

# State Arts Agency Roles in Creative Placemaking



**August 2020**

National Assembly of  
State Arts Agencies

KNOWLEDGE ★ REPRESENTATION ★ COMMUNITY

**ARTPLACE**

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## OVERVIEW AND KEY FINDINGS

### OVERVIEW

State arts agencies play multiple roles in creative placemaking. Through 22,000 grants awarded each year, states support more independent artists and grass-roots cultural organizations than any other arts funder in America. They also play leadership roles as technical assistance providers, conveners, network builders and knowledge brokers to help communities harness the power of the arts to foster vibrant, inclusive and equitable communities.

According to a June 2019 survey of the field by the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies (NASAA), 46 of the 56 state or jurisdictional arts agencies reported that they have formally or informally worked to foster creative placemaking. State arts agencies are well known within the arts sector as a source of grant funding and as purveyors of state cultural policy. However, outside of the arts field their funding and other leadership roles have less visibility, and may be underutilized in the community development sector.<sup>1</sup> Also, state arts agencies' creative placemaking efforts, embedded into many different programs and agency functions, don't always bear the label of *creative placemaking*. This can make it challenging to discern the roles that state arts agencies play in the creative placemaking ecosystem.

This field scan seeks to address those challenges by establishing a better understanding of the creative placemaking roles of state arts agencies (SAAs). It explores programs and policies labeled as creative placemaking and the many aspects of SAA work that advance community development and community based work in the arts. By making this work more visible, **NASAA aims to inform the development of future SAA programs and to help other actors in the creative placemaking funding ecosystem understand the assets and assistance that SAAs have to offer.**

This research is one component of a larger partnership between NASAA and [ArtPlace America](#), [Strengthening the State Arts Agency Support System for Creative Placemaking](#).

### KEY FINDINGS

Government agencies have the power to advance creative placemaking, embedding the arts into many different public policies and funding streams and putting the arts at the center of community development efforts. The public sector has a mandate to serve *all* communities, with a special emphasis on constituencies that have been historically marginalized or overlooked by traditional philanthropic systems.<sup>2</sup> The public sector also holds the power to articulate and propagate best practices in arts

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<sup>1</sup> Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco, Community Development Innovation Review, [State Policy Innovations to Support Creative Placemaking](#)

<sup>2</sup> See [Not Just Money: Equity Issues in Cultural Philanthropy](#) and [Better Together: Public and Private Funding for the Arts](#).

based community development and to convene diverse stakeholders around creative placemaking roles.<sup>3</sup>

This field scan illustrates how SAAs play many of these roles and can be powerful allies and assets in the creative placemaking ecosystem. Because SAAs are present in all 56 states and jurisdictions, they offer a highly accessible array of funding, capacity-building and knowledge sharing services. Support strategies differ from state to state, with few obvious common denominators. But all states catalyze or amplify creative placemaking in one way or another. When viewed in their entirety, SAAs' diverse creative placemaking efforts form a richly textured and robust mosaic of support systems for arts based community development in America. Among this scan's most salient findings are:

- **A majority of state arts agencies recognize creative placemaking as a strategic priority for their agencies.** Survey results, existing policies and a wide array of services profiled in this report reflect that SAAs have adopted the creative placemaking paradigm (if not the exact language) and support creative placemaking practices through a variety of activities and initiatives.
- **Some state arts agencies administer dedicated creative placemaking programs.** A number of states have made specific programmatic investments that direct state resources toward creative placemaking. These programs serve as exemplars that can help to proliferate SAA creative placemaking success stories in more states.
- **More commonly, creative placemaking opportunities are embedded within many other state arts agency programs and services.** Examples include programs designed to fund community development efforts, artists, arts organizations, public art projects and more. Even though these programs may not be exclusively dedicated to creative placemaking, they fuel a state's capacity for creative placemaking and encourage community-integrated arts programming.
- **State arts agency creative placemaking and community development programs have adopted specific goals and tactics to serve populations of color and rural areas.** SAA creative placemaking endeavors are often designed to confront social and economic challenges through the arts. This focus—which is also a priority for some private foundations supporting creative placemaking—is a natural fit for public agencies with a directive to serve all state residents.
- **State arts agencies galvanize influential partnerships.** Of the 79 program or service examples featured in this report, nearly half involve strategic state level partnerships of some kind, and many more are designed to catalyze collaborations at the local level. These collaborations expand

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<sup>3</sup> Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco, Community Development Innovation Review, [State Policy Innovations to Support Creative Placemaking](#)

resources (human, material and financial) and elevate the influence and visibility of creative placemaking.

- **States are important conduits for innovations in creative placemaking.** Because they play a wide variety of technical assistance, convening and training roles, SAAs are an important vehicle for propagating creative placemaking practices. State arts agencies facilitate knowledge sharing, helping communities learn from one another and pool ideas and resources.
- **State arts agencies nourish the cultural ecosystems that allow placemaking to thrive.** Perhaps this survey respondent put it best:

*Our role is to empower and provide resources to cultural arts organizations and create an environment where creative placemaking becomes possible and sustainable.*

## **METHODOLOGY**

To map the complex terrain of state arts agencies' creative placemaking activities, NASAA conducted this field scan through the collection and analysis of multiple data sources:

- mining extant SAA program data through NASAA's database of SAA grant programs, NASAA's ongoing inventory of SAA program highlights and SAA websites
- conducting a survey of SAA community development coordinators
- facilitating a focus group conversation with SAA community development coordinators
- completing a comprehensive scan of SAA strategic plans
- cataloging SAAs' place based programs, including cultural district programs

All research and analysis took place between May and December 2019, and reflects knowledge current as of spring 2020. Consistent evolution within the field and the ephemeral nature of some programs means this landscape will continue to shift.

As the national service organization for state arts agencies, NASAA maintains several research resources that informed this field scan, including a database of all SAA grant programs with tags for community development and economic development related programs, an archive of SAA program and service highlights, and SAA planning documents. Analysis of these sources helped inform a baseline understanding of how SAAs engage in creative placemaking as well as further research needs, facilitation strategies and questionnaire design.

A June 2019 focus group included 13 SAA community development coordinators from 11 states. They represented a diverse cross-section of SAA capacities and perspectives. The group also represented programmatic diversity, including states

with and without formal creative placemaking services. The findings from this group helped inform further research and survey questions needed for this field scan.

In July 2019, NASAA administered a survey of all SAAs to gain a more complete understanding of their creative placemaking work and to inform a needs assessment. NASAA sent the survey to all 56 SAAs with the intent of receiving one response per state. Primary survey recipients were state art agency community development coordinators. In cases where states did not have a community development position, the most appropriate program director was asked to respond. Fifty-three SAAs responded to the survey—a response rate of 95%. This excellent response rate allows for a high level of confidence that survey data accurately reflects the perceptions of SAAs.

The intention of this scan is to exemplify the creative placemaking roles of state arts agencies. It is not a comprehensive catalogue. Initial search parameters for the scan were wide in scope, encompassing many relevant community development activities, economic development activities or tangentially relevant arts support programs. The advantage of this approach was that NASAA was able to surface creative placemaking activities embedded into the many nooks and crannies of SAA work.

**To tighten the focus of this scan—and to lift up some state arts agency roles with special relevance to creative placemaking—this report includes SAA policies and programs that incorporate one or more of the following attributes:**

- an SAA itself has identified the effort as "creative placemaking"
- the effort is place based in its scope or strategies
- the effort seeks to achieve community development goals through the intentional centrality of the arts
- the effort intentionally cultivates partnerships between arts focused entities and place based, development focused entities
- the effort is a grant-making or programming vehicle through which creative placemaking is commonly supported

Within this frame, examples were selected because they are distinct (and hold the potential to inform SAA practice in other states) or because they are typical (and thus contribute to our understanding of the norms of this field). An effort was made to include examples from all geographic regions of the United States, from urban and rural geographies, from large-budget and small-budget SAAs, and from state arts agencies that do not have formally designated placemaking programs (to illustrate the highly embedded nature of this work).

NASAA's research revealed that creative placemaking policies and practices are embedded throughout many different SAA program areas. **While a few state arts agencies have programs dedicated to creative placemaking, a far more common paradigm is for SAAs to integrate elements of creative placemaking within and across many different grant-making and nongrant**

**functions.** Due to such complexities, this report includes relatively few SAA programs explicitly labeled as "creative placemaking" and far more programs that fall under a larger community development, economic development or community arts engagement umbrella.

Note that this field scan contains strategies adopted by state art agencies themselves. It does not include local placemaking projects that draw on SAA resources.

## **STATE ARTS AGENCY RELATIONSHIPS TO CREATIVE PLACEMAKING**

Creative placemaking has been defined in a variety of ways by scholars and practitioners. Among the most inclusive definitions is this one from the **Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC)**:

*Creative placemaking is best defined by what it encompasses. It can mean renovating a historic theater or building affordable live-work space for artists. It can entail transforming a weedy lot into a lively gathering place or an abandoned church into a community exhibition space. It can be organizing a dance festival or providing opportunities for youth to discover their creative power. When the energy of the arts is a driving force, the possibilities are limitless.<sup>4</sup>*

State arts agencies support every activity referenced in the LISC definition above—plus many more activities that nourish the cultural infrastructure upon which creative placemaking depends, such as operating support for cultural institutions; professional development services for artists; preserving cultural traditions; and propagating diversity, equity and inclusion practices in the arts sector. From that perspective, all \$438 million<sup>5</sup> that SAAs invest annually in arts grant making, technical assistance, convening services, research and public awareness work is foundational to the success of creative placemaking. This is particularly true in small, rural and historically marginalized communities, which SAAs have a legislative mandate to reach.<sup>6</sup>

A few state arts agencies have adopted formal creative placemaking definitions of their own, such as those listed below.

- **North Carolina Arts Council:** "One broad definition is that these are communities that use their distinctive arts and cultural assets to revitalize neighborhoods and downtowns, instill a strong sense of place and pride in residents, attract creative workers and cultural visitors, and create sustainable economic development."<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Local Initiatives Support Corporation, [What Is Creative Placemaking?](#)

<sup>5</sup> NASAA, [FY2019 State Arts Agency Revenues Report](#)

<sup>6</sup> NASAA, State Arts Agencies Advancing [Race Equity](#), [Rural Equity](#), [Economic Equity](#)

<sup>7</sup> North Carolina Arts Council, [SmART Initiative](#)





Vollis Simpson Whirligig Park and Museum in Wilson, North Carolina

- **Tennessee Arts Commission:** "In creative placemaking, partners from public, private, nonprofit and community sectors strategically shape the physical and social character of a neighborhood, town, city or region around arts and cultural activities or assets. Creative placemaking animates public and private spaces, rejuvenates structures and streetscapes, improves local business visibility and public safety, and brings diverse people together to build shared understanding of culture and community."<sup>8</sup>
- **California Arts Council:** Creative placemaking projects "animate, activate, and celebrate communities by using local artists, cultural resources, and/or the creative sector as central components" and "encourage increased engagement in arts and cultural activities with community members in a place-based context. *Place-based* refers to a context grounded in a physical space or geographic area (e.g., a building, plaza, neighborhood, or natural geographic feature). The intersection of partnerships, place, and arts and cultural activities is essential for this program."<sup>9</sup>

However, NASAA's conversations to date with state arts agency community development officers indicate that it is the exception rather than the norm for SAAs to adopt a formal definition of creative placemaking. These conversations suggest also that the language of creative placemaking holds some definitional and perceptual challenges within the SAA field.

<sup>8</sup> Tennessee Arts Commission, [Creative Placemaking Guidelines](#)

<sup>9</sup> California Arts Council, [Creative California Communities 2018-2019 Grant Guidelines](#)



These challenges may arise, in part, due to timing: the arts based community development work pioneered by many SAAs starting in the 1960s (and even earlier in some states) predated the creative placemaking movement and related terminology that gained popularity in later decades. The long-term work of SAAs in arts based community development is rooted in principles and practices familiar to placemakers: an emphasis on local decision making; the centrality of voices indigenous to the community; a priority on cross-sector collaborations; and the adoption of methods designed to promote accessibility, equity and inclusion. Some SAAs embrace the creative placemaking label for this constellation of practices; others do not. In the words of these survey respondents:

*We do the work but don't use the term creative placemaking.*

*Community development is our strategic priority, of which creative placemaking is a part.*

*Creative placemaking, as such, isn't an agency priority. Community development, which includes creative placemaking, is.*

Furthermore, SAAs join other cultural and philanthropic leaders<sup>10</sup> in criticizing community or economic development efforts that are conducted under the guise of creative placemaking but ultimately result in the exacerbation of inequalities. Some survey respondents articulated their concerns in this way:

*We prefer to talk about place based work (place based transformation, place based learning, place based creative ventures, place keeping, tradition bearing, and belonging) as opposed to using the language of creative placemaking. As a concept, in our communities, "creative placemaking" often comes with language that is exciting to developers and public-service-types, but is viewed with a great deal of rational skepticism by artists and residents, particularly in communities of color with long, repetitive histories of displacement.*

*We rarely use the term creative placemaking. Our focus is on learning and growing with communities, not prescribing solutions.... Our approach is about social justice, equity and access.*

State arts agencies are not alone in expressing reservations about how creative placemaking is perceived and practiced. They are active participants in the cultural field's ongoing efforts to adopt language and methods through which creative placemaking can become a path to greater equity and sustainability for all.

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<sup>10</sup> Roberto Bedoya, [Placemaking and the Politics of Belonging and Dis-belonging](#); Maria Rosario Jackson, [Creative Placemaking and Expansion of Opportunity](#); Anne Gadwa Nicodemus, [Journeys in Creative Placemaking/keeping/taking](#)

## STATE CREATIVE PLACEMAKING POLICIES

In NASAA's field scan survey, a majority of respondents (34 of 53) indicated that creative placemaking is a state arts agency priority. One way this priority manifests is in the numerous programs and services profiled throughout this report. This priority also is apparent in some policies that guide each SAA's public purpose and set directions for its work. Examples may include strategic plans that articulate SAA goals, laws enacted by state legislatures to stimulate cultural district development, and systems designed to foster local decision making about public investments in the arts.

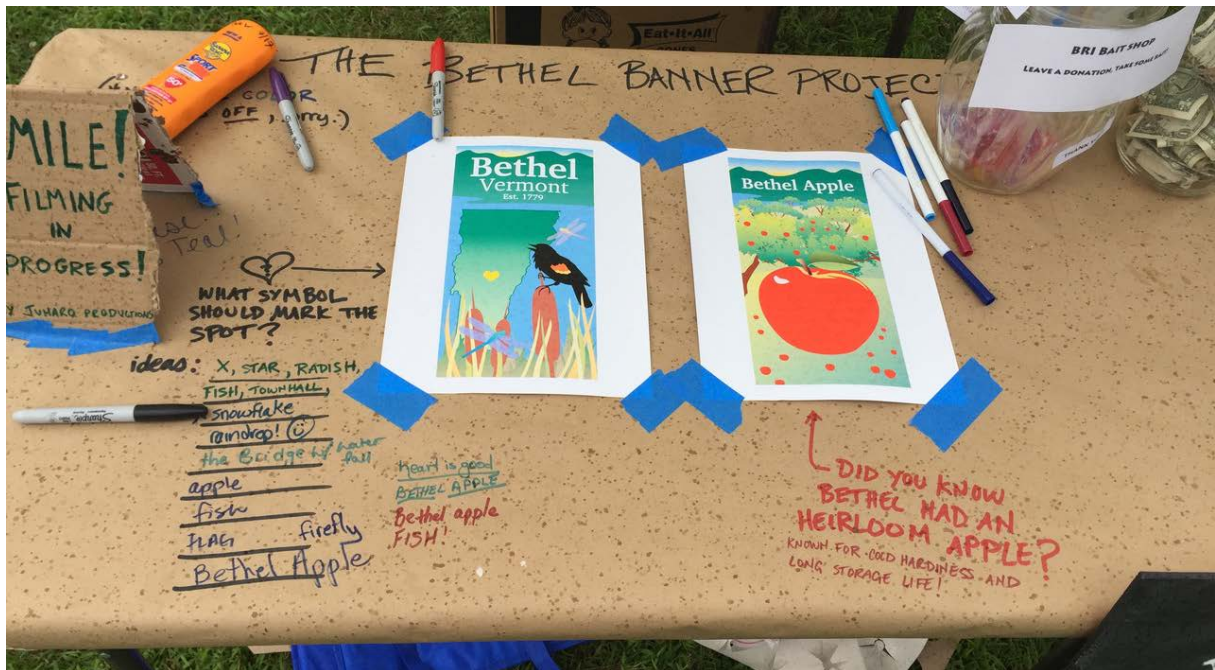
### **STRATEGIC PLANNING**

As a [requirement for receiving federal funds](#), every SAA must develop a comprehensive plan that originates from an extensive public input process and addresses community needs. State arts agencies develop these plans through dialogue with many different groups: residents, civic leaders, businesses, creatives and elected officials as well as local and state representatives of sectors such as economic development, community development, education, health, aging, veterans affairs and more.

As of this writing, 11 SAA plans specifically mention creative placemaking and another 9 reference community development or community building. Two of the most clearly explicated examples are:

- In the **Georgia Council for the Arts (GCA)** [2018-2022 strategic plan](#), the agency's "Build Community Vitality" goal is framed in community development terms: "The arts strengthen the connections that build community resiliency and foster innovation in communities' responses to challenges. Towns and cities throughout Georgia have harnessed the power of the arts to strengthen community vitality, build resiliency and improve quality of life. By supporting, documenting and sharing their stories as evidence of how the arts cultivate healthier communities, GCA will advance efforts to integrate arts organizations, artists and arts educators as partners in community development." The agency also articulates a specific creative placemaking objective and related tactics and partnerships: "Advance the conversation about creative placemaking, including tools, resources, and best practices. a. Build partnerships to support cultural planning. b. Develop resources and guidelines for best practices in public art. c. Continue to foster and strengthen partnerships and collaborations with non-arts entities such as GMA, DCA, and the Archways program at UGA to advance the work of the arts in placemaking."
- The **Vermont Arts Council's** [Strategic Plan 2018-2020](#) views integration of the arts into local community development efforts as a central strategy. The plan asserts, "Creativity and the arts are vital to solving key community issues. The Council honors the work that local cultural organizations and

individual artists do to have long-term impact on health, safety, community connectedness, and lifelong learning." A performance outcome toward which the SAA strives is: "Creativity is embraced in decision-making at the local and state levels." The plan commits the arts council to "work to ensure that arts organizations and artists are represented in town and village planning" and to "support communities to expand the role of arts in community infrastructure projects."



Bethel, Vermont, harnessed creative public engagement practices for its Bethel Revitalization Initiative.

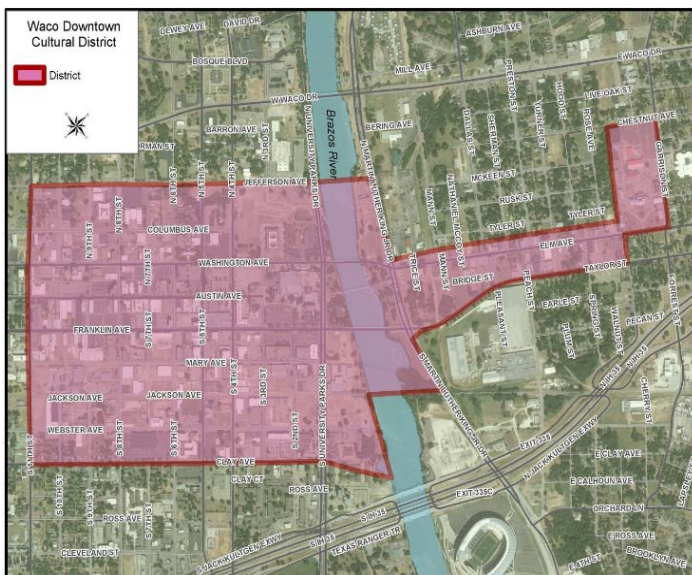
## CULTURAL DISTRICT CERTIFICATION

Cultural districts are downtown urban corridors, rural regions or other designated geographies that feature a high concentration of arts and culture assets that contribute to community revitalization and economic development. There are now 16 state arts agencies with formal cultural district certification systems and another with a legislatively enacted cultural district policy that has yet to be funded.

These programs, which collectively have established at least 338 cultural districts across the country, help neighborhoods to showcase their distinctive identities and serve as a catalyst for local cultural programming. State level certification policies set standards for districts and encourage or require the collaboration of multiple community entities to use the arts to achieve shared community goals. The certification process helps to unite community stakeholders such as artists, community development corporations, main streets, arts organizations, local governments and others around the idea of creative placemaking.

Additionally, the technical assistance that state arts agencies offer to certified cultural districts mirrors the technical assistance offered in many creative placemaking projects. State arts agencies provide direct consulting or access to consultants with expertise in functions such as cultural planning, strategic planning, community engagement, finance, fundraising and facilitation. A state's data collection requirements for certified districts can be useful for understanding long-term creative placemaking efforts and outcomes through a state policy lens. Examples of statewide cultural district initiatives include the following:

- The goals of the [Creative Districts](#) program of **Colorado Creative Industries** (CCI) are to create hubs and clusters of economic activity, promote unique local identities and enhance rural communities as appealing places to live, conduct business, and attract visitors. CCI supports districts after their certification through its [Project and Technical Assistance Fund for Certified Creative Districts](#), which awards grants of up to \$10,000 to enable individual districts to advance their strategic goals. CCI also has a free online toolkit, [Call Yourself Creative](#), designed to help communities initiate creative placemaking efforts or develop or improve a cultural district. This program—along with Space to Create (described below)—received national recognition with an excellence award from the Council of Development Finance Agencies.
- The **Maryland State Arts Council's** [Arts & Entertainment Districts](#) program certifies local districts in both rural and urban communities, which are then eligible for three tax incentives that spur creative economic development. A property tax incentive encourages developers and landowners to redevelop properties for artists and arts groups. The second incentive exempts artists selling their work in any of the state's 25 certified districts from paying income tax associated with their art sales. Also available is an associated [Arts & Entertainment District Technical Assistance Grant](#), which awards grants of \$500 – \$2,500 for marketing and capacity-building purposes.
- With authorization by the state legislature in 2005, the **Texas Commission on the Arts** can designate cultural districts in places across Texas. Goals of Texas cultural districts are tied to the arts as an economic driver, however there are [several codified](#)



Waco, Texas, received state certification for its cultural district in 2019.



[program goals](#) focused on community outcomes, including addressing specific community needs and fostering local cultural development. Texas cultural districts intend to lift up the existing cultural fabric of the communities and to strengthen and celebrate that historical or existing identity. The Texas Commission on the Arts made substantial grant investments in designated districts—with additional funds from the legislature in 2015—and [evaluated the impact](#) of these efforts in terms of additional visitors and dollars to districts.

## **DECENTRALIZED GRANT MAKING**

There are a variety of other SAA policies that tangentially support creative placemaking. An important example is decentralized grant making. This policy model draws on the contextual knowledge local grant makers have to engage them in the redistribution of state funds. When an SAA provides this regranting authority, it empowers local organizations in guiding the allocation of state dollars to address local community needs and priorities. For the [15 states with a decentralized grant program](#), regranting is a way to democratize access to state resources and to support geographically dispersed or historically underserved communities. For instance:

- The **Massachusetts Cultural Council's** [Local Cultural Council \(LCC\) program](#) enriches the cultural life of cities and towns through 329 LCCs across the commonwealth. The SAA distributes state funds to LCCs, which then regrant the dollars to around 6,000 local arts, humanities and interpretive science projects annually. Each LCC determines its own grant criteria based on [community input](#). This program strengthens the local arts agency infrastructure, which is important within the creative placemaking ecosystem: local arts agencies can be significant catalysts and coordinators for placemaking and are positioned to engage local leaders in policy efforts that foster arts based community development. This power was demonstrated through the [Cultural Compact](#) initiative, a pilot program that helped establish creative policy partnerships between local governments and LCCs in six Massachusetts communities. Results included citywide cultural plans, the engagement of new private sector collaborators and deepened relationships with mayors and city managers. The initiative served communities across the economic spectrum, reaching towns with median household incomes ranging from 3% to 53% below the statewide median.

## **STATE ARTS AGENCY CREATIVE PLACEMAKING PROGRAMS**

Many state arts agencies make specific programmatic investments in creative placemaking. Some are broad-spectrum community arts development programs, others direct resources to specific geographies or particular components of placemaking (such as local planning, artist support, public art or social change).

## **CREATIVE PLACEMAKING GRANT PROGRAMS**

A few state arts agencies have developed grant programs that have placemaking as their sole purpose. While the structure and scope of these programs varies, they all embrace the nomenclature of creative placemaking, and most have an overt focus on serving communities that have been historically marginalized or disenfranchised. Examples include:

- Through its [SmART Initiative](#), the **North Carolina Arts Council** (NCAC) awards creative placemaking grants of \$15,000 – \$30,000 to local communities as well as related guidance from NCAC staff and other placemaking experts. Over three to five years, participating communities work with artists, economic development experts and stakeholders in the private sector to envision and realize a placemaking plan. They also establish a fundraising strategy to ensure the sustainability of their efforts. SmART projects have been particularly successful in small towns and rural counties, including Wilson, where more than \$25 million in private development has been invested within a two-block radius of the Vollis Simpson Whirligig Park and Museum.
- The [Pennsylvania Creative Communities Initiative](#) is a new program of the **Pennsylvania Council on the Arts** (PCA) that provides multiyear funding to community-driven, arts based projects designed to foster "livability, economic development, and community connectedness." Through it, PCA is supporting creative placemaking projects in up to four communities over the next four years. Funded projects receive up to \$25,000 per year. Eligible projects must be led by two or more local government agencies and/or nonprofit groups working in partnership. The program's placemaking goals include ensuring diversity, equity, and inclusion and implementing best practices for project evaluations.
- The **Tennessee Arts Commission** (TAC) awards [Creative Placemaking grants](#) of \$5,000 – \$8,000 to projects that leverage arts or cultural assets for economic and community development. (Applications for projects involving two or more communities may request up to \$10,000.) Grants support projects that leverage the arts to revitalize neighborhoods; that develop an arts or cultural business incubator or apprenticeship program; that encourage integration of the arts into state parks, farmers markets, or other natural or recreational assets; or that transform a community liability into a community asset. Every year, TAC reserves at least two of these grants for eligible applicants from rural communities.
- The **California Arts Council** (CAC), through its [Creative California Communities grant](#), awards two-year grants of up to \$150,000 to place based projects that address community priorities through the arts. The program is rooted in CAC's recognition that creative placemaking facilitates civic engagement, collective problem solving and multicultural connections—all of which enrich community dynamics. It funds cross-sector partnerships



leading meaningful, collaborative, creative placemaking projects that leverage local artists and other cultural resources. One of the program's goals is to enhance "the social, economic, or environmental livability of a community through the arts that honors the residents, history, and culture of that community."



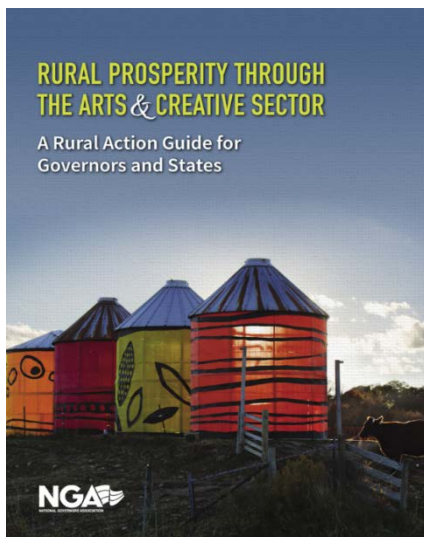
Building on the legacy of Día de los Muertos in Los Angeles, California's Eastside neighborhoods

- [Iowa Great Places](#) is a placemaking initiative that the **Iowa Arts Council** administers on behalf of its parent agency, the Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs. The program aims "to cultivate the unique and authentic qualities of Iowa neighborhoods, districts, communities and regions in Iowa" in order to make them attractive places to live and work. It provides professional development training and other technical assistance opportunities to these ends. The program also recognizes—through a special "Great Places" designation—communities that have conducted a local planning process and demonstrated a vision that values their assets while challenging themselves to set realistic goals for advancing their quality of life. Designated communities are expected to become active members of the Iowa Great Places Network, which is a forum for peer support and the sharing of best practices. They also are eligible to apply for grant funding (average award of \$185,000) to support an infrastructure project.

### ***GEOGRAPHICALLY TARGETED PROGRAMS***

States also design grant programs to target specific geographies. These programs are tailored to distinct areas and often support place based projects that draw on cultural or environmental assets unique to those communities.

- The **South Carolina Arts Commission** (SCAC) launched its rural focused creative placemaking effort, [Art of Community: Rural SC](#), in 2016. With financial support from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Rural Development Agency, the program facilitates community-led planning and projects in six rural, underserved counties designated as Promise Zones by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Each team, consisting of an SCAC liaison known as a "maven" and local residents with deep knowledge of their community's assets and challenges, reimagines their community through an arts based demonstration project that addresses a local community development issue, such as workforce development or access to health care. SCAC provides special grants to fund the demonstration project. An advisory committee of experts in the arts, community development, public policy and related fields provides leadership support.
- The **Louisiana Division of the Arts** leads the [Bayou Culture Collaborative](#), which considers coastal erosion, land loss and cultural disruption in the face of long-term environmental change in Louisiana's littoral and waterway communities. The collaborative convenes artists, tradition bearers, scientists and residents to strengthen the connections between art, heritage, science and community life in the face of land loss and cultural shifts. "Passing It On" workshops feature tradition bearers in passing on locally rooted folklife practices to future generations.



[Rural Prosperity through the Arts & Creative Sector](#), published by the National Governors Association (in partnership with the National Endowment for the Arts and NASAA), offers examples, lessons learned and recommendations from states that have used the arts to drive prosperity in rural areas. Creative placemaking, community development and economic development are explored as complementary policy strategies. Creative placemaking in rural communities is an important option for governors and other state lawmakers wishing to confront specific rural challenges including outmigration, disinvestment and sustainability needs.

- The **DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities** supports access to arts and humanities experiences for residents living east of the Anacostia River—an underserved part of Washington, D.C.—through its [East of the River grants](#). The program awards up to \$35,000 to support the operations and programming of organizations that provide high-quality arts and humanities

experiences that help increase quality of life, spark economic activity and foster community vibrancy.

- Through its [Arts Project Support](#) program, the **Tennessee Arts Commission** (TAC) underwrites efforts that focus on community vitality and engagement in urban counties. TAC's [Rural Arts Project Support](#) program, meanwhile, fosters diverse arts projects in designated rural counties. Both grant programs award \$500 – \$9,000 to arts organizations as well as non-arts groups and local government agencies. Arts groups serving a statewide audience may apply for up to \$10,000.

- [Basin to Range Exchange](#) is a one-year initiative of the **Nevada Arts Council** designed to foster relationships between Nevada's rural and urban communities. Through in-person gatherings, intercommunity arts based exchange activities and peer-to-peer mentorships, the program not only celebrates the state's rural and urban assets, but also encourages cross-sector partnerships and collaborative approaches for arts and culture programming that ultimately benefit the quality of life experienced around the state.



Nevada's Basin to Range Exchange

- **Colorado Creative Industries** designed its [Space to Create, Colorado](#) program, which is building affordable artist housing and work spaces, with the goal of stimulating community and economic development in rural and small towns. This program—realized in partnership with the Colorado Department of Local Affairs, History Colorado, the Boettcher Foundation, the Gates Foundation and the consulting firm Artspace—develops mixed-use buildings that merge affordable live/work space for artists and their families with space for creative enterprises and organizations serving the community. By yoking the vitality of local creative communities with the expertise of public, private and philanthropic stakeholders, each project is tailored to meet specific community needs through successful placemaking strategies.

## ***SOCIAL IMPACT AND CIVIC PROBLEM SOLVING***

Another approach some state arts agencies take to cultivating place based community development is to help their constituents address pressing community issues and social needs. Such efforts can enhance community empowerment, civic engagement and social capital, important components of successful placemaking practice.

- Colorado's [Arts in Society Grant](#) is a collaborative grant-making program, established by Bonfils-Stanton Foundation, Hemera Foundation and **Colorado Creative Industries** in partnership with RedLine Contemporary Art Center, designed to build capacity for social practice projects that implement artistic excellence to engage social issues. The program's goals include fostering cross-sector work through the arts and building capacity for social practice projects that engage social issues through artistic excellence. The program has [funded](#) many creative placemaking activities, such as reclaiming site based memory and history through community narratives, history collection, storytelling and arts; using broadcast media to facilitate public dialogue about community issues; and engaging youth voices in the development of a cultural corridor.
- Iowa's [Arts Build Communities](#) program awards \$10,000 grants to municipal governments, nonprofit organizations and K-12 schools to enable them to respond to civic challenges through the arts. The program, which is a collaboration of the **Iowa Arts Council**, the Iowa State University College of Design, the University of Northern Iowa, and the University of Iowa's Office of Outreach and Engagement, aims to demonstrate how artists and arts leaders can be innovative partners in the social sphere. Participating communities also may receive advisory and technical assistance on project design and implementation from IAC staff as well as faculty and students from one of the partner universities.
- The **California Arts Council's** [Innovations + Intersections pilot program](#) offers funding for arts organizations to fuse technology or wellness into arts projects addressing urgent social challenges. The initiative aims to use the arts to find ground-breaking and imaginative solutions for complex issues such as homelessness, climate change, systemic violence and mental health. Projects must focus on technology or health, feature interdisciplinary partnerships, elevate community assets, and contribute to community resiliency and equity. Artists and other creatives must develop and execute projects by, for and with the community that each project is intending to serve. Grant awards are available up to \$500,000—the largest in the Arts Council's history. The agency made intentional grant guideline shifts to make this funding easier to secure for diverse communities and organizations of all sizes. Grants do not require applicants to provide a cash funding match, so the opportunity is accessible to organizations with limited access to financial resources.



## **COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS**

Placemaking activities are embedded into many state arts agency community development and economic development programs. Some SAA efforts are focused primarily on economic development or community development, but a few support both as mutually reinforcing goals.

- An example of an SAA grant supporting creative economic development is the [Economic & Entrepreneurial Development program](#) of **New Mexico Arts** (NMA). Through it, NMA awards grants of up to \$15,000 for projects and partnerships supporting arts based economic development efforts such as business training and market development. The program supports activities undertaken by arts organizations, tourism groups, community development foundations and individual artists. Thriving places need creative entrepreneurs, but many rural areas face population outmigration and have a hard time retaining talent as well as a tax base. This New Mexico program helps artists and artisans earn their livings in their home communities.
- The **Kansas Creative Arts Industries Commission** funds both community development and economic development through a single grant program. The Innovative Partnerships category of its [Arts Integration Program](#) awards grants of up to \$20,000 in support of innovative programming that infuses the arts into health and human services, economic development, public safety, natural resources and community development. Projects that receive funds must be anchored by strategic partnerships between arts organizations and non-arts entities. This strategy supports creative placemaking by capitalizing on the power of the arts to improve multiple aspects of community life.
- The [Stellar Communities Program](#) is an interagency program led by the Indiana Office of Community and Rural Affairs that helps small and/or rural communities undertake comprehensive community and economic development projects. Through the program, designated communities receive assistance with planning for and implementing innovative solutions to challenges facing rural communities. They also receive financial support. The **Indiana Arts Commission** (IAC) has served as a consultant to the Indiana Office of Community and Rural Affairs on the effort, which has enabled IAC to work directly with communities to incorporate the arts into development strategies.
- Through its [Cultural Vibrancy Project Grant](#), the **Utah Division of Arts & Museums** provides support for projects that showcase the richness of a community's culture and/or increase residents' access to arts experiences. Grants of \$2,000 – \$10,000 fund a variety of projects, including creative placemaking and innovative projects that advance arts and culture in a specific community or geographic region. The program also has an equity focus, as it encourages projects that serve underserved communities, including veterans and refugee populations. Eligible groups include nonprofit

organizations, local government agencies, correctional facilities, social service agencies and libraries.

- The **Vermont Arts Council's** [Arts Impact Grant](#) awards \$500 – \$3,000 to nonprofit organizations, municipalities and schools in its efforts to add vibrancy to local communities by providing equal and abundant access to the arts. The project grant program has two priority areas: (1) creative placemaking and (2) increasing the accessibility of arts opportunities to residents who have experienced limited access due to age, ability, income, race, geography or other factors.

## **LOCAL CULTURAL PLANNING**

Cultural planning—through which community members undertake a comprehensive community assessment and chart goals for cultural programming and assets—is an essential ingredient of creative placemaking. State arts agencies support planning through vehicles such as these:

- The [Creative Communities = Economic Development Grant](#) of the **Maine Arts Commission** encourages stakeholders from the cultural, economic and governmental sectors to work together to effect culturally based community and economic development. The program has two phases. The [first phase](#) awards grants of up to \$10,000 to help communities develop a cultural plan, and the [second phase](#) awards up to \$75,000 over three years to underwrite the implementation of community cultural plans and partnerships between municipalities.
- **The West Virginia Commission on the Arts** funds community cultural assessments through its [Community Arts Project Support Organizational Development grant](#). This two-year grant program helps communities develop a cultural plan. Nonprofit organizations and local or county government agencies are eligible to apply. First-year grantees may receive up to \$5,000 to coordinate a cultural planning process that includes the input of artists, arts organizations, local government agencies, businesses, chambers of commerce, tourism professionals, educators and other stakeholders. Second-year grantees may receive up to \$5,000 to implement their cultural plan.

## **ARTS TRAILS**

Arts trails are, in some ways, geographically dispersed cultural districts. Through an arts trails program, a state arts agency organizes a network of arts and culture sites—such as art galleries, artist studios, public art installations and centers of cultural heritage—to help them pool resources, develop a shared identity and promote themselves to residents as well as visitors.



- The **North Carolina Arts Council's** (NCAC) [Arts Trails](#) program has created three trails that crisscross all 100 counties of the state to promote community development, cultural tourism and related economic development. The [Blue Ridge Music Trails](#) program covers 25 counties and more than 100 music venues in the rural mountains of North Carolina. It highlights the heritage of old-time and bluegrass music. The [Cherokee Heritage Trails](#) program, celebrating Cherokee music, dance, craft and storytelling traditions, covers eight counties and the Qualla Boundary, which is a territory of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians. The [African American Music Trails](#) connect tourists with the traditions of jazz, blues, gospel and funk in eight counties in the eastern part of the state. NCAC has published a guidebook for each one. In addition, through its Literary Trails of North Carolina program, NCAC publishes a three-volume collection of work by North Carolina's writers. Organized geographically, the books enrich the experience of exploring the state, as travelers can read the work of literary icons—evoking local customs and colloquialisms—as they visit the places the writers lived and wrote about.
- **New Mexico Arts** also offers funding to encourage the development of additional cultural tourism trails around the state. Its [Arts Trails grant](#) awards up to \$20,000 to help local communities designing their own arts trails. Funding is available in two categories. Start-Up funds support arts trail launch efforts, such as developing program criteria, issuing calls for applications, adjudicating applications and creating a trail map. Arts Trails Development funds support business training for artists and promotional events, among other things. Four communities have developed their own cultural trail through this program: the Ancient Way Arts Trail, Artistic Vistas and Treasures, the Southwest New Mexico Clay Trail, and the Trails & Rails Arts Trail.



High Road Artisans Tour and Trail sign in New Mexico

## ***PUBLIC ART***

Public art is a common component of creative placemaking. Public art helps foster community development as it can infuse community centers with creativity, civic pride and meaning. For this reason, 27 state arts agencies fund public art projects

through policies that allocate a percentage of state capital construction projects to fund public art projects. In addition to or in lieu of these "percent for art" programs, some SAAs support public art through a specific project grant category. Here are some examples:

- The **DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities** (DCCA) is supporting public art through several different programs guided by the SAA's [Public Art Master Plan](#), which has the creative placemaking goals of advancing an "urban green agenda" and weaving art into the city's "civic and community fabric."
  - [MuralsDC](#) is a partnership between DCCA and the DC Department of Public Works (DPW) that aims, through creative engagement with at-risk youth populations, to celebrate local culture graffiti and revitalize neighborhoods. Through the program, DCCA awards grants of \$3,000 to \$13,500 for the design, creation and installation of six to eight murals each summer. Funded projects involve apprentices aged 14 to 23 and teach young people the craft of aerosol painting. The owners of participating properties, identified by DPW, help select artists for MuralsDC installations. Every MuralsDC wall tells a unique story of the city's diverse neighborhoods and prevents property destruction, becoming a point of pride and inspiration for area residents.
  - Through its [Public Art Building Communities Grant](#), DCCA supports the creation and installation of permanent or temporary public artwork that connects artists with their communities. Applicants must first receive a letter of support from community organizations before applying and must continually take community input and dialogue into



"Everyday I See Something New" by Cita "Chelove" Sadeli in Washington, D.C.

account during the project. Business improvement districts may apply for up to \$250,000, organizations for up to \$125,000 and individuals for up to \$50,000.

- The **Vermont Arts Council** (VAC), through its [Animating Infrastructure Grant](#), awards \$1,000 – \$15,000 for collaborations between artists and communities that integrate artworks into existing or new infrastructure. The program broadly defines "infrastructure" to include buildings, parks, trails, bike paths, bridges or small-scale renewable energy installations. Grants cover artist fees and the costs of artwork fabrication and installation. Eligible projects enliven public spaces and elevate community spirit and may be carried out by municipal governments, nonprofit organizations, schools, libraries, downtown associations, chambers of commerce and other groups. VAC has developed a video, [Strengthening Vermont Communities through Public Art](#), about how public art installations can be creative investments in community development.
- In 2020, the **North Dakota Council on the Arts** (NDCA) plans to unveil a new public art program called Creative Placemaking—Joining ND's Eight Regions. Over the next five years, NDCA will facilitate the creation of one public art piece in each of the state's [eight state planning regions](#). The works will be defined by regional teams, which will include diverse stakeholders such as tribal leaders, civic officials, artists, educators, businesses and health care providers. Using a mixture of public and private funds, the Council plans to send technical specialists to each region as well as provide professional development around topics such as planning, design, budgeting, artist selection, fundraising, building, maintenance and marketing. By nurturing networks and knowledge within each region, North Dakota hopes to build local capacity and catalyze relationships and idea sharing that extend beyond this public art initiative.

## ***ARTIST FOCUSED PROGRAMS***

Artists are often the catalysts, architects and facilitators of creative placemaking. State arts agencies are one of the few funders that offer direct support to individual artists. In fiscal year 2018, SAAs funded \$9.8 million in direct grants to [individual artists](#) through more than 2,700 grants. Many additional artists (more than a million, according to states' FY2018 statistical reporting) are supported by SAA grants to nonprofit and governmental organizations that engage artists in their projects. A number of SAA initiatives aimed at artist residencies, fellowships or career development are designed to enable artists to work in community settings. Program examples include the below:

- The **California Arts Council's** [Artists in Communities grant](#) supports community based artist residencies that are relevant to local residents and responsive to their needs. The program awards grants of up to \$20,000 to nonprofit arts groups, nonprofit social service organizations, local

government agencies and tribal governments to underwrite an artist residency that fosters community development and social progress. The program aims to demonstrate that artists are integral to healthy communities and that the arts are a societal cornerstone. Funded projects must be artist-driven, be responsive to particular community needs and engage community members as active participants.

- The [Tallgrass Artist Residency](#), which is a partnership between the **Kansas Creative Arts Industries Commission**, the Center for Living Education at Matfield Green and the Marianna Kistler Beach Museum of Art at Kansas State University, is based on a slightly different model. The residency, located in the Flint Hills region of Kansas, home to one of the last remaining tallgrass prairies in North America, seeks resident artists who are interested in ecology as a placemaking asset and who spark "connection and conversation across the Great Plains."
- The **Minnesota State Arts Board** runs the [Cultural Community Partnership](#), a grant program designed to advance the careers of artists of color and to support collaborative, artist-led community arts projects. This program funds individual artists to collaborate on projects with other artists of color or a nonprofit organization. Explicit outcome goals of the program are to foster authentic relationships across diverse communities and to change, expand or enrich the ways artists connect to their communities. Through its adjudication criteria and resulting projects, this program expands opportunities for artists of color to play a leadership role in arts based community work.

## EMBEDDING CREATIVE PLACEMAKING WITHIN OTHER STATE PROGRAMS

Most state arts agencies integrate support for creative placemaking across grants or services designed primarily for other purposes, according to NASAA's survey. For example, 35 states reported that they have funded creative placemaking through general project grants and 42 states have enabled creative placemaking through a nongrant initiative such as training, technical assistance or peer networking.

Some of the grant programs and nongrant initiatives through which SAAs have supported creative placemaking focus on issues central to place based development theory, including community development, economic development and cultural tourism. Other types of SAA efforts—such as convenings, general operating support grants and peer networking—have a broader focus but can contribute to creative placemaking nonetheless. To quote some survey responses:

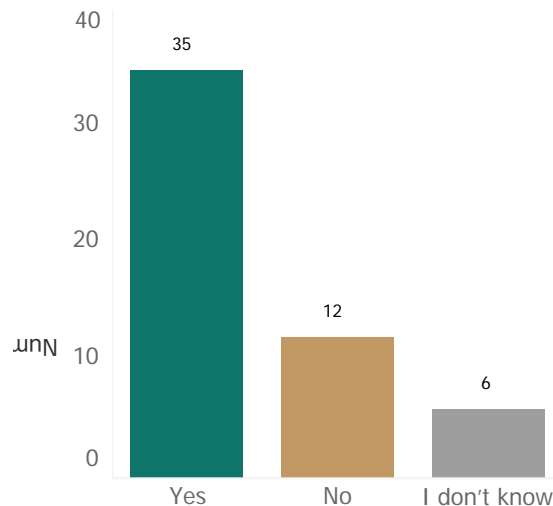
*Aspects of creative placemaking show up in almost everything we do.*

*Our agency does not have programming exclusively dedicated to creative placemaking, so we try to weave the concepts and principles into multiple areas of programming.*

*Some of the work of our county arts councils (funded by our Community Arts Development program) and some public art projects (funded by a separate program) as well as some work by arts organizations, particularly festivals, (funded by our Grants for Organizations and Creativity Grant programs) could be considered creative placemaking work.*

*Our agency doesn't designate any grant dollars specifically for creative placemaking, but I invest extensive staff time in helping on-the-ground placemaking projects.*

**Has your agency funded creative placemaking activities through other grant program categories, such as community development or project grant categories?**



**PROJECT GRANTS**

Project grants enable state support of the arts to enable specific arts activities, including those that foster place based development. Some project grant programs have few limitations on eligible activities. Other programs focus more on certain types of projects, including arts festivals or expanding access to the arts for underserved communities. Examples include the following:



- The [Arts Project Grant](#) program of the **Nebraska Arts Council** (NAC) supported arts programming, productions or events open to the general public through awards of \$2,000 – \$7,500. Eligible activities included exhibitions, performances, poetry readings, commissions and/or support of new work development, arts festivals, community murals, and ethnic heritage projects. NAC's [Mini Grants](#) program is designed to provide quick access to funds supporting a variety of arts projects. Organizations may apply for up to two awards of \$100 – \$2,000 per year. Minigrants are a strategy used by multiple SAAs to enhance accessibility to state funds with fewer restrictions. They are an important vehicle for getting funds to smaller, grass-roots groups.
- The **Ohio Arts Council's** [ArtsNEXT grant](#) offers one-year awards of \$5,000 – \$20,000 to support innovative and experimental projects. Awards are to support big ideas that push boundaries, engage participants in unexpected ways, pilot new solutions to challenging problems, improve program design with calculated risk taking or result in the creation of new work. Priority is given to projects designed to improve the accessibility, affordability and/or diversity of arts experiences.



Youth apprentices transform Cincinnati's Bolivar Alley into a pedestrian thoroughfare.

## **GENERAL OPERATING SUPPORT**

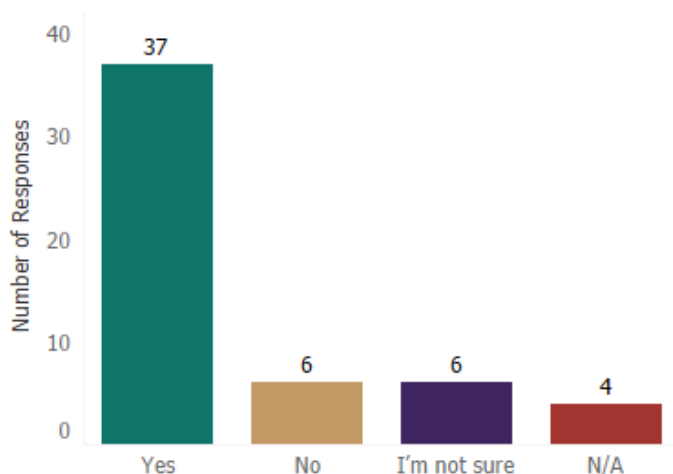
General operating support grants, by design, flexibly support the programmatic and administrative work of arts organizations. The aim of these unrestricted grants is to enable the creative vision and operational goals of arts groups, which often serve as anchor organizations in creative placemaking efforts.

State arts agency program guidelines and review criteria often include language and criteria requiring arts organizations to engage with communities in meaningful ways. Such criteria exert policy leverage that encourages more community based practices that can be foundational to creative placemaking efforts. Thirty-seven out



of 53 SAA survey respondents (70%) said community based work was a factor in their operating support review criteria.

**Within your grants panel process, is community based work a factor in the scoring rubric for your operational support grant applicants?**



Such criteria are especially influential given the \$110 million SAAs devote to operating support each year. Note these examples:

- The **Montana Arts Council's** [Public Value Partnership](#) is an operating support grant that has a particular emphasis on connecting arts organizations with the communities that they serve. Public Value Partners receive support to achieve community relevance and connection. Funding is built on the foundational principle of three Rs: relevance to the community; relationships within the community; and return on investment "that brings meaning, adds vitality, and becomes a catalyst for new ways of thinking, seeing and solving problems."
- The **Maryland State Arts Council's** [Creativity Grant Program](#) awards unrestricted funding of \$1,000 – \$3,500 to small arts organizations (with an annual income of less than \$50,000). Larger organizations apply through the agency's [Grants for Organizations](#) program. Expectations around community responsiveness and community engagement are expressed through adjudication criteria such as:
  - Organization staff and board clearly reflect the constituency of the geographic area of service.
  - Constituents from the geographic area of service are essentially involved in artistic decisions.

- Specifically demonstrates meaningful public value and authentic constituent collaboration and clearly demonstrates plans to reach yet-to-be-known constituents.
- Programming process indicates regular consideration of nondominant norms, values, narratives, standards and aesthetics.
- The **Kentucky Arts Council's** [Kentucky Arts Partnership](#) program supports the general operating costs of arts nonprofits that provide year-round programming. A majority (60%) of application point scoring is based on criteria that emphasize community needs and ties:
  - Networking and collaborations (30 points) includes demonstration of relationships—and the benefits of those relationships—with arts and non-arts organizations and Kentucky artists, among others.
  - Diversity (15 points) includes efforts to build diversity in the organization's leadership and participants as well as the promotion of diverse arts and cultural traditions and programming that is inclusive of underserved populations and people with disabilities.
  - Value of the arts (15 points) includes the organization's response to the community's need for the arts and the provision of public value.

## ***CAPACITY-BUILDING GRANTS***

A number of state arts agencies offer capacity-building grants to strengthen arts organizations that need additional assistance to compete for funding or create high-impact arts programs. While not directly a creative placemaking strategy, these programs address systemic issues of equity and capacity for organizations in low-income communities and those primarily comprised of people of color—priority populations for many placemaking efforts.

- The **Pennsylvania Council on the Arts** [Preserving Diverse Cultures](#) program supports the "creation, development and stabilization of organizations, programs and projects whose mission and artistic work are deeply rooted in and reflective of the African American, Latino, Asian, Asian American, Native American and Hispanic (ALANAH) perspectives." The program offers three types of projects, two of which are focused more on organization capacity building and one of which is more specifically for community based engagement projects—a component that is especially relevant to creative placemaking.
- The [Cultural Pathways](#) program of the **California Arts Council** provides two years of operating support and a host of technical assistance and professional development tools, resources and training to small, new and emerging organizations rooted in communities of color, recent immigrant and refugee communities, and tribal or indigenous groups.

- The **Rhode Island State Council on the Arts** [Expansion Arts Program](#) (RIEAP) offers funding and organizational assistance to community based, culturally diverse arts and cultural organizations. It is supported by a collaboration between the Rhode Island Foundation, Rhode Island State Council on the Arts and Rhode Island Council for the Humanities. RIEAP supports small organizations whose programs and missions center on the cultural practices and traditions of Rhode Island's diverse peoples. RIEAP provides the skills and tools these organizations need to grow as equal partners in the Rhode Island arts and cultural community. [Intercultural Collaboration Seed Grants](#) are available biennially to RIEAP alumni organizations to support programming that promotes cross-cultural exchange and/or cross-sector connections (focused on health, the environment, etc.) in community based settings.

## LEADERSHIP AND RELATIONSHIP BUILDING

Creative placemaking benefits from knowledge sharing among artists, community leaders, policymakers and others who have a vision of or experience with transforming community spaces through the arts. Such expertise can be transmitted in a variety of ways, including online trainings and toolkits. But interpersonal connections have been paramount to the dissemination of best practices and the support of future successes.

## CONVENINGS

Prior to COVID-19, most state arts agencies held regular statewide arts gatherings for artists, arts organizations, arts educators, arts funders, local public leaders and other cultural stakeholders. Since the pandemic, many of these events have been converted to virtual formats. These convenings, which bring together people typically driving creative placemaking efforts, help participants incubate ideas and share knowledge about resources, opportunities and potential partnerships. According to NASAA's survey, 28 SAAs have featured creative placemaking as an agenda topic of a statewide arts convening. Other SAAs have organized special events that specifically focus on creative placemaking practices. Here are three examples:

- In 2011, the **Indiana Arts Commission** collaborated with Ball State University's Building Better Communities office to offer a two-day colloquium on creating dynamic, attractive and economically productive communities. [Creating Vibrant Communities through the Arts](#) featured sessions on creating artist live-work communities, establishing cultural districts and developing community arts education centers. In addition to showcasing best practices from Indiana and from around the nation, the colloquium helped participants apply these ideas to their local planning efforts by sharing practical tools and facilitating team planning sessions.

- The **Kansas Creative Arts Industries Commission** (KCAIC) hosted a creative placemaking convening in 2017. About 30 stakeholders from across Kansas, including representatives from rural economic development organizations, attended the roundtable session, where they participated in discussions facilitated by creative placemaking leaders from Springboard for the Arts, the Wormfarm Institute and Colorado Creative Industries. Given large Latinx population in southwestern Kansas, KCAIC invited the National Association of Latino Arts and Cultures to help lead the event's conversations.
- In 2019, the **New Jersey State Council on the Arts** sponsored the [ArtsTank](#) conference and competition, led by the South Jersey Cultural Alliance in cooperation with the National Consortium of Creative Placemaking (NCCP) and the Ocean First Foundation. Five municipalities proposed creative placemaking initiatives, received coaching from NCCP and competed for a crowdsourced prize of \$5,000. To make the power of placemaking visible to local policy influencers, ArtsTank finalists were highlighted in *New Jersey Municipalities*, the magazine of the State League of Municipalities. Additionally, the mayor of the winning municipality was invited to write a feature article describing a community challenge and the arts based solution that helped to address it.

## **PEER NETWORKS**

As the agencies responsible for funding and otherwise supporting their states' arts community, state arts agencies are well positioned to facilitate connections, conversations and collaborations among cultural stakeholders. As a result, many states organize peer networks, provide them with physical or virtual spaces to connect, and support them with technical assistance and other knowledge services. These networks have become valuable resources for sharing creative placemaking practices. Examples include these:

- The [Vermont Creative Network](#) is a program of the **Vermont Arts Council** (VAC) that aims to cultivate the state's creative sector and, as a result, to improve quality of life, boost local economies and strengthen the fiber of communities. The network is a broad coalition of organizations, businesses and individuals committed to embedding creativity into Vermont's DNA. Through it, VAC fosters mentorships, peer-to-peer learning, cross-sector engagement, communication and planning services, and other activities that advance or leverage creative placemaking. The Vermont Creative Network recently began a 10-month [assessment of the state's creative assets](#) in an effort to develop a comprehensive action plan to advance the creative economy in the state.
- The [NH Creative Communities Network](#) is a statewide, cross-sector consortium of organizations and municipal agencies working together to educate community leaders and other stakeholders about the power of the

creative economy. The **New Hampshire State Council on the Arts** is a key partner of the network. Network members meet three times each year in various regions of the state to share resources and develop collaborative capacity-building projects. Frequently discussed topics include issues pertinent to creative placemaking, such as affordable live-work space for artists, cultural asset mapping, cultural planning and cultural tourism. The network maintains an active [listserv](#) and [Facebook group](#).

- The **Oklahoma Arts Council** incorporates discussion of creative placemaking into its [Leadership Arts](#) program. This training and peer network program annually equips 30 participants from throughout the state to become leaders and advocates for the arts in their communities. During four two-day sessions, participants learn how communities have developed arts programs and vibrant arts spaces to enhance quality of life, how the arts improve the image of cities and neighborhoods while serving as a centerpiece for community engagement, and how the arts cultivate creativity, attracting and retaining a creative workforce. The program is open to artists, community developers, civic leaders and other creative placemaking stakeholders.

## ***TRAINING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE***

Technical assistance with issues related to creative placemaking helps grantees and other stakeholders in arts based development initiatives turn ideas into action. State arts agencies provide technical assistance in a number of formal ways, ranging from facilitating training programs to designing and disseminating free online toolkits.

- The [AZ Creative Communities Institute](#), a partnership of the **Arizona Commission on the Arts** and the Arizona State University Herberger Institute for Design and the Arts, offers communities an opportunity to explore the many ways creativity can be leveraged to catalyze local economic growth and catalyze place based development. Over the course of 12 months, participating communities work with a resident artist, send a delegation to four two-day workshops, and receive technical assistance through site visits, mentorship calls and interactive online training. Each team receives \$2,500 – \$5,000 to support its participation in the learning sessions and up to \$7,500 to support the coordination, promotion and overall implementation of program components.
- The **Indiana Arts Commission** (IAC) hosted [From the Ground Up](#), a creative placemaking workshop for small and/or rural communities. Participating communities were eligible to apply for IAC's [Open Scene Consultancy](#), which provides 50 hours of consulting in support of developing a community-specific creative placemaking strategy. Since then, 13 communities have received this consulting support. Complementing both the workshop and the consulting is IAC's [Creative Placemaking Toolkit](#), an online

resource featuring practical information and project inspiration for artists, community leaders and other stakeholders. The toolkit also includes a primer on creative placemaking ideas, goals and approaches as well as case studies of artist- and community-led projects and links to white papers and training opportunities available elsewhere.



Creative placemaking workshop in Indiana

- The [Change Leader](#) Program, created by the **Utah Division of Arts & Museums**—which has been replicated by Colorado Creative Industries and the Idaho Commission on the Arts—is a professional development certification and cohort-building program that focuses on the leadership, environmental assessment and communication competencies needed to facilitate civic and organizational change. These skills are critical capacities for community development work, and the program is a cornerstone of the agency's community development portfolio. Numerous [Change Leader certification projects](#) focus on creative placemaking. Change Leaders also are eligible for scholarships to fund [Random Acts of Art](#) that use artists or creative methods to engage residents in projects that address social or community needs or that strengthen key community relationships.

## ***PLACEMAKING PARTNERSHIPS***

According to NASAA's survey, 49 state arts agencies leveraged partnerships to support, facilitate or promote creative placemaking. Of these, 46 have partnered with a nonprofit organization or for-profit entity, 44 with state government, 40 with local government and 21 with postsecondary education institutions.



Such partnerships build momentum for creative placemaking and enable SAAs to transcend the limits of their own budgets and staff capacities. Some partnerships help connect SAAs to state residents who have been historically underserved by state arts funding. Other partnerships enable cross-sector collaborations, such as arts and health care, through which the contributions of program partners are greater than the sum of their individual efforts. Yet others pool disparate sources of funding and technical expertise in ways that are more responsive to the evolving needs of state residents than traditional means of agency-specific or statewide policymaking processes.

**Does your agency work (formally or informally) with any entities to support, facilitate or promote creative placemaking?**



Because partnership building is so deeply ingrained into SAAs' creative placemaking approach, this report has already referenced many examples of interagency and cross-sector collaborations. But some additional examples caught NASAA's attention as we were preparing this field scan:

- In Maryland, the [Baltimore Natural Dyes Initiative](#) is a pilot project supporting urban farming, economic opportunities, community redevelopment and the arts. With a combined \$300,000 in support from the Maryland Department of Commerce (through the **Maryland State Arts Council**), the Maryland Department of Housing and Community

Development, the Maryland Agricultural and Resource-Based Industry Development Corporation, and the Baltimore Development Corporation, the effort is creating a natural-dye farm and processing site—the region's first—in a West Baltimore neighborhood affected by racial uprisings in 1968 and 2015. Each year, more than 500 young people visiting the West Baltimore site, including high school interns helping to maintain crops, learn about agricultural practices as well as about the culture of fabric dyeing. In addition, students at the Maryland Institute College of Art (MICA), which is developing a curriculum centered on the natural dyeing process, will have the opportunity to work with raw materials produced through the initiative. The project's main farm is located on Parks & People Foundation's nine-acre LEED Platinum campus in West Baltimore. A small demonstration farm has been operated with the MICA Fiber Department at Hidden Harvest community farm at Station North in Baltimore.



The Baltimore Natural Dye Initiative blends urban farming, the arts and sustainable neighborhood redevelopment.

- The **U.S. Virgin Islands Commission on the Arts** partners with the U.S. Virgin Islands Enterprise Zone Commission, an entity of the U.S. Virgin Islands Economic Development Authority, to run a [Made in the USVI Pop-up Store](#). The initiative seeks to provide business development opportunities for artists, engender creative collaborations and encourage resident and visitor shoppers to "buy local." Pop-up markets offer a creative strategy for enlivening underutilized commercial real estate and public space as well as serving as sites for art-making demonstrations and other arts events.
- The Utah Department of Heritage and Arts, the parent agency of the **Utah Division of Arts & Museums**, leads the state's [Creative Communities](#) program, the mission of which is to "cultivate vibrant, inclusive communities

throughout Utah where residents thrive and have pride in their hometowns." Operating with the slogan, "Love Where You Live," the program offers suggestions for cultural asset mapping workshops and promotes grant funds and research resources offered by the SAA, the Utah Cultural Alliance and the Utah Office of Tourism.

- Localities, the **Kentucky Arts Council** (KAC) and the Kentucky Small Business Development Center collaborate with the [AIR Institute of Berea College](#) to provide training for arts and business leaders. The curriculum is designed specifically for small towns and rural areas in Appalachia. It trains local stakeholders in facilitation techniques, business development, design thinking methods and collaboration practices to cultivate local leadership and capacity for creative placemaking and arts-driven economic development. Reports indicate that AIR workshop participants' networks grow (by 44%), their morale increases (by 43%) and their productivity rises (by 35%). KAC is a statewide partner for encouraging community access to AIR Institute programs.

Several other states throughout the Appalachian region (including Virginia, West Virginia, South Carolina and North Carolina) are collaborating with AIR to provide similar capacity-building workshops and to train cadres of facilitators to work at the local level.



The Berea Story Trail prototype, designed in a 2019 AIR Shift workshop in Berea, Kentucky

- AARP Vermont has teamed up with the **Vermont Arts Council** (VAC) the Vermont Department of Housing and Community Development, and Vermont Department of Health to support place based development in small communities. In 2019, AARP awarded [Community Placemaking Project grants](#) to enable four Vermont towns to undertake "pop-up" placemaking projects. Grant applicants attended a daylong placemaking workshop, where VAC presented on the goals, strategies and benefits of creative placemaking. VAC also served on the panel adjudicating grant applications. In addition, VAC presented on creative placemaking at the [2019 AARP Livable Communities Placemaking Workshop](#).



## **STATE ARTS AGENCY STAFFING**

One of the most important ways that state arts agencies facilitate creative placemaking is through the efforts of designated community development coordinators (CDCs). Present in 33 states, SAA CDCs play a variety of roles essential to arts based community development:

- helping communities to develop local arts plans
- integrating the arts into comprehensive community planning efforts
- directing programs that boost civic engagement through the arts
- administering grant programs
- leading capacity-building services for small/emerging groups
- creating networks for artists, arts organizations and civic groups
- serving as knowledge brokers at the intersection of the arts and civic practice

In some cases, especially in smaller states where local arts agencies are under-resourced or nonexistent, the SAA may be the only entity fulfilling these functions. Because of this type of work, SAA CDCs often hold close community ties. This makes SAA CDC positions vital to implementing and succeeding in any statewide creative placemaking policies.



"I Am a Man" commemorates the 1968 Sanitation Workers' Strike in Memphis, Tennessee.

State arts agency folk and traditional arts officers (FTAOs) are another staff group that can be a powerful asset to creative placemaking. Twenty-seven SAAs have FTAOs on staff and at least 10 others partner with folklorists or organizations to administer folk and traditional arts programming. SAA FTAOs have immersive knowledge of tradition bearers, place keepers and occupational artists from many different cultures within their state, including First Nations. Folklorists at SAAs (often funded in partnership with the National Endowment for the Arts) utilize

fieldwork to build collaborative public programs and engage underrepresented groups, often supporting artists through residencies, apprenticeships or grants. Many of the artists served by SAA FTAOs come from rural communities or Native American communities and may be refugees and immigrants.<sup>11</sup> The fieldwork conducted by or funded by SAA FTAOs frequently occurs in rural or tribal settings, and these individuals often possess a high level of intercultural fluency. They also cultivate in-depth knowledge of their state's informal, occupational and culturally embedded art forms and creative practices. All of these attributes make them valuable assets to conversations about creative placemaking policy and practice.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

NASAA hopes that this report will provide useful information and inspiration to state arts agencies and other funders who support creative placemaking efforts.

### *FOR STATE ARTS AGENCIES*

State arts agencies looking to initiate or improve their creative placemaking support systems can use this field scan to harvest ideas, find exemplars and identify states with whom it could be productive to consult. Useful points of departure for subsequent action can include the following:

- **For good reason, diversity, equity and inclusion stand at the forefront of many of the SAA programs featured in this report.** Centering creative placemaking on the needs of indigenous tribes, immigrant populations and communities of color—as well as rural and low-income areas—is an essential cross-cutting principle to inform all SAA programming and policy development. If the public sector fails to address equity, placemaking may produce negative, unintended outcomes in the very communities SAAs are trying to serve.
- **The examples included in this field scan point to the importance of community-centered and asset based approaches.** The strongest programs that surfaced in NASAA's research were designed to allow a high degree of community self-determination in the development of placemaking initiatives and were engineered to mobilize existing community assets. Strong programs make a concerted effort to invert a "top-down" dynamic and empower local decision making.
- **Meaningful program evaluation could help strengthen future SAA program design.** Beyond standard grant reporting, arts based and grantee-centered evaluation practices can help communities and SAAs alike to refine

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<sup>11</sup> National Endowment for the Arts, [Living Traditions: A Portfolio Analysis of the National Endowment for the Arts' Folk & Traditional Arts Program](#), 2019



their intended outcomes, inculcate reflective practices and garner more support for future placemaking efforts.

- **Strategic planning offers a golden opportunity for a public agency to understand local needs that may be addressed through placemaking or to test potential placemaking ideas.** Input from arts stakeholders, cross-sector perspectives, government officials and the broader public all can inform the design of relevant and responsive programs. The planning process also can plant the seeds for effective partnerships within and outside of state government.
- **State arts agencies can shape partnerships at various geographic levels (regional, state, local) as well as across multiple systems (government, philanthropy, etc.).** This research identifies numerous partnerships in which SAAs give and receive resources and expertise. Such relationships expand the resources that are brought to bear to facilitate creative placemaking in any given state.
- **It may be helpful to explicitly name creative placemaking within the list of allowable activities that an SAA's general programs can support.** When NASAA was conducting this research, it required considerable effort to excavate the placemaking possibilities embedded within broader project support, artist residency or operating support grant programs, for instance. Signposting creative placemaking (without limiting other activity options) may make the placemaking potential of these programs more apparent—not just to researchers, but to creative practitioners seeking support.

## ***FOR LOCAL AND PHILANTHROPIC FUNDERS***

State arts agencies invite dialogue with funders—public or private, state or local—with an interest in place based work. A conversation with an SAA can be useful to:

- take stock of creative placemaking needs and gaps in a state or region,
- share perceptions of bright spots and lessons learned,
- identify opportunities to influence policies or systems to advance creative placemaking, or
- identify shared, divergent or complementary creative placemaking goals.

Whether the ultimate objective of these funder-to-funder conversations is information sharing or collaborative programming, the participants will likely benefit from the unique perspective offered by a state arts agency.

- **The state arts agency executive director or community development coordinator may be a fruitful first contact.** These individuals will be well-versed in the policy milieu of the state arts agency, will be knowledgeable about existing support structures for creative placemaking, and will be in a

position to broker helpful introductions and offer examples of creative placemaking success stories.

- **If you receive an invitation to participate in an SAA strategic planning process or to serve on an SAA grant adjudication panel, seize that opportunity.** These are important vehicles through which state arts agencies establish relationships, share information and secure guidance—and they also provide a powerful opportunity to learn about state systems of support. SAAs often are eager for volunteers to fill these roles, so if you are interested, share your name with your SAA's community development coordinator.
- Likewise, **if you are convening a planning forum, an advisory group or a grant panel, consider inviting an SAA representative.** SAAs can offer extensive state and local knowledge as well as arts expertise. They also are fluent in working at the intersection of community development, economic development, civic practice and other cross-sector endeavors important for placemaking.
- **Take advantage of any networks or convenings facilitated by your state arts agency.** They may provide valuable forums for sharing your work, connecting with experts and developing relationships with other state and local entities working on placemaking.

Ideally, creative placemaking is the embodiment of shared goals for healthy, inclusive, equitable and sustainable communities. It is in the shared interests of the public at large—as well as governments, businesses, philanthropy and the creative sector—to make these goals attainable for *all* communities across America. State arts agencies are active partners in this work, helping people and places galvanize creative ideas, resources and relationships in order to thrive through the arts.

## PHOTO CREDITS AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

**Cover:** Tools designed by local artists for Space to Create Colorado, the nation's first state-driven initiative for affordable housing for creative sector workers. The initiative is led by Colorado Creative Industries. Photo by Raven Paiz

**Page 7:** The Vollis Simpson Whirligig Park and Museum in Wilson, North Carolina, is a two-acre park featuring the largest collection of 50-foot whirligig installations in the world. Photo courtesy of North Carolina Arts Council

**Page 10:** The Bethel Revitalization project, funded by the Vermont Arts Council's Animating Infrastructure program, engaged the community in storytelling and design. Photo by Rebecca Sanborn Stone

**Page 11:** The Waco, Texas, Cultural District received state certification from the Texas Commission on the Arts in 2019. Photo copyright Creative Waco

**Page 14:** With support from the California Arts Council, Self Help Graphics and Art is building on the 45-year legacy of Día de los Muertos as an economic development tool for the artistic and working communities of Los Angeles's Eastside, in partnership with Leadership for Urban Renewal Network. The partnership focuses on strengthening entrepreneurial and small business opportunities within this cultural tradition and work to integrate groups like street vendors and other non-artists. Photo courtesy of Self Help Graphics and Art

**Page 16:** Participants of the 2019 Basin to Range Exchange gathered in Tonopah, Nevada. The initiative was convened by the Nevada Arts Council. Photo by Rebecca Snetselaar

**Page 20:** The Arts Trails Program is a place based arts, community and economic development initiative from New Mexico Arts. Pictured: The High Road Artisans Tour and Trail logo

**Page 21:** "Everyday I See Something New" was painted in 2011 by artist Cita "Chelove" Sadeli for MuralsDC, a joint initiative of the DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities and the city Department of Public Works. Photo by Nancee Lyons, Department of Public Works

**Page 25:** ArtWorks used an Ohio Arts Council ArtsNEXT grant award to transform Cincinnati's Bolivar Alley into a viable pedestrian thoroughfare. ArtWorks employed a team of nine youth apprentices to work alongside nine professional artists on "New Lines III," a series of murals on residential properties that line the alley. Photo courtesy of ArtWorks

**Page 31:** In 2017, the Indiana Arts Commission hosted From the Ground Up, a creative placemaking workshop for small towns and rural communities. Photo courtesy of Indiana Arts Commission

**Page 33:** The Baltimore Natural Dye Initiative grew out of a 2017 visit by Maryland First Lady Yumi Hogan to the Natural Dyeing Cultural Center in Naju, South Korea, a well-known area for Korean traditional dyes and textile arts. The project is an 18-month multiagency pilot to create the area's first natural dye farm and processing site to support urban farming, economic opportunities, community redevelopment, international relations and the arts in Maryland. The Baltimore Natural Dye Initiative is a public-private and international partnership that also includes the Parks & People Foundation and Maryland Institute College of Art, with support from other partners including the Natural Dyeing Cultural Center in Naju, South Korea. Photo courtesy of Baltimore Natural Dye Initiative

**Page 34:** The Berea Story Trail was designed in a 2019 AIR Shift workshop in Berea, Kentucky. In collaboration with the Kentucky Arts Council, the AIR Institute of Berea College encourages place based community and economic development by teaching design thinking, business planning and entrepreneurship. Photo courtesy of AIR Institute of Berea College

**Page 35:** Public art is at the heart of the I Am a Man Plaza, a public park adjacent to Clayborn Temple that commemorates the 1968 Sanitation Workers' Strike in Memphis, Tennessee. The space serves as a point of reflection, inviting all people to a peaceful, interactive and educational experience that supports the advancement of equity and justice for positive social change. The project, funded by the Tennessee Arts Commission, used historic preservation as a route to civic and community pride, and is a product of multiple partnerships between preservation and other community interest organizations. Photo by Logan Young, Memphis Tourism

NASAA is thankful to state arts agencies—especially community development coordinators—for sharing their information, time and perspectives for this report. We also are grateful for the support of ArtPlace America for underwriting the [Strengthening the State Arts Agency Support System for Creative Placemaking](#) initiative.

For more information about state arts agencies' creative placemaking efforts, contact NASAA Senior Director of Research [Ryan Stubbs](#).

The National Assembly of State Arts Agencies (NASAA) is the nonpartisan membership organization representing the state and jurisdictional arts councils of the United States. NASAA is a clearinghouse for research about government support for arts and culture in America, providing statistical data, policy analysis and information on exemplary practices. Additional information on state arts agencies is available on the [NASAA website](#).



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