FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
Thursday, March 11, 2021
Contact: Mayor’s Office of Communications, mayorspressoffice@sfgov.org

*** PRESS RELEASE ***
SAN FRANCISCO AWARDS DEDICATED FUNDING FOR BLACK TRAN-S-EQUITY AS PART OF DREAM KEEPER INITIATIVE

$2.2 million over the next two years to five Black trans-serving organizations will address historic inequities for Black transgender people

San Francisco, CA — Mayor London N. Breed and San Francisco Human Rights Commission Executive Director Sheryl Evans Davis today announced $2.2 million over the next two years to serve San Francisco’s Black and African-American transgender community. This is the first City funding dedicated to providing services to the Black trans community, and is part of the newly announced Dream Keeper Initiative.

The Dream Keeper Initiative, announced by Mayor Breed, is a citywide initiative that reinvests $120 million over two years in redirected funding from law enforcement into San Francisco’s Black and African-American community. As part of this initiative, the City has awarded Black trans-serving organizations funding for technical assistance to build their capacity so they can offer services and programs to address historic inequities and improve outcomes for Black transgender people.

“With the Dream Keeper’s significant investment in the Black community, we knew that it was critical to provide dedicated funding to address the unique needs in the Black transgender community,” said Mayor London Breed. “I am committed to ensuring Black trans people can thrive and reach their dreams in San Francisco, which is why we are investing in the services the community needs and organizations that have been doing this work for years.”

The organizations that have received funding are The Transgender District, TGI Justice Project, TAJA’s Coalition, LYRIC, and PRC. The $2.2 million over the next two years will go towards technical assistance and capacity building for nonprofit organizations serving this community, so that they can be better-positioned to work with the City in developing and implementing programs within the Dream Keeper Initiative and other City programs. This investment will provide a critical boost for these organizations at a dire time, from building up the next generation of leaders, to solving for organizational hardships due to the COVID-19 pandemic, to spurring community-based collaboration to seamlessly serve the Black-trans community. The grant activities are set to begin later this month.

“From the beginning of the pandemic, the Human Rights Commission partnered with the Black transgender community to prioritize their voices in our extensive engagement process for the Dream Keeper Initiative,” said Sheryl Evans Davis, Executive Director of the San Francisco Human Rights Commission.
Human Rights Commission. “Equity, intersectionality, and TLGBQI+ justice go beyond theory — these are community-led practices that provide solutions for the most marginalized people, especially Black transgender women. This is the beginning of a long-term investment.”

“The San Francisco Human Rights Commission is honored to partner with Black-trans serving organizations to improve outcomes in housing, employment, and economic opportunities for Black transgender people in San Francisco, said LGBTQI+ Advisor, Tuquan Harrison. “In many ways, queer history, culture, and the queer liberation movement in San Francisco—and the world—has been defined by and owes much of its richness to Black LGBQ, Trans and Non-binary people, especially Black trans women. We must continue to prioritize an equitable future for Black transgender and LGBQI+ people in San Francisco by investing resources to this vital community.”

“Thank you Mayor Breed and SF Human Rights Commission Director Davis for this historic re-investment into Black trans communities,” said Clair Farley, Director of the Office of Transgender Initiatives. “This critical expansion in funding and services in San Francisco will support Black trans-serving organizations continued efforts to develop community led solutions and address systemic inequities.”

Since March 2020, Black trans people across this country have experienced the dual crises of the COVID-19 pandemic alongside an epidemic of violence, in particular against Black transgender women. At least 44 transgender people were murdered in 2020, and Black transgender women accounted for over half of the cases. According to the National Transgender survey report, 42% of Black transgender people have experienced homelessness at least once in their lifetime compared to 30% in the general transgender community. Black transgender people are incarcerated more than four times the rate the general population and 47% of Black transgender women have attempted suicide at least once in their lifetime.

“Mayor London Breed, Director Sheryl Evans Davis and the Human Rights Commission staff have been amazing supporters and allies to TGIJP and the Black Trans community for many years, even before many other city agencies,” said Janetta Johnson, Executive Director of Transgender Gender-Variant & Intersex Justice Project (TGIJP). “TGIJP is deeply grateful for this incredible new financial support we will be receiving with the Dream Keeper Initiative. It will allow us to continue to provide critical support to the Black Trans community.”

The awarding of the funding and identification of priority funding areas follows months of strategic planning, outreach, and stakeholder engagement with San Francisco’s diverse trans and LGBTQ community. Since June 2020, HRC convened more than 60 community-driven input sessions, each including an LGBTQ space, to gather input on how to prioritize investments to create more services for Black transgender people.

“PRC is thrilled to partner with the Human Rights Commission of San Francisco to provide direct support to the Black Transgender and gender nonconforming communities of color that are so often overlooked and underrepresented,” said Brett Andrews, Chief Executive Officer of PRC. “This initiative reflects the City’s focus on all segments of the Black community, and the
Mayor’s deep commitment to full inclusion. Drawing upon PRC’s deep experience in serving the most vulnerable populations within the LGBTQI community, we are honored to further efforts to provide targeted programs, healthcare and direct assistance to our Black Trans community members to move them forward on the path to social and economic stability.”

“The Dream Keeper Initiative is a necessary pivot towards equity for San Francisco’s Black community. The Transgender District is incredibly honored to help create high impact solutions towards the disparity that Black transgender people face in San Francisco,” said Aria Sa’id, Executive Director of the Transgender District. “While San Francisco is a premiere city for the acceptance of queer and transgender people, the data has not shifted over the last 30 years in regards to what we face including increased rate of homelessness, abject poverty and marginalization. We have a multi-pronged strategy to make immediate changes for our community that promote the empowerment of Black and Brown transgender people and include creation of innovative solutions to advance housing, economic advancement and cultural enrichment for and by our community. Thank you to Mayor Breed, Board President Shamann Walton, Director Sheryl Evans Davis and her team of advocates at the San Francisco Human Rights Commission, LGBTQI+ Advisor, Tuquan Harrison, and the coalition of Black leaders across San Francisco who advocated for the inclusion of Black transgender leadership and peer led programs.”

“LYRIC is honored to be part of the City’s investment in African-Americans and is proud to be a strong collaborator in advancing the health, happiness, and sustainability of the Black transgender community,” said Toni Newman, LYRIC Interim Executive Director. “LYRIC is a long-time service provider for LGBTQ+ youth of color in San Francisco, in particular for young trans and gender non-conforming individuals who make up nearly half of our participants. We look forward to working with a new generation of young people to access the resources and opportunities they need to thrive and to build a more just world for all of us.”

###