

DANCE/NYC ANNOUNCES 4TH ITERATION OF DANCE ADVANCEMENT FUND

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By Dance/NYC

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Submissions of Expressions of Interest Open through June 18

New York, NY – Dance/NYC is pleased to announce the fourth iteration of the Dance Advancement Fund made possible by the generous support of the Howard Gilman Foundation and the Ford Foundation. The purpose of the funding initiative is to address the inequitable distribution of resources in the dance field and advance its resilience and ability to thrive by supporting dance makers in the metropolitan New York City area with operating budgets between \$25,000 and \$250,000 with two-year general operating support grants of \$6,000 to \$40,000 annually, including ongoing professional development, from September 1, 2024 - August 31, 2026. The deadline for expression of interest (EOI) submissions is June 18, 2024, 5:00 p.m. ET.

The fourth iteration of the Dance Advancement Fund, its components, and continued evolution is a reflection of ongoing learning and dialogue with current and past grantees, field partners, Dance/NYC's task forces and committees, and ongoing field research and current events impacting the field. Dance/NYC is also working in collaboration with Niya Nicholson of MOVE|NYC, a justice driven, creatively inclined nonprofit arts leader with 9 years of advancement expertise—namely, business strategy, fundraising, DEI, marketing, and Board & program development.

"I am grateful for the opportunity to partner with Dance/NYC to support and invest in the thriveability of NYC-based dance makers," says Niya. "As this year's Program Consultant, I am excited to serve as a resource to the dance community by providing insights on building company infrastructure, fundraising, and financial planning via webinars and 1:1 technical sessions and making panel recommendations. One major challenge for dance makers is securing funding and other critical resources to bring their vision and activities to fruition, especially under the \$250K budget threshold. The Dance Advancement Fund's proactivity in addressing these barriers and providing multi-year support will undoubtedly help dance makers to go even further with their mission, practice, and offerings."

"The Dance Advancement Fund intervenes in a critical support gap for smaller budget organizations" says Sara Roer, Co-Executive Director of Dance/NYC. "As these entities represent some of the deepest diversity across the New York City metropolitan area, moving them toward thriving has the potential to lift all ships toward a more just, equitable, and inclusive dance sector."

Dance/NYC established the Dance Advancement Fund in 2017 to respond directly to Dance/NYC's research, *State of NYC Dance and Workforce Demographics 2016* ([Dance.NYC/StateofDance2016](#)), which underscored that the smallest organizations demonstrate the greatest capacity to adapt and have workforces that better reflect the racial diversity and presence of disabled and immigrant people in New York City's population than the workforces of larger organizations. The research also revealed that dance makers with annual budgets of less than \$1 million comprise the lion's share (84%) of total groups but have access to only 10% of the total revenue.

In 2020, Dance/NYC's research study, *Defining "Small-Budget" Dance Makers in a Changing Dance Ecology* ([Dance.NYC/SBDMdata2020](#)), further revealed that nearly all "small-budget" dance makers need funding for salaries/wages (95%) and general operations (93%), with more than half (56%) indicating that the salaries/wages category was the most critical funding need. These needs then deepened as the sector responded to the ongoing impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. Dance/NYC's *Coronavirus Dance Impact Informational Brief* ([bit.ly/DNYC_COVID_DanceImpactBrief](#)) found that individual dance workers and dance making organizations expressed an inability to provide for basic needs. That work also found that 84% of organizations facing permanent closure at that time had budgets under \$100K.

Released in 2023, *State of NYC Dance 2023: Findings from the Dance Industry Census* ([Dance.NYC/StateOfNYCDance23](#)) reveals that small budget entities may comprise even more of the dance industry than originally believed. That work welcomed input from all entities regardless of budget size and structure. While previous research had been limited to non-profit entities and entities with budgets of more than \$25K. Nearly 60% of dance entities responding to the Dance Industry Census had budgets less than \$100K and 76% had budgets less than \$250K. The Census research also found that smaller budget entities:

- Experienced more significant pandemic-related budget declines
- Access the lowest proportion of contributed revenue
- Lack capacity to pay living wages and effectively address diversity, equity, inclusion, accessibility and social justice.

Dance/NYC invites dance making organizations and groups based in the metropolitan NYC area with operating budgets of \$25,000-\$250,000 to apply for two-year general operating support awards for the period of September 1, 2024 - August 31, 2026. Dance/NYC expects to award up to twenty-five (25) dance makers to support their operations and advance their resilience and ability to thrive. Benefits of the program include general operating support grants of \$6,000 to \$40,000 per year; professional development support in the form of online webinars and grantee cohort meetings; and goal-directed coaching and consulting to address a specific organizational challenge and support grantee infrastructure and sustainability goals in the areas of: visioning and strategic planning; fundraising and resource gathering; marketing, storytelling, and communications; fiscal management; or general administration & operations.

In order to minimize applicant labor, the application will be a two part process:

1. Expressions of Interest (EOI) are now open for submissions until June 18, 2024, 5:00 p.m. ET. This is an accessible online form assessing applicant interest and eligibility for the grant.
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To assist prospective applicants, Dance/NYC will provide:

- A live webinar detailing how to complete both the expression of interest and full application forms and answering questions.
- Virtual one-on-one technical assistance sessions via phone (voice-only) dictation or Zoom in English, for 40-minute or 20-minute sessions. Registration will be on a first-come, first-served basis.
- Four (4) recorded professional development sessions aimed to aid in the development of application materials.

To ensure equitable access, all webinars and recorded professional development sessions will include ASL interpretation and closed

captioning.

Additional information about eligibility, application requirements, accessibility, and application support can be found at bit.ly/DAF24-26.

The deadline for expression of interest (EOI) submission is June 18, 2024, 5:00 p.m. ET

About [Dance/NYC](#):

Dance/NYC's mission is to promote and encourage the knowledge, appreciation, practice, and performance of dance in the metropolitan New York City area. It embeds core values of justice, equity, and inclusion into all aspects of its programs and operations. Dance/NYC remains committed to delivering programs that address disparities in the dance field by continuing to fill gaps in the availability of resources where they are most needed. It believes the dance ecology must itself be just, equitable, and inclusive to meaningfully contribute to social progress and envisions a dance ecology wherein power, funding, opportunities, conduct, and impacts are fair for all artists, cultural workers, and audiences.

About [Niya Nicholson](#): Niya Nicholson is a justice driven, creatively inclined nonprofit arts leader with 9 years of advancement expertise—namely, business strategy, fundraising, DEI, marketing & program development. A native New Yorker raised in Harlem, Niya studied dance at Fiorello H. LaGuardia High School and obtained her B.A. in 2014 from Vassar College. Niya's arts administration and advocacy career began in 2015, simultaneously supporting emerging and established nonprofits and artists. Upon MOVE[NYC]'s 2015 launch, Niya served as its sole volunteer administrator and was promoted to Executive Director in 2023, helping the nonprofit rise from a \$25K to \$1M budget & implementing 7 tuition-free and subsidized programs in NYC and DC with a 100% college matriculation rate. Niya's prior positions include Director of Development of the José Limón Dance Foundation and Development Manager at Gibney, resulting in 6 new studios and an elevator at 280 Broadway. Niya is Board Chair of MICHYAYA Dance.

Niya was an inaugural and 5-year member of Dance/NYC's Symposium Programming Committee and has been featured at the Symposium as a 2-time SMART Bar Consultant and 2018 session speaker, in addition to being the former Co-Chair of the 2017-18 Dance/NYC Junior Committee. Niya's leadership honors include being a 2023 New York Foundation for the Arts' Incubator for Executive Leaders of Color member and a 2018-19 Dance/USA Institute for Leadership Training mentee. Niya was a panel facilitator and audition adjudicator for the 2024 International Association of Blacks in Dance Conference; a featured speaker at the 2019 Dance/USA Conference addressing DEI; and additional speaking engagements include American Express, Gibney, Vassar College, and S.U.N.Y. Purchase. Niya has made funding and leadership selection recommendations for the NYC Department of Cultural Affairs' Cultural Development Fund and New York Foundation for the Arts' Incubator for Executive Leaders of Color and Fiscal Sponsorship programs.

About the [Howard Gilman Foundation](#):

Howard Gilman believed in the power of the arts to transform lives. The Howard Gilman Foundation honors his legacy by supporting the most robust, innovative, and promising performing arts organizations in New York City.

About the [Ford Foundation](#):

The Ford Foundation is an independent, nonprofit grant-making organization with assets currently valued at \$16 billion. For more than 85 years it has worked with courageous people on the frontlines of social change worldwide, guided by its mission to strengthen democratic values, reduce poverty and injustice, promote international cooperation, and advance human achievement. With headquarters in New York, the foundation has offices in Latin America, Africa, the Middle East, and Asia.

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