

2nd Cohort:
NASAA 2022 DEI Mentorship Program
Announcement & Call for Applications

Program Description

NASAA acknowledges its role as a change leader within the nation's arts sector and shares with state arts agencies a commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) as a foundational principle of arts leadership. The public sector is instrumental in advancing DEI in arts programs, policies and practices that make the arts central to the well-being of all communities in America. As the professional association for state arts agencies (SAAs), NASAA offers a portfolio of [programs and services to support SAAs' DEI work](#) and to equip SAA staff and appointed council members with resources, training and support systems to effect meaningful change. Among these services is NASAA's DEI Mentorship Program, which was first established in 2018.

While there are many ways for an organization serving diverse constituents to promote equity, NASAA's DEI Mentorship Program is deliberately focused on race equity. This is out of recognition that race is often subsumed into broader policies and practices around equity, making the particular circumstances faced by people of color less visible, and therefore left unaddressed. Moreover, NASAA recognizes that, as in other sectors, people of color in the state arts agency sector face unique barriers to career advancement, such as implicit bias in organizational hiring practices and inaccurate perceptions about the availability of qualified candidates of color. A mentorship program is one strategy to eliminate or reduce these race related barriers.

Program Objectives & Guidelines

NASAA envisions the DEI Mentorship Program as a means to "open a window" on middle management and executive level careers in state arts agencies, so that more of NASAA's members of color can efficiently and effectively chart a course toward those roles. The two primary objectives of the NASAA DEI Mentorship Program are:

- to provide professional development for individual members of color to identify and achieve self-determined goals related to the skills and competencies needed to enter, sustain and advance into middle and executive management careers in state arts agencies
- to ensure equity and inclusion of people of color within state arts agencies and the NASAA membership at large

Guidelines for Mentors

NASAA recognizes the need for a flexible approach to pairing mentees and mentors within a DEI focused program. Some mentees may wish to be paired with a mentor of color to build and benefit from a relationship that intentionally prioritizes shared experiences related to race and ethnicity. Other mentees may seek a mentor relationship in which shared race or ethnicity is a less salient factor than the opportunity to build a new network or achieve a specific professional goal.

To broaden the possibilities for mentee candidates' preferences to be realized, NASAA encourages NASAA People of Color Affinity Group participants in middle management and leadership roles to serve as **mentors** in the DEI mentorship program, according to their interests and circumstances. However, to alleviate the burden on our members of color to be mentors if it is not their interest or desire to serve as such, NASAA invites all interested SAA deputy and executive directors and council members to volunteer as mentors as well.

To ensure that all mentors have adequate support around race equity and mentoring best practice, NASAA will provide an annual orientation for mentors, led by NASAA's DEI Mentorship Program coordinator, as a prerequisite for participation as a mentor in the program.

Depending on the number of mentees who apply to participate in the program, mentors may or may not be paired with a mentee, or may be invited to serve as a mentor for more than one mentee.

It is NASAA's expectation that mentors will:

- secure support from their agency's leadership to participate in the mentorship program prior to applying (if applicable);
- commit to full participation according to the program time line (outlined below);
- uphold the principles of diversity, equity and inclusion stated in NASAA's [Policy Statement on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion](#).

Guidelines for Mentees

All state arts agency staff and council members who identify as people of color are invited to apply to participate in the DEI Mentorship program. NASAA anticipates that the second cohort of **mentees** for the DEI mentorship program will come from NASAA's People of Color Affinity Group; however, participation in the affinity group is not required to participate in the DEI Mentorship Program.

To ensure that all mentees have adequate support around race equity best practice, NASAA will provide an annual orientation for mentees, led by NASAA's DEI Mentorship Program coordinator, as a prerequisite for participation as a mentee in the program.

It is NASAA's expectation that mentees will:

- secure support from their agency's leadership to participate in the mentorship program prior to applying (if applicable);
- commit to full participation according to the program time line (outlined below);
- uphold the principles of diversity, equity and inclusion stated in NASAA's [Policy Statement on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion](#).

Mentor-Mentee Application & Pairing Process

According to requests and interests communicated in mentor and mentee applications, NASAA's DEI Mentorship Program coordinator will pair interested SAA staff or council member mentees of color with mentors selected either from NASAA's People of Color Affinity Group or from SAA executive director, deputy director and council member candidates for a five-month, one-to-one mentorship. The structure of the mentorship will consist of a minimum of five one-hour phone calls or virtual meetings between each mentor-mentee pair, scheduled at their mutual convenience.

NASAA's DEI Mentorship Program coordinator will assist mentees in preparing a skills inventory and statement identifying their professional development goals prior to pairing them with a mentor, matching their preference to the fullest extent possible. A brief survey distributed to both mentor and mentee at the end of the mentorship will serve to gather data for program evaluation.

Deadline to Apply: 5:00 p.m. Eastern, Monday, April 4, 2022

Interested mentors and mentees should complete the [NASAA DEI Mentorship Program application form](#).

Mentor-mentee pairings will be assigned and pairs notified by 5:00 p.m. Eastern on **Monday, April 25, 2022**.

Thank you for your interest in NASAA's DEI Mentorship Program. If you have any further questions about the program, please contact NASAA DEI Mentorship Program Coordinator Marisa Summers: marisa.summers@nasaa-arts.org

See next page for Program Time Line & Key Dates.

Program Time Line & Key Dates

Monday, April 4, 2022 5:00 p.m. Eastern	Applications due	On-line application
Monday, April 25, 2022 5:00 p.m. Eastern	Notification of mentorship pairings	Via e-mail
Monday, May 2, 2022 4:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. Eastern Wednesday, May 11, 2022 4:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. Eastern	Virtual information sessions for mentees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Format of mentorship • General questions
Wednesday, May 4, 2022 4:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. Eastern Monday, May 9, 2022 4:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. Eastern	Virtual information sessions for mentors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Format of mentorship • General questions
May 16 – September 12, 2022	Individual mentorship pair suggested meetings (five meetings total)	
Friday, September 16, 2022	Conclusion of mentorship program; surveys due	