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RESULTS

How Inclusion and Equity Are Transforming a Foundation and a Community

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Keywords: Inclusion, equity, Denver Foundation, Inclusiveness Project, emerging leaders of color, Expanding Nonprofit Inclusiveness Initiative, Critical Impact Award, Institute for Executive Directors of Color, Colorado Funders for Inclusiveness and Equity, learning community, Colorado Common Grant Application

Key Points

- Racial inequities in health care, education, incarceration rates and economic stability have persisted, in spite of federal policies to promote equity.
- The Denver Foundation launched what is now known as the Inclusiveness Project in 2002 to help nonprofits, including funders, become more inclusive of people of color.
- The Project defines diversity as one component of inclusiveness; inclusive organizations are defined as learning-centered organizations that value the perspectives and contributions of all people.
- The Project operates on three levels: individual, organizational and sector.
- An extensive evaluation has shown that there are impacts at all levels, including increasing the number of people of color interested in careers in nonprofits, organizations incorporating inclusiveness in policies and practices, and greater awareness and attention to disparities on the part of the funding community.

While “separate, but equal” policies were outlawed years ago, deep inequities persist in African-American and Latino communities throughout the U.S. This is particularly true in Denver, where an established African-American population and a diverse, growing Latino popula-

tion display standard outcomes in education, health care, incarceration rates, and economic stability. The Denver Foundation is addressing these inequities through its Inclusiveness Project. This program has spent the last decade investing time, dollars, and expertise in helping nonprofit organizations, including funders, to become more inclusive of people of color. Through targeted efforts at the individual, organizational, and sectorwide levels, the Inclusiveness Project demonstrates proven results in increasing the effectiveness of nonprofit organizations serving increasingly diverse communities and in supporting leaders of color.

The practices of the Inclusiveness Project have also influenced numerous other related outcomes within the metropolitan Denver community. A major research and funding collaboration that was focused on mental health shifted to include a spotlight on racial and ethnic disparities in access to care. The foundation community revised the Colorado Common Grant Application and included a specific question about inclusiveness practices. The Denver Foundation is increasing the pipeline of diverse leaders joining the sector, having already placed more than 70 diverse interns with nonprofits, and training and making connections for 100 emerging leaders of color to serve on nonprofit boards. In addition, the foundation itself has transformed its own operations

and strategic focus to become deeply connected to the communities it serves and to work in partnership with these communities to address disparities.

The Landscape

Metropolitan Denver is a seven-county area with a population of about 3.2 million, with suburbs extending in a ring surrounding the city and county of Denver. Following nationwide trends particularly prevalent in the West, the city itself is already majority minority, and the metro area is not far behind. Inner-ring suburbs such as Lakewood and Aurora are seeing dramatic rates of growth in communities of color. The metro area saw 22 percent growth in the Latino segment of the population between 2000 and 2010 and four percent growth in the African-American segment of the population, while the number of non-Hispanic white residents decreased by seven percent (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010a). The Asian Pacific Islander population grew by 27.5 percent, to 3.7 percent of the population, while the American Indian population remained stable at approximately 0.5 percent. Along with other Western states, Colorado is expected to be close to majority minority by 2040.

Metropolitan Denver has a relatively stable, diversified economic base with a median household income of \$59,007 in 2009, 17.5 percent higher than the national median. However, prosperity is far from equitably distributed. The median household income in Denver for Latinos is 31 percent less and for African-Americans is 41 percent less than that of non-Hispanic white households. Childhood poverty rates in Colorado's African-American community (28 percent) and Hispanic/Latino community (33 percent) are almost double the rate in the white community (16 percent) (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010b).

Disparities for Latino and African-American residents are especially significant in the areas of education and health. Denver Public Schools reports that Latino and African-American students are less than half as proficient as their white and Asian counterparts in writing and less than one-third as proficient in math, as measured

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on standardized tests (Denver Public Schools, 2011). Rates for childhood and adult obesity and diabetes mortality are higher in both the Latino and African-American communities in Colorado. Latinos are significantly more likely to have chronic liver disease, while African-Americans have higher rates of cancer and heart disease (Colorado Department of Public Health and the Environment, 2009).

The Need and the Response

Given these striking disparities, nonprofit organizations in metro Denver focus considerable effort and energy on achieving their missions within growing communities of color. This doesn't affect simply the education, human services, and health segments of the nonprofit sector; arts and cultural organizations are seeing their audiences shift and advocacy organizations are burdened by the growth of inequities across sectors. The Denver Foundation, as a community foundation serving the seven-county metropolitan area, began to hear from its grantees in the late 1990s that they needed help connecting with the increas-

ingly diverse demographic communities in metro Denver, particularly with relationship to conducting outreach, expanding services, and making their programming relevant to the needs of these changing communities.

From its inception, the Inclusiveness Project has grown with oversight and input from leaders of color in the community, and its committee is comprised primarily of leaders from communities of color along with a small number of white allies.

In 2002, the foundation's board of trustees created the Expanding Nonprofit Inclusiveness Initiative, which grew into the Inclusiveness Project, an ongoing program of the foundation that now has one full-time staff member and five consultants, dedicated funding in the amount of four percent of the foundation's unrestricted grant dollars, and a committee of the board. The Inclusiveness Project has a mission of helping nonprofits, including funders, become more inclusive of people of color. While the foundation supports inclusiveness of all types, including income, age, ability, and sexual orientation, the Inclusiveness Project focuses its efforts on issues of race and ethnicity. In 2011, the Inclusiveness Project received the Critical Impact Award from the Council on Foundations in recognition of its success in achieving its goals.

From its inception, the Inclusiveness Project has grown with oversight and input from leaders of color in the community, and its committee is comprised primarily of leaders from communities of color along with a small number of white allies. This follows the foundation's value of including and listening to the voices of those most affected by the various issues that the foundation address-

es in designing, developing, and implementing its work.

The project's focus on race and ethnicity has been reinforced repeatedly over the course of its evolution. Trustees, advisory committee members, and staff recognize that issues of race, ethnicity, and the disparities related to these characteristics are exceptionally challenging and entrenched in the metro Denver community as in the United States as a whole, and that these challenges will be exacerbated by the shifting demographics in metro Denver. The intersection of race with other types of inequities, such as income, requires sustained focus. With limited resources, the foundation believes that its investment in promoting inclusiveness is best served by working intentionally on race and ethnicity.

Another early decision, maintained throughout the course of the Inclusiveness Project, was to define diversity and inclusiveness. Within the Inclusiveness Project, diversity describes one aspect of inclusiveness: the extent to which an organization has people from diverse backgrounds or communities involved as board members, staff, or volunteers. Diversity is one small subset of inclusiveness.

Inclusive organizations, on the other hand, not only have diverse individuals involved but, more important, they are learning-centered organizations that value the perspectives and contributions of all people, and they incorporate the needs, assets, and perspectives of communities of color into the design and implementation of universal and inclusive programs. Furthermore, inclusive organizations recruit and retain diverse staff and volunteers to reflect the racial and ethnic composition of the communities they serve. The Inclusiveness Project promotes diversity at all levels as an essential element of inclusiveness, while it offers training and education to organizations to help them become more inclusive in all of their practices.

In service to a logic model that identifies a multilevel approach to fostering inclusiveness in nonprofit organizations, the programs and activi-

ties of the Inclusiveness Project operate on three levels: individual, organizational, and sector-wide. Individual activities include leadership and skills training; a paid, nonprofit internship program encouraging the involvement of students from underrepresented communities in the sector; and a board-service training program for leaders of color. The majority of Inclusiveness Project efforts focus on organizational development, working directly with grantees of The Denver Foundation to help them become more inclusive. Sector-wide activities include conferences and a speaker series, publications, a website, an e-marketing platform, and the fostering of organizations such as Colorado Funders for Inclusiveness and Equity. An important distinction between the Inclusiveness Project and its counterparts throughout the philanthropic and nonprofit sector is a focus on organizational development and leadership development as a theory of change related to inclusiveness.

Level One: Involving Diverse Individuals in the Sector

Interns

From its inception, the Inclusiveness Project has sought to respond to concerns from metro Denver nonprofit organizations regarding their difficulty in identifying and recruiting people of color to serve as board members, staff, volunteers, and donors. Given the changing demographics of the community, this is of paramount concern to many organizations. Thus the Inclusiveness Project developed a set of activities to help build a pipeline of individuals of color entering the nonprofit sector in these various capacities. These activities have grown over time, developing into strategies focused on an increase in involvement of people of color within the sector, from internships during their student years to an institute for executive directors of color.

The Nonprofit Internship Program was inspired by findings from the Inclusiveness Project that internships help encourage people of color to pursue opportunities in the nonprofit sector. In 2006, The Denver Foundation conducted a survey of college students and young nonprofit profes-

sionals about how nonprofits can better connect with people of color. Of the 112 respondents (all of whom identified as individuals of color), 95 percent reported that it would be useful for nonprofits to do more outreach to people of color about opportunities for work or leadership in the nonprofit sector and 90 percent expressed interest in internship opportunities within the nonprofit sector (Denver Foundation, 2007). In response to these findings, the foundation established the Nonprofit Internship Program in the summer of 2007.

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In the five summers since then, the foundation has placed 70 paid interns, the majority students of color, in nonprofit organizations selected from among its Community Grants Program grantees. Internships expose students to several aspects of nonprofit organizations, including programmatic work, fundraising, and governance, and introduce interns to a community of their peers who are also interested in improving metro Denver. Interns enhance their leadership skills and gain real-world work experience. The nonprofit orga-

nizations that host interns benefit from additional staff support while expanding the diversity of their staff.

Intensive board trainings have been conducted in partnership with metro Denver chambers of commerce serving communities of color. These trainings and other related activities have resulted in linking close to 200 individuals of color with opportunities to serve on nonprofit boards in metro Denver.

Leaders

The Inclusiveness Project works with established leaders of color. Intensive board trainings have been conducted in partnership with metro Denver chambers of commerce serving communities of color. These trainings and other related activities have resulted in linking close to 200 individuals of color with opportunities to serve on nonprofit boards in metro Denver. Of these 200, about 25 percent are serving on nonprofit boards and the remaining 75 percent are connected to the nonprofit sector as donors and volunteers.

The foundation also recognized that leadership programs in metro Denver already work to connect leaders of color with community service. To determine and inform future funding and programmatic decisions, the Inclusiveness Project conducted qualitative research into the practices and outcomes of eight of these programs. The research process used “Leadership & Race: How to Develop and Support Leadership That Contributes to Racial Justice,” an Annie E. Casey Foundation publication (2010).

In this report, the authors identified nine essential practices for promoting racial equity through leadership development, including making racial justice an explicit and active commitment and promoting inclusive models of leadership that recognize leadership as a collective process. The research determined that metro Denver leadership organizations have incorporated inclusiveness topics into their work, but only two of the eight organizations create communities of leaders that support one another. All of the organizations reported that their effectiveness and impact, particularly for low-income participants, is significantly limited by budgetary concerns (Partners in Nonprofit Success, 2011).

Another finding of this study indicated the need for support for executive directors of color in the metro Denver nonprofit sector. The foundation launched an Institute for Executive Directors of Color to meet this need. The institute involves an internal partnership between the Inclusiveness Project and the foundation’s Strengthening Neighborhoods Program (a grassroots grantmaking program) to present an eight-month institute for executive directors of color. The first institute, launched in the spring of 2012, focuses on helping these leaders to develop networks, connections, and skills to serve their communities more effectively.

The study also highlighted organizations led by people of color developing leaders within their communities. The Inclusiveness Project provides small grants to these training programs to support and enhance their nonprofit and civic engagement curriculum. A recent publication from the Inclusiveness Project, “Reflections & Actions: People of Color and the Metro Denver Nonprofit Sector,” describes this institute in detail and also shares how foundation is taking action related to the impact of the leadership of people of color throughout the metro Denver community (Denver Foundation, 2012).

Donors

The Denver Foundation is committed to expanding the number of individuals of color who become donors to nonprofits. To this end, the

foundation is partnering with the Community Investment Network,¹ which fosters giving circles in communities of color nationwide. The foundation's philanthropic leadership committee made a grant to match initial contributions given by the members of Denver African-American Philanthropists: Black Men Giving With a Purpose, the first African-American men's giving circle west of the Mississippi. This groundbreaking effort is the result of collaboration among the Inclusiveness Project, the Strengthening Neighborhoods Program, and the foundation's Philanthropic Services Group, which focuses on donors and giving.

Level Two: Helping Organizations Build Inclusiveness

The foundation of the Inclusiveness Project's organizational work is helping organizations to assess and develop their inclusiveness through the use of an Inclusiveness Initiative. In 2005, the Denver Foundation and consultant Katherine Pease (2005) authored a workbook, *Inclusiveness at Work: How to Build Inclusive Nonprofit Organizations*, which details the initiative. The six-step process involves creating an inclusiveness committee, engaging in training, defining inclusiveness and creating the case for inclusiveness for the organization, completing and analyzing information gathered, completing an inclusiveness blueprint, and implementing the blueprint.²

The foundation saw the value early on of piloting the workbook with a small group of grantee organizations. In 2007 and 2010, two cohorts of organizations were selected in a competitive manner from among the grantees of the foundation's Community Grants Program. The cohorts developed an Inclusiveness Initiative over the course of two years as part of an intentional learning community. The first cohort of 11 organizations maintained its connection after the grant cycle ended and, nearly five years later, the group still meets monthly to address issues of race and

ethnicity in their organizations. They provide one another with personal and professional support as they work on issues such as hiring, program development, fundraising, and governance.

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Responding to an increasing level of requests, the director of the Inclusiveness Project consults with organizations to help them address inclusiveness issues. In addition, the foundation recognized the key role that consultants play in the development of organizational inclusiveness and developed a consultants' consortium, offering training in the six-step process outlined in "Inclusiveness at Work" while building a community of consultants who can share best practices on how to build inclusiveness.

Level Three: Spreading the Word – Sectorwide Outreach

Conferences and Speakers

The Inclusiveness Project recognizes that its limited resources can influence only a small number of individuals and organizations within and surrounding the nonprofit sector. Therefore, the project uses strategic communications and programming practices to share its work broadly. These efforts include periodic conferences on inclusiveness and diversity that draw several

¹ <http://www.thecommunityinvestment.org/>

² The steps are subdivided into 18 modules. "Inclusiveness at Work" includes 218 pages of narrative, 220 pages of worksheets, and 35 pages of appendices. In recent years, the complete content of the workbook has been reconfigured for easy accessibility and updating on the nonprofitinclusiveness.org website.

hundred attendees from throughout the state. The conferences offer a wide range of training and education sessions, such as “Marketing and Outreach to Communities of Color” and “Privilege and Power.” The Inclusiveness Project maintains a multifaceted website³ that receives thousands of visitors each month and an e-marketing platform that provides regular communication to a mailing list of several thousand metro-area residents.

Colorado Funders for Inclusiveness and Equity serves as a resource to local funders as they challenge their thinking and consider implementing changes within their own organizations regarding inclusiveness and equity. Second, the group serves as a support network for members as they educate themselves about inclusiveness, equity, diversity, and anti-oppression practices.

To heighten awareness, the Inclusiveness Project has brought national speakers to metro Denver to speak on inclusiveness and equity. Speakers have included Michelle Alexander, author of *The New Jim Crow*; Rose Brewer, author of *The Color of Wealth*; and John A. Powell from the Haas Diversity Research Center at the University of California, Berkeley. In addition, the director of the Inclusiveness Project and the foundation’s vice president for philanthropic partnerships speak at local and national conferences about the value of inclusiveness and practices that promote it, including a recent session on building inclusive boards of directors for community foundations.

³ www.nonprofitinclusiveness.org

Publications

The Inclusiveness Project publishes its research activities and disseminates these widely. A 2009 publication focused on the four imperatives for building inclusiveness: mission, demographic, equity, and business. For each of these imperatives, the publication “Why Inclusiveness?” provides data supporting the value of developing inclusive practices. Foundation staff developed the publication in response to requests from nonprofits and funders for a tool to define inclusiveness and its benefits. The publication assists organizations in making the case for investing time and effort in inclusiveness work, and summarizes key findings from the foundation’s research into the link between inclusiveness and organizational effectiveness. This publication is in its second printing and has been downloaded several hundred times from the website (Denver Foundation, 2011).

Funders

Another sector-wide project focuses on encouraging funders to consider the value of inclusiveness. In 2009, the Inclusiveness Project helped launch Colorado Funders for Inclusiveness and Equity (COFIE), a peer network of local funders. The group believes in building on best practices in inclusiveness to increase the effectiveness of philanthropy.

The group has two purposes. First, it serves as a resource to local funders as they challenge their thinking and consider implementing changes within their own organizations regarding inclusiveness and equity. Second, the group serves as a support network for members as they educate themselves about inclusiveness, equity, diversity, and anti-oppression practices.

The Results: How the Inclusiveness Project Makes a Difference

The Denver Foundation has invested in evaluating the activities and impact of the Inclusiveness Project since its inception. The foundation’s board expressed particular interest in understanding the link between inclusiveness and organizational effectiveness. The foundation engaged OMNI Institute to evaluate the first cohort of organizations to work together in a learning community

through the six-step process outlined in “Inclusiveness at Work.”

The evaluation was designed to:

1. document and examine the inclusiveness process that unfolded as cohort organizations applied the “Inclusiveness at Work” framework and activities to their organizations,
2. assess the ways in which the organizations became more inclusive over time, and
3. explore potential outcomes of the inclusiveness process for nonprofit effectiveness.

The evaluation employed a multiple-case, mixed-method, longitudinal design. The design utilized both quantitative (survey) and qualitative (focus group and field observation) methods to complement one another and answer a wide range of evaluation questions that were primarily exploratory and descriptive. It also permitted data collection at multiple points over the two-year period and a comparison of findings across multiple agencies.

Through longitudinal data collection efforts, the cohort organizations typically reported increased inclusiveness in:

- mission and organizational values,
- boards of directors,
- personnel,
- organizational culture, and
- programs and constituents.

These same data-collection efforts also found evidence that the organizations became more effective as a result of inclusiveness work in:

- program delivery,
- public relations,

- community collaboration,
- board governance, and
- organizational culture.

There were a number of other positive effects of the inclusiveness process that participants identified for their organizations: Ten of the 11 organizations found that as a result of their participation they enjoyed a more positive work environment and tolerant workplace.

There were a number of other positive effects of the inclusiveness process that participants identified for their organizations:

- Ten of the 11 organizations found that as a result of their participation they enjoyed a more positive work environment and tolerant workplace. A number of other organizations reported greater staff cohesion and more effective communication. Other experiences included a renewed sense of mission, greater work satisfaction, and a “safer” or “more relaxed” work environment for staff from racial and ethnic minority groups.
- The organizations also indicated that they had more effective personnel and board recruitment practices. This included a greater emphasis on hiring staff or recruiting board members who shared in the organization’s inclusiveness values, as well as a greater emphasis on the racial and ethnic diversity of organizational leadership and boards.

TABLE 1

Nonprofit involvement	Interns reporting past involvement (pre-interview)	Interns reporting intended involvement (pre-interview)	Interns reporting intended involvement (post-survey)*
Volunteer time	100%	100%	92%
Donate money	47%	94%	85%
Donate items	94%	94%	100%
Be(en) an employee	41%	76%	85%
Be(en) a board member	5%	65%	77%

- All 11 organizations reported that as a result of inclusiveness work their agencies were able to more effectively serve their clients. The organizations described gathering and addressing client feedback as a part of the process, as well as placing a greater emphasis on the cultural responsiveness of programming and individual services.

The evaluation also revealed that there were limited advancements made in changing one indicator of nonprofit inclusiveness over the two-year period: the overall racial and ethnic compositions of participating organizations. Some agencies made strides in increasing the number of staff of color and increasing the overall percentage of staff positions filled by staff of color. Others increased the number of staff of color, but the overall staff size grew and the growth in new staff hired was disproportionately white. Nevertheless, a number of the organizations stated that they felt their organizations laid important groundwork for hiring of staff of color, including significant changes in the work environment and personnel practices that would improve recruitment and retention of staff of color (OMNI Institute, 2008).

These findings, combined with the “Report from the Pipeline” survey results described above (Denver Foundation, 2007), informed the creation of the Nonprofit Internship Program, which seeks to place interns from backgrounds under-represented in the nonprofit sector and to help nonprofits develop their inclusive practices and comfort with diverse staff. The evaluation of the Nonprofit Internship Program offers important

findings. The evaluation included interviewing interns before the internship, surveying both interns and the organizations in which they served after the internship, and conducting focus groups with both the interns and organizations at the conclusion of the internship. The purpose of the evaluation was to examine whether the internship achieved its goals. Interns’ and their supervisors’ perceptions of the application process were also assessed, along with overall satisfaction with the program.

The 2011 evaluation of 17 interns placed at 15 organizations determined that the internship increased the intention of the interns to deepen their involvement in the sector in the future, particularly as staff and board members. (See Table 1.) During the focus group session, interns elaborated on their intent to be involved in the nonprofit sector. This internship validated some interns’ desire to work in the nonprofit sector; they were inspired by working in rigorous and passionate environments and the experience clarified their ideas about the type of nonprofit organization and the position to which they would be best suited.

Other interns felt less certain about their fit with the nonprofit sector and indicated a preference for volunteering their time rather than being directly employed by nonprofits. These interns were concerned about making money, feeling personally satisfied with their job, and making a difference in the community. Some interns found this experience to be challenging because of the pressure and responsibility of nonprofit employ-

TABLE 2

Acceptance of diversity	N	Pre-interview mean	Post-survey mean
I can work with someone who has different opinions than mine.	13	3.54	3.54
I think it is important to respect people who are different from me.	13	3.85	3.92
I stand up for myself without putting others down.	13	3.69	3.46
I enjoy being part of a team.	13	3.46	3.69
It bothers me if a supervisor or a co-worker is different from me.	13	1.54	1.54
I can learn a lot from people with backgrounds and experiences that are different from mine.	13	3.31	3.85*
I can learn a lot from people who are much older than me.	13	3.69	4.00*

*Indicates statistically significant change ($p < 0.05$)

ees combined with lack of praise or adequate compensation. Regardless, responses reflected that all interns would like to continue their involvement in some capacity.

The internship also had an impact on interns' acceptance of diversity. (See Table 2.) Significant increases were found in interns' agreement with the following statements: "I can learn a lot from people with backgrounds and experiences that are different from mine" and "I can learn a lot from people who are much older than me."

While organizations hosting interns are selected, in part, for their existing commitment to inclusiveness, host organizations reported that the internship increased their capacity for inclusiveness work. Interns served on inclusiveness committees, facilitated the inclusion of youth in programming, and provided suggestions for being inclusive of more diverse populations. Supervisors appreciated that interns promoted inclusiveness and the ability of interns to connect with the populations being served made supervisors more aware of the importance of inclusiveness for the benefit of their clients. Supervisors were made more aware of cultural differences, the importance of sharing cultural and linguistic backgrounds with clients, and the need to be more accommodating with their target populations. As a result, supervisors found that the internship added to their organizations' awareness or consid-

eration of diversity and inclusion. While most of the organizations already had a high awareness of diversity and the need for inclusiveness, supervisors gained the understanding that inclusiveness is an ongoing effort that is continually changing (OMNI Institute, 2011b).

While the Inclusiveness Project has conducted evaluations of its specific programmatic offerings, The Denver Foundation seeks to determine the cumulative results of its ongoing efforts to build inclusiveness in metro Denver. Thus, the Inclusiveness Project commissioned a benchmark study of inclusiveness in the metro Denver nonprofit sector, particularly among the grantees of the foundation itself. The Denver Foundation's Survey of Nonprofit Inclusiveness was administered online in 2010, with the goal of resurveying grantees in three to five years to assess changes in nonprofit inclusiveness. The survey focused on three primary areas regarding inclusiveness in the metro Denver nonprofit sector:

1. Current nonprofit interest and engagement in inclusiveness work.
2. Use of the inclusiveness resources offered by the foundation.
3. Sector strengths and challenges regarding inclusiveness.

The vast majority of participants attributed organizational motivation for inclusiveness work (informal or formal) to their organizations' missions (79 percent) and overarching values of equity and fairness (81 percent); less than a quarter reported motivations related to financial or business interests.

The survey was completed by 295 participants, representing nonprofit leadership from a wide range of foundation grantee organizations throughout metro Denver. The relatively high response rate (61 percent) indicated that participants were comfortable with the content and interested in this newly developed survey.

Baseline findings suggested that there is fairly broad interest in inclusiveness in the metro Denver nonprofit sector and that there are at least informal practices that support or sponsor activities related to racial and ethnic diversity:

- The vast majority of participating organizations (92 percent) indicated interest in future work to become more racially and ethnically diverse and inclusive; 86 percent of organizations reported supporting some type of diversity and inclusiveness activities.
- Fewer organizations (approximately 50 percent) reported having formal diversity/inclusiveness activities or initiatives. Organizations reporting formal initiatives were statistically more likely than organizations without them to have higher ratings on inclusive organizational practices and workplace environments.

- The vast majority of participants attributed organizational motivation for inclusiveness work (informal or formal) to their organizations' missions (79 percent) and overarching values of equity and fairness (81 percent); less than a quarter reported motivations related to financial or business interests.

The survey examined organizational strengths and challenges related to inclusiveness. In general, leaders tended to rate their organizations highly in terms of setting and upholding inclusiveness values and standards. Nonetheless, survey items assessing how inclusiveness values are translated into practice (i.e., the implementation of specific, concrete activities), revealed some key areas for potential growth in organizational practices. The majority of leaders reported:⁴

- Their organizations set clear expectations regarding inclusiveness in the workplace (72 percent).
- Staff is reasonably knowledgeable about race and ethnicity issues and their impact on daily work (81 percent).
- The board is supportive of organizational diversity and inclusiveness initiatives (84 percent).

The areas of concrete inclusiveness practices that were among the lowest-rated items in the survey are potential targets for foundation inclusiveness programming moving forward. Further, while many leaders may have perceived their organizations as effective in promoting inclusiveness values, this had not necessarily translated into racial and ethnic diversification in participating organizations. Although this is a clear area of challenge for participating organizations, it is important to note that the sample for this survey effort represents only a subset of the larger metro Denver nonprofit community:

- The representation of people of color in leadership positions among respondents ranged from 15 percent to 20 percent. Nearly 34 percent of

⁴ Percentages indicate leaders who either agreed or strongly agreed with related survey items.

the metro area’s population are people of color, according to 2010 U.S. Census data.

- Overall, the representation of people of color among organizational staff as a whole was slightly higher than among leadership positions.
- One-quarter of organizations reported no staff of color at all.

These findings reveal two key areas that the Inclusiveness Project will consider as it continues to refine its strategic focus:

1. The gap between organizations that reported interest in inclusiveness work versus those that have formalized this work through an internal inclusiveness initiative.
2. The need to assess changes in inclusiveness practices within the sector over time. Perceived strengths and challenges as well as the actual representation of people of color within the sector are key indicators of change to be monitored in the future (OMNI Institute, 2011a).

Subsequent administrations of The Denver Foundation’s Survey of Nonprofit Inclusiveness will allow the Inclusiveness Project committee and the foundation’s staff and board to assess changes among these areas over time.

Beyond the Choir: Impacts Through the Community and With the Foundation

The 10-year focus of The Denver Foundation on expanding inclusiveness in the nonprofit sector has been associated with a number of concurrent effects in the metro Denver community. Because the foundation has elevated the issue of inclusiveness in a time of dramatically shifting demographics, many forces have converged to encourage additional efforts on inclusiveness in the broader nonprofit sector. The development and operation of the Inclusiveness Project has also called on the foundation itself to develop its own organizational inclusiveness.

The Colorado funding community has long used a tool called the Colorado Common Grant Application (CGA). In 2008, the funding community and numerous nonprofit partners gathered to revise the CGA. The revised version contains – for the first time – a question specifically related to inclusiveness: “Describe how the organization strives to be inclusive in its programs, staff, board, and volunteers, and describe the progress to date.” The widely referenced User’s Guide states, “Being inclusive helps organizations be more responsive to those they seek to serve and more effective at creating and delivering relevant and successful programs. Inclusiveness also leads to a broader and richer pool of board, staff, and volunteers.”

The foundation’s Inclusiveness Project is noted as a resource. In 2010, Colorado Funders for Inclusiveness and Equity hosted a program to talk frankly about how program officers were assessing applicant responses to this question and to share best practices.

In addition to this sector-wide shift, inclusiveness practices are influencing specific areas of community focus. Nine years ago, a group of funders called Advancing Colorado’s Mental Health Care (ACMHC) gathered to examine the status of mental health care in Colorado. The Denver Foundation staff leader involved in the project was also involved in the inception of the Inclusiveness Project. She ensured that ACMHC’s initial report, “The Status of Mental Health Care in Colorado,” contained information on mental health outcomes for people of color and other marginalized groups, despite the fact that this information was not part of the initial research scope. When the project concluded with an update to the report, all of the funding partners required that such outcomes be included in the scope of the research, and these data were essential to the release of “The Status of Behavioral Health Care in Colorado” (Triwest Group, 2011).

While specific movement to reduce the societal inequities mentioned at the beginning of this article will take considerably more than 10 years, the metro Denver nonprofit sector is seeing numerous pockets of improvement within individual

Denver African-American Philanthropists: Black Men Giving With a Purpose

Created in May 2012, Denver African-American Philanthropists is comprised of nearly two dozen men from all walks of life, including college students, educators, businessmen, blue-collar workers, and elected officials. They each contribute at least \$365 a year to the fund. With guidance from The Denver Foundation, they are working to determine strategic areas of grantmaking this year.

None consider themselves wealthy, and they understand that the impact of their grantmaking will take time to build. But they agree that critical components of their impact are volunteerism, community engagement, and their unique ability to demonstrate a new face of philanthropy. Members of the group were part of a standing-room-only panel discussion on giving circles at the 2012 Council on Foundations Community Foundations Conference. They have volunteered for the Black Male Initiative Summit at University of Denver and played a role in Denver's revitalization efforts. The group has also been featured in local and national media, spurring an informational session with more than 30 other people of color interested in philanthropy.

Project PAVE: Impact and Capacity Building Through Inclusiveness

When Mike Johnson became executive director of Project PAVE, there were concerns about morale and fears for the organization's future. The nonprofit, which offers education and crisis management for victims of domestic violence, teen-dating violence, and child abuse in low-income Denver communities, was in dire financial straits.

Despite reservations on the part of the foundation's board, Project PAVE became one of 11 grantee organizations in The Denver Foundation's inclusiveness learning cohort. Within two years, Johnson says, Project PAVE realized far-reaching results as a result of its inclusiveness work. The nonprofit went from \$120,000 in the red in June 2006 to \$140,000 in the black in December 2007.

The organization worked to get youth involved in the development and delivery of programs, and employs 14 high school students part time to develop curriculum, lead groups, and conduct parent-teacher conferences. In 2008, Project PAVE was recognized by the Denver Metro Chamber of Commerce as Nonprofit of the Year.

programs. (See sidebars on the Denver African-American Philanthropists and Project PAVE.)

Within the foundation itself, the values and practices of the Inclusiveness Project have influenced all aspects of its operations. The board codified inclusiveness as a core value of the foundation in the 2008 strategic plan, and affirmed this in the 2012 strategic plan. This plays out at the foundation in a number of ways. On the diversity front, it is significantly diverse in many ways on the board and staff levels. The board has been led by women and leaders of color almost exclusively during the last 15 years, and is majority people of color. The staff of 38 is close to 50 percent minority, including 50 percent of the management team.

The foundation established an internal inclusiveness committee in 2003 and staff members from all departments, as well as a member of the board, serve on the committee. It has helped the foundation to develop a blueprint for inclusiveness as described in "Inclusiveness at Work," and monitors the blueprints of each department annually. Inclusiveness is part of the annual performance review for each department vice president.

One of the key outcomes of inclusive practice at the foundation has been the development of the philanthropic leadership committee. This committee is made up of voting members including trustees, staff members from all five departments, and former trustees. The committee addresses community leadership issues and the intersection of these issues with race and ethnicity is often highlighted.

As a result of the many ways in which inclusiveness is embedded into the internal and external work of the foundation, the 2012 strategic plan called for the values of the Inclusiveness Project, along with Strengthening Neighborhoods, to influence all of the foundation's community and partner objectives for at least the next 10 years.

Contributors to Success

The development and continuing success of the

Inclusiveness Project within the Denver Foundation would not be possible without three key elements. First and foremost, the foundation's trustees and president are enthusiastic and involved participants in the work of inclusiveness. Since the project's inception, the chairperson of the Inclusiveness Project committee has been a member of the board and several additional trustees have served on the committee.

Second, the foundation has been fortunate to gain funding from key national and local partners, including the Ford, W.K. Kellogg, and Gill foundations. Ford and Kellogg made the funding of the grantee cohorts possible, Ford provided critical initial funding for the Nonprofit Internship Program, and Kellogg funded numerous levels of program evaluation.

Finally, the cross-departmental support offered to the Inclusiveness Project from every aspect of the foundation, including the regular involvement of communications and program staff in the project's operations, have been essential.

Eighty-seven years after its founding, The Denver Foundation has been irrevocably transformed by inclusiveness work as it works to serve an increasingly diverse community with a dedication to equity. The foundation aspires to share this process of transformation with nonprofit and foundation leaders in metro Denver and throughout the United States as they seek to serve their changing communities.

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