

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**BLACK PUBLIC MEDIA WINS \$40,000 NEA GRANT**

**National Endowment for the Arts award to support the Harlem-based media arts organization's residency program at The Johnny Carson Center for Emerging Media Arts**

**NEW YORK (June 15, 2023)** — The Harlem-based national media arts nonprofit [Black Public Media \(BPM\)](https://www.blackpublicmedia.org) has received a \$40,000 award from the National Endowment for the Arts' Grants for Arts Projects program. The award will support its fellowship and residency program for new works in immersive, interactive and emerging media at the Johnny Carson Center for Emerging Media Arts at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. The initiative is a part of BPMplus, Black Public Media's program designed to increase Black participation in emerging tech storytelling, which was founded in 2018. The BPM project is one of 1,130 projects across the country, totaling more than \$31 million, that were selected during the NEA's second round of Grants for Arts Projects FY2023 funding cycle.

"The National Endowment for the Arts is pleased to support a wide range of projects, including Black Public Media's BPMplus fellowship, demonstrating the many ways the arts enrich our lives and contribute to healthy and thriving communities," said NEA Chair Maria Rosario Jackson, PhD. "These organizations play an important role in advancing the creative vitality of our nation and helping to ensure that all people can benefit from arts, culture and design."

"We are again delighted for the generous support of the National Endowment for the Arts for Black Public Media initiatives," said Leslie Fields-Cruz, executive director of BPM. "With this funding we will be able to steep creative technologists in powerful storytelling mediums so they may bring myriad Black stories into the future."

Four creative technologists will receive professional and project development support at the three-week BPM & Carson Center for Emerging Media Residency, where they will have access to computers with virtual reality (VR) software, production equipment, VR headsets, a motion capture studio, technical support, production assistants and workspace to develop their emerging technology skills and projects. During the program, the artists will be required to teach a workshop or give a talk to students at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. The residencies will take place in July.

Upon completion of their residency, the artists will then be invited to receive additional training in preparation for BPM's PitchBLACK Forum — the largest U.S pitch competition for independent filmmakers and creative technologists developing new projects about the global Black experience in the United States — and present their VR/XR/AI projects. The winner of the PitchBLACK Immersive Forum will receive up to \$50,000 in funding for their project.

For more information on other projects included in the NEA grant announcement, visit [arts.gov/news](https://www.arts.gov/news). For more information on Black Public Media, visit [www.blackpublicmedia.org](https://www.blackpublicmedia.org), or follow it on Twitter (@BLKPublicMedia), Facebook (@BlackPublicMedia) or Instagram (@blackpublicmedia).

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**ABOUT BLACK PUBLIC MEDIA:**

**Black Public Media** supports the development of visionary content creators and distributes stories about the global Black experience to inspire a more equitable and inclusive future. The Harlem-based national nonprofit has invested more than \$17 million toward iconic documentaries about the Black experience and, in recent years, has increased its investment in emerging media projects. BPM-funded and supported projects have garnered considerable industry recognition, including five Emmys, two Anthem Awards, nine Peabodys, 14 Emmy nominations and one Oscar nomination.

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