

America's Cultural Treasures

America's Cultural Treasures is an initiative that honors the diversity of artistic expression and excellence in America and provides critical funding to organizations that have made a significant impact on its cultural landscape. We partnered with more than 40 funders from across the United States to deliver over \$276 million in new funds to arts organizations nationwide.

Join us in celebrating America's Cultural Treasures. Learn more about the initiative here: <https://www.fordfoundation.org/news-and-stories/news-and-press/news-additional-pages/faqs-america-s-cultural-treasures/>

Transcript begins.

AUDIO DESCRIPTION:

[A Black female dancer poses, standing on one foot with her other leg and one arm extended. A Native Alaskan woman in traditional dress performs in a community center, and a Black man stands on a stage with his head tucked down and his right arm reaching upwards. Behind him, rows of dancers do the same, wearing traditional African material wrapped around their waists. Throughout the remainder of the video, the interviews and voice-over are interspersed with photographs and footage showcasing a range of diverse cultural activities funded by this initiative, from dance and music performances to art galleries, artists working in public spaces, and community organizations in action.]

VOICE OVER: America's Cultural Treasures is a national initiative supporting the dynamic contributions that diverse communities of color, artists, and organizations make to our nation's identity and cultural narrative.

The program is an unprecedented collaboration of more than 40 funders across the country. It has already leveraged \$276 million in new funds for more than 100 cultural organizations that have been historically overlooked and under-resourced.

KRISTIN SAKODA, Los Angeles County Department of Arts and Culture: It's a huge jurisdiction, incredibly diverse—even the landscape. It's coastal communities. It's urban communities. It's mountains. It's rural. It's all of that together.

VO: Regional funding partners on the community level will tailor the grants to fit local needs and uplift local voices.

KRISTIN: How do we think about the role of arts and culture and the role of representation, recognition, and uplift, and resourcing of arts and culture as both key to our sector and shifting equity in our field and in arts philanthropy, but also as a key to valuing and investing in healthy communities?

SARAH LYDING, The Music Man Foundation: We value the wisdom that came from the field, and we made a commitment to remain in a posture of listening. What we heard was that organizations needed flexibility and stability.

DEANNA CUMMINGS, McKnight Foundation: All of the values that you all shared so eloquently with regard to the way in which you were approaching your work are shared with the way we're thinking about our work here in Minnesota.

NAKEA WEST, IFF: With Chicago's Cultural Treasures, we're attempting to interrupt urgency and crisis mentality, and instead really lean into the patience and intentionality needed to build a truly equitable process and ensure the long-term sustainability of these organizations. These supports will be co-created in partnership with the organizations to ensure they are actually responsive to what the organizations need in this moment.

SHAUNDA MCDILL, The Heinz Endowments: We want to proclaim and promote the Black cultural sector—that while this is about money, it is not just about money. And that we are interested in celebrating the culture, the organizations that will help people to know and understand the vibrant Black cultural life that is here in Pittsburgh.

[A Zoom recital of young violinists, Black performers dance to a djembe beat, Black men tap dance to a conga drum.]

CATHERINE BRYAN, First Nations Development Institute: Communities connect the past to the present and the future and really are key in preserving our knowledge systems, our identities, and our lifeways.

GILES LI, Barr Foundation: In conversations with leaders, I've learned that for communities that have experienced a genocide, like refugee and Indigenous communities, cultural expression is a powerful reaffirmation that their community is still here and that it has a future.

VO: America's Cultural Treasures include forms of creative expression as dynamic as our entire country. They enrich and sustain our enormously varied communities and reflect our diverse cultures. By working together in regions across the country, the partners of this initiative are nurturing America's true cultural landscape and seeding its

future and impact for years to come. Join us in celebrating America's Cultural Treasures.

The regional foundation partners are:

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The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation
Anonymous donors
Barr Foundation
The Barra Foundation
The Brown Foundation
Bush Foundation
California Community Foundation
The California Wellness Foundation
Community Foundation of Western Massachusetts
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The Joyce Foundation
Kinder Foundation
LA County Department of Arts and Culture
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Theater Mu
TruArtSpeaks
Urban Bush Women

Visual Communications
West Point School of Music / Epic Steel
Wing Luke Museum / Karen Ducey

[Ford Foundation logo: a globe made up of a series of small, varied circles].

End of transcript.