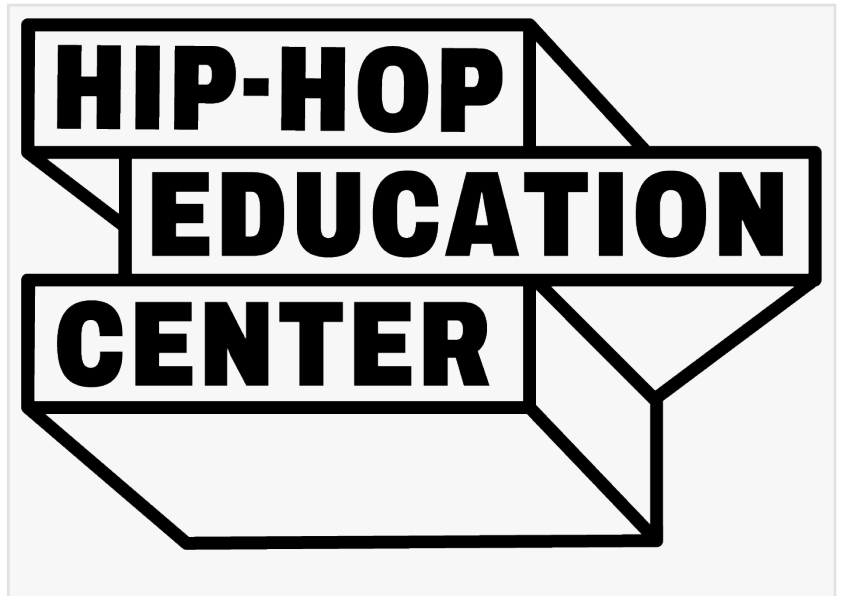


HIP-HOP EDUCATION CENTER AND NATIONAL GRID LAUNCH INAUGURAL POWER THE FUTURE FELLOWS COHORT AT BROOKLYN PUBLIC LIBRARY

Hip-Hop pioneer Special Ed joins as a mentor in a new fellowship pairing MCing, beatmaking, & filmmaking with STEAM careers.

BROOKLYN, NY, UNITED STATES,
August 5, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ --

On Tuesday, August 18, the [Hip-Hop Education Center](#) (HHEC) will publicly launch the inaugural cohort of [Power the Future](#), an innovative workforce development fellowship that trains nine young adults from across Brooklyn in Hip-Hop artistry while building hands-on skills in science, technology, engineering, arts, and math (STEAM). Designed to prepare the next generation of creative STEM leaders for the innovation workforce, the fellowship represents a groundbreaking partnership between HHEC and [National Grid](#).



The public launch event, a live Hip-Hop cypher and community celebration, will take place from 5:00-7:30 p.m. at the Central Library at Brooklyn Public Library, bringing together fellows, mentors, educators, industry leaders, and community members to celebrate a new model for workforce development rooted in culture, creativity, and ingenuity.

The inaugural cohort includes nine fellows specializing in MCing, Beatmaking, and Filmmaking. Over the next year, participants will explore mathematics through rhythm and beatmaking; science through soundwaves and acoustics; technology through MIDI controllers and digital audio workstations; engineering by building solar-powered USB chargers, and visual arts through the physics and chemistry behind graffiti and aerosol design.

"Young people and young creatives have always been at the forefront of driving social change through Hip-Hop. This program continues that powerful legacy by equipping the next generation

with the tools, relationships, and opportunities to create meaningful impact in their communities. I'm inspired by the creativity, vision, and leadership these young creatives bring, and I'm honored to support a groundbreaking program that centers hip-hop as a catalyst for learning, innovation, and community transformation."

— Dr. Justis Lopez

Senior Director of Teaching and Learning, Hip-Hop Education Center

Each fellow receives a Power Up Backpack, a mobile creative studio equipped with an iPad Pro, headphones, a microphone, and Wi-Fi access along with a two-year membership to Hip-Hop Communiversity, HHEC's digital learning platform where fellows can showcase their work, connect with mentors and build professional networks. participants will also receive mentorship from National Grid professionals and Hip-Hop pioneers throughout the fellowship.

nationalgrid



POWER THE FUTURE

"Partnering with the Hip-Hop Education Center places innovation at the intersection of arts and energy. Power the Future gives young people the tools, mentorship, and resources to lead as we reshape the energy landscape, empowering creative minds to deliver sustainability that is both effective and stylish—for the environment and for the innovation workforce."

— Dr. Robert Simmons III

Vice President, U.S. Social Impact and Community Engagement, National Grid
Executive Director, National Grid Foundation

The launch builds on a multi-year partnership between HHEC and National Grid that began in August 2025 with a fireside chat featuring Hip-Hop pioneer MC Lyte sharing her thoughts on engaging kids when there's an element of artistry. Power the Future is designed to serve opportunity youth and young adults ages 18 to 26 across Brooklyn communities, connecting them to STEM, clean energy, digital literacy, entrepreneurship, and a pathway to careers in innovation. The launch will also spotlight Brooklyn Hip-Hop pioneer Special Ed as a mentor in the fellowship's MC pathway. Born Edward Archer and raised in Flatbush, one of the very neighborhoods Power the Future serves, Special Ed became a fixture of Hip-Hop's Golden Era at



Through Power the Future, we're investing in the brilliance that already exists in our communities and connecting it to the skills, mentors, and opportunities needed to shape tomorrow's workforce."

*Martha Diaz, President and
CEO, Hip-Hop Education
Center*

just 17, when his 1989 debut album *Youngest in Charge* and its breakout single "I Got It Made" went gold and landed him on his first national tour alongside Public Enemy, LL Cool J, Run-DMC, Queen Latifah, and Big Daddy Kane. The Source later named the album one of the 100 best rap albums ever made. Decades later, Special Ed has stayed rooted in Brooklyn, mentoring the next generation of artists out of his own studio, the same work he'll bring to Power the Future fellows on August 18.

"Hip-Hop has always been a laboratory for innovation, creativity, and problem-solving. Through Power the Future, we're investing in the brilliance that already exists in our communities and connecting it to the skills, mentors, and

opportunities needed to shape tomorrow's workforce. This fellowship isn't just preparing young people for careers—it is empowering them to become the artists, entrepreneurs, engineers, educators, and innovators who will lead the future."

— Martha Diaz

President & CEO, Hip-Hop Education Center

The evening will feature remarks from Dr. Robert Simmons III, Vice President of U.S. Social Impact and Community Engagement at National Grid; Martha Diaz, President and CEO of the Hip-Hop Education Center; and Dr. Justis Lopez, HHEC's Senior Director of Teaching and Learning. Guests will experience an interactive opening led by Soul Science Lab, followed by live "Next Up" conversations pairing fellows with industry mentors.

Event Details

What: Power the Future: Hip-Hop Cypher & Fellowship Launch

When: Tuesday, August 18, 2026, 5:00 – 7:30 PM ET

Where: Central Library, Brooklyn Public Library, 10 Grand Army Plaza, Brooklyn, NY 11238

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About the Hip-Hop Education Center

The Hip-Hop Education Center is a field-building institution dedicated to advancing Hip-Hop-based education as a framework for learning, cultural preservation, leadership development, and economic opportunity. Founded by curator, archivist, and educator Martha Diaz, HHEC grew out of more than two decades of work at the intersection of Hip-Hop culture, education, media, and social change, and today serves as a hub connecting artists, educators, students, scholars, and innovators around the world. HHEC advances its mission through four core initiatives: research, advocacy, workforce development, and the creation of a living archive of Hip-Hop educational resources and history.

About National Grid

National Grid (NYSE: NGG) delivers electricity and natural gas to more than 20 million people across New York and Massachusetts. We're committed to meeting our customers' energy needs and supporting economic growth across the regions we serve, providing safe, reliable energy today and building the resilient networks of the future. National Grid Ventures, our commercial business, develops and operates infrastructure that delivers affordable and reliable energy to consumers. National Grid Partners, our corporate investment and innovation arm, invests in and collaborates with technology companies that are transforming the energy sector and accelerating industry-wide innovation.

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