

GUIDELINES AND ELIGIBILITY

The Pop Culture Collaborative seeks grantee partners committed to creating a pop culture narrative environment powerful enough to re-shape the American public's imagination around people of color, immigrants, refugees and Muslims.

Our focus is on individuals, projects and collaborations that deliberately work through entertainment and mass media—movies, episodic TV and streaming series, sports, games, books, music, advertising and pop-driven journalism—to transform the narratives, values, beliefs and behaviors of millions of people everyday.

Through a pop culture lens, our grantee partners devote their artistry, resources and strategic efforts to one or more of the following: creative storytelling, narrative strategy design and implementation, research and evaluation, knowledge building and sharing, training and strategy development, audience analysis and activation, and/or network creation and management. We are looking for bold ideas, emotionally resonant storytelling, revelatory research and experiments, and critical insights that together build a powerful field at the intersection of pop culture and social change.

Our Support

Our funding ranges from \$5,000 for small, experimental initiatives to \$200,000 for multi-year culture change initiatives.

To be considered, proposals must engage, impact and/or support at least one or all of our multi-community focus areas –people of color, immigrants, refugees and Muslims. Intersectional focus on gender equity, the rights of children and families, LGBT rights, disability, democratic fairness, and economic justice within these four community areas is also supported.

Our grantmaking will prioritize projects that have a central focus around working within pop culture, but will consider proposals that incorporate fine arts, communications, and/or policy work.

Please see our 'Pop Up' rapid response grant-making program if your work is responding to an acute recent or upcoming political or cultural event and can be accomplished in four months or less.

With the exception of our Pop Up grants, we do not currently fund content production with our major grants, but will support content development, distribution, audience research and activation, partnership development and evaluation.

Eligibility

Individuals/organizations with fiscal sponsorships, non-profit and for-profits are eligible.

As a grantee, you are likely working in one or a combination of the following sectors: social change movement building, entertainment and/or the arts, advertising, academia, and/or science and technology, though we welcome relevant ideas and approaches from any sector.

The Collaborative is focused on long-term narrative and culture change. We expect that all prospective grantees should be able to clearly define how the work described in their proposals fit within a long-term narrative change strategy and theory of culture change.

Funding Areas

PROGRAM AREA 1: Research and Learning

The Pop Culture Collaborative supports the development and sharing of lessons and insights with and among entertainment, social justice and philanthropic sectors in order to deepen understanding and activate more collaborators in the pop culture for social change field.

Areas of interest include lessons, insights, analysis and recommendations that emerge from: the scientific study of the effects of pop culture stories on people's cognitive, emotional and behavioral experience; past and current pop culture change campaigns or experiments; audience research and analysis; evaluation and longitudinal impact methodologies; and trend tracking and analysis of future patterns in pop culture content creation, consumption and engagement.

Proposed projects can include:

- Research, data-driven projects and/or case studies, with a focus on projects that propose an innovative new method for insight dissemination;
- In-person convenings, online collaborative learning spaces;
- Experiments to test new methods of conducting research, partnerships and/or narrative design that offer new insights and analysis.

All *Research and Learning* proposals must have a clear sense of the projects' intended stakeholders and users; how shared research, insights and lessons will advance their knowledge and practice; and a production and distribution plan that will match the goals.

PROGRAM AREA 2: Building the Field

The Pop Culture Collaborative supports building a robust pop culture change field that is anchored by a diverse network of leading creatives, practitioners, and strategists within the entertainment, social justice and philanthropic fields. Together, they will have the knowledge, connections, skills and infrastructure to move in alignment and create transformative narrative change in our society.

Areas of interest include: resources to speed up adoption and activation of pop culture strategies by trailblazing and emerging culture change practitioners, experiments testing new strategies and partnerships; testing and development of partnerships among artists, entertainment industry and social justice leaders; new pipelines to develop the next generation of pop culture focused strategists, campaigners, creatives and artists; and long-term pop culture strategy design for and with issue-based organizations and cohorts.

Proposed projects can include:

- Open-source tools, online resources, interactive experiences
- In-person and/or online trainings and network spaces
- Research, landscape mapping, and data-driven reports
- Formulation of in person and online spaces that support the development of ongoing relationships and networks
- Long-term pop culture change strategy designed for individual organizations and/or cohorts
- Experiments testing new pop culture campaigns, content design and distribution, and partnership formation

All *Building the Field* proposals should have a clear analysis of why the project is needed; a theory of change around how this initiative fits into long-term strategy and/or a concrete hypothesis around new experiments; and an outline of proposed outcomes.

PROGRAM 3: Activating Mass Audiences

The tens of millions of people who make up pop culture audiences are a vast and diverse array of individuals and groups who share an overlapping mix of passions, interests and engagement levels with the stories and experiences that make up pop culture. The Pop Culture Collaborative supports initiatives and ideas to ensure that just, authentic narratives about people of color, immigrants, refugees and Muslims are deeply integrated into the story landscape and strategically leveraged to activate audiences around ways of thinking, living and relating.

Areas of interest include: the design, strategic testing, implementation, recalibration of strategy and assessment of long-term, pop-driven culture change campaigns and narrative strategies around our core communities; research and experimentation around immersive audience engagement; and support for the next generation of pop culture focused strategists, campaigners, creatives and artists;

Proposed projects can include:

- Design and implementation of multi-layered culture change strategies, including content/story strategy design and audience experience design. *Please click here to learn more about culture change strategy planning.*
- Reimagining and testing new roles and relationships between the social justice and entertainment fields to advance the development of new narratives, story creation and audience activation opportunities.
- Experimentation in new forms of narrative system design, story dissemination and audience activation.

All *Activating Mass Audiences* projects must demonstrate the necessary access to the cultural platforms and people needed to reach mass audiences; and display a proven track record of prior experimentation in this or related fields.

APPLICATION PROCESS

The Pop Culture Collaborative approves major grants on a bi-annual cycle in both the Spring/Summer and Fall/Winter. Proposals are by invite only. In order to help the Pop Culture Collaborative learn more about your work, we have created a streamlined process for you to share a quick summary of your organization and/or project to be considered for an RFP.

Step 1: Read the Major Grants eligibility requirements and guidelines.

Step 2: If you believe your proposal matches the Collaborative's guidelines, please submit a brief summary about your organization and/or project idea.

Step 3: If we wish to follow-up for more information, the Pop Culture Collaborative will contact you directly.