



**BCAN AWARDED \$1 MILLION CONGRESSIONAL SPENDING GRANT
TO CONTINUE SUPPORTING BALTIMORE CREATIVES**

Revolutionizing the economics of being a creative in Baltimore, BCAN harnesses collective power to invest in and grow Baltimore's creative ecosystem

Baltimore, MD – January 18, 2023 – [The Baltimore Creatives Acceleration Network](#) (BCAN) is excited to announce that the organization has partnered with the U.S. Senators Ben Cardin and Chris Van Hollen (D-Md.) to receive \$1,000,000 in Congressionally Directed Spending – its largest grant to date.

BCAN supports artists, designers, creatives, and cultural entrepreneurs as they develop the businesses that fuel Maryland's creative economy – a sector that added over \$10 billion in economic impacts in our state in 2020 and sustained nearly 70,000 jobs. Funds will be used to expand BCAN's Scale Your Passion, Creative Coaching, and mobile programming to provide mentorship, technical assistance, and coaching to entrepreneurs seeking to launch and grow their ventures.

"Art inspires us and teaches us – but that's not all. It's also an economic driver in our communities and a key part of our creative economy. We secured these funds so the team at the Baltimore Creatives Acceleration Network can empower even more local artists to turn their passions into their livelihoods. An expanded BCAN will unleash the full potential of creative entrepreneurs in Baltimore, and the City will be stronger for it," said Senator Van Hollen, a member of the Appropriations Committee.

The \$1,000,000 in funding will go a long way to launch BCAN's Creative Coaching program and grow the organization's Scale Your Passion accelerators; initiatives that will provide Baltimore creatives with the resources they need to take their businesses to the next level. The funding will catalyze multiple pathways and levels of support, expand reach and help grow the city's creative ecosystem.

"We are committed to providing essential resources to Baltimore's creative community. Baltimore's creatives share their ingenuity and brilliance to connect communities, set the vision for social and creative movements, and ultimately strengthen our city, said BCAN's Entrepreneurship and Innovation Director, Sharayna Christmas. "This grant will enable us to bolster our programming and support and invest in even more deserving creatives in 2023."

"We're thrilled that BCAN has been selected as a recipient of the Congressionally Directed Spending and grateful to Senator Cardin and Senator Van Hollen for their commitment to Baltimore creatives," shared Maggie Villegas, Executive Director. "Baltimore creatives are the heartbeat of our city and deserve to be invested in. This funding will support our mission of preparing, resourcing and inspiring Baltimore creatives to build mindful creative enterprises."

“MICA is deeply grateful to Senator Cardin and Senator Van Hollen for their belief in BCAN, resulting in this remarkable investment which will fuel BCAN's work to build a stronger and more equitable creative economy in the City,” says MICA President Samuel Hoi. “This hyper-local, values-driven, and heavily partnered effort to empower creative entrepreneurs is a national model for growing sustainable cultural ecosystems and MICA is honored to have seeded and continue to support the initiative.”

BCAN works alongside partners to pour into Baltimore’s growing creative ecosystem and has served over 2000 creatives, awarded over \$1M in direct and partnered grants to small businesses and independent artists, and funded 50 BIPOC and women-owned creative enterprises. The Congressional spending grant will help them continue this work in 2023.

For press inquiries:

Krystle Carter Word
krystle@baltimorecreates.org

About BCAN

The Baltimore Creatives Acceleration Network (BCAN) is a BIPOC woman led citywide movement to prepare, connect, resource and inspire Baltimore’s creatives to own their genius, build mindful creative enterprises, and shape our future. Through business accelerator programs, creative coaching, networking events and advocacy work, BCAN has supported over 2000 creatives in Baltimore. The BCAN community of creative entrepreneurs have gone on to launch new businesses, create local jobs, establish retail locations, and gain national partnerships and press. Past SYP Fellowship graduates include [Mess in a Bottle](#), [Le Monade](#), [Mera Kitchen Collective](#), and [Fruit Camp Tattoo](#). BCAN is made possible by the generous support of Bloomberg Philanthropies, National Endowment for the Arts, the City of Baltimore, Baltimore Development Corporation, Aaron and Lillie Straus Foundation, Stavros Niarchos Foundation, Surdna Foundation, Village Capital & Black Innovation Alliance, T. Rowe Price Foundation, Philip E. & Carole R. Ratcliffe Foundation, Henry Niles Foundation, Goldseker Foundation, Elsmere Education, Winifred M. Gordon Foundation, the Maryland State Arts Council and the Maryland Institute College of Art.