

Theatre Communications Group, Inc.

(New York, NY)

Total Award: \$100,000 over 1 Year

Biennial Conference and National Audience Development Initiative: Planning Phase

To support the sessions on art and social justice at the TCG Biennial Conference as well as the planning phase of a National Audience Development Initiative, which is an effort to attract more diverse audiences to member theaters. In 2004, the Theatre Communications Group (TCG) used its previous grant to begin to educate conferees about issues of art and social justice and arts policy. TCG also brought together 29 theaters of color to share challenges and plan for the future. The 2005 TCG National Conference, *Creating the Future: Theatre in a Polarized World* will take place in Seattle, Washington from June 16-18. TCG acknowledges that the recent election revealed a deeply divided and polarized country which has revealed a growing intolerance for the rigorous debate of issues. In the theater in particular, a field which relies on dialogue to communicate, the situation is critical as audiences seem to have an increasing intolerance for considering viewpoints at odds with their own. As a nation, if we cannot converse across the divides that separate us, how can we hope to create a collaborative, inclusive society that fulfills the true democratic principles at the heart of the American dream. These are the issues that will dominate the TCG conference. Invited guests include theater leaders from Eastern Europe, Africa, Asia and South America. TCG will develop carefully planned breakout sessions, led by experienced practitioners. They will also provide opportunities for participants to call impromptu session on topics that may emerge. In October of 2005, TCG will launch a pilot program in Austin, Philadelphia and the San Francisco Bay Area that offers a "free night of theater" to individuals attending a particular theater for the first time. The goal is to attract an entirely new group to the theater and to encourage existing enthusiasts to be adventurous and expand the circle of theaters that they attend.

Program Contribution Breakdown:

\$100,000 Arts and Culture Program: *Objective I, Strategy 4*