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# DIVERSITY ON FOUNDATION BOARDS OF DIRECTORS

One Out of Four Private Foundation Directors is a Person of Color

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## Introduction

Over the past several years, increasing national attention has been focused on the need for foundations to become more aware of the opportunities presented by our increasingly diverse nation. In this brief, we present figures on the diversity of the nation's 46 largest foundations.

Over 90% of all foundations and 20% of the largest foundations have little or no paid staff (Foundation Center, 2007-2), which effectively delegates the ultimate decision on which proposals should receive funding to the handful of trustees that make up the board. Since foundations are most often not held accountable to any entity outside themselves for their funding decisions, most trustees will decide which causes or organizations to fund based on their own notions of which causes are worthy of funding, as well as their personal and professional networks. Having a culturally competent board of informed givers is therefore essential to increasing a foundation's impact on communities of color.

As one foundation leader stated at a conference

## FINDINGS

- **One out of four** board members of the 46 largest foundations in the United States are people of color, including:
  - 8.0% who are Latino**
  - 12.5% who are African Amer.**
  - 4.5% who are Asian American**
- However, **28.3%** of the top 46 foundations have no people of color on their boards at all, including:
  - 56.5% have no Latinos**
  - 37.8% have no African Amer.**
  - 69.6% have no Asian Amer.**
- Foundations with diverse boards are also overwhelmingly the most diverse in their grantmaking; **47.1%** of all grants to people of color-led organizations in 2005 were made by the foundations with the top 10 most diverse boards.



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for foundation CEOs held in Chicago in 2007, "Often we make grants to organizations that look like us to serve people of color, thereby not building the capacity to have people [of color] take those roles ....We have a great responsibility to make sure that grants are going to those people that we say we care about." (Center for Effective Philanthropy, 2007)

## **Findings**

Our analysis of the racial and ethnic makeup of the boards of directors of the largest 46 foundations in the nation revealed that 25% of the positions are held by people of color, including 8% held by Latinos, 12.5% by African Americans, and 4.5% by Asian Americans. People of color comprise 34% of the population of the United States, Latinos comprise 15% , African Americans 12.8%, and Asian Americans 4.4%.

It is clear from these findings that Latinos are significantly underrepresented on foundation boards, even as African Americans and Asian Americans are represented on foundation boards approximately at par with their representation in the population of the United States. Latinos comprise the fastest-growing ethnic group in the country, and will soon be nearly the majority in highly diverse states such as California and New Mexico. As such, it is imperative that foundations seek Latino directors to better align their funding priorities with the needs of the New Majority.

Another important disparity evident in the data is the fact that 13 out of the 46 (28.3%) of the largest foundations in the country have no people of color on their boards of directors at all. Additionally, 56.5% have no Latinos on their boards, 37.8% have no African Americans, and a startling 69.6% have no Asian Americans.

This finding indicates that insofar as foundations should ensure that their work benefits the whole of American society, they should also ensure that the people at the foundations who are making the ultimate decisions about their activities should fully represent and reflect those whom the foundation purports to serve.

Concerns about diversity in a foundation's grantmaking are not limited to foundations for whom people of color and disadvantaged populations are a target for grantmaking. Latinos, African Americans, Asian Americans, and Native Americans are steadily increasing their presence in nearly all fields of interest to foundations: arts and culture, education, community development, and more.

## **Diverse Boards, Diverse Grantmaking?**

Greenlining's previous research on grants to people of color-led organizations demonstrates a strong correlation between foundations with diverse boards and their investments in people of color-led organizations. Nearly all the most diverse foundations in this study are also the top foundations in terms of percent of grants to people of color-led organizations. (Greenlining Institute, 2006, 2008)

In fact, among the 25 foundations Greenlining studied in the *Funding the New Majority* report, 47.1% of all grants to people of color-led organizations in 2005 were made by the top 10 foundations with the most diverse boards. In contrast, foundations with no people of color on their boards made only 31.7% of their grants to people of color-led organizations.

However, when grant dollars invested by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, which has no people of color on its three-member board, are removed from the totals, the foundations with no people of color on their board made only 10.4% of all grants to people of color-led organizations.

Many foundations already appoint board members with a diversity of experience so that they may best serve their grantees. Communities of color would be better served if foundations placed more emphasis on the diversity of experience often represented by racial and ethnic diversity.

Diversifying the board of directors is not the sole panacea that will lead to greater diversity in a foundation's grantmaking practices. However, foundations should take meaningful steps to diversify their leadership in order to build the cultural capital necessary to truly be responsive to the emerging grantmaking opportunities presented by our nation's changing demographics.

## Diversifying Family Foundations

Family foundations face particular challenges in diversifying their boards of directors, since those positions have traditionally been held by family and close associates of the original donor. However, family foundations seeking to both increase their impact and expand the breadth of their work have the option to add members to their boards of directors. Strategically selected non-family board members can bring with them knowledge and skills that represent values that the foundation wishes to embody.

**47.1% of all grants to people of color-led organizations in 2005 were made by the top 10 foundations with the most diverse boards...**

**...foundations with no people of color on their board made only 10.4% of all grants to people of color-led organizations.**

The board of directors of the New York City-based Jessie Smith Noyes Foundation, for example, contains ten members out of the total of sixteen that are from outside the family. Literature from the foundation's website indicates that it values a diverse board because it allows the foundation to, "respond to the full spectrum of groups seeking grants, ...become more accountable to the grantees and the communities they serve, ...[and] helps [it] broaden [its] perspective on the economic, political and social problems [it is] working to resolve." (Jessie Smith Noyes Foundation)

Given that some foundations have long been subject to public and government concern that they are merely a tax shelter for wealthy families (Troyes, 1999), a family foundation that is willing to bring on board members that will bring the skills necessary to further its stated mission will shield itself to some degree from such criticisms.

## Staff Diversity

Overall, foundation staff seem to be vastly more diverse than their board leadership. A survey by the Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors demonstrated that while 35 percent of the program officers at the 802 respondent foundations were people of color, only 13% of the boards of the same respondents were. (Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors, 2008) Although staff diversity goes a long way to institutionalizing the importance of diversity among foundations, real progress cannot be made without an equal commitment at the board level.

## Conclusion

A determined effort to incorporate the values of diversity into the activities of foundations can only succeed if it receives a strong commitment from all levels of the organization. The example of placing value on diversity begins at the board level, and extends to the decisions made at the staff level. Given the increasingly multicultural and multiethnic nature of American society, foundations cannot continue to fall behind as the future moves towards greater inclusiveness.

## Foundations with People of Color on their Boards of Directors

Foundation	Percent of Board Members Who are People of Color	Percent of Board Members Who are Latino	Percent of Board Members Who are African American	Percent of Board Members Who are Asian American
The California Wellness Foundation	70.0%	30.0%	20.0%	20.0%
Casey Family Programs*	60.0%	0.0%	60.0%	0.0%
The Chicago Community Trust	57.1%	21.4%	28.6%	7.1%
The California Endowment*	55.6%	22.2%	16.7%	16.7%
W.K Kellogg Foundation	50.0%	10.0%	30.0%	10.0%
Ford Foundation*	46.7%	20.0%	20.0%	6.7%
Rockefeller Foundation	46.7%	0.0%	26.7%	20.0%
The James Irvine Foundation	46.2%	23.1%	7.7%	15.4%
Annie E. Casey Foundation	42.9%	14.3%	28.6%	0.0%
The Cleveland Foundation	40.0%	6.7%	26.7%	6.7%
The New York Community Trust	33.3%	16.7%	16.7%	0.0%
Robert Wood Johnson Foundation	29.4%	17.6%	5.9%	5.9%
John S. and James L. Knight Foundation*	26.7%	13.3%	13.3%	0.0%
Houston Endowment Inc.	25.0%	12.5%	12.5%	0.0%
John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation	25.0%	8.3%	16.7%	0.0%
Kresge Foundation	25.0%	8.3%	8.3%	8.3%
The Wallace Foundation	25.0%	0.0%	25.0%	0.0%
William And Flora Hewlett Foundation*	23.1%	0.0%	7.7%	15.4%
Andrew W. Mellon Foundation*	22.2%	0.0%	22.2%	0.0%
Carnegie Corporation of New York*	22.2%	11.1%	11.1%	0.0%
Charles Stewart Mott Foundation	21.4%	7.1%	14.3%	0.0%
Howard Heinz Endowment*	21.4%	0.0%	21.4%	0.0%
Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Foundation*	20.0%	0.0%	0.0%	20.0%
Alfred P. Sloan Foundation*	18.2%	9.1%	9.1%	0.0%
The William Penn Foundation	18.2%	0.0%	9.1%	9.1%
J. Paul Getty Trust*	16.7%	8.3%	8.3%	0.0%
Starr Foundation*	14.3%	0.0%	0.0%	14.3%
Duke Endowment*	13.3%	0.0%	13.3%	0.0%
Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation*	12.5%	0.0%	12.5%	0.0%
Doris Duke Charitable Foundation	10.0%	0.0%	10.0%	0.0%
Daniels Fund*	9.1%	0.0%	9.1%	0.0%
David and Lucile Packard Foundation	7.1%	7.1%	0.0%	0.0%
Lumina Foundation for Education, Inc.	7.1%	7.1%	0.0%	0.0%

## Foundations with NO People of Color on their Boards of Directors

Annenberg Foundation*	The Brown Foundation*
Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation*	The Michael and Susan Dell Foundation*
Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation*	The Moody Foundation*
Lilly Endowment*	The Samuel Roberts Noble Foundation, Inc.*
McKnight Foundation*	W.M. Keck Foundation*
Richard King Mellon Foundation*	Walton Family Foundation, Inc*
Robert W. Woodruff Foundation	

Foundations marked with an asterisk (\*) did not respond to our request to confirm data.

## Foundations with Latinos on their Boards of Directors

Foundation	Percent of Board Members Who are Latino	Number of Latinos on Board	Total Members on Board of Directors
The California Wellness Foundation	30.0%	3	10
The James Irvine Foundation	23.1%	3	13
The California Endowment*	22.2%	4	18
The Chicago Community Trust	21.4%	3	14
Ford Foundation*	20.0%	3	15
Robert Wood Johnson Foundation	17.6%	3	17
The New York Community Trust	16.7%	2	12
Annie E. Casey Foundation	14.3%	2	14
John S. and James L. Knight Foundation*	13.3%	2	15
Houston Endowment Inc.	12.5%	1	8
Carnegie Corporation of New York*	11.1%	2	18
W.K Kellogg Foundation	10.0%	1	10
Alfred P. Sloan Foundation*	9.1%	1	11
J. Paul Getty Trust*	8.3%	1	12
John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation	8.3%	1	12
Kresge Foundation	8.3%	1	12
Charles Stewart Mott Foundation	7.1%	1	14
David and Lucile Packard Foundation	7.1%	1	14
Lumina Foundation for Education, Inc.	7.1%	1	14
The Cleveland Foundation	6.7%	1	15

## Foundations with NO Latinos on their Boards of Directors

Andrew W. Mellon Foundation*	Richard King Mellon Foundation*
Annenberg Foundation*	Robert W. Woodruff Foundation
Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation*	Rockefeller Foundation
Casey Family Programs*	Starr Foundation*
Daniels Fund*	The Brown Foundation*
Doris Duke Charitable Foundation	The Michael and Susan Dell Foundation*
Duke Endowment*	The Moody Foundation*
Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation*	The Samuel Roberts Noble Foundation, Inc.*
Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation*	The Wallace Foundation
Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Foundation*	The William Penn Foundation
Howard Heinz Endowment*	W.M. Keck Foundation*
Lilly Endowment*	Walton Family Foundation, Inc*
McKnight Foundation*	William And Flora Hewlett Foundation*

Foundations marked with an asterisk (\*) did not respond to our request to confirm data.

## Foundations with African Americans on their Boards of Directors

Foundation	Percent of Board Members Who are African American	Number of African Americans on Board	Total Members on Board of Directors
Casey Family Programs*	60.0%	3	5
W.K Kellogg Foundation	30.0%	3	10
Annie E. Casey Foundation	28.6%	4	14
The Chicago Community Trust	28.6%	4	14
Rockefeller Foundation	26.7%	4	15
The Cleveland Foundation	26.7%	4	15
The Wallace Foundation	25.0%	2	8
Andrew W. Mellon Foundation*	22.2%	2	9
Howard Heinz Endowment*	21.4%	3	14
Ford Foundation*	20.0%	3	15
The California Wellness Foundation	20.0%	2	10
John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation	16.7%	2	12
The California Endowment*	16.7%	3	18
The New York Community Trust	16.7%	2	12
Charles Stewart Mott Foundation	14.3%	2	14
Duke Endowment*	13.3%	2	15
John S. and James L. Knight Foundation*	13.3%	2	15
Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation*	12.5%	1	8
Houston Endowment Inc.	12.5%	1	8
Carnegie Corporation of New York*	11.1%	2	18
Doris Duke Charitable Foundation	10.0%	1	10
Alfred P. Sloan Foundation*	9.1%	1	11
Daniels Fund*	9.1%	1	11
The William Penn Foundation	9.1%	1	11
J. Paul Getty Trust*	8.3%	1	12
Kresge Foundation	8.3%	1	12
The James Irvine Foundation	7.7%	1	13
William And Flora Hewlett Foundation*	7.7%	1	13
Robert Wood Johnson Foundation	5.9%	1	17

## Foundations with NO African Americans on their Boards of Directors

Annenberg Foundation*	Robert W. Woodruff Foundation
Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation*	Starr Foundation*
David and Lucile Packard Foundation	The Brown Foundation*
Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation*	The Michael and Susan Dell Foundation*
Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Foundation*	The Moody Foundation*
Lilly Endowment*	The Samuel Roberts Noble Foundation, Inc.*
Lumina Foundation for Education, Inc.	W.M. Keck Foundation*
McKnight Foundation*	Walton Family Foundation, Inc*
Richard King Mellon Foundation*	

Foundations marked with an asterisk (\*) did not respond to our request to confirm data.



## Foundations with Asian Americans on their Boards of Directors

Foundation	Percent of Board Members Who are Asian American	Number of Asian Americans on Board	Total Members on Board of Directors
Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Foundation*	20.0%	1	5
Rockefeller Foundation	20.0%	3	15
The California Wellness Foundation	20.0%	2	10
The California Endowment*	16.7%	3	18
The James Irvine Foundation	15.4%	2	13
William And Flora Hewlett Foundation*	15.4%	2	13
Starr Foundation*	14.3%	1	7
W.K Kellogg Foundation	10.0%	1	10
The William Penn Foundation	9.1%	1	11
Kresge Foundation	8.3%	1	12
The Chicago Community Trust	7.1%	1	14
Ford Foundation*	6.7%	1	15
The Cleveland Foundation	6.7%	1	15
Robert Wood Johnson Foundation	5.9%	1	17

## Foundations with NO Asian Americans on their Boards of Directors

Alfred P. Sloan Foundation*	J. Paul Getty Trust*
Andrew W. Mellon Foundation*	John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation
Annenberg Foundation*	John S. and James L. Knight Foundation*
Annie E. Casey Foundation	Lilly Endowment*
Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation*	Lumina Foundation for Education, Inc.
Carnegie Corporation of New York*	McKnight Foundation*
Casey Family Programs*	Richard King Mellon Foundation*
Charles Stewart Mott Foundation	Robert W. Woodruff Foundation
Daniels Fund*	The Brown Foundation*
David and Lucile Packard Foundation	The Michael and Susan Dell Foundation*
Doris Duke Charitable Foundation	The Moody Foundation*
Duke Endowment*	The New York Community Trust
Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation*	The Samuel Roberts Noble Foundation, Inc.*
Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation*	The Wallace Foundation
Houston Endowment Inc.	W.M. Keck Foundation*
Howard Heinz Endowment*	Walton Family Foundation, Inc*

Foundations marked with an asterisk (\*) did not respond to our request to confirm data.

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## Methodology

We obtained the list of the top 50 foundations in the United States by asset size in 2006 from the Foundation Center's website. We obtained the list of board members of each foundation from the websites of each institution, or from its publicly-available 990-PF form.

Greenlining encourages foundations to self-report their board diversity figures, either on their websites or on their annual reports. In this spirit, we began our inquiry by sending letters to all 50 foundations included in this report, asking them to report the race and ethnicities of the members of their boards of directors. Few foundations responded to our request, and so had to resort to other, publicly-available means to determine board diversity.

Race and ethnicity was presumed based on surnames, biographies, and other information

about the board members available on the foundation website or from other online sources.

Finally, each foundation was sent a letter asking it to confirm whether our tabulation of the diversity of their board is correct, in order to ascertain the accuracy of our numbers.

Nineteen out of the 46 foundations responded, either confirming our findings or providing corrections, if necessary. Those foundations that did **not** respond are marked on the tables in this report with asterisks.

This ranking of foundations does not imply a grading system by which to judge each institution's commitment to diversity, only an objective reporting of diversity data.

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### THE GREENLINING INSTITUTE

Greenlining is a multi-ethnic advocacy, research, leadership development, and public policy organization whose ultimate goal is to increase the role that low-income and minority Californians play in the civic arena in order to create equitable policies and improve quality of life for all communities.

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