



February 1st, 2023

RE: Board of Supervisors Hearing on The Dreamkeeper Initiative

Dear Board of Supervisors of the City and County of San Francisco,

I write this letter to you all in advance of the upcoming hearing on San Francisco's Dreamkeeper Initiative: an incredible project that has allowed Black led and Black trans-led organizations to strengthen our efforts in community building and advance our efforts in racial and gender equity in San Francisco.

The Dreamkeeper Initiative's support of The Transgender District- the first legally recognized cultural district for transgender people in the world, has been tremendous. As many may be aware, being a recipient of the Dreamkeeper Initiative is what has kept our doors open since the pandemic. The district is a proud, Black trans led institution and an international thought leader on transgender human rights advocacy, economic development and community development, and arts and cultural affairs led by and for transgender people. The Transgender District provides numerous programs, services, and advocacy for Transgender people in the Tenderloin neighborhood- and globally. Locally, we are fortunate to have been able to create and lead one of the city's first Entrepreneurship Accelerator Programs for aspiring entrepreneurs. We have recently launched Guaranteed Income for Transgender People- and will be supporting 55 of our most marginalized transgender individuals living in abject poverty in San Francisco by alleviating the extreme impact of poverty at this time. And numerous efforts and programs beyond these hallmark programs- have been successful because of our partnership with the DreamKeeper Initiative.

I'm proud to share that because of DreamKeeper Initiative's support of our work- our staff is 100% people of color. 100% of our staff receive livable, market rate salaries and as a result, 100% of our staff are full time residents of San Francisco. 50% of our staff live in the Tenderloin; 16% of our staff live in the Mission; and 33% of our staff live in Mission Bay. 50% of our staff are Black Trans Women; 33% of our staff at Latinx Non-Binary; and 16% Cisgender Latina. As an organization, we are able to provide support for LGBT and People of Color owned small businesses in San Francisco's Tenderloin through our Small Business grants- helping and supporting small businesses in the Tenderloin post-pandemic.

Without the support of the DreamKeeper Initiative, the cultural district would have had to close its doors in 2021. I can't stress the realities of leading of Black trans led organization in San Francisco and how its very existence often limits our access and opportunities to resources outside of the City and County of San Francisco. Do you know how many foundations and philanthropic organizations have pivoted to "invitation-only" funding? Do you know how difficult it is to break into galas and spaces that don't invite you there? DreamKeeper Initiative has allowed us to pilot innovative and life changing programs and efforts and for the first time, trusted our leadership as Black leaders.

Please continue to support and advocate for the preservation of Black communities in San Francisco.

Thank you,

Aria Sa'id
President & Chief Strategist
The Transgender District