

Akonadi Foundation

Strategic Plan

2008-2012

The Akonadi Foundation's mission is to support the development of powerful social change movements to eliminate structural racism and create a racially just society.

We achieve our mission through:

- **Grantmaking:** *The Akonadi Foundation provides financial and capacity-building support to organizations that advance an explicit racial justice analysis and practice. We also provide opportunities for these racial justice organizations to connect with each other through grantee-led convenings and other timely movement-building opportunities that promote collaboration in the field.*
- **Peer Networking**
Raising Resources: *The Akonadi Foundation increases the resources available to the field by encouraging other funders to support racial justice organizing, and by coordinating grantmaking strategies with local and national funders and donors.*
Raising the Profile: *The Akonadi Foundation documents and disseminates case studies, best practices and contemporary racial justice theories.*

Moving forward, Akonadi will be guided by several beliefs:

- **Because racism is structural, a social movement is needed to overcome it.** Such a movement needs to move large numbers of people to action to achieve structural and cultural transformation on a local, national and global scale. The movement must be comprised of a diverse range of communities and approaches coalescing at a moment in time, uniting people through shared strategy, principles and goals. It must address the interconnected areas of culture, law and policy, and base building and community power that are all necessary for achieving racial justice.

The Akonadi Foundation understands that the field of racial justice organizing is currently made up of groups with many different strategies, ideologies and issues that may or may not identify as part of a cohesive movement. These organizations are often seeking a clear unifying vision, yet funders often separate them into issue silos. Given our assessment of the field, the foundation will partner with these organizations to provide funds to bring people together and begin sharing strategies, articulating a

common racial justice lens across issues, and identifying common strategies across issues.

- **Social movements grow over time and need investments that are long-term and developmental.** Movements are built in stages, as are the organizations involved in movement building. The Akonadi Foundation will therefore support organizations that are developing or advancing an analysis of structural racism and that are committed to proactive racial justice organizing. We recognize that there will be organizations at many points along the spectrum, from those just beginning to work towards racial justice to those with a long track record of racial justice accomplishments. The Akonadi Foundation will support the development of its grantees through establishing deep, long-term partnerships.
- **Social movements are sparked by and grounded in local examples of innovation and success.** Large social movements are anchored in local stories (e.g., the Birmingham Bus Boycott, Stonewall and Soweto uprisings, etc.) that capture popular imagination and demonstrate impact. The Akonadi Foundation believes that racial justice organizing in our “own backyard” of Oakland has the potential to become an example that inspires and informs work across the country.
- **Ending structural racism requires explicit and direct focus.** Organizations and foundations need to deepen their collective understanding of structural racism and develop a more strategic collective approach to racial justice. Moreover, lack of shared and precise language to describe structural racism and a societal reluctance to talk directly about race hinders the progress of the racial justice movement. The Akonadi Foundation will promote an explicit focus on structural racism and work with both funders and practitioners to build a shared language and movement building strategy to dismantle structural racism.
- **Cross-Generational Leadership Nourishes the Racial Justice Movement.** Young people are vital to the burgeoning racial justice movement and understand that an explicit race analysis is the only way to identify and resolve issues. Supporting youth organizing and cross-generational organizing are critical components to both movement-building and racial justice organizing.

AKONADI'S GRANTMAKING

Race and Place (RAP) Fund: Building Racially Just Communities

Akonadi will create the Race and Place (RAP) Fund in Oakland to support the creation and infrastructure of local and regional movements that proactively create a place in society where they can assert their racial justice values and generate just alternatives to dominant structures. The ultimate goal is to shift political, social and cultural power in Oakland. To do so, the Fund will support local organizing as well as build local infrastructure and capacity through intermediaries; support groups working for racially just legislative and policy change on a local, regional or statewide level; and support groups that build community and increase public discourse on race through cultural work. Additionally, the Fund will support key allies in the region that have working relationships with Oakland groups that together, are working towards regional racial justice outcomes. These organizations may be supported further through the Strategic Opportunity Support Fund that will also award capacity-building grants to build organizations' racial justice analysis and practice.

GOAL ≈ Community Power:

Simultaneously support cultural work, effective racial justice organizing and policy creation and advocacy in Oakland to build community power.

GOAL ≈ Elevated Local Discourse on Race:

Change civic and public opinion and raise interest and awareness so that people are motivated to build a racially just Oakland.

GOAL ≈ Regional Alliances for Racial Justice:

Support key allies that contribute to racial justice in Oakland through their work in regional alliances, coalitions and partnerships.

Building A Movement (BAM) Fund: Racial Justice Movement Building

Akonadi's second grantmaking program, the Building a Movement (BAM) Fund, will support the development, dissemination and practice of racial justice theory on a broader or national level. The BAM Fund will support organizations across the country whose core work is deepening an understanding of structural racism; disseminating an explicit racial justice theory; and advancing strategic action toward racial justice. These organizations, found across all areas of social justice work, encourage a diversity of ideas and approaches that together make up the building blocks of a vibrant racial justice movement. Specifically, Akonadi will support innovative scholarship and policy analysis; applied research, think tanks and cultural work; public policy advocacy; and training and capacity building intermediaries. These groups are advancing racial justice in connection with multiple issue sectors and affecting the discourse on race in the larger society.

GOAL ≈ Accessible and Clear Structural Racism Analysis:

Increase use and practical application of a structural racism framework by social justice organizations committed to racial justice.

GOAL ≈ Shared Organizational Values, Vision and Practice for Racial Justice:

Foster a shared vision for racial justice across sectors and strategies beginning with BAM grantees and spreading beyond to other social justice organizations.

GOAL ≈ Transformative National Debate on Race:

Shift the national public discourse on race from a color-blind framework to a common sense understanding of structural racism.

Strategic Opportunity Support (SOS) Fund

The Strategic Opportunity Support (SOS) Fund will complement and enhance Akonadi's RAP and BAM grantmaking by providing rapid turnaround grants. The purpose of the SOS Fund is to 1) build capacity of RAP grantees to address specific organizational needs, 2) bring RAP and BAM grantees and their allies together, and 3) enable grantees and other allies to take advantage of timely opportunities. The capacity-building grants and racial justice convening grants will be available to Akonadi grantees; the racial justice opportunities component is by invitation-only.

Racial Justice Capacity Building. RAP grantees can access the SOS Fund to develop and refine racial justice analysis and to incorporate a racial justice practice.

Racial Justice Convening. SOS grants support the convening of RAP and BAM grantees to: make the structural racism framework more accessible to Oakland organizations and RAP groups; promote replicable strategies locally and nationally; and shift the national dialogue on race.

Racial Justice Opportunities. The SOS Fund enables grantees and allies that emerge from and are significant to the racial justice field to take advantage of timely strategic policy, cultural or political opportunities, arising on either a regional or national level. Examples may include timely racial justice alliances and strategic initiatives as they arise on a local, regional or national level.

GOAL ≈ Increased Racial Justice Capacity at a Local Level:

Strengthen the capacity of RAP grantees to develop their racial justice analysis and incorporate racial justice practice.

GOAL ≈ Cross learning for a Shared Practice and Vision among Grantees:

Facilitate cross learning opportunities among RAP and BAM grantees to share values and move toward a common racial justice vision.

GOAL ≈ Strong Regional Connections and Unified National Racial Justice Movement:

Encourage meaningful alliance building and strategic initiatives to significantly advance the racial justice debate and movement at a regional and national level.

AKONADI'S PEER NETWORKING PROGRAMS

Racial Justice Philanthropy

Akonadi understands that its resources alone cannot achieve the vision it seeks and that it must bring in more partners, more resources and more commitment to the effort of creating a racially just world. Within philanthropic institutions there are a number of racially equitable practices and policies that can be institutionalized, including grantmaking practices, investment policies and practices, human resource policies and practices. Akonadi will begin synchronizing efforts with funders that are already comparatively aligned with Akonadi's work or think are receptive to applying a racial justice framework to their work.

GOAL ≈ Increased Philanthropic Awareness and Funding for Racial Justice:

Encourage funders to use a racial justice lens in all areas of grantmaking and to increase the financial resources for racial justice movement building.

GOAL ≈ Dialogue Shift: From a Diversity Framework to Racial Justice in Philanthropy:

Demonstrate the importance and benefits of racial justice in philanthropy.

GOAL ≈ Investment Policies Support Racial Justice:

Demonstrate the importance and benefits of race-conscious investing.

Race and Communications

Akonadi will document and disseminate best practices and contemporary racial justice theories through a communications plan. Akonadi sees a critical need for documentation of racial justice best practices to draw attention and to increase funding to the field. Akonadi will work with a communications consultant over the 2007-2008 transition year to make decisions on how to best document best practices, methods and ideas coming from the field in Oakland and how to use them to both encourage information sharing with their grantees as well as with funder partners.

GOAL ≈ Akonadi as a Resource to Raise the Racial Justice Profile:

Promote racial justice practices through Akonadi's website, publications and reports.

GOAL ≈ Documentation and Dissemination of Successful Racial Justice Practice:

Showcase models, case studies, and assessments that can inform and promote racial justice practices.

