

DANCE WORKER DIGEST | OCTOBER 2024

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By Dance/NYC

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This month's topics cover hurricane relief efforts, federal arts education funding, protections for nonprofit arts workers, compensation and challenges for access work, and more.

Hurricanes Milton and Helene Devastate the Southeastern U.S.



In the wake of Hurricane Milton and Hurricane Helene, communities across the Southeastern United States are grieving their losses and starting to rebuild. This has directly impacted arts communities, including the River Arts District in Asheville, who also have an important role to play in recovery. As the ongoing climate crisis leads to increased storms, it is important that we develop sustainable ways of supporting dance and the arts through disasters so that we can do the important work of reconnecting our communities.

Links:

- [Check out Hurricane Helene mutual aid efforts](#)
- [Check out Hurricane Milton mutual aid efforts](#)
- [Donate to the North Carolina Arts Disaster Relief Fund](#)
- [Learn more about the arts and disaster preparedness and response](#)
- [Review Dance/NYC coverage on changes to FEMA relief for artists](#)

U.S. Department of Education Issues Guidance on Arts Education Funding



This month, the U.S. Department of Education issued a letter of guidance to Chief State School Officers on how federal funding can be used for arts education. The letter reaffirms the importance of arts education and provides clarity on how school districts can support it. In particular, it explains how school districts can use funds to support arts education for low-income students, disabled students, professional development, technical education, and more.

Arts education is vital to the development of healthy, well-rounded, and empowered students. Dance and broader arts education are undervalued, with only 21% of NYC public high schools providing dance education. This letter opens opportunities for school districts across the country to

increase support for arts education and elevate the importance of the arts in child development.

- [Review the U.S. Department of Education's Letter of Guidance](#)
- [Check out Americans for the Arts' Coverage of the DOE Letter](#)

Fearless Fund Settles Lawsuit Ending Grant Program for Black Women Business Owners



The Fearless Fund, a venture capital firm, announced it has settled in a lawsuit, permanently closing a grant program for Black women-owned businesses. The case only acts as legal precedent in Alabama, Florida, and Georgia. Even in those states, most racial diversity-related grantmaking should be able to continue. The legal case against Fearless Fund hinged on the idea that the grant was a contract, not a gift. Funders in these states should seek legal counsel and limit requirements on grantees to avoid grants being construed as contracts.

This legal case is part of a broader nationwide attack on diversity, equity, and inclusion programs. As detailed in the [2023 State of NYC Dance Report](#), BIPOC dance workers are paid less and have fewer savings. It is vital that the nonprofit arts field does not allow these attacks to halt the important work of righting historical wrongs and building a more just arts sector. The field must continue to prioritize racial justice in grantmaking.

- [Review the Chronicle of Philanthropy's coverage on the Fearless Fund settlement](#)
- [Scan Inside Philanthropy's article on the implications of the settlement](#)
- [Learn more about the Fearless Fund case history](#)

Arts and Entertainment Unions Release Federal Policy Priorities



This fall, the Arts, Entertainment, and Media Industries (AEMI) Coordinating Committee, a coalition of 12 arts unions led by AFL-CIO, released a new policy agenda titled "Reimagining Federal Support for the Arts and Public Media." The priorities are intended to strengthen and protect workers in the nonprofit arts sector, and are centered around three areas:

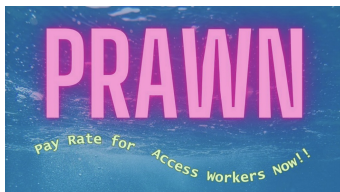
1. Strengthen labor protections in federal arts funding. This includes strengthening enforcement of existing prevailing wage requirements for organizations receiving federal arts funding.
2. Increase workers' power in the funding process by including seats for worker advocates on national arts grantmaking councils.
3. Increase sustainability of arts careers by offering more general operating support in federal arts

funding as opposed to program-specific funding. This would allow organizations to more easily use federal funding to support worker pay beyond the timeline of specific projects.

Federal funding is a vital part of the nonprofit arts sector, with the [National Endowment for the Arts being the largest arts funder in the nation](#). By representing the interests of workers in the grantmaking process, these reforms have the potential to significantly impact the livelihoods and sustainability of individual arts workers as well as organizations across the nation.

- [Review the "Reimagining Federal Support for the Arts and Public Media" agenda](#)
- [Check out Hollywood Reporter's coverage on the federal policy priorities](#)

Pay Rate for Access Workers Now Releases 2023 Report



Pay Rate for Access Workers Now (PRAWN) recently released their 2023 report detailing compensation and challenges for access work. PRAWN aims to build collective power to achieve greater pay, pay transparency, and clearer industry standards for access work. The report surveys a wide variety of kinds of access work, including audio description, access consulting, training, speaking, and more. It details challenges in the field, like the preponderance of unpaid labor and unsustainability, as well as the opportunities to build solidarity and center values in order to increase pay for access work.

Access workers are a vital part of building a more inclusive and just dance field. If we want a diverse array of New Yorkers to be able to engage with dance, it is imperative to support the work of disabled and non-disabled access workers for the long haul.

- [Check out PRAWN's 2023 Report](#)
- [Learn more about Pay Rate for Access Workers Now](#)



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