



*Increasing the racial and ethnic diversity of leadership of the  
community development field by confronting racism*

# **Evaluation Report**

*By Diane Gordon*

**September 2010**

## **INTRODUCTION**

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The Alliance – Advancing Community Development by Confronting Racism – is a coalition of community development organizations and practitioners dedicated to increasing the racial and ethnic diversity of leadership of the community development field by addressing racism. Launched in 2003, the Alliance intends to be a sector-wide response to the limited racial and ethnic diversity of leadership within the community development field. The goals of the Alliance are to:

- Increase the racial and ethnic diversity of the leadership of the community development field,
- Create and foster an environment which values and represents, particularly within its leadership, the racial and cultural diversity of the communities in which it works,
- Build and sustain a broad-based, representative collaboration of community development organizations and supporters, who are committed to increasing the racial and ethnic diversity of the leadership within the field, and
- Build the individual and collective capacity of the Alliance to confront and address racism as well as other barriers to ensuring the racial and ethnic diversity of the leadership within the community development field.

The Alliance is led by a Steering Committee comprised of nine individuals and is housed, and receives part time staffing support from Shirronda Almeida, the Director of Membership Initiatives at the Massachusetts Association of Community Development Corporations (MACDC).

The Alliance is committed to continual learning and evaluation. To that end, early in 2010, the Steering Committee invested in the development of an evaluation process that could provide it with feedback from participants and organizational leaders about the Alliance's impact. Diane Gordon was hired as the evaluator.

## **METHODOLOGY**

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The Steering Committee organized a series of meetings to identify the goals of the evaluation, develop interview and survey protocols, and to determine a list of stakeholders to be interviewed as part of the process. In addition to Diane Gordon conducting interviews, Steering Committee members agreed to conduct at least one interview themselves. (The interview protocol and list of respondents is attached.) Two focus groups – one for mentees and one for mentors who had participated in the Mentoring Program – were organized but because of a very low response rate, these were cancelled and participants were invited to participate in an interview instead. Finally, an electronic survey was developed and distributed to a broad list of stakeholders.

This report summarizes the results from the interviews and surveys. A total of 56 people were contacted for either interviews or to attend a focus group. Of these, 31 individuals participated in the interview process (55% return rate.) The survey was distributed to 50 people, and 20 responded (40% return rate.) In total, 39 individuals provided feedback through this evaluation. (12 of the 20 survey respondents were also interviewed. Data from the survey was used in the analysis, but the individuals were only counted once in calculating the overall evaluation participation rate.) An important note about use of percentages in this report – because there is an

overlap of interviewees and survey respondents, it is not feasible to provide a single counted percentage of responses. Furthermore, the interviews were not conducted with the same focus on data collection as the survey, gathering more qualitative responses than quantitative.

All interview and survey responses are confidential. The findings reported here are an aggregate of all responses. Quotes are used as illustrations of a particular point and not attributed to any one individual.

## **FINDINGS: OUTCOMES AND CHALLENGES IN REACHING IMPACT**

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### ***Measuring concrete outcomes from the Alliance is challenging.***

Prior to describing the outcomes achieved by the Alliance, a key finding from this evaluation reiterated by numerous interviews and from comments listed on the survey instrument, is the overall difficulty in measuring outcomes sector-wide or at the organizational level. This was attributed to several factors. First, the nature of the results that were seen as successful (raising awareness, general education, and opening dialogue) are inherently difficult to measure. Secondly, several of the people interviewed were out of touch with current Alliance activities and were not aware of the specific goals or measurements the Alliance had set to reach and to what degree those had been achieved.

“The impact is hard to judge. It hasn’t had the resources to follow up with groups after they come to some of the discussions.”

“I don’t know what the long term goals are for the Alliance and therefore it is difficult to judge outcomes. Over the next 18 months to 3 years, what are the tangibles they could add to, redirect, really get something concrete to build on and leverage, and then report out on the bigger goal.”

“We don’t know the impact we are having. What are the concrete results?”

Third, several individuals specifically commented that the Alliance does not have the data to justify claims to changes in organizations or the field. “I don’t know what impact (if any) we’ve had on retention of POC in the CD field – we just don’t have the data.”

Finally, evidence indicating significant organization-wide achievements as a result of the Alliance is inconclusive. While raising awareness and educating staff were noted as helping the organization to connect to its mission, concrete changes were harder to pinpoint. Both survey and interview responses were mixed as to the degree of change and the types of change attributed to Alliance participation. Some questioned whether change must start at the local level and then spread across the sector. “It’s very hard to know the full impact of the Alliance and to what degree we had impact vs. other internal or external factors.” Some went as far as to say that there was no impact on their organization.

“I don’t believe there is a noticeable change in my organization from going to the Alliance”

“All the programs are excellent but what isn’t jelling is actual change within the CDCs.”

“The depiction of the Alliance’s work as trail-blazing is directly tied to the unique opportunity to hold honest discussions about race and racism. The challenge is in taking these dialogues out to individual organizations and various sectors of the field.”

Nevertheless, respondents to the interviews and the survey noted several accomplishments gained by the Alliance programming which are included below.

**The Alliance has been highly successful at opening dialogue to discuss and confront racism.**

According to both interviews and the survey results, more people agreed that the Alliance has been highly successful at opening dialogue than any other outcome. 60% of survey respondents rated this ‘highly successful’ and a majority of interviewees agreed. When combining responses for ‘highly successful’ with ‘moderately successful’ from the survey, a total of 85% of survey respondents concurred with this statement. All acknowledged the inherent difficulties in having conversations about race – “Folks can talk about sex easier than race,” and gave high praise to the manner in which the Alliance facilitates open discussions and invites participation across a spectrum of individuals.

“Getting people in our CDC to talk about race has been the most important impact.”

“Race or racism doesn’t get discussed much if it isn’t part of a program like the Alliance; the Alliance hosting dialogues on race and racism for the field is vitally important.”

“This has been their value added [keeping the issue of race on the table.]”

“The Alliance has been pretty successful in opening dialogue and contributing to change in the culture of the field to openly discuss racism.”

**The Alliance provides a safe place to talk about race and racism.**

Most respondents strongly agreed that the Alliance offers a safe place to talk about race and racism. This was attributed to the high level of facilitation skills, the structure of the sessions that utilize small groups, the open sharing of existing members that served as a model for others, and the diversity of the speakers and session leaders.

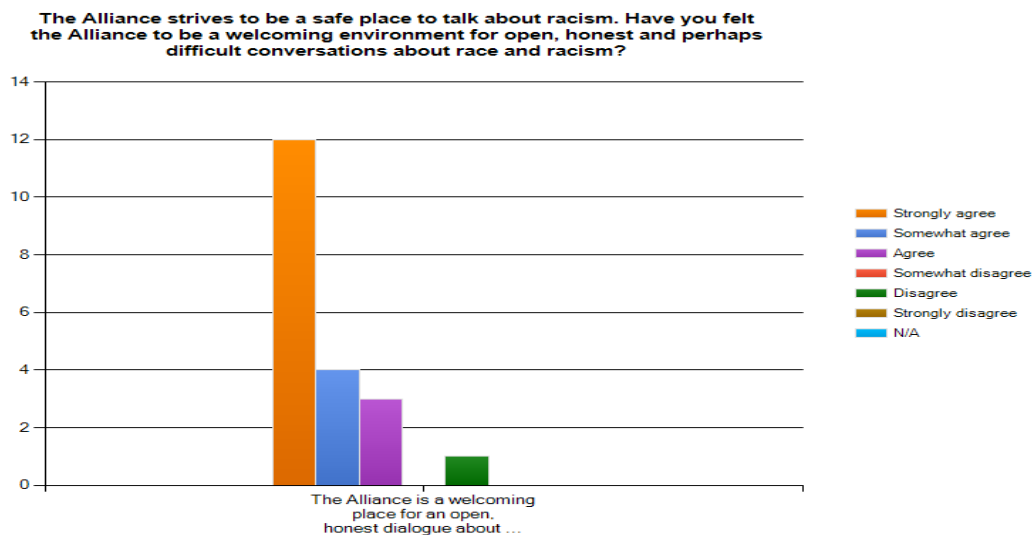
“They are able to bring up a difficult conversation and make them happen in a way that makes me feel free to say what I think without fear of saying the wrong thing or offending someone or admitting sometimes that you may have had a thought you didn’t recognize as something that could be interpreted as racism.”

“The sessions helped increase my comfort level and made me feel that no one is going to shoot me.”

“I gained the ability and courage to be blunt.”

“I felt people were honest, didn’t feel guilt or blame, and people were engaged.”

The chart bellows summarizes the findings from the survey.



***There is not a consensus as to whether the Alliance discussions are in depth or remain on the surface.***

When asked whether the Alliance discussions were deep or stayed at the surface level, responses were mixed. Some felt that the conversations went beyond generalities and encouraged participants to be honest even when it became challenging, yet others stated their concern that the sessions remained too polite. Some also noted that the topics are too big for the structure of the meetings and that the purpose of the discussions was not always clear.

“The sessions did more than scratch the surface but at a point where people get uncomfortable – it is hard to get past this. I don’t know how you fix it because it is an uncomfortable topic for everyone.”

“The Alliance is absolutely a safe space. They created an atmosphere of respectful dialogue. Some conversations did go beyond the surface but other meetings didn’t go as deep; some participants are a little weary of going deeper.”

“I felt safe to say what’s on my mind, but public meetings are ‘anti-racism lite.’ We are trying to address racism but aren’t going as deep as we might. We tend to be politic and dance around it a bit.”

“The conversations stay ‘surfacey’ and didn’t go deep. They are so mild that people feel it’s ineffectual. It’s too polite, too confined, and too mild.”

“I’m concerned that the demeanor and tone set by Alliance SC facilitators in our public meetings is too polite and diplomatic. Although they do raise issues, the follow up is often too gentle or generalized, and there are no follow up activities in which participants are in any way held accountable.”

***There is also not agreement as to whether the participant audience is sufficiently diverse.***

For many respondents, the audience participation at the Alliance meetings is diverse – both from the perspective of race and ethnicity, and by including people who do not usually attend similar events.

“The Alliance has been successful in getting a diversity of people to attend. I was impressed that at a recent forum I didn’t know most of the people; they have worked hard to get people beyond the usual suspects.”

Yet others disagreed, stating that they did not think the audience went much beyond ‘the usual choir’ and that there was a need to get new people from within the organizations to attend.

“It’s too insular; too much ‘naval gazing’”

“It’s getting a little stale – once you have been to a few of these workshops and discussed these issues, there aren’t a lot of new ways to say it. It is what it is and does open people’s eyes but not sure how many new ways to do this that continue to be new and interesting.”

The major criticism offered about the attendees is that the Alliance does not attract enough people who are leaders of organizations - ‘the movers and shakers’ in the field. Many commented that without these higher level individuals present, real change in organizations and in the field will not be achieved. Secondly, several interviewees and survey respondents noted that sufficient participation among CDCs is lacking.

***Educating and raising awareness about the context of racism has been highly successful.***

Along with creating an environment conducive to dialogue, the Alliance programs have been effective at building awareness and the knowledge base of participants about a host of issues pertaining to racism and in particular, the context of institutional racism that relates to community development. The Alliance has helped to increase an understanding of the pressures of sustaining talent within the industry, the challenge of building a representational workforce,

and the value of working collaboratively to address industry-wide issues. 55% of survey respondents rated this activity as ‘highly successful (an additional 30% rated this as ‘moderately successful.) Many interviewees agreed that this has been an important outcome of the Alliance.

“Once you understand this [white privilege], you look at issues very differently, personally and professionally. You look through a prism of race to evaluate systemic issues in the communities we work in.”

“The program led to an acknowledgement that racism exists in the field, even among well-intentioned, progressive people.”

“It helped me to understand racism and the difference with institutional racism.”

“The Alliance helps make it more clear that we are fighting institutional racism. Our CDC is promoting homeownership – the number one way Americans acquire wealth, which was systematically denied by the government [to minorities.] It is helpful for people to get grounded in the reality of the history.”

***The Alliance has contributed to building a network across a diverse spectrum of professionals within the community development field and creating opportunities for those concerned about racism and diversity to connect.***

Respondents generally agreed that the Alliance has fostered networking, and provided a meeting place especially for those organizations and individuals considering how to change their culture or become an anti-racist organization. Among survey respondents, 40% rated ‘fostering networking’ as highly successful, and another 40% rated it as moderately successful. The Alliance has reportedly given voice to a number of constituencies and individuals and provided a valuable opportunity for the development of leadership skills. The Mentor program was singled out as an example of effective network and relationship building.

***The Alliance provides useful tools and resources.***

The Alliance is recognized as a resource to support discussions and actions related to confronting racism. Within the mentoring program or other forums, respondents noted that the facilitators provided tools for how to respond in certain situations which has been helpful. 30% of survey respondents rated ‘identifying tools/ strategies to assist in addressing racism’ as highly successful and another 50% said it was moderately successful.

“The Alliance is the ‘go to’ organization for resources to deal with diversity.”

“They provided the tools to have this difficult conversation.”

***Changes in organizations were more often noted in increasing awareness and training, yet some policies were implemented as a result of the Alliance.***

Of survey respondents, 60% felt that the Alliance had been ‘moderately successful’ in contributing to organizational changes, 25% rated this at ‘some success’, 10% as ‘highly successful’ and 5% as ‘no success.’ Fewer respondents agreed that the Alliance had changed hiring or other practices that help to address racism or to improving retention.

	Highly Successful	Moderately Successful	Some Success	No Success	N/A
Contributing to organizational changes	10%	60%	25%	5%	0%
Changing hiring/ other practices	5%	30%	30%	10%	25%
Improving retention	5%	26%	16%	21%	32%

Some examples of positive change that were noted include:

- Increases in awareness, dialogues, education
  - Created a way to have conversations about race inside the organization
  - Provided diversity training or professional growth initiatives
  - Increased awareness of diversity and increased attempts to hire qualified people of all background to fill open positions
  - Increased board of directors interest in racism; keeps organization working toward being anti-racist
  - Greater awareness and ability to discuss race internally
- Changes in practices, plans, policies
  - Added a line to the mission about fostering more diversity
  - Greater emphasis on hiring practices and desirability of hiring community residents
  - Hiring policies permanently influenced
  - Created an internal diversity plan
  - Distributed manual to managers and have implemented some of the suggested recruiting strategies
  - Agency diversified staff to reflect community it serves

***Regular participation in the Alliance is tied to increased awareness among others in the organization.***

An interesting point was raised by several interviewees as it relates to organizational change. If a staff member attended Alliance meetings and brought back information, then the organization kept the issues on the table.

“Depending if you have someone on your staff that is closely associated with the Alliance, then it appears harder to blow off and ignore these issues. Participation in the Alliance helped to keep the issues higher on our screen.”

However, it was also noted that without that presence and feedback loop, the issues are not as present and without a structured process for engaging the organization, change is less likely.

“I raised the issue of race and racism within my organization while I was involved because I regularly shared updates with my colleagues; since I haven’t been involved, it’s gone underground.”

“There was no impact on my organization. It is not due to a failing of the Alliance but a lack of structured relationship between my work and my Alliance involvement.”

***The Alliance has had a meaningful personal impact on many of the participants, but this varies among individuals.***

Many respondents commented on how the Alliance had impacted them personally. General comments included the following types of benefits:

- Expanded personal and professional networks
- Learned about the deeper level of effort that is required to sustain organizations and communities
- Increased personal awareness of the issues
- Improved ability to react more quickly and differently than in the past
- Decreased sense of isolation and increased recognition of allies for support and learning

“Going through the training was a therapeutic process. I learned how to put my feelings on the table, get a better handle on how to address the issue in a calm manner, and have an educated argument. The Alliance gave me the tools and the language to deal with racism.”

“It has helped to deepen my understanding of what’s going on and tools for addressing the various issues I encounter in my work (and everyday) life.”

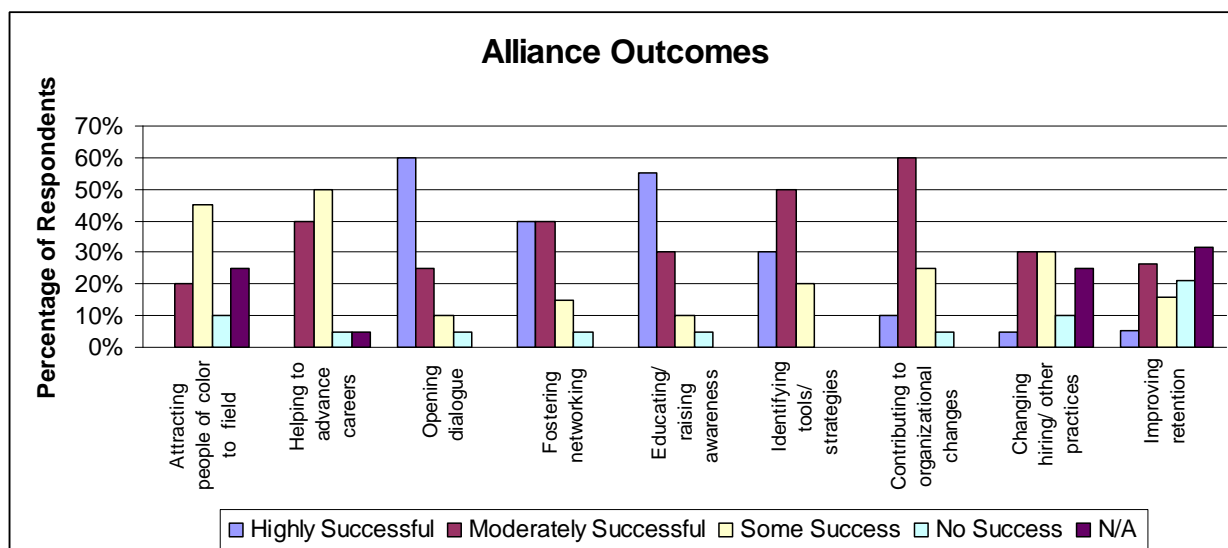
“Undoing Racism” training had the biggest impact on me personally; changed how I thought, made this a long term issue for me”

Yet others felt that there was little or no impact on them personally. Some stated that there was no impact on their career or professional development network or that any significant change occurred for them as a result of Alliance participation.

“There was no impact on me personally.”

“The Alliance did not impact my career or professional network”

The following chart drawn from the survey illustrates the outcomes thought to be most prevalent.



***The Alliance is not structured to achieve the higher goals of advancement or retention.***

For the most part, respondents noted that the Alliance programs were neither structured nor resourced to truly impact hiring, retention, and advancement across the field. Many thought these were not realistic goals within the Alliance’s timeframe and resources.

“Regarding hiring decisions – a majority of the field is white and there are many key drivers that cause this. The Alliance with such a limited budget – its ability to redirect those drivers is pretty limited.”

“The Alliance can do more about the pool of candidates than creating opportunities for advancement.”

“Changing the face of the field – this was not a realistic goals within the timeframe and resources of the Alliance.”

***The Alliance strategies are considered by some as ineffective at systems change.***

Some interviewees raised a concern that the Alliance is not challenging the system enough and does not have a critical analysis of the institutional barriers. Without greater involvement of the leaders in the field, which many people noted was missing, significant impact is difficult to

achieve. For many, the conclusion drawn is that the Alliance has most certainly contributed to raising awareness and opening conversations about race and racism, but that with a complex subject and extremely limited resources, it may be difficult to achieve the more concrete outcomes such as advancing careers or improving retention of people of color in the community development field.

“The inherent problem with the focus and structure of the Alliance is that it is focused on human capital strategy and not equipped to address barriers that lead to institutional racism. The program was not focused on institutional change and the activities did not help them address institutional racism.”

“Changing the CD field will take more than simply being more conscious. Values take a long time to accomplish.”

“It is hard to attract people of color to CD field where salaries are limited.”

“The Alliance is not challenging the system enough. It has to be about more than forums or manuals.”

“The Alliance is not making headway in moving the question about race into the center of the discussion within the field.”

### **Program Analysis**

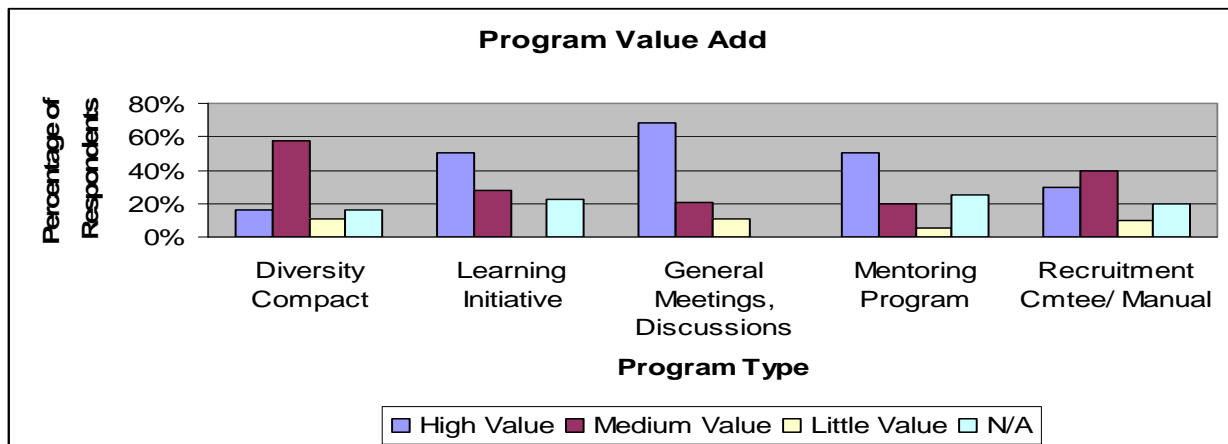
Respondents commented about the quality of the programming offered by the Alliance and rated which ones were of greatest value to the field.

#### ***The Alliance is recognized for providing quality programming.***

In general, the Alliance received high praise for the organization of the sessions, the overall quality, and the level of effective facilitation. Specific program components were rated highly according to the survey (see chart below) and interviewees were generally positive about the Alliance meetings.

#### ***The highest ranked programs are the general meetings/ discussions, the learning initiative and the mentoring program.***

Survey respondents were asked to rate the relative value of each of the major program components along the following scale – high value-add/impact, medium value-add/impact, little value add/impact, no value-add/impact, n/a. The following chart summarizes the findings. (Note: none of the respondents used the ‘no value-add’ option for any of the programs.)



Four of the comments offered indicated that the respondent did not have enough knowledge of the impact of the Alliance programs and therefore were unable to rate program results which is a logical explanation for the significant percentage of responses for N/A.

During the interview process, participants shared their perspective on a number of the programs which are described below.

### Diversity Compact

Few people during the interviews commented on the impact of the Diversity Compact. Some thought it should be revisited whereby organizations would need to review the commitments and re-sign a Compact statement.

“The Compact hasn’t been paid attention to; coming back to this would be good.”

### Learning Initiative

The Learning Initiative was referenced by those who directly participated in it in the past as being a valuable experience. The work during the Initiative was noted as setting the foundation for future Alliance meetings by beginning the process of having open dialogues about race and racism, and in providing tools for having constructive conversations.

### General Meetings/ Discussions

As with the survey respondents who rated the general meetings/ discussion as the most highly valued component of the Alliance, the response to the interviews indicated that this component has been the most successful endeavor for the Alliance. This parallels the findings from the survey chart above (Alliance Outcomes) showing that the Alliance has been most successful at opening dialogue and educating/ raising awareness about race and racism within the community development field.

### Mentoring Program

*The mentoring program has added value to most participants.*

The Mentoring Program was noted by some to be stellar – “It’s their hallmark program,” and effective at maximizing the level of engagement and resources available to it. Responses from individual mentees indicated that most (among those who participated in this evaluation) found value in the program and met some of their learning objectives, and that lasting relationships were formed.

Three mentees responded to the survey. The ratings were as follows:

### Mentee responses

Answer Options	Significant Impact	Moderate Impact	Minimal Impact	Not enough time to determine impact	No Impact	N/A
Career path	1	0	1	0	0	1
Professional development	1	1	0	0	0	1
Professional network	1	1	0	0	0	1
Personal growth	1	1	0	0	0	1

Five mentors responded to the survey and provided their perspective on the impact of the program.

**Mentor responses**

Answer Options	Significant Impact	Moderate Impact	Minimal Impact	Not enough time to determine impact	No Impact	N/A
Mentee's career path	1	2	1	0	0	1
Mentee's professional development	0	3	1	0	0	1
Mentee's professional network	1	2	1	0	0	1
Mentee's personal growth	1	3	0	0	0	1

Respondents noted that the program facilitates recruitment of new leadership by getting them into contact with organizations and their leadership which may lead to a job in the future. The one to one contact as well as the peer group interaction was noted as contributing to both building knowledge and networks.

“The program broadened the professional networks of mentees. The mentee built relationships with others in the organization, not just their mentor which is important for future professional development.”

“The program gave me a group to talk with about these kinds of things. I could see that the issues are not just about me but are experienced more broadly.”

Many who participated stated a positive impact:

“It was useful to have someone with similar experiences, familiar with the industry to get constructive feedback and helped me to do my job better.”

“The Mentor program was a wonderful personal experience. It was a good match and beneficial to me on a personal level.”

“The Mentor program helped open my eyes to a lot of racism, institutionalized racism.”

“This was truly a parallel process of mutual learning and support!”

Yet others disagreed that the program had much if any impact.

“The program did not help the mentee’s career.”

“The program had limited impact.”

“It lived up to my expectations in terms of creating a quality relationships but it was more about a traditional mentee/ mentor relationship not as much about dealing with racism.”

“It did not really impact my career, professional development or network.”

***The matching process is a central factor contributing to the success (or weakness) of the program.***

It was noted that considerable weight to whether the program was a success must be given to the appropriateness and quality of the match. For some this was excellent, but for others the program fell short of expectations because the match was not effective. “The match was not a good fit. Yet, Shirronda’s support – her acknowledging that it was not a good match – was the most helpful.” A few

interviewees suggested that the selection process should be more competitive, through which the Alliance would be able to assess the leadership potential of the mentee and their appropriateness for this program.

***Program impact is limited due to its scale and inconsistent attendance.***

Others commented that the overall impact of the Mentoring program is limited because of the small number of participants. It was also felt to suffer because of inconsistent and at times sparse attendance. Further, some noted that the program cannot fully be evaluated without more data.

“The lack of consistent attendance interfered with building the community.”

“The biggest weakness is the mentoring program because so few people participate – Alliance needs to create a bigger pool of individuals who want to be mentored and individuals who can mentor them.”

***The program could benefit from greater structure and clarity of expectations.***

While many stated that the sessions were helpful for both mentee and mentor, some commented that the program lacked sufficient structure and clear requirements. Several people noted the need to get more commitment from the pairs by signing an agreement or something similar and by getting employers to agree to give release time for participation.

“I had to feel my way in the dark; I didn’t know what was expected of me as a mentor. The program needs more structure.”

“Some other participants couldn’t commit which impacted everyone. It is important to clarify expectations up front.”

**Employee/ Recruitment Manual**

***The Recruitment Manual is valued as a useful tool.***

The Recruitment Manual was praised by some as ‘the most significant achievement’ of the Alliance and by others as a solid, useful document that has been helpful in increasing diversity in their organizations. Some examples of the value of the manual included those stating that they learned new techniques to hire more people of color, and that it helps to raise issues of racism and how to address them in the hiring process. “It’s how we hire and it’s consistently used.”

***Others questioned the Manual’s uniqueness and the frequency with which it is utilized.***

However, others countered this assertion with the statement that the manual is “a no-brainer – it’s just general HR best practices.” Further, several people noted that while they thought the manual had useful information in it, they had not fully read it or used it themselves and did not see the evidence that others were using it.

“The Manual was great but I need to take the time to read it thoroughly. I did pass it on to others.”

“Although I have not used it myself, I have read it and believe that it is an amazing product as it has kept the conversation going around race and racism and the need for more people of color in the field.”

“It looked good but it got lost in the shuffle. I haven’t used it – and somewhat forgot about it.”

“There were no real changes in hiring practices at the local organization.”

## **FINDINGS: STRENGTHS AND CHALLENGES IN THE ALLIANCE STRUCTURE**

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Throughout the interview process and in the survey instrument, participants commented on areas of strength and areas of weakness for the Alliance as an entity.

### ***Universal praise was offered for the staffing provided by Shirronda Almeida***

Her commitment and skills were referenced as a central factor to the success of the Alliance and its continued efforts. Her approach at designing agendas and supporting the work of others has led to the open environment for sharing and learning.

“Shirronda does it all, given the pulls on her time, she’s remarkably effective”

“Shirronda, I think you are doing an amazing job. Your passion and commitment to the Alliance's purpose and goals are to be admired.”

“MACDC (Shirronda Almeida) has done an amazing job despite funding and other challenges and responsibilities.”

### ***Diversity among the Steering Committee and in programs supports the mission of the Alliance.***

Several respondents commented that it has been important to the success of the Alliance that the leadership and the program speakers/ panelists and others reflect its goals through inclusivity and diversity.

### ***The Alliance internal process reflects its values.***

“The Alliance structure itself – SC – does a good job of modeling the way we want to work; everything is vetted, very transparent.”

### ***The general consensus is that awareness of the Alliance is limited.***

A majority of respondents concurred that awareness of the Alliance in general or in terms of specifically what it does is not high. “My knowledge is currently dated, yet when I mention the initiative many are not aware of its impactful efforts.” It was interesting to note that several people said that they had been involved in the past but were out of touch now and that once they were no longer participating, they stopped receiving notices or communication about Alliance activities.

“I don’t get communications from the Alliance. I wish I received something regularly, monthly or at least quarterly.”

“I fell off the mailing list when I changed jobs”

### ***The greatest challenge facing the Alliance is lack of funding***

Nearly all of those interviewed raised the concern about the lack of resources to support the Alliance, the need for more staff, and the question of sustainability.

“We are just a small bunch of people with no money, just trying to move the issue forward.”

“We lack the reputation and the capacity to put together a tight program.”

***Despite the participation among Steering Committee members in programs and in leadership roles, many people are not aware of other leaders beyond Shirronda Almeida.***

“Alliance benefits from Shirronda – she is committed and energetic. Is there more leadership beyond her? If so, it needs to be revitalized or more engaged or more apparent. If there are other leaders, I am not aware of who else is involved.”

“Shirronda is front and center all the time; I am not sure who their other people are. It is not effective to have only Shirronda be the only face and communicator of the Alliance.”

***Overall interest and engagement in the Alliance could be higher.***

One indicator of the importance of the Alliance to individuals is the response to this evaluation process. Both focus groups had to be cancelled due to a poor response rate and there was difficulty in scheduling interviews.

***Participation in the Alliance does not include sufficient numbers of decision makers to have a significant impact.***

Beyond the lack of enough CDC participation as noted above, several people noted that the Alliance does not attract enough attention or participation from leadership in the field.

“The Alliance doesn’t have enough of the movers and shakers in the industry that would make this more central. Without Executive Directors and other decision makers, change won’t happen.”

## **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE FUTURE**

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Respondents to both the survey and the interviews offered recommendations for the future of the Alliance, which include the following:

***1. Set very clear expectations for outcomes that are realistic and aligned with resources.***

Given the difficulty in measuring concrete results to date, and perhaps the unrealistic expectations already set – “With the level of resources, was it feasible to change the face of the CD field?” – The Alliance should set targets and goals for what it wants to achieve and make sure it has the capacity to deliver. Some suggested that it would be better for the Alliance to narrow its focus and scale back its efforts in order to run programs in more depth and improve their ability to accomplish a set of objectives. Furthermore, several people suggested that the Alliance collect hard data on results in relation to hiring, retention, promotion and other concrete measures to support evidence of their achievements.

***2. Partner/ collaborate with other like minded organizations to increase effectiveness and efficiency.***

The Mel King Institute for Community Building was raised as the most appropriate partner by numerous interviewees. The King Institute was noted as closely aligned with aspects of the Alliance and would be in a good position through its training programs to support some of the Alliance’s outcomes including nurturing leaders, recruiting talent, developing boards, mentoring and network building, and supporting professionals of color. Co-hosting training programs or providing a means for mentees to participate in streamlined and consistent training opportunities would be benefits of closer connection. It was noted by several people that given Shirronda

Almeida's role with both programs, this would be a natural fit and should be given strong consideration.

Suggestions were offered for other types of partnerships or collaborations. Community Change was mentioned as another like-minded organization that the Alliance should work more closely with. In particular, it was suggested that a CC leader join the Alliance Steering Committee.

“Community Change is an important partner because the anti racism work they are doing is focused on how white people confront racism and since we are trying to change the community development culture, whose leadership is largely white, it would be important to work closely with them.”

The Diversity Initiative was referenced by several interviewees as another organization with which to form a closer, more formal partnership. The Alliance could be a feeder, or catalyst into the Diversity Initiative, endow a small fund to support one group on an annual basis to participate in the Diversity Initiative, or the Alliance could create a cohort of groups who could work together going deeper into assessing and addressing institutional barriers.

“If there was more of a tie with the Diversity Initiative, then the Alliance could give individuals and managers a taste of the discussion and then inspires them to mount a formal diversity and inclusion process.”

### ***3. Organize programming to support implementation of the Recruitment Manual.***

To address the issue raised by several that the manual is not used, some suggested that the Alliance launch a concerted effort to market, train, and work with groups on the use of the manual. Further, it was suggested that the Alliance collect data on the use and impact of the manual.

“The Alliance should host a workshop on it as opposed to getting it and putting it on the shelf.”

“The manual is helpful but you don't change behavior if you don't go through the process; the Alliance could serve as consultant to support groups.”

Finally, some suggested that the manual be used, in combination with events, forums, listservs, as a way to recruit new people of color to the CD field.

“Organizations say – we can't find anyone of color – the Alliance could seek people out and provide a networking forum at first to learn about the industry.”

### ***4. Recruit more leadership to participate in the Steering Committee and in Alliance programs.***

In addition to engaging more CDC leaders, respondents suggested the Alliance launch efforts to recruit more decision makers from the field and design programs to meet their needs and interests.

“We need to get a broader discussion among more high level people – philanthropic, higher level management; reach higher up the tree to engage people.”

“The clout issue is a problem for the Alliance.”

“It's pretty low on the pecking order of importance. If not for Shirronda, it would have gone away altogether.”

### ***5. Improve communication and marketing.***

Given that many people who were already engaged with the Alliance stated that they were unaware of current program and seemed to ‘fall off the list’ once they changed jobs or were not actively participating, it was highly suggested that the Alliance strengthen its communication

efforts. Ideas including preparing a regular newsletter; profile someone who went through mentoring program, provide regular updates on connection to the King Institute, and make better use of an events calendar.

**6. Focus on the next generation of leadership.**

Several people mentioned the need to engage younger people by creating stronger ties with universities and colleges to get the next generation excited about working in this field.

**7. Expand beyond the CD field.**

Some noted that the issue of racism goes beyond CD field and that the Alliance should expand to other nonprofits, universities, and the private sector in part because people move around between fields and to considering having a broader reach. The Alliance should consider connecting to larger discussions and actions about inclusivity, expanding opportunities and dealing with regional racism.

“The Alliance is very internal looking (focused on how to make the CD field more diverse), but maybe we should tackle racial disparities around specific issues that might get more people of color involved.”

“White leaders in the CD field should cultivate relationships with leadership in the minority community, even beyond the CD field. We should develop meaningful relationships with people of color - it’s painful how white the field is.’ We could start with social and part programmatic, and maybe work together on some policy issues that are in common.”

**8. Evaluate how to strengthen the mentoring program.**

Most concurred that the mentoring program was of value but wondered how to strengthen it and expand participation. Some suggested reconvening of the mentees and mentors alumni once a year, organizing a ‘tier 2’ mentoring program to go deeper, holding more meetings between the mentors/ mentees, and getting stronger commitments from the mentee/mentor pairs by signing an agreement and getting employers to agree to give release time to participate.

**9. Other suggestions included:**

- Focus on research in combination with more concrete programming to get more concrete outcomes
- Cosponsor workshop on discriminatory lending with Mass Homeownership Collaborative
- Focus on boards of directors: use Alliance resources for board recruitment; expand networking opportunities to reach volunteers who want to serve on boards; Go to boards of local organizations and talk during board meetings about the Alliance to increase awareness
- Develop a yearly measure of diversity within the leadership sector of the CD field
- Develop a yearly report on issues such as: rate of job loss for people of color in the field, how the economy has impacted people of color; foreclosure rate for people of color
- Analyze/ hold discussions on how the economy and especially job loss and creation are affecting communities of color and its impact on the types of programs the Alliance does
- Try to match up with the goals of funders who are committed to diversity such as Hyams
- Create a permanent funded position that would be charged with program development and relationship building to expand the base of participating organizations and individuals

- Create pathways for people who are starting out as foreclosure counselors to become more senior positions with the CD field
- Create opportunities to develop more minority consultants in the field
- Deployment of the Compact within the CDC field
- Hold another session(s) of The Learning Initiative.
- Sponsor more trainings such as Undoing Racism and Recruitment and retention

Several people asked to receive a copy of this evaluation and suggested that the findings be shared broadly in order to build for the future.

### **Other comments shared by interviewees and survey respondents:**

“You all are doing critically important work & hope it can be expanded!!! Thank you!”

“I’ve really enjoy participating in the Alliance.”

“This initiative was trail-blazing model that should be replicated in the non-profit, community development sector!”

## **CONCLUSION**

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The Alliance is a successful coalition that has built a track record for hosting open, honest dialogues about race and racism, raising awareness and educating leaders across a spectrum of the community development field, and fostering networking. It is seen as a place where individuals can participate freely and gain valuable tools and resources to understand and address racism in their personal lives and organizations. Numerous individuals attest to the benefits they have gained from their participation and initial changes that are occurring at their organizations.

Currently housed and supported by MACDC staff member Shirronda Almeida, all those who participated in this evaluation praised her dedication and expertise. Steering Committee members have also lent their skills and time to organizing and running effective programs. The contributions of other stakeholders who have served as panelist, speakers, and mentors are to be commended as well.

However, the Alliance is limited in its impact due to the serious lack of resources and staff time that can be allocated. Its programs are neither funded nor structured to reach the larger, more lasting impacts they desire, that being to change the face and the culture of the community development field. Some have questioned whether the programs and discussions go deep enough or sufficiently challenge the status quo. Insufficient participation from leaders within organizations and the field as a whole hampers the Alliance’s ability to achieve systemic change.

Yet, the importance of what they have accomplished on such as short shoestring should not be underestimated. Fostering dialogue, raising awareness, and building connections are critical first steps to addressing racism within the field. Individuals who participated in this evaluation offered various recommendations and are eager to hear from the Alliance about their future. As the Steering Committee reviews this report and considers its priorities, it should set realistic outcomes and match those with available resources to ensure that they can accomplish their goals.

## **ATTACHMENTS**

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### **Interview Respondents (\*\* indicates on Steering Committee)**

Shirronda Almeida **	Danny LeBlanc
Angela Brown	Woullard Lett
Denise Dabney	Hilary Marcus
Valeska Daley	Jose Masso **
Remona Davis	Susan Naimark
Todd Fry	MH Nsangou
Aida Franquiz **	Phillip Page
Adam Gibbons **	Cynthia Parker
Janet Grogan **	David Price **
Mossik Hacobian	Marilyn Sanchez **
Chris Harris	Tyra Sidbury
David Harris	Robert Springer
Jim Haskell	Charleen Tyson
Laurie Hunt	Bob VanMeter
Pam Jones **	Karen Wiener **
Joe Kriesberg	

### **Survey respondents (\* indicates also interviewed)**

Shirronda Almeida *	Ana Luna
Kathy Brown	Karla Nicholson
Vanessa Calderon-Rosado	MH Nsangou *
Valeska Daley *	Jeanne Pinado
Todd Fry *	David Price *
Adam Gibbons *	Lionel Romain
Janet Grogan *	Blanca Sierra de Price
Pam Jones *	Charleen Tyson *
Joseph Kriesberg *	Zahida Vides
Woullard Lett *	Karen Wiener *

## **THE ALLIANCE EVALUATION INTERVIEW QUESTIONS**

1. What outcomes/ results/ impact has the Alliance achieved?
  - For whom? Who are the primary and secondary beneficiaries of these outcomes?  
What have you personally gained from your participation in the Alliance?
  - What are the specific value-added program elements?
    - How would you rate the effectiveness of each of the different components (depending on which ones you participated in)?
    - Among the list of desired outcomes for the Alliance, how would you rate its impact on:
      - Helping to attract people of color to the CD field
      - Helping to advance the careers of people of color in the CD field
      - Opening dialogue and working with participants to discuss and confront racism
      - Contributing to a change in organizational culture to openly discuss and confront racism, and creating a learning culture
      - Changing hiring and other practices as a result
      - Improving retention
      - Increasing productivity
  - Depending on the impact you perceive, what kinds of changes have occurred in your organization or in the community?
2. The Alliance strives to be ‘a safe place to talk about racism.’ What has been your experience of this aspect of the program? Have you felt the Alliance to be a welcoming environment for open, honest and perhaps difficult conversations about race and racism?
  - What impact have these discussions had on your work or personal life?
3. How would you rate the level of awareness of the Alliance and its programs within the community development field overall and within your segment (depending on who is being interviewed)?
4. What are the weaknesses of the Alliance program and/ or structure?
  - In what areas has it not achieved its promise?
  - If you had participated in the past and are no longer active, what led to your decrease in participation?
5. How effective has the structure of the Alliance been in helping it to reach its goals? What changes if any would you suggest to improve the structure of the Alliance?
6. What goals should the alliance set for the future?
  - What activities/ programs are high enough value-added and should be continued?
  - What should be added or deleted?
  - What should be modified?