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### **ArtsWave selects next cohort for the Circle's African American arts grant program**

CINCINNATI (August 30, 2021) – Approved at a board meeting Friday, ArtsWave, the region's engine for the arts, awards its second set grants in support of arts initiatives funded in part by ArtsWave's Circle of African American Leaders for the Arts.

Eleven organizations will be funded through this latest round of grants with \$150,000 in total funding. To date, 29 organizations have benefited from this grant program, amounting to \$405,000. Grant selections were made through a community-based volunteer panel of 10 individuals; 18 applications were received in total.

The Circle's African American arts grants program is designed to strengthen the capacity and sustainability of arts organizations led by or predominantly serving Black Cincinnatians. These grants, along with other ArtsWave initiatives, are also meant to increase audience demand and appreciation for Black arts. While the Black arts ecosystem grows in both supply and demand, the Circle's African American arts grants program is growing in philanthropic support too, with this pool funded in part through donations by the Circle of African American Leaders for the Arts to the 2021 ArtsWave Campaign.

This set of grants will allow the following projects to happen:

- **Revolution Dance Theatre:** *"First, Full and For"*

"First, Full and For" builds off Revolution Dance Theatre's belief that Cincinnati can be home to a professional dance company of consequence. Beyond "a few dance concerts," this project specifically furthers a strategy of positioning Cincinnati to be a more attractive place for African American talent and their families. "First, Full and For" provides for the administrative, artistic and producing capacity for Revolution Dance Theatre to present high quality programming that puts Cincinnati on the Map and bridges cultural divides.

- **Elementz** *"Elementz Presents...The Amplify Performance Series"*

Elementz's "Amplify Performance Series" is designed to increase the level of exposure for emerging artists of color and to restart and regrow the arts scene in Greater Cincinnati. Through performance opportunities, the young people involved and connected to this programming will be able to share their artistry to audiences who are eager to consume new and exciting experiences as more and more become vaccinated and safe engagement of events becomes increasingly available. All performances will have a

different theme related to cultural experiences and showcased virtually and in-person in front of a diverse audience of professionals and creatives.

- **Professional Artistic Research Projects** *Expanding programming and staff on Hoffner Street*

After COVID-19 changed the world, Professional Artistic Research (PAR) Projects will use the next year to reintroduce itself and its 5,000 square feet of mixed use space to the City.

During this grant period, the primary goal will be to bring its outdoor space back online to create a regional destination and enlivening neighborhoods surrounding its Northside location. The secondary goal is to plan how an Applied Arts Education program will be introduced.

- **Robert O'Neal Multicultural Art Center** *Staff Support and Capital Campaign Launch*

Funding from ArtsWave will allow ROMAC to expand the capacity of current staff and hire consultants to begin its Capital Campaign.

- **Juneteenth Cincinnati, Inc.** *35th Annual Cincinnati Juneteenth Festival*

The Cincinnati Juneteenth Festival will return in June 2022, which is "Black Music Month," and it will present "Celebration of Black Music Month, Ohio Style." Numerous, nationally-recognized and Ohio-based R&B and funk bands sprang up in the 1970s and 1980s. Those include Slave, Zapp, Lakeside, The Deelee, Midnight Star, Rude Boys, Ohio Players, and the Isley Brothers. For the first time, the organization plans to feature several in Seasongood Pavilion on Saturday, June 12, 2022. The Festival concludes on Sunday, June 19, with a Father's Day concert featuring many Ohio artists, including Charles Fold Singers as well as other great Cincinnati choirs, soloists and inspirational performers.

- **It's Commonly Jazz** *"It's Commonly Jazz Feels Good to Be Back"*

It's Commonly Jazz attract a culturally and generationally diverse audience throughout the region to come together over jazz, be it live and in person or via technology, bridging cultural divides. The festival brings next generation jazz artists to the mainstage. It's Commonly Jazz is producing a Labor Day Weekend livestream of its 2021 festival to stream in September. The festival producers are taking the art form to youth K-12, providing tools, including bedtime books and artists to learn about the American jazz form of jazz in a fun manner to fuel creativity and learning.

- **National Underground Railroad Freedom Center, Inc. (NURFC)** *"Unmasking the Realities"*

Following the events of Summer 2020, NURFC committed to ensuring that the important conversations happening in our country around racism, inequity and social justice continue and are not forgotten with time. "Unmaking the Realities" is a national, virtual conversation series, curated by NURFC. These conversations create meaningful experiences for attendees that tackle uncomfortable contemporary topics related to injustice and inequities, while encouraging open and transparent, community dialogue. NURFC's goal is for attendees of this series to leave these conversations inspired and ready to provoke constructive action towards justice and equity. By offering these dialogues, NURFC hopes to position itself and Cincinnati as a national leader for vital conversations on social justice. ArtsWave's funding will support the program creation along with the technology that is needed to support the program.

- **Black Art Speaks** *"We Want What You Want"*

Coming off the momentum of overseeing the execution and completion of Cincinnati's Black Lives Matter Mural at City Hall, Black Art Speaks continues to expand its community impact. This grant will be used to create additional art forms that extend the messages of the mural. The first creation will be based on the gun violence that has plagued our communities, especially during this pandemic, as well as the impact of the murders of unarmed black people.

- **Music Resource Center – Cincinnati Music Resource Center Outreach and Inreach**

The Music Resource Center's outreach programs bring core programming to various Cincinnati schools and groups. Outreach initiatives include radio broadcasting of sports events and community council meetings, performances, and more. The core of these programs lie within the classes that are brought to the surrounding community.

- **Jazz Alive Jazz Alive Performance Initiative and Educational Outreach**

Jazz Alive presents jazz concerts within the Greater Cincinnati area, encouraging a greater appreciation of jazz, an American art form with African American roots. The organization strives to present a balance of free and ticketed concerts, presenting in arts centers, recreation centers, churches, and a free outdoor concert series, serving children and adults, and providing exposure to an artistic expression that may not be accessible otherwise. The grant will support an in-school jazz program, "We Create Jazz," that includes discussion on the history of jazz and in school performance by professional musicians. The program is administrated by Jazz Alive at no cost to the school.

- **Hear Us, Hear Them Ensemble "Action Over Stillness"**

Following the three points in our mission statement, "performance," "conversation (engage)," and "education (inspire)," our project, "Action Over Stillness," will highlight the works of marginalized choral composers while enlightening performers and audience members alike. This one-night-only concert is scheduled for January 2022. Presenting the concert around the MLK Holiday invites a natural focus on DEI initiatives and how their goals can be elevated to celebrate all identities in the arts. Programming is focused around the works of BIPOC, LGBTQIA+, female-identifying, Latinx/e, and persons with disabilities. It will feature guest performers in addition to ensemble members.

All of these projects are funded through the 2021 ArtsWave Campaign and the support of tens of thousands of individuals, companies and organizations.

This is one of several initiatives that ArtsWave has created for building capacity of Black-led cultural organizations. Other programs include ArtsWave's Truth and Reconciliation grant program for Black and Brown artists and *Flow*, a series of African American Arts experiences from around the country.

For more information on ArtsWave's Circle of African American Leaders for the Arts, go to [artswave.org/circle](https://artswave.org/circle). To support projects like these, please go to [artswave.org/give](https://artswave.org/give).

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### **About ArtsWave:**

ArtsWave, a nonprofit serving the Greater Cincinnati and Northern Kentucky Region, is the engine for the arts. Its roots stem back to the late 1920s when the Cincinnati Taft

family provided initial investment matched by community support. In the late 1940s, it evolved to become the first united arts fund in the nation and in the mid-1970s, the first organization to initiate workplace giving for the arts. ArtsWave continues to innovate while leading, as illustrated by its No. 1 rank nationally in community arts fundraising; coordination of a sector-wide Blueprint for Collective Action; piloting of new technologies to maximize arts engagement; and development of resources for the arts.

Strong funding for the arts has allowed Cincinnati's arts and culture scene to become a national draw and regional asset, creating a wave of economic and community benefits. Each year, ArtsWave supports the work of over 100 arts organizations, school outreach programs, festivals, community centers, neighborhoods and various collaborations through impact-based grants. ArtsWave is projected to raise \$11 million for the arts in 2021, despite the difficult 18-month health and economic crisis that has affected the entire region. Donations can be made at [artswave.org/give](https://artswave.org/give).