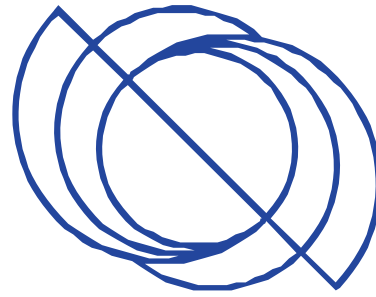




**Disability
Inclusion
Fund**



Landscape Analysis





About the Author

The Disability Inclusion Fund hired Sandy Ho as a consultant to conduct a landscape analysis to guide grantmaking criteria and objectives. Sandy is currently a Research Associate at The Lurie Institute for Disability Policy where she manages research project for the Community Living Policy Center. Other areas of her research work include civic engagement of people with disabilities, and the experiences of marginalized people with disabilities accessing healthcare services. Sandy is also the founder and co-organizer of the Disability Intersectionality Summit (DIS), and identifies as a disabled Asian American queer woman. DIS is a biennial national conference that amplifies marginalized disabled people as presenters in a space that is organized by disabled activists from across the country. Disability justice is central to the DIS organizing practices and principles. Her work has been published by Bitch magazine online, and most recently she was named one of The Advocate's 2020 Champions of Pride. She is completing her studies in public policy at The Heller School for Social Policy and Management at Brandeis University.

Acknowledgments

I would first like to thank all of the participants who took the time to talk with me for this report. Many of the insights shared with me didn't make it into this report, but through frequent meetings with the Disability Inclusion Fund staff I have conveyed as much of the learnings from the conversations here. The context of every interview was of course the global pandemic. Disabled people I spoke to during this time shared some of their biggest fears — and also as this report reflects — their greatest hopes for the field. I thank each of you for being vulnerable with me, and trusting me with the comments you shared. I would also like to offer my deep thanks to Nikki Brown-Booker, Program Officer, and Shayla Robinson, Senior Program Associate, at Borealis for their candid support and affirming guidance throughout this process.



TABLE OF CONTENTS

About the Author/Acknowledgements	3
Executive Summary	4
About the Disability Inclusion Fund	4
Core Guiding Values	4
About this Landscape Analysis	5
Introduction	10
Landscape Analysis: Approach and Questions	12
Findings	14
Recommendations	26
Conclusion	35
Appendix A: Interview Questions	38



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



About The Disability Inclusion Fund

The Disability Inclusion Fund (DIF) is a \$10M, 5-year Fund that supports U.S. groups run by and for disabled people to lead transformational change. The fund is supported by the Presidents' Council on Disability Inclusion in Philanthropy, which is comprised of foundation presidents who are committed to disability inclusion as part of improving diversity, equity, and inclusion within philanthropy. The guiding values of this fund are aligned with several principles of disability justice including intersectionality, leadership of those most impacted, and cross-movement solidarity. The fund strives towards movement funding that is accountable to the disability rights movement. Involvement of those most impacted by injustice and/or exclusion in strategies to advance justice and inclusion forms a core practice for this fund.

Core Guiding Values

Disability Justice

Disability justice is a framework that was founded in 2005 by Patty Berne, Mia Mingus, Stacey Milbern, Leroy Moore, Eli Clare, and Sebastian Margaret; these originators are a collective of disabled activists of color, disabled queer women of color, and disabled people of color who are queer and/or gender non-conforming. This framework is composed of **10 principles** that were developed to address the ways that ableism contributes to systemic oppression that forms the root of disability oppression. In practice, this framework informs responses to the ways that traditional justice and rights-based movements, including the disability rights movement, has contributed to the oppression experienced by disabled people of color and disabled people of color who are queer, trans and/or gender non-

conforming. By embedding several principles of disability justice within its guiding values, and in the fund's support of disability justice work in the field, the DIF should hold close the origins of the disability justice framework in its work. This includes centering and uplifting disabled people of color, and disabled people of color who are queer, trans, and/or gender non-conforming.

Disability Inclusion

Disability inclusion is often misconstrued with disability justice work. Disability inclusion speaks to the ways that our society, culture, media representation, and leadership roles among other areas has a pattern of excluding the broader disability community from these spaces. Representation of people with disabilities and the efforts to leverage disability community voice, perspective, and knowledge forms the crux of disability inclusion efforts. Among the expanse of this work could involve disability advocacy efforts that translate issues of exclusion into policies, and ideally leads to more equality and civil rights for people with disabilities. Through its commitment to elevate the voices of disabled people in public life, including disabled-led organizations in the field, the DIF is guided by the ways disability inclusion adds to its funding and grantee practices.

Why The DIF?

Historically, disabled-led organizations, groups, and collectives have experienced outright exclusion, and/or perfunctory recognition at best from foundation support despite the breadth of social, political, cultural, and movement legacies that have contributed to the knowledge of well-being and justice in our society. The potential of this DIF to play a role in reversing this historical trend — and in doing so lift up wisdom from the field — presents an opportunity for philanthropic foundations to heed purposeful guidance from disabled-led organizations and groups.

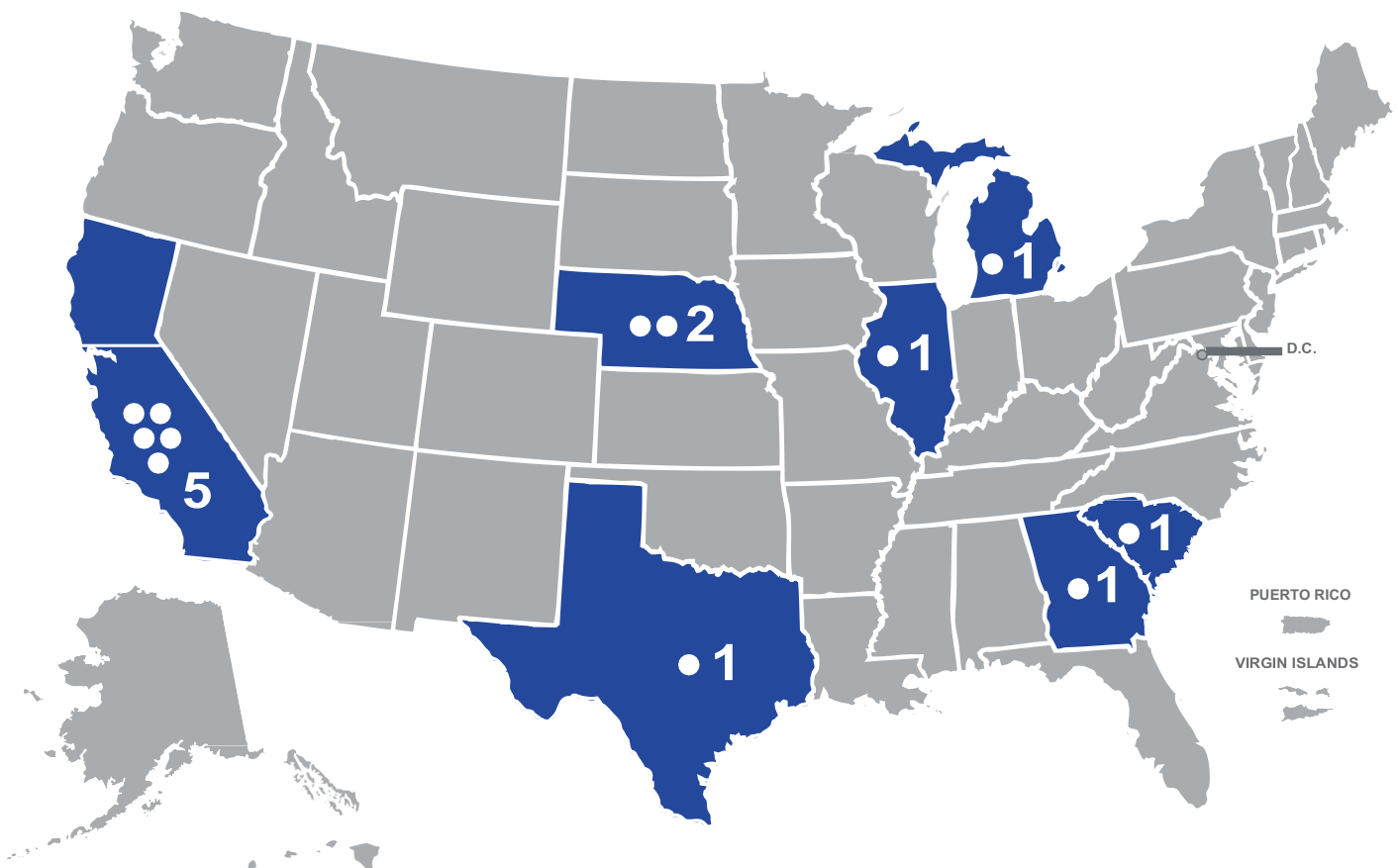
About this Landscape Analysis

Adhering to foundational disability inclusion practices and the disability justice principle 'leadership of those most impacted,' requires that every point of funding operations, dissemination, learning, and development etc. must be informed by and in concert with people with disabilities, with intentional emphasis of involvement from disabled people of color who also hold intersecting marginalized



identities. This understanding guided the approach of conducting this landscape analysis. These findings and recommendations stem from the shared insights, knowledge, aspirations, and challenges experienced from twelve key-informant interviews conducted over the period of March – May from across the U.S. with representation from California, Nebraska, Illinois, Michigan, South Carolina, Georgia, and Texas. Interview participants were compensated for their time with a \$200.00 pre-paid Visa card, and understood that their anonymous contributions will be captured in a report.

INTERVIEW PARTICIPANTS



12

TOTAL PARTICIPANTS



8

PEOPLE OF COLOR



11

SELF-IDENTIFY AS
PERSON WITH A DISABILITY

Driving Questions

What types of support do people in the field of disability justice, and disability inclusion perceive to be most useful?

How can the DIF most effectively support the field?

In conjunction with our findings, this report will include a brief section that provides some preliminary learnings about the Covid-19 impact on the field.

This landscape analysis does not claim or aim to be a comprehensive representation of disability justice and disability inclusion work. Rather, these powerful responses and learnings can closely guide funding criteria, types of funding, approaches to grantee supports, among other areas, and illuminates both the ingenuity and deeply held wisdom in the field. Importantly, this document will provide insight for potential grantees about the ways the DIF can elevate their work in the field.

Findings



Amplify the power of disability justice and disability inclusion work by expanding organizational capacity.



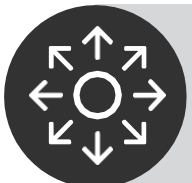
Build the funding and philanthropic knowledge base of potential grantees by proactively providing technical skills that will instill, guide, and further the impact of groups and organizations in the field.



Establish a culture of collaboration through peer-to-peer guidance, and lifting up collective knowledge to deepen both inter-movement and cross-movement practices in the field.



Cultivate processes, approaches, and knowledge to effectively support the sustainability of disability inclusion and disability justice work in the field.



Expand the field's capacity of holding space for powerful growth, wisdom, and healing that comes from disability justice and disability inclusion work.



COVID-19 Impact on the Field



Maintain support, and demonstrate solidarity with disabled-led collectives and groups during periods of crises and beyond.

As many across the country adjust to ‘new norms’ of being and doing, many in the field approached this

period with keen insight that was drawn directly from lived-experiences of disability. For many people with disabilities, mutual-aid support groups and virtual access have already been a core part of their daily living as well as being instrumental in carrying-out the disability justice/inclusion work that gets accomplished. Challenges often came about when organizations and society at-large needed to pivot to alternatives in greater quantities, and at a faster rate. One interview participant indicated that watching these changes happen in broader society left her feeling bitter, “...so many of us have been asking for these very same accommodations that are now being considered mainstreamed because of Covid.” Several participants added that there are key lessons from disability justice and disability inclusion work that seems immediately and readily applicable. Many pointed out that foundations should be conscious of mutual aid support groups, and new ways of ‘being’ at all times, not just during a pandemic.



Provide support to access accurate, accessible, and culturally competent public health information.

Although many in the disability field are already well aware of the disparities that exist for people with disabilities to access equitable

and quality public health information, Covid-19 exacerbated existing gaps and amplified these system failings to the public. One participant suggested that there is a need for support particularly among people with disabilities who are Deaf, and speak other languages. She noted that the current public health regulations around social distancing place an additional burden on people with disabilities whose family members are typically the ‘informal’ translators at doctor’s offices, and/or during emergency room visits. Public health information that is culturally competent and provides appropriate disability access is lacking. This includes access to information in Easy Read formats for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. This field is filled with the wisdom, creativity, and insight from people with disabilities whose entire survival and livelihood has dependent on adapting to systems and external environments. Still, access to critical supports such as guidance on how to protect each other, and mechanisms that provide ways of reaching out to public health are inadequate at best, and for too many of the stories that have been shared – completely absent.

Recommendations

AREAS OF FUNDING



Support initiatives that strengthen peer-to-peer collaboration and/or intersects with cross-movement and cross-issue work.

Examples of this work could include a National Black and Disabled education campaign; justice-involved disabled people; and/or disability justice informed tech hackathons.



Reverse the practice of historically under resourced movement-builders in the field including disabled BIPOC artists, educators, youth leaders, storytellers, and other cultural workers.

Examples of this might be inviting a former grantee to participate in the review process, including selection of other reviewers; or to spotlighting the work of a group who has been largely under-the-radar to elevate the presence, and signal for attention of the group's work in the field.



Equip organizations and groups with the tools to deepen their understanding, identify gaps, and pursue opportunities for growth through empirical research.

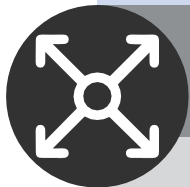
Examples of this might look like setting-up meetings with research institutes to meet with groups for consulting, and support around creating research questions, or brainstorming a methodology that groups can be well-positioned to take the lead on when submitting funding proposals.

IMPLEMENTING INFORMED FUNDING STRATEGIES



Infuse both disability justice and disability inclusion practices at every point of the grant process.

For instance, if a grantee is proposing funding for the redesign of a website, it may be helpful to inquire about the ways the disability justice principle 'collective access' will be embodied in the website's lay-out and navigation tools. Another example of this in practice can be demonstrated through the use of language that is in plain language throughout the grant application itself.



Broaden the representation, access, and leadership within traditional ways of movement-building, and across areas of disability advocacy work.

An example of expanding the ecosystem of the disability justice/inclusion field is to be creative in identifying leaders, this may include forming a task force that scouts for radical cross-movement work, or is generating new strategies around abolition, or to dismantle systemic oppression.



Introduction

The Disability Inclusion Fund (DIF) is a \$10M, 5-year Fund that supports U.S. groups run by and for disabled people to lead transformational change. The fund is supported by the **Presidents' Council on Disability Inclusion in Philanthropy**, which is comprised of foundation presidents who are committed to disability inclusion as part of improving diversity, equity, and inclusion within philanthropy. The guiding values of this fund are aligned with several principles of disability justice including intersectionality, leadership of those most impacted, and cross-movement solidarity. The fund strives towards movement funding that is accountable to the disability rights movement. To this extent involvement of those most impacted by injustice and/or exclusion in strategies to advance justice and inclusion is a core practice for this fund.

Disability justice is a framework that was founded in 2005 by Patty Berne, Mia Mingus, Stacey Milbern, Leroy Moore, Eli Clare, and Sebastian Margaret; these originators are a collective of disabled activists of color, disabled queer women of color, and disabled people of color who are queer and/or gender non-conforming. This framework is composed of **10 principles** that were developed to address the ways that ableism contributes to systemic oppression that forms the root of disability oppression. In practice, this framework informs responses to the ways that traditional justice and rights-based movements, including the disability rights movement, has contributed to the oppression experienced by disabled people of color and disabled people of color who are queer, trans and/or gender non-conforming. By embedding several principles of disability justice within its guiding values, and in the fund's support of disability justice work in the field, the DIF should hold close the origins of the disability justice framework in its work. This includes centering and uplifting disabled people of color, and disabled people of color who are queer, trans, and/or gender non-conforming.

Disability inclusion is often misconstrued with disability justice work. Disability inclusion speaks to the ways that our society, culture, media representation, and leadership roles among other areas has a pattern of excluding the broader disability community from these spaces. Representation of people with disabilities and the efforts to leverage disability community voice, perspective, and knowledge forms the crux of disability inclusion efforts. Among the expanse of this work could involve disability advocacy efforts that translate issues of exclusion into policies, and ideally leads to more equality and civil rights for people with disabilities. Through



its commitment to elevate the voices of disabled people in public life, including disabled-led organizations in the field, the DIF has identified the ways disability inclusion adds to its funding and grantee practices.

Historically, disabled-led organizations, groups, and collectives have experienced outright exclusion, and/or perfunctory recognition at best from foundation support

despite the breadth of social, political, cultural, and movement legacies that have contributed to the knowledge of well-being and justice in our society. The potential of this DIF to play a role in reversing this historical trend - and in doing so lift up wisdom from the field - presents an opportunity for philanthropic foundations to heed purposeful guidance from disabled-led organizations and groups.

This landscape analysis does not claim or aim to be a comprehensive representation of disability justice and disability inclusion work. Rather, these powerful responses and learnings can closely guide funding criteria, types of funding, approaches to grantee supports, among other areas, and illuminates both the ingenuity and deeply held wisdom in the field. This report will give guidance to the DIF by illustrating the challenges in the field of disability justice and disability inclusion work to shape the fund's grant making. In doing so, the report is structured in a way that will also provide insight for potential grantees about the ways the DIF can elevate their work in the field.

Historically, disabled-led organizations, groups, and collectives have experienced outright exclusion from foundation support.

The DIF has a role in reversing this historical trend.

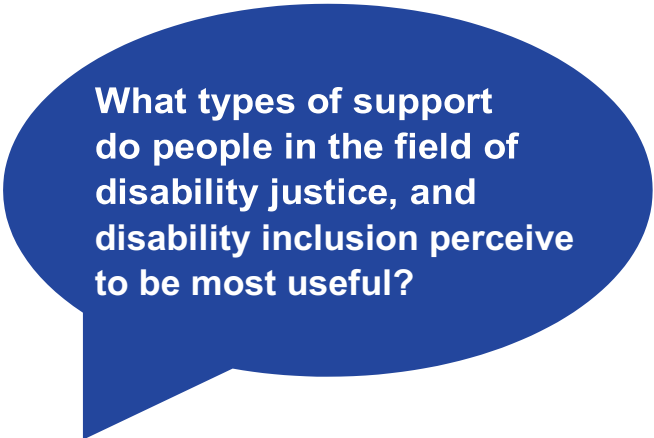
This is an opportunity for philanthropic foundations to heed purposeful guidance from disabled-led organizations and collectives.




Landscape Analysis: Approach and Questions

Adhering to foundational disability inclusion practices and the disability justice principle ‘leadership of those most impacted,’ requires that every point of funding operations, dissemination, learning, and development etc. must be informed by and in concert with people with disabilities, with intentional emphasis of involvement from disabled people of color who also hold intersecting marginalized identities. This understanding guided the approach of conducting this landscape analysis. These findings and recommendations stem from the shared insights, knowledge, aspirations, and challenges experienced from twelve key-informant interviews conducted over the period of March – May from across the U.S. including representation from California, Georgia, Illinois, Michigan, Nebraska, South Carolina, and Texas. All except one interview participant openly identified as a person with a disability, and eight out of the twelve are people of color. Interview participants were compensated for their time with a \$200.00 pre-paid Visa card, and understood that their anonymous contributions will help steer the direction of this fund. Participants had three options to be interviewed: over the phone, over video, or by responding to questions in writing. The Appendix of this report includes the interview questions.

Findings and recommendations compiled in this report were driven by two overarching questions:



What types of support do people in the field of disability justice, and disability inclusion perceive to be most useful?



How can the DIF most effectively support the field?

This landscape analysis was conducted in the midst of the global COVID-19 pandemic. While this pandemic upended the way of life for everyone, for disabled people it further magnified existing gaps in services and supports. Additionally, the

tenuous access to community living for disabled people became a matter of life and death as states began to report the high rates of death for elderly and people with disabilities living in nursing homes, and other institutional settings. The role of the DIF during this time of crisis was to adhere to its long-term goals of providing meaningful, sustained investment in disability inclusion and justice efforts. Over the course of this landscape analysis we added questions in our interview specifically related to community supports, needs, and experiences during the pandemic. These responses are included within this report.

**This strategy was guided by the disability justice principle
“leadership of those most impacted.”**

Participants could choose to respond by:



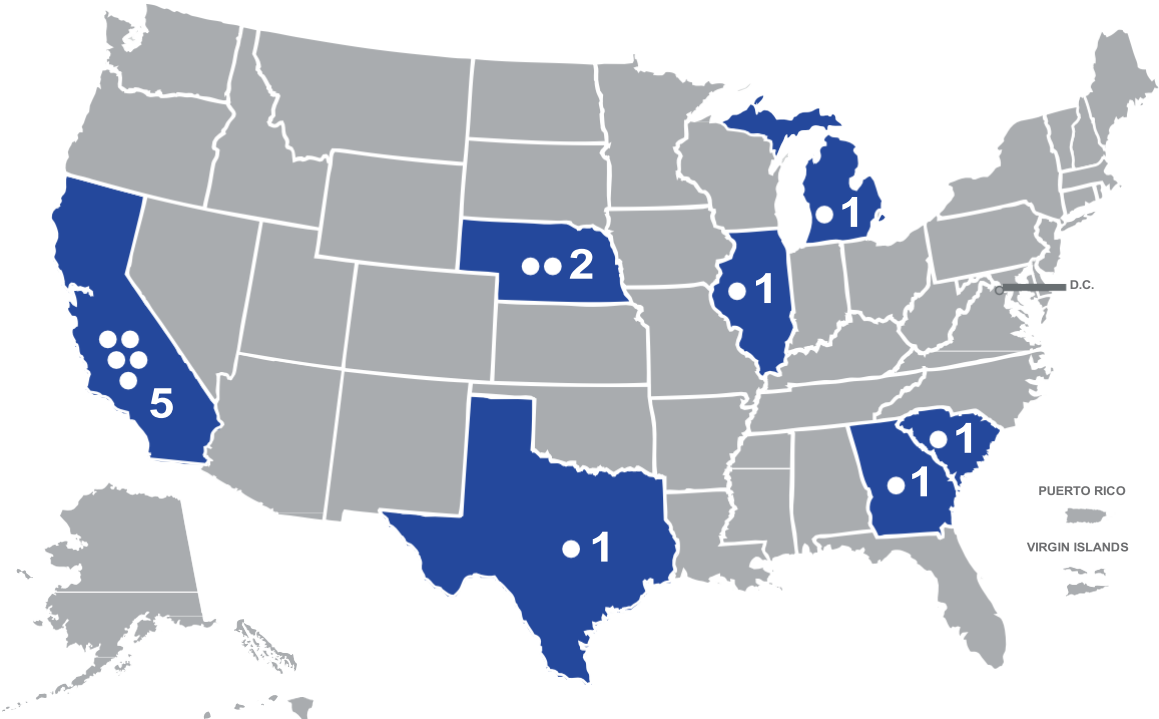
Submitting written response by email



Video conferencing



Over-the-phone



12
TOTAL PARTICIPANTS



8
PEOPLE OF COLOR



11
SELF-IDENTIFY AS PERSON WITH A DISABILITY



Findings

Movement work in the field faces challenges from inconsistent support, barriers to navigate the funding ecosphere, and missed learning opportunities among grantors.

Conversations with participants revealed the ways disability groups and organizations are frustrated by the inconsistent prioritizing of disability work from foundations, barriers to access grant application ‘know-how,’ and missed opportunities for change among grantor processes. In the context of COVID-19, several respondents noted that foundation support should be sustained whether during a pandemic or not. Others commented on the ways that for many disabled-led groups on the ground, the knowledge to navigate the funding landscape and grant applications is inequitable and often privileged to organizations with the capacity to hire grant writers. Many of the participants also noted that the beginning of the DIF presents an opportunity to shake-up routine grant applications, one person suggested that the fund can “center innovation and new ways of doing.” This also includes ways that funders can proactively reach out to resource the innovation and creativity of disability justice and disability inclusion work in the field. Several participants mentioned that disability justice work continues to grow, and develop. But funders who maintain ‘old ways of doing’ miss opportunities to elevate innovation from the field, and further adds to the imbalance of disability justice and disability inclusion work that receive foundation recognition. Frequently, participants in this project advocated for intentional expansion of the movement by equipping groups with the tools to lead, to build coalitions, to conduct research, and to further the capacity to carry out mission-driven work. This is in contrast to a more ‘typical’ grantor approach that may solicit proposals for project-based funding – several participants shared observations that project-based funding often contributes to competition among already under resourced groups.

Disability groups and organizations are frustrated by the inconsistent prioritizing of disability work from foundations, barriers to access grant application ‘know-how,’ and missed opportunities for change among grantor processes.



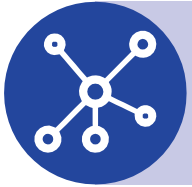
This report will structure the findings in five categories. These five categories were established based on the recurring themes from participant interviews. Each section will also provide concrete examples to illustrate the range of challenges the field experiences.



Amplify the power of disability justice and disability inclusion work by expanding organizational capacity.



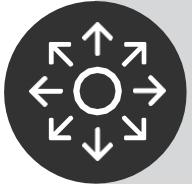
Build the funding and philanthropic knowledge base of potential grantees by proactively providing technical skills that will instill, guide, and further the impact of groups and organizations in the field.



Establish a culture of collaboration through peer-to-peer guidance, and lifting up collective knowledge to deepen both inter-movement and cross-movement practices in the field.



Cultivate processes, approaches, and knowledge to effectively support the sustainability of disability inclusion and disability justice work in the field.



Expand the field's capacity of holding space for powerful growth, wisdom, and healing that comes from disability justice and disability inclusion work.





Amplify the power of disability justice and disability inclusion work by expanding organizational capacity.

Many of the interview participants noted that while the disability justice framework was developed in 2005, intentional collectives, groups, and initiatives that have sought to embody the framework are relatively new – and still in the process of forming. To meaningfully support groups and burgeoning

organizations in this evolving field, the DIF can expand the capacity of grantees undergoing these

“We need knowledge around equalizing power and ways to implement that into practice.”

necessary periods of organizational growth, and the development of pathways for internal organizational shifts that unfold. This would require intentionally and thoughtfully meeting potential grantees where they are in this development, self-reflection, and evolution.

One example of this comes from a leader of a disability justice aligned grassroots initiative that provides frontline responses to environmental consequences such as wildfires, and toxic smoke. They noted that their organizing structure began as a reactionary, and rapid response group. Despite delivering immediate and impactful change, the organization lacks the capacity to do the analysis, self-reflections, and gather learnings in the aftermath of responding to a crisis. Resources to fully process, evaluate, and measure efforts and/or impact on the ground, can reveal robust strategies that improve responses to future environmental crises, and capture these learnings for both their own work and allies in the field. Currently, many disabled-led grassroots groups experience “activist burn-out.” Several participants shared the constant need to respond/react without pause to capture learnings from immediate actions.

This detracts from the sustainability of the movement and adds to the ways that marginalized disabled people are constantly expected to “show-up.”

“Labor on the ground isn’t equitable and neither is accountability.”

Participants also shared thoughts around other areas to expand organizational capacity including coaching on social media skills, facilitation skills, consensus decision-making skills, and mediating conflict among others. Another person added that funding basic utilities also facilitates movement

“There is no shame in offering resources in basic needs for an organization such as a place to host a website.”

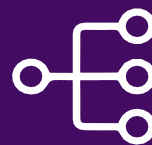
work, By resourcing translational skills and applicable knowledge to support lasting impact, and document learnings and evidence — the field of disability justice and disability inclusion can continue to advance effective work to sustain the movement.

Areas to Expand Organizational Capacity



BRICK AND MORTAR BASICS

- Domain to host accessible website.
- Staff salary that is equitable, just, and gives meaningful value to the work.
- Membership fees including grant directories.



ORGANIZING SKILLS

- Communicate a vision, mission, goals.
- Build bridges with peers, other movements, and movement-leaders.
- Legislative process and leverpulling.
- Knowledge of movement history.



ORGANIZATIONAL PROCESS

- Retreats for internal reflection and vision-making.
- Measuring effectiveness, progress, and impact.
- Developing a mission and goals.
- Evaluating progress and celebrating achievements.



ACTIVISTS IN THE MOVEMENT

- Peer-to-peer intentional support and relationship building.
- Increase awareness of Restorative Justice practices.
- Elevate activist contributions, and celebrate activist progress.





Build the funding and philanthropic knowledge base of potential grantees by proactively providing technical skills that will instill, guide, and further the impact of groups and organizations in the field.

People with disabilities routinely experience high rates of poverty due to inequitable and aged public policies that restricts wealth-building and limits assets.

In this way, disabled people have limited access to social capital, employment opportunities, socio-economic mobility, and are constantly treading a fine line between vital supports and wealth-building. This context is important for grant makers and the philanthropic landscape to understand because many of the participants in this project view the funding world as an exclusive place. Several noted that knowledge acquisition of grant funding is a privilege for those who have previously held professional roles as a grant writer, worked in a non-profit setting, or in university research settings. When the philanthropic landscape continues to be gatekeepers around concepts such as: narratives for grant applications, fiscal sponsorships, and the process to become a non-profit or an LLC, among others - perpetuates the barriers marginalized BIPOC disabled people experience when trying to elevate their own work. Moreover, this pattern of gatekeeping funding knowledge becomes accessible to the same groups and organizations who already have the organizational capacity to navigate the funding landscape furthering the gaps between the Haves and the Have Nots in the disability justice and disability inclusion field.

By recognizing and centering those most impacted by injustices, the DIF can be a resource broker for potential grantees. For instance a respondent shared the unique position that trans people are placed in when trying to get established, “legal entity paperwork gives us two options.

We are either forced to be dead named or we need to hand over control of our organizations to a cis-person.” Resources such as pro-bono fiscal sponsors, or funding attorney fees to become a non-profit are examples of ways that the DIF can build the knowledge base for marginalized disabled people in the field. Another perspective that was shared in this study is appealing to new groups and movement leaders: “Consider that you will be the first grant application for some groups.” Other participants

“There needs to be more support and resources around non-profit status, LLC, and that process.”

“Provide support to fully explore grant writing, networking with partners, and training to navigate the funding landscape.”

commented on the challenges they experienced in past grant applications such as “there is a need for proof or evidence that your project is going to be successful, this tends to limit creativity and doesn’t allow people to take risks.” As disabled-led groups continue to emerge from the field, it is necessary for grant makers to meet the field where it is. By making the tools and knowledge to navigate or pursue grant support, the DIF could meaningfully elevate new movement leaders and deepen the impact of their vision, day-to-day operations, and growth.

Questions to Answer to Navigate Funding Landscape

Establishing a ‘Business’ Structure

- What are the differences between 501c3? LLC?
- Which options will most effectively facilitate mission-driven work, and impact?
- How can groups access a network to establish an Advisory Board? Or a non-profit Board?
- What are the fiscal responsibilities of the entity?

Navigating ‘Know How’ of Grant Applications

- How do you write a grant? What are the components that you need for a successful grant application?
- How can groups identify which grant applications will boost their work, rather than working towards a grant?
- Who are the peers in the field that can provide mentorship or advice?

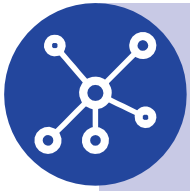
Grantee Informational Resources

- Where do people go to look for relevant grant opportunities?
- What grant portals, libraries, and/or directories can potential grantees access?
- How can grantees learn from unsuccessful applications?
- What trainings or webinars exist to deepen grantee knowledge of the grant process?

Pre-Grant Application

- What technical assistance do grantees need to be well-positioned to complete this grant application?
- Is the priority audience for this grant transparent?
- Are there any examples of previously funded groups?
- Is there information about who will be evaluating the grants?





Establish a culture of collaboration through peer-to-peer guidance, and lifting up collective knowledge to deepen both inter-movement and cross-movement practices in the field.

To support the field, grant makers should cultivate relationships and provide intentional support to foster and fund bridge-builders. Several respondents in this project noted that the disability community struggles to develop cross-movement relationships, and the few that exist have limited capacity to further the impact of relationship and coalition building across the field. To emphasize this point, one comment from a participant in this project said “There is not enough support to help our own people get into other movement spaces. We need support around how to allyship more effectively.” An example of this work was shared by a participant who talked about ways to provide political education, “political education within leftist communities can bring people together through book clubs, and studygroups to explore questions such as ‘What is home?’” Another way to craft and support a culture of collaboration in the field is to intentionally support and celebrate work uses intersectional frameworks. A participant mentioned cross-movement areas such as fat liberation, body politics, and uglification as a few examples of potential areas to further elevate in the field. The DIF can support facilitating lateral and vertical networking among potential grantees, current grantees, and past grantees to build a meaningful social ecosystem. This ecosystem would provide a hub for collaborative learning, activist networking, or mentorship among groups.

“There is a need for mentorship, relationships that are deep and high level: the DIF can be the convener that brings together groups that seem to have similar values.”

Another participant shared a strategy that is used within their organization: “We have Government Affairs meetings and this brings everyone in our office, regardless of job title, if their work has anything to do with the government. This brings people around the table in a way that is work driven rather than project-based or title driven.”

This example provides insight into the ways that grant makers can encourage internal grantee cross-issue and cross-community work. A culture of collaboration also requires an awareness of harm reduction strategies. Disabled people in particular experience harm and violence in overt and subtle ways that can make engaging a violent experience, and/

“There is not enough support for bridge makers, the disability community has a lot of taking over and not enough supporting.”

or add to existing trauma. Support around ways to reduce harm and violence would include, as one participant offers, “knowledge and skills to recognize toxic behavior..” In doing so, the field can support intentional and meaningful relationships that can both add to the individual work as well as contributing to the field.

Building a Culture of Collaboration

There is not enough support to help our own people get into other movement spaces. We need support around how to allyship more effectively.

Disabled-led groups are not mentored, I would love to have peer groups to look up to.

Support movement building areas like political power and leadership development.

Fund more intersectional work.

We need support to attend conferences, and network.

We need support around knowledge infusion in the field.

We need support around cross-issue and crossmovement work.

Fund people to just talk to each other. I haven't talked to enough people in the actual movement.

There is not enough support for bridge makers, the disability community has a lot of taking over and not enough supporting.





Cultivate processes, approaches, and knowledge to effectively support the sustainability of disability inclusion and disability justice work in the field.

Overwhelmingly participants in this project shared views that indicate the need for grant makers to change the dynamic that currently exists between foundations and disability inclusion and justice groups on the ground. This dynamic is shaped by a range of challenges including non-transparent grant application processes, inaccessible grant applications, and misaligned grant objectives. Several comments pointed out that past grant application experiences have left them wary about seeking foundation support. “Foundations have a history of taking over the work’s identity as a “grantee.” So people can’t work on intentional work because they are too busy matching their needs to grants.” These typical grant approaches create a sense of distrust among groups in the field who already have limited capacity and resources to build long-term sustainability of their work, while also responding to the current environment and/or the community they work with. To emphasize this observation, one person shared “There is a fear in the community that if you play nice then you might be playing into [foundation or philanthropy’s] hands.” The disability justice and inclusion field has recently experience greater attention as our broader society calls for increased diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives among general social justice spheres. Despite these increased calls to support and laud disability justice and

disability inclusion work, several people who were interviewed noted that the recent ‘popularity’ calling for disability justice and inclusion work is likely ephemeral.

“Weave the movement more into the grant itself. Incentivize strategies that bring people together to have conversations.”

To further elaborate on this observation, a person responded that to sustain the movement and the field, “Groups can’t just run on grant money, but this support can help people get off the ground. We need support around how to be sustainable.” Another person shared this view with this statement, “Support grantees and groups to exist

outside of funding cycles.” The DIF can leverage being a new source of funding by cultivating strategies and relationships in a way that reimagines expectations. One participant pushed this point further,

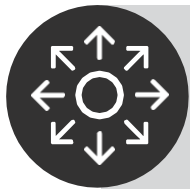
“Uplift the voices that are doing it right; uplift them and bring attention to them. Set that as the expectation and invite people to do the work.”

Although disabled people and disability communities have existed throughout history, there is an understanding among disability justice and inclusion groups that funding sources are niche, limited, and often consolidated to achieve specific aims. Rather, participants in this project urged for greater diversity in funding sources and grant makers should “maintain on-the-ground connections and have lived experiences in their backgrounds.” In doing so, this continues to deepen a trusting working relationship between foundations and the groups and organizations on-the-ground, and will ensure that grant objectives remain aligned with actual mission driven work happening in the field.

Example of Potential DIF Grantee Journey

This chart illustrates one pathway of intentional transparency, and meaningful support throughout the grant application process:





Expand the field's capacity of holding space for powerful growth, wisdom, and healing that comes from disability justice and disability inclusion work.

Throughout conversations about ways the DIF can best support the field, respondents shared thoughts that point to the existence of the ongoing work in the field but the need for grant makers to direct support to leverage impact. Participants described the need to broaden the ecosystem of disability justice and inclusion work; promote, elevate, and provide equitable access to disabled-led movement building strategies among marginalized disabled groups; and the need to facilitate intentional spaces, opportunities, and innovative strategies to address gaps in the movement. While there are some pockets in the field where this work occurs, the continuity and amplification of the impact often experiences routine challenges. One of the participants said of this, “Cross-movement work, for example, is often delayed and slowed down by the need to first get everyone on the same page.” Supporting the field also requires adding and building to the infrastructure, as one interviewee pointed out:

“The funding needs to support the ecosystem and infrastructure that supports many disability orgs to work in coalition.”

The DIF can intentionally prioritize collaboration, inter-movement work, and coalition building by explicitly expecting collaborations. As an example, a participant posed this thought: “Reimagine what life could be like if different grassroots groups and traditional education came together.” This person elaborated by using surveillance as an example issue that could potentially benefit from bringing Black Lives Matter together with Disability Justice activists and science activists.

Typically, grants and other sources of funding have fueled competition and scarcity in the field. The DIF can meaningfully shift this by using grant opportunities to convene groups, and build infrastructures that support sustainable partnered work. That being said, another participant shared their views that “It is very unclear how to join the DJ movement. For example, I just happened to be creating a DJ organization because I’m a DJ aligned activist.” In agreement with this point, a

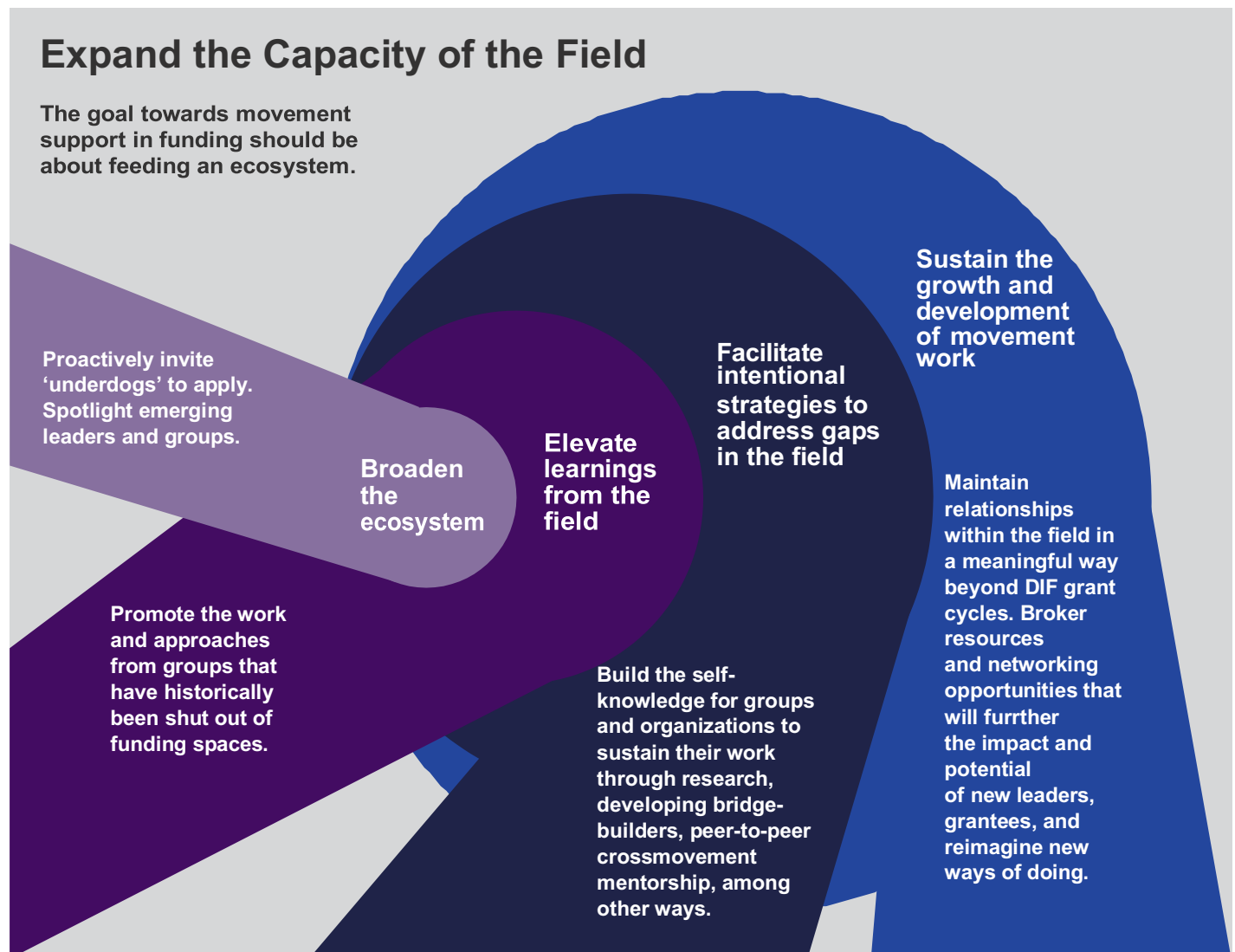
“Strong movements have the wisdom of lived-experiences and good analysis.”



participant added “Support knowledge infusion in the field such as facilitating discourses around power and privilege...” Another area of knowledge infusion that was raised by several participants is the need for disabled-led research. While partnerships with research centers such as academic institutions and/or think tanks is an option, many advocated for disabled-led data collection among groups and organizations.

For another participant, disabled-led research is a means to sustain the work, impact, and understanding of where gaps still exist in the work: “We need support in capacity building skills including research that needs to be done.” This same participant went on to describe the need for data to advocate for priorities among BIPOC disabled communities when attending conferences.

Ultimately, it is important that the DIF is guided by understanding that expanding the capacity of the field requires expanding the capacity of organizations, groups, and collectives on the ground.



Recommendations

This landscape analysis was launched to provide informed input from the disability justice and inclusion field to the DIF grant makers.

Over the course of this exploration, participants in this project made suggestions that reimagined relationships and processes between the field and grantors. Among other areas, participants offered insight into the ways typical grants are misaligned in the actual ways that this field has been leading the movement. As next steps are taken, these recommendations serve to bring concrete, practical, and applicable examples of the ways the DIF can embed shared wisdom from the field. Community-led input, while not a new revelation, is still infrequently used in funding spaces. This was pointed out by a few participants in this project, including one who noted:

“Even [this interview] right now, that is a step and an effort being made by a grant that I have never been asked to be a part of.”

But it should need no reminder that a step is not enough for funders to expand capacities, sustain support, and deepen impact to the field. This observation that was shared by other participants in this project should be a core practice for the DIF in order to begin to meet the sustained support that the field calls for.

Community-led input should not be viewed by groups on the ground as an exemplary practice, but rather an expectation and considered a standard by which grantmaking, reviewing, and grant processes are conducted.

The intent of this landscape analysis is two-fold: first, to provide community-based guidance to DIF grant making and processes; and in doing so, the second purpose is to give transparency to the disability justice and disability inclusion field about ways that the DIF could play a role in amplifying the work of future grantees in the field. In response, participants for this project gave a wide range of recommendations from “Provide cross-regional -- cross organizing disaster relief initiative support,” as one participant suggested to learn from strategists, and survivors of Hurricane Harvey, and Katrina. Others suggested support that would build upon the skills of organizers and activists in the field such as assistance in



drawing connections between “the activities that are being done and the outcomes, or impact groups are having.” Still, others gave recommendations around new ways of doing for the DIF. For instance, one interviewee remarked “[Grant] applications are often a lonely experience, let’s talk with someone else in that position. Stories from previous grantees would help. Let’s support grantee storytelling.” These and other recommendations reflect wisdom from the field that the DIF should implement as the grant moves forward. It is clear from the comments shared throughout this report that the disability justice and disability inclusion field is committed to expanding movement work. This report hopes to be an initial launching place that carries wisdom from the disability justice and disability inclusion field for the DIF, and other funding practices. In the sections that follow, each recommendation is supplemented by examples offered by participants from this project.



Support initiatives that strengthen peer-to-peer collaboration and/or intersects with cross-movement and cross-issue work.



Reverse the practice of historically under resourced movement-builders in the field including disabled BIPOC artists, educators, youth leaders, storytellers, and other cultural workers.



Equip organizations and groups with the tools to deepen their understanding, identify gaps, and pursue opportunities for growth through empirical research.



Infuse both disability justice and disability inclusion practices at every point of the grant process.



Broaden the representation, access, and leadership within traditional ways of movement-building, and across areas of disability advocacy work.





Support initiatives that strengthen peer-to-peer collaboration and/or intersects with cross-movement and cross-issue work.

Participants in this project talked about challenges in the field around building bridges with other movements, the need for knowledge sharing in how to show-up as allies, and the need for peer-to-peer mentorship. This led to many recommending that the DIF grant encourage grants that call for the field to engage in partnered work, coalition-building strategies, and other types of collaboration that center relationship and/or community-building efforts. One example of cross-issue work that a participant suggested is around knowledge infusion in the field of movement history, “We need support and funding around story-telling and movement histories.” In conjunction with supporting relationship-building efforts, several interviewees talked about elevating work that is healing as an area of urgent funding need. While it is important to foster partnerships, doing so in a way that is healing, non-violent, and minimizes trauma is necessary for both inter — and cross — movement building to happen. “Fund creative models. For instance participatory action research that combines the arts, and meditation. Work that is trans-disciplinary, and work that is moving towards mending,” emphasized one interviewee. Other areas of cross-movement work that participants mentioned included disability justice informed responses to climate change, more BIPOC disability representation in media, infusing disability studies in activist work, and supporting disabled artists.

As one participant said, “Artists don’t get enough credit or support in the movement but they are great at simplifying complex ideas.” This example in particular would also expand movement work to onboard new disabled leaders into disability justice and disability inclusion efforts. Disabled people are present in every sector of our society, and every issue impacts disability communities. The DIF can actualize this reality in their grant making by recognizing the ways disability shows up and is present in other social justice movements.

Grant makers can also elevate collaborative work throughout the grant process. For instance, those in the field that were interviewed talked about using grant funds to convene inter-movement work rather than to drive competition among groups and organizations. Inevitably, organizations who already have the capacity to complete grant applications, or have existing relationships within the funding ecosystem



consistently crowd out groups who are doing frontline disabled-led community work. Another approach that contributes to peer-to-peer support is through a shift in mindset “People need to be sustained just as much as organizations do.” By developing on-the-ground relationships whether through peer mentorships, networking opportunities, and other gatherings for movement leaders - the DIF can boost the field’s capacity to share knowledge, strategies, and identify common challenges or goals.

Example Grant Questions to Foster Cross-Movement/ Cross-Issue Work:





Reverse the practice of historically under resourced movement-builders in the field including disabled BIPOC artists, educators, youth leaders, storytellers, and other cultural workers.

During conversations with participants in this project, many shared their observation that grant recipients in the field are frequently white-led disability organizations, and/or non-disabled led organizations. For instance, one participant in this project stated:

“What already gets funded is typically people with disabilities who already are ‘what disability looks like.’”

This participant went onto explain that among those who frequently receive funding in the field, those with visible and/or physical disabilities, are often prioritized. Another interviewee reaffirmed this point with this statement: “Don’t fund a day in my shoes type of work.” Since disability justice principles, including “leadership of those most impacted” is an explicit guiding value of the fund, the DIF has an opportunity to address these perceived observations. Media representation was an area that several interviewees brought up in conversation as an area that could expand the field’s influence, and reaffirm the connection that cultural work is critical to movement work.

Specific to media representation, one person talked about the stereotypes that are perpetuated when cultural embodiments of disability remains white. Another participant added “We need access and support, and more capacity for strong media networks, especially Black media.” Media not only adds visibility to disabled communities in our broader society, but in doing so promotes cultural work in the field that can have a ripple effect in the ways the field is perceived by other movements, society, and other funding opportunities.

Supporting cultural work in the field is one approach to supporting youth in the movement. **A report from the National Guild for Community Arts Education draws connections between building a movement with youth-centered cultural programs.** Some in the field shared a perception that disability identity narrative among youth is centered around “overcoming disability.” A participant who noted this suggested prioritizing “Work that changes the identity narrative among disabled youth.”

The DIF can leverage grant funding resources to support cultural workers who shift narratives around disability, and in doing so radically shift relationships between disability justice and disability inclusion groups in the field, and foundations.



Equip organizations and groups with the tools to deepen their understanding, identify gaps, and pursue opportunities for growth through empirical research.

During conversations with all of the participants in this project, a common theme that came about is the motivator behind their involvement in the field and their work. Among interviewees for this project, participants pointed out the various systemic gaps, oppressions, violence, and injustice that is experienced by disabled people which compels the disability justice and disability inclusion field. One participant framed this as a politicized connection,

“There needs to be greater political education – our experiences are valuable knowledge but it is connected to a system and this needs to be understood.”

But as other groups in our society have experienced, marginalized communities are rarely in positions of power within systems. Moreover, information about marginalized communities is often gathered by being studied upon, tested on, and recounting experiences for research that is rarely led by and/or conducted in partnership with the community itself. As this participant pointed out, this connection ‘needs to be understood,’ and several interviewees gave examples of instances where access to community-based data would amplify the power and impact of their work.

One participant described the need for more BIPOC disabled-led research about marginalized disabled communities, including LGBTQIA+ members of BIPOC disability communities. This person talked about attending conference and/or networking events where data about marginalized BIPOC disabled communities would have helped to provide a more full picture of the community’s needs. “We need to make sure that the research is accessible. There is a critical need for the data at conferences and to talk with leadership in cross-movement work.” Despite the wide-consensus that data about marginalized populations within disability



communities are lacking, the opportunities to conduct research continues to privilege traditional academic institutions, and/or those with the privilege of professional degrees. But disability justice and disability inclusion work in the field should have ‘evidence’ from the impact of their work, areas of growth, and identify trends that could inform future strategies in the field. For instance one participant pointed out data could “Emphasize the relationship between the activities that are being done and the outcomes in grant reporting. For example the number of meetings, the number of people attending and/or showing up etc.” Another participant added that data collection would expand the capacity among frontline and rapid response groups. Specifically data about volunteers who attend a training workshop on disability justice could inform strategies for the group in the future. Research data would enable groups to think critically and deeply about their impact in the field, and more broadly their place in the movement.



Infuse both disability justice and disability inclusion practices at every point of the grant process.

Based on comments shared in this report, the field perceives grant applications and the funding landscape as an exclusive opportunity available to organizations in the movement who are privileged with established social networks, organizational capacity, and/or previous professional grant-writing experience. Interviews for this project point out that the reality is “Many organizations are already stretched thin, and the organizational structure itself is stretched thin.” This, among other barriers shared earlier in the report, have limited the efficacy of foundation dollars to uplift marginalized disabled BIPOC led work from the field. Across the board, all of the participants for this project raised various ways grant applications are frustrating. One person said “Be explicit about what funds this is for because people don’t want to waste time.” Another added “Help people understand which grants are good and/or appropriate for which projects?” The limited capacity that already exists among groups on the ground restricts the time, labor, and capacity to devote to arduous grant application processes. One person went on to emphasize,

“We need grants to be more accessible and have other ways to submit grants, for instance have plain language available.”

Another example of practicing cross-disability solidarity was raised during another discussion. This person thought about ways the DIF can proactively guide potential

grantees to think deeply about the ways cross-disability solidarity shows up in their work. For instance, if a grantee is proposing funding for the redesign of a website, it may be helpful to inquire about the ways the disability justice principle ‘collective access’ will be embodied in the website’s lay-out and navigation tools.

An example of this in practice can be demonstrated through the use of language that is concise and easy-to-understand throughout the grant application itself, and its process. Several commented that typical grant applications are convoluted, tend to be overly lengthy, and seem to ask questions for the sake of asking questions. Put more precisely a participant said,

“Make it so that we are spending less time doing the application.”

A participant added “Too many grants require proof that groups are worthy of this money.” This perception contributes to the ways foundations drive a wedge in the field rather than fostering core values such as cross-disability solidarity, and radical inclusion. Rather, one participant recommended that applications “Be intentional about what the information will be used for during a review, and for the foundation.” To support disability inclusion and radical participation, a participant suggested “Applications should be very straightforward, and reviewed by community members.” The DIF has an opportunity to set the tone for funding operations that embodies in practice the same principles it seeks to support in the field. Among other ways, this would include proactively implementing accessibility, flexibility, intentionality, and multiple ways of doing as a core practice and expectation for the field. By doing so the DIF grant makers will begin to meaningfully amplify and sustain the disability justice, and disability inclusion movement.



Broaden the representation, access, and leadership within traditional ways of movement-building, and across areas of disability advocacy work.

To support the field, the DIF should endeavor to discover and lift up new ways of doing. Among the complex truths held in the field is the reality that many who are ‘doing’ disability inclusion and/or disability justice work are not viewed as “real community workers” or movement-builders in mainstream social justice circles. To further elaborate on this point a participant explained, “Too much of the traditional ways of doing is predicated on “real community work” that requires writing well, and other traditional ways of doing things. But we need grants to be



more accessible and have other ways to submit grants, for instance having plain language available.” Further, many in the field are not employed in the traditional sense by the disability inclusion/justice field. For instance many serve on voluntary Advisory Boards, as presenters on panels, or experience short-term employment for a specific project, or campaign. As one person in this project suggested, “Be creative in how leaders are found -- not necessarily the people who are doing [this work] for their jobs.” An example of expanding the ecosystem of the disability justice/inclusion field is to be creative in identifying leaders, this may include forming a task force that scouts for radical cross-movement work, or is generating new strategies to penetrate systemic oppression. Another participant suggested that the DIF could reverse the standard practice of groups from the field reaching out to the fund, and instead the DIF should shift the practice and “Pick five groups and leaders, find out what they do.” As a way to set the expectation for disability inclusion and disability justice work, as well as celebrate moments of victory, one participant offered these thoughts: “Provide bonuses. The DIF could reward people who are doing something extraordinary. It could be no strings attached, spontaneous gifts. Or the fund could spotlight a list of “Top 10 People” they love.”

By proactively bringing attention to the field, the DIF can amplify grantee work within the funding ecosphere. This might include celebrating the joy around emergent leaders, and groups. Celebrating joy could involve connecting groups to the foundation’s Communications team, or elevating emergent groups by brokering relationships with media outlets and journalists. By proactively contacting groups on the ground, this would address a perception in the field that foundations are gated and exclusive. A participant further explained, “Grassroots groups have a ‘learned mentality’ and believe they can’t call up the organization itself.” To chip away at this perception, this participant went on to suggest, “Call-up interesting people, and call people who don’t apply and ask them why.” Meaningful and intentional grant making should be aligned with the communities, and the field in which the fund supports. More pointedly, a participant added:

“Bridge the gap; come to us and don’t assume that people who know how to navigate an LOI are doing the best work.”

Based on comments collected for this project, recommendations from the field call for the DIF to be intentional about inviting groups and organizations that have been historically excluded from funding spaces, have never sought support from foundations, and/or are new to the disability field to be considered as potential DIF grantees.



Conclusion

This landscape analysis captures a microcosm of the creativity, innovation, and ingenuity across the field. The comments and recommendations shared throughout this report is informed by lived experiences of disabled people, the majority of whom are disabled BIPOC, and/or identify as disabled LGBTQIA+. Among the DIF's guiding core values, leadership of those most impacted, and radical inclusion, are both principles and practices that have helped to support this movement throughout its decades-long history. Still, as seen from the interviews with participants in this project, the field has yet to actualize these principles in a meaningful and sustained way within funding ecosystems. The DIF has the potential to change this in a significant way for the disabled-led groups and organizations in the field itself, and among standard practices for funders. The work of this report is to illustrate how the DIF can shift practices through intentional support of the field, and what areas of the field have continuously been overlooked and/or overshadowed.

The findings and recommendations can be used to encourage the DIF grant makers to push against expectations and standards in funding practices. These recommendations are a place to start, and should serve to guide grant makers to create practices that honors the wisdom from the field. The findings from this report indicate the ways that grant making should support the field's progress through cross-movement and cross-issue work, relationship building, capacity building, and intentionality. These findings demonstrate that grant making should support the work and its moments of victory rather than being used to dictate the direction, or the 'finish line' of the movement itself.

As more disability justice work emerges from the field, so will new areas of support, capacity, and ways of thinking. Our society is also at a place where inclusion has become prioritized, re-prioritized, held accountable, and begun to have systemic impact. The DIF should navigate the current and future social and/or environmental contexts that will surely shift the direction of the movement by first turning to disabled BIPOC, and disabled-led groups who are among the many movement and cultural leaders on the ground for guidance. Collectively, the perspectives and thoughts shared in this report emphasize that funding cycles are not the drivers of innovation in the field. Rather, it is the activists on the front line, the disabled-led organizations advocating for policy change, the young leader who questions their mentor, the coalitions that share knowledge, the emerging collective that reaches



out to a community elder, the story teller of the movement's history, the community center that becomes an accessible place for refuge and healing, among so many.

The limitations of this landscape analysis prevent a full and complete depiction of the disability justice and disability inclusion field. While the report made an intentional effort to collect responses from across the country, and prioritized disabled BIPOC and LGBTQIA+ disabled people, the representation is limited because interview questions and conversations were only conducted in English. Although this report recognizes that disabled people are present across all demographics, grant makers should consider a future endeavor that considers disability justice and disability inclusion work across cultural and language diversity.

Collectively, this report is evidence that there is unwavering commitment from the field for transformational change. As the DIF proceeds with next steps, this commitment should remain at the forefront across all funding activities.





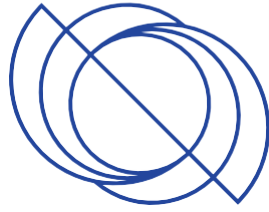
Appendix A Interview Questions

1. How do you (or your work/group/org) conceptualize disability justice? And how do you embed disability justice principles in practice?
2. What kinds of supports would be helpful in the on-the-ground work that you do, and outreach?
3. What kinds of supports, resources, networks, or tools would be helpful in navigating cross-movement collaboration in your work? Can you give an example of a time when your work has benefitted and/or been challenged by cross movement collaboration?
4. Are there other movements or sectors of our society that you (or your work) continuously experience barriers to become involved in? From your perspective why do you think those barriers exist? How have you tried to address those barriers, and what do you perceive to be solutions that might help to dismantle those barriers?
5. In what ways do you celebrate the victories, or moments of progress?
6. Please share a time when you have talked about your work with other leaders in this movement/community and experienced isolation or other challenges? What would have helped to advance the outcome of those situations further in the field of disability inclusion?
7. What do you consider to be the most foundational and urgent challenges facing disability rights/justice/inclusion work in the field?



8. Please share what disability justice/rights/inclusion progress would look like to you. How would you know progress has occurred? In what ways do you recognize progress in our community and/or in the broader movement? How is progress embodied in the work that you do?
9. What recommendations do you have for Borealis as the foundation carries this work of disability justice forward? What kinds of strategies or questions would you want to see reflected in future call for proposals / funding priorities / grantee applications? What challenges do you foresee as the foundation takes steps to develop its grantmaking, what would you suggest in order to mitigate some of those challenges?
10. How do you believe the broader social justice / disability community perceives your work?
11. What areas of growth do you think this movement should focus on? What areas do you believe to be overrepresented in the movement's work? Are there issues or priorities that you perceive to be routinely marginalized, and/or should be elevated more in disability justice/ inclusion work?
12. How would you characterize your relationships with foundations and movement-building work?





**Disability
Inclusion
Fund**



BOREALISPHILANTHROPY.ORG

f /BOREALISPHIL

🐦 @BOREALISPHIL