There are many approaches to innovation. As a 2020 Innovation Grants Program awardee shows, sometimes innovation means identifying a problem and developing a plan to solve it.

Both innovation initiatives and diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) programs require associations to define goals, develop strategies, and take definitive action to move forward. The Greater Cleveland Partnership (GCP), a 2020 Innovation Grants Program grant recipient, outlined a systematic and multipronged approach to innovation and DEI in their winning proposal, “Towards a Racially Equitable Association.”

A chamber of commerce with 12,000 members throughout northeast Ohio, GCP is using its IGP award to fuel work already underway. They began by openly acknowledging the problem to address, engaging staff at various levels, practicing a culture of learning, and building a strategy to continue their efforts using clearly defined terms. The steps they are using provide a model for other associations tackling innovation or DEI to replicate.

**Gather Information**

Once a problem has been identified, project leaders need to gather information and embrace new inputs. Associations that succeed at innovation have a culture of learning, according to
of commerce and other associations to adapt for themselves.

GCP members come from a wide range of industries, so sustained success for its initiative has the potential to propel widespread progress in advancing racial equity in business and association communities.

Learn More

Find out more about the ASAE Research Foundation’s Innovation Grants Program and the other 2020 recipients on the foundation website.