



CITY OF CHICAGO • OFFICE OF THE MAYOR



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 6, 2022

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MAYOR LIGHTFOOT ANNOUNCES GRANT RECIPIENTS FOR COMMUNITY HEALING PROJECTS

Announcement made as part of the 2022 'Year of Healing' Summit promotes wellness, racial healing, and community transformation

CHICAGO — Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot, Chief Equity Officer Candace Moore, and Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events (DCASE) Commissioner Erin Harkey announced the grantees of the Together We Heal Creative Place Program, a \$5.5 million investment in creative projects that promote racial healing and transformation in Chicago's neighborhoods. The program focuses particularly on communities disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and systemic racism.

The announcement was made at the "Let's Talk Healing, Chicago: The Year of Healing 2022 Summit" at Harold Washington Library on September 22. The summit is an integral part of the City's Together We Heal initiative, which is framed by three pillars: reflect on our past, reclaim our present, and reimagine our future. "Let's Talk Healing, Chicago" included policy presentations, performances from local artists, and interactive healing workshops led by community healing practitioners across various modalities: sound, food, mental health, data & research, and more.

"Racial healing and transformation are an essential part of our ability to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic and civil unrest of the past two years," said Mayor Lightfoot. "I want to thank and congratulate our grantees for their visionary plans to create shared spaces for our communities to come together to heal and unite. These spaces give residents the opportunity to reflect on our past, reclaim our present, and reimagine our future."

From Fall 2022 through Winter 2024, selected artists and organizations will work in partnership with stakeholders to create projects that strengthen the economic, physical, and social character of a neighborhood or place. The 48 finalists were selected from more than 180 applications based on artistic merit, project feasibility, benefit to the community, community engagement experience, and connection to the Together We Heal guiding values.



CITY OF CHICAGO • OFFICE OF THE MAYOR



“At the root of Together We Heal is the belief that before we can transform systems and structures, we must first transform ourselves,” said Candace Moore, Chief Equity Officer at the City of Chicago. “We look forward to the outcomes of projects selected for the Creative Place Program, which has limitless potential to heal our community from the inside out and give way to sustainable solutions that will change lives for generations to come.”

“The Together We Heal Creative Place Program focuses on arts-based solutions, with the belief that creative works can play a significant role in addressing systemic inequities, act as a convener for dialogue, encourage problem-solving, and spur positive transformation in communities throughout the city,” DCASE Commissioner Erin Harkey said at the summit. “Chicago’s arts landscape has been devastated by the pandemic, but the resilience of our talented artists and venues as Chicago’s cultural scene continues to safely reopen gives us renewed hope for better times ahead.”

For more information on the Year of Healing and the Together We Heal Creative Place Program, visit chicago.gov/TogetherWeHeal.

EVENT PHOTOS

Available for download [here](#)



*Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot (center) with Together We Heal Creative Place Program grantees.
Photo Courtesy of City of Chicago.*



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(From Left) Roberto Requejo of Elevated Chicago, Juan Sebastian Areas of the Office of the Mayor, City of Chicago Chief Equity Officer Candace Moore, and Theodore J. Crawford of the Garfield Rite to Wellness Collaborative engage in a discussion on healing policies from a racial justice lens. Photo Courtesy of City of Chicago.



City of Chicago Chief Equity Officer Candace Moore leads a moderated Q&A with panelists during a session spotlighting healing policies from a racial justice lens. Photo Courtesy of City of Chicago.



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(From Left) DCASE Commissioner Erin Harkey and City of Chicago Chief Equity Officer Candace Moore announce the grantees of the Together We Heal Creative Place Program. Photo Courtesy of City of Chicago.

TOGETHER WE HEAL CREATIVE PLACE PROGRAM GRANTEES

\$500,000

- Deeply Rooted Dance Theater / Blacks in Green - Growing Together: A Dance + Garden Project for the South Side — *The Project will help heal and uplift South Side communities by using community-based dance and gardening to connect residents to nature, each other, and their cultural and agricultural heritage.*
- Full Spectrum Features NFP / Latinos Progresando - Community Storytellers — *This project will support 3 to 5 lead artists in the production of original short films that celebrate community in South Lawndale, and it will create a permanent space to train emerging storytellers.*

\$250,000

- Sisters in Cinema / Yvonne Welbon - South Shore Remembers — *South Shore Remembers is a multi-media art and social justice project inspired by oral histories of South Shore community members past and present with a special focus on the LGBTQ+ community.*



CITY OF CHICAGO • OFFICE OF THE MAYOR



- Rome in a Day Productions Chicago / Alexandria Aikens - Parkway Picture Show — *RiaD will launch the Parkway Picture Show, a project that repurposes part of an underutilized parking lot into a plaza and creates a summer festival to highlight Black and alternative filmmakers.*
- Folded Map Project / Chicago Bungalow Association - unBLOCKED: Undoing the harmful effects of racist Land Sale Contracts — *unBLOCKED educates about Chicago's racist housing policy of Land Sale Contracts (LSC) and uses art & material resources to catalyze the transformation of an Englewood block with former LSC homes.*
- Architresures / People for Community Recovery - Riverdale Creative Cultural Connections (RC3) Project — *The RC3 project cultivates collective well-being and efficacy through collaborative art experiences and the co-design of public artwork that celebrate the community's history, stories, and culture.*
- #LetUsBreathe Collective / Su Casa Catholic Worker – Liberation Landing — *Liberation Landing is a movement building space and collaborative partnership focused on deepening relationships with Black & Brown activists working in opposition to carceral systems.*
- ConTextos NFP / MAAFA Redemption Project - Sankofa Story Garden: Reflecting, Visioning, Co-Creating — *We will engage Authors Circles to develop 2 cohorts of young Black and Brown West Side leaders who will convene residents to envision and create a garden for sharing stories and shaping the future.*
- The Firehouse Community Arts Center / Haman Cross III - Bell Park: Changing the Narrative and Healing Together through Art, Play & Life — *Continued art activation toward healing and safety, resident engagement, and creation of a stage and community-created public art at WACA Bell Park, a historically relevant space in North Lawndale.*
- Sadia Nawab / IMAN Central - IMANifest Studios — *IMANifest Studios, located in Chicago Lawn and boarding Englewood, will use various forms of art, such as music, dance, media, and ceramics as creative therapy and a pipeline to traditional therapy.*
- The Foundation for Homan Square / Alexie Young - Celebrating Creativity & Culture in Homan Square: Public Space Improvements for Health, Safety, & Belonging on Homan Avenue — *This project will engage in community*



CITY OF CHICAGO • OFFICE OF THE MAYOR



storytelling to enhance the creative design of a public plaza, along with street-facing art installations and creative lot activations along Homan Avenue.

- American Indian Health Service of Chicago, Inc. / Cyndee Fox-Starr – Mending Intergenerational and Historical Trauma (MIGHT) — *MIGHT, an artistic cultural program, reclaims indigenous ways of knowing. Learning lost indigenous artistic disciplines will mend intergenerational trauma exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic.*

\$100,000

- Urban Growers Collective / Chicago Art Department - South Chicago Farm Outdoor Art Studio and Culinary Maker Space: Design Charrettes and Activation — *This project convenes artists and community to design an outdoor studio/maker space at UGC's South Chicago Farm to be activated with public programming and Artist Residencies.*
- Muddy Waters MOJO Museum / Chicago Blues Revival - The Mojo Garden and Performance Center — *The Mojo Garden and Performance Center will be a community gathering and performance space on a city-owned vacant lot next to the recently landmarked Muddy Waters House.*
- Prison + Neighborhood Arts/Education Project / Sarah Ross - Wall Turned Sideways — *Walls Turned Sideways is an art gallery and community center that mends separation caused by incarceration. The gallery connects incarcerated people and their communities with art and education.*
- Territory NFP / Root 2 Fruit Youth Foundation - Austin Safety Action Plan/Austin 2.0 — *An alliance of Austin youth leaders and adult allies will develop and produce hyperlocal community healing pop-ups that are safe and welcoming for everyone, using strategies defined by the youth.*
- Taproots, Inc. / Antidote Inc. - Creative Conversations — *Our Creative Conversations project utilizes restorative practices and art to transform communities through relationship building and the creation of vibrant spaces in partnership with block clubs.*
- Mandala South Asian Performing Arts / Indo American Center - Arts Access and Cultural Healing on Devon, Chicago's Little South Asia — *Mandala strives to revitalize the health and prosperity of Devon's South Asian community through arts and culture programming. Funds will be used to improve local participation and artist recruitment.*



CITY OF CHICAGO • OFFICE OF THE MAYOR



- The Miracle Center, Inc. / Nitza Rosario - TMC Project Synergy — *Project Synergy is a 6-part program series sustained through the Arts Incubator Model that facilitates collaboration and innovation between artists using the space for creative purposes.*
- Chicago Therapy Collective / Eisha Love - Together We Remember Elise — *Our all trans and non-binary BIPOC Co-Leads will set an exemplar bar for the DCASE's Year of Healing through our deeply introspective, collaborative, and transformative program featuring 20+ artists.*
- People Matter / Angela Lin - Breaking Community Bubbles — *By painting a mile-long street mural along bike lanes on Cermak Road connecting Bronzeville, Chinatown, and Pilsen, we increase safety among communities historically divided by viaducts and highways.*
- Pilar Audain / Truth, Racial Healing & Transformation - Year of Transformation through Solidarity — *Our project engages people through arts and culture, connect neighbors across the city through healing circles and to create Solidarity Altars in their neighborhoods to honor our transformation.*

\$45,000

- Affinity Community Services / Jenn Freeman | Po'Chop - The People's Church of the G.H.E.T.T.O — *The People's Church of the G.H.E.T.T.O is a performance series that illuminates the legacies of Black women whose lives and work built and enriched the Bronzeville community.*
- We Sow We Grow Project / The Black Bloom Project - Roots & Blooms — *R&B will transform an urban community farm in the far southside community of West Pullman through the marrying of art and agriculture.*
- Urban Juncture Foundation / Asia Taylor - Train of Thoughts — *Train of Thoughts will engage commuters at the 43rd St. Green Line station with Bronzeville stories that reflect on our past, embrace the present, and articulate a vision for our community's future.*
- Kiela Smith-Upton / Tsehayé Geralyn Hébert - We ARE Legacy...Our Greater South Shore — *Cross sector collaboration and grassroots action research, planning and PlaceKeeping activities focused on collective spaces. Local artists lead formal & informal experiential community engagement.*



CITY OF CHICAGO • OFFICE OF THE MAYOR



- Urban Male Network / Pugs Atomz - Changing the Englewood Landscape — *The project will help to fund the transformation of a vacant lot in Englewood into a place for healing, restoration, and hope.*
- Bridge To Freedom / James Crumb - Chicago Soul Arts — *We are curating a space (6248 S St. Lawrence St.) for culinary arts, theatre production, comedy, poetry, storytelling and more for the community in Woodlawn. This is to provoke healing and community.*
- 6018North NFP / Wisdom Baty - Soil and Soul — *In South Side gardens, artists, curators, chefs, youth, and neighbors collaborate to remediate the soil; reclaim cultural pride; create intergenerational exchange; and express Black joy.*
- Front Porch Arts Center / Free Street Theater - Front Porch Teen Theater and Storytelling Workshops — *Front Porch Arts Center seeks funding for a six month-long teen performance and storytelling workshop facilitated by two theater artists-in-resident and the building a stage, garden, and mural.*
- Free Spirit Media / Westside Association for Community Action (WACA) - You Can't Kill the Revolution: A Cinematic Celebration of Arts & Activism on Chicago's West Side — *A summer outdoor film screening series highlighting activist history on Chicago's West Side and featuring historical films and cinematic responses created by emerging and established BIPOC filmmakers.*
- Melissa Lewis / Cristian Roldán-Aponte - Reclaiming Sanctuary — *Reclaiming Sanctuary is a visual art project that invites the students of PACHS to reflect on their experiences of the dual pandemics of community violence and COVID-19 in order to create public art.*
- Instituto Gaspar Yanga / Brown Wall Project - Plugs and Connections — *Plugs and Connections is a multi-disciplinary Arts, Culture and Education project which intends on building across races and neighborhoods in the city of Chicago.*
- La Escuelita Bombera De Corazón / 18th Street Casa de Cultura - Agua — *Festival that explores musical/spiritual cultural traditions across the African Diaspora in LatinAmerica as a way to build connections & heal wounds of anti-blackness in Black & Brown communities.*
- The Southwest Collective / Nitsia Flores - Archer Ave Art Café — *We will create a weekly space for self-expression at the café, with curriculum developed by a bilingual art teacher, local artisans and a trauma counselor, for youth to plug into regularly.*



CITY OF CHICAGO • OFFICE OF THE MAYOR



- Jennifer Pham / Christopher Quy-Hac tran - Argyle Community Healing & Placekeeping Project — *The Argyle Community Healing & Placekeeping Project is a multi-pronged project that addresses collective community healing and cultural preservation and placekeeping for the Asia on Argyle community.*
- North River Commission / Natalia Virafuentes - We Are Albany Park — *The project will work with individual artists and groups of community members to create five new public art installations for community self-expression, culminating in a free outdoor event*
- HANA Center / Aram Han Sinfuentes - Citizenship for All: Storytelling for Immigrant Justice through NongGi Making — *Aram will facilitate ongoing NongGi making workshops at HANA Center centered around immigration justice. Aram and HANA will create a public installation of NongGis on HANA Center's building façade.*
- Chicago Mobile Makers / Maya Bird-Murphy - Interlocking Visions: Strength(in) Community — *Interlocking Visions: Strength(in) Community engages youth in conversations about space, place, belonging, and change in their community through design education using its Mobile Makerspace.*
- Haitian American Museum / Cranston Ramirez Knight - Healing Through A Pandemic — *The Haitian American Museum of Chicago (HAMOC) will bring its outdoor exhibit We Walk: A Celebration of Black Community to 4 priority neighborhoods, host 2 presentations focusing on community healing.*
- Red Clay Dance Company / Vershawn Sanders-Ward - Rest.Rise.Move.Nourish.Heal — *We explore healing traumatic relationships of Black bodies to the land by reviving agricultural practices and traditions to support spiritual, physical healing for Black/African Diaspora communities.*
- Puerto Rican Arts Alliance / AfriCaribe - Camino Cultura, Activando Nuestro Espacio Comunitario — *PRAA is seeking to activate an empty lot that was purchased in 2019 for community gatherings and to prevent developers from building yet another new condominium in this gentrifying neighborhood.*

\$35,000

- Greater Auburn Gresham Community Development Corporation / Maxwell Emcays - Signs of Change on 79th Street — *GAGDC and Maxwell Emcays will engage community members around the installation of eight events producing*



CITY OF CHICAGO • OFFICE OF THE MAYOR



twenty murals and eight sculptures on abandoned buildings and empty lots in Auburn Gresham.

\$25,000

- Creative Chicago Reuse Exchange (CCRx) / T.H.U.G. Hippie - The Creativity Bus — *CCRx and T.H.U.G. Hippie are launching THE CREATIVITY BUS to provide social emotional based arts and wellness programs/events to better empower the underestimated to build sustainable communities.*
- Lit Feelings / Jeweline Hale - Acting Up in South Deering and Once Upon a Pose — *Acting Up! A readers/writers theater program that combines SEL, & Multi-Arts practices. Once Upon A Pose combines literacy (an inclusive retelling of fairytales), SEL, and Yogic practices.*
- Chicago Urban Art Retreat Center / Dianna C Long - Neighborhood Healing Project — *Through arts in our community we will offer opportunities 4 residents to talk about& make art about how pandemic affected us. We will discuss how past&present will determine the future/what we can do.*
- Wayfinding LLC / Levette Haynes - Wayfinding: West Side Lagoons — *A community-led walking tour and temporary installation series activating Garfield, Douglass & Humbolt Park Lagoons with an all ages exploration of well-being for ourselves and our community waters.*
- Brianna Ramirez Smith / Marco Rios - The Giving Tree Mural of Humboldt Park — *Brianna Ramirez & Marco Rios are proposing to paint a mural in the east gym of the Humboldt Park Cultural Center.*

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About The Office of Equity and Racial Justice:

The Office of Equity and Racial Justice (OERJ) seeks to advance institutional change that results in an equitable transformation of how we do business across the City of Chicago enterprise. This includes the City's service delivery, resource distribution, policy creation, and decision-making.

OERJ will do this by supporting City departments in normalizing concepts of racial equity, organizing staff to work together for transformational change, and operationalizing new practices, policies, and procedures that result in more fair and just outcomes. Visit chicago.gov/equity.

About The Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events:



CITY OF CHICAGO • OFFICE OF THE MAYOR



The City of Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events (DCASE) supports artists and cultural organizations, invests in the creative economy, and expands access and participation in the arts throughout Chicago's 77 neighborhoods. As a collaborative cultural presenter, arts funder, and advocate for creative workers, our programs and events serve