

To fellow members of the Leap Ambassadors Community –

We are excited to share an update on the [Leap Futures Initiative \(LFI\)](#), a process initiated in early 2022 to help the Leap Ambassadors Community (LAC) map out scenarios to become a sustainable, self-governed entity from 2024 and beyond.

This document is a brief overview (~6 pages) of what we've learned and the path forward. Throughout, you will see links to more detailed information found in the Appendix.

We also look forward to hosting Townhalls on November 8th and November 16th to share more and answer questions.



Please respond to survey - At the end of this update, you will be asked to complete a survey. Determining the community's future can't happen until we hear from a critical mass of ambassadors, so we thank you for taking a few moments to respond.

We hope you enjoy learning more, and if you want to get more involved with the LFI Process, or have any questions, please reach out [here](#).

With appreciation,
[LFI SteerCo Members](#)

The LFI has been a robust process led by a diverse group of ambassadors and has produced a lead concept for the future of the LAC

What the LFI process has accomplished

In the LFI Spring Survey launched in April 2022, 78% of ambassadors who responded indicated that they would like to see the community continue post-2023. Subsequently, [a diverse group of ambassadors has stepped up to form a Steering Committee \(LFI SteerCo\)](#) and has successfully explored options and narrowed in on a lead concept.

The LFI process engaged the Leap Ambassadors Community extensively. These engagements found that ambassadors highly value the LAC and believe it should continue with a high degree of activity. Ambassadors also have strong interest in clarifying the current value proposition and imagining new possibilities for the future, particularly around equity work and strengthening social sector outcomes. The LFI SteerCo has concluded that clarifying and ideating on the LAC value proposition could open new opportunities for the community.

The LFI process also used desk research, interviews, and focus groups to understand funding and governance options. The research found that funding will be needed to sustain the community, that a single funder is unlikely to be viable, and that there is reason to believe multiple funders could be coalesced to support the LAC. Research also found that identifying a partner is a viable option to explore further, not only because a partner would enable infrastructure and cost-sharing benefits, but also because there are early indications of interest. More [details about the LFI research and insights can be found here](#).

A Lead Concept for the Future of our Community

In light of these findings, the LFI SteerCo is pleased to recommend a **partner plus funder consortium as the lead concept** to pursue to sustain the LAC and has **designed a process and steps to realize this concept**.

While the SteerCo is optimistic about the lead concept, we are also managing the inherent challenges and risks, with timing as the most likely. The LFI SteerCo therefore has developed a range of contingency plans should we encounter timing constraints or not find the partner and/or funding needed.

This document provides more information about the lead concept and the myriad activities underway to move forward, as well as operational, transition, and contingency plan details.

The LFI SteerCo sees great opportunity around the lead concept and is executing a plan to bring it to fruition

The **lead concept** suggests that beginning in 2024, the LAC will be **housed within a partner organization**, which helps offset infrastructure costs and has the potential to mutually advance missions. The LAC will **offer ambassadors a set of key services similar to the services currently provided**, and will be **sustained through a mixed funding model, consisting primarily of grant funding, annual commitments, and possibly a nominal membership dues structure**.

The LFI SteerCo has **designed and started to execute the plan to pursue this concept**, including outlining the LAC value proposition, interviewing potential partners and potential funders, and building out full [operational and transition plans](#). The work is being executed through a high engagement process with [numerous ambassador volunteers in three working groups](#) who are focused on driving the work forward quickly.

“ I totally support the funding approach and see real potential to attract funders by elevating LEAP’s work around capacity building for orgs led by folks of color. ”
– Omar Butler, SteerCo Member

“ There’s a lot of possibility around future partners, and this is really how we could get to the next generation of the LAC. ”
– Kathy Park, SteerCo Member

“ As our dynamic community continues to grow and diversify, so do the possibilities of achieving our vision and adapting it to new horizons. ”
– Debra Natenshon, SteerCo Member



Potential Funders Interviewed

15



Potential Partners Interviewed

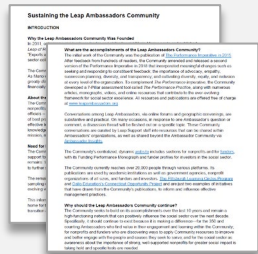
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The working groups are hard at work on efforts to explore and execute against the lead concept

Value Proposition Working Group

12 members - [see list here](#)

- Over 8 ambassadors contributed to producing an LAC value proposition that articulates the current state value of the community



LAC Overview

- The working group is developing **potential future state value propositions** based on exciting ideas that have surfaced to date
- These materials will be combined with **financial and operational materials** for funder and partner conversations

Fundraising Working Group

5 members - [see list here](#)

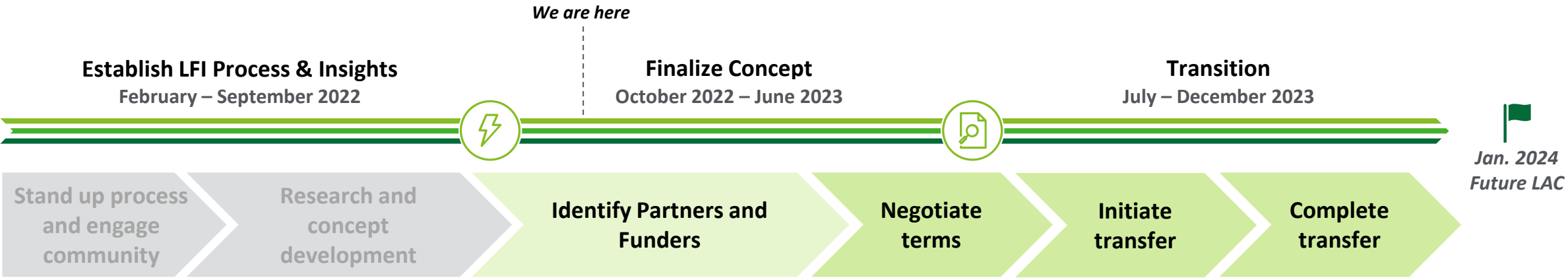
- Aligned on mix of revenue types (grants + annual commitments) and most likely source of funding as the LAC itself, with priority placed on infrastructure funders that have an ambassador in the LAC
- Using **financial analysis** to set fundraising targets
- Conducted **preliminary focus groups and 1:1 conversations with ~15 funders**
- The working group **identified 19 high-priority funders** to hold initial conversations with, to be held in early November
- Brad Dudding and Mari Kuraishi** are leading individual and group conversations with high priority funders
- Will make a **recommendation on funding feasibility** by January 2023

Partner Working Group

9 members - [see list here](#)

- Aligned that the **most likely partners are organizations that have an ambassador in the community**; also considering [fiscal sponsorship](#)
- Developing **partner criteria** to evaluate potential leads
- In confidential conversations with 4 “warm leads”** for partners spanning the philanthropic and social sectors
- Continuing **outreach to the full LAC** to identify other potential partners and continuing to source and evaluate potential opportunities
- Holding **conversations with the Tides Foundation** to assess fiscal sponsorship
- Will make a **recommendation on partner feasibility** by January 2023

The LFI SteerCo has a detailed process going forward with a roadmap for the lead concept and key steps and operational and transition plans



Key Milestones for LFI Process:

- November 2022**
Test LAC alignment on approach
- January 2023**
Test partner fit and funding viability
- Q2 2023**
Confirm LAC is supportive of final path forward

LFI Future Initiative		Partner and Funder ID Workplan		
Activity		Oct-22	Nov-22	Dec-22
Value Proposition	Identify current state value propositions, including with SteerCo and Realize			
	Develop operational planning needs (e.g., budget) to include in addition to value proposition			
	Develop general non-value propositions to engage with prospective funders and partners			
	Coordinate with fundraising and partnership working groups to use materials in funder and partner conversations			
	Conduct initial outreach and conversations with "warm leads" (i.e., potential funders that have shown initial interest)			
	Conduct follow-up conversations with prospective funders based on current state value proposition and potential of new value propositions			
	Develop draft membership case approach/outline and Realize with Steering Committee			
	Conduct funder conversations and share with the LAC			
	Conduct total outreach and conversations with "warm leads" (i.e., potential partners that have shown initial interest)			
	Launch an open call to community to source additional potential partner organizations			
Key Working Group	Develop partner selection and/or partner steering Committee feedback			
	Conduct outreach to interested partner organizations			
	Research fiscal sponsorship model as a contingency option			

Partner and Funder ID Workplan

LFI Future Initiative		Negotiation Checklist	
Negotiation Checklist		Documentation for Negotiations and Decisions	
Overview and Key Assumptions: The below is a checklist of key considerations for the formal / legal negotiations to take place once the community has made a strategic decision to move forward with a viable partner. These negotiations will reflect the transfer of the community's assets/activities to the partner entity (the transfer processes are outlined on the next tab.)		Available via LFI process: • Current state budget and future budget • Current state staffing and future staffing • Membership agreements • List of all assets and technology system	
Key assumption prior to undertaking these steps, there has been general mutual alignment on the path forward, with details and templates to be worked out through the negotiation process.		Available from SteerCo/Realize (TBC): • Employee handbook and policies • Employment contracts • Privacy and data security policies and	
Not relevant/negotiable: • Articles of incorporation • System contracts for the community's computer and accounts • Board of directors (members, minutes) • Tax forms • Audited financial statements or other		• Property deeds or related	

Negotiation Checklist

LFI Future Initiative		Transfer Planning Workplan	
Transfer Planning Workplan		Transfer Planning Workplan	
Overview and Key Assumptions: The LFI transfer process, at a high level, is a series of steps that will ensure the safe and orderly transfer of the community's assets/activities to the partner entity. This process will reflect the transfer of the community's assets/activities to the partner entity (the transfer processes are outlined on the next tab.)		Available via LFI process: • Current state budget and future budget • Current state staffing and future staffing • Membership agreements • List of all assets and technology system	
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Transfer Planning Workplan

The LFI SteerCo developed estimates for different LAC activity levels that could correspond to different funding levels; these estimates are based on analysis of current state operations

The LFI Steering Committee developed the below ranges for the activities that would be possible at various funding levels for the lead concept. The Fundraising working group and the Steering Committee will use this as a backdrop to determine specific fundraising targets.

Note: numbers are provisional pending further alignment with LFI Steering Committee and Fundraising working group

Amount of funding received



The estimated ranges above include compensation expense, discretionary expenses, and support expenses.

Across all scenarios, back-office expenses are estimated at 10% of operating costs and employee benefits are estimated at 30% of total staff compensation.

The LFI SteerCo has also developed contingency plans to address most probable challenges and risks



More time needed to secure funding - Bridge to Future State with Basic Transfer and Minimal Operations

LAC transfers assets to an interim place, continues minimum operations via volunteers and/or part-time interim staff running the online forum, and continues to finalize the LFI proceedings.

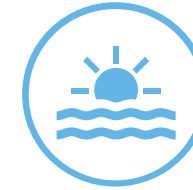
Assumes funding / partnership forthcoming but not finalized.



No partner but sufficient funding - Align with a Fiscal Sponsor

LAC aligns to a fiscal sponsor, which can house the assets and provide comprehensive back-office support for an interim period or longer term (see [additional details on fiscal sponsorship](#)).

Assumes sufficient funding (likely minimum \$200K/year sustainable funding) and fiscal sponsor willingness.



No partner or funding - Celebrate and Sunset

LEAP Support Team will wind down operations, working with the LAC to achieve a graceful sunset for LAC, including securing a home to archive and keep accessible the community assets.

Survey: please help shape the future of our community!

Thanks to the LAC members for your great participation in the LFI process thus far – the vast majority of community members have engaged in some way.

To ensure the path forward reflects the desires of the community, it's important to hear from most of the Leap Ambassadors Community (our aim is **100%** participation!)

Please [click here](#) to take a very short survey on the future of the community.



Appendix 1: LFI Governance, Steering Committee, and Working Groups

The LFI SteerCo designed a governance approach to manage the LFI process

LFI Steering Committee

Oversee working groups and steward the input and decision-making process
during each phase of implementation

LFI Working Groups

Execute LFI implementation plan, **answer key outstanding questions related to funding and governance**, and provide regular updates and recommendations to the Steering Committee

Value Proposition

Fundraising

Partnership

Leap Ambassadors Community

Collective body for input and decision-making on funding sources and governance models
once viable options have been identified

The Charge of the LFI Steering Committee

The LFI Steering Committee is made up of a subset of ambassadors who have **vested stakes in the community, want to see the community continue**, and are able to **invest the time to do the “heavy lifting”** needed for essential definition and development. Specific objectives are to:

- **Design the process** to engage the LAC around potential options and recommendations, including decision rights
- **Develop the lead concept** and governance options to be further explored
- **Refine and recommend the option** for the community to vote on

Equity, Inclusion, and Transparency Considerations for the Steering Committee

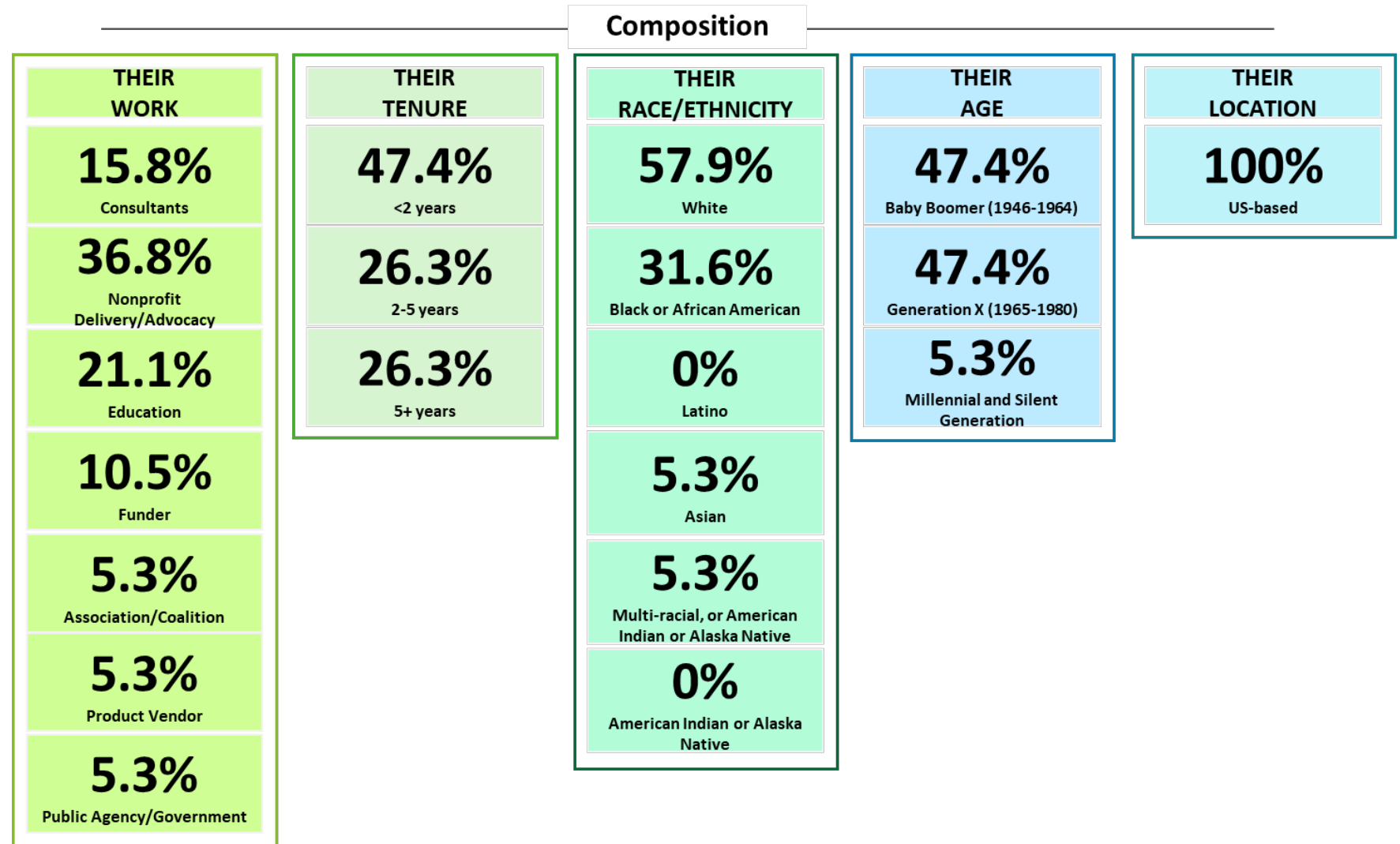
Given our commitment to equity, inclusion, and transparency in the LFI process, we encourage diversity of people, voices, and perspectives on the Steering Committee.

YOUR WORK Adequate nonprofit delivery/advocacy representation.	YOUR TENURE Appropriate balance of Steering Committee members who are new to the Community versus those who have 5+ years of tenure.	YOUR RACE/ETHNICITY Over-representation of Black or African American, Latino, Asian, multi-racial, and American Indian or Alaska Native ambassadors.	YOUR AGE Over-representation of Millennials on the Steering Committee vis a vis the Community.	YOUR LOCATION At least one ambassador located outside of the United States.
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The LFI Steering Committee

As a result of a targeted outreach process, the final Steering Committee is made up of 19 members.

- A. Toni Young
- Amy Morgenstern
- Andrew Niklaus
- Art Taylor
- Brad Dudding
- Britt Lake
- Carmen Moreno-Rivera
- Christine Robinson
- Debra Natenshon
- Doug Bauer
- Erika Van Buren
- James Stancil
- John Brothers
- Kathy Park
- Louis Erste
- Omar Butler
- Quentin Wilson
- Shelley Metzenbaum
- Tracy Gray



Ambassadors have formed 3 active working groups for the lead concept

Fundraising

- Brad Dudding
- Doug Bauer
- Mari Kuraishi
- Kathy Reich
- Jenn Rothberg

Partnership

- John Brothers
- A. Toni Young
- Erika Van Buren
- Tosca Bruno-van Vijfeijken
- Hilda Polanco
- Meridith Polin
- Randal Pinkett
- Heather Carpenter
- Jeremy Kohomban


Value Proposition

- Debra Natenshon
- Louis Erste
- Amy Morgenstern
- Quentin Wilson
- Shelley Metzenbaum
- Brad Dudding
- Kathy Park
- Tracy Gray
- Keren Abina Sotomayor
- Pratichi Shah
- Steve Seleznow
- Dina Wilderson

Appendix 2: Details on LFI learnings, analysis, and methods

The LFI SteerCo explored an initial set of questions about how the LAC can become a sustainable, self-governed entity by 2024

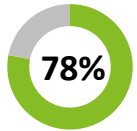
Initial questions

- Which funding mechanisms will be the most feasible to fund the future of the LAC?
 - What type of entity will the LAC be going forward? (e.g., separate 501(c)(3), learning community, part of another org)
 - What activities should the LAC pursue to advance its mission?
 - How will the LAC be run and decisions be made?
- 

Work to date

- Gathered initial **survey responses from 220+ ambassadors**
- Formed **19-member LFI Steering Committee** emphasizing broad inclusion and diversity
- Facilitated **20+ in-depth interviews and focus groups** with ambassadors
- Analyzed current LAC **cost and operational data**
- Conducted **research on 15+ analogue organizations**
- Gathered **survey responses from 100+ ambassadors** on membership dues
- Held **10+ working sessions with the LFI Steering Committee** to explore **different funding and governance hypotheses**, debrief research insights, and scout the path forward

Engagement with ambassadors found they are highly motivated to continue the LAC and see new possibilities for the future



of survey respondents **want the community to continue**¹

Widespread call for further incorporating equity into the LAC tools (e.g., PI), value proposition, and community culture



“We always find that racial equity work [at my organization] is the easiest work to be funded... leadership development with that lens could be quite powerful.”

Desire to clarify the benefits and explore next generation value propositions:



Peer learning among thought leaders in the social sector to help them improve performance in their organizations, receive peer assists on challenging problems, and share best practices



Strengthening the capacity of the sector by facilitating knowledge development, creating new tools/frameworks, and disseminating current research



Improving social sector performance through advocating for specific policies, codifying sector norms and standards, and convening changemakers to address field-level challenges

¹ References the LFI Spring 2022 Survey in which 225 Leap ambassadors participated

The LFI SteerCo looked at a range of funding and governance options for the future of the LAC

1

Membership Organization + Grants

LAC becomes a professional membership organization that charges membership dues, in addition to receiving grants from external funders

2

Group of Funder(s)

A group of funders move forward together OR separate grants from other funders

3

Partner Alignment

LAC is housed as a program area within another organization (e.g., aligned nonprofit, academic center, fiscal sponsor)

4

Transition Funding

Bridge funding that will determine which option we're pursuing

5

Largely Volunteer-Led

Light set of activities (e.g., listserv and moderation) without formal organization status; supported by volunteers

6

Earned Revenue / LLC or B Corp Model

LAC generates earned revenue by developing and selling and/or licensing products and services

Research on governance options found a partnership to be most viable

Resource-intensive and complex to become a **standalone organization**

Becoming a **largely volunteer-led organization** is likely not sustainable over the long-term



“Volunteer-led orgs need a backbone cadre of support to enable success... a single leader or leadership team is critical to generate funding and organize efforts.”

Beneficial to partner with an existing entity to share infrastructure and costs



Organizations/coalitions that focus on strengthening the nonprofit sector are **seen as high-potential partners**



Based on similar transitions, helpful to **keep wide aperture for potential partners** (e.g., use an RFP or open call)

Research on funding found a funder group to be most viable; membership could possibly supplement



Funders

- **Challenging to find a sole funder** to sustain the LAC
- **Possibility of multiple funders**, for transition and/or higher membership grants
- **Fewer than 10 funders focus on strengthening the social sector** (e.g., investing in infrastructure, nonprofit leadership, systems, tools, trainings, etc.)
- **Potential interest from funders for new activities** (e.g., implementation work, leadership development, equity training)



Other funding sources

- **Earned revenue focus would require a dramatic shift** in operations, does not align with equity values

Membership Fees:

- **Substantial majority of those whose organizations pay** membership dues felt their organization would be willing to pay LAC dues
- **Majority of those who have to pay themselves unsure** if they would pay yearly dues
- **Membership price sensitivity varies by ambassador sector**; ambassadors working for nonprofits most price sensitive
- Caution to **create flexible, equitable approach** that protects and expands community diversity

Fiscal Sponsorship | Preliminary Research Insights

- A fiscal sponsor is a nonprofit organization that **provides fiduciary oversight, financial management, and other administrative services**, including **501(c)(3) status**, a **“home” for assets and IP**, and a set **back-office supports**, to help build the capacity of charitable projects
- **Application process assesses** for...
 - Mission and values alignment (e.g., may prefer to focus on BIPOC led orgs or orgs with equity focus)
 - Financial risk / funding commitments
 - Organizational complexity (e.g., overseas employees)
- **Basic requirements** for fiscal sponsorship may include...
 - Minimum amount of funding (e.g., \$250K)
 - U.S. based project director
- Services tend to include **standard back-office activities**, such as finance, legal, and HR (including benefits); **likely does not include IT, CRM, Marketing and Communications**
- Application and transition **timing estimate is 12 weeks**, with longer for more complexity (e.g., government funding)
- Having **dedicated legal counsel with nonprofit experience** is strongly advised to support the transition
- May have a **minimum time commitment** (e.g., 2 years)

LFI Spring 2022 Survey

In January 2022, the Leap Ambassadors Community (LAC) kicked off the LEAP Futures Initiative (LFI), a crucial engagement to help the LAC to **map out scenarios to become a sustainable, self-governed entity after 2023**. In kicking off the LFI, the Monitor Institute by Deloitte (MIbD) Team and Leap Support Team (LST) launched a survey from March to April 2022 to capture **ambassadors' input on the direction of the LAC and to understand how they would like to be involved in shaping its future**.

More information on the survey and its results can be found [here](#) on the LFI webpage.

Individual Stakeholder Interviews

Leap Support Team

- **Purpose:** gather unique perspectives to inform the LFI stakeholder engagement and management process
- **Interviewees:**
 - Tim Goler
 - Shirley Marcus Allen
 - Cheryl Collins
 - Linda Johaneck
 - Kevin Jones
 - Lowell Weiss

Leap Ambassadors

- **Purpose:** gather unique perspectives as part of research on funding and governance mechanisms for the future of the LAC
- **Interviewees:**
 - Kathy Reich
 - Victoria Vrana
 - Ann Mei Chang
 - Jennifer Wei
 - John Brothers
 - Doug Bauer
 - Lisette Rodriguez
 - Raj Chawla
 - Miranda Yates
 - Hilda Polanco
 - Dan Cardinali
 - Pratichi Shah
 - Christine Robinson
 - Melinda Tuan
 - Stephanie Gillis
 - Katherine Fulton
 - Kathy Park
 - Orv Kimbrough
 - Patrick Germain
 - Paul Shoemaker

External

- **Purpose:** gather unique perspectives as part of research on funding and governance mechanisms for the future of the LAC
- **Interviewees:**
 - Gabriel Kasper, Monitor Institute by Deloitte
 - Justin Marcoux, Monitor Institute by Deloitte
 - Lindsay Marcal, Independent Sector
 - Jude Koski, The Nonprofit Technology Enterprise Network (NTEN)

Funder Focus Groups

Round 1 (August 9th – 11th)

- **Purpose:** to have exploratory conversations with additional ambassadors that are part of funding organizations, provide them with an update on the LFI journey thus far, and get their perspectives on possible funding options for the LAC
- **Focus Group Participants:**
 - Tiziano Tazzi
 - Chiku Bernardi
 - Meredith Polin
 - Wayne Jones
 - Darin McKeever
 - Doug Bauer
 - John Brothers

Round 2 (August 22nd – 24th)

- **Purpose:** to have exploratory conversations with additional ambassadors that are part of organizations that focus on strengthening the social sector, get their perspectives on possible funding options for the LAC, and enlist support to join a fundraising working group
- **Focus Group Participants:**
 - Bess Rothenberg
 - Kathy Reich
 - Mari Kuraishi
 - Dale Anglin
 - Doug Bauer
 - John Brothers

Membership Dues Pulse Check

The LEAP Futures Initiative (LFI) Steering Committee is exploring the different funding and governance options available to the Leap Ambassadors Community (LAC). Although not the sole or standalone funding stream, one option from the Steering Committee's research includes exploring what role, if any, membership dues could play in sustaining LAC activities. To better inform this exploration, **the pulse check was launched to gather ambassadors' perspectives on whether membership dues are a feasible option as one potential funding source for the LAC.**

The pulse check was sent to all members of the community and remained open from August 3rd – August 12th, 2022.

More information on the pulse check and its results can be found [here](#) on the LFI webpage.

Membership Model Analogues | Research List

- CALIBR Global Leadership Network
- Young President's Organization
- American Society of Association Executives
- The LA Chamber of Commerce
- The American Bar Association
- The Federalist Society
- Pahara: NextGen Fellowship
- American Association of Retired Persons (AARP)
- National Rifle Association (NRA)
- National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)
- Executive Leadership Council
- The National Academy of Public Administration (NAPA)
- The Nonprofit Technology Enterprise Network (NTEN)
- Independent Sector (IS)