

ANNOUNCING: RECIPIENTS OF 2024–2026 DANCE ADVANCEMENT FUND

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By Dance/NYC

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Dance/NYC Announces Dance Advancement Fund Grantees

25 Recipients and 3 Runners-Up Awarded to Accelerate Resilience in Dance

New York, NY — Dance/NYC is pleased to announce the 25 recipients and three runners-up of 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.

For Dance/NYC, thriving dance makers have the resources to make dance with dignity, defined as the ability to pay dignified wages to all dance workers and collaborators who engage in the ideation, creation, execution, performance, and distribution of their artistic works; remain generative artists, defined as the creation of new works and/or the sustaining, archiving, performance, and preservation of repertory and/or legacy works; and work in accountability and healthy interdependent relationships with their collaborators, audiences, local communities, and the field.

Grantees of this iteration of the Dance Advancement Fund are:

- [7NMS| Marjani Forté-Saunders + Everett Saunders](#)
- [Buffy Productions](#)
- [Company SBB // Stefanie Batten Bland](#)
- [Dancers Unlimited](#)
- [Diversity in Arts and Nations for Cultural Education, Inc.](#)
- [Donna Uchizono Company](#)
- [Exit12 Dance Company](#)
- [Flex Dance Program Inc.](#)
- [General Mischief Dance Theatre](#)
- [iLAND](#)
- [Jeremy McQueen's Black Iris Project](#)
- [Jiva Performing Arts, Inc.](#)
- [Kinding Sindaw](#)
- [Kyle Marshall Choreography](#)
- [LayeRhythm Productions, Inc.](#)
- [MBDance](#)
- [Moriah Evans](#)
- [Ogemdi Ude](#)
- [Pony Box Dance Theatre](#)
- [Project Connect](#)
- [Redhawk Native American Arts Council](#)
- [Surati for Performing Arts](#)
- [Tabula Rasa Dance Theater](#)
- [The Japanese Folk Dance Institute of NY](#)
- [Unpezverde](#)

Runners-Up are:

- [Kathy Westwater Dance](#)
- [Pacemakers Dance Team](#)
- The Church of the Unruly

The selected dance-making organizations and groups will receive general operating support grants ranging from \$6,000 to \$40,000, awarded over a two-year period from September 1, 2024 to August 31, 2026. Recipients will receive half of the total grant amount each year, along with professional development opportunities. Runners-up will receive one-time awards of \$1,500 to \$3,200.

Professional development offerings for grantees are provided by program partners Arts FMS, Mariclaire Hulbert Consulting, and Pentacle. Each grantee will have access to personal one-on-one consultations with a focus on a variety of topics including: visioning and strategic planning; fundraising and resource gathering; marketing, storytelling, and communications; general administration & operations; and individualized fiscal management coaching. In total, professional development offerings are valued at nearly \$85,000 across the full grant period.

This iteration of the Dance Advancement Fund, its components, and continued evolution is a reflection of ongoing learning and dialogue with current and past grantees, partners, Dance/NYC's task forces and committees, ongoing research, the collaboration and advisement of Niya Nicholson of MOVE|NYC|, and current events impacting the field.

"We are thrilled to recognize a diverse cohort of grantees for whom this support can make a substantive difference in the longer term planning of their creative work and basic operations," says Sara Roer, Dance/NYC Co-Executive Director. "Funding paired with professional development allows each company to both define and move toward thriving on their own terms."

"The Dance Advancement Fund is unique in its focus on multiyear general operating support, a key tool for dancemakers as they build their creative and organizational practice," says Anna Campbell, Senior Director of Programs and Planning at Howard Gilman Foundation. "As these companies evolve, so does the dance landscape in New York City. The Howard Gilman Foundation looks forward to seeing the continued impact of these grants on our performing arts ecosystem."

"The Dance Advancement Fund is a crucial source of support for New York City's dynamic dance landscape," notes Rocio Aranda-Alvarado, Senior Program Officer in Creativity and Free Expression at the Ford Foundation. "By empowering smaller dance companies to deepen their artistic exploration and expand their reach, this initiative supports grantees' creative visions as they contribute to the rich diversity of expression that defines our city as a center for dance production."

Dance/NYC remains committed to providing resources and valuing the labor of dance workers in the same way as it advocates to the dance community and across the arts sector. In total, the Dance Advancement Fund represents an investment of \$750,000+ in the resilience and thriving of the New York City metropolitan area dance sector.

The 25 grantees include representatives from five counties in the New York City metropolitan area: Bronx (2), Hudson (3), Kings (9), New York (9), and Queens (2). Grantees are majority ALANNA-led (88%), and include majority women-identifying and gender nonconforming/nonbinary/genderqueer non-cis-man led (79%), includes disabled leadership (36%), majority LGBTQIA2S+ led (60%), and majority immigrant led (52%).

Grantees were selected by a [review panel](#) of dance workers, including members of Dance/NYC's task forces and committees, and were among a competitive pool of over 150 metropolitan New York City area dance groups who submitted applications in response to an open call. Key evaluation criteria included: a dedication to sustaining practice beyond the two-year grant period, commitments and measurable actions in alignment with stated values of diversity, justice, equity, and inclusion, organizational and financial health (regardless of budget size), a commitment to paying artists and arts workers a living wage, with a well-articulated narrative for how the funds will help advance the organization and a willingness to engage in ongoing learning/professional development and to share learnings within a cohort of grantees.

Dance/NYC provided all eligible dance makers who participated in the full application process with an honorarium of \$640 to offset the costs of completing an application. Additionally, substantive technical assistance options were provided to all applicants, inclusive of one-on-one sessions with the program consultant and a series of professional development webinars provided by Niya Nicholson and Laurel Lawson to support completion of key components of the application.

Additional information on grant requirements and eligibility can be found on our website at [Dance.NYC](#).

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 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.

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 MICHİYAYA Dance.

Niya was an inaugural and five-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 [Arts FMS](#):

As a financial management firm that integrates with nonprofit arts organizations, Arts FMS empowers organizations to focus on their mission while they focus on the long-term fiscal health and sustainability of the organization. By providing a comprehensive scope of full financial management services, Arts FMS is able to bring stability, efficiency, and reliability to an organizations' financial operations. Principals, Andrea Nellis and Lucy Mallett, bring decades of nonprofit financial experience and believe art is vital to our society and core to the Arts FMS mission. As practitioners and advisors in the nonprofit arts field, their focus is to strengthen the sector and secure the present and future of their clients.

About [Mariclare Hulbert Consulting](#):

Mariclare Hulbert (she/her) has 20+ years of experience in the arts and nonprofit fields, specializing in strategic marketing, communications, public relations, and outreach. She worked at Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival for nearly 10 years, serving as Director of Marketing & Communication. As a consultant, she supports clients with an array of marketing, PR, and communications needs. She has worked with Bridge Live Arts, Dance/USA, Kayla Hamilton/Circle O, Kinetic Light, Leela Dance Collective, the National Center for Choreography-Akron, Sydnie L. Mosley/SLMDances, and others, [mariclarehulbert.com](#)

About [Pentacle](#):

With a mission to free performing artists to focus on what they do best—create art and engage with audiences and communities—Pentacle offers creative affordable models for arts administration, alternatives to the traditional in-house staffing or creating a not-for-profit corporation. Providing direct management support services and programming focusing on building healthy infrastructures: the production and distribution of work, financial planning/support/management, and nurturing arts workers, Pentacle partners with performing artists/organizations to build successful professional lives and sustainable businesses.

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