

Alan Cooper Leadership in the Arts Award

The Alan Cooper Leadership in the Arts Award honors individuals who have made outstanding contributions to the arts through extraordinary leadership.

Program Guidelines 2021

Nomination due date: May 4, 2021

Alan W. Cooper served as Executive Director of Mid Atlantic Arts for twenty-three years, from 1994 to 2017. Under Cooper's Leadership, Mid Atlantic Arts established a reputation for excellence, integrity, and innovative programs and services that extend beyond the mid-Atlantic region to national and international communities. Cooper fostered a true partnership among the region's State Arts Agencies and the nation's Regional Arts Organizations. His belief in the importance of public-private partnerships and international cultural exchange was reflected in the programs he developed and fostered, and his commitment to diverse artistic expression and belief in the arts as an agent of change made him a champion of artists, arts organizations, and audiences throughout his career.

Established in 2017, the Alan Cooper Leadership in the Arts Award honors the legacy of an arts leader who has made outstanding contributions to the arts through extraordinary leadership. The Award recognizes individuals who continue Cooper's legacy of impactful leadership, the development of innovative models, and the consistent dedication to the value of creative expression in the arts sector.

Mid Atlantic Arts believes that leadership takes many forms and is practiced at all career levels: from emerging leaders to late-career leaders. It is the ability to create, give voice to, and execute a vision and purpose while empowering others and fostering the exchange of ideas. Leadership is not measured in years, budget, or scale; but is expressed by the depth and the breadth of an individual's impact on their community, be it local, regional, or beyond.

AWARD CRITERIA

The Alan Cooper Leadership in the Arts Award recognizes an individual(s) who has demonstrated visionary leadership; whose work has dismantled barriers and inequities in order to expand access to the arts; whose purpose-driven service and authentic, empathetic engagement with their community has affected exceptional and meaningful impact. Though not required for eligibility, Mid Atlantic Arts is particularly interested in recognizing an arts leader who has made significant advances in the areas of public-private partnerships and international cultural exchange.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE FOR THE AWARD

Eligible nominees' work will have served communities in one or more of Mid Atlantic Arts' nine partner jurisdictions of Delaware, the District of Columbia, Maryland, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, the U.S. Virgin Islands, Virginia, and West Virginia; though impact may extend from the mid-Atlantic region to national or international communities.

- Mid Atlantic Arts welcomes nominations for diverse arts leaders as defined by race, ethnicity, nationality, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, appearance, religion, age, geographic location, expertise, education, socioeconomic background, and professional level.

- We strongly encourage the nomination of leaders who identify as Black, Indigenous, Latina/Latino/Latinx, Persons of Color, LGBTQIA+, Persons with Disabilities, Persons whose primary language is not English, and/or are from rural and remote communities.
- Nominations are encouraged for active arts leaders from all career stages (early-, mid-, and late-career) and from all areas or disciplines in the arts industry.
- Eligible nominees must be a citizen or permanent resident of the United States.
- Mid Atlantic Arts recognizes the value of partnership and collaboration at the leadership level and welcomes the nomination of shared leadership/co-leaders. Please note that nominations of co-leaders must be completed as a single nomination submission.
- All nomination materials must be received no later than May 4, 2021.

WHO IS NOT ELIGIBLE FOR THE AWARD

- Current Mid Atlantic Arts board members and staff members, and their families, are not eligible for the award and are not permitted to submit nomination materials.
- Elected officials are not eligible for the award.
- Previous Leadership Award recipients are not eligible for nomination.
- Self-nominations are not eligible.
- Nominations received after the nomination deadline will be deemed ineligible.

AWARD PRESENTATION

The recipient of the 2021 Alan Cooper Leadership in the Arts Award will be recognized in fall 2021 at an event celebrating their work and achievements. Additionally, the award recipient will receive a \$2,500 cash award.

SELECTION AND NOTIFICATION PROCESS

Mid Atlantic Arts administers the nomination, review, and award process of the program. A diverse panel of experienced arts professionals with expertise in arts leadership will review the nominations and recommend the award recipient to Mid Atlantic Arts' board of directors for approval.

Mid Atlantic Arts staff will notify the awardee in summer 2021 and, provided their acceptance, will confirm their status as the 2021 award recipient.

Mid Atlantic Arts reserves the right to withhold presentation of the award.

NOMINATION PROCEDURES

Nomination materials must be submitted no later than May 4, 2021. Nomination materials must include:

- General Information Form
- Nomination Statement
- Nominee's Current Resume or Bio
- Optional Letter(s) of Support
- Optional Supplemental Material
- Optional Demographic Data Survey

Nominations will be reviewed electronically – therefore, electronic submission is encouraged. Nominators may submit nomination materials by **one of the three following methods**:

- Complete an online nomination form here: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/X3R3HLF>
- OR
- Email all materials as PDF or Word documents to adamp@midatlanticarts.org

OR

- Mail a single hard copy* of all materials in a single envelope to the address below. Please do not bind or staple materials.

Attn: Adam “Bo” Plantz
Mid Atlantic Arts Foundation
201 North Charles Street, Suite 401
Baltimore, MD 21201

*submitted nomination materials will not be returned, please submit copies only

Please contact Adam “Bo” Plantz directly with any questions:

- email: adamp@midatlanticarts.org
- phone: 410-539-6656 x 102

NOMINATION MATERIALS

Nominations will be evaluated based on the *Award Criteria* as described above and based on consideration of the following nomination materials. The nomination statement and letter(s) of support may be submitted as written, audio, or video formats. Letter(s) of support and supplemental material are not required for a nomination to be eligible. Please note that nominations of co-leaders must be completed as a single nomination submission and that materials should discuss the nominees’ work and histories that are relevant to the collaborative leadership for which they are nominated.

General Information Form

Complete the accompanying form for email or mail submission, or provide details as prompted in the online form for online submission.

Nomination Statement (written, up to three pages; audio/video, up to ten minutes)

Providing specific examples of their work, submit a nomination statement explaining why the nominee is an exceptional candidate. It is recommended that the nomination statement should address the following:

- What are the nominee’s most notable accomplishments as a visionary leader? Describe the nominee’s vision to realize a better future for the arts and for their community, and how they have achieved that vision. *If applicable*, discuss the innovations, new models of practice, and/or risks involved in realizing that vision.
- Describe the nominee’s purpose-driven approach to their work and the depth of their engagement with their community. How have their sense of purpose and authenticity of engagement impacted their community?
- Discuss the nominee’s accomplishments serving communities and populations that have faced marginalization and inequitable access to resources. How has their work demonstrated equitable practices breaking down barriers to access for these under-represented, under-resourced communities and populations?
- *If applicable*, describe the nominee’s work in the areas of public-private partnerships in the arts and international cultural exchange.

For nominations of co-leaders:

- Describe the collaborative nature of the co-leaders and how their joint leadership has been impactful. (Please begin the nomination statement with the response to this prompt)
- Respond to each of the above prompts, as applicable, as they relate to the collaborative leadership of the nominees – in other words, the responses should only discuss the

nominees' work and histories that are relevant to the collaborative leadership for which they are nominated.

Resume or Bio (resume, up to two pages; bio, up to 500 words)

Submit a copy of the nominee's current resume or submit a bio summarizing their resume. For nominations of co-leaders, submit a resume or bio for each leader.

Optional Letter(s) of Support (written, up to two pages, each; audio/video, up to five minutes, each)

Provide up to three letters of support providing testimony to the nominee's impact. It is encouraged that letters of support come from the perspective of someone with direct knowledge of the nominee's work and that they focus on how they or their communities were impacted by the nominee's work (see the prompts provided under *Nomination Statement* above).

Optional Supplemental Material

In addition to the nomination statement, letter(s) of support, and resume/bio, nominators may provide a web link for supplemental material or work samples supporting the nomination and demonstrating the impact of the nominee's work. This material may take the form of additional text documentation of no more than five pages, audio or video file of no more than five minutes length, or an image gallery of no more than ten images.

The web link for supplemental material may be provided on the General Information Form.

Note: submission of supplemental material *is not required* in order to be considered eligible for the award.

Optional Demographic Data Survey

As part of our broader goals to promote equity in the field, Mid Atlantic Arts seeks program participants that reflect the diversity of the mid-Atlantic region. To measure our effectiveness to reach arts leaders from across the region and across all backgrounds, all nominators and nominees are invited to participate in a brief anonymous survey. This information will help us address inequities in the award process, understand who we are reaching, and understand how we can serve all communities in the region more effectively. Please know that participation in this survey is optional and will in no way impact or affect nominations in the award process.

In this survey, nominators and nominees will be invited to self-identify age, professional level, gender, LGBTQIA+ identity, racial and ethnic heritage, disability status, and to share how you learned about the award opportunity. Survey responses are anonymous, will not be shared with the panel, and will only be used by Mid Atlantic Arts staff for program evaluation. Please consider completing this survey by clicking the link below or copy-and-pasting the URL into your web browser. Please also consider sharing this survey with your nominee – you may do so by sending them the same survey link.

Demographic Data Survey: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/HDQ2QFZ>

Thank you for helping us in our work to create a more inclusive, equitable program!

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q: Is an individual eligible even if they are not a CEO or an executive director?

A: Yes. Leaders exist throughout the industry, not just at the executive level. Furthermore, leaders work in a wide variety of areas including programming, performing, community organizing, presenting, fundraising, education, operations, communications, and marketing, among others. Nominations will be evaluated based on the impact of nominees' accomplishments, not on tenure or job title.

Q: Are arts leaders from for-profit organizations eligible for the award?

A: Yes, so long as they meet all other eligibility requirements.

Q: My nomination materials are longer than the page length limits stated. Will my materials be eligible?

A: Panelists will only be asked to review nomination materials of the lengths indicated for each: the first three pages of the nomination statement, first two pages of resumes, and the first two pages of all letters of support.

Q: Are letters of support from colleagues within the nominee's organization eligible?

A: While letters from individuals within the nominee's organization would not disqualify the nomination, it is recommended that letters of support come from colleagues outside the nominee's organization affiliation (as a reminder, letters of support are not required for a nomination to be eligible).

Q: I would like to submit materials by mail, can I send multiple copies of my video submission to be shared with the review panel?

A: All nomination materials will be reviewed electronically – therefore, electronic submission is encouraged. Audio, video, and image materials submitted on a CD, flash drive, or other physical format will not be accepted. If you are unsure how to submit these materials otherwise, contact Bo Plantz (adamp@midatlanticarts.org) for assistance.

Q: Am I allowed to provide links to additional information in the nomination statement, resume, or letters of support?

A: No. Panelists will only review the nomination statement, resume, and letters of support (optional) as written; links provided within these documents will not be reviewed. You may provide links to additional information as supplemental material.

Q: Can I submit supplemental material as a document attachment to the nomination instead of providing a link to the material online?

A: No. To aid panelist review of the nominations, supplemental material may only be shared via web links to documents online. If your supplemental material is not already available online, you may upload it to a website of your choosing or to a free service such as [Google Drive](#) or [Dropbox](#) and provide the link to the respective web address.

This publication is available in PDF format and as a Word (.docx) file.