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Greater Baltimore Cultural Alliance Receives National Endowment for the Arts-Art Works Grant

Baltimore, MD—National Endowment for the Arts Acting Chairman Mary Anne Carter has approved more than \$27 million in grants as part of the Arts Endowment’s first major funding announcement for fiscal year 2019. Included in this announcement is an Art Works grant of \$20,000 to Greater Baltimore Cultural Alliance (GBCA) for an Urban Arts Leadership Field School. Art Works is the Arts Endowment’s principal grantmaking program. The agency received 1,605 Art Works applications for this round, and will award 972 grants in this category.

“The arts enhance our communities and our lives, and we look forward to seeing these projects take place throughout the country, giving Americans opportunities to learn, to create, to heal, and to celebrate,” said Mary Anne Carter, acting chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts.

The NEA grant funding will allow Greater Baltimore Cultural Alliance to develop a field school within its Urban Arts Leadership (UAL) initiative. The purpose is to train its fellows on ethnographic documentation strategies that uncover and preserve the rich artistic heritage in West Baltimore. The field school will deploy the expertise of folklorists, community scholars, and traditional artists as trainers within the program with a focus on the inherent ethical community practices they already possess. The pilot includes several phases including research, curriculum development, training, interviews, and documentation. These will culminate in an exhibition and will lay the groundwork for dissemination of the model and its best practices to other communities in Maryland. Once complete, project documents will be archived, in an effort to ensure that the materials will be readily accessible to residents in the area.

“The Board of Directors and staff are excited to receive this critical support and recognition from the National Endowment for the Arts for UAL and the important history of Baltimore's Pennsylvania Avenue” said Jeannie Howe, GBCA Executive Director. “We are especially pleased to be working with our partners Coppin State University, Maryland Tradition of Maryland State Arts Council, Sankofa Dance Theater, Motor House, University of Maryland Baltimore County, and others.”

“The glorious history and legacy of many West Baltimore communities is often relegated to the invisible margins. Stories are untold and adequate honor is unbestowed. With Urban Arts Leadership Field School we are offering a worthy solution” said Kibibi Ajanku, GBCA Director of Equity and Inclusion. “The Field School will train emerging leaders that represent underserved populations within Baltimore City as equitable additions to the existing lists of folklorists. They will uncover, collect, archive, and honor valuable arts sector history for all to see and experience. This is one of the ways that we can aid in preserving the many diverse traditions within our community.”

For more information on this National Endowment for the Arts grant announcement, visit arts.gov/news.

About Urban Arts Leadership

UAL diversifies and strengthens arts organization leadership by connecting arts administrators to resources and professional development with a particular focus on racial equity and inclusion. The program provides information, training, and helps participants develop new and expanded networks. It is open to all, but targets college seniors and recent graduates. The UAL professional development intensives are an immediate response to the needs of professionals in the Baltimore area. Since 2014, UAL has trained thirty-four emerging arts administration leaders of color and has been guided by community input and the participation of more than 30 administrators from partnering arts organizations. Enriching the UAL curriculum with intentional community engagement training will provide the fellows with critical transferable skills to be applied in their arts careers going forward.

About Greater Baltimore Cultural Alliance

GBCA nurtures and promotes a vibrant, diverse, and sustainable arts and cultural community embraced by all as accessible, relevant, and essential to the region's quality of life. GBCA connects artists and groups to one another and to vital resources, and advocates for the strategic issues facing the cultural community and the continued visibility and financial strength of the sector.

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