

## FAQS: The Catalyst Fund

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### **Section I: About EDI**

- How is the League defining equity, diversity, and inclusion?

***Equity is fair treatment, equal opportunity, and fairness in access to information and the distribution of resources.*** Equity considers underrepresentation and historic marginalization and is most often measured by the actions organizations take and how those actions are perceived by its communities. Equity (or a lack of it) plays out in conscious and unconscious ways within our institutional practices, such as the types of holidays we observe or the ways we recruit and engage with musicians, staff, boards, and artistic leaders from underrepresented communities.

***Diversity is representation of our individual and collective identities.*** Identity markers such as age, differing abilities, education, ethnicity, gender expression, geographic location, marital and family status, national origin and immigration status, race, religion, sexual orientation, and socio-economic background manifest differently depending on the context, meaning our definition of diversity is ever-shifting and needs to be. Diversity may look different from one city or state to another, due to population demographics, but it is recognizable when people with different backgrounds and experiences from within a community are present. Each organization must identify which perspectives are well represented and underrepresented within their musicians, staff, boards, and artistic leaders, and must consider how well they represent their larger community.

***Inclusion creates a culture of belonging that embraces participation by everyone.*** The degree to which individuals from a wide range of backgrounds can participate fully in the decision-making processes and practices within the organization and their comfort in doing so is a measure of inclusion. For example, if an orchestra creates a culturally-specific fellowship program for musicians but does not include musicians from that culture in the planning and evaluation process, or in mentoring fellows, fellows are unlikely to feel integral to the orchestra.

- Why are equity, diversity, and inclusion important to the League?

The League believes that a commitment to EDI is foundational to upholding the principles of equality and fairness inherent in creating a more just society. The League aspires to support orchestras in attaining unparalleled artistry and celebrating broad-based audience engagement through providing tools and resources for members' growth. A deeper understanding of the breadth of underrepresented communities will only enhance orchestras' understanding of equity, diversity, and inclusion and strengthen their ability to embrace and practice EDI principles.

The League itself is working to develop authentic EDI practices and stands committed to using its resources in support of field progress. The League's commitment to supporting the field in growing knowledge and understanding of EDI is based on the belief that:

- EDI is essential to the long-term relevance of orchestral performance and the viability of the institutions that support it.
  - EDI is imperative for meaningful, authentic, and relevant relationships with communities.
  - EDI is fundamental to creating cultures where creativity flourishes and all staff, musicians, boards, and artistic leaders are supported in bringing their full identities into their orchestras.
  - EDI is necessary for the innovation that orchestras must pursue to adapt to their changing environment and to be fiscally secure and artistically vibrant.
  - EDI is vital in attracting and retaining the highest levels of talent to all dimensions of orchestras—musicians, staff, boards, and artistic leadership.
  - EDI is foundational to upholding the principles of equality and fairness inherent in creating a more just society.
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- Is this program suitable for my orchestra if we have not yet undertaken any EDI work?

The League aspires to support members at any point in their EDI journey, and we welcome orchestras with a range of experience to apply for Catalyst Fund grants. However, we will prioritize proposals from orchestras with a demonstrated and strong commitment to growing their understanding and application of EDI principles.

- Where can I go if I would like additional learning resources on equity, diversity, and inclusion?

The League's online [Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Center](#) offers dozens of resources. You may also review [The Catalyst Fund Resource Guide](#).

## **Section II: About the Catalyst Program**

- Who is eligible to apply?

The Catalyst Fund is open to all League member orchestras based in the United States (both adult and youth) whose membership is in good standing. The Catalyst Fund is not open to member organizations based outside of the United States, or to other member types, such as festivals or corporate members.

- How frequently is this grant program offered?

The Catalyst Fund is a pilot grant program, made possible with support from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation with additional support from the Paul M. Angell Family Foundation. Under the program's current structure, Catalyst grants were available in 2019 and 2020, and the current round with applications opening in fall 2020 is the last year of the three-year pilot program.

- What is the grant range?

The Catalyst Fund grants generally range from \$10,000 to \$25,000. All grant awards must be expended during the one-year grant period.

- What are some of the ways these grant funds could be used?

The Catalyst Fund aims to support ***internal organizational development and capacity building*** around EDI to help orchestras be better prepared to create and deliver their external programming and engage with their communities. Grants are used to engage EDI consultants to help orchestras create and implement strategies that are relevant to their own orchestras and communities. Examples of activities that may be supported by Catalyst Fund grants include, but are not limited to:

- Helping board and staff clarify and align their strategic thinking on EDI issues
  - Conducting an institutional audit and/or developing an EDI plan
  - Professional development such as coaching, mentorship, or training for musicians, staff, boards, and artistic leaders
  - Developing recruitment materials and hiring practices that demonstrate prior knowledge and understanding of the principles of diversity to emphasize inclusion and equity
- Is the Catalyst program just about race and ethnicity?

Black contributors to orchestral music in America have been uniquely undervalued and marginalized. The League's 2016 *Racial/Ethnic and Gender Diversity in the Orchestra Field* report indicated that only 1.8% of orchestra musicians self-identify as African American and 2.4% as Hispanic; these percentages have hardly moved in the last 25 years. Taking steps to repair our relationship with Black people in particular will have ripple effects across all of our anti-discrimination efforts.

Efforts to advance equity, diversity, and inclusion are about acknowledging and correcting historical systems that have disadvantaged and oppressed certain populations to maintain white privilege. This work develops sensitivity and care for all human beings in a way that can benefit people of all marginalized identities.

For orchestras in the aggregate, the extreme lack of racial and ethnic diversity represents a major and overarching challenge that merits sustained attention and action across the field. And yet, the League's 2016 diversity study also indicated the underrepresentation of women in certain roles, noting the dominance of men as music directors (91%) and conductors (80%). Each individual orchestra should consider its local circumstance in efforts to understand and advance equity, diversity, and inclusion and to lift its own ability to address inequity among the marginalized communities relevant to its context. This may include diversity of race, ethnicity, gender, and socio-economic status, or other characteristics of personal identity such as individuals who represent the first generation to attain higher education, have followed non-traditional pathways to professional life in the face of adversity

(such as societal, economic, or academic disadvantages), or have various experiences in terms of sexual identity, gender identity, age, disability, geography, and/or faith and religion.

### **Section III: Applying for a Grant**

- How do I complete the application?

Eligible orchestras may apply for a Catalyst Fund grant through the [online application](#). Online submission through Acceptd is required.

Applicants must first create an account and complete all required fields, providing information about your orchestra, your proposed project, and the community in which your orchestra resides. In addition, applicants must upload the following documents as PDF attachments:

- A one-page commitment letter, signed by the Executive Director/CEO, Board Chair, Music Director, and Musicians' Representative (i.e., the orchestra's elected players' representative; the signatures of a quorum of musicians; the orchestra's personnel manager) stating the orchestra's commitment to growing understanding of EDI and the proposed project
  - A copy of your organization's most recent audited financial statement (no older than 2 fiscal years prior)
  - A preliminary project budget using the [budget template](#)
  - Relevant digital or analogue material from the past three years that demonstrates your commitment to sustained EDI work (e.g., previous organizational audit, agenda for anti-bias/anti-racism workshop, notes from internal/external conversations with key stakeholders, collected or disaggregated data from previous program activities, report from a prior consultancy, evaluation tools you've created and use, materials from a similar program, etc.)
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- Who do I contact if I need assistance in completing this grant application?

If you have additional questions after attending a webinar (September 10, October 8), please contact us at [catalyst@americanorchestras.org](mailto:catalyst@americanorchestras.org). For technical support using Acceptd, please email [support@getacceptd.com](mailto:support@getacceptd.com) or call 888 725 2122.

- Must my organization have a consultant partner identified in order to apply?

Applicants must plan on working in partnership with an external EDI expert to refine and apply their EDI goals. However, applicants are not required to identify or contract an EDI consultant as part of their initial application. Orchestras offered a provisional grant are required to engage a consulting partner to receive grant funds and will have approximately twelve weeks to search for and hire an EDI consultant.

- Can we apply as part of a consortium or partnership?

Applicants wishing to pursue this work as part of a consortium or partnership may do so in collaboration with other eligible League members. This may be of interest especially to

organizations that have regional orchestra partners and wish to scale or replicate their EDI efforts. Please email us at [catalyst@americanorchestras.org](mailto:catalyst@americanorchestras.org) to discuss your consortium proposal before submitting your application.

- How do I budget for this work?

Applicants are asked to provide a provisional budget using the [budget template](#). Only orchestras offered a provisional grant are required to identify a consultant they wish to contract and submit a final budget for consideration.

The League recognizes the challenge involved in estimating consultancy costs. Organizations without prior experience in engaging an EDI consultant may find it beneficial to ask for guidance from other orchestras that have undertaken such work, or to benchmark fees used to engage consultants in other projects such as strategic planning.

- My orchestra was offered a provisional grant—what are my next steps?

Organizations offered a provisional grant will then have approximately eight weeks to undertake a search for an EDI consultant and to submit evidence of agreement between the consultant and the orchestra. Orchestras then have approximately four weeks to finalize the consulting contract and submit a final budget to the League reflecting updated project costs. The League will neither review the final consultancy proposal, nor assess the consultant selected. The League will make final grant determinations based on review of the final project budget submitted.

Orchestras offered a provisional grant are strongly encouraged to make plans for lead project staff to attend the Catalyst Forum at the online League Conference in June 2021.

- Are there key questions my organization should ask itself before looking for an EDI consultant?

Before starting the process of actively soliciting an EDI consultant, you should consider where you are as an organization, why EDI is important to you, and who will manage and engage with the work ahead. A few things to consider:

- **Determine who will support this process.** EDI only works when done *in community* and not *to community*, and with an unwavering commitment from leadership.
  - **Understand and articulate where you are as an organization.** To support this work, our [Resource Guide](#), particularly the self-assessment worksheet, will help you to reflect on your organization's progress to date, challenges, and needs.
  - **Define your rationale for this work.** It may be beneficial to document why your orchestra is doing this work now, and to use this as a touchstone throughout your EDI learning journey.
- Do you have any tips on drafting an RFP to engage an EDI consultant?

Please refer to [The Catalyst Fund RFP Guide](#) for more detail on how to develop an RFP, including some suggestions on pre-work that your organization should consider. Generally, your RFP should include:

- **Organization Overview:** Briefly share the mission and history of your orchestra.
  - **Rationale:** Why are you doing this work at this moment in your orchestra's history?
  - **Scope of Work:** What are the guiding questions you hope to answer with this consultancy?
  - **Anticipated Tasks and Deliverables:** At this stage, what tasks do you expect the consultant to undertake, and what outputs do you expect to result from their work? What milestones can you identify?
  - **Resources:** What information, knowledge, connections, or other resources do you expect to supply to the consultant?
  - **Reporting:** To whom will the consultant be accountable?
  - **Application Process:** How—and by what date—should consultants approach you, and what information do you need in order to assess their suitability for the role?
- My orchestra was offered a provisional grant—does the League know where I can find an EDI consultant?

As part of The Catalyst Fund, and to support the field, the League has compiled a list of known EDI consultants (acknowledging that this list is neither inclusive of all expertise, nor does the League endorse any particular entity). This list will be supplied to all orchestras offered a provisional grant.

- If awarded a grant, am I required to participate in cohort learning?

The League acknowledges that EDI work can be challenging and has structured some opportunities for cohort learning exclusively for Catalyst Fund grantees. Through a series of four convenings (one, during the League's online National Conference and three remote sessions) and reinforced by an online forum, grantees will have the chance to share successes and challenges, learning from the experience of others to inform their own work. Grantees should plan to participate in all four convenings and are required to participate in all virtual cohort learning activities.