



ESSENTIALLY ELLINGTON

2026 ESSENTIALLY ELLINGTON DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION INITIATIVE RECORDING AND APPLICATION GUIDELINES

In the spirit of honoring our jazz heritage, Jazz at Lincoln Center seeks to enrich high school-aged jazz band programs by offering the *Essentially Ellington* Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Initiative. The mission of this Initiative is to develop and support systemically underserved and/or underrepresented jazz programs that show outstanding promise. Each submission will receive thorough qualitative feedback from Jazz at Lincoln Center clinicians in accordance with the *Essentially Ellington* [rubric](#).

TO QUALIFY FOR THIS PROGRAM, BANDS MUST:

- Be a member of the *Essentially Ellington* High School Jazz Band Program. To register for FREE please click [HERE](#).
- Have an existing jazz band that meets at least once a week during the academic year.
- Be a Title 1 school OR at least 40% of band members qualify for free or reduced lunch.
- Have 70% of jazz band students from underrepresented backgrounds as demonstrated by a variety of factors, including but not limited to: socioeconomic background, cultural heritage, race, ethnicity, and geographic origin.
- Submit an application that includes two video recordings of your band performing live – no editing.
 - One video must feature your band performing a work from the *Essentially Ellington* Library (over 160 tunes). A full list of *EE* tunes can be found [HERE](#).
 - The other video may include any tune from your band's existing repertoire. Choose pieces that best display the strengths of your band.
 - The video recordings should be of the best quality possible; however, professional capture is not required.
 - iPhone videos will be accepted.
 - Audition materials should be submitted through Acceptd. To submit an application, click [HERE](#) and select "Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Initiative" from the drop-down menu on the upper left-hand side of the page.



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- Acceptable video file formats include MPEG, MPG, MP4, OGG, MOV, AVI, WMV, M4V, VOB, FLV.
- For assistance uploading content to your application, please visit Acceptd's helpdesk webpage.

SELECTED PARTICIPANTS RECEIVE:

- Continued support from Jazz at Lincoln Center (JALC) Education staff.
- Access to sheet music from previous years in the *Essentially Ellington* library.
- Workshops in your band room with JALC-sponsored and local clinicians.
- Full tuition scholarship to the 2026 Band Director Academy in New York City.
- The opportunity to attend a Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra sound check while on tour (as available).

If accepted to the Initiative, bands must apply for the 2026 *Essentially Ellington* High School Jazz Band Competition & Festival OR submit recordings through our Comments Only program. To learn more about those programs please visit jazz.org/ee.

*Note: finalist bands for the Competition & Festival are limited to 25 participating students. Previous Competition & Festival finalist bands and international ensembles are not eligible to apply.

All submissions must be submitted by **Monday, November 3, 2025 by 11:59pm EST**. For more information or if you have questions concerning your entry, please feel free to contact us at 212-258-9861 or ee@jazz.org.