

REGRANTING

Dance Workforce Resilience (DWR) Fund 2025-2026

Rehearsal Space Subsidy

Dance Advancement Fund

Wednesday, June 18, 2025

Overview

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Program Overview & Goals

Made possible by the support of the Ford Foundation, New York Community Trust, and other generous funders, the purpose of the Dance Workforce Resilience (DWR) Fund is to promote fair labor practices and addresses wage inequities and precarious working conditions for individual freelance dancers by providing awards tied to formal contracts to dancers within the New York City dance ecosystem. Currently in its pilot iteration, the DWR Fund intends to:

- Reduce the wage gap between individual freelance dancers and living wage standards in the NYC metropolitan area;
- Incentivize equitable labor practices by promoting the widespread use of contracts; and
- Address systemic inequities by prioritizing the most underpaid and underprotected groups of dance workers including African, Latina/o/x, Asian, Arab, and Native American (ALAANA); disabled; immigrant; older adults; women-identifying; gender nonconforming/nonbinary/genderqueer; and transgender dancers.

Dance/NYC will award one-time flat grants of \$1,000 to individual freelance dancers in the metropolitan New York City area for contracted dance work that includes a public performance or presentation taking place within the NYC metro area, completed between January 1, 2025, and April 30, 2026. Rehearsals are recognized as work, but projects are only eligible if the final performance or presentation occurs within the NYC metro area. Over the course of the grant period, Dance/NYC will distribute \$324,000 to more than 320 awardees. Awards will be determined through a weighted lottery system.

The DWR Fund is a vital component of Dance/NYC's multiyear [Dance Workforce Resilience \(DWR\) Initiative](#), which intends to address economic inequity and strengthen the dance ecology by directly serving individual dance workers, dance organizations, fiscally sponsored groups and projects, and nonprofit and for-profit dance entities.

Dance/NYC has developed the framework for its DWR Fund pilot in alignment with its organizational research, past experience in funding individual dance workers through its Coronavirus Relief Funds, and new field research.

Dance/NYC's most recent research report [State of NYC Dance 2023: Findings from the Dance Industry Census](#) demonstrates that dance is not financially sustainable for the majority of its workers, with most earning an average of \$22/hour, or 15% below NYC living wage (as determined by MIT's [living wage calculator](#)). Moreover, dancers are among the lowest earners of all dance workers, making less than 50% of what CEOs or equivalent leads earn, bringing in an average annual income of \$23,000 from dance work or \$39,500 when including work outside of the dance sector—with most holding an average of four jobs. This pay inequity compounds the disproportionate access to pay and financial savings experienced by immigrant, Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC), and disabled workers. Additionally, 44% of dancers take jobs without contracts some of the time.

By addressing wage inequities and fostering economic sustainability for individual freelance dancers, Dance/NYC intends to enhance dancers' quality of life, support their artistic development, and promote more equitable labor and contractual practices across the NYC dance community.

Administration of the Fund

Dance/NYC 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. It seeks to advance policies, investments, programs, mindsets, and actions that remove and prevent inequities that exist along the continuum of lives in dance, from the public-school classroom to the stage.

Dance/NYC's approach cuts across its public programs—advocacy; research; leadership training, networking and convening; technology and visibility; and regranting—and all aspects of its operations. Its approach is intersectional, building upon multiple issue areas that together create a more just, equitable, and inclusive dance ecology. Dance/NYC's approach is also grounded in collaboration. It recognizes generations of people and organizations working to advance justice, equity, and inclusion in the arts and culture and strives to contribute to their efforts. It has established formal partnerships with colleague arts service organizations.

The Dance Workforce Resilience Fund pilot, its components and its continued evolution is a reflection of ongoing learning and dialogue with current and past grantees across Dance/NYC's grantmaking programs, 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:

- DWR Fund Strategic Program Consultant, F. Javier Torres-Campos, who provided support in the integration of equitable grantmaking principles into the program's design including the fund components, application design and weighted lottery development.
- DWR Fund Legal Consultant, Jo-Ná A. Williams, Esq., who provided support in the program's adherence to legal best practices, training materials and template development, and offering strategic consulting support to individual artists; and
- The DWR Fund Advisory Group, made up of individual artists with grantmaking experience and knowledge of arts labor advocacy, and who represent the demographic makeup of the local population. The group has provided feedback on eligibility, weighting, lottery categories, and grantee requirements to ensure that the Fund's structure is in alignment with the organization's values of justice, equity, and inclusion.

In alignment with these stated [values of justice, equity, and inclusion](#), Dance/NYC will lead the development, implementation, and evaluation of the Fund to ensure the following:

- Fund priorities are met;
- Applicant pool is a reflection of the demography of the metropolitan New York City area;
- Applicants receive clear information regarding the eligibility and application process;
- Applicants across geographies and demographics have the opportunity to receive support in completing their application;
- The application process and the dissemination of information regarding the application is led by and in conversation with community partners, organizers, and members of the field; and
- As many barriers to participation as possible are removed.

The Dance Workforce Resilience fund pilot is led by the following Dance/NYC Staff:

- Sara Roer, Interim Executive Director
- Alexeya EM, Grantmaking Manager (through May 2025)
- Rithika Ashok, Grantmaking Assistant
- Ann Marie Lonsdale, Interim Grantmaking Manager (Summer 2025)

About Dance/NYC ([Dance.NYC](#))

Dance/NYC's mission is to promote the knowledge, appreciation, practice, and performance of dance in the metropolitan New York City area. It embeds [values of justice, equity, and inclusion](#) into all aspects of the organization.

About the Consultants:

About [F. Javier Torres-Campos](#)

F. Javier Torres-Campos is a seasoned philanthropic leader committed to liberated and self-determined futures for all people. Professionally, Javier is the co-founder of Liberation Partners Co-Op and deploys his more than 20 years of experience as an independent consultant providing interim leadership, philanthropic and executive advising, board development, fundraising consulting, curriculum and program design, and cultural audits for organizations to align their governance, operations, programs, and policies with their values. His work centers on a just transition of our culture centering deep investment in care for people and community while investing in imagination, world-building, prototyping, and power-building. Javier is also the co-founder and co-chair overseeing Strategic Partnerships for Twenty43 Ventures, a pilot impact investing vehicle for commercial-scale BIPOC film and theater working to illustrate market viability and increase ownership, control, and wealth-building opportunities for creators.

About [Jo-Ná A. Williams, Esq.](#):

Jo-Ná A. Williams, Esq. is an award-winning attorney, founder, CEO, and advisor who founded J.A. Williams Law P.C. in 2012 to provide entrepreneurs, public figures, companies, brands, nonprofits, and thought leaders with ways to successfully maximize their careers, secure their companies, and provide assistance with business, and intellectual property matters.

Her clients have written New York Times best-selling books, been nominated for Grammys and Emmys, listed in the Billboard Top 100, with films and shows premiering on HBO, Netflix, HGTV, Amazon Prime, SXSW, and have received local and international acclaim.

She's been featured in Forbes, Entrepreneur, Fortune, Black Enterprise, The Root and Marie TV. She has spoken at Facebook, LinkedIn, NYU University, and Rent The Runway, amongst others. She was named Intellectual Property & Business Attorney of the Year by Acquisition International in 2019. She was also named one of the Top 40 Lawyers under 40 in 2019 by the National Black Lawyers and one of their Top 100 Lawyers in the country in 2023 and 2024. She's an instructor for LinkedIn for Learning and is a Board Member of The LGBT Community Center and the UPI Loan Fund. J.A. Williams Law has offices in both New York City and Dallas.

About the Funders:

About the [New York Community Trust](#):

The New York Community Trust connects past, present, and future generous New Yorkers with vital nonprofits working to make a healthy, equitable, and thriving community for all. From the creation of the country's first donor-advised fund to our vital role in the region's response to the AIDS crisis, September 11th, and COVID-19, The Trust has always been a pioneer, innovator, and leader in offering donors effective ways to empower and champion nonprofits.

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 the DWR Fund Advisory Group:



[Chanon Judson](#), Acting Artistic Director of Urban Bush Women, Visiting Associate Professor University at Buffalo

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[Randi Berry](#), Executive Director
IndieSpace

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[Madison Zalopany](#), Accessibility Consultant

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[Stephanie Acosta](#), Artist, Dramaturg, Director, Archivist

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[zavé martohardjono](#), Multidisciplinary Dance and Performance Artist

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