

CROSS-CULTURAL LEARNING THROUGH SONG

2022–23 Impact Report

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MUSIC EDUCATION PARTNERSHIP GRANTS



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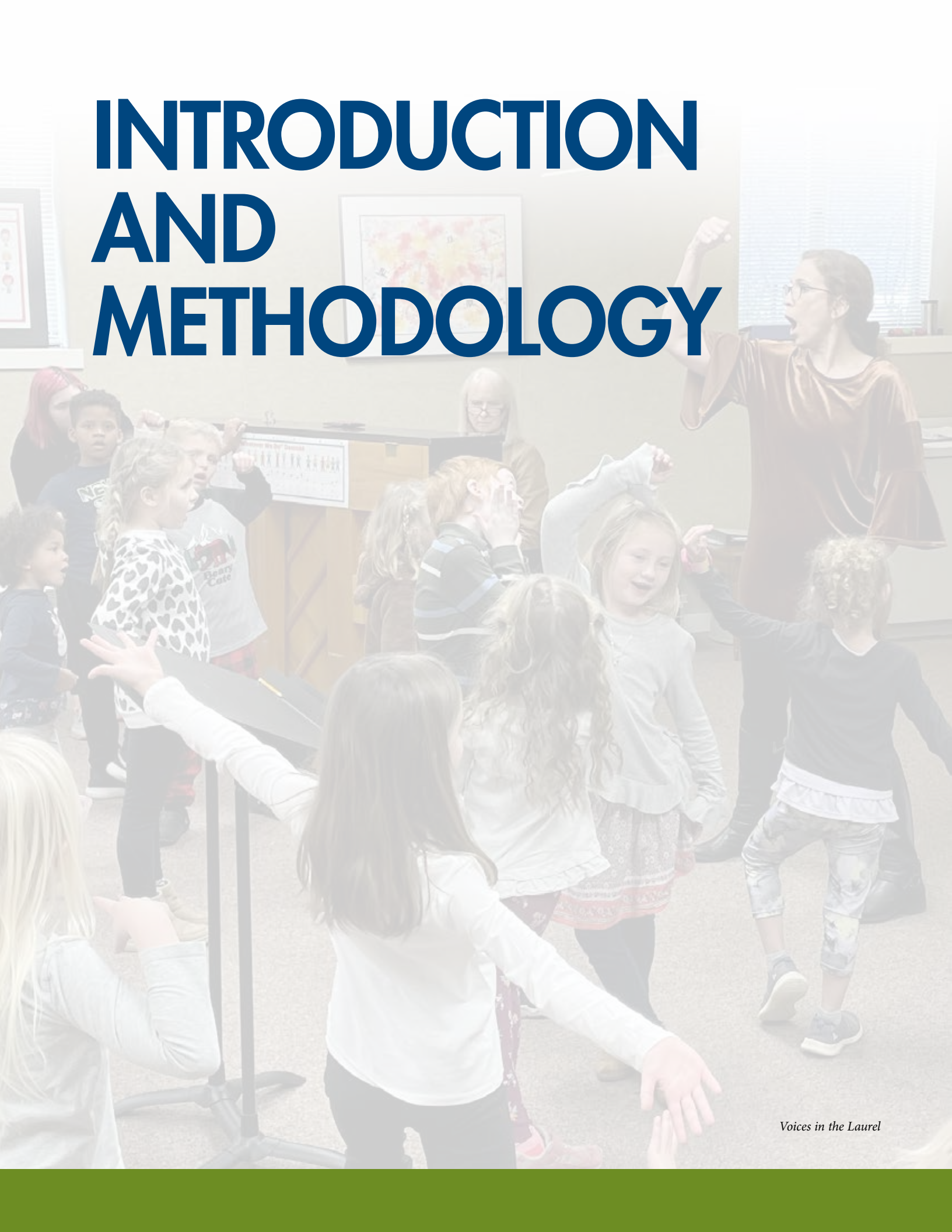
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Top to bottom: Vox Femina, Vancouver Youth Choir, and Tucson Girls Chorus

On the cover: Grand Vision Foundation

INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY



In 2022, Chorus America, in partnership with Margaret A. Cargill Philanthropies, established the Music Education Partnership Grants program. This program provided grants of \$25,000–\$50,000 to projects in North America aimed at increasing access to, and diversity in choral music education. Grants funded partnerships between community organizations and public school systems to provide cross-cultural choral music experiences to students from historically marginalized communities.

21
Total Number of Organizations

Number per Region

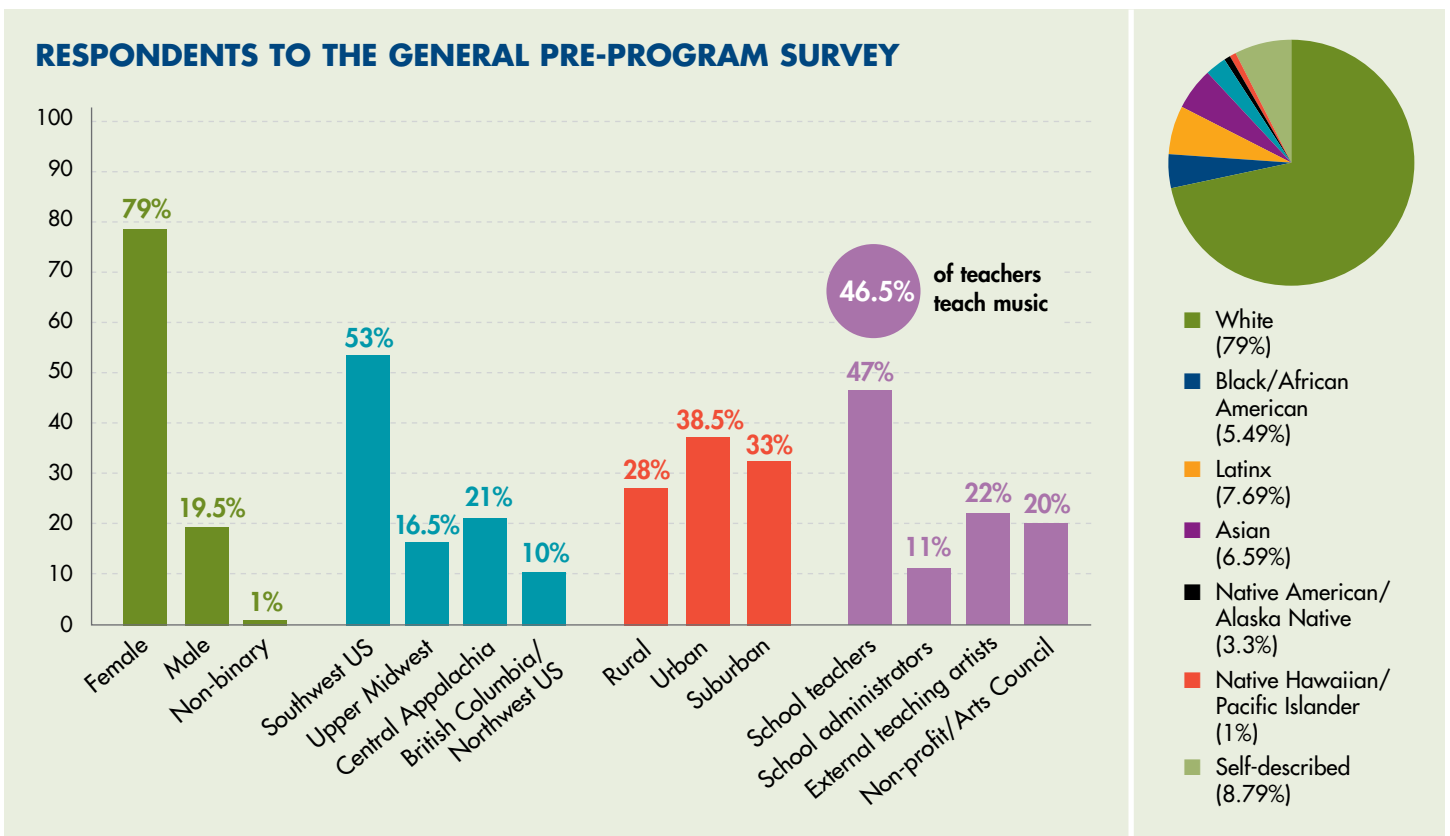
- 4 British Columbia & Northwest US
- 6 Central Appalachia
- 7 Southwest US
- 4 Upper Midwest

These organizations were awarded funds to implement their projects during the 2022–23 academic year. All projects supported partnerships between arts non-profit organizations and public schools, and in most cases in the US, Title I schools. The projects ranged from in-school music lessons at schools with little to no music making opportunities, to bringing in guest artists to work with students and hosting professional development and workshops for music teachers. Almost all the projects introduced students (and in many cases, teachers) to music from other cultures and in other languages. In many instances, projects provided a more multi-faceted cultural experience incorporating dance, instruments, language learning, and food among other cultural aspects. In Appendix I of the report, there is a

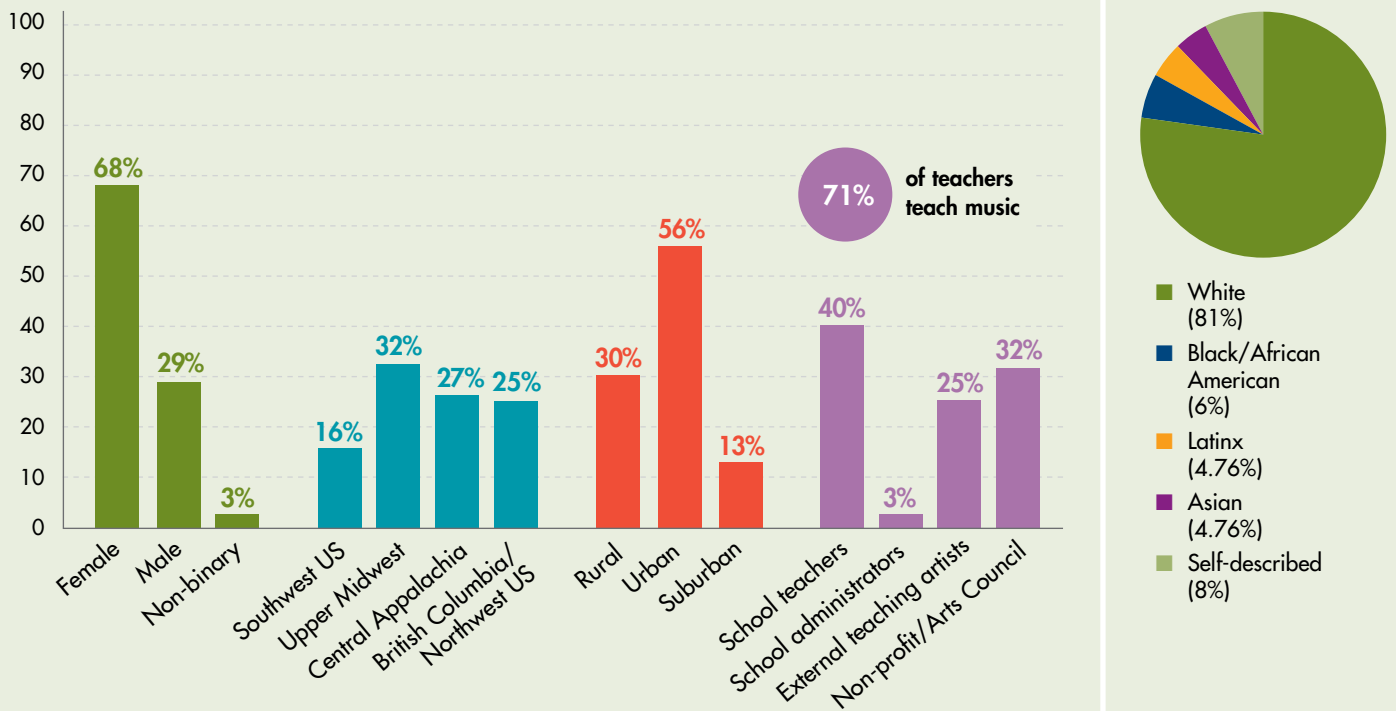
This regranting program was developed because of a gap in funding for music education, specifically choral music education in public schools, and the lack of racial/ethnic and gender diversity in choral music (Siadat 2020). Recent studies show that music education is an important component of a child’s early education and is

vital to developing skills such as language, literacy (Rowe et al 2022), and communication skills, as well as to social and emotional development (Ilari 2016).

Twenty-one grantee organizations from four regions in North America were selected through a rigorous process involving over 30 external reviewers.



RESPONDENTS TO THE GENERAL POST-PROGRAM SURVEY



brief description of each project funded by the Music Education Partnership Grant program during the 2022–23 school year.

As part of the Music Education Partnership Grants program, Chorus America hired an independent researcher to evaluate the impact of the projects on the communities, as well as the impact of the grant funding on the organizations carrying out the projects. The researcher used a mixed-methods approach utilizing surveys and semi-structured interviews to carry out the research. The analysis in this report is based on data from pre- and post-program surveys as well as 21 semi-structured interviews with the grantees. The surveys were distributed to those most closely involved in the projects, including people working at the grantee organizations, teachers and administrators at the partner schools, and external teaching artists. All surveys were anonymous to ensure the most honest and open responses possible.

The pre-program survey aimed, in part, to assess the funded projects' needs and the desired outcomes of the organizations before implementation. Goals of the post-program survey were to evaluate

the projects' progress towards stated project activities, assess whether they achieved desired outcomes, and capture valuable insights gained from the experience.

Demographics of respondents

There were 91 responses to the general pre-program survey. This included responses from teachers at schools, administrators at schools, people at the partnering choral/arts organization, and teaching artists hired specifically for these projects.

There were sixty-four responses to the general post-program survey. This included responses from teachers at schools, administrators at schools, people at the partnering choral/arts organization, and teaching artists hired specifically for this program.

It is not possible to determine if the demographics of the respondents are representative of the demographics of all the participants in the different projects. Responding to the survey was completely voluntary, and not everyone chose to respond. There were also fewer respondents to the post-program survey than the pre-program survey. If survey responses

accurately represent the racial demographics of the overall participants in the program, given the professional development included in most of the projects, this indicates that many respondents received much-needed educational opportunities.

One of the limitations of the study is the short time frame. Given the one-year time frame, as well as the range and variety of projects, it was not logistically possible to create and distribute surveys to the students who participated in these projects and their caregivers. Therefore, the impact of this grants program was evaluated based solely on the responses of teachers, teaching artists, administrators, and non-profit administrators. Further, while survey responses were strongly encouraged, they were voluntary, and therefore, did not capture the entire range of participants in the program. While the report uses data from the sample of 21 grantee organizations' projects to make broader statements about choral music education, the author acknowledges that this is a small percentage of choral music education in the United States and Canada, and the findings are not generalizable.

US AND CANADIAN ARTS EDUCATION POLICIES AND FUNDING



A change in the perception that music education is an 'extra' subject is needed to increase access. Although music education has been labeled as a core subject, in our county it is still perceived as a 'specials' area. Funding for our general music ed teachers to receive extra professional development in the choral arts is still needed in my district. Funding in general is the largest roadblock to our access to choral music education in our county.

—Anonymous respondent

One of the primary barriers to accessing choral music education stems from the secondary emphasis placed on arts, including choral music, in public schools. The arts have been consistently devalued in the United States over the last several years which has resulted in public schools—which have also consistently been defunded over the last few decades—allocating fewer funds and resources to arts education (American Academy of Arts & Sciences 2021). As the findings of the grant impact evaluation revealed, often, even when schools have some music education, they do not have ensembles, and if they have ensembles the emphasis is on band or orchestra rather than vocal music. This is counterintuitive because vocal/choral music can be less expensive to implement since it does not have the high start-up costs related to purchasing instruments.

The availability of, and access to, curricular music programs in the US differs widely across states and communities (Elpus 2019). In the US, public school funding is often tied to property taxes resulting in schools in economically disadvantaged areas not having adequate funds to hire full time or even part time music teachers. Further complicating this issue is the presence of unfunded mandates: states or districts where arts education is required, but there is no funding allocated to its instruction. For example, 44 states require districts or schools to offer the arts

at the elementary, middle and high school levels, yet only 22 actually allocate funding towards it (National Center for Education Statistics 2018). These practices are at odds with U.S. public opinion on arts education. A 2015 study found that 83 percent of teachers and 73 percent of parents believe that music is an essential part of children's education and feel that budget cuts to music programs are detrimental to students' learning (NAMM Foundation and Grunwald Associates LLC 2015).

Federal programs have attempted to address the lack of funds for arts education. The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), passed in 2015, listed music and arts as eligible for funding under Title I, Title II, and Title IV, because they are considered a part of a well-rounded education. In 2022, Congress authorized \$193.2 billion to Elementary and Secondary Education Relief (ESSER) funds, which could be used to support music education. A nationwide survey on the use of federal funds to support music and the arts in 2021-22 found that over 45 percent of respondents who received federal funds for music and arts used the money to purchase much-needed instruments and other supplies (NAfME 2023). In reality, federal funding does not make up a significant portion of funds for arts education in public schools. Despite these federal efforts to assist with funding, many public schools in economically disadvantaged areas struggle to continue offering arts-based learning opportunities.

In Canada, funding for music education is determined at the provincial level. The Minister of Education establishes school board funding, and then the province's school board determines school funding. In British Columbia, music is considered mandatory in grades K-8, however, the



Augusta Heritage Center



VocalEssence

Ministry of Education does not prescribe mandatory time dedicated to music education (Con, Younker, and Zavitz 2021). A 2021 study found that the majority of British Columbia administrators do not have designated funds for music education but can use discretionary funds for it (Con, Younker, and Zavitz 2021). A 2010 survey found that at the elementary level music was a mandatory subject in over 90 percent of schools across Canada, but at the secondary school level the percentage was much lower (Hill Strategies Research 2010). The same 2010 study also found that, on average, elementary schools in British Columbia offer more music opportunities to their students than many other regions in the country (Hill Strategies Research 2010).

Historically marginalized communities in the US are less likely to have opportunities for music education in their schools (NAMM 2015). A 2015 survey found that

African-American and Hispanic children receive fewer years of music education within their schools than their white counterparts (NAMM 2015). In Canada, provincial and territorial governments have tried to incorporate Indigenous music within music education since 2015. However, this hasn't worked as well in practice because often Indigenous music is included in the curricula following the already existing Eurocentric models of music education (Con et al 2021). This is at odds with how music is understood within Indigenous culture as being a part of all aspects of life and culture rather than a subject to be studied independently (Con et al 2021).

In the survey, respondents were asked what was most needed to increase access to choral music education in their area. Respondents indicated that what they most needed were a change in attitudes to choral music education, federal and state

support for arts/music education, and funding and resources, which are all inter-related issues. A change in attitudes towards choral music education and its importance in children's lives and school days could potentially result in more funds and resources being allocated to it. Further, this is a multi-layered structural issue as these perceptions at a state and federal level trickle down to the school districts and individual school levels.

FINDINGS



Goals of the Projects

All of the organizations' projects were aimed at providing choral education opportunities to historically marginalized communities, and nearly all provided musical learning opportunities from cultures around the globe. This took many forms, from students learning directly from guest artists to formal or informal training for music educators. In addition to teaching musicianship and fostering cross-cultural learning, all projects aimed to build community, teach about history and culture, and help students connect with each other.

One respondent shared “We hope to demonstrate to administrators, teachers, and students the power of choral music in helping students connect with the content in a way that is meaningful, because they see themselves and their culture reflected in what they are learning; it is validating. What we understand, we value.”

Another said “I hope to see more excitement and engagement in my students with our singing of more diverse cultural repertoire. Lifelong musicians is the ultimate goal.” Overall, responses demonstrate that those involved strongly believed in the power of choral education opportunities to develop essential skills beyond musical ones.

Findings revealed that there were several immediate impacts on students who participated in the projects as well



Bi-National Arts Institute

as many long-term impacts on teachers because of how the grantee organizations structured their projects. Immediate impacts included building students' confidence, building community, increasing cultural sensitivity, and providing a space for students to find the joy of making music together. Potential long-term impacts included capacity building for teachers

and supplies and/or resources that they would otherwise not have had access to, enabling them to continue to use these skills and resources for future classes of students. While the program was immensely successful, there were several lessons the grantee organizations learned along the way, as well as challenges to partnering with public schools. Fortunately, the grantee organizations were able to overcome many of these obstacles with creative thinking, collaboration, organizational skills, and a lot of hard work.

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—Anonymous respondent

Impact on Students

One hundred percent of teachers who responded to the post-program survey said that they saw immediate benefits to students who participated in group singing through this program. The main themes that emerged in terms of immediately observable impact on students were: building confidence, building community, learning cultural sensitivity, and the joy students felt making music together.

The Power of Representation

Learning music from one's own culture and seeing oneself represented in the music that the class is learning is a powerful way to build students' confidence, particularly if they usually learn more canonical choral music in school or other public group settings. Representation is incredibly important in many fields and has an impact on participation and perceptions of what one can or cannot participate in (National Center for Education Statistics 2018).

Bi-National Arts Institute, located in Bisbee, AZ, on the U.S.- Mexico border, serves a primarily Spanish-speaking student population, many of whom cross the border to attend school in the United States. Their project introduced more bilingual and Spanish language repertoire to their students. Executive Director, Lori Keyne, shared how impactful it was to see the effect that this repertoire had on the students and their families. Similarly, Katie Skovholt, the Executive Director at Seattle Pro Musica, said that a teacher at one of the schools they worked with told her about the tremendous impact of having diverse music and composers in these schools, elaborating with the following:

He told me that [a] student who had been studying Carnatic music hadn't told her friends because it was very specific to her cultural experience, and was pretty outside of the Western music norm that her colleagues were



Bluefield Arts and Revitalization Corporation

enjoying, and at the middle school level it's so easy for them to feel self-conscious about things that they have no need to feel self-conscious about. But anything that takes them out of the sort of homogenized, middle schooler experience is something that they are most often going to hide or keep to themselves. This student had been participating in this thing with Shruthi, it kind of made her a rock star. So not only have her fellow students been asking her questions about the experience, but her level of confidence in the music classroom has increased significantly and her personal ability to just engage with music, generally, and with her fellow students. Pretty extraordinary.

–Katie Skovholt, Seattle Pro Musica

Survey responses also demonstrated the impact of students seeing themselves

represented in the music and their pride in their communities. One respondent shared “The students, by learning music from their cultures and those of their peers, not only demonstrated just a high level of engagement in the music, but also showed pride in seeing their culture and community held up as a meaningful contributor to music.” Another said “My students whose cultural background is Latino were so enthusiastic and excited that their language and culture was represented in the program. They were so proud to share with other chorus students things about their family heritage during rehearsals related to the piece of music that was reflective of them.” Seeing themselves in the music that all their peers were also learning and engaging with validated their own culture and its contributions to music, helping students feel pride in their community amongst their peers.

Repertoire and song choice was just one tactic for centering students' cultures and heritage. In addition to repertoire, many organizations hired teaching artists who were bi- or multi-lingual and had shared lived experiences with students. With a shared culture, students were able to better relate to teaching artists and see themselves reflected in these leaders. Several representatives of these organizations reported that this helped students connect with the teaching artists and engage on a different level. Matthew Valverde at Border CrossSing said "since Richfield is a dual language school, Ahmed was able to come in and lead the instruction and lead a performance in Spanish, and the students responded very well."

The Wisconsin Conservatory partnered with a bilingual school in the area, to provide support to their bilingual music teacher.

[the music teacher] was able to create something that every single school should have. And we are working towards having a representative music program. Kids are not going to feel safe and understood in the way that they deserve unless they can see somebody in front of them who they can look at and say, 'I see myself in that person, that person has the same experiences as me, that person maybe grew up in the same place, or we went and did the same things or they cook the same food that my mom does'...it's just being able to look at somebody in front of you and know that that person feels like somebody who you understand, as a child. Relating to other people is a skill that you grow over time.

—Erin Hutchins, Wisconsin Conservatory

VocalEssence has a partnership with Longfellow High School, a school for pregnant and parenting students and their children. Many of the students there are bilingual or are primarily Spanish speakers. G. Philip Schoultz, III, the Associate Artistic Director at VocalEssence who led the project at Longfellow, worked hard to provide an experience where students would be comfortable with the language. He explained that since his Spanish

Group singing establishes community and allows students to express themselves in a very vulnerable way. Owning your voice is difficult, and in middle school, students crave socialization and are searching for who they are. Group singing can positively impact students at this age and provide safe spaces for students to explore their thoughts, opinions, and emotions. Group singing encourages students to work with one another for a common goal.

—Anonymous respondent

language skills were rudimentary he hired one of the students to be a translator for him during the sessions and said that this resulted in the student engagement increasing by 50–60%.

Overall, educators recognized the significance of students seeing themselves represented among their teachers and having their culture valued through its inclusion in the curriculum.

Community-Building

Studies have demonstrated the value of group singing in a variety of settings (Skingley et al 2016; Hendry et al 2022; Densley and Andrews 2021; Chorus America Impact Study 2019). Research has also shown the impact of group music-making on social bonds (Weinstein et al 2016). All the music teachers and administrators who responded to the survey shared this perspective. One hundred percent of teachers and administrators who responded to the post-program survey said that group singing was an important way to build community. This notion was reflected in the open-ended responses where respondents were encouraged to share why group singing was important. Responses included references to working together, building bonds, and self-expression in a group setting.

- Group singing teaches the importance of working together as one. This teaches them more than the notes on the page.

- Group singing has been shown to build community and resilience to emotional and mental stress.

- Group singing also encourages working together and fosters community, belonging, and self-pride.

- Singing in groups feels good and builds bonds and friendships.

- I work in a Title I school so money is a concern but your voice is free. We all have it and it unifies us in a way nothing else can or does.

- Group singing establishes community and allows students to express themselves in a very vulnerable way. Owning your voice is difficult, and in middle school, students crave socialization and are searching for who they are. Group singing can positively impact students at this age and provide safe spaces for students to explore their thoughts, opinions, and emotions. Group singing encourages students to work with one another for a common goal.

- It's a good team building experience and creates a sense of community.

Some organizations specifically focused their projects on the community aspect of music-making. An intergenerational approach was the focus for some projects, like Bluefield Arts' after school program for elementary and middle school students and their families, and VocalEssence's project for parenting high school students and their babies, which sought to strengthen family bonds. Others sought to build community through singing together, such as Vancouver Youth Choir's (VYC) Kindred program. This project was specifically designed for newcomers to Canada to build connections and make friends while learning Indigenous music and culture from Indigenous leaders.

Based in downtown Asheville, NC, LEAF Global Arts approached community building through connecting students with local musicians. LEAF's project invited local artists of diverse backgrounds to do residencies with an elementary and middle school, providing the students an opportunity to meet, sing with, and create a music video with artists from their own community. Heather Deifell, the Community Development and Grant Director at LEAF said that they were specifically "targeting artists that have a very positive message—the songs are deliberately picked out to try to inspire kids that you can use your voice in such a positive way to shift our community, you can have a voice in the community." The opportunity to interact with artists from their own community allowed students to see possibilities for themselves as well as feel more connected to the broader community.

Cultural Sensitivity

Cultural sensitivity is the ability to understand and respect values, attitudes, and beliefs that differ across cultures. This is an important element of building communities that are strong, diverse, and appreciate the diversity of different people and their culture(s). One hundred percent of teachers and administrators who responded to the post-program survey said that learning music from diverse cultures is a way in which to learn or build cultural sensitivity.

Building cultural sensitivity was a key objective for grant partner COMPAS. Based in the Twin Cities, COMPAS provided diverse performances and singing workshops. Workshops included Music as Resistance taught by Aimee K. Bryant, which addressed how African-American music is used as tool for social change, survival, healing, and Songs of Call & Response taught by Kashimana Ahua where students explored call and responses in a variety of genres and cultures. Students also participated in workshops by Nanilo, a duo of guest artists, to schools across urban and rural Minnesota. Nanilo specializes in Balkan, Gujarati, Yiddish, and Eastern European singing traditions, and COMPAS found that these musical opportunities resonated with many students,



COMPAS

whether or not they identified with the musical cultures being taught. This type of cross-cultural learning also sparked interest in better understanding a students' own culture. COMPAS's program manager, Emma Seeley, observed, "At one school one of the students spoke Russian, and so when Nanilo was there, they were just thrilled that they recognized the language ... we've gotten lots of lots of comments about students really getting interested in their own culture, from hearing about other cultures ... them asking a lot of questions and wanting to delve into their own culture is really exciting and one of the main things we wanted to come from the project."

Learning about one's own and other cultures can be a powerful way to address painful and sensitive history. In Elkins, West Virginia, the Augusta Heritage Center used grant funds to bring authentic cultural bearers and teaching artists to share their singing traditions with 3rd–5th grade students. Through these lessons, the music became a very powerful vehicle for talking about the U.S.'s history of slavery. Ko Cha' Ta "Seth" Young, Executive Director of the Center, reflected on this visit with a teaching artist:

It was a history lesson that a child could understand, like how did African Americans come to America? ... What happened, how they were not allowed to sing the songs that

were in their language, translated some of the coded language that's hidden within spirituals and gospel music, ... and I just thought, 'oh, my gosh, she just did such a masterful job of making that very easy for kids to understand.' In highlighting a subject matter... [that] can be difficult to even touch upon. And then the fact that there are Black students and they had a Black person [teaching them], they're relaying that history in a way that probably might not be done in their entire K–12 existence, at least not if they're living in Randolph County, West Virginia.

Respondents to the post-program survey elaborated on how learning music from different cultures helps build cultural sensitivity and stronger communities. A broader educational experience shapes global citizens with empathy and respect for people from other cultures and cultural traditions. One respondent said "by learning about diverse cultures, students learn about how others live. Their worlds become bigger as they learn about how large our world is. This is very important in building respect and empathy." Another said "Singing songs from other countries builds empathy and understanding of that culture for both students and adults." A third said "People are less afraid of ideas that they have been exposed to, especially

at a young age. Music gives us a chance to experience new sounds, sights, and ideas that set us up for open hearts and minds to learn.” These statements also demonstrate the importance of exposing people to different ideas and cultures at a young age so that their perspective of the world is expanded early.

“All of the students were very excited to meet a living composer and hear more of the story behind his composition that represented our Native American children in our county. The varied cultures represented through our music made my students want to learn more. They have, since returning from this experience, shared with others about this experience... it was life changing for them.” (*anonymous survey response*)

VOX Femina’s project, the Justice Choir Program, provided learning opportunities at three schools and one after-school program where students learned repertoire from The Justice Choir Songbook. Inspired by social justice issues of our time, the songbook is a collection of songs tailored to be accessible to people of a wide range of ages and musical training. VOX Femina brought in different teaching artists to work with the students on different songs. Rebecca Wink, the Executive Director of VOX Femina said “there’s a Spanish song that we’re doing that we’re going to bring a Latina musicologist to speak about the deeper meaning of it just because we’re trying to have people who are reflected in the music speak about it rather than us so that it’s authentic.”

Singing songs in other languages and hearing people speak in other languages also normalizes being bilingual. Matthew at Border CrosSing said “And so there’s

this kind of very normalizing of being fluent in multiple languages, and what it means to come together to do music in that language that was really exciting to see.” This is especially meaningful and important in our socio-political climate where those perceived as ‘others’ have long been and are still often regarded with suspicion (Lee 2019).

As one respondent wrote, “Learning to sing together gives respect and appreciation for each other, their unique and diverse cultures, as well as life experiences. All children should have the opportunity to learn to sing! I truly believe that singing together creates an environment of peace and harmony.”

Increased Access and Engagement

Many of the children who participated in these different projects did not have many, if any, other opportunities to participate in a musical experience. In addition to so many other benefits of making music with others, group singing is also an opportunity for people to have a lot of fun together. Several grantee organizations reported that they had seen themselves just how excited the students were to receive this opportunity and how much enjoyment they were getting out of it, not just in the moment, but out of class time as well. Jennifer Crews at Desert Sounds said “the parents are very happy. And they keep saying how glad they are and how happy they are, and how they’re glad their kids are learning not just music, but mariachi music, and the kids are coming back talking about having fun.”

At McAuliffe Elementary School, Chorus America grant funds supported an in-school singing and ukulele music program teaching the musical traditions of Pacific Islander culture. Not only did the project center the heritage of many

students attending the school, but Vice Principal Christine Carrao observed increased engagement and excitement throughout the school day. She said: “I just see the little kids so excited and so engaged in their learning. How do you quantify engagement? I don’t know, but what I see is them performing ... they know the words and they know the songs and I see them leaving the [music] area and still pretending they’re using their shells.”

Others also talked about observing or hearing students singing the songs they learned outside the classroom. Jennifer Crews at Desert Sounds said, “the kids are loving to sing. I have parents tell me ‘my child is singing at home now’. So the kids are enjoying learning to sing and they’re singing at home.” Similarly, Mitra Khazai at Phoenix Boys Choir said “watching the kids singing and belting out what they were singing at the gospel concert, I think that’s when you see they’re truly engaged and excited.”

Students also gained more confidence and demonstrated interest in singing by themselves or in smaller groups. In discussing the songs the students were learning at Surry Arts Council, Executive Director Tanya Jones shared, “nobody really had interest in it [singing a solo] at the beginning. And now when I say who wants to be a part of this solo and small group almost all of them there raised their hands. They’re excited and it’s cool to see that from fourth and fifth graders that have never done this.” Similarly, Sukari Reid-Glenn, the Manager of Music Education at Grand Vision Foundation, explained that some of the students who were initially very shy were gaining more confidence, because teaching artists provided a range of ways for students to participate in the activities. She said “all of a sudden, they’ve got this shy kid who’s like, ‘I want to be the leader’ ... so it’s really great ... we do have students who have really changed.”

It was clear that students across the different projects were engaged in the musical experience and derived great enjoyment from it, and access to these experiences provided an opportunity for cultural engagement that they did not experience elsewhere.

“The parents are very happy. And they keep saying how glad they are and how happy they are, and how they’re glad their kids are learning not just music, but mariachi music, and the kids are coming back talking about having fun.”

–Jennifer Crews, Desert Sounds

Impact on Teachers and School Culture

Professional Development and Resources

Several of the programs had some type of formal or informal teacher training built in, whether it was workshops, help with syllabi/repertoire, or simply opportunities to observe culturally sensitive and relevant teaching within their classrooms and how students responded to it. For example, Vancouver, BC-based Phoenix Chamber Choir held workshops led by experts on how to perform Black music respectfully. Seattle Pro Musica had one of their artists speak at a music educators' conference about non-idiomatic choral music by Black composers. Voices in the Laurel started a library of culturally diverse music that local teachers can borrow from and use as a resource to access music that would not otherwise be available to them. One hundred percent of teachers who responded to the post-program survey agreed that these funded projects exposed them to music from different cultures that they had not previously encountered.

The survey responses also revealed that one of the challenges with programming



Phoenix Boys Choir

diverse music is that many music educators have not been trained in repertoire outside of Western European musical traditions. Music educators noted that they often do not have access to, or know how, to incorporate diverse musical traditions into their

curriculum. As such, many are wary of programming such repertoire because they want to be culturally sensitive and are uncertain about the best way of doing so. One respondent to the post-program survey said “Conductors/teachers often are tentative about performing music from other cultures, given the potential for it feeling or coming across as ‘performative’ - rather than sincere. Having exposure to new works and conversations with living composers allows me to shine the light on these cultures and give my students a genuine connection and understanding of the music we are singing. This is a priceless experience for me and for my students!” Another participant shared, “As a teacher, I am also thrilled to have professional development as a part of this grant so that I can impact my students in the future as a result.”

This program encouraged me to seek out music from a wider array of regions and cultures. What I learned most is that composers are OPEN to collaborating, and the use of technology makes it all the more do-able. In the future, I definitely plan to reach out to the composer and try to Zoom them in to talk with my classes, if we don't have the luxury of bringing them in in-person.

—Anonymous respondent

Having access to these types of resources is immensely helpful for educators and has a long-lasting impact because they empower the teachers with the skills and knowledge that they can pass on to future students. Ninety-five percent of teachers who responded to the post-program survey agreed that after participating in this program they have increased confidence in their ability to teach a diverse range of music from different cultures, and 100 percent said that they plan to use the knowledge they gained through this program in the future. Ninety-one percent said that they were motivated to introduce music from different cultures to their students and 87 percent said they would encourage students to explore diverse types of music. Seventy-nine percent said they were motivated to research music from cultures with which they were not familiar.

When asked how they plan to use the knowledge they gained through this program, responses ranged from incorporating more historical and cultural context to reaching out to composers themselves. The program not only provided resources, information, and knowledge, but also understanding of a range of possibilities the teachers had not even considered previously. Responses include:

- The techniques our clinician used in rehearsals and interactions with students will be implemented in my teaching. Also, the professional development I received from the clinician on Black history and cultural diversity will be used in my classroom.
- The music we used for our all-county chorus clinic was culturally diverse music that I would be able to use again. Some of the music was genres my students had not been exposed to. Secondly, the personal development day we had was about



Desert Sounds

integrating African American history into our curriculum throughout the school year, not just during the “month”. I appreciate the information I have gained from the PD day and plan on using it throughout my school year.

- This program encouraged me to seek out music from a wider array of regions and cultures. What I learned most is that composers are OPEN to collaborating, and the use of technology makes it all the more do-able. In the future, I definitely plan to reach out to the composer and try to Zoom them in to talk with my classes,

if we don’t have the luxury of bringing them in in-person.

This knowledge was not only useful to music teachers, but to teachers of other subjects too, demonstrating that music education is relevant across disciplines. One respondent said: “I will incorporate music in my content area of physical education more.” Another said, “I’m a science teacher, and I already teach the science of sound, but now I want to expand that class to include more music, discussions of resonance and beats and how artists use distortion etc. in their creations.”

Participating in this program also encouraged teachers to continue learning and sharing this knowledge with peers. Eighty-three percent of teachers who responded to the post-program survey said that this program motivated them to attend workshops/programs to improve their knowledge of diverse types of music, tell other teachers/colleagues about what they learned, learn about other cultures, and listen to the stories of people whose backgrounds are different to theirs.

The personal development day we had was about integrating African American history into our curriculum throughout the school year, not just during the “month”. I appreciate the information I have gained from the PD day and plan on using it throughout my school year.

—Anonymous respondent

Impact on Non-profit Partners

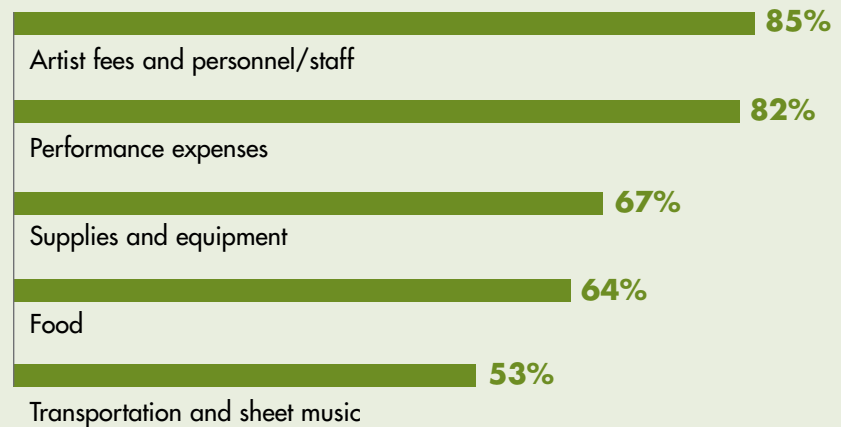
Investing in People and Capacity Building

While many of the grantee organizations had some educational programming and/or existing partnerships with local schools, the organizations are often under-resourced, both in terms of funds and personnel. The Chorus America grant program enabled them to either offer new projects or expand existing ones, offering partner schools more robust or diversified experiences and/or curricula.

The grant was largely an investment in people, as many organizations used significant portions of it to pay personnel (teachers, teaching artists, and administrators) for their labor, without which the projects would not have been possible. Grantees used the funds to: pay external teaching artists, pay classroom teachers for extra time they spent after school, provide transportation for students if there were afterschool activities or field trips, purchase scores and instruments to supplement the lessons, provide snacks and beverages for students, and many other items necessary to make their projects a success.

Many students had the opportunity to work directly with high-quality renowned artists from other parts of the country, whom they would never have otherwise been exposed to. These experiences are important because they provide opportunities for children from historically marginalized communities to have some of the experiences that more privileged children have access to far more frequently. One

USE OF GRANT FUNDS



respondent said “Our families are not in a position to be able to pay for something like this. I work to level the playing field between our students and their wealthier counterparts.” This is one way in which the grantees contributed to creating a more equitable learning environment.

One respondent said “Without this funding, our opportunity to provide our students at the elementary level with a large chorus activity with a renowned conductor would NEVER have happened. We also would not have been given access to instruments, technology items, resources and diversity materials that this grant has provided.”

Another said “Without this funding, our students would not have the opportunity to work with a clinician of Mrs. Ellis’s caliber.

They would not have the opportunity to sing with peers county wide.” A third said “It [the funding] is very important. With this funding, students from lower income communities have the opportunity to learn high level individual and choral production. Helping students find their own voice builds confidence and success for each student.”

Another respondent expressed that their grant provided them with rare opportunities to forge community and feel supported. They said:

We have received a partnership. I feel supported. I seldom feel supported. I often feel like the weight of the entire program rests on me. I’m excited that I’ll have other musicians helping me, guiding me with their experiences.

The people working at these organizations are passionate about expanding access to choral music education and providing a diversity of musical experiences, all while demonstrating creativity and resourcefulness in their project planning and implementation. The Music Education Partnership Grant funds helped them to feel supported in carrying out and expanding the scope of their projects.

“We have received a partnership. I feel supported. I seldom feel supported. I often feel like the weight of the entire program rests on me. I’m excited that I’ll have other musicians helping me, guiding me with their experiences.”

—Anonymous respondent

Sustainability and Funding

When asked about continuing to grow and develop their projects, including sustaining existing programs within the schools, many grantee organizations talked about the need for financial support to continue their work. In some cases Chorus America funds helped bolster and expand existing projects, while in others the funds helped start new projects which would have to seek other funds to continue. Chorus America's renewed funding for a second year will help sustain these projects and give them time to develop and work on a funding plan for future years.

Rebecca Wink at VOX Femina said “the fact that it was a one-time grant means that we have to figure out how we're going to continue funding it. And I'm working really hard on that. Because I know I can't rely necessarily on the Chorus America grant. And also because I want to expand it.”

Marcela Molina and Nicky Manlove at Tucson Girls Choir said “We need funding. We need funding so we can hire more people. We're really working on building capacity as an organization. And the result of all of these programs is we just really need more hands and support, and we're getting another person coming full time in the fall, just to expand that mentorship program that is needed for the teacher.”

Tanya Jones and Tyler Matanick at Surry Arts Council said “when you have limited time and limited staff that's tricky. So as I see it, we would have to have funding at some level to sustain it.” Similarly, Lori at Bi-National Arts said “our biggest challenge right now is seeing if we can find the support to keep this project going.”

“Without this funding, our opportunity to provide our students at the elementary level with a large chorus activity with a renowned conductor would NEVER have happened. We also would not have been given access to instruments, technology items, resources and diversity materials that this grant has provided.”

—Anonymous respondent



Grand Vision Foundation

All the grantee organizations expressed a desire to continue to provide these opportunities and build on them to expand access to choral music education in their communities. However, with limited resources, it is difficult for them to maintain the projects, particularly in the same capacity that they were able to implement them during this year when they had the Chorus America grants to fund them. Fortunately, Chorus America was able to provide an additional \$20,000–\$25,000 per project to support this work during the

2023–24 school year. Despite this renewed funding, the uncertainty of securing additional or continued grant funds poses substantial challenges to maintaining and expanding these projects.

Commitment to Access, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Chorus America has been very intentional throughout this regranting process to make it equitable and accessible to those seeking funding. Keeping in mind the power imbalance inherent in philanthropy, Chorus America has strongly committed to upholding equity and accessibility throughout this entire grants cycle. Several grantee organizations specifically mentioned this equity-centered approach and were grateful for how the grant process was handled.

For example, Erin at the Wisconsin Conservatory explained how grateful she was regarding Chorus America's flexibility and understanding of how budgets and costs can change. She said: “Chorus America has been incredible in understanding that budgets change because

circumstances change. And in the grant process, they were just different from the other grants that I write for our conservatory in that they didn't require a cents by cents budget that they're going to go back and double check... They were very understanding in the application process as long as the budget is still working towards the project and the vision of what the project is, which is making sure kids at Hayes have music classes and that they're supported, then the budget can be kind of molded to fit that."

Similarly Karen and Katie at Seattle Pro Musica expressed how appreciative they were for Chorus America's grant process, particularly in comparison to other grant processes they had experienced. Katie said "this process with Chorus America and the Music Education Partnership Grant has been extremely supportive and generous...it's been a really fulfilling process in a way that a lot of grants are not." She went on to explain that they appreciated the opportunity to be self-reflective and understand how to make the project better in the future and really think about what they are trying to do with the project.

Unsurprisingly, when funders model and prioritize this level of commitment to access, diversity, equity, and inclusion, it is then reflected in the projects selected and funded. The grantee organizations' commitment to the principles of access, diversity, equity, and inclusion were demonstrated in a myriad of ways. VOX Femina of Los Angeles worked to increase diversity in choral music education by teaching repertoire from the Justice Choir Songbook. Other projects, including Seattle Pro Music and Phoenix Chamber Choir, introduced students to composers and commissioned pieces. Nearly all projects engaged and centered teaching artists,



Seattle Pro Musica

choral groups or composers from historically marginalized communities. These projects had the dual effect of highlighting the work of these selected musicians as well as bringing awareness to music teachers and students who otherwise may not have encountered these artists or this music, particularly not in a choral music setting. Several of the projects worked to create sustainable practices so that these impacts would last long beyond the immediate implementation period. Providing opportunities for students to interact with a range of artists and music, as well as have conversations about the history and culture of different repertoire were important components of many of the projects.

Phoenix Chamber Choir is a community choir based in Vancouver, Canada. Their project, titled "Phoenix Choral Experience: Cultural Appreciation" included experiences for educators and singers in the form of workshops, special guests, cultural

exchange, and a newly commissioned choral work. Carolyn Shiau, a member of Phoenix Chamber Choir explained that the Chorus America grant helped the choir develop in the direction of being more socially progressive because the funds gave them the freedom to do what they wanted to do.

Phoenix is now the choir that all the young people want to sing with, because we're socially diverse. And also considering how we can promote diversity within our programming and thinking about how we can not just sing music, but kind of learn and grow from a social justice perspective. And I really think that that is a lot harder to do when you don't have the financial means to do so. And this experience and having the catalyst from the Chorus America grant to help us... [gives us] an opportunity to think about these things without wondering how we're going to pay the bills... The dollars really make a big difference when you're trying to adjust and change directions of an organization that has been a very traditional, formal, classical organization. And it may not be to everyone's taste but it is at least responding to what we see around us.

–Carolyn Shiau, Phoenix Chamber Choir

"This process with Chorus America and the Music Education Partnership Grant has been extremely supportive and generous...it's been a really fulfilling process in a way that a lot of grants are not."

–Katie, Seattle Pro Musica

Lessons Learned: Issues and Challenges

While many grant partners had ongoing relationships with the schools they partnered with as part of their already existing educational programming, many utilized grant funding to expand their existing work. Others began new projects and developed new relationships with partner schools. Whether the project reflected an expansion or new initiative, organizations and schools identified how best to partner together in the future.

Public Schools Acting as Fiscal Sponsors

Chorus America recognized that not all community singing is organized in the form of a 501c3 nonprofit organization (in the US) or registered charity (Canada). As such, to ensure accessibility to the funding opportunity, public schools and districts were eligible to act as fiscal sponsors for the grant opportunity. However, this was not without its own challenges. School districts have multiple processes in place to ensure that there is accountability and numerous steps to disburse funds. In the two projects where the grant money went directly to the schools instead of the partner organizations, these processes were particularly burdensome, as everything from paying personnel to purchasing materials took a much longer time than ideal.

Maggie Jennings at Macon County Youth and Children Choir said: “And so what we have learned is it takes forever to process a purchase order. The school system will not pay for something that hasn’t happened yet. So in order for us to pay our personnel, we have to borrow money from another business, we’ve been borrowing money and paying them out of that borrowed money.” In this case, they were able to make it work, however, the situation was not optimal, and not all organizations have



Pacific Youth Choir

the option of borrowing money to ensure that payments can be made on time.

McAuliffe Elementary School, which was a direct grant recipient, was also unable to manage the bureaucratic processes. Christine, the Assistant Principal, said: “The mistake that I then later learned was having the check cut to the school district. For a large school district, there’s a fiscal department that has to be approved...there’s just many, many layers to actually getting money in your hands.” She went on to explain “I think it would have made more sense to have the money go to our community partner, and have her pay herself as well as pay for services, because very simple things like ordering ukuleles took us three months.” While they did ultimately get the project off the ground and reported that students were greatly enjoying the lessons, they were unable to manage the bureaucracy

in a way that enabled them to pay the teaching artist, and as such, this partnership dissolved before the close of the grant period.

Lack of Transportation and Its Impact on Enrollment

A lack of transportation emerged as a consistent barrier to participation, particularly among low-income students. When students did not have music offered during school hours it was much more difficult for them to either stay after-school or take private lessons (even if free) elsewhere. Transportation depended on caregiver availability to drop and pick them up, public transportation, adult supervision, and many other factors. These findings are consistent with research on disparities between access to and participation in extracurricular activities between children in different socio-economic groups (Rokicki and McGovern 2019).

Even if schools could bus students to different locations or at times outside of the regular school hours, there are other considerations. Working with younger children requires smaller adult/teacher to child ratios, which can be challenging to implement during out-of-school time. Child care continues to be a struggle for many families, and out-of-school or after-school programming needs to take this into consideration.

The transportation issue is huge, especially here because our public transportation system leaves a lot to be desired. And there's that added pressure if a parent... has to have multiple jobs, and are possibly taking care of kids even younger than the kids that are coming to our lessons or going to the schools that we work with. What is a parent supposed to do if they have to stay at work until six? And then they have a two-year-old that they are also having to pick up from daycare... and then they have to get their kid on the bus... it's just not feasible. So there's obviously an endless amount of societal barriers that exist that create roadblocks for people, but the financial and the transportation are ones that we look at very often because of the accessibility factor. And accessibility is really the foundation that we build what we're doing on.

—Erin, *The Wisconsin Conservatory of Music*

As part of their project, Seattle Pro Musica invited students from participating schools to attend some of their concerts featuring composers that had visited the students' classrooms. These concerts were held primarily on Saturday evenings which made it difficult for students to attend without organized transportation. Karen at Seattle Pro Musica said: "I know that there's a middle school that really wants to bring their kids on a bus because they're probably 40 minutes away from us... And they've had some trouble just in terms of internal things in their own school district with getting the bus set up to bring their kids. So they've been really disappointed because their teacher des-

So there's obviously an endless amount of societal barriers that exist that create roadblocks for people, but the financial and the transportation are ones that we look at very often because of the accessibility factor. And accessibility is really the foundation that we build what we're doing on.

—Erin, *The Wisconsin Conservatory of Music*

perately wants to bring the kids so they're still working on [this]"

Many of the grantee organizations had thought about transportation in advance and arranged to pay to bus students to other venues. Others learned about this barrier during conversations with the schools. However, it is not always possible for external organizations to accommodate transportation challenges because of the logistics that go into transporting students, particularly if there are multiple locations (stops) involved.

The grant-funded projects that saw the highest enrollment were those that took place within the school day in a protected non-elective time. Projects which were after-school had lower enrollment in large part because parents had to organize a different type of transportation for their children to accommodate different hours. Low-income families find it more difficult to help their children participate in extra activities because they are less likely to be able to rearrange schedules to facilitate dropping off and picking up children outside of the prescribed school hours (Rokicki and McGovern 2019).

With other projects that saw low enrollment, one of the potential causes is location – specifically, being in an area where there is a dearth of music opportunities for children. In certain cases, families in such communities have grown accustomed to not having these opportunities and as such are less likely to invest the time and energy into it as an extra-curricular, even when offered for free. This was Bluefield Arts' initial experience. They were very resourceful in increasing enrollment for the latter half of the project by extending the offer to two more schools

in more rural areas, shortening the commitment from parents and students. Additionally, instead of organizing a separate performance event, they added a choral performance to an already scheduled community event at each school. All these strategies worked to increase enrollment significantly, which demonstrates the importance of considering what works best for each community/school and being flexible enough to make changes.

In Macon County, North Carolina, grant partners observed that COVID-19 has negatively impacted choral enrollment and their choral programs have not yet recovered. Further, children who were in elementary school when COVID hit went through a period where they were not able to participate in in-person singing, which has been attributed to less interest when they returned to school and group singing opportunities. Some teachers are finding that they are returning to the fundamentals and foundational skills with students who missed choir for several months during the COVID-19 global pandemic.

Teacher Retention

Poor pay, declining funding for the arts, and the many adjustments teachers had to make because of the COVID-19 pandemic have led to teachers being overworked and tired, with a lot of turn-over as teachers leave the profession in droves (Dilbert and Schwartz 2023). Some organizations spoke about the difficulty in engaging teachers for extra activities despite enthusiasm from schools about the projects. This is a much larger structural issue that cannot be addressed by grant programs, although funding helps with providing extra resources.

Jennifer Crews at Desert Sounds explained that despite offering payment to schoolteachers for the extra time they put in with the project, it was difficult to get them to participate. Erin at the Wisconsin Conservatory of Music shared how her organization is actively working to help fill some of the vacancies related to teacher burnout, “So one faculty member will probably teach at three different sites throughout the week... it’s as much as we can do given the landscape of education. Right now there’s full time educators leaving at an astronomical rate from schools. And there isn’t enough funding that’s being given by certain government entities ... So schools have to cut teachers, they have to cut benefits, they have to cut schedule time.”

Mitra at Phoenix Boys Choir said “statewide, we’re seeing huge turnovers. There’s a teacher retention and recruitment crisis. That is pretty significant. And it has to do with a lot of different factors... when you are from a profession that has historically been under compensated, ... And then you layer on the pandemic. And all the awful things that happened during that and what we asked teachers to do... It’s a real issue we’re facing.”

The impact of turnover cannot be overstated. Educational work is powered by people, and it takes time to build relationships with school personnel. Project logistics, longevity, and quality are all impacted by turnover. Increasing support and funding for teachers would be one way to help prevent teacher burnout and potentially create more longevity, which will ultimately be beneficial to both students and teachers.

Logistics and Relationship Building

Several organizations had logistical challenges when working with school systems. For in-school programs, schools have their own schedules and the organizations had to work with them to either fit into existing music classes within the school day or find another time that would work for the students and teachers. Emma Seeley at COMPAS said that it “took a long time and figuring out all the different components ...and then the artist schedules and getting everything sorted was not necessarily an obstacle but a challenge, for sure.”



Wisconsin Conservatory of Music

Similarly, Border CrosSing said “the biggest hurdle has been scheduling. Getting our schedules to coordinate with the school year schedules plus the teacher schedules plus coordinating six, seven musicians, sometimes nine musicians on our end plus the school...has taken a lot more administrative time than we realized when we were first imagining this project. So that is definitely something we’ve figured out now, we’ve gotten better about it. But scheduling was a real hurdle at first.”

Tucson Girls’ Chorus (TGC) began a relationship with Tohono O’odham Nation, located approximately 3 hours away from Tucson, Arizona in 2021. TGC staff member, Nicky Manlove, works with the students at Tohono O’odham Nation once a week, over Zoom, using a range of techniques to successfully engage them. The students all gather in one space and Nicky video calls in for the session. Transportation to and from the common space, and technological challenges including a poor internet connection makes these sessions challenging, however, Nicky spoke enthusiastically about the weekly sessions and the relationships they’ve formed with the students even in a virtual setting. They noted that showing up consistently and engaging with the students goes a long way in building and sustaining the relationship.

Bi-National Arts Institute faced very specific logistical challenges due to the

international nature of their work. Because their work involved students in Mexico and the United States, they had to work with local governments on both sides of the border, as well as Border Patrol to organize concerts and other events. This work takes a lot of advance planning, relationship-building, and communication, and even then, misunderstandings can happen. For example, Lori Keyne explained “Last October, we had planned to have musicians on both sides of the border for the entire concert. And at the last minute the Naco, Sonora government canceled the concert...because of, I think, a misrepresentation that occurred as we were trying to put together the concert.”

The Border Patrol has been supportive, but having to go through that entity going through both Naco, Sonora and then town governments on both sides to make sure they know what’s happening is a challenge. *–Lori Keyne, Bi-National Arts*

In addition to the challenges of working with different governments, Bi-National Arts also ran into the problem of stereotypes about the border. Lori Keyne reported that there are concerns about children’s safety when going to the border from those who hold negative stereotypes about the border. Part of Bi-National Arts’ work is to try and dismantle those stereotypes through exposing people to the border with concerts and other events and also bringing people from both sides of the border together.

That kind of stigma that exists between the two areas is, is one challenge. But it’s also, I think, one of the greatest joys, because when we do something like this, it breaks all of our stereotypes. *–Lori Keyne, Bi-National Arts*

These stereotypes are a part of broader national narratives, and ones that organizations like Bi-National Arts are trying to dismantle through their work and building awareness. However, these problems do not have immediate solutions, and long-term consistent work is needed to continue to address these issues.



RECOMMENDATIONS AND LESSONS LEARNED

FOR THE CHORAL MUSIC & SCHOOL
PARTNERSHIP ECOSYSTEM

Recommendations

Despite the challenges identified, funded project leaders expressed great hope for the future and the need to work collaboratively within systems. Below are some recommendations and key takeaways for the work ahead.

	Choral Leaders	School Administrator	Philanthropy Staff
CROSS-CULTURAL SINGING OPPORTUNITIES	<p>Collaborate with schools, parents, teaching artists, and others to ensure that their voices inform the program’s design. The most meaningful and strongest partnerships are community-led. This ensures that communities are getting the specific support they need.</p> <p>Recognize the vast potential for continued learning for choral leaders. Do not limit the learning outcomes to only students. This work provides an incredible opportunity to learn about musical traditions outside of one’s own culture and how they intersect with one’s musical experiences.</p>	<p>Recognize and share with district leadership that cross-cultural singing partnerships have the potential to address multiple school challenges, many that may be exacerbated by the pandemic.</p> <p>Harness the power of these partnerships to deepen student engagement, increase attendance, build student confidence and representation, and play a positive role in school culture and mental health.</p>	<p>Deepen access and engagement by specifically funding work that provides community-led opportunities for cross-cultural learning.</p> <p>Prioritize funding projects that work with authentic culture bearers that meaningfully engage communities in the projects’ development and design.</p>
LOGISTICS AND PLANNING	<p>Take time to develop relationships with the school administrators, parents, and other communities you are engaging in this work so both parties can openly share challenges and find solutions. Strong partnerships are built on strong relationships.</p> <p>Address potential issues between partners quickly and respectfully, being open to creative solutions and others’ perspectives.</p>	<p>Support project partners by prioritizing space and time at school and/or organizing additional transportation. If a program must meet after school hours, dedicated space and time on campus and transportation for students can make a substantial difference in alleviating barriers to participation and increasing the program’s reach and impact.</p>	<p>Seek feedback from current and prospective grantees that support schools’ planning timelines, which may mean providing funds well in advance of the school year.</p> <p>Provide multi-year support when possible, to allow for long-term planning and community-led project development.</p>
FUNDING AND RESOURCES	<p>Utilize funding to invest in the people that make this work possible. Many grant partners found it valuable to expand or allocate new resources for staff and teaching artists.</p> <p>Recognize and identify nonfinancial resource needs that will support the people implementing the program in the long term, for example, additional music and materials, more planning time, and/or additional training/learning.</p>	<p>Recognize that partnerships with choral music nonprofits can be a critical avenue for providing new and meaningful arts-based learning opportunities.</p> <p>Advocate and be a champion for nonprofit partners by sharing stories that speak to their success and help them secure additional resources to continue this work.</p>	<p>Take time to understand the specific funding challenges of the communities you seek to serve and provide the flexibility for grant partners to use funds as needed.</p> <p>For example, if a music teacher position has been cut, perhaps providing funding for advocacy work may be more beneficial than supplies. If teachers express a need for culturally relevant music training, consider funding a professional development program.</p>

CONCLUSION





Surry Arts Council

This one-year grant program demonstrated how important music education is to building stronger, more culturally aware, and more connected communities. There were several immediate impacts on students as well as potential long term impacts. In the immediacy of the projects, grantee organizations reported that students were gaining more confidence as they saw themselves represented in the music they learned and were able to connect to their peers more through the projects. Further, organizations noted that there was tremendous cross-cultural learning because of many projects' emphasis on highlighting music from a range of cultures.

Many of the organizations included professional development to help school music teachers have a better understanding of how to teach and perform music from different cultures or even where to find such music. Several others provided funds to purchase much needed supplies such as sheet music or instruments. As teachers reported, these are all skills and resources that will continue to be used in the future for many more classes of students.

Receiving exposure to music from different cultures, learning about the history and culture surrounding these communities, and having open conversations about social issues, are all important ways in which students build appreciation for people, cultures, and communities that are

different to their own. This is particularly important in the current polarized climate. Building stronger communities involves creating trust and appreciation of differences between people, and a strong music education program is one way in which to do this while also providing a joyous group activity where people can work towards a common goal together. As this report has shown, choral music education is a vital part of developing well-rounded, empathetic citizens, with an appreciation for a range of cultures and histories.

Although choral music education should be available to all students regardless of their socio-economic status, this is unfortunately not the reality for many students. The result is that without programs like Chorus America's Music Education Partnership Grant program, thousands of students would have had little to no music education during the 2022-23 school year, and if they did have some opportunities to sing together, it would not have been of the quality and diversity that they were exposed to through funded projects. While this program was immensely impactful, funding is essential for organizations to continue to do this work.



Macon County Youth & Children's Choir

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APPENDIX I: FUNDED ORGANIZATIONS AND PROJECT DESCRIPTIONS



The Augusta Heritage Center of Davis & Elkins College

Elkins, West Virginia

\$50,000 to support World Connections: Augusta in the Schools, a year-long world music singing course for 3rd–5th grade students in Elkins, West Virginia.

BiNational Arts Institute

Bisbee, Arizona

\$50,000 to support choral music classes at the El Centro Community Center and a Concert without Borders, focusing on music from migrants around the globe.

Bluefield Arts & Revitalization Corporation

Bluefield, Virginia

\$50,000 to support Music Across the Years, which provides opportunities for intergenerational singing in Bluefield, West Virginia.

Border CrosSing

St. Paul, Minnesota

\$50,000 to support performances and workshops celebrating Latinx music to schools with student populations that identify as Latinx.

COMPAS

St. Paul, Minnesota

\$50,000 to support performances and workshops to schools across urban and rural Minnesota by Nanilo, a women's singing group specializing in Eastern European musical traditions.

Desert Sounds Performing Arts

Mesa, Arizona

\$35,000 to support vocal training in the mariachi style for the Desert Sounds elementary school mariachi program.

Grand Vision Foundation

San Pedro, California

\$50,000 to support the expansion of the Roots of Music Program, a multicultural singing and music fundamentals curriculum for 4th graders in the L.A. Harbor area.

LEAF Global Arts

Asheville, North Carolina

\$50,000 to support Songs for Change, a multicultural guest artist residencies at WD Williams Elementary School and Owen Middle School in Buncombe, North Carolina

Macon County Youth & Children's Choir

Franklin, North Carolina

\$50,000 to support a partnership between Macon County Youth & Children's Choir and music programs in Macon County Schools.

McAuliffe Elementary School

Oceanside, California

\$50,000 to support a singing, ukulele, and ancient and modern hula program for elementary school students. The program integrates singing, instrumental music, movement, and storytelling from Pacific Islander cultures.

Pacific Youth Choir

Portland Oregon

\$35,000 to support Pacific Youth Choir's Neighborhood Choir Program for elementary students at Title I schools in Portland, Oregon.

Phoenix Boys Choir

Phoenix, Arizona

\$50,000 to support an in-school singing program for elementary schools in Creighton ESD, which embeds socio-emotional learning and culturally relevant repertoire.

Phoenix Chamber Choir

Vancouver, British Columbia

\$25,000 to support the Phoenix Choral Experience, a program designed to spark conversation and inquiry around cultural appropriation versus cultural appreciation.

Seattle Pro Musica

Seattle, Washington

\$50,000 to support the Composer Series Residencies, a series of workshops and performances featuring commissioned works by BIPOC composers.

Surry Arts Council

Mount Airy, North Carolina

\$50,000 to support Surry County Sings, a weekly after-school program for elementary schools learning old-time Appalachian, African-American, and Latin-American music.

Tucson Girls Chorus

Tucson, Arizona

\$50,000 to support the TCG Engagement Choirs, which provide cross-cultural school and online-based learning for students in Tucson and Tohono O'odham Nation reservation.

Vancouver Youth Choir

Vancouver, British Columbia

\$50,000 to support the KINDRED program, which provides newcomer families Indigenous music singing opportunities led by Indigenous leaders and youth mentors.

VocalEssence

Minneapolis, Minnesota

\$50,000 to support VocalEssence's partnership with the Longfellow School for pregnant and parenting students, which provides opportunities for parents and children to sing together and connect with their culture.

Voices in the Laurel

Lake Junaluska, North Carolina

\$25,000 to support a cross-cultural community initiative featuring workshops, performances, and professional development for music educators.

VOX Femina Los Angeles

Los Angeles, California

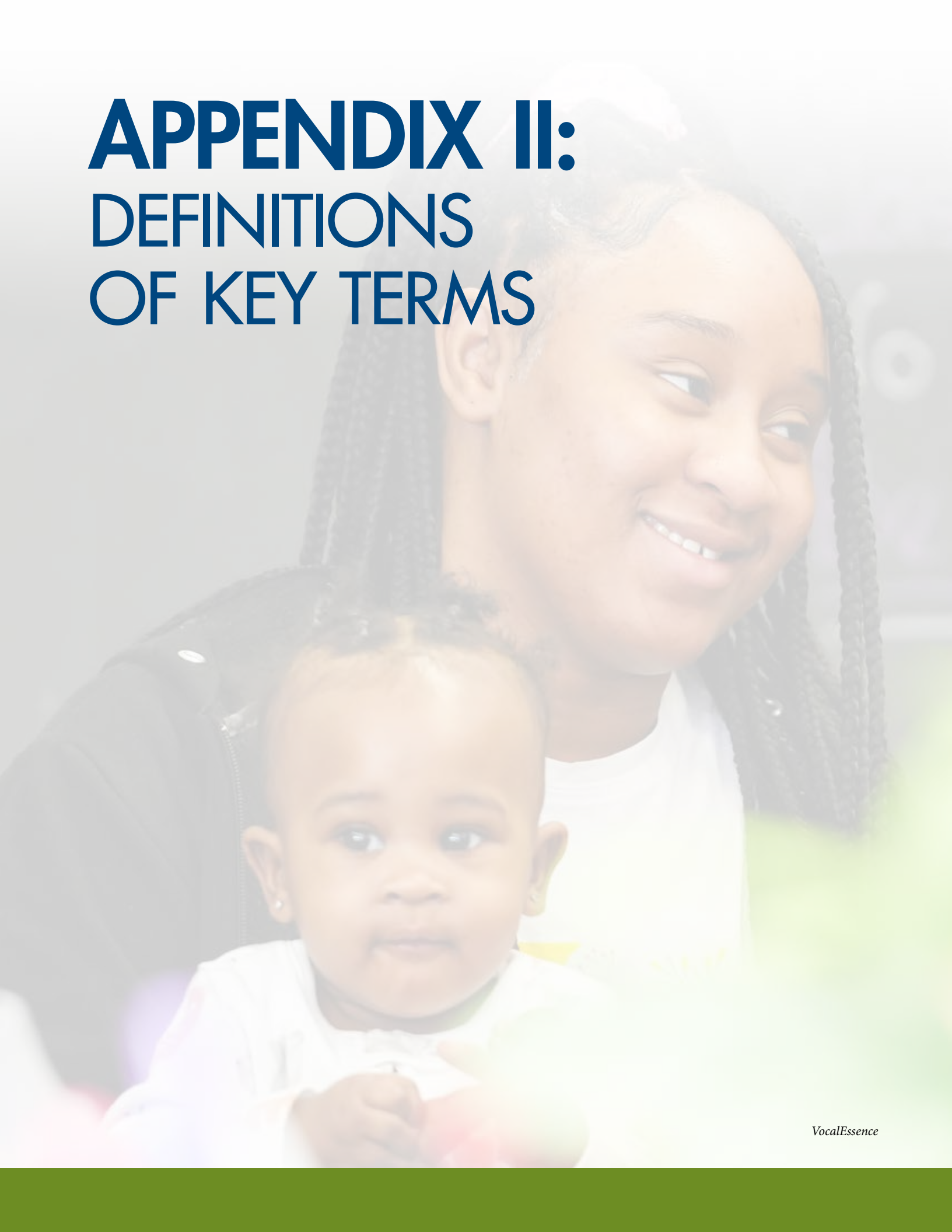
\$30,000 to support a new music education program centered on singing for social justice which incorporates repertoire from the Justice Choir Songbook.

The Wisconsin Conservatory of Music

Milwaukee, Wisconsin

\$50,000 to support the Conservatory's teaching artists and partnership with Hayes Bilingual Elementary School in Baron Park, Milwaukee.

APPENDIX II: DEFINITIONS OF KEY TERMS



Access Providing equal and equitable opportunities for students to take full advantage of participating in singing together.

BIPOC People who identify as Black, Indigenous, or People of Color.

Choral Music/Group Singing Music created by singing with others. We are intentionally defining choral music to be as inclusive and broad as possible and welcome projects that teach musical traditions with origins across the globe. The size, organizational structure, learning method (rote, reading), or repertoire performed can vary substantially within this definition, as well as cultural origin.

Cross-Cultural Learning Increasing one's understanding of their own and other cultures.

Cultural Sensitivity The ability to understand and respect values, attitudes, and beliefs that differ across cultures.

Cultural Exchange Sharing the exchange of ideas, gifts, music, etc. between artists, students, and teachers of different cultures to promote mutual understanding. A practice rooted in deep respect that takes effort to address power dynamics present between different cultures. Note: often occurs domestically and is not limited to international cultural exchange.

Diversity Recognizing the value in all of our human differences, including but not limited to race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, age, gender, socio-economic status, sexual orientation, and ability.

Equity Identifying and addressing the needs of different people to support equal outcomes.

Historically Marginalized Communities Socially excluded groups of people because of unequal power relationships across various dimensions, such as race, age, gender, physical or mental abilities, economic status, access to education, or living in isolated or economically distressed communities.

Inclusion The active, intentional, and ongoing engagement of an organization, school, or classroom and its culture to create equal access, outcomes, well-being, and a sense of belonging for everyone.



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