

# HARMONY INITIATIVE WEST

## 2020-2021



**JUSTICE FUNDERS**

Powering Philanthropic Transformation



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**The Harmony Initiative**, a program of Justice Funders, equips grantmaking professionals with the community, skills, and practices to make philanthropy a true force for justice and liberation. Applications for the 2020-21 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](mailto: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, it can be as daunting as it is inspiring. Philanthropy is a field with outlandish aspirations, minimal accountability, and longstanding practices that often undermine stated values and goals.

Justice Funders launched the Harmony Initiative in 2015 to support professional grantmakers in strengthening their philanthropic practice to better align with values of justice and equity. **Designed by and for grantmakers, the program provides in-depth exploration of both transitional and transformational philanthropic practice to bring about a Just Transition for 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 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

The Harmony Initiative is community of practice that offers an engaging, customized learning experience. The nine-month program is designed for immediate application and potential innovation in participants' day-to-day work.

In Harmony, we explore the big questions of culture and transformation – such as how to address white supremacy and anti-Blackness in our work, and how to create a world in which the wealth accumulation that creates philanthropic institutions is no longer possible – while simultaneously seeking to identify interventions for justice possible within our current systems and organizations.

Participants study effective philanthropic practices and share their own wisdom and experiences, collectively building their skills and toolbox in a sustained and iterative learning process. 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. By learning the art and science of making grants from a values-based lens, participants strengthen their ability to partner with grassroots communities, select impactful grantees, evaluate social change work, and collaborate in philanthropy.

The program is based on Justice Funders' [Choir Book](http://justicefunders.org/choir-book/) (<http://justicefunders.org/choir-book/>) and [Resonance Framework](http://justicefunders.org/resonance/) (<http://justicefunders.org/resonance/>), and is grounded in the [Just Transitions Framework](https://climatejusticealliance.org/just-transition/) (<https://climatejusticealliance.org/just-transition/>).

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

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

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

Core components of the program design include:

- 115+ hours over nine months allows for **practice and integration** into day-to-day work.
- A cohort of 20 grantmakers provides a **close community of practice** and support.
- Four online retreats using highly engaging online facilitation techniques based in adult learning theory provide **substantive content and tools** relevant to grantmaking in today's world.
- Monthly peer practice groups encourage **nuanced problem solving** and offers **real-world lessons**.

- Ongoing one-on-one coaching (up to 20 hours) provides tailored, individual **support and accountability** in pursuing **individual goals**.

### A Program for All Grantmakers

The program is appropriate for grantmaking practitioners who are directly responsible for grantmaking and seek an opportunity for reflection and learning in community. We have had executive directors as well as program associates attend the program and get great value from it. 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
- East Bay Community Foundation
- The Energy Foundation
- Full Circle Fund
- General Service Foundation
- Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation
- Groundswell Fund
- Grove Foundation
- The Hyams Foundation
- Humboldt Area Foundation
- Humanity United
- The James Irvine Foundation
- Kenneth Rainin Foundation
- Latino Community Foundation
- Liberty Hill Foundation
- The Libra Foundation
- May and Stanley Smith Charitable Trust
- McKenzie Foundation
- Metta Fund
- Neighborhood Funders Group
- Northern California Grantmakers
- Omidyar Network
- Raikes Foundation
- The San Francisco Foundation
- Silicon Valley Social Venture Fund
- SEIU Local 2015
- S. D. Bechtel, Jr. Foundation
- The Simmons Foundation
- Skoll Global Threats Fund
- Sobrato Family Foundation
- Swift Foundation
- Thousand Currents
- Tipping Point Community
- Xelay Foundation

## Program Logistics

The program officially begins in August 2020 and ends in June 2021, including onboard activities and one-on-one coaching. Online retreats will be held on the following dates:

- September 15-17, 2020: Opening Retreat
- November 17-19, 2020: Strategy; Outreach and Application; Due Diligence
- February 16-18, 2021: Making the Case; Award + Implementation; Evaluation + Learning
- April 27-29, 2021: Closing Retreat

To enable participation from institutions of all sizes, tuition fees are sliding scale, based on annual grantmaking budget. As financial arrangements are customized for each individual, tuition information is discussed in the information sessions.

## How to Apply

If you have attended an information call to assess if Harmony is a good fit, you are welcome to submit an application: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/HIWc6application>. Final decisions and commitments to participate will be made by August.

If you haven't attended an information call, please email Jamie Carter, Operations and Administrative Coordinator at [jamie@justicefunders.org](mailto:jamie@justicefunders.org).

## What Our Alumni Say...

"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

"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

"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 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

"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 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.**"



[www.justicefunders.org](http://www.justicefunders.org)