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**Pillars Fund Awards \$625,000 to 26 Organizations Elevating American Muslims Through Political Advocacy, Health & Wellness, Research and the Arts**

*Pillars Harnesses the Wealth of American Muslims Who Want to Strengthen the Community Today and for Generations to Come*

Chicago, IL - Pillars Fund is thrilled to announce our second round of grantees since incorporating as an independent organization in July 2016. This year, we will award \$625,000 to 26 organizations elevating American Muslims through political advocacy, health and wellness, research and the arts. The grantees are diverse in terms of geographic representation and cover a wide range of issues impacting American Muslims -- the [youngest, most racially and ethnically diverse faith community](#) in the United States. A full list of grantees may be found at the end of this press release.

*"We are proud to support these organizations as they build a better future for Muslims in the United States,"* said Co-Founder and Executive Director **Kashif Shaikh**, who left the [Robert R. McCormick Foundation](#) in July 2016 to run Pillars full time. *"Pillars is led by American Muslim staff members and trustees, so we are a part of these communities too. We believe this gives us a unique vantage point from which to strategize and build with our grantees."*

Since its founding, Pillars has awarded \$3.5 million in grants to elevate American Muslim institutions, leaders, and storytellers. There are currently 25 trustees, American Muslim professionals who want to maximize their charitable giving by contributing funds collaboratively with the expertise and guidance provided by Pillars staff.

During the 2018-19 grant cycle, Pillars received more than 200 letters of inquiry from prospective grantees. *"We know that no one organization can tackle these challenges alone."* said **Kalia Abiade**, director of programs. *"We are excited to work closely with each of our grantees to advance a shared vision of equity, creativity, and opportunity for American Muslims and for society as a whole."*

*"We are continuing to focus more resources in the South and into leaders who are driving critical civic engagement work in local communities every day,"* **Abiade** continued. *"We know that building local power is key to addressing a range of challenges, including voter suppression and anti-Muslim policies, and we*

*are eager to support artistic initiatives that are helping to create a culture that nurtures necessary social change.”*

In addition to awarding grants to nonprofits, Pillars invests in Muslim-led storytelling initiatives and works to ensure that Muslim perspectives are incorporated into decisions and depictions that directly impact the community. Most recently, Pillars, along with [MACRO](#) and [Pop Culture Collaborative](#), co-hosted a panel at the Sundance Film Festival called “[Unflinching & Unfiltered: How Muslims are Owning Their Stories.](#)”

**Visit our [grantee portfolio](#) for the full list of 2019 grantees.**

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