“Philanthropy was not designed for people of color.”
Letter from the editors

As we planned together for the first issue of a new decade, and a new editorial partnership, we considered how an evolving PEAK Grantmaking Journal can best serve you.

Building on a legacy of in-depth reporting and insight critical for grants management professionals, we are proud to present this expanded Journal, your new member magazine — delivered three times yearly in print to our Organization and Consultant members, and accessible online exclusively to our membership community at peakgrantmaking.org/journal.

With this re-envisioned Journal, we’re staking out a space for members, experts, and the PEAK team to bring their best thinking forward. Our goal is to earn and hold your attention, giving you a place to unplug and focus on the issues that matter most to you as a grantmaking professional, team member, and sector leader.

Our partnership as co-editors begins with an issue that is consuming philanthropy and philanthropic organizations: the persistent lack of racial equity. The conversation is flowing, but progress lags. Meanwhile, the fallout is ongoing, limiting impact and potential in our work, workplaces, and lives.

Why is change so hard, and what are the obstacles we need to overcome? Our guest editor Roland Kennedy, Jr., eight contributors, and a panel of professionals have courageously raised their voices to bring clarity to our present moment and light the way forward. Read closely: In their passion, frustration, buried anger, and seedlings of hope, they offer the keys to further understanding. From their ideas come the building blocks for inclusive cultures, equitable grantmaking practices, aliyah, and mentoring.

Colleagues: Join us in rededicating yourself to your work in service of equity, and raising your voice to accelerate progress within your organization and across our sector. Here’s to another year of internal growth and external impact for us all. 🌟

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PEAK Grantmaking Journal is published three times a year by PEAK Grantmaking, a member-led national association of more than 4,500 professionals who specialize in grants management for funding organizations—the “how” of grantmaking. PEAK members come together to form a vibrant community of practice that advances shared leadership and learning across the sector. By cultivating resources, learning opportunities, and collaborations across the philanthropic spectrum, we champion grantmaking practices designed to help funders of all size and type maximize giving, learning, and impact. PEAK Grantmaking is dedicated to helping funders of all size and type maximize giving, learning, and impact. PEAK Grantmaking is dedicated to helping funders of all size and type maximize giving, learning, and impact.

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makes space for Black grants professionals to be heard in the discussion on racial diversity, equity, and inclusion in philanthropy. National conversations, various articles, and conferences have featured voices from across the sector on these topics. However, the Black grants perspective has been largely bypassed and overlooked in the conversation.

The grantmaking community is still on its own journey to be seen and heard as strategic impact partners within foundations. The community’s role is often viewed as limited and functional, which can impact one’s sense of belonging.

Being Black in this context means having a distinct experience, both within our personal lives and within the professional sector. Like our colleagues, we have a unique opportunity to generate change and make an impact. But what too often goes unheard are our daily experiences navigating society within the challenging confines of race.

The purpose of this journal is to bring Black voices in grants management into the light and invite the broader PEAK membership and philanthropic community into some of these unheard experiences.

We want readers to absorb the variety of these experiences: To see color. To sit with the audacity of Black voices being heard and shaping the narrative. To feel the weight on Black agency and voice, and understand how the possibilities of this sector become damaged under the pressure to assimilate and conform to white-dominant culture. To challenge yourself to be uncomfortable. To discern the lessons from participating white allies.

Philanthropy is an isolated field, and grants management is no less. We want the Black grants community to know that your voice matters, and now has a platform to be heard.

This journal is dedicated to Madam C.J. Walker and her philanthropic legacy. First in her family to be born free, and one of America’s first Black millionaires, Madam C.J. Walker was bold and successful in business and activism. She leveraged her fortune to fund Black causes related to education, social services, and art, and was the largest funder of anti-lynching efforts in her time. Just over 100 years since her death, we honor her legacy of support for racial justice in America.

“"I am in the business world, not for myself alone, but to do all the good I can for the uplift of my race.”"

– Madam C.J. Walker to Booker T. Washington in 1912

Courtesy of Madam Walker Family Archives /A'Lelia Bundles
What has been your experience navigating philanthropy as a Black person?

“I have felt invisible, not only because I’ve been the minority in the space, but because of the ‘blindness’ of the majority to appreciate and accept my value.”

“I was fortunate to have a mentor who cared deeply about my success, but many of my Black female peers have not had this luxury, and have left because of cultural insensitivities and neglect – choosing not to accommodate Black workers in situations where white counterparts are routinely accommodated.”

“I've been painted as the angry Black person and damn near lost my job for voicing my thoughts, holding folks accountable, and advocating for communities who have been left out of our generous grantmaking.”

“I've often felt as if I spoke an entirely different language than my teammates.”

“It’s been extremely difficult, especially in terms of pay equity and professional growth opportunity. My white colleague is currently receiving all the growth opportunities while I’m given the majority of administrative work. I feel very much like ‘the help’ in my current position.”

“I've been rewarded for my Blackness. The types of people who are leaders in the field either 1. do not truly understand the people they wish to serve and their needs, 2. can never build the trust or connections to the people they wish to serve, and therefore have a program that won’t ever be utilized, or 3. are unwilling to trust that those they seek to serve are able and want to help themselves.”

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“An emotional roller coaster that makes me question my value in terms of education, professional experience, lived experience, and knowledge, skills, and abilities.”

“Feeling pressure to do more than others for people who look like me. For example: Am I encouraging more funds towards Black organizations or issues and, if I do, would it be perceived as for the wrong reasons?”

“Surreal. ‘Othering’ is a term I cling to as it best describes how people of means and wealth often make the issue or cause they support about something ‘over there.’”

“I often carry the torch and fight for the funding for outstanding Black run initiatives.”

“It has felt tiring. We often have to work hard to put on our cheeriest, most outgoing, most welcoming versions of ourselves. And when we want to raise issues of equity, it feels lonely to push an organization by yourself as a person of color.”

“I’ve been able to have a mentor who cared deeply about my success, but many of my Black female peers have not had this luxury, and have left because of cultural insensitivities and neglect – choosing not to accommodate Black workers in situations where white counterparts are routinely accommodated.”

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By the Numbers: Exploring the Black experience in philanthropy

In exploring the Black experience in philanthropy, it’s necessary to start by naming the roots of philanthropy and its continuing challenges around diversification – of boards, executive leaders, staff, grantees, and partners. Despite, or perhaps because of, philanthropy’s roots in oppressive practices, it becomes even more important to have the conversation and to take action aimed at creating organizations and practices that foster greater inclusion for those it has traditionally left out.

Drawing on research from the Association of Black Foundation Executives, the Building Movement Project, the Council on Foundations, BoardSource, and PEAK Grantmaking in partnership with Frontline Solutions and Arabella Advisors, we can lay the groundwork for understanding the experience of Black professionals within the philanthropic sector in general, and in grants management in particular. It is always complex, and often troubling, yet still hopeful.

How foundations are staffed, by race:

- board chairs: 95% white
- executives: 90% white
- board members: 85% white
- executive staff: 83% white
- staff: 73% white
- program officers: 66% white
- grants managers: 62% white

The statistics are stark. Philanthropic organizations (and nonprofits) are largely led and heavily staffed by white people, and the diversity of employees increases as their power within the organization decreases.

“We have to be honest about the sources of wealth and how wealth was accumulated in this country – a great part of it was on the backs of people of color, and now those communities are benefiting from just a very small percentage of dollars... Once you know, how can you not be equitable about how you’re distributing the money?”

- Edgar Villanueva, Decolonizing Wealth

DEI is a value, yet...

Conversations in the field have centered racial equity, diversity, and inclusion as key to improving impact both in the way we fund and in the way we operate. With an increasing sense of urgency, more and more foundations are lifting up the values of diversity, equity, or inclusion. In our recent survey, a majority of foundations reported a formal statement of commitment to these values, with another 8 percent either in the process of creating one or taking action in other ways.

Despite that progress, philanthropy continues to fall far short in instituting equitable practices. The experience of Black, indigenous, and other people of color in the sector continues to stand in conflict with these stated values in two important ways: organizational culture and grantmaking practice.

Where is the DEI in organization culture?

Research across the nonprofit sector continues to show that people of different racial identities experience organizational culture, career development, and advancement differently. When we begin to understand that the traditional tenets of a “good” organizational culture were defined by members of one particular identity group (white men, to be exact), we begin to see organizational culture as it looks to all of those who sit outside that white-dominant framework. “In the workplace, white supremacy culture explicitly and implicitly privileges whiteness and discriminates against non-Western and non-white professionalism standards related to dress code, speech, work style, and timeliness,” observes Aysha Gray in the Stanford Social Innovation Review.

In the 2017 report Race to Lead: Confronting the Nonprofit Racial Leadership Gap, over one-third of people of color ranked their race/ethnicity among factors negatively impacting their career advancement, compared with 6 percent of whites. A textual analysis of write-in explanations provided by 380 people of color who reported that their career advancement was negatively impacted by their race shows that 40 percent talked about a perceived inability to lead, a lack of human resources support, and/or an exclusion from important social networks. Thirty percent cited negative experiences with others, ranging from microaggressions to tokenizing to managing white colleagues’ guilt and emotions about race.

The lack of diversity seen in foundation boards and staff shows up again when you check to see where grant dollars are flowing: According to DS’s State of Work report, less than 7 percent of grants go to diverse communities.

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Why do Black philanthropic professionals leave grantmaking?

1. Isolation within a grantmaking institution can be a challenge to retaining Black philanthropic professionals, especially those new to the sector.

2. Some feel that their role within a grantmaking institution does not allow them to work directly with communities.

3. They may find their jobs frustrating or perceive grantmaking institutions as overly bureaucratic.

4. When they leave philanthropy, they are often pushed out of grantmaking institutions.

5. Some find professional growth opportunities elsewhere.


Source: The Exit Interview, ABFE

*Respondents answered “all of the above,” capacity building, or outreach.

Where is the DEI in organization grantmaking practice?

When we asked grantmakers what they needed the most help with as they worked to embed equity in their grantmaking practice, their answers broke down like this:

- **Decision-making**
  - 37.4%
- **Grant guidelines**
  - 7.1%
- **Application**
  - 7.1%
- **Reporting**
  - 11.1%
- **Monitoring & Evaluation**
  - 21.2%
- **Other**
  - 16.2%
- **Application**
  - 7.1%

A full 62% of responding grantmakers do not use segmented or disaggregated data in their data collection process.

Only 36% are using external review committees or participatory grantmaking to increase the diversity of voices in grantmaking decisions.

Just 25% indicated that their foundation compares the demographic data of the organizations being funded with that of the communities they serve to determine whether funding may support existing inequities.

Grantmakers are evenly split (42% to 42%) over whether they compensate grantees and grantseekers for time spent convening, reporting, and performing other activities.
These are among the practices that support equity in funding decisions, allocations, and requirements, and are all concrete ways that grantmakers can demonstrate to their Black employees—and all other indigenous people and people of color—that they understand what it means to operationalize equity.

Everything that goes into a grant—from guidelines and applications to reporting, monitoring, evaluation requirements, decision-making criteria, and processes—are influenced by an organization’s values and culture, including the implicit, the explicit, and the aspirational. Whether decisions are being made about internal policies or grant allocations, who is in the room makes a big difference. Those elements of white dominant culture that dictate our organizational culture also dictate decisions about practices and processes. These systems, at their core, are built to let certain people and organizations in and keep other people and organizations out. Risk management and compliance practices, for instance, are tied up with who exactly decision-makers think is risky and what kinds of organizations need more due diligence. In essence, Black grants management professionals are being tasked with enforcing white dominant culture on their communities as they work to help those communities navigate traditional philanthropic practice.

It’s a unique and conflicting position to be in, but one that is fueling the drive to put grantmaking practice into the service of equity, and to question notions of implicit trust (or bias) that show up in the day-to-day work of philanthropy.

“Code-switching is becoming a more valuable skill in our profession than it has ever been. It’s a unique and conflicting position to be in, but one that is fueling the drive to put grantmaking practice into the service of equity, and to question notions of implicit trust (or bias) that show up in the day-to-day work of philanthropy.” —Ify Mora

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You’ve reviewed the research. Now hear the voices of dozens of Black grantmaking professionals, giving testimony on the dynamics of organizational culture for your colleagues of color. Reflecting on the findings above, their experiences and perspectives contain an extra layer of complex hierarchical power interactions that come with being on the operations side of philanthropy. Our Black members have trusted us with their stories in the hope that they will advance the state of the sector, and that the cognitive dissonance those stories highlight—held in place each and every day by anyone navigating the world of philanthropy—can be resolved with the power of common understanding.

These stories and perspectives tell us more about how far we all have to go if we truly want to support Black professionals (and all professionals) in this field, and create a truly inclusive culture that builds equity into its structure, its operations, and its aspirations. ▲

“[There should be an increase in safe opportunities to communicate more frankly and openly about philanthropy-related issues that affect Black people, to the whole group, to leadership, and to the sector.]”

Black Grant Directors’ Roundtable: Lessons from a career in philanthropy

Five grants management leaders offer on-the-ground testimony to the challenges of Black professionals in the sector—from the complexities of practicing DEI to the ways race has affected perceptions of their leadership, to the realities of code-switching your way through the white dominant workplace.

We offer our gratitude for the generosity and candor of Susan Hairston, Director of Grants Management at the JPB Foundation; Nicole Howe Buggs, Chief Administrative Officer and Corporate Secretary at the Carnegie Corporation of New York; Ify Mora, Director, Program Operations at Margaret A. Cargill Philanthropies, and PEAK Grantmaking board member; Miyesha Perry, Director of Grants Management at the Kenneth Rainin Foundation; and Timothy Robinson, AVP - Operations and Grants Administration at the Lumina Foundation, and PEAK Grantmaking board member.
Organizations tend to take for granted those in positions of formal authority (usually white people, often men, but particularly white women, in the context of grants management) as the standard referent to formal authority and voice. What is a core lesson in leadership you have learned about your voice? How is it valued and heard, and how has race affected perceptions of your leadership?

**Miyesha Perry:** Early in my management career, I had a performance review with my direct supervisor, one of the most supportive leaders I’ve worked with, and was told that, “some of your colleagues feel like you’re too direct.” When I asked her to tease that out a bit more, she really couldn’t. I’m not aware of any instance where a white colleague’s assertiveness has been labeled as “too direct” or viewed as anything less than positive. This was my first experience with feeling that my race was a defining factor in how colleagues perceived my behavior as a leader. It felt like being assertive was really a privilege that can be exercised only by whites. This was both frustrating and disappointing.

**Leaders of color must have multi-cultural fluency in the practice of code-switching in order to lead in ways that resonate with their own racial group while also connecting with the dominant ways of working in a predominantly white environment. Can you share a lesson about navigating this workplace dynamic?**

**Susana Hairston:** When I went into the investment business, there was an about-even gender split — perhaps a few more men — but zero Black people. I didn’t see another Black person until my last year. That really bothered me. So I came into philanthropy expecting it to be different, and it wasn’t. That was disappointing to me. But in the end, it’s the connections that you make with the people you surround yourself with and the people that you’re serving. That’s that personal connection that makes it all worthwhile.

**Perry:** The tools and resources to manage the code-switching required of you are your network and your mentors. Find that network, find your people, and hold on to them: Without them, it’s very, very challenging and it can be very, very socially isolating. I found those spaces in local Black and philanthropy groups, and if not for them, I would have left philanthropy years ago. With the right opportunity, the right leadership, and your own personal and professional maturity, you will find your voice, so you don’t have to code-switch as much.

**What are we doing for our early-career folks? We’re losing talented, smart people because they are not being supported. They don’t feel safe. They don’t feel heard.** — Miyesha Perry

**Haiyson:** Everyone needs to be culturally fluent to thrive in their workplace. Culture is not transparent to newcomers who don’t know what they don’t know. Often, people who have been in a workplace for a long time are not transparent, even though most genuinely believe they are. Blind spots can be rampant on both sides! Authenticity is everything — to a point. Cultural awareness and competency — knowing the definitions of acceptable and unacceptable behavior, failure and success, spoken and unspoken hierarchies, pitfalls, and opportunities — are gained over time, and go hand-in-hand with, or sometimes even trump, authenticity.

If you are a pioneer or a change agent, expect the challenge, embrace it, and practice self-care at all costs.

**Mora:** When I was younger, I used to resent the fact that I always had to navigate different cultures — be it white dominant culture, African-American culture, or others. I didn’t like always having to figure out how to assimilate into other cultural environments, especially when others had no interest in learning about my culture. Over time, I learned to accept code-switching as my reality, and appreciate it as an asset. I believe my lived experience navigating different cultural identities — for instance, as a Nigerian-American with a Cuban husband and a Nigerian/Cuban/American family — is ultimately what allows me to be able to work with people of different backgrounds and work styles, and to learn from them.

I think this skill is critical to being successful in the work we do to drive change within our organizations.

**Code-switching,** which allows us to easily navigate different cultural environments, is becoming a more valuable skill in our profession than it has ever been. This is because so many of us in grants management are now being tasked as organizational development change agents, working with people with varied lived experiences across functional teams, in order to roll out changes to systems and processes that support our foundation’s grantmaking.

**Howe Buggs:** I grew up in a Caribbean family in a predominantly white neighborhood where I didn’t have many opportunities for diverse interactions. The lesson for me was twofold: Stop trying to be what others expect, and endeavor not to make the same assumptions about people based on how they look. I found the confidence to be unapologetically me, even if I do not sound or behave the way others expect. I also learned to focus my time and energy on figuring out the best way to connect and communicate with the person or group by getting to know them, not by relying on assumptions based on their race, gender, orientation, or disability.

**Hairston:** Don’t sit back and make a judgment without having the right opportunity, the right leadership, and your own personal and professional maturity, you will find your voice, so you don’t have to code-switch as much.

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Most leadership theory implicitly or explicitly claims to be identity-neutral, disregarding insights on race. The current sense of diversity, equity, and inclusion in philanthropy suggests that organizations need to balance some degree of color-blindness and color consciousness. Can you share your experience with this paradox?

Howe Buggs: For years, it has felt as if organizations were sending mixed signals, wanting to appear as if they are addressing the issue of diversity while simultaneously wanting to be neutral in order to appear fair and balanced. Foundations may hire a few people of color, in the hopes that greater diversity among staff will automatically lead to better and more equitable decisions and informed thinking. But more work is required. They must also provide the environment and culture to discuss bias.

You need to have authentic conversations, asking people of color what they think, what they need, and what could be done better. You must foster an environment of trust where tough conversations can take place, and give people a voice. To leverage insights, you cannot simply hire people or invite them to an event. You have to incorporate mechanisms and facilitate forums to invite true feedback and input.

Mora: To paraphrase Dr. ML Black: It can be riskier to not bring your full self into your work than to do so. As I reflect on the paradox of balancing some degree of color-blindness and color consciousness within philanthropy, I keep coming back to that comment from Dr. Black’s keynote at a recent Technology Association of Grantmakers conference. As a Black Nigerian-American woman, it has not always felt “safe” or prudent career-wise to be my full self as a leader.

For the early part of my childhood, I lived in an all-white neighborhood where my family was the only family of color. My parents, both born and raised in Nigeria, worked hard to instill a sense of belonging and pride in our cultural heritage. But the environment around me did not embrace that difference, so I learned early on how to “play the game.” I learned from feedback in the formative years of my career that I will always need to navigate the “angry Black woman” stereotype. The reality is that tamping down my expressiveness and enthusiasm for my ideas can be effective because it can be experienced by others as aggressive or “having an attitude.”

Robinson: One lesson that I've learned over the last 30-plus years in nonprofits, primarily as a board volunteer, has been to set the intention to make a difference and create a different experience. When I started volunteering, I was, in most cases, one of the youngest people on the board, and the only person of color. It bothered me that there weren't more people of color on those boards. And my observation was that the reason why I was at the table was twofold: My financial background, which is always sought-after, and my legal background, which was also helpful. Plus, as a person of color, I was able to check that box for an organization. It was a great experience for me personally, but there was an absence of other people who looked like me.

Perry: There is no such thing as identity-neutral. As a sector and as leaders, we can work to minimize unconscious bias. However, the reality is that racial identity, especially as a Black person, is undeniable and affects every area of our experiences—professionally, educationally, mentally, physically, financially, and socially. Pretending that it doesn’t matter only serves to continue the many microaggressions that exist daily in the culture of philanthropy, foundations, and our sector. I have learned to name the elephant in the room and I try to educate others when I can. That means discomfort for many, but that’s okay. Someone has to begin the conversation and do the work.

Color-blindness and color consciousness can also be expressed in terms of visibility and invisibility, or valued and devalued. When are these frameworks helpful or harmful and, most importantly, to whom and how? —Susan Hairston

What feedback would you give your senior leaders or board about how to promote the inclusion of Black voices in philanthropy?

Howe Buggs

“Black voices and people-of-color voices should not always be assumed to be the same thing. All Black voices are not monolithic.”

“Be intentional about promoting hard-working people of color who have proven themselves time and time again. Have a progression plan in place and offer professional development opportunities to bridge cultural divides. Be open to new and different ideas, even if they challenge the status quo or make you personally uncomfortable. That discomfort is where your impact lives.”

Robinson

“If you truly care about certain ‘voices,’ you must speak up and ask, then be prepared to act on the feedback received. Inclusion is not meant to be easy, but the payoff is always worth the effort.”

“Promote from within and encourage Black staff to do more than administrative jobs.”

“‘It’s not enough to just have a diverse staff, adding bodies and checking boxes. Allowing and bringing individuals of color to the decision-making table is what makes a difference.’

“Color-blindness and color consciousness can also be expressed in terms of visibility and invisibility, or valued and devalued. When are these frameworks helpful or harmful and, most importantly, to whom and how?” —Susan Hairston

ANONYMOUS

Timothy Robinson

Nicole Howe Buggs
As I write this, I am struggling to find the right words to start the conversation between you and me. I want to make sure I am clear and concise, but the feelings I am giving a voice to aren’t clear or concise. These feelings are HEAVY, and not only do they come with a weight — that I carry around with me every day — they are layered and nuanced. They are the first thing to greet me in the morning, the first thing I think about when I step out of the door, and the first thing I must manage as I step into work.

My feelings, like me, long to be understood and accepted. However, when they aren’t, the world can feel monochromatic. Some may think that is dramatic and that’s okay. But, when who you are as a person creates this conflict that leads to a path of most resistance, personally and professionally, you can understand how “fitting in” presents a certain appeal.

I’ll admit, assimilation has been a silent lesson in my life and has always been something I was taught through absorption and observation. I observed how assimilating could save me and serve me, and I absorbed those lessons in subtle ways. Sometimes it was a look received from others to admonish me for being different, or a conversation with my parents about being on my best behavior around the police. And in those moments, it felt like I had to choose their acceptance over my own self-acceptance, causing me to feel isolated daily.

Being Black, gay, and gender non-binary in the nonprofit world is extremely lonely. As if being Black wasn’t already hard enough, maneuvering through this world with additional identifiers like gay and gender non-binary makes every day feel like a battle. I can’t tell you how frustrating it is to have to reintroduce myself to people every day. Having to walk around ready to educate the masses in order to garner support and understanding for who I am and how I identify — only to have to do it again the next day and the next day. It is exhausting, and some days I don’t have the energy. But then I tell myself if I don’t hold myself accountable to teaching others, then what’s the point?

It is an uncontested fact: Philanthropy, even in organizations that value diversity, equity, and inclusion, is filled to the brim with cisgendered white people. The leadership likely looks nothing like you and they most surely don’t identify the way you do, so when you enter the organization, the feeling of othering is immediate. Belonging is not the primary focus of philanthropy — it’s the mission-based work to have successful programs, thoughtful grantmaking, and a positive impact outside of the office. But, too often, grantmaking organizations do not operate this way internally. Why does it seem that they have all the energy to be innovative thought leaders in their philanthropic work, but too often fall short when it comes to building a thriving and inclusive culture?

Culture can make or break an organization, and this of course isn’t something that is unique to nonprofits or philanthropy. Countless studies underscore culture’s profound impact on the success of an organization and the people in it. However, too many organizations shy away from even attempting to create a culture that serves everyone, and instead opt for a one-size-fits-all approach, which is doomed to fail the people who work there. Even with minimal positional power, you do have the influence to try and make a change if you feel empowered to do so, or find like-minded colleagues to help present a plan to leadership. For some, it can start with a commitment. One might work with colleagues to create a DEI committee within their organization to cultivate and co-create a culture that is equitable and inclusive to all.

I challenge you to make a commitment to yourself and to your organization, and to see it through. Here are a few things I have learned along the way:

1. Create and find support systems in and out of the office that can help you navigate your career and organization.
2. Bring your authentic self to every situation.
3. Follow your gut and let your intuition guide you.
4. Treat every opportunity as one to build your network.
5. If you can’t attend a conference, find ways to attend smaller regional meetings or webinars to not only learn but forge new connections.

While this certainly can’t serve as an exhaustive list of all the ways that you will navigate your own journey, it captures many of the beacons of guidance that have been most effective for me. Over time, I’ve noticed that when areas of life have been unable to support my full authentic being and belonging, it is often my colleagues who bridge a lot of those gaps. For listening to challenges I encounter, coming together to be thought leaders, or encouraging and supporting me in unimaginable ways, I say thank you! Thank you to a great network of diverse people in philanthropy who hold me accountable and check in with me. I urge you to find your network, create new connections, learn about new things you’re passionate about, and have conversations with people who understand your struggles.

I hope that what you take away from this makes you feel less lonely, and that you walk away knowing that you don’t have to need help out of the darkness.

Darius Soler is a grants associate at a private foundation.

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A Conversation with LaTosha Brown about Courage, Authenticity, and Healing

Over her 15-year career in nonprofits and philanthropy, LaTosha Brown has led an array of trailblazing initiatives to tackle urgent needs, bridge relationships between national and regional funders, and innovate funding models. She founded the Gulf Coast Fund, the Appalachian Community Fund, Grantmakers for Southern Progress, the Fund for Southern Communities, the Southern Black Girls and Women’s Consortium, and, in 2017, the Black Voters Matter Fund. This March, she addresses the PEAK Grantmaking community in her PEAK2020 opening keynote, “Inspiration and Courage for Movement Building in Philanthropy.”

In the following highlights from her conversation with Genise Singleton, Program Operations Manager at The Kresge Foundation, Brown takes stock of the qualities and practices needed to advance the state of sector equity.
Courage is those moments when I’ve had to move on what I know in my heart to be true, authentic, and advancing for all involved, whether they see it or not — leaning into that in spite of the fear and the consequence.

But courage also requires what I call considerations. Having courage sometimes means that I fight at all, or that I don’t fight right now, or that I fight differently because I am concerned about the welfare and the wellbeing of others around me.

Case in point: Last year, my organization went down to Jefferson County. You may have seen the story, it was all over the place. There were 40 elder Black seniors who had on a bus to take them to vote, and we got stopped [by the police], and they had to get off the bus. And at the time, because I’m an activist, my initial reaction is, “Oh hell no, we’re going to fight.”

Instead, we adhered to the request, knowing that we would come back and address it — that it wasn’t appropriate to address it there. It required deep courage for me, because at that moment, there was something that I knew was not right, that I personally wanted to shut down. But I also had to recognize that my foremost responsibility is to take care of those people who trusted in me. And so I had to put aside my own ego, my own wanting to blow it up, and consider all these other factors.

So, courage to me requires a commitment. Courage is not just the action — courage is the action as it relates to whatever the commitment requires. Sometimes that means I’ll blow it up. But having courage also means that sometimes you have to move in a particular way. Not in fear of anything, but making a decision based on the advancement.

Singleton: What workplace issues have you run into that have limited your ability to be impactful, and how have you dealt with them?

Brown: What I think philanthropy often doesn’t do is give people the space to heal. We show up in communities, but there’s no real acknowledgement of racism and how we are dealing with the traumatic effects of it now — not just historically, instructionally, but in the way it shapes how people show up.

So you go to a community meeting and people censure you out: if you’re really committed to that community, you lean into the conflict and figure out what has them so angry that they are protesting your plan to put a center there. Maybe it’s because you all didn’t even ask them if they want a center. Maybe that’s not what they want to prioritize. Or maybe they want to be a part of the process. Or maybe they just need to curse somebody out because they had a bad day, and they’ve seen their community being exploited over and over again.

So I don’t think that philanthropy gives space and place to communities, or understands how trauma shows up. And that even in our relationships with philanthropy, that’s been a traumatic experience.

So how are you accounting for healing on both ends? Because trauma doesn’t just impact those that have been oppressed. Oppressors are also traumatized by the nature of oppression. And sometimes they show up in communities like there’s nothing wrong with them, only what’s wrong with the community. No, you’ll need to get some therapy and help too.

That’s the other piece: How do we embed healing constructs in this process that impact the way we interact with communities, but also impact the way that philanthropy shows up, and the way in which we give people grace and space to build trust?

Singleton: In that vein — philanthropy providing grace and space for healing — I want to talk about Black staff in the philanthropic space. I feel like, as a Black person, particularly in a white-structured environment, I need space to connect with people who look like me. Can you talk about things that you have done for your staff to help them succeed as it relates to working in these white spaces?

Brown: Absolutely. One part of our work for the Black Voters Matter Fund is that we center the leadership of Black women in particular. We wanted to create an organization to be impactful, but also to create a space for Black women to work, to get paid, and have benefits doing the organizing work we do in our community. We wanted to create these positions to give opportunities for people to really develop, and be able to take care of themselves in those spaces.

In addition to that, the name of our organization was created specifically for what you described: Black Voters Matter Fund. We’ve got white folks and all kinds of other people that support us. But we want to be affirming that it is okay to have Black space, and that we need Black space. And in affirming who we are, it gives permission for other people to stand and affirm who they are.

White people sometimes don’t have the capacity to be able to make the distinction that when folks are saying “Black lives matter” or “Black voters matter” or whatever, all we’re saying is to give Black people grace and space to fully show up and affirm who they are.

In my time [teaching] at Harvard, I’ve had students say stuff to me like, “Oh my God, they got to keep you. You are so free. I’ve never seen a Black person that’s free.” And I didn’t know what they meant at first. I’m like, “Really?” Because it’s so natural for me. We all have code-switch, because we’ve got to learn that if we’re working in the Eurocentric-dominated environment, right?

If I know you can’t hear me when I say “social justice,” but you can hear me if I say “capacity building,” then I say “capacity building.” I’m still talking about social justice, I’m just using it as a language, as a form of communication. If you speak Japanese, I have to speak to you in Japanese. I don’t have to become Japanese. I just show up in my authentic space, a space that’s filtered through love. It’s being able to demonstrate how we are in white spaces and take that Blackness with us, not as something to be embarrassed about, or something to force in, but actually as added value.
So You Want to Be a White Ally
Healing from white supremacy

by Caitlin Duffy

White people aren’t inherently bad or broken. We are humans, born into and conditioned by a toxic culture of whiteness.

I am a person underneath my ancestors’ assimilation and my social inheritance of this culture in the U.S., including the biases it seeds in me, the privileges it affords me, the realities it numbs me to, and the history and lineages it obscures.

This has been a simple but profound reckoning for me as an aspiring white “ally,” especially since I’ve spent most of my life wanting little to do with people like me or my family.

I’m a descendant of Irish, German, and Polish immigrants with deep roots in New Jersey, some going back to the 1600s. My family has next-to-no remnants of the identities and cultures that my ancestors brought from Europe. Michael Eric Dyson, a Black professor of sociology and former pastor, describes the intergenerational process of (white) Americanization as breaking up ethnicity and then building up an identity that was formed from the old tongue and connected to the new land.”

I grew up in a rural area, a small town where 90 percent of the population was white. My first significant engagement with a community of color was through elementary school friends who had immigrated from Costa Rica. Growing up together, I was fascinated by their strong community ties and the collective sense of self expressed and reinforced through their ethnicity, faith, and rich cultural traditions such as food, music, and dance.

Looking back, I realize that they represented what my soul craved, but had not experienced, through white culture.

This has become clearer to me over the past ten years, as I’ve sought out opportunities to learn about race and racism in my academic and personal life, and about diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) in my work in philanthropy.

I’m so self-righteous that a mentor said I was like rushing water, trying to push people against their will. How could I become like a flowing river, to instead bring people along with me?

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Now, instead of trying to push others out of my own discomfort, I lean into conversations that are uncomfortable about race and privilege. Do the work. Ask questions. Join discussions. And stick your neck out! Black people shouldn’t have to do all the pushing for equity for everyone.

One teacher who has supported me in this is Sandra Kim, founder of the online platforms Everyday Feminism and Re-Becoming Human. Sandra talks about how we must build the emotional and spiritual capacity of white people to care for the pain of internalized white supremacy, so that it can be transformed into a compassionate call to action.

Sandra describes compassion as a naturally arising human response in the presence of pain—something that is stunted by our unconscious conditioning. To help people like me identify our normalized wounds, she defines the core pains of whiteness as:

• Disconnection from the reality of white supremacy, and therefore from people of color and white people with different racial consciousness;

• Disconnection from ourselves, especially from our bodies, hearts, and spirits;

• Disconnection from our lineages, including blood, ethnic, spiritual, and land ancestors;

• Disconnection from nature, including the land, water, animals, plants, minerals, and our natural rhythms.

That’s why she connects our desire to hold deeper compassion for others with the need for us to deepen our containers for our own pain first. So many of us see fires around us and want to help, but we often only add to the flames because we’re on fire ourselves. We have to acknowledge and care for these pains.

Edgar Villanueva, a long-time grantmaking practitioner and Native American leader, offers similar recommendations regarding our full, feeling selves. In his seminal book, Decolonizing Wealth, he says, “Settlers and their descendants have to grieve the lives of their ancestors, the culture that made their domination and exploitation even imaginable, possible, and acceptable. What confused, numbed, dissociated hell it must have been, on a deep level, even if they enjoyed benefits on other levels. Hurting people hurt others.”
This approach to anti-racism has helped me peel back the layers of my anger to find pain, loneliness, and grief over the loss of community, culture, and identity in my lineage.

Now when anger arises within me, I use it as an indication that something has been broken, such as an explicit agreement or an unspoken value that I hold. I’m better able to treat myself and others with compassion, and to give and receive feedback. This has strengthened my ability to engage with others around issues of race and racism in my family and my work; for example, in organizing caucuses with white peers in philanthropy. I also continue to take educational courses like “Roots Deeper Than Whiteness” with White Awake, and donate monthly to local groups like the Diverse City Fund, where I served on the “Board of Instigators” for three years.

I encourage you to find your own community of practice, and invite you into relationship. I believe this work can help move us beyond white-savior charity mindsets and performative allyship, and build a foundation for more authentic, accountable relationships and collective liberation.

In the words of Richael Faithful, a Black healing justice practitioner whose teachings have influenced my life, “Ending white supremacy is as much about humanizing people of color as it is about reclaiming whites’ own humanity.”

PEAK Grantmaking has long posited that effective grantmaking organizations deliberately connect the “how” of grantmaking to strategy and impact. Though it might sound simple, this goal is difficult to achieve, and few funders have attained it. In a recent PEAK Grantmaking survey, only 8 percent of grants management professionals indicated that their job included organizational strategy development.

For grants management staff — whose work and expertise is the “how” of grantmaking — it’s been a challenge to gain a seat at the strategy and impact table, since the field at-large must overcome?

For Black grants management professionals, this adds another layer to their already-challenging position. Is attaining a seat at this table possible and desirable, considering the various forms of institutional racism and lack of positional power they must overcome?

The challenges that Black professionals experience in the philanthropic sector are well documented. They start with low bar, but important in a position where many Black people say they experience loneliness and isolation — in their organizations and in philanthropy generally.

“Help Black people who are emerging (or evolving) in their career connect with more senior folks to gather advice. Lift up the accomplishments of people of color in philanthropy.”

“We need white allies, but we need them to be fully informed and educated — not just proclaim their knowledge.”

“Be more inclusive so that more voices are not just at the table, but are able to have power and authority to help make change. Many times, I am at the table, but I feel powerless to really do anything meaningful.”

Mentoring for a Seat at the Table

by Steven Casey and Roland Kennedy, Jr.
To address the race and equity barriers that are held in place by white-dominant professional standards while attempting to advance equity in grants management.

Mentoring is therefore critical for the survival and growth of Black staffers in the sector. In the face of a layered, philanthropy-wide problem, we believe that mentorship is a key part of the solution.

To break down the challenge, and the ways mentoring can help,

When we narrow the field to focus on Black men, the lack of commitment, and lived experience that so often bring Black staff to this work aren’t enough to navigate the long game. Often, the personal and professional behaviors of Black professionals are scrutinized at greater heights and depths than their white counterparts, and they must deal with the pressure of white-dominant professional standards while attempting to advance their own systems of philanthropy, education, and finances.

Is attaining a seat at this table possible and desirable, considering the various forms of institutional racism and lack of positional power they must overcome?

Will mentorship advance the sector beyond the challenges of racism and white privilege? No, not on its own, but it is a critical piece of the puzzle. As we all become more aware of the harm that racism has caused, and seek to remedy it, our local and national philanthropic affinity groups must facilitate safe spaces for Black members, implement ideas for group mentoring, and provide anti-racism tools to their members in order to advance equity in grants management.

Mentoring has the power to spark understanding, courage, and resilience — and, ultimately, assist in navigating the norms, personalities, and exceptions to the rules that underwrite white privilege. If all goes right, perhaps mentors can ignite the audacity to thrive in a seat that was never meant for Black people or grants management staff to occupy.

Often, the personal and professional behaviors of Black professionals are scrutinized at greater heights and depths than their white counterparts, and they must deal with the pressure of white-dominant professional standards while attempting to advance their personal and professional lives. The passion, commitment, and lived experience that so often bring Black staff to this work aren’t enough to navigate the long game.

To address the race and equity barriers that are held in place by white leadership, peers, consultants, and even volunteers and vendors, patience must be learned and taught — in philanthropy, and in America generally. Black staff who have been in the sector for a while can take on the role of mentor, but they must simultaneously navigate their own experiences with racism in the sector. Awareness and stamina are needed to address and redress institutional racism, and ultimately reduce the mental and physical toll it can take on Black bodies.

Black leaders are few in this sector. To increase their numbers, we propose mentoring relationships rooted in trust, human experience, shared empathy, and an unflinching examination of the problems we face. An ideal mentor is someone who can speak to the hopes and hazards ahead, the ongoing opportunities for growth, and how to capitalize on them.

What feedback would you give your senior leaders or board about creating a supportive organizational culture?

“Change the color of boards and senior leaders.”

“Atas a Black professional, I bear an unspoken burden of cultural assimilation performances, code-switching, tongue-biting, and self-protection that has to be performed daily — all in addition to the kinds of carefulness we all must be mindful of in our workplace, regardless of race.”

“Invest resources in grassroots efforts. Provide resources so marginalized communities can create their own systems of philanthropy, education, and finances.”

“Too much work is happening in the ‘head’ space and not the ‘heart’ space — listen, pay attention, move beyond diversity, and take a risk and be authentically inclusive!”

“Culture will propel your organization forward or stifle it. Commitments to racial equity and DEI have to be supported from the board and senior leaders or it will never institutionalize.”

“Senior leaders and trustees need to ask probing questions to assess what’s working well about organizational culture and what needs improvement. In far too many cases, there is a clear line of separation between staff and trustees, with senior leaders too often serving as an intermediary between the two.”

ANONYMOUS

Steven Casey is associate director of grants management at the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, and a PEAK Grantmaking board member.

Roland Kennedy, Jr. is a grants professional and a former chair of PEAK Grantmaking’s Greater Washington D.C. chapter.
How to Support Black Professionals Through Philanthropic Culture and Grantmaking Practice

Curated by Melissa Sines

Culture
Culture beats strategy every time. When you make an explicit connection between your values and your organizational culture, norms, and practices, you will hire and retain a more diverse staff. Consider these recommendations for developing a more equitable and inclusive organizational culture that clearly demonstrates how you value diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Emphasize race equity over diversity
Focus on race equity explicitly, emphasizing the structures, rules, processes, and practices that negatively impact people of color inside and outside of organizations, and outlining specific tactics to mitigate them as part of a process to drive race equity within an organization’s culture.

– The Exit Interview, ABFE

Nurture inclusive cultures and professional standards
An organization’s board members, executive team, and staff need appropriate training to help them understand potential roadblocks to maintaining staff diversity, and work within their institutions to promote a culture that values the unique and diverse skill sets of employees.

– The Exit Interview, ABFE

Implement race-conscious hiring and promotion practices
Implement hiring and promotion policies/practices that address issues of implicit bias. Organizations should also regularly inventory their own success in hiring and advancing staff of color.

– The Exit Interview, ABFE

Lead with values
Effective grantmaking organizations deliberately connect the “how” of grantmaking to values, strategy, and impact.

– Action Planner: Strategies for Aligning Practices and Values, PEAK Grantmaking

Use mentoring, coaching, and professional development
New Black philanthropic professionals need training on how to navigate philanthropy, as well as mentoring and coaching to inform how they approach the grantmaking craft.

– The Exit Interview, ABFE

Create affinity spaces
People of color should have their own cohorts where they can openly express the ways they experience racialized barriers and find support and advice from their peers, including access to networks that can help them advance.

– Race to Lead: Confronting the Nonprofit Racial Leadership Gap, Building Movement Project

Practice
Elements of organizational culture, implicit bias, and positional power, combined with our personal outlook, inform how we approach both trust and risk as it relates to our grantees. Consider these recommendations for developing more equitable grantmaking practices that clearly demonstrate how you value diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Cultivate your personal power
Recognize and use the positional power you hold in your organization; find allies across staff, board, and other stakeholders to advocate for change; and develop a shared commitment to embed equitable grantmaking practices.

– 2018 Research on Equitable Practices, Frontline Solutions and PEAK Grantmaking

Implement more flexible practices
When we provide funding that gives nonprofits space to innovate and the security to know our support is here for the long haul, they worry less about their own survival and focus more on responding to shifts in their environment and lifting up their communities.

– Grantmakers for Effective Organizations

Implement race-conscious grantmaking practices
Analyze data to understand which communities are getting left out of funding streams and why. Adjust practices to meet the needs of grantees and applicants targeting historically marginalized communities.

– 2018 Research on Equitable Practices, Frontline Solutions and PEAK Grantmaking

Practice smarter risk management
In a recent study, the Open Road Alliance identified that funder-created obstacles present the most risk to impact for nonprofits. Collecting and sharing risk data can help a foundation understand the types of risk that are keeping nonprofits from achieving grant results. Naming and contextualizing risk keeps us from relying on gut feelings about what or who is risky.

– Roadblock Analysis Report, Open Road Alliance

Put in the extra effort to develop trusting relationships
We heard the importance of “picking up the phone and asking questions” and “trust” as important elements allowing funders to take calculated risks. Processes that rely heavily or solely on paperwork might be more biased toward risk aversion and favor organizations led by a white person.

– 2018 Research on Risk Management and Equity, Arabella Advisors and PEAK Grantmaking

Learn from community
The current evaluation paradigm includes definitions and expectations around validity, rigor, bias, and objectivity that honors particular types of knowledge, evidence, and truth. This looks for generalizable and scaled data and findings that often feel disconnected and not reflective of the values of the nonprofit/community partner, particularly those engaged in equity, inequality, or social-justice work.

– The Equitable Evaluation Initiative
Dear members, this section is dedicated to celebrating you: your contributions to the field and professional news, the latest members to join you in this vibrant network, and the local chapter events connecting you.

Of course, PEAK wouldn’t exist without you, the 4,500 grants management professionals committed to improving the “how” of grantmaking. We are a member-led community, with an extraordinary group of 200-plus volunteers stepping into roles as board members, chapter officers, committee members, and more.

Over 365 grantmaking organizations and consultants help power our work, and show their commitment to the profession, as dues-paying members.

Collectively, we are advancing the grants management profession and changing the practice of philanthropy into the practice of principled grantmaking.

We thank you for the work and dedication demonstrated in these pages; our own work is dedicated, in turn, to you. We hope you are inspired to deepen your engagement with our community in 2020, and beyond.

First, we offer huge thanks to the 19 members of the PEAK Grantmaking Board for their leadership and service, and a special note of gratitude to outgoing board members Heather Peeler, Hope Lyons, Marc McDonald, and Rik Treiber.

This month, three candidates have been nominated to join the board (pictured, from left): Adam Sanders, Grants Manager, The Leona M. and Harry B. Helmsley Charitable Trust; Miyesha Perry, Director of Grants Management, Kenneth Rainin Foundation; and Bridget DeLeon, Director of Grantmaking, The Char and Chuck Fowler Family Foundation.

Current board members pursuant a second term include Kevin Bolduc, Janet Camarena, and Tim Robinson.

Join us at PEAK2020 to meet board members and candidates, then vote in our online election this spring. Also, plan to attend our virtual Annual Membership Meeting in April, featuring updates from PEAK Grantmaking’s board and staff and ways to get involved, build your expertise, connect with peers, and elevate your grantmaking practice.

In October, PEAK Midwest held a daylong workshop in St. Louis centered around ways to be grantmaking practices to organizational values throughout the grantmaking cycle, and to assess and develop the competencies outlined in PEAK’s Grants Management Professional Competency Model. Thanks to host Mid-America Transplant, members also had the unique opportunity to tour a first-of-its-kind on-site organ recovery facility, hear first-hand from the recipient of a donated organ, and help with preparations for the nonprofit’s 5K race that weekend.

PEAK Community

In October, PEAK Southeast hosted a two-day summit in Charleston, South Carolina last October. Day one found attendees making site visits to Old Enclave, a historic elementary school repurposed to house community-building services, and Fresh Future Farm, a nonprofit urban farm and grocery store. Day two focused on workshops on diversity, equity, and inclusion practices.
Member News

Paige Granger (PEAK New York Co-chair) started a new position as Grants Manager at The Rockefeller Foundation. Kevin Ryan is the new Director, Foundation and CSR at the Delta Dental Community Care Foundation.

Ursula Stewart (Past PEAK Board Member) is the new Grant Making Impact Advocate at Salesforce.org.

Lacey Sortman serves as both the new Grants Associate at James F. and Marion L. Miller Foundation and Grant and Program Coordinator at The Resier Family Foundation. Enrika Moore became the Senior Program Officer at Community Foundation for Greater Atlanta.

Hannah Kahn, Vice President, Grants Management Director at Arnold Ventures, received the Outstanding Foundation Professional Award from the Association of Fundraising Professionals Golden Gate.

Lori Perkins, Grants Manager, Ausherman Family Foundation is now a certified Standards for Excellence Licensed Consultant.

Deena Lauver Scotti is new Vice President of Program Administration at Missouri Foundation for Health.

Mark Szuiman, currently Chief Strategy Officer and President of Global Policy and Advocacy at the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, will take over as the Foundation’s Chief Executive.

Nichol Higdon will be the new Vice President of Finance and Operations at McKnight Foundation.

Qiana Thomason was named the new CEO of Health Forward Foundation.

Adam Cimino became the first Manager of Philanthropy and Foundation Operations at the new Visa Foundation in San Francisco.

Welcome, new members!

Organization Members

Open Road Alliance
HKK Foundation
Foundation for Opioid Response Efforts
WomenStrong International
Kenneth Rainin Foundation
The Libra Foundation
Jessica Bell duPont Fund
Community First Foundation
Potomac Health Foundation
Jack Miller Family Foundation
Rocky Mountain Health Foundation
OnaB Foundation
Delta Dental Community Care Foundation
Capital One
Castelline Family Foundation
Dave & Charyl Duffield Foundation
Native American Agriculture Fund
NEO Philanthropy
Napa Valley Vintners
MACR
California Humanities
Maine Community Foundation
The Simmons Foundation
Visa Foundation
Community Foundation for the Ohio Valley
Charles Hayden Foundation
Rockefeller Family Fund
Patrick J. McGovern Foundation
Adria Foundation
American Student Assistance
Disabled Veterans National Foundation
Humansities DC
The Foundation for AIDS Research
The New York Women’s Foundation
Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids
Oregon Community Foundation
Consultant Members
Third Plateau
Hitprint, LLC
Bessermere Trust
Community Impact Consultants
Build Up Advisory Group
Kim Foster Consulting
Grassi & Co.
C & W Creative Endeavors

The newly-renamed PEAK Mideast (formerly PEAK Ohio) held a fall learning and networking day focused on sharpening core grants management skills like due diligence, applications, and reporting. Our thanks to host The Columbus Foundation and sponsor osteopathic Heritage Foundation of Nelsonville.

The Meyer Foundation hosted the PEAK Greater Washington, DC fall meeting in October, featuring a presentation on grantmaking legal compliance, followed by roundtables to discuss streamlining efforts around applications and reports, grants management system integrations, process workflows, and due diligence.

PEAK Community

Nora Miltsiek became Grant Information Systems Manager at The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

Kimberly Canfield is the new Grants Manager at The James Irvine Foundation.

Shirley Hamilton has a new position as a Program Assistant at the Argosy Foundation.

Amber López Gamble was promoted to Director of Grants Management at The California Wellness Foundation.

Deb Debbaut (PEAK Midwest Co-chair) was named the 2019 Outstanding Alum of Iowa Western Community College.

Fernanda Kuchkarian (PEAK Florida Vice Chair) was promoted to Grants Manager at American Jewish World Service.

Elizabeth Donohue became Manager, Grants at Peter G. Peterson Foundation.

Andrew Brown (PEAK Greater Washington, DC Co-chair) has been promoted to Grants Manager at the Meyer Foundation.

Edgar Villanueva has been promoted to Senior Vice President of Programs and Advocacy at the Schott Foundation.

Kelli Rojas (PEAK Rocky Mountain Co-chair) was promoted to Director of Data and Operations, Rose Community Foundation.

Neeta Boddapati was promoted to Senior Program Officer at Grand Victoria Foundation.

Members, send your news to info@peakgrantmaking.org for our next edition!
Here, you’ll find a roundup of what’s new and notable around PEAK Grantmaking, and ways you can tap into a growing array of member-exclusive resources to support your work – from the latest reports and “how-to” tools to interactive online options like web-based training and our CONNECT peer-learning communities – and more.

Lead the way in putting principles into practice

Last fall, we issued a call-to-action to transform the practice of philanthropy into the practice of principled grantmaking, as introduced in our Courage in Practice whitepaper, complete with a collective vision and action plan. Created by and for our members, the Principles for Peak Grantmaking are a values-driven, equity-centered, practice-based roadmap for change. In 2020, we’ll be using the five Principles as a guiding framework for educational content that equips you to inspire and lead equitable change in your practices.

Explore the first two suites of resources to Tie Practices to Values and Narrow the Power Gap. Through case stories, in-depth how-to guides, and our new Principles Communities of Practice, we’ve provided a comprehensive toolkit for Organization Members. Case stories are accessible to all members, along with resources like action planners, webinars, and a roundup of insights from the field. Access them all at peakgrantmaking.org/principles.

Announcing our 2020 chapter leaders

PEAK Delaware Valley
Nicole Saunders, Connelly Foundation
Linda Musumeci, American Philosophical Society

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Nicole Saunders, Connelly Foundation
Linda Musumeci, American Philosophical Society

PEAK Florida
Ashley Heath, United Way Suncoast
Fernanda Kuchkarian, Health Foundation of South Florida

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PEAK Greater Washington, DC
Andrew Brown, Meyer Foundation
Alesa Parker, Administrative Office of the Courts, Maryland

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PEAK Midwest
Deb Debbaut, Iowa West Foundation
Tara Havlick, Mitsubishi Electric America Foundation

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Tara Havlick, Mitsubishi Electric America Foundation

PEAK Minnesota
Tracy Lampard, The Jay & Rose Phillips Family Foundation of Minnesota
Dorothy Wickens, McKnight Foundation

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Dorothy Wickens, McKnight Foundation

PEAK New England
Lisa Colaninno, The Travelers Companies
Susan Bouchard, Agnes M. Lindsay Trust
Kyrstin Thorson Rogers, Proteus Fund

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PEAK Northwest
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PEAK Northern California
Tamara Raidcliffe,魄Reado Family Foundation
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Alesa Parker, Administrative Office of the Courts, Maryland

PEAK Pacific Northwest
Alisha Templeton
Jody Marshall, Meyer Memorial Trust

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Jody Marshall, Meyer Memorial Trust

PEAK Rocky Mountain
Kelly Costello, Temple Hoyne Buell Foundation
Kalil Raja, Rose Community Foundation

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PEAK Programs
Look out for quarterly releases: More resources, tools, and webinars are coming to advance your work in three more PEAK Principles: Drive Equity; Learn, Share, Evolve; and Steward Responsively. We’ll also be on the road throughout the year with Principles-centered learning opportunities, hosted by our regional chapters and partners, and delivering insight online through our webinar events series. Visit peakgrantmaking.org/events.

Join us at PEAK2020: This March, in Seattle, we’ll illuminate the Principles through five dedicated learning tracks. Register at peak2020.peakgrantmaking.org

Join our new Communities of Practice, focused on the Principles for Peak Grantmaking and dedicated to building practical tools, resources, and knowledge for grants managers striving to achieve values-driven, equity-centered grantmaking practice. In addition to CONNECT forums, these communities will provide members with structured learning and sharing opportunities – including webinars, live discussions, resource libraries, and expert Q&A sessions – around some of the most challenging and leading-edge topics of grantmaking practice. To join, contact us at principles@peakgrantmaking.org.

GM101 Online: Introduction to Grants Management

Build your career foundation: Understand the grants manager’s role, the grantmaking process, and the philanthropic context in which grantmaking takes place in this self-paced online course. At your own pace, explore effective practices, identify due diligence procedures, understand the legal and regulatory landscape, and learn the components of the grantmaking cycle. Interactive modules test your knowledge and reinforce key concepts. Plus, you’ll gain access to an extensive array of resources, including job aids.

2020 Consumer’s Guide to Grants Management Systems

A comprehensive GMS review: We’ve teamed up with Tech Impact’s Idealware and Grantbook for the fifth edition of our popular GMS guide. For the first time, the guide will include an interactive digital component to make it easier than ever to compare features, systems, and pricing to help foundations choose the best software for their needs. The report reviews dozens of systems against more than 100 requirements – criteria developed with the help of consultants, vendors, grants management staff, program officers, and system administrators.

Smart Risk Management for Greater Impact

Self-paced online training: Examine organizational values, policies, and practices through a risk management lens. You’ll also get practice applying concepts through scenario-based activities, preparing you to take action in your own organization. Among other lessons, you’ll learn how to develop a higher tolerance for risk – and understand how low risk tolerance can reinforce bias in the grants management process; ultimately reducing impact – and the ways that a good partnership with your grantees can help you assess and plan for risk, remove barriers for applications, and ensure the best possible outcomes.

2020 Grants Management Salary Report

Assess and evaluate salaries: Using current data on salaries, roles, and areas of responsibility in the grants management profession, this analysis focuses information through a number of lenses, including region and metro area, foundation size and type, and individual levels of responsibility. Grants management pros can use this report to assess their current salary, determine their market value as a professional, make the case for a promotion or raise, and negotiate salary for a new position. Managers can use the report to help evaluate their team against profession benchmarks.

Get social with us

Over on Twitter, LinkedIn, and Facebook, we’re posting community news, #PEAKlearning at our chapters, and the latest reporting, along with recommended reads and insight from members, partners, experts, and our team. We welcome you to follow us and join the conversation. Find us on Twitter @PEAKgrantmaking.

CONNECT with Peers

Your place to share ideas, discuss issues, offer advice, and network with other grants management professionals: A daily digest will keep you in the know, and you can easily search past contributions to find what you need when you need it. In addition to the all-member open forum, sign up for chapter forums and interest-based communities for corporate reporting, along with recommended reads and insight from members, partners, experts, and our team. We welcome you to follow us and join the conversation. Find us on Twitter @PEAKgrantmaking.org.

Going live this month: a new section of peakgrantmaking.org that brings together articles and news from PEAK e-newsletters, blog posts, and Journal reporting, all in one place – now easily searchable across a streamlined set of eight topic areas. Members can easily log in to access the complete archive. Visit peakgrantmaking.org/insights or select “Insights” from the menu.
This March in Seattle, we’re moving big ideas to the front lines of philanthropy. Together, we’ll delve into how you can put the five Principles for Peak Grantmaking into practice — transforming how grants get made.


Register now at peak2020.peakgrantmaking.org