



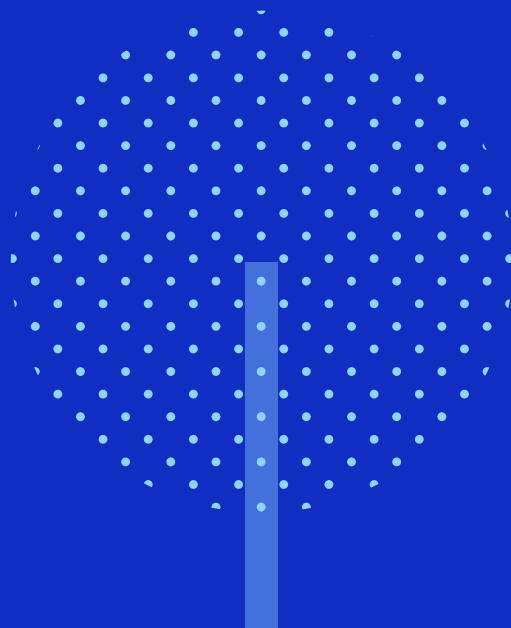
COLLECTIVE  
POWER FUND

FEB 2021



FOCUS GROUP

S N A P S H O T



## PROCESS

We paid 12 King County artists of varying disciplines, ages, backgrounds, and experience with applying to grants to participate in a 90-min focus group (85% QTBIPOC) to collectively dream about what "Collective Power" means to them and how the Northwest Film Forum can deliver a new grantmaking program that increases non-monetary benefits and decreases barriers.

Below is a list of quotes and takeaways from the group that we will use ~ in tandem with a new round of focus group feedback and 1x1 community consultants ~ to inform our Spring and Summer 2021 Collective Power Fund grants.

## GROUP DEFINITION

Collective Power equitably opens and levels the gates for artists who have historically lacked access to awards, development, and recognition to intentionally give them the tools and support they need to level up. Collective Power is built through relationships and sustained through strong community-based ecosystems to help each other thrive.

## COLLECTIVE POWER LOOKS LIKE...

Community-building & Collaborative Magic  
0% Gatekeeping & Text-worshipping Applications  
Liberating the Process  
Less Barriers/Restrictions/BS  
Equity-informed Panelists & Selection Processes  
Connecting, Connecting, Connecting  
Transparent Practices & Trusting Artists  
Increased Accessibility & Accountability  
Values & Vision-based Grants  
Encouraging Feedback Before & After Grants  
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Peer-to-Peer Learning & Critique Groups  
Opportunities to Serve on & Observe Grant Panels  
Welcoming Artists as their Whole Selves  
Eliminating the Euro-centric Gaze  
Relationships & Resource-sharing

## BARRIERS IDENTIFIED

### Application Process

- ~ "Trust that the artists/collective will deliver on a project regardless of how realized their vision is because project details almost always become stale or evolve by the time the money is awarded anyway"
- ~ "Remove toxicity and attachment around awards, money, and prestige determining an artist's worth"
- ~ Too much focus on how artists "need" to present themselves on paper and not enough focus on who the artist is and what they've accomplished
- ~ Having a project fully realized is limiting
- ~ "Sometimes we are still percolating ideas...and need money beforehand to flesh them out"
- ~ Budgets & timelines are impossible and a waste of time
- ~ Work Samples, Bio, and Artist Statement should be enough to prove an artist's/collective's ability

### Capital

- ~ Artists & communities don't have the network or access to the capital that other established artists have to win and/or keep winning awards
- ~ Same rotating group of artists being awarded

### Education

- ~ "If applying for grants is challenging for me as a person with an educational background, how can people with less of an education even begin to approach this process?"

### Grantwriting

- ~ "Grant writing workshops be cute but just aren't enough most times"
- ~ "Too much calculating & analysis for something that you haven't really been able to calculate because you don't even have access to the funds yet"

## BARRIERS IDENTIFIED (cont'd)

### Panel Process

- ~ Grant panels need racial equity training
- ~ "Where do you have to be to even get through the door?"
- ~ Panelists unable to understand the different cultural significances of artists' work
- ~ Code-switching is taxing when trying to talk about art in a way that other people can understand

### Parenting

- ~ "Artists that are parents - don't always have the time for the detail required, it is exhausting!"

### Work Samples

- ~ "I have a background in photography, but I still lack the space/access/resources/money to produce quality photos of my own work"
- ~ lack of institutional trust that work samples actually carry as much weight as grantmakers say they do

### Transparency

- ~ "I think the real barrier is the lack of feedback on our application that make it transparent on how they weigh our work when applying."

## BENEFITS IDENTIFIED

### Application Process

- ~ "A video/archive of information on how to access, apply for grants that can be shared would be really helpful for the community"
- ~ "If you continue to have the application to be as straightforward as the one in the Fall, you may increase accessibility because you take away the academic part of applying to a very large grant"
- ~ Video submission options can capture the creative thinking and expression around a prompt in a more artist-friendly way
- ~ Offer vision and values-based grants as alternatives to project and merit-based grants while still being unrestricted

## BENEFITS IDENTIFIED (cont'd)

### Feedback // Peer Support

- ~ Provide encouraging feedback so artist don't feel abandoned and clueless about why they didn't receive the grant
- ~ "What's valuable is the feedback received + connecting w one another to help utilize the tools that we have"
- ~ "These things build encouragement, artists need to be able to have someone else have an eye on their art to better prep for grants"
- ~ "Having access to other artists is helpful because it provides a support system to help folx realize that getting grant rejections is not really a reflection of you/your art, a lot of it is about luck"
- ~ "Virtual critiques to build relationships, trust, & peer support"
- ~ Call in those obscure artists who would never apply for grants to bring them in and connect them to the circle

### Panel Process

- ~ Hold grant panels accountable & make more transparent
- ~ Youth panels/panelists to add fresh perspective
- ~ "It would be amazing to either be on the panels or at least observe panels to better understand the process"

### Time & Space

- ~ "Artspace/residency without the obligation to create something specific"
- ~ Create collaborative opportunities for artists to have more time and space to create and document their work

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Learn more about the Collective Power Fund & our partnership with the Marhol Foundation @ [collectivepowerfundnm.org](http://collectivepowerfundnm.org)