

Disability Inclusion & Philanthropy: What funders need to know

This video combines our Introduction and Message to Funders videos for streamlined viewing. It features leaders from the disability movement sharing their perspectives on opportunities for funders at the intersection of disability and philanthropy.

Transcript begins.

[light piano music]

[A series of individuals sit for interviews in an industrial studio setting.]

KERI GRAY: I am a young-adult black woman, sitting in a chair. On my right leg is a prosthetic limb, and I am wearing a red romper with a black head wrap.

My name is Keri Gray. Keri Gray is a black, disabled woman, and there's power behind that. Disability, to me, is about a connection to a community and a culture.

REBECCA COKLEY: My name is Rebecca Cokley. I am wearing a Prince-purple dress because I'm a huge Prince fan. I am a second-generation little person.

Roughly one in five people in this country are a person with a disability or a person who will experience disability at some point in their life. There's not a community, there's not a demographic that is not touched by disability.

SARA MINKARA: My name is Sara Minkara. I am blind, I'm a Muslim, and I'm a woman.

There's one billion individuals in this world with disabilities. The majority of persons with disabilities are marginalized, from the education sector, employment, health sector.

JANE AKINYI: My name is Jane Akinyi. I am a self-advocate from Kenya. I was born with this intellectual disability.

We have equal rights like you. We have rights to marriage, to have inclusive work.

RYAN EASTERLY: My name is Ryan Easterly. I am a black man with a teal-and-white striped shirt, wearing glasses.

I identify, personally, as a black, gay person with disability who's a former foster kid. I consider disability one of the characteristics about myself, but it's not my entire identity. I am multifaceted, as we all are.

ALICE WONG: My name is Alice Wong. I'm an Asian American woman in a wheelchair, wearing bright-red lipstick. And I'm wearing a mask attached to a tube that's used to help me breathe.

A lot of people don't associate disability with diversity. Yet they absolutely should. I really think of disability as part of the wonderful variation in our cultures, in our society.

RABIA BELT: My name is Rabia Belt. I'm a black woman with short curly hair, wearing a green shirt.

We see disability all over the place, but often in ways that are somewhat negative. We don't often see people with disabilities speaking for themselves, so we don't really know the history of disability in this country. What I would like to see is different types of representation across race, gender, and class, so that you see the full panoply of people with disabilities.

MADDY RUVOLO: My name is Maddy Ruvolo. I am a young white woman with brown curly hair, wearing a bright-green shirt. I am a disabled woman. I have a chronic illness called POTS.

Full access—that's the dream, right, that everybody can move through the world and not face barriers. Full accessibility means talking to people, designing processes and programs in a way that people are included from the start. Understanding that the legal requirements are just a minimum.

DESSA COSMA: My name is Dessa Cosma. I am a white, disabled woman. I'm a little person who often uses a wheelchair.

Everything that's wrong with our society was a set of choices, and the beautiful thing about that is that we can make different choices. So, there's this huge opportunity to rebuild our world in a way that actually works for people, and not just a few people.

MINKARA: I have a nonprofit organization—ETI, Empowerment Through Integration—that focuses on changing the narrative surrounding disability. There's a huge inequality between the reality of persons with disabilities and what support is going towards that. Only two percent of international funding is going to persons with disabilities.

COSMA: I have started a disability organization called Detroit Disability Power, and we are organizing people with disabilities and collaborating with other social justice movements around our issues that intersect with their issues.

People with disabilities are some of the most impoverished people in the United States. We typically live below the poverty line, and because of lack of access to education and jobs, we will remain there unless we do something about it. And so to work on anti-poverty or economic justice without a focus, at least in some way, on disability means that you're leaving out the most marginalized people in that marginalized category.

RUVOLO: I'm a transportation planner. About five years ago, I discovered that there was a disability community and got really involved in the community. The key issues to focus on are things like health care, employment, education, deinstitutionalization, where people are not getting their very basic needs met.

BELT: I'm an assistant professor of law at Stanford Law School. I'm also a professor of history, by courtesy, at Stanford. And I'm a council member of the National Council on Disability.

Forty to 60 percent of people in prisons or jails are people with disabilities. And it's not just people with disabilities going into the prison system but also that prison itself exacerbates and causes disabilities, as well, both in terms of disabilities such as tuberculosis, HIV ... but then also the trauma of incarceration itself.

WONG: I'm the founder and director of the Disability Visibility Project. Every community needs to have the right to have a part in civil society, to vote, to be part of our city councils. There are still a lot of barriers people with disabilities face in political participation. For example, in 2012, over 30 percent of people with disabilities reported difficulty voting, compared to 8 percent of nondisabled people.

EASTERLY: I currently serve as executive director of the WITH Foundation. It's a private foundation that promotes comprehensive and accessible health care for adults with developmental disabilities. The Council on Foundations estimates that only one percent of those working in philanthropy identify as individuals with disabilities. Part of grant making and part of philanthropy is strengthened when you have people with lived experience in various aspects, including disability, involved in the process, actually on staff.

GRAY: My current job is at the US Business Leadership Network. What's different about the disability narrative is that it's this added layer of accommodations. So, insuring that when you're hiring people with disabilities that your buildings are accessible, that people with wheelchairs are actually able to get into the building, that if you want to hire folks who are deaf and hard of hearing that there's some type of communication channel that allows for them to be implemented throughout the organization.

COKLEY: I am the senior fellow for disability policy at the Center for American Progress in Washington, DC. There is not a civil rights issue today impacting marginalized communities that does not have a disproportionate impact on people with disabilities. Come, sit with us, talk to us. We are already there, but the tables that you have created are fundamentally inaccessible to us. So we're asking you, join us and apply the disability lens across your funding strategy.

[music crescendo]

WONG: It's part of a larger conversation that all of us as a society has about who we are, where we're going, who we want to be in our movement toward, ultimately, social justice.

[affecting piano music]

[The same series of individuals appear in silhouette against a window in a sparsely lit studio.]

RUVOLO: We ask for disability access because when we evolve our institutions to be fully inclusive, we can build a world where all are free.

GRAY: Disability is a normal, positive part of human diversity.

RUVOLO: Disability is diverse, and people with disabilities have other important identities.

AKINYI: Disabled people come from different cultures.

RUVOLO: These parts of our lives also affect what we are able to do and how people treat us.

GRAY: Nothing about us without us.

COKLEY: We want to have a say in everything that affects us.

MINKARA: We are people with disabilities building power and inclusive social justice movements.

COSMA: Funders should serve people with diverse disabilities.

MINKARA, GRAY, AND COSMA [speaking together]: True inclusion is revolutionary.

VOICE-OVER: Where are you in your Journey to Inclusion? For more information, go to DisabilityPhilanthropy.org, and promote using the hashtag DisabilityInclusion. Brought to you by the Presidents' Council on Disability Inclusion in Philanthropy.

CREDITS

Director and Producer

Jessica Reynolds

Director of Photography

Peter Hutchens
Frazer Bradshaw

Field Producer

Keith Wilson

Assistant Camera

Keith Wilson
Aaron Chandler

Sound Recordist

Aaron Chandler
Kevin Crawford
Seth Peterson

Production Assistant

Shrien Alshabasy

Editor

Rob Halstead

Title Design

Rob Halstead

Color Correction

Henninger Media Services

Re-recording Mixer

Nicholas Montgomery

Music

De Wolfe Music

Voice-Over Artist

Rob Halstead

Accessibility Editor

Naomi Wax

SPECIAL THANKS

Detroit Disability Power
Rooted in Rights
Dogpatch Films
Kelsey Baker
Judith Heumann
Kadi Hughes
Noorain Khan
Claire Kinnen
Eryn Loeb
Nicole Okai
Naomi Ortiz
Paul Silva
Catherine Hyde Townsend
Nina Whitley
Gitta Zomorodi

End of transcript.