



Press Release

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Center for Cultural Innovation in Partnership with Zoo Labs Announce 2023 Fund Recipients

San Francisco Bay Area – The Center for Cultural Innovation (CCI) today announced the 2023 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 ecosystem in positive ways. 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 101 eligible applications were received across the four award tiers. Of these, the fourteen business recipients and the Bay Area counties they represent are:

\$50,000

Harpist from the Hood (Alameda)

\$25,000

House of Gongs (Contra Costa, San Francisco)

JAB Step (Alameda, Contra Costa, San Francisco)

Tradición Peruana Cultural Center (Alameda, San Francisco)

\$15,000

All Day Play FM (Alameda)

Because of Black Music IAM (Alameda, Contra Costa)

Grand Nationxl (Alameda, Contra Costa)

Studio X Recording (Alameda)

The Stacks Record Shop (Alameda)

\$5,000

Fam Sesh (Contra Costa, San Francisco)

Full Belly Productions (Alameda)

Hot Goth GF Radio (Alameda)

Mabuhay Gardens (Alameda, San Francisco)

Working Name Studios (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 to start or scale 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.

“We are incredibly inspired by the 2023 Zoo Labs: FUND grantees and are honored to help them get to the next level of their creative business,” shared Zoo Labs founders Vinitha and David Watson. CCI Program Officer, Stephanie Barajas, continued, “This is the third cycle of the Zoo Labs: FUND, and we continue to be impressed by the level of creativity, entrepreneurship, and innovation reflected in our slate of grantees. CCI is deeply honored to continue to partner with Zoo Labs to support Bay Area music businesses through substantial and unrestricted awards, helping us further our mission to support individuals in the arts to realize greater self-determination.”

CCI invited two three-member panels to review Zoo Labs: FUND applications and make grantee recommendations. For the \$5,000 and \$15,000 award tiers, panelists included Demone Carter (hip hop artist, creative catalyst, and nonprofit leader), Joshua Icban (musician and educator), and Stephanie Imah (artist and grantmaker). For the \$25,000 and \$50,000 award tiers, panelists included Aireene Espiritu (singer/songwriter), Roy Hirabayashi (activist, composer, performer, teacher, and lecturer), and yétúndé olagbaju (artist, organizer, and residency director).

The 2023 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' 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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