

# maddox DEI research

## executive summary

The purpose of this research project was to explore diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) within the context of the Dan & Margaret Maddox Charitable Fund's (referred to as 'Maddox') grantmaking and partnerships. Specifically, this project sought to **center nonprofit partner input and experiences relating to diversity, equity, and inclusion through 6 listening sessions, 9 interviews, and 86 surveys** (a response rate of 78%).

All but three organizations reported having conversations within their organization about DEI. The average frequency of conversations varied across program area. On a scale of 1-5, the average frequency of DEI conversations reported was 3.6 for education partners, 3.1 for low-income youth partners, and 2.25 for wildlife conservation partners. Reported frequency did vary slightly by race, with white respondents reporting an average frequency of 3.33 and respondents identifying as people of color reporting an average frequency of 3.14.

88% of education and low-income youth respondents and 66% of wildlife conservation respondents report having completed diversity and/or racial equity trainings. 81.3% of respondents identifying as white and 54.5% of respondents identifying as people of color strongly agreed with the statement: "I think it is valuable to examine and discuss the impact of race on my organization's work." 24.4% of organizations report having a strategic plan that incorporates DEI and 36% report having hiring practices designed to address inequity.

Partners shared a number of challenges related to DEI work, including limited staff and board time, financial resources, unclear direction, a lack of training, and a lack of buy-in from senior leadership. Several white-led organizations also noted difficulties finding diverse board and staff members, possibly due to an overreliance on pre-existing and homogenous social networks.

Partner recommendations varied widely, and were grouped into three overarching categories: 1) training and consulting; 2) communication and convening; and 3) grantmaking. Common suggestions included funded trainings and more "two-way communication" between Maddox and their partners. Many partners urged Maddox to avoid "punitive" changes to the grantmaking process around DEI outcomes, instead suggesting that additional funding and resources be made available to partners interested in having conversations around and making progress towards DEI.