



Press Release

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Center for Cultural Innovation in Partnership with Zoo Labs Announce the 2025 Fund Recipients

San Francisco Bay Area – The Center for Cultural Innovation (CCI) today announced the **2025 Zoo Labs: FUND** grant recipients. Fifteen grants ranging from \$5,000 - \$50,000 were awarded to Bay Area culturally rooted artist teams with a music business. In addition to receiving a cash award, grantees will have access to a suite of mentorship resources offered by Zoo Labs: LEARN, including on-demand artist-tailored entrepreneurial courses, virtual group learning and networking sessions, and a curated pairing with a business mentor.

A total of 91 eligible applications were received across the four award tiers. Of these, the fifteen business recipients and the Bay Area counties they represent are:

Audiopharmacy (Alameda), \$50,000: To support the expansion of music and community arts programming at BAMBU Pharm, including a full-service recording studio, creative media lab, and affordable space rentals.

House of Gongs (Alameda, Contra Costa, San Francisco), \$25,000: To support the second Uni at Ugat music camp. Funding will support program-related staffing, vendor, equipment, and material costs.

Sticky Thing (Alameda, Contra Costa, San Mateo), \$25,000: To support program-related staffing, artist fees, and engineer costs. Funding will also support costs associated with operation and infrastructure needed to grow the business, such as costs related to studio and software fees.

Young Gifted and Black(YG&B) (Alameda), \$25,000: To support YG&B's program-related staffing and material costs, including technology to facilitate rehearsals, workshops, and the expansion of the online curriculum.

DíaPaSón (Alameda, Contra Costa, San Francisco), \$15,000: To support the recording, publishing, and distribution of music that DíaPaSón has assembled over several years.

Legacy Symphony Orchestra (Alameda), \$15,000: To support Legacy Symphony Orchestra's musician and administrative costs related to promotion, content creation, and videography.

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Live at the Lotuship (Alameda, San Francisco), \$15,000: To support program-related costs associated with monthly performances, including but not limited to equipment upgrades, space rental, marketing, and staff costs.

Palestinian Youth Movement (PYM) Band (Alameda), \$15,000: To support costs related to the production of PYM's debut album, specifically costs associated with space and instrument rental, merchandise, and photography.

The Shadow Band (Alameda, Contra Costa), \$15,000: To support costs associated with vinyl pressing, developing CDs, and independent music publishing. Funding will also support outreach and marketing efforts.

First Wav Preservation Society (Alameda), \$5,000: To support equipment costs and program-related production fees. Funding will also support costs associated with marketing, such as web design, photography, and social media ads.

Her DJ Club (San Francisco, San Mateo), \$5,000: To support programming, materials, and equipment costs. Funding will also support event production and space-related costs.

Higate Media (Alameda, San Francisco, San Mateo), \$5,000: To support the creation of music videos, photography, and live events. Funding will also support costs associated with staffing, equipment, merchandise, and outreach.

Lovey and Zen Rocker/Jupiter's Moon (Alameda), \$5,000: To support production costs for "Jupiter's Moon", including but not limited to fees related to mixing/mastering services, beat production, music videos, photoshoots, vocal training, merchandise, and marketing.

Syrn Multiverse Media (Solano), \$5,000: To support the development and rollout of SYRN I, cover artist fees, and visual production costs.

Zero charisma x psychics agree (Alameda, San Francisco), \$5,000: To support costs associated with hiring independent engineers, space rental, and marketing.

Zoo Labs: FUND is a grant and investment program designed to support Bay Area entrepreneurs who are building businesses that center music. By providing funding, mentorship, and educational resources, the FUND helps creative business owners in the Bay Area begin or scale their ventures in ways that contribute to cultural enrichment, economic empowerment, and community benefit.

Grants were awarded to teams based on the potential for funding to have both a short and long-term impact, such as seeding the launch of a business, accelerating a business's growth, or investing in the untapped potential of an established business.

"Every year, we're amazed by the exceptional talent and innovation of our Zoo Labs: FUND grantees, and we're even more impressed by the difference they make in our local communities," said Zoo Labs founders Vinitha and David Watson. "It remains an honor to support their growth in advancing their creative businesses."

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CCI Grants Program Director Stephanie Imah reflected, “As we conclude this fifth cycle, we remain inspired by the creativity and entrepreneurial spirit of the Bay Area's creative community. We’re grateful to continue our partnership with Zoo Labs in supporting local music entrepreneurs to realize self-determination in their creative ventures.”

Two, three-member panels were invited by CCI to review Zoo Labs: FUND applications and make grantee recommendations. For the \$5,000 and \$15,000 award tiers, panelists included **Flavia Mora** (poet, muralist, visual artist, DJ), **Kira Hooks** (vocalist, songwriter, and artist), and **Maddie Liu** (singer-songwriter, bandleader, producer, and multi-instrumentalist). For the \$25,000 and \$50,000 award tiers, panelists included **Kaitlin McGaw** (Emmy and Grammy award-winning artist, writer, and cultural strategist), **Mohit Kohli** (DJ, founder, online radio station manager), and **Olivia Dodd** (creative leader, storyteller, and arts advocate).

The 2025 cycle of Zoo Labs: FUND awarded \$230,000 in grants. The program was made possible by Vinitha and David Watson, in addition to the support of individual donors.

About Zoo Labs

Since 2013, Zoo Labs has been building an ecosystem that values art, ideas, and people. Their programming helps empower artists to own and amplify their creations, breaking down the roadblocks between art and business. Complimenting Zoo Labs: FUND is [Zoo Labs: LEARN](#), a suite of free artist-tailored entrepreneurship courses. The curriculum taught in these self-paced online courses is tried and true - tested over Zoo Labs’ decade of serving an extensive alumni community and helping them level up their artistic business practices. For more information about Zoo Labs and Zoo Labs: LEARN, please visit www.zoolabs.org.

About the Center for Cultural Innovation

The Center for Cultural Innovation (CCI) was founded in 2001 as a California 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation. Our mission is to support individuals in the arts—artists, culture bearers, and creative entrepreneurs—to realize greater self-determination so as to unfetter their productivity, free expression, and social impact, which contributes to shaping our collective national identity in ways that reflect the diversity of society. For more information about CCI, please visit www.cciarts.org.

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