

NATIONAL ENDOWMENT for the ARTS

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Deaf Austin Theater to Receive \$10,000 Grant from the National Endowment for the Arts

Austin, Texas — Deaf Austin Theatre is pleased to announce it has been approved by the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) to receive a Challenge America award of \$10,000. This grant will support Deaf Austin Theatre mounting a production of The Laramie Project in American Sign Language (ASL) and English in Fall 2023. The grant is one of 262 Challenge America awards totaling \$2.62 million that were announced by the NEA as part of its first round of fiscal year 2023 grants.

“The National Endowment for the Arts is proud to support arts projects in communities nationwide,” said NEA Chair Maria Rosario Jackson, PhD. “Projects such as this one with Deaf Austin Theatre (DAT) strengthen arts and cultural ecosystems, provide equitable opportunities for arts participation and practice, and contribute to the health of our communities and our economy.”

Artistic Director Dr. Brian Cheslik will lead the project in collaboration with Jules Dameron of Hypernovas Productions as director. Deaf Austin Theater will produce The Laramie Project, the first professionally live staged adaptation, in American Sign Language (ASL) with both Deaf and hearing actors and a Deaf production team to be mounted at Ground Floor Theatre in Austin, Texas.

Our stage production will be live-streamed through Broadway On Demand on October 12th, 2023, in honor of the death of Matthew Shepard. We are grateful for the endorsement of our ASL adaptation by its Playwright Moises Kaufman and The Tectonic Theater Company, along with The Matthew Shepard Foundation.

Our goal is to establish dialogue and recognition of the LGBTQ & BIPOC individuals within the Deaf Community, both locally in Austin and nationally. A documentary will be shot of The Laramie Project: ASL and fundraising for the project is ongoing. Deaf Austin Theatre envisions a NYC reprise, this time on Broadway with a Deaf and hearing cast. It would be a first for The Laramie Project and for those who have been historically silenced.

For more information on how you can support the project and to get involved contact: artisticdirector@deafaustintheatre.org. Visit <https://deafaustintheatre.org>