

HARMONY INITIATIVE WEST 2019-2020



JUSTICE FUNDERS

Powering Philanthropic Transformation

The Harmony Initiative, a program of Justice Funders, equips grantmaking professionals with the community, skills, and practices to make philanthropy a true force for equity and social justice. Applications for the 2019-20 Harmony West cohort are now open. Please read the following for program details and instructions on how to apply. For questions, please contact Rachel Humphrey, Sr. Program Director at rachel@justicefunders.org.

Honing Your Craft: The Art and Science of Grantmaking

While giving away money might seem like the easiest and most joyful job one can find, grantmaking can actually be quite the challenge. Being charged with “changing the world” can be as daunting as it is inspiring, as philanthropy is a field with outlandish aspirations, inherent contradictions, and more questions than answers.

Justice Funders (formerly Bay Area Justice Funders Network) launched the Harmony Initiative in 2015 to support professional grantmakers in strengthening their philanthropic practice. Designed by and for grantmakers, the program provides in-depth training on the art and science of making grants. The Harmony Initiative provides cutting edge tools, training and knowledge needed to partner with grassroots communities, select impactful grantees, evaluate social change work, and collaborate in philanthropy.

“The value of the Harmony Initiative is beyond words... The relationships we’ve made in this cohort are priceless to me. Our facilitators expertly created a space that allowed us to bring our best selves, go deep and be vulnerable together while holding each other accountable. We’ve been able to have a realness in our conversations and learnings that we wouldn’t have been able to have otherwise.”

- Sara Dronkers
Director of Grantmaking and
Nonprofit Resources
Humboldt Area Foundation

Why is it called “Harmony”? A common refrain in philanthropy is “We have to get beyond the choir.” At Justice Funders, we have heard this sentiment from members and peers since our beginnings. It seems to be an unquestioned assumption: there is a choir, we are in it, and the real power for making change is in talking to others outside of it.

We think it is time to question this set of assumptions. In the community of funders working for equality and justice, **is there really a choir?** Are funders singing the same song, in key – or even better – in harmony? Our perspective is that philanthropy has excellent soloists, but is far from forming a choir. Coming together at conferences is important for identifying choir members and perhaps choosing a songbook. However, to achieve harmony, a choir needs to **practice**. Harmony Initiative is a community of practice, accelerating the adoption of values-aligned grantmaking practices towards systems change.

A Dynamic, Comprehensive Learning Journey

As the processes a foundation employs are a public expression of its values, Justice Funders supports grantmakers in developing values-aligned grantmaking practices to advance equity and justice. The Harmony Initiative is both a learning community and a community of practice that offers an engaging, customized learning experience. With four multi-day, in-person retreats supported by professional coaching and independent study, the ten-month program is designed for immediate application and potential innovation in participants' day-to-day work.

Through studying effective philanthropic models and practices, learning from leading grantmakers, and sharing their own wisdom and experiences, participants in the cohort-based program build their skills and toolbox in a sustained and iterative learning process.

The curriculum follows **six common steps in the grantmaking cycle**:

1. strategy development
2. outreach and application
3. due diligence
4. making the case
5. award and implementation
6. evaluation and learning

At each step, participants investigate the Analytical, Leadership, Strategic, Technical, Adaptive, and Relational competencies needed for effective grantmaking.

Using case studies and the real-world challenges of the cohort, participants explore values in action and complicated philanthropic quandaries as well as gain specific skillsets vital to effective grantmaking.

Core components of the program design include:

- 130+ hours over ten months allows for **practice and integration** into day-to-day work.
- A cohort of 15-20 grantmakers provides a **close community of practice** and support.
- Case study method encourages **nuanced problem solving** and offers **real-world lessons** from esteemed guest faculty members' experience.
- Individual coaching provides **support and accountability** in pursuing **individual goals**.

A Program for All Grantmakers

The program is appropriate for philanthropic professionals of all levels who are directly responsible for grantmaking and seek an opportunity for reflection and learning in community. The Harmony Initiative is equally applicable for those looking to improve current philanthropic practice as those looking to innovate how philanthropy is done. We seek a diversity of issue foci and experiences to create a rich and nuanced learning environment. Participants have included staff from the following foundations:

- The 11th Hour Project
- Akonadi Foundation
- Blue Shield of California Foundation
- Borealis Philanthropy
- The California Endowment
- The California Wellness Foundation
- Ceres Trust
- CS Fund
- The Christensen Fund
- The Chorus Foundation
- Common Counsel Foundation
- Conflict Transformation Fund
- The Energy Foundation
- Full Circle Fund
- General Service Foundation
- Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation
- Groundswell Fund
- Grove Foundation
- The Hyams Foundation
- Humboldt Area Foundation
- The James Irvine Foundation
- Kenneth Rainin Foundation
- Latino Community Foundation
- The Libra Foundation
- McKenzie Foundation
- Metta Fund
- Neighborhood Funders Group
- Northern California Grantmakers
- Omidyar Network
- The San Francisco Foundation
- Silicon Valley Social Venture Fund
- SEIU Local 2015
- Skoll Global Threats Fund
- Sobrato Family Foundation
- Swift Foundation
- Thousand Currents
- Tipping Point Community
- Xelay Foundation
- YCore Network

Led by and for Grantmakers

Guest faculty, comprised of esteemed and innovative grantmakers, offer examples of how they have improved a particular process within their institution, or in some cases, disrupted 'business as usual.' The program also brings in subject experts for training on specific technical skills, such as financial due diligence and public speaking.

The program is designed and led by Justice Funders staff, including Allen Kwabena Frimpong, Kimi Mojica, and Rachel Humphrey.

Program Logistics

Retreats will be held at IONS EarthRise Retreat Center in Petaluma, CA on the following dates:

- September 10-12, 2019: Opening Retreat
- November 12-14, 2019: Strategy; Outreach and Application; Due Diligence
- February 4-6, 2020: Making the Case; Award and Implementation; Evaluation and Learning
- April 21-23, 2020: Closing Retreat

The program officially begins in August 2019 and ends in June 2020, including onboard activities and one-on-one coaching before and after the in-person retreats.

To enable participation from institutions of all sizes, tuition fees are sliding scale, based on annual grantmaking budget, and include all lodging, meals, materials and trainers. Participants are expected to cover travel costs.

How to Apply

If you are interested in learning more about the program and are considering applying to be in the 2019-2020 cohort of Harmony West, **please schedule an information call** with Justice Funders staff by submitting the "How to Join" form on the Harmony Initiative page on our website (justicefunders.org/harmony).

Those invited to apply after the information call will be asked to submit their application by the end of March, with final decisions and commitments to participate made by May.

What Our Alumni Say...

"The Harmony Initiative helped me to understand my place in philanthropy, and what I can bring to the field to help advance equity and social justice. The program's facilitators are thoughtful and responsive, and being part of a cohort of grantmakers focused on social justice is invaluable. Through the Harmony Initiative, I developed relationships I can rely on and gained a safe space to share successes and address challenges. **The combination of in-person meetings over 10 months, paired with regular individual coaching sessions, is a unique opportunity and sets Harmony Initiative apart.**"

Padmini Parthasarathy
Senior Program Officer, Economic Security
Walter & Elise Haas Fund

"Harmony inspired me to think about the field of philanthropy in a completely new way. Instead of being mystified (and sometimes frustrated) by the structures and processes that exist today, I have a vision for how philanthropy can work for social justice and movements. I now bring an organizing approach to my role in philanthropy, which means identifying and building allies - in the Harmony Cohort and with my colleagues - and moving money to and for communities of color. I see philanthropy both based on the capitalism and concentration of wealth from which it springs, but also in what it can be, and how it has the ability to lead with a radical agenda of love, and what a transformation that would make in the world."

Elizabeth Wampler, Initiative Officer
Great Communities Collaborative
The San Francisco Foundation

"I no longer feel alone in this work. I feel the love and support of a community that truly stands behind me, encouraging me to be a smarter organizer and a bolder advocate in our sector. After Harmony, I am equipped with the knowledge, tools, and language to push a philanthropic agenda (inside and outside my Foundation) that **puts people and grassroots voices at the center of our work.**"

Masha Chernyak, VP of Programs and Policy
Latino Community Foundation

"If you seek **strengthened professional capacity and deep relationships** to leverage your investments and work for powerful social change, this program is for you!"

Katherine Gilje, Executive Director
Ceres Trust

"The Harmony Initiative journey strengthened my understanding of the field, its history and its intricacies. I **learned strategies and tools that have empowered me to make a positive impact in my role and in the field of philanthropy.** I've developed deeper connections with fellow justice funder colleagues."

Elaine Mui, Grants & Operations Manager
General Service Foundation

"Participating in Harmony helped me understand philanthropy's challenges— and gave me the tools and confidence to tackle those challenges. I **emerged from the program both committed to and excited about my work in philanthropy.**"

Alex Desautels, Program Manager
The California Endowment

"Being part of the Harmony Initiative helped me **feel grounded and connected** to other progressive people in philanthropy. Each gathering built on the next, and before long I understood how grant making can happen in more transformational ways."

Esperanza Tervalon Garrett
Director of Strategic Partnerships and Initiatives
Groundswell Fund

"The Harmony Initiative was an extremely valuable experience for me as someone who still feels quite new to philanthropy, but I believe its model lends **unique benefits regardless of career stage**. The year-long cohort model enabled me to build deep professional and personal relationships with justice funders across the Bay Area. Though working on different issues, we were able to connect through the shared values and world-views that underpin our approach to the work. Harmony emphasized examining the historical context for why philanthropy functions the way it does, creating space to identify the conventional structures and processes that impede our ability to achieve transformational change. Overall, Harmony fostered a community of learning and application, and I left each retreat with skills and approaches that I was eager to share with my colleagues."

Jake Mogan, Program Associate
The 11th Hour Project

"Thanks to the Harmony Initiative, I connected with funders working to elevate social equity and community participation in their grant-making strategies, and learned how best to collaborate and align priorities with other grantmakers. I attended Harmony when we were deep in strategy development, and the retreats and one-on-one coaching were instrumental in **helping me lead that process in a collaborative and values-aligned manner**. Looking back, many of the ideas and strategies we talked about in Harmony shape the way I do my work today."

Jose Carmona, Program Director
The Energy Foundation

Anonymous Program Evaluation Responses:

"Harmony has been so eye-opening in learning **what does equity truly mean and how do we practice it**, and providing the community to collaborate, learn, and celebrate together."

"I would so recommend folks working in or interested in working in philanthropy to participate in a Harmony Initiative cohort, whether you/your foundation fall on the more moderate end of the spectrum or you/your foundation are already embodying values-aligned grantmaking. **You will be challenged to think critically, you will be inspired and energized, you will build deep relationships, you will emerge with a toolbox of ways in which to improve and deepen the way you do your work and a cohort who has your back.**"

"Harmony Initiative helped me grow into my role of a PO in my first year at the foundation. **It made my life so less stressful and provided me with the tools I needed to thrive.**"



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