



# Building Bridges Initiative: Leaders of Color Project

## *Beyond Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging*

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### ACRC Conference 2024

- Tekoah Boatner, HS-BCP, BBI Leader of Color
- Lauri Smalls, BBI Leader of Color
- Larome Myrick, Ph.D., ACRC Board Member, BBI Leader of Color & BBI Consultant

# Introductions

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**Tekoah Boatner**  
Executive Director  
Youth Oasis  
*Louisiana*



**Dr. Larome Myrick**  
Executive Director  
Division of Youth Development  
*Rhode Island*



**Lauri Smalls**  
Executive Director  
Turning The Corner Residential Programs  
*Rhode Island*

# Agenda

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- Overview
- Key Themes
- Strategies & Resources
- Insights & Actions
- Q&A
- Resources
- Stay Connected





# Overview

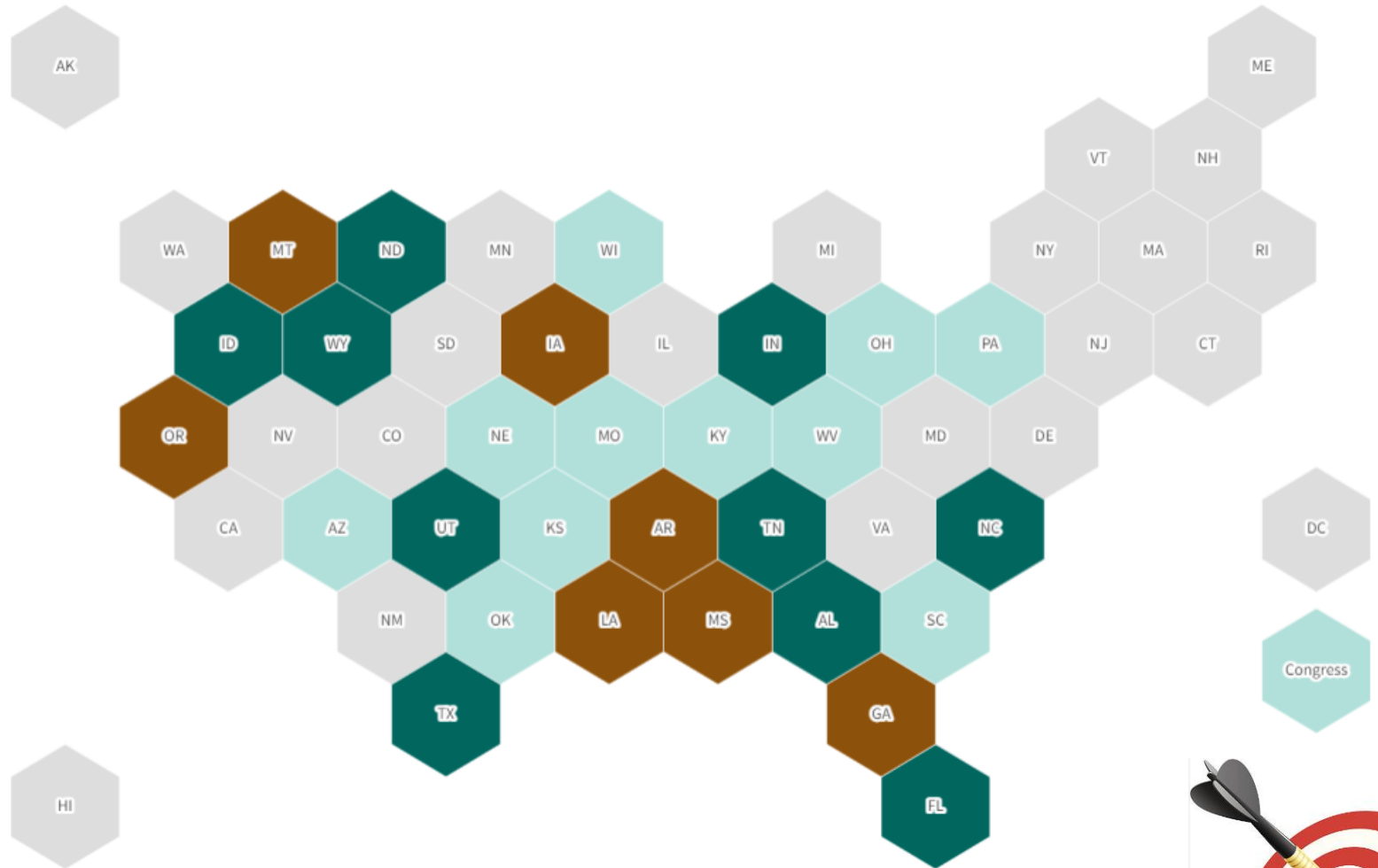
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# THE CHRONICLE OF HIGHER EDUCATION

## Where Anti-DEI Legislation Has Been Proposed

■ No bill ■ Introduced ■ Final legislative approval ■ Signed into law ■ Tabled, failed to pass, or vetoed



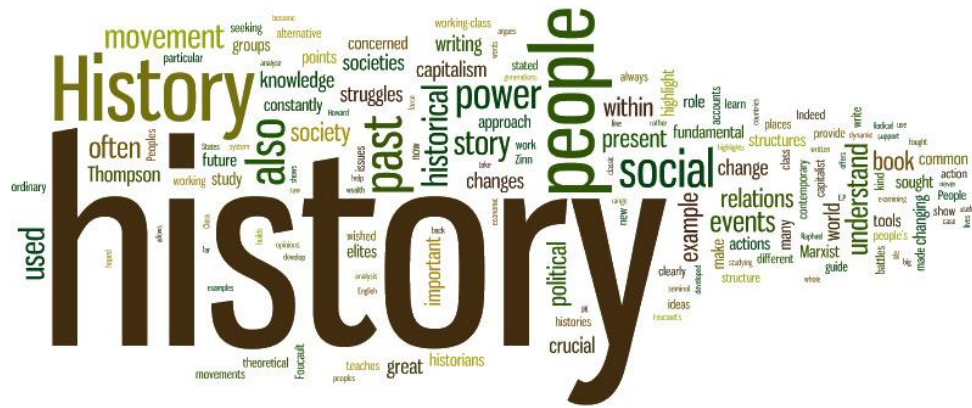
Note: Florida, Idaho, North Carolina, and Tennessee also have bills introduced, which their colors do not reflect.

We are tracking **82** bills in **28** states and the U.S. Congress. Since 2023:

- 82 have been introduced.
- 12 have final legislative approval.
- 12 have become law.
- 35 have been tabled, failed to pass, or vetoed.



# A Brief History



- 2017 – Building Bridges Initiative’s (BBI) Leaders of Color (LoC) Project Inception via the Annie E. Casey Foundation grant
- 2020 – LoC Concept Paper: *“Beyond Cultural and Linguistic Competence (CLC): Achieving Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion for Leaders of Color”*
- 2023 – Partnership between the Association of Children’s Residential & Community Services (ACRC) & Building Bridges Initiative: LoC Project Partnership

# Building Bridges Initiative: Leaders of Color



Our vision is for a world where diversity, equity, inclusion, access, and belonging (DEIAB) are valued and practiced by all individuals, groups, and service organizations.



**LEADERS of COLOR**

# Concept Paper

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QR Code for:

*Beyond Cultural and Linguistic  
Competence (CLC): Achieving  
Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion for  
Leaders of Color*



**LEADERS of COLOR**



# Beyond Cultural and Linguistic Competence (CLC): Achieving Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion for LoC

## Background

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- Rising Diversity, Lagging Leadership Representation
- Visionary LoC in Nonprofits
- Disproportionate Barriers for LoC

## Purpose

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- Addressing Challenges for LoC
- Strategic Recommendations for Inclusion
- Call for Collaborative Efforts



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# Key Themes

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Michael Bloomberg is worth about \$106B — but he's nowhere to b...



Bumble founder Whitney Wolfe Herd wins men's bracket in...



**BUSINESS**

# Boeing prioritizing diversity and inclusion over flier safety, Elon Musk says after near-catastrophic Alaska Airlines mishap

By Shannon Thaler  
11/11/2024 9:31 a.m. ET

"People will die due to DEI," Musk said in the wake of the near-disastrous Alaska Airlines flight on Friday.  
Getty Images



**“People will Die due to DEI”**  
~ Elon Musk



<https://nypost.com/2024/01/11/business/elon-musk-rips-boeing-they-prioritized-dei-over-safety/>

# Emerging Themes

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Diversifying the Board of Directors

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Recruiting Leaders of Color

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Promoting Leaders of Color

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Retaining Leaders of Color

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Professional Development



### The Benefits of Being in Charge

- Data shows that People of Color in executive positions reported higher rates of common challenges and frustrations than White EDs/CEOs.

### The Burden of Sustainability:

- On average, LoC report smaller organizational budgets and, more often, say that they lack access to financial resources.

### The Challenge of Managing Up

- EDs/CEOs of color report more challenges in their relationships with boards of directors when the boards are predominantly White.

### The Responsibility to Lead on Equity

- While LoC have achieved individual greatness, the struggles for diversity, equity, and inclusion remain.

# Understanding the Challenges



# Strategies & Resources

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Baltimore Mayor Brandon Scott, accompanied by Maryland Gov. Wes Moore. Credit: The Associated Press/Matt Rourke

## Baltimore Bridge Collapse Blamed On DEI: The Attack on DEI Continues

<https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/baltimore-bridge-collapse-blamed-dei-attack-continues-asare-ph-d--hvkwe/>

## Is DEI a slur now? Plus, control & basketball

APRIL 5, 2024 · 4:02 PM ET

By Barton Girdwood, Alexis Williams, Liam McBain, Corey Antonio Rose, Brittany Luse, Jessica Placzek, Veralyn Williams



31-Minute Listen

+ PLAYLIST



<https://www.npr.org/2024/04/05/1197956148/its-been-a-minute-dei-mayor-slur-dartmouth-basketball-union>







# Diversifying Boards

## Initiating DEI Self-Assessment:

- Begin with a frank self-evaluation of DEI and readiness for change within board structures.
- Use self-assessment data to inform actions that forge a genuinely inclusive leadership.



## Bias Training for Board Members:

- Implement implicit bias training to uncover and mitigate unconscious biases.
- This training lays the groundwork for diverse leadership and broadens the talent pool.



## Expanding Recruitment Networks:

- Actively seek out diverse candidates beyond conventional circles, utilizing resources like HBCU job boards.
- Outreach to diverse talent showcases an organizational commitment to inclusivity, attracting a wider array of qualified professionals.

# Recruiting & Retaining LoC

## Building Bridges

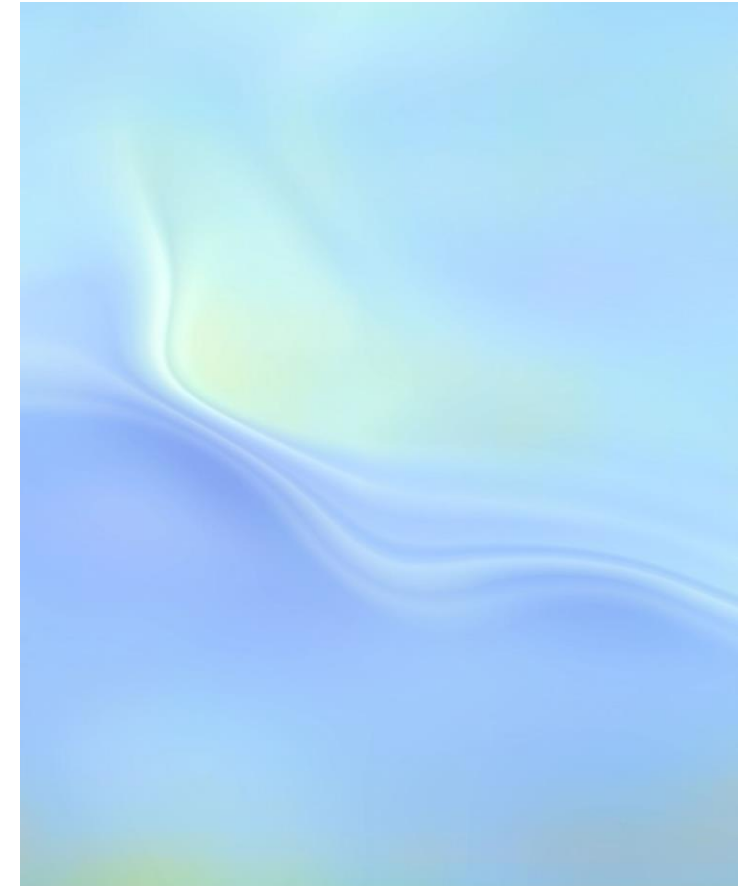
- Collaborate with minority-focused institutions for a skilled, diverse talent stream, enhancing mutual growth.

## Invest in Potential

- Establish mentorship programs for LoC to foster their leadership skills, ensuring their success and long-term engagement.

## Culture is Key

- Cultivate a workplace that truly values diversity and equity, enabling LoC to fully contribute and bolster organizational strength.



# Promoting & Professional Development

## Leadership Pathways:

- Emulate UC Berkeley's success with career ladders and mentorship for LoC, emphasizing visible promotion opportunities, detailed mentorship programs, and incentives for diversity efforts.

## Customized Professional Development:

- Professional growth must align with the organization's mission, utilizing Employee Resource Groups to foster dialogue and safe spaces for equity discussions.

## Leadership Development Strategies:

- Foster cross-racial dialogues, provide clear mentorship guidelines for LoC success, and engage emerging leaders in targeted management training, drawing from BBI LoC Project insights.



# Insights & Actions

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# The Assault on DEI



<https://www.chronicle.com/package/the-assault-on-dei>



# Enhancing Diversity and Inclusion

## Integrating Diversity in Core Values:

- Pledge openly to diverse hiring practices and cultivate leadership diversity to embody organizational inclusivity.
- Offer signing incentives to bilingual Latino/a/x personnel, reinforcing culturally competent services.

## Goal-Oriented Recruitment:

- Establish transparent, trackable goals to diversify recruitment, aiming for a leadership team that mirrors a spectrum of backgrounds and insights.



# Retaining Leaders of Color

## Inclusive Work Environment:

- Engage LoC in key initiatives and value their input in decision-making.
- Maintain equitable salaries to affirm fairness and respect for every team member.

## Development & Advocacy:

- Offer personalized professional development for LoC to align with their career goals.
- Partner with LoC advocates to address systemic barriers and support career progression through benefits like tuition aid and professional coaching.



# Promoting Leaders of Color

## Fostering DEI in Leadership:

- Solidify a commitment to DEI at all levels, particularly by promoting LoC to leadership positions.
- Create leadership training programs that reinforce DEI competencies and encourage their practical application.

## Advancing Transparent Promotions:

- Establish clear, collaborative processes for advancement to ensure fair and supportive promotion pathways.
- Prioritize internal visibility of promotional opportunities, aligning employee development with career progression.





# Cultivating Emerging Leaders of Color

## Promoting Leadership & Skills

- Support staff in leading roles to highlight and enhance their capabilities.
- Foster individual leadership qualities through tailored discussions and management training.

## Cultivating DEI in Leadership:

- Embed DEI goals department-wide to spotlight and advance potential LoC.
- Offer varied leadership opportunities to cultivate emerging talent within the organization.



# Identifying and Developing Leaders of Color

## Elevating Leadership Experience:

- Ensure work assignments are challenging and growth-oriented to nurture leadership skills.
- Implement a development program for all leadership levels, emphasizing continuous learning.

## Cultivating Mentorship & Engagement:

- Engage staff in the decision-making process and idea exchange with top leaders to boost participation and initiative.
- Foster a learning-centric environment and establish mentorships to support upcoming leaders, with a special focus on programs for LoC.



# Securing Organizational Capacity

## Enhancing Networking for LoC:

- Facilitate networking platforms for LoC to bolster confidence in donor engagements.
- Train LoC to effectively communicate and advocate in challenging situations, shifting funder perspectives and aligning with the organization's goals.

## Strengthening Coalition Advocacy:

- Form alliances with similar groups to create a powerful collective voice for funding and inclusive practices.
- Engage top leadership in advocacy discussions to highlight the necessity of capacity-building support.



# Engaging with Predominantly White Boards

## Customized Board Communications:

- Leverage the diverse expertise of board members by customizing communication, using industry-relevant language to highlight organizational strengths.
- Adopt an assertive yet receptive communication style to maintain authenticity in sensitive discussions.

## Authentic Diversity Representation:

- Advocate for personal narratives instead of generalized community representations to preserve authenticity.
- Cultivate deeper connections through one-on-one meetings, fostering understanding on intricate matters and bolstering self-assurance.



# Energizing Quotes from Leaders of Color

“Never expect to be, become so you can expect.”

- Garry McWhorter

“My journey started with promise and slipped into disappointment. I am looking toward a better tomorrow.”

- Edward L. Pruitt

“It is very important that we have a peer group that is representative of us. This is an underutilized resource, and we must take advantage of it.”

- Larome Myrick



“You are either at the table, or on the table, or on the menu.”

- Lauri Smalls

# Call to Action: Embracing Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion





# Q&A

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# Conservatives Are So Scared of Diversity They're Starting to Boycott 'Woke' Airlines

After twisting a Boeing safety issue into an outrage over Black pilots and LGBTQ inclusion, the far right is taking aim at commercial carriers

BY MILES KLEE

JANUARY 24, 2024



<https://www.rollingstone.com/culture/culture-news/conservatives-blame-diversity-dei-airlines-boycott-1234953756/>







QUESTIONS/DISCUSSION

# Resources

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**LEADERS of COLOR**

Eid al-Fitr 2024 Arizona abortion ban Israel-Hamas war Tara VanDerveer retires Champions League

BUSINESS

# As diversity, equity and inclusion comes under legal attack, companies quietly alter their programs



<https://apnews.com/article/dei-diversity-corporations-affirmative-action-309864f08e6ec63a45d18ca5f25d7540>



# CLC/DEI Resources

- **BBI Website**

[www.buildingbridges4youth.org](http://www.buildingbridges4youth.org)

- Cultural and Linguistic Competence Guidelines for Residential Programs - [http://www.buildingbridges4youth.org/sites/default/files/BBI\\_CLC\\_Guidelines\\_FINAL.pdf](http://www.buildingbridges4youth.org/sites/default/files/BBI_CLC_Guidelines_FINAL.pdf)
- BBI Self-Assessment Checklist for Staff of Residential Programs Providing Behavioral Health Services and Supports to Children, Youth, and their Families - <http://www.buildingbridges4youth.org/sites/default/files/Self%20Assessment%20Checklist%20CLC.pdf>
- BBI CLC Issue Brief <https://buildingbridges4youth.org/download/5789/?tmstv=1708363101>

- **BBI Web-Based Training Programs**

[https://theinstitute.umaryland.edu/onlinetraining/programcategory.cfm?ottype\\_id=30](https://theinstitute.umaryland.edu/onlinetraining/programcategory.cfm?ottype_id=30)

- Cultural and Linguistic Competence (Part 1): Why Does it Matter? (2 CEUs)
- Cultural and Linguistic Competence (Part 2): Implementation Strategies (2 CEUs)
- Cultural and Linguistic Competence (Part 3): On a One-to-One Level (1.5 CEUs)

- **NCCC Georgetown University**

<https://nccc.georgetown.edu/assessments/>

- Self Assessments



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# CLC/DEI Resources

- **African American Board Leadership Institute (AABLI)** -AABLI strengthens nonprofit, public and private organizations through recruiting, preparing, and assisting with the placement of African Americans on a broad range of governing boards.
- **Changemakers** – Changemakers activates a global network of social entrepreneurs, innovators, business leaders, policy makers and activists to build an Everyone a Changemaker world. <https://www.changemakers.com/>
- **Hispanic Federation** – The Hispanic Federation focuses on capacity building through institution building, Latino Core Initiative, Entre Familia Nonprofit Learning Series, Hispanic Leadership Institute, Latina Leadership Circle and Communities of Color Nonprofit Stabilization Fund, [https://hispanicfederation.org/programs/organizational\\_development/](https://hispanicfederation.org/programs/organizational_development/)
- **National Association of Social Workers (NASW) Social Justice Initiative** - The National Association of Social Workers (NASW) is the largest membership organization of professional social workers in the world. NASW works to enhance the professional growth and development of its members, to create and maintain professional standards for social workers, and to advance sound social policies. <https://www.socialworkers.org/advocacy/social-justice>
- **National Council for Behavioral Health** - The National Council for Behavioral Health is the nation's voice of mental health and addiction providers who care for 10 million adults and children. <https://www.thenationalcouncil.org/>
- **National Council of Nonprofits** - Diversity on nonprofit boards National Council of Nonprofits - Why diversity, equity and inclusion matter to nonprofits Nonprofit Quarterly (NPQ) - The declining diversity of nonprofit boards - and what to do about it
- **CompassPoint Next Generation Leaders of Color Program** - is a transformative leadership development program that builds leadership confidence, management competencies, and the ability to unleash organizational change. Next Generation Leaders of Color Program



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# Stay Connected

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## NEWS & COMMENTARY

# Anti-DEI Efforts Are the Latest Attack on Racial Equity and Free Speech

The far right wants to get rid of DEI offices, end anti-bias training, and stop public statements of support for diversity. It's the latest effort to dismantle systems designed to foster racial equity and progress.



**Leah Watson,**  
Senior Staff Attorney,  
ACLU's Racial Justice

First, Donald Trump and right-wing extremists attacked government trainings on racism and sexism. Then the far right tried to censor classroom instruction on racism



# Contact Us

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Thank you!

