

Program Overview

The Dream Keeper Initiative Program Overview

The Dream Keeper Initiative (DKI) is a new, Citywide effort to reinvest \$120 million over the next two years 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.¹

The Arts Commission is investing \$2.1 million in arts and culture organizations to anchor support for the cultural assets and economic vitality in historically Black and African-American communities facing rapid change.

Panel Composition

The three-member peer review panel convened on May 27, 2021 to rank the DKI applications according to the stated review criteria in the published DKI 2020-2021 guidelines.

The panelists brought a range of experiences and deep community connections to San Francisco's Black and African-American communities. All brought a depth of knowledge in social innovation and cultural equity, performance, nonprofit leadership and arts administration, and one hundred percent identify as Black/African American.

FY20-21 DK Funding Recommendations

7 grant applications were received requesting a total of \$2,620,000.

The panelists reviewed 7 DKI applications according to the stated review criteria. Funding recommendations include 5 applicants for a total of \$2,100,000.

Successful proposals included a strong history of a focus on the Black experience, provided examples and evidence of how the organization centers needs of the Black community, and articulated innovative visions for the project area, as well as a robust plan for community engagement.

The applicants that did not score well were unable to clearly describe aspirational goals and desired outcomes, assessment plans needed more detail and uncertainty around the experience and relationships with the Black community.

Attachments

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

¹ *The Dream Keeper Initiative: Reinvesting in San Francisco's Black and African-American Community.* Office of the Mayor, San Francisco. https://sf-hrc.org/sites/default/files/Dream%20Keeper%20Initiative_One%20Pager.pdf



FY21 Dream Keeper Initiative Panelist Biographies

Alexa Hall

Alexa Hall is a California native interested in city infrastructure, economic development, arts & culture. She is a futurist whose work improves the lives of people living in cities through sustainability, access and impact. Alexa holds a Master's degree in Management and has more than 10 years of experience at high value organizations. She has worked as an arts administrator for institutions like Brooklyn Academy of Music, Tribeca Film Festival, and Oakland Museum of California. Most recently, she was a funder at the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation. There, she managed large grant portfolios which invigorated her passion for supporting organizations work toward social justice with a cultural equity frame. A recent move to tech meant a shift from the nonprofit sector into the private. Although Alexa has left the arts full time, she continues to be involved in social innovation through philanthropy and impact investing.

James Spingola

Born and raised in the Harlem of the west - still in the Fillmore, work in the Fillmore and he loves the work he dos, which is taking care of community. James has beaten the odds, overcoming poverty and incarceration. His re-entry journey led him to three jobs - one at Ella Hill Hutch Community Center, which would prove life changing. He spends his days helping community and mentoring young people. In October 2018, James was appointed to the Juvenile Probation Commission of the City & County of San Francisco. He is known as "Uncle" in the community and is dedicated to providing youth with the support they are craving. He knows his successes are tied to someone taking a chance on him, and he extends that same courtesy to every person he comes in contact with on his journey.

Sara Williams

An alumna of Dartmouth College, Sara has a diverse background that includes real estate, sales, music, and nonprofit work. Currently, Sara consults with the Opportunities for All Initiative and the Santa Clara County FireSafe Council. Sara is a classically trained vocalist, having toured the world with many esteemed artists. She has performed for several events, including the Inauguration of Mayor London Breed, the SF Juneteenth Festival, and the SF Black History Month Closing Ceremony. Sara has performed on shows including The Tonight Show, and has served as the Background Vocal Director for many local and national artists, and for shows such as the Superbowl Gospel Celebration. Sara has curated and presented many workshops, works with various youth and religious organizations, and is a Teaching Artist with SFArtsEd. In December of 2019, she was named one of the Sun Reporter's "Talented 25."

Community Investments

FY20-21 Dream Keeper Initiative (DKI) Funding Recommendations



Applicant Category Grant Amount	Average Score	Project Description
Idris Ackamoor and Cultural Odyssey Theatre Companies \$400,000	91	San Francisco Arts Commission funds will be used to support Cultural Odyssey's African American Theater Alliance for Independence (AATAIN/BLACK THEATRE COLLECTIVE) AATAIN is composed of organizations dedicated to advancing stories focusing on the Black experience. AATAIN members are Cultural Odyssey, Lorraine Hansberry Theatre, Cultural Odyssey, AfroSolo Theatre, and San Francisco Recovery Theatre. These organizations have been in existence from 25 - 40 years servicing San Francisco's Black community. The aim of AATAIN's Dream Keeper Initiative is to increase the sustainability of individual organizations by implementing the following goals: (1) Build organizational capacity to stabilize budgets and long-term revenue goals; (2) increase earned income resources; (3) implement audience development and marketing planning; and, (4) present new productions through artistic collaboration. Keeping with tradition, these productions will be deeply rooted in the Black experience, and involve the embedding of artistic programs, while addressing racial equity within San Francisco's Black communities.
African-American Shakespeare Company Theatre Companies \$100,000	84	San Francisco Arts Commission funds will be used to support a philanthropic donor campaign to have Keith David star in August Wilson's Fences as the catalyst to begin AASC's legacy giving program for an endowment, "Live a Legacy, Leave a Legacy" Campaign. The endowment will bring sustainability and longevity to the institution and the cultural field. Having Keith David in Fences will be a pinnacle project which will bring national attention to San Francisco, and can kick-start the "Live a Legacy, Leave a Legacy" Campaign Program.
San Francisco Bay Area Theatre Company (SFBATCO) Theatre Companies \$100,000	77	San Francisco Arts Commission funds will be used to compensate theater workers who will participate in our programs during the grant period: Co-Director Rodney Jackson, Artistic Development Director Aidaa Peerzada, and Music Director Othello Jefferson. Additional expenditures will include the fees of actors, singers, dancers, playwrights and designers appearing in our productions from August 2021 to January 31 2023.

African American Art and Culture Complex Artists and Creatives Collaborative \$1,000,000	100	San Francisco Arts Commission funds will support an 18-month hybrid training and regranting program that will serve the City's creatives and arts organizations, with a focus on the black community and will increase approximately 30 stakeholders' planning, grant writing, promotional and production skills. The project's regranting component will empower artists and arts organizations to plan and implement arts programs that celebrate Black culture and/or explore the systemic wealth, health, education and employment inequities that permeate contemporary American life. Grant writing training and paid employment will also be provided to 30 creatives and arts non-profits that will improve their sustainability. Grantees will also attend intensive workshops on fundraising, publicity and tax deductions for artists.
African American Art and Culture Complex Mini-Grants to Artists and Arts Organizations \$500,000	93	San Francisco Arts Commission funds will be used to stabilize the operations and staff infrastructures of San Francisco-based arts organizations focused on the Black community to support the City's Black residents to recover from COVID. AAACC will implement this program by regranting approximately \$425,000 through a competitive process. Funding will support artists, healers, instructors or practitioners who are leading or directing online and in-person self-restoration projects or who are creating new works or a curated series that affirm, celebrate and promote both personal and community healing, with a focus on the Black community. AAACC will also fund publicity and production costs including space rental expenses, technical production staff, box office personnel, supplies and social media consultants. The proposed project will also assist arts organizations to navigate the City's post-COVID reopening process by providing COVID compliance training and guidance.