

**Organization Name:** [Automotive Repair Transformation](#)

**Date of Interview:** 4/15/24

**Organization Interviewees:** Eli Allison and Fiona

**Impact 100 GRT Interviewers:** Gretchen Boehm and Tanya Moore

**Application:** [Click here](#)

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### **Organization Mission:**

It is the mission, duty and purpose of Auto Repair Transformation (A.R.T.) to close the equity gap for workers and customers in the automotive repair industry by removing barriers to access, inspiring marginalized people to enter and thrive in the industry and advocating for inclusive and equitable environments. Primarily to serve and address the needs of BIPOC, Women, LGBTQIA+, and low-income people.

### **What are the compelling reasons for Impact 100 to partner with this organization?**

A.R.T is an incredibly unique organization because “transportation and getting around” is critical to all people! A.R.T. is working to fix more than just cars; they are working to fix a broken industry. The car repair/service/shop industry is embedded in sexism and misogyny. It is not uncommon for BIPOC, Women, LGBTQIA+, and low-income people to feel unsafe or intimidated by this industry as a customer or a technician. Eli Allison, founder and only staff, funded the organization for 11 years until 2022 when A.R.T was incorporated as a 501c3 nonprofit. Now, A.R.T is able to build capacity by increasing partner shops to train auto tech apprentices with the goal to “untrain sexism and misogyny” in the industry. In Eli’s words” it feels awesome to see folks come into a shop and feel welcome and safe”.

A.R.T is providing access to auto repair for low income folks. It is not uncommon for low wage earners to lose their jobs if they do not show up for work. A reliable and safe vehicle is vital for maintaining one's livelihood, accessing medical appointments, etc. - and this program prioritizes financial assistance towards repairs for BIPOC, Women, LGBTQIA+ houseless community members.

**Do you have any reservations about this organization as a potential grantee partner for Impact 100?** None.

### **What does the organization do?**

A.R.T. is working to create an equitable environment for Women, BIPOC, LGBTQIA2S+ individuals in the automotive industry as customers and workers. 5 principal programs:

- **Apprenticeships:** 2-year program that trains new automotive technicians and service advisors. Expand access to the automotive repair trade for women, BIPOC, LGBTQIA+, and low-income communities. This program has been around for 11 years (before A.R.T. was formed as a 501c3) and was housed at the partner Repair Revolution shop.
  - **Community workshops:** Created to make car repair knowledge more accessible for BIPOC, Women, LGBTQIA+, and low-income people. Enabling them to do car maintenance/repair themselves, be knowledgeable so that they can understand repair needs at a shop
  - **Lights out on racism:** Provides free exterior light inspection and bulb replacement for our BIPOC and low-income community.
  - **Financial assistance:** Program prioritizes financial assistance towards repairs for BIPOC, Women, LGBTQIA+ houseless community members. A.R.T. understands that having a safe, running car is needed for healthcare, job opportunities, and often as a safe haven for vehicle residents who not only sleep in their car but use it to get to work.
- Partners in equity:** The partner shop equity program exists to advocate for car repair shops to become more inclusive (for both employees AND customers). A.R.T stated that this is a place where they are

really focusing in order to open more doors for their apprentices to have work, but also to really begin digging into changing the systemic racism, misogyny, and more that exists within the current automotive culture.

All of these programs work to build a more inclusive and equitable society - increasing job opportunities for those interested in auto mechanics, creating a space for people to learn and ask questions to better advocate for themselves when having their car worked on, and financial help allowing families to keep jobs, make appointments, and more.

### **Who does the organization serve?**

A.R.T primarily serves and addresses the needs of BIPOC, Women, LGBTQIA+, and low-income people. Transportation is a crucial factor in advancing economic equality. A.R.T is creating a more inclusive and accessible car repair industry for these communities, providing education and empowerment to ensure that marginalized groups, particularly low-income populations, are not taken advantage of during the repair process. There is a disproportionate impact of barriers to safe and reliable transportation on low-income individuals and BIPOC community members. A.R.T strives to alleviate these challenges by offering preventative measures and maintenance to address safety issues before they result in citations or court dates. By dismantling the barriers that marginalized groups face, A.R.T is working towards a more equitable future in the automotive repair industry.

### **How does the organization reflect, maintain proximity to and stay accountable to the community it serves?**

Eli Allison, executive director, is LGBTQIA and from a multiracial family. The board includes LGBTQIA individuals, and folks from BIPOC communities. LGBTQIA and BIPOC individuals who represent the community that A.R.T .serves are employed at the primary training shop. (Repair Revolution) A.R.T. works closely with LGBTQIA community partners and has a strong relationship with the automotive tech programs at local colleges allowing continued assessment of community needs. A.R.T is building relationships with more partner shops that will expand access to reflect the needs of participants who may live further away from the primary shop.

### **What inequity is the organization addressing and what is the root cause of that inequity? How is the organization addressing this?**

There is great inequity in access to auto repair and auto repair knowledge from both a customer and employee standpoint. It is no secret that the automotive repair industry is male dominated. If the industry is reflecting women, LGBTQIA community members, and people of color it naturally leads to folks feeling more welcome and included. People can thrive and succeed and lead in this industry when they feel welcome and safe. All training leads with DEIAB, then technical training. By using this approach in repair shops, A.R.T is creating a culture where all people feel welcome and safe.

### **How is the organization collaborating with other community-based organizations?**

A.R.T. works closely with LGBTQIA community partners and has a strong relationship with the automotive tech programs at local colleges, allowing continued assessment of community needs. A.R.T. is utilizing Board and Founder contacts within the communities served, and are working to spread the word about A.R.T programs within the BIPOC and LGBTQIA communities.

A.R.T is working to bring in more partner shops which expand access, allowing more chances to stay accountable to the mission and reflect the needs of participants who may live further away from the primary

shop. A.R.T. is also creating relationships with government and city agencies to help support the Lights Out program and create a mechanism for vouchers for free headlight/taillight repair.

**What is the vision for the organization in 5 years?**

Creating more partner shops so apprentices have more opportunities to work in safe and open environments which then creates the same type of environment for customers. Emphasis will be on bringing in the partner shops to a system that has been shown to work through Eli's work the last 12 years. Expanding partner shops will in turn allow for all the programs to expand creating a network of shops that work together to meet the needs of women, low income, BIPOC and LGBTQIA through employment opportunities, community education, safety and financial assistance and helping to create/maintain economic stability/mobility and safety for those that it serves.

**What is the organization's area of greatest need?**

Funding for staff and programs. Eli is the founder and only staff member at this point. A.R.T needs to hire staff to expand programming. Goal is to hire a Development Director, and 4-5 program staff.

**Highlight a story of impact.**

We have heard many heartwarming stories over the years from our participants, but one of our favorites is from a set of twins whose parent asked us to host a "sweet 16 car care workshop" for them and their friends to learn about car safety and maintenance. A couple of months after they took the class, their neighbor had a flat tire and they headed over armed with the knowledge they gained in our class and successfully installed the spare tire on their neighbor's car. The sense of pride these young women felt is indicative of the impact we are making in breaking through stereotypes in a male-dominated space. Our workshops not only provide practical knowledge but also empower individuals to take charge of their vehicle maintenance, regardless of their gender or background. It is one of the many ways we accomplish our mission of reshaping the automotive repair landscape and creating a more equitable future.