Dear Colleagues,

We launched the Color Congress in January of this year with a bold vision to actualize a reimagined documentary landscape toward one that strengthens the visibility, voice, and power of people of color, laying the groundwork for a future of the field that is a more powerful force for social change.

Over the past year we focused our efforts on supporting, resourcing, connecting, and championing organizations led by people of color that serve nonfiction filmmakers, leaders, and audiences of color in the United States and US islands. Collectively, these organizations constitute the entire scope of the ecosystem, and represent the diversity of our nation.

We began our work thanks to the unwavering support of our partners at the Ford Foundation, MacArthur Foundation, and Perspective Fund, who created a pooled grant totalling $3.5 million over three years. Our first year has already proven the strategic value of this intervention and the foresight of their investment.

In 12 months we launched the organization, grew a membership base of over 85 documentary organizations, directed $1.35 million dollars in unrestricted grants, offered tangible skills and infrastructure support to our members - and we did so in ways that centered our voices and our values.

Strengthening this neglected, but vibrant documentary ecosystem is our north star, and we are proud to share our work and reflections with you.

Onward,

Sahar Driver & Sonya Childress
Co-Directors
WHO WE ARE

COLOR CONGRESS is an ecosystem-builder that resources, supports, connects, and champions organizations led by people of color (POC) that serve nonfiction filmmakers, leaders, and audiences of color across the United States and US islands.

COLOR CONGRESS creates the infrastructure for collaboration, shared problem solving and sustainability.
A 2019 study conducted by Sahar Driver and commissioned by the Ford Foundation’s JustFilms program surveyed the landscape of 200+ domestic organizations that support filmmakers and audiences of color in the nonfiction field. This study, *Beyond Inclusion*, revealed 4 Key Takeaways:

• While all of the 200+ organizations have programming to support people of color in documentary, a subset of them are both led by people of color and created to serve people of color.

• Those POC-led organizations often serve as important gateways for filmmakers, leaders and audiences of color to the documentary form, but they are historically under-resourced by national funders, and undervalued in the field.

• Despite their commonalities, POC-led and serving organizations are largely disconnected by geography, community, or by the various roles they play in the field.

• If properly resourced, supported and connected, these POC documentary organizations can make even greater contributions to the field, and to society.

In response to the Beyond Inclusion findings, the focus of the Color Congress is to:

• **SUPPORT** leaders of color to sustain themselves and strengthen their organizations.

• **FUND** POC-led organizations so they can continue to serve people of color in the field, who cultivate more storytelling by, for, and about communities of color on their own terms.

• **CONNECT** POC orgs across identity and geography to deepen understanding, solidarity, and power, which will strengthen the documentary ecosystem and enable it to build power.

• **CHAMPION** the POC documentary ecosystem by amplifying its contributions and innovations that serve both the documentary field and society at-large.
MEET OUR MEMBERS

Color Congress offers free membership to organizations based in the U.S. territories that support nonfiction storytellers and leaders of color or nurture audiences of color for documentaries. Congress members have access to monthly meetups, technical assistance and sustainability support, as well as opportunities to direct resources to field-building interventions.

**WITHIN LESS THAN 3 MONTHS AFTER OPENING UP ENROLLMENT IN APRIL 2022, COLOR CONGRESS BALLOONED FROM ZERO TO 80+ MEMBERS.**

- African American Women in Cinema
- African Film Festival, Inc. (AFF)
- American Documentary - POV
- Arab Film and Media Institute
- Arkansas Soul Media
- Asian American Documentary Network (A-Doc)
- Association of Puerto Rican Documentary Filmmakers (ADocPR)
- Audaz Entertainment (Black Muslim Girl Fly)
- Austin Asian American Film Festival
- AXS Lab
- Beyond Inclusion
- BIPOC Doc Editors
- Bitchitra Collective: Indian Women in Documentary
- Black Association of Documentary Filmmakers West (BADWEST)
- Black Documentary Collective
- Black Film Space
- Black Public Media
- BlackStar Projects
- Brown Girls Doc Mafia
- Center for Asian American Media (CAAM)
- Center for Cultural Power
- Chicana Directors Initiative
- Cine Solar Rodante / Defend Puerto Rico
- Cinema Tropical
- Comfrey Films (Kia House of Pentacles)
- CultureWorks Ltd (Time Out of Joint)
- DC Asian Pacific American Film Festival
- Define American
- Detroit Narrative Agency
- dGenerate Films
- Distribution Advocates
- Diverse Filmmakers Alliance
- Documentary Accountability Working Group (DAWG)
- Educational Video Center
- Empowering Pacific Islander Communities (EPIC)
- ENTRE Film Center and Archive
- Femme Frontera
- Firelight Media
- Full Spectrum Features NFP
- Handy Foundation
- Harlem Film House
- Hayti Heritage Film Festival
- IllmiNative
- Imagine This Women’s Film Festival
- IMPACT LENS
- KOSINIMA
- Laredo Film Society
- Latino Public Broadcasting
- Lede New Orleans
- Level Ground
- Liberating Cinema
- Life Media Projects
- Mama Film
- Mezcla Media Collective
- MOM Film Festival
- Native Lens
- New Negress Film Society
- No Evil Eye Cinema
- Òlelo Community Media
- Pacific Islanders in Communication
- PATOIS Film Collective
- Philadelphia Latino Film Festival of Culture Trust
- Pillars Fund
- Plenty of Pie Production Accelerator
- Prism Reports
- Prismatic Ground
- Queer Women of Color Media Arts Project (QWOCMAP)
- Rada Studio/ Rada Collaborative
- Re-Present Media
- Reality Poets (OPEN DOORS)
- Represent Justice
- Restoring the Future
- Scribe Video Center
- SIFTMedia 215 Collective
- SF Urban Film Fest
- Sisters in Cinema
- Storyline Partners
- Tasveer
- The Luminal Theater
- The Maysles Documentary Center
- Third Horizon Film Festival
- Third World Newsreel
- Undocumented Filmmakers Collective
- Urban Scholar Film Academy
- Vision Maker Media
- Visual Communications
- Watsonville Film Festival
- Youth FX / Next Doc
"ONE OF THE THINGS THAT WAS VERY CLEAR TO ME IS OUR ORGANIZATION NEEDS TO GO BEYOND JUST AN ANNUAL FILM FESTIVAL. I CAME IN WITH THE GOAL TO BUILD A YEAR-ROUND INSTITUTION. FOR YEARS WE WOULD GET RESTRICTED FUNDS FOR THE FESTIVAL OR FOR THE EDUCATION PROGRAM. BUT IT’S YEAR TO YEAR. I FEEL LIKE I’VE BECOME A GLORIFIED GRANT WRITER. BUT THIS IS THE FIRST YEAR, AND LARGELY DUE TO COLOR CONGRESS, THAT WE WERE ABLE TO BREATHE."

- Serge Bakalian, Executive Director
**DEMOGRAPHICS**

Color Congress member organizations expressly serve filmmakers, leaders and/or audiences who identify as Black or African American and/or of Indigenous, Latinx, Pacific Islander, Asian, Arab and Middle Eastern descent.

Color Congress membership is open to organizations based in regions across the United States and Puerto Rico, U.S. Virgin Islands, the Northern Mariana Islands, American Samoa, and Guam.

- **Black or African American**
- **Latinx**
- **Indigenous**
- **Asian**
- **Other**
- **Pacific Islander**
- **Arab & Middle Eastern**

- **Multi-Identity** 55%
- **Discrete Communities** 45%

**Regions**
- **National** 52
- **Northeast** 14
- **West** 11
- **Southwest** 8
- **Southeast** 5
- **Midwest** 2
- **U.S. Caribbean Islands** 1
- **U.S. Pacific Islands** 2

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THE COLOR CONGRESS GRANT HAS ALREADY HAD A HUGE IMPACT ON THE FESTIVAL AS WE’VE BEEN ABLE TO BRING ON PART-TIME STAFF, RECEIVE TRAINING IN STRATEGIC FUNDRAISING, AND LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT. IN LESS THAN A YEAR WE’VE BEEN ABLE TO DO MORE WITH REGARDS TO SUSTAINABILITY THAN WE HAVE IN THE PRIOR 26. AND THAT IS DUE TO THE RESOURCES BOTH MONETARY AND ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROVIDED BY COLOR CONGRESS. “

- Lana Garland, Festival Director

HAYTI HERITAGE FILM FESTIVAL in Durham, NC is one of the nation’s longest-running Black film festivals. For 28 years, the Festival and year round programming aims to keep Black Southern film alive.

“"
ROLES

Color Congress member organizations represent all aspects of the documentary ecosystem, including film festivals, collectives, advocacy organizations, and artist-serving organizations.

56 NETWORKING & PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT
49 FELLOWSHIPS & MENTORSHIPS
43 PUBLIC EDUCATION & CULTURE SHIFT
37 TRAINING & PRODUCTION SUPPORT
33 AUDIENCE DEVELOPMENT, IMPACT & MARKETING
30 NETWORKS & COLLECTIVES
24 FUNDING
19 FILM FESTIVALS
13 BROADCASTER, STREAMER & PUBLIC MEDIA
12 EXHIBITOR
6 CURATION & CRITICISM
5 RESEARCH

KEY FACTS

The newest organization was founded in 2022 (Restoring the Future), the oldest was founded in 1967 (Third World Newsreel)

An estimated 88% of Congress members operate with budgets under $500k, despite their length of operation

Our members are diverse in geography, identity and the roles that they play in the field
COLOR CONGRESS RECOGNIZES THAT CHANGE IS PUSHED FROM THE GRASSROOTS. IT DIRECTLY ADDRESSES INEQUITIES IN TRADITIONAL PHILANTHROPIC FUNDING MODELS, AND BELIEVES IN THE NETWORKED POWER OF BIPOC SERVING ORGANIZATIONS WITH DEEP FAITH THAT THEY KNOW WHAT THEY NEED, NO MATTER HOW NEW OR SMALL THEY MAY BE. IT Says, ‘WE SEE YOU’ IN A PROFOUND WAY. THE CREATION OF COLOR CONGRESS IS THE FRESHEST INNOVATION WE’VE SEEN IN THE DOCUMENTARY LANDSCAPE IN A LONG WHILE."

- Marjan Safinia, Co-Founder

BEYOND INCLUSION is a BIPOC-led national collective of non-fiction makers, executives, and field builders. They organize for a more racially just and equitable media landscape and hold an unapologetically large vision for ecosystem-wide change.
MEET OUR INAUGURAL GRANTEES

To address chronic disinvestment, we awarded $1.35 million in unrestricted funding to 17 documentary organizations that are led by people of color. These organizations play a uniquely valuable role for the communities that they serve and do so with budgets of $300,000 or less, most with little to no national funding.

We facilitated a grantmaking process that was values driven, trust-based and participatory.

$1.35M UNRESTRICTED FUND
A NEW KIND OF SUPPORT

IN 2022, WE LEVERAGED OUR $525K FIELD BUILDING FUND TO SUPPORT CONGRESS MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS. A participatory design process allowed for members to consider their sustainability needs and shape a menu of offerings that would benefit their organizations and that of their peers. Each member selected two offerings to strengthen their organizations.

* Fundraising Training
* Strategic Planning
* Impact Reporting
* Public Relations
* Financial Planning
* Social Justice Communications
* Management Training
* Leadership Development
* Accessibility Training
* Social Movements Course
* Legal Support
* Conflict Management
* Campaign Strategy
* National Board Training
STRONGER TOGETHER

CONGRESS MEMBERS MEET VIRTUALLY EVERY MONTH FOR PEER-LEARNING, SKILL-BUILDING AND DEEP CONNECTION.

Member meetups are:

• Facilitated by Color Congress staff
• Supported by Lumos Transforms, a wellness team
• Closed to the public

Topics include:

• Trauma Informed Resilience Orientation training
• Lessons in Cross-Racial Solidarity
• Narrative Sovereignty, Decolonized Film and Story Stewardship
• Disability Justice and True Access in Documentary
• Depictions of War and Orientalism, Organizing For Change One Year Later
FIELD LEADERSHIP

COLOR CONGRESS HAS RECEIVED PRESS COVERAGE IN ITS INAUGURAL YEAR AND CONTRIBUTED NEW WRITING FOR NATIONAL OUTLETS.

Filmmaker

- “Color Congress, a National Collective, Launches, Announces Funding and Support for POC-Led and Supporting Documentary Organizations”

MacArthur Foundation Blog

- “A Generational Investment in Filmmakers of Color”

Congress Staff have spoken on industry panels at

- Sundance Film Festival
- San Francisco International Film Festival
- Tribeca Film Festival
- Third Horizon Film Festival
- European Film Market
- Trust Based Philanthropy Project
- BlackStar Film Festival
- Media Impact Funders
- International Documentary Association
- Bay Area Video Coalition
- Southern California Grantmakers
- Doc NYC
LEARNING CURVE

A Member Survey and Year 1 evaluation conducted by Informing Change resulted in the following insights:

- **CONNECTION** Members, especially outside of major media hubs, feel more connected to the documentary field.
- **CULTURAL COMPETENCY** Members & grantees appreciate our trust-based, value-centered, participatory operations.
- **BARRIERS** Members struggle to find the time, staffing or skills to apply for grants, despite relying almost entirely on philanthropic support.
- **INFRASTRUCTURE** The Field Building Fund addresses many of the structural gaps identified by members.
LOOKING FORWARD

In 2023, Color Congress hopes to **BUILD** even deeper relationships and collective power at a National Convening in Atlanta, GA in September. This historic gathering will bring together member organizations for three days of connection, visioning and planning.

We plan to **DIRECT** another round of field-building grants to catalyze collective problem solving, field advocacy, and innovation.

In addition, we are fundraising to **PROVIDE** a second round of unrestricted organizational support grants to more members and grow our current reserves to proper general operating fund levels.
OUR SUPPORTERS

OUR FOUNDING FUNDERS

JustFilms
FORDFOUNDATION

PER SPECTIVE
FUND

MacArthur
Foundation

OUR LEARNING COMMUNITY

BLACKSTAR

INMAAT
FOUNDATION

do csociety

CAAM
STORIES TO LIGHT

NIA
TERO

THE CENTER FOR CULTURAL POWER

FRIENDS OF COLOR CONGRESS
