ILI Partners Announce $5 Million Crisis Relief Grants for Arts & Culture Leaders

Five organizations receive funding from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation to re-grant to artists, culture bearers and other arts practitioners in the face of economic crisis.

SAN ANTONIO (PRWEB) August 31, 2020 -- The Partners of the Intercultural Leadership Institute announced today the launch of a $5 Million Crisis Relief Grants program funded by The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. The one-year funding will be distributed among the organizations Alternate ROOTS, First Peoples Fund, National Association of Latino Arts & Cultures, PA’I Foundation and Sipp Culture to directly re-grant within the communities each non-profit organization supports.

The Crisis Relief Grants will be focused toward small arts organizations, cultural producers, and individual artists who typically fly beneath the national radar – and national arts funding, specifically seeking to support artists and arts & culture organizations of color and across diverse regions of the country.

“The pandemic’s impact in our communities is amplified by entrenched systemic inequities that we can most effectively address collectively,” said Maria López De León, President and Chief Executive Director of the National Association of Latino Arts and Cultures (NALAC). “The generous funding from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation permits an expansion of relief efforts to artists and organizations who continue to create and uplift communities in the face of this health and economic crisis.”

The $5 Million resource will be distributed to each organization based on their individual reach and the communities they serve.

“The ability to re-grant to the people we support as well as other folks in our region, who are the most impacted by the pandemic is critical right now,” said Michelle Ramos, Executive Director of Alternate ROOTS. “Since the COVID outbreak in March, we’ve prioritized supporting our communities above everything else we do. This support helps all of us extend the reach and sustainability of the people who will tell the story of these transformative times.”

The Intercultural Leadership Institute (ILI) is a collaborative program established in 2015 between the five organizations that promotes an intercultural approach to change-making and leadership development within the arts and culture field. The effort grew out of direct experiences of the leaders of these long-standing and impactful founding cultural organizations. With early support from the Mellon Foundation as one of the first and ongoing funders, the intercultural idea links together the effective reach of NALAC’s dedication to amplifying the U.S. Latino arts & culture sector since 1989; Alternate ROOTS’ deep support of arts & culture bearers in the South working on social & economic justice for more than 44 years; First Peoples Fund’s honoring and supporting the Collective Spirit® of Native artists & culture caretakers for over 20 years; PA’I Foundation’s mission to preserve and perpetuate Native Hawaiian arts and cultural traditions for future generations; and Sipp Culture’s groundbreaking work to connect cultural production with agriculture through storytelling and community connection.

“We often found that many personal and professional leadership programs emphasized dominant cultural norms, modes of learning and social approaches that didn’t match our commitment to cultural equity and change-making in our own communities,” says the program’s website weareili.org
The ILI program provides a year-long experience for a cohort of artists, culture bearers and other arts practitioners that includes immersive place-based convenings, along with ongoing group exploration and learning. Now in its third year, ILI has quickly pivoted to address the needs of cultural leaders in the face of the COVID pandemic and social isolation.

“From the inception of the Intercultural Leadership Institute,” said President Elizabeth Alexander, “the Mellon Foundation has supported ILI’s crucial mission to foster brilliantly inventive artists and cultural communities of color. The urgent need to address the profound distress that many of these exceptional individuals and organizations are experiencing as the pandemic continues impelled us to work quickly in partnership with ILI to fund the Crisis Relief Grants program. We’re delighted that these grants will offer immediate financial relief to dynamic arts and culture leaders throughout the United States.”

"Now more than ever, it is timely that the Mellon Foundation is trusting the ILI partners who are deeply rooted and remain steadfast in service to our communities,” said Lori Pourier, President, First Peoples Fund. “During this time of the pandemic, our organizations do not have the bandwidth to help educate mainstream arts organizations on how to best serve Indian country and rural communities."

In the midst of uncertainty and social transformation, arts and culture leaders are always part of the front-line of active change-making. During 2020 especially, these vantage points are helping shape the narrative of the moment and engage people in ways that go beyond news media.

“Each of our organizations has a long legacy of direct experience,” said Vicky Holt Takamine, Executive Director of PA’I Foundation. “Passed down from generation to generation, we continue to hold and practice our cultural traditions in the face of adversity that gives us collective strength and a very unique perspective. This is an important time for ILI, when we can pool together our strength and resources to collectively support and amplify these voices.”

“As the pandemic and economic crisis ripples throughout the U.S., rural areas are especially affected,” said Carlton Turner, Director of Sipp Culture in Utica, Mississippi. “The rural South, in particular, is an example of how racial inequity makes a crisis even worse for Black people and other people of color. This support has the potential to make a lasting effect on arts & culture in our state – and it models an approach that could impact far beyond our region as we all face the future.”

People seeking more information about the Crisis Relief grants are encouraged to visit http://www.weareili.org/ and sign up for the e-mail list to receive notices of application openings at each organization.

ABOUT ILI
The Intercultural Leadership Institute is a year-long intensive leadership experience for artists, culture bearers and other arts practitioners.

ILI is a collaborative program of Alternate ROOTS, First Peoples Fund, National Association of Latino Arts & Cultures (NALAC) and PA’I Foundation. The effort grew out of our direct experiences as leaders of these founding cultural organizations. We often found that many personal and professional leadership programs emphasized dominant cultural norms, modes of learning and social approaches that didn’t match our commitment to cultural equity and change-making in our own communities.
ILI’s “intercultural” approach emphasizes overlapping experiences, shared spaces and mutual accountability – and seeks to challenge dominant social norms while honoring differences of histories, traditions, vocabulary and more. We seek to develop leaders specifically within the arts & culture field to adeptly respond to significant changes that impact society, politics, environment and economy. As a peer cohort, ILI intercultural leaders hone personal and professional skills to affect local, national and global communities – and promote a shift toward greater awareness, resourcing and action in the broader field of arts & culture.

ALTERNATE ROOTS (https://alternateroots.org/)
Alternate ROOTS supports the creation and presentation of original art that is rooted in community, place, tradition or spirit. We are a group of artists and cultural organizers based in the South across 14 states creating a better world together. As Alternate ROOTS, we call for social and economic justice and are working to dismantle all forms of oppression – everywhere. Find out more information about Alternate ROOTS crisis funding program Solidarity Fund here. Find out more about Alternate ROOTS here.

FIRST PEOPLES FUND (https://www.firstpeoplesfund.org/)
First Peoples Fund (FPF) supports the Collective Spirit® of artists and culture bearers. Rooted in the traditional values of generosity and respect, humility and fortitude, FPF uplifts the Indigenous Arts Ecology – relationship based ecosystems that strengthen Native arts and culture grounded in ancestral knowledge. We accomplish this by 1) supporting culture bearers and artist entrepreneurs as transformative community leaders, 2) deepening tribally based organizations’ capacity to serve artists and their families and 3) investing holistically into the next generation of resilient artists. Learn more about FPF’s Resilience Fund https://www.firstpeoplesfund.org/coronavirus-response.

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF LATINO ARTS AND CULTURES (NALAC) (https://www.nalac.org/)
National Association of Latino Arts and Cultures (NALAC) is the nation’s premier nonprofit organization exclusively dedicated to the promotion, advancement, development and cultivation of the Latino arts field. In this capacity, NALAC stimulates and facilitates intergenerational dialogues among disciplines, languages and traditional and contemporary expressions. Find information about NALAC’s Actos de Confianza emergency grantmaking here.

PA‘I FOUNDATION (www.paifoundation.org)
Media Contact: marigaliher@gmail.com
vicky@paifoundation.org

PA‘I Foundation, organized in 2001, preserves and perpetuates Hawaiian cultural traditions for future generations. PA‘I Foundation is the non-profit organization of Pua Ali‘i ʻIlima, a hālau hula (school of Hawaiian dance) founded by kumu hula (master teacher of Hawaiian dance) Vicky Holt Takamine in 1977. While the organization is centered around and supported by hālau members, the purpose of PA‘I Foundation is to address and serve the needs of native Hawaiians and those who make Hawai‘i their home. Find more information about PA‘I Presents: E Ho‘i Ke Aloha (Return the Love) - A Covid Relief Project for the Arts Community at http://www.paifoundation.org.

SIPP CULTURE (http://sippculture.com/)
The Mississippi Center for Cultural Production (Sipp Culture) is honoring the history and building the future of Utica, MS. Our work weaves together research, development, local agriculture, with contemporary media & storytelling to promote the legacy and vision of our hometown. Our place-based model program supports groups and individuals working to achieve social, economic, and cultural transformation toward long-term
sustainability through the creation and presentation of arts, culture, and through using food (agriculture) and story to leverage community transformation and shift the material condition of Southern rural people.
Contact Information
Ennis Carter
Social Impact Studios
http://socialimpactstudios.com/
+1 2672576700

Online Web 2.0 Version
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