



Leadership Intensive

2026 Selection Rubric

This rubric will be used by OPERA America staff and field leaders to evaluate the written application and interviews.

SELECTION CRITERIA	CANDIDATE QUALITIES:
Field Contribution	Candidates will have: • A strong grasp of field priority issues and opportunities; • A clear vision for how they will lead change in the field; • Made commitments to implement change on a personal, departmental, or organizational level; and • Already taken action to develop their own learning toward those ends.
Demonstrated Leadership	Candidates will: • Have proven abilities to solve problems and take initiative; • Provide examples of expanding their responsibilities within an arts organization or developing growth opportunities outside an organization; • Name specific accomplishments in at least one administrative area; • Offer engaging/achievable/applicable/creative ideas/attitude/energy that serves them in leading well-designed/implemented projects and managing staff/volunteers; and • Have an endorsement that reinforces these qualities and speaks to skills/accomplishments beyond typically required tasks and administrative functions.
Clearly Articulated Goals	Candidates will: • Possess a strong dedication to the arts with long-term plans for achieving a dynamic role in the field; • Outline clear objectives for professional growth in the short term that align with the Leadership Intensive's curriculum (emphasizing personal development goals rather than organizational benefits or department-specific/administrative learning goals); and • Make the case that this program is best suited to their learning objectives, as opposed to other OPERA America offerings or academic programs.
Career Stage	Candidates will: • Articulate their desire to grow professionally and personally by participating in the program at this point in time and at this phase of their career; and • Show that they can contribute expertise to the peer learning of the cohort, but that by doing so would also grow their own leadership capacity.
Field Citizenship	Candidates will offer evidence of past participation or interest in: • Mentoring or being mentored by others in the field; • Strengthening collegial connections among colleagues; and • OPERA America network forums, listserv discussions, or other field learning activities.