

# Black Queer Equity Index

## WHAT IS THE BQEI?

Lighthouse Foundation's flagship program is the Black Queer Equity Index (BQEI), a Black LGBTQ+ community-led participatory action research project to evaluate nonprofit cultures for Black LGBTQ+ staff and board members. **The BQEI will improve organizational inequity through publishing an annual report card and offering actionable interventions.** Lighthouse Foundation contends that when Black LGBTQ+ employees and board members are centered and empowered in their organizations, those organizations are best positioned to serve communities.

## WHY IS THE BQEI NEEDED?

As we saw with COVID-19 and mpox, health disparities between Black communities and their white counterparts are widening. Over 25 billion dollars in federal funding goes to HIV/AIDS prevention, treatment, and related direct services in the United States. According to the CDC, the percentage of Black gay and bisexual men who represent new HIV cases doubled from 26% in 2018 to 53% in 2020. **Against this backdrop, nonprofits must improve how they support, develop and promote Black LGBTQ+ leadership because communities most impacted have the insights to develop solutions we need.**

## WHAT DID WE LEARN?

We launched the BQEI by evaluating the workplace culture of five of Chicago's largest nonprofits addressing LGBTQ+ health – AIDS Foundation Chicago, Center on Halsted, Chicago House, Equality Illinois, and Howard Brown Health. These nonprofits work on HIV, an issue area with well-documented, pervasive, and persistent racial disparities. Actively striving to be anti-racist, they committed to working closely with us. We analyzed human resources data, surveys, interviews and focus groups to publish a BQEI White Paper in 2021. **100% of Black LGBTQ+ board members and employees reported experiencing marginalization.** Frustrated by initiatives that prioritize optical diversity over the "real work" of anti-racism, they recommended many practices and policies that organizations could change. Five key themes emerged: resource allocation, giving voice and power, professional development, systemic action, and data collection.

### Five key themes emerged:

Resource Allocation

Giving Voice and Power

Professional Development

Systemic Action

Data Collection



## WHAT ARE THE NEXT STEPS?

