

## A Foundation Looks in the Mirror on Diversity and Inclusion

In 2008, the Rockefeller Brothers Fund began a foundation-wide process to assess diversity within its operations and grantmaking. The endeavor, called the Diversity Working Group (DWG), ultimately spurred an organizational culture change and transformation.

“The decision to take on this work came from the top,” says Andrea Gray, the Fund’s Co-Director of Finance and Chair of the Diversity Policy Steering Committee. “Our board and senior management made the decision that we should look at our diversity policies and practices.”

The group settled on four goals for the initial exploration: (1) become familiar with contemporary concepts, frameworks, and programs for diversity; (2) assess the current status of the Rockefeller Brothers Fund’s (RBF) diversity relative to staff, board, and grants; (3) identify strengths and weaknesses in the RBF’s institutional culture relative to diversity and inclusiveness; (4) form recommendations on the design and implementation of strategies to improve diversity and inclusion in RBF’s work.

The DWG first conducted an internal audit of diversity and inclusion policies and practices related to all aspects of the Fund’s work—staffing, management, operations, grantmaking. It convened workshops for staff. It developed a diversity definition. And ultimately it created the RBF Diversity Statement, approved in November 2010.

Two key conclusions emerged from the process.

First, diversity is a mandate of Rockefeller Brothers Fund’s mission, not just “the right thing to do.” “Diversity must be rooted in our social justice values,” says Gray.

Second, embracing diversity in practice requires an everyday commitment to promoting an inclusive environment. “Diversity is not the same as inclusiveness,” says Gray. “We concluded that in order to achieve our mission, we had to be more intentional about inclusiveness.”

In just over two years, the group’s efforts have produced tangible results. Action plans have been developed across several areas of the Fund’s work, and staff regularly measure progress according to the metrics outlined in these plans. The assessment of its diversity policies and practices is widely available. The board is more diverse. And staff who previously felt isolated from the grantmaking process are now included.