Black Equity Initiative

Research and Recommendations on:
Policy, Linkages, Resources, and Collective Work

Presented by: Arthur Levine - BEI Systems Change Fellow 2022
Organizations Interviewed
Current BEI grantees (2022)
Some snapshots of interviews with BEI grantees
How will this information be useful?

**Funders**
- Will see where BLOs are successful and where there are needs for support.
- Will recognize the ongoing under-funding and vulnerability of BLOs.
- Will better understand how BLOs see themselves integrating with and changing systems over time.
- Will recognize how BLO’s are crucial partners and agents in policy change that will affect improvements for Black equity and the broader society.

**BLOs**
- Will gain a deeper sense of each other’s work and where there are opportunities to collaborate on policy initiatives, programming and coalition-building.
- Will learn from each other about policy initiatives, funding strategies, and key decision-makers who impact their work.

**BEI as convener**
- Learn more about each of their funded partners and how to support them.
- Learn more about the shared goals, programs, initiatives, and objectives of BEI grantees.
- Gain insights about building an effective coalition that supports BLOs.
Organization staff ranged from 0-1 paid staff (some were volunteer-run only orgs) up to 33-37FTE paid staff.

Average of 11FTE per organization

Three organizations had 20+ staff while the majority had 10 or less.

The average organization is running 7 programs.

No organization claimed to only run a single program, but the range of answers ran from 2-26

Of the organizations surveyed 80% are multi-issue organizations

100% claimed to have local sources of funds

44% claimed to have access to or had state-level funds

33% claimed to have access to or had federal-level funding

On average, organizations have ~1.5FTE staff per program they run.

On average, BEI grantees rated themselves:

8.4 out of 10 for mission achievement, but 5.8 out of 10 for having their needs met.

BEI Grantees are working on policy and funding strategies, but many would like greater support in policy action capacity building, accessing county-level, federal-level, and foundation funding.
BEI Grantees’ Collective Definitions of the Work

“Direct Services Work” Collective synthesized definition - A direct intervention that provides training, one-on-one support, education, knowledge, or other help/service to a client or person in need with a direct impact that meets an immediate need. Can include mentoring, housing, food, care, information, voter registration through contact or remote provision of the need.

“Power Building” Collective synthesized definition - Capacity-building, advocacy, influence, and strategy. The work involves critical-thinking, resourcing and funding, collaboration, and connection to co-power changes in leadership, agency, and ability to influence outcomes and leverage resources. The work involves education, extreme networking for collaboration and connection, being alongside community, and working as a team to make a greater impact. Relationships are key and experiencing the impacts of using power collectively to show a community has power.

“Systems Change” Collective synthesized definition - Organizing, advocacy, and base-building with multiple groups for changing policy, engaging in education, activism, shaping legislative work and developing solutions over the long-term. Involves changing mindsets as well as policy and involves cultural, political, and economic work around identifying barriers, hierarchies and oppressive standards/norms and working to change them. Involves working on the inside to dismantle harmful practices while building up people, influence, voice, and solutions.
BEI Grantees’ Short-term Goals

**Education Equity**
**Short-term** - Organizations are working towards bringing resources, support, and training to school districts in the IE, developing restorative justice and healing spaces, while supporting youth organizing, development, critical thinking, especially for those most vulnerable groups like foster children and those impacted by human trafficking.

**Housing Justice**
**Short-term** - Organizations will expand their work to include cities where the Black population is growing. Organizations will identify new partners, expand to more areas of influence and empower more people to grow awareness of racist housing policies.

**Criminal Justice System Transformation**
**Short-term** - Organizations will aim to build more relationships for equitable systems. Organizations aim to establish restorative healing spaces in the IE, support youth organizing themselves, empower more people and grow awareness of racist housing policies. Organizations aim to reduce the number of collateral consequences faces by returning residents and get folks reconnected to families and back into the education system.

**Health Equity:**
**Short-term** - Organizations aim to build more relationships for equitable outcomes and to initiate policy change work that will impact Black folks. Organizations will support youth organizing themselves as they work to expand their service areas and educate within school districts in the IE.

**Economic Liberation:**
**Short-term** - Organizations aim to support Black owned businesses in the community and opportunities for Black folks to gain training and gainful employment through connections to industry, job-pathways, and capacity building. More relationships will be built to bring about equitable systems and Black workers and Black youth will be supported to organize themselves, know their rights, and connect to industry, pre-apprenticeship programs, pathways to good employment and/or opportunities to start their own businesses.
BEI Grantees’ Long-term Goals

**Education Equity**
**Long-term** - Organizations are expanding their membership, sustaining their efforts, and building new models that will be adopted in all IE school districts and even across the state and the country and working on policy change. Organizations are working toward more Black folks in power and working toward building physical spaces like community centers, homes, and land-trusts where Black youth are safe and supported.

**Housing Justice**
**Long-term** - Organizations will work to get more Black people in power, expand the work to a nation-wide impact scale, engage more system-impacted folks, work to support Black youth power-building and begin initiating policy changes. Organizations will work toward purchasing land and safe homes for vulnerable populations and for affordable housing.

**Criminal Justice System Transformation**
**Long-term** - Restorative justice training will be in all school districts. Organizations will engage more system-impacted folks civically, economically, and through land-trusts. There will be more Black folks in power and the work being done will go nation-wide and be able to successfully empower black youth and system-impacted people to develop sustainable organizational strategies to keep doing the work generation after generation. Ultimately organizations aim to run programs that prevent people from going to jail in the first place.

**Health Equity:**
**Long-term** - Organizations are developing new models and strategies to be implemented as far as nation-wide. Organizations are working to get more Black folks in power and doing more to empower Black youth. Organizations see policies implemented that reflect their work. Organizations are fostering relationships to support their work long-term.

**Economic Liberation:**
**Long-term** - More Black folks will be in power and have quality jobs through partnership with industry. Policies will be changed and implemented to support doing more for Black workers and for Black youth. Resource centers will be developed for Black workers and Black youth to succeed no matter where they start off.
BEI grantee’s desired outcomes for their organizations
“What is your Endgame” (Gugelev, A. and Stern, A., 2015)

If you could choose one of these options for your organization in the long-term, which one would be most satisfactory?
15 responses

- Sustained Service - A strong organization that continues to
  provide valuable services
- Mission Achievement - defined mission and
  clear goals
- Commercial adoption - the program
  is adopted commercially
- Government Adoption - high
  government interest
- Replication - other groups can
  adopt the program
- Scale up - get much larger (but
  still in control)
- We think about sustainability. How
  do others make this happen?
- Others provide housing but we
  are not the ones that
  provide housing
- For right now. Still a new kid on
  the block
- Sustainable for us. Currently 9
  years into the grant

10 (66.7%)
3 (20%)
3 (20%)
3 (20%)
8 (53.3%)
10 (66.7%)
1 (6.7%)
1 (6.7%)
1 (6.7%)
1 (6.7%)
Policy Initiatives Work: If these organizations are successful…

Education Equity Group… It will be as if we are all singing together. Juvenile detention will be replaced with restorative justice programs and we will see less suspensions and expulsions for Black students. We will see less of an educational achievement gap. We will live in a free and liberated world free from the collateral consequences of incarceration, free from the racial disparities that have impacted this country from its inception. We would be able to serve more people and change the narrative about system-impacted folks. We will have changed hearts and minds. We would see fair representation in different sectors (industry, government, schools, health care etc.). All that want to be housed will have affordable sustainable income and a stable place to live. Law enforcement won’t have to exist in the same places as education. Our communities will have a better understanding of mental wellness, emotional intelligence and self awareness. People would recognize the system as the culprit rather than understanding that the issues that they go through is a result of long-term trauma not personal shortcoming. Ultimately, Black folks will have a better chance at achieving, staying free, and living fulfilling lives.

Criminal Justice System Transformation group… The recidivism rate will go down tremendously because folks coming home who are justice-impacted will be able to get a second chance. Folks will have a better chance as if we are all singing together. There will be restorative tools and techniques in place and we will see less suspensions and expulsions for Black students. We will see less of an educational achievement gap. We will see a free and liberated society where Black folks are free from the collateral consequences of incarceration and from the racial disparities that have impacted this country from its inception. We will have changed the narrative about who system-impacted people are.

Health Equity group… All students will have mental and behavioral health support provided to them in a way that doesn't bring stigma. Our communities and systems will have a better understanding of mental wellness and will be practicing mental wellness. People will understand that many of the things we are dealing with are due to stresses and traumas of racism and the health and stress nexus. People would recognize the system as the culprit rather than blame themselves for the shortcomings. Educators will be teaching them self-care and learning about trauma. We would see fair representation in different sectors (industry, government, schools, health care etc.) and equity in access to healthcare and health resources for maternal health, mental health and emotional/behavioral health. With regards to our political empowerment it would lead to systematic change and policies designed to impact the black community. We will have deep and rich partnerships with community orgs to support our work.

Housing Justice group… We would be able to serve more people. Community members will respond positively to the work and access their housing needs. We will have saved foster youth from human trafficking and all people that want to be housed will have affordable sustainable income and a stable place to live. We would see fair representation of Black folks in power in different sectors (industry, government, schools, health care etc.) We will live in a free and liberated world, free from the collateral consequences of incarceration and free from the racial disparities. With regards to our political empowerment it would lead to systematic change and policies designed to impact the black community. We will focus on a strategy of alliance developing relationships and build upon existing ones.

Economic Liberation Group… Youth and everyone would all have equal access to the same opportunities. Parity. We would see fair representation in different sectors (industry, government, schools, health care etc.) and people in jobs that are union or non-union jobs make livable wages with upward promotion potential and sustainability such that quality of lives are improved. Workers will feel they have a voice and power. Workers will realize their power to collectively make change. Having experienced the results/outcome of power (ie. wins)
Policies of interest:

Ethnic Studies Bill by Jose Medina.

Expanding ACEs aware.

Community trauma informed policies and Restorative approaches

WIOA funding.

Champions for college platform.

Cal Grant equity framework.

AB 1705

"The push out act." Ayana Presley

CA EITC.

SB 823

JJCC. Legislation that works to decriminalize truancy.
Policies of interest:

- The eviction moratorium.
- Policies with how many people can be housed in a single location
- "Crime free ordinance"
- HUD housing policies and the crime bill impact us
- Change affordable housing terms.
- Sustainable housing.
- CA EITC.
- AB 109.
- Prop 47.
- HR 2007
- George Floyd across the nation.
- Support for reentry for long-term sentences
- Prison prevention programs
- Bill AB 1227.
- SB 1042.
- B 354.
- AB 1816
- AB 2774
Policies of Interest:

"Crime free ordinance"
Zoning laws on reentry homes
Change affordable housing term
Sustainable housing
AB 1816
SB 354.

Criminal look-back periods
SB 823
JICC. Legislation that works to decriminalize truancy.
Prop 47.
Bills that have gotten rid of voluntary probation.
Support for reentry for long-term sentences
Prison prevention programs
CA EITC
Policies of Interest:

Expand ACES aware IE redistricting work.

AB 2774.

HR 2007.


George Floyd Justice in Policing Act
Policies of Interest:

- PLA or any project
- State reparations task force.
- Ex. order 11246.
- CERF program
- Warehouse policy
- Critical infrastructure
- Pathways to work in
- Eviction moratorium.
- Infrastructure bill
- WIPO funding
- Regional report on funding of projects in IE.
- PPP Funds and COVID relief
- CA EITC
- Power Building
- Direct Services
- Systems Change
Policies of Interest:

Crime free housing ordinances. AB 1816 which makes law enforcement budget higher than public.

Racism as a public health crisis AB 2774.

HR 2007.


George Floyd Justice in Policing Act.

"The push out act."

Ayana Presley.

Young Black girls know their rights to appeal expulsion decisions. And get outside council.
Recommendations and Resources

**Provide for and hire a shared BEI Policy Expert.** With a single person in the BEI network devoted to this job of researching policy, informing the BEI organizations about opportunities to impact policy and when and who to lobby would greatly enhance the ability for these busy organizations and CEOs to perform in the policy arena as a part of systems-change work.

**Provide training in Power-mapping and relationship building for social change.** It would be worthwhile to provide one or two trainings per year for the BEI and especially for the BEI grantees about relationship building with decision-makers and to train organizations to see and exploit relationships of power by understanding how power is situated in decision-making bodies.

**Provide Organizer training for BEI CEOs and their staff.** Less of the organizations were discussing how they were working to build power to target and pressure decision-makers to make changes that they wanted to see. It would be worthwhile to engage BEI grantee staff and CEOs in training around community organizing as another method of how to have impact and get their goals met.

**Provide training and support for organizations around grant-writing and management.** Several of the respondents including, mentioned the need for grant-writing training and support. BEI could bring a trainer for the benefit of all members and especially the newer BEI grantees to support their capacity to apply for and win grants at all levels of government and from the private sector.

**As a sub-goal, the BEI could work to create a relevant grants funding Database** with all the relevant grant opportunities for BLOs and racial-justice work as well as issue area focused grant opportunities with categories including Foundation grants, local, state, and federal grants.

**As another sub-goal to this point, BEI could consider hiring a shared grant-writing and technical assistance provider** that can split time helping organizations prepare for and submit grant proposals from concept to coalition-building to evaluation.
Recommendations and Resources

- Database of Key decision-makers on the BEI website
- Grant writing resources on the BEI website
- Power mapping tools on the BEI website
- Full report including shared goals, visions, and definitions for the the 5 BEI issue areas. Transcripts and recordings of the interviews.
Continuation of the Research

If continued, this research will help co-define the work, set short and long-term shared goals for BEI issue areas, and better help demonstrate spaces where BEI members can collaborate, work on policy, funding strategies, and build power together.

The BEI can:
• Give this survey to new cohorts of grantees
• Give this survey to all BEI members
• Continue using the data collected from the first survey for future reports/grants/policy initiatives

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdUN9QxjPWydCYYyw58c-t-eJ_GI-TbxC2ULa0fKzHblqb4w/viewform
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Please note these messages from interviews about the appreciation for the BEI.

"The intentionality to do the work and gather the organizations together. The work allowed us to go deeper into the policy space. We are grateful. Having this collective of organizations and people who can come together to support, challenge, provide resources." (Teresse Lewis - The Empowerment Center)

"I would like to thank them so much for the work they are doing and the resources. Well needed and well appreciated." (Owen Duckworth - IE Rebound)

"Keep doing the work. I love the platform they are creating to allow us to do our work." (Danielle Townshend - Curls, Coils, and Crowns)