KEYNOTE

Race to Lead: Confronting the Nonprofit Racial Gap

Sean Thomas-Breitfeld
Co-Director of the Building Movement Project
ARE WE READY TO CONFRONT THE NONPROFIT RACIAL LEADERSHIP GAP?

Sean Thomas-Breitfeld
Co-Director of the Building Movement Project
ABOUT THE BUILDING MOVEMENT PROJECT

Leadership

Analyzing how organizations can do their best work by promoting the most effective and inclusive practices

- Reports
  - Race to Lead: Confronting the Nonprofit Racial Leadership Gap
- Blog
  - The Leadership in Leaving
- Reports
  - Vision for Change

Service and Social Change

Developing the capacity of organizations to engage constituents in changing the systems that impact them

- Tools
  - Service and Social Change
- Blog
  - Small Shifts, Big Change
- Reports
  - Crossing Organizational Boundaries to Build New Partnerships

Movement Building

Acknowledging and building on the distinct role of nonprofit organizations in advancing movements for social change

- Reports
  - The Respect ABQ Women Campaign
- Blog
  - Learning How to ACT UP
- Blog
  - Detroitors Reclaiming Voice and Power

Join the Conversation @BldingMovement #RaceToLead
Why – despite an increased number of training programs for developing leaders of color and the number of groups working on issues of race/race equity – are there not more leaders of color in nonprofits?
Reviewed Academic Literature:

- Race and Racial Equity in Leadership
- Leadership Modes and Models
- Challenges and Barriers to Leadership
- Relevant Models from Feminist Leadership

Conducted Three Dozen Interviews with Nonprofit Leaders, Capacity Builders, Search Firms, etc.

Join the Conversation @BldingMovement #RaceToLead
Survey Design Elements

• Information on Demographics and Organization for data segmentation

• Future Career Plans to identify aspiration for ED role and/or assessment of barriers to taking on role

• Development and Support of Leadership to identify supports people access

• Perceptions on Leadership and Race to surface opinions and mental models

Join the Conversation @BldingMovement #RaceToLead
More than 4,300 Respondents Nationwide

63 Nonprofit staff in OR
WHO TOOK THE SURVEY

58% White

42% Person of Color

- 15% African American/Black
- 8% Asian American/Pacific Islander
- 11% Latino/a or Hispanic
- 1% Native American
- 8% Multiracial/POC

Race/Ethnicity
PEOPLE OF COLOR ARE QUALIFIED

EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND

People of Color

- 1% High School Graduate or less
- 6% Associate's Degree or less
- 32% Bachelor's Degree
- 53% Master's Degree or less

White

- 1% High School Graduate or less
- 10% Associate's Degree or less
- 30% Bachelor's Degree
- 49% Master's Degree or less
- 8% PhD, JD, MD, etc.
People of Color are Experienced

Current Role/Position in the Organization

- CEO/Senior Management: 48% Person of Color, 53% White
- Middle Manager: 18% Person of Color, 18% White
- Line/Admin Staff: 32% Person of Color, 28% White
Level of Interest in Taking a Top Leadership Role (among Non-CEOs)
It’s Not Personal - It’s The System

- Executive recruiters don’t do enough to find a diverse pool of qualified candidates for top-level nonprofit positions: 80% agreement.
- Predominantly white boards often don’t support the leadership potential of staff of color: 71% agreement.
- Organizations often rule out candidates of color based on the perceived “fit” of the organization: 66% agreement.

Why So Few POC Nonprofit Executives?: Structural Reasons (“Somewhat” or “Strong” Level of Agreement)
Race as Factor in Advancement

Factors that Have Played a Role in Respondents’ Career Advancement
Duh! What did you expect?

Really? Are you sure?
The Oregon Sample
CURRENT ROLE / POSITION IN OR

- Associate's Degree or less: 4% (Person of Color), 8% (White)
- Bachelor's Degree: 44% (Person of Color), 62% (White)
- Master's Degree: 44% (Person of Color), 30% (White)
- PhD, JD, MD, etc.: 8% (Person of Color), 0% (White)
Who Wants to Lead in Oregon?
PEOPLE OF COLOR ASPIRE MORE, BUT ...

- **Person of Color**
  - Definitely/Probably Yes: 41%
  - Definitely/Probably No: 48%
  - Maybe: 41%

- **White**
  - Definitely/Probably Yes: 31%
  - Definitely/Probably No: 21%
  - Maybe: 21%
POC REPORT NEGATIVE RACE IMPACTS

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My organization does not support leadership of color. We have a high level of PoC in our front line staff but the top positions are filled by mainly White men and women (even though our constituency reflects mostly brown and Black students). As someone who identifies with this racial demographic, I struggle to be seen as an asset and feel as though my organizations does not actually care about (or is tone deaf to) the real issues affecting my communities ...

-- Multiracial Man
WHAT ASPIRING LEADERS SAY THEY NEED

- Technical or management skills: 39% (Person of Color), 33% (White)
- Leadership capabilities: 11% (Person of Color), 15% (White)
- Professionally prepared but need opportunity: 10% (Person of Color), 8% (White)
- Ability to lead and supervise staff: 5% (Person of Color), 10% (White)
What Aspiring Leaders in OR Need

- Technical or management skills: 33%
- External Connections: 11% (POC), 20% (White)
- Confidence: 11% (POC), 13% (White)
- Professionally prepared but need opportunity: 11% (POC), 0% (White)
- Ability to lead and supervise staff: 6% (POC), 7% (White)
- Leadership capabilities: 20% (White)

Legend: □ Person of Color □ White
CHALLENGES AND FRUSTRATIONS

- Demanding workload: 70% (Person of Color), 71% (White)
- Inadequate salaries: 51% (Person of Color), 46% (White)
- Lack of relationship with funding sources: 41% (Person of Color), 33% (White)
- Lack of role models: 39% (Person of Color), 27% (White)
- Lack of social capital/networks: 31% (Person of Color), 21% (White)
- Being called on to represent a community: 36% (Person of Color), 14% (White)
CHALLENGES AND FRUSTRATIONS IN OR

- Demanding workload: 75% (Person of Color); 72% (White)
- Inadequate salaries: 58% (Person of Color); 59% (White)
- Lack of relationship with funding sources: 26% (Person of Color); 28% (White)
- Lack of role models: 50% (Person of Color); 38% (White)
- Lack of social capital/networks: 22% (Person of Color); 16% (White)
- Being called on to represent a community: 63% (Person of Color); 13% (White)
I get pigeon-holed into working for/on behalf of the Latino/immigrant community. Sometimes being Latino is seen as my only "skill."

-- Hispanic / Latinx Man
1. **Address Bias and Racism**
   - Bad experiences can kill aspiration
   - Diversity can’t just be added demand to “represent”

2. **Shift the Culture of Current Leaders**
   - Build capacity to have difficult conversations
   - Make sure those conversations are about race and racism – not just diversity

3. **Measure Change**
   - Be at least as rigorous about DEI as everything else
   - Honor small wins
QUESTIONS?

RACE TO LEAD
CONFRONTING THE RACIAL LEADERSHIP GAP

Summary The percentage of people of color in nonprofit executive director roles has remained under 20% for the past decade. To increase the number of people of color leading nonprofits, the sector needs a new narrative about the problem and new strategies to address it. Nonprofits have to transfer the responsibility for the racial leadership gap from those who are targeted by it (aspiring leaders of color), to those governing organizations.

racetolead.org & buildingmovement.org