MOVING
ARTS LEADERSHIP
FORWARD

DISTRIBUTED LEADERSHIP

HOW ARE YOU SHARING RESPONSIBILITY & AUTHORITY?

It should take you no more than ten minutes to complete. After reading the introductory questions below, give yourself one point for each statement that is true for **your organization.**

1. ADAPTABILITY

Think about your organization's current leadership structure and practices. Are there signs that your organization is open to adjusting its approach to leadership? What might already be in place to stimulate distributed leadership?

For each of the following that is true for your organization, give yourself (1) point.

- ☐ **A.** There are regular, structured opportunities for staff to engage in cross-generational dialogue.

- ☐ **B.** Important decisions are delegated to various people or groups based on who is in the best position to make the decision, rather than repeatedly deferred to the same person or group.

- ☐ **C.** My organization is willing to learn and change as a result of experiences.

- ☐ **D.** Senior staff value higher up-front investments in training and planning that often results in greater efficiency and engagement over the long-term.

- ☐ **E.** Early- and mid-career leaders are given responsibility to represent the organization externally, such as attending community meetings or making presentations at conferences.

2. PARTICIPATORY PRACTICE

Think about how people are engaged in moving your organization forward. Are there the kinds of relationships that stimulate distributed leadership across generations? Could more participation be established or nurtured to promote distributed leadership?

For each of the following that is true for your organization, give yourself (1) point.

- ☐ **A.** Staff with varying levels of positional authority actively chair and lead group meetings.

- ☐ **B.** My organization has a cooperative and team-oriented environment.

- ☐ **C.** Information effectively flows between the board and staff.

- ☐ **D.** Collaborative efforts for organizational change are more common than individually driven, top-down efforts for change.

- ☐ **E.** Early- and mid-career leaders have opportunities to attend board meetings and participate, when appropriate.

3. CULTURE OF LEARNING

Think about how it feels to be a member of your organization. To what degree is the culture open to new learning? How do people interact? Is there a sense of mutual support for everyone in the organization?

For each of the following that is true for your organization, give yourself (1) point.

- **A.** Time is regularly set aside for listening, learning, planning, and making organizational decisions.

- **B.** Staff actively engage in dual-directional mentorship.

- **C.** Early- and mid-career staff are given opportunities to plan and lead professional development sessions within the organization.

- **D.** Staff can be honest with their supervisors/direct reports.

- **E.** Early-career leaders have professional development opportunities and substantial say over how to use professional development resources.

4. DECISION MAKING

Think about problem solving and decision making within your organization. How are decisions made, both internally and externally? Are the staff aware of and involved in decisions that will affect them?

For each of the following that is true for your organization, give yourself (1) point.

- **A.** Groups of people with diverse perspectives are involved in key organizational decisions, such as strategic planning.

- **B.** High-level decisions have been made with, or designated to, early-career leaders.

- **C.** Processes for organizational decision making and opportunities for staff input are clearly communicated before the decision is made or input is solicited.

- **D.** Staff throughout the organization can and do make decisions about the allocation of resources that pertain to their jobs, without needing to ask permission.

- **E.** New responsibilities are assigned to people based on a combination of their interests, abilities, and skills, not solely only their position.

SCORING

Let's gauge the distributed leadership potential in your organization.

STEP 1: First, add up your score from each domain.

SUBTOTAL DOMAIN #1 ☐ How **Adaptable** is your organization?

SUBTOTAL DOMAIN #2 ☐ To what degree does your organization embrace **Participatory Practices**?

SUBTOTAL DOMAIN #3 ☐ How strong is the **Culture of Learning** within your organization?

SUBTOTAL DOMAIN #4 ☐ How inclusive is **Decision Making** in your organization?

STEP 2: Now, add the totals from all four domains to get an overall gauge for your organization.

☐

STEP 3: Add (1) point if your organizational's annual budget is over $1 million.

☐

TOTAL _____ (possible total score of 21)

This is your Distributed Leadership Quotient (DLQ) score.

WHAT YOUR SCORE MEANS

This quiz addresses two aspects of leadership: distributed leadership and cross-generational leadership. An organization's potential for cross-generational leadership is correlated to its embrace of distributed leadership. For example, organizations with high distributed leadership scores (16 to 21) will likely already be practicing cross-generational leadership to some degree, or movement in that direction will be easier than for those organizations with lower distributed leadership scores (0 to 10).

16–21 POINTS: Distributed leadership is prevalent within your organization and cross-generational leadership likely is too.

Your organization allows many leaders, of all career stages, to participate regularly in formally assigned and recognized leadership activities. The perspectives of early- and mid-career leaders are embraced, and their input is sought on major organizational decisions. Distributed leadership is flourishing within your organization. **What you might do next:** continue to provide staff development and training to strengthen collaborative decision making and a culture of learning. To strengthen cross-generational learning, expand upon opportunities for dual-directional mentorship between late-career and early- and mid-career arts professionals. Maintain professional development offerings for early- and mid-career staff. Encourage rising organizational leaders to acquire skills and experiences that will further distributed leadership within the arts sector.

11–15 POINTS: Distributed leadership is present within your organization and the potential to accelerate cross-generational leadership is clear.

Your organization recognizes the contributions of early- and mid-career leaders, and provides these leaders with some opportunities to make decisions that impact the larger organization. **What you might do next:** professional development for mid- and late-career leaders should target management practices that nurture potential distributed leadership within the organization. Identify opportunities for early- and mid-career leaders to conduct presentations at board meetings, as appropriate. Provide ongoing staff development designed to strengthen collaborative decision making, cultivate dual-directional mentoring, and advance organizational learning. Taking these steps will allow rising leaders to thrive, and help established leaders to foster more distributed leadership within and across teams.

6–10 POINTS: Your organization has instances of distributed and cross-generational leadership and budding potential to build upon.

Your organization is just beginning to acknowledge and reconcile the different perspectives, needs, and interests of early-, mid-, and late-career leaders. The potential for distributed leadership is evident though underdeveloped. **What you might do next:** intentional, facilitated discussions about leadership experiences will help identify which aspects of distributed leadership require immediate attention. Provide early- and mid-career leaders with opportunities to shape and co-facilitate these and other conversations. Pursue staff development and training that supports shared decision making, reflective supervision, and dual-directional mentorships. This will help develop a readiness for more distributed leadership at every level of the organization.

0–5 POINTS: Your organization does not currently approach leadership with a distributed or cross-generational leadership mindset, and likely has unrealized potential to draw upon.

Your organization currently has limited opportunities for distributed leadership across generations. Early-, mid-, and late-career leaders will benefit from opportunities to explore and reflect on the unrealized potential within your organization. **What you might do next:** executive and board-level training on the topics of cross-generational workplaces, leadership development, and dual-directional mentorship can help build awareness of unexplored or overlooked opportunities for early- and mid-career leaders. Support professional development opportunities for these staff members to help them become more visible in the day-to-day success of the organization. Sabbaticals or leadership retreats for late-career leaders offer opportunities for renewal and reflection, and can help usher in a new focus on distributed leadership upon return.

STEP 4:
Finally, tally up all the responses for just questions

1e + 2d + 3b + 4c =

This is your Cross-Generational Mindset score. This score is an indicator of the degree to which your organization embraces the diversity of experiences and thinking that comes with mixed-age workplaces.

Higher scores (3 and 4) suggest that leadership is shared among several individuals across generations and that formal, positional leadership for younger generations is valued and already in place. Lower scores (1 and 2) suggest that there is room for the inclusion of early- and mid-career leaders in decision making and leadership positions within your organization.

CONVERSATION GUIDE

This quiz is intended to be a learning tool about how your organization practices and structures leadership opportunities across generations. It can be used individually, or by two or more people from the same organization. Quiz reliability increases when taken by more than one person within an organization. It is most reliable when staff with varying levels of responsibility take the quiz and then discuss the results. Before using this quiz in a group setting, consider how a subsequent discussion would be structured to generate healthy reflection and discovery, and dedicate some time to discussing the results as a group. Consider who will facilitate the discussion and if a third party facilitator might help everyone feel more comfortable expressing their views. Finally, consider it your job to be curious about the results, rather than to generate consensus or solutions. Use the conversation to discover and explore how different people experience leadership within the organization. **Here are some possible discussion questions:**

What parts of the quiz did you find most valuable?

What doubts or concerns do you have about the quiz?
Are there aspects of it that apply more or apply less to our organization?

In what ways are our scores similar and different from each other? Why might this be?

Are there strong patterns across the scoring—
for example, based on age or experience level? What do we think is happening here?

Are there particular aspects of distributed leadership that the quiz made you more curious about?

What themes are you taking away from this conversation?
What next steps might you take, if any, to apply these themes to our organization?

If you are interested in learning more about changing leadership, these readings may be helpful:

Kelly M. Hannum et al, *Emerging Leadership in Nonprofit Organizations: Myths, Meaning, and Motivations*, Center for Creative Leadership (2011) http://www.praxiscg.com/sites/praxiscg.com/files/AMEX-ReportEmergingLeadership.pdf

Michael Mauskaf, "Shared Leadership Proves Successful in Music Orgs," (2011) http://artsfwd.org/sharedleadership-proves-successful-in-music-orgs/

Christie Smith and Stephanie Turner, "The Radical Transformation of Diversity and Inclusion: the Millennial Influence," Deloitte University (2015) http://www2.deloitte.com/content/dam/Deloitte/us/Documents/about-deloitte/us-inclus-millennial-influence-120215.pdf

Michael Allison, Susan Misra, and Elissa Perry, "Doing More with More: Putting Shared Leadership Into Practice," *The Nonprofit Quarterly* (Summer 2011) http://www.tccgrp.com/pdfs/180206_Reprint.pdf

Peter Senge, Hal Hamilton, and John Kania, "The Dawn of System Leadership," Stanford Social Innovation Review (Winter 2015) http://ssir.org/articles/entry/the_dawn_of_system_leadership

CROSS-GENERATIONAL LEADERSHIP

the degree to which an organization embraces the diversity of experiences and thinking that comes with mixed-age workplaces. Staff members from different generations and at different points in their careers experience mutual levels of satisfaction and professional fulfillment. These organizations are perpetually seeking to support leaders at every career stage, and see the importance of recognizing that everyone in the organization has distinct skills and a unique generational perspective to bring to the table.

CROSS-GENERATIONAL DIALOGUE

the sharing of skills, perspectives, and expertise across generations. This includes formal opportunities for staff members to explore and discuss how different generations experience workplace opportunities and challenges. Thoughtful inter-generational conversations transmit stories, insights, and knowledge that enhance workplace performance, and promote the understanding of peer experiences that move beyond generational stereotypes.

DISTRIBUTED LEADERSHIP

the diffusion of formal responsibility and decision making throughout an organization, which empowers individuals to take leadership positions in their areas of expertise and optimizes all available human resources in the process.

DUAL-DIRECTIONAL MENTORING

when two people develop a relationship where they invest time and effort in enhancing the other person's growth, knowledge, and skills. The key to dual-directional mentoring is that it is a reciprocal relationship, and the sharing of knowledge and guidance moves in both directions. Mentoring relationships can be formal, as in the case of an explicit mentorship program. They can also be informal, such as when two colleagues build trust and rely on one another for regular, recurring feedback and professional growth. Given the similar ratio of Millennials, Generation X-ers, and Baby Boomers in today's workforce, dual-direction mentorships that transcend age, experience, and pay grade are especially important to promote trust and learning across generations.

EARLY-CAREER LEADERS

those with ten or fewer years of professional experience in arts. This is the formative period in which individuals are learning skills that apply to a specific job and career, and includes many entry-level workers who are still exploring their career options.

MID-CAREER LEADERS

those with between eleven and twenty-five years of experience. They often have developed expertise in one or more areas and have an established identity in their field, yet they still have room to rise and skills they can develop.

LATE-CAREER LEADERS

those with more than twenty-five years of experience. They tend to have well-developed expertise and perspectives based on myriad experiences, hold executive leadership positions, and have influence that extends beyond their organizations. Learning and growth at this career stage often includes exploring new approaches to leadership; navigating how and to what degree to transmit their knowledge and experience; and, sometimes, moving out of long-held positions into different types of active roles.