

HARMONY INITIATIVE 2021-2022



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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 equity and social justice. Applications for the 2021-22 Harmony West cohort are now open. Please read the following for program details and instructions on how to apply. For questions, contact Rachel Humphrey, Senior 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, it can be as daunting as it is inspiring. Philanthropy presents itself as having the “answers” to societal problems, but it can come with pitfalls like minimal accountability and scrutiny, and longstanding accepted 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.**

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 question this set of assumptions. In the community of funders working for equity 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 still needs to form a choir. 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 a community of practice that offers an engaging learning experience that is both cohort-based and individualized in focus. The nine-month program is designed for immediate application and 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 and act on interventions for equity that are possible within our current systems and organizations.

Participants study effective philanthropic practices and share their own wisdom and experiences, collectively building adding to their toolbox of skills in a sustained and iterative learning process. Using case studies and the real-world challenges of the cohort, participants explore values in action and grapple with complicated philanthropic quandaries while gaining specific skill sets vital to effective grantmaking. 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 program also incorporates the principles of conflict transformation, with the goal of guiding participants through a healing journey away from harmful practices, towards healing and regenerative approaches to philanthropy.

Core components of the program design include:

- 100+ hours over nine months allows for **practice and integration** into day-to-day work.
- A cohort of 25 grantmakers provides a **close community of practice** and support.
- Four retreats using highly engaging facilitation techniques based in adult learning theory provide **substantive content and tools** relevant to grantmaking in today's world.
- Peer practice groups encourage **nuanced problem solving** and offer **real-world lessons**.
- Identity-based affinity groups support skills building for **effective leadership in multi-racial spaces** and provide **healing spaces** based in robust racial-justice analyses
- Ongoing one-on-one coaching (up to 8 hours) provides tailored, individual **support and accountability** in pursuing **individual goals**.

A Program for All Grantmakers

The program is appropriate for practitioners who are directly responsible for grantmaking and who 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 seeking ways to innovate how philanthropy is done. Executive Directors as well as Program Associates have participated in the program. We seek a diversity of issue foci and experiences as well as geographic diversity to create a rich and nuanced learning community.

Participants have included staff from the following philanthropic institutions:

- ▶ The 11th Hour Project
- ▶ Akonadi Foundation
- ▶ Blue Shield of California Foundation
- ▶ Borealis Philanthropy
- ▶ Calgary Foundation
- ▶ The California Endowment
- ▶ The California Wellness Foundation
- ▶ Ceres Trust
- ▶ Chan Zuckerberg Initiative
- ▶ CS Fund
- ▶ The Christensen Fund
- ▶ The Chorus Foundation
- ▶ Common Counsel Foundation
- ▶ Conflict Transformation Fund
- ▶ Cultural Survival
- ▶ East Bay Community Foundation
- ▶ The Energy Foundation
- ▶ Environmental Grantmakers Association
- ▶ Full Circle Fund
- ▶ Funders for Housing and Opportunity
- ▶ General Service Foundation
- ▶ Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation
- ▶ Groundswell Fund
- ▶ Grove Foundation
- ▶ Heising-Simons Foundation
- ▶ The Hyams Foundation
- ▶ Humboldt Area Foundation
- ▶ Humanity United
- ▶ Irene S. Scully Family Foundation
- ▶ The James Irvine Foundation
- ▶ Kenneth Rainin Foundation
- ▶ Latino Community Foundation
- ▶ Liberty Hill Foundation
- ▶ The Libra Foundation
- ▶ Marguerite Casey Foundation
- ▶ May and Stanley Smith Charitable Trust
- ▶ McKenzie Foundation
- ▶ Metta Fund
- ▶ Neighborhood Funders Group
- ▶ Northern California Grantmakers
- ▶ Omidyar Network
- ▶ Raikes Foundation
- ▶ Rise Together Fund, Proteus Fund
- ▶ The San Francisco Foundation
- ▶ Silicon Valley Social Venture Fund
- ▶ SEIU Local 2015
- ▶ S. D. Bechtel, Jr. Foundation
- ▶ SH Cowell Foundation
- ▶ The Simmons Foundation
- ▶ Skoll Global Threats Fund
- ▶ Sobrato Family Foundation
- ▶ Stoneleigh Foundation
- ▶ Stupski Foundation
- ▶ Swift Foundation
- ▶ Thousand Currents
- ▶ Tipping Point Community
- ▶ Wellspring Philanthropic Fund
- ▶ Women's Foundation California
- ▶ Xelay Foundation
- ▶ 1892 Consulting

Program Tuition and Logistics

The program officially begins in September 2021 and ends in May 2022. Online retreats will be held 8:00am PT - 4:00pm PT on the following dates:

- September 14-16, 2021
- November 16-18, 2021
- February 15-17, 2022
- April 26-28, 2022

To enable participation from institutions of all sizes, tuition fees are sliding scale. It is our aim that financial resources are not a barrier to participation, thus we are happy to discuss arrangements that make participation possible. The sliding scale guide is as follows:

Organization type/size	Tuition	Current BAJFN members discounted tuition
Total organizational grantmaking budget \$25M and up	\$9,000	\$8,500
Total organizational grantmaking budget \$5M-25M	\$7,000	\$6,500
Total organizational grantmaking budget up to \$5M, and philanthropy support organizations	\$5,000	\$4,500

How to Apply

If you have attended an information session to assess if Harmony is a good fit, you are welcome to submit an application: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/Harmony2022app>. Final decisions and commitments to participate will be made by mid-April.

If you have not been able to attend an information session, please email Jamie Carter, Operations and Administrative Coordinator at jamie@justicefunders.org.

What Our Alumni Say...

"Harmony Initiative helped give me a space outside of my workplace to wrestle with the contradictions of social justice philanthropy and identify opportunities to **adapt my work to better reflect liberatory values**. The highlight was by far being able to build relationships with other people committed to justice and using their positions to grow community power. I got to learn so much from my peers and build relationships that push and support me to stay on purpose in my role."

Dani Martinez
Program Officer, Borealis Philanthropy
Harmony Initiative Class of 2020

"Harmony was like **graduate school for social justice philanthropy**. It was intense, inspiring, and deeply based in relationships. My Harmony colleagues have become sounding stones and collaborators for my work, even years later. My time at Harmony **changed my career path**, and going there with colleagues from my foundation **changed the way we operate day to day** grantmaking at Humboldt Area Foundation."

Lindsie Bear
Program Director, Native Cultures Fund,
Humboldt Area Foundation
Harmony Initiative Class of 2019

"I entered the Harmony Initiative completely brand new to philanthropy, and I left with an incredible and strong **grounding of purpose** – of my why – why me, why philanthropy, and why now? I was able to personalize and apply my own experiences as a queer person of color and build a **beloved, supporting community** through my cohort to navigate challenges, celebrate wins, and **refine visions for this sector and our role in it.**"

JC De Vera
Fellow, The San Francisco Foundation
Harmony Initiative Class of 2018

"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
Harmony Class of 2017

"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
Harmony Initiative Class of 2017

"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 Initiative Class of 2016



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