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IgnitED Award Nomination Questions

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DESCRIPTION

The Grantmakers for Education IgnitED Awards celebrate outstanding leaders who drive bold ideas and innovative thinking in education and philanthropy. Nominees spark possibility and inspire change in collaboration with communities, policymakers, advocates and academics, embodying Grantmakers for Education's guiding principles. Their contributions advance equitable and just education systems where all learners can thrive.

Nominations for the 2026 IgnitED Awards are now open to members of Grantmakers for Education in this year's award categories:

- **Torchbearer Award:** For a visionary leader committed to equitable education systems where all learners thrive.
- **Kindle Award:** For emerging grantmakers with fewer than five years of experience in philanthropy making insightful or innovative contributions to the field.
- **Fusion Award:** For collaborative efforts that creatively address challenges and advance learner opportunities.
- **Catalyst Award:** For leaders or organizations that go beyond their grantmaking to spur position change in education spaces and systems and increase access and opportunity for learners.

Only members of Grantmakers for Education may submit nominations, though nominees **do not** have to be members of Grantmakers for Education, except where noted. Members are asked to limit their nominations to one nominee per category. Self-nominations are also accepted.

The nominations deadline is July 10th and winners will be recognized during our annual conference in New York during the week of October 12th. Grantmakers for Education members may submit nominations [here](#).



TORCHBEARER AWARD

Visionary and principled leader in the field of education philanthropy who holds an unwavering commitment to education space and systems that are equitable and just so all learners may thrive.

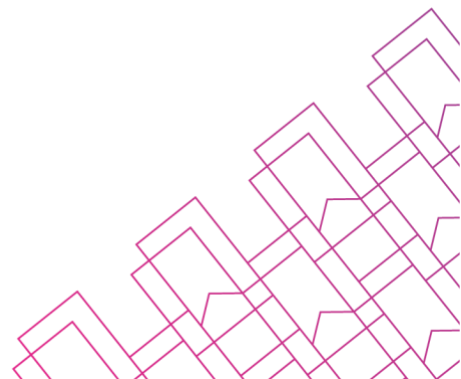
Award Criteria

Nominee should be an exemplary leader who demonstrates the following:

- A commitment to Grantmakers for Education's [guiding principles](#) in their work.
- Visionary leadership in the field of education philanthropy, guiding initiatives, policies or programs that have made a significant and lasting impact on education systems.
- Proven record of advocating for and implementing initiatives that promote educational equity, inclusion and justice for all learners, particularly those from historically underserved or marginalized communities.

Nomination Questions

1. Nominee
2. Current Organization
3. Current Title
4. In 250 words or less, tell us why you are nominating this person.
5. In 500 words or less, describe how this individual has demonstrated their visionary and principled leadership in education and philanthropy. Refer to the award criteria to craft a compelling nomination narrative.
6. Please share up to five (5) recordings or writings of the nominee which you feel helps exemplify their leadership and commitment to education and philanthropy.



KINDLE AWARD

Emerging member with five (5) or less years of experience navigating the field of education philanthropy who have brought new insights through their grantmaking and/or other contributions to the field.

Award Criteria

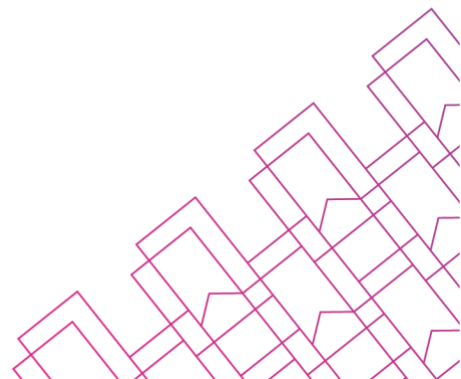
Nominee should be an exemplary leader who demonstrates the following:

- A commitment to Grantmakers for Education's [guiding principles](#) in their work.
- Five years or less of experience in the field of education philanthropy.
- Engaged the field of education philanthropy with new insights; offering novel approaches to addressing challenges in education. This could include new frameworks for grantmaking, unique strategies for supporting education initiatives, or innovative methods for engaging stakeholders.
- A [member](#) of Grantmakers for Education.*

Nomination Questions

1. Nominee
2. Organization (if an individual)
3. Role (if an individual)
4. In 250 words or less, tell us why you are nominating this member?
5. In 500 words or less, describe what makes this member's accomplishments within the last 5 or less years noteworthy. Refer to the award criteria to craft a compelling nomination narrative.
6. Please share up to five (5) recordings or writings of the nominee which you feel helps exemplify their leadership and commitment to education and philanthropy.

*A list of Grantmakers for Education member organizations can be found [here](#). A member nominee can be the organization or a staff member or trustee of a member organization.



FUSION AWARD

Collaboration of philanthropy leaders and/or funded organizations that creatively and effectively address emerging or persistent challenges in education philanthropy or otherwise advanced opportunities for learners.

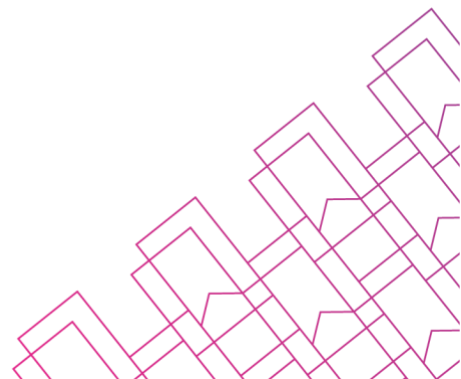
Award Criteria

Nominee should be an exemplary collaboration or coalition that demonstrates the following:

- A Commitment to Grantmakers for Education's [guiding principles](#) in their work
- A collaborative effort between philanthropy leaders, funded organizations, or other stakeholders (such as educators, policymakers, or community leaders). The collaboration must be central to the work, showcasing how different entities have come together to leverage their strengths to achieve common goals.
- Evidence of improved educational outcomes, increased access to resources, or new opportunities for learners (particularly those from underserved or marginalized communities) should be clear.

Nomination Questions

1. Nominees
2. Roles and Organizations (if individuals)
3. In 250 words or less, tell us why you are nominating this partnership?
4. In 500 words or less, what makes this collaboration or partnership powerful and what has been their impact? Refer to the award criteria to craft a compelling nomination narrative.
5. Please share up to five (5) recordings or writings of the nominee which you feel helps exemplify their leadership and commitment to education and philanthropy.



CATALYST AWARD

Leader or organization that has gone “beyond the grant” to improve education philanthropy or education systems and structures to unlock access, opportunity, achievement, and the flourishing of learners by actively engaging in the use of non-grantmaking resources to spark meaningful transformation.

Award Criteria

Nominees should be an exemplary leader who demonstrates the following:

- A commitment to Grantmakers for Education’s [guiding principles](#) in their work.
- Innovation and breakthrough thinking by championing new creative approaches to solving educational challenges, inspiring fresh perspectives and driving transformative change in the field.
- Utilizes non-grantmaking resources—such as expertise, networks, strategic partnerships, advocacy or research—to drive meaningful transformation in education. Examples include offering professional development, creating policy initiatives, fostering collaborations or influencing public discourse to generate positive change in education systems.

Nomination Questions

1. Nominee
2. Organization (if an individual)
3. Role (if an individual)
4. In 250 words or less, tell us why you are nominating this person or organization?
5. In 250 words or less, describe how this leader or organization has performed to improve the issues they were addressing or the causes they were protecting.
6. Please share up to five (5) recordings or writings of the nominee which you feel helps exemplify their leadership and commitment to education and philanthropy.

