



**ABFE**

A Philanthropic Partnership  
for Black Communities

2023-2024

# Connecting Leaders Fellowship Program

Application Announcement

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Submission Deadline: Friday, July 14, 2023

## ABOUT ABFE

ABFE was established in 1971, by forward-thinking, Black foundation executives to promote effective and responsive philanthropy in Black communities.

As the first official affinity group of the Council on Foundations, ABFE is the champion of diverse leadership in philanthropy. Progress is defined by a substantial increase in the number of Blacks as leaders and emerging leaders within the philanthropic field, as well as new and more effective dollars targeted to priority issues in Black communities.

Today, ABFE counts among its members some of the most influential staff, trustees, and donors of grantmaking organizations who are intimately involved in shaping the focus, decision-making, and response of foundations toward Black communities.

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For more information, please visit [ABFE.org](https://abfe.org) or contact Tekecha Morgan, Program Manager for ABFE, at [tmorgan@abfe.org](mailto:tmorgan@abfe.org).

## OVERVIEW

The ABFE Connecting Leaders Fellowship Program (CLFP) is designed for early to mid-career professionals (foundation staff; donors; trustees; nonprofit leaders).



CLFP is a year-long experience designed to sharpen the skills and strengthen the leadership capacity of professionals who are committed to assisting Black communities through philanthropy. Fellowship cohort participants have the opportunity to hear from seasoned grantmakers, leaders, and peers on a regular basis. Participants will learn how to be more effective agents for change within their institutions, and participate in a network that focuses on innovative solutions to community challenges.

Cohort members participate in an exclusive Leadership Summit and are assigned an executive coach. In addition, each cohort member is required to complete a community-based learning project during the fellowship year. This can be volunteer work or a research project on a topic of interest to them, and of service to Black communities. Please note that cohort members will be based at their home institutions and in their communities during the fellowship year. We will host an informational webinar for anyone interested in applying on **Wednesday, June 28, 2023 at 2:00 PM ET.**

[Register for the webinar](#)

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## WHO IS ELIGIBLE TO APPLY?

The Fellowship is open to anyone who fits the following profile:



- 2+ years of demonstrated experience as a grantmaker, trustee, donor or nonprofit leaders working in philanthropy.
- A demonstrated philanthropic commitment to assisting Black people and Black communities
- Ability to attend the ABFE Leadership Summit that will take place November 12-17, 2023. Participation in the Summit is MANDATORY. ABFE covers the costs associated with travel, lodging at the designated host hotel and group meals.
- An active ABFE Membership is not a prerequisite to apply to the Fellowship, *however*, all Connecting Leaders Fellowship participants must be current members of ABFE at the time the Fellowship program begins and for the entire cohort period. For information about membership, contact Evelyn Frederick, director of membership, at [efrederick@abfe.org](mailto:efrederick@abfe.org).

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**TIME COMMITMENT**

# Participants in the Connecting Leaders Fellowship Program can expect the following time commitment:

The Leadership Summit is comprised of several day long commitments during the fellowship year. Breaks are scheduled to allow for email check-ins, however, participants should anticipate being busy for the entire week. For 2023-24, we will integrate a portion of the Leadership Summit with our annual conference.

- There will be a 90-minute (unless otherwise indicated), monthly conference call/webinar for the cohort (see anticipated dates below).
- All calls/webinars will be held at 2:00 PM ET and we expect all cohort participants to participate. Should unforeseen circumstances arise (personal or professional), we appreciate advance notice.
- Participants in the Fellowship receive a monthly one-on-one executive coaching sessions, usually by phone or zoom video conference. These appointments are coordinated directly between the cohort member and the Coach at their convenience.
- Participants in the Fellowship should expect to spend an additional 3 or 4 hours a month preparing for coaching sessions, working on your Community Based Learning Project and reading assignments.

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**TENTATIVE MEETING DATES**

To help you plan, we have set aside the following tentative dates for Fellowship video calls/webinars.

*\*All calls will be held at 2:00 PM ET.*

- Wednesday, September 13, 2023 – Kick-off Meeting
- Wednesday, October 11, 2023
- Sunday, November 12 - Friday, November 17, 2023 – Leadership Retreat
- Wednesday, December 13, 2023
- Wednesday, January 10, 2024
- Wednesday, February 21, 2024
- Wednesday, March 13, 2024
- April Meeting at ABFE Annual Conference
- Wednesday, May 8, 2024
- Wednesday, June 5, 2024

We will host some sessions with CLFP alum throughout the cohort year. You may be invited to participate in additional ABFE webinars and convenings throughout the year.

PROGRAM DETAILS



- The Connecting Leaders Fellowship is an outstanding professional development opportunity, which includes access to invaluable resources and supports. CLFP offers cohort members: one-on-one Executive Coaching; rigorous scientifically-based assessments 360° evaluation; the weeklong Leadership Summit (including airfare, hotel, meals, ground transportation, and learning experiences; and monthly facilitated cohort calls.
- The cost of the Fellowship for each cohort member is \$2,500.00, to be paid upon acceptance to the program. Requests for payment plans and limited financial aid will be considered. The application consists of five (5) essay questions, one letter of accommodation to be uploaded, and an uploaded copy of your resume. You can download a sample application and find additional information about the letter of recommendation on the ABFE website, [ABFE.org](http://ABFE.org).

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For questions about the Fellowship, please contact Tekecha Morgan, Program Manager for ABFE at [tmorgan@abfe.org](mailto:tmorgan@abfe.org).

## IMPORTANT DATES TO REMEMBER



- **INFORMATION AND Q&A WEBINAR:**  
Wednesday, June 28, 2023 at 2:00 PM ET
- **APPLICATION DEADLINE:**  
Friday, July 14, 2023\*  
(\*Due by 11:59 PM ET)
- **APPLICANT NOTIFICATION:**  
Tuesday, August 8, 2023
- **ABFE LEADERSHIP SUMMIT:**  
November 12-17, 2023

[Apply](#)

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## CLFP APPLICATION QUESTIONS

# Sharing your story is a key part of the application process and the CLFP learning journey.

Our cohorts focus on elevating the entire African diaspora and we invite you to embrace its diversity and breadth as you answer the questions below. The United Nations declared 2015-2024 the International Decade of People of African Descent. It is time to fully represent and uplift your Blackness. Integrate your authentic self into your essays and video – showcasing who you are, your lineage and your connections. Consider how celebrating and incorporating your heritage can catalyze greater impact in your work.

- Describe a situation where you were challenged to step into a “leadership moment” to effect change. What change needed to occur? Did the change take place? What role did you play? What did you learn about yourself as a leader from this experience? (please limit your response to 250 words)
- Please share your experiences leading teams, projects, or initiatives. What steps did you take to succeed? What are some challenges that were faced? What did you learn from experiences that did not meet your expectations? How will you manage the next opportunity to ensure success? (please limit your response to 250 words)
- What issues or challenges facing Black communities are of most interest to you? What role do you see organized philanthropy playing in effectively addressing them? (please limit your response to 250 words)
- What difference do you want to make through your work? Consider: How does your personal passion connect with your professional mission? What skills and experiences do you need to gather to meet your goals? What role do you see the Connecting Leaders Fellowship playing in your career journey? (please limit your response to 250 words)
- ABFE launched the Black Social Change Funders Network in 2017, which includes our Case for Funding Black Social Change (include the link). Tell us, what does “Black Social Change” mean to you? (please limit your response to 250 words)
- Upload a 3–5-minute video that shares your thoughts on the importance of culture and legacy. All videos must be formatted using the following video files (MOV; Mp4; WMV; or AVI)





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