



Contact: Kathy DeBrosse
Vice President, Marketing & Engagement, ArtsWave
937.207.3079

ArtsWave surpasses \$500K in 2020 support for local African American arts

Cincinnati (June 19, 2020) – On Juneteenth, ArtsWave, the engine for the arts in the Cincinnati region, announces the first set of recipients of a new African American arts grants program, totaling \$255,000. These grants, plus \$287,000 already invested since September to organizations that are led by or predominantly serving African Americans, together represent \$542,000 in support of African American arts initiatives in this fiscal year.

Earlier this morning, the ArtsWave Board of Directors approved this set of 18 grants and projects in the new African American Arts grants pool, which is designed to strengthen the capacity for arts presenting, producing, programming and instruction at organizations led by or predominantly serving Black Cincinnatians. Offering these new, dedicated grants is one way that ArtsWave is working to increase the sustainability of organizations that focus on the preservation and advancement of Black arts and culture.

Twenty-two eligible submissions were received and reviewed by a panel of 10 business and community leaders, 80% of whom were African American. These panelists made award recommendations to ArtsWave's Board, which unanimously approved them. "It was inspiring to see the variety in the grant proposals and the levels of commitment, creativity and impact that are being shown by African American artists in our community," said panel Chair and ArtsWave Board Member Dr. Monica Posey, president of Cincinnati State University.

Alecia Kintner, ArtsWave President & CEO, notes "Though these new grants for local African American Arts organizations have been in process for some time, it's particularly meaningful to make the award announcements on Juneteenth. ArtsWave looks forward to working with the leaders and visionaries behind these projects and to making future investments in Black arts and culture in the Cincinnati region."

The grants were made possible by gifts from ArtsWave's Circle of African American Leaders for the Arts in the 2020 ArtsWave Community Campaign, plus significant

support from the Greater Cincinnati Foundation. "Greater Cincinnati Foundation is committed to ensuring a diversity of voices to create vibrancy in the arts for our community," said Ellen Katz, President and CEO of GCF. "Partnering with ArtsWave on this program is one way we can do that."

Additional dollars for this program were allocated from ArtsWave's Arts Vibrancy Recovery Fund which was launched in May to support the post-COVID restart of the arts sector, a \$300+ million industry employing nearly 10,000 and forecasted to be one of the last locally to recover.

The African American Arts program was launched in January with a celebration and a two-part plan: more regular opportunities to experience leading Black artists from around the country on Cincinnati's premier stages through the new ArtsWave series *Flow*; and dedicated resources to build capacity and scale the impact of Cincinnati's Black-led arts organizations through this new African American Arts Grants Program.

Besides announcing first-time grant recipients to this program, ArtsWave received news this week that its *Flow: an African American Arts Series* is being awarded one of two National Endowment of the Arts grants recently allocated to the region, with \$40,000 being invested in the program. Though *Flow* is currently paused due to COVID-related restrictions on public gatherings and cultural facilities, ArtsWave continues to make plans for future guest artist appearances.

In addition to these initiatives, a press conference will be held this afternoon to dedicate a new street mural on Plum street, near City Hall, that was produced by a total of 60-70 artists in teams, each painting a letter in "BLACK LIVES MATTER!" with all artists taking part in the exclamation point at the end. ArtsWave has supported this initiative with more than \$35,000 in artist fees.

To help fund cultural diversity efforts like these through ArtsWave's Arts Vibrancy Recovery Fund, go to artswave.org/recovery.

###

About ArtsWave:

ArtsWave, a nonprofit serving the Greater Cincinnati and Northern Kentucky Region, is the engine for the arts. Its roots stem back to the late 1920s when the Cincinnati Taft family provided initial investment matched by community support. In the late 1940s, it evolved to become the first united arts fund in the nation and in the mid-1970s, the first organization to initiate workplace giving for the arts. ArtsWave continues to innovate while leading, as illustrated by its No. 1 rank nationally in community arts fundraising; coordination of a sector-wide Blueprint for Collective Action; piloting of new technologies to maximize arts engagement; and development of resources for the arts.

Strong funding for the arts has allowed Cincinnati's arts and culture scene to become a national draw and regional asset, creating a wave of economic and community benefits. Each year, ArtsWave supports the work of over 100 arts organizations, school outreach programs, festivals, community centers, neighborhoods and various collaborations through impact-based grants. In 2019, ArtsWave raised over \$12 million, marking its sixth year in a row surpassing this milestone. ArtsWave remains the largest community campaign for the arts throughout the country, both in total contributions and number of donors.

ArtsWave is focused on helping the Cincinnati Region's arts sector weather the coronavirus crisis. The region's arts sector has an economic impact of more than \$300 million annually and includes more than 225 organizations throughout Cincinnati, Northern Kentucky and Southeastern Indiana that employ 10,000+ individuals as artists, performers and staff. The sector was hit at the onset of the coronavirus crisis, when venue and performance closures were announced in early March. ArtsWave has accelerated \$2.4 million in grant payments for 43 organizations which receive operating revenues, expanded its \$10,000 Working Capital Bridge Loans for eligible arts organizations, and has provided Emergency Arts & Culture Organization grants to 47 organizations. The public can help fund these and additional, evolving efforts at artswave.org/give.