Independence Public Media Foundation Announces Inaugural Grants

Foundation aims to improve communities across the region through its support for media initiatives and organizations

(July 9, 2019, Philadelphia) The Board of Directors of Independence Public Media of Philadelphia (IPM), a new private foundation, announced its first grants today, totaling $5.3 million to 11 organizations, as well as a new partnership with Bread & Roses Community Fund.

These grants represent key partners for advancing the foundation’s strategic goals, which were designed through a detailed community listening and engagement process involving interviews and feedback from dozens of the area’s neighborhood leaders, media makers and organizations, as well as other foundations active in media funding. The foundation’s goals reflect an expansive definition of media, including journalism, digital literacy, and creative expression, as a pathway for building power with communities.

“We are delighted to announce these inspiring first grants, which support authentic, community-centered media and amplify under-represented voices across the region,” said René Smith, chair of the foundation’s nine-member board.

“Our work is just beginning,” added Molly de Aguiar, the foundation’s president. “We look forward to learning from local leaders and organizations who understand the transformative power of media and media making to improve people’s lives.”

The foundation was formerly a public broadcaster operating WYBE Channel 35 in the Philadelphia market. Founded in 1981, IPM relinquished its broadcast license in 2017 as part of the Federal Communications Commission’s Broadcast Incentive Auction and received a one-time payment of $131.5 million. The organization is investing these funds in a permanent endowment and will henceforth operate as a private grant-making foundation strengthening and connecting diverse voices and fostering greater understanding across the Greater Philadelphia region.

In February, IPM hired its first president, Molly de Aguiar, an experienced media funder. Prior to joining IPM, she was the managing director of the News Integrity Initiative at the Craig Newmark Graduate School of Journalism at CUNY, and the Informed Communities Program Director at the Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation. She is also a board member of Media Impact Funders.
Independence Public Media, Inc. will announce new funding opportunities as it further establishes its grantmaking programs, hires staff, and continues to implement its vision.

For more information, visit: www.independencemedia.org

A full list of the grants is below:

**African American Museum of Philadelphia**
$300,000

The African American Museum in Philadelphia brings diverse communities together in greater appreciation of the Black experience through the combined narrative of art, culture and historical witness.

This two-year grant will support the upgrade and reinstallation of the museum’s main permanent exhibition, *Audacious Freedom: African Americans in Philadelphia 1776 – 1876*. Responding to students’ educational needs and expressed visitor interests, the exhibit’s “Conversations” gallery will be reconfigured to connect the story of 19th-century activism to the present day, covering the lives and legacies of African Americans in Philadelphia and the surrounding region through the 20th and 21st centuries.

Website: aampmuseum.org

**Digital Literacy Alliance**
$500,000

The Digital Literacy Alliance, an initiative of the Office of Innovation and Technology, is a broad coalition of organizations and agencies that works to expand digital access and skills by serving as a grant maker, convener, and resource.

This two-year grant will enable DLA to provide grants to immigrant-serving organizations for targeted digital literacy training, and to deepen its work with partner organizations and projects by developing a learning and support network.

Website: mayorsfundphila.org/initiatives/digital-literacy-alliance

**Doc Society, Inc. (Good Pitch Local Philly)**
$307,500

Doc Society works globally to bring people together to unleash the transformational power of documentary film. Their Good Pitch programs connect social justice filmmakers with new allies
in local communities through mentoring and pitch sessions to cross-sector community representatives.

Building on a successful inaugural Good Pitch Local Philly program in 2018, this two-year grant will support two subsequent rounds of Good Pitch Local Philly, with the addition of a re-granting program to fund filmmakers and to provide focused facilitation of networking and collaborations among participants.

Website: docsociety.org

The Lenfest Institute for Journalism
$1,300,000

The Lenfest Institute for Journalism is a non-profit organization dedicated to developing sustainable business models for local journalism in Philadelphia for use in local markets nationwide. The Philadelphia Inquirer serves as a live laboratory for the institute’s innovation initiatives, including efforts to strengthen diversity and inclusion in the Philadelphia journalism ecosystem.

This two-year funder collaboration between Lenfest and IPM will further these efforts by supporting cultural competency training, professional development, entrepreneurial skills, and creative opportunities for entry-level, mid-level and senior journalists and managers of color at the Inquirer and throughout the region. Alongside these concrete efforts, this collaboration will provide flexible funding for research, business assistance, and convening of Philadelphia-area multi-cultural media.

The grant will also help fund strategic planning for Resolve Philadelphia, a journalism project built on equity, collaboration among multiple media properties, and the elevation of community voices and solutions.

Website: lenfestinstitute.org

PhillyCAM (Philadelphia Public Access Corporation)
$150,000

PhillyCAM is a community media center for making and sharing content that promotes creative expression, democratic values, and civic participation. Involved at multiple levels of teaching, creation, and distribution, PhillyCAM operates Philadelphia’s public access television network and a FM radio station, in addition to sharing content online.

This six-month planning grant will support research and planning for a new television and radio broadcast series inspired by WYBE’s signature series, Philadelphia Stories. In conjunction with
exploring a relaunch of the series, PhillyCAM will strengthen its mentorship role, bolstering its role as a community connector and network builder for diverse local media makers and producers.

Website: phillycam.org

**Scribe Video Center**
$1,110,000

Scribe Video Center explores, develops, and advances the use of electronic and time-based media as an artistic practice and tool for progressive social change. With roots in documentary film, Scribe trainings and platforms span video, audio, film, and web-based media, encouraging participatory community media making through many channels.

This three-year grant supports organizational capacity building that will position Scribe to build its staff, broaden its programming portfolio, and enlarge its re-granting program for area media makers.

Website: scribe.org

**SEAMAAC (Southeast Asian Mutual Assistance Association Coalition)**
$250,000

Founded by refugees, SEAMAAC supports immigrants, refugees, and other politically, socially, and economically marginalized communities, as they seek to advance the conditions of their lives in the United States. Through initiatives in Health & Human Services, Education, and Community Development, SEAMAAC works to create an equitable society where refugees, immigrants, and their families are able to access opportunities, and where the contributions of all residents are equally valued.

This two-year grant will support SEAMAAC’s “The Way Forward Project” to increase media training in SE Philadelphia, helping its constituencies tell and share their stories. “The Way Forward Project” works to counter xenophobia and misunderstanding by building empathy, and by bridging and humanizing divides through the power of personal storytelling.

Website: seamaac.org
Taller Puertorriqueño
$100,000

Taller Puertorriqueño preserves, develops, and promotes Puerto Rican arts and culture, grounded in the conviction that embracing one’s cultural heritage is central to community empowerment. Serving as El Corazón Cultural del Barrio (The Cultural Heart of Latino Philadelphia), Taller is also committed to the representation and support of other Latino cultural expressions and common roots.

This two-year grant supports the continued development and digitization of the Eugenio Maria de Hostos Archive. This funding will also help broaden the archive’s public accessibility, welcoming audiences to engage with the collection and to inform programming.

Website: tallerpr.org

Temple University, Klein College of Media & Communication
$850,000

The Lew Klein College of Media and Communication provides hands-on learning, real-world experience, and a blend of analytical and theoretical knowledge for students of broadcasting, journalism, media production, strategic communications, advertising, media studies, and related fields. These distinct disciplines are organized around a unifying focus on communication in urban life and are informed by the contemporary need to rebuild trust in media institutions, particularly among communities that face a history of stigmatizing media coverage.

This two-year grant will strengthen two existing Klein College community-centered journalism projects, in Germantown (Germantown Info Hub) and Kensington (Kensington Voice), in which residents are helping to create news coverage of issues important to their neighborhoods. Funding is designed to foster long-term sustainability and continuity through community staff positions, advisory groups, and the hiring of program alumni.

Website: klein.temple.edu

The Village of Arts and Humanities
$200,000

The Village of Arts and Humanities amplifies the voices and aspirations of the community by providing opportunities for artistic expression and personal success that engage youth and their families, revitalize physical space, and preserve black heritage.

This two-year grant will support The Village’s neighborhood-based media advocacy work through two initiatives: the Juvenile Justice Media Fellowship, and the Civic Power Studio’s
Media Justice Lab. Through amplifying the voices of local experts—those most affected by systems of injustice and misrepresentation—these initiatives work to reshape narratives and dispel myths, bringing often unheard voices to seats of power and driving positive change for the community.

Website: villagearts.org

WHYY
$250,000

WHYY is the Philadelphia region’s largest public media provider, serving southeastern Pennsylvania, southern New Jersey, and all of Delaware. WHYY has studios in Philadelphia and Wilmington, operates WHYY-FM and three 24 x 7 broadcast television channels, and produces online content.

This two-year grant will provide commissioning funds that enable WHYY to expand its work with freelancers and reporters from racially and ethnically diverse media outlets who will produce programming for WHYY News. These efforts will be further supported by cultural competency training for WHYY staff and community engagement events that provide opportunities for conversations around divisive issues and pressing local and national concerns.

Website: whyy.org

Bread & Roses Community Fund
$800,000

Bread & Roses Community Fund organizes donors at all levels to support community-based groups in building movements for racial equity and economic opportunity. It supports movements and their leaders through fundraising, grantmaking, capacity building, and convening.

IPM is establishing a fund in partnership with Bread & Roses to support grassroots media and media making across the region.

Website: breadandrosesfund.org

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