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# **AAPD**

**2024 Paul G. Hearne Emerging Leader Award Informational Webinar**

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CHRISTINE: Good afternoon, everybody and welcome to the 2024 Paul G. Hearne Emerging Leader Award webinar. We are so excited for your interest in this award and happy to have you here with us today.

So I just wanted to review a couple of housekeeping items. This webinar is recorded. The recording will be available within three to five business days. We will be e-mailing the recording to everyone who has registered to attend.

The recording will be available with the PowerPoint slides, frequently asked questions, and then my e-mail in case any of you have questions.

For today's webinar, we have closed captioning, which you can click at the bottom and click CC and view captions or you can have the Streamtext which we dropped in the chat box if you prefer to view the captioning in a separate window.

We also have an ASL interpreter today with us who is pinned for easy access.

And then, questions and answers will be at the end of the webinar. If you have any questions, please put them in the Q&A box. The chat box is available for any interactive component, but we will not be monitoring it for any questions that come up, unless they are in the Q&A box.

So the agenda for today's webinar, we will talk a little bit about the history of the award. Then we will talk about the timeline and the application process, and we'll hear from past awardees, and then we will open it up for Q&A at the end.

So before we get started, I just wanted to introduce myself. My name is Christine Liao. My pronouns are she/her, and I am the program director at AAPD. A visual description of me is that I am a young Asian woman with long, black hair, red glasses wearing a black long-sleeved sweater. Behind me is a beige wall with a window.

And then on this slide, I have a black-and-white photo of Paul G. Hearne. He is a man who is balding, has a mustache and is wearing a suit.

So the award is named after Paul G. Hearne, one of AAPD's co-founders. He was also AAPD's first president and CEO.

He was a person with osteogenesis imperfecta, a little person, and a lifelong disability advocate and leader. He ran an organization called the One Break and also ran The Dole Foundation for Employment of People with Disabilities.

Paul Hearne had two passions: One, he wanted to create a national association of people with disabilities, and cultivate potential leaders to carry on the disability rights movement.

So after his death in 1999, we decided to honor him by carrying out his second passion, to support emerging leaders with disabilities and support their advocacy and work throughout this movement.

So now we are going to talk about the timeline. On this timeline slide, there is an image with a yellow diamond that says "deadline ahead."

So the deadline for this award is on Wednesday, October 25th, at 5:00 p.m. Eastern. Please take a note of this time zone.

The review and interview process will be from November through January, and then in January, 2024, everyone will be notified of the decision.

The project timeline is from January through December 2024. And then our awardees are recognized during AAPD's virtual gala, which is in spring 2024.

Now we will talk about the application process. The application has five different sections: Applicant information, resume, project information, letters of support and an optional section on demographics. As we walk through the section, I'm going to be talking about some notes and make sure tips that you might consider while you're filling out your application.

Not all tips might apply to you.

So section one is applicant information. You are eligible for this award if you self-identify as one, an emerging leader; and two, a person with a disability.

I want to note that emerging leader is not tied to age, education status, employment, specific experience or involvement with the disability community. If you identify as an emerging leader, you're welcome to apply.

You do not need to disclose your disability as part of this application process, but filling out the application, you do signify that you identify as a person with a disability.

In the demographics section, you're given the option to self-disclose, but that is optional.

You do not have to have a formal diagnosis. This also includes people with mental health, chronic illness or medical conditions, long COVID and so forth.

As part of this application process, you do not have to send AAPD any proof of disability or medical records.

As part of this application process, an individual can apply or a group can apply. If you are applying as part of a group, there can be up to four people who can be recognized for the award, but if your group is, say, 20 people, that is okay. But only four out of the 20 people will be recognized to receive the award.

So section one, we'll ask for your phone number, your name, your e-mail, and if applicable, a group's member names.

The image on the slide is a person filling out a checklist.

Okay, section 2 will be your resume. We recommend that your resume will list activities and experiences directly related to your project. We recognize that all kinds of experiences can contribute to your expertise and skill. This includes any volunteer work, any internship or fellowship, any school projects or thesis that you might have worked on. It can include temporary, part-time, or full-time.

So in some ways, this can include unpaid work on your resume, but we're hoping your resume will give us a full picture of the skills and experiences that you bring.

And if applicable, you will be also submitting all of the group members' resumes.

Section 3 is a project information. So when you're filling out the essay, make sure to relate your project to AAPD's mission, which is available on our website. Please make sure that you provide enough background information, because the reviewers might have all different understandings related to disabilities and related to your project. So just make sure that we are all on the same page.

Please share any specifics if you have them, and then in each essay, there will be a parenthesis that will indicate the word count for each essay count.

If there's a higher word count, that means reviewers will be paying closer attention to those responses.

So for your project, recipients will receive $7,500 for the project. And then recipients will also receive $2,500 for their contribution to the disability community. So this is a total of $10,000.

We ask that $7,500 is used only for the project. $2,500 can be used however you want it to be, and it will be $2,500 for the group. If you have four members of the group, all of you collectively will get $2,500 and decide how you want to split that.

People have done this in many different ways. It just depends on what works for you and your group.

On this slide is an image of some papers, money and a calculator.

Related to the project funds, AAPD disburses the funds to wherever the recipient chooses. The two main options are one, a 501(c)3 entity that can be either your own nonprofit that you set up, or it can be a fiscal intermediary, meaning that another 501(c)3 will handle the money and then give it to you, or make the purchases for you, or whatnot.

AAPD cannot serve as the fiscal intermediary, so this means you will have to find another 501(c)3 nonprofit organization to do so.

The second option is directly to you. If it is directly to you and to your bank account, it will be counted as taxable income. This is also true for the $2,500 that you receive from the AAPD.

So consider that the budget may be smaller if it is sent to you directly, because you will have to save some of that to pay taxes in 2025 during the tax season.

Section 4 is letters of support. We require two letters, and they can be from people who can speak to your leadership style and your project. We also recommend that they are able to speak to why you are the right person to lead this project, or if they have witnessed your commitment to this project before, just to give us a better idea of you and the project.

Letters of support cannot be written by anybody who has a conflict of interest. This includes AAPD board members, AAPD staff, or a relative of any of these individuals, or if applicable, if you are applying as a group, nobody within your group can write a letter of recommendation for each other.

And then section 5, the last one, is demographics, which is optional. This is helpful for AAPD to get a better sense of our outreach efforts to make sure that our applicant pool reflects the diversity of the disability community.

Demographic questions include, but are not limited to, race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, and disability.

So that is our application process and I just wanted to give you all some tips and encouragement. There is an image on this slide with two speech bubbles that have the exclamation point and the word "tip" in the other one.

I just want to emphasize, look at AAPD's mission, see how the project relates.

We have a Google Word document available for all of you to preview the application, so I recommend looking at it in full to see if there's any questions that pop up before you formally fill out the application in Survey Monkey. Please feel free to ask questions. You are more than welcome to e-mail me, I'm happy to set up a call with you and your group, if you ever want to talk through ideas.

AAPD is always welcoming to new ideas. We encourage you all to be creative. If there is something that has not yet been addressed in the disability community that you think we need to be, if there has been a new method or program that you want to try out, we are very open to them.

And then note that this is an award for emerging leader. That means that AAPD staff is here to support you.

So throughout the award period, AAPD will be doing quarterly calls with you. We will be sending you resources. We will be facilitating connections. So don't feel like you have to be well established in order to get this award. The whole point of the award is to support you and your goal as a leader and give you additional resources and support throughout the project year.

Okay. So now I am going to welcome our two past Hearne awardees so you can engage in a little bit of a panel and learn from them. We have Sneha and Elijah.

I'm going to invite Sneha to give her visual description of her headshot and introduce herself briefly, and then we'll move on to Elijah.

SNEHA: Yes, hi, everyone. This is Sneha speaking. I apologize that I have to be off-camera due to surgery that I had on Saturday, but it's really good to be here. Just a visual description of my headshot, I am a young woman with light brown skin and brown hair and wearing a blazer and the background is gray.

And I guess I'll give other introductions. I use she/her pronouns, and I am the executive director at Generation Patient, which I can talk a little bit more about later, but I was an awardee in 2020, so three years ago now.

ELIJAH: Hello. I am Elijah Armstrong. I am a lighter-skinned Black male, mid-20s. I've got shorter locks. I'm wearing a gray T-shirt. I run the Heumann-Armstrong award for stabilities. I started it in 2021 when I won the Hearne award from AAPD.

I'm excited to talk to you all. Hi, Otto. I just saw Otto in the chat. Excited to be talking with you all.

CHRISTINE: Thank you so much both of you for being here today. I'm going to ask a couple of questions, and then we will open it up for the larger Q&A which I hope Elijah and Sneha will help support with their experiences.

So the first question for you both is how did you decide on your project and assuring its scope was feasible for you?

SNEHA: I can go first, and then Elijah if that's okay. So I came in with the pre-existing project that I had started my freshman year of college and I got this award during my senior year of college, but basically, this award allowed me to expand the scope, so I guess I should talk a little bit more about what my project was.

It was events for young adults with chronic medical disabilities, and we focused on a variety of different topics and before the project, we were doing our events with a $250 to $500 budget because we were able to get a lot of in-kind donations, but we were pretty limited in scope as to how or where we could do the events, because we were I believe at the time, just in Indiana, Texas and North Carolina, and we're trying to grow to have more local community events.

And so this award was supposed to go to that. However, we did, of course, enter a pandemic and so a lot of that was changed during the course of 2020, but it really allowed us to expand our base virtually.

And I think more importantly, it gave us the capacity to think about what it would look like to expand our programming with this funding, this amount of funding, which we hadn't previously received.

So I think it really allowed us to think more about how we could expand our work. Yeah. So that's that.

Elijah, if you want to take it away from here.

ELIJAH: Yeah, in a very similar sense, I started Equal Opportunities for Students the org I run this through in my freshman year of college. So when I entered the disability community, I was always interested specifically in access for education and running a scholarship which would allow us to award students with disabilities was something we had been interested in doing for a while, but just hadn't been able to get the funding for.

And I think in terms of making sure the project was scalable, making sure that it was sustainable, so not just the means of funding, that we were getting funding at reasonable levels, levels I thought we could match year over year, but also the forms of labor that we were getting were sustainable were two things that I really thought about in terms of doing this project.

So one of the biggest things that I did was deliberately underbudget, just to make sure that we would be set for that first year and the future.

CHRISTINE: This is Christine. Thank you.

And the next question is how did the Hearne Award impact your growth and project?

SNEHA: Yeah, so I think this came at a really consequential time because we were -- we kind of had to pivot our whole project I would say actually, but I think it allowed us to think more intentionally about accessibility because we were all online and to this day, we remain entirely online. We do a lot more than events now at Generation Patient, but I think one of the biggest things is we were able to, for example, have ASL interpreters or live closed captioners at our virtual event which we put on instead of the in-person events, and so our scope of work changed quite a bit, but I think it also allowed us to build capacity in ways that we didn't know we really needed.

And so I think that's one thing that I probably reflect on a lot is the flexibility of knowing that you won't have every detail planned out, and I think it might be better to, like Elijah said, underbudget because there's a lot of costs that come up that you might not be able to foresee right now with the project.

And so I hope I answered the question there. Elijah, you can fill in for anything else.

ELIJAH: One of the biggest things that I will say about the impact of the project was winning the Hearne is sort of a moment, so I mean, people don't use Twitter anymore, but back in the day when I won, people still used Twitter. So literally my phone was blowing up the entire day, the announcement made from all of these people I had heard of, Alice Wong, all these big people in the disability community are tweeting me congratulations.

And from that moment, the scope of the project became much, much larger than I had anticipated. Like our first year in running this scholarship, I remember the goal that we had for AAPD was to get 100 applicants.

We had 185 applicants our first year from many different countries, from Canada, from England, from all over the world. So just the size of both the support that you'll get -- so we work with a lot of really awesome people as well as the result of that, but also the size of the number of people who are going to want to engage with your project and use your services also increases very drastically. It becomes pretty large.

CHRISTINE: This is Christine. Thank you both. I realize that I skipped over the very first question, and I want to ask both of you, which is arguably the most important, which is to give an overview of your project.

So I will ask the next question, and then if you can fold in the project that you applied for the Hearne Award, which is how has AAPD supported you through your project?

SNEHA: Yeah, so I think similar to Elijah, I guess I wasn't as familiar with the disability advocacy space in terms of how incredibly vast it is and how powerful it is, and I think that the Hearne Award was my first introduction into -- I don't want to say the more traditional disability advocacy space, but like Elijah said, knowing about people like Alice Wong and so many people who uplifted the work that we were doing, and I think at the same time, it was an incredible learning experience because I hadn't been as much into or I wasn't as well informed, and so I think getting to integrate the work that I did as part of the larger disability advocacy space was really exciting and a huge step up, I think even beyond the funding, was being able to have the platform was really huge.

And I also think, like Christine and Maria Town said, the CEO of AAPD, was really helpful in the pivot to a completely virtual project and was very flexible and very attentive to the needs and it was great to just have that sort of support because it does feel really intimidating, I think at least it did for me to receive this award, and so being able to have that support from AAPD was really, really great.

The other thing I will say -- to describe my project. I run Generation Patient and we're a nonprofit focused on representing adolescents and young adults with chronic and rare conditions.

So we do work in health policy, higher education and peer support. But when I won this award, we were just doing in-person events and we've grown a lot from there, and now, we're able to do this full-time and we have another full-time staff, as well.

We're actually hiring our new executive director come this March or April, so also just a plug for that that we're on the search for a new executive director, but that is all to say that a lot of the support that we received and just the platform that we received through this award was really huge for us and for me, personally, as well.

ELIJAH: So one of the other things that I think is really cool is that AAPD knows pretty much, everyone. So I became very close with Judy Heumann. I met Judy Heumann for the first time also through AAPD, but first when I was an AAPD intern, and then I started working with Judy after winning the Hearne. They connected me to Judy and I was meeting with Judy all the time.

We actually just announced our most recent cycle of Heumann-Armstrong award winners.

I run a scholarship for students with disabilities. Each student gets a $1,000 monetary award and we shoot a video interview with them that are illustrated by a group of disabled artists out of Colorado.

So they travel quite a bit, which is really cool and part of that to circle back to something AAPD does is we haven't started our interviews yet for this current cycle, but they're going to be on Wednesday, our winners are going to be having a session with Emily Ladau, the writer of demystifying disability to be teaching the winners how to best tell their stories, which is super cool. She was editor in chief of Rooted in Rights and we've worked with so many different people and orgs.

Having talked with Alice Wong, working with Cat Perez, also a Hearne winner. They connect you to everybody that you could possibly need in this space, specifically within the realm of disability so that's a really, really useful part of winning the award for your project.

CHRISTINE: Thank you both. My last question for the two of you is do you have two or three tips that you recommend for folks when they apply?

SNEHA: Elijah, do you want to go first on this one?

ELIJAH: Sure. So my first suggestion -- well if I had three, my first would be to make sure that your project is both something that you can feasibly carry out and also sustainable.

So my project considering it was only six people, it's wild, we ran about $12,000 I want to say just for that first section, just for the six awards that year because that's $6,000 for financial, for the monetary awards. Then it's $3,000 to get the videos illustrated, and then also shipping production of the certificates that we mail out and also when we have webinars and stuff, we need to make them accessible so that's captioning, that's ASL interpretation, that's CART.

So really aiming to underbudget because I mean, we partner with the Quella Center, they take on part of that as well, but just making sure that you underbudget, I would also say yeah making sure that it's a project that is really unique to you, like something that you can speak to specifically that your background really addresses really well.

Yeah, I would say those are actually the two biggest things I would say.

SNEHA: I love that, and I think going off that, I would really urge you -- not urge you, I would really recommend telling a story for your application, just because I think so much like Elijah said, so much of this is probably personal, and I think that it makes the case for your project that much more powerful, that lived experience is driving whatever you intend to do.

And so I would really just not be afraid.

I mean, obviously, you don't have to overshare. You can share whatever you feel comfortable with, but I think just being able to share a story of why this project is so important to you and for the broader disability community is really critical.

And I would also agree with the sustainability aspect. I think in my application, this is three years ago, but I'm pretty sure I thought through what it would look like in the next year or two years, what this project would look like, and although it didn't really probably pan out to be what it looks like now, it just showed a lot of being able to think through what this project means to you beyond one year and so I think that's really powerful if you can spend some time thinking about what you hope for the future with this project.

And then I would just say also think about how you're thinking about disability in an intersectional way, too, and so being able to address people with disabilities as a whole I think is really important, too.

And so I would say that those are the three things that I would recommend.

CHRISTINE: This is Christine. Thank you both, Elijah and Sneha, for sharing your experiences and advice with our audience today.

So now we are going to go ahead and move into Q&A and I invite Elijah and Sneha to jump in if they feel like they can add something or I might direct one of the questions to one of you or both of you.

So I am looking through the Q&A box.

One person said, I have a project idea I like, but I'm having difficulty finding mentors to help me develop my project.

Can both of you share what resources or how you tapped into your network to get support on this?

ELIJAH: So for my project specifically, I went to the Harvard grad school of ed and I had been doing education work for a while, before I got here, so tapping into the education aspect of this project, like getting the award into classrooms is a whole lot easier.

So I would say, but that's part of why I selected the project that I did, because I had already graduated from the grad school of ed before I had applied, so I was already using my network in terms of the project that I was doing, so I would say definitely even if you don't have the disability side of it, if you have contact in a different angle, to definitely use those, and then mention that in your application. AAPD can sort of bridge the gap in terms of disability because that's a largely -- what happened in terms of my project.

SNEHA: And I think for myself, I really -- if I'm thinking back on this, I think I really didn't work where a lot -- I think I wrote this application in a very personal way and so I hadn't really thought about the same connections that maybe Elijah did and so I think that's okay, too.

Being able to just focus in on what you want to do individually and for the community and with the team and so I would say mine wasn't as thought through in terms of partnerships and working with other people. It was really much focused on what I intended to do with this award moving forward and again, I think if you don't feel like you have the connections or the partnerships, I think the personal story and being able to show that vision very clearly is what would be very impactful.

CHRISTINE: This is Christine. Thank you both.

Another question that I think is applicable to both of you is what can the funding cover? What is allowed and what is not allowed to be in the budgets? I can cover what is not allowed, but if both of you want to give an overview of the little to big things that you covered in your budget? I think that would be helpful.

SNEHA: Okay. Elijah, do you want to go first actually for this? It's been a couple of years so I have to think about it.

ELIJAH: So in a pretty broad sense, at least from the basis of my project, there's a really wide mandate in terms of what you can spend the budget on.

I literally sent $1,000 check to a middle schooler and then spent $3,000 getting videos illustrated. As long as you send the budget and it is very clear what it is that you're doing, and it's legal.

So the key there, too, is the fact that when we sent the check to the middle schooler because she had won the award, she had to fill out the proper tax information, so I would say the bigger challenge is not so much what you're allowed to do, but more keeping track of it and making sure that everything you're doing is documented appropriately.

But we send out direct funds to award winners; we use a lot of graphic designers; we mail a lot of things, so it goes into postage. We hire a different group of artists; we hire an ASL interpreter for at least eight videos a year.

There's a really wide range of things, and we really didn't run into any challenges because we kept it all above board and were very clear in our budget and also got all of the paperwork set, but yeah, you're allowed to get really creative as long as you're, you know, communicating and have a clear-through line in terms of what it is you're doing and keep it all documented.

SNEHA: Yeah, and I think if I go back to my memory, I think a huge thing that we spent the funding on was, like, the virtual event platform that we used which I think at the time, was Excel Events. So that was a bit costly, especially at the time in 2020.

And then we also had a lot of our funding go towards speaker stipends, because we very much believe in paying people for their time, and so that was also a huge area. I think we had 20 speakers the first year or something like that, and we provided a decent stipend to our speakers, and then to ASL interpreters and live closed captioning.

But I think, like Elijah said, just being in communication with Christine and Maria was really important because there were a lot of things that changed in our budget, and so I think just knowing that what you submit is probably -- I don't know if this is true, but probably not going to be your final budget that you actually end up doing so whatever you can estimate and do to the best of your ability I think is probably the best advice I can give because I know the budget part at least for me was the most intimidating because it's dealing with a lot of money, so it's a little scary to do.

I think again doing it to the best of your ability is good.

CHRISTINE: Just to add on what both said, what is not allowable, I'm trying to think of multiple things, but the one thing I think of is AAPD is a 501(c)3. We are a nonpartisan organization. Any funding we give out also has to be nonpartisan. It cannot be used for partisan or lobbying efforts.

Beyond that, I'm having a hard time thinking of what would not be allowable, but, you know, I would not let that count against somebody from submitting something.

If we feel that one item may not be allowable, AAPD will talk you through the process and make sure that you still feel like the project aligns with what you're hoping to do, and then you can remove that from the budget. It's not going to automatically disqualify you from being eligible for the application.

Another thing I did want to name is that AAPD does not require a budget proposal as part of this application.

We recognize that sometimes when you look at $7,500, it can feel like a lot of money and you're not sure how expenses will be counted, and so AAPD has worked with past Hearne awardees to give them a better template, talk through some estimates and then try to either scale down the project so it's more feasible within the $7,500, or sometimes, you might be overestimating something, and then we can scale up the project.

So as both of them mentioned, it's okay if it changes. We do not expect the budget to be exactly the same from January to December.

So I am going to look through other questions. I think this one might be for Sneha and this person asks: Can you expand from a preexisting project? The answer is yes, but I don't know Sneha if you want to talk about how you went from the health advocacy summit to expanding to a nonprofit.

SNEHA: Yeah. So we were actually -- I believe we were actually a 501(c)3 before we applied, and I got help from this pro bono law student clinic at my university to become a 501(c)3, so just side note, if anybody needs help with that, you might want to look into that if that's an option at your university or if you're not in school, you can contact a nearby university to help you with that, but again, if that's of interest to be a 501(c)3, but really, I think, yeah, we grew from the health advocacy summit to Generation Patient a lot because of the pandemic and recognizing that in-person events, even considering not being in a pandemic or whatever time, that in-person events can be very inaccessible to a lot of people, and our community in general.

And so being able to pivot our work and our programming was really helpful with this award because we got to think more creatively about how we could pivot that programming with the funding.

So I think, you know, having something pre-existing is really great, thinking how you can expand it or make it more accessible is always really exciting with this support.

CHRISTINE: This is Christine. Thank you, Sneha. I saw some questions in the Q&A that ask if you had to have a nonprofit project? The answer is no. It seems like a lot of our Hearne awardees, Elijah and Sneha have their own established nonprofits, but your proposed project does not have to be a nonprofit.

We have funded -- I'm trying to think of other past projects that are not nonprofits -- we funded someone last year who wanted to create a film and a children's book to go with the film. And that was part of her project so she put everything into production and everything into graphic design and all of that.

I think in Elijah's year, we had a Hearne awardee who wanted to focus on creating plain language of the Quran and that was not a nonprofit.

So it can be a very personal project that will have a big impact on the disability community, or it can be -- I'm trying to think if there were any others -- I think in Sneha's year, the other awardee worked with her university to provide education around sexual health and violence and all of that, training around that, for people who have intellectual and developmental disabilities.

So the project can be very wide ranging in terms of what the scope can be.

Let's see. Someone asked if you can submit more than one project, and I think the answer is yes, if you have distinct, separate projects. We wouldn't fund you twice. We wouldn't put both of your projects for the Hearne Award, but we can review multiple project submissions.

Someone asked if we consider gender identity to be a demographic criterion, and I believe the answer is yes, that's one of the fields we ask for in the optional section.

A question was if you recently gave an award to a group in one state for a project that helps lots more people, would you give one to the group in the same state with another project? The answer is yes, we would consider the type of impact to be different.

We can't control where applicants are applying from or where they might end up.

Someone asked can you get more than two letters of support or is it better to only get two?

We at this time only accept two, just to make it equitable across the board. If someone else submits two, and someone else submits ten, we don't want that to weigh differently so we will only look at two letters per application.

A question was can the money be used to pay group members and/or consultants or does it only go towards materials and such?

I don't know if Elijah or Sneha, if you want to talk about your experience of paying honorariums or consultants during your project.

ELIJAH: Sneha, do you want to answer first?

SNEHA: I'll really quickly say yeah, I think most of our funding probably went to technically speakers and ASL interpreters and closed captioners are considered consultants in my opinion, and so we mostly used our funding toward consultants and partially towards the video platform software.

ELIJAH: So the bulk of our budget went directly towards the financial awards for the winners, and then also for Amazon gift cards for the semifinalists, and then after that, hiring the people who illustrate the videos, and hiring the ASL interpreters and closed captioners who do the final back-end stuff.

So I would say that it's definitely like a sizable part of the budget and that's like reasonable, but also to be very cautious about the way that you're doing those things because the $7,500 seems like a lot of money, but when you realize just how many things you have to get done, it is not quite as much as it initially seems like.

CHRISTINE: This is Christine. Thank you both. Someone asks: Can we use the funds to buy things for people who need those things and/or mutual aid? I believe, was it 2019 or 2018, there was a Hearne Award, Lydia Brown who actually set up the autistic people of color fund, which actually touches on this topic where they have people apply for funding that they need and they give them out, similar to a mutual aid group.

Elijah, I saw that you unmuted. Did you want to add on to this?

ELIJAH: That was an accident.

CHRISTINE: Okay. Let's see.

One of the questions was could we collaborate with other organizations before our project? Elijah, I know that you collaborated with the Quella Center. Did you want to talk on this?

ELIJAH: Yeah, so it wasn't before the -- so there are a lot of orgs that I worked with before the project, like I was a former board member of Dream, the first one, they helped circulate the applications, but as soon as the situation was made public, I started working with the Quella Center. So you can definitely work with a lot of other organizations and such while you're doing this.

And heavily -- like we run the award jointly with them so it's housed both on our website and on their website.

So yeah, you can get some really solid partnerships with a bunch of different organizations if it's something that benefits you.

CHRISTINE: This is Christine. Thank you.

I saw there was some questions about the resume and how long it can be. Generally, for resumes, we ask for one-page length, but we understand that some people have CV's and they are longer so we are open to it, but we will ask that all the things that you include in your resume or CV are related to the project that you are proposing. So that way, we can get a better sense of what experiences you're trying to share.

Someone asked how detailed the use of funding needs to be and just to say again, we do not ask for a budget proposal, but if you have specifics around, we anticipate the majority of the funding will be used for the production of the film. That is an okay thing to add and that gives us even more insight that you're thinking of we would like to use the majority of the money for this thing, compared to something else related to the project.

But we don't ask for a specific line item as part of our application process.

Related to the CV, someone said if we have a long, complicated CV, can we include a one-page bio sketch instead? I think that is doable. I think that would help our reviewers understand more about you as a person.

Someone asks if you are not selected, can you apply again with the same project in the future? And the answer is yes. There actually has been a few of our Hearne awardees who have applied multiple times, and got funded the second or third time. And I am channeling Maria Town, our president and CEO, she's typically on this webinar, but she has a busy schedule.

Something that she loves to share very often when she joins on this webinar is that she also applied for the Hearne Award, but did not get it and that is okay.

Because obviously, now she is running the American Association of People with Disabilities and is the president and CEO. So I would not be discouraged if you do not get an interview round or do not get selected.

We always recommend our applicants to apply again if you do not get accepted. I'm more than happy to set up a time with you afterwards and talk through what are some areas for growth for your application, so that way, you have a better insight for a future year.

Let's see. One person wrote can the project you propose stay local? And the answer is yes. One of our current Hearne awardees is from the State of Connecticut and they are focused on working with the Department of Children and Family Services in Connecticut.

And that is a statewide project and the AAPD supported that because we saw a model for that to be replicated across the country and sometimes, what is feasible can start at a smaller or local level before it expands.

We have time for a few more questions. One question was how complete do you expect the application to be? I have a project barely out of brainstorming stage. Would it be a better idea to shoot for next year? Elijah and Sneha, do you want to talk about your personal experience of brainstorming an idea and when you felt ready to officially apply for something?

ELIJAH: One thing that I think is really interesting and I talked to a couple of other Hearne winners about it is usually at least most of the other Hearne winners that I've talked to, usually it's a project that they had been thinking about for a while before they end up doing it.

Like one example that jumps to mind was Sarah Bohovek won in 2019 and I was an AAPD intern the year before and she came and presented to our class about having -- she was laying the groundwork for her project at that point before the Hearne applications had even started, and I think another example of this which was a weird thing, I was on Joyce Bender's radio show two years before I applied for the Hearne, just talking about the work that I did doing with the Equal Opportunities for Students and even in the interview I mentioned how a long-term goal of mine would be to provide scholarships to students with disabilities.

So usually, it's something that people have thought about and had been gearing towards for a while.

So I would personally probably suggest fleshing it out more.

I mean, obviously, I don't have details, but that's just my general advice at that point, but also -- there's no grave harm in trying if you feel like you should.

SNEHA: And I also think that it's good to make sure that your project is purposeful and that you're not just throwing it together for this award. I think going in with the mindset of wanting to do something and then applying for this award to support that thing that you want to do is better than applying for this award, and then having the project as an afterthought of what this award would be, but I applied very much on a whim because I really did not think that I would get this award at all and so I basically just used everything that I had been thinking of to try to scale up this project for a long time and I applied the day it was due again because I didn't think that I would get this award at the time.

And so I think you'll never know if you don't try so I definitely recommend trying.

And I think also putting the application together is a learning experience in itself, because it really loudest you to think about things that you might not have thought about pertaining to your project.

So I definitely would I think recommend filling out the application and nothing has to be perfect, but again, applying with a purpose in mind is something that I would recommend, if you don't have something that you have been working on in the past.

CHRISTINE: This is Christine. I would definitely second Sneha and kind of related to what Elijah said, you have an idea and you can keep thinking about it and you feel intimidated and the fact that maybe my project needs more thinking, maybe it needs more work, maybe I need more buy-in, and you can get into that process for a long time.

And that's what the award is intended to do is just to give you that platform and foundation for you to start something new or if you had been wanting to expand on a project for a while.

So I lean towards -- it never hurts to apply. There's nothing bad that can come out of applying for this award. At the very least, we can have a conversation around where your project is at and get some support from AAPD.

With that being said, we are about out of time, so I wanted to go ahead and thank Elijah and Sneha for sharing your time and your experiences with our audience today.

I think a lot of folks have found it very helpful to hear from both of you. As a reminder, this webinar is recorded. We will send out the recording along with the PowerPoint slide, the transcript and some questions that I did not get to today, they will be answered in a document.

If you have any questions, you're more than welcome to e-mail me, I dropped it in the chat, programs@aapd.com. Please feel free to e-mail me at any time before Wednesday, October 25th, when the application is due.

I look forward to seeing all of your applications and I hope everyone has a great rest of the day. Thank you all for being here with us.