

Nonprofit Recovery Grant : Entry # 2263**General Information****Date or application:**

01/02/2024

Organization Name

Black Theatre Troupe of Upstate NY, Inc.

Organization TIN or EIN:

90-0753854

If available, provide your Unique Entity Identifier (UEI):

TGGYJCD3SKS6

Organization physical address:

35 Woodlawn Ave
Albany, NY 12208
United States
[Map It](#)

Is the mailing address different from the physical address?

Yes

Organization mailing address (if different):

251 N. Pearl St.
Albany, NY 12207
United States
[Map It](#)

Contact Information**Primary contact name:**

Jean-Remy Monnay

Primary contact title:

Artistic Director

Primary contact phone:

518-833-2662

Primary contact email:jrmonnay@gmail.com**Preferred method of contact:**

Email

Website (if available):<https://www.blacktheatretroupeupstateny.org/>**Organization Info and Structure:****Please attach to this application proof of your organization's Tax-Exempt Status**

- [Black-Theatre-Troupe-of-Upstate-NY-Tax-exempt-certificate.pdf](#)

Date of establishment:

11/18/2011

Give a brief description of your organization. Please include information on the organization's activities or mission statement (150 words or less):

The Black Theatre Troupe of Upstate NY fosters cross-cultural understanding and creates more diversity on stage by producing theatre arts by marginalized artists in upstate New York. As an Albany-based mentoring company that educates new artists of all ages, we aim to expand the cultural landscape in the Capital Region and to create a place for Artists of Color to grow and thrive.

We believe in the value of diverse and meaningful representation, the disruption of systemic racism through art, and providing safe spaces for BIPOC artists. We value all identities and commit to continuing to evolve throughout the rest of our existence, helping to make the world of theatre a more just, equitable, and inclusive space for all.

We center Black stories on stage, celebrating our BIPOC community while also helping to educate our White audience members through talkbacks and other programming.

Provide the total number of part time employees (if applicable):

For FY 22-23: 38 production contracts for artists

Provide the total number of full-time employees (if applicable):

No paid full-time employees. Our Artistic Director is currently a full-time volunteer, although we have plans to gradually build in a salary for this position over several years, to help ensure long-term viability of the company.

Provide the total number of volunteers (if applicable):

For FY 22-23: 54+. (1 full-time Artistic Director, 1 Assistant Artistic Director, 1 Associate Director, 12 Board Members, 19 Producers/Production Assistants/General Operations Volunteers, and 20+ House Management and Event volunteers.)

What is the organization's current annual budget?

Projected budget of \$29,453 for FY 23-24 (July 2023-June 2024). Actual budget of \$27,340 for FY 22-23.

Have you or the organization ever received any form of COVID-19 relief funds or loans specific to the negative impacts of the Pandemic?

No

Describe the purpose of the organization. Include a description of the target population, as well as the goals and objectives of your proposed project and the amount of Albany County residents that are served (250 words or less).

Black Theatre Troupe of Upstate NY (BTTUNY) was founded in order to provide access to the world of theatre for aspiring BIPOC, and predominantly Black, artists in the Capital Region. With a home base at the REP in Arbor Hill, we tell both global and local Albany stories, bringing BIPOC history to life on stage. We aim to provide safe learning spaces for new BIPOC artists, and we are also constantly looking for ways to reach new artists and audience members, especially members of the local BIPOC community who might not otherwise seek out theatrical experiences. We have a main season of 3-4 fully staged productions, additional special projects and performances, and we are in the process of developing regular educational programming for artists of all ages.

Performances can reach more than 3,500 audience members, and we have 90+ artists and volunteers working with us in any given year, many of whom come from Albany County. Our educational programming – open to people from all areas but based in Albany – will be able to serve at least 100+ people per year once it is fully operational. We already regularly collaborate with local schools, including Siena College and University at Albany. Recent special projects have included events with Prisoners Legal Services of New York, The Stephen and Harriet Myers Residence/Underground Railroad Education Center, NYS Division of Criminal Justice Services, and more. We aim to continue cultivating these and similar relationships, in order to expand our outreach and impact.

If an award is made, describe how Albany County stakeholders will benefit.

BTTUNY is working to improve the lives of aspiring BIPOC artists in the Albany area, and to bring theatre to more diverse audiences. As the company grows and invests more in its programming, we will be able to reach and collaborate with more people. Audiences attending our performances bring more business and foot-traffic to the downtown Albany area, and we reinvest in our community with every performance, paying all of our artists – something that is uncommon for a community theatre company. Money that comes to this company does not stay with the company alone: the wealth is redistributed to our local performers and designers.

BTTUNY has never been just a theatre company. It has always been a collaborative home for artists who would not otherwise have opportunities in the world of theatre, due to years of systemic racism and White-centric theatrical practices. The stories we tell on stage are chosen to educate and empower the surrounding community. Our audiences have become increasingly more racially diverse, and we see ourselves not just as a safe space for BIPOC artists but also as an agent for change.

The more BTTUNY is able to invest in its programming and existence in Albany, the more we can offer to the community: increased mentoring opportunities, tuition-free classes, more collaborations with local artists and businesses, and continued

engagement with Albany County schools, colleges, and universities. We will continue to bring our BIPOC-focused productions to the area while training new artists, thereby diversifying and strengthening the arts environment in Albany and beyond. Albany County is our home, and we are committed to finding a permanent residence here so that we can offer even more diverse and community-focused programming in the future. Any funding received through this grant would help us to continue to employ and pay local artists in the present, while building a firm foundation for our future in Albany.

Negative Economic Impact:

What amount of funding is being requested?

\$25,000

Provide the total amount of lost revenue/additional expenses attributable to the COVID-19 Pandemic.

Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, BTTUNY lost 15 months' worth of performance opportunities and revenue. Although we were able to pivot to some online offerings, these were not revenue-generating. BTTUNY's average annual earned income (average taken over the last 3 fiscal years) is \$23,989. An award of \$25,000 would help us recoup almost all of the 15 month gap in income. (15 month earned income estimate, which would include at least one more production than a 12-month average: \$29,986 or more.)

Sustainable Operating Model: Describe how your organization adapted its operations to respond to (a) the immediate impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and (b) any long-term trends brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic.

When COVID-19 hit, BTTUNY had to cease all in-person operations and flip to a virtual model of engagement.

In June of 2020, BTTUNY led and organized 8:46, a virtual theatre response to the murder of George Floyd. This production was a collaboration with Capital Repertory Theatre (theREP) in Albany's Arbor Hill neighborhood, Troy Foundry Theatre, Playhouse Stage Company, and others in support of the African American Cultural Center of the Capital Region. Each company or group created its own performance, 8:46 in length, created to be a theatrical response to the series of murders and assaults against Black people throughout American history. This project, along with BTTUNY's strong history of quality programming, led Proctors Collaborative to offer BTTUNY a residency at theREP when performances were able to be in person again.

We also produced a free Zoom performance of Camp Logan, one of our company's most popular productions, in June of 2021 in celebration of Juneteenth.

When it was safe to return to live performances, we had to begin with an outdoor production: Barbecue, by Robert O'Hara, in August 2021. As we do not typically perform outside, this brought extra equipment rental costs, in addition to the costs of COVID-19-related safety measures. While this outdoor arrangement allowed us to return to performing two months earlier than we would have otherwise been able, we are not invested in maintaining regular fresh-air offerings, as the costs and weather-related challenges proved too great to be sustainable long-term.

Some adjustments that we made during the pandemic have proved to be useful and sustainable over time, though: we regularly now use Zoom for meetings, enabling our artists and designers to work more efficiently. We also offer virtual

auditions for our productions, which helps us to reach people who are challenged by transportation or otherwise unavailable. Cast and crew members who are ill during rehearsals sometimes attend virtually, which helps to keep our community healthy without stalling progress. We have also started more regularly casting understudies, as COVID-19 continues to affect artists' abilities to perform. This is positive in that it allows us to offer opportunities to even more people in the community, although it does come with additional expenses. We have also switched from physical playbills to digital programs, which are more cost-effective and allow us to provide helpful links and resources for our audiences.

And of course, we have continued to protect our company against COVID-19 and other illnesses through regular testing, use of PPE, and sanitization practices.

If an award is made, describe how the funds will help the organization to recover from the negative economic impacts associated with the COVID-19 pandemic and to sustain long-term operations in Albany County.

The COVID-19 Pandemic caused BTTUNY to pause its development of its educational programming, most notably a Youth Theatre Program, which we are now slowly starting to re-envision and build. This year, as part of our final production of the 2023-2024 Season, we are producing a children's program in June of 2024 that includes new works written by Capital Region youth as well as a previously published piece that teaches about key African American historical figures. These performances will be free to the public, and young authors will receive mentoring as they work on their pieces. As BTTUNY grows, we intend to add more offerings for children and teens: an in-depth summer program with classes on acting, design, and direction, culminating in a production, and similar after-school classes during the school year. We are also planning on creating free classes for adults of all ages that teach acting skills, audition techniques, design, direction, stage management, and more. As a mentoring company, we already train select individuals with each production, bringing on new artists and helping them gain the skills that will allow them to be more successful beyond BTTUNY. But with our traditional season, we are limited in the number of new artists we can train. Having a regular class structure will help us to increase the number of people we can help. We often have people who reach out to us wanting to participate, and instead of them having to wait several months for an appropriate production, classes would allow them to start at the time most convenient to them, and be better prepared for productions when they come around.

BTTUNY pays all of its artists (performers and artistic team) during its productions. We also intend to pay a competitive wage to anyone teaching our classes. Funds awarded will help us to support this programming, paying for staff and other resources (space rental when necessary, scripts, costumes, and more).

We are also saving for a permanent home in downtown Albany – a theatre space that is our own, where we can expand our programming more than we are able to do in our temporary home at the REP. A permanent home would allow us to be a more vibrant and engaged part of the Albany community, as it would give us more flexibility and opportunities for outreach and community engagement. Using some of these funds to pay artists throughout our regular season would allow us to invest more of our current earned income in our theatre home goal.

A grant of \$25,000 would restore to us almost all of what we lost in the pandemic, and get us back on track financially, thereby benefiting the BIPOC artists and diverse audiences of Albany County.

Does the organization possess a financial management system that provides records that can identify the sources and application of ARPA funds if an award is made? Please explain below:

Yes: we manage our finances using QuickBooks, and we have a volunteer bookkeeper who helps us with our records and financial analysis.

Please explain how the negative impact associated with the COVID-19 pandemic led to revenue loss:

As a Theatre company, we are rare in the amount of our operating budget that we cover through earned income; we regularly raise 80-85% of our annual budget through ticket sales and performance fees, as compared to many theatre companies that rely on unearned income for 50% or more of their budgets. Due to COVID-19, we were unable to perform live, sell tickets to performances, or conduct workshops/special performances from March 2020-July 2021. This therefore removed most of our income for 15 months, with the exception of a few donations that continued to come in from our supporters.

When we returned to performance via an outdoor production in August 2021, we had additional expenses due to the ongoing challenges of COVID-19: rental of outdoor seating equipment, tarps for rain shields, porta-potties, and extra sound and lighting equipment, as well as COVID-19 test kits, PPE, and extra cleaning/sanitizing products. We also had to cancel some performances due to excess rain, resulting in lower ticket revenue. In October 2021, we returned to indoor performances, and our revenue began to stabilize. We still had extra COVID-related costs, but we were not also dealing with the challenges and unpredictability of outdoor performances. Nevertheless, we had spent 15 months with no performance-related income, and an extra two months of increased performance-related costs that reduced the net profit from ticket sales for the first show of our 2021-2022 season. All of this set us back on our long-term institutional goals of establishing free educational programs for artists of all ages, and finding a permanent home of our own.

(Optional) Use the below space, or attached supplemental files, to provide any additional information that you believe will support the organization's request:

To view photos from our production archive, please visit <https://www.blacktheatretroupeupstateny.org/archive>. (Scroll to the bottom for a list of past productions.)

For bios of our main artistic staff, plus a list of our Board of Directors and Producers, please visit <https://www.blacktheatretroupeupstateny.org/about>.

BTTUNY Founder and Artistic Director Jean-Remy Monnay was recently awarded the Larry Murray Award for Community Outreach and Support through Theater from the Berkshire Theatre Critics Association, for diversity programming and audience development. You can read about the 2023 Berkshire Theatre Awards here: <https://berkshireonstage.blog/2023/11/14/seventh-berkshire-theatre-awards-presented/>.

Tax Information**Please upload Federal tax returns for tax year 2019**

- [Black-Theatre-Troupe-of-Upstate-NY-IRS-990-for-2019.pdf](#)

Please upload Federal tax returns for tax year 2020

- [Black-Theatre-Troupe-of-Upstate-NY-IRS-990-for-2020.pdf](#)

Please upload Federal tax returns for tax year 2021

- [Black-Theatre-Troupe-of-Upstate-NY-IRS-990-for-2021.pdf](#)

Please upload Federal tax returns for tax year 2022

- [Black-Theatre-Troupe-of-Upstate-NY-IRS-990-for-2022.pdf](#)

Please upload IRS Form W-9

- [Black-Theatre-Troupe-of-Upstate-NY-W-9.pdf](#)

Risk Assessment**Has the organization adopted and/or implemented policies relating to: records retention, conflict of interest, code of ethics, and/or nondiscrimination policies**

Yes

If you selected "Yes" above, please specify:

Diversity, Inclusion, and Nondiscrimination: As a Black-run theatre company with a commitment to continual growth and self-education, we are keenly aware of the need to honor and include people of all identities. Our company is dedicated to telling BIPOC stories, but we are also actively investigating intersectionality on our stages. We ask our audiences to look at their own implicit biases, and to consider the world from new perspectives. In order to do this effectively, we have to be willing to examine our own lenses, and to be sure that we are not inadvertently discriminating against any group or identity. We seek input from artists and other collaborators with diverse identities: varied races, genders, sexual orientations, physical abilities, and more. As we grow in the future, it is our goal to further diversify our artists, volunteers, and organizational staff, while staying true to our mission to support, mentor, and employ the BIPOC community, with a focus on Black artists. As we become more able to pay artists and staff, we are committed to being equal-opportunity employers, and more diverse in our composition.

Is the organization properly insured?

Yes

If you selected "Yes" above, please specify the types of insurance held and the limits:

Erie & Niagara Insurance Association: Commercial Package.

Property coverage: Business Property limit: \$2,000. (No building coverage as we do not have a permanent residence. This is held by the REP/Proctors Collaborative.)

Liability Coverage: Bodily Injury and Property Damage/Personal Injury and Advertising Injury: \$1,000,000 each occurrence, \$2,000,000 aggregate. Premises Medical Payments: \$1,000 each person, \$10,000 each accident. Products/Completed Operations: \$1,000,000 each occurrence, \$2,000,000 aggregate. Fire Legal Liability: \$50,000 each occurrence.

Does the organization have a financial management system?

Yes

If you selected "Yes" above, please specify

Yes: we manage our finances using QuickBooks, and we have a volunteer bookkeeper who helps us with our financial analysis.

Has there been any change in your organization's key staffing positions in the last 2 years?

No

Has the organization previously done work for the Federal government (i.e. Is the entity experienced in managing Federal funds)?

No

If you selected "Yes" above, please specify

We have received local and New York State grants (ART NY, NYSCA Creative Opportunity Fund) but not Federal funding.

Certifications:

Acknowledgment 1

I have read and understand the U.S. Treasury's Compliance and Reporting Guidance for State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (see link below)

U.S. Treasury's Compliance and Reporting Guidance for State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds:

<https://home.treasury.gov/system/files/136/SLFRF-Compliance-and-Reporting-Guidance.pdf>

Acknowledgment 2

Should the County allocate ARPA Funds, I am able to and pledge to adhere to ALL Compliance and Reporting Requirements of the U.S. Treasury as it relates to any State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds

Acknowledgment 3

I understand the County will contact me if/when additional information is needed and that information will be promptly provided to the County to support reporting requirements

Acknowledgment 4

If for any reason I am unable to comply with the U.S. Treasury's Compliance and Reporting Requirements I will immediately notify the County in writing by email or letter

Acknowledgment 5

All information submitted in this application is true and accurate

Electronic Signature Agreement

I agree

By checking the "I agree" box, you agree and acknowledge that 1) your application will not be signed in the sense of a traditional paper document, 2) by signing in this alternate manner, you authorize your electronic signature to be valid and

binding upon you to the same force and effect as a handwritten signature, and 3) you may still be required to provide a traditional signature at a later date.

Type name

Mariah Sanford-White

Notes



Admin Notification (ID: 655253b8f18ee)

added January 2, 2024 at 8:43 pm

WordPress successfully passed the notification email to the sending server.