

# 2018 Year in Review (and 2019 Budget Preview)

Dear Donors, Supporters and Friends,

As Old Blue-eyes might [croon](#), 2018 “was a verrry good year.” Despite the Mars Rover going dark and the government shutting down, the AB portfolio soars on! Thanks to your generosity we met our revenue target, and through the relentless toil of grantee leadership we achieved our collective goals for **improving organizational effectiveness** (p. 2).

We have again engaged an outside evaluator to solicit “**after action**” feedback from our grantees and herein feature some highlights (p.3) and areas for improvement (p.4).

Lots of momentum headed into 2019, with new board members, exciting events and even more support for grantees and alumni. Stay tuned for updates in our 1x1 meetings!

As always, we’ll endeavor herein to be **substantive, candid and brief**. We look forward to hearing your feedback!

Best, The AB Team



Arbor Brothers finds, funds and supports the most promising early-stage education and workforce development nonprofits in the New York tri-state area.

For context and transparency, we provide a snapshot of AB’s historical and projected finances:

<b>Contributions Summary</b>				
<i>in \$000s</i>	2016A	2017A	2018A	2019P
<b>Contributions to AB</b>	\$ 1,760	\$ 1,880	\$ 2,230	\$ 2,350
<i>Growth %</i>	12%	7%	19%	5%
<b>Core Funds Budget</b>				
	2016A	2017A	2018A	2019P
<b>Nonprofit Support</b>				
Cash grants	59%	60%	51%	54%
Consulting support*	33%	32%	41%	35%
<b>Nonprofit Support</b>	92%	92%	92%	88%
Operating costs*	8%	8%	9%	12%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

*\*Includes allocated portion of compensation and benefits*

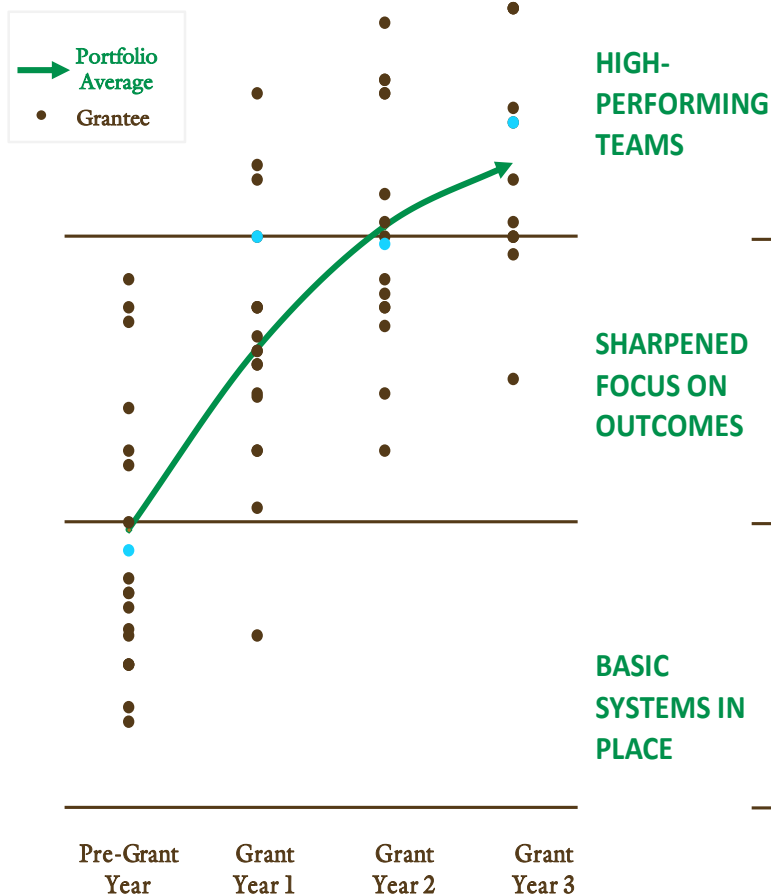
**Our 2019 revenue goal is \$2.35M.** As a reminder, our [2017-2020 Growth Plan](#) calls for ~10% average annual revenue growth. After adding staff in 2017-2018, we plan to increase grant sizes (“cash grants”) in 2019 and incrementally invest in fundraising (“operating costs”).



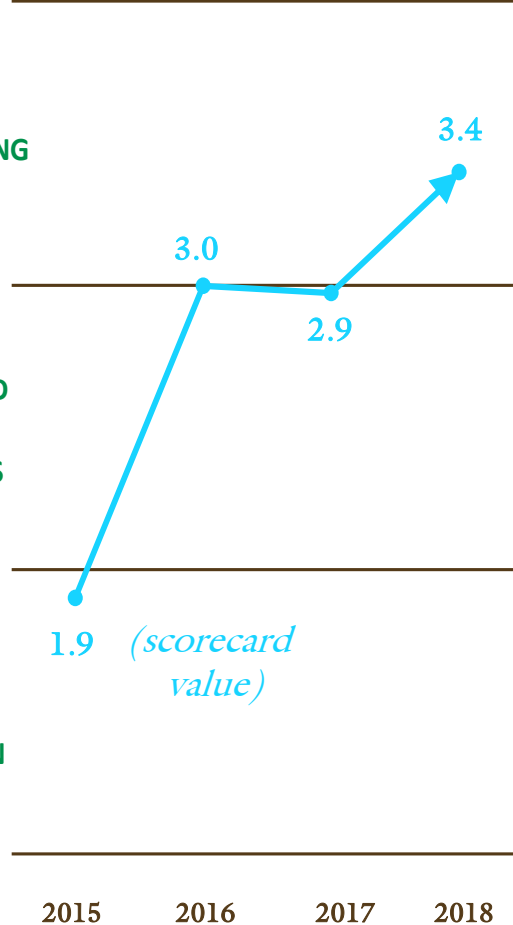
# “De-Quantifying” Grantee Progress

As a reminder, we aim to help grantees build a **high-performance culture** focused on measurable, positive outcomes. We evaluate their progress with an AB-developed [scorecard](#) and chart it using tiny, inscrutable dot patterns (at left). Here we attempt to bring those dots to life through the trajectory of recent portfolio graduate [Code Nation](#) (f.k.a. ScriptEd).

## Arbor Brothers Portfolio Progress



## Grantee Example: Code Nation



## Together with management we...

### Grant Year Three (2018)

- Articulated a multi-year growth campaign and hiring plan
- Defined and filled two key positions including site director and operations/finance lead

### Grant Year Two (2017)

- Crafted a financial planning tool and decision-rights map but...
- Unexpected staff transitions stalled performance progress

### Grant Year One (2016)

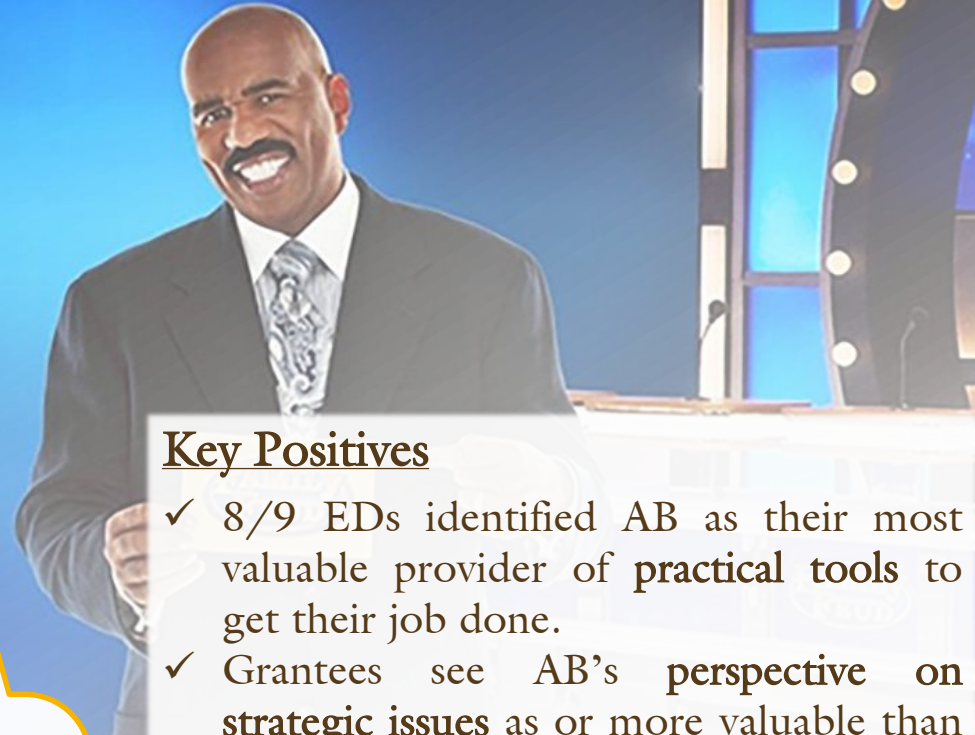
- Co-constructed a Theory of Change, clarifying the population served, activities and key outcomes
- Drafted a dashboard enumerating shorter-term indicators of programmatic success



# No One Recalls Family Feud but We're Still Making the Reference

Every year we solicit **candid, constructive feedback** from our grantees. Selected quotes and positive takeaways below—learnings featured on the next page. Full results [here](#).

## SURVEY SAYS...



*“The level of respect that they bring and attention they pay to even the most granular aspects of our work; it makes them different from everyone else I’ve encountered.”*

*“It was nice to be financially supported, but the consulting was even more valuable... It changed the way we work as an organization.”*

### Key Positives

- ✓ 8/9 EDs identified AB as their most valuable provider of **practical tools** to get their job done.
- ✓ Grantees see AB’s **perspective on strategic issues** as or more valuable than that of their most-engaged board member.
- ✓ Considering the combined \$ and consulting package AB provides, 7/9 grantees described us as their **“most valuable” partner** (7.0/7.0); the other two grantees scored us a 6.0/7.0.

# Reflecting Back, Looking Ahead

## We Blew It!

(*lessons learned the hard way*)

As with every young organization, we are making some mistakes as we grow. By acknowledging and reflecting upon them, we hope to avoid making similar oversights in the future. Here are some excerpts from a long list:



- 1. Why Truman Wanted a One-handed Economist.** Fleshing out pros and cons for the sake of analysis is great (and a big part of our job) but sometimes grantees just want to know what we recommend. As much as we aim to teach fishing rather than distribute fish, we heard in our grantee survey that the Socratic method can sometimes be frustratingly obtuse. We pledge to be more forthright, especially when asked.
- 2. We Promise: We'll Get to It.** We often work to help grantees identify *the important* and help prioritize it over *the urgent*. Sometimes that means pushing back on grantee project preferences (e.g. we mandate building a Theory of Change before tackling Performance Management). We always tackle grantees' proposed issues, but need to better communicate the "why" around re-ordered project timelines.
- 3. Is Parental Colic a Thing?** Hopefully grantee project troubleshooting sessions will have a more, uh, constructive, vibe after newborn sleep-training kicks in and *some of us* are more well-rested (sorry, Team!).

## Current Arbor Brothers Portfolio



ALL OUR KIN



## Grantees Up Close

By popular demand, we brought a second group of AB supporters to visit [Hudson Link](#) at Sing Sing in January for yet another mind-blowing experience. Looking ahead, we aim to visit [All Our Kin](#) this spring and the math whizzes at [BEAM](#) this summer. Let us know if you're interested in joining!

## News from Our Network

- Big news from AB alum Code Nation (f.k.a. ScriptEd) as the founding CEO pens an [op-ed](#), lands a [\\$1.5M grant](#) and [names her successor](#) (whom we love). Great work, Maurya!
- AB grantee Co-Founder and ED Jess Sager just won a prestigious [Aspen Braddock Scholarship](#). Congrats, Jess!
- We are thrilled to welcome three new superstars to the AB board: [Melissa Harris](#), [Chris Rush](#) and [David Sambur](#).

