Dear Donors, Supporters and Friends,

At this point, you may be experiencing a bit of “unprecedented” fatigue. These unprecedented times. An unprecedented public health crisis. Thesaurus-pining notwithstanding, at Arbor Brothers we are ready to give this term new life: we are now faced with the unprecedented opportunity to build a more just and equitable society. Our region’s most innovative social entrepreneurs are ready to take on that challenge, and we are collectively stepping in to help support their success.

We have just completed our 2021 selection process, and these grantees represent the best-in-class when it comes to creative solutions to our most entrenched challenges. This year, we are expanding our range of supports for current and past grantees (more on that on page 3!) and reinforcing our commitment to equity by funding our most diverse group of leaders yet—55% of the leaders in our portfolio identify as people of color. We identify them all as fabulous changemakers, and we are so excited for you get to know them. Read on for more details.

Warmly,
The AB Team

P.S. As always, we endeavor herein to be substantive, candid and brief. We look forward to your feedback.
2021 Portfolio: A warm welcome (and welcome back!) to...

**ImmSchools | Second-Stage Grantee**

*ImmSchools* works to transform schools into safe and welcoming spaces for undocumented students. Led by a powerhouse trio with lived experience as undocumented students, ImmSchools advocates for policies and facilitates workshops to ensure that undocumented and mixed-status families know their rights and can access resources.

**KindWork | Second-Stage Grantee**

*KindWork* helps talented young adults from overlooked communities transform their economic outlook and launch new careers in the innovation economy. KindWork provides in-depth job skills training to prepare otherwise inaccessible careers in customer-focused role for low-income, underemployed and unemployed young adults.

**UPchieve | Second-Stage Grantee**

*UPchieve* connects low-income high school students to free, on-demand online tutors. By recruiting, training, and certifying volunteers to be high-quality tutors or college counselors, UPchieve increases these students’ access to academic support by enabling them to request and get paired with a live volunteer in five minutes.

**COOP Careers | Follow-on Grantee**

*COOP* connects college grads with the critical digital skills and peer connections necessary to succeed in the digital economy. COOP invests deeply in apprentices, providing 200 hours of workshops through a 16-week apprenticeship, moving average wages from $15k to $60k within two years.
2021 Portfolio: Returning Grantees

BRAVEN equips low-income and first-generation college students with the skills and supports necessary to transition from college to strong first jobs

EMMA’S TORCH empowers refugees and asylum seekers through culinary education

The Marcy Lab School provides an alternative pathway into high-growth tech careers for underestimated youth

YONKERS PARTNERS IN EDUCATION partners with students in a low-income, urban school district to ensure they are ready for, enroll in and complete college

CITY LIVING — NY — empowers youth aging out of foster care to transition successfully into adulthood by providing essential resources and in-depth support

GirlTrek is pioneering a health movement for African-American women through walking campaigns, community leadership and health advocacy

CodeNation equips underserved high school students with the skills, experiences, and connections that together create access to careers in technology

Introducing: The Arboretum

A number of grantees have provided feedback regarding the potential value of a peer learning community, though we’ve historically demurred on this given that so many of these leaders are also “volun-told” to participate in other funder cohort experiences. But we realized that their promising deputies could really benefit from some management training and networking. This led us to design and launch The Arboretum, our first-ever cohort program, offered in partnership with the Solon E. Summerfield Foundation.

This brief, targeted program is designed to address a common organizational problem we see: Nonprofit staff are often promoted to managerial positions on the strength of their individual performance, but new managers often receive little to no training in people management.

To help fill this gap, we are working with a group of ten managers this Fall to provide the resources and develop the skills necessary for success in each stage of the management life cycle:

- Effective hiring
- Empowering and delegating
- Giving feedback
- Course correcting and self-care

Click logos to learn more
1. “[Awkward silence] …why don’t you just *tell* us what capacity-building project we should be requesting?” (Sammy insists people will get this Moviefone reference from Seinfeld.) For 11 years, we’ve asked applicants—who don’t yet know us—to write about their current organizational challenges and suggest a project based on one of AB’s areas of expertise. Despite annual attempts to better describe our capabilities and share examples of previous projects, most applicants struggle to propose something appropriately specific and important to tackle together. While we’ll still ask applicants to reflect on their organizational challenges, starting next year we won’t make them propose a plan for our engagement.

2. **Meeting Formats in Flux Require Extra Clarity.** “(belated text message): oops I thought this meeting was virtual.” “Can we rig up a computer and have it sit in that chair?” Especially in the next few months, as we all get used to a new normal which intermixes in-person, virtual and hybrid meetings, it’s essential to get on the same page well in advance around format expectations. We’ve had a couple of hiccups already with our own board and grantees. We are redoubling our efforts to make sure the setup and meeting invitations are clear, especially when shifting to a different default mode. (And keep your winter coats handy, AB Board. Our next in-person meeting will be in February!)

3. **Don’t Let This Guy Proofread Anything.** He’s been on family leave for awhile. He means well. He probably misses the office. But averaging three hours of sleep per night drastically limits anyone’s ability to add value. Maybe just send along an encouraging comment like “Hang in there fellah” or “Some of your friends have five kids, you know, and they survived.”

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**Meet the Grantees**

**News From Our Network**

- Scott and board member Erica Hamilton penned an article for Philanthropy New York, *Dear Fellow Funders: No More Statements on Racial Equity Please (Until You Publish “The Receipts”)*, calling on the funding community to more transparently share DEI data.
- Many of you remember, Lawrence Bartley, who has represented Hudson Link at prior AB gatherings. Lawrence was just nominated for an Emmy (!), for his documentary, *The Zoo*.
- In addition to presenting the need for quality family child care to Senator Schumer and Senator Warren recently, All Our Kin was named Good Day New York’s Hero of the Day!
- **COOP Careers** CEO Kalani Leifer was featured in a lovely profile last week in which he opened up on what drives him and how he’s been building the organization. Thank you, Kalani, for sharing such great lessons with the field about how best to focus on quality.