



CAFE GROUP

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Welcome to The 1954 Project Luminary Award Pre-Application

Thank you for your interest in the 1954 Project Luminary Award. Named for the year of the *Brown v. Board* decision, The 1954 Project exists to fund and fortify nonprofit leaders whose work is transforming educational opportunity in Black communities. Since its launch, [The 1954 Project](#) has provided over 21M in catalytic unrestricted funding to organizations across the country.

We are honored that you are considering joining this community of innovators, change-makers, and visionaries creating equitable systems that benefit everyone.

About The Pre-Application

This is the first step in the 2026 Luminary Award application process. This pre-application ensures that potential applicants align with our grantmaking priorities and meet our basic eligibility criteria before proceeding to the full application.

Timeline

- **Pre-Application Deadline:** Thursday, December 4, [2025](#) at 11:59 PM CT
- **Response Timeline:** You will receive notification advising whether you have been invited to submit a Round 1 application by mid-December, 2025.
- **Luminary Award Application:** The 2026 application process for [The 1954 Project Luminary Award](#) spans from January to August 2026. It consists of three distinct rounds.

Grantmaking Alignment

We seek visionary nonprofit leaders with a proven track record in driving education outcomes in Black communities, who demonstrate proximity, lived expertise, and a deep commitment to collective leadership, long-term transformation, and the future of education. Applicants must align with one of our three impact areas.

- **Innovation in Teaching & Learning:** Create education models that center Black students through culturally affirming approaches that challenge traditional structures and transform how learning happens, ultimately serving all students.
- **Diversity in Education:** Build pathways that increase and sustain Black educators and education leaders who transform where and how students learn.
- **Pathways to Economic Mobility:** Build pathways to wealth, ownership, and economic power for Black students, families, and communities through innovative educational programming.

Eligibility Requirements

To be considered for the 2026 Luminary Award, you and your organization must meet all of the following criteria:

Leadership Requirements

- **Primary Executive:** Leader must hold the primary executive leadership position (CEO, President, Executive Director) with decision-making authority over operations and resources.
- **Leadership Continuity:** Leader must commit to remaining in role for at least three years from the award date.

Organizational Requirements

- **Legal Status:** Organization must be a legally incorporated nonprofit organization OR operate under fiscal sponsorship.
- **Independence:** Organization must be an independent entity with its own governing board of directors and separate legal status. Programs or departments of larger organizations (including universities) and regional offices of national organizations are not eligible unless they maintain true independence with their own governing board and legal incorporation.
- **Founding Year:** Organization must have been founded in 2021 or earlier.
- **Budget Range:** Annual organizational budget between \$500,000 and \$10 million.

- **Gift History:** Largest single gift received in last 10 years between \$150,000 and \$5 million.

Important Information & Resources

- **Complete in One Session:** This form cannot be saved as a draft, please plan to complete it in one session. **Download an offline version** [Insert Link] of the questions to prepare your responses.
- **Learn More:** Visit thecafe.org/luminary-application for information about the CAFE Group and the Luminary Award application and selection process.
- **Technical Support or Questions:** Contact The1954Project@thecafegroup.org.

Ready to begin? Click 'Next Page' to start your Pre-Application.

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Your Contact Information

Enter information about you, the person completing this form.

First Name *

Last Name *

Salutation

 

Suffix

Job Title *

Pronouns

Phone Number

Email Address *

Which of the following best describes your role in relation to the organization that is applying? *

- ☐ I am an employee of the organization
- ☐ I am a board or council member of the organization
- ☐ I am a consultant / third party
- ☐ I am a volunteer for the organization, but not a board or council member
- ☐ None of the above

Are you the organization's leader, or are you submitting this form on behalf of the organization's leader? *

- ☐ I am the organization's leader
- ☐ I am submitting on behalf of the organization's leader



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Organization's Basic Information

Organization Legal Name *

What is the full legal name of the organization?

Organization Preferred Name *

How do you prefer the organization's name to be written?

Organization Website *

Founding Year *

Organization's Mission Statement

Leave blank if you do not have a formal mission statement. 500 character limit.

What does the organization do? *

In your own words, briefly describe your organization's work and mission. 2,000 character limit.

Organization's Address

Billing Street *

Include suite/apt if applicable

Billing City *

Billing State *

Billing Zip Code *

Is the organization's shipping address the same as the billing address?

*

☐ Yes, same ☐ No, different

Organization Status

Organizations must be an independent entity with their own governing board of directors and separate legal status. Fiscally sponsored organizations are eligible. Programs or departments of larger organizations (including universities) and regional offices of national organizations are not eligible unless they maintain true independence with their own governing board and legal incorporation.

Is the organization an independent entity as described above? *

☐ Yes

☐ No

Does the organization have 501c3 status or a fiscal sponsor? *

☐ Yes - 501c3 status

☐ Yes - Fiscal sponsor

☐ No

Organization's EIN *

Financial Information

What were your organization's total expenses for fiscal year 2024? *

\$

What was your organization's total revenue for fiscal year 2024? *

\$

What was the amount of the largest single gift your organization received in the last 10 years? *

\$

Enter the dollar amount of your organization's largest single gift received in the last 10 years. This should be one gift from one source, not a combination or total of multiple gifts. Include foundation grants, government funding, corporate grants, individual monetary donations, and other charitable monetary contributions. Do not include in-kind donations, pro-bono services, or non-monetary support.

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Grantmaking Alignment

Innovation in Teaching and Learning: Create education models that center Black students through culturally affirming approaches that challenge traditional structures and transform how learning happens, ultimately serving all students.

Diversity in Education: Build pathways that increase and sustain Black educators and education leaders who transform where and how students learn.

Pathways to Economic Mobility: Build pathways to wealth, ownership, and economic power for Black students, families, and communities through innovative educational programming.

What grantmaking area does this organization most readily fit? *

- ☐ Innovation in Teaching and Learning
- ☐ Diversity in Education
- ☐ Pathways to Economic Mobility

Please share why your organization fits that grantmaking area. *

Briefly explain how your organization's mission, programs, and impact align with the grantmaking area you selected. 2,000 character limit

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Previous Luminary Award Applications

Has the organization applied for The 1954 Project's Luminary Award before? *

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

How Did You Hear About Us?

How did you hear about The CAFE Group's 1954 Project initiative?

- ☐ Social Media
- ☐ Friend, Colleague, or Another Organization
- ☐ Newsletter
- ☐ Outreach from The 1954 Project

Acknowledgements and Privacy

We understand the sensitive nature of your responses and are committed to handling your data with the utmost care and security.

Our [\[Privacy Policy\]](#) outlines how we collect, store, and protect your information. You can review it at any time by clicking the link or navigating to the Policies page on our website. If you have any questions or concerns about how your data is used, please don't hesitate to contact us directly. We are here to provide clarity and assurance.

Check the box below to acknowledge that you have read, understood, and agree to be bound by our [\[Privacy Policy\]](#), and that you are opting in to receive our emails. *

- ☐ I agree to the Privacy Policy and to receive emails from The CAFE Group

Check the box below to confirm the accuracy of your submission and certify that the information provided is true and complete to the best of your knowledge. *

☐ I certify that the information provided in this submission is true and complete to the best of my knowledge



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