



For Immediate Release

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Mellon Foundation Awards We Here \$500,000 for Transformative Project, “We Here: Dream-Shaping Our Community”

Baltimore, January 30, 2024 — Project and program leaders at We Here® are excited to announce they have received \$500,000 from the Mellon Foundation. The grant is directed to We Here’s fiscal sponsor, the Greater Washington Community Foundation in support of the three-year initiative, “We Here: Dream-Shaping Our Community.” This funding will facilitate the expansion of professional development, peer mentoring, and continuing education programs for library and archives workers who identify as Black, Indigenous, or People of Color (BIPOC).

Over the next three years, We Here’s project and program leaders will embark on several endeavors:

- Develop a new virtual leadership program
- Explore innovative press models
- Analyze data pertaining to BIPOC publications
- Release a podcast centered around highlighting BIPOC media and cultural creators
- Expand the impactful mentorship program “We Together”

The grant will also enable the team to convene in person for the first time. This marks a significant shift for the team, which has collaborated virtually for the past five or more years. In the upcoming months, We Here will issue calls for various contract positions to support the above work, including researchers, program coordinators, and data visualization professionals.

We Here’s initiatives respond to deep-seated structural discrimination within the library and archives professions. Recognizing the historical inequities faced by BIPOC individuals in the field, We Here aims to forge dynamic pathways for knowledge sharing and community building, anchored in a commitment to radical accountability.

In the words of the Dream-Shaping proposal narrative, “For decades, the library and archives professions have attempted to diversify the profession, and while some methods have helped, some are performative and even cause more



harm than good, leading to lower retention rates for folks who identify as Black, Indigenous, or People of Color. Our proposed projects address these injustices by creating dynamic new pathways for knowledge sharing and community building, all rooted with an ethos of radical accountability. We see these projects as catalysts for systemic change across the field, honoring the full spectrum of library and archives workers within their professional, creative, and personal lives.”

With joy and gratitude, Team We Here extends acknowledgment to the members of their private communities, Patreon and Seed Circle supporters, and fiscal sponsor Greater Washington Community Foundation, who have been essential allies in shaping a more equitable future for BIPOC in library and information science.

About We Here

We Here emerged in 2016 as a vital community for library workers of color, addressing the pressing need for connection among BIPOC in the field. What started as an online group has evolved into an array of educational, leadership, and mentorship projects and programs with a virtual community of over 3,600 libraries and archives workers at its core. We Here’s programming and communication is done with marginalized and underserved people at the center, doing the work not yet built into the fabric of the profession.

About The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation

The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation is the nation’s largest supporter of the arts and humanities. Since 1969, the Foundation has been guided by its core belief that the humanities and arts are essential to human understanding. The Foundation believes that the arts and humanities are where we express our complex humanity, and that everyone deserves the beauty, transcendence, and freedom that can be found there. Through our grants, we seek to build just communities enriched by meaning and empowered by critical thinking, where ideas and imagination can thrive. Learn more at mellon.org.

Stay updated on grant progress, hiring announcements, and program news from We Here by [subscribing to our public newsletter](#) and [dream-shape with us by supporting our work](#).

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