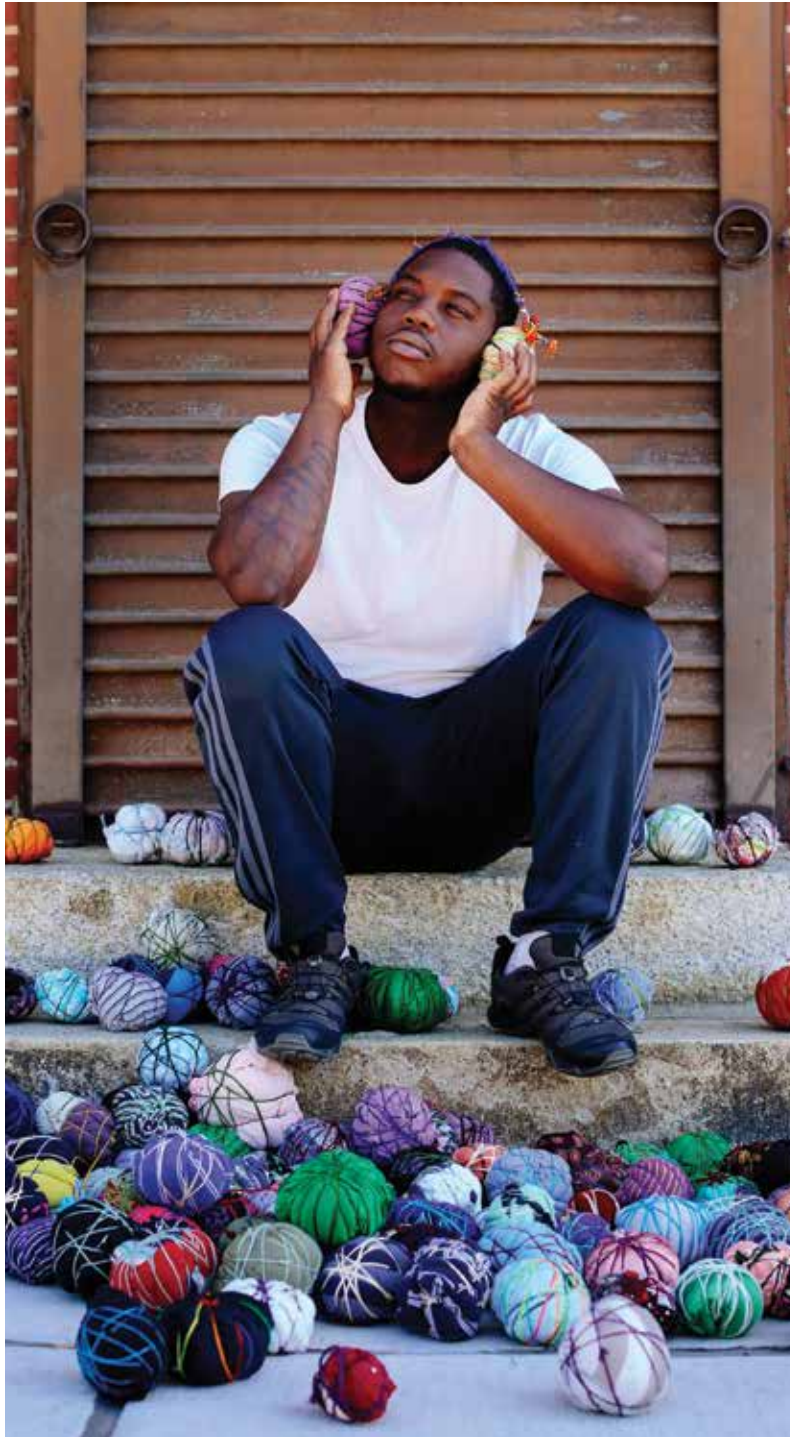


# Creating Change through Arts, Culture, and Equitable Development: A Policy and Practice Primer



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# **Creating Change through Arts, Culture, and Equitable Development:** A Policy and Practice Primer

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# Introduction

Arts and culture are essential for building community, supporting development, nurturing health and well-being, and contributing to economic opportunity. Collectively, arts and culture enable understanding of the past and envisioning of a shared, more equitable future. In disinvested communities, arts and culture act as tools for community development, shaping infrastructure, transportation, access to healthy food, and other core amenities. In communities of color and low-income communities, arts and culture contribute to strengthening cultural identity, healing trauma, and fostering shared vision for community.

## Bridging Two Movements

Across the United States, growing movements focused on equitable development and community-centered arts and culture are uniting to strengthen the equity impact of their work. The equitable development movement—which brings a racial and economic equity lens to the community development field—depends on the engagement of communities of color and low-income communities in prioritizing, designing, and implementing their aspirations for the futures of their neighborhoods, cities, and towns. The community-centered arts and culture movement—made up of social justice artists, arts and culture agencies focused on racial equity, and cultural centers that serve communities of color and low-income communities—leads in securing cultural assets, building greater social cohesion, and feeding economic vibrancy.

Over the last decade, increasing collaboration between these two movements is yielding transformative and creative change. Arts and culture are critical elements of an equity framework; they reflect the assets of communities and enable cohesion in a pluralistic nation. Without equity, community redevelopment can improve a physical place but leave the people behind, stifle broad creativity, bring economic benefit only to a few, lead to a homogeneous community, or displace many. The tools of arts and culture can accelerate equity, build communities of opportunity, and design for broadly shared prosperity.

Committing to achieving equity requires responses to three questions: who benefits, who pays, and who decides. By reflecting the needs of people and place, arts and culture offer the means for engaging diverse and pluralistic communities in exploring such questions, and working together to find answers. To determine the desired outcomes, equity is the measure for success and a guide for course correction.

- In East Harlem, New York, community activists, equity advocates, and philanthropy converted an abandoned public school into a vibrant affordable live-work space for low-income artists of color. Today the building is a cultural hub and a bulwark against displacement in a historic Puerto Rican neighborhood.
- In the Phillips neighborhood of Minneapolis, home to one of the nation's largest urban concentrations of Native Americans, local leaders, residents, and artists seized the opportunity of light rail development to create the American Indian Cultural Corridor. The strategy builds on the assets of a neighborhood that is home to Native-owned businesses, services, and galleries, to anchor a community destination, generate wealth, and celebrate Native identity.
- And in San Francisco, public utility leaders are leveraging a \$1.2 billion rebuilding of the main waste water treatment plant to renovate a cultural center, support the arts, and strengthen the economy in the surrounding neighborhood for the historic African American community struggling with poverty and the threat of gentrification.

Across the United States, these growing movements to achieve equity are focused on advancing policies that can secure these types of results. Such efforts bring together artists, leaders of cultural organizations, culture bearers, municipal planners, grassroots leaders, community developers, government officials, residents, neighborhoods, and philanthropy to shape policy that builds and sustains resilient, inclusive, and prosperous communities.

This report describes some of those policy opportunities, documents their emergence across America, and offers a framework for moving equitable development policy across multiple sectors—aided by and strengthening the use of arts and culture practice. Equitable development is the place-based manifestation of equity. The desired outcome of equitable development is the establishment of communities of opportunity that are characterized by just and fair inclusion, that build public will for equity solutions, and that expand the capacity of local leaders and residents to drive resources toward improving the quality of life in underinvested communities. The power of arts and culture to engage community leverages that outcome and is exemplified by innovative state- and local-level arts and culture agencies that offer equity considerations to partnerships integrating arts, culture, and community development.

**Equitable development is informed by culture, recognizing shared, interdependent values and practices that shape the quality of our lives. Art forms express and embody culture, and in whatever form—visual, performing, landscape—mirror, reflect, inform, explain, and provide meaning and substance to cultural practices and social movements.** In public spaces, art forms are the manifestations of the places where people live and reimagine their lives, and where they gather to advance justice for all.

Over the last two decades, both public and private sources have propelled forward an approach known as creative placemaking, that revitalizes places with cultural and artistic intent. Yet creative placemaking is not exempt from driving more inequity or fostering displacement. Arts and culture can be seen as agents of, as well as subject to, gentrification.

**When an equitable development lens is brought to creative placemaking, however, the power of arts and culture can be leveraged to further advance equity by connecting and deepening the cultural and social fabric of community life.**

*Creating Change* highlights approaches that can be brought to scale through policy change, addressing communities of color, low-income communities, and immigrant and rural White communities, drawing on their cultural roots, lifting up creative expression, and steering public resources to the transformations of their neighborhoods, cities, and regions. As policymakers invest in arts and culture that reflect and strengthen increasingly diverse communities, cultural communities can be anchored against displacement.

## **Advancing Equity in Arts, in Culture, and for the New American Majority**

The nation's evolution points to a new national majority, one increasingly made up of people of color, a change that has already occurred in the nation's most populous states and cities. Workers, leaders, entrepreneurs, artists, innovators, and culture bearers will increasingly come from communities that historically have been left behind. As the nation changes, equity is more than a moral imperative, it is an economic one as well. Prosperity depends on embracing inclusion, ensuring opportunity for all, and honoring the wisdom, voice, and experience of diverse communities. Arts and culture vividly express that wisdom and experience, and reflect the hopes and aspirations that people share.

The lush variety of artistic and cultural practices is one of the great treasures of a diverse America, and so deeply embedded in community fabric that it can be taken for granted. These traditions are reflected in food, dances, songs, murals, crafts, barber shops, cafes, bodegas, clubs, parades, festivals, and countless other ways. They are beloved fixtures on the American landscape and a source of pride and empowerment in communities of color and low-income communities. Federal, state, and local policy must intentionally lift up and support the cultural riches that join people together, nourish the spirit, enliven communities, and create a vibrant nation.

The United States has strong precedent for such policy action. In 1934, at the depth of the Great Depression, percent-for-arts programs were levied on public works and commercial development<sup>1</sup> not only to support artists, but also to enhance urban infrastructure and acknowledge the role of art in civic welfare.<sup>2</sup> The 1935 Works Progress Administration (WPA) employed 90 percent of unemployed artists to conceive public art works and document oral histories, music, and folkways. The Federal Art Project, considered one of the most successful public works projects, included the Community Art Center Program, which resulted in the construction of 100 arts centers, with an estimated eight million people participating by 1940.<sup>3</sup>

The push to build cultural centers underscored the notion that artists and artistic innovations could contribute directly to the nation's reconstruction by developing a participatory cultural practice. This shifted community culture from the periphery to the center of a New Deal America.<sup>4</sup> By supporting artists and arts and culture programs, the WPA highlighted them as essential elements of a healthy society and growing economy.

This notion was expanded with the establishment in 1965 of the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) and the National Endowment for the Humanities.<sup>5</sup> Programs aimed at supporting arts in communities of color and among poor rural Whites, and other marginalized groups—for example, NEA’s 1971 Expansion Arts Program—attempted to address funding disparities that overwhelmingly favored mainstream arts and cultural groups. Similarly, the 1973 Comprehensive Employment Training Act supported artists of color and arts organizations in communities of color that had been largely ignored by elite arts funders.<sup>6</sup> In the 1980s and 1990s, U.S. cities began to recognize the importance of incorporating the cultural sector into government programs, and began establishing municipal departments of cultural affairs.

The Obama Administration advanced the practice of connecting arts and culture to infrastructure and equitable development by offering competitive funding streams that allow for creative innovation. The Sustainable Communities Initiative, the Healthy Food Financing Initiative, Promise Neighborhoods, and the Department of Transportation’s TIGER grants for transit, award competitive points in grant applications, explicitly recognizing how arts, culture, and equity can enhance the program’s desired outcomes.

Also in recent years, several innovation-focused state and local arts and culture agencies have begun insisting on the need for equity in undertaking cross-agency partnerships that incorporate arts, culture, and community development. In Los Angeles, for example, the County Arts Commission partnered with the Department of Health Services in the development of the Martin Luther King, Jr Health Campus in South Central LA that included three permanent artworks that explore the relationship between healing, wellness, and community: an exterior sculptural tribute to the legacy of Dr. King, a series of collages that document the community history of the healing home, and the Azul Healing Garden. All are rooted in the cultural legacies of the African American community.

The creative placemaking approach, defined by one leading supporter as “projects in which art plays an intentional and integrated role in place-based community planning and development,”<sup>7</sup> has evolved in recent years to reflect a stronger commitment to equity and inclusion and a greater relevance for lower-income communities of color. In the past, plans for the reactivation of urban public spaces were sometimes viewed skeptically as vehicles for potential gentrification if not displacement. However, creative placemaking, as now supported by the federal NEA Our Town

program, the ArtPlace America funder consortium, The Kresge Foundation, and others, more frequently encourages equity-driven strategies and design processes for inclusive community building.

Efforts like these are essential, but they are only a start. More action, innovation, and investment are needed to integrate and bolster arts and culture to serve the growing pluralities, restore crumbling infrastructure, and revitalize disinvested communities.

## **Past Is Prologue: A Short Look at Connecting People, Place, and Policy**

To prepare this document, PolicyLink spent much of the last two years surveying the arts and culture, and the equitable development fields, interviewing arts, culture, and municipal leaders, visiting projects, reviewing cultural plans and cultural economy studies, all in an effort to understand the impact of arts and culture on community development efforts across the country. The work revealed some of the many programmatic initiatives underway and policies in place that offer models for moving forward arts and cultural strategies to advance equity. This report lifts up the kinds of policies that can expand arts, culture, and equitable development in places throughout the country.

The report begins with a look at the arts and culture sector and the disparities that send the lion’s share of public arts support to large institutions and projects that predominantly reflect the expression of White and Euro-American culture. It moves on to examine places and policies that are advancing more equitable arts and culture investments, and the broad benefits that accrue from those investments. It also argues for restructuring public investments in the arts and culture sector to support capital projects, operations, and programming that can become cultural and economic engines in underserved communities.

As the report details, significant policy opportunities and funding resources far beyond the arts sector can be tapped to support artists and cultural organizations as catalysts for equitable development. We delve into arts, culture, and equitable development opportunities by devoting additional chapters to the sectors of transportation, housing, infrastructure investment, economic development, health and food, youth and education, parks and recreation, and technology.



For example:

- Transportation, housing, and redevelopment agencies can commission design services and public art that enhance cultural identity in public infrastructure and spaces.
- Investments in open space and recreation can support artists in collaborating with residents, planners, and environmental stewards to create cultural plazas, parks, historical trails, or memorials.
- Investments in community health and food equity can incorporate culture bearers in the creation of farmers' markets, community farms, community clinics, and other programs that foster well-being, healing, and trauma recovery.
- Tourism and economic development resources can be targeted to create cultural districts and support robust arts and culture as hubs of local vitality and magnets for visitors.

Leveraging these opportunities and others requires policy change built on new alliances, new partnerships, and a new understanding of the intersection of culture, community, equity, and economic development in a nation undergoing historic demographic change.

## Using Policy to Support Arts, Culture, and Equitable Development

In the fields of community-centered arts and culture and equitable development, engaged artists and place-based cultural institutions are helping to define community engagement and collaboration. Public sector investments combined with arts and cultural assets can support the growth of healthy communities of color and build thriving, inclusive economies. Federal, state, and local policies to support the interconnected growth of arts, culture, and equitable development, can be advanced in six principal ways:

- 1. Map the artistic and cultural assets** of cities, towns, states, tribal communities, and the nation, with a focus on the cultural resources in communities of color and low-income communities.
- 2. Evaluate economic conditions, including current investments in public works, arts, and culture**, using data disaggregated by race, ethnicity, and neighborhood.
- 3. Identify barriers to resources for communities of color and low-income communities and restructure processes** to engender access.

**4. Work with artists, designers, young people, and culture bearers to engage the community and inform equity-driven processes** for community development.

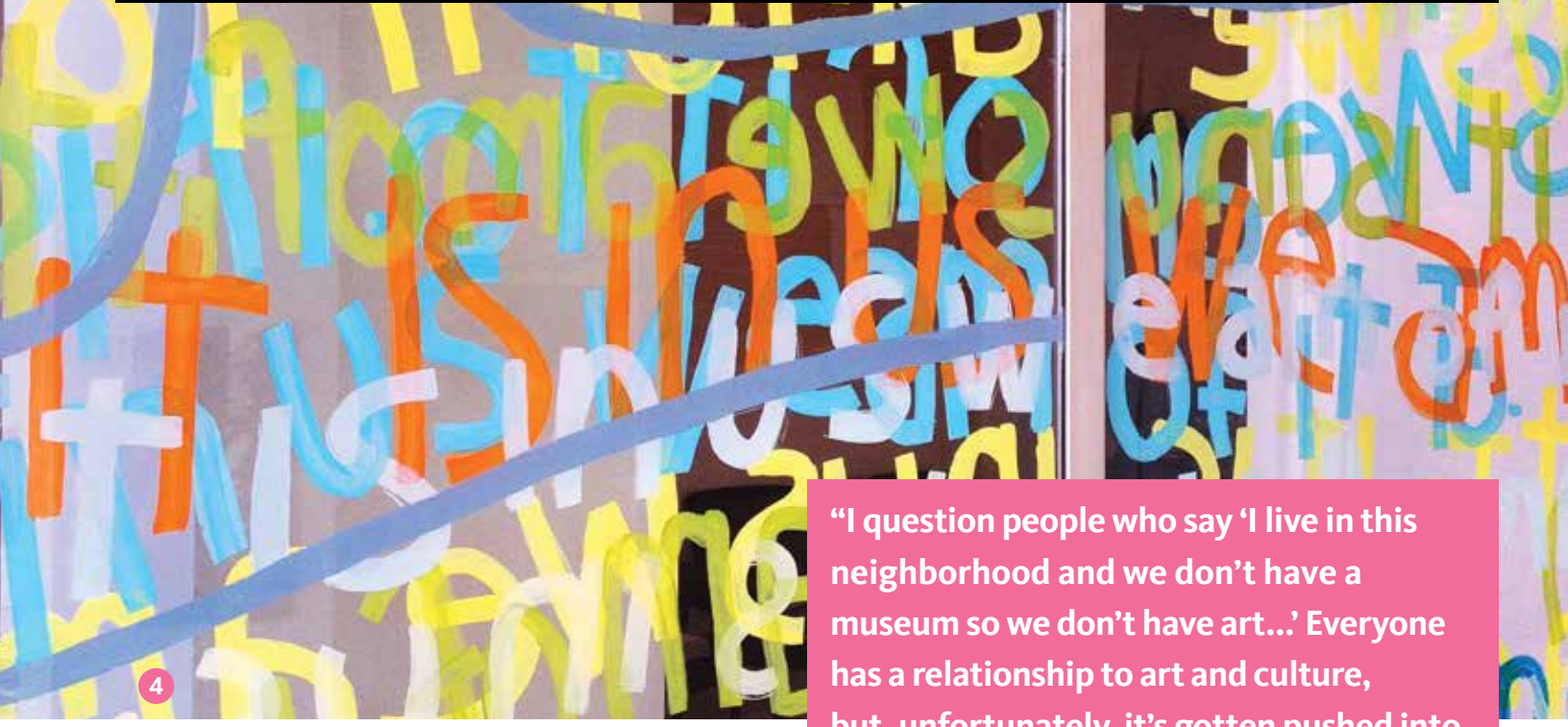
**5. Expand equity-focused arts and culture investments across public agencies**, through community-driven cultural plans, budget appropriations, and targeted allocations to disadvantaged communities, artists of color, and cultural institutions serving communities of color and low-income communities.

**6. Ensure that governance and staffing are representative** of the populations served by the agency.

The policy approaches highlighted in this report are meant to inspire further equity-focused arts and culture policy action in partnership with community agencies and organizations that can lead to tangible positive results. (See Appendix A for a snapshot of how these approaches and strategies evolved.) In its focus on the intersection of people and place, the report draws connections among artists, planners, community developers, residents, cultural agencies, and elected officials, and aspires to help them scale up equity impacts at all levels of government. We hope it stimulates communities to advance a new era of equitable public works that rebuilds our nation's infrastructure by embracing the vision and creativity of cultural communities and artists. The imperative of the work is to bring an explicit focus on the role of arts and culture in building an equitable society for all.



# Delivering Equity through Arts and Culture



4



5

**“I question people who say ‘I live in this neighborhood and we don’t have a museum so we don’t have art...’ Everyone has a relationship to art and culture, but, unfortunately, it’s gotten pushed into this institutional framework which is such a narrow framework compared to what it could be.”**

—Caron Atlas, Director, Arts & Democracy

**This spread: 1)** A community collaborative project with Lanre Tejoso, artist-in-residence, transforms discarded street materials into beautiful objects, while exploring loss and trauma in Philadelphia. (*The Village of Arts @ Humanities/ Breanne Furlong*); **2)** Faith Bartley, People’s Paper Co-op fellow, poses for figure drawing for Ladies Night—a monthly nonjudgmental, intergenerational space that brings women together in N. Philadelphia through art. (*The Village of Arts and Humanities/Mark Strandquist*); **3)** Community square dancing at Carcassonne Community Center in Blackey, KY, a partner of Applashop, as part of “Performing Our Future Institute.” (*Lafayette College/Clay Wegrzynowicz*); **4)** Art at the LUMEN8 Festival, Anacostia, Washington, DC. (*lumen8 Anacostia by hellomarkers! is licensed under CC BY 2.0*); **5)** A West African ensemble performs in Richmond, CA. (*East Bay Center for the Performing Arts/Michelle Flynn*)

# Arts and Culture: *Nourishing the Soul of Communities of Opportunity*

Public sector investments in arts and culture across the United States can play a foundational and catalytic role in delivering racial and economic equity in community development. Arts and culture strengthen the connection between neighborhood identity and development, especially when they are centerpieces of projects in other sectors, such as housing, health, and transportation. Furthermore, when public arts and culture agencies adopt equity as an imperative, their creative approaches to problem solving can bring other agencies into alignment with an equity-driven mission.

Public arts and culture investments have significant place-making, economic, and social impacts. A survey by Americans for the Arts found that the nation's arts and culture sector received about \$4 billion in public investment in 2010. The sector generated \$135.2 billion in economic activity, supported 4.13 million full-time jobs, and generated \$22.3 billion in revenue (through taxes and fees) to local, state, and federal governments that year.<sup>8</sup> A Grantmakers in the Arts analysis of 2015 public art appropriations totaling \$1.33 billion attributes about one-seventh of public arts and culture investments to the federal government, two-sevenths to state and municipal appropriations, and over half in direct expenditures on the arts by county and municipal governments.<sup>9</sup> Foundation grants invested \$2 billion in the sector in 2013.<sup>10</sup>

This chapter examines how public investments in arts and culture can leverage equitable development.

## Moving Forward Arts, Culture, and Equity in the Public Sector

Many cities, states, and tribal communities recognize arts and culture as local assets and economic drivers that can be leveraged to strengthen communities. In Washington, DC, for example, more than 75,000 jobs—10 percent of the city's employment<sup>11</sup>—are connected to the creative economy. This includes not only national monuments and museums, but also significant neighborhood cultural assets. The city is now using arts and culture investments to revitalize underserved neighborhoods; further a sense of place; enliven streets and neighborhoods; and better link public education, workforce development, and the creative sector.

The cultural economy is significant not only in cities, but also in rural and tribal communities. A study by First Peoples Fund and Artspace revealed that 40 percent of Native households on the Pine Ridge Reservation (Kyle, South Dakota) depend on home-based arts enterprises. The findings led the two organizations and the community development financial institution, Lakota Fund, to collaboratively develop anchor arts space, artist housing, artist training, and credit access to strengthen economic and cultural outcomes.<sup>12</sup>

While arts, culture, and equitable development initiatives like this are growing, our research and extensive interviews with leaders in the field suggest that the arts and culture sector continues to lag behind on equity. A 2015 study by the DeVos Institute of Arts Management documented a limited focus by public arts and culture agencies on the equity roles their resources can play, although, historically, periods of social activism and civil rights movements have focused attention on equity. Arts organizations serving communities of color are, in general, much less financially secure and far smaller than their counterparts in White communities. The median budgets of the 20 largest arts organizations serving communities of color in a given discipline, such as dance, theater, or music, were more than 90 percent smaller than the budgets of the largest organizations in that discipline.<sup>13</sup> While there is no comprehensive review of how well public sector arts and culture investments align with the demographics of communities and cities across the country, no leaders we interviewed identified strong alignment between demographic share of the population and share of arts and culture investments.

A recent study found New York City's arts and culture sector to have more workforce and leadership diversity than the sector nationally, but it was still not as diverse as the population of the city.<sup>14</sup> People of color represent 67 percent of New York City's population, but only 38 percent of the staff and board members of cultural organizations. The findings are leading the city to equity-focused action to recruit more representative staff and board members. Nationally, 72 percent of museum staff, 78 percent of arts managers, and 91 percent of board members are White.<sup>15</sup>

Like New York, many cities and communities are beginning to address racial disparities in arts and culture funding and access. This work is driving changes in policy and funding, both by government agencies and philanthropy. These changes can accelerate greater equity in arts and culture investments and equitable development outcomes in communities. Grantmakers in the Arts has played a leadership role by adopting a philanthropy purpose statement that includes racial equity in arts<sup>16</sup> and a set of processes to structurally address philanthropic disparities in arts investment. A partnership of the First Peoples Fund, the National Association of Latino Arts and Cultures, Alternate Roots, and the PA'I Foundation have formed an Intercultural Leadership Institute to advance equity practice and policy within arts and culture.

The opportunities for policies in the arts and culture sector to deliver on equitable development include the following.

- Investing in artists of color and cultural organizations serving communities of color, and realigning public arts and culture investments for racial equity
- Creating strong alignment between investments by public arts and culture agencies and demographic shares of populations
- Creating collaborations between arts and culture agencies/commissions and other key sectors (e.g., infrastructure, transportation, housing, public health, public safety, economic development, tourism) to co-design, invest, and deliver on equitable development

# Policy Chart: Arts and Culture

## Equity Goal:

Ensure the arts and culture sector serves current and future communities of color and low-income communities across sectors

## Equity Policy

## Arts and Culture Strategies

**Incorporate arts, culture, and equity into foundational planning documents**

- Develop an arts, culture, and equity chapter in long-term general plans or comprehensive plans of municipalities.
- Develop a cultural equity plan that maps assets, assesses access to arts and culture resources, and lays out cultural investment and cultural preservation strategies.
- Develop a cultural economy plan to invest in and strengthen the cultural vibrancy of the local economy.

**Direct arts and culture funding and programming to communities of color and low-income communities**

- Conduct an equity assessment of arts and culture funding allocation and barriers to underserved communities.
- Address barriers in grant application processes to enable arts and culture organizations who serve underserved communities to successfully compete for funds.
- Include board and staff diversity in grant scoring criteria.
- Include artists of color and cultural representatives on boards, commissions, and other infrastructure/development agencies to reflect demographics and interests of their communities, and to inform projects in their communities.
- Create targeted procurement and commission policies that support purchases from artists and cultural groups of color.

**Create citywide and statewide efforts to address racial equity in the public, nonprofit, and private sectors**

- Designate an Office of Arts and Culture to facilitate/train across agencies for racial equity and to lead equitable public engagement processes across departments.
- Incorporate cultural impact assessments into public sector review processes (e.g., California Environmental Quality Act, National Environmental Policy Act, redevelopment plans, and fair housing assessments).
- Develop learning cohorts of public sector staff and community leaders led by an Office of Arts and Culture to train and support ways to address racial equity barriers across sectors.

**Build the capacity of disadvantaged communities to influence decisions of local development processes**

- Use arts and culture as an organizing mechanism to deliver development that reflects priorities of low-income communities and communities of color.
- Incorporate arts and culture into community development design processes and have artists of color and cultural organizations leading community design processes.
- Create strategic partnerships among artists, activists, businesses, and policymakers to discuss and activate arts and culture roles in strengthening communities.

## Promising Practices: Arts and Culture

### Empowering Communities and Restoring Justice through Arts and Culture

#### **Metro Arts: Metropolitan Nashville, Tennessee**

*What they do: Restructure funding processes to increase access to underserved communities and integrate arts into other sectors*

Nashville is projected to have a majority of people of color by 2020, and the Metropolitan Nashville Arts Commission (Metro Arts) is responding to this shift with commitments to equity, projects that honor cultural identity, and innovative inclusive approaches to funding. Driven by a vision of every Nashville resident participating in a creative life through art, the commission sees its job as fostering understanding, forging genuine relationships among all communities, and heightening awareness of institutional practices that promote or inhibit cultural inclusion and access.

The recently renovated William Edmondson Park, reopened in 2014 as Nashville's first "Art Park," is emblematic of the commission's embrace of equity. The park is named in honor of a Nashville native and self-taught artist—the first African American artist to have a solo exhibition at the New York Museum of Modern Art. The project accomplished multiple equity goals. According to Jennifer Cole, executive director of Metro Arts, "To honor Edmondson's legacy, Metro Arts commissioned new public art installations by self-taught artists Thornton Dial and Lonnie Holley whose sculptures, 'Road to the Mountaintop' and 'Supported by the Ancestors,' were the first public art commission for each of these artists. The park also serves as a 'front yard' for the John Henry Hale apartments public housing next door (whose residents contributed to the design), and for the ongoing arts and culture programming that Metro Arts funds in the Youth Opportunity Center."

Metro Arts is also addressing racial disparities in arts funding. Recognizing that grants did not reach communities that lacked experience, awareness, and language capabilities to compete for funding, the commission developed the Thrive program. It awards contracts of up to \$4,000 directly to artists and neighborhood culture activators, without the formal, often cumbersome reviews of the standard grant process. Contract decisions are made monthly, and while limited to one contract a year, applicants can apply in as many years as they wish. There is a simple two-page application, and the

agency provides online tutorials, coaching sessions, language support, and neighborhood "shop talks" at community centers and other gathering spots that seek to meet residents where they are to cultivate their participation.

The Thrive process has become a form of professional development, with help provided to applicants to refine their applications until they are selected. The pilot has supported over 200 artists, with 67 percent of them artists of color. Most contracts supported arts and culture in neighborhoods where Metro Arts had not previously made grants. Begun as a \$40,000 pilot, Thrive has proven to be so successful that the city council increased funding to \$100,000 for 2016.

As a leader on equity, Metro Arts is driving innovation well beyond the traditional arts and culture sector. Metro Arts is a leader in the citywide conversation on affordable housing and production space and on restorative justice.

- In partnership with the Housing Fund, a local community development financial institution, Metro Arts launched "Make a Mark," a loan program that helps artists buy or rehabilitate studios in low- and moderate-income neighborhoods. Through property ownership, the program aims to stabilize neighborhoods and ensure creative activity in the community.
- Working with nonprofit housing developers, Metro Arts is exploring models for artist housing and "open space" in new affordable developments.
- Metro Arts initiated a long-range partnership with the Juvenile Court to determine how arts and artists can be integrated into diversion programs, restorative justice, and employment for juvenile offenders. Metro Arts is working with the court, the Nashville Career Advancement Center, and the Oasis Center (a community youth-empowerment organization) on a multiyear pilot on arts "referrals," group artist residencies as alternative sentencing, and an arts employment apprenticeship model for older youth.

Metro Arts believes community empowerment and vibrancy are outgrowths of bringing equity and beauty to all communities. Its work is not just about arts, but about access, agency, and empowerment through creativity.

## Policy Spotlight

### Racial Equity at the Forefront

#### Seattle Office of Arts & Culture: Seattle, Washington

*What they do:* Lead equity training across the city, and address underserved communities' barriers to arts and culture grants

#### Arts and Culture Strategies, Tools, and Tactics:

- Evaluate the city's arts and culture grants process with an equity lens.
- Address barriers to arts and culture organizations that work in underserved communities.
- Create a cross-agency collaborative approach to equity from the Office of Arts & Culture.

**Who:** Seattle Office of Arts & Culture (ARTS), Seattle Office for Civil Rights (SOCR)

**Challenge/Opportunity:** Since the City of Seattle adopted its groundbreaking Race and Social Justice Initiative in 2005, officials have steadily advanced structural equity practices within city agencies, through service delivery, and with budget and development decisions.

#### Process:

*Short-Term Planning:* The Seattle Office for Civil Rights has played a key role in training other city agencies to implement racial equity, and the Seattle ARTS has as well in moving Seattle's citywide arts and culture sector toward greater racial equity and inclusion.<sup>17</sup> The agencies continually assess the racial impacts of their policies and practices and adapt them to improve results. First, ARTS examined its grants allocations and discovered that many small organizations serving underrepresented populations never applied for funding or had been rejected and were discouraged from applying again. With input from these organizations and artists, ARTS piloted a funding program to address barriers and assign project managers to help people through the grant process. This diversified the grantees and built deeper connections with diverse cultural communities who now have greater representation on the allocations committee.

The ARTS grant process now prioritizes resources to underrepresented communities and incentivizes mainstream organizations to adopt more inclusive practices. Under new grant criteria, for example, ARTS awards competitive points to organizations that work with underserved populations and reflect diverse staff and board demographics. Artists of color or arts organizations serving communities of color received 31 percent of the funds in the 2016 round of \$2.8 million in grants.

*Long-Term Planning:* As a municipal leader on racial equity, ARTS partnered with the Seattle Office for Civil Rights to develop tools and trainings to bring a racial equity lens to all city departments. ARTS also works with other city agencies to advance equity in their domains. Several city departments fund ARTS to help carry out mandates in ways that fulfill the promise of racial equity. Kathy Hsieh, ARTS' cultural partnerships and grants manager, said "Whether it's through Human Services, Office of Economic Development, or Parks, agencies found it beneficial to use the arts to address their focus area." For example, ARTS helped interdepartmental teams develop Inclusive Outreach and Public Engagement Toolkits.

In addition, ARTS is a partner in the outward-facing Community Institute for Racial Equity—a series of workshops and trainings to strengthen community leadership and action for racial justice. In 2015, ARTS launched three racial equity learning cohorts to turn commitment into action. The training series invites staff and board members from local arts and cultural institutions to collectively address barriers to racial equity in their organizations and within the arts and cultural sector. Each of the 30 participating organizations developed and are implementing plans to address racial equity internally and through arts and culture programming.

ARTS has been a key thought partner for SOCR as they build the public will for racial equity. "A goal for SOCR is to change things at the structural level," said Diana Falchuk, deputy manager of the City of Seattle Race and Social Justice Initiative, who, as of 2015, is splitting her time with ARTS. "So we're posing questions together. What role does the arts and culture community have in helping undo the school-to-prison pipeline? Or in creating equitable development? What would it mean for arts organizations to partner with organizers and other institutions working on structural policy change?"



### Equitable Results:

- Underserved arts and culture organizations have overcome barriers to obtaining grant funding and now receive 43 percent of annual allocations.
- City agencies examine and accelerate equitable practices, budgets have been reallocated, over half of the board members are now artists of color, and staffing exists for racial equity positions.
- Community organizations and institutions build capacity for equity through racial equity training and structural changes.

### Lessons for Policy Change:

- Adopt racial equity purpose statements for arts and culture agencies.
- Partner with community cultural leaders to co-design and lead community engagement practices.
- Structure equitable grantmaking and cross-agency and community-facing equity initiatives.

### Tools/Resources:

Seattle Office of Arts & Culture, programs focused on racial equity: <http://www.seattle.gov/arts/racial-equity>

## Advancing Equity through Cultural Hubs

### Arts & Democracy: New York, New York

*What they do: Employ arts and culture to promote participatory democracy and achieve social justice through the use of digital and print media, cultural organizing workshops, courses in urban planning, and special events*

Arts & Democracy advances the integral role of arts and culture in supporting social justice. “We engage underrepresented communities in decision making through the sustainable, transformative power of arts and culture,” explained Director Caron Atlas. Arts & Democracy focuses on advancing equity policies and puts arts and culture on political agendas where it has not been before. They co-founded Naturally Occurring Cultural Districts NY (NOCD-NY), a citywide alliance of cultural networks and leaders that uses creative strategies to revitalize New York City neighborhoods. Arts & Democracy advocates for, and has won, new investment in community cultural organizations serving as critical neighborhood hubs. As Atlas explains in an article, “These cultural hubs are not just art places, but where young people develop leadership and retain a sense of place and history.”<sup>18</sup>

NOCD-NY lifts up diverse communities’ cultural expressions and informal arts infrastructure as positive forces for equity. It fosters dialogues, such as “Culture is Not a Crime,” to recognize art forms like graffiti and subway dancers as cultural resources, not as criminal behavior. NOCD-NY and Arts & Democracy have recommended policies to reduce burdensome regulations on cultural expression, increase access to public space, integrate arts and culture in the work of other city agencies, and further cultural equity.

Organizers, policymakers, artists, and media makers came together in Brooklyn to learn how to use cultural organizing for community change. ([Artsanddemocracy.org/Arts @ Democracy](http://Artsanddemocracy.org/Arts @ Democracy))



The image shows the interior ceiling of a bus, which is covered in a collage of various black and white photographs. The photos depict diverse groups of people, including a man in a suit, a woman in a white dress, a group of people sitting at a table, and a person in a shiny jacket. A large green circle with a white border is centered on the ceiling, containing a quote in white text. The bus's metal handrails are visible in the foreground, and the overall scene is captured from a low angle looking up.

*“When you have an open mind and can listen to other people, then you can start accepting the diversity around you.”*

**“I think when you set the table to talk about culture, you’re setting a different table than when you’re talking about planning.”**

—Lynne McCormack, former Director, City of Providence  
Department of Arts, Culture, and Tourism

**Above:** Interior ceiling of a bus from the Rhode Island Public Transit Authority youth-led “The Moving Bus” project. (Scott Lapham Projects/Scott Lapham)

# Transportation: *Connecting Arts, Culture, and Vibrant Economies*

Transportation is a critical link to opportunity, connecting people to jobs, schools, affordable housing, health care, grocery stores, and more. For many Americans, mobility can make all the difference in their ability to meet basic needs, participate fully in community life, and contribute to the economy. A 2014 study by The Brookings Institution found that nearly one in six households of color live without a car and are dependent on public transit.<sup>19</sup> According to the U.S. Bureau of Transportation Statistics, about 560,000 people with disabilities never leave home because of transportation difficulties.<sup>20</sup> Equitable transportation systems do more than move people to where they need to go; equitable transportation investments also spur economic growth and improve a community's built environment—the sidewalks, bike paths, safe transit hubs, plazas, bus shelters, and other essential infrastructure that make a place livable and sustainable.

Arts, culture, and transportation are not usually talked about in the same breath, but together they offer tremendous opportunity. Using an arts and culture lens to shape transportation investments can bring communities together around an asset frame—proud, empowering traditions—and result in transportation systems that work better for the people who need them most. Furthermore, the transportation sector brings significant resources that can yield lasting arts and cultural assets for communities.

Transportation equity champions have discovered that engaging artists and cultural organizations strengthens organizing and advocacy efforts and results in better transportation and community design. Artists and cultural organizations can:

- engage communities in setting transportation priorities for transit-dependent populations;
- drive creative transportation designs that reflect community values and leadership;
- use infrastructure investment for cultural benefits, such as culturally representative transit plazas, and walking or biking paths that safely connect key community amenities;
- mitigate the impacts of transportation infrastructure construction on businesses and imbue transit hubs and districts with cultural identities; and

- organize communities to prevent the displacement often generated by transportation investments.

Artists and cultural organizations are stepping up to improve life and opportunity in their communities by:

- winning affordable transportation improvements for transit-dependent people;
- gaining fair access to quality jobs, workforce development, and contracting opportunities in the transportation industry; and
- delivering healthy, safe, and inclusive communities and cultural districts through equitable transportation investments.

In November 2015, Congress approved HR 22 (the FAST Act), which authorized \$558 billion in transportation investment between 2016 and 2020.<sup>21</sup> For 2017, the proposed \$10.5 billion investment in transit funds programs like the New Starts capital grant program that prioritizes the needs of transit-dependent populations and low-income households, the TIGER multimodal improvements that improve travel times, and the direct grants to reduce greenhouse gas emissions through transit-oriented development.<sup>22</sup>

All of these investments can leverage equitable development that supports diverse cultural communities. Artists and cultural organizations can bring their unique talents, voices, and perspectives to make it happen.

The channels for shaping equitable transportation policy include the U.S. Department of Transportation; state departments of transportation; metropolitan planning organizations that determine regional transportation plans, policies, and resource allocations; regional transit authorities that generally operate bus systems or commuter rail systems; and local transportation agencies that generally oversee paving and active transportation (bicycle and sidewalk) projects and disability paratransit services. All of these levels of transportation investment set aside 1 or 2 percent for public art, and all can benefit from creative planning processes that engage the community.

# Policy Chart: Transportation

## Equity Goal:

Ensure that equitable transportation investments are made in communities of color, that development impacts are mitigated, and that transportation improvements benefit underserved communities

## Equity Policy

**Leverage transportation planning, capital, and operating resources to support cultural corridors, hubs, and commercial districts serving low-income communities, people with disabilities, and communities of color**

## Arts and Culture Strategies

- Anchor and elevate key arts and cultural assets in transportation planning.
- Use transportation investment to create new or connect to existing cultural amenities in underresourced communities.
- Conduct cultural asset mapping.
- Create a cultural plan that guides transit planning and investment.
- Design bus stops, transit plazas, and pocket parks to reflect and serve cultural communities.
- Appoint artists and cultural institutions representing communities of color to governance bodies of planning agencies/activities.

**Mitigate impacts of transportation construction, and ready small businesses of color to grow with new transit amenities**

- Commission local artists and cultural organizations to work with businesses of color in engagement/mitigation processes.
- Mitigate construction impacts through arts and cultural events (e.g., musical performances, community murals, street theater, etc.).
- Enliven transit corridors with defined cultural expression and identities.

**Mandate meaningful engagement of underserved communities for all project phases**

- Target engagement and marketing funds to local artists and cultural organizations with demonstrated records in serving diverse language, cultural, and disability communities (instead of public relations firms).
- Partner a transportation agency with an arts and culture agency to lead infrastructure design (e.g., station areas, stops, corridors, etc.).
- Establish workforce internships for area youth.
- Use major public works projects to implement the cultural plan.
- Commission artists of color and artists with disabilities for transit plazas, public art, and station/stop designs.

Carlos De La Rosa, Norlan Olivo, and Miguel Rosario pose with former Mayor Angel Taveras in “The Moving Bus” youth-led project in Providence, RI. (*Scott Lapham Projects/ Scott Lapham*)



## Promising Practices: Transportation

### Creating an American Indian Cultural Corridor

#### **Native American Community Development Initiative: Minneapolis, Minnesota**

*What they do: Use transportation investment to connect to existing cultural amenities and anchor cultural corridors or districts*

The American Indian Cultural Corridor is the only formal community-designed urban American Indian corridor in the United States. It runs along Franklin Avenue in Minneapolis' Phillips neighborhood, birthplace of the American Indian Movement in 1968<sup>23</sup> and home to one of the nation's largest urban concentrations of Native Americans.

The development of the Blue Line, part of the evolving light rail system in the Twin Cities region, created an unprecedented opportunity to focus investment and visibility on this historic community. The Native American Community Development Initiative (NACDI) seized the moment. It conceived the cultural corridor to lift up Franklin Avenue as a community destination and a source of pride. NACDI saw this framing as a way to capitalize on the assets of the corridor and build wealth while celebrating Native identity.

The creation of the cultural corridor proceeded with the redevelopment of a light rail stop along Franklin Avenue, a half mile from the corridor's heart. By planning the redevelopment of the stop with NACDI and other local Native arts organizations as partners, the community prioritized making the walk between the stop and the corridor a more pedestrian-friendly zone. Their efforts linked transit-oriented arts programming and sidewalks with interpretive markers, and boosted foot traffic from the light rail stop to the vibrant arts community, now a corridor of Native-serving shops, galleries, social services, and gathering spaces. All My Relations gallery, the first fine arts gallery in the Twin Cities featuring Native artists, serves as a cultural event hub and anchor for the district.

## Policy Spotlight

### Full Participation in Artistic, Cultural, and Economic Life

#### **Rhode Island Public Transit Authority and City of Providence Department of Arts, Culture, and Tourism: Providence, Rhode Island**

*What they do: Establish partnerships to address transportation and cultural needs and build a community where everyone can participate in the city's artistic, cultural, and economic life*

#### **Arts and Culture Strategies, Tools, and Tactics:**

- Establish partnerships among the Transit Authority; Department of Arts, Culture, and Tourism; and Department of Planning and Development for transportation corridor planning and engagement processes.
- Create an inclusive cultural plan using cultural asset mapping.
- Award grants strategically to equity-oriented arts and culture organizations to engage the community.
- Build youth workforce development internships in arts, culture, and infrastructure.

**Who:** Led by the City of Providence Department of Arts, Culture, and Tourism (AC+T), City of Providence Department of Planning and Development (DPD), and Rhode Island Public Transit Authority (RIPTA)

**Challenge/Opportunity:** Once nicknamed the “Beehive of Industry,” Providence began rebranding itself as the “Creative Capital” under Mayor David Cicilline in 2009 to emphasize its educational and arts communities.<sup>24</sup> The new identity recognized a profound shift in the city's economy and demographics. Non-Hispanic Whites, historically predominant, now make up 36.5 percent of the population.<sup>25</sup> Latinos represent 40 percent of the population and the majority of public school students.<sup>26</sup> Blacks represent 16 percent of the population, and 6.5 percent are Asians.<sup>27</sup> Growing diversity added to the cultural vibrancy of the city. But for the 29 percent of residents living below the poverty line—most of them people of color—limited resources and transportation blocked full participation in the artistic, cultural, and economic life of the city. New equity strategies were needed to turn this around.

Among these challenges, a new opportunity to tackle these equity issues arose. Under the leadership of then-director

Lynne McCormack, the city's AC+T became a strategic partner in the 2010 Federal Sustainable Communities Grant, to utilize arts and cultural methods to plan for five rapid-bus corridors with the transportation, planning, and economic development agencies of the cities.

**Process:**

*Long-Term Planning:* In 2009, DPD was updating the city's comprehensive and zoning plans. Although DPD had held 17 community meetings to cover every neighborhood of the city, they were still not reaching low-income communities and communities of color. DPD then engaged AC+T to design a more targeted approach. Together they decided to do a full cultural plan that mapped cultural assets. The process resulted in the successful engagement of many more low-income residents and residents of color contributing to their long-term neighborhood visions.

*Short-Term Planning:* In 2010, the federal Sustainable Communities grant funded RIPTA and DPD to increase the effectiveness of transit services, land use, and arts and cultural activities along the five highest-ridership bus routes. The extensive asset mapping of the cultural plan allowed AC+T to inform the transit plan and award grants to equity-oriented arts and culture organizations. The city used its Workforce Investment Act resources to give internships to young people to document community assets through photography, learn welding skills, and work in public relations firms. Youth participants in AS220—a nonprofit community arts center—conducted the asset mapping along the corridor, taking photographs of amenities and challenges in their communities. Their work was used to strengthen assets and mitigate harms along the route and to reflect the themes of their community at 17 bus stops.

*Implementation:* Through a National Endowment for the Arts Our Town grant, the AT+C helped re-envision Kennedy Plaza, a major bus hub that was prone to crime. In partnership with a public relations and marketing company, the youth asset mappers created a “moving gallery” inside and wrapped images around the bus to engage bus riders on the design of the transit hub. This powerful installation spurred dialogue between urban and suburban bus riders and, through interactive surveys and social media, it ultimately shaped the design and functions of the corridors and their stops.

**Equitable Results:**

AC+T effectively used arts and culture to revitalize neighborhoods.

- Low-income communities and communities of color influence corridor plans and improve transit service.
- Low-income youth and youth of color receive paid internships and gain documentary, marketing, and welding skills.
- Small businesses of color leverage city transportation infrastructure for economic development.
- Cultural and artistic practice bridges gaps and fosters new dialogue between communities.
- Zoning changes deliver more inclusive cultural uses in neighborhoods.

**Lessons for Policy Change:**

- Partnerships across agencies can leverage increased funding opportunities (e.g., workforce, transit, and cultural economy).
- Strategic investments in equity-focused arts and culture organizations strengthen workforce and small business engagement in development projects.

**Tools/Resources:**

- Providence Cultural Plan: [http://www.providenceri.com/sites/default/files/file/Arts\\_Culture\\_Tourism/e\\_Reports\\_Publications/City%20of%20Providence%20Cultural%20Plan.pdf](http://www.providenceri.com/sites/default/files/file/Arts_Culture_Tourism/e_Reports_Publications/City%20of%20Providence%20Cultural%20Plan.pdf)
- Transportation Corridors to Livable Communities: Enhancing Transit, Land Use, and Art and Cultural Opportunities along Providence's Highest Use Bus Corridors: <http://www.providenceri.com/efile/5795>

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## Strengthening Cultural Identity and Quality of Life

### Chinatown Community Development Center: San Francisco, California

*What they do: Use transportation investment to create cultural amenities in a community of color*

The Chinatown Community Development Center (CCDC) confronts the challenges of urban land pressures facing many ethnic and immigrant communities in job-growth regions by organizing cultural organizations for community power and advocating for culture to be at the center of major redevelopment. In collaboration with the Community Tenants Union of Chinatown and the Chinese Culture Foundation, the Center is on the front line of the fight against displacement as housing prices skyrocket and the gap between rich and poor widens in San Francisco. The groups are working to stabilize the neighborhood and improve the quality of life for residents through two major cultural arts projects that engage the Chinatown community. One is a new subway transit plaza in the dense urban community with very limited public space. The other is the nearby redesign of an aging Portsmouth Square, the primary gathering space of Chinatown residents.

CCDC is leveraging these major incoming investments to centralize culture in redevelopment. As a result of much advocacy, Chinatown is being connected to downtown through a new central subway line. An underground transit station will deliver a new street-level transit plaza at the heart of the district. Arts and cultural activities have been generated in plans for this precious open space and for the redesign of Portsmouth Square. The arts and culture components of the redevelopment projects include investments by Caltrans (the state transportation agency), the San Francisco Arts Commission, California Housing and Community Development, and the City of San Francisco. The Chinatown community has made informed decisions regarding redevelopment plans that strengthen core cultural identity and quality of life—creating tai chi and mahjong space, elders/gathering benches, art installations by local and Asian artists, and mosaics that document community history.

Seniors and youth gather for “Chinatown Pretty”—an exhibit highlighting the fashion styles of local seniors while promoting the neighborhood stores. (*Chinatown Community Development Center/Ben Kwan*)



# Housing:

## *Anchoring Cultural Communities*

Where we live directly impacts our health and our ability to achieve our full potential. High-quality affordable housing in neighborhoods that provide access to good schools, good jobs, reliable transportation, and a robust cultural community are critical for the success and well-being of children and families. Integrating smart housing, transportation, education, and arts and culture policies creates stronger, resilient, inclusive, prosperous communities.

Arts and culture can play important roles in housing development, neighborhood stabilization, and anti-displacement strategies. Artists can engage specific cultural communities to meet the challenges of neighborhood change by crafting and owning a vision of an inclusive community future—one in which residents can stay and thrive in place. New affordable housing developments can reflect cultural aesthetics in design, and offer live-work space for artists and culture bearers as well as space for arts programming.

Among the key resources at the intersection of housing and arts and culture are programs such as the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Community Block Grant program, and the Low Income Housing Tax Credit investments.<sup>28</sup> These can be invested to anchor cultural communities and invest in artist housing and live-work space. Local equity leaders can apply these resources, along with other HUD program investments, including public housing capital improvement, Choice Neighborhoods, the HOME program, and other funds to engage communities in planning and to address the priorities that emerge to ensure culturally relevant outcomes.

HUD's Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing rule,<sup>29</sup> which requires a data-driven opportunity assessment every five years that is attached to receiving federal resources, gives advocates a potent mechanism to improve opportunity and support cultural vitality in disadvantaged communities. It establishes a process for goal setting to address disparities, and resource allocation to follow goals through the HUD Consolidated Planning process—a key process for embedding equitable development uses of these resources. Communities can set goals that define cultural zones or design processes for artist housing development, for cultural space, for use of Community Development funds for design processes, for new infrastructure investment, and for transit-oriented development.

Federal housing and historic preservation resources can support cultural anchor institutions to provide affordable residential units and performing arts space, anchoring the critical role of arts and culture in lower-income communities and communities of color. These resources can be prioritized through the annual development of local consolidated plans and states' qualified allocation plans, which provide priority scoring or set asides for these equitable arts and cultural uses.



## Policy Chart: Housing

### Equity Goal:

Prevent displacement, secure housing choice, and provide support within development for low-income communities and communities of color

### Equity Policy

### Arts and Culture Strategies

#### Prevent displacement of artists and communities of color

- Include affordable artist housing and workspaces for artists of color, culture bearers, and tenured community artists in strategies to expand affordable housing supply.

#### Create and retain affordable housing for low-income communities and communities of color

- Establish provisions for historic residents of color and low-income residents to be prioritized in affordable housing and workspaces.
- Include affordable artist housing, work, retail, and performance space in transit-oriented development and downtown and urban village plans.
- Use artists to help win political support for renter protection laws.
- Target low-income housing and historic tax credits, rental subsidies, etc., to create affordable spaces for artists of color and cultural organizations serving underserved communities.

#### Ensure housing developments reflect and support low-income communities and communities of color

- Include arts and culture providers who are representative of the local community when planning for on-site services and retail in mixed-use developments.
- Use arts and culture to express equity values represented by housing development through visible design features that reflect community culture.
- Create artist-in-residence and cultural programming in affordable housing developments.

## Promising Practices: Housing

### Collaborating with Artists to Make Housing Developments More Vibrant and Engaging

#### Community Engagement and Grand Central Arts Center: Santa Ana, California

*What they do: Partner artists-in-residence with a community for social and economic development in affordable housing*

In Santa Ana, California, two innovative organizations demonstrate the power of artist-in-residence programs in community housing developments. In exchange for a rent-free apartment and a \$10,000 stipend for one year, resident artists initiate projects with residents, such as building community gardens, providing after-school tutoring and youth enrichment, and developing community-driven art projects.

Home to many low-income people of color and seniors, the properties become more vibrant, engaging places. Also, the diverse participating artists and culture bearers benefit from affordable housing and facilities and access to funding and partnerships.

The programs are operated by the nonprofit Community Engagement and Grand Central Arts Center, a program of California State University at Fullerton, in collaboration with the City of Santa Ana. Community Engagement sees the residence programs “as catalysts in bringing about positive change....in collaboration with the individuals, families and seniors who live there.”<sup>30</sup>

## Policy Spotlight

### An Abandoned School Becomes a Cultural Hub

#### Artspace and El Barrio's Operation Fightback Inc.: East Harlem, New York

*What they do: Cultivate partnerships to address the challenges facing the arts and creative industries and struggling, underserved communities in New York City*

#### **Arts and Culture Strategies, Tools, and Tactics:**

Target low-income housing/historic tax credits, rental subsidies, etc., to create affordable spaces for artists of color and cultural organizations serving underserved communities.

**Who:** El Barrio Artspace LP: Partnership between Artspace and El Barrio's Operation Fightback Inc.

**Challenge/Opportunity:** Artspace is a national leader in arts and culture development with a mission to create, foster, and preserve affordable space for artists and arts organizations. Today, they run a network of 40 affordable art facilities in 17 states. Wendy Holmes, senior vice president of Artspace, listed their project parameters: "We work only at the invitation of communities thinking about revitalization, historic preservation, and the creative community." Artspace's intentional partnerships ensure that their projects are catalytic, non-invasive, diverse, and sustainable in the long term.

Artspace PS109 grand opening, in East Harlem, September 26, 2015. (Artspace/Carlos David)



At the invitation of the Warhol Foundation in 2004, Artspace began exploring ways to apply its expertise to the space challenges facing the arts and creative industries in New York City.<sup>31</sup> That led to a partnership with El Barrio's Operation Fightback Inc., which had worked since 1986 to address housing, economic development, and social service struggles in East Harlem, a historic Puerto Rican area. Together the groups rescued PS109, an abandoned public school in East Harlem marked for demolition, and transformed it into a local gem. Today it is a vibrant, affordable, sustainable space for cultural organizations and artists.

#### **Process:**

Artspace has a history of masterfully putting together funding mixes relevant to the state where they are partnering. They raise 10–15 percent from philanthropy, 5–10 percent from private financing, and 75–80 percent from public sources that include:

- the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit;
- locally controlled federal funds (e.g., HOME program and Community Development Block Grant funds allocated annually);
- tax increment financing, sometimes set up by project or by district;
- Federal Home Loan Bank (private source); and
- state housing trust funds or bond finance.

Philanthropic support tends to come in the form of a relatively few major grants from both local and national funders, although in some cases a more typical, wide-ranging public campaign is required. Artspace looks for as many sources of capital as possible so projects are self-sustaining. The group also advocates for policies that open up funding streams for artists. In 2008, for example, Artspace participated in a national coalition led by the Local Initiatives Support Corporation that successfully changed language in the Housing Tax bill, Section 42 Low Income Housing Tax Credits, to allow it to serve artists.

The change permitted the use of the credits to renovate PS109 for permanently affordable live-work spaces for artists and their families, and for space for nonprofit arts and culture organizations including Hi-ARTS (formally known as the Hip-Hop Theater Festival) and El Taller Latino Americano (The Latin American Workshop).<sup>32</sup> Furthermore, this change has opened the affordable artist housing field to many new partners, including both for-profit and nonprofit developers, who had previously been hesitant to engage because of the legal ambiguity.

Demand for these spaces far exceeds supply—proof that if you build a place like this with a full commitment to equity, inclusion, and community engagement, then artists will come. The experience also demonstrates why targeting resources to low-income artists of color is so important. “To satisfy the demands of the city and the neighborhood, we needed to guarantee that at least 50 percent of our residents were local East Harlem residents, who are predominantly Latino,” Holmes said. “Now we have 53,000 applications, including 5,000 from self-identified artists, for 90 units of affordable artist housing—which is why it was good we had those restrictions.”

With high demand and the successful model of PS109, New York Mayor Bill de Blasio has pledged 1,500 new units of affordable housing earmarked for artists and 500 working artist studios, to be rolled out over 10 years.<sup>33</sup>

**Equitable Results:**

- A vacant, iconic building was restored as a cultural hub in a historic Puerto Rican area, with permanent housing for low-income artists and arts and culture organizations.
- Future government commitments have been made for more affordable housing and working studio spaces for artists.

**Lessons for Policy Change:**

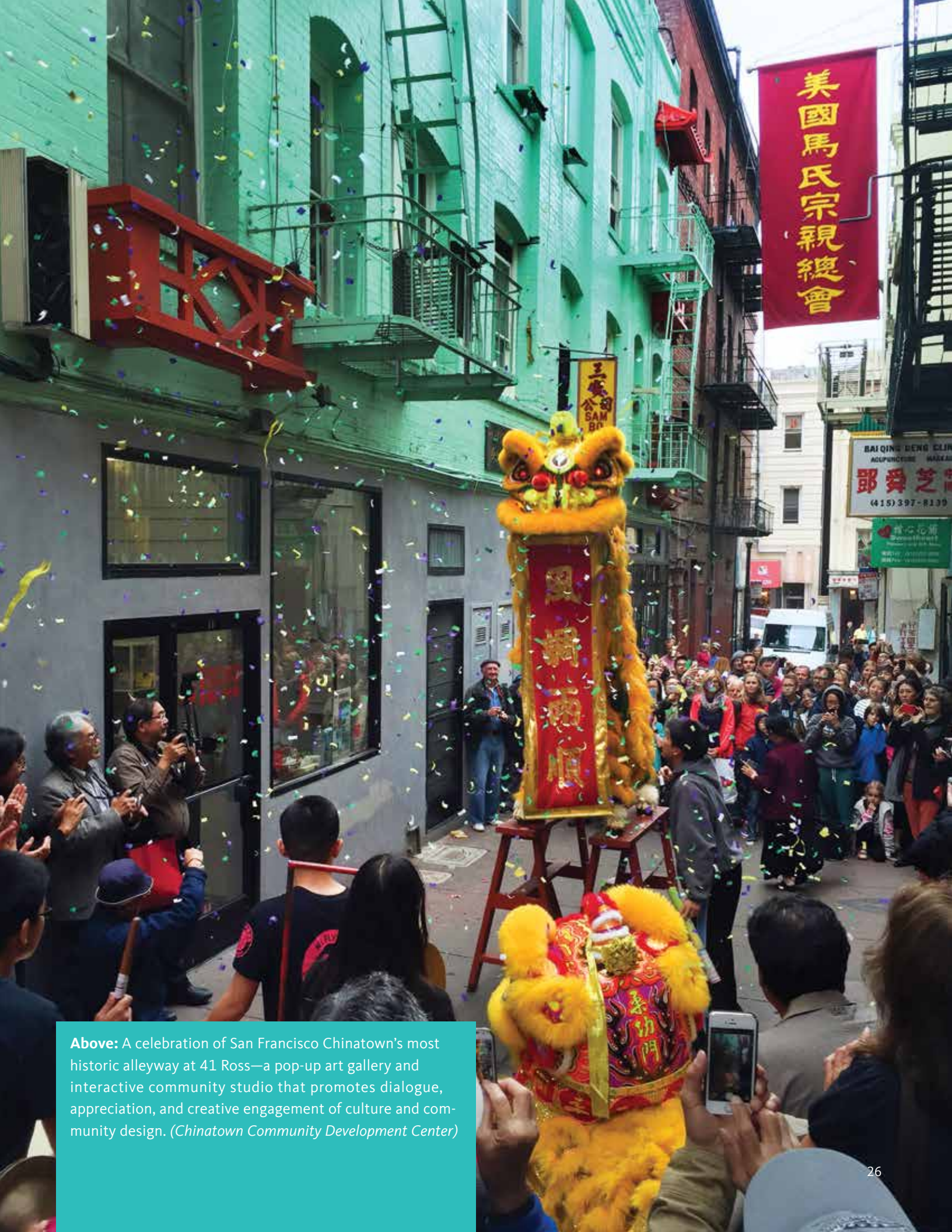
Securing policies to target affordable housing funding to low-income artists can help retain and revitalize communities of color as cultural hubs.

**Tools/Resources:**

Description of the amendment to the Housing Tax Bill (Housing and Economic Recovery Act of 2008) to support affordable artist housing: <http://www.artspace.org/ideas-insights/artist-preference-affordable-housing>

Artspace PS109 grand opening, in East Harlem, September 26, 2015. (Artspace/Carlos David)





**Above:** A celebration of San Francisco Chinatown's most historic alleyway at 41 Ross—a pop-up art gallery and interactive community studio that promotes dialogue, appreciation, and creative engagement of culture and community design. (*Chinatown Community Development Center*)

# Infrastructure and Community Investment: *Creating Vibrant Foundations*

The huge scale of infrastructure investment and public resources for community development projects offers creative ways to leverage substantial support for arts and culture investments in low-income communities and communities of color. Several mechanisms integrate the arts and large capital projects. Most cities and federal projects mandate that a percentage of the cost of large public infrastructure projects be set aside for public art or community arts programs. Typically, the set-aside is 1 to 2 percent of construction costs, which can add up to a significant investment in community arts and culture. The American Society of Civil Engineers estimates that the United States must spend \$3.6 trillion by 2020 to fix and upgrade aging infrastructure.<sup>34</sup> In some instances, percent-for-art formulas are also applied to private development.

Another common approach is to direct capital investments in arts and culture facilities from public revenues like tourism and hotel taxes to support arts and culture venues and activities to draw visitors to the community. Allocation of these resources can address historic inequities in arts and culture funding and strengthen families and neighborhoods if they are guided by equity goals (though too often they have not been).

The federal New Markets Tax Credit and Historic Tax Credit programs are examples of public-private approaches that can or explicitly do target arts and culture through investments in museums, cultural centers, theaters, historic buildings and neighborhoods, and other arts and culture-related physical and business assets. In 2015, the New Markets Tax Credit program was extended through 2019 and funded at \$3.5–\$7 billion annually.<sup>35</sup> The Historic Tax Credit program is designed not only to preserve and rehabilitate historic buildings, but also to promote the economic revitalization of older communities in cities, towns, and rural areas. The federal government and numerous state governments offer historic tax credits; in 2014, the federal program provided \$4.8 billion in credits. Because both programs target disinvested, blighted, and low-income communities, they can be important sources of support for equitable development and culture preservation in communities of color.

New trends in capital investment that seek to achieve social benefits can advance the integration of equitable development and arts and culture. Investment innovations such as pay-for-performance contracts (also known as social impact bonds), impact investing, community development financial institutions, crowdfunding, and The Giving Pledge all point to the potential for positive reinvestment in low-income communities and communities of color. It is imperative that investors engage deeply with these communities to shape investments that reflect their priorities and serve their needs. According to the Monitor Institute, by 2020, the impact-investing market will grow to between \$400 billion and \$1 trillion in invested capital.<sup>36</sup>

Equity advocacy organizations and coalitions can help develop equity criteria to screen proposed investments, as well as to shape programs, policies, and initiatives to ensure that investment and development decisions serve community needs and priorities.<sup>37</sup> These criteria can extend to include arts and culture investments that deliver on equity.

# Policy Chart: Infrastructure and Community Investment

## Equity Goal:

Expand capital improvement, tourism, economic development, and workforce investments to target low-income communities and communities of color

## Equity Policy

**Target tourism tax revenue, workforce development, small business administration, community economic development, and 1–2 percent of infrastructure to public arts funds, etc. to invest in arts and culture facilities and programming in low-income communities and communities of color**

**Expand and establish set-asides of capital project funds across federal, state, and local infrastructure and public and commercial buildings to ensure equitable investment in low-income communities and communities of color**

## Arts and Culture Strategies

- Assess investments and benefits with a cultural equity lens.
- Designate grant and capital funds to reflect demographics to ensure cultural services in all communities.
- Allocate a portion of funds to emerging artists or community organizations using cultural practices.

- Create set-asides of capital projects (e.g., water, schools, transportation, public facilities) targeted to serve low-income communities and communities of color.
- Ensure arts and culture components are included in project design.

## Promising Practices: Infrastructure and Community Investment

### Bundling Resources to Create New Cultural and Artistic Spaces

#### PA'I Foundation: Honolulu, Hawai'i

*What they do: Advocate for state tourism and art funds to be allocated to reflect the demographics of Native populations*

Victoria Holt Takamine of the PA'I Foundation is a determined proponent of targeting a share of arts and culture funding, tourism revenue, and other investments relative to the demographics of the state of Hawai'i. In a 2006 PA'I survey of Native Hawaiian artists' needs, 90 percent of respondents wanted an art school with access to studio space, materials, equipment, tools, intellectual exchange, and other knowledge; 90 percent believed a Native Hawaiian arts market would help to promote their art; and 76 percent of hula practitioners wanted a Hawaiian cultural center. The PA'I Foundation report on the survey explained that, "Indigenous Hawaiian cultural and arts organizations have repeatedly applied for funding from various institutions in Hawai'i and have been turned down for a variety of reasons. H'lau hula (Hawaiian dance schools) serve thousands of community residents throughout the Hawaiian Islands from kupuna (elders) to keiki

(children). [Yet] these schools/arts institutions are virtually ignored by funding resources in our state."<sup>38</sup>

These results led Takamine to convene Native Hawaiian leaders from each of the major islands who together urged the state to allocate public arts and tourism funds to Native Hawaiians based on legal precedent. "Policies should guarantee that Native Hawaiians would get at least 20 percent of the funds, since Native Hawaiians make up 20 percent of the state's population," she explained. "This allocation was codified in federal law and state statute when statehood was imposed on Hawai'i: funds related to ceded lands are to be invested in Native Hawaiian people, industries, and businesses. We wanted them to comply with that policy. The Arts and Public Places program has [significant] funding because 1 percent of every construction project is dedicated to the purchase of art. At least 20 percent of the funding should be used to commission Native artists or cultural practitioners who provide art."

Nine years after conducting the community survey, PA'I, in partnership with Artspace, is breaking ground on a Hawaiian cultural center, gallery, and artist housing that bundles a range of public sector housing and economic development resources. Takamine hopes that the Arts and Public Places program will award a commission for the first hula performance in the space. "State funding should not be limited to just visual art," said Takamine, "but also dance, and literary arts; we want commissions to compose and choreograph a dance

about this land; we want to pay for capital investments in the construction of facilities; we want our artists to take a picture of us dancing, record it, and write a poem about it. Hula is intergenerational, and passed on this way.”

Funding for cultural tourism and the protection of the environment are now targeted to traditional and Native cultures of Hawai'i because these two are inextricably linked. PA'I is partnering with the First Peoples Fund Artist in Business Leadership program to teach Native Hawaiian artists business skills that will help them apply for targeted funds and commissions. However, when the Honolulu City Council recently appropriated over \$1 million for cultural arts, the mayor thought they should go to alleviate poverty. Takamine asserted, “If you invest in the things that people have come to Hawai'i to share, those investments *will* address poverty.”

Keiki (children) and kupuna (elders) are engaged in the halau practice at the 2014 Prince Lot Hula Festival. (*Pa'I Foundation/James Miura*)



## Policy Spotlight

### Aligning Arts and Infrastructure Investments to Benefit People and Place

**San Francisco Public Utilities Commission in partnership with the San Francisco Arts Commission: San Francisco, California**

*What they do: Realign arts and culture allocations to those most negatively impacted by utility projects*

#### **Arts and Culture Strategies, Tools, and Tactics:**

Align arts and culture set-asides of capital projects to maximize arts investments in impacted communities.

**Who:** Led by the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission (SFPUC), which provides water, power, and sewer services to the City and County of San Francisco, and by the San Francisco Arts Commission

**Challenge/Opportunity:** San Francisco's 1969 Art Enrichment Ordinance set aside 2 percent of all above-ground public construction projects for art works administered through the San Francisco Arts Commission. As the SFPUC invests in a multiyear, multibillion rebuild of the city's sewer system, the agency is partnering with the SF Arts Commission to ensure the arts funds benefit the neighborhoods directly impacted by the rebuild, most notably the city's Bayview-Hunters Point neighborhood, which is home to the SFPUC's largest treatment plant that is responsible for treating 80 percent of the city's wastewater.

A mural in the San Francisco Bayview neighborhood, painted by Bryana Fleming. ([sfwater.org/SFPUC](http://sfwater.org/SFPUC))



The agency became the first public utility in the nation to adopt an environmental justice policy in 2009, and a community benefits policy in 2011. The latter includes as a desired outcome “support for arts and culture related to the SFPUC’s mission, goals and activities.”<sup>39</sup>

**Process:**

For years, the SFPUC simply gave its 2 percent for arts funds to the SF Arts Commission, which invested the funds in a citywide public art program. In light of the agency’s community benefits and environmental justice policies, the agency decided to be more intentional and strategic about the arts allocations and directed the investments to both be tied to the core mission of the agency and to benefit the neighborhoods directly impacted by their operations.<sup>40</sup> These are among the lowest-income and most disinvested communities in San Francisco.

In partnership with the Arts Commission, the SFPUC now pools the funds generated from capital projects across the city and ensures those dollars support arts and culture projects in communities most impacted by agency operations and projects. This equitable approach required a clarification of priorities in arts enrichment. Prior to this clarification, the arts policy unintentionally fueled inequities in neighborhood-based public art because construction was not equally distributed across all neighborhoods.

The biggest recipient of the funds is the Bayview-Hunters Point neighborhood, adjacent to the SFPUC’s largest wastewater treatment plant. It is a historic Black community in a city where the Black population is declining sharply as economic inequality soars. SFPUC-funded efforts in the community include the Sewer System Improvement Program, a rebuild of a community center (built by the SFPUC in an environmental mitigation effort in the 1970s), provision of youth internship opportunities for more than 1,000 San Francisco youth, and arts collaborations and block parties aimed at revitalizing the neighborhood’s cultural corridor. An example of a grant recipient who received funding from the SF Arts Commission is the Salvation Army Bayview-Hunters Point Ministry’s “I Am Not Trash,” an outreach program empowering victims of domestic violence, women in recovery, and female veterans to heal and express themselves through spoken word, musical performances, documentary film, and recycled visual art.

**Equitable Results:**

- Communities most impacted by utility projects benefit from arts enrichment set-asides.
- Youth participate in creative and technical internships preparing them for higher education and careers.

**Lessons for Policy Change:**

Agencies can assess and clarify policies to tie their use of arts set-asides to their most impacted communities. One way to do this is by increasing the flexibility of art funds allocations so they can be targeted to the communities that need them most.

**Tools/Resources:**

Public Art Ordinance modified to be able to “aggregate funds”: <http://www.sfartscommission.org/pubartcollection/documents/pa00-public-art-ordinance/>



# Economic Development and Financial Security: *“Greening” the Creative Economy*

Cultural life and economic well-being are deeply intertwined in low-income communities and communities of color, from successful small businesses in traditional arts and crafts to arts and culture districts that advance equitable local economic development. Perhaps never before has it been more important to fully tap and invest in the nation’s vast, diverse cultural riches to spur economic growth where it is needed most and to ensure that all families can achieve financial security.

For the past three decades, the cost of living for a middle-class family in the United States has increased while income has declined. The top 10 percent of earners hold 75 percent of the nation’s wealth, while the bottom 80 percent hold only 13 percent.<sup>41</sup> For low-income communities and communities of color who have been left behind, the challenges are even greater. Today, White households have 13 times as much wealth as Black families, and 10 times as much wealth as Latino households.<sup>42</sup> The widening wealth gap is the result of a long history of public policies driven by explicit racism that excluded communities of color from the mechanisms of acquiring wealth, such as home ownership. Because wealth is transferable, the inability to build financial security persists across generations. This has contributed significantly to entrenched poverty and limited mobility in low-income communities and communities of color.

Arts and cultural activities can play an important role in breaking the cycle of poverty. “The arts are a formidable business presence and broadly distributed across our communities,” observes Americans for the Arts; the group calculates that 702,771 businesses are involved in creating or distributing the arts, and these businesses employ 2.9 million people.<sup>43</sup> However, these numbers do not include small ethnic restaurants, grocery stores, and countless other businesses that create local jobs, boost neighborhood economies, and enrich cultural life. As discussed earlier, arts and culture enterprises also generate economic vitality through tourism and cultural attractions. They often serve as the centerpiece for downtown redevelopment and neighborhood renewal. These enterprises also create vibrant public spaces that improve quality of life.

Yet for all their remarkable contributions, artists, culture bearers, and cultural entrepreneurs of color are largely shut out from conventional financing, and the tax dollars from tourism almost never flow back into their communities. This takes a tremendous toll on family finances, hurts local economies, and discourages young people from learning and practicing traditional arts and wisdom. One good place to start to turn this around is with equitable access to financing systems, including low-cost lending for artists, arts and culture organizations, and cultural entrepreneurs. Another strategy is public and private investment in parades, festivals, and other celebrations that showcase local artists and cultural entrepreneurs. Communities must also receive their fair share of the tourism revenues that their artists help generate.

# Policy Chart: Economic Development and Financial Security

## Equity Goal:

Strengthen the economy and financial security of underserved communities

### Equity Policy

**Eliminate barriers to financial security for underserved communities**

### Arts and Culture Strategies

- Establish and strengthen culturally based practices that enhance underserved communities and connect them to financial resources.
- Restructure current funding mechanisms to serve artists and cultural business owners of color.
- Provide culturally sensitive professional development support for low-income artists and businesses of color.
- Establish culturally centered social loan programs, such as lending circles.
- Allocate community development financing initiative loans and small business assistance to artists and cultural business owners of color.

**Develop vibrant economies in underserved communities**

- Conduct arts and cultural economy studies.
- Develop cultural plans for neighborhoods, transit corridors, or cities or towns that elevate diverse cultural communities and assets.
- Invest in the cultural economy in high-poverty areas by targeting funds to anchoring/elevating key arts and cultural assets.
- Target competitive arts funds and bid solicitation to local artists and cultural organizations from low-income zip codes.
- Allocate a percent of tourism, workforce investment, small business administration, and community economic development funds to arts and culture organizations serving underserved communities.

## Promising Practices: Economic Development and Financial Security

### Supporting Native Artists to Become Entrepreneurs

**First Peoples Fund: Rapid City, South Dakota**

*What they do: Provide culturally sensitive professional development support for low-income Native artists*

First Peoples Fund (FPF) is dedicated to the preservation, advancement, and well-being of American Indian, Native Hawaiian, and Alaska Native arts and culture. FPF supports American Indian, Native Hawaiian, and Alaska Native artists who live across the United States, through all stages of entrepreneurial development. It is an effort both to preserve and sustain the gorgeous cultural fabric of Native peoples

and to promote economic development and security in some of the most isolated, underinvested communities in America.

Consider these findings from a 2013 study,<sup>44</sup> the first ever to examine the Native American creative economy. Conducted by FPF in partnership with Northwest Area Foundation, Artspace, Colorado State University, and Leveraging Investments in Creativity, the study focused on South Dakota. It found that 51 percent of Native households have home-based enterprises, the vast majority of them based in traditional art forms. The study makes a strong case for lifting up these enterprises from an informal economy to a formal one to give Native households a sustainable income and contribute to economic growth in their communities.

FPF is working toward that goal. The group works with community development financial institutions (CDFIs)—the primary source of credit, capital, and financial services in tribal communities—to build their capacity to serve Native artists. “Artists think differently than other business owners,” said

Lori Pourier, FPF president. “So conventional loan terms and packaging of loans aren’t necessarily going to fit the business model and the way an artist does business. We train CDFIs to work effectively with Native artists.”

FPF also helps Native artists cultivate sound business practices and form the networks and relationships that are crucial for leveraging resources and building community support for the arts. Perhaps most importantly, the fund helps artists like Louie Gong understand their value and inspires them to be in control of their own narrative.

Gong, a fellow in an FPF business leadership program, is working to replace “Native inspired” blankets with “Inspired Native” honor blankets—authentic products rooted in deep cultural traditions. He hopes to educate consumers about cultural appropriation and encourage them to shop consciously in ways that support Native artists and build their capacity. With the support of FPF, Gong has established a retail/learning center located in Pike Place Market in Seattle, Washington. There, area artists can access the level of marketing and infrastructure support of a full-blown successful business.

Work like this helps Native communities become more self-sufficient in a manner that honors tribal values and traditions. Lori Pourier explained, “In American Indian communities, art is at the heart of household economic life, at the heart of community mobilization, and at the heart of cultural revitalization and self-determination.”

Louie Gong makes “Inspired Native” honor blankets. (*First Peoples Fund*)



## Policy Spotlight

### A New Vision for Building Community

Office of Planning: Washington, DC

*What they do: Implement comprehensive community plans*

#### **Arts and Culture Strategies, Tools, Tactics:**

Develop cultural economies in underserved neighborhoods and areas of rapid change by targeting planning efforts and funds to anchor and elevate key arts/ cultural assets.

**Who:** Led by the DC Office of Planning (DCOP) in partnership with the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development (DMPED), the DC Commission on Arts and Humanities (DCCA), and the Washington DC Economic Partnership (WDCEP)

**Challenge/Opportunity:** In 2002, Washington, DC, initiated its first major comprehensive plan update since the 1980s. It codified a 20-year “Vision for Growing an Inclusive City”—where every resident, regardless of race, income, or age, would have a choice on where to live. DCOP laid out a framework for addressing the needs of a changing city faced with rapid growth through inclusive development across neighborhoods.<sup>45</sup>

#### **Process:**

DCOP emphasized approaches that are hyper-local, that are immersed in the context of people and place, that are informed by data and built on civic engagement, and that lead to equitable outcomes. It brought together its land use and economic development planning with a charge to strengthen the cultural economies of neighborhoods. Kimberly Driggins, former DCOP associate director, explained the shift in how arts and culture was defined. “There was a sense that arts and culture was important to the city, but till then had been framed as downtown and museums.” DCOP and its partners instead focused on strengthening the identity and economy of “emerging” neighborhoods—those that experienced higher rates of poverty, but were starting to see new investment. The resulting 2006 comprehensive plan provided the city’s first guidance on incorporating arts and culture into neighborhoods throughout the city.

Building on the comprehensive plan, DCOP in collaboration with DCCA (the district's arts agency) and WDCEP (a public-private organization that promotes economic opportunities in the city's neighborhoods) undertook the Creative DC Action Agenda. The effort measured the share of the creative sector in the District of Columbia's overall economy and the sector's role in strengthening neighborhoods. Rather than focusing only on tourism from national monuments, museums, and downtown venues, DCOP mapped the cultural assets of neighborhoods including building arts, design, media, communications, performing and visual arts, and culinary arts. Released in 2010, the results showed that the creative economy constituted over 75,000 jobs, roughly 10 percent of the city's employment base, and generated \$5 billion annually.<sup>46</sup>

The agenda outlined comprehensive strategies to strengthen neighborhood economic development through creative economy approaches that focused on equity. One strategy, the Temporary Urbanism Initiative, partnered artists and creative organizations to program vacant and underutilized spaces into vibrant cultural destinations.<sup>47</sup> In one project, DCOP partnered with ARCH, an arts-focused community development corporation, to create the LUMEN8 Anacostia festival. A historic African American neighborhood, Anacostia was neither connected to the cultural assets downtown nor branded as a creative hub. A three-month festival of music, art, and light transformed the neighborhood and activated 30 temporary spaces. The former Metropolitan Police Department Evidence Warehouse became "The Lightbox." It featured local artists and a Busboys and Poets pop-up restaurant—a DC-based restaurant franchise whose mission is to "feed your mind, body, and soul and where art, culture, and politics intentionally collide."<sup>48</sup> The festival drew people from all over the city, showcasing Anacostia's cultural spirit, and leading to greater cultural business occupancy of the neighborhood.

DCOP now seeks to further strengthen underserved communities through cultural equity planning. A citywide cultural plan will assess how well artists and neighborhoods are served with cultural resources to inform investment allocations going forward.

#### **Equitable Results:**

- Allocation of city planning and arts and culture budget resources to underserved communities.
- City government's creation of culturally relevant job and business opportunities for underserved communities.

**Lessons for Policy Change:** When planning for the future of a city, government agencies can reframe, recognize, and support creative economic development in underserved communities.

#### **Tools/Resources:**

- The Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital: District Elements, "Chapter 14 Arts and Culture Element": <http://planning.dc.gov/node/574792>
- Creative Economy Strategy for the District of Columbia Full Report: <http://dmped.dc.gov/publication/creative-economy-strategy-full-report>
- Creative DC Action Agenda: <http://planning.dc.gov/page/creative-dc-action-agenda>



**Above:** Christylez Bacon performs at LUMEN8, Anacostia, Washington, DC. (Christylez Bacon by [ep\\_jhu](#) is licensed under [CC BY 2.0](#))

# Health and Food:

## *Healing Trauma, Feeding Well-Being*

Cultural traditions can and must be integral to efforts that address trauma and racism; increase the sense of individual, family, and collective agency and resilience; and offer culturally resonant care—all important elements of a health equity agenda. As an element of the varied palette of cultural expressions, the arts provide especially resonant forms for addressing health in the cultural context. Art's unique focus on voice, expression, and the communication of difficult-to-articulate narratives can open up space for the deliberate crafting of health equity.

The legacy of racism and disinvestment has hurt the health and well-being of low-income communities and communities of color. This is reflected in countless ways, from shorter life expectancy to disproportionately high rates of illness, injury, and death to limited access to healthy food, health care, parks and recreation, and other resources for healthy living. Equitable access to economic opportunities is essential for improving the health of disinvested neighborhoods and the people who live there. Embedding an explicit focus on culture can enhance the effectiveness of health equity strategies. A direct application of this lens is evident in programs that heal trauma through engagement in arts and culture.

Consider food, for example. Healthy food access is an important component of a comprehensive strategy to improve health and the economy in places that need it the most. Food not only is basic sustenance but also can be an art form, a trove of cultural traditions, and a means of advancing equity by preserving and supporting those traditions. This puts culture squarely at the center of increasing healthy food access—attracting healthy food retail in communities that have limited or no access to supermarkets. For too many urban and rural communities, especially low-income communities and communities of color, healthy food is out of reach; nearly 30 million people in low-income areas have limited access to supermarkets.<sup>49</sup> The long history of displacement compounds the challenge because it has separated many communities from native healthy food sources and traditions. This is one reason why diabetes rates are so high in Native

American communities and why some Latino and Asian immigrant groups see rates of chronic diseases skyrocket within a generation of arriving in the United States.

The advancement since 2010 of the federal Healthy Food Financing Initiative (HFFI) incentivizes and supports new or expanded food retail in underserved communities. Established in 2011, HFFI has distributed more than \$500 million in grants and tax credits and leveraged more than \$1 billion in private investment to build and upgrade full-scale grocery stores, co-operatives, farmers' markets, mobile markets, food hubs, and other retail outlets. Increasing healthy food retail is proven to bring triple bottom-line benefits to communities: a revitalized economy, job creation, and better health. It can also contribute to a fourth bottom line—maintaining, preserving, and restoring cultural traditions. Equity advocates can use the initiative to support culturally relevant food system investments in diverse communities. Expanding the program and embedding strategies that focus on culture while improving food access would strengthen cherished traditional practices and promote access to a greater diversity of healthy, delicious foods.

Similarly, arts and culture can play critical roles in health and healing. The design and installation of public art that reflects the cultural context of the people it serves can deliver powerful health amenities in the form of parks, health facilities, and active recreation infrastructure for communities that have been underserved. Sculptures of civil rights icons in local parks, healing walks within health-care campuses, and walking and biking trails that commemorate relevant cultural contexts (e.g., the route of the Underground Railroad, Native trading routes, or places of farmworker organizing campaigns) can strengthen health within healing cultural contexts. The incorporation and adaptation of traditional music, storytelling, and other cultural practices into new rites of passage for young people is another way in which arts can be a vehicle for healing, restoration, and support.

# Policy Chart: Health and Food

## Equity Goal:

Address trauma, food, and health disparities among low-income communities and communities of color

### Equity Policy

### Arts and Culture Strategies

**Target resources and support to low-income communities and communities of color, especially those with high levels of violence, incarceration, and poverty**

- Allocate health care, prevention, and arts funding streams to arts and cultural practices that address trauma and health disparities.

**Reevaluate/evaluate approaches to achieving health outcomes for underserved communities**

- Use local cultural arts agencies, youth service organizations, public health departments, and cultural health practitioners to inform policy.
- Employ arts and culture instead of mainstream methods to address systemic issues (e.g., criminal justice).
- Use arts and cultural engagements to break and reconstruct the narrative of poverty and trauma (e.g., drumming, talking circle, theater).
- Explore restorative justice and other healing practices.

**Increase healthy food access in local food systems for low-income communities and communities of color**

- Strengthen cultural networks of food producers and distributors that impact the health of underserved communities.
- Partner with local farmers of color, residents, and community-based businesses to connect and improve the food systems network.
- Incubate culturally resonant food businesses in mixed-use development retail spaces.
- Create and support community gardens, urban farms, and grocery stores in food deserts.
- Grow vegetables unique to cultural culinary traditions.
- Integrate flexible underwriting criteria that can accommodate culturally specific practices.

## Promising Practices: Health and Food

### Emphasizing the Arts as a Healing Force

#### Communities United for Restorative Youth Justice: Oakland, California

*What they do: Use engagement in arts and culture to break and reconstruct the narrative of poverty and trauma*

The arts are a core component in the mission of Communities United for Restorative Youth Justice (CURY); pronounced “courage”), which is to disrupt cycles of violence and poverty. The organization motivates and empowers young people—particularly boys and men of color who have been impacted directly or indirectly by the criminal justice system—to make positive changes and prepare them to become community

leaders. The organization emphasizes healing trauma through engagement in arts and culture. This takes many forms, including drum making and drumming, mural projects, theater, talking circles, gardening, and creating graphic novels. All are outlets for youth to express themselves and their experience, which is a key to healing.

The co-founder and executive director of CURYJ, George Galvis, explained that art is the community's way of telling its stories and thus owning its voice, and rich, beautiful traditions. "Part of our belief is that returning to the old teachings and re-rooting ourselves, reclaiming and relearning traditional ways, is part of the healing process to help us heal these traumas," he said. As CURYJ illustrates, arts and culture are essential to improving the health and well-being of communities experiencing violence. If more funding were directed to support community organizations that use culture-based healing practices, greater health equity would be achieved in low-income communities and communities of color.

A traditional farm on the Tohono O'odham Reservation, Sells, AZ. (Tohono O'odham Reservation - Sells AZ by [biotour13](#) is licensed under [CC BY 2.0](#))



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## Revitalizing Cultural Traditions through Agriculture and Nutrition

### Tohono O'odham Community Action: Sells, Arizona

*What they do: Rebuild and reconnect a local food system through traditional American Indian farming*

Faced with high rates of poverty and diabetes in its community, along with dependency on the highly processed foods of the federal surplus commodity program, the Tohono O'odham Community Action (TOCA) is rebuilding a healthy, culturally vital, and sustainable community by restoring traditional farming methods.

The Tohono O'odham Nation was food self-sufficient for 1,000 years. That changed in the mid-20th century as land acreage was lost; water rights were disputed; and the community was shredded by forced relocation, mandatory boarding school, and wartime draft.

For the Tohono O'odham (as for communities across the globe) food is the foundation of health, culture, community, family, and the economy. Since beginning its first community garden in 1996, TOCA has created food system programs that improve public health, revitalize cultural traditions, and spur economic development. The approach reflects a model of empowerment instead of service—programming is developed by and with the community and focuses on building the skills and capacity for self-sufficiency. For example, the New Generation of O'odham Farmers program offers apprenticeships and internships in traditional and modern farming and other cultural traditions around agriculture and nutrition.

In 2013, TOCA created Desert Rain Food Services, a social enterprise serving the Tohono O'odham Nation in southern Arizona. The service provides healthy, locally grown, nutritious meals for school and institutional customers in a place formerly bereft of such access. The enterprise improves access to healthy food for children, creates jobs for residents, and keeps federally funded school-food revenues in the community instead of sending them to distant corporate vendors. It is proof that more equitable outcomes can be achieved when healthy food funding supports culturally specific food systems.



# Youth and Education: *Grounding in Arts and Culture*

Arts and culture help heal the effects of trauma, focus political energies and activism, inspire engagement and discipline, and build community. These roles can be particularly powerful for young people who face environments of underinvestment, poverty, and/or violence. For the nation to prosper, all young people must have a fair chance to succeed. This requires expanding opportunity for all, including the nearly 50 percent of young Americans who identify as people of color.

The infusion of arts and culture processes in communities and school curricula can be a powerful countervailing force for the disproportionate number of young people of color who grow up with failing schools, run-down neighborhoods, poor health, inadequate social support, and limited job opportunities. Several recent studies show that increased funding in arts education for vulnerable young people helps them complete more schooling and earn higher incomes, and it promotes economic growth.<sup>50</sup> An analysis from the Washington Center for Equitable Growth calculated that the U.S. economy could be 10 percent larger by 2050 if students from low-income backgrounds had the same educational achievement as more advantaged students.<sup>51</sup> In another study, researchers at Northwestern University and the University of California—Berkeley examined the effects of court-ordered increases in state funding for low-income schools over 40 years and found that a 10 percent increase in spending on low-income students resulted in additional education, higher incomes, and reduced poverty rates throughout their lives.<sup>52</sup>

Communities highlighted in this section have structured policy reforms that enable arts and cultural activities for youth who have faced poor educational outcomes or interaction with the criminal justice system—the activities provide a means for processing both life direction and systems change. Many youth exposed to this programming have themselves become policy leaders, artists, or culture facilitators of community life and development.

The Black Lives Matter movement has engaged a new generation of young people in calling for justice through cultural alliances and with the use of art as an inspiring force in movement building. Initiatives such as the Alliance for Boys and Men of Color and the Promise Neighborhoods Institute at PolicyLink—broad-based coalitions committed to improving the life chances of young people of color and low-income youth—rely on intercultural processes and artistic expression to build movements for policy change. For example, the Alliance brings together youth; community organizations; foundations; and leaders in government, education, public health, and law enforcement at the local and state levels to pursue policy and systems reforms that will help boys and men of color in California. Incorporating arts and culture into the work strengthens it significantly, by creating a proactive platform to address and heal the effects of trauma, focus young people's political energies and activism, inspire engagement and discipline, and build community.

Equity policy focused on arts and culture internships, apprenticeships, educational curricula, and organizational resources to build cultural and arts components into youth and education programming can deliver powerful placemaking and equitable development outcomes. Youth programming attracts diverse communities, provides a place for political exploration of community issues, feeds surrounding businesses, and creates constructive space in former vacuums of activity.

## Policy Chart: Youth and Education

### Equity Goal:

Expand opportunities and improve educational outcomes for low-income youth and youth of color

### Equity Policy

### Arts and Culture Strategies

#### Eliminate educational outcome disparities among youth of color

- Provide culturally relevant arts and culture programs and curricula to underserved communities.
- Create culturally relevant electives that instill pride and self-esteem.
- Engage youth in neighborhood planning and design processes through relevant school curricula.

#### Build capacity and increase economic opportunities to underserved youth of color

- Develop school internships and summer workforce programs in cultural arts industries targeting disadvantaged and disconnected youth in high-unemployment communities.
- Anchor youth arts and culture organizations in economic development efforts.
- Provide youth leadership training and incorporate media and other creative skill-building.
- Hire high school students as cultural center hosts.

#### Create sustained funding for cultural education

- Allocate earmarked funding for disadvantaged youth to culturally relevant programming.
- Create flexible funding guidelines that allow for innovation through cultural and artistic approaches.
- Strengthen Community Development Block Grant uses for instrumental effects of arts and culture.
- Apply federal funds, such as the Alaska Native Education Equities Act, Every Student Succeeds Act, Workforce Investment Opportunity Act, Promise Neighborhoods, and Community Development Block Grants, to youth in low-income, high-unemployment communities and communities of color.

## Promising Practices: Youth and Education

### Sustaining Culture and Economic Development in Appalachia

#### Appalshop: Whitesburg, Kentucky

*What they do: Target federal education funds for arts and culture job training to address poverty and educational barriers*

Appalshop is a great illustration of how arts and culture can help a disinvested rural community weather significant challenges and envision a brighter economic future. Appalshop began as an economic development project—the only rural media-arts job-training program for impoverished youth in Lyndon Johnson’s War on Poverty in the 1960s. It focused

initially on capturing the voices of Appalachian people through arts and technology.<sup>53</sup> Today new generations are paid to learn media production after school and during the summer. They use these skills to start important conversations on community topics, such as the health effects of mining, domestic violence, and Appalachian culture. This college-accredited program has been shown to increase pride and confidence, and to help youth overcome the barriers to educational attainment that are common in struggling communities.<sup>54</sup>

Having produced the largest extant body of films, plays, and audio recordings about its region, Appalshop is a predominant cultural and economic anchor in Appalachia. It also is one of the only constant institutions in a region buffeted disproportionately by deindustrialization and absentee corporate ownership of its natural resources. The program forthrightly

addresses environmental damage, high unemployment, poor educational opportunities, and other major issues through cultural organizing and place-based media, arts, and education.

“Appalshop has always contributed to this notion of how arts and culture contribute to the economic development and vibrancy of our town of 2,000 people and to the larger region,” said Ada Smith, the program’s institutional development director. “How we sustain our culture is so important in this environment. Over the last three years, due to the decline of coal as an energy source, we lost 8,000 jobs just in Eastern Kentucky. So there’s a lot of talk about what our economies will look like. Will we see tons of out-migration? Will people be encouraged to move to where opportunities are? Appalshop sees tons of opportunity for how arts and culture can really contribute to a vibrant and diverse future in the region and sustain a robust economy.”

Appalshop receives federal funds from the U.S. Department of Agriculture and Economic Development Administration, which supported the development of their cultural center in Whitesburg, Kentucky. “Appalshop has a long history of showcasing what can work and what has worked in rural America,” Smith said. “There are not a lot of examples of what a strategic investment plan looks like in places like this, but what is clear to us is that one must have arts and culture in any rural community for development to succeed long term.”

Community square dancing at Carcassonne Community Center in Blackey, KY, a partner of Appalshop, as part of “Performing Our Future Institute.” (*Lafayette College/Clay Wegrzynowicz*)



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## Revitalizing a City through Music, Theater, and Dance Training

### East Bay Center for the Performing Arts: Richmond, California

*What they do: Anchor youth arts and culture organizations in economic development efforts*

The East Bay Center for the Performing Arts, a long-standing and trusted space of culture and care, became a true institutional anchor when Richmond decided to give it a critical role in its downtown redevelopment. Founded in 1968, the Center counters the image of a poor and dangerous place by shining a light on the hidden richness and diverse range of its population’s many cultural practices—through music, theater, and dance training and through the creation of new artistic works rooted in community life. The Center not only has a celebrated understanding of the complex cultural assets that are present in the community, but also is well-acquainted with the health, safety, and educational challenges of this low-income area. The against-the-odds, recession-era (2009–2011) rebuilding of its historic Iron Triangle neighborhood home—in conjunction with ongoing Richmond redevelopment efforts—moved the Center from being a reliable community hub to an architectural award-winning catalyst for the physical, cultural, and economic revitalization of the city center.

One of its key strengths is its recognition that with opportunities to train and participate in the arts, Richmond youth and families foster their individual abilities to act in the world, while strengthening their neighborhood’s collective stability and self-determination. The investment in improving the cultural center is an example of redevelopment that provides new hope to a community that needs a chance to reimagine what it can and will be through the strengths and gifts of its young people.

## Policy Spotlight

### Culturally Rich Programming to Benefit Native Youth

#### Alaska Native Heritage Center: Anchorage, Alaska

*What they do: Preserve and strengthen the traditions, languages, and art of Alaska's Native people through statewide collaboration, celebration, and education*

#### **Arts and Culture Strategies, Tools, and Tactics:**

Allocate education funding appropriated for indigenous, disadvantaged youth to culturally relevant curricula and programming.

**Who:** Alaska Native Heritage Center, which preserves and strengthens the traditions, languages, and art of Alaska's Native people through statewide collaboration, celebration, and education

**Challenge/Opportunity:** Like many indigenous communities, Alaska Native people live generation after generation in poverty due to economic and cultural destruction. This cycle contributes to large education disparities, which in turn fuel the vicious cycle of poverty and economic immobility. Through the U.S. Department of Education, the Alaska Native Education Equity Act, enacted in 2002, provided funding to Alaska Native education organizations to bridge gaps in test scores and graduation rates. Education funding was earmarked to the Alaska Native Heritage Center, which offers after-school programs, paid summer internships, and leadership training for youth in a supportive, culturally rich environment.

#### **Process:**

At the Center's after-school program, high school students choose from three electives: Alaska Native visual arts, Alaska Native dance, or Alaska Native athletics (arctic winter games). Students can apply the elective credit toward graduation, but Steven Alvarez, director of arts and education at the Center, explained "that more importantly it allows the students to be themselves, in a safe environment."

The Center also has taken the program to a correctional facility and continuation schools, providing visual art, dance, and classes in such topics as kayak building and traditional hunting.

During the summer, when the Center receives 50,000 to 60,000 visitors, it hires high school students to be cultural

hosts. Many students return after college to work at the Center as successful visual artists, in education, or in other Alaska Native organizations or corporations. Alvarez stated that "the premise of this work is if we provide the students with opportunities to learn about their own cultures, we instill a greater sense of self-esteem, cultural pride which results in...incentive to stay in school and graduate... as well as job skills."

Like many federally funded programs, the Center has faced funding challenges. When the recession hit, earmarks were cut and grants became competitive. The Center has successfully weathered these challenges thanks to strong congressional relationships. Alaska Natives are 17 percent of the state's population, and Alaska Native corporations are the largest economic driver after oil and tourism. With this political leverage, Alvarez explained, "the key for us [has been] to create a relationship with our congressional delegation" and for representatives to be "aware of who we are, what we are doing, and the work that needs to get done."

Alvarez believes this work holds lessons for all communities of color working to achieve equity outcomes. "Get your local, state, or federal representatives to create the funding to provide opportunities for specific cultural educational activities that can meet the kinds of needs of youth. The needs of African Americans and Latinos are no different than what we are experiencing here."

#### **Equitable Results:**

- Gaps in test scores and graduation rates between Native and non-Native youth are being reduced.
- Opportunities post-high school increase as job skills are gained.
- Underserved youth of color gain cultural pride and strengthened identity.

#### **Lessons for Policy Change:**

Build relationships and advocate for government representatives to create funding for underserved youth, specifically for cultural education.

#### **Tools/Resources:**

- Youth Cultural Internships: <http://www.alaskanative.net/en/main-nav/education-and-programs/youth/internship/>
- Blueprints for Teaching and Learning in the Arts: <http://schools.nyc.gov/offices/teachlearn/arts/blueprints.html>



**“The premise of this work is if we provide the students with opportunities to learn about their own cultures, we instill a greater sense of self-esteem, cultural pride which results in...incentive to stay in school and graduate... as well as job skills.”**

—**Steven Alvarez**, Director of Arts and Education at the Alaska Native Heritage Center

**Above:** Alaskan Native youth learning a traditional dance. (*Alaska Native Dancer (Explored)* by [Doug Brown](#) is licensed under [CC BY 2.0](#))

# Open Space and Recreation: *Aligning Cultural Practices and Public Spaces*

Open spaces embody the potential to be the public commons—culturally driven places for gathering, political action, and recreation. During a period of community change driven by intentional community planning or volatile real estate markets, shared open spaces can act as visible, living anchors for communities in transition. Investment in, planning of, and design of the public domain, and in particular open spaces, must be driven by equitable and culturally oriented outcomes. Arts and culture can be a catalyst for activation in open space design and planning so that the needs of historic and changing populations can be addressed equitably.

A neighborhood park or well-designed sidewalks broadcast powerful messages about who belongs there. The enactment of recreation policy says whose bodies belong in a space, and which communities are encouraged to be healthy. Open space and parks are subject to diverse interpretation, expression, and demands that are sometimes complementary and sometimes competing. Open spaces designed and built for social interaction and gathering in all aspects of the urban environment are becoming more prevalent and necessary as the demographics of the United States shift dramatically toward a majority people of color.

For the 80 percent of Americans who live in or near a city, neighborhood parks offer the closest connection to nature, to cultural festivals and gathering places, and to low-cost exercise. Yet more than 16 million people in our 60 most populous cities do not have close-to-home access to a park.<sup>55</sup> Even when parks are nearby, disinvestment leaves many of them so blighted and broken that children, families, and seniors stay away.<sup>56</sup> This has negative consequences for the health of residents and communities. Clean, safe, well-resourced parks are not only places for play, recreation, and physical activity, they are also spaces for connecting with neighbors to foster connection, cultural expression, and a sense of community.

Like many arenas, the potential for arts and culture to be integrated into open space and parks can be realized through a community's comprehensive plan (also known as a general plan, master plan, or land use plan), which is a document designed to guide the future actions of a community. It presents a vision for the future, with long-range goals and objectives for all activities that affect the local government. For example, recreation, open space, and culture are sometimes combined into the same element in comprehensive plans. In these instances, we find a potential model for the integration of arts and culture in all policies.

A major source of public funding for parks, the Federal Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), was authorized to receive up to \$900 million in offshore gas and drilling revenue every year. Over time, Congress diverted billions of dollars from LWCF to other purposes—leaving it chronically and severely underfunded. As part of the omnibus spending bill passed at the end of 2015, the LWCF was reauthorized for a three-year period with a total of \$450 million appropriated for grant programs.<sup>57</sup> Of the \$450 million, \$110 million will be offered through states with \$12 million of these funds allocated to the Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership urban competitive grants program.<sup>58</sup> These grants have criteria that will prioritize equity investments in underserved communities.

# Policy Chart: Open Space and Recreation

## Equity Goal:

Expand opportunities for low-income communities of color to connect and create vibrant places through open space and recreation

## Equity Policy

**Create strategic open spaces and parks in low-income communities and communities of color**

## Arts and Culture Strategies

- Designate parks and open space on a per capita formula in plans that reflect cultural practices and spaces for user communities.
- Convert vacant land into parks, gardens, and passageways that provide an artistic and creative opportunity for underserved communities to design and program culturally relevant spaces.
- Assign a portion of space in historical parks for community gardens with culturally specific vegetables, cooking classes, and exhibits of foods/recipes.
- Host events and other programming in parks to provide the opportunity to tell the historical and cultural stories of underserved communities.
- Develop cultural centers shared by diverse cultural groups and a platform for intercultural relationships and community development synergy.
- Link cultural and recreation assets through sidewalks, trails, and bikeways that create safe access for low-income communities and communities of color.

## Promising Practices: Open Space and Recreation

### Let's Build Cully Park

#### Living Cully: Portland, Oregon

*What they do: Convert construction landfill into a park that provides environmental review, cultural design, work and contracting, recreation, and food opportunities to local residents*

Following widespread displacement of African American and other communities of color from Northeast Portland after the development of the light rail over a decade ago, four key organizations (Verde, a social enterprise; Native American Youth and Family Services; Hacienda Community Development Corporation; and Habitat for Humanity) came together in 2013 to form a social equity-focused “ecodistrict”—Living Cully—whose collective mission was to build environmental assets, wealth, and explicit anti-displacement strategies in the last remaining majority people-of-color, low-income neighborhood in the city of Portland.

Working to win site control over a sealed construction landfill, Living Cully won development rights to design and build Cully Park in a neighborhood largely defined by industrial and environmental justice exposures with few environmental assets. Working through cultural lenses, middle school students worked with park designers to plan their park. The Latino community prioritized community gardens and soccer fields for youth recreation leagues; the Native American community designed native plant growing areas to produce materials for ceremonies and art projects and walking and visiting space for community elders. The Hacienda Community Development Corporation prioritized sidewalks connecting their affordable housing developments to the recreation space, and Habitat for Humanity focused its efforts on investing in helping low-income homeowners rehabilitate and energy retrofit their homes to ensure affordable tenure.

In the course of this work, Living Cully confronted many policy barriers, and partnered with local and state agencies, from parks and recreation, to public health, transportation, housing, environment, and economic development. These efforts pushed through equity policies that would allow work and contracts to go to their residents and set anti-displacement policies focused on their communities. Gardens, soccer fields, and Native ceremonies are now regular activities of the neighborhood.

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## Building Youth Leadership through Outdoor Art and Land Transformation

### **The Village of Arts and Humanities: Philadelphia, Pennsylvania**

*What they do: Convert vacant land into a park that provides artistic and creative opportunities for underserved communities to design and program culturally relevant spaces*

From its origin as a one-off art-in-a-park project, the Village of Arts and Humanities has evolved into a multifaceted community organization that incorporates environmental stewardship, cultural vitality, and neighborhood revitalization. As a nonprofit, the Village has served thousands of low-income, mostly Black, children and their families in North Philadelphia. It focuses on outdoor art and land transformation as vehicles for youth leadership and placemaking. The Village has transformed more than 150 parcels of vacant land into 16 parks, gardens, and passageways maintained by the Village's environmental crew, which consists of workers and youth of color.

Their next project is focused on building a future for a three-block zone of influence that is a mix of art-filled parks, gardens, private residences, and repurposed buildings that house the Village's youth arts education programs. Over 25 years after founder and artist Lily Yeh found her way to North Philadelphia and created the first art park project, the public spaces remain a beautiful haven for the neighborhood.

A community celebration after the restoration of the Ile lfe Guardian Mural, first painted at The Village in 1986. (*The Village of Arts and Humanities/Michael Kuetemeyer*)



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## Connecting Open Space to the Needs of Low-Income, Refugee, and Immigrant Communities

### **Peralta Hacienda Historical Park: Oakland, California**

*What they do: Assign a portion of space in a historical park for community gardens and culturally specific celebrations*

The Peralta Hacienda Historical Park connects the cultural, political, and ecological context of Oakland to the contemporary issues and needs of low-income, refugee, and immigrant communities. Located on six acres of open space with a historic house museum, the park, with the help of the Friends of Peralta Hacienda Historical Park and in collaboration with Lao Family Community Development, supports community garden space for Mien women who grow more than 30 vegetables unique to their culinary traditions. The park brings together Mien elders with their own youth and other youth to build bridges through the arts of cooking and gardening.

Peralta Hacienda also provides operational support and space to Mexica Dancers, who, as community gardeners and artists, invite the community to dance celebrations in the site's California Native Plant Garden, demonstrate their recipes in the Peralta House kitchen exhibits, and perform blessings and special dances at many events at the site.

The Cambodian community holds its annual New Year celebration, now in its fifth year, in the park. It affirms resilience in the wake of Pol Pot's killing of an estimated 90 percent of Cambodia's artists, musicians, dancers, and teachers between 1975 and 1979 by sharing its music with more than 1,000 attendees.

Puerto Rican Cultural Day held at Peralta Hacienda Historical Park, Oakland, CA. (*Puerto Rican Cultural Day by Romel Jacinto is licensed under CC BY 2.0*)





# Technology and Information Access: *Opening Doors to the Creative Economy*

Innovations in technology and digital media, enabled by broadband access, are transforming the power to make and create, to design and build, and to imagine and learn; these innovations are, in turn, informing and informed by arts and culture. The equity implications of this transformation are only magnified by the way digital and information technology are becoming foundations for the economy, culture, arts, and even many dimensions of the physical design of cities and towns. Access to this confluence of broadband, technology, and digital media will affect how education, health care, economic development, and arts and culture are delivered and shaped by communities of color and low-income communities on the ground.

Technology and digital media create tremendous opportunity for diversity and inclusion of expression, ideas, and cultures. While vast inequalities remain in access and representation, which is often referred to as the “digital divide,” technology and digital media have unprecedented potential to give voice and power to communities fighting economic inequity, bias and discrimination, and cultural misrepresentation. Kris D. Gutiérrez, a University of California—Berkeley professor of language, literacy, and culture and the curator of the 2015 Digital Media and Learning Conference wrote: “Equity is not just about access. It involves a new social and pedagogical imagination about how youth and people from non-dominant communities can become designers of their own futures.”<sup>59</sup>

Conversely, technology can also tell harmful stories about people of color, too. Surveillance—often enabled by technological innovations like “big data”—has both a disproportionate impact on people-of-color communities<sup>60</sup> and a chilling effect on cultural expressions like literature. With technology and social media companies rocketing to the top of national market capitalization lists, inequitable hiring practices are literally encoding that inequity into the communications and commerce platforms that connect humans globally.<sup>61</sup> Further, big data can unfairly document arrests, evictions, and credit histories in ways that lock people of color out of work, housing, and fair access to credit.

On the equitable side of the technology ledger, since 2009, the U.S. Department of Commerce has made progress in connecting communities and closing the digital divide through the National Telecommunications and Information Administration’s \$4 billion broadband grant program.<sup>62</sup> These grants generated greater growth in broadband availability than in non-grant communities. This access gives underserved communities greater access to creative technologies and economies, such as the dozens of tribal communities that have acquired broadband over the last half decade. According to the Broadband Opportunity Council, “The additional broadband infrastructure is expected to create more than 22,000 long-term jobs and generate more than \$1 billion in additional household income each year.”<sup>63</sup> Federal agencies have taken dozens of actions in 2015 and 2016 to modernize federal programs valued at approximately \$10 billion to include broadband as an eligible program expenditure, such as the Department of Agriculture’s Community Facilities program, which helps communities around the country bring broadband to health clinics and recreation centers and creates greater access for underserved youth and artists in creative technologies.

# Policy Chart: Technology and Information Access

## Equity Goal:

Increase equitable access to knowledge and resources for underserved communities

## Equity Policy

**Increase access, capacity, and knowledge to use technology in low-income communities and communities of color**

## Arts and Culture Strategies

- Partner with arts and culture organizations to create culturally relevant means through technology to engage public input from underrepresented communities.
- Increase technology access and knowledge for low-income communities and communities of color to tell their own narratives.
- Fund project proposals that are at the intersection of technology, art, and social justice.
- Employ youth of color to use media to create dialogue around equity and community planning.

## Promising Practices: Technology and Information Access

### Driving Social Change through Media, Technology, and Art

#### Allied Media Projects: Detroit, Michigan

*What they do: Cultivate media strategies for a more just, creative, and collaborative world*

Allied Media Projects (AMP) produces the Allied Media Conference and supports art, media, and technology projects. AMP is based in Detroit and serves a network of media makers, artists, educators, and technologists working for social justice.

“Media-based organizing,” the practice at the core of AMP’s mission, is any collaborative process that uses media, art, or technology to address the roots of problems by advancing holistic solutions toward a more just and creative world. Executive Director Jenny Lee said that AMP has a “very expansive definition of media” that has grown to include not only journalism and digital media, but also theater, dance, music, culinary arts, and even quilting.

AMP catalyzes media as a social justice driver in two ways: they sponsor projects that align with their mission and host an annual conference attended by more than 2,500 people working at the intersection of media and communications,

Closing celebration of the 18th annual Allied Media Conference in Detroit, MI. (Allied Media Projects/Ara Howrani)



art, technology, education, and social justice. Participants come together to create and exchange strategies that use media for transformative change. The work emphasizes relationship-building and collaboration, a core creative practice, an interest in building relationships with other artists, and a community-rooted approach. The Detroit Community Technology Project, which trains community members in building and maintaining community wireless networks in Detroit and beyond, represents a creative sponsored project.

AMP's practice emphasizes "transforming ourselves from consumers of information to producers, from objects within other's narratives to authors of the transformation of ourselves and our communities." Lee recalled their first national conference in Detroit. "There was a mantra of 'become the media.' The conference ended in reclaiming our own voices, to tell our own stories.... A lot of the early participants were using hip hop—not just the musical elements, but the visual and dance elements—as a leadership development and communications vehicle for young people." This informed how AMP came to frame their work on community organizing through art, media, and technology, and, as Lee said, to "counter the top-down, unaccountable, corporate development we're seeing here in Detroit."

BAYCAT team filming a movie in the Bayview, San Francisco, CA. (*Shooting New Scenes by Ariel Dovas is licensed under CC BY 2.0*)



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## Empowering Youth by Building Skills in Digital Media Arts

### **Bayview-Hunters Point Center for Arts and Technology: San Francisco, California**

*What they do: Employ youth of color to use media to create dialogue around equity issues*

Bayview-Hunters Point Center for Arts and Technology (BAYCAT) is a nonprofit social enterprise focused on young people from historically underserved communities; the program educates, empowers, and employs youth in digital media arts including video and music production, animation, graphics, and web design. BAYCAT places 88 percent of its internship graduates in media-related jobs with employers such as SF Giants Productions, Wired, HBO, LucasFilm, the City of San Francisco, and the Golden State Warriors broadcast team.

One way that technology and digital media can accelerate equity is by combining increasingly affordable production tools with the reach of new forms of media. As BAYCAT illustrates, this combination can amplify voices to advance equitable development. For example, as BAYCAT youth learn media skills, they have produced influential videos and animation on gentrification, youth incarceration, and police violence in San Francisco. "If we can empower low-income youth, young people of color, and young women to find their passions and talents, educate and employ them in one of the most competitive arenas, then I believe we can change the world, and de-amplify the social and economic inequalities that are amplified in this digital age," said Villy Wang, chief executive officer of BAYCAT. BAYCAT has advanced this work by getting the City of San Francisco's Office of Youth and Families and its Workforce Investment Board to collaborate and focus summer jobs and youth internships in this area.

# Conclusion



**Above:** Temporary art installation in Seattle's Rainier Valley East-West Neighborhood Greenway, funded in part by the Office of Arts & Culture's Public Art Program, featuring the work of Kemba Opio. ("Art Interruptions 2016" makes its way to the Rainier Valley East-West Neighborhood Greenway with whimsical temporary installations by [SDOT Photos](#) is licensed under [CC BY 2.0](#))

In the United States today, with our rapidly changing demographics and daily struggles to realize the “perfect” union, only equity can make sure that all have the opportunity to participate, prosper, and achieve their full potential. As municipalities struggle with needs for improved infrastructure and better education systems, and with delivering health and well-being to people in their jurisdictions, the intersection of art, culture, and equitable development—and the policies to secure that intersection—can ensure just and fair inclusion for all.

Significant policy change is needed to realize the promise of the equity movement. Policy clarifies the goals, the strategies, and the accountability for realizing vision. Nowhere is the need for this vision more necessary than in communities of color and low-income communities. The opportunities that policy change can deliver include the means for economic development, expanded transportation access, enhanced youth development, creation of parks and recreational venues, embedding of cultural strength and knowledge, and healing from trauma and violence.

Public agencies and philanthropy across diverse sectors are being called upon to reform or expand their practices and invest in arts and cultural assets. To realize policies that can deliver on cultural equity, equitable investment in arts, and equitable development, this paper has outlined six methods for advancing change:

- 1. Map the artistic and cultural assets** of cities, towns, states, tribal communities, and the nation, with a focus on the cultural resources in communities of color and low-income communities.
- 2. Evaluate economic conditions, including current investments in public works, arts, and culture**, using data disaggregated by race, ethnicity, and neighborhood.
- 3. Identify barriers to resources for communities of color and low-income communities and restructure processes** to engender access.
- 4. Work with artists, designers, young people, and culture bearers to engage the community and inform equity-driven processes** for community development.

**5. Expand equity-focused arts and culture investments across public agencies**, through community-driven arts and culture plans, budget appropriations, and targeted allocations to disadvantaged communities, artists of color, and cultural institutions serving communities of color and low-income communities.

**6. Ensure that governance and staffing are representative** of the populations served by the agency.

As the examples in this paper show, arts and culture are uniquely positioned to inform work on the ground and to build a policy agenda for equity that touches people and place. The promising arts and cultural practices found across multiple sectors of community development described in this paper and the policies to support them are intended to motivate action at many levels of government and to encourage philanthropy to accelerate its equitable development support.

Partnerships are needed between the National Endowment for the Arts and other federal agencies such as Housing and Urban Development, Health and Human Services, Transportation, and Education; between state arts and culture councils and their housing, community development, transportation, and economic development agencies; and between city arts and culture agencies and their public utilities, departments of planning, youth development, parks, and workforce agencies. All of these partnerships can yield resources and creativity that pave the way for the next generation of a public works movement that delivers new infrastructure, jobs, and arts and culture to long-neglected communities. The partnerships and policies described in this report can transform a nation by creating change.

Finally, the roles of artists and cultural organizations in equity change work are multiple and cannot be overstated: bringing creative vision and processes to community planning and development; forming the vanguard of political resistance against poverty, human and civil rights abuses, community disinvestment, and displacement; healing historical trauma and communal divides; and bridging diverse cultural histories to achieve unified community well-being and thriving equitable economies.

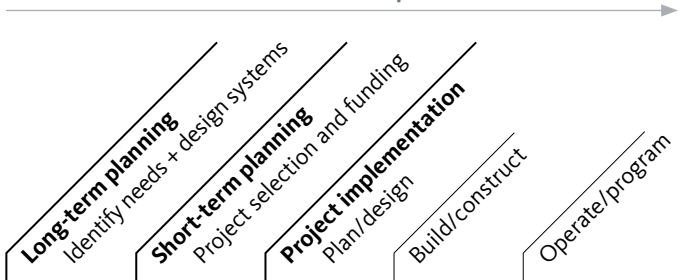
# Appendix A: Phases of Development

The programs and projects described in this report make it clear that equitable development is enhanced when linked to arts and culture. The ability of every sector—housing, transportation, health, economic development, etc.—to deliver opportunities for residents in all communities is more effective and resilient when artists and cultural organizations play integral roles. Cities, regions, states most often follow phases of development that include:

- **Long-term planning or policy:** Identifying needs and developing solutions for the future (e.g., change in local, state or federal housing policy; regional transportation plans that chart the next 30 years; or comprehensive plans that outline a city's growth strategy for the next two decades)
- **Short-term planning:** Projects are selected and funded (e.g., a transportation improvement program representing transportation projects selected for the next four-plus years; annual budget processes at federal, state, local, and tribal levels; and annual plans for HUD funding)
- **Project implementation:** Individual projects as they are: 1) planned and designed; 2) built and constructed; 3) programmed and operated

The chart that follows indicates where arts and cultural activities have intersected with the planning phases of the agencies and organizations featured in the report. The chart does not encompass what the organizations may be doing in other phases of development. Often, artists and cultural leaders are brought in at the implementation phase. But their creative talents, skills, and tools can also be applied at the long- and short-term planning phases, where work is being conceptualized and envisioned.

Examples included here represent a sampling, not a comprehensive scan of the field. Thus, there are not examples for every sector nor for every phase. And the examples exist along a continuum: policies or long-term plans can be brought to project-level equitable development efforts, and pilot projects or single developments can in turn inform effective equity policy.



### Arts and Culture

See pages 10 to 15.

**Metro Arts, Nashville, TN**

Maps and pilots integration of arts into other sectors, including housing, restorative justice, and youth workforce development  
 Restructures funding process to increase access to underserved communities

**Seattle Office of Arts & Culture, Seattle, WA**

Leads equity training across the city  
 Addresses underserved communities' barriers to arts and culture grants

**Arts & Democracy, New York City, NY**

Creates strategic partnerships to connect arts and culture and social justice to policymaking

### Transportation

See pages 17 to 21.

**American Indian Cultural Corridor, Minneapolis, MN**

Native Americans leverage light rail transit investment to strengthen access to cultural goods/services

**Department of Arts, Culture, and Tourism, Providence, RI**

Leads cultural plan, transportation engagement and planning, and mobile design exhibit

**Chinatown Community Development Center, San Francisco, CA**

Wins cultural plaza in new light rail transit extension

### Housing

See pages 22 to 25.

**Community Engagement/Grand Central Arts Center, Santa Ana, CA**

Partners artists-in-residence with affordable housing community groups for social and economic development

**El Barrio Artspace LP, East Harlem, NY**

Makes policy change in the Housing Tax Bill so affordable housing can explicitly serve artists

## Infrastructure and Community Investment

See pages 27 to 30.

**Pa’I Foundation**, Honolulu, HI

Advocates for reallocation of state art and tourism funds to reflect demographics and serve Native Hawaiians

**San Francisco Public Utilities Commission**, San Francisco, CA

Pools all set-aside art funding to serve environmental justice populations most negatively affected by utility stations

## Economic Development and Financial Security

See pages 31 to 35.

**Office of Planning**, Washington, DC

Strengthens creative economy by mapping cultural assets in underinvested/high-poverty areas and developing equity actions

**First Peoples Fund**, Rapid City, SD

Identifies needs and develops plan to support Native artists in reservation-based cultural economies

## Health and Food

See pages 36 to 38.

**Communities United for Restorative Youth Justice**, Oakland, CA

Utilizes arts and culture to heal trauma and reconstruct narratives of poverty and violence

**Tohono O’odham Community Action**, Sells, AZ

Rebuilds and reconnects a local food system through traditional indigenous farming practices

	Long-term planning Identify needs + design systems	Short-term planning Project selection and funding	Project implementation Plan/design	Build/construct	Operate/program
Pa’I Foundation, Honolulu, HI Advocates for reallocation of state art and tourism funds to reflect demographics and serve Native Hawaiians	■				
San Francisco Public Utilities Commission, San Francisco, CA Pools all set-aside art funding to serve environmental justice populations most negatively affected by utility stations	■	■			
Office of Planning, Washington, DC Strengthens creative economy by mapping cultural assets in underinvested/high-poverty areas and developing equity actions	■	■	■		
First Peoples Fund, Rapid City, SD Identifies needs and develops plan to support Native artists in reservation-based cultural economies	■	■			
Communities United for Restorative Youth Justice, Oakland, CA Utilizes arts and culture to heal trauma and reconstruct narratives of poverty and violence					■
Tohono O’odham Community Action, Sells, AZ Rebuilds and reconnects a local food system through traditional indigenous farming practices			■	■	■



### Youth and Education

See pages 39 to 43.

**Appalshop**, Whitesburg, KY

Targets federal education funds to arts and culture job training to address poverty and educational barriers

**East Bay Center for the Performing Arts**, Richmond, CA

Anchors redevelopment efforts on youth art and culture

**Alaska Native Heritage Center**, Anchorage, AK

Funnels federal funds to cultural curricula and internships for youth to address educational disparities

### Open Space and Recreation

See pages 44 to 46.

**Let's Build Cully Park**, Portland, OR

Wins development rights and work for community residents in design and build of park with cultural attributes

**The Village of Arts and Humanities**, Philadelphia, PA

Revitalizes neighborhoods with art by transforming vacant land into parks, gardens, passageways

**Peralta Hacienda Historical Park**, Oakland, CA

Designates part of park as community garden with culinary traditions and a place to exhibit cultural practices

### Technology and Information Access

See pages 47 to 49.

**Allied Media Projects**, Detroit, MI

Funds projects at nexus of media, social justice, and collaboration; hosts annual national conference using media to incite social change

**Bayview-Hunters Point Center for Arts and Technology**, San Francisco, CA

Empowers and employs low-income youth of color to use digital media to discuss equity issues

	Long-term planning Identify needs + design systems	Short-term planning Project selection and funding	Project implementation Plan/design	Build/construct	Operate/program
Appalshop, Whitesburg, KY Targets federal education funds to arts and culture job training to address poverty and educational barriers		■			
East Bay Center for the Performing Arts, Richmond, CA Anchors redevelopment efforts on youth art and culture		■	■		
Alaska Native Heritage Center, Anchorage, AK Funnels federal funds to cultural curricula and internships for youth to address educational disparities		■			
Let's Build Cully Park, Portland, OR Wins development rights and work for community residents in design and build of park with cultural attributes		■	■	■	
The Village of Arts and Humanities, Philadelphia, PA Revitalizes neighborhoods with art by transforming vacant land into parks, gardens, passageways			■	■	■
Peralta Hacienda Historical Park, Oakland, CA Designates part of park as community garden with culinary traditions and a place to exhibit cultural practices					■
Allied Media Projects, Detroit, MI Funds projects at nexus of media, social justice, and collaboration; hosts annual national conference using media to incite social change		■			
Bayview-Hunters Point Center for Arts and Technology, San Francisco, CA Empowers and employs low-income youth of color to use digital media to discuss equity issues					■

# Appendix B: Interviewees and Contributors

\*Note: All roles and organizations reflect where each person was at the time of the interview, not necessarily where they currently are.

<b>Organization</b>	<b>Contact Name and Role</b>
<b>Alaska Native Heritage Center</b>	Steven Alvarez, Director of Arts and Education
<b>Allied Media Projects</b>	Jeanette Lee, Executive Director
<b>Appalshop</b>	Dudley Cocke , Director of Roadside Theater
	Ada Smith, Institutional Development Director
<b>ARCH Development Corporation</b>	Duane Gautier, Chief Executive Officer and President
<b>Arts &amp; Democracy</b>	Caron Atlas, Director
<b>Artspace</b>	Naomi Chu, Director of Real Estate Operations, Property Development
	Colin Hamilton, Senior Vice President, National Advancement
	Wendy Holmes, Senior Vice President, Consulting and New Projects
<b>Ashé Cultural Center</b>	Carol Bebel, Co-Founder and Executive Director
	Jo Ann Minor, Associate Director of Administration and Operation
<b>Berea College Promise Neighborhood</b>	Sherry Taubert, Project Director
<b>Bush Foundation</b>	Erik Takeshita, Community Creativity Portfolio Director
<b>Chicago Public Art Group</b>	Jon Pounds, Former Executive Director
<b>Chinatown Community Development Center</b>	Roy Chan, Community Planning Consultant
<b>Chula Vista Community Health Improvement Partners</b>	Dana Richardson, Senior Director, Community Health and Engagement
<b>City of Chicago, Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events</b>	Julie Burros, Former Director of Cultural Planning
<b>City of Los Angeles, Department of Cultural Affairs</b>	Danielle Brazell, General Manager
<b>City of New Orleans</b>	Ashleigh Gardere, Senior Adviser to Mayor Mitchell J. Landrieu; Director of The Network for Economic Opportunity
<b>City of New Orleans, Cultural Economy</b>	Asante Salaam, Outreach Manager
<b>City of New Orleans, Office of Workforce Development</b>	Brandi Ebanks, Program Manager
<b>City of Promise</b>	Sarad Davenport, Director
<b>City of Seattle, Office of Arts and Culture</b>	Randy Engstrom, Director
	Kathy Hsieh, Cultural Partnerships and Grants Manager
<b>City of Seattle, Race and Social Justice Initiative</b>	Diana Falchuk, Deputy Manager
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<b>Destiny Arts Center</b>	Cristy Johnston-Limón, Executive Director

<b>East Bay Center for Performing Arts</b>	Jordan Simmons, Artistic Director
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<b>Foundation for Louisiana</b>	Flozell Daniels Jr., President and Chief Executive Officer
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<b>La Clínica de La Raza</b>	Jane Garcia, Chief Executive Director
<b>Miami-Dade County, Department of Cultural Affairs</b>	Deborah Margol, Deputy Director
	Michael Spring, Department Director
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<b>Nathan Cummings Foundation</b>	Maureen Knighton, Senior Vice President for Grantmaking
<b>National Association of Latino Arts and Culture</b>	María López De León, President and Chief Executive Director
<b>National Compadres Network</b>	Héctor Sánchez-Flores, Executive Director
	Jerry Tello, Co-Founder and Director of the National Latino Fatherhood and Family Institute
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<b>New York City, Department of Cultural Affairs</b>	Tom Finkelpearl, Commissioner
<b>Newark Department of Economic and Housing Development</b>	Baye Adofo-Wilson, Deputy Mayor
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<b>PA'I Foundation</b>	Vicky Holt Takamine, Executive Director
<b>Pillsbury United Communities</b>	Chanda Smith Baker, President and Chief Executive Officer
<b>Pregones Theater</b>	Rosalba Rolón, Artistic Director
<b>Project Row Houses</b>	Rick Lowe, Founding Director and Executive Director
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<b>Queens Museum</b>	Jodi Hanel, Former Co-Interim Director
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# Notes

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Jeremy Liu, senior fellow for arts, culture, and equitable development at PolicyLink, is an award-winning artist, community builder, social entrepreneur, and real estate developer. He works to integrate arts and culture into equitable development work and co-founded Creative Ecology Partners, an art and design studio for community development innovation that created the Creative Determinants of Health and the National Bitter Melon Council. His award-winning art projects and published writings often operate at the intersection of community planning, art, and creative placemaking.



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