BLACK VOICES

IN GRANTS MANAGEMENT

> "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 greater understanding. And from their ideas come the building blocks for inclusive cultures, equitable grantmaking practices, allyship, 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. △

Betsy Reid   ***Melissa Sines***

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The authors would like to share that the opinions and thoughts expressed in this publication do not represent the opinions or policies of their respective employers.

BLACK VOICES

IN GRANTS MANAGEMENT

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 moreso. 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. △
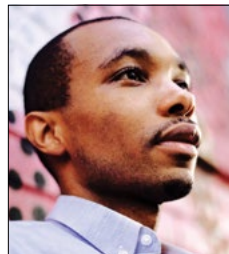
Roland Kennedy, Jr.
Guest Editor

"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

What has been your experience navigating philanthropy as a Black person?

"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."

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

"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."

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

"Because I'm typically the only Black person in the room, I'm often treated as the 'Black stamp of approval' on issues that might be racially sensitive or related to race, equity, and inclusion issues."

"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."

"If a Black woman speaks up, she might be pegged as opinionated. If a white person speaks up, they might simply be intelligent."

"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."

"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?"

"There is an expectation that I will forgive and openly assist with my white peers' racial equity journey; that I will manage being triggered in solitude so as to not disrupt or make others uncomfortable. It's been devastating."

"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."

"Being in the room is not inclusion. Inclusion is being in the room and having a say in things."

"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.'"

"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 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."

By the Numbers:
Exploring the Black experience in philanthropy
by Melissa Sines

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.

"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*

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: 61% white

Sources: BoardSource *Leading with Intent*, 2017 (foundation board chairs, members); Council on Foundations *Salary and Benefits Survey 2019* (foundation executives, program officers, staff); PEAK Grantmaking *Member Survey 2018* (grants managers)

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.
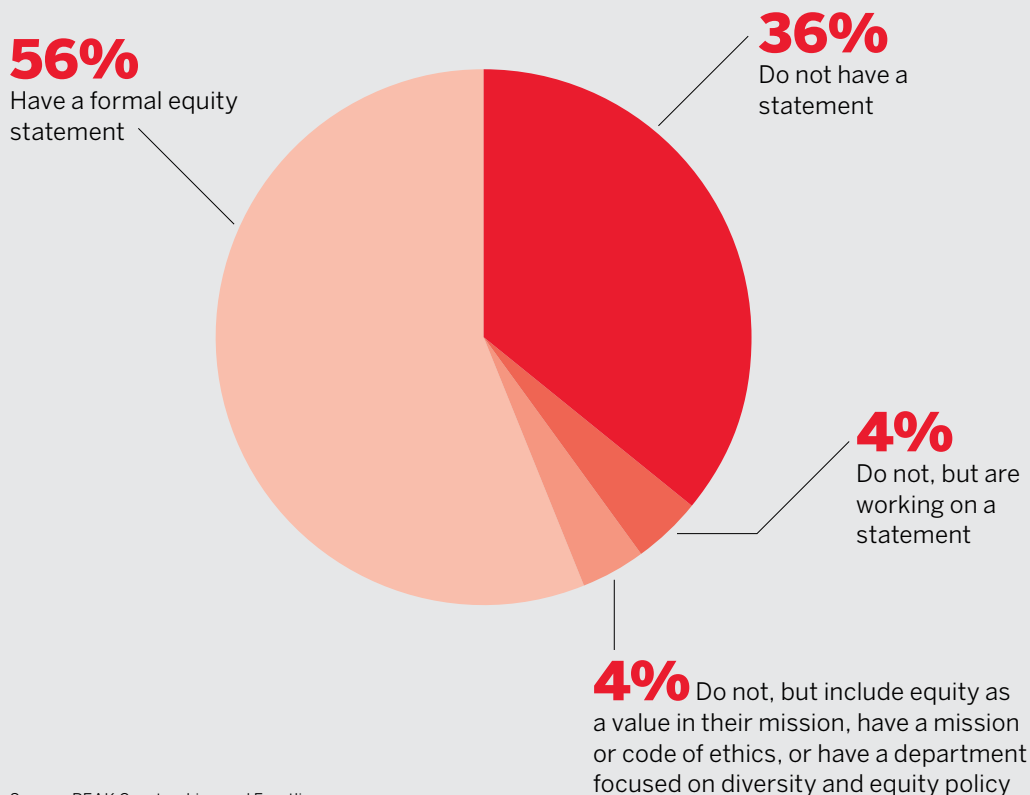
The lack of diversity seen in foundation boards and staff shows up again when you check to see where grant dollars are flowing: According to D5's State of Work report, less than 7 percent of grants go to diverse communities.

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.

Foundation level of DEI commitment:

56%
Have a formal equity statement

36%
Do not have a statement

4%
Do not, but are working on a statement

4% Do not, but include equity as a value in their mission, have a mission or code of ethics, or have a department focused on diversity and equity policy

Source: PEAK Grantmaking and Frontline Solutions 2018 Research on Equitable Practices

> **"I've been put in 'my place,' silenced, isolated, and almost slipped into the deep abyss of the sunken place."**

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 Aysa 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.

Over one-third of people of color ranked their race/ethnicity among factors negatively impacting their career advancement, compared with 6 percent of whites.

Already starting from a deficit mindset, many in the sector assume that their colleagues of color need support in the form of additional education, training, and credentialing in order to be more successful and move into positions of leadership. However, the *Race to Lead* report debunks that theory, finding few differences between white people and people of color in their "aspirations or preparation for leadership roles." Those findings demonstrate that the underrepresentation of people of color in leadership positions is not attributable to differing backgrounds or qualifications, or to a lack of aspiration, skills, or preparation. Rather, the data points to an uneven playing field, the frustration of "representing," and the system's shortcomings.

These findings are echoed in a report on Black professionals in philanthropy. In 2014, the Association of Black Foundation Executives (ABFE) published a report titled *The Exit Interview*. In it, 72 percent of respondents said they believed that leadership roles are not substantial for Black professionals at grantmaking institutions. In particular, most Black

professionals named the following when asked what challenges they faced in their philanthropic institutions and the reasons they left their organizations or philanthropy altogether:

- **Feeling isolated**
- **Having limited access to professional-track training, pipeline networks, and support systems**
- **Feeling that colleagues do not value their expertise**
- **Roles that do not allow them to work directly with communities**
- **Finding their jobs frustrating and overly bureaucratic**

Further confirmation can be found in research for emerging leaders of color. In the 2018 report *Dissonance and Disconnects*, Emerging Practitioners in Philanthropy stated that "practitioners of color tended to report more challenging experiences related to identity in the workplace, are less likely to have an ally on the senior team, and have a more critical outlook as to whether grantees are able to provide feedback without fear of reprisal."

> "Navigating philanthropy as a Black person often feels like being on a desert island — Am I the only one going through this? Am I crazy? Do I ignore the microaggressions or do I speak to the elephant in the room? Sadly, you end up having to ask yourself these questions to the point of exhaustion."

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.

6 Not sure.

Source: *The Exit Interview* 2014, ABFE
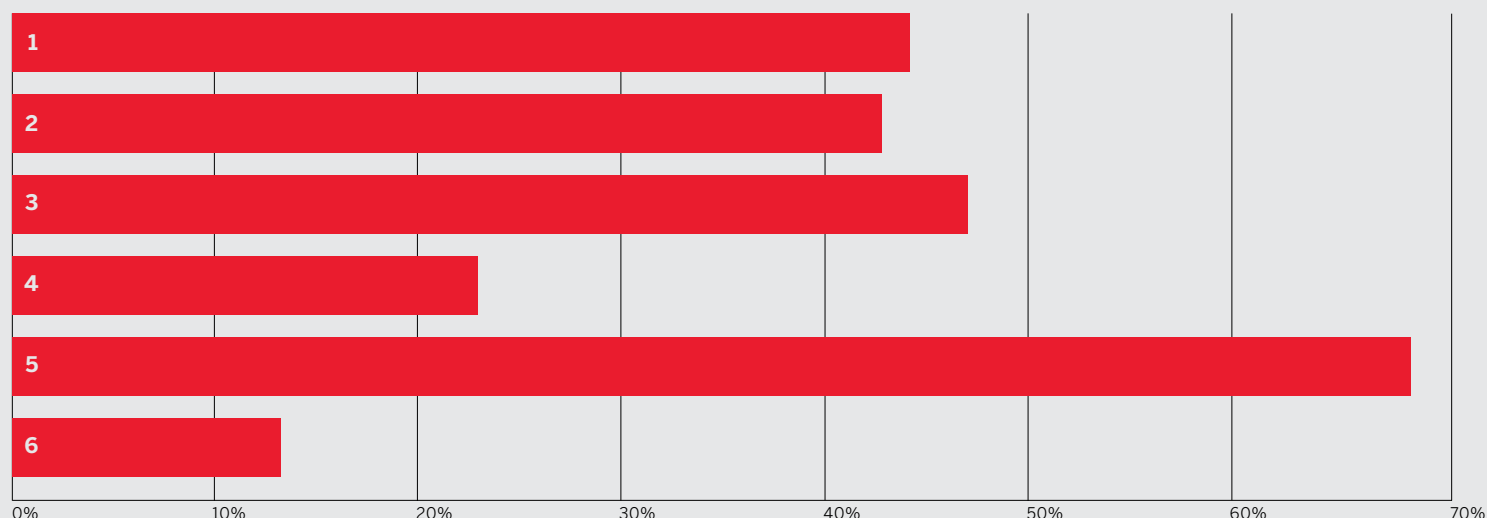
Where is the DEI in organization grantmaking practice?

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:

7.1%
Grant guidelines

7.1%
Application

37.4%
Decision-making

11.1%
Reporting

16.2%
Other*

21.2%
Monitoring & Evaluation

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

Source: PEAK Grantmaking and Frontline Solutions 2018 Research on Equitable Practices

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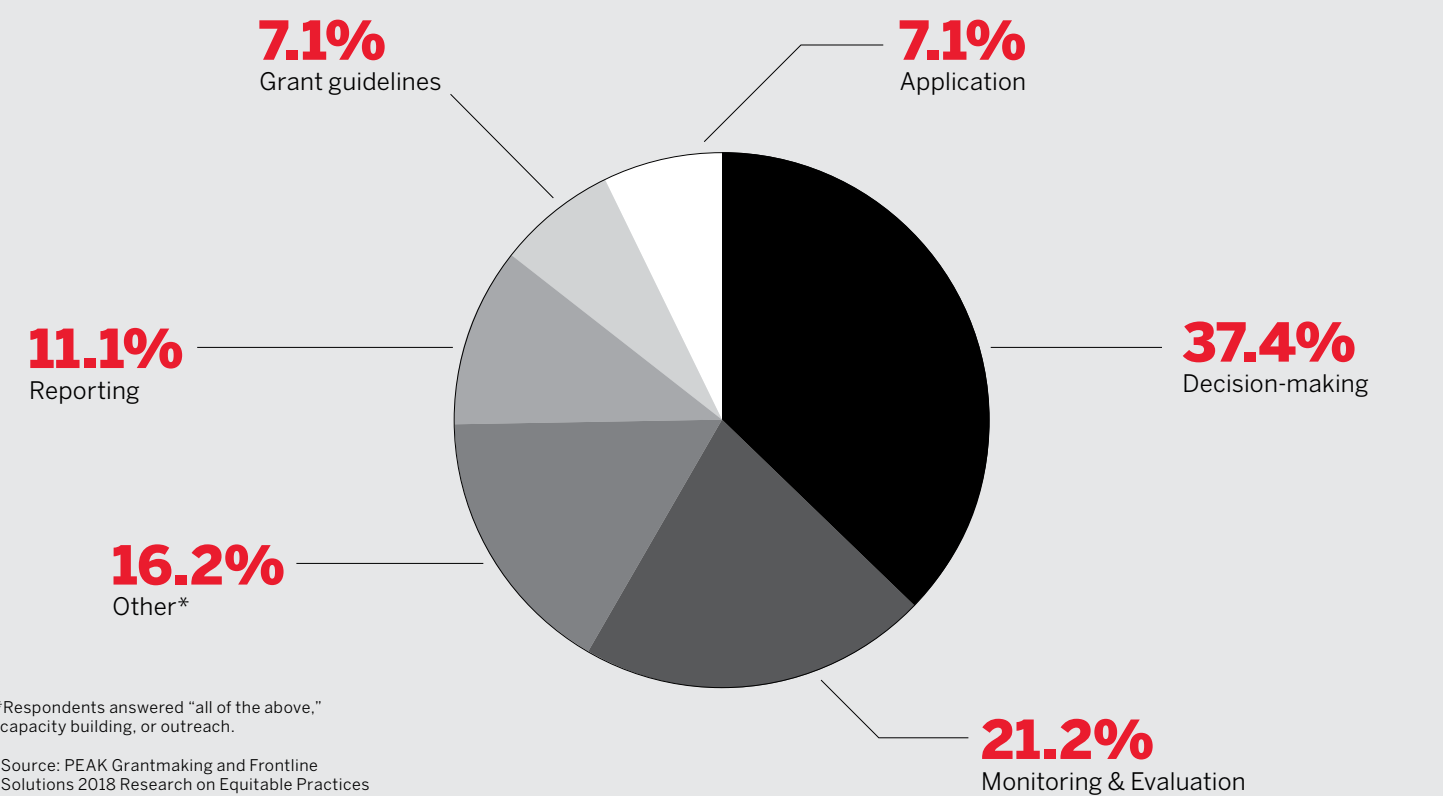
When we asked about some specific DEI-related grantmaking practices, we found that:

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

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

25%
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.

42%
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

These systems, at their core, are built to let certain people and organizations in and keep other people and organizations out.

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.

> **"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."**

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. ⚠

Melissa Sines is programs and knowledge director at PEAK Grantmaking.

"Code-switching 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." – Ify Mora

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?

Ify Mora

Ify Mora: Early in my career, I felt I needed to work extra hard to prove I am informed and credible, and that my ideas were worth listening to. I struggled with how to be assertive enough to be heard without coming across as 'pushy and abrasive,' as someone once said to me. Feedback like that motivated me to focus on developing better ways to communicate and advocate for my ideas so as not to be experienced so negatively.

But, what I've learned over time and in talking with women of color with similar experiences, is that it isn't just about me improving my communication skills. My race, gender, and age, taken together, also influence the way my voice is heard, despite my actual work contributions and job title. I've learned to be particularly thoughtful about how I show up as a leader, and have more sensitivity to how to express my opinions differently based on the environment I'm in, so that it can be heard most effectively.

There are limits to how much we can change others' perceptions and biases. In the realm of what we can control and change, however, I've tried really hard to model a different approach, one that signals to those I work with that I do care about their

My voice must incorporate and represent those who have not always been represented at the leadership table. That has manifested what I have always been taught: I have to be thoughtful about how I carry myself as a person of color, as I represent more than just myself. –Nicole Howe Buggs

voices and want to hear different perspectives. I also try to speak up when I feel like others' voices may not have been heard.

Susan Hairston: Gender and race are often the first thing folks experience when they encounter me in my leadership role. Being comfortable in my own skin and with my knowledge base has grown more important as my sphere of responsibility has increased. I started out very naïve, expecting people to judge me on face value, not realizing all of the baggage that goes along with what "face value" means to different people. For women and Black people, it's typically to expect "less than." Fortunately, I am blessed with a naturally joyful constitution that has served me well in disarming a challenge to my expertise, a standard response to Blackness.

Timothy Robinson: I have never felt like I did not have a voice. I'm never shy to express my opinion. My opinion may or may not bear out in the final decision in the way that I think it should. But I've never felt like I was not heard because of the color of my skin. In fact, I think that because of either my age or my experience, people did listen. I try to approach my work thoughtfully and deliberately, so that if I'm going to say something, people take it seriously.

If you're feeling discounted, particularly when you're new to an organization, my advice is to first understand how decisions are made and how the organization runs, before you jump in with a bunch of opinions and thoughts about how things should change. Don't sit back and make a judgment without having knowledge of the process. Instead, consider the thought that goes into making difficult decisions. There are clearly instances where racism is a part of that decision making, and I hope I'm not part of any organization that is part of that.

Miyesha Perry

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?

Robinson: 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 come 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. It'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

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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.

Susan Hairston

Hairston: 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 own 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.

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?

Nicole Howe Buggs

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."

Timothy Robinson

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?

"We'll need to find a way to recruit a much more broad and diverse staff, equal to the attempts and efforts made on the programmatic side to do the same."

"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."

"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."

"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."

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

Assimilation and Authenticity:
Being Black+ in philanthropy

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 have all the answers or be the only one working to make changes in your organization.

What's most important is that you always remember to show up as your most authentic self, not only to add color to the world around you but to be a light for those who need help out of the darkness. △

Darius Soler is a grants associate at a private foundation.

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.

LaTosha Brown at the offices of the New Georgia Project in Atlanta

Genise Singleton: Define courage. And, as a Black woman, do you find that your courage is often mistaken for other, more negative attributes?

LaTosha Brown: Courage, for me, is my ability to lean into conflict. I think part of the challenge is that folks don't lean: It's a conflict! People are afraid of conflict because they feel like conflict is a negative thing, but I don't think conflict has to be negative. You can lean into the conflict looking for the breakthrough, looking for what else can be revealed. That energy can be transformed by recognizing that when there is conflict, it is pointing to something. Don't run away from it. Taking the time, and putting my ego to the side to ask, what is it pointing to? What's the gifting of the conflict?

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.

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 don't 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 that we 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.

Photo credit: Ali Lapetina for NBC News

So you go to a community meeting and people curse 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 grace and space 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 place. 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, get paid,

affirm who they really are. You don't have to put away your Blackness to work with us. You can actually own that, explore where you want to go with that, and show up in yourself.

Singleton: What inspiration and advice can you offer to Black grantmaking staff who often toe the line between authentically bringing their full selves to work and navigating white dominant cultures in the workplace?

Brown: One of the things that we've been demonstrating

LaTosha Brown cheers with local residents outside the Bowens Senior Center in Pontiac, Michigan.

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

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.

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 – and not at the behest of anybody else but those Black people. And to the extent that the white folks

don't understand, that is symptomatic not of us being exclusive, but of them only seeing a world where they are in fact centered.

So we know that, throughout history, there are spaces that women have created just for women, and men have created for men. What we've done, and in a variety of ways, is created career opportunities and paths for Black people where they're able to

and teaching is the art of being authentic. I'm walking in spaces and being my authentic Black self in a way that helps people get beyond whatever belief they have about me. It transcends that because I'm transcending that. And I have no attachment to their acceptance of it or not.

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'm just showing 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 a dramatic makeover, "breaking down, or at least to a degree, breaking up ethnicity and then building up an identity that was cut off from the old tongue and connected to the new land." This process has isolated my family in many ways.

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've met hundreds of white peers in the nonprofit sector. We try to understand the harshness of our country's legacy of racial terrorism, and the ways it still manifests today. We work to unpack our unconscious biases, and change our behavior

to minimize harm to people of color around us. We read articles and participate in book clubs. We attend trainings and pack conference sessions dedicated to DEI, courageous conversations, and power dynamics. Many of us have been fortunate to benefit from the life experiences and teachings of incredible leaders of color like Lori Villarosa, Allen Kwabena Frimpong, Kerrien Suarez, Jara Dean-Coffey, Desiree Adaway, Angela Park, Keecha Harris, Bina Patel, and Vu Le.

In our learning about the extreme harm that white supremacy enacts on Black and Brown bodies, it can be easy to get stuck in guilt and shame about whiteness. These emotions can be leveraged for important action, though I don't believe it serves us or others to stay in them, especially when heeding important calls to "collect" and "call in" white friends, family members, and colleagues.

I was 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?

Jardana Peacock, a white spiritual teacher and student of antiracist activist Anne Braden, says she was "the girl always calling out other white people, the voice of truth and accountability," yet she was "pushing most all of the white people away, except those more radical than myself."

This was very much my experience, especially because I was angry.

Angry because my good intent wasn't enough. Because the things I'd see and hear from other white folks reflected back frustration with my own whiteness. Because if I was going to hold myself to high standards, then others like me should, too. Because we need change *now,* and I wanted other white people – especially those I love–to understand that the same way I did.

I was 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?

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 – one 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."

Combined with ongoing education and reparations, I believe that one of the most powerful things that people of European descent like me can do is to reckon with how white supremacy has dehumanized us and our families in these ways, and identify our own stake in racial justice. Questions that have guided me in this include:

- What can healing look and feel like for white people, so that we can show up in multiracial workplaces and social movements in more effective, grounded ways?

- How can we recognize and treat white "fragility" as a trauma response to generations of isolating individualism and disconnection from our shared humanity?

- What is our north star for a different way of being—not just doing? And not just as white people, but as humans?

Resmaa Menakem, a Black therapist and social worker who specializes in trauma work, says that the place to start is with our bodies, which must integrate both our learning and our unlearning. He writes, "We've tried to teach our brains to think better about race. But white-body supremacy doesn't live in our thinking brains. It lives and breathes in our bodies."

One venue where I've found a deep community of practice for ancestral healing and reembodiment has been with the Healing Team of the DC chapter of Showing Up for Racial Justice (SURJ). Together, we experiment with dialogue, reflection, ritual, and more holistic ways of being. Conscious breath, mindfulness, song, and movement have all been powerful practices for reconnecting with my body, voice, and emotions, and for holding space for those of 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. It has provided more space for joy in my life and relationships with other white people, like the Healing Team, as well. Lebanese poet Khalil Gibran beautifully described this when he wrote, "The deeper that sorrow carves into your being, the more joy you can contain."

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 I 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." △

Caitlin Duffy is based in Washington, DC. Find her on Twitter at @DuffyInDC.

See Caitlin's recommended reading list at peakgrantmaking.org/journal

> "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."

> "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.

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 frames our profession as an integral but "back-office" function, responsible for implementing but not for making decisions.

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 representation: Digging into the demographics of PEAK Grantmaking's membership, Black staff represent about 10 percent of our 4,500-person network. Representation is a low bar, but important in a position where many Black people say they experience loneliness and isolation — in their organizations and in philanthropy generally.

When we narrow the field to focus on Black men, the lack of representation becomes even more pronounced: They are fewer than 1 percent. For them, especially, the work experience can be lonely and isolating, both in their organizations and in philanthropy as a whole.

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, consider the issues that Black professionals must navigate:

- **How much of their "whole self" must Black staff negotiate when coming to work every day?**

- **What are the potential consequences for being your "whole self"?**

- **What self-inventory must you take to ensure white peers and leadership are more "comfortable" with your presence?**

- **How do you react when a white peer or leader causes harm to you through their actions?**

- **What coping mechanisms and self-care should you consider?**

- **When do you stay in the fight and when do you take a break?**

- **How are you expected to perform — and enforce — whiteness in your role?**

- **How do you share what's on your mind, your expertise, or your lived experience when what you share could put your career at risk?**

- **How do you respond when your organization says it values "diversity, equity, and inclusion," but your day-to-day experience demonstrates otherwise?**

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.

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. ⚠

Steven Casey is associate director of grants management at the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, and a PEAK Grantmaking board member.
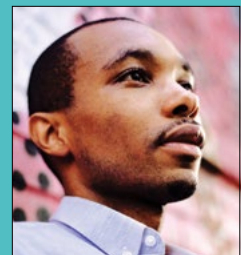
Roland Kennedy, Jr. is a grants professional and a former chair of PEAK Grantmaking's Greater Washington D.C. chapter.

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

"Change the color of boards and senior leaders."

"As 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."

"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."

"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."

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, roles, 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.

– Awake to Woke to Work, Equity in the Center

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

PEAK Community

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.

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

In October, **PEAK Midwest** held a daylong workshop in St. Louis centered around ways to tie 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.

Board of Directors Updates

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 pursuing 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.

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 Management Associate at James F. and Marion L. Miller Foundation and Grant and Program Coordinator at The Reser Family Foundation.

Errika 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 now Vice President of Program Administration at Missouri Foundation for Health.

Mark Suzman, 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.

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.

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.

Welcome, new members!

Organization Members

Open Road Alliance

HRK Foundation

Foundation for Opioid Response Efforts

WomenStrong International

Kenneth Rainin Foundation

The Libra Foundation

Jessie Ball duPont Fund

Community First Foundation

Potomac Health Foundation

Jack Miller Family Foundation

Rocky Mountain Health Foundation

One8 Foundation

Delta Dental Community Care Foundation

Capital One

Castelloe Family Foundation

Dave & Cheryl Duffield Foundation

Native American Agriculture Fund

NEO Philanthropy

Napa Valley Vintners

MADRE

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

Adira Foundation

American Student Assistance

Disabled Veterans National Foundation

Humanities DC

The Foundation for AIDS Research

The New York Women's Foundation

Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids

Oregon Community Foundation

Consultant Members

Third Plateau

Hillspire, LLC

Bessemer Trust

Community Impact Consultants

Build Up Advisory Group

Kim Foster Consulting

Grassi & Co.

C & W Creative Endeavors

Nora Mitnick 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 Program Director at the Health Foundation of South Florida.

Sam Caplan founded his own consulting venture, New Spark Strategy.

Sarita Michaca became the Vice President, Grants Management in Global Philanthropy at JPMorgan Chase Foundation.

Mallory Womble (PEAK Southwest Program 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!

PEAK Southwest hosted its first-ever mini-conference at St. David's Foundation in Austin in September. Highlights included in-depth discussions on foundation effectiveness, the complexities involved in building positive relationships with grantees and recognizing the inherent power differential, and methods that funders can use to help grantees leverage data for their own learning and growth.

PEAK Southern California closed out 2019 with their third networking Coffee Hour of the year at With Love Market & Cafe, a social enterprise that combines a for-profit cafe, market, and catering business with a nonprofit community center.

Announcing our 2020 chapter leaders

PEAK Delaware Valley
Nicole Saunders, Connelly Foundation

Linda Musumeci, American Philosophical Society

PEAK Florida
Ashley Heath, United Way Suncoast

Fernanda Kuchkarian, Health Foundation of South Florida

PEAK Greater Washington, DC
Andrew Brown, Meyer Foundation

Alecia Parker, Administrative Office of the Courts, Maryland

PEAK Mideast
Kristen Summers, Saint Luke's Foundation

Sheiron Sanchez, Sisters Health Foundation

PEAK Midwest
Deb Debbaut, Iowa West Foundation

Tara Havlicek, Mitsubishi Electric America Foundation

PEAK Minnesota
Tracy Lamparty, The Jay & Rose Phillips Family Foundation of Minnesota

Dorothy Wickens, McKnight Foundation

PEAK New England
Lisa Colaninno, The Travelers Companies

Susan Bouchard, Agnes M. Lindsay Trust

Kyrstin Thorson Rogers, Proteus Fund

PEAK New York
Paige Granger, The Rockefeller Foundation

Indya Hartley, The ELMA Philanthropies Services

PEAK Northern California
Tamara Radcliffe, Sobrato Family Foundation

Debra White, California Humanities

PEAK Pacific Northwest
Alisha Templeton

Jody Marshall, Meyer Memorial Trust

Alexia Cameron, Medina Foundation

PEAK Rocky Mountain
Kelly Costello, Temple Hoyne Buell Foundation

Kelli Rojas, Rose Community Foundation

PEAK Southeast
Amy Hall, Georgia Power Foundation

Jenny Morgan, Robert W. Woodruff Foundation

PEAK Southern California
Christina Thompson, The California Endowment

Nicole Larsen, The Ralph M. Parsons Foundation

PEAK Southwest
Hannah Rabalais, Kleinert Foundation

Mallory Womble, American Jewish World Service

See the full slate of 2020 chapter officers at peakgrantmaking.org/ chapters.

PEAK Programs

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.*


Tie Practices to Values

Narrow the Power Gap

Steward Responsively

5 Principles

Learn, Share, Evolve

Drive Equity

Principles for Peak Grantmaking
How-To Guide
How to Rightsize the Grantmaking Process and Implement Flexible Practices

Narrow the Power Gap

Principles for Peak Grantmaking
How-To Guide
How to Collect and Act on Community Feedback

Narrow the Power Gap

Principles for Peak Grantmaking
Action Planner
Strategies for Aligning Practices and Values

Tie Practices to Values

Principles for Peak Grantmaking
Case Story
Tying Practices to Values: From Words to Action at Bainum Family Foundation

Tie Practices to Values

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 Responsibly*. 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.*
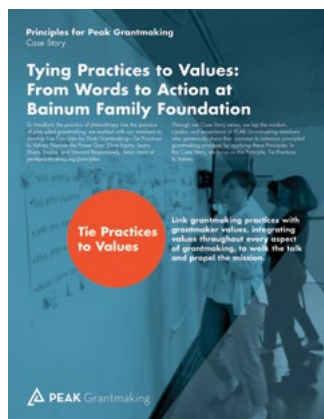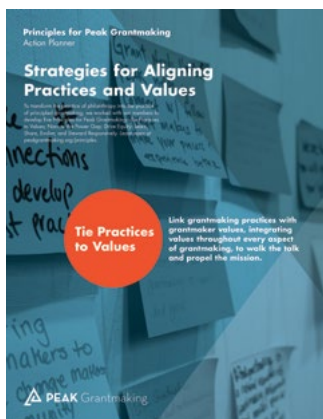
CONNECT with Peers

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 grantmaking, small foundations, career development, and, coming soon, grants management systems and technology-related topics. *Questions? Reach out to the team at connect@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.

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.
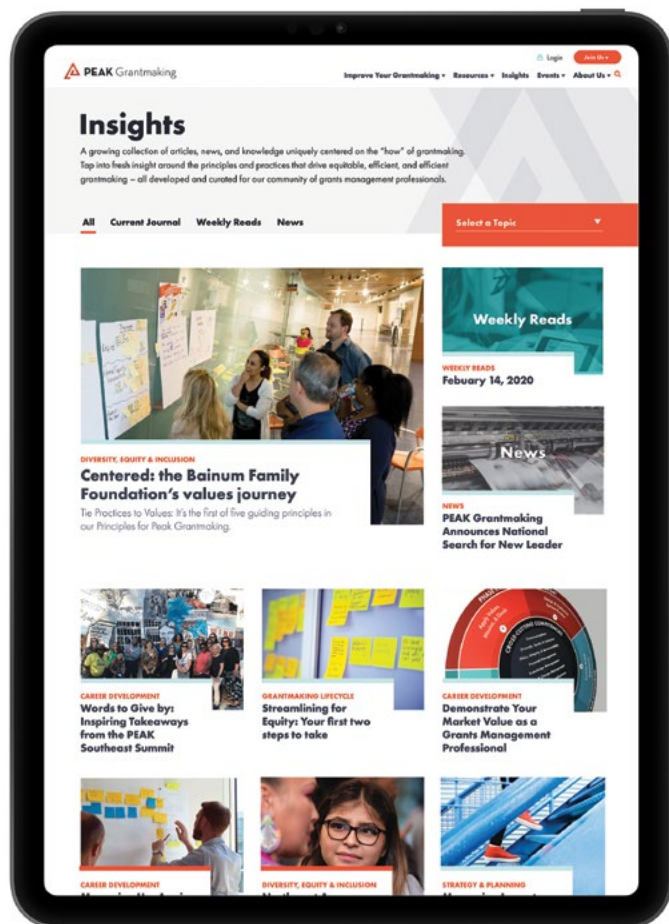
Insights: newly expanded, integrated, and searchable

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.*

What's ahead

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.

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.

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.

PEAK2020

Seattle
March 9-11

COURAGE IN PRACTICE

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.

Courageous conversations. Change-making keynotes. Deep dives. Meaningful connections. All at PEAK2020, the biggest gathering of philanthropy professionals focused on the "how" of grantmaking. Get ready for Courage in Practice.

Register now at peak2020.peakgrantmaking.org