



## Board Pipeline Leadership Development Training Program

*Updated August 2022*



Associated Black Charities' Board Pipeline Leadership Development Program was launched in 2011 to begin changing the landscape of nonprofit leadership in the Baltimore region. The previous year, Racial Diversity Collaborative released [Measuring Racial-Ethnic Diversity in the Baltimore Washington Region's Nonprofit Sector](#).

The report showed that nonprofit executive directors and board members did not reflect the racial, gender, and age make-up of the region or the

communities that the nonprofits served. Black people and people of color held 27% of board positions in the region even though they made up over half of the region's population. The larger the budget of a nonprofit and the larger the board of a nonprofit, the less diverse the board.

Ten years later, more recent data suggests this gap for nonprofit boards' diversity [persists both nationally and locally](#). Furthermore, this gap correlates with differences in funding and resources for the organization and the organization's commitments to equity and inclusion. Nonprofits with more Black leadership and leadership of color carry more of the nonprofit sector's burden of racial equity work but receive less of the available funding.

It is within this context that the Board Pipeline Program does its work. We demonstrate that there is not a lack of qualified and willing Black individuals and individuals of color for nonprofit board positions, but rather, there is a lack of opportunity. Traditional methods of board recruitment are unable to change the demographics of nonprofit leadership. The Board Pipeline Program creates these opportunities and networks of professional growth and nonprofit leadership diversification. Ultimately, as we change the nonprofit landscape, we transform the Baltimore-DC landscape that the nonprofits serve.

Many of the nonprofits seeking professionals with racially diverse backgrounds are also nonprofits that serve low-income communities of color. This provides a double bottom line "return on investment" on behalf of the community and on behalf of the professionals of color.



The Board Pipeline Program consists of five learning sessions over five weeks and then a Meet & Greet Reception with nonprofits recruiting for their boards. The learning sessions are from 6:00 PM – 8:30 PM and are all required to complete the program, as is the Meet & Greet.

- **Nonprofit Boards** — This session introduces and addresses the basic roles and responsibilities of nonprofit board members. Participants develop a high-level understanding of board service and the nonprofit sector.
- **Board Service: A Kaleidoscopic View** — This session moves from the legal and institutional responsibilities and best practices of the first session to the realities of board service from the perspective of experienced board members of color.
- **Negotiating the ‘Isms’ of Board Service** — This session examines addresses the realities that professionals who are profiled by race, gender, and/or other forms of prejudice and oppression continue to face.
- **Board Budgets, Financials, and Philanthropic Giving** — This session focuses on the financial aspects of board service, both managing the organization’s finances and fundraising for the organization’s activities.
- **ABC & You** — The final session features rotating topics relevant to current trends in nonprofit board service. The session focuses on moving toward transforming nonprofit organizations. Finally, there will be an overview of the ongoing ways that ABC will support our program alumni.
- **Meet & Greet Reception** — This networking event puts Board Pipeline participants in direct contact with nonprofit organizations who are looking for new board members. Connections will continue to be made after the event, but this face-to-face contact is invaluable.

After the Baltimore Uprising, the need for more racial diversity within organizations serving Baltimore’s most vulnerable residents was evident. A racially diverse board that is also sensitive to cultural differences is usually one that has a stronger capacity to be in touch with community needs. The Council of Nonprofits noted, “A diverse board will improve the nonprofit’s ability to respond to external influences that are changing the environment for those served and in which it is working.” To date, the Board Pipeline Project has trained over 480 professionals to serve on boards. More than 250 area organizations have connected to ABC’s Board Pipeline, many of them from areas serving communities most impacted during the Uprising.



## How to Apply

### Organizational Process

An organization that is interested in connecting with our Board Pipeline professionals must first complete our Organizational Profile, which overviews the organization's mission, board demographics, and board needs. This profile helps our professionals and nonprofit partners make the best connections that fit both of their needs.

Once an Organizational Profile is received, the organization will join our nonprofit partner mailing list and be notified of and invited to opportunities to connect with our Board Pipeline professionals, including the Meet & Greet Reception and other opportunities including our Board Pipeline alumni newsletter. Typically, there is a Meet & Greet Reception in June and in December.

Details about each Meet & Greet Reception will vary. For more information and for the Organizational Profile template, please contact Jon Law at [jlaw@abc-md.org](mailto:jlaw@abc-md.org) and/or check out [abc-md.org](http://abc-md.org).

### Individual Process

Any individual that is interested in participating in the Board Pipeline Program must complete an Applicant Questionnaire and submit a one-page professional biography within the application window. Board Pipeline cycles happen in the spring (April-May) and autumn (October-November) and applications are typically open for one month (February and August).

The applicant must commit to attending and participating in all five learning sessions and the Meet & Greet. If the dates for a particular cycle do not fit your schedule, we invite you to stay connected and join in a future cycle.

Details about each Board Pipeline cycle will vary. For more information, the application questionnaire, and specific session dates, please contact Jon Law at [jlaw@abc-md.org](mailto:jlaw@abc-md.org) and/or check out [abc-md.org](http://abc-md.org).