



**For Immediate Release**

**-- 2021 CONNECTING LEADERS FELLOWSHIP COHORT ANNOUNCED --**  
**ABFE: Building Leadership Capacity in the Global Fight for Racial Equity**

NEW YORK – November 3, 2020 – Today, ABFE: A Philanthropic Partnership for Black Communities announced its 2021 class of its Connecting Leaders Fellowship Program (CLFP). The CLFP is a year-long experience designed to sharpen the skills and strengthen the leadership capacity of foundation staff, donors, and trustees who are committed to assisting Black communities through philanthropy.

Currently, only 5 percent of racial equity funding in the U.S. is specifically focused on movement-building and grassroots organizing, indicating an urgent need to increase funding for activists and groups that are advancing sweeping change. As the Black community struggle to manage these overlapping pandemics, philanthropy has a critical role to play.

“These are the best and brightest leaders in philanthropy and are a critical link to an equitable distribution of resources that are funneled towards anti-Black racism and the required change to make grantmaking more equitable,” said Edward Jones, ABFE vice president of programs. “The senseless killings of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, Tony McDade and others underscore the prevalence of systemic racism along with the urgency to address it. Money alone will not solve the problem, but we believe it can give extra power to increase the impact on systemic racism and catalyze real change.”

CLFP Fellows have the opportunity to learn from seasoned grantmakers and peers on a regular basis, understand how to be more effective agents for change within their institutions, and participate in a network that focuses on innovative solutions to community challenges. Members of this class join 145 other ABFE Fellows since the program’s inception in 2005. The CLFP fellows work in diverse fields across various nonprofits and foundations.

The 2021 Fellows are:

- Kim Addie, senior director of Place-Based Initiatives, United Way of Greater Atlanta (Atlanta, GA)
- Courtenay Barton, program director for Arts & Culture and Racial Equity Initiatives, Cleveland Foundation (Cleveland, OH)
- Kimberly Brown, senior program officer, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (Washington DC)
- Ciara Coleman, program manager, W.K. Kellogg Foundation (New Orleans, LA)
- Keisha Deonarine, executive director, Nspire – A Park Community Initiative, Inc. (Louisville, KY)
- Brittney Frazier, Public Health program specialist, Allegany Franciscan Ministries, (Palm Harbor, FL)
- Mark Harris, Jr., program officer, JPB Foundation (New York, NY)
- Breanna Hawkins, program officer, First 5 LA (Los Angeles, CA)

- Ebony D. Howard, program officer, ELMA Philanthropies Services, (New York, NY)
- Emanuel “Manny” Johnson, program officer, Robert R. McCormick Foundation (Chicago, IL)
- Jamillia Kamara, program officer, Pittsburgh Foundation, (Pittsburgh, PA)
- Rachel Knox, senior program officer, Hyde Family Foundation, (Memphis, TN)
- Danielle Shoots, vice president and chief financial officer, Colorado Trust, (Denver, CO)
- Fernando Snowden-Lorence, vice president for Global Philanthropy, JPMorgan Chase (New York, NY)
- Michael A. Williams, associate program officer, Kresge Foundation, (Detroit, MI)
- Jayme Wooten, founder, CLLCTIVLY, (Baltimore, MD)

“This country is in a crisis and these non-profit and philanthropic leaders have taken a stand for racial justice,” said ABFE’s President and CEO, Susan Taylor Batten “I have no doubt that these dynamic fellows will continue the trajectory of significant pledges by the philanthropic sector to fund Black-led and Black-focused social change and not let it become stagnate or fade after a leadership transition or when philanthropy (or society) elects to turn its attention elsewhere.”

A selection committee comprised of CLFP alumni and ABFE members reviewed application submissions and made final recommendations of the current class. Fellows were chosen based upon a set of criteria covering their experience in philanthropy, their future goals, as well as their interest and passion for making systemic change in Black communities.

[Click Here to Read All Bios](#)

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### About ABFE:

ABFE is a nonprofit, membership-based philanthropic organization that advocates for responsive and transformative investments in Black communities. Partnering with foundations, nonprofits and individuals, ABFE provides its members with professional development and technical assistance resources that further the philanthropic sector’s connection and responsiveness to issues of equality, diversity and inclusion. Established in 1971 as the Association of Black Foundation Executives, the all-volunteer organization was credited with many of philanthropy’s early gains in diversity. It since has evolved into a fully staffed, influential network. In 2013, the organization shed its descriptor and adopted the simpler ABFE (ab-fee) to better reflect its broadening membership. For more information, visit [ABFE.org](http://ABFE.org).

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