan, can provide ideas or a blueprint for grantmakers to embrace.

Arbor Brothers DEI Commitment Statement

We are our best when we stand together.

Arbor Brothers recognizes that institutional racism and unconscious bias continue to disproportionately deny people of color access to opportunity. We believe that in order to fulfill our mission of addressing the root causes of poverty, we need to deploy our grantmaking resources with these racial barriers in mind. To this end, we have committed to learning from like-minded leaders, adopting best practices, and earmarking specific resources to promote diversity, equity and inclusion both within our portfolio and our organization.

Ongoing DEI Practices (2010-present)

1. Actively cultivate and recruit organizations led by under-represented minorities (i.e. African American or Latino/a) for AB grants. Track our funding rate against grantmaking peers.
2. Actively cultivate and recruit under-represented minorities for AB staff positions (in AB's case, this category also includes women). Track against foundation and nonprofit peers.
3. Actively cultivate and recruit under-represented minorities for AB board. Track against foundation and nonprofit peers.
4. Donate or earmark our time (~100 hours per year) to support organizations committed to incubating entrepreneurs of color, including [Camelback Ventures](#), [Leadership for Educational Equity](#) and Teach for America's [Social Entrepreneurship and Innovation](#) team.
5. Inquire with grant applicants about diversity policy and practices for hiring and board recruitment.
6. Engage AB board regularly, and especially during grantee selection, on issues of racial equity.

Additional DEI Investments (2017- present)

1. Offer small sponsorship subsidizing grants (\$2-5k) to portfolio or alumni organizations interested in DEI professional development work (in-service, staff or board retreats) with an AB-approved facilitator.
2. Provide grants for emerging leaders of color who may be too early stage for AB funding:
 - a. 2 grants in 2017, each providing \$10k in cash and ~50 hours of capacity-building support per leader.
 - b. Focus is on developing Theory of Change and building program quality in the hopes that these leaders and organizations might make even stronger candidates for AB or similar funders in the future.

DEI Resources

Though we have a considerable distance yet to travel on this journey, we provide here the materials we wish we'd had when starting out. This list of resources comprises the items we read with our board in 2016 as well as a few other resources we've read recently that we believe advances the conversation. It is by no means a comprehensive list.

For Board Engagement

- [Implicit Association Test](#) (Project Implicit)
- [“The Case for Reparations”](#) (Ta-Nehisi Coates article in *The Atlantic*)
- [“Racial Bias, Even When We Have Good Intentions”](#) (*New York Times*)

- Blog post reactions to the 2016 NewSchools Venture Fund conference
 - [Original piece by Marilyn Rhames](#)
 - [Original piece](#) by Robert Pondiscio
 - [Response](#) to Pondiscio's piece
 - [Response by Marilyn Rhames](#)
 - [Response by Stacey Childress](#), CEO of NewSchools Venture Fund

Primers

- [Privilege, Allyship, & Safe Space](#) (Oberlin College)
- [Detour Spotting for White Anti-Racists](#) (Joan Olsson)
- [Grant Making with a Racial Equity Lens](#) (Grantcraft)

Articles and Blog Posts

- [White Fragility: Why It's So Hard to Talk to White People About Racism](#) (Dr. Robin D'Angelo)
- [All the Greedy Young Abigail Fishers and Me](#) (blog post by Jia Tolentino)
- [Are Emily and Greg more Employable than Lakisha and Jamal](#) (Marianne Bertrand and Sendhil Mullainathan)
- [New Approaches to Understanding Racial Prejudice and Discrimination](#) (Lincoln Quillian)
- [Does Unconscious Racism Exist](#) (Troy Duster introduction, Lincoln Quillian author)
- [What Has Economics to Say about Racial Discrimination](#) (Kenneth Arrow)
- [Structural Racism](#) (Keith Lawrence and Terry Keleher)

Audio

- [This American Life: Cops See It Differently](#)
- Gimlet Media piece called [Raising the Bar](#)
- [On Being](#) interview with Mahzarin Banaji

Videos

- [Putting Racism on the Table](#) (Washington Grantmakers)
- ["We Need to Talk About an Injustice"](#) (Bryan Stevenson TED talk - 24 min)
- [A Trip to the Grocery Store](#) (Joy DeGruy – 4 min)
- [White Like Me](#) (Tim Wise – 68 min)
- ["The Danger of a Single Story"](#) (Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie TED talk – 19 min)
- ["How I learned to Stop Worrying and Love Discussing Race"](#) (Jay Smoot TED talk – 12 min)

Books

- [The New Jim Crow](#) (Michelle Alexander)
- [Can We Talk About Race?](#) (Beverly Tatum)
- [Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria](#) (Beverly Tatum)
- [White Like Me](#) (Tim Wise)

Other Research

- [Asian-American Success and the Pitfalls of Generalization](#) (Brookings Institute)
- [Racial Micro-aggressions in Everyday Life](#) (American Psychologist)
- [Defining Racism](#) (Beverly Tatum)