Agenda for Today

• Introduction by Cuyahoga Arts & Culture
• Presentation of Bright Spots Research
• Questions and Discussion
Cuyahoga Arts & Culture Introduction

- Why this framework? And why now?
- What’s the takeaway?
- What this webinar ISN’T
Bright Spots Project Questions

• Which cultural organizations are achieving exceptional results without exceptional resources?

• Do these organizations share characteristics or strategies that could be replicated by others?
Methodology

- Interviews with 43 cultural leaders in the Pacific Northwest
- Review of previous Bright Spots research (including 60 interviews)
- Review of resources on leadership and change
- 4 focus groups with cultural leaders and funders in the Pacific Northwest
“Bright spots” definition

- Observable exceptions to the norm
- Peer-selected
- Same resources as others
- Locally relevant practices
Five Bright Spot Principles

A - Animating purpose
D - Deeply engaged with community
E - Evaluation and analysis
P - Plasticity
T - Transparent leadership
Animating Purpose

- “Why should we exist now?”
- Clear, distinctive purpose and vision
- Review regularly
- Clear about desired impact and on whom
- High quality work that connects artists and audiences
- “Stop doing” list
Deeply Engaged with Community

• Exercise civic leadership
• See themselves as part of larger systems
• Invested in community goals
• Partner within and outside the arts
• View other arts organizations as partners, not competitors
Evaluation and Analysis

- Tell the truth to themselves
- Seek and use multiple perspectives
- Realistic and fiscally conservative
- Willing to make hard choices
- See opportunities, not obstacles
- Active agents in creating their future
Plasticity

• Very little is too sacred to change
• Continual adjustment in response to changing circumstances
• Growth doesn’t equal success
• Are comfortable with uncertainty
Transparent Leadership

- Not ego-driven
- Empower others
- Build trust internally and externally
- Define clear roles
- Transparent decision-making
- Willing to make unpopular decisions
- Share leadership among staff and board
Am I a Bright Spot?

- Brightness is a practice, not a destination.
- Brightness is a spectrum.
- Brightness is uneven within an organization.
- The potential number of bright organizations is unlimited.
Feedback from the Field

• Non-judgmental self-analysis
• Applicable across kinds of organizations
• Explains positive results
• Sparks conversation among staff and board
Questions for Discussion

• Questions about the study or about elements of the framework?

• Does this framework resonate for your organization?

• How might you use it? With staff? With board? With partners?
We’d love to hear from you

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