



Announcement on ABFE's 2010 Connecting Leaders Fellows Program

Thank you for your support and participation in ABFE as it celebrates its 39th year promoting effective and responsive philanthropy in Black communities. Over the past decade, the organization has steadily evolved, effectively transforming itself from a board-led volunteer organization to the fully-staffed, president-led membership association that exists today. Throughout this period, staff has been intentional about establishing new features to programming such as ABFE's Black men and boys initiative, while preserving the integrity and relevance of signature programs, such as the *James A. Joseph Lecture and Awards Ceremony*.

As we approach our historic 40th year, we have committed ourselves to revisiting each programmatic strategy to ensure its alignment with ABFE's current vision and trajectory as a leader in the field of philanthropy. Primary among these efforts is the Connecting Leaders Fellowship Program, which has emerged in its first five years as a model in the sector for leadership development and retention of mid-career professionals. In recognition of this promise, we have decided to celebrate Year five by performing an assessment longitudinal evaluation to substantiate our anecdotal information on the program's impact on skills enhancement and retention claims. As a result, we will forego conducting a 2010-2011 Class, instead opting to invite a new class to begin in the Summer of 2011.

In place of traditional Fellowship proceedings, we have planned to use this year to strengthen and refine the program curriculum in the following ways:

- Assess the impact of the initial five years of the Connecting Leaders Fellowship Program to better articulate the program's impact and inform improvements to the selection process, fundraising strategy, leadership summit, and fellow roles and requirements;
- Develop the ABFE Connecting Leaders Alumni Network infrastructure;
- Plan and promote the 2011 Leadership Summit, in which fellows will engage representatives from the local philanthropic, nonprofit and governmental sectors of a select community to explore what it means to develop effective and responsive philanthropic strategies in Black communities.

We thank you for your interest and continued support of the Fellows Program. We look forward to this time of assessment and believe ABFE's Leadership Program will be stronger for it. Please feel free to contact Marcus Walton for questions at mwalton@abfe.org.