AMERICAN ORCHESTAS’ FUTURES FUND
Made possible by the Ann and Gordon Getty Foundation

PROPOSAL GUIDELINES FOR GROUPS 5–8 AND YOUTH ORCHESTRAS

OVERVIEW
The American Orchestras’ Futures Fund is a competitive grants program designed to advance the innovative work of the League of American Orchestras’ member orchestras. Made possible through the generous support of the Ann and Gordon Getty Foundation and administered by the League, the Futures Fund builds on the results of earlier League-sponsored and Getty-funded grants to orchestras. The Foundation’s generous support of the Futures Fund allows the League to provide larger, multi-year grants for American orchestras of all sizes as they work to increase their investment in experimentation, risk taking, and innovative practices, and contribute to field-wide learning.

Application Deadline: Friday, January 31, 2020

PROGRAM COMPONENTS
The primary goal of the Futures Fund is to encourage a culture of learning and innovation in orchestras of all sizes, structures, and locations. Toward this end, the Futures Fund will offer two-year grants to a select number of orchestras that are making investments in innovation and exploring new ways of working that demonstrate impact within the organization and its audiences and communities. The Futures Fund provides the following resources to assist orchestras in these endeavors:

- Two-year grants where successful applicants can pilot and continue projects focused on innovation in areas key to orchestral health (artistic vibrancy, organizational vitality, and civic engagement)
- A community with which to share learning with other grantees, the League, and the larger orchestral field
- Opportunities to lead and participate in field-building activities to give visibility to the innovative work occurring in orchestras and to inspire members. Grantees may be profiled in League communications such as The Hub and Symphony magazine or speak during convenings and other League events.

To encourage learning and innovation across the orchestra field, the League will collaborate with the grantees to document and share their approaches, practices, and results.

Peer-to-Peer Learning
The League will also facilitate peer-to-peer learning opportunities. Each orchestra is expected to participate in at least one learning opportunity. These include but are not limited to:

- Presenting about your project during a webinar or peer-to-peer call
- Hosting site visits or staff exchanges from other grantees or member orchestras
Fieldwide Learning
The League will work with Futures Fund grantees to develop various ways of sharing their work with the wider field, which may include one or more of the following:

- Video, audio, and photographic documentation as applicable
- Preparation of written materials for Symphony magazine, other articles, case studies, and reports
- Serving as presenter at the League National Conference or Mid-Winter Managers Meeting

Dissemination methods will be developed to correspond with the resources available in each grantee’s documentation plan.

AWARD AMOUNT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>League Budget Group</th>
<th>Grant Amount</th>
<th>Approximate Number of Awards</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Groups 5–8 Youth Orchestras</td>
<td>$30,000, paid in two installments of $15,000 over the two-year grant period</td>
<td>Up to 20 grants</td>
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The League calculates budget groups based on member orchestras’ most recent report of total operating and artistic expenses for the previous season. Budget group thresholds are updated each July.

FUTURES FUND PRIORITIES
Many orchestras today are engaged in work that embraces risk and experimentation, organizational responsiveness and adaptability, and non-traditional approaches to audience building and engagement.

Futures Fund grants support projects that propose innovations that are:

- New to the orchestral field
- An adaptation or application of strategies implemented in other arts fields such as theater, dance, or visual arts
- A refinement or enhancement to proven practices both inside and outside of the orchestral field that merit continued development

The Futures Fund welcomes applications that represent efforts in at least one of three areas critical to the sustainability and public value of orchestras. Examples of projects for each area are provided for illustrative purposes only and are not intended to be interpreted as specific recommendations or limitations to proposed Futures Fund projects.
• **Artistic Vibrancy**
  o Develop new concert formats and expand the venues in which audiences can enjoy orchestral music
  o Experiment with multi-media and new technologies inside or outside of the concert hall to engage with audiences in virtual and digital realms
  o Promote a more democratic approach to artistic decision-making such as involving orchestra musicians, collaborating artists and composers, members of the community, or other administrative staff
  o Develop new ways to advance classical music through new forms of performance, new concert experiences, and new artistic partnerships

• **Organizational Vitality**
  o Diversify the orchestra’s services or sources of earned income
  o Address new organizational models that explore alternatives to traditional operating models, offer new leadership structures, and redefine relationships among organizational stakeholders
  o Address working models that encourage strengthening and building organizational culture (e.g., plans and methods to integrate equity, diversity, and inclusion [EDI] principles into mission, vision, and values; revising staff policies and practices to be more inclusive; peer-to-peer learning, etc.)
  o Research the reasons people attend, or don’t attend concerts, and tailor offerings to support multiple and distinct audience segments

• **Civic Engagement**
  o Craft programs on or off the stage that are responsive to and reflective of their communities and the key issues they face
  o Expand the orchestra’s role in society through cross-sector collaborations to address important social issues
  o Create a more equitable, diverse, and inclusive environment for participating in and experiencing classical music
  o Pursue new strands of community service, such as cross-cultural creative partnerships, lifelong learning, or health and wellness programming

The most competitive proposals have been those that demonstrate effective leadership and an organization’s capacity to derive learning from the projects. The League will work closely with grantees to coordinate research, documentation, and other tools to assist with sharing learning with the field.

**ELIGIBILITY**
The League invites applications for 2020 Futures Fund grants from member orchestras in budget Groups 5–8 and from Youth Orchestras. You may visit our website to verify your budget group designation.

In addition, member orchestras wishing to apply for the Futures Fund must:
• Be a League adult or youth orchestra member in good standing based in the United States, meaning the orchestra has:
  o paid all dues for the current membership year, or be current with all authorized installment payments
  o provided the League with a current list of staff, musicians, board members, and volunteers—including titles, email addresses, and the street addresses of those eligible to receive Symphony magazine as a benefit of membership
  o completed and submitted a response to the League’s current Orchestra Statistical Report (OSR) Survey
• Employee at least one full-time staff member
• Have annual operating expenses of at least $150,000 per year for each of the last two fiscal years (FY18 and FY19)
• Present at least three concerts to the public annually in the previous two seasons (2017-18 and 2018-19)

Non-member adult and youth orchestras may join the League at the time of application to become eligible. Youth orchestras that are part of a professional adult orchestra may apply for Futures Fund grants through a separate youth orchestra League membership.

APPLYING FOR A GRANT
Eligible orchestras may apply through Acceptd, the Futures Fund’s online application portal. Applicants must create an account, complete all required fields, and upload the required attachments as PDFs to your account. (For technical support using Acceptd, please email support@getacceptd.com or call 888 725 2122.)

The Futures Fund application includes the following:
Section I: Applicant Information
Section II: Project Narrative
Section III: Organizational Readiness
Section IV: Attachments:
• Project Budget showing income and expenses
• Operating revenues and expenses for the current fiscal year and previous fiscal year
• Most recent audited financial statement
• Relevant digital or analogue material from the past two seasons (FY18 and 19) that demonstrates capacity to complete your proposed project (e.g., report from a prior consultancy, evaluation tools you’ve created and use, video documenting a project or process, materials from a similar program, etc.)

ADJUDICATION & SELECTION PROCESS
After verifying the eligibility of applicants, the League will convene an independent panel comprised of experts in the orchestral field as well as from the performing arts field at large. Panelists are knowledgeable in artistic programming, audience development, media and technology, financial management, governance, and education and community engagement.
Futures Fund panelists are instructed to review applications and make recommendations based on the following criteria:

**Evidence of Organizational Readiness**

i. Clear identification and analysis of a core issue or opportunity that is:
   - Central to its viability and relevance in its community
   - Clearly defined with long-term vision and short-term objectives
   - Has the potential to be sustained

ii. Capacity to undertake innovative work in this area:
   - Earlier projects that demonstrate learning and willingness to experiment and take risks
   - Participation in equitable partnerships with other organizations
   - Knowledge of other organizations’ work in this area, both successes and challenges

iii. A demonstrated culture of learning:
   - In-depth internal collaboration and distributed ownership across departments, stakeholders, and constituents
   - Courageous framing of institutional and community issues, and candor regarding obstacles and challenges, including past false starts, or unexpected results
   - Ability to articulate the rationale for action, intended outcomes, and how results will be measured, evaluated, and shared for collective learning
   - Evidence of self-reflection and continuous improvement processes
   - Illustration of how the Futures Fund will enable the organization to further its innovative work

**Evidence of Impact (Each proposal must fall into at least one of the three categories below)**

iv. Artistic Vibrancy
   - Evidence of compelling and engaging forms of performance and distinctive programming
   - New and satisfying opportunities for musicians to perform a wide range of music
   - Authentic artistic collaborations and partnerships

v. Organizational Vitality:
   - Evidence of staff, board, and musicians working collaboratively
   - Willingness of board of directors and both senior management and musical leaders, including, but not limited to the music director, to adopt and model adaptive practices and take risks
   - Evidence of an evolving vision and a willingness to shift strategies based on changing circumstances

vi. Civic Engagement:
   - Evidence that the orchestra is becoming an active partner in the civic life of its community
• Evidence that community partners have input in design, implementation, and evaluation of projects
• Evidence of expanded and returning audiences
• Evidence that the orchestra is seen in its community as a model cultural institution, deeply identified with civic vitality and identity
• Recognition of the orchestra’s work beyond the concert hall in improving quality of life

Potential for Field-Wide Contributions

vii. Evaluation and Documentation
• Evidence of clear qualitative and/or quantitative strategies for collecting verifiable data on the impact the proposed innovations have on the orchestra both internally and externally
• Evidence that these strategies expand on or rethink established approaches

viii. Sustainability
• Clear plans for sustaining the proposed work past the grant period
• Strategies for sharing what is learned

2020 FUTURES FUND TIMELINE for Groups 5–8 and Youth Orchestras

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Program announcement and online applications open</td>
<td>November 20, 2019</td>
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<tr>
<td>Application Closes</td>
<td>January 31, 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Applicant Eligibility Verified and Applications Reviewed by Independent Panel</td>
<td>February and March 2020</td>
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<tr>
<td>All Applicants Notified of Decision</td>
<td>April 3, 2020</td>
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<tr>
<td>First Payment Disbursed</td>
<td>May 2020</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grant Period</td>
<td>June 2020 through May 2022</td>
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<tr>
<td>League National Conference (Minneapolis-St. Paul)</td>
<td>June 10–12, 2020</td>
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<tr>
<td>Preliminary Check-in Conversation</td>
<td>September 2020</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interim Report</td>
<td>April 30, 2021</td>
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<tr>
<td>Second Payment Disbursed</td>
<td>May 2021</td>
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<tr>
<td>League National Conference and Futures Fund Forum (Pittsburgh)</td>
<td>June 2021</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mid-point Check-in Conversation</td>
<td>October 2021</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Report</td>
<td>April 30, 2022</td>
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REPORTING REQUIREMENTS
Each grantee will be required to submit two grant reports: an interim report and a final report. These reports will be an opportunity for grantees to share what they have learned throughout the process of their innovation work as well as ways for capturing its outcomes. The League
will develop report templates and protocols for grantees, in which they will be asked to describe how the funds were ultimately used for their work and to reflect on the affect their Futures Fund project has had on the entire organization. The second-year grant payment is contingent on demonstration of the grantee’s fulfillment of its intended work.

QUESTIONS
If you have additional questions about the Futures Fund or the opportunity, or wish to discuss your application, you may email Lee Ann Norman, Director, Learning and Leadership Programs at futuresfund@americanorchestras.org, and we will respond to your inquiry within twenty-four hours.