Strategies for Talent Diversity:

A proposal for improving the racial and ethnic diversity at nonprofit organizations across the sector

2013-2014 | American Express NGen Fellows
Convened by Independent Sector
July 2014
1. Project context

2. Diversity as an adaptive leadership challenge

3. Key takeaways from research

4. Strategies for increasing staff diversity

5. Next steps
Project context

Program background

American Express NGen Fellows are a diverse and talented group of 12 leaders age 40 or under who are emerging leaders and mid-career professionals at Independent Sector member organizations. Fellows have a track record of exemplary leadership and a passionate commitment to advancing the common good, as well as demonstrated leadership potential for their organization and the nonprofit community. The American Express NGen Fellows program elevates participants’ ability to shape the future of the nonprofit and philanthropic community, and in particular, expands their capacity to tackle society’s toughest challenges. The program uses a core curriculum of adaptive leadership and focuses on the work of Ronald A. Heifetz and Marty Linsky in Leadership on the Line (Harvard Business School Press, 2002).

Project context

In September 2013, the 2013 cohort of American Express NGen Fellows issued a Request for Proposals to Independent Sector member organizations to identify a pro bono consulting project. The goal of the project was to address a pressing leadership challenge the organization faced that was also relevant to the sector at large.

Increasing staff diversity was the challenge chosen, using National Audubon Society (Audubon) as a case study. This document is the major project deliverable.
Process and overall goal for staff diversity project

**Goal of project:**
Identify strategies to improve the racial and ethnic diversity of staff at Audubon and across the nonprofit sector

### Internal Research
- Review of policies, processes, and documents related to Audubon’s human resources (HR) activities and overall strategy
- Interviews with over 18 Audubon staff from the organization’s national and state offices

### External Research
- Review of literature focused on best practices for building and retaining a more diverse staff
- Synthesis of literature and knowledge of adaptive leadership
- Interviews with 16 organizations focused on increasing diversity in their fields or making progress on their own diversity goals
The sector, as a whole, has struggled with staff diversity

• Nonprofits report particular difficulty in hiring people of color for positions in fundraising, program/professional positions, and administrative support.

• While almost 9 out of 10 nonprofit employees believe their organization values diversity, more than 7 out of 10 believe their employer does not do enough to create a diverse and inclusive work environment.

• Among nonprofit employees who believe their employers value diversity, only one-fourth (25%) believe that their organization has actively demonstrated their commitment to creating a racially diverse environment.

• More than half (57%) of the employees of all races...reveal that they attempt to evaluate the commitment to diversity of prospective organizations during the interview process—and this is especially true for prospective employees of color (71%).

A cultural shift is required across the sector to ensure inclusivity and build diversity

- Lack of diversity may be the symptom of a larger problem which relates to a lack of inclusivity across the sector.
- This requires a cultural shift towards more inclusive mindsets and a collective approach to changing values, beliefs, assumptions, and behaviors.
- It also indicates that while technical changes are important, a broader set of adaptive leadership efforts are required to generate real, sustainable progress over time.
- This is an issue that requires a bottom-up and top-down approach to ensure all voices are heard and all stakeholders are involved in solutions.
- Organizations that are well-known, large and/or far-reaching have particular opportunity to lead the sector on these issues and make diversity and inclusion core parts of organizational culture.
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Organizations striving to increase staff diversity should consider it an adaptive leadership challenge

- Adaptive challenges are **murky, systemic problems** with no easy answers.
- These challenges occur when people and organizations are forced to adjust to a **radically altered environment** (e.g., changing demographics).
- Adaptive change requires a shift in **values, beliefs, assumptions**, or **behaviors** related to how the organization achieves its mission (organizational strategy).
- **Adaptive leadership** requires leaders to introduce **new ways of working**, which limit problem solving at the executive level and **involve people throughout the organization** to address current realities.

Six key principles in managing adaptive work

1. **Get on the balcony:** Take a high level perspective to spot emerging patterns

2. **Identify your adaptive challenge:** Spend time with people across levels and geographies to understand which beliefs, values, and behaviors need to change

3. **Regulate distress:** Pace adaptive work and don’t start too many initiatives simultaneously

4. **Maintain disciplined attention:** Encourage managers to grapple with divisive issues and demonstrate collaboration to solve problems

5. **Give the work back to employees:** Help people recognize they have the solutions and support their risk taking

6. **Protect leadership voices from below:** Seek out people providing fresh perspectives and exposing contradictions

Leaders handle their responsibilities differently for an adaptive situation than they do with a routine situation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Leader’s Responsibilities</th>
<th>Technical/Routine Situation</th>
<th>Adaptive Situation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Direction</td>
<td>Define problems and provide solutions</td>
<td>Identify the adaptive challenge and frame key questions and issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protection</td>
<td>Shield the organization from external threats</td>
<td>Let the organization feel external pressures within a range it can stand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orientation</td>
<td>Clarify roles and responsibilities</td>
<td>Challenge current roles and resist pressure to define new roles quickly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managing Conflict</td>
<td>Restore order</td>
<td>Expose conflict or let it emerge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shaping Norms</td>
<td>Maintain norms</td>
<td>Challenge unproductive norms</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“Real leaders ask hard questions and knock people out of their comfort zones. Then they manage the resulting distress.”

Beliefs, assumptions, and behaviors that organizations striving to increase diversity may consider shifting

Perceived Belief:

- People of color communities care little about conservation work/are disengaged on conservation issues that extend beyond environmental justice.

Perceived Assumption:

- Collaboration with other environmental sector organizations would yield few positive results in the way of addressing diversity because they aren’t making progress on this issue.

Perceived Behavior:

- Overlooking potential models for success and areas for thought partnership across the network; gathering limited information about engagement of people of color communities and related activities within the network.

Examining these beliefs, assumptions, and behaviors may uncover limitations in organizational effectiveness beyond diversity (e.g., collaboration; communication)
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Nonprofit organizations can work across five dimensions to make progress on staff diversity and inclusion

1. Pipeline
   Activities that ensure organizations can tap into a larger and more diverse pool of talent to fill future positions

2. Recruitment & Hiring
   Efforts to build diverse staff, management, boards

3. Retention & Development
   Tools to retain and develop existing staff

4. Capabilities & Culture
   Adaptive strategies to understand, develop, measure, and communicate the value of diversity and inclusion across the organization

5. Employer Brand
   Actions to engage people of color communities and generate organizational trust in diversity and inclusion; become known as an employer of choice
Findings from internal and external research

1. Pipeline: Tap into a larger and more diverse talent pool

**Internal**
“We need to grow leaders in the community that will grow with our organization.”

“If our instructors and staff don’t look like the youth in our programs, do the youth really see our organization as a possible career choice for them or the environmental field in general?”

“We need to strengthen how we are engaging with our communities.”

**Literature Review**
An important outreach strategy to support diversity and local communities is educating and encouraging youth of color to study Science, Technology, Engineering & Math (STEM) subjects.

**External**
Actively market career paths to youth participants and part-time younger workers.
- YMCA of the USA

Partner with scholarship organizations and look for traits that indicate interest in target areas.
- Accenture

Target volunteer workforces.
- Boy Scouts of America

Target influential diverse leaders to bring them into other activities within the organization.
- American Heart Association
Findings from internal and external research

2. Recruitment & Hiring: Build diverse staff, management, boards

Internal
“The matrices of our values and what we look for in our staff should reflect the community and their needs.”

“The best way to recruit people of color into the environmental field is to have role models like them that are in those roles.”

“Online and social media presence needs to be stronger.”

External
Commitment to diversity must include diversity of board, staff, volunteers, vendors, etc.

Retain a search firm for local chapters to ensure diverse executive director candidate pools.

Reopen a search if the candidate pool is not diverse.

Partner to share booth space costs in professional/career fairs at national conferences targeted at people of color communities.

Introduce potential employees to people of color who have been successful in the organization

- Accenture
- Girl Scouts of the USA
- Public Allies
- Boy Scouts of America and Girl Scouts of the USA

Literature Review
Findings from internal and external research

3. Retention & Development: Keep and develop existing staff

Internal
“We need to build talent within our organization and put our diverse staff members through a leadership development program that ensures we keep them.”

“We need to have a clear commitment to the recruitment and retention of diverse staff members; have stated goals and benchmarks…”

External
Diversity at all levels is critical to allow minority staff to identify role models and mentors that increase perceptions that they too can succeed/be promoted within the organization. – Nonprofit HR Solutions

Conducting and analyzing surveys of employee satisfaction are important in understanding any significant satisfaction differences for staff of color. - Commongood Careers

Being clear and honest with people about what it takes to be successful within the organization and where people stack up against that bar is vital. – Management Leadership for Tomorrow

Literature Review
Mentoring was a contributing factor to the rise in ranking of the highlighted companies that rose in the Diversity Inc. Top 50.
Findings from internal and external research

4. Capabilities & Culture: Promote ways of being across the organization

Internal
“We would benefit from seeing how other chapters are increasing diversity.”

“If we train staff members on diversity and sensitivity, then staff members will be more educated in these matters and be able to then develop their own ideas that they can apply to their regions.”

“This isn’t just about racial diversity, but it’s also about socio-economic, religious, and gender diversity.”

External
You can’t hire your way out of a lack of diversity, it needs to be an intentional process.
– Commongood Careers

Diversity is broader than talent and needs to be embraced beyond HR. There must be an active commitment of the CEO.
– Girl Scouts of the USA

There have to be clear connections between high diversity/inclusion and impact towards mission.
– Nonprofit HR Solutions

This work is a process, not a destination. Organizations must nurture dialogue, trust, and honesty.
– RFK Children’s Action Corps

Literature Review
Without dependable data, diversity work does not stand on firm ground and the message is clearly sent that diversity efforts are not as important as other organizational systems.
Findings from internal and external research

5. Employer Brand: Be known as an employer of choice

Internal
“One of the obstacles we face is that many people view us as an ‘old organization’. How do we appeal to a younger generation?”

“A functional website and having some good campaigns to increase our visibility would certainly enhance our image and build awareness of our work.”

External
Potential and current employees want to work for an employer they believe in, not just to advance a mission.
– Boy Scouts of America

Our national office reports on the diversity of our staff regularly.
– Girl Scouts of the USA

Workplace media like Diversity Inc. rank organizations and are used by job-seekers as vetting tools for potential employers.
– Girl Scouts of the USA

Participate in community/sector activities that indicate a sustained commitment to diversity and inclusion.
– Nonprofit HR Solutions

Literature Review
The desired goal of an Employment Brand is to create an image and perception that makes people want to work there because it is well-managed, where workers are continually learning and growing.
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Based on our research, we identified 11 potential strategies to consider for increasing diversity.

**Internal**

- Strategies to build diversity within the organization
  1. Create an inclusive environment
  2. Develop processes to increase accountability
  3. Leverage broader recruitment sources
  4. Re-evaluate qualifications for targeted roles

**Network**

- Strategies to build diversity within local offices
  5. Articulate diversity and inclusion value to network
  6. Replicate best practices within network
  7. Prioritize board diversity
  8. Create opportunities for and support young talent

**External**

- Strategies that engage external audiences
  9. Engage people of color communities in programs
  10. Cultivate partnerships
  11. Collaborate with people of color communities to develop relevant messaging

**Bold** = particularly adaptive in nature
## High level summary of the 11 potential strategies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Internal</th>
<th>External</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. Develop processes to increase accountability</td>
<td>10. Cultivate partnerships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Leverage broader recruitment sources</td>
<td>11. Collaborate with people of color communities to develop relevant messaging</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Re-evaluate qualifications for targeted roles</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Internal

- Ensure all voices are valued in the organization
- Assess individual assets and align them with mission
- Establish measurable goals and data collection processes
- Use data and feedback to learn and improve
- Identify new sources that bring in a more diverse pool
- Expand pool of qualified candidates by reassessing which competencies are needed to succeed in targeted roles

### Network

- Build upon and share business case for diversity
- Ensure common definition of diversity across network
- Identify and codify best practices at local level
- Develop support mechanisms for local offices
- Engage national board in creating goals around diversity
- Focus on diversity of local office board / leadership teams
- Create opportunities for upward mobility and professional development
- Identify support systems to retain talent

### External

- Develop programs that align mission/goals with environmental issues for communities of color
- Establish partnerships with youth groups, diversity orgs, other environmental orgs working on diversity/inclusion
- Ensure messaging is relevant to people of color communities
- Focus on community, identify applicable topic

### Network

- Articulate diversity and inclusion value to network
- Replicate best practices within network
- Prioritize board diversity
- Create opportunities for and support young talent
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- Create opportunities for and support young talent
These strategies align with the five dimensions for increasing staff diversity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pipeline</th>
<th>Recruitment &amp; Hiring</th>
<th>Retention &amp; Development</th>
<th>Capabilities &amp; Culture</th>
<th>Employer Brand</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Create an inclusive environment</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
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<td>2. Develop processes to increase accountability</td>
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<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
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<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Re-evaluate qualifications for targeted roles</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Articulate diversity and inclusion value to network</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Replicate best practices within network</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
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</tr>
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<td>7. Prioritize board diversity</td>
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<td>✓</td>
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<td>8. Create opportunities for and support young talent</td>
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<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Engage people of color communities in programs</td>
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<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
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</tr>
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<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Strategy 1: Create an inclusive environment

Overview

• Build an environment in which a variety of viewpoints, experiences/skills, and worldviews are embraced, celebrated, and deployed in alignment with the mission and an adaptive approach.

What this strategy might entail

ACTIVITIES INVOLVED

• Create tools for staff feedback and sharing of skills, interests, and experiences across departments
• Provide training on diversity and inclusion
• Expand opportunities for staff to interact across the network
• Align individual interests and skills to achieve mission

EVIDENCE OF IMPACT

• Within Audubon case study, staff at all levels (HQ and field) believe they are valued for their identities, knowledge, and skills

"There is not a feeling of higher ups and lower rungs. It is more of a team environment."
- Audubon staff member

CAPABILITY & CAPACITY REQUIREMENTS

• Design activities/events to bring interdepartmental teams together (HQ & field)
• Identify and hire trainer(s) on diversity & inclusion
• Develop initiatives that identify untapped staff skills/interests in strategic priorities & integrate learning into departmental goals and action items

Capacity and attention across levels required to make ongoing progress
## Strategy 2: Develop processes to increase accountability

### Overview
- Set achievable, measurable goals for staff diversity for network; identify metrics to measure progress against those goals; put in place feedback loops to learn and improve over time

### What this strategy might entail

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTIVITIES INVOLVED</th>
<th>EVIDENCE OF IMPACT</th>
<th>CAPABILITY &amp; CAPACITY REQUIREMENTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Staff “inclusion” survey to develop baseline</td>
<td>• United Way tracks baseline data and set goals</td>
<td>• HR capacity; analytical skills; communication skills; ability and mandate to follow-up on results</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Set measurable goals for network and chapters</td>
<td>• American Heart Association commissioned Diversity Inc. for external rating</td>
<td>• Possible with existing capacity if deployed effectively</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Encourage network to provide data</td>
<td>• Girl Scouts track board chair diversity</td>
<td>• External support can be brought in where needed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Share data and engage in conversation around issues</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Potential to commission external rating on diversity</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Performance measurement processes are an important foundation for ensuring diversity and inclusion efforts are well managed.
Strategy 3: Leverage broader recruitment sources (1 of 2)

**Overview**
- Understand the pipeline assets of the organization, discern gaps, seek new connections to feed diverse candidates into staff applicant pools.

**What this strategy might entail**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTIVITIES INVOLVED</th>
<th>EVIDENCE OF IMPACT</th>
<th>CAPABILITY &amp; CAPACITY REQUIREMENTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Require diverse applicant pools</td>
<td>Public Allies will re-open a search if applicants not diverse</td>
<td>Time to potentially leave searches open longer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local/national partnerships</td>
<td>Boy Scouts/Girl Scouts share recruitment event costs</td>
<td>Staff time to manage partnership / committed partners / mutually agreed upon recruitment engagements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>View volunteers as a pipeline for staff</td>
<td>YMCA promotes career paths to youth workforce</td>
<td>Targeted communication plan / system to track volunteers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broaden perspective of what makes a great staff member</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Better leverage existing pools and reach out to new potential pipelines to better position an organization’s brand.
### EXAMPLES OF RECRUITMENT SOURCES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Racial/Ethnic</strong></th>
<th><strong>Age</strong></th>
<th><strong>Ability</strong></th>
<th><strong>LGBTQ</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Congressional Black Caucus</td>
<td>AARP / AARP Experience Corps</td>
<td>National Industries for the Blind</td>
<td>Gay, Lesbian &amp; Straight Education Network</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Congressional Hispanic Caucus</td>
<td>ReServe.org</td>
<td>American Foundation for the Blind</td>
<td>CenterLink</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NAACP</td>
<td>Encore.org</td>
<td>Goodwill Industries</td>
<td>Campus Pride</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Council of La Raza</td>
<td>Public Allies</td>
<td>The Arc</td>
<td>Out for Work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>League of United Latin American Citizens</td>
<td>Nonprofit Leadership Alliance</td>
<td>American Association of People with Disabilities</td>
<td>Pride @ Work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Congressional Asian Pacific Americans</td>
<td>AmeriCorps Alums</td>
<td>National Association of the Deaf</td>
<td>Point Foundation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Allies</td>
<td>Generations United</td>
<td>Enable America</td>
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<tr>
<td>National Urban league</td>
<td>National Youth Leadership Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>Management Leadership for Tomorrow</td>
<td>National Youth Employment Coalition</td>
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<tr>
<td>National Urban Fellows</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sponsors for Educational Oppty</td>
<td>ProInspire</td>
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</table>
Strategy 4: Re-evaluate qualifications for targeted roles

Overview

- Carefully evaluate which qualifications (e.g., experience in environmental field) are critical for candidates to succeed in various roles; may open network to larger pool of high-potential candidates with different backgrounds

What this strategy might entail

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTIVITIES INVOLVED</th>
<th>EVIDENCE OF IMPACT</th>
<th>CAPABILITY &amp; CAPACITY REQUIREMENTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Identify key positions and reassess skills and competencies needed for success in that role</td>
<td>• Management Leadership for Tomorrow is working with its partners to review competencies for key roles and re-prioritize which skills are most critical</td>
<td>• Ability to engage the network in assessing the skills and competencies most critical for key positions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Develop diverse recruitment pipelines based on the identified skills and competencies</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Knowledge base to identify pipelines with different backgrounds and most critical competencies</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Identify roles where different candidate profiles may be successful; potential for significant impact if identified roles are common across organization
Strategy 5:
Articulate diversity and inclusion value to network

Overview

- Articulate – bottom-up and top-down – a clear and compelling business case that responds to the interests of the network’s stakeholders (e.g., staff, donors, community partners, etc.); will provide an important foundation for designing strategies, identifying priorities, and measuring results.

What this strategy might entail

<table>
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<tr>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Articulate and build consensus around Audubon’s business case for diversity/inclusion</td>
<td>Literature points to importance of connecting diversity efforts to an organization’s mission – the connection needs to be clear</td>
<td>Develop statement of priority from leadership and engage network in refining case</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop a stronger “pipeline” to diversify staffing and pool of candidates (WINGS, HBCUs).</td>
<td>From Audubon case study, WINGS internship program is clearly connected to the mission and enhances the network’s diversity efforts</td>
<td>Develop partnerships that demonstrate commitment to diversity and mission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop “collaborations” with community groups to broaden membership base (American Indian Tribes, Girl Scouts, etc.)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Identify and share existing partnership models within network</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Articulating the business case is an important “quick win” and a foundation for an organization’s diversity efforts
Strategy 6: Replicate best practices within network

Overview

- Identify promising practices for improving staff diversity that are currently implemented at local offices and could be replicated more broadly; codify core elements of the most replicable practices; support and incentivize the most interested and best positioned local offices to replicate the initiatives as part of a broad effort to build change.

What this strategy might entail

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Develop process for identifying, codifying and rolling out best practices across network</td>
<td>• Some federated networks (e.g., YMCA) have built central office teams to source quality programs and roll them out to other affiliates in the network</td>
<td>• Capacity:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Potential programs/practices to replicate across network include:</td>
<td></td>
<td>- Designate staff develop and run best practice selection process, support local implementation, and evaluate impact on diversity goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Internship recruitment (Debs Park Center, CA)</td>
<td></td>
<td>- Funding to incentive local participation</td>
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<tr>
<td>- University partnerships (Louisiana state office)</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Capabilities:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Staff mentor program (Seward Park Center, WA)</td>
<td></td>
<td>- Source promising practices</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Measure impact of programs on diversity goals</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>- Provide support to local offices as they begin to implement</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>- Implement proven practices with fidelity</td>
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<td>- Fundraise for any new costs related to new practices</td>
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Scaling network-developed practices is likely to receive strong backing from network and offer quick wins for leadership team.
Strategy 7: 
Prioritize board diversity

**Overview**
- Identify Board responsibilities for diversity goals; create mechanisms to get state and local boards (if relevant) to start thinking about diversity in their work

**What this strategy might entail**

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Create a diversity task force that identifies board-level responsibilities</td>
<td>• “Make this a priority of the Board. Get them to establish their own goals.” – CEO of large conservation organization</td>
<td>• National, state, and local board capabilities: Board development matrix that incorporates diversity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Recruit board members who bring diverse perspectives and do not have a connection to conservation</td>
<td>• Girl Scouts Council tracks diversity of Council Board chairs as a key metric in their diversity efforts</td>
<td>• Network capability: Ability to set expectations for state and local boards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Track diversity of national, state, and local boards</td>
<td>• United Way asks chapters if they have a board-approved diversity statement as part of membership renewal</td>
<td>• HQ capability: Mechanism to collect diversity data on state and local boards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Consider requiring state and local boards or leadership teams to create their own diversity and inclusion statement</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This is a high effort strategy that can lead to high results because of the Board’s visibility and responsibility in steering the organization.
Strategy 8: Create opportunities for and support young talent

Overview

- Develop opportunities for expansion of skills and expertise within the organization; create mid-level positions that enable advancement and increased responsibility

What this strategy might entail

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTIVITIES INVOLVED</th>
<th>EVIDENCE OF IMPACT</th>
<th>CAPABILITY &amp; CAPACITY REQUIREMENTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Develop and advertise career ladders by position classes; focus on mid-level positions</td>
<td>Networks have identified opportunities for high potential staff to increase responsibilities</td>
<td>Mechanism to assess current staff’s professional development needs and opportunities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Build infrastructure for staff to gain conservation skills</td>
<td>Building a cross-network support system for diverse staff to feel connected to larger community</td>
<td>Ability to develop and implement new mid-level positions and job classes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identify and cultivate seasonal workers for entry level positions</td>
<td></td>
<td>Develop individual and group mentorship -models</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create mentorship opportunities for young staff</td>
<td></td>
<td>Identification of rising stars and targeted support to retain and develop them</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This strategy has potential to yield long-term diversity gains; requires significant resources to design and implement career pathways and PD programs
## Strategy 9:
Engage people of color communities in programs

### Overview
- Identify organizational goals and issues that are of greatest relevance/concern to priority people of color communities. Work with community leaders to develop and raise awareness of programs that link efforts and community concerns.

### What this strategy might entail

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTIVITIES INVOLVED</th>
<th>EVIDENCE OF IMPACT</th>
<th>CAPABILITY &amp; CAPACITY REQUIREMENTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Research priority environmental concerns for people of color communities</td>
<td>• The Nature Conservancy successfully built relationships with communities of color via its Western States Diversity Project (2005)</td>
<td>• Research, community engagement, and program development capabilities required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Determine potential areas of alignment</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Greater capacity to collaborate with leaders in communities of color will be needed to implement strategy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Identify and contact community leaders to brainstorm alignment areas and develop strategies for community engagement</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

An organization must live its values internally to be successful partners with people of color communities.
## Strategy 10: Cultivate partnerships

### Overview
- Convene thought leaders and practitioners across different sectors to identify opportunities for partnership on inclusivity; establish informal & formal partnerships with clear goals, roles, and timelines.

### What this strategy might entail

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTIVITIES INVOLVED</th>
<th>EVIDENCE OF IMPACT</th>
<th>CAPABILITY &amp; CAPACITY REQUIREMENTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Identify key thought leaders and practitioners</td>
<td>Goodwill partners with MLT to recruit and market to college students for their programs</td>
<td>Funding for the convening, a broader network of potential partners, and critical thinking to determine ideal partners will be needed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensure that those engaged with people of color are well represented</td>
<td>Other organizations have partnered with organizations with diverse constituents to source a broader pool of candidates</td>
<td>Greater capacity to collaborate with leaders in communities of color will be needed to implement this strategy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Establish a planning team to convene with representatives from people of color communities and develop clear goals, roles, and timelines for events</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Convening will provide partnership opportunities and establish commitment to diversity/inclusion.
Strategy 11: Collaborate with people of color communities to develop relevant messaging

Overview

- Partner with people of color communities (and organizations that serve people of color communities) in real, collaborative ways to develop and refine messaging of organization’s work and mission, ensuring these issues resonate with people of color.

What this strategy might entail

ACTIVITIES INVOLVED

- Engage communities in discussion on importance of environment to different populations
- Develop relevant messaging and materials to be used by chapter and offices that serve people of color communities

EVIDENCE OF IMPACT

- Key steps in developing an effective communications platform include:
  - Test messaging with communities before rolling it out more broadly
  - Identify the right media channels and staff to deliver tailored messaging

CAPABILITY & CAPACITY REQUIREMENTS

- Local capacity to engage people of color communities, community organizations
- National capacity to draft tailored messaging and materials for local chapters/offices that serve people of color communities
- Marketing and partnership development capabilities

A difficult strategy to implement well; ensure messaging remains grounded in the mission and focus; coupled with programming, this strategy is key to effective community engagement.
Organizations striving to increase diversity can work on a few “quick wins”, many of which also support broader adaptive change.

These quick win strategies have low implementation difficulty, low/medium cost to implement, and shorter timeframe to results.

### Quick Win Tactics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3. Leverage broader recruitment source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Post jobs on job boards that target diverse candidates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Attend job fairs at HBCUs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>5. Articulate diversity and inclusion value to network</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Send out messaging from leadership about business case</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Launch cultural competency trainings with key sites</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>6. Replicate best practices within network</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Identify 2 programs to replicate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Codify practices and roll out through existing channels</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>10. Cultivate partnerships</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Convene small group of thought leaders and practitioners for roundtable discussion</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Requirements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3. Leverage broader recruitment source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• HR team resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Target list of job fairs and job boards</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>5. Articulate diversity and inclusion value to network</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• CEO and communication team resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Training partner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Staff time for training</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>6. Replicate best practices within network</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Field Support team resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Online and offline fora to exchange learning</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>10. Cultivate partnerships</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Point person for partnerships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Clear goals, target participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Meeting resources</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table of Contents

1. Project context

2. Diversity as an adaptive leadership challenge

3. Key takeaways from research

4. Strategies for increasing staff diversity

5. Next steps
Six proposed criteria to prioritize across these strategies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CRITERIA</th>
<th>DESCRIPTION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Impact on Diversity</td>
<td>• Extent to which the strategy will help organization reach its diversity goals&lt;br&gt;• Evidence of results from within and outside the organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Progress to Date</td>
<td>• Evidence of organization’s progress on diversity in a given area&lt;br&gt;• Includes policies, frameworks, and practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to Scale Across Network</td>
<td>• Extent to which organization can scale a strategy across local offices&lt;br&gt;• Can be both top-down from headquarters and bottom-up from local offices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implementation Difficulty</td>
<td>• Difficulty of operationalizing the strategy in practice&lt;br&gt;• Includes extent to which progress can be tracked against indicators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost to Implement</td>
<td>• Cost of the strategy in both financial and operational terms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timeframe to See Results</td>
<td>• Point at which results of a strategy will become clear against stated goals&lt;br&gt;• Can be short, medium, or long-term in nature</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Determine if any criteria more or less important than others
## Sample rubric for assessment of identified strategies against proposed criteria

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Impact on Diversity</th>
<th>Progress to Date</th>
<th>Ability to Scale Across Network</th>
<th>Ease of Implementation</th>
<th>Cost to Implement</th>
<th>Timeframe to See Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>LOW RATING</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No evidence from within or outside organization of strategy’s potential to impact staff diversity</td>
<td>Organization has not begun to plan for or implement this strategy</td>
<td>Organization network would not be interested in or capable of adopting strategy</td>
<td>Strategy requires significant coordination across network and capabilities that organization lacks</td>
<td>Strategy requires very little staff time and financial resources</td>
<td>Organization is likely to see results (i.e., improved staff diversity) within first year of implementation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>MEDIUM RATING</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some evidence from in or outside organization of strategy’s potential to impact staff diversity</td>
<td>Organization has begun to plan for and/or implement this strategy</td>
<td>Some portion of the organization network would be interested in and capable of adopting strategy</td>
<td>Strategy will require some coordination across the network and some existing organization capabilities</td>
<td>Strategy requires some staff time and financial resources</td>
<td>Organization is likely to see results (i.e., improved staff diversity) within 2-3 years of implementation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>HIGH RATING</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clear, compelling evidence from within or outside organization of strategy’s potential to impact staff diversity</td>
<td>Organization has already made significant progress against this strategy</td>
<td>A significant portion of the organization network would be interested in and capable of adopting strategy</td>
<td>Strategy requires little coordination across network and core organization capabilities</td>
<td>Strategy requires significant staff time and significant financial resources</td>
<td>Organization is likely to see results (i.e., improved staff diversity) after 5 or more years of implementation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Organizations can use criteria to uncover tradeoffs across the proposed strategies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How organizations should use criteria</th>
<th>How organizations should not use criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• To better understand the pros and cons of each of the various strategies</td>
<td>• To make decisions on which strategies the organization will prioritize or pursue based on their overall “score”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• To identify strategies that stand out on criteria that the organization finds most important</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• To help the organization clearly communicate its decisions to the network</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• To gauge which strategies begin to address core adaptive challenges to ensure sustainability of diversity and inclusion efforts over time</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Recommended next steps

• Assess strategies against criteria to prioritize how best to structure discussions on these issues going forwards;

• Create a cross-organization committee to clarify the adaptive challenges and diagnose values-based conflicts;

• Create an implementation strategy that may draw on this analysis and set of conclusions.
2013 American Express NGen Fellows

Project conducted December 2013 – April 2014 by:

- Stephen Bauer, Director, Strategic Initiatives, Public Allies
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- Alicia Gonzalez, Executive Director, Chicago Run
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