

## **Adaptive Leaders as Cultural Innovators: Houston**

Local Funding from **Houston Endowment**

National Funding from **American Express Foundation**

Designed and Presented by EmcArts

### **CALL FOR APPLICATIONS**

#### **Key Dates**

- **September 5<sup>th</sup>, 2019:** Application Released
- **October 29<sup>th</sup>, 2019:** Application Deadline
- **January, 2020:** Program Begins (for a full timeline, see page 3)

---

EmcArts is now accepting applications for the Houston cohort of *Adaptive Leaders as Cultural Innovators* (ALACI), a nationally renowned leadership development program that will engage up to 20 first-time regional executive and artistic directors of nonprofit arts and culture organizations (or organizations that sustain significant cultural programs in their portfolio of services). The 12-month process of seminars, executive coaching, and practicums aims to leave a long-term legacy of increased capacity for adaptive change across the Houston Metro Area, and advance a cohort of leaders adept at process facilitation who can maintain and actively support organizational innovation and adaptive change processes.

---

**Why ALACI?** | Current training for the top executive positions in arts and culture organizations tends to focus on technical and functional issues (marketing, fundraising, planning, budgeting) rather than on adaptive skills, culture and leadership. Many new Executive Directors fall into the traditional “heroic” model of leadership for lack of any alternative, thus impeding rather than propelling a shift in leadership skills and roles. This lack of coaching and capacity-building is currently colliding with a huge generational shift in leadership in the field, making the *ALACI* program particularly timely, both nationally and in many local and regional communities. *ALACI* focuses on building the capacity of arts professionals to navigate complex problems, where there are no known solutions, best practices are insufficient, and where the way forward is generated only through probing, experimentation, and learning-by-doing. The *ALACI* program is designed to encourage, improve, and support the development of adaptive leaders in addressing these complex challenges. Participants become investigators driving the experiments in this laboratory – testing new approaches and exploring “next practices” for themselves as individuals, within their organizations, and in their greater communities.

**Who makes a good ALACI Fellow?** | We are specifically offering the program to first-time Executive Directors and Artistic/Executive Directors. New executive leaders who have been in position for no less than 6 months, and no more than 5 years, are best positioned to participate in the program. While there is no minimum organizational budget, we encourage applicants to consider the time commitment in relation to their organization’s capacity.

**What is the financial commitment?** | Each participant’s organization is asked to contribute towards the total cost of their fellow’s participation with a financial commitment of **\$2,000**. *There is a very limited pool of partial scholarship funds available to support participant fees. If you would like to request a scholarship to subsidize the costs of your participation, please include your organizational budget details in your Letter of Support.*

The bulk of the ALACI program’s cost is generously underwritten by a grant from Houston Endowment. National funding for ALACI is largely underwritten by a leadership grant from the American Express Foundation.

## **Program Activities**

The elements of the program, over 12 months, have been carefully designed to reinforce each other and achieve maximum impact for participants and for their communities. The fundamental design principle of ALACI is therefore to move back and forth between group learning and individual practice. This repeated rhythm is assisted by ongoing individual coaching throughout the program.

### **1. Three full-cohort seminars**

- Held over four months, each for two days
- Designed and delivered by EmcArts faculty
- Include teaching, practical exercises, small group work, reflection and coaching
- Tools include leadership competency review and *Belbin Team-Role Preference* analysis for each participant (participants individually choose which competencies to focus on)

## 2. Applying Learning to Real World Challenges

- Defined opportunities for each participant to engage in new practices and guide adaptive work in their organization
- Opportunity in phase 2 of the program (over 8 months) for participants to work individually and together in small groups to in community put their adaptive leadership practice into action in community

## 3. Individual Adaptive Leadership Coaching

- Participants will benefit from regular individualized phone counseling, as follow-up to the seminars and virtual learning, and in parallel with participants putting new approaches into practice.

## Program Timeline

### APPLICATION PROCESS

- **September 5, 2019:** EmcArts Info Session with Melissa Dibble, Lead Process Facilitator. The session will be held at the DeLuxe Theatre from 3:30 PM to 5:00 PM.
- **October 29, 2019:** Deadline for Fellowship Application
- **November 22, 2019:** Individuals notified of application status
- **December 13, 2019:** Individuals notify EmcArts with acceptance

### **PHASE ONE: September - December 2019** *Individual coaching continues throughout Phase 1 and 2*

- **January 22 & 23, 2020:** First Seminar (second morning includes inviting 2 others – board and staff); Individual sessions begin
- **February 12 & 13, 2020:** Second Seminar
- **April 8 & 9, 2020:** Third Seminar

In addition to the full cohort seminars, each participant will work with an EmcArts facilitator who will provide ongoing guidance via phone around adaptive change work.

### **PHASE TWO: April - October, 2020**

#### In-Community Practicum and Ongoing Individual Coaching

In Phase 2, each participant will expand their adaptive leadership practice into their communities, working either singly or with a group. Work could involve facilitating adaptive change processes in another organization, or working alongside other Fellows to advance innovative responses to a community's complex challenge.

## **Application**

In selecting ALACI fellows, we are looking for understanding of what needs to be learned, a high level of critical self-awareness and openness to change, and challenges that are emergent in one's own leadership style and practice. Your application should provide a window into the conflicting ideas, creative tensions, areas of growth and hard choices that leadership generates for you.

### **The application should include three elements:**

1. Application Narrative (no more than 3 pages and should use 11-point type) The narrative should include:
  - Personal Vision Statement (up to 2 pages): What do you hope to gain by participating in this program? Why is this important for you at this stage of your career? How will this program benefit your career goals? How do you think participation would be beneficial for your organization?
  - Organizational Realities and Future Possibilities (up to 1 page): What do you see as some of the major opportunities and challenges ahead for your organization? What barriers do you see to your organization seizing these opportunities/ meeting these challenges? How could you imagine this program supporting your efforts in leading your organization's responses to these opportunities and challenges?
2. Your résumé (two page maximum)
3. A Letter of Support from your organization, addressing:
  - How they know you, in what capacity, and for how long
  - Why they feel you would be a good candidate for the Adaptive Leaders as Cultural Innovators program
  - Your level of commitment to the field
  - Your leadership potential
  - How the organization will support your participation
  - *If you would like to request a scholarship to subsidize the costs of your participation, please include your organizational budget details in this Letter of Support*

**Applications due by**  
**October 29<sup>th</sup>, 2019 6pm EST**

**Send as PDF to**  
**[aquizon@emcarts.org](mailto:aquizon@emcarts.org)**

*All applications will be acknowledged by e-mail upon receipt. You will receive notification by November 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2019 of the status of your application. Please officially accept your admittance by December 13<sup>th</sup>, 2019.*

If you have a specific question that's unanswered by our program page or this call for applications, or if you'd like to explore in more detail whether your application would be appropriate and timely, please contact Liz Dreyer directly.

Liz Dreyer, Lead Process Facilitator  
EmcArts Inc.

Tel: 1.917.446.8260  
Email: [LDreyer@EmcArts.org](mailto:LDreyer@EmcArts.org)