

# **EVALUATION OF THE AFRO-CULTURAL BLACK LGBTQIA+ PRESERVATION MINI-GRANTS PROGRAM AT HOMELESS CHILDREN'S NETWORK**

**2023-2024 EVALUATION**



**REPORT PREPARED BY INDIGO CULTURAL CENTER**



**INDIGO**  
CULTURAL CENTER

**FOR HOMELESS CHILDREN'S NETWORK**



**HOMELESS  
CHILDREN'S  
NETWORK**

# GRATITUDE & ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

## TO OUR ANCESTORS...

“We honor the gifts, resilience, and sacrifices of our Black ancestors, particularly those who toiled the land and built the institutions that established the City of San Francisco’s wealth and freedom, despite never being compensated nor fully realizing their own sovereignty. We acknowledge this exploitation of not only labor, but of our humanity and through this process are working to repair some of the harms done by public and private actors. Because of their work, we are here and will invest in the descendants of their legacy.”



~ San Francisco’s Reparations Plan Report, 2023

## MORE GRATITUDE...

We express deep gratitude to the San Francisco Office of Economic and Workforce Development, San Francisco Human Rights Commission, and Dream Keeper Initiative whose generous funding made this evaluation possible.

Thank you to the entire Homeless Children’s Network community. This has taken a collective effort, and everyone has come together seamlessly to bring it full circle.

Thank you to the Afro-Cultural Black LGBTQIA+ Preservation Mini-Grants program partners and community members who contributed to this evaluation. People who provided their expertise and time included: healers, families, advocates, community organizers, practitioners, trainers, and community leaders. Your experiences are the valued knowledge we seek to uplift. Thank you for so graciously sharing your expertise, time, energy, vulnerability, and wisdom.

You helped us truly see the sense of community and cohesion within and among the Black community(ies) of San Francisco.

Thank you to Rio Holaday for the vibrant, customized art work. Your process of getting to know the programs and the data not only make this report more meaningful, but this process helped us understand the data and the work at HCN in more expansive and integrated ways. To learn more about Rio’s work, please visit: (@rioholaday on Instagram) or ([www.rioholaday.com](http://www.rioholaday.com)).

Thank you to our very own, Krystle Canare, for the fabulous design of this report.

Thank you to our amazing Indigo Cultural Center team your assistance and amazing attention to detail in entering, managing and analyzing various aspects of the vast amounts of data for this evaluation. And for all the additional administrative and emotional support required to move this work to completion in such a short amount of time.



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# INTRODUCTION

## PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT

In July 2021, Homeless Children’s Network (HCN) launched the **Afro-cultural Black LGBTQIA+ Preservation Mini-Grants Program** to support Black LGBTQIA+ community members to plan, host, and complete events or projects that highlights and fosters a culture of belonging citywide for Black LGBTQIA+ community members. The **Afro-cultural Black LGBTQIA+ Preservation Mini-Grants Program** is funded through a partnership between the Office of Economic and Workforce Development (OEWD), the Human Rights Commission (HRC), and the Dream Keeper Initiative (DKI) with the intention of increasing the capacity of Black-led cultural organizations and Black community leaders to host projects in various neighborhoods and to encourage connectedness, particularly within the Black LGBTQIA+ community.

The target population is Black LGBTQIA+ cultural producers and community organizers with deep roots in Black historic neighborhoods in San Francisco. The aim of this grant program is to fund cultural preservation events and projects and empower community and cultural healing through showing Black LGBTQIA+ pride in public and reclaiming our healing and liberation by igniting the power of community, joy, and our remembered ancestry.

**The main objectives of this report are to:**



Describe the **Afro-cultural Black LGBTQIA+ Preservation Mini-Grants Program** in a way that contextualizes it as one aspect of Black community mental health,



Demonstrate whether key services, goals, and objectives were met,



Share feedback about experiences and impact from **Afro-cultural Black LGBTQIA+ Preservation Mini-Grants Program**,



Explore the factors and conditions necessary to facilitate this program with the Black LGBTQIA+ community in San Francisco,



Provide implications for program delivery and community development.



## INDIGO CULTURAL CENTER: A NOTE ABOUT THE AGENCY & PEOPLE CONDUCTING THIS EVALUATION

The Institute of Child Development Research and Social Change at Indigo Cultural Center is an action-research firm that specializes in infant and early childhood research and evaluation conducted with an anti-racist lens. Indigo Cultural Center (a predominantly BIPOC-staffed organization) is led by executive director Dr. Eva Marie Shivers who identifies as an African American cis-gendered woman. Dr. Shivers led this current evaluation with a small team that consisted of a bi-racial Black and Mexican American woman, a Black woman, two Filipina/Filipina American women, and one white woman.

Indigo Cultural Center’s mission is to conduct rigorous policy-relevant research on mental health, education, and child development by partnering with community agencies and public agencies that are dedicated to improving the lives of children, youth and families in BIPOC communities. Since its inception, Indigo Cultural Center has employed the use of **community based participatory research** in all our evaluations.

What this means is that we use a collaborative model and working style that involves our clients - who we prefer to call ‘partners’ - in the planning, implementation, interpretation, and dissemination processes of evaluation. We recognize the strengths that our partners bring to each evaluation project, and we build on those assets by consulting with our partners initially and at key milestones throughout the project, integrating their input and knowledge into all aspects of the project, asking for feedback on a regular basis, and seeking consensus on key issues and outcomes.



# INTRODUCTION

## BACKGROUND & CONTEXT

We begin this evaluation report by including a description of several background factors and the context in which the Afro-cultural Black LGBTQIA+ Preservation Mini-Grants program took place. Over the past several years, there has been a call to decolonize the field of mental health. One important way we can do this is by expanding the construct of wellness to include a more explicit focus on community mental health in Black and Brown communities. It is increasingly imperative that we not perpetuate the mainstream pathology-narrative of people in our communities by failing to acknowledge the broader forces that impact the well-being of communities that have experienced historic and current marginalization and oppression.

Community-based programs designed to promote healing, wellness, and positive mental health do not simply unfold in isolation. The work that Homeless Children's Network embodies is emergent work that will always reflect the time and space in which it is happening. Indeed, African and Pan-African philosophy teaches us that "all things have an impact on each other, and this interconnectedness and interplay is universal" (Marumo & Chakale, 2018).



## VOICE AND TERMINOLOGY USED IN THIS REPORT

The authors of this report employ the use of feminist methodology and use of first-person voice (e.g., 'we', 'us')

(Leggat-Cook, 2010; Mitchel, 2017).

- Throughout this report we use the terms Black and African American interchangeably.
- We do not capitalize white but capitalize Black, Indigenous, and People of Color to challenge the power of whiteness, decenter it, and elevate Black and BIPOC perspectives.
- We use LGBTQIA+ as an acronym for "lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, and asexual" with a "+" sign to recognize the limitless sexual orientations and gender identities used by members of our community.
- We use queer to express a spectrum of identities and orientations that are counter to the mainstream. Queer is often used as a catch-all to include many people, including those who do not identify as exclusively straight and/or folks who have non-binary or gender-expansive identities.
- We use gender rather than sex as an inclusive term that acknowledges that gender is socially and contextually constructed and is a multidimensional facet of identity.



*All things have an impact on each other, and this interconnectedness and interplay is universal.*

*Marumo & Chakale*

## **BLACK COMMUNITY IN SAN FRANCISCO**

The City of San Francisco is often lauded for its diversity and progressive values. However, after decades of structural racism, the Black population in San Francisco which was once 13.5% has eroded to 5%. The Black San Franciscans that remain are largely segregated in communities that have experienced marginalization, exclusionary policies, and other forms of discrimination and oppression. Once considered the ‘Harlem of the West,’ San Francisco has been home to a vibrant population of Black residents since the city’s inception. For one to fully comprehend the present circumstances and trends within the Black San Franciscan community, it is vital that we revisit the rich history of Black San Franciscans and their continued impact on the city’s culture and growth.<sup>1</sup>

## **WORLD WAR II**

During World War II, Black Americans from the South were recruited by employers to fill the need for shipbuilding labor and jobs left vacant by Japanese Americans who were forcibly sent to internment camps. While Black Americans were heavily recruited to San Francisco, they had few options for housing and were often funneled into what are now considered historically Black neighborhoods such as the Fillmore District, the Western Addition, and Bayview-Hunters Point.

<sup>1</sup> For an excellent review of Black San Franciscan history, please see: “African American Citywide Historic Context Statement, 2024, Prepared for City and County of San Francisco, San Francisco Planning Department.” Retrieved on July 26, 2024: <https://sfplanning.org/african-american-historic-context-statement>



## POST-WORLD WAR II

During the Post-World War II period, Black Americans were faced with housing shortages as GIs and Japanese Americans returned to San Francisco and anti-Black discrimination in the private housing market left them unable to purchase homes. Black communities quickly became overcrowded and under-resourced. Moreover, competition from returning GIs, the closing of shipyards, and lack of representation from labor unions led to high unemployment rates among the Black community.



## 1960 - 1979

In the late 1960s, racial tensions continued to rise against the Black community. During this time, the 1949 Housing Act allowed the city to demolish and reconstruct neighborhoods considered “slums”. Thus, a significant number of homes and places of business in Black neighborhoods such as the Fillmore District were demolished (Whitney, 2024). This led to an exodus of Black-owned businesses and Black residents from the city. In 1970, there began a significant decline in San Francisco’s Black residents since the 1920s, when it was 13% of the city’s population.

## 1980-2009

By the 1980s, redevelopment projects were completed, but new homes were too expensive for the majority of former San Francisco residents to afford. Then, the 1990s-2010s brought tech booms which created a strong demand for skilled tech workers in the Bay Area and increased rates of gentrification of historically Black and immigrant neighborhoods in San Francisco, contributing to rising costs of living and further displacement of the Black community.



## 2010 - PRESENT

Looking ahead to the last decade, Black San Franciscans have been faced with even more challenges as they continue to experience rising police brutality, use of force (Balakrishnan, 2023), and disproportionate rates of hospitalizations and mortality from COVID-19 compared to white people (Cho & Hwang, 2022). Now, the Black community makes up only 5% of the San Francisco population and continues to decline as Black Americans continue to face the lasting impacts of gentrification, discrimination, and anti-Blackness.

Since the murder of George Floyd and the rise of the Black Lives Matter movement, the City of San Francisco has begun to acknowledge historical racist policies that have disproportionately impacted the Black community. The city has made more direct efforts toward revitalizing Black communities (Health Commission City and County of San Francisco, Resolution No. 20-10; Office of the Mayor of San Francisco, 2021; San Francisco Human Rights Commission, 2020, 2023).

The overall vision and goal of the Dream Keeper Initiative, a key revitalization initiative in the Black community in San Francisco, is to address and remedy racially disparate policies within the City of San Francisco so that the dreams of young African Americans and their families are no longer deferred, and they have the needed resources and support to thrive in San Francisco. The first round of funding and grants focused on nine (9) priority areas such as: youth development and education; arts and culture; community-led change; workforce training and development; housing and homeownership; and health and well-being. <sup>2</sup>

With continued, targeted, and intentional support for the Black San Franciscan community, we may look to a future where Black families can live and continue to nurture their legacies in San Francisco.



<sup>2</sup> The City of San Francisco Dream Keeper Initiative: Funding the Dream  
<https://www.dreamkeepersf.org/funding>





Mural by Serge Gay Jr at Polk Street and Larkin Street



## CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE CITY OF SAN FRANCISCO

The Black community has made significant and lasting impacts on the civic, cultural, and economic conditions of San Francisco.

Critically necessary programs are advancing racial justice and equity of access in funding environments. According to an Echoing Green and Bridgespan report, revenues of Black-led organizations are 24% smaller on average than white-led organizations. HCN’s Mini-Grant programs are overcoming these barriers and getting funding from San Francisco’s Office of Human Rights Commission and Office of Economic and Workforce Development directly into the hands of grantees—including Black-led and Black-serving community-based organizations and Black entrepreneurs serving marginalized communities – including those experiencing homelessness.

Another example of the Black community’s impact on San Francisco can be seen in their long-standing support for the intersectional LGBTQIA+ community. Acknowledging racist practices within the white LGBTQIA+ community towards queer people of color, queer Black leaders often held leadership positions in LGBTQIA+ organizations and established the Third World Caucus which was specifically open to BIPOC LGBTQ members of the community.

Despite the longstanding history and significant contributions to San Francisco, Black residents and the Black community are often overlooked and forgotten. Community organizations like Homeless Children’s Network exist to uplift and preserve the rich history of Black San Francisco by attending to the holistic well-being of its residents.







HCN staff at 2023 HCN Retreat in San Francisco, CA

## HOMELESS CHILDREN'S NETWORK: HISTORY

Since 1992, Homeless Children's Network (HCN) has empowered toward a brighter future for children, youth, parents/caregivers, and families in San Francisco who are experiencing or are at risk of homelessness, formerly homeless, or in generational poverty. HCN was founded by the directors of six homeless and domestic violence shelters to establish a standard of care for San Francisco. Now, HCN is the hub of a Provider Collaborative of over 60+ service agencies and community-based organizations in San Francisco.

Their mission is to decrease the trauma of homelessness and domestic violence for children, youth, and families through direct mental and behavioral health services as a response; to empower families; and to increase the effectiveness of collaborative efforts among service providers by unifying a city-wide collaborative to end homelessness and poverty.

Three notable and distinguishing factors that describe HCN's work include: a 32 year-long history of building trust-based relationships with both community members and providers; the integration of a strong Afri-centric framework that guides their approach to their clinical mental health and their community mental health services; a committed focus on amplifying the voices of marginalized communities; and the integration of an Afri-centric approach to providing services that includes engaging Black communities in the design and implementation of solutions, including the evaluation of HCN's impact.<sup>3</sup>

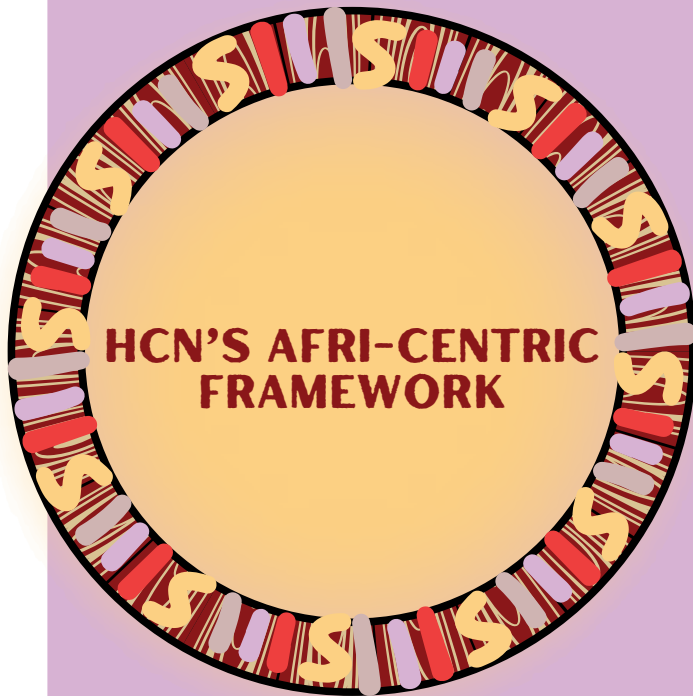
<sup>3</sup> For more history about Homeless Children's Network, please visit: <https://www.hcnkids.org/history>

## AFRI-CENTRICITY IN HOMELESS CHILDREN'S NETWORK'S PROGRAMMING & FRAMEWORK

For Black people in this country and around the world, community and interconnectedness – **ubuntu** – is and always has been a vital part of our existence and healing, and is the essence of HCN's Afri-centric programs. **Ubuntu** is a term that originates from the Bantu people in South Africa. Ubuntu encapsulates a set of closely related value and belief systems throughout the continent of Africa and throughout Pan-Africa (including the U.S.) that emphasize interconnectedness and humanity towards others. This value system ultimately comes down to the following, “an authentic individual human being is part of a larger and more significant relational, communal, societal, environmental and spiritual world” (Mugumbate & Admire, 2020).



All the programs at HCN and the organizational culture are influenced and based on an Afri-centric worldview. ‘Afri-centricity’ refers to a way of considering social change and human dynamics that are rooted in African-centered intellectual and (pre-colonial) African philosophies. The main values and concepts that ground an **Afri-centric worldview** include the “interconnectedness of all things; the spiritual nature of human beings; the collective / individual identity and the collective / inclusive nature of family structure; the oneness of mind, body, and spirit; and the value of interpersonal relationships” (Graham, 1999, p. 258). HCN's Afri-centric framework is presented below.



- Affirms Blackness
  - Is trauma-informed
  - Is love-informed
  - Focuses on self-acceptance
  - Focuses on resilience
  - Identifies unique areas of strength
  - Normalizes individuals' experiences
  - Reframes the stigma of mental health among the Black community (including the healing power of community and community events)
- 
- Acknowledges a range of spiritual practices within the Black community
  - Encourages clients to believe in their capability and choice to engage in their own healing
  - Integrates family and community members into events
  - Offers space to process collective grief and fear without judgment
  - Addresses barriers to accessing resources and basic needs
  - Facilitates difficult conversations



# THE AFRO-CULTURAL BLACK LGBTQIA+ PRESERVATION MINI-GRANT PROGRAM



There's a whole history behind how a community communicates internally. Embracing this language can provide one with a whole history up until the moment, not simply the here and now. Decolonizing mental health in the Black community requires interdependence, a sense of belonging, joy, and a remembering (Mullan, 2023). For the Black LGBTQIA+ community, this can include a unique kind of consideration that HCN's Afri-centric methodology and framework is geared to address. The concept of "rhythm" comes up as core to understanding African history. In understanding rhythm, one must adapt to how it is also commonly shared through oral tradition (Nobles, 1980). In this case records of rhythm can count towards history as much as given words.

This asks for flexibility in traversing a troubled collective history. African people's long history in the U.S. has led to a fragmented, though versatile, history. Forced labor and migration further heightened the extremes of an already perilous traversal. African people brought to the West have thus suffered tremendously regarding a maintained and shared history (Aina, 2018). African records ranging from personal home items to records and libraries have been destroyed and lost to time. Newly freed African people could make little of this eroded point of reference. African Americans developed their own language in response, one that takes many shapes and forms; but all still centered around the African nature of rhythm. The same way some African chiefs used music to teach the youth about their home, African Americans depicted their homes in vivid detail (Shockley, 1978).

Affirming the voices of our community members helps us better understand ourselves as a whole. The people one engages with directly on the street often suffer the brunt of harm and are the ones with the most faithful testimonies. These moments of their time then become artifacts, capturing snapshots of our people and our time (Gerloff & Gayraud, 2007). The Afro-cultural Black LGBTQIA+ Preservation Mini-Grants program pursues this historic preservation, open to the perspectives of Black LGBTQIA+ community members on what and how to preserve. It aims to offset underrepresentation of San Francisco's diminishing Black community, only 5% of the population and even more underrepresentation within the broader LGBTQIA+ community in the Bay Area. The voices of the Black LGBTQIA+ community should be weighed as valuable documentation. Their perspectives, vision and earnest expressions must be seen as knowledge beyond space and time regardless of the sheer numbers we represent.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

In community with each other, Black LGBTQIA+ individuals can develop resilience, a stronger sense of identity, and motivation to engage in organizing (Hailey et al., 2020; Ortiz-Wythe et al., 2022; Rosenberg, 2021) in ways that may not be possible in communities that reflect only their LGBTQIA+ or Black identities in isolation. Developing spaces and organizing opportunities that reflect this intersectional lens is particularly meaningful and essential to fostering a sense of belonging and community (Shaheed et al., 2022). Visibility through community events such as photography exhibitions has been found to reduce stigma and promote new connections (Fields et al., 2022). Other research on community events created for and by people of color has found that they support preservation of cultural identity and self (Ruvalcaba, 2023). Little is known, however, about how grants and public events specifically for the Black queer community can impact the community at large. This evaluation seeks to help fill that gap.

## AFRO-CULTURAL BLACK LGBTQIA+ PRESERVATION MINI-GRANTS PROGRAM AT HCN: PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

HCN's Afro-cultural Black LGBTQIA+ Preservation Mini-Grants Program is funded through a partnership between the Office of Economic and Workforce Development (OEWD), the Human Rights Commission (HRC), and the Dream Keeper Initiative (DKI) with the intention of increasing the capacity of Black-led cultural organizations and Black community leaders to host events in various neighborhoods and to encourage connectedness, particularly within the Black LGBTQIA+ community. The priority population is Black LGBTQIA+ cultural producers and community organizers with deep roots in Black historic neighborhoods in San Francisco.







The aim of the grant program is to fund cultural preservation projects, reclaim space and history in San Francisco, and empower event planners to produce a further demand for similar community- based events. HCN used innovative outreach strategies – relying on simple, community-based efforts to promote the opportunity to those who typically would not be able to get funding for their cultural events. The team at HCN conducted extensive outreach in the Black LGBTQIA+ community in San Francisco, focusing on individuals, coalitions, programs, and non-profit organizations through Black community events, HCN’s website, and word of mouth.

**Community events conducted by grantees promoted one or more of these community goals:**

- Celebration of Art
- Cultural Pride
- Economic Recovery
- Empowerment
- Financial Literacy
- Provide Food/Nutrition
- Mental Health & Wellness
- Community Safety & Awareness

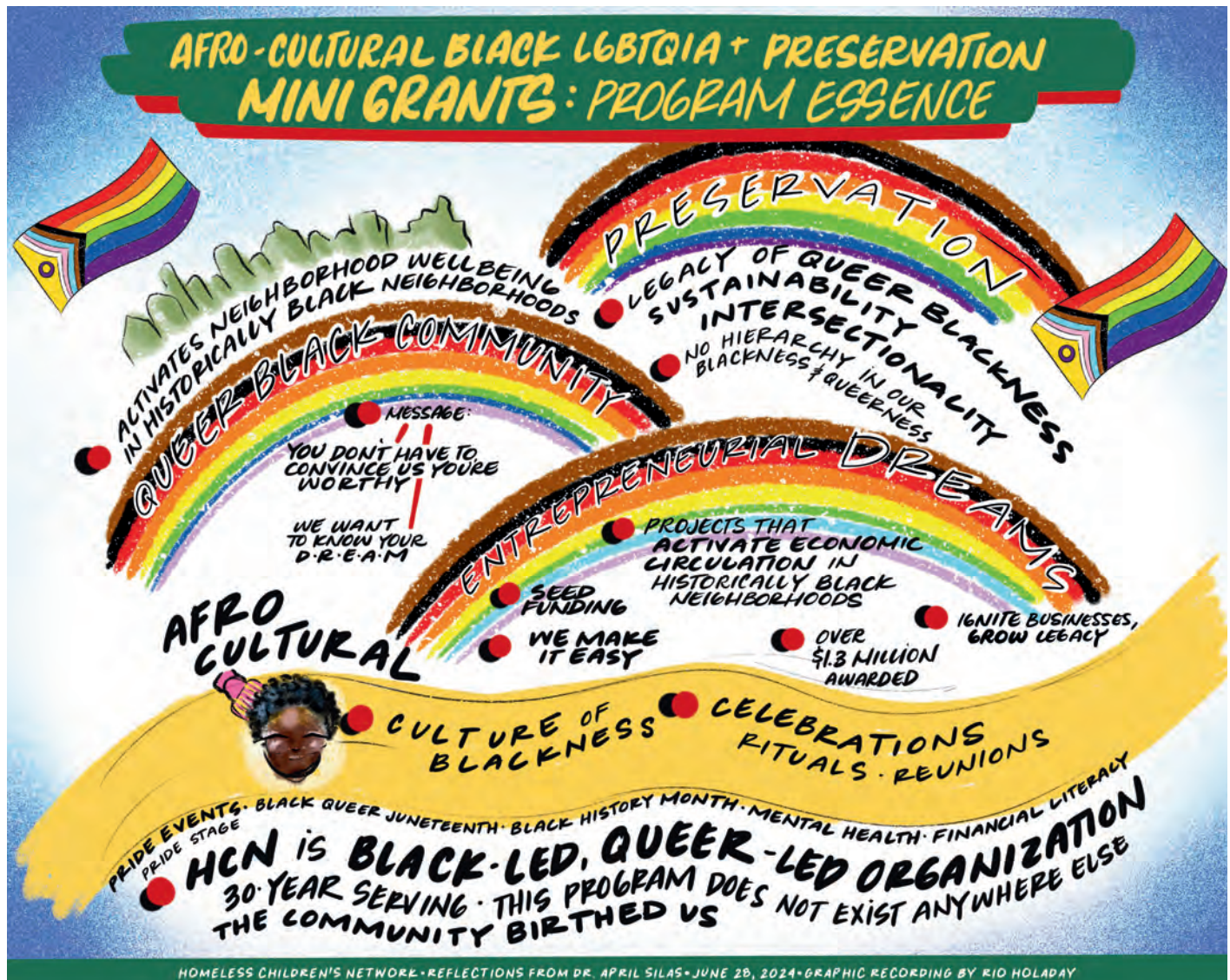




# APPLICATION PROCESS AND ACCOUNTABILITY

The application process was simple and straightforward and included a short application form that could be accessed on paper by program staff or online from HCN's website. The form requested information about the event being proposed, the benefit to the LGBTQIA+ community in San Francisco, and a project budget. HCN staff worked closely with applicants to ensure they had the capacity to complete the application and develop programs that met the intention of the funding. They provided this technical assistance via email and phone, as well as in person.

Once program staff reviewed the applications, they conducted applicant interviews over the phone or in person to assess the following: 1) the applicant's vision for their event and capacity to fulfill the vision; 2) whether the event would positively impact the Black LGBTQIA+ community; and 3) a fully itemized budget for the event. During the interview process, HCN program staff also informed the applicant of the selection process. **Appendix A** depicts all phases of the granting process.





# HCN'S AFRO-CULTURAL BLACK LGBTQIA+ PRESERVATION MINI-GRANTS PROGRAM EVALUATION

## PRIMARY RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- 1 **Were Afro-cultural Black LGBTQIA+ Preservation Mini-Grants program objectives met?**
- 2 **How do Afro-cultural Black LGBTQIA+ Preservation Mini-Grants program participants rate and describe their experiences with and the impact of Afro-cultural Black LGBTQIA+ Preservation Mini-Grants program?**
- 3 **How does the Afro-Cultural Preservation Mini-Grant program team at HCN describe the conditions and approaches that enabled them to meet their objectives?**

## METHODOLOGY

### PARTICIPATORY PROCESS

Since 2007, Indigo Cultural Center has built a strong reputation as a Community Based Participatory Research (CBPR) organization with partner-clients across the country; whereby evaluation design, implementation and dissemination activities are closely aligned with our partner's ongoing service delivery to establish and maintain continuous quality improvement.

HCN leadership and the Afro-cultural Black LGBTQIA+ Preservation Mini-Grants program team at HCN collaborated with us on the following phases of development: evaluation design, survey development, data collection outreach, and interpretation of findings.

### PHASES OF DATA COLLECTION

The evaluation for the Afro-cultural Black LGBTQIA+ Preservation Mini-Grants program at HCN had three phases.

**Phase one** involved reviewing the progress of service goals and performance measures set by the funders and HCN leadership.

**Phase two** involved the distribution of a survey that included rating scales and open-ended questions.

**Phase three** involved the Afro-cultural Black LGBTQIA+ Preservation Mini-Grants team's participation in a joint interview to explore the approach(es) and conditions necessary to make this program a success.

We relied heavily on the methodology of storytelling in the qualitative aspects of our data collection. Inspired by the work of S.R. Tolliver (Recovering Black Storytelling in Qualitative Research, 2022), we were interested in uplifting alternative ways of knowing that foregrounds Black narrative traditions.

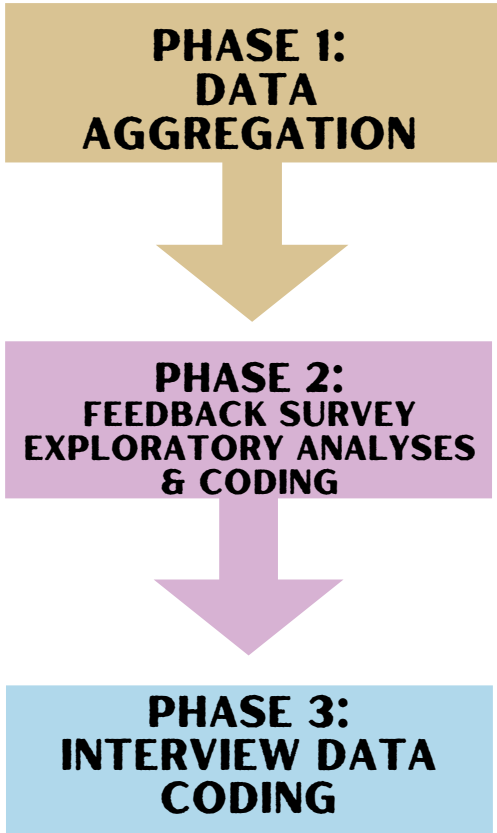
Here at Indigo Cultural Center, we are also on our journey of decolonizing our ways of gathering data and conducting community evaluations by decentering more mainstream, white-centered qualitative methods.





# FINDINGS

## ANALYSIS APPROACH



**PHASE ONE:**  
To track performance measures, we simply aggregated data points from HCN’s administrative database.

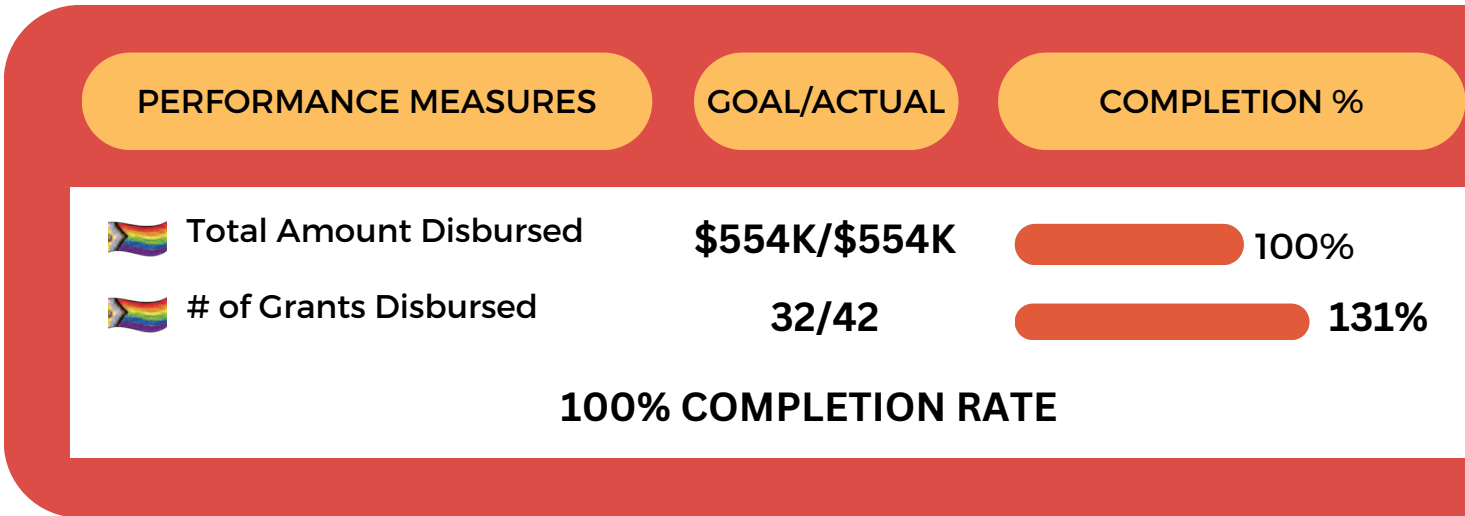
**PHASE TWO:**  
To analyze the participant feedback survey, we conducted exploratory analyses on the rating scales. For the open-ended questions we coded those responses using a priori and emergent coding.

**PHASE THREE:**  
To analyze joint interview data from HCN staff, we utilized emergent coding (Charmaz, 2006; Saldaña, 2021). Because our questions were broad and exploratory, we aimed to capture concepts, experiences, and meanings that surfaced from the words and stories in the transcripts. Emergent themes are a basic building block of inductive approaches to qualitative social science research and are derived from the worldviews of research participants themselves.



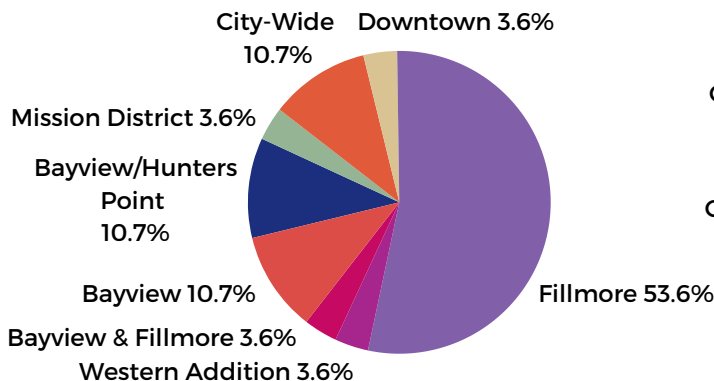
## RESEARCH QUESTION #1: WERE THE AFRO-CULTURAL BLACK LGBTQIA+ PRESERVATION MINI-GRANTS'S PROGRAM OBJECTIVES MET?

This section highlights the service goals that were exceeded by HCN's Afro-cultural Black LGBTQIA+ Preservation Mini-Grants team, a description of the neighborhoods where community events took place, the key themes addressed by the community events, and the number of attendees at the community events.

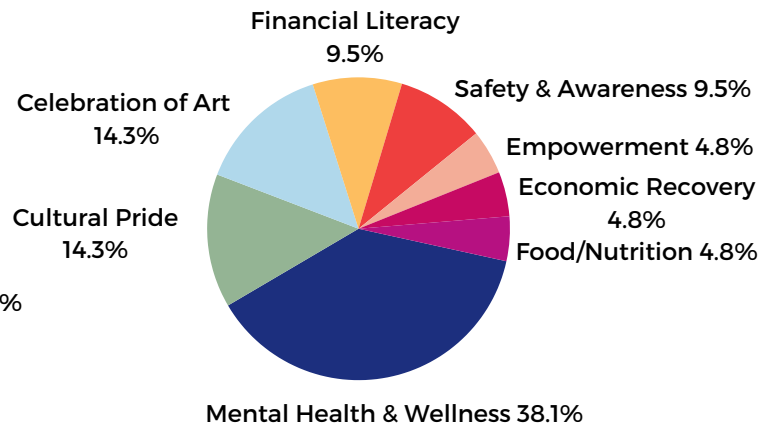


**There was a diverse range of approaches to wellness and community healing for the Black LGBTQIA+ community grantees.**

### EVENTS HELD IN HISTORICALLY BLACK NEIGHBORHOODS



### KEY THEMES OF COMMUNITY EVENTS

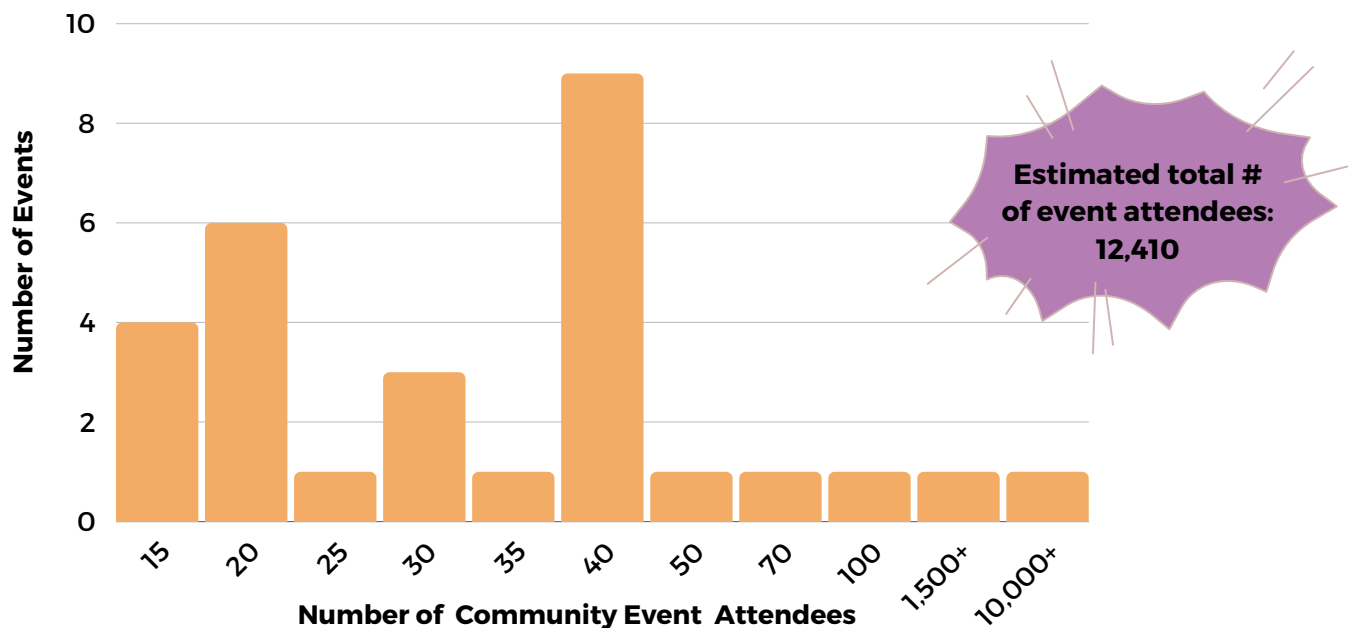


## RESEARCH QUESTION #2: HOW DID COMMUNITY MEMBERS AND GRANTEES EXPERIENCE THE IMPACT OF HCN'S AFRO-CULTURAL BLACK LGBTQIA+ PRESERVATION MINI-GRANTS PROGRAM OFFERINGS?

We gathered feedback from grantees via a survey that included rating scales and open-ended questions. Twenty-nine (29) grantees completed the survey. The findings for this research question reflect those responses and are organized in three sections: 1) community attendance; 2) feedback from grantees about perceived impact on the community; and 3) feedback from grantees regarding the support they received from HCN.

### SECTION I: # OF COMMUNITY ATTENDEES

The impact of the community events organized by grantees was meaningful based on the sheer numbers of community members who were in attendance. The aggregated number of community members in attendance based on grantees' reports was **more than 12,410**.

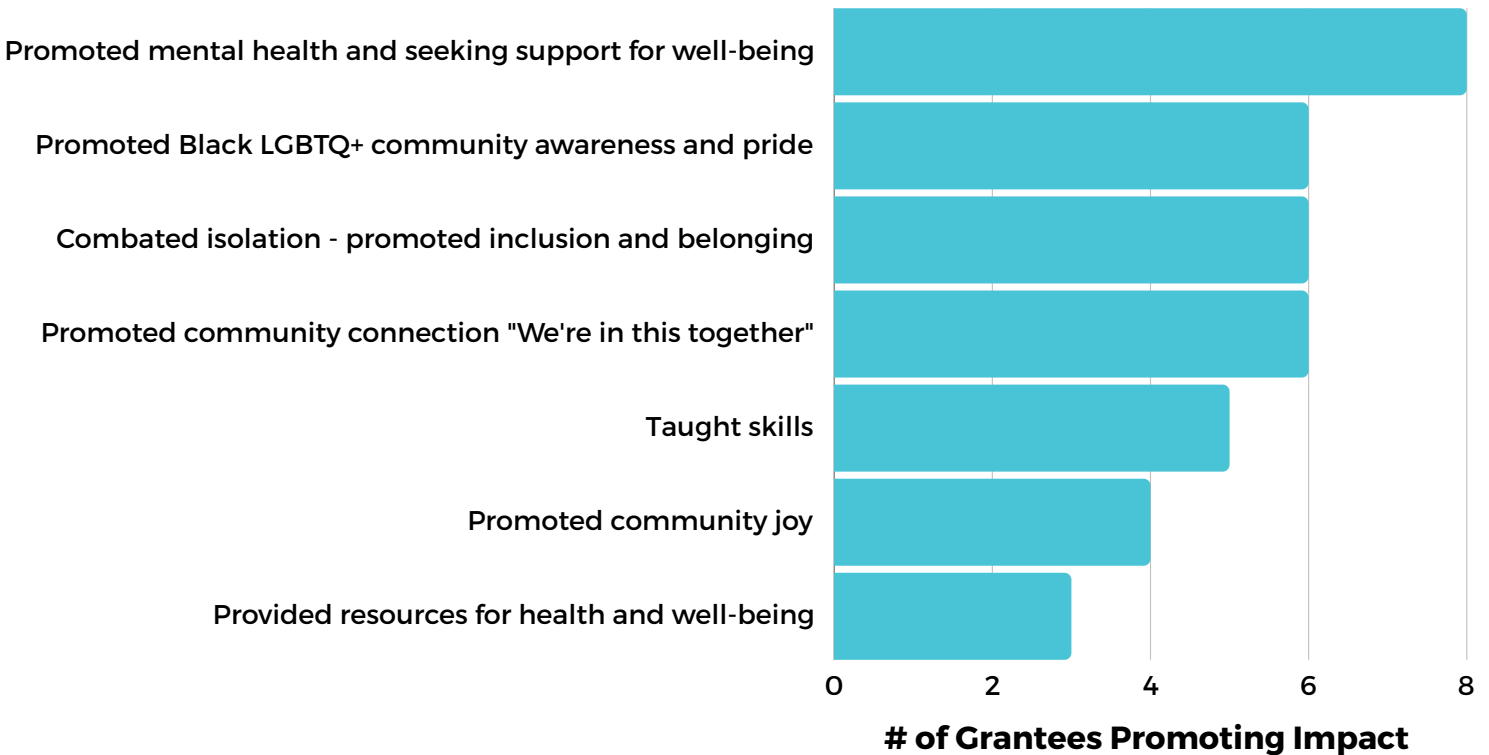


*Only 29 participants reported community attendance for this evaluation, so the actual total number of attendees and community impact is likely much larger.*

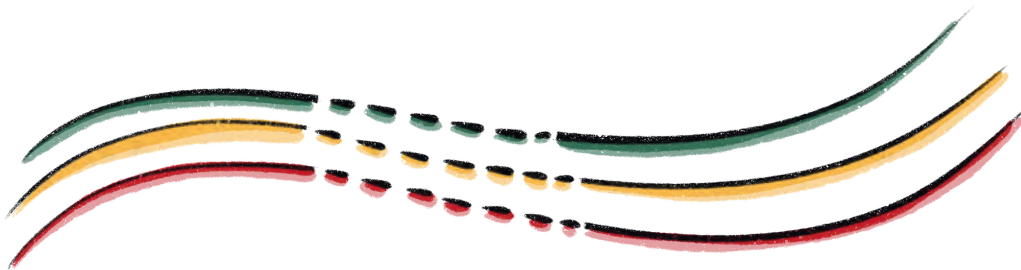
## SECTION II: GRANTEES' PERCEIVED IMPACT ON COMMUNITY ATTENDEES

We asked grantees via open-ended questions to reflect on the various ways their community events impacted the community members in attendance. We coded their responses and discovered seven (7) unique themes.

### “How did your event impact the community members in attendance?”



*(Total number of themes equals more than 29 because most grantees expressed more than one impact theme in their response.)*





## THE QUOTATIONS BELOW ILLUMINATE SEVERAL OF THE THEMES LISTED IN THE PREVIOUS TABLE.

### Grantees told us...

“The impact of this work is vital to building Black San Franciscans’ knowledge of financial literacy as the divide is wider than imagined. The divide will impede future generations to remain part of San Francisco’s topography. Without this type of education provided at my event Black San Franciscans will cease to exist physically. We will become as the Mayans – a historical point of influence for future generations’ intrigue”.

“My event impacted the community by bringing about an open dialogue, where we openly discussed mental health issues affecting Black people and the LGBTQ community.”

“This event impacted my community. They were showered with love, peace, joy, unity and happiness. Family is one. I wanted my community to come out to see San Francisco as one family. Family doesn't always mean we are related through bloodline. We are kinfolk.”

“[My community event] helped Black women open up about past experiences, and to feel confident about themselves moving forward. The goal was to make women feel beautiful despite their abused past and to not be afraid to seek help”.








## SECTION III: HOW DID GRANTEES RATE THE SUPPORT THEY RECEIVED FROM HCN?

HCN's grant-making activities went beyond basic administration of the funds to grantees. The program coordinator for the Afro-cultural Black LGBTQIA+ Preservation Mini-Grantss program engaged in offering intense technical and emotional assistance to grantee-applicants as most applicants were generally inexperienced in applying for grants and need supportive guidance. Further, as the planning of the numerous community events unfolded, more help was required with supporting details that varied in numerous ways – from logistics, capturing stories, making connections with complementary events, hiring vendors, marketing, etc. The program coordinator walked alongside recipients through every step of the planning process and then also engaged with post-event activities such as disseminating surveys, engaging in reflective integration, gathering photos, following up with vendors, etc.

Grantee-participants were asked to respond to our evaluation survey and reflect on the support they received from HCN. On average, grantee-participants rated HCN's support as 4.9 (on a Likert scale ranging from 1-5. A score of 5 was the highest rating possible). **In fact, 90% of respondents provided the highest rating of support.**

### Some of the support themes that emerged from grantee-participants' open-ended feedback on the survey included:

-  The grant application was a simple and easy process.
-  There was clear communication from HCN throughout the process.
-  Grantees felt they were 'fully equipped' to host their event.
-  Grantees felt immense gratification from helping the community.
-  The program coordinator was reliable and actively listened to grantees' concerns.

Notably, there were **no negative themes** that emerged in our exploration of grantee-participants' feedback.

## RESEARCH QUESTION #3: WHAT DID IT TAKE TO MEET AND EXCEED PROGRAM OBJECTIVES AND TRANSFORM COMMUNITY AND PARTICIPANT OUTCOMES?

The final section of our evaluation explored the HOW of understanding HCN's approach to implementing an expansive agenda for addressing grant-making in the Black LGBTQIA+ community using an Afri-centric lens. We felt it important to highlight this aspect of the work since there are still many gaps in the literature that elucidate the many mechanisms by which Black community wellness can operate in communities.

HCN's work as a whole - and especially regarding Afro-cultural Black LGBTQIA+ Preservation Mini-Grants offerings - is rooted in an Afri-centric paradigm.

In order to learn about and document the application of Afri-centric worldview to community practice, we conducted interviews with the program coordinator and with HCN's CEO. We heard stories about how the work is done and why these approaches matter. The themes on the next page elucidate implications for the field and specifically how to build, maintain, and nurture an effective workforce that can effectively apply an Afri-centric paradigm to community engagement for the Black LGBTQIA+ community in San Francisco.





Through our emergent coding process of the interviews, we found **two (2) primary themes**.

## PRIMARY CATALYST THEME #1: DKI VALUES INTEGRATED INTO THE GRANT-MAKING PROCESS

Indigo Cultural Center organized feedback in the interviews according to the Dream Keeper Initiative’s framework for guiding the work of its grantees. We used the Framework’s seven (7) elements (**Appendix B**) to help organize and make sense of the values that were infused throughout all phases of HCN’s Afro-cultural Black LGBTQIA+ Preservation Mini-Grants program, which received funding from the broader, city-wide Dream Keeper Initiative and is administered by the Office of Economic and Workforce Development (OEWD).

**The themes and quotations below were generated from interviews with the HCN team.**



**“COMMUNITY INFORMED”**

*This refers to strategies designed and informed by community input and desired outcomes.*

**“By the people and for the people. We know our community and know what is needed. We are the healers. We are the community.”**

**“Grantees have the agency to decide what to offer in their own community.”**

**“Our events represent a point in history. What we offer in the present moment represents what has come before us and what will come after us.”**



**“LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS”**

*This value asks DKI stakeholders to highlight strengths and resources, as well as gaps in the services ecosystem, and to offer recommendations for services based on community needs.*

**“These grants are creating a space for Black LGBTQ community voice. Through these events we feel seen, heard, and affirmed. That is good for our well-being and mental health.”**

**“We have to fight for visibility in a city that no longer wants us.”**

# FINDINGS

## (Continued themes from the HCN team...)



### “COLLABORATIVE”

*This value is accomplished by working together with others, cooperating and joining forces, with other people. It involves leveraging the expertise of others where necessary.*

“This gives Black LGBTQ folks a chance to experience some power. They share that power with others and then we can build together for our collective liberation.”

“We would go out into the community and engage and utilize what resources and organizations are already out there, and just start building with them. We just like really homed in on cultivating relationships with solid organizations who do have positive reputations of being a part of the community.”

“We leverage the relationships among the LGBTQIA organizations - especially those that are Black and BIPOC-led.”



### “ALTRUISTIC”

*This value is embodied by showing a selfless concern for the well-being of others.*

“These events represent ‘wisdom ways of knowing’ oneself AND our community.”

“I believe that these events represent love as a community practice.”



### “ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT”

*This value involves engaging in processes by which economic opportunities of a community, or individual, are improved according to targeted goals and objectives.*

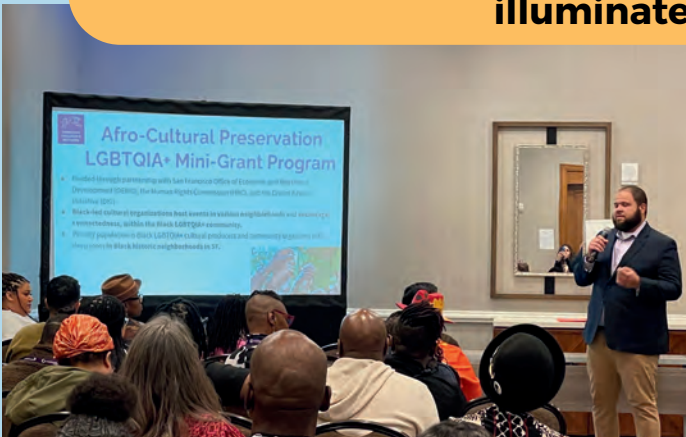
“So, a lot of folks talked about having greater than expected attendance. They were like, “Yeah, more people showed up than I thought would.”  
And so that's really cool. They also made connections with like relevant professionals. And some of them worked with vendors that were useful to them in growing their business, or they would like to hire again.”

“A lot of them explored working with possible collaborators and essentially growing their professional network. And others also found new clients for their business.”

## PRIMARY CATALYST THEME #2: AFRI-CENTRIC APPROACHES MAKE OUR WORK IMPACTFUL AND TRANSFORMATIVE

Key strategies employed by the HCN team included integrating approaches that are aligned with HCN's **Afri-centric model** of service delivery. Specific strategies included – a focus on identifying unique areas of strength; addressing barriers to resources; normalizing grantees' experiences; encouraging grantees to believe in their capability and choice to engage in their own definitions of what is needed for community to thrive and; integrating community members into healing spaces.

Several quotes from HCN's Mini-Grants Program team members illuminate these strategies.



“We held healing sessions with grantees to reclaim love and passion for our community.”



“We use a lot of innovative outreach strategies to find people to apply for these grants. We also try to eliminate barriers to grantee participation.”



“This whole process was an exploration of the ways in which we can invite others into our work. We don't have to do this alone.”



# AFRO-CULTURAL BLACK LGBTQIA+ PRESERVATION MINI-GRANTS

## RECLAIMING BLACK SPACE, HISTORY, & IDENTITIES

### VALUES



BY THE PEOPLE,  
FOR THE PEOPLE

CREATING SPACE FOR  
BLACK LGBTQIA  
COMMUNITY VOICE

PATHWAY TOWARD  
ENTREPRENEURIAL  
WELLBEING

COLLABORATIVE,  
SHARED POWER

"HCN IS THE ONLY ORG OFFERING  
GRANTS TO THE LGBTQIA+  
POPULATION FOR BLACK  
SAN FRANCISCANS."  
- HCN GRANTEE

### HCN'S APPROACH

ACCOUNTABILITY:  
GRANTEES HAD REGULAR, SUPPORTIVE  
CHECK-INS WITH HCN TO MAINTAIN  
TRANSPARENCY ABOUT THE PROCESS  
AND ACCOUNTABILITY FOR HOW THE  
MONEY WAS BEING USED

"THE EVENT FOSTERED  
A SENSE OF  
UNITY AND BELONGING"  
- HCN GRANTEE

"I HAVE SEEN SO MANY FAMILIES INHERIT  
PROPERTY AND LOSE IT ... OUR  
COMMUNITY NEEDS TO KNOW HOW TO  
BUILD WEALTH, PROTECT WEALTH, AND  
PRESERVE OUR WEALTH."  
- HCN GRANTEE

### IMPACT

\$554,000  
DISPERSED

42 GRANTS  
(32 EXPECTED)

GRANTEE-LED COMMUNITY  
EVENTS FOCUSED ON

EMPOWERMENT  
ART

FINANCIAL LITERACY  
SAFETY

MENTAL HEALTH & WELLNESS  
CULTURAL PRIDE & LEGACY

FOOD & NUTRITION

WESTERN ADDITION • FILLMORE • BAYVIEW • HUNTERS POINT • TENDERLOIN • CASTRO • POTRERO HILL  
OMI (OCEAN VIEW, MERCED HEIGHTS, AND INGLESIDE) • VISITATION VALLEY

A PROGRAM OF HOMELESS CHILDREN'S NETWORK • FUNDED BY THE SAN FRANCISCO OFFICE OF ECONOMIC AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT,  
SAN FRANCISCO HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION, AND DREAM KEEPER INITIATIVE • GRAPHIC BY RIO HOLIDAY





## DISCUSSION

Homeless Children’s Network’s Afro-cultural Black LGBTQIA+ Preservation Mini-Grants Program is funded through a partnership between the Office of Economic and Workforce Development (OEWD), the Human Rights Commission (HRC), and the Dream Keeper Initiative (DKI) with the intention of increasing the capacity of Black-led cultural organizations and Black community leaders to host events in various neighborhoods and to encourage connectedness, particularly within the Black LGBTQIA+ community. The priority population is Black LGBTQIA+ cultural producers and community organizers with deep roots in Black historic neighborhoods in San Francisco. The aim of the grant program is to fund cultural preservation projects, reclaim space and history in San Francisco, and empower event planners to produce a further demand for similar community- based events. HCN used innovative outreach strategies – relying on simple, community-based efforts to promote the opportunity to those who typically would not be able to get funding for their cultural events. The team at HCN conducted extensive outreach in the Black LGBTQIA+ community in San Francisco, focusing on individuals, coalitions, programs, and non-profit organizations through Black community events, HCN’s website, and word of mouth.



# DISCUSSION

## HIGHLIGHTED FINDINGS

HCN's Afro-Cultural Mini-Grants program distributed \$554,000 to 42 grantees. There was a diverse range of approaches to wellness and community healing for the Black LGBTQIA+ community grantees – including themes related to mental health and well-being, cultural pride, celebration of art, financial literacy and more. And community events were largely held in historical African American neighborhoods in San Francisco. The impact of grantees' community events was evident in the sheer number of attendees reports, which totaled over 12,410.

Grantees also reflected on the support they received from HCN's Mini-Grants team. On average, grantee-participants rated HCN's support as 4.9 (on a Likert scale ranging from 1-5. A score of 5 was the highest rating possible). **In fact, 90% of respondents provided the highest rating of support.**

Grantees shared that the grant application was a simple and easy process; there was clear communication from HCN throughout the process; they felt 'fully equipped' to host their event; and they shared that HCN's mini-grants program coordinator was reliable and actively listened to grantees' concerns. In summary, HCN's Afro-cultural Black LGBTQIA+ Preservation Mini-Grants program is one of the few grant programs developed with the intention of building up the Black LGBTQIA+ community in San Francisco. It is important to emphasize that uplifting the Black and Queer community does not only impact the individuals in that community, this program and the community events HCN supported enriches the overall community regardless of race, gender, and sexuality. While grantees affirmed that the grant process was simple and straightforward, the community impacts are nuanced, multifaceted, and wide-reaching, thereby impacting thousands of community members in and outside of the Black community.

**No one is free  
until we're all free.**

~Fannie Lou Hamer



## Implications for Practice

Poverty sits more latently in the margins. Any holistic approach to healing and empowerment must also and primarily include marginalized communities like the Black LGBTQIA+ community (hooks, 1984). HCN's approach to grant-making in focusing on marginalized intersectionality is the embodiment of a framework that centers and focuses on those who have historically and currently inhabited the margins (Murray-Browne, 2021). This is not just HCN's interest, this is a template for how to address poverty, oppression, and well-being in a community that is often left completely out of 'the discussion' (Mullan, 2023). **HCN's Afro-cultural Black LGBTQIA+ Preservation Mini-Grants Program** is an example of an expansive program that preserves, centers, and celebrates the Black LGBTQIA+ community in San Francisco.

## Implications for Organizational Policies

The Mini-grants team at HCN intentionally created policies and procedures that are transparent, accountable, and EASY to understand. They built trust in the community by conducting relationship-based outreach and removing typical barriers that grantees tend to encounter in similar grant programs. The data from grantees reflects extremely high ratings of support from the HCN Mini-grants team, and grantees reported that they felt 'fully equipped' to host their community event.

## Implications for the San Francisco Community

HCN's approach with the Afro-cultural Black LGBTQIA+ Preservation Mini-Grants program integrated key Afri-centric strategies with a specific focus on the following – identifying unique areas of strength; addressing barriers to resources; normalizing grantees' experiences; encouraging grantees to believe in their capability and choice to engage in their own definitions of what is needed for community to heal; integrating community members into healing spaces.

HCN's approach to preserving, centering, and celebrating Black LGBTQIA+ community in San Francisco resulted in the successful delivery of a grant-making program that embodies key Dream Keeper Initiative (DKI) values related to being community-informed, collaborative, and altruistic. In the words of HCN's Mini-grants coordinator, "Even though this grant is given to people who are part of the Black LGBTQIA+ community who are planning events FOR the Black LGBTQIA+ community, it often impacts and involves the broader community in San Francisco - bringing visibility, inclusion, awareness, togetherness."





**“What we must do is commit ourselves to some future that can include each other and to work toward that future with the particular strengths of our individual identities. And in order for us to do this, we must allow each other our differences at the same time as we recognize our sameness.”**

**~Audre Lorde**





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## Afro-cultural Black LGBTQIA+ Preservation Mini-Grants Program Application and Decision Process

### 1. Application Submission:

- Visit our website, HCNkids.org, and navigate to the "What We Do" tab to find the Afro-cultural Black LGBTQIA+ Preservation Mini-Grants or the Community Innovations Mini-Grant.
- Both grants contain specific details about the grant, including its purpose, eligibility criteria, and application timelines.

### 2. Application Review:

- Our mini-grant team will review all applications to ensure they are complete and meet the mini-grant requirements.
- Once reviewed, the applications will be presented to our committee board for further consideration.

### 3. Decision Notification:

- Applicants will be informed via email upon receiving their application.
- Accepted applicants will be contacted via phone call, while those who were not accepted will receive a notification email.

### 4. In-Person Meetings and Documentation:

- Selected grantees will be scheduled for individual meetings to discuss the grant's impact and requirements.
- Required forms, including W-9, grant agreement, signed application, and direct deposit form, will be sent electronically after the meeting.

### 5. Processing and Disbursement

- Upon receiving the necessary forms, our Finance team will process the grant documents and disburse the funds via direct deposit.
- If direct deposit is not feasible, a check can be arranged for pickup at our office.

### 6. Impact Survey:

- Grantees are requested to submit a grant impact survey within 3-4 weeks of receiving the grant funds.
- For Afro-Cultural Preservation grantees requiring date adjustments, we ask for timely communication.



## **7 Guiding Principles for Dream Keeper Initiative (SF HRC)**

### **ALTRUISTIC**

- Showing a selfless concern for the well-being of others; unselfish.

### **COLLABORATIVE**

- Accomplished by working together with others; cooperate, or join forces, with other people. Leverage expertise of others, where necessary.

### **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

- Process by which economic opportunities of a community, or individual, are improved according to targeted goals and objectives.

### **TRANSFORMATIVE**

- Causing or able to cause an important and lasting change in someone, something or an entire community.

### **COMMUNITY INFORMED**

- Strategies designed and informed by community input and desired outcomes. Collect research data.

### **LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS**

- Highlights strengths and resources, as well as gaps in the services ecosystem. Offer recommendations for services based on community needs.

### **MEASURABLE**

- Able to be measured, with numbers and/or narratives, both short and long-term.