

CUYAHOGA ARTS & CULTURE | ORGANIZATIONAL PLANNING

Roadmap - Board Approved 12/12/2016

Cuyahoga Arts & Culture's mission is to inspire and strengthen the community by investing in arts and culture. Through our grantmaking, we support the people and organizations that create cultural experiences that are important to our residents' health and vitality.

In mid-2015, we began an organizational planning process intended to help our public agency chart its course for the next 10 years. That work was completed in two phases:

PHASE I

Phase I looked backward: we examined what our work has meant to Cuyahoga County since we began making grants in 2007. From that phase, we learned that:

- CAC is the largest institutional funder for the arts sector, providing almost twice the funding of our region's largest foundation, and our funding has been net positive for the sector.
- CAC's pursuit of funding arts and culture for the public's benefit is aligned with good grantmaking practices for public agencies, even if those practices aren't always well understood by some of our stakeholders.
- And, most importantly, we reaffirmed that, as a public agency, **we serve two key stakeholder groups: the nonprofit organizations in our County, and the residents who live here.**



PHASE II

Phase II built on that work, as well as what we learned from our 2014 Arts, Culture & Public Value Report. That study revealed that, while many residents find great value in the programs offered by area cultural organizations, many others do not feel that they benefit from those programs. We designed Phase II to help us better understand that disconnect, and we explored this key question:

How can we best support the cultural life of Cuyahoga County residents today and in the future?

Phase II included extensive learning and listening, as we gathered qualitative data from over 2000 County residents. The attached Summary of Learnings document provides details of the process. [From that work, we can now answer our key question:](#)

To best support the cultural life of Cuyahoga County residents today and in the future, Cuyahoga Arts & Culture must:

- Continue to support a wide variety of Cuyahoga County's cultural institutions, artists and creative people, to develop and present arts and cultural programs to the public; and
- Acknowledge that there are significant differences in the way arts and culture are experienced among different segments of our community, and find ways to recognize and equitably support our community's varied cultural ecology.



Our mission will continue to be our primary guide to accomplishing this work. We also reaffirm a new vision and new set of values that will, together with our mission, support all of our efforts.

MISSION

To inspire and strengthen the community by investing in arts and culture.

VISION

All Cuyahoga County residents experience a meaningful cultural life.

VALUES

CONNECTION

we believe we can go farther together. We nurture the relationships that we have and actively seek out new partnerships that will enable us to better serve the entire population of the County.

DISCOVERY

we value continuous improvement and strive to bring a spirit of innovation and creativity to all of our work. Recognizing that stewardship of resources can require us to act boldly as well as thoughtfully, we actively seek out new opportunities in line with our values.

EQUITY

we recognize that our society is challenged to overcome a complex web of social, economic, educational and other inequities, and we believe that CAC is responsible for operating with an awareness of legacies of privilege and power that have effects on opportunity, access and resources. This awareness will inform all of our policies and practices, including funding criteria, program development, hiring, and resident engagement.

SERVICE

we exist to support all of Cuyahoga County's residents and strive to lead by listening and acting in partnership with our cultural partners and community residents.

STEWARDSHIP

we are accountable to all County residents for ensuring that resources – both human and financial – are managed prudently and to their best use now and for years to come.

TRUST

we operate with integrity and strive to be worthy of the public's trust. We operate transparently and openly, and we assume positive intent, actively seeking the best in each person and situation.

I CONTINUE TO SUPPORT A WIDE VARIETY OF CULTURAL ORGANIZATIONS, ARTISTS AND CREATIVE PEOPLE

CAC will pursue our responsibility to cultural organizations, artists and creative people by sustaining our operating and project grant programs, as well as our technical assistance services and related programs. We will align all of our program guidelines and policies around our mission, vision and values, taking care to implement program changes thoughtfully and with a spirit of partnership and collaboration.



Next Actions

- In the first half of 2017, CAC will create its 2018 grant program guidelines, ensuring alignment with CAC's mission, vision and values, and present them for board approval.
- Throughout 2017, CAC will create a portfolio of learning opportunities for cultural organizations, to help them achieve their goals.
- Throughout 2017, CAC will seek input from cultural partners and residents and use that input to inform our work.
- In the second half of 2017, with the support of the National Endowment for the Arts, CAC will work with partners to provide paid opportunities for institutions and artists to present programming for residents on the newly designed Public Square.

II EXPLORE WAYS TO RECOGNIZE AND EQUITABLY SUPPORT OUR COMMUNITY'S VARIED CULTURAL ECOLOGY

CAC will pursue its second responsibility by focusing on three opportunities:

1. Engaging with residents and expanding our understanding and support of the diversity of the contemporary creative practices and cultural traditions of the African American, Latino, Asian, Middle Eastern and ethnic European peoples in our County.
2. Experimenting with ways to expand our support at the neighborhood level, particularly in parts of the County that currently lack meaningful CAC support for their cultural assets.
3. Exploring ways for people to actively participate in the arts – making and doing themselves – both in neighborhood locations and in cultural institutions



Next Actions

In the next 18 months, CAC will experiment with different approaches to these three opportunities. These experiments might include:

- Conducting assessments in neighborhoods currently lacking CAC support, in order to better understand what local cultural assets are and how we would deliver support that would best benefit neighborhood residents.
- Piloting projects that can expand access by supporting quality arts programs and artists in public libraries, parks and other community centers in underserved communities.
- Testing communications strategies that help broaden public awareness of existing cultural offerings, utilizing media relationships and ClevelandArtsEvents.com.
- Providing learning opportunities for organizations and artists that will help them build the skills necessary to expand and improve their social engagement and civic leadership.

We have allocated human and financial resources in the 2017 operating budget that will allow us to begin this experimentation. As we learn what works, we will need to think carefully about ways to make these efforts sustainable for the long term. Based on the results of these experiments, staff will return to the board in the second half of 2018 with a proposal for implementing one or more initiatives that will enable us to better serve our community's cultural ecology.