



For Immediate Release

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**Tzedek Brilliance Awards Provide \$50,000 One Time Grants for Asheville's
Community Leaders**

ASHEVILLE, NC - (Sept. 20, 2021) - Tzedek Social Justice Fund is currently accepting nominations for the Tzedek Brilliance Awards. The Brilliance Awards are a one-time no-strings-attached grant of \$50,000 given to leaders who have consistently shown up to dismantle systemic oppression in the Asheville, North Carolina region.

The Tzedek Brilliance Awards honor Asheville's leaders who are engaged in impactful, intersectional efforts to further racial justice, LGBTQ equality, and/or to combat antisemitism. As opposed to the majority of Tzedek's grantmaking that funds organizational work, Brilliance Awards are designed to cultivate the well-being of individual brilliant community leaders by investing in their spaciousness, autonomy, and wisdom.

Past awardees include Sheneika Smith, black community culture-builder, and Nicole Townsend, local community activist. Nicole Townsend is a former Regional Organizer at Southerners on New Ground (SONG) where she co-led [Black Mama's Bail Out](#), as well as supported the leadership of Queer and Transgender folks in Buncombe County and across the South. Sheneika Smith is the founder of [Date My City](#), a social organization that sought to enhance the cultural identity of Black Asheville by fostering social cohesion, increasing civic participation, and centralizing Black leadership.

"[The Brilliance Awards] are a godsend that continues to manifest," Smith says. "My children are more enriched, I feel more enriched. I am no longer worried about feeding my babies."

Interested individuals are invited to nominate themselves or other leaders in the community at Tzedek's [website](#). Nominations are due October 8th. All nominees must be a full-time resident of the Asheville area (living within 30 miles of The Asheville City Building) for at least 5 years and must not hold an elected office or advanced government position. We especially encourage nominations from people of color, LGBTQ individuals, and Jewish individuals. Applicants can reach out for more support during the process by emailing brilliance@tzedeksocialjusticefund.org.

For more information on the application process and applicant criteria, visit Tzedek's website here: <https://tzedeksocialjusticefund.org/tzedek-brilliance-awards/>.
