

Do. Reflect. Improve.

Dear Donors, Supporters and Friends,

After nine years and 31 newsletters, it has become clear that the one consistent area of reader interest is our “Mistakes” section. Is it good news or bad news that we are not running out of material?

The hundreds of lessons featured in that section have all come with the battle scars of experience. In this newsletter, we share some recent learnings with a more *proactive* flavor: **grantees learning** from each other (p. 1), **AB aggregating data from alumni** around best practices (p. 2), and **y’all learning** about a new AB grantee, Hopeworks (p. 3). Of course, we can **all keep learning together** from AB’s latest missteps (p. 4).

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

Warmly, The AB Team

arborbrothers
engaged philanthropy

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

Grantee Peer Learning

The [Adverse Childhood Experiences](#) survey and the newer [Urban ACEs](#) attempt to measure the long-term effects of trauma experienced in childhood.



Recently, we brought some of our grantees together to discuss this research-based diagnostic. They asked each other:

- Should we exclude participants with *lower* ACE scores?
- Should we tailor programming to a participant’s ACE score?
- Can ACE scores predict program success?

We believe grantees should generally hold outcomes targets steady and adjust programming rather than lower expectations for high ACE participants, but that’s a lot easier said than done.

Curious about your own ACE score? Calculate it [here](#).



Reverse Engineering Best Practices

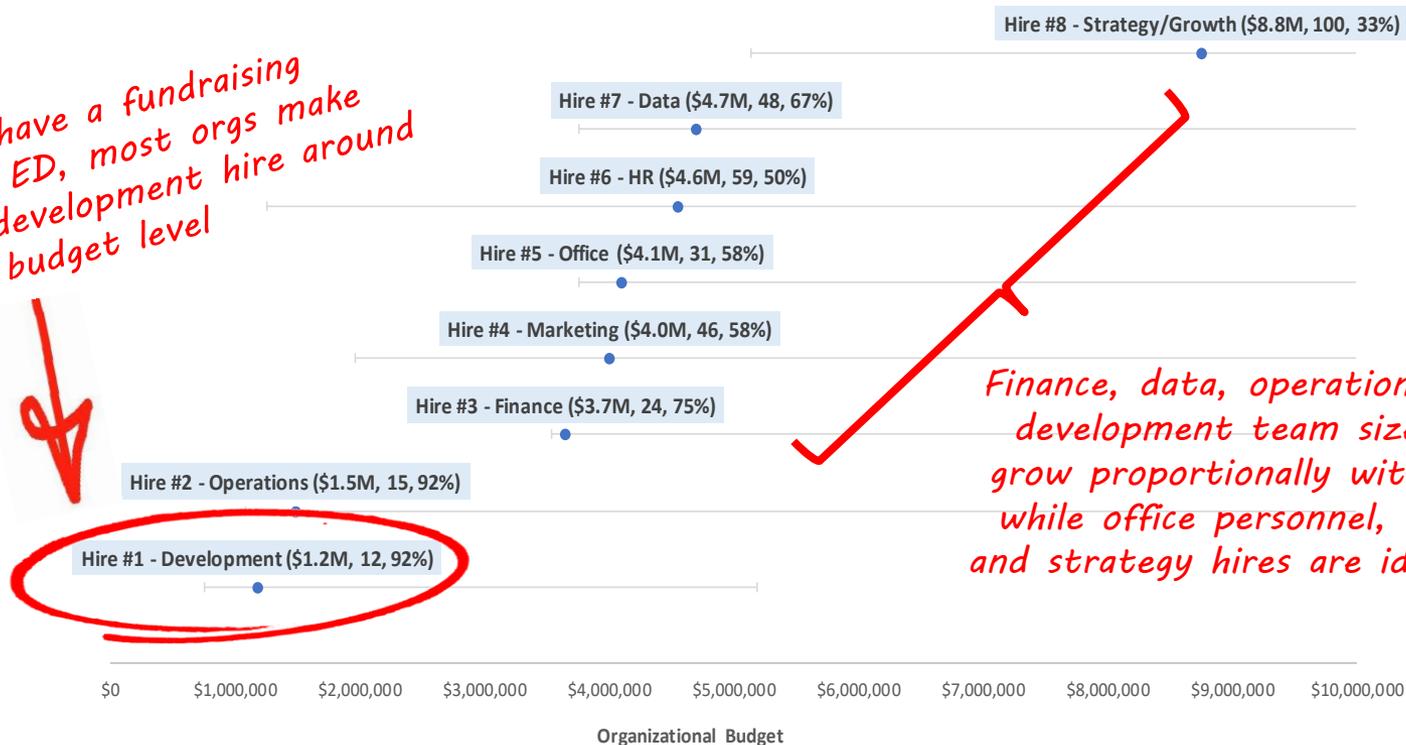
“What role should we hire for next? Should we have an in-house finance expert?”

Questions like these come up frequently with our young, fast-growing grantees. To substantiate our recommendations, we surveyed AB alums and other large, well-regarded nonprofits to better understand their hiring patterns. Though the data set is still small, we share two high-level takeaways below.

Unless they have a fundraising “savant” as ED, most orgs make their first development hire around the \$1.2M budget level

When do Nonprofits First Hire Non-Program Roles?

(median budget at hire, median team size at hire, % of sample who hired for role)



Finance, data, operations, HR and development team sizes tend to grow proportionally with budgets, while office personnel, marketing, and strategy hires are idiosyncratic



Grantee Spotlight: Hopeworks



Background

- In operation since 2000
- FY19 Budget: \$2.6M
- 19 FTEs



Learn more at Hopeworks.org

With a focus on education, technology, and entrepreneurship, Hopeworks provides a positive, healing atmosphere that helps young people **build tech careers** and break the cycle of violence and poverty in Camden, New Jersey.



Program Model

The following three elements of the Hopeworks model really stand out:

An Open Door

Hopeworks does not turn anyone away. Anyone aged 16-25 and coming from a low-income background, is welcome to start training. This makes the outcomes even more impressive.

Trauma-informed Framework

Infused within the tech training, there is:

- One-on-one weekly life coaching
- Individualized academic support
- A culture of community and care

Social Enterprise

After training, Hopeworks hires its training completers to be interns at its [Social Enterprise](#). This 6-month paid internship provides experience in web development and GIS mapping, prepping them to secure full-time jobs while generating 20+% of Hopeworks's total revenue.

Latest Outcomes

Most trainees enter Hopeworks without income. 75%+ of those who complete training secure and maintain full-time employment for at least one year at an average income of \$36k.



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. Changing Roles Mean Changing Orientations.** As we start to experiment with grantee board membership, we must remember that this fiduciary role entails different responsibilities (and provides different leverage) than that of a pure grantmaker. As issues arise, we can and should work through peer directors, not just through management – a belated realization as we addressed some challenges this year.
- 2. Follow-through: Key for Steph Curry's Jump Shot *and* Hiring.** We have been advising on and helping execute search processes for grantees. It has become crystal clear that however thorough the hiring process, and no matter how strong the candidate, we need to ensure that there is a detailed onboarding plan in place which is overseen by senior staff. Mismatched expectations in the first months have derailed otherwise promising hires.
- 3. Wave the White Flag.** When your toddler is home sick, don't even try to work. That time is better spent on child care, and those anticipated spurts of productivity rarely materialize.

Current Arbor Brothers Portfolio



ALL OUR KIN



Grantees Up Close

In April, [All Our Kin](#) broke down their model for 20+ AB donors, detailing their coaching work with family child care providers and their big plans for growth.

Next up: [BEAM](#) (who just secured Gates Fdn funding!) We'll visit 6th grade math camp in July. Stay tuned for details!

News from Our Network

- AB alum [BRICK](#) was awarded a [\\$10M grant](#) from the federal DOE to expand their school network (on top of \$30M Promise Neighborhood grant). Congrats, Dom!
- AB alum [Pursuit](#) (formerly C4Q), was [profiled](#) in *The New York Times*. AB helped design and find funding for the income-sharing deal featured in the story (and it's working!)
- A former participant of AB Alum [CARA](#) published an [Op-Ed](#) in *The New York Times* on the college admissions scandal.