

Organization Name: Auto Repair Transformation (A.R.T.)

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Organization Interviewees: Eli Allison, Dee Jackson

Impact 100 GRT Interviewers: Heidi Narayan

Application Link: <https://2025grt.softtr.app/glt-applications-detail?recordId=recQexRMftjNJar0Y>

Organization mission: A.R.T.'s mission is 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.

What does the organization do? A.R.T. offers five core programs including paid apprenticeships, community car care workshops, free safety light repairs, low-income repair assistance, and equity partnerships with auto shops. Through education, hands-on training, advocacy, and inclusive partnerships, A.R.T. aims to make the industry more just, accessible, and empowering for marginalized communities.

Who does the organization serve? A.R.T. primarily serves BIPOC, women, LGBTQIA+, and low-income individuals, both as workers and customers, centering those most impacted by inequities in the automotive repair industry. As a “by and for” organization, their team is made up entirely of people who share lived experiences with the communities they serve.

What inequity is the organization addressing and how does the organization address it? A.R.T. addresses systemic inequities in the automotive repair industry, which is traditionally male-dominated and less accessible to women, BIPOC, LGBTQIA+, and low-income individuals. These communities often face exploitation during repairs, lack access to technical education, and are disproportionately impacted by vehicle-related policing. A.R.T. tackles these barriers through paid apprenticeships, preventative car care services, community education, and its Partners in Equity program, which helps independent shops become safer, more inclusive workplaces. Their work not only diversifies the industry but also builds a more equitable and sustainable future for marginalized communities.

What are the compelling reasons to support this organization? How is this organization doing transformative work? Supporting Auto Repair Transformation is an opportunity to be part of transformative, systems-level change in one of the most overlooked but essential sectors: the automotive repair industry. A.R.T. is reimagining what equity, access, and justice can look like in a trade that has long excluded women, BIPOC, LGBTQIA+, and low-income individuals. With less than 2% of technicians identifying as women and even fewer from LGBTQIA+ or BIPOC backgrounds, the barriers to entry and success in this field are significant and systemic. A.R.T. is not just training people to fix cars—it's repairing a broken industry by creating inclusive training programs, safer workplaces, and real economic pathways for marginalized communities.

Through its *Registered Apprenticeship Program*—Washington State's first of its kind in automotive repair—A.R.T. equips underrepresented individuals with not only technical skills, but also paid, on-the-job experience and mentorship in safe, affirming environments. The program addresses long-standing inequities in employment access by removing financial barriers and offering a living wage with benefits, creating a model that helps people build sustainable careers without incurring student debt. Simultaneously, A.R.T.'s *Partners in Equity* program supports independent shops in adopting inclusive practices, offering DEI training, mentorship, and resources that make it easier for small businesses to hire and retain diverse talent. This approach ensures both entry into and sustainability within the industry for marginalized workers.

The organization's community impact extends beyond the workplace. Programs like *Lights Out on Racism* and *Low-Income Repair Assistance* reduce harm for low-income drivers, especially BIPOC individuals who are

disproportionately cited for minor vehicle issues that can escalate into legal or financial crises. These services don't just keep cars running – they keep people safe, employed, and out of the court system. In 2024 alone, A.R.T. provided nearly \$35,000 in repairs to low-income clients, 86% of whom were women, trans, or non-binary, and 75% were people of color. Many clients were either caregivers, domestic violence survivors, or living in their vehicles—underscoring the essential nature of reliable transportation for survival and mobility. By supporting A.R.T., Impact 100 has the chance to invest in a proven, scalable solution that advances workforce equity, strengthens local economies, and transforms lives through dignified, skilled work.

Highlight a story of impact: Sharing highlights (rewritten to be more concise) of a note from an ART client:

I wanted to reach out and express my gratitude to ART for fixing my headlights and taillight through the Low Income Fund. I am an older adult and am dealing with health challenges which affect my ability to earn and pay for many of my basic needs. I must and do use my car to get to necessary medical appointments.

As you know, here in Seattle, in the winter it gets dark early, by 4:00pm. My lights were so dim, at times, I could hardly tell if they were on or not. In addition to that, each time I'd drive, I had to worry about my broken-out taillight putting me at risk of getting pulled over by the police.

Now that ART has fixed the issues with my headlights and taillight, I don't have to drive with limited ability to see safely in front of me or the fear about getting pulled over for a broken taillight putting myself and others at risk. This sense of safety is such a relief, I even breathe more freely while driving!

But there's something deeper and more profound than I ever imagined would happen after this repair: See, my taillight was broken out due to a violent outburst involving a domestic violence relationship I had been in. Every single time I would see that busted out light, it would remind me of what had happened, and I'd get a knot in the pit of my stomach regarding that night and other violent incidents and injuries. Luckily, I'm able to share, that after several attempts, I was able to escape the relationship, but the marks on my car and triggers in my mind had remained. So, I would just try not to look at the back of my car where the light had been busted out, to prevent flashbacks.

After ART fixed my lights, and gave me my keys, I saw my repaired tail light. I was in awe as I took my hand and ran it across the smooth new light casing and spoke to my car. And I realized that awful image of the night the light was busted out in anger, no longer had a hold on me. I never imagined how therapeutic getting this fixed would be! It was so healing, giving much more meaning and depth to the word "repair".

I thank you, ART, Repair Revolution, and The Low Income Fund, so very much for helping to keep me and others safe on the road and for the unexpected and greatly appreciated healing. The gifts you've brought to us who have been fortunate enough to benefit from your care and expertise are immeasurable. Thank you from the bottom of my heart.

What is the organization's area of greatest need? Capacity - staff to support the demand of the apprenticeship program and community events. There is always a waitlist and we would love to have capacity to support more people who want the training.