



# **Mentorship Program for Opera Leaders of Color**

**2022 Guidelines and Application Procedures**

**OPERA America**  
National Opera Center  
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New York, NY 10001  
[operaamerica.org](http://operaamerica.org)

## Goals

OPERA America reaffirms its pledge to be an agent for change in the determined and sustained effort to eradicate racism and ensure equity and justice throughout the opera field. Many of opera's inherited practices and prejudices have excluded Black, Indigenous, and People of Color from participating in the art form. The Mentorship Program for Opera Leaders of Color was created to acknowledge that Black, Latinx, Asian, Pacific Islander, South Asian, Arab, Middle Eastern, North African, and Native American administrators face many systemic barriers that have limited their professional advancement, regardless of their leadership potential, level of experience, or current title. This program was conceived through the continued work and efforts of the Racial Justice Opera Network Steering Committee to bring equity to the art form.

Navigating the opera landscape and pathways to arts leadership can be complex. The Mentorship Program for Opera Leaders of Color provides support for administrators who are at the threshold of taking their next leadership step by pairing them with more seasoned leaders in the opera field who can serve as coaches and advocates. This program intentionally identifies and disrupts barriers to increase representation and agency for BIPOC leaders at all levels in the opera field.

## About

The Mentorship Program for Opera Leaders of Color provides a unique opportunity for motivated participants to cultivate professional skills and long-term relationships. Participants in this program must have a minimum of one year of administrative experience, managing programs and/or staff, that has allowed them to build an understanding of organizational structure and processes. This program is best suited for those who are/have been employed at an OPERA America Professional Company Member. All program participants must be able to fully commit to the program, in both time and capacity. Professionals engaging in other forms of professional development or additional education programs (including but not limited to university degree programs, certifications, and other mentorship programs) will not be excluded from participation in the program, though the engagement in other programs may be considered. Program participants will be paired with established leaders in their areas of interest for a one-year engagement. The program will be designed to identify barriers and achievement gaps, and then establish and begin to implement an action plan for professional growth and long-term career trajectory. OPERA America will provide support for three mentorship teams and resources for professional development, including registration, travel, and housing for OPERA America's annual conference, and financial support for one on-site visit at the mentor's organization during the year-long program for which they are engaged. This program is structured to design professional development resources based on the needs of each mentee cohort.

Since this program is based on the quality of the interpersonal relationships and bonds developed, OPERA America will engage mentors who are equipped and committed to achieving racial justice and promoting BIPOC professionals in the field. Program administrators will remain in touch with the mentees and mentors on an individual basis to assure that the relationships remain positive and

productive. The mentorship cohort will also receive additional support throughout the program from the Racial Justice Opera Network Steering Committee.

## Application Process

Application available online: April 14, 2022

Application deadline: May 23, 2022

Selected mentees notified: June 2022

### Eligibility Requirements

- *Applicants must identify as one or more of the following races/ethnicities: Black, Latinx, Asian, Pacific Islander, South Asian, Arab, Middle Eastern, North African, and Native American/Indigenous.*
- *Applicants must have current or recent employment experience at an OPERA America [organizational member](#) and seek mentorship to achieve the next level in their career development.*
- *Mentees must be available to participate in mentorship activities between **July 2022 and June 2023**.*

### Required Materials

1. Completed Application, which includes:
  - Responses to six long-form questions
  - Two References
2. Resume (outlining academic and administrative experience)
3. Current Biography

Apply: All mentee applications must be [submitted online](#).

## Program Details

Participants will be selected based on their leadership growth needs, motivation to bring positive change to the field, and an eagerness to learn and make the most of the opportunity. OPERA America will match each mentee with a mentor who identifies as Black, Latinx, Asian, Pacific Islander, South Asian, Arab, Middle Eastern, North African, and/or Native American. Mentees are invited to state their preference in regard to their mentor's gender, which OPERA America will make all best efforts to accommodate. Participants will commit to a full year of participation in a mentorship partnership with prominent leaders from the opera field. OPERA America will provide support for the mentorship teams with additional resources for mentoring sessions and professional development through the entirety of the one-year program. Additional support will be provided through the community of the Racial Justice Opera Network.

The program will help to establish the one-on-one relationship between the mentor and a mentee,

who will work together to support the growth and goals of the mentee. This work is supported by OPERA America through facilitated meetings with all cohort members, regular check-ins with each individual participant, and the offerings of private learning opportunities, as mutually decided by the program participants. For professionals seeking to move into executive leadership positions in the next stage of their career, we encourage you to also consider our [Leadership Intensive](#), a rigorously structured program of advanced learning for opera leaders.

## **Selection Process**

All applications will be screened for eligibility. Ineligible applicants will be contacted by the program administrator with an explanation as to why their application will not be moved forward to the next round. A panel comprised of members of the Racial Justice Opera Network (RJON) will review all eligible applications and select candidates to advance. A second round of review will include an interview with one or more members of the RJON. OPERA America staff will facilitate the panel and selection process. Final selections will be made by the full evaluation panel. All applicants will be informed of their status at each stage of the selection process and receive feedback and guidance to prepare for a future application cycle.

## **Requirements**

The application must be completed in full, including answering all application questions and providing two references with full contact information. These references may be any combination of employment, professional, academic, and/or character/personal references. The applicant must submit a resume, which should not be an artistic resume.

## **Contact Information**

Please direct questions about this program to Ebony Menefield, education manager, at [EMenefield@operaamerica.org](mailto:EMenefield@operaamerica.org).