FACILITATING ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE

LESSONS FROM NONPROFIT PARTICIPATION IN **INCLUSION**BOSTON

A report on enacting organizational change towards greater diversity, equity, and inclusion in the workplace.

eliminating racism
empowering women

yw
boston

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thank you to the many organizations that have participated in InclusionBoston as part of their diversity, equity, and inclusion journey. In particular, we want to thank the ten organizations featured in this report for their hard work and dedication, as well as the Boston Foundation's generous funding of their participation.

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> "Leadership development programs may help, but they will not alone make a marked difference. A new approach is needed, one that targets cultural change within organizations and the sector.
>
> - Beth Chandler, President & CEO, YW Boston

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Special thanks to the Boston Foundation, who made the participation of these ten organizations possible.

INTRODUCTION

The goal of this paper is to provide nonprofit leadership, nonprofit staff, funders, and other practitioners with tools, learnings, and context through which they can begin or deepen their diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) work. Specifically, this paper introduces the InclusionBoston model and explores the impact of this model on racial DEI within nonprofit organizations in the Greater Boston area. This paper is in response to the relaunch of InclusionBoston (formerly Dialogues on Race and Ethnicity) as a long-term engagement between YW Boston staff and each organization, with a continued emphasis on individual change and a renewed emphasis on organizational change. This paper reflects the implementation of the model at ten nonprofit organizations, generously funded by the Boston Foundation.

eliminating racism empowering women

As the first YWCA in the nation, YW Boston has been at the forefront of advancing equity for over 150 years. Through our DEI services as well as through our advocacy work and youth programming, we help individuals and organizations (nonprofits, government agencies, schools, and corporations) change policies, practices, attitudes, and behaviors with a goal of creating more inclusive environments.

A 2017 McKinsey report[1] found that many workplaces "overlook the realities of women of color, who face the greatest obstacles and receive the least support. When companies take a one-size-fits-all approach in advancing women, **women of color end up underserved and left behind**." YW Boston has consistently led equity and opportunity efforts for women, people of color, and particularly women of color.

The Boston Foundation, Greater Boston's community foundation, seeks to bring the collective power of our region's people and resources together to drive real change. Established in 1915, it is one of the largest community foundations in the nation—with net assets of $1.3 billion. In 2019, the Foundation received $151 million in contributions and the Foundation and its donors paid $153 million in grants to nonprofit organizations. The Foundation has many partners, including its donors, who have established more than 1,000 separate charitable funds for the general benefit of the community or for special purposes. With support from the Annual Campaign for Civic Leadership, the Foundation also facilitates public discourse and action, commissions research into the most critical issues of our time and advocates for public policy that advances opportunity for everyone. The Philanthropic Initiative (TPI), a consulting unit of the Foundation, designs and implements customized philanthropic strategies for families, foundations and corporations around the globe. To learn more about the Foundation and its work, visit TBF.org.

For years, the nonprofit sector has grappled with a lack of diversity in leadership positions. Though many of the people served by nonprofit organizations are people of color, the leadership doesn't reflect that. The Building Movement Project's 2017 *Race to Lead* report shows that the percentage of people of color (POC) in executive director/CEO roles has remained under 20 percent for the last 15 years.[2] Yet, 50% of POC aspire to leadership positions compared to 40% of their White counterparts.[3]

So what gets in the way of people of color leading nonprofit organizations? At YW Boston, we believe that part of the answer lies in structural challenges that exist within organizations. Often the organizational culture creates barriers for people of color to ascend to leadership positions. For far too long, it was believed that people of color lacked the ambition and skills to lead organizations. However, the *Race to Lead* report shows that people of color do not lack the skills and training to lead, but that the nonprofit sector lacks the ability to address the practices and biases that prevent those governing such organizations to hire more leaders of color.

> The concept of **culture** has been referred to as the "personality" of an organization. It can be defined as a set of shared assumptions that guide what happens in organizations by defining appropriate behavior for various situations (Ravasi & Schultz, 2006) and is reinforced by policies and practices, that exist within nonprofit organizations (and other sectors as well).[4]

We believe that there is enough evidence to show that if the nonprofit sector is truly committed to increasing racial diversity in leadership positions, then it must find ways to support cultural change within the sector. Leadership development programs may help, but as over twenty years of such programming shows, they will not alone make a marked difference. **A new approach is needed, one that targets cultural change within organizations and the sector.**

To the Boston Foundation, thank you for believing in this approach and supporting InclusionBoston within ten organizations. To participant organizations, thank you for investing in this work and sharing your stories in this paper. To other organizations and funders, we hope that this report will serve as an inspiration and guide to changing the face of nonprofit leadership in Boston and beyond.

Beth Chandler
President & CEO, YW Boston

Despite our region's changing demographics, the nonprofit sector continues to face a persistent racial leadership gap. According to the 2017 *Opportunity in Change*[5] report, 85% of Greater Boston leaders identify as White, in stark contrast to data from the 2019 *Changing Faces of Greater Boston*[6] report, which demonstrates that people of color represent 32% of the Greater Boston's and 56% of Boston's population.

This disparity is problematic for at least three reasons. First, as author and criminal justice reform champion Bryan Stevenson reminds us, those with firsthand experience of these challenges are the ones who can develop the best solutions. Second, as the disability justice movement teaches us, "nothing about us without us" should be the guiding principle of our work. Last, the "business case" for representative leadership is clear as we can see from published analyses—including from McKinsey, Harvard Business Review, and Forbes—that diverse teams drive innovation and lead to better decision-making. Although racial equity is both a moral and business imperative for our sector, if we are not intentional about disrupting the biases, practices, and policies that reinforce the racial leadership gap, we can only expect more of the same.

Given the Boston Foundation's position as Greater Boston's community foundation and one of the largest grantmakers in the region, we have a unique role to play in supporting the effectiveness of this nonprofit ecosystem and have long believed that representative, connected, and diverse leadership is the key to a strong nonprofit sector. Over the last few years, through our Nonprofit Effectiveness strategy, we have made an explicit commitment to identifying, developing, and supporting efforts that advance racial equity in order to help nonprofit staff and board leadership build the confidence, skills, and trust to lead this work within their own organizations and beyond.

Within and beyond Boston, it is critical for funders to leverage our position and resources and work together to build the sector's capacity to dismantle the implicit and structural barriers that are perpetuating the racial leadership gap. Together we can center and prioritize racial equity through our funding and support of programs like InclusionBoston that teach us how to bring about the culture change needed within organizations and the sector to close the racial leadership gap.

I am so grateful for YW Boston's leadership and for the courage and commitment of the nonprofit organizations that participated in this journey and so generously shared their experiences with us. The task before us can at times seem unsurmountable but, as you will see in the pages that follow, by working together progress is possible.

Jennifer W. Aronson
Associate Vice President for Programs, The Boston Foundation

[2] Kunreuther, F., Thomas-Breitfeld, S., *Race to Lead: Confronting the Nonprofit Racial Leadership Gap*, Building Movement Project, 2017. https://racetolead.org/race-to-lead/
[3] Ibid.
[4] Ravasi, D., Schultz, M., *Responding to Organizational Threats: Exploring the Role of Organizational Culture*, The Academy of Management Journal, Jun., 2006.

[5] Third Sector New England, Boston Foundation. *Opportunity in Change: Preparing Boston for Leader Transitions and New Models of Nonprofit Leadership*, 2017.
[6] Boston Indicators, The Boston Foundation, UMass Boston, and the UMass Donahue Institute. *Changing Faces of Greater Boston*, 2019.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Many nonprofits are determined to create racial and gender equity within their organizations. InclusionBoston can turn determination into results. Though the process has its challenges, as it should, the rewards are worthwhile. This report describes the InclusionBoston model and explores its impact on organizational change and ultimately racial diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) within ten nonprofits.

The Problem

Gender and racial disparities still pervade workplaces. National trends reveal that women, people of color, and especially women of color are underrepresented in leadership roles. Boston is no exception to these national trends. Within the Boston area, fewer than 1 in 50 senior managers are Black[7], and while Boston's 10 largest law firms collectively have more than 1,000 partners, only 8 are Black[8]. The nonprofit sector does not fare much better. People of color have filled under 20% of executive director and CEO roles in the nonprofit sector for the past 15 years.[9]

Workplace inequity is both harmful to employees and inefficient for employers. As an increasing number of staff leave their workplaces to search for fairer treatment, employers are left with the high cost of turnover. On the other hand, research has shown that diverse and inclusive teams lead to greater work performance.[10]

InclusionBoston as a Solution

YW Boston's InclusionBoston engages organizations in over a year of diversity, equity, and inclusion work, starting with ten hours of structured dialogue sessions around race and ethnicity. Participants explore how race has impacted them, how it impacts others, and how issues of racial inequity are showing up in their organizations. Using the knowledge and trust they build through the dialogue sessions, participants create an action plan to combat inequities in their organization. YW Boston helps to implement the action plan and uses an assessment tool to measure growth in individual and organizational change. InclusionBoston stands out as a uniquely effective model for several reasons:

- InclusionBoston intervenes at all levels necessary for change: individual (micro), interpersonal (meso), and institutional (macro).

- Dialogue series develop shared knowledge, trust, and skills in all participants, which are prerequisites to creating change within an organization.

- Follow up processes ensure action is not just planned, but occurs. This helps organizations accomplish tasks quickly and create momentum for future work.

[7] *For blacks in Boston, a power outage*, The Boston Globe, December 2017. https://apps.bostonglobe.com/spotlight/boston-racism-image-reality/series/power/
[8] Ibid.
[9] Kunreuther, F., Thomas-Breitfeld, S., *Race to Lead: Confronting the Nonprofit Racial Leadership Gap*, Building Movement Project, 2017. https://racetolead.org/race-to-lead/
[10] Bourke, J., Dillon B., *Waiter, is that inclusion in my soup? A new recipe to improve business performance*, May 2013. https://www2.deloitte.com/content/dam/Deloitte/au/Documents/human-capital/deloitte-au-hc-diversity-inclusion-soup-0513.pdf

YW Boston and the Boston Foundation in Partnership

Through the generous support of the Boston Foundation, YW Boston ran its InclusionBoston series with ten nonprofit organizations in the Greater Boston area:

- Bottom Line

- Citizen Schools

- Friends of the Children

- Health Care For All

- Health Leads

- Massachusetts Association of Community Development Corporations (MACDC)

- Massachusetts Nonprofit Network (MNN)

- Parenting Journey

- RAW Art Works

- United South End Settlements (USES)

The ten organizations consisted of 207 individuals between the ages of 24 and 68. Most participants self-identified as White (52%), women (67%), and residing outside of Boston (56%). Over half (56%) were in a leadership or management role. Despite having different missions, demographics, and reasons for engaging in InclusionBoston, all ten organizations cared about racial equity and wanted to continue and expand DEI learning.

The pathway to change was not easy for participating organizations. Each faced hurdles along the way. Some common challenges faced by organizations in the Boston Foundation-funded cohort included:

- Staff and leadership turnover

- Mitigating disparate levels of staff interest, participation, and preexisting knowledge

- Completing action steps with limited time, money, and support

Navigating through and around the challenges, the organizations in the cohort took action in several exciting ways:

- Creating racial affinity groups

- Establishing learning libraries—or compilations of educational articles, podcasts, videos, and other media on equity

- Revising hiring practices

- Reexamining promotion plans

- Establishing an equity steering committee

- Encouraging informal mentorship opportunities for staff of color

At the time of publishing of this paper, some organizations in the cohort have yet to complete their year of work with YW Boston. Yet, even in a short amount of time, individual participants and their organizations showed growth in the following ways:

- Aligning on language, knowledge, and attitudes on the importance and challenges of DEI work

- Increasing awareness about the need to develop skills to communicate across difference

- Developing action plans and integrating them with overall strategic plans

- Deciding to continue investing in equity

We are proud of the progress the organizations made. Organizational growth requires dedication, trust, and thoughtfulness. Though the work is not always easy, the participants showed passion and curiosity that fueled deeper learning.

Call to Action

DEI work is imperative, and there is much more to accomplish. Racism is interwoven in our citywide structures, organizations, and cognition. Learning about racism and unlearning previously held notions and biases is a continuous process. Every individual has more learning to do, despite their backgrounds and experiences. This is work that all nonprofits can and should engage in, whether their staffs are predominantly White or racially diverse. Internal DEI work is central to a nonprofit's success and impact.

Below and on the next page are some recommended actions to help advance DEI work. These recommendations are not instant fixes, but rather components of a long-term commitment to advancing DEI within organizations.

FOR NONPROFIT LEADERS

- Rise to staff and community expectations by doing the work to disrupt your own biases and participating in leadership development opportunities

- Build organizational structures for change

- Engage influential staff in DEI efforts

- Ensure that participants from across different identities and organizational roles participate in DEI work

- Consider DEI in every opportunity, challenge, and process

- Carve out consistent, protected time for staff to engage in DEI work

- Communicate, communicate, communicate—and document

- Set incremental goals and acknowledge that progress will take time

FOR DEI PROFESSIONALS

- Collect data and measure change

- Explore practices from diverse disciplines

- Bridge gaps in DEI knowledge and skills for both White people and people of color

FOR FUNDERS

- Engage in personal growth to better understand where to distribute funds and support equity and inclusion

- Invest in research and innovation into both DEI practices and measurement tools

- Nudge nonprofits forward

- Fund sustainable, long-term change that can disrupt oppressive systems at their root

FOR EVERYONE

- Recognize your perceived intersectional identity and the advantages and disadvantages you have

- Acknowledge, engage, and work through emotions that arise when talking about race

- Identify areas for personal growth

The case studies enclosed in this report provide a first-hand account of organizations' challenges and triumphs in their DEI work. We hope that, by reading them, you will identify opportunities and next steps for how your organization can advance its own DEI work. YW Boston will continue to offer InclusionBoston and research how our offerings can be improved to further meet the needs of organizations embarking on and deepening this work.

THE PROBLEM

A WEB OF EXCLUSION IN THE WORKPLACE

A web of racial and gendered exclusion pervades both our society and the organizations operating within it. These systems, through adverse policies, practices, behaviors, and attitudes have negative impacts on many groups, especially women, people of color, and women of color, which prevent them from being included at every level in institutions—particularly leadership. A plethora of data highlights the issue.

National Trends

- Women are underrepresented in leadership positions across all fields and sectors including academia, nonprofits, politics, and business. This is despite long-term and sustained demographic shifts in the US population.[12]

- Underrepresentation is more acute for women of color. Black women are 3x more likely than white women to aspire to leadership roles, and half as likely to get one.[13]

- Six percent of SP500 CEOs are women. Out of the Fortune 500 today, women CEOs number just 30, down from 33 a year ago.[14]

- There is a gendered and racialized pay gap. Compared to White men, Black, Native, and Latina women only make 62, 58 and 54 cents respectively on the dollar. Asian women on average make 90 cents, and White women make 76 cents.[15]

- Resumes with "Black sounding names" are less likely to get interview callbacks.[16]

Close to Home: Inequities in Boston

- Women are more likely to attain leadership in the social sector. However, in MA, only 21 out of 151 organizations had a board with at least 50% women.[17]

- *The Boston Globe* Spotlight Team's 2017 series on race in Boston revealed many startling realities. For example, fewer than 1 in 50 senior managers at Boston-area companies are Black.[18]

- Boston's top 10 largest law firms collectively have more than 1,000 partners while only 8 are Black.[19]

[12] *Women in the Workplace,* LeanIn.Org and McKinsey & Company, 2017. https://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/gender-equality/women-in-the-workplace-2017
[13] Hewlett, S. A., Green, T. *Black women ready to lead.* Center for Talent Innovation, Center for Talent Innovation, April 2015. https://www.talentinnovation.org/_private/assets/BlackWomenReadyToLead_ExecSumm-CTI.pdf
[14] *List: Women CEOs of the S&P 500,* Catalyst. https://www.catalyst.org/research/women-ceos-of-the-sp-500/
[15] *America's Women and the Wage Gap,* National Partnership For Women and Families, March 2020. https://www.nationalpartnership.org/our-work/resources/economic-justice/fair-pay/americas-women-and-the-wage-gap.pdf
[16] Bertrand, M., Mullainathan, S. *Are Emily and Greg More Employable than Lakisha and Jamal? A Field Experiment on Labor Market Discrimination,* American Economic Review, September 2004. https://pubs.aeaweb.org/doi/pdfplus/10.1257/0002828042002561
[17] *Stability Isn't Progress: The 2015 Census of Women Directors and Chief Executives of Massachusetts' Largest Nonprofit Organizations,* The Boston Club, 2015.
[18] *For blacks in Boston, a power outage,* The Boston Globe, December 2017. https://apps.bostonglobe.com/spotlight/boston-racism-image-reality/series/power/
[19] Ibid.

Why this Matters

- By 2050, there will be no racial or ethnic majority in the United States.[20]

- Employees who experience bias (typically young professionals of color) are 3 times more likely to quit their jobs than those that do not perceive bias.[21] This costs employers $30.5 billion annually.[22]

- Unfair treatment is cited as a turnover factor almost twice as much as a better job offer.[23]

- 67% of job seekers cite workplace diversity as important to them.[24]

- Contrary to myth, women are not leaving the workforce to focus on family. Women and men[25] leave their jobs at a similar rate and 81% of women who plan to leave their organization plan to stay in the workforce.[26]

- Greater board diversity leads to lower volatility and better performance.[27]

While nonprofits are driven by different motives than for-profit companies, if revenue is seen as a proxy for performance, the following data points can further illuminate why this matters:

- Companies with inclusive talent practices generate up to 30% higher revenue per employee.[28]

- Companies in the top quartile for gender diversity are 21% more likely to outperform those in the bottom quartile.[29]

- Those in the top quartile for racial diversity are 33% more likely to outperform their peers.[30]

[20] *The Changing Face of America, 1965-2065,* Pew Research Center, January 2016. https://www.pewresearch.org/ft_16-01-25_nextamerica_fig2_1_495px
[21] Hewell, S., Rashid, R., Sherbin, L., *Disrupt Bias, Drive Value,* Center for Talent Innovation, 2017. https://www.talentinnovation.org/_private/assets/DisruptBias-DriveValue_Infographic-CTI.pdf
[22] *How Millennials Want to Work and Live,* Gallup, 2016. https://www.gallup.com/workplace/238073/millennials-work-live.aspx
[23] *Tech Leavers Study,* The Kapor Center, 2017. https://www.kaporcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/KAPOR_Tech-Leavers-Executive-Summary-FINAL-4-27-17.pdf
[24] Bourke, J., Dillon B., *The diversity and inclusion revolution: Eight powerful truths,* Deloitte, January 2018. https://www2.deloitte.com/us/en/insights/deloitte-review/issue-22/diversity-and-inclusion-at-work-eight-powerful-truths.html
[25] Data for non-gender conforming people is not currently available.
[26] *Women in the Workplace,* LeanIn.Org and McKinsey & Company, 2018. https://leanin.org/women-in-the-workplace-report-2018/men-still-outnumber-women-at-every-level
[27] Chanavat, A., Ramsden, K., *Climb to The Top - Tracking Gender Diversity on Corporate Boards,* Thomson Reuters, October 2014. https://www.thomsonreuters.com/en/press-releases/2014/corporate-boards-make-steady-but-slow-progress-towards-gender-equality.html
[28] Bourke, J., Garr, S., van Berkel, A., Wong, J., *Diversity and inclusion: The reality gap,* Deloitte, February 2017. https://www2.deloitte.com/us/en/insights/focus/human-capital-trends/2017/diversity-and-inclusion-at-the-workplace.html
[29] Hunt, V., Prince, S., Dixon-Fyle, S., Yee, L., *Delivering through Diversity,* McKinsey & Company, January 2018. https://www.mckinsey.com/~/media/McKinsey/Business%20Functions/Organization/Our%20Insights/Delivering%20through%20diversity/Delivering-through-diversity_full-report.ashx
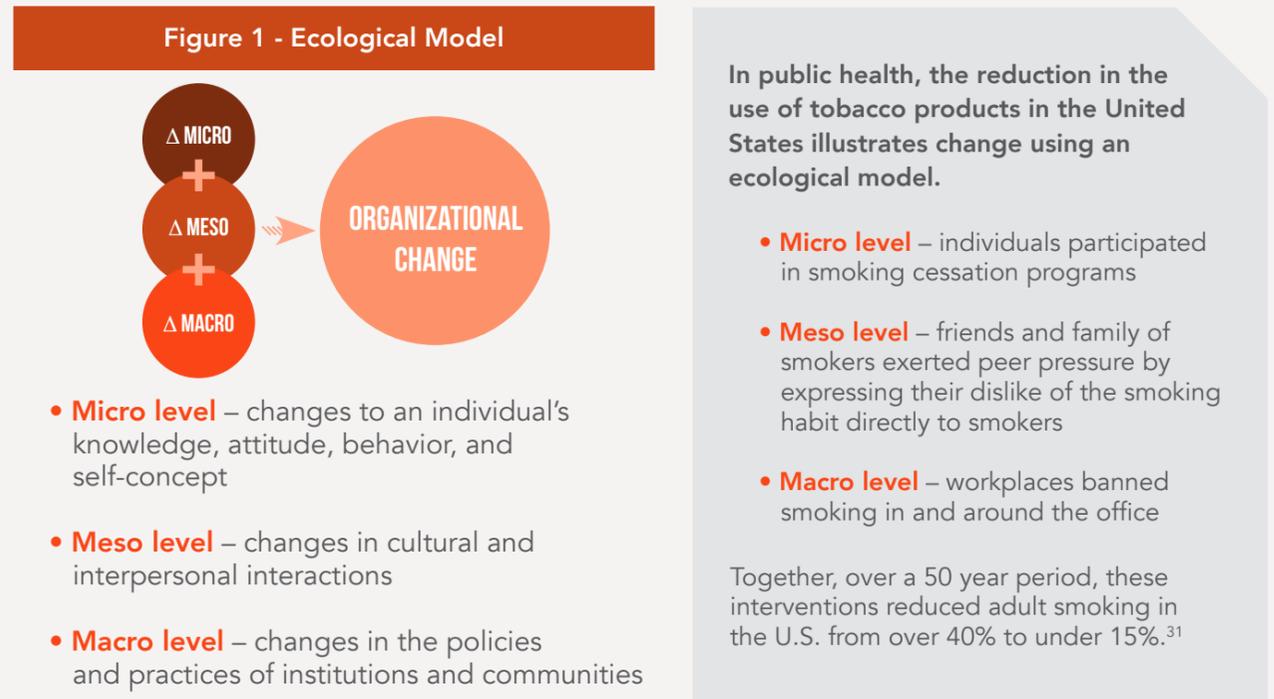[30] Ibid.

CREATING CHANGE

Creating more inclusive environments is one of the toughest challenges faced by today's workforce. It requires change on various dimensions: policies, practices, attitudes, and behaviors.

Based on research, YW Boston believes that changes in people's attitudes and behaviors regarding race and gender, coupled with supportive policies and practices, will lead organizations to be more inclusive. As organizations become more inclusive and remove barriers that prevent women, people of color, and especially women of color from ascending into leadership positions, organizations will have greater diversity.

Historically, diversity, equity, and inclusion work has focused on explanatory theories and training models that support identifying what needs to change for either individuals or organizations. Innovating from the historical approach, YW Boston's approach resides solidly in change theory practice for both individuals and organizations. This change theory practice borrows from public health, organizational learning, organizational change, strategic renewal, and policy change.

For example, the ecological model borrowed from public health requires change at three levels:

Figure 1 - Ecological Model

- **Micro level** – changes to an individual's knowledge, attitude, behavior, and self-concept

- **Meso level** – changes in cultural and interpersonal interactions

- **Macro level** – changes in the policies and practices of institutions and communities

In public health, the reduction in the use of tobacco products in the United States illustrates change using an ecological model.

- **Micro level** – individuals participated in smoking cessation programs

- **Meso level** – friends and family of smokers exerted peer pressure by expressing their dislike of the smoking habit directly to smokers

- **Macro level** – workplaces banned smoking in and around the office

Together, over a 50 year period, these interventions reduced adult smoking in the U.S. from over 40% to under 15%.[31]

These simultaneous actions set the conditions for sustainable change. Planned action and follow-up are required at all levels to ensure the change persists.

This ecological model, alongside ideas from the other aforementioned disciplines, provides a base for YW Boston's multifaceted approach to creating the change we hope to see in Boston. InclusionBoston is one critical pillar of that approach. Others elements include leadership development, cross-organizational knowledge sharing, and systems-level advocacy efforts.

[31] American Heart Association, *Smoking in America: Why more Americans are kicking the Habit*, August 2018. https://www.heart.org/en/news/2018/08/29/smoking-in-america-why-more-americans-are-kicking-the-habit

THE INCLUSIONBOSTON MODEL

OVERVIEW

InclusionBoston advances diversity, equity, and inclusion by supporting organizations looking for improved impact. Using our advanced assessment tool and the latest research on behavioral and organizational change, YW Boston partners with organizations to create an action plan and provides them with the resources needed to drive lasting change. Our customized, evidence-based approach builds internal capacity and a plan for cultural change while supporting organizations throughout their journey.

HOW IT WORKS

Diversity without inclusion is not enough. InclusionBoston offers a variety of services that help advance diversity, equity, and inclusion within organizations. The services influence cultural, behavioral, and structural changes through the following components:

- Organizational assessment and process design

- Dialogue-based sessions empowering individuals and groups to take positive action

- Action plan development and implementation support

The Civil Rights Act of 1964 banned racial discrimination in schools, employment, and public accommodations, yet data tells us discrimination still exists. History has shown that achieving racial equity does not happen if we rely on either passing laws, improving policies and practices, or changing attitudes and knowledge alone. Racial equity in organizations is achieved by incorporating multiple levers. That is why our approach includes culture change, policies and practices to support that change, as well as efforts to address systemic issues outside of organizations.

Figure 2 - InclusionBoston Timeline

The InclusionBoston model includes a thirteen-month plus partnership between an organization and YW Boston staff.

Discovery and Assessment

To effectively create change, we must honor the past, understand the present, customize the process, and begin to align on expectations for the future.

Engagements begin with conversations between YW Boston staff and partner organization liaisons. In these meetings, YW Boston staff introduce the InclusionBoston model, vet organizational capacity and fit (e.g. commitment to increasing inclusivity rather than just diversity), and begin to establish goals for participation. YW Boston works with these organizations to determine who from the organization should participate. Best practices in organizational change, culture change, and influence are utilized to be sure the right people are in the room. Simultaneously, YW Boston and partner organizations iron out logistics of when and where the five consecutive weeks of dialogues will take place.

Dialogues Series

In order to begin having brave conversations about race, we have to practice brave conversations on race.

Dialogue sessions are a key part of developing shared knowledge, trust, and skills. The foundational elements of the five dialogue sessions are necessary pre-conditions to addressing key areas of needed change in an organization.

Each organization participates in five, two-hour dialogue sessions facilitated by YW Boston. Dialogues explore issues of race and racial identify through reflection, active listening, relationship building, study of history, development of shared language frameworks, and connection of observation to action. Each dialogue series is tailored to explore issues currently holding individuals and the organization back when it comes to building diversity and inclusive practices. The foundational sessions allow groups to identify barriers to equity and inclusion and create action plans to address these barriers.

SESSION STRUCTURE

WHO AM I? → WHO ARE WE? → HOW DID WE GET HERE? → WHAT DO I DO? → WHAT DO WE DO?

Session 1: Participants strengthen relationships by fostering trust in a safe place.

Session 2: Participants spend time reflecting on the intersectionality of social identities and how they have been advantaged or disadvantaged by them; with a focus on gender, racial and ethnic identities.

Session 3: Participants deepen awareness of the history that has shaped the way racism manifests in present day.

Session 4: Participants cultivate empathy through active listening and experiential learning.

Session 5: Participants identify barriers to inclusivity and outline next steps to bring them closer to a shared vision for racial equity.

Between sessions, participants are assigned content (articles, podcasts, and/or videos) to help reinforce, build upon, and reflect on the sessions.

1 DISCOVERY & ASSESSMENT   2 DIALOGUES SERIES   3 ACTION PLAN DEVELOPMENT   4 FOLLOW-UP & OUTCOMES

EVALUATION

Action Plan Development
Action plans set the roadmap for the work to continue into the future.

InclusionBoston's action planning process is a key element in moving the organization from reflection, dialogue, and discussion to diagnosis and deployment. Action plans become the guiding documents for the yearlong follow-up process that YW Boston supports, and are the roadmap for creating more diverse, equitable, and inclusive workplaces.

INDIVIDUAL ACTION PLANS

In session four of the dialogue series, participants evaluate how they, as individuals, consciously and unconsciously uphold racism in their personal lives and in the workplace. Each person reflects on the behavior changes they want to make by using the GROW model. The GROW model guides users through a process of setting SMART goals, reflecting on their current reality, brainstorming options for how to reach the goal and obstacles that might get in the way, then committing to the specific actions that will most likely help achieve goals. YW Boston facilitators serve as coaches, asking participants questions, reality testing, and stimulating brainstorming. Facilitators then encourage the cohort to lean on each other for support and accountability while implementing their individual action plan.

Figure 3 - Adapted GROW Model

GOAL
What do you want to achieve?

WILL
What action will you take?

INDIVIDUAL RACIAL EQUITY GROWTH

REALITY
Describe the current situation

OPTIONS
What are your options?

Figure 4 - The table below provides simplified examples of individual action plans.

	White Woman	Black Woman
Topic	Leadership	Leadership
Goal	Amplify voices of people of color	Navigate pathway to become a leader in organization
Reality	Her own privileges and biases mask DEI realities	She experiences systemic disadvantages that need to be navigated
Options/ Obstacles	Needs further growth in her learning of race and racism Needs to actively listen to her colleagues and be open to being challenged and to learn	Needs to find buy in and support in organization for pipeline to leadership
Will (Action)	Actively listen to colleagues and invite them to challenge and educate her Further advocate for racially diverse voices to amplify	Resist replicating racist systems Continue to find support towards her goal

ORGANIZATIONAL ACTION PLANS

YW Boston staff works with each organizational partner to create and implement a custom measurable action plan. This action plan takes into consideration organizational feedback, capacity, and existing internal efforts, as well as insights gathered during progress evaluations.
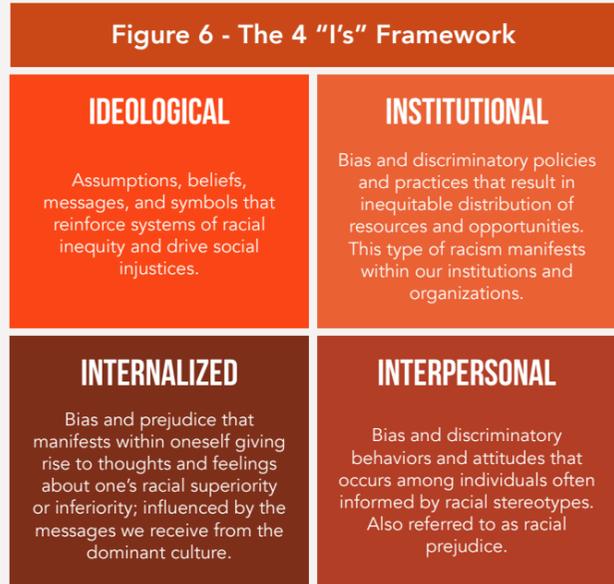
Action planning begins during the dialogue sessions. In session four, organizations craft a community vision for what inclusion and equity could and should look like within their organizations. Utilizing the 4 "I's" framework, illustrated in **Figure 6**, participants pinpoint opportunities for their workplace to address issues, bolster strengths, identify resources, and define indicators of success. Building on this, session five leads participants through a root cause analysis. This analysis focuses actions toward the underlying forces rather than merely the symptoms of racial inequity. Participants then work together to develop an action plan that includes timelines, roles and responsibilities, and indicators of success. Please see **Figure 5** for an example plan excerpt.

Figure 5 - Illustrative Action Plan Sample

Goal 1: Create affinity group

Impact statement: Affinity groups will allow for supportive, more inclusive work environments that build the organization's diversity culture, as well as new channels for creating change.

Domains of organizational change
Primary: Culture
Secondary: Leadership

Action Step/Task	Accountability	Performance Measure(s)	Organizational Domain	Deadline
Figure out recruitment strategy. Plan training/meeting to recruit interested parties. Determine and communicate scope of the affinity work groups.	Assigned Staff Member	Will work with YW Boston to determine recruitment strategy	Retention Culture	May 1

Staff's co-creation of the plan results in increased likelihood of plan buy-in and resolve to see it implemented as compared to a plan developed and delivered by an external consultant. To assure congruency with DEI best practices, and to provide coaching around any gaps in goals, tasks, or assignments, YW Boston staff closely monitor and participate in the plan development.

After the five sessions, the action plan typically needs additional refinement and polishing. This is undertaken jointly by the organizational liaison(s) and YW Boston staff, resulting in an action plan with both organizational buy-in and DEI best practices.

Figure 6 - The 4 "I's" Framework

IDEOLOGICAL
Assumptions, beliefs, messages, and symbols that reinforce systems of racial inequity and drive social injustices.

INSTITUTIONAL
Bias and discriminatory policies and practices that result in inequitable distribution of resources and opportunities. This type of racism manifests within our institutions and organizations.

INTERNALIZED
Bias and prejudice that manifests within oneself giving rise to thoughts and feelings about one's racial superiority or inferiority; influenced by the messages we receive from the dominant culture.

INTERPERSONAL
Bias and discriminatory behaviors and attitudes that occurs among individuals often informed by racial stereotypes. Also referred to as racial prejudice.

The 4 "I's" Framework outlines arenas in which racism often manifests in organizations.

1 DISCOVERY & ASSESSMENT   2 DIALOGUES SERIES   3 ACTION PLAN DEVELOPMENT   4 **FOLLOW-UP & OUTCOMES**

EVALUATION

Follow-Up and Outcomes

Many nonprofits can probably relate to the experience of bringing in consultants to help develop a plan, and then observing the plan gather dust when the consultants leave and the client gets pulled back into day to day responsibilities. We also see DEI plans die for several reasons beyond capacity such as:

- Lack of knowledge on what to do
- Fear of mistakes
- Avoidance of conflict/discomfort
- Staff turnover

YW Boston remains with each client for one year as an accountability partner and support to assure each client builds capacity and incorporates their action plan into their workflow.

Follow-up includes regular check-ins for a year after the conclusion of the dialogue sessions.

The first check-in, occurring two weeks after the final dialogue session, consists of reviewing the recommendations for the action plan, identifying meaningful action steps as well as individual(s) that would own each step of the process.

A one-hour check-in with the point of contact occurs at the 1, 3, 6, 9-, and 12-month benchmarks.

Check-ins may cover areas such as: troubleshooting/problem-solving, revising action plans, providing resources, time management, and identifying and resolving barriers. The preferred method for conducting these check-ins is in person at the client's site. However, in some circumstances, it can be conducted remotely.

Evaluation
Evaluation is integral to every part of InclusionBoston.

We know that changing behavior, particularly around issues of racial inequity, involves a lot of hard work to unlearn certain attitudes and behaviors, and to begin to see inequity as it manifests in the day to day. In client engagements, identifying and celebrating successes can energize future work. Meanwhile, recognizing slippages and stalled progress can prompt course-correcting interventions. Additionally, we at YW Boston are consistently striving to improve our own model and practice, adapting and innovating in response to data.

In order to best identify the strengths and potential of both individuals and organizations, we collect data throughout each stage in the thirteen-month InclusionBoston process:
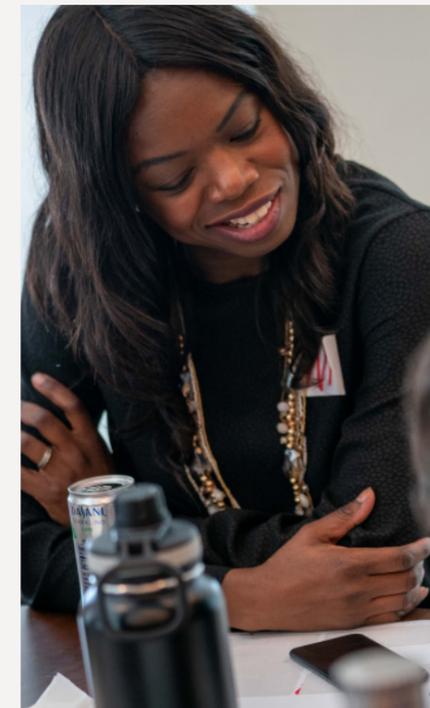
- **Pre-Dialogues** – Starting in the first conversation, YW Boston staff collect information from organizations to learn more about their needs, readiness, and hopes for their engagement with InclusionBoston. As the discovery process progresses, organizational liaisons complete a questionnaire providing YW Boston with more context on their organization. Soon to be dialogue participants also complete both a brief demographic survey and a formal pre-survey.

- **During Dialogues** – We believe that data at this stage are as embedded in the process as is the content. We utilize several forms of data collection to capture these dynamic sessions, including program day surveys for participants and a structured reflection debrief for facilitators. Taken together, these data help improve program facilitation, identify areas and needs for participant growth, and guide curricular adjustments.

- **Post-Dialogues** – Dialogue participants take another formal survey upon completion of the five-week dialogue sessions in order to measure their preliminary growth. An adapted version of this pre- and post-survey is also given quarterly for the following year in order to examine long-term impact of the program on participants' attitudes and perceptions. Simultaneously, through conversations with organizations as they fine tune and realize their action plans, YW Boston staff continue to collect data on challenges and successes.

1 DISCOVERY & ASSESSMENT   **2** DIALOGUES SERIES   **3** ACTION PLAN DEVELOPMENT   **4** FOLLOW-UP & OUTCOMES

← EVALUATION →

We find that many organizations are already, on average, successfully recognizing prejudice at work and are sensitive to issues of inequity. Therefore, the averages (represented by the circles in **Figure 7**) do not typically move much from pre to post; given high average responses, there is a "ceiling effect" that caps the average growth. However, we do typically see a lot of movement on these measures from pre to post for the minimum responses (represented by the lower rectangles). This indicates that individuals furthest from the group average begin to, and in some cases dramatically, catch up with their colleagues on these different indicators. As the gap between minimum and maximum responses closes, we can infer an increased social cohesion within organizations.

Figure 7 - Illustrative snapshots of pre- and post- dialogues data from various organizations

Perceptions of Prejudice   *Manifestations of Prejudice*   *Self Efficacy*

WHY WE MEASURE DEI CHANGE

At YW Boston we believe that in order to have more diverse, equitable, and inclusive workspaces, we need to empower individuals across sectors to act. But clients and organizations are all at different stages in their DEI journey, bringing with them different lived experiences and workplace histories, and understanding this work in different ways. Our preliminary research finds that strengths and barriers vary by sector, client demographics, and organizational location (e.g. leadership vs. front-line staff). **As a result, we ask our clients to participate in formal evaluations (surveys) throughout for two key reasons:**

1 Measuring a baseline (pre) allows us to better understand who has signed up to do this work, how they view the world, what skills/resources/knowledge they bring with them, and what gaps or challenges they face in being more effective DEI advocates at work. **Knowing both *who* is entering this work and *how* they enter the work allows us to finetune our curriculum, facilitation styles, action plan support, and other elements of our partnership to best serve the partner organization's growth potential.**

2 **Subsequent evaluations (post) allow us to better understand what change towards DEI looks like both across clients and across time.** We suspect that certain skills and knowledge might grow tremendously and immediately as a result of participating in dialogues (such as identifying racial bias in policies) while others might take a while to develop or finetune (such as advocating for or modeling ways to mitigate racial bias in interactions or practices).

The InclusionBoston Evaluation Process

Ultimately, while extensive, our formal evaluations focus on concepts and skills that we want to empower individuals to have and use in their workplaces, such as recognizing colorblind attitudes, developing and expressing cross-cultural empathy, practicing self-efficacy, and identifying racial bias in interactions, practices, and policies.

This work is innovative in both DEI and organizational change fields. We are utilizing research from across sectors and disciplines to develop a toolkit that measures what organizational change at the micro (individual), meso (interpersonal), and macro (institutional and societal) levels looks like within the context of a DEI lens. While some argue that "this work cannot be measured," at YW Boston we are working hard to show not only *how* it can be measured but *why* this measurement is so critical to understanding and leveraging DEI change work.

YW BOSTON AND THE BOSTON FOUNDATION
IN PARTNERSHIP

In 2017, the Building Movement Project's *Race to Lead* report and presentation sparked conversations between the **Boston Foundation** and **YW Boston**. The Boston Foundation (TBF) was eager to build upon recent investments in closing the racial leadership gap. In pursuit of its mission, YW Boston wanted to be able to cover costs while providing **InclusionBoston** to organizations with limited financial resources.

The two organizations realized that the combination of the Boston Foundation's reach and resources and YW Boston's expertise would create a powerful opportunity to understand, name, and begin to address various manifestations of racism that exist in Boston's nonprofits.

Why Nonprofits

The Building Movement Project's 2017 *Race to Lead* report showed a racial leadership gap in the nonprofit sector. The lack of people of color in top nonprofit leadership roles was a structural problem for the sector. For the last 15 years, the percentage of people of color in executive director/CEO roles in the nonprofit sector had remained under 20%,[32] despite increasing racial diversity in the communities these nonprofits served. Research illustrated that this lack of representation was not due to lower aspirations or qualifications of emerging leaders of color. Instead, both subtle and explicit mechanisms permeated our organizations, resulting in both the systemic and systematic exclusion of leaders of color. By helping organizations address racial inequities internally, YW Boston and TBF could help position them to better serve their constituents and achieve their missions.

[32] Kunreuther, F., Thomas-Breitfeld, S., *Race to Lead: Confronting the Nonprofit Racial Leadership Gap*, Building Movement Project, 2017. https://racetolead.org/race-to-lead/

OVERVIEW [33]

Ten organizations (n=207) were identified and funded by the Boston Foundation to participate in InclusionBoston, with the explicit goal of making the program accessible to organizations across different nonprofit sectors and serving diverse communities in and beyond Boston. **Figure 8** provides a breakdown of this cohort's participation organized by priority impact areas identified by TBF.[34]

Participants[35] ranged in age from 24 to 68 years and were on average 39 years old. The majority of participants self-identified as White (52%), as women (67%), and as residing outside of the city of Boston (56%). Nearly half (49%) of participants had been at their organizations between one and five years and over half (56%) were in a leadership or management role.

The TBF-funded participants' gender identification[36] mirrors broader trends of the nonprofit workforce[37], where women make up between 72 and 75%. Two-thirds identified as women, 31% identified as men, and about 2% identified as non-binary, gender non-conforming, or other (marked as Other).

A majority of participants identified as White, while 48% identified as a person of color. Both Black or African American and Hispanic or Latinx were the largest groups represented with 17 and 18 percent of participants respectively. For context, one report indicates that the overall percentage of people of color in the nonprofit workplace is only about 18%[38], suggesting that this cohort[39] was more diverse than nonprofit workers more broadly.

Figure 8 - Participation by Impact Area

- 10% Nonprofit Effectiveness
- 24% Education
- 22% ODG
- 11% Arts
- 13% Neighborhoods and Housing
- 20% Health and Wellness
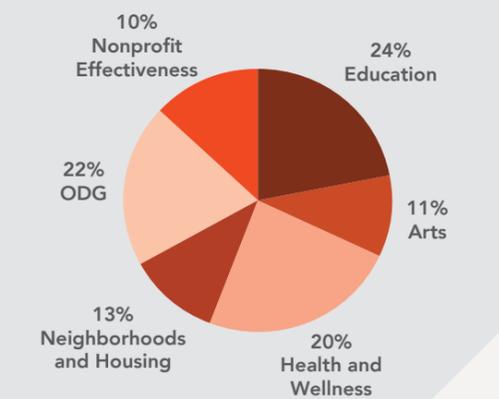
Figure 9 - Participation by Gender

- 2% Other
- 31% Men
- 67% Women
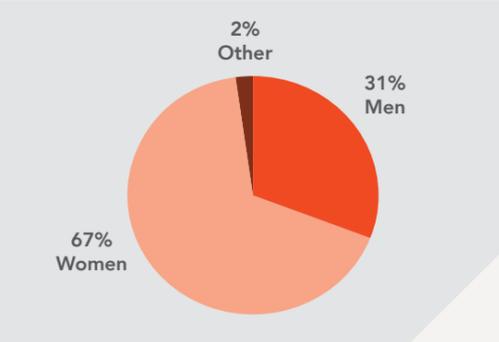
Figure 10 - Participation by Race/Ethnicity

- 6% Multi-Racial
- 2% Other
- 18% Hispanic or Latinx
- 52% White
- 17% Black or African American
- 6% Asian

[33] Based on individual self-reported data from the start of the InclusionBoston series, typically before the first program day (response rate 91%). All numbers are aggregated to protect the anonymity of individuals.
[34] The Boston Foundation's Impact Areas: https://www.tbf.org/nonprofits/funding-opportunities/impact-areas-grants-guidelines
[35] N=118
[36] N=181
[37] Outon, P., Women in Nonprofits: Then & Now, GuideStar, November 2015. https://trust.guidestar.org/blog/2015/11/20/women-in-nonprofits-then-now/; Patz, E., Where Are All the Women in Nonprofit Leadership?, Top Nonprofits, March 2018, https://topnonprofits.com/women-nonprofit-leadership/; Gender Equity In Nonprofits Has A Way To Go, The Nonprofit Times, March 2018, https://www.thenonprofittimes.com/npt_articles/gender-equity-nonprofits-way-go
[38] Fernandez, I., Brown, A., The State of Diversity in the Nonprofit Sector, Community Wealth Partners, May 2015. https://communitywealth.com/the-state-of-diversity-in-the-nonprofit-sector
[39] N=180

Figure 11 - Participation by Home Location

44%
Boston

56%
Outside
Boston
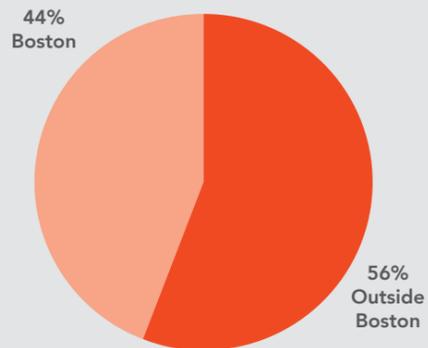
One hundred forty-two participants[40] were asked where they lived, and a majority of these participants (56%) indicated that they lived outside of Boston, while 44% indicated that they lived within Boston. Cohort members from Boston most commonly lived in Jamaica Plain (12), Dorchester (10), and East Boston (8) but also lived in the neighborhoods Allston/Brighton; Beacon Hill; Charlestown; Hyde Park; Mattapan; North End; Roslindale; Roxbury; South End; and West Roxbury.

Participants[41] identified their tenure at their respective organizations at the start of the InclusionBoston series. **Figure 12** illustrates the distribution of individuals' tenure across time. Twenty percent of responding participants had worked for their organization for less than one year at

Figure 12 - Participation by Tenure at Organization

5%	6%	9%	31%	18%	32%
Less than 3 months	3-6 months	7-12 months	1-2 years	3-5 years	More than 5 years

the start of their participation in the InclusionBoston series. A third (32%) had worked at their organization for more than five years. Forty-nine percent were at the organization between one and five years.
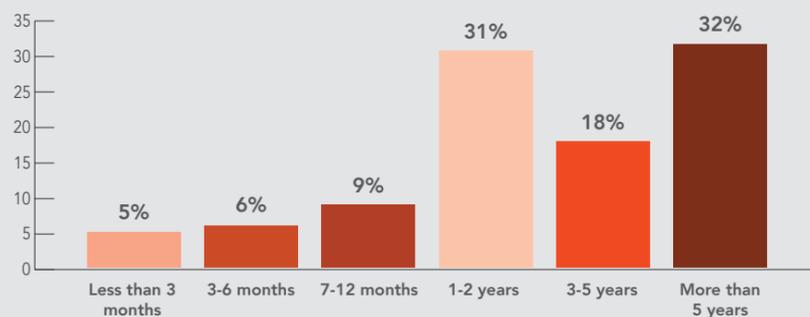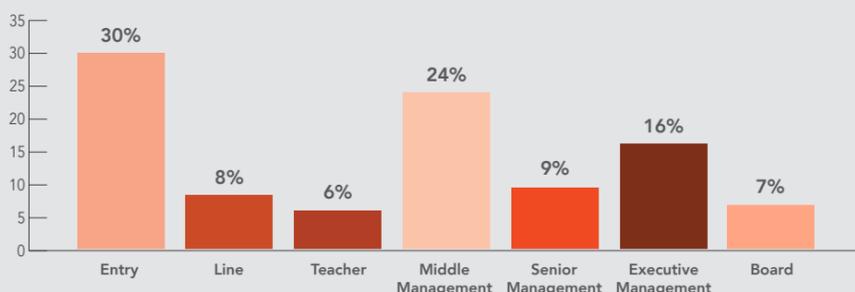
Figure 13 - Participation by Organizational Role

30%	8%	6%	24%	9%	16%	7%
Entry	Line	Teacher	Middle Management	Senior Management	Executive Management	Board

We also asked participants to identify their roles within the organization and found[42] that nearly a third of participants (30%) were in entry level roles, followed in proportion by middle management roles (24%). A majority

of participants (56%) identified that they were in a leadership and/or management role. Participation of leadership was central to InclusionBoston's design to guide organizational change.

40 N=142
41 This measure was added mid-way through our data collection, and therefore these responses do not reflect the perspectives of all organizations. N=85
42 N=184

COHORT COMMONALITIES

Despite different organizational missions, demographics, and reasons for doing this work, three themes emerged:

1   **Mission driven nonprofits cared about racial equity.** On average, pre- and post-surveys reveal very high levels of thinking about, recognizing, and acting on issues of racial (in)equity.

2   **Organizations wanted to continue and expand DEI learning.** The more participants learned, the more they wanted to know. Staff planned for more resources, conversations, and learning opportunities in order to create broader understanding and investment in DEI at work.

3   **Hiring and retaining staff of color was a priority.** Action plans consistently aimed to improve rates of hiring and retention of both board and staff members of color.

WHAT STOOD IN THE WAY

All organizations face challenges, particularly when it comes to DEI work. The ten cohort organizations were no exception. Over the course of the engagement with YW Boston, participant organizations grappled with turnover, competing priorities, uneven staff buy-in, lack of alignment, organizational silos, and insufficient support. Naming the challenges is important so that we, as a sector, can address them. It is also important to recognize that participants did not let these challenges get in the way of their participation.

Turnover

In most cases, turnover was referenced in the context of organizations overall (especially for organizations with already small staff numbers), but in some cases turnover also impacted participation in the dialogue series itself with some staff leaving and others joining mid-way through the process. For some, this turnover was in leadership. In the year post-dialogue, one organization experienced the death of the founding executive director and hiring of a new director. Another organization experienced at least three changes in leadership. The consequences of turnover take a heavy toll on organizations generally, and for this cohort it was no exception. Organizations described a waterfall of new challenges resulting from the turnover, such as onboarding new staff and/or getting buy-in from new leadership. Additionally, YW Boston's own internal turnover may have also impacted the depth and regularity of follow-up with some organizations. Overall, this persistent challenge impacts the crucial trust, knowledge, and organizational momentum needed to achieve change.

Turnover

Turnover is mentioned numerous times throughout this paper. It had a significant impact on the ten cohort organizations featured and riddles organizations across the sector.

Turnover and broader DEI challenges spotlight a classic "chicken-and-egg" problem for organizations. Lack of stability impedes DEI progress and the DEI challenges themselves (for example, poor inclusion practices) lead to increased turnover.

This relationship illustrates that DEI challenges are not distinct or siloed from other organizational challenges. They are deeply entangled. Thus, the solutions need to be similarly intertwined.

Pre-Existing Organizational Priorities

Despite organizational investment of time and staff to participate in the InclusionBoston series, the timing of the process was not necessarily ideally aligned to other existing organizational and individual priorities. Some organizations described that other things made it harder (or slower) for them to achieve the DEI goals and actions they had mapped out during the series. In some cases, cohorts used this delay as an opportunity to examine their organization's investment, buy-in, and commitment to the process overall.

More generally, the timing of the series in relationship to other organizational shifts such as turnover or changes in leadership, shifting hiring processes, or even their own strategic planning processes, were described as factors that impacted the organizations' ability to garner resources (both time and money) to achieve some of their action steps. Given that successful DEI work is embedded into all aspects of organizations, some staff expressed challenges in figuring out how to incorporate their learnings into the existing day to day routines and structures of their work.

Uneven Staff Buy-In

Related but distinct to the challenges of organizational priorities, staff explained that sometimes changes within the organization either catalyzed or stalled investment in DEI work. While in some cases turnover meant gaining new staff with fresh energy in this work, several organizations mentioned that they struggled to have consistent staff buy-in, particularly from those who had not participated in the dialogues series.

Some participants expressed concern about their overall organization's (or particular colleagues') "readiness" (including Board members who joined after beginning the process) to have more of these DEI conversations or to do the work it would take to create more diverse, equitable, and inclusive workplaces. While a consistent theme of post-dialogue feedback was for even more concrete examples of how to do this work, this eagerness from some employees did not mean that any strategies would have been well or easily received at their organizations.
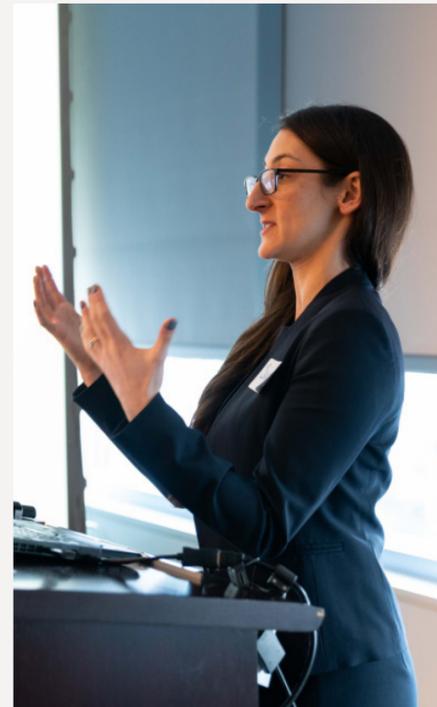
A regular challenge of implementing organizational change was that individual employees did not always feel empowered, protected, or ready to challenge their peers and their overall organization in ways that would produce that change. While it was unclear if this resistance was a cautious excuse or a real explanation, it was an important component of organizational change worth addressing and supporting.

Lack of Alignment

Given shifting attendance and participation in the series, as well as the fact that not all staff participated from all organizations, follow-up processes identified that there was a common theme of struggling to align the knowledge, willingness, and effort of staff. One organization mentioned that they did not quite know how to get everyone on the same page or infuse their learning back into the overall organization.

Organizational Silos

Several organizations expressed a wish for cross-organizational meetings with other "alums" of the InclusionBoston process. In particular, points of contact articulated an interest in learning what changes and challenges emerged from other participants, for both opportunities to learn and to troubleshoot, share best practices, and reflect on shared learnings. While YW Boston alone did not at the time have the infrastructure for this in our program model, the generosity of the Boston Foundation has created a cohort and convening to help achieve this very goal.

Insufficient Support

Organizations expressed that they wished they could have had more support, both within their own organizations (particularly from leadership) and through a longer engagement with YW Boston. Although YW Boston built an entire year of support into the InclusionBoston model, organizations were always hungry for more. This attests to how challenging it is to usher lasting change into organizations, even in those already committed and invested in this work.

As much as we may wish otherwise, in reality, advancing DEI is hard. The challenges outlined exasperated the degree of difficulty for the participant organizations. It is precisely because of this difficulty that InclusionBoston is not just a training, but a model designed to support organizational change. Despite the real challenges faced by participant organizations, all ten persisted to make changes towards greater diversity, equity, and inclusion. Furthermore, not only did they go through the motions, but the participating organizations succeeded in developing action plans with important and compelling goals.

EXAMPLES OF COHORT ACTION

At the culmination of the dialogue sessions, each of the ten cohort organizations had successfully developed an action plan to guide their DEI efforts over the following year. While each action plan was unique, customized by staff of participant organizations to the particular needs of the organization, there were four themes that emerged across plans: affinity groups, ongoing learning, policy and practice review, and mentoring.

Affinity Groups

Affinity groups typically form around a key identity with which individuals self-identify. Several action plans aimed to establish affinity groups (typically one for White staff, and one for staff of color) as a way to invest time and resources around DEI learning. Organizations planned to operate affinity groups monthly, bi-monthly, or quarterly as a way to protect time for organization-wide conversations specific to each affinity and aligned to organizational context. One organization used their affinity groups as a space to do some internal information seeking around organizational culture. Following the design, dissemination, collection, and analysis of an internal survey, the data was presented to leadership. The organization explained that this was a new approach for the organization to listen and respond to diverse employee perspectives and needs.

Ongoing Learning

Increasing knowledge was a priority for many organizations. A common strategy to achieve this was setting the intention to collect, share, and in some cases even require DEI focused readings for employees. Organizations planned to incorporate this content into new employee orientation, affinity group meetings, formal or informal "lunch and learn" opportunities, and an internal library comprised of books and/or digital resources. The eagerness to create more opportunities for learning also emerged as a theme in the qualitative survey responses. One participant created a binder with resources at her office, while another initiated a project on storytelling to create space for often overlooked voices within the organization. In addition, in follow-up conversations with organizations, staff noted that part of organizational action was intentionally continuing learning in order to add support, momentum, and clarity to additional next steps

Policy and Practice Review

Through this work, some organizations recognized the importance of examining, revising, and implementing policies that would help them both hire and retain staff of color. In one conversation, a staff member explained that their leadership team examined promotion plans through a lens of race and gender inequities for the first time. The staff member noted that tools and language from the dialogues series allowed them to critically interrogate what structures and practices may have contributed to their unequal promotion pipeline. More broadly, organization action plans spoke to an interest in designing, revising, and implementing policies that would codify the organizations' goals of attracting and maintaining a diverse workforce. For some, this meant revising their hiring practices, mission statements, and/or vision statements to reflect a racial equity lens. One agency identified creating and establishing an equity steering committee as a priority goal. This strategy allowed them to have a structured, cross-organizational group dedicated to the incorporation of racial equity throughout the fabric of the entire organization.

Mentoring

There were three distinct mentoring configurations that appeared in action plans.

• Informal mentorship: Literature on staff retention details the importance of providing mentorship opportunities for staff of color, especially in predominately or historically White organizations.

• DEI mentorship for mid-senior level leaders (irrespective of racial/ethnic identification): This mentorship aimed to provide support, training, and development so existing leaders could become more skilled in leading the organization's racial equity work.

• Outside mentorship: One organization whose leaders are primarily people of color sought outside mentorship for their staff. This outside mentorship could help both staff and leadership by addressing staff's biases.

OUTCOMES

DEI success is ultimately measured by shifts in the numbers and reported experiences of staff. Just as the system of racism took time to build, it will take time and effort to deconstruct. As practitioners, participants, and funders, we must recognize this, set expectations accordingly, and celebrate indicators of progress. In a relatively short amount of time, participant organizations achieved admirable progress:

Assessment tools showed that participants with the most room to grow, grew a lot. After completing the dialogues series, group cohesion within the 10 organizations increased. Dialogues helped align participant language, knowledge, and attitudes on the importance and challenges of DEI work. InclusionBoston therefore helped to increase organizational alignment, in part by increasing the confidence and competence of those who were most skeptical of DEI initiatives.

Participants reported increased awareness around the need to develop skills to communicate about race and across difference, and reported self- and group-improvement in those areas.

The action plans demonstrated that participant organizations were clearer about how to make, integrate, and accomplish specific racial equity goals than before the dialogue series.

Follow-up meetings revealed that participants successfully completed specific actions to advance equity, including:

- Integration of DEI action plans with overall strategic plans

- Decisions to continue investing in equity (e.g., one organization relocated to be proximate to communities and constituents they serve)

- Launch of an information campaign to educate more staff about racism as a system and how individuals participate in this system

To learn more about the specific journeys and successes of the 10 organizations in the cohort, please read the case studies starting on page 40.

OPPORTUNITIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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Working with the cohort of 10 organizations funded by the Boston Foundation and profiled in this paper, YW Boston was able to extrapolate learnings that can benefit other nonprofit leaders, DEI practitioners, funders, and nonprofit staff (everyone) wanting to continue to engage in DEI work.

FOR NONPROFIT LEADERS

What leadership looks like

Nonprofit leaders are seen not only as leaders of their organizations, but also as leaders in the broader community. Staff and community members hold nonprofit leaders to a high standard. If an organization works with a marginalized community, the expectation is that the leader has a strong lens and understanding of diversity, equity, and inclusion, particularly the DEI issues that impact their work. Furthermore, they are expected to lead work towards dismantling inequities to better serve their community.

To become more inclusive and effective leaders, it is imperative that leaders do the personal work of acknowledging and working to disrupt their own bias, but this is only one step of the process. Leaders can further deepen their skills by participating in leadership development programs like YW Boston's LeadBoston and communities of practice focused on inclusive leadership.

To deepen trust with staff and community, leaders must visibly commit to this work while maintaining humility about their own growth.

To catalyze change within their organizations, leaders should empower staff with more competency in DEI to lead the work of creating equitable practices within their organizations and provide them with the time and space to do this important work.

Who should be involved?

When selecting a cohort of individuals to drive the integration of DEI into an organization, consideration should be given to the organizational structures for change, the specific individuals best equipped to spearhead the change, and the cohesive blend of the cohort.

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURES FOR CHANGE

For larger organizations, there are three primary options for how to incubate change: within the leadership team, within a department, or cross-organizationally. Starting with leadership enables the development of expertise to support future initiatives. Starting within a department creates a concentrated "center of excellence" from which other teams can learn. Starting with a cross-organizational group includes perspectives and experiences representative of the broader organization.

INDIVIDUALS BEST EQUIPPED TO SPEARHEAD CHANGE

Regardless of the starting place, individual participants should be influencers within the organization. While people with formal authority should participate, it's important to remember that the biggest cultural influencers may not have authority.

COHESIVE BLEND OF THE COHORT

Organizational DEI change work needs a diverse coalition of participants from across different identities and organizational roles. While many individuals, particularly in mission driven organizations, already felt well-equipped with social justice and racial equity mindsets, this was not equally the case for all individuals. Having a diverse coalition of employees participate in designing and implementing change helped increase cohesion, solidify commitment, and develop the groundswell support needed to shift practices and norms.

Other characteristics to consider when building a cohort include: organizational function, tenure, demographics, and preexisting commitment to the work.

DEI must be integral

When a DEI lens is not applied to the core of an organization's practices, processes, and culture, it is easy to eliminate and hard to sustain because DEI initiatives appear to be "extra" or "additional work." In the cohort of ten TBF-funded organizations, we saw this manifest as "competing organizational priorities" that made the DEI work seem particularly challenging. Conversely, the organizations that could identify the interconnectivity between "competing priorities" and DEI, saw easier success in both arenas. One organization within the cohort launched InclusionBoston at the same time that they were undergoing a strategic planning process. The InclusionBoston process provided a lens to support adding DEI practices throughout their strategic plan and incorporating into staff evaluations.

DEI work has to be considered in every opportunity, challenge, and process. Leaders must consistently ask who will be most impacted by the decisions they are making and work to include these voices into the process. Development and execution of any kind of organizational plan should center all people and focus on what the impact will be for different groups to mitigate the overall challenges. This is the root of true diversity, equity, and inclusion work. Current practices have left many groups out and we need to ensure that they are fully integrated at each step. This may look different for each organization but should not be an add-on or after thought.

Investment of time and resources

ORGANIZATIONAL DEI CHANGE REQUIRES THE INVESTMENT OF TIME AND RESOURCES

Despite some initial challenges in scheduling, participants in the TBF-funded cohort regularly wished for more time to discuss, unpack, think through, and act. Investing resources so that staff had the time and support needed to sustain the work was a critical ingredient for successful efforts. This starts with leadership.

As a leader, it is imperative that you carve out consistent, protected time to engage in DEI work and model best practices. Leaders should bake DEI into standing organization-wide and one-on-one staff meetings. When delegating DEI work to others, be sure to include these responsibilities in the job descriptions and protect staff time.

Many leaders have said they want their staff to drive this work, yet staff are looking to senior leaders for guidance. Stepping into DEI leadership can feel ominous but the change that is necessary to create equitable and inclusive organizations will not happen if leaders are not willing to both lead and protect time and resources.

Communication is key

ORGANIZATIONAL DEI CHANGE RELIES ON DOCUMENTATION AND COMMUNICATION

To capture, sustain, and message institutional change, organizations in the cohort that invested time in documentation were most equipped to message what had changed as a result of participating, and had greater consistency in their staff's recognition of those changes. Development of communications plans to coincide with strategic plans will both help with transparency, a core tenet of DEI work, motivation, and trust. Staff and community members may see the decisions of leadership from a very different vantage point. Often communication of decisions and actions do not exist or are not clear. Ensuring that the communication is accessible to all stakeholders will help to sustain and support the implemented DEI initiatives and practices.

Change is slow and incremental

DEI CANNOT BE ACHIEVED BY A LIST OF DO'S AND DON'TS OR BY ONE-TIME TRAININGS

During the action planning phase of the model, many organizations identified large lists of challenges and wished to implement broad stroke interventions that would quickly achieve progress. Organizations are better served by setting incremental goals that can build on foundational work to ensure that change is both effective and sustainable.

Progress towards shared organizational goals requires acknowledging, and often shifting power. It also requires the deconstructing and rebuilding of ideologies, behaviors, and systems that have been constructed over hundreds of years. This important and achievable work will take time. Understanding and communicating the time expectations to staff, funders, board members, and the leaders themselves will help set leaders up for long-term success.

FOR DEI PROFESSIONALS

Measurement and data are important

Practitioners often claim that DEI change work cannot be measured. At YW Boston, we have found that DEI work can and must be measured, although it is difficult to do. Outcomes centric practices that utilize and triangulate multiple data sources (both quantitative and qualitative; formative and summative) are required to determine the impact of the work. This approach is necessary to be able to determine effectiveness and dosage conditions to maximize change at the micro, meso, and macro levels. YW Boston is still in the process of fine tuning its tools, but an early indicator of the potential of both our measurement and program model is increased social cohesion for all groups following five dialogue sessions. We are continuing to follow and measure this trend as we serve more organizations, but given that social cohesion is a strong pre-condition of effective organizational change, this is a promising early finding.

Diversity of disciplines yields high results

Diversity of thought and voice is something that DEI practitioners preach to client organizations and is a practice that DEI practitioners should have as a part of their own discipline. There isn't one way to achieve equity within organizations. Many disciplines support equity and inclusion and have a variety of practices that can meet a varied number of needs. If you can imagine racism to be a river, you will need many rocks and/or branches to create a dam. All pieces are necessary to stop the flow. If there is even a slight fracture, the river can topple the dam. There are many approaches to this work. We should borrow and merge best practices from each approach.

Decentralize whiteness and White people

While research and popular press most often call attention to the growth and gaps in White knowledge and skills in DEI work, we find that people of color often also have gaps in their own DEI knowledge and skills. While individual and experiential knowledge may vary substantively by identity, we at YW Boston have observed persistent of gaps in historical knowledge, critical thinking of contemporary contexts, and internalized racial behaviors and attitudes in our participants across identities. As a field, we need to ensure that interventions address the needs of all stakeholders, not just White people. As such, DEI professionals need to consider both the unique and universal needs of staff in different positionalities when planning interventions and measuring change. A more expansive view of who needs support to be an effective DEI advocate will both expand the skills and knowledge of all involved and simultaneously help to decenter systems of racial oppression.

FOR FUNDERS

Everyone needs to do the work

Funders should take note of the guidance for leaders, all staff, and DEI practitioners. It is important for funders to do their own work to be more equitable and inclusive, otherwise it will be more difficult for them to understand how resources and time need to be distributed within the organizations they fund to support equity and inclusion.

We commend our contacts at the Boston Foundation for attending events across the city, encouraging a Foundation colleague to participate in InclusionBoston, and inviting YW Boston to lead workshops for Foundation staff. This will lead to smarter, more effective funding decisions and will serve as a role model for others to follow suit.

Invest in innovation

There is a need for additional research and innovation into both DEI practices and measurement tools. While YW Boston is drawing on peer-reviewed research from fields as diverse as social psychology, organizational behavior, sociology, social work, and behavioral economics, there is little information on what conditions are actually required for racial change work (let alone how to best measure it). Given this, YW Boston has been working on utilizing statistical methods such as factor analysis and cluster analysis to isolate key variables and both individual and organizational profiles. By doing so, we hope to add precision to the field of DEI services so that all ongoing work can have even greater impact. This work is time consuming and inevitably will take many twists and turns. Funders that join for the ride will be rewarded by the innovations that follow.

Nudge the field forward

Funders can utilize their power for good by nudging (and funding) nonprofits to effectively engage in DEI work. At YW Boston, we often hear that pressure from funders is a catalyst for organizations to prioritize DEI work. Asking grantees for the racial and gender make-up of staff, leadership, board, and people served, or adding questions on grant applications about DEI efforts can be important motivators for nonprofits and can help drive change. Of course, directly supporting nonprofits struggling to do this work is extremely important as well.

Fund sustainable long-term change

Funders have begun to change funding to support capacity building and sustain programming. It is important that they continue this work and look towards further supporting systemic change. There are a number of direct needs that communities have but by ignoring the root causes, funders are simply replicating the oppressive systems. The Boston Foundation has taken a pivotal step in supporting the systemic work within these ten organizations.

FOR EVERYONE

Your perceived identity matters

When discussing identity many people focus on how they see themselves. This is a very important aspect of identity, but it is not the sole definition. Each of us is socialized and treated in society based on how others perceive us. Recognizing that our intersectional identities create advantages and disadvantages for us is the first step in beginning to create the individual change necessary. For example, a White woman may not recognize that she holds a significant amount of power and privilege in society due to her Whiteness because she holds another marginalized identity: woman. She has been socialized as a White woman with different societal expectations placed on her due to others perceiving that she is a White woman. While she may face systemic oppression as a woman, there is also significant power inherent in being perceived as White in the United States that has an impact on how she moves through the world. This socialization is imprinted on every aspect of identity. It teaches us how to view ourselves and how to view others. Our socialization also supports the development of biases. Examining the expectations each of us has of other intersectional identities is fundamental in raising awareness to create personal change.
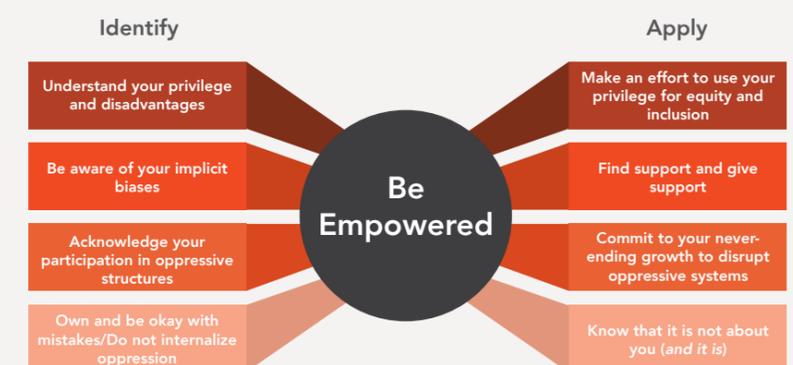
Emotions in the workplace

Although infrequently discussed, emotions play a large role in the workplace, our interactions with others, and our DEI journeys. Many emotions arise when people discuss difficult topics like race. The primary emotions that come up when doing DEI work are shame and/or guilt. Often, we shy away from acknowledging the emotions, particularly in the workplace context. But emotions exist as a catalyst for action. If DEI involves seeing the humanity in all people, we have to also acknowledge and mitigate the emotions that come along with being human. Naming and working through one's emotions to affect change will support creating a more equitable organization. This may be uncomfortable at first but this growth is necessary to fully engage in DEI work.

Be Empowered

Everyone can support the changes to their organizations by doing the personal and interpersonal work to become more inclusive. **Figure 14** shows strategies to both identify and apply change in your life. As noted previously, everyone needs to do this work, though the work may look different depending on how you self-identify and how you are perceived.

Figure 14 - Personal and Interpersonal Empowerment Strategies

Identify

Understand your privilege and disadvantages

Be aware of your implicit biases

Acknowledge your participation in oppressive structures

Own and be okay with mistakes/Do not internalize oppression

Be Empowered

Apply

Make an effort to use your privilege for equity and inclusion

Find support and give support

Commit to your never-ending growth to disrupt oppressive systems

Know that it is not about you (*and it is*)

ORGANIZATIONAL CASE STUDIES

Through the generous support of the Boston Foundation, YW Boston ran its InclusionBoston series with ten nonprofit organizations in the Greater Boston area. We are grateful for the opportunity to work with these organizations and we appreciate their openness. Our learnings will help move the DEI field forward.

- Bottom Line
- Citizen Schools
- Friends of the Children
- Health Care For All
- Health Leads
- Massachusetts Association of Community Development Corporations (MACDC)
- Massachusetts Nonprofit Network (MNN)
- Parenting Journey
- RAW Art Works
- United South End Settlements (USES)

BOTTOM LINE

Since 1997, Bottom Line has addressed the low college graduation rates of first-generation students from low-income backgrounds. Our organization was founded on the belief that students need a mentor and a guide during the college application process and throughout college to succeed. By providing consistent one-on-one support, Bottom Line has helped thousands of first-generation students from low-income backgrounds stay in college and complete their degrees.

Bottom Line's Boston office began InclusionBoston as the national organization was on-boarding a new CEO. Leadership buy-in is important to implementing DEI work, and Bottom Line was fortunate to have a new CEO who was open to discussion and dialogue. Prior to InclusionBoston, Bottom Line's Boston office, in concert with the rest of the organization, had engaged in work to define what DEI meant to them. There was a desire, particularly among frontline staff, to move towards action, and InclusionBoston was seen as an opportunity for the organization to do so.

The InclusionBoston dialogues cohort consisted of staff from all levels and included both local and national leadership. In retrospect, this combination of people may not have been the best model for efficiently creating change at Bottom Line, as the two groups had significant power differentials and lacked preexisting trust. Though the initial gap in trust between local and national was wide, the dialogues helped to connect the groups. Building off the foundation of dialogue and trust established in the InclusionBoston dialogue sessions, many frontline staff then felt empowered to participate in listening sessions with the new CEO, and these sessions provided the basis for areas the organization wanted to look into nationally.

> ❝ The dialogues helped us move from awake to woke to work.

Bottom Line's HR policies have also shifted as a result of the organization's participation in InclusionBoston. For example, significant changes were made to the hiring process to focus on more effectively assessing candidates' DEI fluency. Interview questions were suggested by the regional group, and 90% of the recommendations were adopted organization-wide. Bottom Line has seen an increase in the hiring of both people of color and White people who demonstrate more awareness around racial inequities.

Written with support from **Justin Strasburger**, Executive Director, Bottom Line.

> ❝ Leadership buy-in is important to implementing DEI work, and Bottom Line was fortunate to have a new CEO who was open to discussion and dialogue.

CITIZEN SCHOOLS

Website: citizenschools.org

Citizen Schools aims to effectively set students' sights on high school graduation and post-secondary matriculation, while building the 21st century skills, beliefs, and networks they will need to thrive in the modern economy.

Citizen Schools participated in InclusionBoston in the midst of several challenges that impacted the organization's DEI work. Four months prior to starting the dialogues, a large set of layoffs occurred stemming from both fiscal challenges and an organizational strategy shift that transitioned Citizen Schools away from the traditional out-of-school time model to increased support of classroom teachers and students in underserved communities. The role of National Director of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion was among these lay-offs, which led to a delay in the organization-wide DEI strategy rollout. During that same period, the regional office in Massachusetts was also working to ease tensions amongst the team following multiple challenging experiences with past consultant-led dialogues.

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The YW Boston facilitators did an excellent job building relationships, connecting with the cohort, and meeting the organization's needs.

InclusionBoston was helpful in level-setting the regional focus for diversity, equity, and inclusion and allowed participants to gain a deeper insight into each other, both personally and professionally. By participating in the dialogue sessions, Citizen Schools committed not only to having conversations but also to moving the work forward outside of these sessions.

One challenge Citizen Schools faced was ensuring that the concerns that arose during the dialogues were addressed and that the follow-up to these concerns was communicated to the whole team. Working through the action plan allowed the team to identify multiple strategies to ensure that this essential communication occurred. The process also helped to identify gaps in equity by increasing the opportunities for frontline staff to provide feedback on decision-making that directly impacted them and the students they served. YW Boston's programmatic flexibility was instrumental in identifying and implementing ways to keep the work going during the midst of a big transition.

Participating in InclusionBoston proved overall to be beneficial for Citizen Schools, as it allowed them to repair harm that had resulted from previous consultant-led dialogues. InclusionBoston also allowed Citizen Schools to take a deeper dive into their DEI work by providing a regular, structured space to discuss topics with a diverse group of staff and service members from a variety of organizational levels.

Written with support from **Vanessa Bishop**, Executive Director, Citizen Schools

FRIENDS OF THE CHILDREN

Website: friendsboston.org

Friends of the Children–Boston is an independent 501c3 nonprofit chapter of a nationwide organization dedicated to breaking the cycle of generational poverty through salaried, professional mentoring. The original Portland chapter was founded in 1993. Our chapter was founded as an independent nonprofit in Boston, Massachusetts, in 2004.

One of the most challenging aspects of moving towards a diverse, equitable, and inclusive organization is identifying precisely where progress is needed and the corresponding changes that should be made (i.e. increasing the diversity of a pool of candidates "versus" increasing the diversity of actual staff). That awareness was integral to developing a clear and explicit message, which in turn guides staff around what to prioritize.

At Friends of the Children – Boston (FOC), staff wanted their action plan and commitment to racial equity to be "baked into" the organization by having a racial equity lens permeate every aspect of the strategic plan. Going through InclusionBoston helped FOC zero in on feasible targets and organize the work into manageable components. Yi-Chin Chen, Executive Director of Friends of the Children – Boston, felt that the 4 "I's" framework[43] prompted staff to look at things differently. She observed that, although they "had a cohesive team, as we went through the series, we found that people really did need the space to talk about race and diversity issues. We also thought people were very comfortable talking about race, but we found out they were not that comfortable talking about it."

In particular, she highlighted the affinity groups, established as part of FOC's action plan, served as a place to practice having conversations about race. "**We have a very diverse organization and I think the affinity groups gave people the space to talk about shared experiences with a facilitator that may look like them, and I don't think you get that in every racial equity training.**"

One compelling example of how FOC was able to concretize their investment in DEI work was their decision to relocate their headquarters. For the last 14 years, FOC had worked out of Jamaica Plain, even though most of their youth and families lived in Roxbury, Dorchester, and Mattapan. When their lease was up, and they decided to relocate their headquarters, they recognized how important it was for them to invest in the communities their constituents called home. By considering their options through a DEI lens, FOC knew the decision wasn't just about location; it was an opportunity to act on their commitment to creating equity in the communities where their youth and families lived.

With this in mind, FOC signed a ten-year lease in the historic Hibernian Hall building in Roxbury. With the move, FOC's operating costs would help create additional economic revitalization, both through the preservation of Hibernian Hall and by supporting the work of Madison Park Development Cooperation, one of the largest affordable housing developers in Boston. For FOC, this move was a landmark step in the organization's commitment to align decision-making with a systemic investment in racial equity.

Written with support from **Yi-Chin Chen**, Executive Director, Friends of the Children

[43] Please see page 19 for a description of the 4 "I's" framework.

HEALTH CARE FOR ALL

Website: hcfama.org

Health Care For All advocates for health justice in Massachusetts by working to promote health equity and ensure coverage and access for all. HCFA takes a unique approach, leveraging direct service, policy development, coalition building, community organizing, public education, and outreach.

As an organization whose very name embodies the essence of equity, Health Care For All (HCFA) seized the opportunity to participate in InclusionBoston. From the very beginning, Health Care For All was put to the test. Shortly before the Dialogues ended, the founding director of HCFA passed away. This was a significant moment for the whole organization, including key individuals who participated in the cohort. YW Boston facilitators were attentive and responsive, adapting the dialogues as needed to accommodate the hard time, while still helping guide the group towards the development of an action plan.

HFCA's action plan included three focus areas:
- hiring and recruiting
- working with and expanding coalition partners
- ensuring that a racial equity lens was incorporated into their work

One immediate action that resulted upon completion of the dialogue sessions was an examination of the hiring process. In the months that followed, HCFA continued its effort to focus on hiring diverse staff members and hired three people of color.

Another major outcome of the action plan was that HFCA sent outreach workers on a "road show" to meet new potential coalition partners in order to expand and diversify the groups and individuals that HCFA regularly works with. The team went as far as Western Massachusetts and met with organizations such as MOCHA (Men of Color Health and Awareness). HCFA developed a working relationship with Vital Village, a network of residents and organizations committed to maximizing child, family, and community well-being. This partnership helped expand HCFA's ability to work with communities of color.

To ensure that they brought a racial equity lens to all of their work, HFCA incorporated discussion of the action plan as a standing component of their regular staff meetings. HCFA also worked to incorporate DEI into work plans, and the organization delegated specific actions to smaller staff groups.

Finally, the internally focused working group began taking strides to ensure all staff members fostered closer personal ties so that they would feel more comfortable addressing issues around race. To that end, a buddy system was established between staff to foster organizational collaboration and relationships. With staff turnover at YW Boston impacting the timeliness of check-ins and implementation of action plan strategies, YW Boston offered a three-month extension for further support on their action plan work.

Written with support from **Sally Strniste**, Chief of Staff, Health Care For All

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HEALTH LEADS

Website: healthleadsusa.org

Health Leads partners with communities and health systems to address systemic causes of inequity and disease. We do this by removing barriers that keep people from identifying, accessing and choosing the resources everyone needs to be healthy.

Health Leads was primed for diversity and inclusion work, with all levels of leadership ready to engage and actively looking to turn lessons learned into actionable strategies and steps. Health Leads determined that, as a remote organization, they would not be able to fly people in weekly to participate in InclusionBoston, so they selected a group of participants from interested Boston-based staff.[44] The resulting cohort represented many levels and social groups, with diversity of sexual orientation, gender, race, and other identities, as well as participants from across seniority levels, from executive leadership to frontline staff.

> " It is important for an organization to build a positive atmosphere through communicating the importance of diversity, equity, and inclusion at all levels. In addition, leadership buy-in goes a long way towards moving the work forward.

One result of Health Leads' participation in InclusionBoston was the formation of racial affinity groups that worked together with the existing DEI committee. The affinity groups helped the DEI committee transform from a brainstorming committee to a group of individuals really addressing and speaking with each other around relevant issues. For example, the African-American racial affinity group gathered qualitative data around

staff members' lived experiences within the organization and presented their findings to senior leadership. Participating in the dialogues also helped Health Leads realize they needed someone with HR expertise to review the organization's practices, policies, and procedures and to make objective recommendations. In examining their promotion pipeline, Health Leads' leadership found that, for the past two years, only White women were being submitted for promotions. InclusionBoston helped the leadership team to 1) be aware of this trend, 2) question why the trend existed, and 3) develop interventions to address it.

For Tene Hamilton Franklin, InclusionBoston reinforced that, to have lasting change, Health Leads needed to look at their operations and systems, "We always knew that we needed to 'do something' to stem the attrition rate for POC, especially African-American women. InclusionBoston helped us look deeper than a surface level 'do something' and work with an HR business partner to objectively review our hiring and promotion efforts and make recommendations we could implement." In addition, InclusionBoston helped staff cultivate the trust necessary to engage in DEI work, "In thinking back, something as simple as being in a circle together, being forced to interact with each other around the topic, and really talking with each other helped to create an open communication environment."

Written with support from **Tene Hamilton Franklin**, VP of DEI, Health Leads.

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44 Remote participation in InclusionBoston became available after the time of Health Leads' participation.

MACDC

Website: macdc.org

MACDC is a membership organization that seeks to build and sustain a high performing and adaptive community development sector that is supported by private and public investment and sound public policies. We advance racial and economic equity by creating healthy communities where everyone lives in housing they can afford, benefits from economic opportunities, and can fully participate in the civic life of their community.

"To me, if an organization wants to tackle racial equity and really infuse it into the work that they do broadly—that can only happen if staff and board members trust each other. They have to believe in their hearts that the people they are working with are well-intentioned. They have to have shared analysis, understanding, and language about the ways racial inequity plays out in our society, and its causes and implications. People don't have to agree on everything. People can and will have different interpretations and different ideas about how to address systemic problems.

Ultimately though, **you need to have some level of trust**, so that people feel like they can speak up and that if they say something clumsily, if they are awkward, offensive or hurtful, that it won't shut the conversations down. There has to be enough trust to make it safe to take some risks and share things. The only way to get there is by doing the work it takes to get there together. I think sometimes people want to jump right into the action steps, but, in my experience, you have to start with the relationships and the learning that happens when you come together in this way. Even if you have a PhD in Racial History, if you haven't done it with the folks you work with, especially those directly affected by the issues, you need to do this work with them.

Some of the people on our board had already been through a lot of racial equity and anti-racism training as individuals, but we still had to do it together, so that we could build that relationship within the room. The most useful and meaningful thing that our participation in YW Boston's InclusionBoston did for us is that it helped us cultivate a shared language, and it brought us closer to being on the same page. **InclusionBoston made it possible to connect in a deeper way with new board members and gain tangible strategies to use moving forward.**"

Written by **Joe Kriseberg**, President & CEO, MACDC

> To me, if an organization wants to tackle racial equity and really infuse it into the work that they do broadly—that can only happen if staff and board members trust each other.

MASSACHUSETTS NONPROFIT NETWORK

Website: massnonprofitnet.org

The Massachusetts Nonprofit Network (MNN) is the voice of the nonprofit sector, a statewide organization that brings together all parts of the nonprofit ecosystem—nonprofits, funders, community and business leaders, and elected officials—to strengthen nonprofits and raise the sector's voice on critical issues. MNN understands that strong nonprofits build strong communities. It is MNN's mission to strengthen the nonprofit community through advocacy, public awareness, and capacity building.

While the Massachusetts Nonprofit Network (MNN) works with a number of organizations that prioritize diversity and inclusion, they had never created a formal DEI plan to direct their own work. When presented with the opportunity to take part in InclusionBoston, it was clear to the organization that this was an opportunity they could not pass up. It was also clear, as the InclusionBoston staff worked with MNN to design a cohort geared towards the uniqueness of MNN's mission, that YW Boston had put a lot of thought into crafting the program.

MNN's cohort ultimately consisted of staff, board members, and member organizations of their network. This cohort reflected MNN's commitment to incorporating its different stakeholder groups' perspectives in DEI plans. After the dialogue series, Massachusetts Nonprofit Network CEO Jim Klocke noted how the program encouraged participants to engage in personal reflection, "Each session helped us get to know each other better and helped us frame and understand what we learned."

MNN's engagement with YW Boston through InclusionBoston resulted in a deepened partnership between the two organizations as they worked together to develop *Our Shared Sector*. Launched in August 2019 as part of MNN's action plan, *Our Shared Sector* explores the intersection of nonprofit work and diversity, equity, and inclusion through articles published on MNN's blog and in the organization's monthly newsletter, *SectorNews*.

The InclusionBoston dialogue series ultimately led MNN staff to work towards increasing diversity internally and externally. As an organization, they had known they needed to increase staff and board diversity, and the series gave them a space to brainstorm strategies. The organization also decided to focus on increasing diversity among the presenters at their annual conference. Following the InclusionBoston series, they increased diversity at their 2019 conference—and plan to keep that momentum going for 2020.

Written with support from **Jim Klocke**, CEO, MNN.

> The dialogues helped us to think about a challenge we have been aware of, which is continuing to diversify our board of directors and our staff.

PARENTING JOURNEY

Website: parentingjourney.org

Parenting Journey believes resilient parents are a catalyst for social change, and that all of us have a role to play in harnessing that power to build strong communities. Parenting Journey has built stronger families by developing the inner strengths, life skills, and networks of resources they need to succeed.

Through its work, Parenting Journey had shown a commitment to equity. Prior to InclusionBoston, they wanted to hold conversations and build consciousness of equity through the organization, but had never engaged an external partner to support the work. In fact, although individual staff had been active in formal DEI work in the past, the organization as a whole had not. When approached, Parenting Journey did not want to pass up the opportunity to participate. YW Boston seemed like the right partner to help launch their formal DEI effort.

Duncan Remage-Healey, Managing Director of Operations at Parenting Journey, noted, **"What impressed me about YW Boston was they had a consistent, strong message of participation—you had to be there for all five dialogues, you had to be committed to putting in the time, you had to be committed to doing the work. From the CEO, Beth, to the facilitators, I felt YW Boston was a good example of an organization committed to DEI work."**

Twelve members of the Parenting Journey staff participated in InclusionBoston, including some based in New York. YW Boston worked with Partnering Journey to customize the dialogue sessions and utilize technology so New York based staff could fully participate even while remote.

A lot was unpacked during the dialogues: systemic and structural racism, and white supremacy, to name a few. There was a real desire among staff to move DEI work forward, but it was a challenge for the organization to embark on this work after the dialogues' conclusion without intentional trainings on group facilitation for DEI work.

> " How does a white man (me), in a position of leadership, navigate the power dynamics and get things moving forward without participating in the very same cycle that we were trying to disrupt?

Staff transitions at both YW Boston and Parenting Journey resulted in a reworking of the original action plan. Parenting Journey reworked their action plan and decided on a 90-day goal focused on creating a Race, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion statement for the organization. Ultimately, their statement will be the guiding principle for all that Parenting Journey does.

Written with support from **Duncan Remage-Healey**, Managing Director of Operations, Parenting Journey

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RAW ART WORKS

Website: rawartworks.org

RAW is a youth arts organization, rooted in art therapy. At its core, RAW believes that all kids should be seen and heard and that everyone has a story to tell. Located in Lynn, Massachusetts, RAW offers a variety of free programming from painting to filmmaking, for kids ages 7-19.

RAW Art Works had just completed a different race dialogue series, when the opportunity to participate in InclusionBoston came along. YW Boston's InclusionBoston was a good fit, because the dialogues were delivered on-site, which was key for the organization. Additionally, the five two-hour dialogue sessions were a good balance for different levels of staff thirst for depth.

> " There is only so much ground you can cover in any one training, and different people will get different things from different aspects of it. Some may be frustrated, because complex issues are not delved into deeply enough; others may feel challenged to think about things they never considered. Both of these will be normal, as well as the people who find the training has the exact right balance.

Fundraising was a focus area for RAW's conversations and action plan. InclusionBoston's process helped push RAW to examine how they selected and utilized data to describe the community and youth they served, to ensure that marginalized voices were included in the narrative that RAW used in their fundraising. At the time of this case study's publishing, RAW still felt frustrated about the lack of attendees of color at fundraising events and maintained a strong desire to increase the diversity of attendees. Another aspect of RAW's action plan was the forming an equity steering committee (ESC) to ensure the organization was doing its best to tackle issues of diversity and inclusion. The ESC's ongoing work focused on researching and reviewing onboarding training materials that, once implemented, would allow every member of the organization to build a shared level of understanding about issues of DEI. Over time, the ESC anticipated layering greater levels of depth into the materials, so that staff could take their learnings, and the group's conversation, deeper.

RAW also began to discuss hosting events that would build upon their goals to support their diverse community. They anticipated "bringing back" *They Look Like Me* (TLLM), an event that had not occurred in several years. TLLM was a career night that brought together 15 to 20 professionals of color to speak with RAW's youth. RAW's executive director had been trying for the past few years to get new leaders for the event. Matriculating through InclusionBoston and the formation of the Steering Committee seemed to provide the necessary impetus for new leadership to step forward. RAW hoped to relaunch the event in the fall of 2020.

Written with support from **Kit Jenkins**, Executive Director, RAW Art Works

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> " As a creative youth development program, I think most staff thought we were pretty educated about DEI issues. The workshops highlighted the gaps in our awareness. These workshops and the ongoing steering committee work have opened up dialogues in the organization that were not previously possible. There has been growth, openness, and tolerance for broader conversations.

UNITED SOUTH END SETTLEMENTS

Website: uses.org

United South End Settlements offers programs that support the whole family in achieving economic mobility. USES helps parents and caregivers develop their own capacity to reach their goals, increase their income and assets, and connect with new networks.

" The best training that I have been through in my professional career.

The United South End Settlements (USES) leadership team began their InclusionBoston series with mixed emotions. The team felt a sense of anxiety about digging deep into their experiences and opinions on race at work. However, they also felt that this training was critical for the leadership to reflect and gain perspective around issues of DEI. They realized that the success of diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives would depend on the broad engagement of employees, particularly key decision makers. For this reason, USES prioritized internal equity work and found the opportunity to engage with InclusionBoston to be timely.

During each weekly dialogue session, the USES team peeled off another layer, learning more about each other and the systems that impact their lives and work. USES managers and directors reflected on their own personal privilege and how the organization was being portrayed through marketing and communications. The environment was tense, real, and yet extremely healthy. The series pushed USES to plan for change by looking at their work through a different lens. USES found that YW Boston staff became their accountability partners and participants expressed that they wished the weekly sessions had lasted longer, as they

allowed staff to connect and uncover growth areas. Participants expressed a desire for opportunities to practice new skills with facilitators, such as holding "courageous conversations."

Ironically, after completing the series, USES immediately faced a difficult public relations situation. They made the very difficult decision to sell one of their properties and, while internal staff announced that this was in order to balance their finances and continue serving their community, the community did not receive the message the same way. From this, USES received community feedback that they had not prioritized equitable outcomes and then experienced a high level of staff turnover.

One of USES's "big wins" was that the organization created new policies for hiring and promotion. In doing so, they hired more people of color in leadership positions and refined their "onboarding process to encourage people of color to speak up." While they still struggle with public perception that they are a "race-blind" organization, they continue to prioritize internal equity and inclusion. USES hopes to participate in another InclusionBoston series soon, which will include frontline staff and provide the opportunity for more staff members to participate.

Written with support from **Jerrell Cox**, Vice President of Development and External Relations, USES

ABOUT YW BOSTON

eliminating racism
empowering women

yw boston

As the first YWCA in the nation, YW Boston has been at the forefront of advancing equity for over 150 years. Through our DE&I services—InclusionBoston and LeadBoston—as well as through our advocacy work and youth programming, we help individuals and organizations change policies, practices, attitudes, and behaviors with a goal of creating more inclusive environments where women, people of color, and especially women of color can succeed. Using a customized and measurable change management process and range of training and services, InclusionBoston (formerly known as Dialogues on Race and Ethnicity) helps organizations create the necessary cultural shift that will support inclusive policies and practices. Our evidence-based approach builds internal capacity and a plan for cultural change while supporting organizations throughout their journey.

ABOUT THE BOSTON FOUNDATION

The Boston Foundation tBf

The Boston Foundation, Greater Boston's community foundation, seeks to bring the collective power of our region's people and resources together to drive real change. Established in 1915, it is one of the largest community foundations in the nation—with net assets of $1.3 billion. In 2019, the Foundation received $151 million in contributions and the Foundation and its donors paid $153 million in grants to nonprofit organizations. The Foundation has many partners, including its donors, who have established more than 1,000 separate charitable funds for the general benefit of the community or for special purposes. With support from the Annual Campaign for Civic Leadership, the Foundation also facilitates public discourse and action, commissions research into the most critical issues of our time and advocates for public policy that advances opportunity for everyone. The Philanthropic Initiative (TPI), a consulting unit of the Foundation, designs and implements customized philanthropic strategies for families, foundations and corporations around the globe. To learn more about the Foundation and its work, visit TBF.org.

YW Boston is dedicated to eliminating racism, empowering women, and promoting peace, justice, freedom, and dignity for all.