

# Racial Equity and Inclusion on Your Board

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# Today's Conversation

- Overview of BoardSource and Its Commitment to Diversity, Inclusion, and Equity in the Nonprofit Sector
- *Leading with Intent* study and National Data on DEI
- The “Disconnect” between Attitudes and Actions
- Non-Diverse Boards – Org-wide Implications
- My Experiences and Conversations in the Field
- Five Questions that Boards Should Discuss
- Strategic Steps in Board Recruitment and Retention
- Recommended “Mindsets” for Board Members
- Tools and Resources for Individuals and Boards

# Overview of BoardSource's Vision

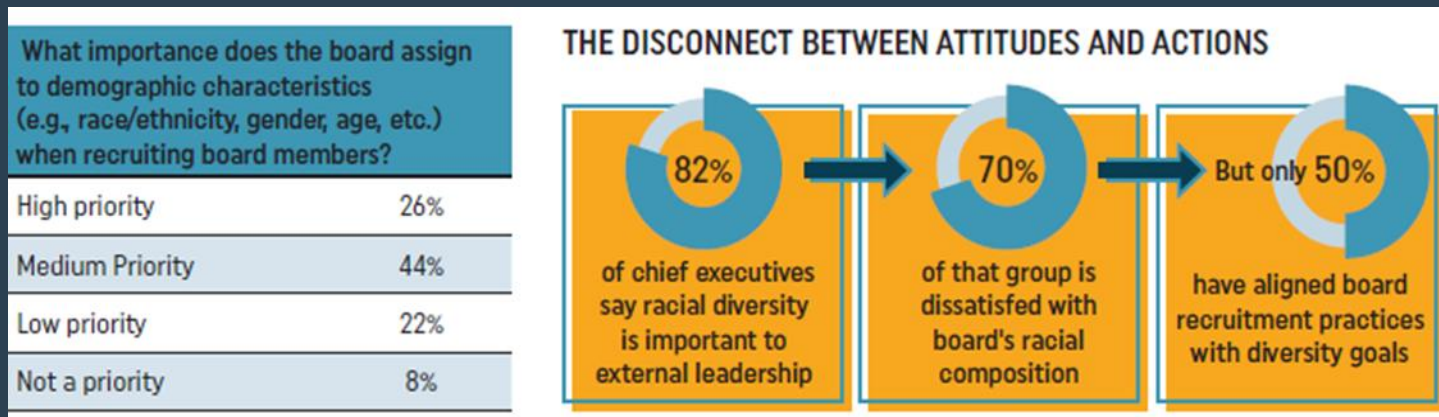
- Vision: A world where every social sector organization has the leadership it needs to fulfill its purpose and create a just world where all can thrive.
- Core Belief: It is *impossible* for the social sector to achieve this vision without a commitment to diversity, inclusion, and equity.
  - Diversity in board composition (skills, expertise, lived experiences, racial/ethnic background, access to networks, etc.)
  - Inclusion in building a board culture of trust, candor, and respect for everyone
  - Equity-focused in understanding and developing strategies in the societal context in which the organization operates

# The Data: We've Got a Long Way To Go . . .

- The nonprofit sector isn't as diverse as it should be, as indicated by our national survey data:
  - 87% of nonprofit chief executives are white
  - 78% of nonprofit board members are white
  - 19% of nonprofit boards are *entirely* white
  - 71% of board chairs said that the board's composition did not represent the demographics of the population served by the organization
  - Only 26% of boards place a "high priority" on demographic diversity when they recruit board members

# Board Recruitment Strategies Are Not Aligned with Diversity Goals

- Top two methods for identifying new board members:
  - Board members' personal or professional contacts (96%)
  - CEO/ED's personal or professional contacts (88%)
- There is a disconnect between attitudes and actions:



# Org-wide Implications of a Lack of Racial and Ethnic Board Diversity

- Boards lacking in racial/ethnic diversity self-report that their boards' racial/ethnic make-up negatively impacts their ability to:
  - Understand the organization's operating environment and work
  - Attract and retain talent for both board and staff
  - Enhance the organization's standing with funders, donors, and the general public
  - Understand how to best serve the community
  - Cultivate trust and confidence with the community served

# My Experiences and Conversations in the Field

- This work often leads to “uncomfortable” moments for white nonprofit leaders (and for me) -- here are four quotes that I’ve heard within the last 18 months on this topic:
  - *“I was so angered by the first 30 minutes of the racial equity training session that I shut down for the next two days of training.”*
  - *“Could we use softer terms than “white privilege”? I just don’t want white leaders to be “put off” by the terminology.”*
  - *“Do we have to focus on diversity for our board? We’re a nonprofit that focuses on the environment, not on affordable housing, economic development, education, or health.”*
  - *“If we’re so focused on adding people of color, then I suppose you don’t value my board service anymore.”*

# 5 Questions That Boards Should Discuss

- Do you think your Board's current racial composition negatively or positively impacts your reputation in the field?
- If someone were to make assumptions about your organizational values based solely on your board composition, what would they be likely to think?
- Is your lack of commitment to racial equity impacting your ability to attract and retain talent in your workforce?
- Are you ever at risk of making decisions without fully understanding how these decisions may affect those you serve?
- If you were to make a deeper commitment to racial equity, what would that mean for your mission, your work, and the people you serve?



# Board Recruitment Strategies

- Develop an action plan, policies, and procedures to address self-identified weaknesses
  - Use a board recruitment matrix to identify areas you want to address
  - Set expectations up front with board candidates, especially related to fundraising
  - Assess candidates' level of comfort and experience on prioritized topics
  - Move beyond regular channels for board recruitment
    - ✓ Post board searches
    - ✓ Connect with local chapters of national ethnic professional and civic associations
    - ✓ Engage staff
    - ✓ Engage every board member

# Board Retention Strategies

- To support greater retention:
  - Establish written diversity policies
  - Implement a detailed orientation process
  - Assign a “buddy”/mentor
  - Provide equal access to board leadership opportunities
  - Pay careful attention to board social inclusion practices
  - Ask board members of color for feedback on the recruitment process they experienced
    - ✓ What worked?
    - ✓ What didn’t work?

# Recommended “Mindsets” for Board Members

- **Be Courageous**: “Lean in” to the “discomfort” in discussing these issues; don’t be afraid to hear or speak the truth about inequity. It’s part of the work, and you can’t get around it if you want to make progress
- **Be Curious**: Keep learning (read, watch, listen, notice, connect, engage, act, reflect, stay inspired)
- **Be Committed**: Acknowledge that making statements and declaring intentions aren’t enough; assess what you’ve done and decide what you will commit to doing

# Tools & Resources for Your Racial Equity Journey

## Additional Resources (Board)

- [The Four Principles of Purpose-Driven Board Leadership](#)
- [The Four Principles of PDBL -- Board Conversation Starter Guide](#)
- [Leading with Intent 2021](#)
- [Leading with Intent 2021 -- DEI Findings](#)
- BoardSource [DEI website](#)
- BoardSource [COVID-19 website](#)
- Equity in the Center publication: [Awake to Woke to Work: Building a Race Equity Culture](#)

## Additional Resources (Individual)

- [21 Day Racial Equity Habit Building Challenge](#)
- [Racial Equity Tools -- Glossary](#)