

## How Board Members Can Advance Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Foundations

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Philanthropy has been successful in tackling some of our region's biggest challenges and in contributing to our region's vibrancy. And our region's philanthropy has the potential to be even more successful. Focusing on encouraging foundations to take voluntary action to advance diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) will increase our philanthropy's success by: 1) increasing effectiveness, 2) enhancing impact, and 3) advancing the common good.

Trustees and Board members of foundations are uniquely positioned to advance DEI in foundations. Below are some ideas for foundation Trustees and Board members to support progress on DEI – explore which ones would work best for your foundation:

- **Authorizing environment:** Make DEI an institutional priority; e.g., include as a goal in your strategic plan or a statement in your guiding principles; dedicate resources to building an inclusive culture at the staff and board levels; define what diversity means for your organization
- **CEO expectation:** Include performance around DEI as a measure of effectiveness; i.e., your CEO is expected to prioritize DEI and show progress, such as in grantmaking, community engagement, hiring, recruiting volunteers
- **Executive hiring:** Mandate to search firms that DEI is a priority in searches; interview diverse candidates; develop strategies to ensure diverse recruitment at executive and non-executive levels; ask all candidates about how they will approach DEI issues
- **Vendors:** Hire vendors with diverse staff and an explicit commitment to DEI; e.g., fund managers, investment advisors, legal firms, consultants, accounting firms, venues for meetings and events
- **Investment strategy:** Apply a diversity, equity, and inclusion lens to investment strategies
- **Evaluation of organizational impact:** Evaluate the effectiveness of your work with a DEI lens; e.g., analyze who is benefiting from your work by collecting and using data that tracks distinct populations (e.g., gender, ability, sexual orientation, race/ethnicity)
- **Board diversity:** Implement structures that expand entry points for potential Board members, such as committees that create spaces for diverse voices; mentor and develop the leadership of diverse Board members; nominate and appoint diverse candidates as successors to Board chairs
- **Community engagement:** Expand networks through intentional outreach and participation in communities (e.g., site visits, volunteering and being involved in communities served); ask for and act on input from the communities you serve
- **Grants and programs:** Commit resources to explicit DEI work and grants; ask grantees to submit their staff, Board and program DEI profiles and policies as part of the grant application
- **Nonprofits as partners:** Encourage greater responsiveness among nonprofits to DEI issues and work with them as partners; i.e., set the expectation that DEI is a priority and provide resources for it, such as capacity building around DEI issues and tools; build learning relationships with nonprofit partners to strengthen your foundation's connections to and understanding of diverse communities; welcome nonprofit leaders on your foundation's Board and committees
- **Strategic communications:** Use strategic communications to share your DEI work and to promote it as a priority in the nonprofit and philanthropic fields

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*These recommendations were developed by a group of Philanthropy Network members who participated in a year-long Trustee peer-group to explore how foundation Trustees and Board members can support progress on DEI. Group sessions were facilitated by Meghan McVety, Capacity for Change and R. Duane Perry Trustee, The Claneil Foundation and The Philadelphia Foundation.*

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