

JAZZ Legacies Fellowship

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) - Jazz Legacies Fellowship

1. What is the Jazz Foundation of America (JFA)?

The Jazz Foundation of America (JFA) is a national nonprofit organization dedicated to providing financial assistance, social services, and employment opportunities to jazz, blues, and roots musicians facing hardships such as financial crises, health issues, and natural disasters. JFA was founded in 1989 and now assists musicians and their families in 7,000 cases annually across the U.S.

2. What is the Jazz Legacies Fellowship?

The Jazz Legacies Fellowship is a four-year initiative designed to support seasoned jazz musicians through unrestricted financial awards and additional stipends for personal and project-related needs, such as housing, medical expenses, tours, and recordings. This initiative is made possible by a generous \$15 million grant from the Mellon Foundation, who are the sponsors of the program.

3. What is Andrew W. Mellon Foundation?

The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation is the nation's largest supporter of the arts and humanities. Since 1969, the Foundation has been guided by its core belief that the humanities and arts are essential to human understanding. The Foundation believes that the arts and humanities are where we express our complex humanity, and that everyone deserves the beauty, transcendence, and freedom that can be found there. Through its grants, the Foundation seeks to build just communities enriched by meaning and empowered by critical thinking, where ideas and imagination can thrive.

4. How else is the Mellon Foundation supporting Jazz?

We are proud to share that Andrew W. Mellon Foundation is sponsoring this fellowship as part of their larger initiative of \$35 million to support and uplift the field of jazz. The Jazz Legacies Fellowship sits at the helm of this support, as a way to directly support musicians who have dedicated their careers and invaluable contributions in shaping the history of music in America. To find out more about this please visit mellon.org.

5. Who is eligible for the Jazz Legacies Fellowship?

Any person(s) who has made an impact in the Jazz field is eligible. All nominees must meet the below requirements:

- Be 62 years of age or older
- Be based in the U.S., including Puerto Rico or holds US citizenship or residency
- Have significantly contributed to jazz and influenced other genres
- Have a history of mentorship and community involvement
- Benefit from financial assistance, though need is not the sole criterion
- Be well-established members of their local music community
- Incorporate social change, justice, and/or human rights into their work

6. Is the work limited to U.S. territories?

Yes, the Jazz Legacies Fellowship is specifically designed to support musicians based in the United States, including Puerto Rico, or any person who is based internationally but holds US citizenship or residency and has spent a significant portion of their career working in the US.

7. How long is the fellowship?

The Jazz Legacies Fellowship is a four-year initiative that provides financial and project-based support to selected fellows. Each round is 24-months; there will be 4 rounds.

8. How can someone be nominated?

Eligible nominators, including music industry professionals, journalists, and educators, can nominate up to two jazz musicians who meet the eligibility criteria. Nominations are submitted via an online form.

9. How can I become a nominator?

Nominators for the Jazz Legacies Fellowship are selected by JFA staff in collaboration with an artist advisory committee appointed by the Mellon Foundation. Invitations are extended to individuals with deep expertise in the field of jazz, including musicians, arts administrators, journalists, and educators. If you are interested in becoming a nominator, we encourage you to reach out to fellowship@jazzfoundation.org for more information.

10. Can I nominate without an invitation?

No.

11. Will there be a new nomination and selection committee every year?

Yes! While some nominators may be invited to participate multiple times, rotating the final selection committee welcomes fresh perspective, and a diverse selection without past biases. This broadens representation across the jazz community and ensures equity in recognizing a wide range of deserving artists.

12. What is the selection process?

Once the nominations are submitted, the following steps are followed:

- Internal review by JFA staff and Mellon the appointed artist advisory group to create a shortlist.
- Review by an external Selection Committee composed of music industry experts
- Notification of selected fellows
- Public announcement of fellows

13. How many fellows will be selected in total?

Over the span of four years we will select a total of 50 fellows. The decision to support 50 fellows allows us to make meaningful impact while ensuring that resources are distributed equitably. It also ensures that a diverse group of musicians from different backgrounds, regions, and artistic influences can benefit from the program.

14. Why did the first cohort have 20 fellows?

The first cohort of the Jazz Legacies Fellowship included 20 fellows to lay a strong foundation for the program and create impact right from the start. By launching with a larger group, we were able to support more artists in the inaugural year, ensuring a diverse representation of musicians who have shaped the field of jazz. This also set a precedent for future cohorts, reinforcing our commitment to jazz artists.

15. Why does the fellowship require ages 62 and over?

The decision to support jazz artists aged 62 and older is rooted in the recognition of their invaluable contributions to jazz and the unique challenges musicians often face later in their careers. Many veteran musicians have dedicated their lives to shaping the history of jazz, mentoring younger generations, and influencing a broad spectrum of musical genres, however, due to the unpredictable and unstable nature of jazz, many older musicians experience financial hardship, lack of healthcare, and limited employment opportunities. This fellowship was specifically created to honor their legacy, provide financial stability, and ensure that they can continue their creative pursuits with dignity and security.

16. How much will each fellow receive in support?

Each fellow will receive a lifetime achievement award and a grant of \$100,000 in unrestricted funds. This will provide financial stability and freedom to use the money in ways that best support their lives and careers. Whether for medical expenses, housing, creative projects, or personal needs, this funding honors their contributions to jazz while empowering them to continue their work on their own terms

17. How much will they receive in the “supplemental funding?”

For the safety and security of our current fellows, and future ones, we have chosen not to disclose the additional funds allocated for tailored services. This is to ensure each fellow can access the support they need without external pressures or concerns, allowing them to fully benefit from the fellowship in a private and protected manner. The supplemental funding is geared towards personal, including master class and performance opportunities, production assistance, legal and financial counsel and more.

18. Who are the supporting staff of the Jazz Legacies Fellowship?

The supporting staff is:

- Veronika Châtelain, Program Director
- Seth Abramson, Senior Artistic Advisor
- Anne Foerg, Human Services Director

19. How can I learn more?

For more information about the fellowship please contact us at fellowship@jazzfoundation.org