



**The Apollo  
Announces the Recipients of the  
2021 Harlem Entrepreneurial Micro-Grants  
in Collaboration with  
125<sup>th</sup> Street Business Improvement District and  
Harlem Commonwealth Council**

**20 grants awarded to small independent  
Harlem businesses and local non-profits affected by COVID-19**

Harlem, NY – July 28, 2021 – The **Apollo**, in collaboration with **125<sup>th</sup> Street Business Improvement District (BID)** and **the Harlem Commonwealth Council (HCC)**, announced today the recipients of the **Harlem Entrepreneurial Micro-Grant Initiative**, a \$20,000 program created to provide support to small and independent Harlem businesses affected by COVID-19. This year the initiative expanded its scope, providing funding to eligible local non-profit community-based arts organizations and arts collectives as well as local businesses in financial need. Established in 2020 in response to the disparate impact COVID-19 had on Black and Brown communities, this year’s twenty \$1,000 micro-grants were distributed to local merchants and organizations that define the culture and the vitality of Harlem. A complete list of recipients follows below.

“The Harlem community has always played an integral role in helping us create a safe and innovative space for artists and audiences, and I’m honored to partner with Harlem BID and the Harlem Commonwealth Council to give back directly to local businesses and organizations, which ensure Harlem is a vibrant and welcoming destination for all. I’m also incredibly grateful to our donors who have given their support to the Harlem community, including the Apollo, during such a challenging year,” said **Apollo Theater President and CEO Jonelle Procopé**.

**2021 Harlem Entrepreneurial Micro-Grant Recipients:**

- **Betty’s Daughter Arts Collaborative, LLC** – Cultural organization
- **Black Light Community, Inc.** – Cultural organization
- **Calabar Imports** – Fashion, jewelry, and apparel
- **Harlem Chi Community Acupuncture** – Health and wellness
- **Harlem Opera Theater Inc.** – Cultural organization
- **JTW FIT** – Health and wellness
- **Kaarta Imports** – Fashion, jewelry, and apparel
- **Media Scheme, LLC** – Media company
- **Melody Vaughn Interiors** – Lifestyle
- **Odd Balls Sales** – Fashion and apparel
- **Peartree Preschool** – Educational services
- **Regina Fleming Photography** – Visual arts
- **Shugah Baybees Child Development Center** – Educational services
- **Sundae Sermon Inc.** – Cultural organization
- **Swing It Inc.** – Beauty and lifestyle
- **Sydney L. Mosley Dances** – Cultural organization
- **Uptown Dance Academy, Inc.** – Cultural organization
- **Urban Stream Media, LLC** – Media company

- **When Love Works Dynamically** – Health and wellness

- **While We Are Still Here** – Cultural organization

“Each year, through the grant process, we get the opportunity to dig a bit deeper and understand the immediate challenges our local business community are facing. There are still small local businesses that need support with staffing, health insurance, creating an online presence, general operating expenses, public relations, special project-related costs, software subscriptions, marketing, and more,” said **Barbara Askins, President and CEO of 125<sup>th</sup> Street BID**. “The 125<sup>th</sup> Street BID is honored to once again participate as a partner with the Apollo and Harlem Commonwealth Council to bring some relief in these areas for our arts and business establishments.”

“Once again, the management and staff of Harlem Commonwealth Council are delighted to participate in this wonderful effort to provide some relief to our fellow Harlemites. We value our relationship with the Apollo and 125<sup>th</sup> Street BID, and look forward to working together to combat the economic fallout of COVID-19 for the betterment of the Harlem community,” said **E. Hamil Douglas, President and CEO of Harlem Commonwealth Council, Inc.**

This year marks the second year of the Harlem Entrepreneurial Micro-Grant Initiative. To-date, the program has supported over 40 small business and organizations as they continue to navigate the impacts of COVID-19 on their businesses.

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### **About the Apollo Theater**

The legendary Apollo Theater—the soul of American culture—plays a vital role in cultivating emerging artists and launching legends. Since its founding, the Apollo has served as a center of innovation and a creative catalyst for Harlem, the city of New York, and the world.

With music at its core, the Apollo’s programming extends to dance, theater, spoken word, and more. This includes the world premiere of the theatrical adaptation of Ta-Nehisi Coates’s *Between the World and Me* and the New York premiere of the opera *We Shall Not Be Moved*; special programs such as the blockbuster concert *Bruno Mars Live at the Apollo; 100: The Apollo Celebrates Ella*; and the annual *Africa Now! Festival*. The non-profit Apollo Theater is a performing arts presenter, commissioner, and collaborator that also produces festivals, large-scale dance and musical works organized around a set of core initiatives that celebrate and extend the Apollo’s legacy through a contemporary lens, including the *Women of the World (WOW) Festival* as well as other multidisciplinary collaborations with partner organizations.

Since introducing the first *Amateur Night* contests in 1934, the Apollo has served as a testing ground for new artists working across a variety of art forms and has ushered in the emergence of many new musical genres—including jazz, swing, bebop, R&B, gospel, blues, soul, and hip-hop. Among the countless legendary performers who launched their careers at the Apollo are Ella Fitzgerald, Sarah Vaughan, Billie Holiday, James Brown, Stevie Wonder, Gladys Knight, Luther Vandross, H.E.R., D’Angelo, Lauryn Hill, Machine Gun Kelly, and Miri Ben Ari; and the Apollo’s forward-looking artistic vision continues to build on this legacy. For more information about the Apollo, visit [www.ApolloTheater.org](http://www.ApolloTheater.org).

### **About 125th Street Business Improvement District**

125th Street Business Improvement District is one of New York's City's 76 BIDs. It's mission is to expand sustainable economic activity in the area including the creation or expansion of businesses and the development of jobs for community residents; to maximize the ability of local residents, businesses and

institution to benefit from any and all opportunities created by commercial revitalization efforts and to improve the quality of life in the community. [www.125thstreet.nyc](http://www.125thstreet.nyc).

**About the Harlem Commonwealth Council**

Harlem Commonwealth Council (HCC) is a 501(C)(3) economic development organization delivering community-driven solutions in Harlem and surrounding communities since 1967. Our mission is to stimulate economic development through the creation and support of business enterprises, the generation and retention of jobs, and the education of residents. Harlem Entrepreneurial Fund (HEF) is our investment arm that provides access to capital and technical assistance to the Harlem community. <https://www.harlemcommonwealth.org/>.

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