

How We Organize the Allied Media Conference



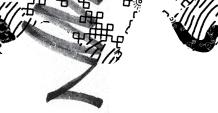












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Introduction

Allied Media Projects (AMP) produced the first edition of the *How We Organize the AMC* zine in 2013 to tell the story of the conference's participatory organizing process. Each year the AMC is created through the passionate contributions of hundreds of coordinators, presenters, and volunteers. This zine explains how the conference's tracks, practice spaces and network gatherings come together through a yearlong organizing process.

We update this zine each year with a new edition that reflects the best practices we have learned through producing the AMC with our network of brilliant media-based organizers. These practices continue to evolve each year through an iterative cycle of feedback and learning between AMC participants and organizers. We hope you find helpful organizing tips and strategies in these pages!

-The AMC Team





Welcome to Allied Media Projects



AMP's Network Principles

Embedded into every conference organizing cycle are a set of principles, which AMP has distilled from our network after years of listening.

- We are making an honest attempt to solve the most significant problems of our day.
- We are building a network of people and projects that are developing long-term solutions based on the immediate confrontation of our most pressing problems.
- Wherever there is a problem, there are already people acting on the problem in some fashion. Understanding those actions is the starting point for developing effective strategies to resolve the problem, so we focus on the solutions, not the problems.
- We emphasize our own power and legitimacy.
- We presume our power, not our powerlessness.



- We spend more time building than attacking. ٥
- ٥ We focus on strategies rather than issues.
- ٥ The strongest solutions happen through the process, not in a moment at the end of the process.
- ٥ The most effective strategies for us are the ones that work in situations of scarce resources and intersecting systems of oppression because those solutions tend to be the most holistic and sustainable.
- Place is important. For the AMC, Detroit is important as a source of ٥ innovative, collaborative, low-resource solutions. Detroit gives the conference a sense of place, just as each of the conference participants bring their own sense of place with them to the conference.
- We encourage people to engage with their whole selves, not just with one ٥ part of their identity.
- We begin by listening.

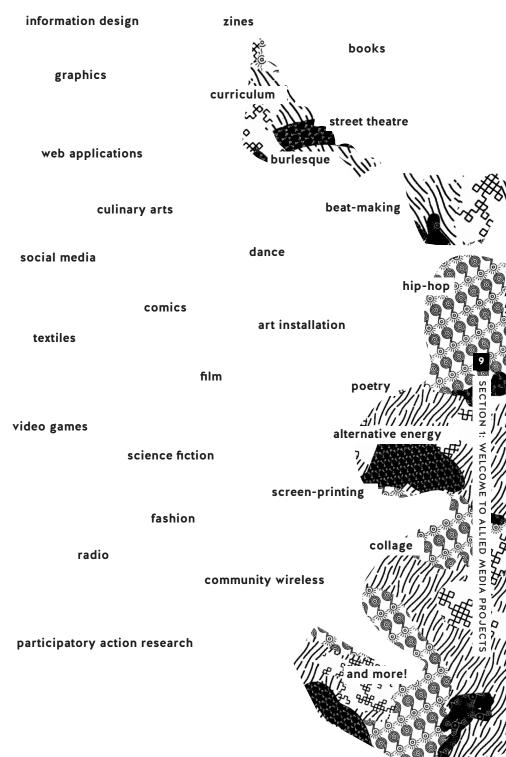


Allied Media Conference: A Brief History

The Allied Media Conference emerges out of 19 years of relationship-building across issues, identities, organizing practices and creative mediums. Since the first conference (then called the Midwest Zine Conference) in 1999, people have been gathering to explore do-it-yourself media. The conference was rebranded as the Underground Publishing Conference for a couple years and then became the Allied Media Conference in 2002. The shift to the Allied Media Conference attracted more people who were interested in using participatory media as a strategy for social justice organizing.

Our definition of "media" has grown over the years to include all the ways in which we communicate with the world.

oral history



AMC Advisory Board

In 2015 we launched an AMC Advisory Board, made up of diverse and long-time AMC participants. Advisory board members make a year-long commitment to help shape the AMC. For AMC2017 we have renewed our Advisory Board's membership with a combination of new and returning members who will pick up where 2016's crew left off and create new initiatives to bring into AMC2017. Additionally, AMC2017's Advisory Board will review track, practice space, and network gathering proposals, session proposals, and support with designing the opening ceremony.

The AMC2017 Advisory Board is: Tawana Petty, Nandi Comer, Shea Howell, Invincible, Tula Lawsin Kurashige, Alfredo Lopez, Antoine Haywood, Kezia Curtis, Moya Bailey and Cayden Mak.







Media-based Organizing

The tracks, practice spaces and network gatherings of the AMC are all based around a shared interest in what we call "mediabased organizing."



Media-based organizing is any collaborative process that uses media, art, or technology to address the roots of problems and advances holistic solutions towards a more just and creative world.









The AMC Organizing Process



Tracks, Practice Spaces and Network Gatherings

Through an open proposal process in the early fall, we select the thematic focus areas of the following year's conference. These focus areas take the form of tracks, practice spaces, or network gatherings (TPSNGs). Each TPSNG is coordinated by a team of between three and six people. These teams envision, curate and raise resources to support the tracks, practice spaces and network gatherings for each AMC.

A Track

is a series of sessions connected by a shared theme.

A Practice Space

is a hands-on open studio space dedicated to a creative practice such as dance, screen-printing, or technologybuilding that spans the three days of the conference.

A Network Gathering

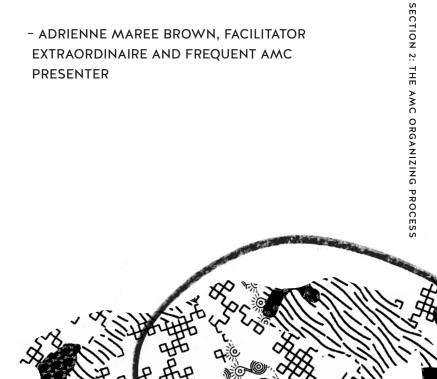
is a day-long mini-conference convened by a local or national network on the Thursday of the AMC weekend. A network gathering is an opportunity to convene a network for focused work and strategy-development within the AMC. A typical network gathering is between 20 and 75 people, however some are larger.



TPSNG ["tip-sing"]: noun. → Track, practice space, network gathering

"AMC participants are brilliant. Don't forget that - don't be full of your own answers and stories, leave as much space as possible to fill up from them. Be in an exchange."

- ADRIENNE MAREE BROWN, FACILITATOR EXTRAORDINAIRE AND FREQUENT AMC PRESENTER





Roles Within the TPSNG Coordinating Team

Each TPSNG coordinating team needs a *minimum* of three coordinators with at least one person having participated in a previous AMC. The work hours needed from each coordinator are variable and may be more like two hours per week earlier in the year and as much as 15 or 20 hours in the final weeks leading up to the AMC.

Here are the different types of roles that your team should include:

The Wrangler

- Keep communication flowing among coordinators.
- ♦ Keep track of deadlines and tasks.
- Be the point person with AMC staff.
- Organize and schedule regular coordinator meetings.
- Develop and manage coordination tools (such as spreadsheets, to-do lists, listservs, etc.).
- Facilitate group brainstorming and problemsolving.



facilitate





The Communications Maven

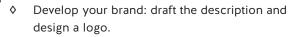
promote	
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 Lead the session solicitation process (for tracks & practice spaces) or promote participation in a network gathering.



- ♦ Promote a fundraiser.
- Create and manage social media campaigns.
- Edit the outlines and descriptions of sessions.

The Fundraising Whisperer

strategize	\$ Remind everyone that it's okay to ask the world for the resources we need.
budget	\$ Lead fundraising strategy brainstorms with the team, and plan for their implementation.
	\$ Research fundraising tactics that have worked in the past.
motivate	\$ Create and manage the budget.
	\$ Create a system for deciding how funds raised will be distributed, then manage that system.
ask	\$ Coordinate the collection of receipts and documentation necessary for your AMC mini-grant.
	\$ Keep the whole team engaged and excited about fundraising efforts.

Everyone together now!

- Actively participate in shaping the vision of your TPSNG.
- Be realistic about your capacity and communicate directly when you need support.
- > Delegate when you can't get it done yourself.
- Remain aware and respectful of all deadlines.
- Communicate with AMC staff when you have questions or concerns.
- Promote your TPSNG's "Call for Participation", fundraising efforts and other updates far and wide!





recruit





Big Questions for Your Coordinating Team

Once your TPSNG has been accepted to the AMC, here are some big questions to guide your team as you begin to plan for your track, practice space, or network gathering:

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- How will this TPSNG connect to and strengthen the work that our coordinating team members are already doing?
- Think about the topic that your TPSNG is addressing. Is there a history of this topic being presented and discussed at the AMC? If not, how can we set a good framework for introducing a new topic? Or how can we build upon what has been presented at the AMC in the past?
- Is our TPSNG's description, title and "Call for Participation" clear and easy to understand for a wide audience?
- What are we hoping to learn through the experience of coordinating our TPSNG?
- What are the indicators of success for our TPSNG?
- What challenges do we anticipate? Can we prepare solutions in advance?
- How will we document our organizing process to share with future coordinators? How will we share the best practices and lessons we learn? How will we share the outcomes of our work after the AMC is over?





The AMC is a year-round organizing process that kicks off with the call for proposals for the tracks, practice spaces and network gatherings in September and ends when teams debrief and submit their final feedback in July. Below is a timeline of the AMC year.

Fall

Between September and November...

- Tracks, practice spaces, and network gatherings (TPSNGs) are proposed, reviewed, and selected.
- TPSNG coordinators decide who will attend the coordinators planning weekend in January, hosted by AMP.

Winter

Between December and February...

- Each TPSNG determines the members of their coordinating team.
- TPSNG coordinators gather at the coordinators meeting in January in Detroit.
- Coordinators finalize their TPSNG descriptions, logos and calls for participation.
- All TPSNGs distribute a "Call for Participation" detailing the sessions they are looking for or other ways to get involved in their content area.
- ♦ The AMC session proposal process launches.
- Network gathering coordinators determine who will be invited to participate and how many participants may be included.

- Network gathering coordinators work with AMC staff to select facilities to be used, and plan for specific logistics.
- Track and practice space coordinators review session proposals and make recommendations to AMP staff regarding final selections.
- All TPSNG coordinators launch promotional and fundraising campaigns for their content areas.

Spring

Between March and May...

- AMC staff work with TPSNG coordinators to refine and finalize their content.
- TPSNG coordinators (with support of AMC staff) assist presenters with securing their registration, travel, and housing arrangements for the AMC.
- The conference schedule and session logistics are finalized.

Summer

Between June and August...

- The AMC happens!!
- AMC staff conduct a post-AMC participant and coordinator survey.
- TPSNG coordinators debrief their AMC experience and share lessons and documentation from the AMC with their communities.
- AMC staff consolidate lessons and publicly share reflections on the conference.
- AMC staff plan for improvements on the design of the coming year's conference.

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SECTION 2

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What the AMC Provides for Each TPSNG Coordinating Team

AMC staff will advise on the development of vision, content, and fundraising strategies of your TPSNG. We will do everything we can to facilitate connections between coordinators, potential participants, and potential funders.

For AMC2017, we are able to provide the following support to coordinating teams:

- Training on the AMC organizing process at the coordinator's weekend, January 13-15, 2017*
- Complimentary registration for each coordinator
- Up to \$200 in scholarship funds per coordinator to offset travel and/or housing costs
- Up to \$1000 per coordinating team in matched funds towards grassroots fundraising efforts**
- Support with grassroots fundraising campaigns via merchandise sales on the AMP Store
- Online promotion of your fundraising efforts, promotion of the "call for participation" for your TPSNG, and promotion of your finalized content

*At least two TPSNG coordinators from each group are required to attend. **See the "Mini-guide to Grassroots Fundraising" in this zine.







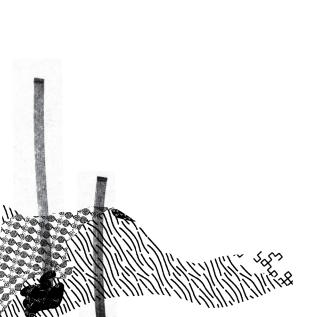


Recruiting Presenters and Developing Sessions

Coordinators of tracks and practice spaces will recruit presenters and sessions for their content area at the AMC. Before you begin recruiting, review the types of AMC sessions below.

Types of AMC Sessions

The Allied Media Conference includes various session types as a way to diversify the ways we are sharing and learning throughout the conference weekend. New for 2017, we are adding plenaries as a type of morning session open to all participants. AMC sessions are dynamic spaces joined by the common thread of "media-based organizing". Most sessions are 90 minutes long.



Types of sessions at the AMC include:

Mands-on workshop:

A session that engages multiple senses in the learning process and allows participants to construct their own knowledge. Presenters may use a mixture of: direct instruction, discussion, small group work, multimedia sharing, games, and making things!



Mealtime meet-ups:

A focused discussion amongst a specific group with a shared identity or interest. One-hour meet-ups are held during lunch, two-hour meet-ups happen over dinner time.



Strategy session: a gathering of collective brain power around hard questions that generate possible solutions and clear next steps.



ስሻ Panel:

Featuring three or more presenters and a strong moderator/ facilitator sharing critical knowledge and expertise on a given topic, ideally with ample Q&A time with participants.



Tours and field-trips:

A three-hour immersive experience that takes participants off campus to learn from the history and current realities of Detroit.

Film screening or performance:

A session that shares a piece of media or performance and provides an opportunity for participants to ask questions during or afterwards.

%Practice space session:

An interactive, hands-on session centered on media-making within a practice space.



Plenaries (new for 2017!):

XXXXX A lecture or panel presented each morning for a large audience of AMC participants, featuring critical conversations with some of our network's most dynamic media-based organizers.

Your "Call for Participation" + Outreach

Each track and practice space will **c**reate a "Call for Participation" inviting sessions proposals. Your call should include a description of your track or practice space (ideally with a hot logo), some examples of the kinds of sessions and presenters you are looking for, and contact information for the person on your team who is available to answer questions.

Promote your "Call for Participation" on email listservs, websites, and all manner of social media. Create an online platform for publishing ongoing updates, such as social media accounts or a Facebook event page. Attend community events and talk to people one-on-one, or host informal info sessions. Ask friends to share your call with others who they think would be interested.

Target your outreach. Make a list of people who you'd like to ask to submit a session proposal and send them a personalized invitation. You can include a specific suggestion for how you envision them participating. While many will be excited by the opportunity, be prepared for some ambivalence and maybe even some "no thank yous". But be persistent!





Helpful tip: Increase the effectiveness of personalized invites by being clear with the person about why you think their work is awesome and how you envision them participating in the AMC. Propose some specific ideas as to the type of session you'd like them to present.



Reviewing Session Proposals and Making Recommendations

Session proposal review takes place in early March. At the time, specific instructions for how to review sessions will be provided to each coordinating team.

Here is a summary of the process:

- Each track and practice space will receive a list of all proposals from AMC staff.
- Each coordinator will have one week to review and comment on the proposals in their track or practice space.
- As a team, you will make a recommendations for up to 8 sessions and 4 mealtime meetups to AMC staff. Please note: these recommendations are not guaranteed. They are suggestions that are crucial to the final decisions/offers made by AMC staff.
- Based on your recommendations and additional review,
 AMC staff will submit our final list of sessions for your track or practice space.
- Coordinators can submit feedback, ask questions and request reconsiderations before final announcements are made.
- AMC staff will connect presenters of accepted sessions with the respective coordinators of their track or practice space.

The AMC is looking for sessions that:

- are accessible for people of diverse abilities, experiences, ages, and backgrounds.
- offer a range of learning opportunities: from beginner to advanced.
- explore media-based organizing ideas, projects, and practices.
- align with the Allied Media Projects Network Principles (see page 6 in this zine).
- help fulfill the visions of the AMC's tracks and practice spaces.

Supporting Your Presenters Throughout the AMC

Once sessions are accepted and confirmed, AMC staff will connect coordinators to the presenters in their track or practice space. As coordinators, your role is to support them by sharing context and big questions about your track or practice space, connecting them to one another before the conference and offering logistical support during the AMC weekend.







Section 3:

Planning a Network Gathering at the AMC

Most of the work of planning of your network gathering will be self-organized amongst the members of your team. Be sure to create an organizing timeline for yourselves that makes space to find answers to all of the questions below.

When planning your network gathering, ask yourself:

- Why is it important to hold this NG at the AMC?
- What can we healthfully and realistically aim to accomplish during the seven hour block allotted for the NG?
- Who will be the primary facilitators of the NG?
- How many people can we responsibly facilitate?
- How will we incorporate media-based organizing into our NG?
- What are the desired outcomes of the NG and what new information and resources will participants leave with?
- How will our NG participants participate in the rest of the AMC, from Friday-Sunday?

Brainstorm the most essential takeaways of your NG and work backwards from there. For example, if you want to be able to say at the end of the day, "40 youth of color from across the continent built a trans-local media-based strategy for sharing liberatory education practices" then that end-goal should guide all of your planning efforts – from your outreach strategy to your facilitation plan, and the specific activities of the day.



Registration of Network Gathering Participants

Network gatherings may be closed to a pre-selected group of invited participants, or they may be open to anyone, or you may ask prospective participants to complete an application to participate. All network gathering participants must register for the AMC.

In the AMC registration form, registrants will be able to sign up for a Network Gathering. Gatherings will be marked as either "invite only" or "open to all". In the months leading up to the AMC, we will periodically share updates with you including who has registered for your NG.

If your NG is "invite only", make sure to let us know. We will need to confirm that the list of people who signed up for your gathering when they register for the AMC aligns with your list of invited participants.

If your NG is open, please let us know once you have reached capacity and we will remove the sign-up option from the AMC participant registration form. If you choose to leave your gathering open, please plan on receiving walk-up participants and communicating with us when you've reached capacity.



Section 4:

The AMC Mini-guide to Grassroots Fundraising

NI-GUIDE TO GRASSROOTS FUNDRAISING



The primary purpose of fundraising is to make the AMC as accessible as possible for those who need financial support. Each track, practice space, and network gathering coordinating team will come up with their own strategy for raising funds and making decisions for how they will distribute the funds.

The Grassroots Institute for Fundraising Training, frequent presenters at the AMC, describe the importance of grassroots funding in this way:

"We see grassroots fundraising as an essential strategy when working against all forms of oppression, and toward justice and liberation of all people. Fundraising is political, and is a form of organizing and movement-building. As an organization working for social justice, we try to be intentional about where our funding comes from and take into account how the way we generate resources impacts our work."

An AMC fundraising campaign, especially one that happens over the course of many months, can bring together groups from different social demographics and income brackets, and can build community and coalition that lasts through and beyond the AMC.

In this section, we will take your through a step-by-step process for creating a small to moderately scaled fundraising plan. We are not expecting any TPSNG to raise tens of thousand of dollars (though many do!). We are expecting that each team will take advantage of the resources offered to raise some money on behalf of their track, practice space, or network gathering.

Getting Started Fundraising

Each track, practice space and network gathering has access to the following resources:

- Up to \$1000 in matched fundraising dollars to support your TPSNG. (For example, if you raise \$1000, we will match that amount, making your total amount \$2000.)
- Access to the online AMP Store to sell merchandise.

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- Opportunity to create a "donate" form through AMP, where people can directly make tax-deductible contributions to your TPSNG.
- Promotion of your fundraising efforts through AMP's social media networks.
- Access to AMC staff to assist your planning and offer support to your fundraising events.



What Are You Fundraising For?

The specifics of what your team decides to fundraise for may vary. As long as all funds raised for your TPSNG goes towards AMC-related expenses, you can collectively decide how to allocate your funds.

Here's a list of things coordinators have fundraised for in the past:

- Travel stipends for coordinators, volunteers, and/or presenters
- Housing stipends for coordinators, volunteers, and/or presenters
- Travel and housing costs for children
- Personal attendants for participants with disabilities
- Food for mealtime meet-ups at the AMC.
- Childcare costs for presenters or coordinators who have to leave their kids at home in order to attend the AMC
- Stipends for coordinators to offset the number of volunteer hours spent organizing their TPSNG
- Reimbursement of costs related to fundraising (supplies, performance fees, venue fees, etc.)

Please see page 26 for more information on what the AMC provides for each TPSNG coordinating team.

GRASSROOTS FUNDRAISING

Big Questions to Ask Before You Start Fundraising:

- Who from our coordinating team will lead fundraising efforts?
- What amount can we realistically and healthily raise?
- What methods of fundraising are we most excited about as a team? (See ideas on p. 47)
- What fundraising platforms are coordinators already familiar with?
- Who are some people, partners and venues who may donate to support our efforts (money, space, products, etc)?



"People are buying into a community or an idea that they support and they should understand how their money furthers that goal as well as see some evidence of their gift beyond getting you and your crew to AMC."

"This is not the time to be coy or passive. Get your friends who have no shame, who really feel comfortable making the hard sell, even if they may only be tangentially connected to the project, to do the asking."

"We are not in a world of something for nothing and people are more likely to give if they feel an exchange is taking place."

- MOYA BAILEY + ZACHARI CURTIS, ON FUNDRAISING FOR COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN AN AMC PRACTICE SPACE

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Methods of Fundraising

There are many ways to go about grassroots fundraising. There are assets and drawbacks to each type. Here are the general categories of fundraising you may choose to pursue:

- Crowdfunding using a web-based platform (like Indiegogo, Crowdrise or Razoo)
- Events/Activities, either one-time or ongoing events where all or some of the proceeds go towards the fundraising goal
- Applying for grants or asking funders for travel support to help you get to the AMC
- Asking specific individuals in your network for a contribution

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> Hybrid strategies that employ more than one fundraising method to meet a goal



Build Your Strategy

For any fundraising effort, there needs to be a strategy. Here are our suggestions for building a plan of action.

- Identify all the roles involved in executing your fundraising plan.
- Decide who is responsible for each role.
- Develop your team's plan and "pitch". (For help, try using the "4 W's and H" - who, when, where, why, how?)
- Build a timeline for your team to follow, including check-in points.
- Promote your efforts to your network so people can stay in the loop.
- ♦ Launch your plan and get everyone activated in their role.
- Keep the momentum going and promote until the timeline is complete!
- Plan next steps based on the actual outcome of your campaign.
- Share your successes with your community. Invite more support!



Examples of Successful Grassroots Fundraising at the AMC

#SayHerName Network Gathering (2016)

The #SayHerName Network Gathering began with a modest goal of raising only \$5,000 and blew it out of the water by raising \$55,000.

- Sensing that it was a critical time to raise the issue of violence against Black women with funders, SayHerName coordinators applied for and received \$3,000 from the Third Wave Mobilization Fund, and \$15,000 from the Groundswell Rapid Response Fund.
- They were then approached by Solidaire and the Ms.
 Foundation to be funded at an additional \$15,000 and \$20,000, respectively.
- #SayHerName also raised \$500 from an individual donor,
 \$2000 through a crowdfunding campaign, and \$325 in merch sales of silk-screened posters, t-shirts and totes through the online AMP Store.
- With the money they raised, the coordinators were able to cover virtually all expenses – accommodation, food and travel – for approximately 35 attendees, with money left over to continue the important work of organizing around their mission post-AMC.

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The DIY Spa (2014)

The coordination team of the 2014 "Liberations Technologies" track put together a series of DIY Spas to raise travel funds for presenters.

- Funds from a mini-grant from the AMC were used to purchase supplies for DIY salons including nail supplies, tarot cards, snacks, drinks, mirrors, lotions, oils, and other essentials.
- They secured a space for the DIY Spa events, designed and printed flyers, mixed special drinks and snacks. Salon services were sold with sliding scale pricing.
- To increase funds, they bought bottles, herbs, flower essences and constructed a magical recipe of healing powers. They printed special labels and these healing potions were sold at events.

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GRASSROOTS FUNDRAISING

Immune Power Packs for the Healing Justice Practice Space (2011 & 2012)

The Healing Justice Practice Space (HJPS) worked with an herbalist to develop Immune Power Packs, filled with natural remedies for overworked activists.

- The HJPS spent their AMC mini-grant covering the supplies for the Power Packs.
- They advertised by writing an article for the AMC website and advertising to their networks as well as potential attendees to the AMC.

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- They sold most of them through the online AMP Store (store. alliedmedia.org), and sold the remaining items at the AMC.
- As a result of the fundraising, all HJPS coordinators and volunteers who required travel stipends were able to receive support, and a leftover balance of funds was carried forward for 2013 fundraising efforts.

Crowdfunding for Detroit Future Youth (2012)

Detroit Future Youth led a successful crowdfunding campaign with 109 donors online through IndieGoGo.

- Organizers spent part of their \$500 AMC mini-grant to create promotional media (video, posters, icons, etc.) for their campaign.
- Five people coordinated this effort, with dozens more promoting the campaign.
- Detroit Future Youth offered "perks" for donors ranging from participation in a skate party (\$5), to a "DFY Curriculum Mixtape" (\$500). Through donations, they surpassed their \$5000 goal.



Philadelphia Spelling Bee (2009, 2010, and 2011)

This took place in conjunction with the Philadelphia delegation's fundraising efforts.

- Three coordinators planned the event. They charged a \$5 entry fee to the spelling bee. Prizes were donated.
- They spent \$100 on food and drink, and got an additional
 \$100 in food and drink donated.
- ♦ Approximately 150 people attended.
- From entry fees and refreshment sales they grossed \$1,000, leaving about \$900 in funds raised after costs.
- Special touches: Hand-engraved plaque prizes for the winners!





Notes



Acknowledgements

Major support of the Allied Media Conference is provided by: The Ford Foundation The Nathan Cummings Foundation

For up-to-date information on conference logistics and organizing process, conference program, background information and an archive of past AMCs, visit **www.alliedmedia.org/amc.**

This zine has been compiled and edited by Morgan M. Willis, Jenny Lee, Sophia Softky, Muna Danish, and Mike Medow.

Design: The Work Department / theworkdept.com Photography: Ara Howrani / howranistudios.com





Help us sustain and grow the Allied Media Conference!

Becoming an Allied Media Projects sustainer is the best way to show long-term love for the AMC and AMP. Monthly sustainer contributions help grow the Allied Media Conference and sustain our support for art, media, technology projects working for social change.

Get started at: alliedmedia.org/sustain

Sponsor the AMC

Your sponsorship contribution will help us make the AMC more impactful, inclusive and dynamic. If your organization or company is interested in becoming a conference sponsor, we will work with you to craft a sponsorship package that works for you.

To learn more about our sponsorship packages contact info@alliedmedia.org.







