

Community Investments

FY23-24 Dream Keeper Initiative (DKI)

Organizations Grant Program Overview



Dream Keeper Initiative (DKI) Grant Program Overview

The Dream Keeper Initiative is a new, citywide effort to reinvest \$60 million annually from law enforcement into San Francisco's Black and African American communities. This initiative is part of Mayor London N. Breed's roadmap for reforming public safety and addressing structural inequities in San Francisco.

Purpose:

- To increase the number of cultural spaces designed and curated by Black people.
- To Increase the number of Black artists and producers contributing to the art culture in San Francisco.
- To invest in the stabilization and growth of Black artists, producers, creatives, and organizations serving the Black communities in San Francisco.

Panel Composition

A five-person review panel convened on October 19-20, 2023, to rank the organization applications according to the stated review criteria in the published DKI 2023-2024 guidelines.

The panelists brought a range of expertise in dance, writing, education, nonprofit arts leadership and administration and community-based programming. They demonstrated broad knowledge of the San Francisco arts and culture ecosystem. All panelists identified as African American.

FY23-24 DKI Organizations Funding Recommendations

37 organization grant applications were received requesting a total of \$5,109,700.

The panelists reviewed 29 DKI organization applications according to the stated review criteria. DKI Funding recommendations include 17 applicants for a total of \$2,250,000.

The four (4) organizations currently receiving San Francisco Arts Commission Dream Keeper Initiative funding, requested \$250,000 for the next phase of the current Dream Keeper Initiative project, and to support organizational infrastructure. This funding focused on organizations and projects that prioritized support for Black-led, San Francisco-based theater companies and arts organizations.

13 other applicant organizations requested \$100,000 for projects supporting workshops, classes, performances, special events and general community engagement. Many established, emerging, and youth-serving organizations will benefit from this round of funding.

Funding requests include a range of small and mid-sized nonprofit organizations that engage San Francisco's Black and African American communities, spanning a range of artistic disciplines including visual and literary arts, new performance art, theater, large-scale performance installations, African American and African Diasporan art, contemporary dance, and storytelling.

Successful proposals clearly articulated the project’s mission, goals, and project plan that focuses on the Black experience and cultural traditions. Using the provided scoring rubric, review panelists looked closely for examples of community engagement, demonstrated racial equity, strong partnerships, and evaluation planning.

The applicants that did not score well were unable to clearly articulate their organization’s history of engaging communities identified in the [Dream Keeper Initiative guidelines](#); did not clearly articulate how the proposal will further the goals of the initiative; or provided incomplete or missing documentation and work samples.

Attachments

Attachments to this memo include the list of DKI applicants recommended for funding with project descriptions and panelist biographies.

Community Investments
FY23-24 Dream Keeper Initiative



Organizations Grant Funding Recommendation

Applicant Grant Amount	Average Score	Project Description
Afro Solo Theater Company Fiscal Sponsor Idris Ackamoor and Cultural Odyssey \$100,000	96.4	San Francisco Arts Commission funds will be used to support AfroSolo Theatre Company (AfroSolo) in engagement, with a focus on the Black community and artists through multiple events: "Afro Solo Festival 2024" a series of multi-disciplinary productions; and, Bayview Creative Writing Workshops, culminating in the showcase of new works in "Our Neighborhood Speaks!" This grant also supports the stabilization and sustainability of AfroSolo to build organizational infrastructure in fiduciary operations to increase earned income.
Bayview Opera House Inc. \$100,000	90.6	San Francisco Arts Commission funds will be used to support art programming with a focus on uplifting Black artists, and amplifying the work of Black-led organizations, and celebrating Black History. The Ruth Williams Opera House (Bayview Opera House) stands with more than just a physical space; it’s a hub of creativity, education, and inspiration that serves as a testament to the rich history and vibrant contributions of Black leaders in Bayview and across San Francisco.
New Community Leadership Foundation Inc. \$100,000	90.6	San Francisco Arts Commission funds will be used to support New Community Leadership Foundation (NCLF)'s facilitation and support of a collaborative celebration, with a focus on San Francisco BIPOC artists, producing events and art activities that feature a variety of art mediums, some traditional, some emerging, that will engage, uplift, and

		spark interest and engagement in the arts and showcase the immense talent of the San Francisco community.
Northern California Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Community Foundation \$100,000	91	San Francisco Arts Commission funds will be used to support three project areas of the Northern California Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Community Foundation's (NorcalMLK Foundation) Black & Brown Comix Arts Festival (BCAF) program, including increased cultural spaces focused on Black creators through our BCAF Expo and BCAF Pop-up Galleries, amplifying African American creators' presence and voice through our Historical Art Commissions program and exhibits, and supporting creativity and mentorship through BCAF Art-in-the-Square.
Push Dance Company \$100,000	92.6	San Francisco Arts Commission funds will be used to support PUSH Dance Company in collaboration with Black technologists to conduct community-based engagement in a performance exploring futurology, the digital divide, with a focus on justice for peoples of African descent caught up in the penal system.
Queer Women of Color Media Arts Project - QWOCMAP \$100,000	93.8	San Francisco Arts Commission funds will be used to support Critical Juncture, Queer Women of Color Media Arts Project's (QWOCMAP) program with a focus on investments in the stabilization and growth of LBTQIA+ Black/African descent filmmakers. Funds will support grants, film commissions, and staff time to coordinate other resources and supports including professional development and industry mentorship. This project will transform the leadership of LBTQIA+ Black filmmakers by building careers in the creative economy and shifting narratives about Black communities with just and representative films.
SEW Productions Inc. \$100,000	93.2	San Francisco Arts Commission funds will be used to support the production of "The Black Feminist Guide to the Human Body" by Lisa B. Thompson and "(No More) Adjustments" by Champagne Hughes. Each production includes a series of community events and panels exploring Black femininity, advocacy and health. The combination of these productions will also expand the company's New Black Voices Initiative, a program providing mentorship with a focus on Black female and femme-identifying playwrights.
SF Recovery Theater Fiscal Sponsor Idris Ackamoor and Cultural Odyssey \$50,000	95.2	San Francisco Arts Commission funds will be used to support Playwright Geoffrey Grier in the development of a New Work, "Differentiated Masses: Shouts from the Fentanyl," a comedic drama that will bring Fentanyl's besiegement of SF's Tenderloin to the forefront. Grier will base the script on his father's (Psychiatrist "William H. Grier") 1968 book, "Black Rage." Working with his brother,

		actor David Alan Grier, and Poet Laureate Ayodele Nzinga, they will produce performances and workshops.
Shipyard Trust for the Arts \$100,000	93.8	San Francisco Arts Commission funds will be used to support Shipyard Trust for the Arts (STAR) to support artists, with a focus on Black artists at the Shipyard, equipping them to enhance their artistic careers and achieve greater success. Collaborating with the Black on Point collective and Bayview Senior Services, STAR will amplify artist visibility, foster artistic development, generate income opportunities, expand the Black artist cohort, while connecting to the intertwined histories of the shipyard and the Black Bayview community.
The African and African American Performing Arts Coalition Fiscal Sponsor The Dance Brigade, A New Group from Wallflower Order \$100,000	90	San Francisco Arts Commission funds will be used to support events and exhibitions presented by The African and African American Performing Arts Coalition (AAPAC) that celebrate the history and connections of Black Choreographers Moving Toward the 21st Century (BCM) and the Black Choreographers Festival (BCF), two iconic SF Festivals that preserve the legacy of Black dance. Expanding our ability to provide supportive spaces for Black choreographers to take creative risks and develop new works; connect artists to new audiences; bring our community together in participation, contemplation, and celebration of African American Art and Culture.
The Dance Brigade, A New Group from Wallflower Order \$100,000	92.4	San Francisco Arts Commission funds will be used to support the expansion of Dance Mission Theater's African Diasporic-rooted performances and workshops, centering Black-focused and Black-led storytelling. Together with our project partners, we will develop and produce workshops and performances exploring the impact of Black culture on dance, strengthening Black-centered arts programming for San Francisco's Black community and for all San Francisco residents.
The Village Project SF Fiscal Sponsor San Francisco Housing Development Corporation \$100,000	90.2	San Francisco Arts Commission funds will be used to support four annual core arts programs: 1) Mardi Gras-San Francisco Style, a free blues concert with a community-procession down Fillmore Street and a Masquerade Ball with blues performances; 2) A Senior Moment, an awards ceremony honoring seniors with dinner and musical performances; 3) Grillin' In the 'Mo a free outdoor blues concert and community barbeque. 4) Kwanzaa- a seven day festive celebration at 15 different venues.

Zaccho SF \$100,000	95.8	San Francisco Arts Commission funds will be used to support the expansion of Zaccho's Black Futures Artist-in-Residence Program from four to six, with a focus on Black, San Francisco based performing artists to be served in 2024-25; and to commission a new work from an artist that will premiere in Zaccho's San Francisco Aerial Arts Festival 2024.

FY23-24 Dream Keeper Initiative Current Grantee Organizations Funding Recommendations

Applicant Grant Amount	Average Score	Project Description
African American Art and Culture Complex \$250,000	81.6	San Francisco Arts Commission Funds will be used to support the African American Art and Culture Complex (AAACC) in coverage of costs associated with performance, exhibition, storage, and the acquisition of administrative spaces. In the fiscal year 2024-25, AAACC will engage a proficient strategic planning specialist to lead the development of a fresh 3-year plan. This comprehensive blueprint will delineate the organization's programs, staffing framework, and operational budgets, set to take effect immediately following the conclusion of the seismic upgrade.
African-American Shakespeare Company \$250,000	82.8	San Francisco Arts Commission funds will be used to support the second half of our 23-24 production seasons which includes Pipeline by Dominique Morrisseau directed by Nataki Garrett; and Shakespeare's Merchant of Venice with a Black Ethiopian Jewish Shylock played by L. Peter Callender. Fund will also be used to support planning preparations for our 30th anniversary season.
Idris Ackamoor and Cultural Odyssey \$250,000	95.2	San Francisco Arts Commission funds will be used to support the sustainability of Idris Ackamoor & Cultural Odyssey (IACO) through Audience Development and Earned Income, enabling the employment and development of artists and administrators through: Professional Development broadcast "Don't Drop Dead on Stage - Artist's Guide to Income Equity & Retirement", live performances of Idris Ackamoor & The Pyramids with the

		Healing Force Ankhestra of Strings, and 7-Day Residency entitled, "Artists Rock the Presidio!"
San Francisco Bay Area Theatre Company \$250,000	93.2	San Francisco Arts Commission funds will be used to support San Francisco Bay Area Theatre Company's (SFBATCO) next year and half of programming, which includes: the world premiere of Sign My Name to Freedom, a musical inspired by the life and work of Black Bay Area icon Betty Reid Soskin; the 2024 New Roots Theatre Festival; and the development and premiere of Every Saturday Night, an original musical about the Fillmore in the 1950s.



**FY24 Dream Keeper Initiative (DKI) Organizations
Panelist Biographies**

Christina Hamner (she/her/hers)

Christina Hamner is passionate about increasing access to quality healthcare and education, particularly for those in underrepresented communities. Professionally, she leads organizations through design processes to create accessible solutions promoting equitable outcomes. Most recently, Christina worked for 8.5 years as Director of Strategic Design & Product Innovation at KIPP Public Schools, a national education non-profit supporting a network of 270 K-12 public charter schools with a mission of preparing students for college, career, and beyond. Christina earned her bachelor's degree in Product Design Engineering from Stanford University and an MBA in Design Strategy from California College of the Arts.

Since childhood, Christina has engaged in shared artistic expression with her community, including showing her photography in local coffee shops, teaching middle schoolers how to make DIY beauty products alongside entrepreneurship skills, and participating in a cover band collective. Christina has lived San Francisco resident for over 13 years.

Janeen Ella Johnson (she/her/hers)

Janeen Johnson, a cultural producer and artist with a career spanning over two decades, brings a wealth of skills and achievements in performing arts, theater productions, arts education, and management to the arts community. Her journey is deeply rooted in the rich legacy of Congolese music and dance in the Bay Area. She possesses 11 years of teaching and performing throughout three Bay Area counties; 15 years of travel across North America, Africa, Asia, and Europe as a global arts production specialist, making her a recognized leader and a sought-after specialist in event planning, collaborative leadership and community initiatives within the arts. Janeen is dedicated to harnessing the transformative power of cultural arts to fortify and unite communities and currently aims to advance the vital role of arts and culture in communities of color, ensuring it remains vibrant and relevant for generation come through her community arts agency, O.Y.A. Strategies.

Jennifer Ross (she/her/hers)

Jennifer Ross is the Director of Development & Communication for the Museum of Children's Art (MOCHA) in Oakland, CA. Her career path is shaped by a desire to facilitate thriving financial viability for community-focused arts and arts education organizations, and artists. Currently full-time, she served as fund development consultant for MOCHA during/since the pandemic raising over \$1.75 million dollars. Overtime interweaving consultant work and employment, she has been privileged to facilitate executive, mid-management, development, production, and administrative functions for several Bay Area arts and culture institutions; including Oakland Museum of California, Dimensions Dance Theatre, Pamela Z and the Qube Chix, ShadowLight Productions, Georges Coates Performance Works, Linda Tillery & the Cultural Heritage Choir, the Women's Philharmonic, San Francisco Contemporary Music Players, Searchlight Educational Media, Bay Area Dance Series, Chitresh Das Dance Company, Junior Center for Art and Science, Diamano Coura West African Dance Company, and San Francisco's SOMArts Cultural Center among others.

Naa-Diane Green (she/her/hers)

Naa-Diane Green has over 2 decades of experience as a Choreographer and Dance Instructor. Former Ex Director of The Young People's Performance Group; a non-profit Dance company for youth and teens. Former City-Wide Dance coordinator for the City of Oakland; Created and co-wrote the curriculum of the dance entity of the visual and Performing Arts Department at Saint Mary's College High School in Berkeley, Ca. Created a Dance Ensemble that gave students opportunities to train and perform in New York China, Brazil, and Mexico. Creator of 'From Heart to Hand' a non-profit Rite of Passage program for African American students to travel to Egypt and Ghana. First to create and implement a Sankofa Anomantu (An Africa Cotillion) in Northern California. Created various programs such as 'The Black Experience' a Cultural Youth musical, created events for 911, the Tsunami, among other cultural events that brought African American performers, vendors, speakers and families together to celebrate cultural heritage and greatness.

Umi Vaughan (he/him/his)

Umi Vaughan is a scholar/artist who conducts research, creates photographs and performances, and publishes work that examines the evolution and meaning of music/dance traditions across the African Diaspora. He holds a Ph.D. in Cultural Anthropology from the University of Michigan and is currently Professor of Africana Studies at California State University Monterey Bay. Dr. Vaughan is the author of *Carlos Aldama's Life in Batá: Cuba, Diaspora, and the Drum* (Indiana University Press) and *Rebel Dance, Renegade Stance: Timba Music and Black Identity in Cuba* (University of Michigan Press). Dr. Vaughan just put on a successful immersive photographic installation entitled "Afro-Fatherism: Black Dads Here and Now" as a Cultural Strategist for the Department of Violence Prevention in Oakland. His new book *Religious Racism and the Drum: Afro-Brazilian Sacred Music, Repression, and Resistance* is forthcoming from Amherst College Press. The book is a battle cry against a growing wave of intolerance and violence that threatens to destroy invaluable world cultural legacy.