

**REVISED SEMINAR 2 DATE: April 18 & 19, 2024**

## **Arts Leaders as Cultural Innovators: Southeast Michigan**

### **CALL FOR APPLICATIONS**

#### **Key Dates**

- **December 8, 2023, at 12:00 PM:** Virtual Info Session
- **January 31, 2024:** Application Deadline
- **March 14, 2024:** Program Begins (for a full timeline, see pages 4 & 5)

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CultureSource is now accepting applications for the Southeast Michigan cohort of *Arts Leaders as Cultural Innovators* (ALACI), a nationally renowned leadership development program that CultureSource is presenting in Southeast Michigan that will engage up to 20 first-time regional executive, senior, and artistic directors (with approximately one to five years of experience in their role) of nonprofit arts and culture organizations (or organizations that sustain significant cultural programs in their portfolio of services). The 9-month process of seminars, executive coaching, virtual learning, and practicums aims to leave a long-term legacy of increased capacity for adaptive change across Southeast Michigan and advance a cohort of leaders adept at process facilitation who can maintain and actively support organizational innovation and adaptive change processes. The *Arts Leaders as Cultural Innovators Program* results from CultureSource’s recent acquisition of EmcArts and is the first of many programs to expand the robustness of CultureSource’s support of member organizations.

**In this FAQ packet, you’ll find answers to the following questions:**

- What is ALACI?
- Who is the program for?
- How can I apply? (page 8)

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## **What is *Arts Leaders as Cultural Innovators* (ALACI)?**

### **Why this program now?**

The professional arts and culture sector in the United States is going through a period of immense change in response to dramatic shifts in demographics and trends in constituent engagement. This demands not so much improvement in existing organizational strategies as departures from past practice – innovations in program formats and venues, in how organizations equitably engage diverse publics, in creative use of the Internet, in organizational structures and governance, and through new partnerships and mergers.

With nonprofit organizations operating in this increasingly complex environment, rising leaders know that the best practices of the past can no longer guide the emerging solutions of the future. What is needed is innovation and adaptive change. Such change processes demand that we move away from traditional heroic leadership – the singular individual as the driving force and problem-solver, behind whom followers unite – and develop adaptive leadership, a set of practices that requires leaders to act as collaborative hosts, bringing people together across differences and distributing responsibility for tackling today’s “wicked” problems.

Ronald Heifetz defines adaptive leadership as “mobilizing people’s hearts and minds to work together differently to address complex challenges.”

However, leadership styles and approaches in our field have a long way to go to catch up with these seismic changes. Adaptive leadership skills must be developed and passed on to the next generation of leaders. This is a crucial time to develop the new leadership competencies that will equip younger leaders to stay in the field and be effective in radically changed circumstances.

### **Why is CultureSource bringing this program to Southeast Michigan?**

Within CultureSource's membership of 127 regional arts and culture organizations, we are steadily welcoming new leaders to our sector, many of them first-time executive directors and CEOs. Our evaluations and assessments have shown a desire among professionals for arts and culture-focused leadership development training and a clear gap in their availability in Southeast Michigan.

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### **What are the program activities?**

The elements of the program, over ten months, have been carefully designed to reinforce each other and achieve maximum impact for participants and their communities. Most traditional leadership training provides little space for the integrated practice of new skills learned in the program. With adaptive leadership, however, it is impossible to usefully strengthen relevant skills by working with single leaders alone and away from their workplaces. The fundamental design principle of ALACI is, therefore, to move back and forth between group learning via multi-day seminars and individual practice of new approaches and skills within each participant’s work environment. This repeated rhythm is mediated by ongoing executive coaching throughout the program.

#### Group activities

##### **1. Three full-group seminars for all participants together**

- Held over four months, each for two days
- Faculty to include leadership experts, facilitated by CultureSource
- To include teaching, process facilitation, practical exercises, small group work, reflection, and coaching
- *Belbin Team-Role Preference* analysis for each participant
- Individual executive coaching support throughout the program

##### **2. In-organization and In-community Practice**

- Defined opportunities for each participant to engage in new practices and guide adaptive work in his/her organization
- Opportunity in phase 2 of the program (over five months) for participants to work individually and/or together in small groups to address complex challenges in their community

#### Off-site/Online activities

##### **3. Virtual Learning Program**

- Short videos, available on demand 24/7, on key topics in adaptive leadership and managing an adaptive change process – such as identifying complex challenges, building an innovation team, generating innovative strategies, creating an effective project framework, designing experiments and prototypes, and enrolling others

#### 4. Individual Executive Coaching

- Participants will benefit from regular individualized phone or video (however the participant is most comfortable ) counseling by a qualified executive coach as a follow-up to the seminars and virtual learning and in parallel with participants putting new approaches into practice.

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### What Kinds of Challenges Will I Be Focusing On?

The challenges that individuals, organizations, and communities face play out in various contexts – [obvious, complicated, complex, and chaotic](#). Of these, two produce known or knowable challenges: in obvious contexts, existing best practices can be used to solve problems predictably, and in complicated ones, expert knowledge can inform finding a logical solution. **ALACI focuses on building the capacity of arts professionals to navigate complex problems** where there are no known solutions, traditional modes of strategic planning and best practices are insufficient, and where the way forward is generated only through probing and experimentation, adaptive leadership, and learning-by-doing. Adaptive responses to complex challenges require that individuals, organizations, and communities shift their ingrained and invisible assumptions, let go of cherished beliefs, shift received culture, and develop innovative approaches.

The ALACI program has been created to help encourage, improve, and support the development of adaptive leaders in addressing complex challenges. Participants become investigators driving the experiments in this laboratory to test new approaches and explore “next practices” for themselves as individuals and their organizations, and likely in their greater community.

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### What are the benefits?

Participating individuals, the organizations they work with, and the communities of Southeast Michigan will all benefit from greater and more diverse adaptive leadership capacity, a vital component of advancing and accelerating innovation and adaptive change. Advancing adaptive leadership behaviors and strengthening capacity in the field for effective process facilitation is a critical element in enabling organizations to innovate and address complex challenges. The program cohort, together with peers from the previous cohorts in other US cities (which have included Washington D.C., Providence, RI, New York, NY, Detroit, MI, Phoenix, AZ, & Houston, TX), will form a distributed learning network of adaptive leaders and empowered influencers for the field.

The work of participants will also provide vital reinforcing evidence for the field of the positive benefits of shifts in leadership, values, organizational processes, structures, and cultures that the program embraces and for which there is such an urgent call across the entire sector.

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### What is the program timeline?

The first full-group seminar for the Fellows is scheduled for March 13 and 15. The first phase of the program will end with the final seminar in May 2024. At that point, the participants will guide community-based adaptive change processes building on the individual practice during Phase 1. Phase 2 will run through November 2024. A more detailed timeline is below.

## APPLICATIONS:

- **December 8, 2024:** CultureSource Information Session (virtual)
- **January 31, 2024:** Deadline for Fellowship Application
- **February 5, 2024:** Individuals notified of application status
- **February 19, 2024:** Individuals notify CultureSource of acceptance, and the first LearningSource content post becomes available to Fellows

## PHASE ONE: March-May 2024

*Executive coaching and LearningSource content posts continue throughout phases 1 and 2*

- **March 14 & 15, 2024: Seminar 1 at Mexicantown Plaza del Norte Welcome Center;** Individual coaching sessions begin
  - **Seminar 1 Concepts**
    - *Getting to know each other & the ALACI program*
    - *Adaptive leadership and you*
    - *Understanding your role as a leader within the organization*
    - *Develop a practice of reflection – learning what you’ve learned*
- **April 18 & 19, 2024 (Revised): Seminar 2 at Mexicantown Plaza del Norte Welcome Center**
  - **Seminar 2 Concepts**
    - *Continuing cohort formation*
    - *Being data-informed, holding multiple perspectives*
    - *Understanding and navigating organizational culture*
    - *Building organizational understanding of different types of challenges*
    - *Guiding adaptive change in your organization*
- **MAY 14 & 15, 2024: Seminar 3 at Mexicantown Plaza del Norte Welcome Center**
  - **Seminar 3 Concepts**
    - *Understanding the systems you inhabit in your communities*
    - *Individual and organizational connections to your greater communities*
    - *Managing and making generative heat and disequilibrium*
    - *Intervening effectively when adaptive work gets stuck or devolves*

## PHASE TWO: June – November 2024

*In-community practicum, LearningSource content posts, and ongoing executive coaching throughout phase 2*

### June 2024

- Share your ALACI journey with your org leadership (board chair, key staff member, etc.)

### September 2024

- Community-oriented interactions to implement your ALACI skills begin [30 min avg per week]
- Cohort Session (in-person) DATE TBD upon completion of phase 1
  - o *Concept covered: Sharing your summer implementation and learning on three levels (individual, organizational, and in the community)*
  - o *Concept covered: Artistic Capabilities of Adaptive Leaders*

### October 2024

- Cohort Sharing and Reflection Session, DATE TBD upon completion of phase 1, hosted by CS Virtually
  - o *Concept covered: Financial Structures that support Adaptive Changemaking and Innovations*

### November 2024

- Community-oriented interactions to implement your ALACI skills continue [30 min average per week]
- Cohort Sharing and Reflection, Program Closing Session (in-person) Date TBD upon completion of phase 1
  - o *Concept covered: Assess & align your organizational culture with its strategic directions*

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## Who Is the Program For?

**We are recruiting first-time executive, senior, and artistic directors (with approximately 1-5 years of experience in their current role) working in Southeast Michigan. The application process is open until January 31, 2024, and the program will launch on March 14, 2024.**

(Southeast Michigan includes Livingston, Macomb, Monroe, Oakland, St. Clair, Washtenaw, and Wayne counties.)

## Who makes a good ALACI Fellow?

The anticipated participants in the Southeast Michigan cohort of the ALACI program will be a diverse cohort of up to 20 rising leaders of arts and culture organizations (or organizations that sustain significant cultural programs in their mix). ***We are specifically offering the program to Artistic/Executive/Senior Directors holding that position for the first time.*** Current training for the top executive position in arts and culture organizations tends to focus on technical and functional issues (marketing, fundraising, planning, budgeting) rather than adaptive skills, culture, and leadership. Many new Executive Directors fall into the heroic leadership model for lack of any alternative, thus impeding rather than propelling a shift in leadership skills and roles. This lack of coaching and capacity-building collides with a huge generational shift in leadership in the field, making the ALACI program particularly timely, nationally, and in many local or regional communities. We intend that participants will also be poised to play a wider role in the overall social and cultural health of a particular geographic location – more so than the executives with more than five years of experience who are a common focus of professional development programs.

New executive leaders who have been in position for no less than six months and no more than five years will likely be best placed for the program. There will be no specific floor on the budget size of participants' organizations, but we anticipate that the program will be most valuable for organizations with budgets over

\$500,000, where there is enough organizational capacity for ongoing business to continue while the participant focuses partially on the ALACI work, and where the repeated convening of a staff team to work on a complex challenge in Phase 2 is feasible.

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### ***What is the time commitment?***

For a full timeline of fellowship activities and seminars, see page 4.

In Phase 1, Fellows will attend 3 two-day in-person seminars (8 hours per day), currently scheduled for February, March, and May 2024. Between seminars, we expect Fellows will spend at least 30 minutes weekly on implementing, reflecting, and designing their Adaptive Changemaking skills and experiments.

In addition to the full cohort seminars, each participant will work with an executive coach who will provide regular telephone/zoom counseling around their adaptive change work (6 one-hour coaching sessions across the entire program, 3 sessions per Phase). We also anticipate regular peer-to-peer exchanges to share learnings, experiments, and approaches.

In Phase 2, participants will expand their adaptive leadership practice further into their organizations and communities, working individually or with other Fellows. For example, this work could involve providing lead process facilitation for an adaptive change process in another organization or working with other Fellows to advance an innovative response to a complex challenge specific to a community. There will also be two in-person Cohort Sharing Sessions in September and November and a virtual Cohort Session in October. Phase 2 will run for five months, from June – November.

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### ***What is the financial commitment?***

Each participant's organization is asked to sponsor their fellow's participation with a financial commitment of \$2,000.

Applicants who are employees of CultureSource member organizations automatically receive scholarships of \$1750 towards the program's cost.

We are asking for organizational financial commitment as a means of ensuring that each individual has substantive backing for a program that will not only provide benefits for the individual and the organization but will also require ongoing organizational investment and support for the fellow to practice adaptive leadership skills.

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### ***Is this the right program for me?***

Below are a series of questions that might help you consider whether to apply for ALACI. These can help you determine if this program could be a good fit; ask yourself if exploring these topics might help you move your organizational and personal leadership challenges forward.

#### **Seeing systemic patterns**

- Are you able to move confidently back and forth between action and reflection?
- Do you have an external orientation, considering outside trends and circumstances? Can you make connections between these and the dynamics inside your organization?
- Are you interested in gaining a deeper understanding of complex systems and how they work?

**Surfacing complex challenges**

- Are you inclined toward clarity of vision and goals and flexibility in strategy?
- Are you interested in learning ways to understand organizational challenges and make sense of people's experiences in responding to them?
- Are you able to challenge the status quo without creating animosity? Can you guide people to question their assumptions?
- Are you interested in helping people to adopt an experimental mindset?

**Maintaining disciplined attention to complex issues**

- Can you motivate and inspire people to take on difficult journeys?
- Are you good at bringing unusual suspects together?
- Are you interested in learning how to create a safe "practice space" for adaptive work?
- Are you committed to building high-performing teams?
- Are you interested in getting out of a conventional planning mindset?

**Regulating distress and creating generative conflict**

- Do you possess mental toughness and negotiating ability? Are you prepared to disrupt norms, question sacred cows, and take the heat?
- Are you attracted to balancing openness with control?
- Are you interested in learning how to promote useful idea conflict and conflict resolution tools?
- Are you interested in addressing your own immunity to change?

**Giving the work back to people**

- Can you let go of your authority in favor of learning?
- Are you committed to facilitating fair and inclusive engagement across differences?
- Is competence and agility in responding to varied cultural backgrounds important to you?
- Are you inclined to delegate, or do you prefer to make most decisions independently?
- Are you good at stopping voices (including your own) from predominating?

**Encouraging and protecting leadership voices from below and outside**

- Do you see value in working with non-experts?
- Are you interested in learning how to build trusting relationships?
- Are you committed to bringing unusual networks together and fostering critical connections?

## How Can I Apply?

**What Is the Deadline for Applying?**

The application deadline is 6:00 pm Eastern on January 31, 2024.

All applications must be received electronically by **January 31, 2024, 6 PM Eastern Time**. Please submit the documents detailed below and fill out the form on the [online submission form](#).

You will receive notification by **February 7, 2024**, of the status of your application. We ask that you officially accept your admittance by **February 19, 2024**.

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## What Should the Application Include?

It is natural for ambiguity and a degree of messiness to characterize adaptive change work—indeed, these qualities are often part of developing new ways of thinking, acting, and leading. In selecting ALACI fellows, we are looking for an 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. Please fill out the form and attach the three application documents detailed below via the application form linked here: [ALACI 2024 APPLICATION FORM](#)

### The application should include three elements:

**1. The Application Narrative** should be no more than three pages and use Times New Roman font with a minimum 11-point type. The narrative should include:

- Personal Vision Statement (no more than 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 are 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. Résumé

- Two pages maximum for background information only. If an updated resume is unavailable, a list that states your employment history and role and a brief description of responsibilities is acceptable.

**3. Organizational Letter of Support** from a leader in your organization, addressing:

- How do they know you, in what capacity, and for how long?
- Why they feel you would be a good candidate for the Arts Leaders as Cultural Innovators program
- Your level of commitment to the field
- Your leadership potential
- How will the organization support your participation? Will it help cover your participation fee? If your organization will not cover your participation fee, where will it come from? What level of monetary support can the organization provide? Will your employer, board, and colleagues provide support in other, non-monetary ways?

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## Where do I Apply?

Applicants should complete the form and upload the three required documents on the [online submission form](#).

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## Where can I get additional information?





For more information on ALACI goals and objectives, program design and elements, fellowship eligibility, and more, visit the [program webpage](#). 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, please contact Goode Wyche III directly.

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