

Assessment of the 2025 RESOP Initiatives

Organizational Initiatives

There is an ongoing emphasis on enhancing staff capacity to incorporate DEI principles into their work by using staff-developed tools like our Equity Lens for strategic decisions. The BEAM Team formalized all-staff learning and discussion sessions, which occurred four times this year, and conducted two pulse surveys and a more comprehensive annual survey to gauge organizational culture and DEI practices. In addition, DEI goals have been integrated into professional assessments and related updates were made to the employee handbook and HR policies that align with the Fund's DEI values and legal requirements.

At the board level, the investment committee has begun implementing socially responsible investment strategies, including continuing to screen out tobacco and investing in a customized index portfolio with a focus on health and wellness, racial justice, and democracy. The board's ad hoc DEI committee finalized its charter and role, emphasizing the integration of DEI in organizational processes and external partnerships. It also created a framework for DEI action and measurement that will be implemented into all committee work. The new CDC Foundation scholarship, Voices Today for Change Tomorrow, in which Milbank has played a role, has enhanced visibility for Voices, and is an important source of new funding for the organization.

State Leadership Programs

The Emerging Leaders Program and the Milbank Fellows Program have continued to maintain diverse participation that mirrors the US demographic makeup, specifically considering race, ethnicity, political ideology, gender and sexual orientation. At the same time, the programs are enhancing leaders' capacity to manage depolarizing discussions and promote best practices for advancing health equity through inclusive recruitment, meeting culture, and program curriculum.

Staff successfully recruited diverse 2024-2025 classes, maintaining close to 40% persons of color participation. The share of participants identifying as LGBTQIA+ rebounded from last year as did applications and cohort representation among men. Legislator and Republican participation increased slightly, though the share is still slightly less than half of participants.

Participants have spoken to the ways the DEI sessions have expanded their thinking and leadership program alumni of color, in particular, have appreciated the new alumni convenings as a way to maintain a supportive community.

Milbank State Leadership Network communications and briefings have focused on promoting depolarization and health equity discussions. Briefings have intentionally engaged speakers of color to include a diversity of perspectives and narratives, although there was slightly less racial diversity among MSLN speakers in 2025 than in prior years.

Population Health Programs

Milbank's network of Medicaid agencies engaged in primary care initiatives, and the Primary Care Investment Network, which Milbank supports, continue to see high levels of engagement. While strong primary care is associated with improved health equity, there hasn't been a specific focus on racial equity in these networks.

The 2025 Scorecard did not call for data on the primary care workforce by race and ethnicity. However, it did include a sidebar on approaches to increasing the diversity of the workforce through pipeline programs. We also highlighted this issue in other 2025 Fund publications, including [Why the US Needs a Racially and Ethnically Diverse Health Care Workforce](#).

Under the Peterson-Milbank program, we published guidance on ways that states can safeguard and promote health equity alongside their efforts to make health care more affordable, particularly for those who bear the greatest burden of high and rising health care costs. In addition, some participating states published survey data highlighting health care affordability concerns by race and ethnicity.

Communications Initiatives

Over 20% of *Milbank Quarterly* articles and Opinions published in 2025 have been equity-focused, meeting the target for equity as one of 5 editorial areas of interest. This count does not include articles published in the special issue, *Mental Health and Substance Use Challenges Facing the United States: What Can State Policymakers Do?*

Efforts to increase representation of racial and ethnic minority groups among *MQ* and *MMF* authors and *MQ* reviewers continue. Demographic self-reporting is an ongoing challenge. Wiley's new manuscript management system does not allow *MQ* authors or reviewers to self-report demographic information. *The Quarterly* staff is in the process of soliciting advice from the Editorial Advisory Board (EAB) to help develop strategies and practices that will increase the racial, ethnic, political, and geographic diversity of the authors and reviewers. A subset of EAB members with expertise in this area may be convened for further discussion. The Milbank Memorial Fund reached its goal for racial and ethnic representation among authors; an estimated 30% of all authors were people of color. In 2026, *MMF* will capture self-reported demographic data using a new survey platform that integrates with Salesforce.

The DEI style guide, primarily for use by *MMF* staff and authors, has been routinely updated to incorporate the latest evidence-based guidance. Milbank's Equity Lens is occasionally being applied to *MMF* publications during the commissioning and review process. Our 2026 strategic plan calls for its more consistent use.

2025 RESOP: Initiatives Status Summary

Organizational Initiatives	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Become an organization that is and is viewed by staff as racially equitable and inclusive, and values the full participation of individuals of diverse backgrounds <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build the capacity of staff to incorporate diversity, equity and inclusion into their work by applying our Equity Lens tool to strategic decisions; continuing staff-led learning and discussion sessions guided by our Building Equity at Milbank (BEAM) staff workgroup; incorporating DEI goals into professional assessments and individual development plans; and conducting regular team discussions of holding to our values in challenging political environments 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Document systems, policies, and practices to ensure transparency and identify areas for improvement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to conduct surveys to assess staff satisfaction and belonging and track organizational DEI metrics Continue to review and revise our human resources policies and procedures on a yearly basis using an equity lens Incorporate contractor and vendor selection practices that promote diversity, equity, and inclusion 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement a mission-and-values-aligned investment strategy that is reflective of our organizational values <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue quarterly Board investment committee meetings with Cambridge Continue to implement the Socially Responsible Investment strategy 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement a formal plan for Board leadership succession and senior staff turnover that improves race/ethnicity representation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Board will develop a plan for transitions and board processes consistent with Milbank values and its equity lens 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plan for Board and staff DEI strategies and oversight implementation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Board will oversee the Fund's work and role in fulfilling the Fund's commitment to an ongoing partnership with Voices for Our Fathers Legacy Foundation with direction from the Ad Hoc Committee on DEI Oversight The Board will also develop a framework for DEI action and measurement, implement an equity lens and commit to using it in decision-making, determine how DEI work interfaces with 	

<p>governance and develop regularly held and intentional spaces to discuss the emotions that come with DEI work</p>	
Initiatives in state health policy leadership programs	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain participation by members of racial and ethnic minority groups in our two state leadership program cohorts that is representative of the US population 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase health policy leaders' capacity to facilitate depolarizing conversations to advance racial health equity work in states 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify and promote best practices for programmatic interventions to promote health equity, recruiting consultants and faculty who are people of color, and ensuring that the strategies are relevant and applicable in environments in which it is challenging to advance this work 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase participation among representatives of the communities we aim to serve, including underrepresented racial and ethnic minority communities, in Milbank State Leadership Network (MSLN) briefings and as authors of MSLN publications 	
Initiatives in population health programs	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop Medicaid's role in strengthening primary care by convening and supporting the Making Care Primary (MCP) Network of state Medicaid agencies 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to support the newly established Primary Care Investment Network of states that are involved in developing, proposing, passing, or implementing legislation to measure and/or increase primary care spending as a percentage of total spending 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote states' focus on the impact of health care costs on health equity, including by supporting state communications focused on populations facing greater affordability challenges 	
Communications Initiatives	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain health equity as one of five key areas of editorial interest for <i>The Milbank Quarterly</i>, with at least 20% of published articles and opinions focused on health equity 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the percentage of <i>Milbank Quarterly</i> reviewers and authors, as well as Milbank Memorial Fund contributors, who are members of racial or ethnic minority groups 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement methods for capturing self-identification of racial and ethnic identity by reviewers and authors in order to collect more 	

accurate data regarding the percentage of individuals who are members of racial or ethnic minority groups	
↳ Convene an expert subset of editorial advisory board to help develop practices that will increase the racial/ethnic, political, and geographic diversity of the authors and reviewers	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to update the Milbank Memorial Fund diversity, equity, and inclusion style manual to incorporate the latest evidence-based guidance 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apply Milbank's Equity Lens to all blogs, briefs, and reports during commissioning and review 	