



Mentorship Program for Opera Leaders of Color

2024 Guidelines and Application Procedures

Important Dates

- **Application available online:** January 10, 2024
- **Application deadline:** January 31, 2024
- **Review and interview process:** February 2024
- **Participants notified:** March 2024
- **Program dates:** April 1, 2024 – June 30, 2025

Mentee-mentor pairings of the 2024 Mentorship Program for Opera Leaders of Color are generously underwritten by BIPOC Arts and an anonymous donor, with additional support from Anne-Marie Blancquaert, Walter Bruyninckx, and Corey Kingler.

OPERA America
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About the Mentorship Program for Opera Leaders of Color

The Mentorship Program for Opera Leaders of Color intentionally identifies and disrupts barriers to increase representation and agency for BIPOC leaders at all levels in the opera field, providing a unique opportunity for motivated participants to cultivate professional skills and long-term relationships.

The program 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, as mentors, serve as coaches and advocates for a 15-month engagement.

The program is structured and customized for each mentee cohort to cultivate professional development resources based on their needs. It identifies barriers and achievement gaps and then establishes an action plan for professional growth in support of the long-term career goals for each mentee.

OPERA America provides support for the mentee/mentor teams and resources for professional development, including financial support for one on-site visit at the mentor's organization, professional development programming, and support to attend OPERA America's Opera Conference 2025, including registration and stipends for housing and travel. This work is supported by OPERA America through facilitated meetings with all cohort members, regular check-ins with each participant, and the offerings of private learning opportunities, as mutually decided by the program participants.

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 coordinate with the mentees and mentors to ensure that the relationships remain positive and productive and to provide guidance and support in the course of the program. The mentorship cohort will also receive additional support throughout the program from the Racial Justice Opera Network Steering Committee.

For professionals seeking to move into executive leadership positions in the next stage of their careers, we encourage you to also consider our Leadership Intensive, a rigorously structured program of advanced learning for opera leaders.

Eligibility

Applicants must:

- Identify as one or more of the following races/ethnicities: Black, Latiné, Asian, Pacific Islander, South Asian, Arab, Middle Eastern, North African, and Native American/Indigenous;
- 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;
- Be a current or recent employee at an OPERA America organizational member;

- Seek mentorship to achieve the next level in their career development; and
- Be available to participate in mentorship activities between April 1, 2024, and June 30, 2025.
- Not be an alumnus of the program.
- Complete the application in full.

Please note that 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.

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.

Program Expenses

This program is tuition-free for participants. Mentees receive:

- Reimbursement of up to \$1,000 for travel and housing costs to attend an on-site “flash mentoring” session with their mentor at their mentor’s host company.
- A free coaching session with a professional coach
- Reimbursement of up to \$500 for professional development programming
- Free registration to Opera Conference 2025
- Reimbursement of up to \$700 for travel costs to attend Opera Conference 2025
- Three nights in the conference hotel at Opera Conference 2025

Selection Process

Participants are selected based on their interest in the opera field, the clear learning and professional goals they have set, and their desire to cultivate a relationship with a mentor. Selection is made without regard to current title, company affiliation, or area of specialty.

A panel composed 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.

[View the selection rubric.](#)

Staff Contact

Please direct questions about the Mentorship Program for Opera Leaders of Color to Vincent Rutter-Covatto, director of learning and leadership, at VRutterCovatto@operaamerica.org or 646.699.5237.