M&T Bank Newsroom

Weaving Baltimore Together: Applications Open for $100,000 in Weaver Awards from the Aspen Institute and M&T Bank to Support Neighbors Building Trust

Individuals and groups eligible for $5,000 hyperlocal grants to foster community connection

(Baltimore, MD, July 26, 2024)— M&T Bank and the Aspen Institute's Weave: The Social Fabric Project will recognize 20 new individuals and groups in Baltimore City who foster community connection. The $5,000 awards for neighbors working together, funded by M&T Bank, are easy to apply for, require only simple reporting, and can go to individuals or small organizations whether they are registered as nonprofits or not.

In its fourth year, the Weaver Awards have recognized over 50 Baltimoreans fostering emotional well-being and a sense of belonging in their neighborhoods. Among the 2023 awardees were Monique Bess, of Black Boxx Radio, focusing on community-centered, positive conversation across Baltimore and Tiny Adams, whose organization Leader Breeders is using the power of sports to mentor and support educational and social success among youth. Past Awardees come from diverse neighborhoods across Baltimore.

The Awards are open to residents of Baltimore City 18 years and older and are not intended for large nonprofits. While many people in Baltimore are serving their neighbors, the Weaver Awards look for those whose projects also create lasting relationships and build trust as people work together to strengthen their community and weave a tighter social fabric.

"Weavers are showing us the way forward to heal our divisions across race, place, and beliefs as they help us come together as neighbors who care about each other," says Frederick J. Riley, Executive Director of the Weave Project.

People can learn more and apply themselves or recommend a neighbor atWeaverAwards.org through September 30. The application is intentionally simple, asking a few questions about the people involved, the project, and the community, with no need for a detailed budget. Every applicant must have at least one neighbor to recommend them as a trusted community connector.

"Having grown up in Baltimore, I have seen the transformative power of weavers in my community," says Dan Porterfield, president and CEO of the Aspen Institute. "The Weaver Awards let us honor the neighbors who may not have titles but foster authentic connections and make every person feel seen, heard, and valued."

M&T Bank, a leading corporate philanthropist in Greater Baltimore, plays a pivotal role in creating the Weaver Awards in Baltimore. “Our commitment at M&T Bank is to support the communities we serve and to empower Baltimore residents to do the same,” said Brian Walter, M&T Bank Regional President for Greater Baltimore. “The Weaver Awards is our way of encouraging vital relationships that can significantly benefit residents and the local workforce.”

A selection panel of community advocates and past awardees will review all the applications and choose the 2024 Awardees. Everyone who applies can get support for their own neighborhood work – whether they receive an award or not – by joining the Weave Baltimore online community. The community helps people meet other weavers, find collaborators, learn about other grants and fellowships, and access free training ranging from public speaking to grant writing and community organizing.

2023 Weaver Awardee Crystal Forman of East Baltimore says, “One of the most notable benefits of the Weaver Award has been the opportunity for heightened visibility.” She used her Award to host community cooking classes that focus on health and wellness. “Through PR coverage on WBAL-TV and online write-ups highlighting our collaboration with the 6th Branch's farm locations in East Baltimore, we've been able to showcase the vital work we're doing to promote holistic wellness and healthy living within our community.”

People can get more information, join the Weave Baltimore online group, apply for an award, or recommend a neighbor at WeaverAwards.org.

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About M&T Bank
M&T Bank offers a comprehensive range of banking products and services across 12 states in the eastern U.S., from Maine to

Virginia and Washington, D.C. In Greater Baltimore, M&T Bank stands as one of the region's most prominent corporate philanthropists, contributing $3.5 million annually to support over 200 nonprofit organizations. For more information about M&T Bank, visit MTB.com.

About the Aspen Institute's Weave: The Social Fabric Project

Weave: The Social Fabric Project is a nationwide initiative of the Aspen Institute that supports and inspires grassroots leaders who are building social trust and fostering an inclusive social fabric in their communities, enabling them to thrive. Weave empowers and strengthens these remarkable individuals by providing access to resources, facilitating partnerships, and inspiring the next generation of weavers. David Brooks, New York Times columnist and author, founded the project in 2018 and currently serves as its chair. More at Weavers.org

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