



Press Release

**For Immediate Release
September 29, 2022**

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Center for Cultural Innovation in Partnership with Zoo Labs Announce 2022 Fund Recipients

San Francisco Bay Area – The Center for Cultural Innovation (CCI) today announced the 2022 Zoo Labs: FUND grant recipients. Fourteen unrestricted grants ranging from \$5,000 - \$50,000 were awarded to Bay Area BIPOC-led artist teams with music businesses that are contributing to the region’s arts and culture environment in positive ways. In addition to receiving a cash award, grantees will have access to mentors with expertise in a range of business topics and industries.

A total of 80 eligible applications were received across the four award tiers. Of these, the fourteen business recipients and the Bay Area counties they represent include:

\$50,000

Hip Hop for Change (Alameda)

\$25,000

Gold Beams (Alameda, Contra Costa, Solano)

OakTownSoul (Alameda)

Psychic Eye Records (Alameda)

\$15,000

Assinyeola Music Publishing (Alameda)

Balay Kulintang / House of Gongs (Contra Costa, San Francisco)

Bobi Céspedes Music (Alameda)

Diaspora Sessions (Alameda)

Lyrical Opposition (San Mateo, Alameda, San Francisco)

\$5,000

Calm Waiting (Alameda)

Eartheareal (Alameda)

Love Letters to a Black Seed (Alameda)

Maryzelle - Sound Healing for The People (San Francisco)

Underdogs Soundtrack (San Mateo, Alameda)

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Zoo Labs: FUND was shaped in response to the lack of financial capital available to Bay Area music entrepreneurs—especially BIPOC artists—to afford starting or scaling up their creative businesses. 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.

“The second cycle of Zoo Labs: FUND affirmed that there is no shortage of profound artistry, innovation, and hustle in the Bay Area’s music sector,” shared Zoo Labs founders Vinitha and David Watson. “We are honored to recognize the businesses selected for funding and grateful for their contributions to the local community.”

CCI Program Director, Laura Poppiti, continued “This year’s Zoo Labs: FUND grantees represent an exciting spectrum of Bay Area music businesses—from hip hop education and music festivals to record labels and music healing services. We are equally thrilled to have partnered with Zoo Labs to accomplish a shared objective of getting resources into the hands of individuals in the arts, who are the backbone of our society.”

Two, three-member panels assisted CCI in reviewing Zoo Labs: FUND applications and making grantee recommendations. For the \$5,000 and \$15,000 award tiers, panelists included Amy Dabalos (vocalist, songwriter, community leader, and music educator), Rohith Jayaraman (vocalist, composer, and educator), and Christian Medina Beltz (storyteller, teaching artist, and musician). For the \$25,000 and \$50,000 award tiers, panelists included Miles Dotson (startup business leader, career product manager, author, research advocate, and entrepreneur), Ripley Jene (musician, multimedia digital artist, writer, and educator), and Yesenia Sanchez (principal consultant of Soleil Coaching & Consulting).

The 2022 cycle of Zoo Labs: FUND awarded \$225,000 in unrestricted 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’ eight years 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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