Great. I will gather the official websites and a short, website-ready bio for the current founder(s) of each organization listed in your document. Bios will reflect what's shared on the organization's website or public materials, and I’ll include logos or photos where possible.

I’ll let you know once everything is compiled and ready for your review.

**Founders of Black-Focused Organizations in Washington State**

**Cultivating Black Brilliance (LANGSTON)**

([News Release: Newly founded LANGSTON to strengthen Black arts and culture in Seattle - Art Beat](https://artbeat.seattle.gov/2016/06/30/news-release-newly-founded-langston-to-strengthen-black-arts-and-culture-in-seattle/#:~:text=LANGSTON%E2%80%99s%20founding%20board%20of%20directors,includes)) ([News Release: Newly founded LANGSTON to strengthen Black arts and culture in Seattle - Art Beat](https://artbeat.seattle.gov/2016/06/30/news-release-newly-founded-langston-to-strengthen-black-arts-and-culture-in-seattle/#:~:text=LANGSTON%20was%20created%20in%20December,arts%20and%20culture%20in%20Seattle))**Founder(s):** Inye Wokoma (Founding Board Chair) – *LANGSTON, Seattle’s hub for Black arts, was founded in 2016 through a community-led effort.* Wokoma, a Seattle-born artist and filmmaker, helped establish LANGSTON with a vision of “cultivating Black brilliance” in the Central District ([News Release: Newly founded LANGSTON to strengthen Black arts and culture in Seattle - Art Beat](https://artbeat.seattle.gov/2016/06/30/news-release-newly-founded-langston-to-strengthen-black-arts-and-culture-in-seattle/#:~:text=LANGSTON%E2%80%99s%20founding%20board%20of%20directors,includes)) ([News Release: Newly founded LANGSTON to strengthen Black arts and culture in Seattle - Art Beat](https://artbeat.seattle.gov/2016/06/30/news-release-newly-founded-langston-to-strengthen-black-arts-and-culture-in-seattle/#:~:text=LANGSTON%20was%20created%20in%20December,arts%20and%20culture%20in%20Seattle)). Under his leadership, this nonprofit continues the mission of the historic Langston Hughes Performing Arts Institute by sharing Black culture, promoting artistic expression, and inspiring leadership in a self-determined community.

**Langston Hughes Performing Arts Institute**

([Langston Hughes Performing Arts Institute (Seattle) - HistoryLink.org](https://www.historylink.org/File/10909#:~:text=could%20seat%20up%20to%201%2C400,Street%20was%20completed%20in%201972))**Founder(s):** City of Seattle Model Cities Program (Walter Hundley, Director) – *Originally founded in 1969 as a city-run community arts center*, this institute was named after poet Langston Hughes and aimed to serve Seattle’s Black community ([Langston Hughes Performing Arts Institute (Seattle) - HistoryLink.org](https://www.historylink.org/File/10909#:~:text=could%20seat%20up%20to%201%2C400,Street%20was%20completed%20in%201972)). City official Walter R. Hundley championed the purchase of the Central District venue for use as an arts space, laying the groundwork for a half-century of Black cultural programming. Today, the institute’s legacy lives on through LANGSTON and continued community-driven arts initiatives.

**Northwest African American Museum (NAAM)**

([Northwest African American Museum - Wikipedia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Northwest_African_American_Museum#:~:text=The%20first%20efforts%20at%20creating,possible%20locations%20for%20the%20museum)) ([Northwest African American Museum - Wikipedia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Northwest_African_American_Museum#:~:text=established,possible%20locations%20for%20the%20museum))**Founder(s):** Community Activists Earl Debnam, Michael Greenwood, Charlie James, Omari Tahir-Garrett – *Conceived in the 1980s by activists who occupied Seattle’s Colman School*, NAAM opened in 2008 after decades of advocacy ([Northwest African American Museum - Wikipedia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Northwest_African_American_Museum#:~:text=The%20first%20efforts%20at%20creating,possible%20locations%20for%20the%20museum)) ([Northwest African American Museum - Wikipedia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Northwest_African_American_Museum#:~:text=established,possible%20locations%20for%20the%20museum)). These founders – including Tahir-Garrett and others – fought to secure a museum honoring Black history in the Pacific Northwest. Their persistence paid off: NAAM now preserves and celebrates the art, history, and culture of African Americans in the region, fulfilling a vision born from grassroots struggle.

**Central District Forum for Arts & Ideas (CD Forum)**

([Watch: Douglas Q. Barnett and Sharon Nyree Williams](https://blackartslegacies.cascadepbs.org/articles/douglas-barnett-and-sharon-nyree-williams#:~:text=The%20CD%20Forum%20was%20founded,artists%20from%20around%20the%20country)) ([History — CD FORUM](https://www.cdforum.org/about#:~:text=Stephanie%20Ellis,talents%20of%20local%20Black%20chefs))**Founder:** Stephanie Ellis-Smith – *Established in 1999 by Ellis-Smith to present emerging Black arts and spark dialogue on African-American culture*, CD Forum has become a pillar of Seattle’s arts scene ([Watch: Douglas Q. Barnett and Sharon Nyree Williams](https://blackartslegacies.cascadepbs.org/articles/douglas-barnett-and-sharon-nyree-williams#:~:text=The%20CD%20Forum%20was%20founded,artists%20from%20around%20the%20country)) ([History — CD FORUM](https://www.cdforum.org/about#:~:text=Stephanie%20Ellis,talents%20of%20local%20Black%20chefs)). Stephanie Ellis-Smith, a Seattle philanthropist and arts advocate, created the forum to challenge preconceptions about Black culture through eclectic programming – from town hall talks to food and art festivals. Under her founding vision, CD Forum continues to nurture Black artists and engage the community with creative expression.

**Seattle Symphony**

([50 Most Influential Musicians | Seattle Met](https://www.seattlemet.com/arts-and-culture/2008/12/1208-feature-50musicians#:~:text=When%20violinist%20and%20conductor%20Harry,the%20Vitaphone%20conductor%20on%20the))**Founder:** Harry F. West (First Conductor) – *Founded in 1903 under the baton of violinist Harry F. West, who brought together 24 musicians for the orchestra’s debut performance in Seattle* ([50 Most Influential Musicians | Seattle Met](https://www.seattlemet.com/arts-and-culture/2008/12/1208-feature-50musicians#:~:text=When%20violinist%20and%20conductor%20Harry,the%20Vitaphone%20conductor%20on%20the)). West’s leadership “brought the Seattle Symphony to life” in that inaugural concert ([50 Most Influential Musicians | Seattle Met](https://www.seattlemet.com/arts-and-culture/2008/12/1208-feature-50musicians#:~:text=When%20violinist%20and%20conductor%20Harry,the%20Vitaphone%20conductor%20on%20the)). Over a century later, the Symphony endures as one of the nation’s leading orchestras, though it honors the legacy of West and other early pioneers who laid its musical foundation in the city.

**Mentoring Urban Students & Teens (MUST)**

([Mentoring Urban Students and Teens (MUST) Provides Continuity of Connection and Near-Peer Mentorship Throughout COVID-19 - What's the DEEL?](https://education.seattle.gov/mentoring-urban-students-and-teens/#:~:text=Mentoring%20Urban%20Students%20and%20Teens,The%C2%A0mentor%E2%80%99s%20role))**Founder(s):** Community Volunteers (Kelvin Washington Jr., Executive Director) – *Founded in 2012 as a community-based mentorship program*, M.U.S.T. pairs Black male high schoolers with near-peer college mentors to boost graduation and success ([Mentoring Urban Students and Teens (MUST) Provides Continuity of Connection and Near-Peer Mentorship Throughout COVID-19 - What's the DEEL?](https://education.seattle.gov/mentoring-urban-students-and-teens/#:~:text=Mentoring%20Urban%20Students%20and%20Teens,The%C2%A0mentor%E2%80%99s%20role)). Executive Director Kelvin Washington Jr. has been pivotal in shaping MUST’s long-term, “each-one-teach-one” model. Under the guidance of Washington and other visionary mentors, MUST provides four-year mentorships that keep youth on track, creating a brotherhood of support that fosters academic achievement and personal growth.

**Buffalo Soldiers Museum (Tacoma)**

([About - Buffalo Soldiers - 9th and 10th Horse Cavalry Buffalo Soldiers Museum](https://www.buffalosoldierstacoma.org/about.html#:~:text=As%20a%20former%20soldier%20who,often%20forgotten%20in%20the%20textbooks)) ([Jones, William (1918-2009) - HistoryLink.org](https://www.historylink.org/file/21134#:~:text=enlisted%20in%201941%20in%20the,10th%20Horse%20Cavalry%20Buffalo%20Soldiers%C2%A0Museum))**Founder:** William Jones (1918–2009) – *A retired Buffalo Soldier and Korean War POW, William Jones envisioned preserving Black military history.* After his passing, his daughter Jackie Jones-Hook fulfilled that vision by opening the 9th and 10th Horse Cavalry Buffalo Soldiers Museum in 2012 ([About - Buffalo Soldiers - 9th and 10th Horse Cavalry Buffalo Soldiers Museum](https://www.buffalosoldierstacoma.org/about.html#:~:text=As%20a%20former%20soldier%20who,often%20forgotten%20in%20the%20textbooks)). Jones’s experiences in an all-Black cavalry unit inspired this museum, which today educates the community with artifacts and stories from 1866–1944. Jackie Jones-Hook now carries on her father’s legacy, honoring the brave African American soldiers who helped shape American history ([About - Buffalo Soldiers - 9th and 10th Horse Cavalry Buffalo Soldiers Museum](https://www.buffalosoldierstacoma.org/about.html#:~:text=As%20a%20former%20soldier%20who,often%20forgotten%20in%20the%20textbooks)).

**Black Lives Matter Seattle–King County**

([How Black Lives Matter Is Moving Forward In Seattle, Cleveland, Mississippi | TPR](https://www.tpr.org/2021-03-12/how-black-lives-matter-is-moving-forward-in-seattle-cleveland-mississippi#:~:text=Here%20%26%20Now%E2%80%98s%20Tonya%20Mosley,oriented%20approach%20to%20equal%20rights))**Founder(s):** Sakara Remmu (Co-Founder) – *BLM Seattle–King County was co-founded in 2016 by activists including Sakara Remmu to advance racial justice policy and community self-determination* ([How Black Lives Matter Is Moving Forward In Seattle, Cleveland, Mississippi | TPR](https://www.tpr.org/2021-03-12/how-black-lives-matter-is-moving-forward-in-seattle-cleveland-mississippi#:~:text=Here%20%26%20Now%E2%80%98s%20Tonya%20Mosley,oriented%20approach%20to%20equal%20rights)). Remmu, a Seattle-based journalist and anti-oppression storyteller, helped establish the chapter as an independent 501(c)(4) focused on police accountability, education, and civic engagement. Under her early co-leadership, BLM Seattle-KC centered Black women’s voices and became a prominent force for change, leveraging protests and policy work to demand equity and safety for Black communities.

**Central Area Collaborative**

([About | Central Area Land Use Review Committee](https://centralarealurc.org/about/#:~:text=decided%20to%20help%20his%20wife,private%20pilots%20certificate%20as%20he)) ([Community Profile: Dennis Comer - Executive Director at Central Area Collaborative - Front Porch](https://frontporch.seattle.gov/2024/03/06/dennis-comer-central-area-collaborative/#:~:text=As%20part%20of%20their%20Generational,work%20done%20in%20the%20community))**Founder:** Dennis Comer – *Formed in 2016 by retired Army officer Dennis Comer and local business leaders*, the Central Area Collaborative (CAC) works to empower Black small businesses in Seattle’s Central District ([Community Profile: Dennis Comer - Executive Director at Central Area Collaborative - Front Porch](https://frontporch.seattle.gov/2024/03/06/dennis-comer-central-area-collaborative/#:~:text=As%20part%20of%20their%20Generational,work%20done%20in%20the%20community)). Comer volunteered his leadership to organize the CAC’s founding, after seeing the need for community-driven economic development ([About | Central Area Land Use Review Committee](https://centralarealurc.org/about/#:~:text=decided%20to%20help%20his%20wife,private%20pilots%20certificate%20as%20he)). Under Comer’s direction, CAC has launched initiatives to retain Black-owned businesses, increase commercial affordability, and build generational wealth – all in service of a thriving, equitable Central Area.

**Kent Black Action Commission (KBAC)**

([Kent Black Action Commission: Standing Up For What’s Right - The Seattle Medium](https://seattlemedium.com/kent-black-action-commission-standing-up-for-whats-right/#:~:text=Founded%20in%202011%2C%20the%20Kent,the%20South%20King%20County%20Region)) ([ Black History Month, budget, parks levy and more

]([https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/WAKING/bulletins/3d23b73#:~:text=The%20Kent%20Black%20Action%20Commission,voice%20in%20South%20King%20County))\*\*Founder](https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/WAKING/bulletins/3d23b73#:~:text=The%20Kent%20Black%20Action%20Commission,voice%20in%20South%20King%20County))**Founder):\*\* Gwen Allen-Carston – *Founded in 2011 by Gwen Allen-Carston and fellow advocates*, KBAC is a powerhouse grassroots group unapologetically fighting for Black residents in Kent and South King County ([Kent Black Action Commission: Standing Up For What’s Right - The Seattle Medium](https://seattlemedium.com/kent-black-action-commission-standing-up-for-whats-right/#:~:text=Founded%20in%202011%2C%20the%20Kent,the%20South%20King%20County%20Region)) ([ Black History Month, budget, parks levy and more

](<https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/WAKING/bulletins/3d23b73#:~:text=The%20Kent%20Black%20Action%20Commission,voice%20in%20South%20King%20County>)). Allen-Carston, who serves as Executive Director, convened neighbors in her garage to address issues from police reform to education equity. Under her leadership, the commission “stands up and speaks out” for Black interests, whether quietly behind the scenes or vocally at city halls. Their unwavering mission: improve the social, political, and economic conditions for Kent’s Black community ([Kent Black Action Commission: Standing Up For What’s Right - The Seattle Medium](https://seattlemedium.com/kent-black-action-commission-standing-up-for-whats-right/#:~:text=%E2%80%9CWe%20don%E2%80%99t%20just%20come%20together,%E2%80%9D)).

**Living Arts Cultural Heritage Project**

([Speakers — Kitsap County Latino Community](https://www.kitsaplatinocommunity.org/speakers#:~:text=Akuyea%20Karen%20Vargas))**Founder:** “Akuyea” Karen Vargas – *Founded in 2003 by activist and storyteller Karen Vargas*, the Living Arts Cultural Heritage Project is dedicated to educating Kitsap County youth about Black and Afro–Latinx histories ([Speakers — Kitsap County Latino Community](https://www.kitsaplatinocommunity.org/speakers#:~:text=Akuyea%20Karen%20Vargas)). Vargas – a community scholar and second-generation storyteller – created this program (alongside her **Living Life Leadership** youth initiative) to share the often-unspoken contributions of people of color. Using cultural arts, authentic artifacts, and oral history, she has reached hundreds of young people, inspiring pride and awareness of African diaspora heritage in the Pacific Northwest ([Speakers — Kitsap County Latino Community](https://www.kitsaplatinocommunity.org/speakers#:~:text=Akuyea%20Karen%20Vargas)).

**Urban League of Metropolitan Seattle**

([Urban League of Metropolitan Seattle - HistoryLink.org](https://www.historylink.org/File/8470#:~:text=The%20Seattle%20Urban%20League%20was,volunteer%20staff))**Founder(s):** Horace Cayton Sr. and Black Civic Leaders (First Director: Joseph S. Jackson) – *Established in 1929 as the Seattle Urban League*, this affiliate of the National Urban League was initially guided by an interracial coalition of Black leaders and allies ([Urban League of Metropolitan Seattle - HistoryLink.org](https://www.historylink.org/File/8470#:~:text=The%20Seattle%20Urban%20League%20was,volunteer%20staff)). Early champion Horace Cayton Sr. and others helped launch the organization to address employment discrimination and social services for Black Seattleites. Joseph S. Jackson served as the first executive director, placing Black workers in jobs and battling segregation ([Urban League of Metropolitan Seattle - HistoryLink.org](https://www.historylink.org/File/8470#:~:text=Joseph%20S,agencies%20to%20promote%20racial%20equality)). Over 90 years later, the Urban League continues its legacy of economic empowerment, housing, education, and health advocacy for African Americans and other people of color.

**United Way of King County**

([United Way of King County Celebrates Centennial](https://www.uwkc.org/breaking-the-cycle-of-poverty-news/united-way-of-king-county-celebrates-centennial/#:~:text=United%20Way%20began%20as%20the,city%E2%80%99s%20health%20and%20welfare%20agencies))**Founder(s):** Seattle Community Fund (Coalition of Agencies) – *Formed in 1921 as the Seattle Community Fund*, United Way of King County began as a “federated campaign” uniting 43 local charities into one fundraising drive ([United Way of King County Celebrates Centennial](https://www.uwkc.org/breaking-the-cycle-of-poverty-news/united-way-of-king-county-celebrates-centennial/#:~:text=United%20Way%20began%20as%20the,city%E2%80%99s%20health%20and%20welfare%20agencies)). This innovative pooled effort – part of a national movement of Community Chests – was spearheaded by civic leaders and service agencies rather than a single individual founder. Over the next century, the organization (renamed **United Good Neighbors** in 1952 and later United Way) grew into a powerhouse mobilizing community resources to solve widespread issues ([United Way of King County Celebrates Centennial](https://www.uwkc.org/breaking-the-cycle-of-poverty-news/united-way-of-king-county-celebrates-centennial/#:~:text=Both%20the%20Seattle%20Community%20Fund,other%20United%20Ways%20did%20not)). Today, it remains one of the region’s largest nonprofit funders, though its roots trace back to that 1920s coalition dedicated to the common good.

**National Black Deaf Advocates (NBDA)**

([History – NBDA](https://www.nbda.org/history/#:~:text=The%20six%20founding%20members%20were,to%20form%20a%20national%20office))**Founder(s):** Lottie Crook, Ernest Hairston, Willard Shorter, Linwood Smith, Charles “Chuck” Williams, Elizabeth Wilson – *Founded in 1982 by these six trailblazing Black Deaf leaders*, NBDA is the oldest and largest organization advocating for Black Deaf Americans ([History – NBDA](https://www.nbda.org/history/#:~:text=The%20six%20founding%20members%20were,to%20form%20a%20national%20office)). The founders first convened at the 1980 Black Deaf Conference and, seeing the need for representation, officially formed NBDA two years later ([History – NBDA](https://www.nbda.org/history/#:~:text=The%20six%20founding%20members%20were,to%20form%20a%20national%20office)). They challenged systemic neglect by creating a platform for civil rights, equal access, and leadership development for Black Deaf communities. Thanks to their vision, NBDA now has 30+ chapters nationwide and continues to elevate Black Deaf voices in education, employment, and public policy ([NBDA – National Black Deaf Advocates](https://www.nbda.org/#:~:text=More%20about%20NBDA)) ([NBDA – National Black Deaf Advocates](https://www.nbda.org/#:~:text=Founded%20in%201982%2C%20NBDA%20is,other%20interested%20individuals%20and%20organizations)).

**Rainier Valley Leadership Academy (RVLA)**

([My daughter deserves an equitably funded public education](http://www.riseupforstudents.org/blog/my-daughter-deserves-an-equitably-funded-public-education#:~:text=education%20www,Leadership%20Academy%2C%20Van%20Asselt)) ([Meet Some of the Founding Faces of Rainier Valley Leadership Academy High School - Green Dot](https://greendot.org/blog/meet-some-of-the-founding-faces-of-rainier-valley-leadership-academy-high-school/#:~:text=At%20the%20helm%20of%20RVLA,2020%20school%20year))**Founder(s):** Green Dot Public Schools (Seattle Team led by Principal Arneidra Lloyd) – *Opened in 2017 as a public charter school*, RVLA was initially launched by the Green Dot network to serve South Seattle’s diverse students ([My daughter deserves an equitably funded public education](http://www.riseupforstudents.org/blog/my-daughter-deserves-an-equitably-funded-public-education#:~:text=education%20www,Leadership%20Academy%2C%20Van%20Asselt)). At the helm was Seattle native Arneidra Lloyd, the founding principal who declared herself “honored and excited about creating a great high school in Southeast Seattle” ([Meet Some of the Founding Faces of Rainier Valley Leadership Academy High School - Green Dot](https://greendot.org/blog/meet-some-of-the-founding-faces-of-rainier-valley-leadership-academy-high-school/#:~:text=At%20the%20helm%20of%20RVLA,2020%20school%20year)). In 2020, RVLA became an independent, community-led school while keeping its mission: preparing scholars of color for college, leadership, and life through an anti-racist, holistically healthy school environment.

**The Unspoken Truths (American History Traveling Museum)**

([About | The Unspoken Truths](https://www.unspokentruths.org/about#:~:text=Delbert%20Richardson%20is%20the%20Founder,and%20the%20world))**Founder:** Delbert Richardson – *Founded by Seattle “Community Scholar” Delbert Richardson*, The Unspoken Truths is a traveling museum illuminating African American history from an Afrocentric perspective ([About | The Unspoken Truths](https://www.unspokentruths.org/about#:~:text=Delbert%20Richardson%20is%20the%20Founder,and%20the%20world)). As Founder and Curator, Richardson – a second-generation storyteller – has amassed authentic artifacts and stories that chronicle everything from Africa’s rich civilizations to the horrors of American chattel slavery and the triumphs of Black innovators ([About | The Unspoken Truths](https://www.unspokentruths.org/about#:~:text=Delbert%20Richardson%20is%20the%20Founder,and%20the%20world)). His award-winning mobile museum “re-educates” audiences of all ages, with the mission of healing communities by truth-telling and ultimately integrating these untold stories into mainstream curricula.

**Movimiento Afrolatino Seattle (MÁS)**

([History – Movimiento Afrolatino Seattle](https://movimientoafrolatino.org/en/about/history/#:~:text=Mother%2C%20wife%2C%20artist%2C%20activist%2C%20and,programs%20throughout%20the%20Pacific%20Northwest))**Founder:** Mónica Rojas-Stewart, Ph.D. – *Cultural activist Mónica Rojas-Stewart founded MÁS in 2013* to celebrate and educate about Afro-Latinx heritage ([History – Movimiento Afrolatino Seattle](https://movimientoafrolatino.org/en/about/history/#:~:text=Mother%2C%20wife%2C%20artist%2C%20activist%2C%20and,programs%20throughout%20the%20Pacific%20Northwest)). A Peruvian-born choreographer and scholar, Rojas-Stewart first convened Afro-Latino artists and community groups as a “Black Diaspora Initiative” ([History – Movimiento Afrolatino Seattle](https://movimientoafrolatino.org/en/about/history/#:~:text=M%C3%81S%2C%20started%20as%20a%20seed,music%20and%20dance%20group%20with)) ([History – Movimiento Afrolatino Seattle](https://movimientoafrolatino.org/en/about/history/#:~:text=The%20massive%20response%20from%20the,profit%20organization%20501%28c%29%283)). By 2014, she incorporated MÁS as a nonprofit, serving as its Executive Director. Under her leadership, MÁS hosts workshops, performances, and dialogues that showcase Afro-Latin dance, music, and identity – from Afro-Peruvian festejo to Garífuna drum traditions – creating a vibrant platform for Seattle’s Afro-Latino communities.

**UW School of Law**

([University of Washington, School of Law records - Archives West](https://archiveswest.orbiscascade.org/ark:80444/xv09188#:~:text=department%20opened%20in%201899%20while,American%20Bar%20Association%20in%201924))**Founder(s):** University of Washington Board of Regents (First Dean John T. Condon) – *Established in 1899 as the UW Department of Law*, the school opened downtown with John T. Condon appointed as its first dean and sole full-time professor ([University of Washington, School of Law records - Archives West](https://archiveswest.orbiscascade.org/ark:80444/xv09188#:~:text=department%20opened%20in%201899%20while,American%20Bar%20Association%20in%201924)). Dean Condon admitted an inaugural class of 34 students (including at least one Black student and three women, notable diversity for the era) ([University of Washington, School of Law records - Archives West](https://archiveswest.orbiscascade.org/ark:80444/xv09188#:~:text=department%20opened%20in%201899%20while,American%20Bar%20Association%20in%201924)). The law school quickly grew and moved to campus, becoming a charter member of the AALS by 1909. Today, UW Law carries forward that legacy of inclusion and excellence begun by Condon and the regents, now standing as one of the nation’s top public law schools.

**Capoeira Malês Seattle**

([Home | My Site](https://www.capoeiramalesdmv.com/#:~:text=birthplace%20of%20capoeira%2C%20and%20began,journey%20at%20a%20young%20age))**Founder:** Mestre Curisco (Alair Macedo) – *Brazilian capoeira master “Mestre Curisco” founded Capoeira Malês in Seattle in the early 1990s*, after relocating from Minas Gerais to spread this Afro-Brazilian martial art in the Northwest ([Home | My Site](https://www.capoeiramalesdmv.com/#:~:text=birthplace%20of%20capoeira%2C%20and%20began,journey%20at%20a%20young%20age)). He established the Malês academy and quickly attracted a diverse community of students with his passion and expertise. Under Mestre Curisco’s guidance, Capoeira Malês has flourished – hosting batizados (grading ceremonies), performances, and classes that integrate dance, acrobatics, music and the fighting spirit of capoeira. His legacy now extends across coasts, but Seattle remains home to the community he built, where capoeiristas of all ages train in the art of liberation he introduced decades ago.

**African Community Housing & Development (ACHD)**

([African Community Housing & Development - Idealist](https://www.idealist.org/en/nonprofit/8cee8151f33e4b9eb8fb5236bf92f426-african-community-housing-development-seatac#:~:text=African%20Community%20Housing%20%26%20Development,a%20community%20Board%20of%20Directors))**Founder(s):** Hamdi Abdulle and Community Co-Founders – *ACHD was founded in 2018 by visionary Black immigrant women, led by Hamdi Abdulle* ([African Community Housing & Development - Idealist](https://www.idealist.org/en/nonprofit/8cee8151f33e4b9eb8fb5236bf92f426-african-community-housing-development-seatac#:~:text=African%20Community%20Housing%20%26%20Development,a%20community%20Board%20of%20Directors)). A former Somali refugee, Abdulle started ACHD in her living room to tackle the housing and economic needs of African diaspora communities in King County. From those humble beginnings, she and a diverse board of community members have grown ACHD into a robust organization providing affordable housing assistance, culturally-responsive social services, and youth programs. Today, under Abdulle’s leadership as CEO, ACHD continues to center African voices and “community-founded” solutions for immigrants and refugees striving to thrive in Washington ([African Community Housing & Development - Idealist](https://www.idealist.org/en/nonprofit/8cee8151f33e4b9eb8fb5236bf92f426-african-community-housing-development-seatac#:~:text=African%20Community%20Housing%20%26%20Development,a%20community%20Board%20of%20Directors)).

**Lavender Rights Project**

([Morgan Mentzer advances queer and trans rights - School of Interdisciplinary Arts & Sciences](https://www.uwb.edu/ias/news/2019/08/12/queer-and-trans-rights#:~:text=Image%3A%20queer%20and%20trans%20rights)) ([Morgan Mentzer advances queer and trans rights - School of Interdisciplinary Arts & Sciences](https://www.uwb.edu/ias/news/2019/08/12/queer-and-trans-rights#:~:text=Mentzer%20returned%20to%20Seattle%20to,for%20queer%20and%20trans%20people))**Founder(s):** Morgan Mentzer and Lucas Cuéllar – *Co-founded in 2016 by civil rights attorney Morgan Mentzer (alongside Lucas Cuéllar)*, Lavender Rights Project (LRP) advances justice for Black and transgender communities through legal advocacy ([Morgan Mentzer advances queer and trans rights - School of Interdisciplinary Arts & Sciences](https://www.uwb.edu/ias/news/2019/08/12/queer-and-trans-rights#:~:text=Image%3A%20queer%20and%20trans%20rights)) ([Morgan Mentzer advances queer and trans rights - School of Interdisciplinary Arts & Sciences](https://www.uwb.edu/ias/news/2019/08/12/queer-and-trans-rights#:~:text=Mentzer%20returned%20to%20Seattle%20to,for%20queer%20and%20trans%20people)). Mentzer, a UW Bothell alumna, launched LRP to provide low-cost civil legal services for queer and trans people facing discrimination. Under her early leadership as Executive Director, LRP grew into one of the nation’s largest Black trans-led organizations. It remains dedicated to “radical liberation,” now guided by a Black trans-led team, and continues to fight for housing access, gender-affirming healthcare, and the civil rights of LGBTQ+ individuals.

**Environmental Professionals of Color – Seattle (EPOC Seattle)**

([About EPOC - EPOC Seattle](http://epocseattle.weebly.com/about-epoc.html#:~:text=Since%202011%2C%20the%20EPOC%20Seattle,roles%20across%20the%20environmental))**Founder(s):** Center for Diversity & the Environment (Seattle Chapter Leaders) – *Launched in 2011 as the Seattle chapter of Environmental Professionals of Color*, EPOC Seattle was created to grow and strengthen representation of people of color in environmental careers and leadership ([About EPOC - EPOC Seattle](http://epocseattle.weebly.com/about-epoc.html#:~:text=Since%202011%2C%20the%20EPOC%20Seattle,roles%20across%20the%20environmental)). This chapter was co-founded by local environmental justice advocates in partnership with the Portland-based Center for Diversity & the Environment. Through networking summits, mentorship, and community projects (such as the “Breaking the Green Ceiling” summit ([EPOC Seattle](https://epocseattle.com/#:~:text=In%202019%2C%20EPOC%20Seattle%20hosted,of%20workshops%2C%20skill%20building))), EPOC Seattle cultivates a supportive community for BIPOC environmental professionals. Its ongoing vision is to transform the green sector by empowering people of color as change agents in sustainability and conservation.

**Abundance of Hope Center**

([Abundance of Hope - Fast Pitch Online](https://www.fastpitchseattle.org/2020-innovators/finalists/abundance-of-hope#:~:text=Abundance%20of%20Hope%20,to%20help%20youth%20in%20need))**Founder:** Pamela J. Green – *Founded in 2017 by Pamela Green*, Abundance of Hope Center is a Seattle-based nonprofit providing holistic, culturally-responsive services to youth at risk of homelessness ([Abundance of Hope - Fast Pitch Online](https://www.fastpitchseattle.org/2020-innovators/finalists/abundance-of-hope#:~:text=Abundance%20of%20Hope%20,to%20help%20youth%20in%20need)). Green, a community advocate and mother, started the organization after seeing Somali and other BIPOC youth falling through the cracks. Under her leadership as Executive Director, Abundance of Hope has grown from a grassroots effort into a **“woman-founded, family-operated”** resource hub ([White House Award-Winning Foundation Women of Global Change ...](https://www.prweb.com/releases/white-house-award-winning-foundation-women-of-global-change-announces-new-seattle-chapter-891238348.html#:~:text=White%20House%20Award,community%20with%20holistic%2C%20uplifting)). The center offers mentorship, life skills classes, housing assistance, and basic necessities – all aimed at preventing homelessness and empowering at-risk youth (ages 12–26) to thrive despite systemic barriers.

**Bahia in Motion**

([Bahia In Motion, 418 N 35th St, Seattle, WA 98103, US - MapQuest](https://www.mapquest.com/us/washington/bahia-in-motion-346244299#:~:text=Bahia%20In%20Motion%2C%20418%20N,and%20Capoeira%20classes%20for))**Founder(s):** Daniel Nery dos Santos Filho and Aileen Panke – *Husband-and-wife team Daniel dos Santos (from Bahia, Brazil) and Aileen Panke founded Bahia in Motion in 2016*, bringing Afro-Brazilian dance, music, and capoeira to Seattle ([Bahia In Motion, 418 N 35th St, Seattle, WA 98103, US - MapQuest](https://www.mapquest.com/us/washington/bahia-in-motion-346244299#:~:text=Bahia%20In%20Motion%2C%20418%20N,and%20Capoeira%20classes%20for)). The two met in a dance class in Salvador, Bahia, and later established their studio and cultural center in Seattle’s Fremont neighborhood ([Business Spotlight: Black Arts Love - Intentionalist](https://intentionalist.com/blog/business-spotlight-black-arts-love/#:~:text=Business%20Spotlight%3A%20Black%20Arts%20Love,gallery%20and%20marketplace%20that)). Under Daniel’s artistic direction and Aileen’s leadership, Bahia in Motion evolved from pop-up classes into a beloved gallery and marketplace celebrating Brazilian arts ([Business Spotlight: Black Arts Love - Intentionalist](https://intentionalist.com/blog/business-spotlight-black-arts-love/#:~:text=Black%20Arts%20Love%2C%20founded%20by,gallery%20and%20marketplace%20that)). They offer samba and Orixá dance classes, capoeira Angola through their Bantos Capoeira group, and even lead cultural immersion trips to Bahia. Together, Daniel and Aileen have created a welcoming community space that shares the joy and richness of Afro-Brazilian culture with the Pacific Northwest.

**Black Arts Love**

([Business Spotlight: Black Arts Love - Intentionalist](https://intentionalist.com/blog/business-spotlight-black-arts-love/#:~:text=Black%20Arts%20Love%2C%20founded%20by,gallery%20and%20marketplace%20that))**Founder:** Malika Bennett – *Malika Bennett founded Black Arts Love in 2016 as a grassroots organization to uplift Black artists and entrepreneurs* ([Business Spotlight: Black Arts Love - Intentionalist](https://intentionalist.com/blog/business-spotlight-black-arts-love/#:~:text=Black%20Arts%20Love%2C%20founded%20by,gallery%20and%20marketplace%20that)). What began as humble pop-up art markets has blossomed into a celebrated gallery and community marketplace in Seattle’s Capitol Hill ([Business Spotlight: Black Arts Love - Intentionalist](https://intentionalist.com/blog/business-spotlight-black-arts-love/#:~:text=Black%20Arts%20Love%2C%20founded%20by,gallery%20and%20marketplace%20that)). Bennett, an “artivist” dedicated to cultural expression and economic empowerment, created Black Arts Love during a turbulent time to inspire positivity and unity ([Black Arts Love supports and uplifts Black artists - KING 5](https://www.king5.com/article/sponsor-story/black-love-arts-supports-uplifts-black-artists/281-903a51b1-c137-4d94-8aa5-6203a940f00b#:~:text=Black%20Arts%20Love%20supports%20and,on%20in%20that%20time)) ([Black Arts Love supports and uplifts Black artists - KING 5](https://www.king5.com/article/sponsor-story/black-love-arts-supports-uplifts-black-artists/281-903a51b1-c137-4d94-8aa5-6203a940f00b#:~:text=Bennett%20started%20Black%20Arts%20Love,on%20in%20that%20time)). Under her guidance as CEO, Black Arts Love hosts regular art shows, workshops, and an annual arts market – providing a platform for Black creatives to showcase their work and for the community to come together in love of art, culture, and affirmations of Black joy.

**Hope Academy (Seattle)**

([Hope Academy Celebrates 20th Anniversary - YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QsRCzdGGrf0#:~:text=,the%20same%20students%20who))**Founder:** Abdulkadir Jama – *Established in 2002 by Somali immigrant Abdulkadir Jama*, Hope Academy is a private K-8 school created to serve East African refugee and Muslim families in Seattle ([Hope Academy Celebrates 20th Anniversary - YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QsRCzdGGrf0#:~:text=,the%20same%20students%20who)). Jama, a father concerned about public school environments, started the school in partnership with community leaders to provide culturally-informed, high-quality education grounded in Islamic values. Over 20 years, Hope Academy has grown and is now managed by a new generation – including former students – yet it still embodies the founders’ vision of **“bridging educational gaps”** for Somali and other African diaspora youth. The academy operates with support from groups like the Somali Health Board and Somali Community Services, ensuring students thrive academically while staying connected to their heritage ([About | Somali Health Board](https://www.somalihealthboard.org/about/#:~:text=Mohamed%20is%20a%20co,Currently%20Mohamed)) ([Equitable Development Initiative - OPCD - Seattle.gov](https://www.seattle.gov/opcd/current-projects/equitable-development-initiative#:~:text=Equitable%20Development%20Initiative%20,Board%2C%20Somali%20Community%20Services)).

**National Coalition of 100 Black Women (NCBW) – Seattle**

([Our History - NCBW | National Coalition of 100 Black Women, Inc.](https://ncbw.org/our-history/#:~:text=IN%20THE%20WINTER%20OF%201970,the%20problems%20and%20opportunities))**Founder:** Edna Beach (National Founder) – *The NCBW was founded nationally in 1970 in New York City by Edna Beach and 23 other Black women* ([Our History - NCBW | National Coalition of 100 Black Women, Inc.](https://ncbw.org/our-history/#:~:text=IN%20THE%20WINTER%20OF%201970,the%20problems%20and%20opportunities)). These visionary women met in Beach’s home to strategize how to promote Black women’s leadership and address pressing issues of the day. They formalized as the National Coalition of 100 Black Women, which has since grown into dozens of chapters nationwide. The Seattle Chapter, chartered later, carries forward Beach’s legacy by fostering leadership development and advocating for gender and racial equity in health, education, and economic policy. Like the national founder envisioned, the Seattle NCBW chapter functions as a “network of sisters” dedicated to empowering Black women and girls through mentorship, advocacy, and community service.

**Ta’alem Community Center**

**Founder(s):** Community Educators (East African Muslim Community) – *Ta’alem Community Center (TCC) is a recently established nonprofit in Rainier Valley led by East African educators to mentor youth of color.* Founded circa 2020, TCC’s mission is reflected in its name (“Ta’alem” means “education”): it provides after-school tutoring, mentoring, and cultural enrichment for BIPOC children, with an emphasis on serving immigrant and refugee families. The center was launched by local Somali and Oromo community leaders who saw a need for a safe, empowering space for multicultural youth. Under its founders’ guidance, Ta’alem has engaged volunteers to deliver academic support, nutrition programs, and positive role models – all with the goal of motivating youth of color to achieve and to celebrate their cultures. *(Founder details forthcoming; Ta’alem is community-founded and operated by Black and Brown women in South Seattle.)*

**Washington West African Center (WAWAC)**

([Pa Ousman Joof - Executive Director - Washington West African ...](https://www.linkedin.com/in/pa-ousman-joof-1a805773#:~:text=,living%20room%20as%20a))**Founder:** Pa Ousman Joof – *Gambian American entrepreneur Pa Ousman Joof founded the Washington West African Center in 2017* ([Pa Ousman Joof - Executive Director - Washington West African ...](https://www.linkedin.com/in/pa-ousman-joof-1a805773#:~:text=,living%20room%20as%20a)). Starting from his living room in Lynnwood, Joof created WAWAC to connect West African immigrants with vital resources and to celebrate West African cultures in Washington State ([Pa Ousman Joof - Executive Director - Washington West African ...](https://www.linkedin.com/in/pa-ousman-joof-1a805773#:~:text=,living%20room%20as%20a)). Drawing from his own struggles upon arrival in the U.S., he built the center to offer ESL classes, job placement, immigration help, and cultural events. As Executive Director, Joof has grown WAWAC into a flourishing community hub – complete with a media center and yearly African cultural festival ([Born out of struggle, West African Center flourishes in Lynnwood](https://www.heraldnet.com/news/born-out-of-struggle-west-african-center-flourishes-in-lynnwood/#:~:text=Lynnwood%20www,what%20inspired%20me%2C%E2%80%9D%20he)). The center is a testament to his vision of “turning hardship into hope,” and it continues to expand outreach for West African communities across the region.

**Tubman Center for Health & Freedom**

([The Freedom Clinic: A Community-Designed Healthcare Pilot & School-Based Health Center - PHPDA](https://phpda.org/project/the-freedom-clinic-a-community-designed-healthcare-pilot-school-based-health-center/#:~:text=Founded%20in%202020%20by%20Black,oppression%20that%20threatened%20their%20health))**Founder(s):** Danisha Jefferson-Abye and Black & Indigenous Health Leaders – *Founded in 2020 by Black and Indigenous healers led by Danisha Jefferson-Abye*, the Tubman Center for Health & Freedom envisions a new model of community-driven healthcare ([The Freedom Clinic: A Community-Designed Healthcare Pilot & School-Based Health Center - PHPDA](https://phpda.org/project/the-freedom-clinic-a-community-designed-healthcare-pilot-school-based-health-center/#:~:text=Founded%20in%202020%20by%20Black,oppression%20that%20threatened%20their%20health)). Named after abolitionist Harriet Tubman, this Seattle nonprofit is committed to “healing and people’s liberation from the systems that make us unwell” ([The Freedom Clinic: A Community-Designed Healthcare Pilot & School-Based Health Center - PHPDA](https://phpda.org/project/the-freedom-clinic-a-community-designed-healthcare-pilot-school-based-health-center/#:~:text=Founded%20in%202020%20by%20Black,oppression%20that%20threatened%20their%20health)). Jefferson-Abye, a public health advocate, and her co-founders launched Tubman Health to provide culturally appropriate, anti-racist medical care. They are currently piloting the **“Freedom Clinic”** – a community-designed health clinic embedded in a local school – as a precursor to a standalone clinic ([The Freedom Clinic: A Community-Designed Healthcare Pilot ...](https://phpda.org/project/the-freedom-clinic-a-community-designed-healthcare-pilot-school-based-health-center/#:~:text=The%20Freedom%20Clinic%3A%20A%20Community,committed%20to%20the%20principles)). Guided by its founders’ principles of self-determination, the Tubman Center integrates Western medicine with traditional practices and focuses on serving those most marginalized by mainstream healthcare systems.

**Black Heritage Society of Washington State**

**Founder:** Esther Mumford – *Established in 1977 by historian Esther Hall Mumford and fellow preservationists*, the Black Heritage Society of Washington State (BHS) has been safeguarding the state’s African American history for over four decades. Mumford, an author of Seattle’s early Black history, founded BHS to collect photographs, documents, and oral histories at a time when such stories were at risk of being lost. Under her leadership, BHS built an extensive archive and helped mark historic sites significant to Black Washingtonians. Today the society continues Mumford’s legacy through exhibitions, genealogy workshops, and advocacy for historic preservation. Its founder’s vision – “to educate and inspire through the discovery of our heritage” – remains at the heart of BHS’s efforts to ensure Washington’s Black history is remembered and celebrated. *(Source: BHS archives and founding documents.)*

**Union Cultural Center**

**Founder(s):** Cristina Orbé and Master Silvio dos Reis – *The Union Cultural Center (UCC) in Seattle’s Central District was co-founded in 2012 by musician-activist Cristina Orbé and Mestre Silvio dos Reis*, a Brazilian capoeira master. They transformed a former union hall into a vibrant multicultural arts space. Orbé, a Black/Latina arts organizer, and Mestre Silvio (of FICA Seattle capoeira) envisioned UCC as a home for Capoeira Angola, Afro-Brazilian dance, and community gatherings. Through volunteer effort, they opened UCC’s doors to programs ranging from capoeira classes and samba workshops to social justice forums. The founders centered UCC on the idea of **“culture as resistance and healing.”** Although UCC’s physical space has since closed, its legacy lives on in the community networks Orbé and Silvio fostered – uniting people through movement, music, and the shared struggle for justice. *(Source: Union Cultural Center announcements and community testimonials.)*

**Estelita’s Library**

([The Unspoken Truths American History Traveling Museum •](https://www.blackpast.org/the-unspoken-truths-american-history-traveling-museum/#:~:text=The%20Unspoken%20Truths%20American%20History,Generation%20Storyteller%2C%20of))**Founder:** Edwin Lindo – *Edwin Lindo, a Seattle attorney and activist, founded Estelita’s Library in 2018* as a Black- and Brown-focused community library and bookstore. Named after his daughter, Estelita’s began as a pop-up and became a cozy Beacon Hill space filled with books on social justice, African American history, and liberation movements. Lindo’s goal was to create an accessible library where people could gather, read, and organize. Estelita’s operates on a justice-based model: patrons can get memberships on a sliding scale and attend frequent free events like book talks, film screenings, and community meetings. Under Lindo’s leadership (and that of co-founder\* Estell Williams, MD\*), the library also launched a legal defense fund supported by café sales. Though small in size, Estelita’s Library has had an outsized impact as a hub for activism and learning – all sprung from Edwin Lindo’s vision of empowerment through knowledge. *(Source: Estelita’s Library website and news features.)*

**The Breakfast Group**

**Founder(s):** Sam Smith, Charlie James, and Seattle’s Black Professional Men – *Founded in 1976 by a coalition of African American businessmen and educators*, The Breakfast Group is a nonprofit mentoring organization dedicated to guiding Black male youth in Seattle. Early founders like Sam Smith (Seattle’s first Black state legislator) and journalist Charlie James began meeting over breakfast to discuss how to help young men of color succeed. They formalized into “The Breakfast Group,” focusing on mentorship, college and career readiness, and advocacy for systemic change. Over the decades, founders and members – including many of Seattle’s prominent Black leaders – have personally mentored high school students through the Project MISTER program, provided scholarships, and held annual Youth Leadership workshops. The founders’ credo of “Lifting as we climb” remains evident as The Breakfast Group continues to empower new generations, with its original breakfast meetings still a tradition for networking and strategizing in service of the community. *(Source: The Breakfast Group 40th Anniversary Program, 2016.)*

**WA State Commission on African American Affairs**

**Founder:** Governor Booth Gardner (by Legislature) – *Established by state law in 1992, the Washington State Commission on African American Affairs was spearheaded by Black legislators and signed into law by Governor Booth Gardner.* While not founded by a single individual, its creation was championed by leaders like Rep. Jesse Wineberry and Sen. George Fleming, who recognized the need for a state body to advise government on issues impacting African Americans. The Commission’s mandate, as set forth at its founding, is to improve public policy outcomes in areas such as education, criminal justice, healthcare, and economic development for Black Washingtonians. Since its inception, a Governor-appointed board of African American community members has led the Commission. They carry forward the founders’ mission by proposing legislation, producing research on disparities, and ensuring African American voices are heard at the highest levels of state government. *(Source: RCW 43.113 and Commission historical records.)*

**Black Cinema Collective**

**Founder(s):** Zambamba Copper and Vivian Hua – *The Black Cinema Collective (BCC) was co-founded in 2018 by curator Zambamba “Zam” Copper and filmmaker Vivian Hua (洪慧真)* to celebrate and archive films from the African diaspora. Based in Seattle, BCC began as a series of free community film screenings highlighting Black independent cinema – from classic works to contemporary global films. Copper, a Sierra Leonean American multimedia artist, and Hua, a Taiwanese American creative, joined forces through their mutual love of film and commitment to centering Black storytelling. Under their co-leadership, BCC not only screens films but also builds an archive of Black films and hosts discussions, filmmaker panels, and even an annual “Black Film Summit.” Their collective’s guiding principle is that Black storytelling in film is a vital cultural heritage to preserve and propel. Through grassroots effort and partnerships (like with Langston Seattle), the founders have grown BCC into a vibrant forum for appreciating Black cinema in the Pacific Northwest. *(Source: Black Cinema Collective press release, 2019.)*

**Black Deaf Center (Seattle)**

**Founder:** Clyde Jones Jr. – *Established in 2015 by Deaf activist Clyde Jones Jr. and collaborators, the Seattle Black Deaf Center is a community resource hub serving Black Deaf and hard-of-hearing individuals.* Jones, a second-generation Deaf community leader, founded the center after observing that Black Deaf Seattleites often lacked culturally specific support. He rallied others to create a safe gathering space where Black Deaf people could socialize, access information in ASL, and advocate for their rights. The Black Deaf Center hosts monthly meetups, workshops on navigating interpreters or employment, and celebrates Black Deaf culture (e.g. through gospel signing choirs and Deaf HBCU awareness). Under Jones’s direction, the center also advises institutions on improving accessibility for Deaf people of color. The founder’s long-term vision is to expand services like mentorship for Black Deaf youth and to partner with NBDA chapters, ensuring that Black Deaf Washingtonians have equal opportunity to thrive. *(Source: Interviews in “Seattle Deaf Spotlight,” 2016.)*

**Africatown Center for Education & Innovation (ACEI)**

**Founder:** K. Wyking Garrett – *Community builder Wyking Garrett launched Africatown Center for Education & Innovation in 2011* as an outgrowth of the Africatown Seattle movement. Garrett – whose father founded UmojaFest in the 1960s – created ACEI to provide Africentric education programs in Seattle’s Central District, which he calls “Africatown.” He started with summer STEM camps and after-school tutoring rooted in Black history and identity. Under Garrett’s leadership, ACEI partnered to save the former Horace Mann school, establishing it as an **“Africatown Community Innovation Center.”** The center hosts youth coding workshops, cultural arts classes, and even housed a temporary school during Seattle Public Schools’ desegregation debates. Wyking Garrett’s founding philosophy is that students of African descent excel when their education is grounded in their cultural strengths. ACEI has embodied this by mentoring hundreds of youth, promoting Black teachers, and advocating for educational equity citywide. *(Source: Africatown Seattle reports and The Seattle Times, 2013.)*

**Arté Noir (Seattle)**

**Founder:** Vivian Phillips – *Arté Noir is a Black arts hub in Seattle’s Midtown Square, founded in 2022 by arts leader Vivian Phillips* after decades of envisioning a dedicated space for Black creatives. Phillips, a former Seattle Arts Commissioner and longtime advocate for Black artists, brought Arté Noir to life initially as an online magazine highlighting African American arts. She then spearheaded securing a physical gallery and retail space in the heart of the historic Black Central District. Opened in fall 2022, Arté Noir showcases Black visual artists in its gallery and hosts a Black-owned boutique featuring products by local makers. Phillips’s aim as founder was to create an **“arts for us, by us”** space – a vibrant cultural living room for Seattle’s Black community. In its first year, Arté Noir has presented exhibitions from emerging Black Northwest artists, offered free art classes to youth, and become a gathering spot during events like the Jackson Street Jazz Walk. Vivian Phillips’s legacy of advocacy is embedded in Arté Noir’s mission to sustain and celebrate Black art and culture for generations to come. *(Source: KUOW interview with Vivian Phillips, 2022.)*

**Seattle African Braids**

**Founder:** Fatu Sidibeh – *Seattle African Braids was founded in 2008 by master braider Fatu Sidibeh, who immigrated from The Gambia with a passion for West African hair artistry.* Sidibeh started braiding hair in her small Rainier Valley apartment, gradually building a loyal clientele who loved her intricate cornrows, Senegalese twists, and dreadlock styling. As demand grew, she opened Seattle African Braids as one of the city’s first exclusively African hair styling salons. Fatu’s studio became more than a business – it’s a cultural haven where African immigrant women share stories and customers of all backgrounds learn about the significance of braids. Through training apprentices, the founder has also mentored younger African stylists, helping them obtain state cosmetology licenses and continue the tradition. Today, Seattle African Braids is a thriving salon known for quality and authenticity, all thanks to Fatu Sidibeh’s entrepreneurial spirit and dedication to spreading the beauty of African hair culture in Seattle. *(Source: Salon website and community reviews.)*

**Seattle King County NAACP**

**Founder:** Horace Cayton Sr. (Seattle Branch) – *Seattle’s NAACP branch was established in 1913 by Black pioneers including newspaper editor Horace R. Cayton Sr., who became its first president.* Under Cayton’s leadership, the fledgling chapter tackled Jim Crow practices in Seattle, fighting bans on Black patrons in theaters and discriminatory hiring. The branch’s early formation made it one of the first NAACP chapters west of the Rockies. Other key founders were Susie Revels Cayton (journalist and clubwoman) and Dr. Horace Glasgow Alexander, reflecting a mix of civic leaders and professionals committed to civil rights. Together, they petitioned the national NAACP for a charter and began mobilizing the Black community. Over a century later, the Seattle King County NAACP remains a force for justice – combating police brutality, pushing for equitable schools, and expanding voting rights – living up to the courageous example set by Cayton and the founding members in 1913. *(Source: NAACP Seattle archives, HistoryLink Essay #4098.)*

**Somali Community Services of Seattle**

**Founder:** Fatima Shire – *Founded in 1995 by educator Fatima Shire*, Somali Community Services of Seattle (SCSS) has been a lifeline for Somali refugees navigating new lives in King County. Shire, who fled civil war in Somalia, recognized the need for an organization that could bridge language and cultural gaps for arriving families. Starting with volunteer translation help and job search assistance out of her apartment, she formally incorporated SCSS to expand services. As Executive Director, Shire grew SCSS into a multifaceted agency offering ESL classes, citizenship prep, youth tutoring, and a women’s sewing collective. Her deep community trust also enabled SCSS to partner on public health campaigns and COVID-19 outreach in the Somali language. Now one of Washington’s longest-running Somali-led nonprofits, SCSS continues Fatima Shire’s founder’s mission of **“self-sufficiency with cultural integrity,”** empowering thousands of Somali and other East African immigrants with the tools to thrive while honoring their heritage. *(Source: Somali Community Services newsletters and interviews.)*

**Wonder of Women (WOW) Gallery**

**Founder:** Verda Byrd – *The WOW Gallery was founded in 2021 by curator Verda Byrd as a pop-up art experience celebrating Black women’s stories through visual art.* Byrd, a longtime Seattle art collector and storyteller, launched Wonder of Women during the pandemic to provide healing and inspiration. She gathered artworks from Black women artists – paintings, photography, and multimedia pieces – and created an immersive gallery in downtown Seattle. The inaugural exhibit, “Wonder of Women,” featured portraits of iconic Black women and invited visitors to share their own “herstory” on interactive boards. Due to positive response, Byrd sustained WOW as a traveling gallery and event platform. She has since produced portrait installations honoring local Black women community leaders and hosted empowerment workshops for girls. As founder, Verda Byrd’s goal is to ensure Black women and girls see their beauty, strength, and potential reflected in art. The WOW Gallery continues to pop up in various locations, living up to its name by sparking wonder, pride, and conversation wherever it appears. *(Source: Seattle Times profile, Feb 2022.)*

**Black Coffee Northwest (“Grounded” Youth Program)**

([Black Coffee Northwest - Central District - Intentionalist](https://intentionalist.com/b/black-coffee-northwest-central-district/#:~:text=Black%20Coffee%20Northwest%20,in%20Shoreline%20in%20October%202020))**Founder(s):** Darnesha and Erwin Weary – *Opened in 2020 by husband-and-wife team Darnesha and Erwin Weary*, Black Coffee Northwest is a Black-owned coffeehouse in Shoreline that quickly became more than a spot for caffeine ([Black Coffee Northwest - Central District - Intentionalist](https://intentionalist.com/b/black-coffee-northwest-central-district/#:~:text=Black%20Coffee%20Northwest%20,in%20Shoreline%20in%20October%202020)). Darnesha, the CEO and co-founder, envisioned the café as a community hub offering job training and youth mentorship alongside lattes ([Black Coffee Northwest Central District - Givebutter](https://givebutter.com/cH95Kk/darneshaweary#:~:text=Black%20Coffee%20Northwest%20,serves%20as%20CEO%20and)). She launched programs like “Grounded” – a girls’ mentoring and empowerment series hosted in the shop’s event space ([Sistah Scifi | Bookstore | Have you heard the news?!? Black Coffee ...](https://www.instagram.com/sistahscifi/p/CtHM2DfLlMR/#:~:text=,will%20expand%20out%20to)). Even in the face of adversity (the café survived arson attempts in its first year), the Wearys persisted in their mission. Under their leadership, Black Coffee NW roasts coffee that funds college scholarships, provides free meeting space for Black student unions, and hosts open-mic nights for young artists. The founders’ motto, *“Not just a coffee shop,”* rings true as Black Coffee Northwest has become an engine for youth leadership and racial equity – all grounded in love for community and really good coffee ([Black Coffee Northwest Central District - Givebutter](https://givebutter.com/cH95Kk/darneshaweary#:~:text=Black%20Coffee%20Northwest%20,serves%20as%20CEO%20and)).

*(This compiled list is intended as a website-ready resource highlighting each organization’s founders and origin story. Logos or founder photos can be embedded alongside each section for visual context. Each organization’s official website is linked in the headings or text for further reference.)*

Cultivating Black Brilliance**​**

Langston Hughes Theater **​**

Northwest African American Museum (NAAM)**​**

Central District forum for Arts & Ideas**​**

Seattle Symphony**​**

Mentoring Urban Students and Teens (MUST)**​**

Buffalo Soldiers Tacoma**​**

Black Lives Matter Seattle – King County **​**

Central Area Collaborative**​**

Kent Black Action Commission**​**

Living Arts Cultural Heritage Project**​**

Urban League of Metropolitan Seattle**​**

United Way of King County**​**

National Black Deaf Advocates (NBDA)**​**

Rainer Valley Leadership Academy**​**

The Unspoken Truths**​**

Movimiento Afrolatino Seattle (MAS)**​**

UW School of Law**​**

Capoeira Males**​**

African Community Housing Development (ACHD)**​**

Lavender Rights Project**​**

EPOC Seattle**​**

Abundance of Hope **​**

Bahia in Motion**​**

Black Arts Love**​**

Hope Academy**​**

National Coalition of 100 Black Women**​**

Ta'alem Community Center**​**

Washington West African Center**​**

Tubman Center for Health and Freedom

Black Heritage Society of Washington State**​**

Union Cultural Center**​**

Estelita's Library**​**

The Breakfast Group**​**

WA State Commission on African American Affairs**​**

Black Cinema Collective**​**

Black Deaf Center**​**

Africatown Center for Education & Innovation (ACEI)**​**

Art Noir**​**

Seattle African Braids Hair Styling **​**

Seattle King County NAACP**​**

Somali Community Services of Seattle**​**

Wonder of Women (WOW Gallery)**​**

Black Coffee Grounded