

PUBLIC HOUSING COMMUNITY FUND

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Public Housing Community Fund, NYCHA, NYC Mayor’s Office, NYC Public Design Commission, NYC Department of Youth and Community Development, NYCHA Residents, and NYCHA’s Cornerstone Program Operators Launch First-of-its-Kind NYCHA Artist-in-Residence Program

Calling all artists: An artist open call seeks artist applications for the program

*The Mellon Foundation awarded the Public Housing Community Fund a \$3 million grant to launch **From Roots to Arts: Celebrating NYCHA’s Cultural Heritage**, a scalable citywide artist-in-residence program*



New York, NY —The Public Housing Community Fund (Fund), an organization committed to enhancing the lives of NYCHA residents, the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA), the New York City Mayor’s Office, NYC Public Design Commission, NYC Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD) and its funded Cornerstone programs, and NYCHA residents are thrilled to announce a transformative partnership with the Mellon Foundation, launching *From Roots to Arts: Celebrating NYCHA’s Cultural Heritage*. This groundbreaking artist-in-residency program will activate public housing communities across New York City’s five boroughs through the lens of public art programming.

Spanning 20 months, beginning in summer 2024 and running through 2026, *From Roots to Arts* will feature five distinguished artists, each with a residency and program space at one NYCHA development in each of the five boroughs. The selected sites include dynamic communities at King Towers, Manhattan, Bushwick Houses, Brooklyn, Astoria Houses, Queens, Bronx River, the Bronx, and Richmond Terrace, Staten Island, embracing a broad spectrum of cultural

expressions and community engagement, impacting over 12,000 public housing residents. Each NYCHA community is supported by DYCD-funded Cornerstone operators, including SCAN-Harbor (Manhattan), Grand Street Settlement (Brooklyn), HANAC Inc. (Queens), Children's Arts & Science Workshops, Inc. (Bronx), and Joan & Alan Bernikow Jewish Community Center of Staten Island (Staten Island).

Residents were invited to participate in community days in March and April, offering a platform to voice their preferences on the type of art and artists they wish to engage with. These events were designed to be interactive and fun, providing a unique opportunity for residents to shape the artistic direction of the program. In total, nearly 200 residents participated and provided feedback for the artist open call, and over 160 community surveys were collected across all program sites.

From Roots to Arts is crafted to foster a vibrant, creative environment in the dedicated spaces of NYCHA's community centers. Artists will delve into the heart of these communities, working closely with residents to create art and cultivate a deeper sense of community and personal expression. The artist open call was released today and can be viewed at <https://www.communityfund.nyc/fromrootstoarts>. Interested artists can apply to serve as an artist-in-residence at one of the five participating communities. Applications are due by May 19, 2024. The artist selection process will be led by organization officials, representatives from the city and art organizations, and NYCHA resident leaders, with a goal of selecting five artists to begin their residency in July 2024. Artists will be provided \$70,000 in compensation annually (\$105,000 over the 20-month residency) plus benefits and other program support. Each NYCHA community is allocated \$155,000 for public art fabrication and program facilitation support.

This effort is a part of NYCHA's [Connected Communities](#) program, which is focused on transforming open and community spaces by implementing public-private partnerships. The program's efforts are based on participatory planning and design and strive to enhance physical and social connections between residents and their communities.

"Today marks a significant milestone for the Public Housing Community Fund as we launch the *From Roots to Arts: Celebrating NYCHA's Cultural Heritage* initiative. Thanks to the generous support from the Mellon Foundation, this initiative will foster a dynamic platform where art and community intersect and thrive. Nearly 200 public housing residents joined with our partners for community days, informing the type of public art programming they want to see in their communities and what kinds of artists they would like to work with," **Public Housing Community Fund Executive Director Alex Zablocki** said. "We are excited to announce that the artist call-out is live and accepting applications through May 19th. This is a clarion call to all artists passionate about making a difference in our communities—your creativity has the power to inspire and uplift. I encourage every interested artist to apply and join us in shaping a legacy of cultural enrichment that echoes throughout our public housing and beyond."

“NYCHA is ecstatic to contribute to the From Roots to Arts program,” said **NYCHA Chief Executive Officer Lisa Bova-Hiatt**. “It’s always exciting to provide residents with a positive outlet for artistic expression and this truly unique artist-in-residency opportunity will give the selected resident-artists an amazing platform to showcase their work in a way that enriches NYCHA campuses and communities. We are very thankful to the Public Housing Community Fund and our city partners for helping to bring this spectacular program to life for NYCHA residents, and I, for one, cannot wait to see the amazing artwork that comes from it.”

“I’m eager to see the ways in which *From Roots to Arts* artists in residence contribute to community and creativity at NYCHA community centers. Public art has the potential to bring us together, revitalize our communal spaces, and highlight the work of artists in our community, and this opportunity, driven by the input of nearly 200 residents, will do just that. I appreciate the many public and private partners who contributed to the development of this program, and the NYCHA residents whose feedback is shaping this work,” said **Deputy Mayor for Housing, Economic Development and Workforce Maria Torres-Springer**.

The program is made possible thanks to a generous grant of \$3 million from The Mellon Foundation, Humanities in Place program area.

“As a cross-sector commitment to the unique value of the arts and cultural programming for all communities, *From Roots to Art* presents opportunities foster community building and a sense of pride and connection for NYCHA’s residents,” said **Mellon Foundation Humanities in Place Program Director, Justin Garrett Moore**. “Artists and culture bearers will have the opportunity to research, interpret, and create work in and with community based on the distinct histories and cultures of our city’s public housing communities. This collective work promises to better reflect and amplify the experiences, stories, and heritage of our great city.”

"Participatory Public Art has an extraordinary ability to vitalize, inspire and strengthen communities," says **NYC Public Design Commission Executive Director Sreoshi Banerjea**. "The Public Design Commission is thrilled to partner on From Roots to Arts, an initiative that harnesses this transformative power to empower, and uplift NYCHA communities. This innovative artist -in-residency program aligns with the Commission's mission to champion quality design that connects with communities and meaningfully engages residents in shaping their environments to reflect their unique spirit and heritage. We are deeply grateful to the Mellon Foundation for their visionary support in making this impactful program possible."

“Whether providing jobs through the Summer Youth Employment Program or offering safe spaces at Saturday Night Lights sites, DYCD is committed to Mayor Adams’ forward-thinking vision for NYCHA residents at our Cornerstone Community Centers,” said **NYC Department of**

Youth and Community Development Commissioner Keith Howard. “From Roots to Arts is a cross-agency, public-private collaboration that harnesses the power of art to beautify our public realm and foster more vibrant communities. DYCD is excited to join the Public Housing Community Fund and our partners to tap into the creative talents of New Yorkers.”

From Roots to Arts will be guided by a resident stakeholder advisory group in each community that will collectively share their experiences and art throughout the program and amplify NYCHA resident voices through public art programming. The program will be evaluated to support scalability and will be supported by a newly created position at the Fund, a NYCHA Art Liaison.

We invite all NYCHA residents and the broader public to join us in this exciting journey of artistic discovery and community engagement. For more information about the *From Roots to Arts* program, please visit <https://www.communityfund.nyc/fromrootstoarts>.

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About Public Housing Community Fund

Public Housing Community Fund is a nonprofit that forges partnerships to power transformative programs that enhance the lives of over 500,000 residents across NYCHA communities. Our goal is to engage people and partners to build a stronger, more equitable New York City by investing in public housing communities. We invest in programs focused on leadership development, financial empowerment, community health, and workforce training for residents of the NYCHA community. www.communityfund.nyc

About NYCHA

The New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA), the largest public housing authority in North America, was created in 1935 to provide decent, affordable housing for low- and moderate-income New Yorkers. NYCHA is home to 1 in 17 New Yorkers, providing affordable housing to 528,105 authorized residents through public housing and Permanent Affordability Commitment Together (PACT) programs as well as Section 8 housing. NYCHA has 177,569 apartments in 2,411 buildings across 335 conventional public housing and PACT developments. In addition, NYCHA connects residents to critical programs and services from external and internal partners, with a focus on economic opportunity, youth, seniors, and social services. With a housing stock that spans all five boroughs, NYCHA is a city within a city.

About DYCD

The New York City Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD) invests in a network of community-based organizations and programs to alleviate the effects of poverty and to provide opportunities for New Yorkers and communities to flourish. Since 1996, DYCD has been committed to supporting New Yorkers of all ages through high quality initiatives such as Beacon and Cornerstone Community Centers, COMPASS afterschool, the Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP), Adult Literacy and Immigrant Services, Runaway and Homeless Youth, and the Office of Neighborhood Safety. www.nyc.gov/dycd.

About The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation

The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation is the nation's largest supporter of the arts and humanities. Since 1969, the Foundation has been guided by its core belief that the humanities and arts are essential to human understanding. The Foundation believes that the arts and humanities are where we express our complex humanity, and that everyone deserves the beauty, transcendence, and freedom that can be found there. Through our grants, we seek to build just communities enriched by meaning and empowered by critical thinking, where ideas and imagination can thrive. Learn more at mellon.org.