



Newsletter

VOL. 44
SUMMER 2023

Dear Donors, Supporters and Friends,

It's summer camp season, and in our circles the best letters home are deemed **newsy**. In that spirit...

We've got a **new senior colleague!** You're going to love Rochelle. *(see p.4 for details)*

Some said it would never happen, but WeWork's longest-tenured* renters are moving out to a **new office** of their own! *(goodbye kombucha on tap, hello elbows not touching)*

We're in the middle of our grant selection process. This was an open application year and we received 160 applications, including 97 from **new (to us) organizations**. Stay tuned for a portfolio refreshed with some of these promising constituents this fall.

Yes, the Supreme Court is erecting **new challenges** to equitable access to higher education, but we're doing our part to ensure opportunity is universally-distributed. *(see our Leaders of Color Initiative on p.2 and a profile of AR grantee ImmSchools on p.3)*

As always, we endeavor herein to be substantive, candid and brief. We look forward to your feedback.

Warmly,
The Arbor Rising Team

*Seriously, we have very likely been strapped into this roller coaster longer than anyone. We moved into WeWork's second building in 2011. They have 200+ sites now.



WATCH

Hear from some of the thousands of high school students AR alum Code Nation has trained in computer science in this **10th anniversary celebration video** (5 min)

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Arbor Rising's Leaders of Color Initiative (LOCI)

Proximate leaders share life experience with those they serve, meaning they are more likely to better understand their challenges, act as credible messengers, and remain committed over time. However, they are underrepresented in nonprofit leadership and face greater barriers to success when they do occupy those positions.

AR created LOCI in 2016 to: 1) **empower more leaders of color**, and 2) **strengthen their candidacy** for AR's "second-stage" portfolio. Each year since, we've selected leaders of color at high-potential, early-stage nonprofits and provided them with \$10-15k in unrestricted funding along with a short course of intensive consulting sessions.

Seven years in, we're proud to share that **LOCI has supported 15 organizations, ~30%* of which have joined our second-stage portfolio.** We are so grateful to be partnering with these talented leaders and excited to kick off year eight! If you'd like to nominate a LOCI candidate, eligibility and program details are [here](#).



Since LOCI's inception, we've been heartened to receive consistent positive feedback from participants, such as...

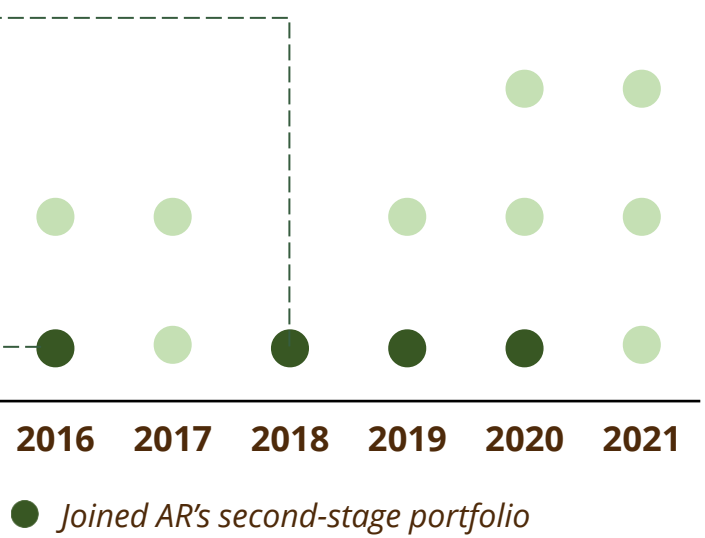
"I loved the safe space. I learned so much about myself and my organization...This has given me the confidence to walk into any room with anyone, and share [my organization's] story."

"LOCI was transformational. I feel empowered as a leader; the theory of change we created together has truly become our leadership team's barometer for making important decisions."

AR awarded Marcy Lab School its first-ever grant and helped them draft a theory of change. Today they are a fully-fledged college alternative, with a \$6M budget and a slick Brooklyn training campus.

The Knowledge House had a budget of \$500k and served 45 participants. Today with a \$5M budget, they have helped hundreds of young adults train for and land jobs in tech.

LOCI Organizations 2016-2021



* Calculated excluding 2022's not-yet-eligible cohort

Grantee Spotlight: ImmSchools

The challenge: 5 million K-12 students in the U.S. (10%!) are either undocumented or live in a mixed-status household. For these students, fear of losing their families to deportation or violence is real and often impacts their emotional well-being and academic progress.

That's where ImmSchools comes in. Founded in 2018, this immigrant-led organization works with administrators, educators and families in NYC, NJ, and TX to help create safe and welcoming cultures in K-12 schools. AR first engaged with ImmSchools through LOCI, when their budget was \$400k; today, they are a \$2.5M organization entering their third year in AR's portfolio.

Changing School Culture – Is That for Real?

Indeed! The team created a rigorous and detailed scorecard to assess schools and districts on their ability to support these students and is spending ~3 years with these partners to drive changes in culture. Stay tuned for the data as these first partnerships wrap up.



In the meantime, we can report that ImmSchools has partnered with over **50 schools and districts** to-date, reaching:

19K+ immigrant students, families and educators *(direct impact)*

172K+ students supported by educators ImmSchools has trained *(indirect impact)*

◀ Left to right: co-founders Lorena Tule-Romain, Vanessa Luna, and Viridiana Carrizales

Welcome, Rochelle!

Rochelle Sinclair joins Arbor Rising this fall as a *Principal* (senior leader) after two decades working in the public, private and nonprofit sectors. Most recently, she served as the Executive Director in New York for **OneGoal**.

We are delighted (and fortunate) to be adding her to our team.



HINDSIGHTS

By acknowledging and reflecting upon our shortcomings, we hope to avoid similar oversights in the future. Here are some excerpts from a long list:

- 1. Congratu—wait where are you going?** A while back we employed the little-used “surprise promotion” tactic. No warning, no structured process, no clear change in responsibilities. Can you believe it was received with bemused perplexity? Happy to report in our go-round this year we communicated a reasonable timeline, established clear targets, and set expectations for responsibilities and compensation going forward. Go figure—it went much, much better. Congratulations *Engagement Manager* Courtney Tran!
- 2. Harmony > Cacophony.** As you saw on p. 2, LOCI participants have a reasonable chance of joining our core “second-stage” portfolio; participants are often curious about that opportunity. Given that we spend months building trust together, transparency and honest communication on this topic is key. Recently, however, three members of our team shared *slightly* different messages, confusing the participant about the likelihood of an invitation to apply. We’ll tighten our messaging.
- 3. What is a 125% gross margin? (And can we have one please?)** If you sell \$0.25 lemonade for a dollar, you have a 75% gross margin. If you sell refurbished furniture, you get paid to haul away the items from the original user and then get paid (a lot) again by the re-purchaser. The business has gross margins north of 100%! In unrelated news, we are over budget on furniture for the new office.

News From Our Network

- AR grantee **YPIE** is expanding their effective college access and success programming into **Jersey City**. Kudos to ED Sam Wallis and team! They’re hiring a **site director** if you know anyone...
- Virtual tutoring nonprofit **UPchieve**, a 2nd year AR grantee, secured a \$1.5M commitment from the Skyline Foundation (Yahoo founder) along with another follow-on grant from Gates. Nice work!
- AR alumni **Code Nation** just **celebrated ten years** of building the next generation of diverse coding talent. (We still remember when Maurya took the leap and quit her day job.) Congrats to their team!

2022-2023 Portfolio

Second-stage



Follow-on

