

INSIDE INCLUSIVENESS:

RACE, ETHNICITY AND NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS



A research report on nonprofit
organizations in Metro Denver
prepared for The Denver Foundation's
Expanding Nonprofit Inclusiveness Initiative
Prepared by Katherine Pease & Associates



THE DENVER FOUNDATION



July 2003

Welcome to “Inside Inclusiveness: Race, Ethnicity and Nonprofit Organizations in Metro Denver”. This report was created for The Denver Foundation and its Expanding Nonprofit Inclusiveness Initiative by Katherine Pease & Associates.

The **Expanding Nonprofit Inclusiveness Initiative (ENII)** is a project of The Denver Foundation, led by a steering committee of community leaders from throughout the seven-county Metro Denver area.

Over the years, The Denver Foundation has discovered a widespread interest in developing a deeper understanding of how inclusiveness of diverse voices and experiences can enhance and expand the work of nonprofits. In response to this interest, The Denver Foundation made a three-year leadership grant to develop the Expanding Nonprofit Inclusiveness Initiative (ENII) and has provided staff and other resources to ensure its success. The Denver Foundation Board of Trustees established ENII as a vehicle to help the community benefit from an increased knowledge of and commitment to inclusiveness.

While the Foundation recognizes that all forms of inclusiveness are essential, the focus of this initiative is on issues of race and ethnicity.

“Inside Inclusiveness” represents the first phase of ENII. In this initial phase, the steering committee contracted with a student and faculty member of the University of Colorado at Denver Graduate School of Public Affairs and with Katherine Pease & Associates to conduct quantitative and qualitative research about the inclusiveness practices of Metro Denver nonprofits. We thank them for their excellent work and for the cooperation of hundreds of local nonprofits in completing the surveys and case studies described herein.

The ENII steering committee and The Denver Foundation Board of Trustees believe that this report emphasizes *the value of inclusiveness* of multiple cultures and perspectives, and provides insight into *the practices that foster inclusiveness*. The purpose of ENII and this research is not to prescribe numerical targets for racial and ethnic diversity in organizations. Many organizations already value inclusiveness. Instead, The Denver Foundation hopes that the information and reflections here will provide nonprofits with assistance developing their own inclusiveness practices.

In the remaining 18 months of this three-year initiative, ENII will develop a set of tools that will help organizations implement the findings of these studies. The Denver Foundation’s website at www.denverfoundation.org will have updated information on these programs.

We hope that members of the community will recognize some of their own opportunities and challenges in these pages, and that they will find the voices and experiences of their colleagues to be helpful guides. Together, we can build inclusive organizations that bring together our community’s many strengths and resources.

Sincerely,



Dean Prina, MD
Chair, Board of Trustees
Chair, Expanding Nonprofit Inclusiveness Initiative



David Miller
President and CEO



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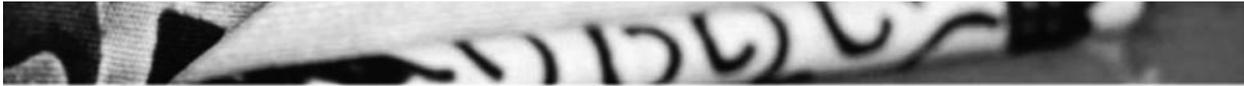
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We especially thank the eleven organizations who participated in the case studies. Without their honesty and willingness to share their experiences and perspectives, none of this work would be possible.

Katherine Pease & Associates



INTRODUCTION

Introduction to The Denver Foundation

The Expanding Nonprofit Inclusiveness Initiative is a project of The Denver Foundation. The Denver Foundation is the oldest community foundation in Colorado, providing grants to nonprofit organizations and working with local donors in Metro Denver. The mission of the Foundation is to improve life in Metro Denver through philanthropy, leadership and strengthening the community. The Denver Foundation is led by 19 trustees and a professional staff of 25. In 2002, the Foundation had financial assets of \$198 million and it distributed over \$17.9 million in grants.

Introduction to the Expanding Nonprofit Inclusiveness Initiative (ENII)

Over the years, The Denver Foundation has discovered a widespread interest in developing a deeper understanding of how the inclusion of diverse voices and experiences can enhance and expand the work of nonprofits. In response to this interest, The Denver Foundation has made a three-year leadership grant to develop the Expanding Nonprofit Inclusiveness Initiative (ENII) and has provided staff and other resources to ensure its success. The Denver Foundation Board of Trustees established ENII as a vehicle to help the community benefit from an increased knowledge of and commitment to inclusiveness.

The mission of ENII is to enhance the effectiveness of Metro Denver's nonprofit organizations by helping nonprofits become more inclusive of people of color.¹

ENII is led by a Steering Committee comprised of community leaders from throughout the seven-county Metro Denver area. Steering Committee members represent diverse organizations in the private, public and nonprofit sectors. (See Appendix A for a list of Steering Committee members.)

Prior to the establishment of the Expanding Nonprofit Inclusiveness Initiative, very little data had been collected on the inclusiveness practices of nonprofit organizations in the Denver area. After completing a literature review of information on the inclusiveness practices of nonprofits in general, it was determined that few resources exist that are targeted at nonprofit organizations. Thus, one of the first objectives that the ENII Steering Committee focused on was collecting both quantitative and qualitative data that would serve as a benchmark for the nonprofit community and provide substantive information on trends within nonprofits regarding inclusiveness practices. The Steering Committee hired Katherine Pease & Associates to carry out two research activities. The first was a survey of nonprofit organizations in Metro Denver with budgets of more than \$500,000. The survey data from this research provide information on the extent to which people of color are currently represented on nonprofit boards and staffs. (See Appendix B for a summary of the findings.)

The second research activity is this report, which summarizes the findings from the qualitative research that was completed for ENII. The goal was to identify best practices from organizations that are highly inclusive of people of color, and to identify barriers – either real or perceived – that prevent nonprofit organizations from becoming highly inclusive.

METHODOLOGY

Over seven hundred organizations in Metro Denver with budgets of over \$500,000 received surveys in November, 2002. The names, addresses and budgets of these organizations were supplied by GuideStar, a national organization that keeps databases of information on nonprofit organizations in the United States. Of the 700 organizations that received surveys, 210 completed the surveys, for a response rate of 30 percent. In addition to providing information on the extent to which people of color are represented at the board and staff

¹ For the purpose of this report, people of color is used to refer collectively to African Americans, American Indians and Alaska Natives, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, and Hispanic/Latino Americans and all other persons who are not categorized as white by the Census.



levels, organizations were asked if they would be willing to participate in a series of interviews to gather more in-depth information for the Initiative. Sixty organizations responded affirmatively to the request to be interviewed to gain more information.

Eleven of the sixty organizations were selected to be subjects of case studies. The eleven were chosen according to three criteria:

- 1. Size of budget and staff**
- 2. Mission/program focus area**
- 3. Degree to which they were representative of people of color**

Diverse groups were interviewed, including a mix of organizations in each category, from very small to quite large, from arts and culture organizations to advocacy organizations and from organizations that are very representative of people of color to those not at all representative.

Once the organizations were selected, an interviewer was assigned to work with each organization. Interviews were conducted with at least four participants from each organization. Every attempt was made to ensure that at least half of the participants from each organization were people of color, and that two participants were board members and two were staff members. In every instance the President/Executive Director was interviewed. When staff or board members of color were not available because an organization did not have staff or board members of color, attempts were made to interview past board or staff members of color. In over 90% of the interviews, a second interviewer was present. In total, 46 interviews were completed.

Interviews focused on five primary topic areas:

- 1. Program and outreach**
- 2. Organizational environment and culture**
- 3. Staff**
- 4. Board**
- 5. Leadership**

The staff and trustees of The Denver Foundation and members of the ENII Steering Committee received aggregate data on the organizations only. They did not receive any specific information on any individual organization, except the two organizations that are highlighted at the end of this report. Both of those organizations agreed to be profiled after the interviews were completed.

The information summarized in this report is qualitative in nature. Qualitative data provide a forum rich in information for exploration and discovery. Qualitative research methods enable researchers to study social and cultural phenomena. Qualitative data sources include observation and participant observation (fieldwork), interviews and questionnaires, documents and texts and the researcher's impressions and reactions, all of which were used in this study. Qualitative research methods are designed to help researchers understand people and the social and cultural contexts within which they live.² It was imperative to use qualitative research in this study given the pioneering efforts into understanding inclusiveness and organizational dynamics.

²Michael D. Meyers, "Qualitative Research", <http://www.qual.auckland.ac.nz/>



WHY INCLUSIVENESS MATTERS

In the 1970's and 1980's, corporations, nonprofits and individuals often stated that organizations should strive to become more diverse because there is a moral imperative to do so. In other words, the argument went, they should become more inclusive because "it's the right thing to do." Over the past decade, many corporations have realized that there are other reasons for creating more inclusive workforces and work environments. For example, the buying power of communities of color is vast and growing larger every year, and a diverse workforce allows corporations to develop products that are desirable and culturally appropriate. Additionally, creating inclusive workplaces leads to greater job satisfaction among staff and results in lower turn-over rates which reduces overhead costs. In other words, corporations have begun to realize that there is a **business rationale** for becoming more inclusive of people of color.

Taylor Cox, a well-known diversity consultant to corporations, states that "Well-managed diversity can add value to an organization by (1) improving problem solving, (2) increasing creativity and innovation, (3) increasing organizational flexibility, (4) improving the quality of personnel through better recruitment and retention, and (5) improving marketing strategies."³ In other words, the business imperative can be summed up by saying, "Creating a highly inclusive organization helps us to create a stable work environment and sell products to a larger audience, which increases our bottom line. Therefore, there is a business imperative for creating highly inclusive organizations." The transition can be characterized as a mindset that has *shifted from doing things based on a moral imperative to one based on a strategic imperative*.

There is at least as clear a strategic imperative for nonprofits as there is for corporations, but the results are more difficult to measure. Emerging from the case studies, however, is the finding that those nonprofits that have made the shift to become truly inclusive organizations do so because they *understand that becoming inclusive truly makes a difference in their ability to accomplish their missions*.

Participants shared the following about the strategic imperative for nonprofit organizations to become inclusive:

- "We operate in a diverse community and we serve a diverse community with rapidly shifting demographics. Diversity brings a variety of perspectives that can inform the development of the organization in many ways."
- "It is diversity that ensures the organization's responsiveness to its constituencies."
- "A diverse, representative board is better able to inform the organization's development."
- "The organization needs to have diversity to have the information, guidance and support needed to respond to the rapidly changing dynamics of the community."
- "Diversity is very important given our mission to serve families and children. Families come in all colors, shapes and sizes and we must be diverse, too, professionally. It is a fundamental element as we go forward."
- "If we're all carbon copies of each other it won't position us in the long-term to ensure the organization has a real, ongoing community presence."
- "If you don't have diversity within, you can't relate well to those on the outside – you must be able to relate to the community around you."
- "Diversity is more than a legal question."
- "Our clients talk about how important our diversity is to them and it's touched the board to know how valuable it is to the clients."
- "It's a high priority for us. We want to make sure that our agency is reflective of our community."
- "Diversity is the fabric that needs to run through the organization to have everyone be on and stay on the same page."

³ Taylor Cox, Jr., *Creating the Multicultural Organization*, Jossey Bass, A Wiley Company, San Francisco, 2001, pg. 6



DEFINING INCLUSIVENESS

Organizations that have both higher numbers of people of color represented at all levels, and that have created an environment that is positive for all people, are organizations that will be best equipped to accomplish their missions in the twenty-first century. These are organizations that are defined as “highly inclusive.”

Developing highly inclusive organizations begins with a fundamental understanding and belief that different communities have different strengths and needs and there are cultural nuances that impact how people think and behave. Highly inclusive organizations are aware of these different cultural nuances, and they use that awareness to plan and implement programs. Highly inclusive organizations understand that people do not respond the same way to messages, and that it is important to communicate in culturally competent ways. Highly inclusive organizations develop internal systems to help bridge cultural gaps between people from different communities and try to ensure that all voices are listened to and that all backgrounds are respected. Highly inclusive organizations are self-aware, they intentionally solicit and listen to feedback about themselves and they realize that there are no simple answers to the challenges of living in a diverse world, but that our heterogeneity provides opportunities at many different levels. Creating inclusive environments is most successful when organizational leaders are open to change, are willing to look inward and are willing to bring key stakeholders together for an open, honest dialogue that will begin the process of creating more inclusive organizations.

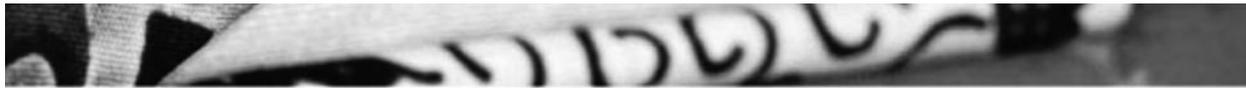
Communities of Color and Other Diverse Populations

The Denver Foundation believes that highly inclusive organizations are inclusive of all diverse groups. The Foundation chose to focus this research on the inclusiveness practices of organizations as they relate to an organization’s relationship to communities of color. This decision was made for many reasons. First, the Foundation wanted to understand and help others understand more about how race relations specifically impact nonprofit organizations. Second, the Foundation believes that because of the demographic shifts happening in Colorado and throughout the United States, nonprofits are ill-equipped to deal with the rapid changes taking place in the environment, and there is an urgency to help them learn how to become better at responding to the needs of a population that is increasingly representative of communities of color. Third, because the Foundation has limited resources for this project, it wanted to focus its resources on one issue related to inclusiveness practices in order to make a larger impact in one area. The Foundation believes that if organizations can better understand how to become inclusive of people of color, those lessons will impact other diverse populations positively. The Denver Foundation fully supports and encourages other efforts to help organizations become more inclusive of all diverse populations.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

Becoming a Highly Inclusive Organization

Becoming a highly inclusive organization is an exciting, rewarding process that takes time and commitment. Some organizations decide to “become more diverse” and make attempts to change the representation of people of color on their boards of directors and within their staff, but do not have a sustained commitment to do what is required to create lasting change. This approach raises hopes and expectations that may not be met without a deeper commitment to actualizing real cultural change within an organization. True cultural shifts happen when a number of factors are in place. The positive factors are best practices which, if present, will help an organization to become more inclusive of people of color. The factors that make a negative impact are referred to as barriers to inclusiveness. Due to a variety of external and internal considerations, every organization has a combination of best practices and barriers at play. Some organizations, however, have



worked hard to overcome barriers and have been intentional about focusing on best practices that will strengthen the organization from a variety of perspectives. The following are important best practices and barriers that impact an organization's inclusiveness practices.

BEST PRACTICES

Leadership

The CEO of a nonprofit organization almost always establishes the level of commitment, the attitude, the pace, and the behaviors related to an organization's overall inclusiveness practices. Organizations that are highly inclusive of people of color are led by CEOs (which includes paid staff leaders with the title Executive Director, President and/or CEO) who are deeply committed to developing inclusive organizations and boards of directors that are, at a minimum, unlikely to interfere with the CEO's efforts and ideally, are supportive of the CEO's commitment. In three out of four case studies of organizations with very inclusive cultures, the organization was dramatically changed when a new CEO with a high level of personal and professional commitment to inclusiveness was hired. The fourth organization was founded by an individual who has ensured that inclusiveness practices have been central to the organization's work since the beginning.

Importantly, *the race or ethnicity of the CEO is not the determining factor affecting an organization's inclusiveness practices.* While some people may intuit that a person of color must lead an organization in order for the organization to be deeply inclusive, this is not the case. In two different case studies, organizations with white⁴, male CEOs significantly transformed the culture of the organizations when they took over. Every case study participant of those organizations was aware and appreciative of those individuals' work and understood that it was their leadership that was responsible for changing the organization. Two other organizations, which were led by women of color, were also very successful in creating inclusive organizations. The leadership of the CEOs was cited repeatedly in those instances as well.

Conversely, it is important to note that having a *CEO of color may not guarantee commitment to developing a more inclusive organization solely on the basis of the CEO's ethnicity.* For example, one organization studied was led by a woman of color who had been in her position for over five years. When asked about recruitment practices that might lead to hiring a diverse staff, she said that the only thing she considers is an applicant's qualifications and she does not intentionally do outreach or recruitment in communities of color. While this organization does have staff members of color and generally has a congenial work environment, it has no board members of color and has not made any deliberate attempts to create a more inclusive environment for diverse clients, constituents, board or staff.

Though the race or ethnicity of an organization's CEO may not be the salient factor affecting inclusiveness levels, it is still a factor. In leading an organization through a transformational process, white CEOs may benefit from a perception that they are leading the effort because it is good for the organization. Chief Executive Officers of color may be subjected to criticism and a perception that they are engaging in the work only because it is perceived to be beneficial for them and their ethnic community, which may cause a certain degree of tension within the organization that white CEOs might not face. On the other hand, organizations with CEO's of color may benefit from a perception that the CEOs of their organizations are more knowledgeable about communities of color and have a greater expertise about race and ethnicity than white CEOs. Boards of directors and other key stakeholders should consider how these subtle perceptions may impact their responses to CEO efforts to impact change.

The role of a board of directors in influencing change is also significant but is limited by the CEOs attitude and behavior regarding inclusiveness practices. Boards of directors can knowingly or unknowingly perpetuate cultures of exclusivity or create highly inclusive board cultures. In one case study, just a few years ago all of the board and staff members of an organization were white. A new board member of color joined the board and decided to make it a personal goal to recruit more people of color onto the board. The board is now comprised of 25% people of color and a commitment to diversity at the board level has grown. The CEO has been supportive of

⁴For the purposes of this report, white is used to denote non-Hispanic white Americans.



these efforts though she has not been a leader in diversifying the board. Despite these changes, no people of color at the staff level have been hired, and the programs and services of the organization are not designed with diverse communities in mind. The CEO characterizes her leadership and the staff's awareness of issues of race and ethnicity as "benign neglect." Thus, despite board changes and the board's growing commitment to becoming more inclusive, the organizational change is limited since the CEO is not equally as committed. Unless there is a CEO change at this organization or unless the current CEO's commitment to inclusiveness changes, the organization's ability to become more inclusive with its programs, constituents and staff will be limited.

In another instance, a board of directors of an organization that historically had a poor reputation within marginalized communities made a determination to begin the process of diversifying after being lobbied to do so by people in the community. Shortly thereafter, the white CEO retired and the board - which was now more diverse - intentionally decided to hire someone who was committed to inclusiveness. They hired another white person, one who is deeply committed to inclusiveness practices and who immediately hired a more diverse staff and worked with the board to continue bringing new people of color onto the board. In this instance, while the board was instrumental in making changes to its own composition, one of its most important actions was to institutionalize the change it envisioned by hiring a CEO who would reflect its commitment to inclusiveness. This organization now has a strong partnership between the CEO and the board and the leadership continues to work together diligently to build a healthy, inclusive organization at all levels.

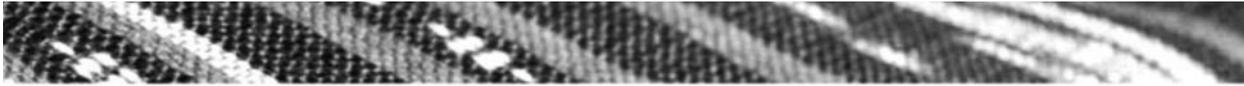
Comprehensive Commitment to Inclusiveness

The most important quality that is found in leaders and organizations that are highly inclusive is that these leaders take a long-term, holistic approach to inclusiveness and integrate it into all of the work of the organization.

In highly inclusive organizations, leaders and the teams that they assemble are constantly working with the external world to be responsive to communities of color and their needs, and they are intentional about working internally with their staff and board to create a welcoming environment and to expand people's knowledge and awareness of different cultures in myriad ways. In essence, these organizations embrace core values of inclusiveness in all that they do and, rather than considering inclusiveness to be one more thing that has to be done in a busy day, it is a fundamental part of the everyday work so it is neither perceived to be a burden or an additional responsibility.

Developing a comprehensive program to increase inclusiveness practices requires making a long-term commitment to changing an organization's culture and practices. Externally, it requires examining how an organization's programs are designed and implemented, which implies looking at how the organization communicates with communities of color and how it responds to feedback from communities of color. Internally, a comprehensive approach requires looking at how the organization recruits, retains and treats diverse staff and board members and the organizational culture and environment. Transforming organizations are aided by an ongoing commitment to providing race-related training programs to staff and board members and by retaining outside consultants who can help organizations evaluate their strengths and weaknesses and develop a plan to realize lasting change. Importantly, however, *the addition of consultants can only be successful if the leadership of the organization has a sustained commitment to becoming more inclusive and if they truly own the process rather than shifting responsibility and ownership to external consultants.*

Consultants are used for a variety of purposes. One common mistake organizations make is that they hire consultants to do race-related training programs – diversity training – without doing the requisite work that is also necessary to make an impact on an organization. *To have a lasting impact on an organization, race-related training programs must be completed in tandem with other efforts to create more inclusive organizations. If race-related training programs are carried out in isolation, the impact can either be negligible or, in some cases, can even be negative.* For example, one organization that was studied created a diversity committee and completed cultural competency training. The impact on individuals who went through the training was insufficient for creating organizational change. The diversity committee then decided to adopt a formal diversity goal and



promptly disbanded since they felt that they had accomplished their objective. Needless to say, these activities did little to institutionalize any long-term change within the organization.

Money, Race, Ethnicity and Nonprofits

The downturn in the U.S. economy that began in 2000 has hit nonprofit organizations hard. Individual and corporate giving is down, foundation assets are down, and many nonprofit organizations are struggling to continue providing their core services to their primary constituents. Some organizations are responding to the economic downturn by retrenching. In our study of nonprofits, a number of organizations stated that, given the current economic climate, they are unable to focus on anything other than raising enough money to continue operating their core programs. "It would be foolhardy to go toward goals beyond surviving," one board member of an organization stated.

Other nonprofits in the study, however, have responded to the economic environment by increasing their commitment to inclusiveness. These organizations value people of color as major contributors to the Colorado economy, to the tax-base and to nonprofits. They also recognize that people of color are significant consumers of nonprofit services. The potential assets that people of color may have available for an organization include, but are not limited to, financial resources. In fact, recent research shows that African American⁵ families in Denver are slightly more philanthropic than white families, according to a study of itemized charitable deductions.⁶

One of the organizations studied, an arts organization, made the decision to engage in a comprehensive change management program targeted at creating a more inclusive culture overall while increasing the number of individuals of color who pay to access their facility. The leaders of this organization recognized that few people of color currently utilize their facility and that there is a market-benefit to improving how communities of color experience the organization externally and internally. More clients will, obviously, lead to more revenue.

Similarly, organizations that do not necessarily generate revenue from their client bases also reported that they are working to increase their level of inclusiveness in these economically challenging times. *Highly inclusive organizations recognize that people of color represent every socio-economic class. They also understand that most communities of color hold strong community and family values and are deeply philanthropic, though not always in ways that are recognized by the majority of the nonprofit community.* Thus, these nonprofit leaders are looking to people of color as donors and contributors as well as clients and consumers.

Staff

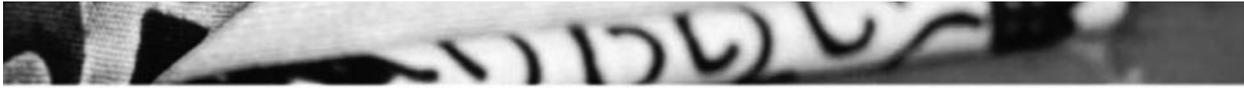
In almost all nonprofit organizations, staff members are the primary people with whom an organization's constituents, key stakeholders and the public interface. Thus, nonprofits benefit from having a staff that is able to effectively communicate with constituent groups and the public. Highly inclusive organizations successfully manage to hire an inclusive staff and work to retain staff once hired.

Recruitment

The process begins with recruitment. *Highly inclusive organizations interviewed in the case studies make a concerted effort to reach out to communities of color in the hiring process.* For example, they advertise their job openings in papers aimed at specific ethnic groups. Some also develop reciprocal relationships with other nonprofit organizations whose primary constituent base is a community (or communities) of color. One organization spoke of the importance of valuing an individual's ability to work in diverse communities to such an extent that positions will be held open until candidates who are able to work in diverse communities and environments are found. Notice, this organization does not hold the position open until a person of color is

⁵ For the purpose of this report, African American denotes a person having origins in any of the Black racial groups of Africa.

⁶ *Chronicle of Philanthropy*, "How Americans Give", May 1, 2003



hired. Rather, they hold the position open until a candidate is found who is able to understand their clients and who thrives in an environment where inclusiveness is highly valued. That individual might or might not be a person of color; however, when candidates are evaluated on how well they understand diverse communities, the likelihood that the people doing the hiring will look seriously at candidates of color increases.

In a case that is quite different from those previously mentioned, a large, well-known organization in Denver believes it does not need to actively recruit staff because so many people go to them seeking employment. As a result, this organization's human resources department does no external recruitment of any kind (except for senior management positions). For a variety of reasons, people of color do not tend to approach this organization for employment. Thus, there is very little interaction between the organization and communities of color when it comes to hiring. The result: fewer than 5% of the organization's staff are people of color. To work toward inclusiveness, organizations need to consider their hiring practices and what steps they can take to remove any perceived or real barriers that might exist in reaching out to communities of color.

Interestingly, some organizations that have had difficulty becoming more inclusive seem to perceive that the lack of a human resources department precludes them from doing appropriate outreach. This does not appear to be so. In our case studies, we found small organizations and large organizations without human resource departments that have managed to become very inclusive; the important factor is not how much institutional help managers receive in the hiring process, but how committed the leadership of the organization is to hiring a diverse staff.

Retention

Hiring staff is only part of the process to ensure that an organization has a diverse staff. In many ways, the more important work to be done comes after the employees are hired. One of the most important retention factors is ensuring that employees of color know that there is a solid commitment from the leadership to create a healthy, inclusive work environment for all staff. One staff person of color in an organization that has recently been through a change process to become more inclusive stated that before the process, she felt isolated from other staff members. Since the process began, she has felt more accepted and she feels that her skills and talents are more valued. Another staff person of color from the same organization stated that the process has made all of the staff of color more able to succeed in their positions.

Organizations also benefit from formalizing performance reviews and professional development programs that give all staff a clear sense of their standing within an organization and concrete information about their future career opportunities. By formalizing these procedures, limits can be placed on subtle biases that sometimes influence managers' decisions. In some case, those subtle biases result in staff of color being at a disadvantage in promotional processes. In addition, paying special attention to these areas can help ensure that staff of color are given an equal chance to serve in management positions, which can impact an organization's overall inclusiveness practices and its ability to work with diverse populations at every level.

Retaining a diverse staff does take intentional work and mirrors good management practice. The case studies indicate that once a diverse staff is hired, if an organization consistently engages in the other activities outlined within this report and engages in good management practices, staff will be retained and the organization is more likely to thrive.

Programs

Nonprofit organizations tend to design programs using three different approaches to reach their constituents.

- 1.) ***Universal and Inclusive:*** Programs are intentionally designed to reach everyone in an organization's service area, which includes but is not limited to, people of color. Programs are developed with an awareness of how people from different cultural backgrounds might respond to a program. For example, a human service organization provides health care services to low-income neighborhood residents. The organization dedicates funding to ensure that it has offices located in low-income neighborhoods. It



employs a diverse staff, some of whom are bilingual, and prints bilingual materials. Staff of all racial and ethnic backgrounds go through regular training programs to ensure that they have an awareness of different cultural perspectives on health and access to health care.

2.) *Specific to Communities of Color:* Programs are developed for particular racial or ethnic populations. For example, a hypothetical arts organization determines that it wants to cultivate the creative talents of young artists of color and creates an after-school program aimed at young people of color that is called “Color in the Arts” in a neighborhood that is predominantly Latino⁷ and Vietnamese. Art instructors are multi-lingual, materials are multi-lingual, and outreach efforts are focused on young people of color from the neighborhood. The curriculum includes instruction on the artistic accomplishments of artists of color and lessons on the artistic traditions of Latino and Vietnamese cultures.

3.) *One Size Fits All:* Programs are developed for an organization’s client base without consideration of the needs of diverse populations. For example, a substance-abuse treatment program sends a monolingual white outreach worker into a diverse low-income community with a large immigrant community. The materials she is carrying with her are printed in English only. Though the outreach worker has worked in the field for seven years and has had success helping many individuals access the programs her organization offers, she has had almost no success with recent immigrants. The organization continues to send her into this neighborhood with no cultural-awareness training and no support from others who have more familiarity with various immigrant populations.

Highly inclusive organizations within the case studies indicated that they design programs that are mostly Universal and Inclusive and programs that are Specific to Communities of Color. Organizations that are not very inclusive typically create One Size Fits All programs and in some instances, design programs that are Specific to Communities of Color. Interestingly, a trend was identified regarding the progression of organizations as they strive to become more inclusive. Organizations that are transitioning from being only moderately inclusive to making a concerted effort to becoming highly inclusive often develop programs that are Specific to Communities of Color. Once organizations develop a comprehensive knowledge of diverse communities and have created a fully inclusive culture, they have enough knowledge that they are confident in their ability to effectively design and implement Universal and Inclusive programs and have less need to create programs specifically targeted at communities of color.

Organizations that have difficulty becoming more inclusive sometimes develop programs that are Specific to Communities of Color in order to compensate for their overall lack of connection to communities of color. In some cases, these programs are excellent opportunities for organizations to learn more about their constituents and to begin integrating inclusiveness practices into the organization. However, if these programs are designed without a true commitment from the leadership to creating a more inclusive organization, it is unlikely that there will be any significant impact on the organization. For example, an organization that was interviewed received money from a funder to create an education and outreach program for school children of color. A person of color who is deeply committed to working with communities of color was hired to run the program. As a discreet entity within the organization, the program appears by all measures to be meeting its goals and has been an unqualified success. However, the CEO of the organization and board members (including one board member of color) generally believe that the organization should be “color blind” as it does its work and have not integrated the program into the broader work of the organization. When funding for the program ends, chances are, the staff person of color may leave, the program will end and the lessons learned from the program will have no lasting impact on the organization.

⁷ For the purpose of this report, Latino denotes those people who classify themselves as having "Mexican, Mexican American, Chicano," "Puerto Rican", or "Cuban" heritage as well as those who indicate that their origins are from the Spanish-speaking countries of Central or South America, the Dominican Republic or people identifying themselves generally as Spanish, Spanish-American, Hispanic, Hispano, Latino, and so on.



Outreach

Highly inclusive organizations recognize that they must create mechanisms to communicate with and listen to their constituents. *Highly inclusive organizations understand that successful outreach is a two-way process. When done well, outreach efforts offer communities of color an opportunity to learn about an organization while also providing organizations an opportunity to hear from and learn from communities of color.* For example, one organization that was interviewed organizes annual meetings in neighborhoods that are predominantly comprised of people of color. These meetings are opportunities for the organization to let residents know about the programs it is providing that will impact the community. It is also an opportunity for residents to provide the organization with feedback on how their work has affected the neighborhood and how the organization might do things differently to increase the effectiveness of their work. Similarly, together, the clients, staff and volunteers of this organization organize an annual celebration of the life and vitality of the neighborhoods with which it works. By being present with the residents and working side-by-side with them in their communities, the organization gains valuable knowledge and insight into the residents' values and cultural norms. This information allows the organization to respond more effectively and in more culturally competent ways to its constituents' needs.

Even organizations that have been less successful becoming inclusive often develop outreach strategies targeted at communities of color. However, the impact of these efforts is diminished greatly because in most cases, there is no mechanism by which the organization can hear and learn from their target audiences. For example, one organization interviewed has begun advertising on a local Spanish-language television station to inform Latino communities in Metro Denver about their work and the services they provide. Obviously, there is nothing intrinsically wrong with this tactic. Yet, because there are almost no Latinos involved with this organization at any level, and because they have not created a feedback mechanism – such as holding community forums about their work and/or their advertising campaign – their outreach to communities of color is unidirectional and less effective. Their work would be strengthened enormously if they went one step further and created a mechanism to solicit responses from Latino community members about their advertisements and about how community members perceive the organization and its programs.

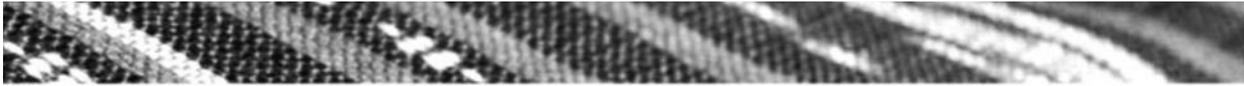
BARRIERS

The following observations about barriers to creating inclusive organizations will give organizations insight into the potential they have to create inclusive environments for clients, board and staff members that will help them accomplish their missions. In the case studies we found that organizations that have made a genuine, comprehensive commitment to inclusiveness have overcome some of these same barriers and have ultimately become transformational models for how to create more inclusive organizations.

The case studies also revealed that nonprofit leaders who have struggled to help their organizations become more inclusive are genuinely bewildered and sometimes very frustrated by the limited results that their hard work has yielded. In many instances, efforts seem to make little or no impact or, even worse, make a negative impact on an organization. In our interviews we found that some nonprofit professionals have simply given up trying to make their organizations more inclusive of people of color. The barriers outlined may shed light on where efforts by some nonprofit leaders fell short.

Mission

The most significant barrier that organizations face is a perception that the focus of their work is not relevant to communities of color. This perception seems to be especially pervasive in arts and culture organizations but exists in other kinds of organizations as well. Over time, these perceptions can develop into mythic proportions. The perception or myth becomes so deeply ingrained in the organizational culture that staff and board members become conditioned to believe the myth without questioning it. For example, a white CEO of an arts organization whose artists include numerous people of color but whose board, staff and audience is mostly



white, stated that “It’s a shame that other cultures don’t see value in art outside of their own communities.” Perceptions of this type are debilitating to organizations because they negatively stereotype communities of color, placing the blame on the community and releasing the organization of any responsibility.

These case studies also revealed that white board and staff members and staff and board members of color within the same organizations often had different impressions about how their organizations were perceived by people of color. The fact that there are significant differences in perception that exist among people who serve the same organization is an indicator that organizational myths about how people of color respond to an organization’s work are frequently inaccurate.

Highly inclusive organizations have found that they can overcome these concerns by collecting objective information on perceptions that people of color may have about their organizations and setting out on a deliberate course to respond to the information they gather.

“Color-Blind” Organizations

In our case studies we found that most individuals from all racial and ethnic backgrounds voice an interest in creating a culture of inclusiveness, but they do not know how to do so and/or they do not feel they have the time to do so. In many instances, we found that people in leadership positions believe that the most important contribution that they personally can make to create a more inclusive culture is to be “color-blind.” The implication of color-blindness is that an individual’s race and/or cultural background is irrelevant and that people’s contributions should be evaluated solely on how well they can “do the job.”

Yet, in the nonprofit sector, most organizations are in the business of making communities better places by providing services, by doing advocacy, by developing the arts, and so on. Nonprofits are not just making widgets. In almost all instances, culture matters when providing services or engaging in advocacy work or creating cultural or artistic experiences. Thus, it is a disservice to try to view the world through color-blind eyes, because the Denver Metro community is a diverse community and there are cultural nuances in how different communities respond to different programs, performances, messages, behaviors, etc.

Let us return for a moment to an organization that was interviewed and which has recently undergone a transformational process to become more inclusive. As stated earlier, a staff person of color in this organization who had been through the transition said that the process made all of the staff of color more able to succeed in their positions. It was the act of focusing on race and ethnicity and trying to adapt to differences in the organization that created that change and made the staff and thus the organization more effective. A color-blind response would not have led to the same results and would have perpetuated the isolation that staff of color felt prior to the change process.

Another mid-size organization that was interviewed has no board members of color and 5% of the staff are people of color. When the CEO of the organization was asked about the presence of people of color on staff, on two different occasions he stated that there were no people of color on staff. While this certainly epitomizes a “color-blind” perspective, this CEO is one of the first people to express frustration that his organization is not more inclusive and he is genuinely interested in finding ways to change the culture. It will be critical that he and other leaders begin to enhance their cultural competency if they are going to become more responsive to communities of color. *Creating a more inclusive culture requires paying attention to race, ethnicity and culture rather than turning a “blind eye” to these differences.*

Failure to Recognize Assets

A troubling pattern that was observed is that *leaders of organizations that have been less successful in their efforts to become more inclusive often fail to recognize the human resources around them.* More specifically, in numerous situations, organizations failed to recognize that they have potential board and staff members of color all around them. For example, one relatively small organization has very few people of color on the staff and the board despite the fact that it has thousands of clients – of which 45% are people of color – and many hundreds of volunteers, many of whom are also people of color. Interestingly, all of the interviewees of this organization believe that the leadership has a commitment to mutual respect and values inclusiveness yet it



does not attract individuals of color to its leadership positions. If this organization were to formalize a board and staff recruitment process that included opportunities for volunteers and clients to more easily move into these positions, it would be able to develop a more diverse staff and board.

Length of Board Term

Every board of directors is a unique entity with its own culture and its own operating norms. In our study of nonprofits in Metro Denver, we found boards that varied in every way imaginable, from size of board to expectations regarding fundraising responsibilities to length of board terms. No single structural characteristic of boards stood out as a critical difference for boards that were more or less inclusive, except one: *Nonprofit boards of directors that have board and board leadership terms that are either very short or very long have the most difficult time implementing changes to inclusiveness practices.* For example, one organization that was studied has one-year board terms and the Chair of the board also serves for just one year. This organization has made intermittent attempts to become more inclusive. However, because the leadership at the board level turns over so quickly (and this board is unusually involved in the day-to-day management of the organization) any lasting commitment to institutionalizing change has been severely limited. Creating a truly inclusive culture takes time and requires that the leadership remain committed for the long haul.

Another organization suffers from exactly the opposite predicament. In this case, there is no limit to the number of years that board members can serve on the organization's board of directors. As a result, many of the board members have served for eight or ten years. While this organization has had considerable success with inclusiveness practices in general, its board is comprised exclusively of African Americans and whites. Most of the interviewees from this organization identified the need to bring on individuals of color from a variety of racial/ethnic backgrounds, but there is inertia on the board regarding further attempts at diversification given that the board is basically self-perpetuating and positions on the board rarely open up.



Case Study Profile: Cathy Phelps Denver Center for Crime Victims

“Inclusiveness and diversity go beyond hiring people of color.” When Cathy Phelps became CEO of the Denver Center for Crime Victims formerly Denver Victim Service Center, she felt that both her staff and her Board of Trustees believed that inclusiveness was something it “had to deal with”. Now, years later, her staff and board understand that cultural awareness and inclusiveness are values to “embrace and respect”.

How did Cathy move her organization through this change? It wasn't easy. When she first arrived at Denver Center for Crime Victims, Cathy was one of two people of color on staff. Within a year, her associate who was a person of color died, and she became the only person of color. Although her predecessor was generally supportive of efforts to create a more diverse workplace, the change came slowly. Only after Cathy was promoted to the CEO position did she fully realize that the responsibility for deeper change was now hers. Within her first two years in the new position, she focused her efforts on:

- Recruiting new board members, including people of color, who shared her values regarding the importance of creating an inclusive organization;
- Assisting the staff (new and old) to understand the assets that different cultures, customs and practices offer the organization.

With these two goals in mind, Cathy set about strategically to accomplish her goals. She began by educating her staff about the important role each staff person plays in the life of each client and how important it is that staff understand the client's culture, background, language and customs.

Diverse clients come to the Denver Center for Crime Victims because they have been victimized – the Center could no longer ignore the cultural differences of some clients if they were to improve the lives of all people who sought their help. When asked about the Center's specific goal regarding representation of people



of color on staff, Cathy replied, “Our goal is to have a diversified staff: this goal is driven by the clients that we serve.”

The staff at the Denver Center for Crime Victims complete a two-day “cultural training” session. In addition, staff have sought to expand their knowledge of diverse communities by bringing in speakers, reviewing relevant films, and meeting monthly to exchange information about other cultures and international communities. The process of learning about the needs of their diverse clients has taught Cathy and her staff much about how to create an inclusive workplace.

One of the most important skills they have developed is how to deal with conflict. Diverse communities naturally have different ways of dealing with conflict. When there is an internal disagreement at the Center, staff “talk it out”...they get together and work through issues, and try hard not to allow minor problems to balloon into major issues. It’s not always an easy process, Cathy says, but it helps build team spirit within her small agency. A board member observed, “It’s remarkable how seamlessly we involve people from different communities, with different backgrounds and different desires in our work. I don’t know if it can be done better than this. It’s not perfect, but for a group of people with such widely divergent backgrounds and really different agendas, we are a model of diversity.”

Cathy recognizes that by the very nature of the services the Denver Center for Crime Victims provides, she and her staff must be prepared to work with many tools to help their clients restore their lives, in part, by being prepared to value the differences they bring with them. Board members, staff and Cathy do not always agree on what will make the organization better. However, they have created a safe forum in which to discuss those issues and that has made the Center a place where employees can say, “This is the best place that I have ever worked and diversity is a big part of that.” At present, over fifty percent of the staff are people of color. Spanish speaking clients can now speak in their native language when they explain how they have been victimized. Staff respect and build upon the assets that their own backgrounds and the diversity of their clients provide. Sixty-three percent of the Board of Directors are also people of color. With this amazing transformation, lead by a CEO with a clear vision and commitment to inclusiveness, it’s not surprising, then, that in 2002 the Martin Luther King Business and Social Responsibility Committee honored the work of Cathy Phelps and the Denver Center for Crime Victims with the Business and Social Responsibility Award.



Case Study Profile: David Fletcher-Janzen **Devereux Cleo Wallace, Colorado Springs**

At Devereux Cleo Wallace with campuses in Westminster and Colorado Springs, working to instill value for diversity has helped foster cultural sensitivity in working with young people who have emotional, developmental and educational disabilities.

Devereux Cleo Wallace’s Colorado Springs campus is a residential mental health treatment facility with capacity for 118 clients. In the last few years, David Fletcher-Janzen has been involved in promoting diversity and inclusiveness in the organization’s culture.

David, who is the administrator at the Colorado Springs campus, knew that embracing inclusiveness would help employees better serve the clients placed in Devereux Cleo Wallace’s care by helping them better understand young people and their families.

David started by modeling the behavior he wanted to see in his staff. He also discussed with staff members the importance of being able to respond to the cultural needs and language of the children they served. At staff meetings, he talked about the need to be inclusive and respectful.

“For instance, an American Indian will bring an entirely different way of looking at treatment than a Caucasian, and it helps to understand where they’re coming from,” said David. “Also, if you understand their cultural values and consider those values in treatment, the clients are more likely to accept treatment.”

To help himself and his staff change their attitudes and practices regarding inclusiveness, David sought the help of a professional group. First, he and a colleague attended a weeklong program presented by the Institute for Cultural Competency. Following that, each employee at the Colorado Springs campus attended the same program, five staff members at a time.



“At first there were misgivings among staff members who were worried that they would say the wrong thing,” said David. “But, as the classes taught them about prejudice and stereotypes, they began to understand their own responsibility for making change. Eventually, once they expanded their definition of diversity to include diversity of practice and thought, they became more comfortable.”

This training was then extended to the organization's other campus in Westminster, Colorado, where employees are currently attending the program. By budgeting for large-scale employee training, Devereux Cleo Wallace demonstrated its commitment to inclusiveness as being fundamental to the way it operates.

“Now we know that practicing inclusiveness among the staff of DCW and with the families and children we serve is automatic and everyday,” said David.

In addition, Devereux Cleo Wallace is making a concerted effort to recruit and retain a more diverse staff, and the results of this commitment to staff inclusiveness can be seen throughout the organization. For instance, the organization has expanded its avenues for employee recruiting, by starting to use more targeted community newsletters and word-of-mouth, in addition to the standard methods.

What has come of these efforts overall? Referral agencies comment on the importance of inclusiveness practices for their clients and on how effectively DCW has responded to different cultural needs. The staff has been recognized for its efforts with awards and newspaper articles. Clients and families from diverse backgrounds are more likely to seek out Devereux Cleo Wallace, because it is building a reputation for cultural sensitivity.

In addition, better appreciation for diversity allows the staff to make better connections with clients and to treat them more successfully. This can result in better job satisfaction, which can be extremely important in the mental health industry, an industry which traditionally struggles with high staff turnover.

Devereux Cleo Wallace's parent organization, the Devereux Foundation, has seen the positive impact of DCW's diversity efforts, and has asked DCW to assist the national office in structuring a corporate plan for diversity.

“Inclusiveness is so important in any workplace, and here it extends to the work we do with our clients,” said David. “When I joined Devereux Cleo Wallace, I was excited to be able to bring my own personal commitment to this issue.”

Inclusiveness, a business imperative? Yes! A moral commitment? Absolutely! Focusing on inclusiveness has made a difference for the organization's clients and employees. And, in 2003, Devereux Cleo Wallace Colorado Springs Campus was the recipient of the Pikes Peak Coalition of Chambers' Diversity Award, an award that recognizes organizations that demonstrate outstanding commitment to inclusiveness.



CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

We hope that the information contained in this report will help nonprofit organizations in Metro Denver to do better work and to create better work environments through creating more inclusive cultures. Time and again case study participants reported that the process of becoming more inclusive is extremely rewarding personally for the individuals involved, and makes a significant impact on an organization's ability to carry out its mission and to generate resources of every kind. The richness that results from Colorado's diversity is a great asset to nonprofit organizations and, with focused efforts, can be tapped in powerful ways to help create a more effective, more vibrant nonprofit community in the region.

If you are interested in exploring how your organization can become more inclusive, a set of questions has been developed related to the Best Practices and Barriers identified in this report. Furthermore, the Expanding Nonprofit Inclusiveness Initiative is currently developing a set of tools to help organizations effectively develop inclusiveness practices. Please visit the Foundation's website (www.denverfoundation.org) for the most recent information.

Questions for Nonprofit Organizations:

1. If you are the CEO of a nonprofit organization, have you developed and expressed your own commitment to inclusiveness?
2. Has your organization developed a long-term, integrated approach to inclusiveness?
3. Have you considered the assets and markets that communities of color could bring to your organization?
4. Have you recruited and retained a staff that can effectively communicate with your constituents?
5. Does your organization implement programs that are Universal and Inclusive and/or Specific to Communities of Color?
6. Do you know how communities of color understand your mission and your work?
7. Have you investigated the cultural nuances of your programs and services?
8. Have you assessed existing resources for developing inclusive leadership in your organization, including volunteers and clients?
9. Does the structure of your organization's board of directors lend itself to developing inclusiveness?



APPENDIX A

EXPANDING NONPROFIT INCLUSIVENESS INITIATIVE STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Polly Baca, *LARASA*

Patricia Barela Rivera, *Small Business Administration*

Sister Alicia Cuarón, *Centro Bienestar San Jose*

Ashara Ekundayo, *Pan African Arts Society*

Thom Foster, *Street Smart, Inc.*

Maria Guajardo Lucero, *Assets for Colorado Youth*

Anna Jo Haynes, *Mile High Child Care*

Elsa Holguín, *Rose Community Foundation*

Grant Jones, *Metro Denver Black Church Initiative*

Jesse King, *Daniels Fund*

Joyce Nakamura, *Hall & Evans*

Jackie Norris, *Metro Volunteers*

Dean Prina MD, *Steering Committee Chair*
Partners in Pediatrics
Chair, Denver Foundation Board of Trustees

Sylvia S. Smith, *City of Denver, Auditor's Office*

Pia Smith, *Community College of Denver*

Darius Smith, *Colorado Indian Education Association*

Hazel Whitsett, *Northeast Women's Center*



APPENDIX B

SURVEY FINDINGS

In the summer and fall of 2002, The Denver Foundation and the steering committee of the Expanding Nonprofit Inclusiveness Initiative (ENII) contracted to conduct a survey on inclusiveness within Metro Denver nonprofit organizations. A master's student and a faculty member in the Graduate School of Public Affairs at the University of Colorado at Denver conducted the research and reported on the findings to the ENII steering committee.

This appendix contains a brief summary of this quantitative research. For a full description of the research, please see The Denver Foundation's website www.denverfoundation.org.

Methodology

The Denver Foundation surveyed 700 nonprofit organizations with operating budgets of greater than \$500,000. The survey instrument asked questions about the inclusiveness practices of the organizations, specifically focusing on race and ethnicity. Surveys were completed by hand and on-line, and were received from 210 organizations for a 30% response rate.

Results

Numerical Representation of Communities of Color

Numerically, African-Americans, Asian-Pacific Islanders, and Native Americans are proportionally represented in metro-Denver nonprofits at the staff, volunteer, and board levels. However, though it is the metro area's largest community of color, ***Latinos are significantly underrepresented both on boards and staffs***. Only 13% of nonprofit staffs and only 7% of nonprofit boards are Latino/Chicano/Hispanic, compared to 17% of the population in Metro Denver.

When asked about their donors, 94% of the organizations reported that they do not keep track of the ethnicity of donors. However, 19% did report receiving support from minority-owned businesses.

Interest in and Implementation of Inclusiveness Practices

Most organizations are interested in learning how to become more inclusive and many are taking action toward that end. Fifty-eight percent of respondents were interested in designing a comprehensive diversity strategy and 28% of respondents volunteered for in-depth case studies about their inclusiveness practices. Related to implementation of inclusiveness practices: 52% of organizations have trained their staffs to understand the impact that racial/ethnic inequality has had on their constituents; 31% have provided workshops on diversity for staff; and 23% have initiated diversity committees.

Inclusiveness and Leadership

While 48% of surveyed organizations have actively recruited people of color for board positions, a large number of nonprofit boards of directors are not at all inclusive. Twenty-five percent of nonprofit boards have ***no board members of color***.



Research also shows that larger organizations are less likely to have a President or Chief Executive of color. The greater the size of the operating budget of an organization, the less likely an organization is to employ a CEO of color.

Conclusion

This quantitative research reveals that the Metro Denver nonprofit sector has already begun to incorporate diverse voices and cultures into its organizations. However, there are some gaps in these efforts, particularly in the representation of the Latino/Chicano/ Hispanic communities on staff and boards, and in the lack of people of color on one-quarter of all nonprofit sector boards of directors. These findings helped to lay the groundwork for the case studies reported on in the “Inside Inclusiveness” report.