

Progress Trust Present 'Meeting of the Griots' for the 100th Anniversary of Black History Month

A festival-style Black History Month event honoring legacy, modern-day griots, art, music, and storytelling at historic Sullivan Progress Plaza.

PHILADELPHIA, PA, UNITED STATES, February 20, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Progress Trust Inc. is hosting Meeting of the Griots, a free, festival-style Black History Month program, on Saturday, February 21, 2026, from 11:00 am to 3:30 pm at Sullivan Progress Plaza, 1501 North Broad Street, Philadelphia.

[Black History Month was federally recognized in 1976](#), marking 50 years of national recognition and 100 years since the founding of Negro History Week in 1926. As the nation observes the centennial of Black History Month, Meeting of the Griots contributes to broader efforts to preserve cultural memory and strengthen civic participation by creating space for intergenerational learning and dialogue. The event brings together elders, youth, artists, scholars, community leaders, and families for a gathering centered on storytelling, cultural memory, modern-day leadership, and the continued development of a community storytelling infrastructure that preserves knowledge and shared experience across generations. The program honors the griot tradition, storytellers who preserve history, transmit knowledge, and guide communities, while demonstrating how that role continues today through living voices, active community engagement, and modern storytelling infrastructure that ensures knowledge remains accessible over time.

With Black residents making up approximately 43% of Philadelphia's population, according to the U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts, one of the largest proportions among major U.S. cities, Meeting

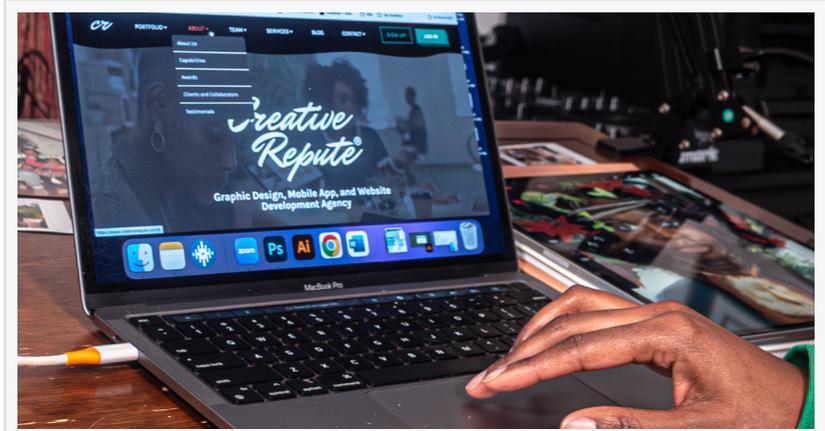


Creative Repute highlights intergenerational storytelling and cultural heritage at Sullivan Progress Plaza through the Meeting of the Griots.

of the Griots is designed as an immersive, community-focused experience. Attendees will move through a series of exhibits, exploring community resource tables, and participate in interactive programming throughout the afternoon. The event will also feature musical presentations, African drumming, and a family-friendly art experience.

As a featured highlight of the program, attendees will have the opportunity to engage with the Montgomery Collection's Traveling African American

Pop-Up Museum, which includes archival artifacts such as vintage photographs, letters, album covers, and historical materials that document African American life and legacy.



Creative Repute develops digital platforms and communication systems that support storytelling infrastructure and community engagement.

“

Meaningful work deserves systems that preserve knowledge over time. Meeting of the Griots reflects that mission.”

*Nile Livingston, CEO of
Creative Repute*

Throughout the program, a series of featured griots, including community leaders, cultural practitioners, and subject-matter experts, will share reflections on health, education, film, music, arts, Black business, community outreach, and Black history. Each presenter will offer a 15-20-minute presentation, followed by a moderated Q&A session in Salon B, creating space for dialogue, learning, and connection.

“This event is about honoring where we’ve come from while recognizing that history is still being written every day,” said Janice Sykes-Ross, Fund Development Specialist at Progress Trust Inc. “Meeting of the Griots invites people to engage with the past, understand the present, and see themselves as part of what comes next. It is boots-on-the-ground, community-centered, and deeply intentional.”

The Meeting of the Griots takes place at Sullivan Progress Plaza, a site of national significance. Founded in 1968 by the late Rev. Dr. Leon H. Sullivan, the plaza is recognized as the first shopping center in the United States built, developed, continuously owned, and managed by African Americans. The location serves not only as the venue for the event but as a living example of Black economic leadership, self-determination, and long-term community investment.

“We are honoring the extraordinary legacy of Rev. Dr. Leon H. Sullivan by continuing the work he began, creating spaces where culture, commerce, and community intersect,” Sykes-Ross added.

“This gathering reflects that vision and helps introduce what’s next for the Sullivan Progress Plaza and its evolving role as a community anchor.”

This event offers an innovative, archival-based approach to cultural education. Through pop-up exhibitions and storytelling experiences, individuals and families are encouraged to explore history, genealogy, and collective memory in accessible, participatory ways.

“Meaningful work deserves systems that preserve knowledge over time,” said Nile Livingston, CEO of Creative Repute. “Meeting of the Griots reflects that mission.”

Creative Repute, a Philadelphia-based creative strategy and design firm, is participating in the program as part of its ongoing work supporting community storytelling and knowledge preservation initiatives. Founder and CEO, Nile Livingston, will join the lineup of featured griots, sharing insights on how modern storytelling infrastructure helps communities document lived experience, strengthen public engagement, and sustain institutional knowledge over time.

Through its work with cultural organizations, nonprofits, and community institutions, Creative Repute helps design the narrative systems, communication frameworks, and digital platforms that allow community knowledge to remain accessible across generations. The firm’s participation reflects a broader commitment to strengthening community voice, public

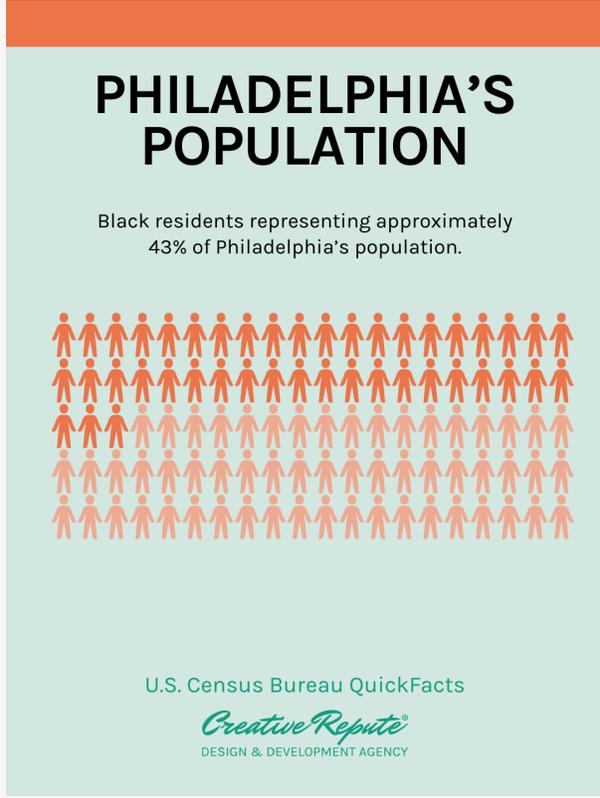


The poster for the 'Meeting of The Griots' event features a repeating pattern of 'BLACK HISTORY MONTH' in white text on a black background. Below the text is a row of colorful hands in yellow, green, red, and blue. The event title 'Meeting of The Griots' is in a bold, red serif font. Below it, the tagline 'Preserve the Past - Inspire the Future' is in a smaller, black sans-serif font. A descriptive sentence follows: 'This Exhibition is a free, family-friendly gathering that promotes preserving our heritage while experiencing cultural connections.' The date and time are listed as 'SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 21, 2026' and '11:00AM-3:30 PM'. A list of activities includes 'AFRICAN DRUMMERS', 'MUSICAL PERFORMANCES', 'TRAVEL POP-UP MUSEUM BY DIASPORA DNA', and 'MOVIE PREVIEW: "RIVERBEND" BY REELBLACK'. There are two small images: a book cover on the left and a circular logo on the right. A decorative bar with green, red, and yellow segments is at the bottom.

Meeting of The Griots
Preserve the Past - Inspire the Future
This Exhibition is a free, family-friendly gathering that promotes preserving our heritage while experiencing cultural connections.
SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 21, 2026
11:00AM-3:30 PM

- AFRICAN DRUMMERS
- MUSICAL PERFORMANCES
- TRAVEL POP-UP MUSEUM BY DIASPORA DNA
- MOVIE PREVIEW: "RIVERBEND" BY REELBLACK

Creative Repute highlights the Meeting of the Griots cultural event celebrating heritage and community storytelling.



The infographic titled 'PHILADELPHIA'S POPULATION' has a light green background and an orange header. It states that Black residents represent approximately 43% of Philadelphia's population. This is visualized with a grid of 43 orange human icons. At the bottom, it cites 'U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts' and includes the Creative Repute logo, which is a stylized 'C' and 'R' in orange and green, with the text 'Creative Repute DESIGN & DEVELOPMENT AGENCY' below it.

PHILADELPHIA'S POPULATION
Black residents representing approximately 43% of Philadelphia's population.

U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts
Creative Repute
DESIGN & DEVELOPMENT AGENCY

Creative Repute shares Philadelphia demographic data highlighting community representation found in the U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts.

memory, and long-term cultural sustainability through strategic creative partnership.

The event also aligns with broader citywide and national efforts to highlight history, culture, and civic participation during milestone commemorations, including the 100th anniversary of Black History Month. By centering local voices and lived experience, Meeting of the Griots contributes to broader efforts to preserve cultural memory and strengthen civic participation by building storytelling infrastructure that supports intergenerational learning, community dialogue, and long-term knowledge preservation.



Creative Repute's Nile Livingston highlights community voices through intergenerational dialogue and cultural engagement.

While the event is free and open to the public, registration is required. Tickets are available through Eventbrite, with optional paid ticket tiers to support the program and future initiatives. Refunds are available up to seven days prior to the event.

Progress Trust Inc. views the Meeting of the Griots as the foundation for ongoing programming, partnerships, and educational opportunities. Plans are underway to expand the initiative beyond this single event, including future exhibitions, residencies, and additional community-based gatherings.

Event Details

Event: Meeting of the Griots

Date: Saturday, February 21, 2026

Time: 11:00 am - 3:30 pm EST

Location: Sullivan Progress Plaza, 1501 North Broad Street, Philadelphia, PA

Admission: Free

Registration required: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/meeting-of-the-griots-tickets-1981382238613>

For more information and to register, visit the Eventbrite event page.

About Progress Trust Inc.

Progress Trust Inc. is a nonprofit organization dedicated to economic development, cultural preservation, and community advancement. Founded in 1999 under the umbrella of Sullivan

Progress Plaza, the organization continues the legacy and vision of Rev. Dr. Leon H. Sullivan by supporting initiatives that strengthen community, commerce, and opportunity.

About Creative Repute

[Creative Repute is a Philadelphia-based creative strategy, web, and design](#) firm specializing in storytelling infrastructure, community engagement, and knowledge preservation. Led by Founder and CEO Nile Livingston, the firm partners with cultural institutions, nonprofits, and community organizations to design narrative frameworks, communication systems, and digital platforms that help preserve community knowledge, strengthen public trust, and support long-term impact. Its work focuses on transforming community initiatives into sustainable systems of engagement and shared learning.

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