

# Arbor Brothers Commitment to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI)

(updated January 2022)

## DEI Vision:

People of color who lead high-potential nonprofits in the New York metropolitan area, particularly Black and brown leaders, can access the financial and capacity-building support their organizations need to empower individuals in marginalized communities to secure paths out of poverty.

## I. Equity as an Essential Value

Arbor Brothers recognizes that structural racism and unconscious bias have severe negative consequences for the health, safety, and prosperity of communities of color, particularly Black and brown communities, and continue to disproportionately deny them access to opportunity. Further, we recognize that philanthropic institutions have historically perpetuated harmful cycles of oppression by erecting structural barriers to resources.

In response, Arbor Brothers seeks to promote equitable access to opportunity by supporting nonprofit leaders of color. We believe these leaders are uniquely equipped to develop effective programs because they share lived experiences with the communities they serve. As a result, they are more likely to have a nuanced understanding of community context, benefit from earned trust and credibility, and commit deeply to addressing challenges.

Therefore, in order to better fulfill our mission, we seek to shape our organizational culture and deploy our grantmaking resources with the above context in mind. Specifically, we have embraced the following priorities<sup>1</sup>:

1. **Proximity:** Actively increase our understanding of, connection to, and investment in people and communities most impacted by poverty in the New York metropolitan area.
2. **Reflection:** Collect, analyze and reflect on stakeholder and portfolio data disaggregated by race in order to ensure that our investments reflect our values and not our biases (see Section II below). Integrate and normalize discussion of race and equity in all stages of decision-making at both the staff and board levels, holding DEI-specific conversations at least monthly with the staff and frequently with the Board.
3. **Accountability:** Set goals for racial equity progress, continuously innovate to achieve them (see Sections III and IV below), and report progress publicly. This is all done with the objective of building power among leaders proximate to the challenges faced by the marginalized communities we serve.

## II. Measures of Progress

While we acknowledge that pursuing equity is not primarily an exercise in counting, we do believe that tracking certain DEI metrics is essential to gauging progress. In the interest of transparency and accountability, we share here our track record on a subset of these metrics and have [actively encouraged](#) others to do the same. While we are generally proud of our efforts in this area, we also acknowledge that we are on a journey with a

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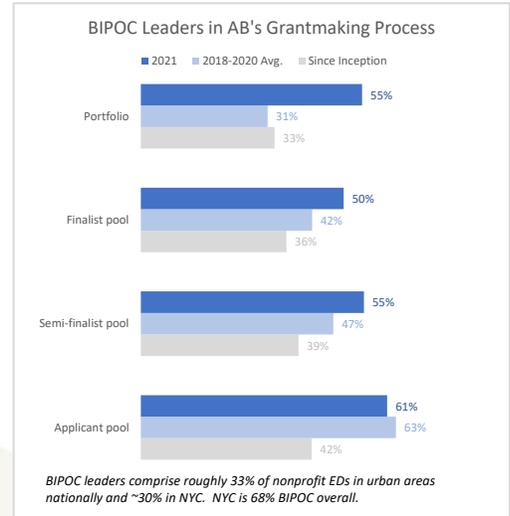
<sup>1</sup> Though our DEI work predates [this Bridgespan report](#), we appreciate the framing they lay out.

long distance still to travel. Additionally—while we make new and renewed efforts on an annual basis to promote equity on all these fronts—we are still in the process of establishing clear benchmarks. We are hopeful that by sharing our data publicly we can inspire other grantmakers to do the same, so that in time we can all have a better idea of where we stand and where we should be headed.

**Key Indicator: In whom are we investing?**

We prioritize investments in nonprofits headed by leaders of color<sup>2</sup> (BIPOC = Black, Indigenous and people of color). To do this, we...

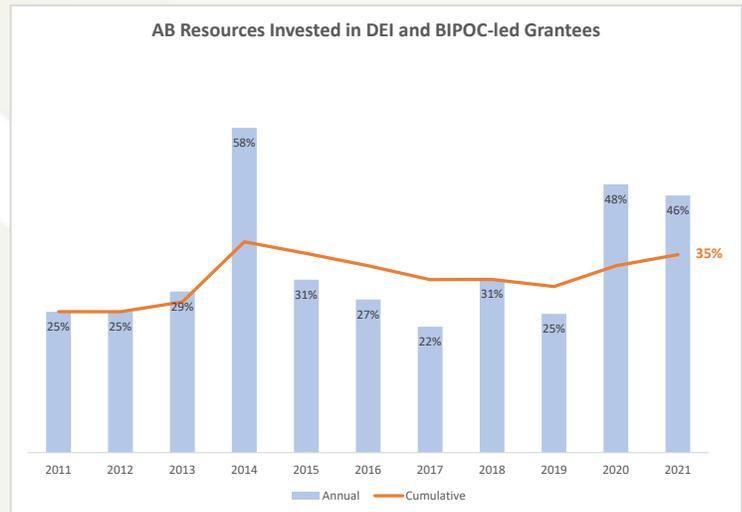
1. Conduct our annual grantmaking process with a DEI lens, including...
  - a. Continuously refining our outreach and selection process to increase accessibility and inclusivity.
  - b. Tracking applicant pool demographics by year to measure progress towards equitable inclusion (see chart at right).
2. Earmark additional support to early-stage leaders of color through our Leaders of Color Initiative (LOCI).



**Key Indicator: How much are we investing in equity?**

We seek to provide additional resources to support BIPOC leaders and encourage healthy DEI practices within our grantees wherever practicable, such that our investment in equity is manifested in more than just the complexion of our portfolio's leadership. To do this, we...

1. Track actual dollars and capacity-building resources dedicated to BIPOC leaders and equity initiatives overall (see chart at right).
2. Invest extra resources in promising BIPOC leaders through our LOCI program, which includes...
  - a. Partnering with 1-3 leaders per year since 2017
  - b. Providing supplemental grant packages typically composed of \$10,000-15,000 and 50-75 hours of consulting support.
3. Subsidize up to 50% of costs of internal DEI trainings for current and former grantees.

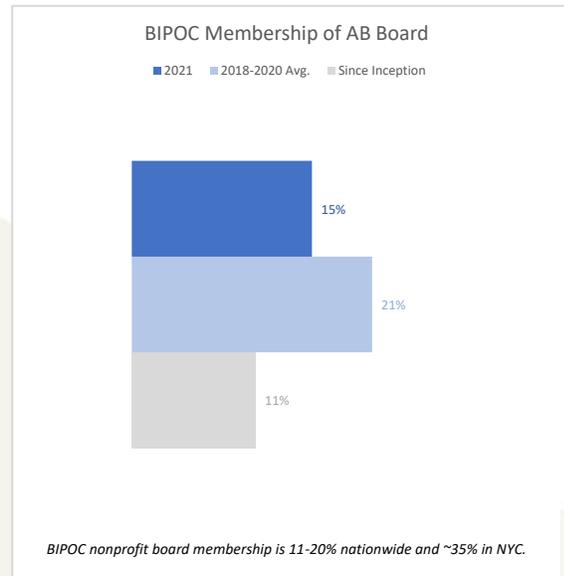
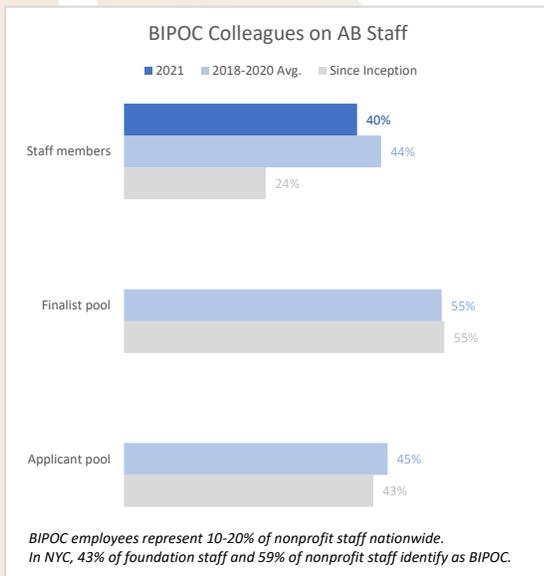


<sup>2</sup> **Note on Additional Dimensions of Equity:** To tease out more granular conclusions and root out other subtle biases, we track a number of other DEI metrics which are not included here, such as disaggregated data by race and identity markers like gender, community background, educational pathway and organizational affiliations. While we focus our current DEI commitment on racial equity, we acknowledge breaking down barriers between many identity groups is important.

## Secondary Indicator: How diverse is our staff and our board?

We actively cultivate and recruit a diverse candidate pool for staff and board positions. This entails...

1. Tracking candidate pool demographics over time to inform equitable selection practices (see chart below).
2. Conducting periodic analysis of our recruitment and hiring processes to identify opportunities to increase accessibility and inclusivity (*we will conduct an internal analysis of hiring processes in 2022*).



### III. Additional Commitments

Each year we incorporate feedback from our grantees, colleagues and board to assess our progress towards a more diverse, equitable, and inclusive organization. We include here reflections on 2021's supplemental efforts as well as some refinements and additions we intend to make in 2022.

**2021 Commitment:** Increase the number of second-stage organizations led by leaders of color in our applicant pool by tapping at least five new recommender networks during our outreach process.

- **Result:** We exceeded our goal, reaching out to more than 10 new recommenders during our 2021 grantmaking process. However, we did not feel that this led to a significant number of new BIPOC leaders participating in our process.
- **Refinement in 2022:** We will explore reaching out to additional non-institutional and community-based funders to assess whether that approach enables us to find new BIPOC-led organizations that prove competitive in our grantmaking process. We will also reach out to existing recommenders that have consistently provided us with valuable information and inquire about their sources. Finally, we will analyze the recommender list for our LOCI initiative to assess possible insights into the merits of particular sources.

**2021 Commitment:** Commit to serving 3-4 proximate leaders annually through LOCI (vs. ~2 previously).

- **Result:** We met our goal, and supported three leaders of color via our LOCI initiative in the 2020-2021 cycle. Due to the success of this initiative, we will continue to engage in this effort in this upcoming year.

**2021 Commitment:** Establish a continuous learning commitment to DEI for all team members to ensure we regularly introduce fresh perspectives into our individual and organizational equity journeys. Specifically, staff will aim to attend one DEI-focused learning session per quarter (learning sessions fulfill the commitment if they highlight the issues faced by people of color or other marginalized identities).

- **Result:** We met regularly as a team to engage in continuous learning and discuss topics related to DEI. Individually, we also attended DEI-focused learning sessions in external contexts. However, because we did not track our attendance at external sessions, we cannot definitively state that we met this objective.
- **Refinement in 2022:** This year, the team will convene for four internal DEI-focused discussion sessions and commit to four hours of additional DEI-focused content in external settings (training, webinar, panel discussion, conference session, etc). We have implemented a system to accurately track and report out on this objective in the coming year.

**2021 Commitment:** Add a publicly accessible anonymous feedback form to the Contact Us page of our website as a tool to listen, learn and improve.

- **Result:** In 2021, we met this goal by adding a readily accessible [feedback form](#) to our website. However, we did not receive any significant communications via this channel.
- **Refinement in 2022:** In 2022, we aim to increase awareness amongst partners, prospective grantees, and other stakeholders about this form through our newsletters, request for proposals, etc.

**2022 Commitment:** We will facilitate at least one DEI-focused learning session with our board in 2022. DEI remains an important priority for our board, and we will continue to engage with them to ensure continuous learning.

**2022 Commitment:** Arbor Brothers plans to expand our team in 2022. In advance of those hires, the team will conduct an internal DEI assessment of our recruitment and hiring practices to ensure there are aligned with best practices.

#### IV. Additional Resources

Though we have a considerable distance yet to travel on our journey, we have compiled a selection of materials we wish we'd had when starting out. While by no means comprehensive, this [list of resources](#) includes a selection of the content we have engaged our team and/or board on and found particularly useful.