

<https://www.fordfoundation.org/the-latest/news/sixteen-major-donors-and-foundations-commit-unprecedented-156-million-to-support-black-latinx-asian-and-indigenous-arts-organizations/>

Sixteen Major Donors and Foundations Commit Unprecedented \$156 Million to Support Black, Latinx, Asian and Indigenous Arts Organizations

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“America’s Cultural Treasures” initiative will provide multi-year grants to sustain vital organizations in the face of COVID-19 pandemic

New York, NY (September 24, 2020) -- Today, sixteen major donors and foundations announced an unprecedented commitment to a two-pronged national and regional initiative to recognize **“America’s Cultural Treasures.”** Together, the funders will grant more than \$156 million to support Black, Latinx, Asian, and Indigenous arts organizations in response to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic that has devastated America’s arts and culture landscape. The funding includes \$85 million from the proceeds of the Ford Foundation’s historic social bond offering [announced earlier this year](#).

The foundations identified grant recipients as “America’s Cultural Treasures” to acknowledge and honor their vital contributions to the diversity of expression and excellence in America, and to bring greater recognition to a group of organizations that have been impactful, despite historically limited resources and funding streams. They, along with others, represent the cultural heritage and creativity of communities that have been historically marginalized, underfunded and under-represented in the narrative of American culture.

Led by an initial investment of \$50 million from the Ford Foundation — with leadership support from Bloomberg Philanthropies and Barbara and Amos Hostetter, and additional support from the Abrams Foundation, Alice L. Walton Foundation, and Tom and Lisa Blumenthal— the national component of the initiative will provide \$81 million in operational and general support funds to an initial cohort of 20 organizations that are significant national anchors for artistic and cultural diversity in America.

The 20 organizations are: Alaska Native Heritage Center, Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, Apollo Theater, Arab American National Museum, Ballet Hispánico, Charles H. Wright Museum, Dance Theater of Harlem, East West Players, El Museo del Barrio, Japanese American National Museum, Jazz at Lincoln Center, Museo de Arte de Puerto Rico, Museum of Chinese in America , IAIA Museum of Contemporary Native Arts , National Museum of Mexican Art, Penumbra Theatre, Project Row Houses, Studio Museum in Harlem, Urban Bush Women, and Wing Luke Museum of the Asian Pacific American Experience.

National grants will range in size from \$1 to 6 million, representing a significant portion of each institution's operating budget. In addition to the grant funds each grantee will receive up to \$100,000 for organizational capacity building — particularly in key areas including digital strategies and other needs.

The increased commitment in general operating funds will enable these organizations to build on their decades of leadership and remain resilient and durable in the face of the unprecedented economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. The donors hope this initial investment will catalyze conversation and increased giving to Black, Latinx, Asian, and Indigenous arts organizations.

Ford's contribution to America's Cultural Treasures makes the foundation one of the largest funders of arts and creative expression in the U.S., with more than \$205 million in grantmaking planned over the next year.

Darren Walker, President of the Ford Foundation said, “These organizations represent the very highest ideals of artistic excellence and are truly America’s cultural treasures. We hope that other arts philanthropists and corporations

will join in increasing support to the many cultural organizations that reflect our nation's rich and diverse history.”

"This initiative fills an urgent need, as the pandemic threatens so many vitally important arts organizations of color across the country," said Michael R. Bloomberg, founder of Bloomberg Philanthropies and Bloomberg LP and three-term mayor of New York City. "Together with the Ford Foundation and its many partners, we're glad to help ensure that America's cultural treasures and the essential, innovative artistic traditions they steward can withstand the current crisis – and thrive in the future.”

“We can learn so much about our country's history and cultural heritage through the eyes of artists. This initiative is a commitment to preserving access to diverse and important perspectives and the arts organizations who support them,” said Alice Walton.

Investing in Regional Arts Organizations

As the second component of the America's Cultural Treasures initiative, numerous foundations will drive fundraising and design for individually-tailored regional grantmaking initiatives, which will be seeded by an initial \$35 million in support from the Ford Foundation across seven regions. The foundation partners will provide matching funds for multi-year grants and other supports to cultural groups of color with exceptional regional or local significance. Those foundations include the Barr Foundation (Massachusetts), Getty Foundation (Los Angeles), Heinz Endowments (Pittsburgh), Houston Endowment (Houston), John D. & Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation (Chicago), Joyce Foundation (Chicago), McKnight Foundation (Minnesota), The Ralph M. Parsons Foundation (Los Angeles), Terra Foundation for American Art (Chicago), and William Penn Foundation (Philadelphia).

The scope and recipients of local programs will be announced in early 2021 and more cities and regions will be added as funders join this effort.

“The financial commitments represented by this initiative are both timely and vital. It's also important that we shift the narrative about what constitutes our “cultural treasures” in this country,” said Jim Canales, President of the Barr

Foundation. “We are grateful for Ford’s role in elevating that conversation, and we look forward to contributing to a new and broader narrative, and to ensuring increased financial support for BIPOC arts organizations, artists, and communities.”

“BIPOC arts organizations represent the vitality and diversity of the Los Angeles region, yet have been undercapitalized for years,” said Joan Weinstein, director of the Getty Foundation. “The arts give solace in difficult times, but they also challenge us to imagine and create a more just and equitable society. We are proud to partner with the Ford Foundation and lead the Los Angeles effort to make arts organizations of color that are the heartbeat of so many local communities more resilient for the future.”

“Never before have foundations joined together in such a powerful, groundbreaking and courageous effort to confront issues of need and inequality that face our nation’s cultural organizations of color,” said Grant Oliphant, President of The Heinz Endowments. “History shows us how great leadership so often emerges in our most challenging times, and we congratulate wholeheartedly the Ford Foundation for developing this extraordinary commitment. The Endowments is honored to be chosen to work in partnership with Ford, and we will infuse the spirit of this work in our decades-long support to strengthen and embolden our region’s diverse arts community in celebration of the cultural treasure that it represents.”

“Houston’s cultural organizations of color celebrate our region’s extraordinary diversity and foster our connections to each other. This initiative, which will provide meaningful support to important organizations during a time of great challenge, carries with it the potential to transform the funding landscape and significantly advance racial equity,” said Ann Stern, President and CEO of the Houston Endowment. “We are grateful to the Ford Foundation for creating this opportunity and proud to represent the Houston area in this work.”

“This initiative, as imagined in Chicago, is designed to provide general operating support to cultural organizations of color that contribute to the history, vibrancy, and identity of our city,” said John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation President John Palfrey. “Many of these institutions serve as neighborhood anchors, sustain cultural traditions, build community,

and help ensure that experiences are shared and heard. We are proud to collaborate with the Ford, Joyce and Terra foundations and hope it creates the momentum for other funders to join us in this transformative grantmaking.”

Ellen Alberding, President of the Joyce Foundation, said, "The impact of COVID-19 on arts organizations of color in Chicago has been seismic. These groups are the cultural anchors of our city and yet have historically been undercapitalized, making them particularly vulnerable during this crisis. The stability and continued vitality of arts organizations of color is central to our city's recovery efforts. It is our hope that through this initiative these organizations will emerge even stronger and better positioned to enrich our city for years to come. Thank you to Darren Walker and the Ford Foundation for their partnership in this effort."

Debby Landesman, Board Chair of the McKnight Foundation, said, “As a long time funder in the arts, it is an honor for the McKnight Foundation to serve as the regional lead in Minnesota, working in partnership with the Ford Foundation to multiply the impact of this initiative. Minnesota is home to incredible arts institutions led by Black, Indigenous, and people of color. These organizations enhance the well-being of our state and serve as vital cultural, social, and economic anchors for our communities. This initiative will be an exciting appreciation of their work.”

Remarking on the diverse cultural landscape in Los Angeles, Wendy Garen, President and CEO of The Ralph M. Parsons Foundation, shared, “Creativity is our region’s greatest asset. The arts will play a critical role in our recovery, helping us heal, grow the economy, and build empathy. We are committed to ensuring our arts and cultural partners remain healthy and resilient for decades to come.”

“We are honored to collaborate with the Ford Foundation and engage in this essential work alongside our partners in Chicago to bolster the region's arts organizations of color. These institutions are critical in shaping the artistic and cultural heritage of our city and nation,” said Sharon Corwin, President and CEO of the Terra Foundation for American Art. “It is our hope that through this collective action, these organizations will continue to thrive as creative centers for learning, ensuring a diversity of voices and narratives are celebrated and ideas exchanged.”

“We are grateful to the Ford Foundation for recognizing the strength and impact of Philadelphia’s arts and cultural organizations, and pleased that local commitments to the sector have paved the way for this investment,” said Dr. Janet Haas, Chair of the Board of the William Penn Foundation. “Funding organizations led by and serving people of color is more important now than ever. We are excited to engage with other local funders to implement this critical work.”

[For more information about "America's Cultural Treasures" our frequently asked questions are available here.](#)

About the Abrams Foundation

The Abrams Foundation’s mission is to nurture creative, deeply informed communities, while promoting equity and fairness. Founded in 1997 by Amy and David Abrams and based in Boston, the foundation’s grantmaking is concentrated in journalism and narrative, arts and creativity, and access and opportunity.

About the Alice L. Walton Foundation

The Alice L. Walton Foundation is a philanthropic organization committed to increasing access to the arts, improving education, enhancing health, and advancing economic opportunity for all. Through this work, the foundation strives to deliver meaningful and lasting change to individuals and communities most in need.

About the Barr Foundation

The Barr Foundation’s mission is to invest in human, natural, and creative potential, serving as thoughtful stewards and catalysts. Based in Boston, Barr focuses regionally, and selectively engages nationally, working in partnership with nonprofits, foundations, the public sector, and civic and business leaders to elevate the arts, advance solutions for climate change, and connect all students to success in high school and beyond.

About Bloomberg Philanthropies

Bloomberg Philanthropies invests in more than 570 cities and over 160 countries around the world to ensure better, longer lives for the greatest number of people. The organization focuses on five key areas for creating lasting change: the Arts, Education, Environment, Government Innovation and Public Health. Bloomberg Philanthropies encompasses all of Michael R. Bloomberg's giving, including his foundation and personal philanthropy as well as Bloomberg Associates, a pro bono consultancy that works in cities around the world. In 2019, Bloomberg Philanthropies distributed \$3.3 billion. For more information, please visit bloomberg.org or follow us on Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Twitter, and TikTok.

About the Getty Foundation

The Getty Foundation fulfills the philanthropic mission of the Getty Trust by supporting individuals and institutions committed to advancing the greater understanding and preservation of the visual arts in Los Angeles and throughout the world. Through strategic grant initiatives, the Foundation strengthens art history as a global discipline, promotes the interdisciplinary practice of conservation, increases access to museum and archival collections, and develops current and future leaders in the visual arts. It carries out its work in collaboration with the other Getty Programs to ensure that they individually and collectively achieve maximum effect. Additional information is available at www.getty.edu/foundation.

About The Heinz Endowments

The Heinz Endowments is devoted to the mission of helping our region prosper as a vibrant center of creativity, learning, and social, economic, and environmental sustainability. Core to our work is the vision of a just community where all are included and where everyone who calls southwestern Pennsylvania home has a real and meaningful opportunity to thrive.

About Houston Endowment

Established in 1937, Houston Endowment advances equity of opportunity for the people of Greater Houston and enhances the vibrancy of our community so that our region and its people thrive. In 2020, the Endowment will grant

more than \$80 million to the area in support of our community and advancing our mission.

About the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation

The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation supports creative people, effective institutions, and influential networks building a more just, verdant, and peaceful world. MacArthur is placing a few big bets that truly significant progress is possible on some of the world's most pressing social challenges, including advancing global climate solutions, decreasing nuclear risk, promoting local justice reform in the U.S., and reducing corruption in Africa's most populous country, Nigeria. In addition to the MacArthur Fellows Program and the global 100&Change competition, the Foundation continues its historic commitments to the role of journalism in a responsive democracy as well as the vitality of our headquarters city, Chicago.

About the Joyce Foundation

The Joyce Foundation is a nonpartisan, private foundation that invests in public policies and strategies to advance racial equity and economic mobility for the next generation in the Great Lakes region. The foundation supports policy research, development, and advocacy in five areas: Education & Economic Mobility, Environment, Gun Violence Prevention & Justice Reform, Democracy, and Culture. Visit JoyceFdn.org for more information.

About the McKnight Foundation

The McKnight Foundation, a Minnesota-based family foundation, advances a more just, creative, and abundant future where people and planet thrive. Established in 1953, the McKnight Foundation is deeply committed to advancing climate solutions in the Midwest; building an equitable and inclusive Minnesota; and supporting the arts in Minnesota, neuroscience, and international crop research.

About The Ralph M. Parsons Foundation

Placing a special emphasis on direct services for vulnerable children and families, The Ralph M. Parsons Foundation is dedicated to improving the

lives of Los Angeles County residents through responsive grantmaking in the areas of civics and culture, education, health, and human services.

Recognizing that meaningful change requires working in partnership, the Foundation also supports special initiatives focused on child welfare and wellbeing, organizational effectiveness, and cross-sector collaboration.

About the Terra Foundation for American Art

The Terra Foundation for American Art supports individuals, organizations, and communities to advance expansive understandings of American art. Established in 1978 and headquartered in Chicago, with an office in Paris, its grant program, collection, and initiatives are committed to fostering cross-cultural dialogues on American art locally, nationally, and internationally.

About William Penn Foundation

The William Penn Foundation, founded in 1945 by Otto and Phoebe Haas, is dedicated to improving the quality of life in the Greater Philadelphia region through efforts that increase educational opportunities for children from low-income families, ensure a sustainable environment, foster creativity that enhances civic life, and advance philanthropy in the Philadelphia region. In 2020, the Foundation will grant more than \$117 million to support vital efforts in the region.

THE FORD FOUNDATION

The Ford Foundation is an independent, nonprofit grant-making organization. For more than 80 years it has worked with courageous people on the frontlines of social change worldwide, guided by its mission to strengthen democratic values, reduce poverty and injustice, promote international cooperation, and advance human achievement. With headquarters in New York, the foundation has offices in Latin America, Africa, the Middle East, and Asia.