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The Saint Paul & Minnesota Foundation, F. R. Bigelow and Mardag Foundations Announce Nearly \$8 Million in Community Grants for Healing from COVID-19 and Systemic Racism

ST. PAUL, MINN. – June 29, 2021 - [The Saint Paul & Minnesota Foundation](#), [F. R. Bigelow Foundation](#) and the [Mardag Foundation](#) today announced that, together and independently, they have awarded nearly \$8 million to Minnesota nonprofits through their latest round of grants. The funding will support programs and services that provide relief to people disproportionately challenged by the coronavirus pandemic and racial injustice.

“Last year was tough for our nonprofit partners, where the pandemic and the murder of George Floyd heightened the injustices and racial disparities that exist in our communities,” said Pahoua Yang Hoffman, senior vice president of Community Impact for the Saint Paul & Minnesota Foundation. “But the difficulties faced by the nonprofit community didn’t end in 2020. This year presents as many, if not more, challenges for nonprofits as they build, repair, heal and do what they have always done—which is to serve our communities with a relentless commitment.”

The following organizations were among the Foundations’ 2021 grant recipients:

[Open Cities Health Center](#) (OCHC) was awarded \$75,000 by all three Foundations. Since 1967, the health center has served low-income, uninsured and underinsured patients in the Twin Cities through culturally reflective medical, dental, behavioral, chiropractic and optometry services. The OCHC was on pandemic front lines providing drive-through services to safely serve patients and protect staff. After the murder of George Floyd, OCHC was one of the first community health organizations to test asymptomatic volunteers, protesters and others who had taken part in mass gatherings. The grant to OCHC will support its vaccination education campaigns in special populations experiencing low testing. Funding from the Mardag Foundation will further expand OCHC patient services in the East Metro and Greater Minnesota.

[The Link](#), a nonprofit founded in 1991 by local leaders and former Minnesota Vikings players Jim Marshall and Oscar Reed to provide programming and housing for homeless youth and young families, also received a \$75,000 award from all three Foundations. Link services are provided through a street outreach program, drop-in center, emergency shelter and at 10 Twin Cities’ housing programs. The grant will support the organization as it continues to meet the need for critical services – from health care to housing, and food to employment support exacerbated by the recent economic downturn and George Floyd’s murder.

[Isuroon](#), a community nonprofit founded in 2010 to support Somali women and girls in leading healthier, more productive lives, received an award of \$20,000 from the F. R. Bigelow Foundation. The new funding will support Isuroon’s programs to aid Somali women in navigating health care for themselves and their families; civic engagements to build understanding of issues racism, Islamophobia, community safety and equity; and strategic efforts to attract diverse funding sources. [Black Table Arts](#) (BTA), a community cooperative widely recognized for its work to promote Black culture, artistic achievement, activism and better Black futures in Minnesota, received a \$30,000 grant from the Saint Paul & Minnesota Foundation. Through grassroots programs developed after George Floyd’s murder, BTA brings Black artistic communities together to encourage them to view

themselves as changemakers responsible for their collective liberation. The grant will enable BTA to expand its partnerships with St. Paul-based organizations, such as In Black Ink, through virtual conversations on topics related to Black place-making, racial equity and long-term wealth. [Mentor North](#), a 501c3 community-based mentoring organization, is collaborating with the Duluth Public School District and received a grant in the amount of \$20,000 from the Mardag Foundation. Funding will support the organization's Five Points Academic Mentoring Program. In its second year, Mentor North's Five Points Program mission is to close the achievement gap by providing one-on-one mentoring and community engagement opportunities to youth at risk of falling behind academically in Duluth, Minn. The Five Point Program, launched in 2020 during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, will continue to connect mentees with adult academic mentors on a weekly basis for help with homework, exploring the mentee's interest and fostering a positive development mindset.

A complete list of 2021 grants and grant recipients is available at: spmcf.org/who-we-are/nonprofits-we-fund

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About the Saint Paul & Minnesota Foundation

The Saint Paul & Minnesota Foundation believes in the best of Minnesota and the power of its communities. With roots in Saint Paul and partners across the state, it is Minnesota's largest community foundation and the partner of choice for thousands of donors, nonprofits and community organizations. The Foundation aspires to create an equitable, just and vibrant Minnesota where all communities and people thrive by inspiring generosity, advocating for equity, and investing in community-led solutions. Visit: spmcf.org

About F. R. Bigelow Foundation

The F. R. Bigelow Foundation is committed to making the Saint Paul community a better place to live, learn and grow. Frederic Russell Bigelow, fourth president of the Saint Paul Fire and Marine Company (now Travelers), created the Foundation through a trust in 1946. Today, his commitment to strengthening the Saint Paul area lives on through the Foundation. The Foundation is an affiliate of the Saint Paul & Minnesota Foundations. Learn more at frbigelow.org.

About Mardag Foundation

Established in 1969, the Mardag Foundation is the legacy of Agnes Ober. The Foundation provides grants to nonprofit organizations that enhance quality of life, inspire learning, revitalize communities and build capacity for the arts across the state of Minnesota. Agnes' passion lives on through the work of her descendants who serve on the Foundation's board. The Foundation is an affiliate of the Saint Paul & Minnesota Foundations. Learn more at mardag.org.