

# BIPOC Arts Network & Fund

## **\$2 Million in Grants for Communities of Color in Nine-County Greater Houston Region Announced by New Initiative, BIPOC Arts Network and Fund**

*BIPOC-Founded and Led Nonprofits with Arts Programming and Artist Collectives Urged to Apply*

HOUSTON, TX, September 21, 2021 - A bold, new initiative, the Black Indigenous People of Color (BIPOC) Arts Network and Fund, or BANF, welcomes eligible organizations and fiscally-sponsored artist collectives in Greater Houston's Black, Latinx, Indigenous, Asian American, Pacific Islander, Middle Eastern and other communities of color to apply for grants ranging from \$5,000 to \$50,000.

This \$2 million announcement represents BANF's first round of funding, which will be awarded by the end of 2021 to eligible applicants across nine counties in the Greater Houston region, including Austin, Brazoria, Chambers, Fort Bend, Galveston, Harris, Liberty, Montgomery and Waller counties. BANF is currently a \$12.4 million initiative that will provide funding over five years to BIPOC arts communities.

### **Houston's BIPOC Arts Community: Part of America's Cultural Treasures**

BANF was created to provide resources and networks that support the vibrant Black, Latinx, Indigenous, Asian American, Pacific Islander, Middle Eastern and other communities of color of Greater Houston in fully displaying their power, values and traditions. Its goals are achieved through grant funding, advocacy, and community-building networking initiatives that revolutionize the local funding landscape, break down silos within the arts ecosystem, and welcome everyone to support and learn from BIPOC arts communities.

This groundbreaking effort was born out of the [Ford Foundation's America's Cultural Treasures initiative](#), which in September 2020 committed an unprecedented \$156 million to support BIPOC arts communities across the country in response to the devastating economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. The regional grantmaking initiative invested \$35 million across seven regions, including Greater Houston, and invited local philanthropic partners to match funding in support of multi-year grant programs for cultural groups of color with exceptional regional or local significance.

Houston Endowment and the Ford Foundation led the way for BANF's creation, equally donating \$5 million, with additional generous contributions from The Brown Foundation, Inc., The Cullen Foundation, Kinder Foundation and The Powell Foundation.

BANF's grant opportunity is open to BIPOC founded and led nonprofit organizations with arts and cultural programming, as well as fiscally-sponsored artist collectives who have a proven track record of work that benefits BIPOC communities. Applications will be accepted from September 21, 2021 through October 22, 2021 at 5 p.m. CST.

A website hosting the grant opportunity guidelines, including the specific set of eligibility requirements, as well as a link to the application submission portal, can be found at [www.houstonbanf.org](http://www.houstonbanf.org). Virtual grant information sessions will be hosted on September 29 at 12 p.m. CST and October 7 at 9:30 a.m. CST. Interested applicants should register to attend at this link: <https://bit.ly/3AbVmVB>.

“This historic first round of funding is the beginning of a new story and a new way of how we recognize BIPOC arts communities in Greater Houston,” said Sixto Wagan, project director, BANF. “Our BIPOC arts communities have demonstrated decades of leadership with work that has shaped this country’s culture and history despite being excluded from resources, funding streams, recognition and representation. In the face of that, Black, Latinx, Indigenous, Asian American, Pacific Islander, and Middle Eastern arts organizations and artists have thrived through systemic oppression and still stand in their power contributing as they always have to this country’s arts and culture narrative.”

Future BANF funding opportunities will be informed by direct community input from BIPOC arts organizations and artists.

### **Global and Local Disasters Create Urgency to Distribute Funds**

According to [\*“Lost art: Measuring COVID-19’s devastating impact on America’s creative economy.”\*](#) a report by the Metropolitan Policy Program at Brookings, Houston lost 42,500 creative industry jobs and \$1.6 billion in sales in four months last year. The report also shows Texas and Houston are among the most devastated.

The Greater Houston Area Arts Relief Fund, established by a collective of education, government and nonprofit organizations in 2020, reiterated how much communities of color are impacted when global and local disasters strike. Seventy-two percent of grant applicants were from BIPOC communities. Almost 56 percent were Black and Latinx.

“BIPOC arts organizations and artists are more vulnerable to climate, public health and economic disruptions due to our historical exclusion from funding,” said Wagan. “The grants we distribute, the networks we build to bring us closer together as a BIPOC community, the programs we design in partnership with our arts organizations and the artists they support, will ensure that our Greater Houston arts ecosystem will be stronger and more resilient after the pandemic and far beyond.”

### **Founded by the Community, for the Community**

Wagan leads BANF along with a seven-member Steering Committee and a nine-member Accountability and Advisory Council made up of a diverse group of artists, curators, scholars, organizational leaders and foundation partners, who guide goals and priorities.

Before joining BANF, Wagan was the inaugural director for the Center for Art and Social Engagement (CASE) at the University of Houston. He also led the contemporary art center, DiverseWorks, serving a multitude of capacities including artistic director, co-executive director and performing arts curator.

The BANF Steering Committee includes:

- Patra Brannon-Isaac, Director of Education and Community Projects, Kinder Foundation
- Bao-Long Chu, Senior Program Officer, Houston Endowment

- Tony Diaz, Writer, Activist and Political Analyst
- Adán Medrano, Chef, Food Writer and Filmmaker
- Deidre Thomas, Senior Advisor, Mattison Advisors
- Frances Valdez, Executive Director, Houston In Action
- Kheli Willetts, Director of Professional Development, Mid-America Arts Alliance

The BANF Accountability and Advisory Council includes:

- Sebastien Boncy, Photographer and Educator
- Janice Bond, Cultural Architect, Art Advisor, Interdisciplinary Artist
- Candice D'Meza, Actor, Writer, Filmmaker and Multidisciplinary artist
- Julie DeVries, Artist and Educator
- Eureka Gilkey, Executive Director, Project Row Houses
- Eleisha Nelson-Reed, Executive Director, Powell Foundation
- Mari Carmen Ramirez, Wortham Curator of Latin American Art and Director of the International Center for the Arts of the Americas, Museum of Fine Art, Houston
- Shayna Schlosberg, Arts Administrator and Community Organizer
- Roberto Tejada, Hugh Roy and Lillie Crazz Cullen Distinguished Professor, University of Houston

BANF is currently seeking public nominations for Community Reviewers who will join the organization's Accountability and Advisory Council to engage in a peer review process to consider grant applications. Community Reviewers may include independent artists, educators, patrons, community leaders and organizers. Nominations may be submitted at [www.houstonbanf.org](http://www.houstonbanf.org).

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### **About BIPOC Arts Network & Fund (BANF)**

The BIPOC Arts Network & Fund (BANF) is a multi-year initiative dedicated to providing resources that support the vibrant BIPOC arts community of Greater Houston in fully displaying their power, values and traditions. Established in 2021 as a collaborative community effort, BANF is guided by the very artists, nonprofit organizations and local leaders it seeks to serve through its grant funding, advocacy, and community-building networking initiatives. BANF works to revolutionize the local funding landscape by changing cultural value systems, breaking down silos that separate communities in the arts ecosystem, and welcoming everyone to participate, support and learn from BIPOC arts communities.

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