

# CREATING HEALTHY COMMUNITIES: ARTS + PUBLIC HEALTH IN AMERICA

*Center for Arts in Medicine in partnership with ArtPlace America*

## **Working Group Proceedings**

**September 9-10, 2019, Lexington, Kentucky**

*Creating Healthy Communities: Arts + Public Health in America*

**Social Cohesion, the Arts, and Health Equity: Seventh National Convening Working Group**



*Presented by PolicyLink, Metris Arts Consulting and the University of Florida Center for Arts in Medicine, with support from ArtPlace America, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, the National Endowment for the Arts, the Kresge Foundation & the Bush Foundation; hosted by the UK Center for Appalachian Research in Environmental Sciences & UK Center of Excellence in Rural Health*

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## Introduction: Creating Healthy Communities: Arts + Public Health in America

Over the past several decades, evidence has mounted to demonstrate that the arts and culture have measurable impacts on health and wellbeing. Today, innovation is taking root at the intersections of arts and public health throughout the nation. *Creating Healthy Communities: Arts + Public Health in America* is a national initiative designed to accelerate this innovation to create healthy communities in alignment with national public health goals through strategic cross-sector collaboration, research and translation. Led by the University of Florida's Center for Arts in Medicine, in partnership with ArtPlace America, the initiative engages a comprehensive agenda – including research, collaboration, publication and mass communication – to drive significant improvements in the health of American communities through evidence-based use of the arts.

The *Creating Healthy Communities: Arts + Public Health in America* initiative brings together artists, researchers, public health professionals, community builders, policy-makers and others in conversations around how the arts and culture can be used to improve health in the United States. Alongside convenings, a professional consortium, and network, the initiative is leading research that explores work being conducted at the intersections of the arts, community building and public health. Research findings and key points emerging from working group convenings will contribute to the development of relevant policy recommendations, publications, and an evidence-based framework for using the arts in public health.

### **Working Group #7: Focus on Social Cohesion, the Arts, and Health Equity, Lexington, KY, September 9-10, 2019.**

Each of the initiative's nine working group convenings is designed to examine the intersections of the arts, community building and public health from a unique perspective. This seventh convening of 50 thought leaders was undertaken in partnership with PolicyLink and Metris Arts Consulting, and was supported by ArtPlace America, the National Endowment for the Arts, the University of Florida, the Kresge Foundation, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, and the Bush Foundation. The working group expanded upon work previously undertaken through a partnership between PolicyLink, Metris Arts Consulting, the Kresge Foundation, the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, and the National Endowment for the Arts. The dialogue generated in the working group was intended to contribute to a report examining the literature and current practices on this topic, and offer recommendations to strengthen research, practice, organizing, and policy-making

Participants of this group focused on social cohesion and health equity. While the group of participants included a diverse array of practitioners and stakeholders, an intentional effort was made to curate the working group to include scholars with commitment to promoting equitable health outcomes and social connection for health. The working group explored a conceptual framework and "Social Cohesion Theory of Change" proposed by Metris Arts Consulting and developed with support from several of the working group partner organizations.

The goal of this convening was to advance dialogue and strategy around several ideas through local site visits, performance, presentations, and structured dialogues. These ideas included:

- People are healthier when they are less isolated and more connected;
- People can improve the health of their communities when they find common ground for organizing;
- The arts can be a powerful instrument for the expression of cultural identity; and
- The arts are a source for bonding and mutual support that leads to more cohesive, stronger and healthier communities.

Graphic Recorder Katherine Torrini (Creative Catalyst) captured and illustrated the working group sessions on large boards throughout the working group. Some of these images are found on the following pages of these proceedings.



## Agenda Day 1: Monday, September 9, The Lyric Theatre

8:30-9:00	Coffee, tea, pastries and check-in	
9:10-9:45	Welcome, Introductions & Project/Program Overviews	Sarah Calderon, ArtPlace America Ellen Hahn, University of Kentucky Victor Rubin, PolicyLink Jeremy Liu, PolicyLink Jill Sonke, University of Florida
9:45-10:05	Key Terms & Theory of Change	Moderators: Anne Gadwa Nicodemus and Rachel Engh, Metris Arts Consulting
10:10-noon	<b>Site Visits</b>	
Group 1:	10:10-11:00 Pope Dalton Clinic 11:10-12:00 Justice House/Murals	Guide: Dr. Thad Salmon, Pope Dalton Clinic Guide: Tanya Torp, Step By Step & Justice House
Group 2:	10:10-11:00 Justice House/Murals  11:10-12:00 Elm Tree Lane	Guides: Ashley Smith & Trevor Claiborn (Farmer Brown) Black Soil
12:00-1:00	Lunch and Presentation	Presentation by Crystal Wilkinson, Author, Lexington, KY Lunch by Selma's Catering
1:00-1:40	<b>Considering the Issues: Social Cohesion</b>	Moderator: Sarah Calderon, ArtPlace America 1. Susan Seifert, University of Pennsylvania 2. Alex Gibson, Appalshop 3. Carolyn Rubin, Tufts University
1:40-2:20	<b>Considering the Issues: Equity</b>	Moderator: Chera Reid, The Kresge Foundation 1. Tasha Golden, University of Florida 2. Gabrielle Uballez, US Dept of Arts and Culture 3. Nupur Chaudhury, NY State Health Foundation
2:20-2:40	Break	
2:40-3:30	<b>Practice Models</b> PechaKucha Presentations & Group Discussion	Moderator: Jeremy Liu, PolicyLink 1. Meghan Tompkins, Cheyenne River Youth Proj. REDCAN 2. Jerome Chou, Kounkuey Design Initiative 3. BJ McBride, BE-Imaginative Collective
3:30-3:50	Sociometry Exercise	Moderator: Jill Sonke, University of Florida
3:50-5:00	<b>Discussion #1:</b> Considering the Theory of Change	Moderator: Katie Wehr, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation
5:00-5:15	Closing Summary	Jeremy Liu, PolicyLink
6:30	Dinner	21c Hotel and Museum, Main Gallery, 2nd Floor



## Agenda Day 2: Tuesday, September 10, The Plantory

8:00-8:30	Coffee, tea, pastries and check-in	
8:30-8:45	Welcome & Overview of the Day	Sarah Calderon, ArtPlace America
8:45-9:00	Reflections on Day One	Moderator: Sarah Calderon, ArtPlace America
9:00-9:20	Funder Perspectives	Moderator: Sunil Iyengar
9:20-10:30	<b>Discussion #2:</b> Considering social cohesion in heterogeneous, culturally distinct, and transient communities	Moderator: Victor Rubin, PolicyLink
10:30-10:45	Break	
10:45-11:50	<b>Discussion #3:</b> Influencers and Key Strategies	Moderator: Erik Takeshita, ArtPlace America
11:50-12:00	Lightning Feedback Session	Qualtrics Link
12:00-1:00	Lunch	Lunch by Smithtown With short, informal video interviews
1:00-1:20	Sociometry Exercise	Moderator: Jeremy Liu, PolicyLink
1:20-2:15	Mapping the Through-lines, Key Opportunities & Priorities	Moderators: Amanda Navarro and Alexis Stephens, PolicyLink
2:15-2:45	Open Provocations, Calls to Action & Summary Statements	Moderator: Chera Reid, Kresge Foundation
2:45-3:00	Closing	Victor Rubin, PolicyLink

## Working Group Participants

Ariel Arthur	Center for Health Equity and Transformation, UK
Savannah Barrett	Art of the Rural
Mike Blockstein	Public Matters Group
Steven Boudreau	Rhode Island Department of Public Health
Beth Bowling	University of Kentucky
Dessie Bowling	Kentucky Valley Educational Cooperative
Sarah Calderon	ArtPlace America
Devine Carama	Musician
Dionne Champion	University of Florida
Nupur Chaudhury	New York State Health Foundation
Jerome Chou	Konkuey Design Initiative
Ras Cutlass	A Blade of Grass Fellow for Socially Engaged Art
Rachel Engh	Metris Arts Consulting
Alex Gibson	Appalshop
Tasha Golden	University of Florida
Ellen Hahn	University of Kentucky, School of Nursing
Jen Hughes	National Endowment for the Arts
Sunil Iyengar	National Endowment for the Arts
Megan Jordan	Vanderbilt University
Vivian Lasley-Bibbs	Kentucky Dept. for Public Health
Taja Lindley	NYC Department of Health & Mental Hygiene
Megan Shoemaker Little	Welcoming America
Jeremy Liu	PolicyLink
Bridget Madden	University of Florida



Carlos Marin	University of Kentucky
Keely Mason	University of Florida
BJ McBride	BE-IMAGINATIVE collective
Nina McCoy	Concerned Citizens of Martin County
Josh Miller	IDEAS xLab
Nicole Morgan	University of Florida
Emily Moses	Kentucky Arts Council
Amanda Navarro	PolicyLink
Anne Gadwa Nicodemus	Metris Arts Consulting
Jamilah Peters-Muhammad	Ashe Cultural Center
Mimi Pickering	Appalshop
Chera Reid	The Kresge Foundation
Carolyn Rubin	Tufts University
Victor Rubin	PolicyLink
Elaine Russell	Kentucky Cancer Consortium
Kelley Sams	University of Florida
Susan Seifert	UPenn, Social Impact of the Arts Project
Danya Sherman	ArtPlace America
Jill Sonke	University of Florida
Alexis Stephens	PolicyLink
Erik Takeshita	ArtPlace America
Meghan Tompkins	Cheyenne River Youth Project
Tanya Torp	Step by Step/ Justice House
Katherine Torrini	Creative Catalyst
Gabrielle Uballez	US Department of Arts and Culture
Katie Wehr	Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

## Welcome, Introductions, Initiative & Working Group Overview

**Jill Sonke** (University of Florida) began the working group by asking the group to join in acknowledging and paying respects to the indigenous people of the land on which the convening was taking place, and asking for a moment of reflection on the complicated history that this land bears. She then invited everyone in the room to introduce themselves by answering the question, “What is your oxygen?” Participants shared a variety of responses, broadly focused on ways of being (curiosity, discovery, hope, peace, love, passion, creativity, freedom, respect, empowerment, resilience), people, and relationships (youth/children, families, neighborhoods, networks, connections/connectedness, conversation, learning, and creating great places for kids to grow).

**Jeremy Liu** (PolicyLink) described the interdisciplinary breadth of today’s audience. He reflected upon the state of the current research evidence related to the arts and health and highlighted the need to include comprehensive qualitative data. He reminded us that work toward equity is “not only for specialists, it’s for all of us.” He then raised questions for the group to think about during the next two days:

- Are people with “skin in the arts” more inclined to participate in community?
- What is the state of research and what do we know about “social cohesion”?
- How do we articulate the mechanism by which the arts engender cohesion and to what end?

**Ellen Hahn** (University of Kentucky/Center for Rural Health) described how her work helped communities in Kentucky move toward becoming smoke-free, which was a huge feat in a tobacco state. She spoke about rural health disparities and their broader relationship to environmental health. Ellen stated that people in Kentucky are disproportionately affected by environmental issues, clean water, etc. Within the Center for Rural Health, Ellen focuses on

priority health issues for the area, including heart disease, cancer, and the opioid crisis. The Center leads activities that are designed to meet people where they are and to improve their lives. This work involves the arts in several ways, including a quilting club that is part of a smoking cessation program.

**Victor Rubin** (PolicyLink) began his introduction by stressing the value of the diverse collection of people in the room. However, he also noticed that, because of this diversity, some people may not immediately see themselves as part of the working group’s mission. Victor joked, “If you don’t quite yet know why you’re here, you will by lunch time.”

He then introduced PolicyLink and discussed the institution’s connection to arts, culture, and equitable development. He shared a description of the organization’s history working in health equity and challenged working group participants to do some “rigorous thinking” on the following points:

- What do we need to understand that will lead to more positive health outcomes?
- Are the answers the same for all communities?
- We need practice-based evidence as well as evidence-based practice.
- What does artistic expression mean for the quality of health?
- No one discipline has all the answers.
- There are deeply felt institutional factors that we must understand.
- How can we better think systematically?
- The historical inequities and traumas that shape this country are still a part of people’s lives. This is not just an intellectual exercise.
- How can these ideas be put in the hands of people who can act?



Jill Sonke (University of Florida) then introduced the two-year Creating Healthy Communities: Art + Public Health initiative. She began by acknowledging that the connection between the arts and public health is not a new idea. There has never been a time in history where the arts and culture have not been connected to health and well-being. Jill went on to note that, while arts and culture have been utilized in various ways within the public health sector in the US, they are significantly underutilized as a sector and as community-based assets.

Jill described how the Creating Healthy Communities: Art + Public Health in America initiative was designed with a place-based perspective to accelerate the development of arts in public health as “a thing”, like arts in healthcare has become in recent years. This initiative is designed to drive cross-sector collaboration among the community development, public health, and arts and culture sectors.

In addition to convening nine national working groups of thought leaders, the initiative has undertaken a robust research agenda, including:

- Focus groups to capture lived experiences

- A field survey of professionals working at the intersections of the arts, public health, and community development
- Scoping reviews to consolidate the evidence around the arts and well-being and the arts and health communication
- An on-going systematic review focused on how the arts have been used in suicide prevention and survivorship

The initiative has created a series of resources that translate research and knowledge to policy and practice. On September 19th a state-level policy brief will be released. This will be followed by municipal and federal governmental advisory briefs, peer-reviewed publications, and several academic resources, including an online Arts in Public Health certificate.

A white paper offering recommendations for addressing five priority public health issues through cross-collaborations between arts and culture, community development, and public health will be released on September 23rd to coincide with the *Creating Healthy Communities: Art + Public Health* Florida conference.

## Key Terms & Theory of Change

Anne Gadwa Nicodemus and Rachel Engh (Metris Arts Consulting) introduced the Social Cohesion Theory of Change framework drafted by Metris, and explained that they hoped this could be used to ignite discussion on the language and ways of thinking about social cohesion, place-based arts and cultural strategies. Metris defined social cohesion as “when individuals feel and act as part of a group that is oriented towards working together.”



The Social Cohesion Theory of Change framework was created around four guiding questions:

- What is social cohesion?
- How does it relate to place-based arts and cultural strategies?
- What is the relationship between place-based arts and cultural strategies, social cohesion and increased equitable environments?
- Who works at this intersection and how?

This Theory of Change considers that:

- Placed-based arts and cultural strategies drive social cohesion, which enables coordinated community organization and activity and leads to equitable community well-being.
- Social cohesion is made up of four different dimensions. All four must be present for cohesion to be achieved.
  1. an orientation toward the common good
  2. willingness to participate
  3. sense of belonging
  4. relationships

Rachel introduced the “Dear Tamaqua...” initiative to illustrate how Metris’s Theory of Change could be applied. Before the program began, the small North Eastern Pennsylvania town of Tamaqua had low levels of community trust and connection. The program distributed coasters and pieces of paper containing the writing prompt “Dear Tamaqua...” to community members who responded by sharing negative as well as positive feedback as if they were writing a letter to their town.

In this former mining community with low community moral, the perception of community ownership was increased by the creation and display of these messages. Residents articulated and strengthened their relationship to their town through this art activity with a low barrier to entry. Following this initiative, more large-scale community events were developed to imagine a vision for the future based on community, equity, and shared values.

### What was it about “Dear Tamaqua” that helped drive cohesion?

- Prioritized ownership and obtained feedback from diverse groups of community members
  - \*Organizers did not censor the result for positive content
  - \*Specific groups of community members were targeted whose voices were not typically heard

### How did it do this?

- Increased social capital by forming new connections with one another
- Allowed people to articulate their relationship to the town
- Low barrier to participation: you could write a letter in a bar on the back of a drink coaster, for example

### What did social cohesion do?

- Since this time, the town of Tamaqua has organized community-wide events that bring people together
- There is now a drop-in coffee shop that has since opened and continues to bring people together
- The project yielded significant improvements in relationships, connectedness and social capital
- People feel like their voices matter more
- Enabled coordinated community organization and the envisioning of a future in which community members have collective efficacy and collective action
- Helped the community develop shared values

Anne highlighted the need to keep in mind that social cohesion takes time and is not always linear. Discussion following this presentation focused on the need for broad research on interventions that cross racial and ethnic lines.

## IN COMMUNITIES FACING SOCIAL, HEALTH AND WELLBEING INEQUITIES

Ongoing structural disinvestment has led to social, health, and wellbeing disparities in American communities.

Social cohesion works to alleviate these disparities, notably in historically marginalized communities.

Place-based arts and cultural strategies are well equipped to amplify social cohesion and build toward more equitable wellbeing.

## PLACE-BASED ARTS AND CULTURAL STRATEGIES



THAT PRIORITIZE  
COMMUNITY OWNERSHIP



THAT CONNECT  
PEOPLE



THAT INCLUDE ALL TYPES  
OF COMMUNITY MEMBERS

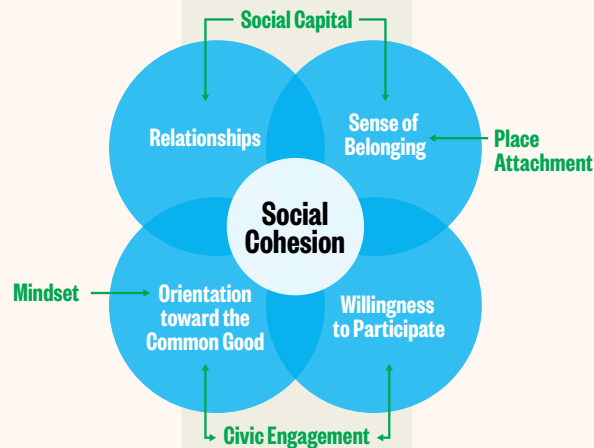


THAT HAVE A CONSISTENT  
PRESENCE IN THE COMMUNITY



THAT ALIGN TOPICALLY TO  
REINFORCE DESIRED IMPACTS

## DRIVE THE DRIVERS



## OF SOCIAL COHESION

## WHICH ENABLES COORDINATED COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION AND ACTIVITY



Developing Shared Values



Collective Efficacy



Collective Action

## AND LEADS TO INCREASED EQUITABLE COMMUNITY WELLBEING.



Mental and Physical Health



Safety



Efficacy and Empowerment



Preservation of Community/Heritage

and those feed back into, amplify, and grow **SOCIAL COHESION**.



## Site Visits

Working group members divided themselves into two groups for the site visits. Each group had the opportunity to visit two of the three local sites: **Polk-Dalton Clinic**, **London Ferrill Community Garden/BlackSoil**, and the **Justice House**.

The Polk-Dalton Clinic visit was led by **Dr. Thaddeus Salmon**, an Internist and Assistant Professor at the University of Kentucky College of Medicine. The clinic, named after two African American physicians from Georgetown who once practiced in the neighborhood, began in a trailer before being bought by the University of Kentucky 20 years ago. It now offers OB/GYN and internal medicine services to a diverse population within a new facility that was constructed to better serve Lexington's Northside and urban communities. Polk-Dalton's patient population is primarily made up of Medicaid recipients. Many of these patients are undocumented and 45% are non-English speaking. The team expressed pride in serving this community, including their ability to develop payment plans, employ three full-time medical interpreters, and have International Clinic Days with longer appointment times intended to accommodate translation. The clinic develops

programming in partnership with organizations throughout the community to better serve at-risk populations. One such example was the PATHways program, designed to help pregnant women seeking assistance for opioid and other substance use disorders.

In the London Ferrill Community Garden, **Ryan Koch**, founder and director of Seedleaf, described the non-profit organization's mission to cultivate successful community gardens in Fayette County's food deserts. Located on the property of a local church, the London Ferrill Community Garden was named after an enslaved person who, after emancipation, moved to Lexington and became a prominent Reverend. London Ferrill was buried in a cemetery adjacent to the gardens and serves as a reminder of the Garden's partnership with faith-based communities. Seedleaf promotes community revitalization by providing education and hands-on skill development for community members, and includes to opportunity to work on several garden plots and fruit trees, a mobile composting service, and recycling services. The organization's efforts place particular emphasis on youth engagement.







Tanya and Christian Torp welcomed working group members to their home, Justice House, where they engage in what they refer to as “Radical Hospitality” by opening up their home to the community. They bring people (those without homes, neighbors, sex workers, children, politicians... everyone!) together around events like their regular pancake and waffle breakfasts, canning lessons, concerts, art-making groups, etc. Tanya made a point about the lack of “third spaces” in the community where people can come together. Although the Torps are motivated by their religious beliefs to engage in this work, they open their home to people of all beliefs.

There are several non-profits that work out of Justice House. In the front of the house is a law firm where Christian Torp provides free law services. The front yard offers a vegetable garden where people can come and take what they want. The Torps stated that they rarely even really see the people who visit the garden - they just come and take what they need. They also glean from the market across the street and share this with the community.

The East End neighborhood where they live has a very “sit on your porch” culture. For their wedding, the Torps, who were new to the neighborhood,

invited the entire community to come. Tanya joked, "They say it takes ten years to be part of a community. That wedding took off some of that time, about a day." The neighborhood is facing gentrification and expulsion, and no one knows where displaced neighbors end up going. Longtime residents, who have found themselves pushed to the margins, are sharing the message "you are welcome, but we are here" with new residents of the neighborhood. Justice House leverages the power of the collective. They recently invited city officials to listen to community members and gave them a tour of the neighborhood, entering homes and allowing neighbors to show and discuss their problems.

Tanya works full time as the Executive Director of Step-by-Step, a non-profit Christian organization that provides programs for young single mothers. She cited the flexibility and support of her job as very important in allowing her to do the work that she does with Justice House. The Torps have no outside funding for Justice House.

Following Tanya and Christian's presentation, participants were invited to share comments and questions, which included the following points:

- Universities will come in and collect stories; we never know where they go"
- There is a need for financial support for work like this; the Torps are at risk of burning out if they do not get support
- No one needs to bring people in; community expertise is already there; "the neighborhood is the answer, and the neighborhood is moving out"
- Leadership training and stipends are needed to make this work sustainable
- People want to know how to do this work - they need to be able to take time off from their jobs and not lose their jobs if they engage in community work

Black Soil co-founders **Trevor Claiborn** and **Ashley Smith** discussed how Black Soil celebrates black farmers in Kentucky through education on topics related to agriculture, sustainability, and urban gardening. In addition to hosting farm to table dinners with partners from throughout the state, Black Soil offers workshops for adults, adolescents, and children on various topics related to agriculture. Trevor described how he uses hip-hop to engage the community. As Farmer Brown the MC, Trevor raps to young audiences on topics like pollination and photosynthesis. Engaging the community in such a manner, he believes, gives African American children an opportunity to see themselves represented in farming, and more likely to engage with it themselves. During the walking tour, Ashley showed working group participants murals that had been created to increase knowledge and respect for local Lexington culture.

## Lunch Presentation



Over lunch, author **Crystal Wilkinson** (University of Kentucky), discussed her award-winning novel *Birds of Opulence*. The novel was inspired by her life as a black woman in Appalachia and her mother's struggle with mental health issues. The term "bird" is a word that her grandmother used for a woman who "wasn't right", who does not follow society's norms or fit in. Crystal discussed how she would like this book to bring light to mental illness.

Crystal's mother was hospitalized and diagnosed with paranoid schizophrenia. As an adult, Crystal was able to obtain her mother's medical files - over 300 pages of documents, including letters from her grandmother. She learned through these documents that her mother constantly longed for the land. She shared poetry that was inspired by these pages, one inspired by her mother's Rorschach tests, and another

based on a letter from her grandmother. Then, she read a powerful excerpt from the book.

In Appalachia, African Americans often do not get the mental health care that they need. The reasons why they do not receive care include cost, access, a desire to handle the problem within the family (pray it away), and the stigma of mental illness. A lack of trust in medical facilities and medical staff is also a challenge for some individuals. Often, they do not know where to go for services, are unable to locate them, or these services are not available (this applies to rural people in general as well as specifically to African Americans). They may not have time, or do not believe that treatment will not help due to how long it can take. There is also a fear of being committed or having to take medication for the rest of their lives.

## Considering the Issues: Social Cohesion

**Sarah Calderon (ArtPlace America)** introduced this panel discussion on social cohesion which included presentations by **Susan Seifert (University of Pennsylvania)**, **Alex Gibson (Appalshop)**, and **Carolyn Rubin (Tufts University)**.

### **Susan Seifert (University of Pennsylvania), Social Impact of the Arts project**

Susan Seifert described her team at the University of Pennsylvania School of Social Policy & Practice's study of the influence of cultural engagement on urban communities in New York City and Philadelphia. This research mapped cultural ecology and the density of cultural assets, alongside other well-being indicators such as health, personal security, and education, using a neighborhood-based multidimensional index of wellbeing.

Susan acknowledged that the project's methodology did not include an analysis of social cohesion because of its emphasis on individual experience. After controlling for race, economics, and ethnicity, positive relationships were found between the number of cultural offerings within a neighborhood and other measures of well-being including personal health and security. This relationship was strongest in low-income neighborhoods, neighborhoods lacking in other forms of "capital" (financial, human, and cultural). These findings highlight the important role of social networks in cultural engagement and corresponding with community wellbeing.

Susan pointed out that these cultural assets were not enough to mitigate the negative effects of economic inequality and social exclusion on health outcomes. She in Philadelphia, low-income neighborhoods received only one percent of philanthropic arts funding between 2003 and 2014. She concluded with a call to increase investment in the cultural ecology of the poorest communities in order to compound the positive effects of cultural engagement.

### **Alex Gibson, Appalshop**

In the simplest sense, "Appalshop is about giving cameras to local folks to tell their own stories."

In order to describe the deeper importance of Appalshop's effort to restore social cohesion through art and storytelling, Alex painted a broad picture of the ways social cohesion has historically been eroded through the interruption and restructuring of societies. He spoke about the partitioning of the Ottoman Empire by the Allied forces after World War I, a process which destabilized a culture and enabled allied forces to exert their power and extract oil. He explained how such cultural fragmentation and restructuring can be seen across Africa, Southeast Asia, and even within coal-rich Appalachia. "Somehow, the harvesting of resources is connected to the destruction of songs." Alex countered this depiction of social destruction with an idea he credited to Karl Marx – that humans are naturally cooperative creatures.

Alex concluded that the aim of Appalshop - and the work of the arts as a whole - is to help rebuild social cohesion by sharing the stories of seemingly disparate groups, and to help us remember what we share in common.





## Carolyn Rubin, Tufts University

In describing her work at Tufts University College of Medicine, Carolyn Rubin stated that she sees herself not so much as a researcher, but as a community builder and bridge between the University and the surrounding Boston China Town community. Social cohesion has always existed in China Town, she explained, and it is social cohesion that has helped to preserve the community in the face of displacement and gentrification.

Carolyn discussed how, through an academic community partnership called ADAPT, community members were able to define how they thought about health, and address issues like pedestrian safety, gambling issues, and affordable housing. Additionally, she described her work with the Pao Arts Center, a new civic space built on reclaimed land and developed with the aim of promoting social cohesion and social networks. Such a space provides a venue to heal trauma and celebrate Asian culture.

She concluded with a call to acknowledge the history of a place and those who came before as an essential step toward strengthening social cohesion.

### Group Discussion

Time for questions and discussions followed the presentations. The following key points were emphasized in those discussions:

- Social cohesion is an attitude that is difficult to measure quantitatively
- History and historic injustices must be acknowledged in order for community work to be authentic
- Individual stories, history, and current combined may create a more authentic picture of a community
- Cross-sector collaborative research on social determinants is needed for evidence-based practice
- Work must be organized around community-based centers of power
- Isolated communities must be connected with resources

## Considering the Issues: Equity

**Chera Reid (The Kresge Foundation)** introduced this panel on equity. She noted that organizations are starting to discuss race more specifically, and that this is important in regard to work on equity. Each of the three presenters spoke about their definitions of equity and the ways that it shows up in their work.

### Nupur Chaudhury, NY State Health Foundation

Nupur introduced herself as both a representative of the New York Health Department and as a public health practitioner working with community partners. She pointed out that there is a difference between a community-created strategy and a community-owned strategy, and challenged the group to think about centering communities in decision-making.

People are healthier when they are able to self-determine their own futures. She shared the example of Brownsville, a neighborhood of 85,000 people in predominantly public housing with very poor social and health outcomes. The unofficial mayor of Brownsville, who invited Nupur to work in the community, told her that there was hope in everyone in this neighborhood, but you have to move the dust out of the way to find it. When he died of a sudden heart attack, the community began to lose hope as they mourned the loss of their leader. Subsequently, Nupur helped to organize a Hope Summit that brought people together to discuss their hopes for the neighborhood. Transportation was provided, and it was conducted like a wedding. Food was served on nice tablecloths, seating was assigned, entertainment was hired, and childcare was provided in the form of tables that brought kids together in their own discussions about the neighborhood.

At the second Hope Summit, conversations focused on residents' hopes for Belmont Avenue - a once thriving street that by 2013, had become a place of gun violence and closed buildings. Young people decided to improve this area using technology. The

project encouraged and empowered residents with the belief that change was something they could and should do. The Brownsville Community Justice Center moved their office to the Belmont location. The community repainted plazas with the slogan "Brownsville stronger together." Once the community started to do this work, city funding followed. Nupur juxtaposed this example with an example of another community rebuilt after Hurricane Sandy. In this community on the Lower East Side, designers implemented place-based strategies from the "top-down." People were brought together to discuss what they wanted, but the solutions were not designed by the community. The idea of a flood wall that would double as a recreation space when there was not a hurricane never came to fruition. Once the proposal was made, it was cancelled. Through these examples, Nupur showed the importance of communities owning and operating the processes required for creating and implementing strategies towards positive social change.

#### **Gabrielle Uballez, US Dept of Arts and Culture**

Gabrielle is a community-based artist who works at the US Department of Arts and Culture, an organization that does grassroots networking to incite imagination and collaboration. She orients to equity as a community organizer and community-based artist. In her presentation, Gabrielle interpreted the concept of "equity" as necessary but

insufficient, because it does not get to the root of the problem.

Equity says that we need to give more to people who are disenfranchised, but it does not enable us to imagine the world we want. She characterized equity as something that we need to practice and challenged us to think about how to practice equity within the boundaries of current systems, while simultaneously working toward something better. Equity is a necessary ingredient, but the end goal should be collective liberation.

- Equity centers white, European norms as the standard, disallowing space to reckon with the work we all need to do.
- Collective liberation, on the other hand, centers perspectives that are marginalized (indigenous, queer, people of color).

In moving toward creating the world in which she wants to live, Gabrielle is moving away from terms like "art" and "culture." Many communities don't parse out art and culture from life. She also challenged the group to consider how can we support indigenous and black and brown communities - and not just elitist, white/European, "fine arts" orgs - in having their art supported?

Collective liberation requires that we all love ourselves, love our neighbors, and work together toward common goals. Gabrielle referenced *This Little Light of Mine* - a film about a queer black activist named Wendy O'Neal - to contextualize collective liberation. After watching the film, she felt a desire to better understand the black queer perspective. Watching the film raised questions for her about how we can as a society center love, not fear, and how we can support places where arts and culture are deeply embedded.





### Tasha Golden, University of Florida

Tasha began her talk by sharing her perspective as a folk artist. Before moving into academia, she was a touring singer-songwriter, often writing and performing songs about domestic violence and mental illness. These songs garnered the most interest from audiences. People, mainly women, would come up to her after concerts to talk about these songs, sharing things that happened in their own lives. Many times, they would admit that she was the first person they had ever told about the abuse they had been through. This meant they had not told doctors or other health care providers, or counted in reports and studies of domestic violence in their communities.

In her work with incarcerated girls, Tasha also noted that the information they shared in their poems was often very different from the information on their intake surveys. The surveys, she believed, were asking the wrong questions in the wrong ways. As the sole source of data, the information collected from surveys was not inaccurate, but inadequate; not incorrect, but incomplete. When health is defined and valued in Euro-centric ways, the information gathered may be inadequate or represent people inaccurately. The arts encourage unique shifts in rhetoric, sometimes with more authenticity than healthcare settings or surveys. She voiced the need for researchers learn how to treat this type of data as robust and rigorous.

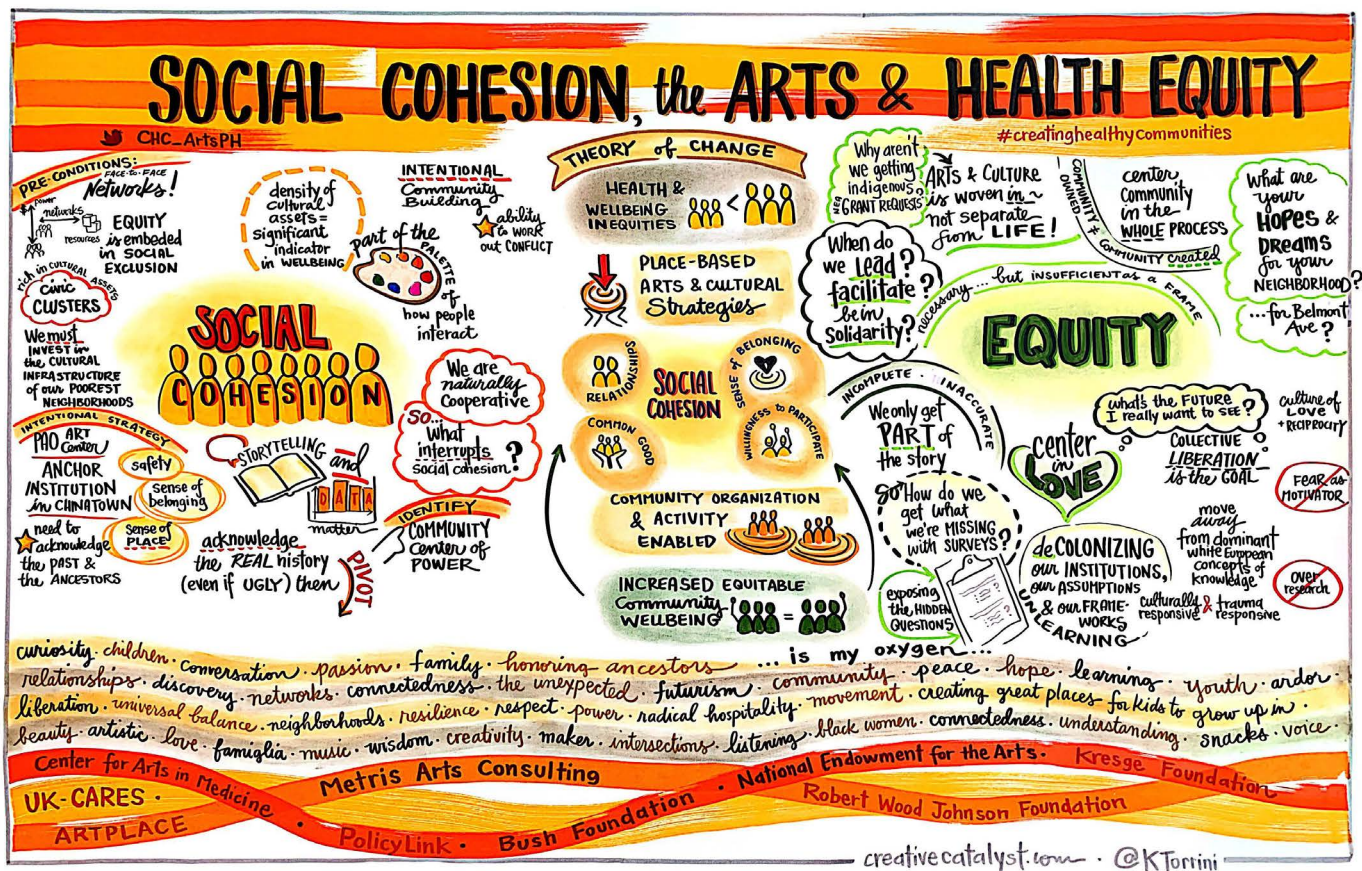
Tasha shared another example that contrasted a city survey on youth violence with a writing contest about “youth perceptions of violence and how we make a better Louisville.” The number one subject of the young people’s writing was domestic violence and its relationship to intimate partner violence. The winning poem was about miscarriage, a topic that is not typically connected to youth violence but was salient in the mind and experience of the young person who wrote it. The city survey did not ask youth about those topics at all. Tasha reminded the group that this is what can be missed with surveys, which tend to predetermine answers.

Tasha also reminded the group about the importance of finding ways to talk to people who do not want to talk to someone with a clipboard. Epistemologies are implicitly biased by the questions we ask and the ways in which they are asked (i.e. clipboards, tablets, pieces of paper). It is likely that the participants in a survey have already answered the questions asked of them, but they have answered them in their own ways. What is thought of as “knowledge” is situated in biases. Tasha challenged the group to question biases and to gather information through culturally responsive mechanisms.

*The artist cannot and must not take anything for granted but must drive to the heart of every answer and expose the question the answer hides.*

—James Baldwin





## Group Discussion

Time for questions and discussions followed the presentations.

The following key points were emphasized in those discussions:

- Equity as a frame is important, but insufficient
- There is a need for radical imagination to move beyond the current state
- We must simultaneously attend to past, present and future
- People who are black, indigenous, queer must be centered
- People must be seen as their whole selves
- Center love
- A different "posture" is needed in how this work is approached and how those doing the work show up
- The questions, "when do we lead, when do we follow, and what's our position in the work?" must be carefully considered
- The institutions, minds, and approaches involved in this work must be decolonized
- Universal basic income could make a difference

## Practice Models

Jeremy Liu (PolicyLink) moderated this session with presentations of practice models by Meghan Tompkins (Cheyenne River Youth Project/REDCAN), Jerome Chou (Kounkuey Design Initiative), and BJ McBride (BE-Imaginative Collective). Each presentation was delivered in a PechaKucha format with 20 slides, each shown for 20 seconds.

### **Meghan Tompkins, Cheyenne River Youth Project/REDCAN**

This project takes place in an isolated region of the country, which is home to a large Lakota population. It is one of the poorest counties in the nation. There are high unemployment and suicide rates, and a history of forced relocation and repression. It was illegal to practice the native religion until the 20th century. However, the arts are entwined in everything to the extent that there is no word for art in the Lakota language.

The Cheyenne River/REDCAN project began in 1988 when a bar was converted into a youth center. It now offers paid internships, job training, and indigenous cooking classes. Community meals, weekend arts and culture camps, arts fellowships, and a graffiti jam connect youth to their art and culture. The graffiti jam, which just celebrated its fifth year, consists of two days of creating murals followed by a two-day festival. Youth involved in the project are mentored by artists in the community and media partners.

REDCAN beautifies the city by selecting empty buildings to improve through art. The project simultaneously preserves the Lakota language through its use in street art. The project functions through multiple partnerships and contributions from volunteers; some forty volunteers participated in this year's graffiti jam. The impact of the project is much more than just "art on the walls," as it facilitates reflection of heritage and tradition, particularly

for youth in the community. "It's healing... when you're painting, your mind is going somewhere else, creating just enough room for a positive thought to come in."

### **Jerome Chou, Kounkuey Design Initiative (KDI)**

KDI was founded in Nairobi, Kenya in 2006, and now has offices in Los Angeles and Coachella. The organization works closely with residents in underdeveloped communities to create resources that address physical, social, and economic priorities through design. Meaningful participation is at the heart of the work with community organizers to cultivate leaders and make planning and design accessible.

The organization works toward the creation of permanent spaces and toward policy change to create more of these spaces. Jerome shared the work that KDI has done in Kibera, a low-income neighborhood of Nairobi with frequent flooding. They recruited unofficial celebrities from the neighborhood and made billboards with their pictures and warnings about potential flooding and how to prevent it. After seeing how effective KDI has been using design for community development, government agencies became very interested in replicating this model.

In Los Angeles, KDI adapts this placemaking approach to the United States context. When the local government was not interested in building the parks that the community wanted, KDI invented a "wobble" (a durable plastic play object that can be assembled to create the world's largest rocking chair) that they deployed along with other objects to create pop-up "play streets". They are in the process of working with the Department of Transportation to expand this work. "Play streets" improve the quality of community, feelings of safety, activity, and reduce stress.



The Collective began in Oakland and was initially funded by the organizing network formerly known as PICO California, now Faith in Action, and has expanded to seven other cities in California, as well as New York City, New Orleans, and Washington, DC. Their goal is to reach 10 cities that are experiencing gun violence and implement the program in partnership with local people in the community.



Discussion following these presentations included the following key points:

#### **Social cohesion:**

- It takes time; the assumption that faster is better must be disrupted
- There is a spectrum from authentic to inauthentic work; individuals working in communities must recognize their own spectrum and weigh the benefits of what they can contribute

#### **What would help to accelerate your practice?**

- More community involvement and funding (Meghan)

- Being able to hire organizers (Jerome)
- Funding and new relationships (BJ)

#### **How are your relationships with city government?**

- “We are a community staple. We work alongside the tribal government. They were involved from the beginning.” (Meghan)
- “We have some close partnerships (like the DOT in LA). In other places where communities are not recognized or are neglected, we drag the city along and try to change how they work.” (Jerome)
- “A local councilwoman lost her son so she has been a huge advocate. We are still trying to deepen other connections.” (BJ)

## **Sociometry Exercise**

In this embodied dialogue, Jill Sonke asked participants to choose a position in the room in response to their answers to the question:

#### ***Can place-based arts and cultural strategies lead to concrete health equity outcomes?***

Jill identified one side of the room as the “yes” side and the other side of as the “no” side, and asked participants to stand somewhere on the spectrum in response. Most people moved closer to the “yes” point of the continuum. Jill asked people to explain why they had chosen their position.

#### **Several themes emerged from this discussion.**

- What is meant by “health equity outcomes” needs clarification. The answer to the question depends on community, funding, and on what health outcomes are actually being measured and who sets those standards. Is the goal to make everyone have the same health outcomes? What about regions and neighborhoods that suffer from disinvestment? Are we talking about “equitable health outcomes” or “health equity outcomes”?
- Communities are perhaps too heterogenous to address health equity with a broad scope. There is heterogeneity within communities. Not everything has the same impact on everyone. Community may be too large of a unit to consider. Strategies may need to be targeted to neighborhoods. Communities are also not always geographically bound. For example, one may not be geographically bound by the black community place-wise, but relate more with the black community in Lexington. Sometimes, it is difficult to make that distinction within the existing funding paradigm.
- Liberation vs. Equity. Structural inequities limit everyone. The term “equity” doesn’t leave room for change beyond structural limitations. Liberation is critical to change.
- How are outcomes defined? How can mental health be defined? Are desired outcomes agreed upon?
  - o The notion of outcomes is problematic. An outcome is not a thing that’s fixed forever, and must be time-bound and how they can be maintained must be a consideration.

Time and funding lead to impact. Health equity outcomes depend on funders. Do they allow for time and support to build relationships and co-create?

- **In response to a second question, *To what extent is social cohesion a driver of health equity outcomes?*, the question of what health equity outcomes are was raised again.** It was defined in the moment by using Metris's Theory of Change, as "mental and physical health, safety, equity and empowerment, preservation of community/heritage." With respect to "equity," participants decided to engage the definition from Grantmakers in the Arts, "the fair treatment, access, opportunity, and advancement of all people, while at the same time striving to identify and eliminate barriers that have prevented full participation in the group."

The group positioned themselves widely across the room in response to this question, with the following themes emerging from the discussion:

- **There is promising evidence from the site visits that social cohesion can drive health equity. A narrative around social cohesion was coherent at the sites and the arts clearly played an important role.**
- **Social cohesion can be used as a positive mobilizing force for equity and aspects of social cohesion are the precursors for effective community organizing:**
  - o People cannot organize effectively without trust and a willingness to work together
  - o The outcomes of social cohesion can be tactical, social or transformative
  - o Communities can't achieve transformation without social cohesion
  - o With social cohesion ideas can be handed things, creating a new generation of leaders, and building the power to make policy change
  - o An emphasis on the tactical may not lead to the lasting change that is required, but it can guide the culture in the right direction
- **Social cohesion is either a mediator or a moderator to get to health equity.**
  - o Policy change is needed to get to institutional and systems change
  - o Social cohesion will trigger these things
  - o Institutional disinvestment is causing inequities; in order to tackle structural inequality, there needs to be structural institutional changes and responsibility taking
- **Social cohesion can be good for leveraging power against an institution, but when does the power shift? What is the responsibility of the institution?**
  - o For example, even if everyone knew their rights about sexual reproduction, hospitals that have certain policies and practices don't allow people to exercise autonomy over their own bodies
  - o The people who are doing harm don't always come from within the community
- **The effectiveness of social cohesion is dependent on power and collective liberation**
  - o Social cohesion can be positive or negative
  - o Its effectiveness is based on power
  - o Certain communities have used social cohesion to resist oppression and segregation
  - o In some ways, desegregation has disrupted the social cohesion of those communities.
  - o It is important to understand what power people have to disrupt systems of oppression
- **Social cohesion can also work to perpetuate inequality**
  - o The social cohesion of the dominant culture led to inequities
  - o We must enable cohesion of marginalized groups to bolster change
- **Who is carrying water for who? It is not just the job of those who are most affected by whatever the issue is to carry the water, to push for change**
  - o Places like Justice House should not be entirely self-funded



## Discussion #1: Considering the Theory of Change

Discussion #1 was moderated by **Katie Wehr** of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. Before outlining the discussion process, Katie spoke briefly about the origins of the Theory of Change, and how it evolved out of a desire by funders to change the way they orient and ground their funding efforts. The small table dialogues for this discussion were intended to dissect the different aspects of the Theory of Change, to evaluate its potential effectiveness, and to propose new ways of thinking about social cohesion. Each table responded to different questions.

**Group 1A: Place-Based Arts & Cultural Strategies.**  
*What characteristics of place-based arts and cultural strategies are most effective at fostering social cohesion? How do they amplify social cohesion?*

**The Theory of Change calls out five characteristics of place-based arts & cultural strategies. They amplify social cohesion by: increasing social capital, place attachment, civic engagement and changing mindset. Does this ring true? Why/why not?**

### Key Points

- Arts and cultural strategies offer a way for communities to heal from trauma and to organize
- A sense of belonging is more than place attachment
- Gentrification has made it difficult for marginalized voices to be heard within their longstanding communities
- Desire for a clear anti-racist framing within the model of social cohesion
- The framework is missing institutional accountability to the needs of communities
- Community-led, grassroots approaches are more effective than Institution-led approaches

**Group 1C: What is social cohesion? What does social cohesion mean to you?**

**The Theory of Change calls out four dimensions of social cohesion: relationships, sense of belonging, orientation toward the common good, and willingness to participate.**

*Does this ring true? Why/why not?*

### Key Points

- Social cohesion can mean different things depending on time, place, scale and context
- Social cohesion is a precondition, but not sufficient as an outcome
  - Collective efficacy moving into collective liberation
- Durability, time, and duration are important considerations for projects aimed at building social cohesion
- Trust and accountability should be included as dimensions of social cohesion

**Group 1D: Social cohesion to what end? Outcomes? What does social cohesion do for communities and how does it do it?**

**In the Theory of Change, social cohesion enables coordinated organization and activity. The development of shared values, collective efficacy, and collective action are the next “steps” of the process towards achieving equitable community wellbeing.**

*Does this ring true? Why/why not?*

### Key Points

- Social cohesion is naturally occurring – however, it can be positive or negative
  - Can be disrupted by elements such as gentrification
- Remove empowerment and replace with power sharing within communities

- Lack of social cohesion amplifies violence, mental illness, and reduces a sense of belonging
- Questioned the language of “place based” solutions - how do they apply to those who have been displaced? How can a sense of belonging and community be recreated for those individuals?

**Group 1E: Equitable Health & Wellbeing Impacts.**  
*What health equity impacts do place-based arts and cultural strategies and social cohesion generate?*  
*How?*

**The Theory of Change calls out five health and wellbeing impacts: mental and physical health, safety, efficacy and empowerment, preservation of community/heritage.**

*Does this ring true? Why/why not?*

#### **Key Points**

- This group had trouble with the language of the question, so they reframed it slightly, discussing instead the ways in which arts and culture strategies themselves improve social cohesion
- Assuming the arts do improve social cohesion, they have the capacity to generate the following outcomes:
  - o Cultural pride
  - o Sense of belonging
  - o Create platforms to be heard – echoing the idea that power should be shared, not given
  - o Experience of beauty – health outcomes of joy and celebration

**Groups 1F: Policy. What policies have been or could be effective at facilitating social cohesion through place-based arts and cultural strategies?**

#### **Key Points**

- The group could not point to any ways policies are specifically intended to positively affect and drive arts and culturally based outcomes
- Potential policies
  - o Population-based incentives where hospitals and health institutions are reimbursed for driving positive health outcomes as well as arts and cultural strategies

- o Include disenfranchised populations in the conversation during the planning and development of policy
- o Issue of gentrification - how do we maintain social cohesion if established communities are being destroyed because people can no longer afford to live in their homes or pay taxes?
- o The media as drivers of policy - who's stories are being told and who's telling those stories?

Following individual reports by each small group, the full group engaged in an open discussion. Certain implicit assumptions within the model were questioned, such as the utility of describing arts and cultural strategies as “place-based”. It was noted that many communities may not be tied to a specific geographic location, but are instead unified through shared identity. “Community-based” was suggested as a plausible alternative, an alternative for which the group expressed support.

It was suggested that the proposed drivers of social cohesion in the model could instead be reworked as constructs for assessing social cohesion in a community, therefore giving strategists a better understanding of what intervention or approach would be most effective.

There was a call to identify the types of policies and institutional practices that oppress certain communities, drive social exclusion, and hinder collective liberation. Additional reflections on this point emphasized the need for policy and institutional investment that enables people's capacity for personal efficacy and self-determination, particularly within communities who have been systemically disempowered. The subject of power remained a theme throughout the discussion, with the need to exalt the arts and cultures of marginalized communities as a central conclusion.



## Closing Summary



**Jeremy Liu (PolicyLink)** provided the closing summary for Day One of the working group. He shared the following observations:

- Community members feel a sense of responsibility for one another. But the challenge is, if people do not have the power to enact this responsibility, change cannot be made. There is a disconnect between authority and responsibility.
- It is important to consider the situational appropriateness of using terms like place, community, power.
- Recognizing the broad array of professionals in the room, including practitioners, policy makers, and researchers, Jeremy encouraged each person to imagine if they had a position different than their own, and to ask themselves one of the following questions:
  - o If you're a researcher, what would you go out and do if you had a magic researcher wand?
  - o If you're a policy-maker, what kind of research would you want to see and share?
  - o If you're a practitioner, what kind of policy would you want to see to help your work move forward?



## Day Two: Welcome & Overview of the Day

The day began with a performance by local hip-hop choreographer and dancer, Alex Hernandez. After dancing, Alex shared that where he is from, arts and culture programs do not exist. Having grown up on a farm, he learned about and formed a connection to hip-hop culture at school. He discussed the origins of hip-hop, and how it grew out of a need for personal expression by young people living in the Bronx.

Now, Alex teaches hip-hop dance to children and adolescents within the Lexington community with his organization BULLY, which stands for Believe, Unify, Live, Love, Yours. The organization's members share their love of hip-hop without worrying about how people perceive them. Alex concluded that while some may view hip hop negatively, it is through the artform that he has learned peace, love, positivity, and unity. "If people are sharing their truth", he asked, "how could anyone be judged for telling their story"?

## Reflections on Day One

**Sarah Calderon of ArtPlace America** facilitated the first group conversation of the day by sharing key reflections and questions that emerged for her after day one of the convening.

- Humans are social creatures and like to be in groups. Social cohesion supports this fundamental human need. Creation of groups generates boundaries, which can lead to exclusion
- It is difficult to regulate, police, and create norms within a very large group. It is easier to draw boundaries and divide, rather than to include and strive toward consensus
- Accountability is important. There are often unintended consequences within community work and predicting these consequences can be impossible
- Power is very important in this conversation. Power creates social distance (decreased interest in the thoughts and feelings of others, reduced responsiveness, etc.), which is a barrier to social cohesion

- There is strength in numbers. Greater cohesion within a group can help generate action, such as speaking out against laws or authority that people don't agree with
- Can social cohesion encourage both wellbeing and productivity? Does it depend on what a community wants to be productive around? Are wellbeing and productivity mutually exclusive?

Dialogue that followed raised several questions:

- Is social cohesion the right organizing frame for this work?
- Where did the concept of social cohesion come from? What kind of intervention was it created to encourage?
- Who is this work intended to impact?
- What are the standards of practice and ethical implications of our actions?
- How can we exalt ideas of transcendence and pleasure?

## Funder Perspectives



**Sunil Iyengar** (National Endowment for the Arts) moderated this panel that included perspectives from the National Endowment for the Arts (Jen Hughes), Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (Katie Wehr), ArtPlace America/Bush Foundation (Erik Takeshita), and the Kresge Foundation (Chera Reid). In his introduction, Sunil explained that at the federal level, discussions about policy issues and the influence of the arts on health often include ideas pertaining to social cohesion. “Even if there are questions about the term’s origin story and what it means” he explained “we need to be aware that it is an important term for the dominant paradigm.” He described a need to obtain better evidence about its relevance.

### **Jen Hughes (National Endowment for the Arts (NEA))**

Jen Hughes began by describing her role as a funder, in which she oversees projects in the field of creative placemaking. The aim of such projects is to work within a systems framework to help support existing connections. Jen described one such project in which the NEA collaborated with the Pittsburgh city government to fund a project by the Greater Pittsburgh Arts Council. The initiative placed artists in city government agencies, and created opportunities for community cultural engagement with the intention of building connections between longtime Pittsburgh residents and new arrivals.

Jen spoke of the way creative placemaking has been the entry point for collaboration between arts and cultural organizations, the public health sector, and community development organizations. Creative placemaking was founded in the wake of the economic recession, starting with ideas of economic development, and transforming into ideas of social change, and ultimately, systems change. The NEA is now exploring how to embed arts and culture to achieve goals of transforming institutions and power structures.

The social change piece of this work is something that has the potential to create new collaborations and advance diverse perspectives. “We need to move beyond economic change toward systematic change,” Jen urged. The NEA has their theory of change posted on their website. They are committed to speaking to other sectors and raising the interest and availability of funding to support this work. Jen encouraged the working group participants to reflect on their “elevator speeches” and how they can best translate their work to others.

### **Katie Wehr (Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF)).**

RWJF is the largest funder of public health in this country. They recently celebrated their forty-year anniversary and looked back at their achievements, as well as what they have not achieved. They saw that equity was not as central as they would have liked.

Katie noted that currently, we live in a country that focuses on treating sick people, rather than keeping people well. This led to a commitment by RWJF to promote a culture of health. RWJF awards the Culture of Health prize to cities and towns as a way of supporting work that is already happening. RWJF intentionally listens to different narratives. They gathered evidence to develop an action framework that includes consideration of how the health care system interacts with social programs, multisector collaboration, and the shared values of health. They are continuing to look for new ways of collecting and sharing evidence.

### **Erik Takeshita (ArtPlace America)**

Erik recently transitioned from the Bush Foundation to ArtPlace, and was able to provide a glimpse into both agencies. He encouraged the group to think about the scale of funding of these agencies. Even the biggest funders like the Bush Foundation are just “a drop in the bucket” of the economic activity of a region. Given these limited resources, how can benefits be maximized? What does success look like? Success, he suggested, will require more money for this type of work, beyond philanthropic foundations. For this, the case must be made to those who are outside of the “usual suspects.” He noted that funding for sectors like housing or healthcare is typically in the millions of dollars. The norm of much smaller awards for arts and culture must be addressed.

### **Chera Reid (Kresge Foundation)**

The Kresge Foundation is focused on developing an equitable evaluation lens that is very important to this work. As an organization, they think a lot about place, in concert with thinking about national organizations and resources. “The toggle” between place- and national- levels is greatly needed. It is part of the institutional journey toward equity. As a foundation, they push to be explicit about their anti-racist frame.



## Discussion #2: Considering social cohesion in heterogeneous, culturally distinct, and transient communities

This break-out group discussion was moderated by Victor Rubin (PolicyLink). The discussion explored the arts and social cohesion in relation to three different types of communities:

- Heterogenous communities - communities that are changing, becoming more heterogenous;
- Communities at risk - those communities that are being forced to move, with cultures that have been or are being erased; and
- Trans-local communities - communities that are not about geographic location, but about social and identity networks.

Two groups discussed the question: *How do heterogeneous communities use place-based arts and cultural strategies to build and sustain social cohesion?*

The following key points emerged from this discussion:

- There are no “homogenous” communities. All communities are culturally heterogeneous in some way.
  - o Communities based on age stratification have been historically overlooked
  - o Communities may also be heterogeneous based on class divisions
  - o Demographics change over time (ex. LA county)
- Shared interests and goals create social cohesion.
  - o Common threats, such as a new development, external threat, can create connectedness
  - o Coalescing around affinity groups and affiliations, common wants, needs, desires or enemies
  - o As long as you trust the goal and you’re willing to work, groups can coexist without strong ties
- Arts and culture do not necessarily lead to social cohesion.
  - o Arts-based activities and programs function as groundwork to enable change rather than a huge transformation
  - o They are stepping-stones, but permanent change requires regular interventions at the policy level
  - o Social cohesion can exist ephemerally; it can exist and then dissipate once the activity or event is gone (i.e. pop up events or activities)
- Arts and culture can create social cohesion that is positive or negative.
  - o Parades, festivals, and community celebrations can build pride in place and encourage new residents to assimilate into the local norm, but they can also be exclusionary, defining inside and outside groups and reinforcing homosocial norms; policy change may be necessary to resolve this
  - o Art making is part of everyday life for many community members; it occurs naturally and not for the purpose of social cohesion
  - o In a lot of places that are dealing with gentrification, many newcomers want to change the neighborhood.
  - o Those in power often define what culture is consumes (what culture is the “good” culture), what culture is wrong, and what culture is policed
  - o Problematic creative placemaking is used to police youth and control the type of art they do
  - o Who are we leaving out of the conversation?
  - o The discussion of marginalized communities and communities of color never includes mentally ill communities in the suburbs that are producing mass shooters
  - o Age is a community that doesn’t get talked about as much; both youth and elders are marginalized groups
  - o Resources can be used to “level the

playing field” but funding institutions lack imagination about what is and isn’t part of health

**Two groups discussed the question: *How do communities that have been marginalized and whose cultural distinctiveness has been threatened, diffused, or suppressed - i.e. “communities at-risk communities” - use(d) place-based arts and cultural strategies to build and sustain social cohesion?***

The following key points emerged from this discussion:

- “Communities at risk” should be reframed as “communities with which the dominant culture does not share power,” “oppressed communities,” or “communities targeted by oppressive, anti-cultural strategies.”
  - o This language shifts the onus from the individual – rather than “disenfranchised people,” we should say “people who have had disenfranchised experiences”
  - o The question should be how dominant cultural practices denigrate certain cultural practices and privilege others
- Events can allow commemoration, memory and remembrance, visibility, and spaces for healing and organizing
- Forms of celebration include dance, rituals, spoken word, oral storytelling, quilting, knitting, and cooking provide remembrance of ancestors, connection to heritage and traditions, acknowledge ways of being, and can “disrupt the establishment”
  - o “Place-based arts in cultural strategies” may not be a term in these communities – arts and culture are just a way of being
- Cohesion happens where people feel safe - the arts and culture can play a role in this
- Resiliency may arise out of social cohesion
- Arts and culture make us feel human; can they help humanize dehumanizing systems?

- The Theory of Change model would look fundamentally different if it had an anti-racist frame; social cohesion would be part, not the center.
- The TOC should center wellbeing, liberation, and love
- Social cohesion may be an indicator, rather than the central focus (i.e. to understand or assess if anti-racism policies are working)
- Segregation, marginalization, assimilation and resiliency should be highlighted
- Appropriation needs to be discussed
- Trans-local communities

**Two groups discussed the question: *How do trans-local communities use place-based arts and cultural strategies to build and sustain social cohesion?***

The following key points emerged from this discussion:

- The “here” is often no longer a single geographic place; communities are shifting because of displacement
  - o Program can move with people
  - o Gentrification can separate local organizations from the people they exist to serve
- Some activities can be particularly useful in bringing people together from different places; festivals such as Latino, Roots, and Heritage festivals, or queer open mic nights, can bring people from even far away because they know that they’ll find others like them
- Digital spaces, such as social media sites can provide a safe space to share ideas
- Arts and Culture can help create a sense of safety and social coherence
- Arts and culture can reach communities of people who are in prisons, in schools, in shelters
- It can be hard for trans-local communities to build collective action because it may be difficult for these communities to access resources



Following reporting out by each group, a final discussion with the full group generated some overarching ideas:

- Orientation toward the “common good” is a value judgement
- Some people like alt-right groups may also feel marginalized
- Engaging an ant-racist frame is essential
- “Every system is perfectly developed to get the results that it gets”; we need to disrupt systems at the top, even if we are working from the bottom
- The people who have been the most affected by injustices have had the least power to change the systems that cause it
- Until the ‘I’ becomes ‘we,’ ‘we’ will always be sick



## Discussion #3: Influencers and Key Strategies

This discussion was moderated by Erik **Takeshita** (ArtPlace America) with the goal of expanding the conversations toward future-looking ideas.

**The discussion engaged small groups around a single question: *Who are the key influencers in the uptake of an action plan for enhancing equity, social cohesion and community health through cross-sector collaboration? What do they need to know?***

The discussion raised the following key points:

- Funders are key influencers
  - Flexibility and fluidity of funding is important
  - Trust is essential between grantees and funders
- Larger non-profits that can help smaller funding organizations
- Universities have different levels of engagement in their communities and need to learn from those on the ground
- Hospitals have to manage pain and anger from violence that makes healthcare workers vulnerable
- Healthcare institutions have money, but are not generally focused outside of hospitals
- Supporting famous figures/popular culture influencers can create new understanding of issues and foster change
- Political change can only occur through disruption
- Institutions struggle to find balance between satisfying the status quo and moving forward in bold ways
- Should the focus be on changing communities or the oppressors of those communities?
  - Those impacted should not be solely responsible for reshaping structures
- A “bottom-up” approach where policies are informed by lived experiences is needed
  - Create opportunities for a thousand different localized experiences rather than one big platform
- Work toward collective liberation and equity needs to be clear regarding the changes is seeks to make
- Creation of non-hierarchical structures is a priority
- Our current systems are designed explicitly to get the results that they’re getting
- Structures must be disrupted, but there is violence in shifting minds; artists are great at doing this well
- Code switching happens everywhere and needs to be used to advantage
  - Decisions are often made based on one experience or one encounter (selective anecdotes) - storytelling is important, but so is a wider perspective
- Practitioners need to be humble - Listen first, design with others, invest time in change-making
- Funders need to break down barriers around who gets funding
- Risks to participants, institutions, and stakeholders must be considered
- Change moves at the speed of trust.



# INFLUENCERS + STAKEHOLDERS

CHC\_ArtsPH

#creatinghealthycommunities

art isn't a "STRATEGY"

LEADERSHIP Development

highly de-centralized  
★ LOCAL ACTION

bridging and bonding  
SOCIAL CAPITAL

★ power-mapping the BARRIERS

★ RIGOROUS in our LANGUAGE

COMMUNITY HEALTH  
INDIVIDUAL HEALTH

everyone is "COVERING" something about THEMSELVES...

ARTPLACE.

Center for Arts in Medicine • Robert Wood Johnson Foundation • PolicyLink • Bush Foundation •  
Kresge Foundation • National Endowment for the Arts • Metris Arts Consulting • UK-CARES.

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it's a WAY of LIFE

COMMUNITIES



WHO is doing the CHANGING?

PEOPLE • INSTITUTIONS

What is the IMPACT we want to have?

...for whom?

EQUITY

affects the oppressors as much as the oppressed

Whose stories are being TOLD?

are we CODE-SWITCHING ???

...for the RIGHT REASONS?

let's name it...

What "bargain" are we making?

HOW do we ask DIFFERENT Questions?

...better QUESTIONS?



PROXIMITY MATTERS

★ POLICY-MAKERS need to STAY CLOSE to those affected by their POLICY

"There is a 'VIOLENCE' in SHIFTING minds"



...and KEEPING people ENGAGED



## Lightning Feedback Session

In order to garner individual-level perspectives to complement the group dialogues, attendees were asked to complete a brief Qualtrics survey. The survey gave participants the opportunity to provide feedback on a preliminary set of recommendations for strengthening the field of creative placemaking offered within the draft Theory of Change. The survey asked respondents to select the top three recommendations from lists of suggestions for practitioners, funders, and researchers. Each recommendation and the percent of responders who ranked it in their top three is listed below.

**Please review the following recommendations for *practitioners* (those who want to support building social cohesion through place-based arts and cultural strategies). Please select the three highest priority strategies in your view. And, feel free to add one that might be missing.**

Involve community members as co-designers and co-creators. 27.94%

Reach and work with isolated community members and those from historically marginalized communities. Consider youth as key partners. 16.18%

Understand that building social cohesion takes time. Gains through place-based arts and cultural strategies might be modest but that doesn't mean they're not important. If a community consistently practices this work, they will be able to build off of small gains. 13.24%

Create projects that align topically with community goals to reinforce desired impacts. 10.29%

Recognize that communities can leverage social cohesion to produce a variety of equitable community wellbeing impacts.	8.82%
If the entity doing this work is external to a community, make plans to foster resident leadership in order to pass on ownership to the community.	8.82%
Recognize community organizations interested in achieving equitable community wellbeing as partners. These partnerships can result in pooled resources and stronger collective capacity.	8.82%
Other recommendations:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Disrupt systems of power</li> <li>• Fund cultural organizers and producers of color</li> <li>• Fully fund cultural organizers and focus on institutional practice change to address power imbalances and white supremacy</li> <li>• Prioritize and support community led work</li> </ul>	5.88%
<b>Please review the following recommendations for <i>funders</i> (those who want to support building social cohesion through place-based arts and cultural strategies). Please select the three highest priority strategies in your view. And, feel free to add one that might be missing.</b>	
Understand that building social cohesion takes time. Fund long-term studies that explore how place-based arts and cultural strategies foster and maintain it.	37.50%
Identify and financially support “bridge-builders” in communities.	29.17%
Other recommendations:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus on lower-income and diverse communities</li> <li>• Fund community organizing through the arts explicitly, provide flexible funds to programs, fund long term projects</li> <li>• Fully fund artists and cultural organizers of color and other disenfranchised communities</li> </ul>	16.67%
Invest in anchor spaces and organizations grounded in communities that can build on achievement over time.	8.33%
Link practitioners to evaluation resources. These resources include funding, connections to local researchers, and adequate time.	8.33%



Please review the following recommendations for *researchers* (those who want to evaluate building social cohesion through place-based arts and cultural strategies). Please select the three highest priority strategies in your view. And, feel free to add one that might be missing.

Prioritize participant ownership. Involve impacted community members in evaluation design, data collection, and analysis.	25.00%
Strive for multicultural validity. This includes challenging Western culture's understanding and worship of empirical studies and quantitative evidence.	20.83%
Clearly articulate social cohesion for whom and to what ends.	12.50%
Directly explore the relationship between place-based arts and cultural strategies, social cohesion, and impacts of equitable community wellbeing.	12.50%
Understand that building social cohesion takes time. Realistically understand the project's timeline and conduct long-term studies.	8.33%
Integrate mixed-method approaches, using qualitative and quantitative data sources.	8.33%
Other recommendations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make research readable, accessible to people you are trying to study – let them study themselves.</li> <li>• Accept lived experience as real knowledge, accept cultural forms of knowledge sharing as legitimate, employ youth and other people with lived experience as researchers and research assistants.</li> </ul>	8.33%
Engage practitioners in developing innovative data collection tools.	4.17%



## Sociometry

The sociometry exercise was preceded by a spoken word performance by **Divine Carama** (Kingtucky LLC & Believing In Forever Inc.), a working group participant who is also a hip hop artist, community activist and motivational speaker from Lexington. His performance focused on his life experiences and history, the connection to current affairs and reflections on how to take action to create change.



**Jeremy Liu** (PolicyLink) led the sociometry exercise by inviting participants to physically position themselves along the “yes” to “no” continuum in the room in response to the question, ***Do you need a definition of the term before you can act on social cohesion?*** Participants were then invited to explain the reasoning behind their choice of position.



**Yes, we need a definition.**

- Because of my role with my organization, I need to be able to explain what I'm doing
- As a researcher, I need a definition, but it doesn't need to be the definition forever, it is just for the moment
- As I'm learning more, I'm learning that in order to get funding you need to learn how to speak a certain language and speak so that the right people listen

**No, we do not need a definition.**

- We will continue to move ahead and take action, no matter what the definition is
- What we do just makes sense to our communities; they want to participate in this work

**It's more complicated than yes or no.**

- On one hand, people do what they do, even if people are not conscious of social cohesion; on the other hand, people who think of themselves as community organizers argue incessantly concerned about definitions related to what they do
- You don't need to define it in order to use it, but language is important
- Often times you can get wrapped up in the details of the work, and afterwards someone can offer up the definition; the aha moment of this is not new, this is already what we're doing



## Mapping the Through-lines, Key Opportunities & Priorities

Moderators **Amanda Navarro** and **Alexis Stephens** (PolicyLink) started the discussion with reflections on what was untangled and questioned throughout the two days. Discussion about through-lines and opportunities that emerged from the working group followed, and included the following key points:

### Through-lines:

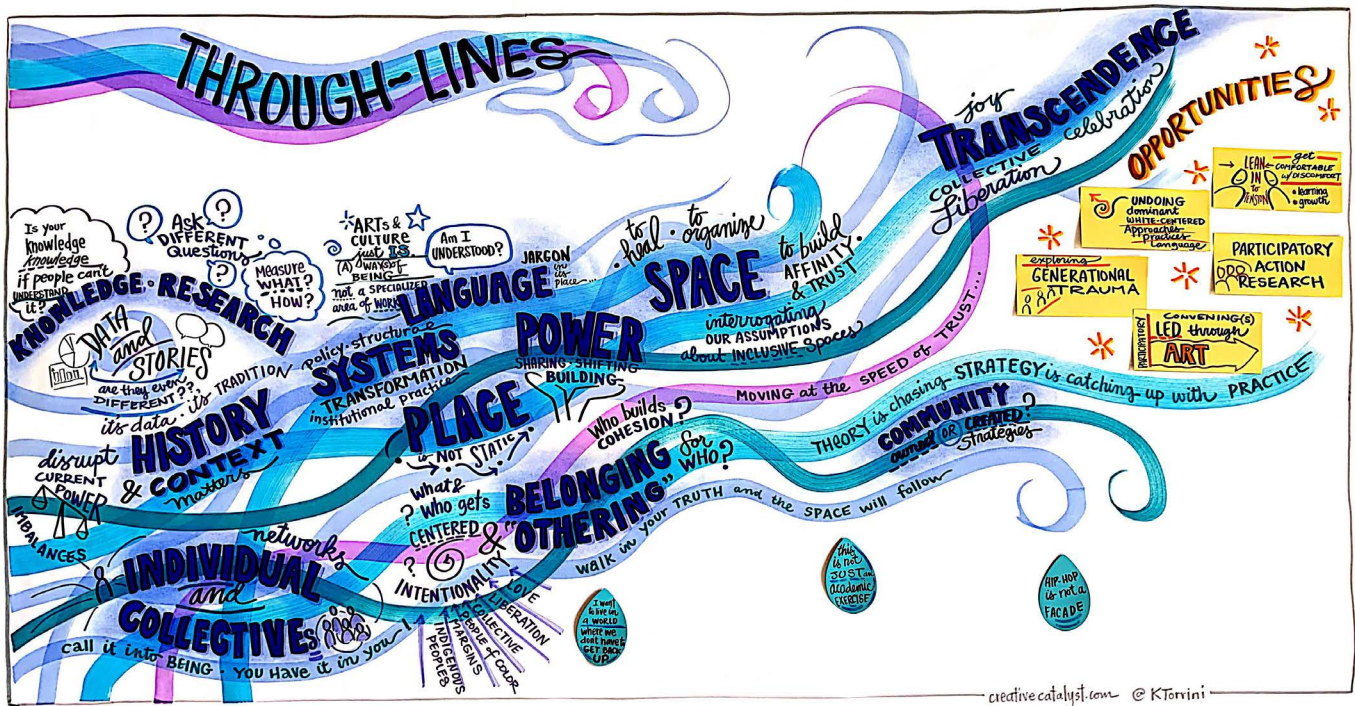
- How power is shared, shifted, and built is critically important - current power imbalances must be shifted
- Belonging and othering: Questions of who gets centered, who is building social cohesion and for whom, acknowledge not othering, and radical hospitality—welcoming others where they are
- History and context matter
- Data and stories go hand in hand
- Place is not static and not only geographic
- Language/jargon vs. ways of being: arts, culture and social cohesion is a way of being, not a specialized area of work
- Research questions need to be asked differently
- The policy, structural and institutional practice changes needed must be made more explicit
- Considerations of space is critical to healing and organization, building affinity and trust, and for honoring those already in those spaces and communities
- Love, liberation, the collective, people of color and indigenous peoples must be centered
- Transcendence – arts and cultural engagement celebrates and liberates people, individually and collectively
- Individual vs. collective as a consideration and complexity in this work
- Stories and narratives – individual and collective – are real and powerful data
- Strategies must be community-created and -owned
- Change happens at the “speed of trust”

### Opportunities

- To surface and lean into tensions
- To discuss what or how things get defined and legitimized
- To undo dominant, white-centered approaches and practices, re-centering the work and focus
- To connect arts and social cohesion work to structural, institutional change by defining actor roles and by creating alliances
- To better understand the context of generational and current trauma







Amanda and Alexis also facilitated a discussion using the questions prompts:

**What most resonated with you? Which of these things did you feel the most energy around?**

- Power is at the root of what has been discussed
- The complexities of research, including the lack of and need for equity in what is being documented, how it is being documented, and the value given to trials vs. stories (data and story are not different)
- Power and centering - who gets to make the decisions?
- Belonging and othering must be considered in regard to all people and groups
- Language is powerful and problematic, and can shut people and processes down; shared language and language that is sensitive to cultural histories are needed.





Finally, Amanda and Alexis facilitated a discussion that invited people to consider anything that might have been missed in the discussion and to offer any additional thoughts.

- Are we looking for something new or just more support for what we're already working toward?
- Remember transcendence and joy
- The Social Wellbeing Index includes things like social connection, cultural production, and health, but doesn't do the qualitative work like this two day convening; multidimensional points of view are important
- Social cohesion is not a welcoming term to everyone
- Hip hop culture was created as a voice for people who didn't have one; to hear it, no matter who you are, is emotional; this is why it hits us so strongly; hip hop is not a façade - "If you want the language to change in hip hop then you need to have change in the communities that are represented"
- In many places, arts and culture just is; the term "arts and culture strategies" may over-instrumentalize them and threaten their organic existence in communities
- What would it look like if we had an arts-led convening? Over the past two days, we have connected mostly through conversation. But what if we lead the next convening through art instead of dialogue?
- Where is the space for Participatory Action Research? No one is asking the hourly workers, the patients, the people who are unwell. Why are we not using more inclusive forms of research?
- How do we center the room on the margin without putting a burden on people who have historically been at the margins?



## Open Provocations, Calls to Action & Summary Statements

Chera Reid (Kresge Foundation) moderated the final discussion, providing an opportunity for the group to synthesize, summarize, and discuss ideas about how to disrupt and provoke change.

She lifted up “collective liberation” as one such idea. She changed the “front of the room” of the working group to a different direction by positioning herself at the wall and changing the physical perspective.

The following ideas arose from the discussion:

- There are tensions around being understood. Why is research not held to the same standards as other writing when it comes to accessibility? Why is knowledge only knowledge if only a small number of people understand it?
- Different people have different knowledge about what needs to happen to move towards liberation. Who needs to take the risks? Who are we asking to take risks and what is the burden that we are putting on whom in what situations? To what extent is a knowledge building event like this extractable? What is the necessary reciprocation of this extraction?
- Is the term “social cohesion” friendly enough? Is it useful? Is it the right term? The question was raised about whether members of the working group would personally use the term “social cohesion” to refer to anything that our families, community or friends do. There is an opening in social science fields that can be leveraged for liberation, arts and culture. Does using a social scientific term like “social cohesion” hinder this process? How can space be held so that it becomes part of the mainstream and build space for more voices, difference spaces?
- How can this work be deployed to the places that it is needed? We need to think about how to create understanding in other ways and how to support carrying the message back to peers in a way that calls for change. For example, we could reach out to communities to contribute to a participatory communication engaging sci-fi writers and illustrators. There could also be a very valuable lesson from this initiative and what has happened. **The story of this initiative could be very important.**

## Closing

Closing remarks were offered by **Victor Rubin** of PolicyLink. He began by thanking everyone behind the scenes and on stage and proceeded to offer his reflections on the convening as well thoughts about how we can drive this work forward. He quoted Jamilah, who said “Don’t go looking for models – make them yourself,” and suggested practitioners be their own proof of concept. He described how theory is chasing strategy, while strategy catches up with practice. Practice, he said, is where we learn the most.

Victor lauded the willingness of the funders to open up the Theory of Change draft to further critique and input, as well as the UF Center for Arts in Medicine’s willingness to partner with Metris on their adjacent initiatives.

What’s next?

- Gathering knowledge in response to the issues raised in the project materials
- Using this input for revision of the project report and related documents
- Developing an external strategic communications plan
- Recommending further research
- Recommending ways to embed the ideas advanced by the project into the work of health equity practitioners and community development organizations, as well as arts and culture groups

Victor thanked the group for their role in revising the paper, and encouraged attendees to continue to offer feedback remotely, and to establish connections so they might also collaborate with one another. He emphasized the action orientation of the project, and asserted that funders were enthusiastic to determine a method of creative placemaking that works, one that integrates the ideas generated during the rich dialogue of this two-day convening.



## Participant Biographies



**Ariel Arthur** is a passionate, engaged public health professional with a focus on issues of equity and justice. She graduated from The George Washington University in May 2014 with a BA in Biological Sciences and a minor in Public Health. While in college she developed a keen interest and commitment to eliminating barriers to optimal health for marginalized and disadvantaged communities, and chose to pursue a career in health equity. Ariel worked for over three years as a Health Policy Analyst with the Kentucky Department for Public Health's Office of Health Equity to reduce inequities throughout the commonwealth, and in the Chronic Disease Prevention Branch addressing issues of asthma and colon cancer. She currently serves as the Manager of the Center

for Health Equity Transformation at the University of Kentucky, whose mission is to synergize innovative, transdisciplinary and impactful research and training to improve the health of the most vulnerable residents of Kentucky and beyond. Ariel is a California native and has also lived in Atlanta and Washington, D.C. Now that she calls Kentucky home, she enjoys working to ensure all populations she serves achieve the highest level of wellbeing.



**Savannah Barrett** is Exchange Director for *Art of the Rural* and co-founder of the *Kentucky Rural-Urban Exchange*. She serves the board of the *Center for Performance and Civic Practice* and the *Robert E. Gard Foundation* and served as lead advisor for the *Bush Foundation Community Creativity Cohort II*. She frequently shares her work through conference talks and has widely published essays and interviews. She holds a Master of Arts Management degree from the University of Oregon and is an alumnus of the Muhammad Ali Scholars for Peace and Justice at the University of Louisville. Before her work with *Art of the Rural*, Savannah guided community arts and education programs in Oregon and Kentucky. Savannah is a twelfth-generation Kentuckian and was raised in Grayson Springs, where she

co-founded a local arts agency in high school. She continues to steward of six acres of her home place and currently lives in Louisville.



**Mike Blockstein** is a visual artist, educator, and Principal at Public Matters. Public Matters is an award-winning, interdisciplinary, Los Angeles-based social enterprise that designs and implements long-term, place-based, socially engaged art, media, education, and civic engagement projects that advance social change. Mike has created and led projects nationally, working with youth, community leaders and organizations to reflect on, understand and shape their physical, social and political geographies, including *A Chinatown Banquet* in Boston Chinatown, *Market Makeovers'* work on healthy food access, and *PDUB Productions* in Los Angeles' Historic Filipinotown. He has a long track record of

pushing paradigms in the visual arts, as Director of *Southern Exposure*, a San Francisco artists' organization, through the National Association of Artists Organizations, and as a rare visual artist with a Master in Public Administration from Harvard's Kennedy School.



**Steven Boudreau** is CO-Chair of the RI State Arts and Health Network. Steven serves as Chief Administrative Officer at the Rhode Island Department of Health assisting six divisions and a staff of 500 in support of the objectives and priorities of the Department. He is a member of the RIDOH Executive Leadership and Health Policy and Leadership Teams. He is the Department's lead for the RIDOH Workforce and Career Development efforts which are housed within the RIDOH Academic Center and serves as RIDOH Diversity Liaison and Strengths Coach. He is a member of the Health and Safety Committee and facilitates the RIDOH Alumni Association planning team meetings.



**Beth Bowling** is a Rural Project Manager with the University of Kentucky Center of Excellence in Rural Health. For more than 20 years, she has worked in a variety of healthcare roles including community engagement, health research, nursing and marketing. She has been instrumental in the development and implementation of innovative projects at the UK CERH, including the Community Leadership Institute of Kentucky (CLIK); Appalachian Research Day and Employee Wellness for Small Rural Worksites. Each of these programs promote research, leadership development and community education. In addition to being a registered nurse, Bowling also holds a bachelor of arts in public relations from Eastern Kentucky University.



**Dessie Bowling** is the Associate Director and CFO at the Kentucky Valley Educational Cooperative in rural eastern Kentucky. The Cooperative is an educational support agency working with 23 member school districts to actively engage with local, state and national partners to enhance academic success for educators and students. From her early years as a middle school teacher she has been an advocate for innovative classroom practices that personalize learning for students. Through her work at the Cooperative, she has been instrumental in designing and leading several regional initiatives – the most recent include: (1) an Investing in Innovation (i-3) grant to focus on College and Career Readiness for all students; (2) a Race-to-the-Top (RTT-D) grant focused on improving teaching,

learning, and health and wellness; (3) a Project Prevent grant aimed at reducing violence against children and youth, by addressing trauma-related mental health concerns that are often at its root; and (4) Building it Forward, an initiative focused on providing practical learning experiences for students and helping to solve a need for adequate housing. More than anything, she is a teacher at heart, working for more than 29 years in public education to serve the unique needs of students.





**Sarah Calderon** is Managing Director at ArtPlace and former Executive Director of Casita Maria Center for Arts and Education in the Bronx. She has both a B.F.A. in Printmaking and a B.A. in Psychology from the University of Michigan. In 2000, she earned a Master of Arts degree (M.Ed.) in Arts in Education, with a concentration in Administration, Planning, and Social Policy from Harvard University. Calderon has been an artist-in-residence teaching photography and printmaking, worked with High/Scope Educational Research Foundation in Michigan, and at MPR Associates, Inc. She worked on program evaluation, policy analysis, curriculum design, and teacher professional development, concentrating on middle and high school reform. Calderon also served from 2002 – 2004 as the Vice President of the

Board of Directors for Opera Piccola, an arts education nonprofit in Oakland, CA. Most recently, she worked with the NYC Department of Education's Office of the Arts and Special Projects as the ArtsCount Advisor, implementing the first comprehensive review of arts in schools across New York City and creating an arts accountability system.



**Devine Carama** is a Hip hop artist, Director of *Believing In Forever Inc.*, Youth Motivational Speaker, & Educator at University of Kentucky. Believing In Forever Inc. hopes to inspire & encourage youth advancement through art, leadership, education & community service. We believe in a "bottom up" approach of serving, inspiring, & mentoring youth to making neighborhoods & communities better. Some of our organization's initiatives include Strive 4 Success free tutoring sessions, Sons of Single Mother Mentoring Days, Poetry In Motion Youth, Community Service Project, A Coat to Keep the Cold Away youth coat drive, Water for Flint water drive, & more.



**Dionne Champion** is a Research Assistant Professor at the Center for the Arts in Medicine at the University of Florida. Her work has focused on the design and ethnographic study of learning environments that blend STEM and creative embodied learning activities, particularly for children who have experienced feelings of marginalization in STEM education settings (e.g. African Americans, girls). She is interested in understanding the ways these populations draw on their everyday practices and use their bodies as resources. She explores STEM engagement through making and embodied experience to construct broader conceptualizations of cognition that substantively intertwine STEM learning and development, attending to the affective, social and emotional while broadening

STEM knowledge and understanding. Dionne is an engineer, dancer, arts educator, and education researcher. Her background and experiences give her a unique perspective for understanding issues related to STEM and children from communities of color as well as an informed perspective on the intersections of arts and sciences, informal and school settings, theory and practice. Trained primarily as a qualitative researcher, she has developed a toolkit that includes video ethnography, participant observation, video and artifact elicitation interview, clinical interview and multimodal analysis. She is founder of DancExcel, a creative arts center in Gary, Indiana. Her experience running that program include designing and implementing educational programming that infuses science, math, writing and history into music and dance activities.

This work has deepened her appreciation for the fact that context matters, that cognition is complex and that understandings are often demonstrated but left unspoken. It also deepened her commitment to exploring both STEM and making opportunities for children of color, thinking not only about how to broaden participation, but also about how to understand, respect, and shed light on the ways in which children already engage, and the strengths that they bring to the table. Dionne is currently developing a research program that studies ways to engage children in authentic STEM experiences and that interrogates and complicates the ways we think about sense-making, particularly within informal learning environments like Makerspaces where STEM is not just STEM, movement can be more than “just” movement, and the pathways to understanding are not linear, normative, or even always predictable.

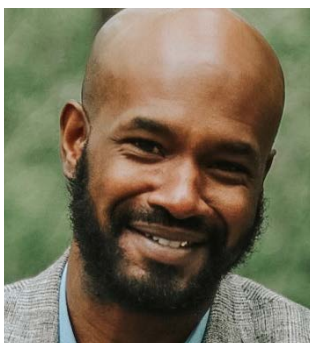


**Nupur Chaudhury** is a bridge builder and translator in the fields of urban planning and public health. Throughout her career, she has developed and implemented strategies to support residents, communities, and neighborhoods challenge power structures to build just, strong, and equitable cities. She has led coalition building efforts after Superstorm Sandy through her work with the Rebuild by Design competition, redeveloped power structures in villages in India through the Indicorps fellowship, and developed a citizen planning institute for public housing residents in Brownsville, Brooklyn. Her work has been featured in the American Journal of Public Health, CityLab, National Public Radio, and the National Academies of Science, Engineering and Medicine. Nupur is also

a Program Officer at the New York State Health Foundation, where she is responsible for identifying and nurturing opportunities for affecting positive systemic change within communities across the state. She is a member of the American Planning Association, an Urban Design Forum’s Forefront Fellow, a Salzburg Global Seminar Fellow, board member of University of Orange, Center for the Living City, and is the past board chair of Made in Brownsville. She is a founding director of the Center for Health Equity, housed at the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene and holds degrees from Columbia University (Masters in Public Health), New York University (Masters in Urban Planning), and Bryn Mawr College (BA in Growth and Structure of Cities).



**Jerome Chou** is the Planning Director at KDI’s Los Angeles office. Jerome is passionate about collaborating with community members to realize their potential as designers and planners of their neighborhoods and cities, with a focus on finding the sites and places that can be activated – immediately and in the long-term – to improve lives. Jerome oversees KDI’s regional and statewide programming, policy and advocacy. Before joining KDI, he worked for Van Alen Institute, the Flint Public Art Project, the Design Trust for Public Space, James Corner Field Operations, and Baltimore City Department of Planning. His experience spans landscape architecture, urban planning and community organizing in the public, private, and non-profit sectors. Jerome has Masters Degrees in Urban Planning and Landscape Architecture from Harvard University’s Graduate School of Design.



**Trevor Claiborn**, Co-Founder of Black Soil was born in McComb, Mississippi and raised in Lexington, KY. Known fondly and widely as Farmer Brown the MC, he has led hundreds of children, youth and adults in presentations on food production, sustainable systems, and outreach regarding agricultural occupations using culturally relevant education via hip hop and statistics. As Farmer Brown the MC, Claiborn promotes awareness of occupations and careers in agriculture. Holding degrees from Bluegrass Community & Technical College in Environmental Systems and Kentucky State University in Agriculture, Food and Environment where he works as an Extension Assistant in the Land Grant Program. In his spare time, he administers original programs, Fresh Op, an urban gardening workshop, and

Basics for Young Bosses, an after-school production camp that produces a collection of original children's books. Claiborn has received the recognition from the Central Kentucky Diversity Consortium, awarded the 2016 MOAIIIC Award at MOSIIAC Conference, 2nd Place in Community and Outreach Research-Oral Presentation at the Association of 1890's Research & Development Research Symposium, Rising Star Award from Kentucky Association of Environmental Educators (KAEE). He is 2018 ee360 Green Fellow and KAEE Board of Directors member.



**Ras Cutlass** is a Philly-based sci-fi writer, narrative artist, and co-founder of Metropolarity, a local grassroots sci-fi collective. Her artistic work concerns the experiences of people who are subject to institutionalization and dehumanization because of mental wellness challenges, being of color, or possessing another marginalized identity that proves dangerous to the status quo. Much of her artistic practice also involves engaging, nurturing, and organizing local artists, writers, youth, and other neighbors in creating speculative work and vision through workshops, readings, and other collective events meant to encourage connection and creativity among Philly residents who are often neglected by the local mainstream arts, university, and literary communities. In another life, she is

social worker with over ten years of frontline mental health experience, currently organizing young people to take the lead in local housing justice and community healing work. Cutlass's speculative writing and artistic practices are heavily grounded in experiences from frontline mental health and social work, personal and ancestral experiences of institutionalization and confinement, critical perspectives on 'insanity' and the mental health field, and communitarian, collective processes of imagining futures where marginalized people can access power, wellness, and joy.



**Rachel Engh** is the Conductor of Curiosity at Metris Arts Consulting. Metris' mission is to improve and measure cultural vitality. Engh's current projects include evaluation capacity building for a nonprofit arts organization and a state arts agency; helping a city develop a new film office; and exploring how communities use arts and culture to activate vacant property. She has spoken about Metris' work for conferences and webinars and has contributed articles to a variety of publications. Prior to joining Metris in 2015, Engh worked for the City of Minneapolis where she supported a city-wide arts and cultural planning process. Engh holds a Master of Urban and Regional Planning from the University of Minnesota's Humphrey School of Public Affairs. When she's not at Metris, she makes art out of old maps and writes postcards to friends and family. A proud Minnesotan, Engh currently lives in Easton, PA with her cat, Harriet.





**Alexander Gibson** graduated from Berea College in 2008 with a B.A. in Philosophy and earned his J.D., Doctor of Laws, from the University of Pennsylvania Law School in 2012. Alex also holds certificates in International Comparative Law from Queen Mary at the University of London, England, and in Thai and Southeast Asian Studies from Payap University in Chiang Mai, Thailand. Alex now serves as the Executive Director of Appalshop, a multi-media arts organization located in Whitesburg, Kentucky. Before joining Appalshop, Gibson practiced law within the Torts, Insurance, and Business Litigation practice groups at Stites & Harbison, PLLC in Louisville, Kentucky, and in the Business Litigation group at Ballard, Spahr, Andrews, and Ingersol in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Before entering private

practice, Gibson served as a federal law clerk for the Honorable Thomas W. Phillips, U.S. District Judge for the eastern district of Tennessee. While attending law school, Alex provided Pro Bono legal services to asylum seekers from central and west Africa; he conducted tax workshops in west Philadelphia and was part of a delegation that went to Mombasa, Kenya, to teach constitutional law to women's rights groups in the wake of Kenyan constitutional reform.



**Tasha Golden**, PhD is a public health researcher and consultant whose work is bolstered by her career in the arts. As frontwoman and songwriter for the critically acclaimed band Ellery, Golden toured full-time for many years throughout the US and abroad, and her songs have been in feature films and TV dramas. Now in Public Health, Golden draws on her background to develop creative, interdisciplinary partnerships and practices. Her work advances health equity by improving communications; interrogating research assumptions; and innovating health research, education, and practice. Dr. Golden consults for organizations, initiatives, and communities to develop creative, research-based strategies that further their goals. She also leads writing workshops for incarcerated teen women

in Ohio and Kentucky, who are among her greatest teachers.



**Ellen J. Hahn** is a Professor in the Colleges of Nursing and Public Health at UK and Director of BREATHE including the Tobacco Policy Division, the Kentucky Center for Smoke-free Policy (KCSP), and the Radon Policy Division. She also serves as Interim Director of UK-CARES (Center for Appalachian Research in Environmental Sciences) and Leader of its Community Engagement Core. She holds the Marcia A. Dake Endowed Professorship in the College of Nursing. Dr. Hahn is Deputy Director of UK-CARES (Center for Appalachian Research in Environmental Sciences) and Leader of its Community Engagement Core. She is also a Faculty Associate at UK's NCI-designated Markey Cancer Center, and a member of the Lung Cancer Translational Research Group. Dr. Hahn received her undergraduate

degree in nursing from Frances Payne Bolton School of Nursing, Case Western Reserve University. She earned a Master of Arts in Health Education from The Ohio State University and a Master of Science in community health nursing from Indiana University. In 1992, she completed a PhD in health policy/health of the community with a minor in substance abuse and the family at Indiana University School of Nursing. Through KCSP, Dr. Hahn and her colleagues have assisted many of Kentucky's over 50 communities to go smoke-free. Hahn and colleagues have published multiple smoke-free workplace policy outcome studies showing positive health effects and no harm to business. In 2011, Dr. Hahn is a Fellow in the American Academy of Nursing. Dr. Hahn was named the 2012 UK Provost's Public Scholar, and is Ambassador for Friends of the National Institute of Nursing Research.



**Jen Hughes** was appointed director of Design and Creative Placemaking for the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) in April 2018, having served as acting director since June 2017. In this position, she oversees grant portfolios that support the design and creative placemaking fields, as well as leadership initiatives that include the Mayors' Institute on City Design and the Citizens' Institute on Rural Design. Prior to her work at the NEA, she was an urban planner for the District of Columbia and has held communications and business consulting positions in the private sector. Hughes was recognized by Impact Design Hub's 40 under 40, honoring innovative leaders working at the intersection of design and public good. A Philadelphia native, she has a bachelors in management from the Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania and a masters in city planning from University of California, Berkeley with a focus on community development and design.



**Sunil Iyengar** directs the Office of Research & Analysis at the National Endowment for the Arts. Under his leadership, the office has produced dozens of research reports, hosted periodic research events and webinars, led strategic plan development for the agency, and established research and data partnerships with the U.S Census Bureau and the Bureau of Economic Analysis. His office also conducts program evaluations and performance measurement for the NEA. Working with his team, Iyengar has created and pursued a long-term research agenda (based partly on an arts "system map" his office helped to design), founded a national data repository for the arts, and launched two awards programs for arts researchers. He chairs a federal Interagency Task Force on the Arts and Human Development. Related reports include *Staying Engaged: Health Patterns of Older Americans Who Participate in the Arts* and *The NEA Guide to Community-Engaged Research in the Arts and Health*. He contributes a monthly research post (titled "Taking Note") to the NEA's official blog. Iyengar and his team have partnered with organizations such as the Brookings Institution, the National Academy of Sciences, and the National Institutes to Health to study the arts in relation to such topics as economic development and health and well-being. Prior to joining the NEA as research director, Iyengar worked as a reporter, managing editor, and senior editor for a host of news publications covering the biomedical research, medical device, and pharmaceutical industries. He writes poems and book reviews. Iyengar has a BA in English from the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor.



**Megan L. Jordan** is a Ph.D. student of Sociology at Vanderbilt University. Her research draws on intersecting interests of artist activism, public policy, and power. Intersectionality of race & class dynamics are an intrinsic focus of her research. She currently serves as an Associate Editor for the international sociological journal *Work and Occupations*.





**Vivian Lasley-Bibbs** is acting branch manager and Epidemiologist for the Kentucky Department for Public Health Office of Health Equity (OHE) as well as the state coordinator for Healthy People 2020. The Office of Health Equity provides leadership and oversight on multiple projects that address health disparities including cultural and linguistic competency, social and ecological factors of health on disparate populations and disease prevention. Vivian earned a bachelor's degree in Biology from Kentucky State University, a master's degree in Hospital and Molecular Epidemiology from the School of Public Health at the University of Michigan, and a B.S. degree from the University of Kentucky's College of Allied Health in Physician Assistant Studies.



**Taja Lindley** is a memory worker, healer and an activist based in New York City. Through iterative and interdisciplinary practices, she creates socially engaged artwork that transforms audiences, shifts culture, and moves people to action. She uses movement, text, installation, ritual, burlesque, and multi-media to create immersive works that are concerned with freedom, healing, and pleasure. Her performances, films, and installations have been featured at Brooklyn Museum; La Mama Theater; New York Live Arts; the American Repertory Theater at Harvard University; the Philbrook Museum in Tulsa, Oklahoma; the Carver Museum in Austin, Texas; the Hammer Museum in Los Angeles, California; and more. She is the founder of Colored Girls Hustle and a member of Echoing Ida and

Harriet's Apothecary. In addition to being an artist, Lindley is actively engaged in social movements as a writer, consultant, and facilitator. Most recently, she served as a Sexual and Reproductive Justice Consultant at DOHMH, co-facilitating a community-driven process that created The New York City Standards for Respectful Care at Birth. She continues her work at the NYC Health Department as the current Public Artist in Residence, a program of the NYC Department of Cultural Affairs.



**Meg Shoemaker Little** oversees all aspects of programming at Welcoming America, including Welcoming America's network, events, and Certified Welcoming program. She has over 10 years of experience at national and international organizations working to build more welcoming and inclusive communities. Her recent roles include Program Officer and Grants Manager at Unbound Philanthropy and Program Officer at the Four Freedoms Fund. Meg holds a BA in international studies from Macalester College in St. Paul, Minnesota. She now calls Louisville, KY, home with her husband and two preschoolers.



**Jeremy Liu** is Senior Fellow for Arts, Culture, and Equitable Development at PolicyLink. He has a background in equitable community development, affordable housing and real estate development, social innovation, and is an award-winning artist whose work has shown up in neighborhoods, museums, and art centers around the U.S. As a Senior Fellow, he is shaping and guiding the integrating of arts and culture into equitable development and he co-authored *Creative Change: Arts, Culture, and Equitable Development*, a Policy and Practice Primer. From 2009 to 2012, he led the strategic repositioning of a nationally-recognized community development corporation to focus on the social determinants of health. He co-founded Creative Ecology Partners, an art and design studio incubating economic

and community development innovation, which developed the Creative Determinants of Health framework and created the National Bitter Melon Council, winner of the 2005 Artadia Award, to address social bitterness.



**Bridget Madden** is the Events and Communications Coordinator with the University of Florida, Center for Arts in Medicine. She is a fully qualified Irish Dancer Teacher (TCRG) and is the Co-Director of a multi-national based Irish Dance school 'Scoil Rince an Chroí' based in Gainesville, FL and Belfast, Ireland. As a professional dancer, she performed in various dance shows in over 20 countries worldwide, including the Kremlin, Red Square (Moscow), Royal Concert Hall (Tokyo), Citifield stadium (New York), Inside/Out stage (Massachusetts) and Queen Elizabeth Theatre (Vancouver). She has hosted masterclasses in Irish Dance and Dance and movement in the USA, Czech Republic, Estonia, Holland, Finland, Poland and Russia. As a Choreographer, she created work for stage, Opera, open

air arena, Healthcare settings and Film: winning the Reel Islington short film Award (London, UK) and 3rd place for the Grolsch International film festival for 'Belfast Dance', alongside NI Screen. Along with dance, Bridget also raises funds for various charities including running the Disneyland Half marathon in Los Angeles, for the Arts Care Charity (Belfast, Northern Ireland) and she also visited, rebuilt 4 homes alongside a team of other Volunteers in Malawi in South Africa, with Habitat for Humanity.



**Carlos Marin** oversees the UK Area Health Education Center (AHEC) Program which includes the Health Careers Pipeline Program and provides guidance and support to regional AHEC directors. He also serves as the College's primary representative in areas of community and cultural engagement. He collaborates with College of Medicine faculty and staff to continue implementation of initiatives to increase representation of students and faculty from rural and minority populations and assist students and faculty in identifying opportunities for community engagement. He earned a BA in Psychology from Morehead State University in Morehead, Kentucky, and competed Registry Eligible for Respiratory Care at the University of Chicago Hospitals and Clinics Advanced Respiratory Care Program.



**Keely Mason** is the Program Associate for the University of Florida Center for Arts in Medicine. She is an alumnus of UF's College of the Arts and holds a BA in Dance and a BS in Health Education. Keely's work centers around program coordination, grants management, research assistance and community health program involvement. She teaches a dance class for adults with developmental disabilities and works closely with UF Health Shands Arts in Medicine's Dance for Life program. Keely also serves as research associate for the Center for Arts in Medicine Interdisciplinary Research Lab. Her research interests focus on arts in health communication and the effects of dance on movement disorders. Keely is an active member of the Gainesville dance community and has trained, taught and performed as a ballet and modern dancer for many years.



**Benjamin "BJ" McBride** is the Co-Founder of BE-IMAGINATIVE, Artist Manager/ Creative Director for SOL Development + Mino Yanci. Prior to taking on these positions, BJ was Special Assistant to Mayor Kevin Johnson for the City of Sacramento where he was a founding member of a political action committee called IndiviZible and instrumental in the retention of the Sacramento Kings (NBA). He obtained his Bachelors of Arts Degree in African- American Studies with a concentration in History and a Minor in Urban Education from the University of California in Los Angeles).

Nina McCoy, Concerned Citizens of Martin County



**Josh Miller** Originally from Chattanooga, TN, Josh is the co-founder + CEO of IDEAS xLab - an artist-led nonprofit based in Louisville, KY that leverages the power of community creativity and culture to transform lives through art. He is an artist with a background in entrepreneurship, art and business administration, and editorial production - and explores the world through photography (and a lot of running), documenting his journey through [joshmiller.ventures](http://joshmiller.ventures). In addition to his outdoor explorations, Josh celebrates the brilliance and strength of LGBTQ+ and Black communities through photography and collaborative storytelling. Josh was selected for Louisville Business First's Forty under 40, and is a distance runner, a TEDx speaker, an advisor for the Derby Diversity & Business Summit, and founding Board Member of Civitas: Regional LGBTQ Chamber of Commerce headquartered in Louisville, KY.



**Nicole Morgan** is the Research Coordinator at the University of Florida Center for Arts in Medicine. is a University of Florida alum, graduating Summa Cum Laude with a B.S. in Health Education and Behavior and a minor in Health Disparities in Society. She has experience conducting and coordinating research within the CAM Interdisciplinary Lab and at the Institute on Aging in UF's College of Medicine. She has also designed and implemented quality improvement initiatives within UF Health's Department of Neuromedicine and in the College of Medicine Equal Access Clinic. Her research interests include the arts in public health, as well as the connection between aesthetic experiences and wellbeing.



**Emily B. Moses** is the executive staff advisor for the Kentucky Arts Council. She is instrumental in building partnerships to enhance economic and community development through the creative industry in the state, in addition to identifying and accessing resources to assist communities in developing their local creative industry and assets. Additionally, Emily develops and implements special projects, produces the state's annual Kentucky Creative Industry Summit, and coordinates all grant writing and reporting for the KAC's annual National Endowment for the Arts State Partnership Award. She also manages the grants and fiscal operations for the KAC. Emily is the former communications director for the arts council and previously worked as publications manager for the Kentucky Cabinet for

Health and Family Services where her work was informed by best practices in health literacy. Prior to working in government, she enjoyed careers as a newspaper editor, reporter, and an actress. She holds a bachelor's degree in journalism from Morehead State University, and is a proud native of Cynthiana, Kentucky.



**Amanda M. Navarro** oversees and leads capacity-building efforts with government agencies and philanthropy at PolicyLink, training diverse leaders and constituencies across the country on a range of strategies to advance racial and health equity. Amanda brings deep expertise in collaborative efforts to advance equitable policy and practice change and is a frequent keynote speaker on equity-focused policy and organizational strategy. Before joining PolicyLink, Amanda worked at the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, coordinating several programmatic and research activities related to health disparities, social determinants of health, and community health promotion. She holds a Master of Public Health from Boston University and a Doctor of Public Health from the University of Texas School of Public Health-Houston.





**Anne Gadwa Nicodemus** has led Metris Arts Consulting since its launch in 2009. Metris' mission is to improve and measure cultural vitality. Via planning, Metris helps clients equitably advance cultural vitality. Through program development, Metris helps clients fill knowledge gaps so that they can effectively incorporate arts and culture into their work. Metris uses a range of research and communication skills to advance understanding and field building. Metris also evaluates; it helps clients understand what difference their efforts make, why, and how. Nicodemus is honored to have helped shape arts-based community development via reports, journal articles, book chapters, and public speaking. She co-authored "Creative Placemaking," the report for the National Endowment for the Arts (2010) that helped define the field. Nicodemus holds a Masters of Urban and Regional Planning from the University of Minnesota. She is an ex-choreographer/arts administrator, queer, and a foster mom of three.



**Jamilah Yejide Peters-Muhammad**, RN BSN FCN proudly serves the New Orleans Musicians Assistance Foundation as the Community Outreach Nurse. Jamilah has performed and taught African dance and culture for over 40 years. Jamilah was honored by the New Orleans Black Mardi Gras Indians as "Nurse of the Nation," for her work in helping to bring awareness of health and wellness issues to this important segment of the New Orleans cultural community and to cultural bearers around the city. My work as a cultural artist and nurse, I bring information and resources to our cultural community, the benefits of preventative healthcare, and the many benefits available through NOMAF.



**Mimi Pickering** is an award-winning filmmaker and director of Appalshop Community Media Initiative (CMI). Pickering is a recipient of a Guggenheim Fellowship and two Kentucky Arts Council Artist Fellowships. Her film, *The Buffalo Creek Flood: An Act of Man*, was selected by the Library of Congress for inclusion in the National Film Registry in 2005. Other documentaries include *Chemical Valley*, an examination of environmental racism in West Virginia's Kanawha Valley after the Bhopal disaster in India, which aired on the PBS series *P.O.V.*, and *Hazel Dickens: It's Hard to Tell the Singer From the Song*, a film *The Oral History Review* described as "a powerful tale told by one of Appalachia's most reverent filmmakers working today..." Most recently Pickering and Anne Lewis produced *Anne Braden:*

*Southern Patriot*, a biography of this storied civil rights and civil liberties activist. As CMI Director, Pickering produces *Making Connections News*, a joint effort with WMMT-FM to share stories exploring sustainable economic options for the coalfields. She also is a team leader for *All Access EKY*, a collaboration to leverage youth-produced multimedia storytelling and community-based decision making to raise awareness and support for comprehensive reproductive health services for women in Appalachian Kentucky.



**Chera Reid** serves as director of strategic learning, research and evaluation for The Kresge Foundation. She leads organization-wide work to grow the foundation's learning endowment—drawing from the full suite of philanthropic tools, including evaluation and thought leadership—to advance the nonprofit and philanthropic sectors. Chera has long focused on issues of access and equity in institutions and systems. In her current role, she brings an equity lens to evaluative thinking, which she applies to the foundation's learning agenda around place-based practice, collaboration across fields and sectors and impact measurement. She also serves on the foundation's diversity, equity and inclusion steering committee and on its Opportunity Fund team. Chera previously was a program officer with the Education Program, working to increase college access and success for low-income and students of color.

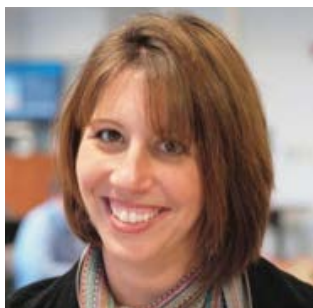


**Carolyn L. Rubin** is a social scientist trained in theories of racial and ethnic inequality, immigration, community development and qualitative methods. Her research agenda focuses on using collaborative community research partnerships to address health disparities in underserved communities in Boston. She has led community-based participatory research projects related to Asian women's health and also developed research capacity-building programs for community partners. Currently, she is co-investigator on two community-engaged projects, one with the Asian Community Development Corporation that looks at the impact of stable housing on health outcomes, and the second with the Boston Chinatown Neighborhood that looks at the role of arts and culture in promoting social cohesion and social networks. Dr. Rubin also directs the ADAPT Coalition, (Addressing disparities in Asian populations through translational research), a project of the Tufts Clinical and Translational Science Institute. The ADAPT Coalition focuses on strengthening the capacity of Tufts researchers and Chinatown community partners to use community engaged research approaches to address Asian American health disparities. Her work as a researcher and teacher is informed by twenty years of experience working as a community builder with the Asian American and Pacific Islander communities in various cities around the US. She grew up in San Francisco, California.



**Victor Rubin** is a Senior Fellow and former Vice President for Research at PolicyLink, a national nonprofit institute advancing equitable policy change. He has been an urban planning researcher, teacher, and consultant for more than 35 years. He leads the research and documentation about ArtPlace America's Community Development Investments and supervised the recent assessment of a pilot technical assistance program for the Our Town program of the National Endowment for the Arts. He is the guest editor of the forthcoming issue of the Community Development Innovation Review on arts and culture strategies. He coauthored the 2018 PolicyLink report for the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, *Counting a Diverse Nation: Disaggregating Data on Race and Ethnicity to*

*Advance a Culture of Health*, and, with Angela Glover Blackwell and Chris Schildt, "Equitable, Inclusive Growth Strategies for American Cities," a chapter in Wachter, Susan M. and Lei Ding, editors, *Building Shared Prosperity in America's Communities*, 2016, University of Pennsylvania Press. He has been an advisor to the American Planning Association, The American Institute of Architects, the National League of Cities and many other organizations. He was guest editor of the Special Issue on Regional Equity of the Journal of the Community Development Society (2011 and 2018). Victor joined PolicyLink in 2000 after serving as Director of the HUD Office of University Partnerships. He is a member of the California Planning Roundtable and was formerly Adjunct Associate Professor in the Department of City and Regional Planning at the University of California, Berkeley, the department where he earned his MCP (1975) and PhD. (1986.) He has lived in Oakland since 1975.



**Elaine Russell** is the lead for Kentucky's Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Obesity Program in Kentucky's Cabinet for Health and Family Services, the Partnership for a Fit Kentucky, a statewide coalition which helped develop Kentucky's Nutrition and Physical Activity State Action Plan. She assisted in the development of *Shaping Kentucky's Future: Policies to Reduce Obesity*. Currently she leads the Kentucky Farm to School Taskforce and is actively involved in Kentucky's Action for Healthy Kids, Kentucky Food Security Partnership and CDC's Sustainable Food System workgroup.



**Thaddeus R. Salmon** is Assistant Professor of Medicine and Pediatrics at the University of Kentucky College of Medicine. His specialties include general internal medicine and geriatrics, primary care, and primary care pediatrics. Thaddeus has certifications and special training from the American Board of Internal Medicine and American Board of Pediatrics.



**Kelley Sams**, BFA, MPH, PhD, is Visiting Research Faculty at the University of Florida's Center for Arts in Medicine. She was previously a post-doctoral researcher in social anthropology and global health at the Norbert Elias Center/ CNRS/EHESS in Marseille, France and a Fulbright-Hays fellow. Kelley is a graduate of UF's College of Arts in Fine Art Photography. After graduating from UF, she served as a Peace Corps volunteer in Niger where she used visual methods to reflect upon experiences and knowledge related to health. As an applied medical anthropologist, Kelley's research takes place at the intersection of the social sciences, public health, and the arts. Her recent work engages ethnographic photography (see [www.kelleysams.com](http://www.kelleysams.com)) and other qualitative methods to study

the circulation of public health initiatives in the US and sub-Saharan Africa. Kelley's work with the Center for Arts in Medicine supports the Creating Healthy Communities Arts + Public Health initiative, a national initiative being led by UF to support effective collaboration between the arts, community development and public health.



**Susan C. Seifert**, an urban planner with over 30 years' experience in Philadelphia and New York, is director and co-founder of the Social Impact of the Arts Project (SIAP) at the University of Pennsylvania School of Social Policy & Practice. The research group began in 1994 to ask questions and develop methods to examine the relationship of the arts to community vitality. Studies in Philadelphia (2014) and New York City (2017) explore cultural engagement, social inclusion, and community wellbeing through the lens of neighborhood ecology. Publications (with Mark J. Stern) include: "Creative capabilities and community capacity" (Enhancing Capabilities: The Role of Social Institutions, Otto and Ziegler, eds,

2013) and "Culture and the new geography of social exclusion: The New York experience" (Social Work & Society, Vol 16/3, 2018). Seifert received her MSc Urban & Regional Planning from the University of Toronto (Canada).



**Danya Sherman** is a strategist and writer who specializes in collaboratively developing initiatives that build a more creative and just society. She works closely with Jamie Hand and others on the ArtPlace team to design and conduct research, training, and field-building programs that help integrate arts and culture into community development nationwide. Danya also runs an arts and community development consultancy based in Boston, where she works primarily on innovation and organizational effectiveness in the non-profit and public sectors. Previously she founded and directed the Department of Public Programs & Community Engagement at Friends of High Line and co-founded the MIT Case Study Initiative. Her writing has been published in Next City, Shelterforce, and by Rutgers University Press. She holds a Master's in City Planning from MIT and a Bachelor of Arts from Wesleyan University.





**Ashley Smith**, Co-Founder of Black Soil, is a native of Lexington, KY. She graduated from the University of Kentucky in 2008 with a Bachelor of Arts in Sociology. Smith currently serves as Director of Education and Governmental Affairs. Combining her 16 year career spanning diverse sectors, Smith will lead the agency's efforts in educating and supporting key stakeholders on Fayette Alliance's pillars of advocacy. Previous to joining The Fayette Alliance team, Smith has worked for such brands as KentuckyOne Health, Bluegrass Hospitality Group, Community Ventures, NetGain Technologies, Smiley Pete Publishing, and The Lyric Theatre & Cultural Arts Center. Smith is an Ethical Redevelopment Salon member under the leadership of Theaster Gates, Secretary for Kentucky State University's Extension

and Research Advisory Council, and 2016 Scholarship Chair for the Bluegrass Chapter of the Association of Fundraising Professionals. In addition, her leadership also includes serving on the Management Team for the crave food + music festival and Steering Committee member for the Kentucky Rural Urban Exchange. Her professional portfolio also includes voice over and Mistress of Ceremonies duties for City of Lexington 2017 and 2018 Martin Luther King Holiday Celebration, Stage Emcee for 2017 and 2018 crave lexington food + music festival. She earned an Emmy nomination for KET's Kentucky Life episode, A Kentucky Christmas, voicing the work of Kentucky native, writer and poet, Effie Waller Smith.



**Jill Sonke** is director of the Center for the Arts in Medicine at the University of Florida (UF) and Assistant Director of UF Health Shands Arts in Medicine. She serves on the faculty of the UF Center for Arts in Medicine, and is an affiliated faculty member in the School of Theatre & Dance, the Center for African Studies, the STEM Translational Communication Center, the One Health Center, and the Center for Movement Disorders and Neurorestoration. Jill is an Entrepreneurship Faculty Fellow in the UF Warrington College of Business, and serves on the editorial board for Arts & Health journal and the board of Citizens for Florida Arts. She is also director of the national initiative, *Creating Health Communities: Arts + Public Health in America*, in partnership with ArtPlace America.



**Alexis Stephens**, Senior Communications Associate at PolicyLink, delivers messages about racial and economic equity to advocates, policymakers, and media members within the PolicyLink network and beyond. She provides communications support to the All-In Cities, National Equity Atlas, and Arts, Culture, and Equitable Development (ACED) teams. Prior to joining PolicyLink, Alexis was Next City's 2014-2015 equitable cities fellow and has a master's in historic preservation from the University of Pennsylvania. Alexis enjoys reading speculative fiction, rooting for the Philadelphia 76ers, and dancing to disco with family and friends in her spare time.



**Erik Takeshita** has been named as a Senior Fellow to ArtPlace America, supported by the Bush Foundation. His thought partnership will come from more than twenty years of culturally rooted community development experience. Erik joined the Bush Foundation as Community Creativity Portfolio Director in August of 2015. From 2008-2015 he led a breadth of work at the Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC), including launching a nationwide Creative Placemaking initiative. He was previously a senior policy aide to the mayor of Minneapolis, where he advised the framework for a 10-year Plan for Arts and Culture, and led an art center in Honolulu, Hawai'i, helping to revitalize the city's downtown. He serves on numerous boards and commissions, and is nationally recognized

for managing high-impact initiatives that express a community's unique culture through the arts. Takeshita holds a master's degree from the Harvard Kennedy School—an opportunity he pursued through a 2005 Bush Leadership Fellowship.



**Meghan Tompkins** is originally from the Twin Cities in Minnesota. She obtained her Bachelor of Arts from the University of Minnesota, Duluth majoring in Communication Studies with a minor in Professional Writing. After college, she worked in Saint Paul, MN at an Association Management Company. There, she planned continuing education conferences for multiple industries and managed various volunteer committees and Board of Directors. For the past year, Meghan has been in San Diego, CA where she worked with the city's bar association that has a membership of over 10,000 lawyers. It was her job to plan the programs for the year for the different law related sections. Now, Meghan is working as CRYP's Deputy Director where she combines both her passion for the work CRYP does in the community and her business background to work alongside the team in furthering CRYP's mission and goals.



**Tanya Torp** is a connector, an entrepreneur, an activist and a lover of community. Currently, she serves as Program Director of Step By Step, a non-profit organization working with young moms ages 14 to 24. She lives in the East End of Lexington, KY with her husband Christian, a Civil Rights Attorney and their two precocious cats. Her awards include Urban League Individual Champion 2014, Bluegrass Alliance for Women Impact Award Winner 2013, and Community Heroes in Honor of Caesar Chavez Day 2014.



**Katherine Torrini** is a graphic recorder and facilitator who has brought her visual magic to the likes of NASA, Dell, Coca-Cola, Chevron, Accenture, Southwest Airlines and The Institute for the Future. She makes the invisible visible during meetings by drawing real-time, mural-sized infographics that mesmerize viewers, activate creative problem solving and unlock the wisdom of the room. Her work captures themes, illuminates connections, and reveals patterns, while getting stakeholders "on the same page"—literally! Always keen to share her markers, Katherine's visual thinking trainings empower teams to use their whole brains to think, communicate and collaborate better.



**Gabrielle Uballez's** passion for cultural democracy is rooted in 20-years of experience in community-based arts centering Indigenous, Black, and Communities of Color. Uballez is the Minister of Collaboration and Activation for the U.S. Department of Arts and Culture. She also serves as the City of Albuquerque Urban Enhancement Trust Fund at-large member, co-facilitator for the New Mexico Women of Color Nonprofit Leadership Initiative, and board member of the ACLU of New Mexico. Uballez formerly served as the executive director of Working Classroom, a grassroots arts organization of which she is an alumnus. She has been associated with the Studio Museum in Harlem; Crescendo Cultural/National Museum of Mexican Art; WESTAF; NALAC Leadership Institute;

and a grant panelist for the National Endowment for the Arts. Uballez earned her B.A. from Pomona College. She lives in downtown Albuquerque, New Mexico with her husband and their two Chinese-Chicanx children.



**Crystal Wilkinson**, associate professor, is the award-winning author of *The Birds of Opulence* (winner of the 2016 Ernest J. Gaines Prize for Literary Excellence), *Water Street and Blackberries*, *Blackberries*. Nominated for both the Orange Prize and the Hurston/Wright Legacy Award, she has received recognition from The Kentucky Foundation for Women, The Kentucky Arts Council, The Mary Anderson Center for the Arts, The Fine Arts Work Center in Provincetown and is a recipient of the Chaffin Award for Appalachian Literature. She has been nominated for a Pushcart Prize and her short stories, poems and essays have appeared in numerous journals and anthologies including most recently in the *Oxford American* and *Southern Cultures*.



**Katie Wehr**, senior program officer, joined the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation in 2010. Wehr focuses on discovering and investing in what works to promote and protect the nation's health and to achieve the Foundation's vision where we, as a nation, strive together to build a Culture of Health enabling all in our diverse society to lead healthy lives, now and for generations to come. Since joining RWJF, Wehr has worked to increase the visibility and impact of solutions that advance health and that incorporate emerging research, practice and policy tools to put evidence into action and create policy and system changes that enable all people lead healthy, productive lives. As she puts it: "It takes all of us to improve the quality of people's lives, prevent illness, and make our communities

vibrant, healthy places—no matter where people live, learn, work and play." To that end, Wehr's interests range from identifying innovations occurring across the country to developing new collaborations and solutions to improve the nation's health—especially those that nurture and strengthen early childhood development and health across the life course. A UT Austin graduate, she is an artist, certified Life Coach and Intentional Creativity teacher in addition to her facilitation and graphic recording work. The common thread through all of Katherine's work is her passion for reconnecting people to their innate creativity and empowering them to use it to live their most fulfilling lives—personally and professionally.

## Organization Descriptions

**ArtPlace America (ARTPLACE)** is a ten-year collaboration among a number of foundations, federal agencies, and financial institutions. Beginning their work as an organization in 2011, their mission is to position arts and culture as a core sector of community planning and development. They envision a future of equitable, healthy, and sustainable communities in which everyone has a voice and agency in creating contextual, adaptive, and responsive solutions. To this end, they have invested \$104 million to grow the field of creative placemaking through demonstration projects, in-depth investments in organizational change, and research.

**The Bush Foundation.** The Bush Foundation has invested in great ideas and the people who power them since it was founded in 1953. The specific initiatives, programs and tactics have changed and evolved, but the work has always been rooted in supporting the organizations and people who think bigger and think differently about solutions to problems in their communities. Archibald and Edyth Bush set up the Foundation to fund and be “operated exclusively for religious, charitable, scientific, literary or educational purposes, including encouragement of art.” The Foundation makes investments in Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota and the 23 Native nations that share the same geography. It works to inspire and support creative problem solving — within and across sectors — to make the region better for everyone.

**The Kresge Foundation.** The Kresge Foundation is a U.S. philanthropic private foundation headquartered in Troy, Michigan. Founded in 1924 to promote human progress, the foundation fulfills that mission by building and strengthening pathways to opportunity for low-income people in America’s cities, seeking to dismantle structural and systemic barriers to equality and justice. Using a full array of grant, loan, and other investment tools, Kresge invests more than \$160 million annually to foster economic and social change.

**Metris Arts Consulting.** Launched in 2009, Metris Arts Consulting believes in the power of culture to enrich people’s lives and help communities thrive. They provide high caliber planning, research, and evaluation services to reveal arts impacts and help communities equitably improve cultural vitality. To accelerate change, they seek to share knowledge and amplify the voices of those closest to the work. Metris is a certified Women’s Business Enterprise (WBE) based in Easton, PA.

**The National Endowment of the Arts (NEA).** Established by Congress in 1965, the NEA is the independent federal agency whose funding and support gives Americans the opportunity to participate in the arts, exercise their imaginations, and develop their creative capacities. The NEA is the only funder, public or private, that provides equal access to the arts in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and U.S. territories, supporting activities such as performances, exhibitions, healing arts and arts education programs, festivals, and artist residencies. Their research demonstrates the powerful connection between the creative workforce and our nation’s economic health.



**PolicyLink.** PolicyLink is a national research and action institute advancing racial and economic equity. They advocate for groundbreaking policy changes that enable everyone, especially people of color, to be economically secure, live in healthy communities of opportunity, and benefit from a just society. PolicyLink has been instrumental in building a potent broad-based movement for equity and engaging hundreds of partners in cities, suburbs, rural communities, and tribal lands across America.

**Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.** The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) is the nation's largest philanthropy dedicated solely to health. Since 1972, they have supported research, programs, and initiatives targeting some of America's most pressing health issues—from substance abuse to improving access to quality health care. RWJF works to develop strong, interdisciplinary networks of leaders from every sector who have a shared vision of what shapes health—and a desire to work together.

**University of Florida Center for Arts in Medicine.**

The University of Florida Center for the Arts in Medicine is committed to advancing research, education, and practice in arts in medicine, locally and globally. Established in the College of the Arts in 1996, the Center provides a framework for interdisciplinary collaboration among University of Florida faculty and students, healthcare providers, clinical artists, and our local and global communities. The Center develops and affects interdisciplinary research studies and educational curricula on all levels and serves as a national model for arts in health research, education, and training.