

# The Ari Advocacy Center

**The Education Trust**, as a national partner, brought new insights and opportunities for The Ari Center. The Education Trust served as a thought partner while we navigated the political and social climate of our state and bridged collaborative support and relationships with state and national leaders and experts and encouraged the use of a collective approach to solve education equity issues and complex problems.

Much consideration was given to the fact that a collective approach may be more effective than working to address a problem as an individual or single organization. The inclusion of individuals and organizations with varying backgrounds and experiences brings new perspectives to issues and problems with the added benefit of shedding light on what may not have otherwise been seen. As a result, The Ari Center team attended several specialized, intensive trainings, sponsored by The Education Trust, with organizations, education leaders, and experts, from across the country in small class settings with concentrated agendas that addressed education equity issues.

Equally important the partnership with The Education Trust strengthened our internal assets (skill development) and provided complimentary supports, which increased our capacity to engage the communities and people we serve more effectively. They served as a clearinghouse of information and provided technical assistance, such as data sources and customized tools, that helped to reinforce concepts and contributed to the understanding of and sustained focus on issues. This is best demonstrated by our **Community Equity-Data Walks**. The data walks presented data in a visual context that allowed us support community members in having robust, fact-based conversations and in planning action steps. The visual data also allowed us to continue outreach to others who may have been interested in or linked to the issue in some way.

The Ari Center also had the incredible opportunity to serve as the **State Coordinator** for **The Ed Trust Family Fellowship (ETFF)**. The fellowship supported parents and family members from across the state by building on their skills, knowledge, and experiences and encouraging them to work alongside leaders in their communities to improve outcomes for the most vulnerable students.

