

the lewis prize for music

community | collaboration | leadership

Community Convening Recommendations and Themes

The Lewis Prize for Music hosted community convenings in Los Angeles, New York, Boston, Detroit, Chicago, San Antonio, and Miami between November 2017 and January 2018. The following recommendations were articulated across multiple meetings and have served as essential contributions to the development of The Lewis Prize. The full list of participants is available on the [Transparency](#) webpage.

Vision
<p style="text-align: center;">Social Justice and Social Change</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Definitions for social change and social justice should be open and broad to allow for diverse artists and projects to be included• Award projects that combine social impact and high levels of artistry• Seek to address systemic inequity for civic benefit and recognize that any size project can advance this goal• Value artists' role and leadership in defining projects and social change
<p style="text-align: center;">Community Engagement and Locality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• From city to city the award may look different based upon local assets and needs particular to each demographic• Community members and non-artists should actively be engaged in the process and projects• The prize should be awarded to artists and organizations who have already proven authentic engagement with community. Thought must be given to how this can be measured
Process

Inclusivity of the Process

- The Lewis Prize should decide if artists need to be at a certain point in their career in order for them to qualify for the award
- The Lewis Prize should be inclusive of all genres of music and reward a diverse array of genres types and types of thought leaders
- Make the application process welcoming and broadly accessible. There are often structural barriers to applications that the Lewis Prize should be aware of in order to ensure that artists of Color and smaller organizations aren't over burdened by the process, disadvantaged, or self-select out

Judging and Nominating Board

- The nominating board and jury should be racially diverse and in touch with the communities in each locality
- The board and jury should be diverse and not comprised of all the same types of people at the table, including non-musicians
- The nomination board should be aware of systematic hierarchies and implicit bias in order to ensure a diverse and surprising pool of candidates
- Ensure the nominating board, jury and candidates are more than the "usual" award winners or field leaders

Application Process

- An open application process would allow for lesser known and more obscure artists to be able to be involved and apply; would also help with limited administrative bandwidth
- The experience for applicants should be more than competition, even artists that are not selected should gain access to community and other resources that can in some way elevate their careers
- Additional resources should be provided to artists who may not be as familiar with an application process to support their involvement

Prize Form and Sustainability

- In order for a project to be sustainable, funding over a long period of time is more appropriate than a one-time cash influx
- Outside of financial support, the prize can provide artists and organizations with other resources, including training, mentors and a network
- Thought should be given to the long-term impact of the prize in marginalized community and how to engage community values and resources around art making

Evaluation, Measurement, and Accountability

- Include new voices and partnership in evaluation, including artists' perspective and consensus, when defining project success
- Limitations in quantifying impact highlight the imperative of documentation and dissemination of project activities and results to demonstrate accountability
- Artists and smaller organizations have less experience and capacity for evaluation so may need assistance

Prize Recipient

- Balance awarding individuals and organizations. Individuals need capacity assistance while organizations need the flexibility of artists.
- Being cognizant of the career stage of recipients
- Award individuals and/or organizations with a history of commitment to addressing core inequities, not just beginning because of The Prize

Impact on Artists and the Field

Individual Impact

- Consensus in having the funding encourage the growth of an artist's ecosystem of support, including networks and mentors
- Invest in the leadership and development of winners by providing training, capacity and travel support in addition to The Prize
- A secondary question to consider: how does this impact music training and from more of a systemic view, how will the LP create ripple effects in all aspects of how artistic creation is approached
- Lift up work that is strong but might be struggling due to lack of resources

Innovation and Transformation in Field

- Use The Prize to elevate music for social change work by moving away from “star effect” prize giving
- Create a community of stakeholders who elevate the importance of music and social change as well as share knowledge, resources and ideas and collaborate
- Impact the existing structures of the arts field to shift power and bring more attention and resource to music for social change practices