

NEA Arts, Health, and Well-being Demonstration Projects

The following grants have been approved by the NEA Chair. Some details of the projects listed are subject to change, contingent upon prior National Endowment for the Arts approval.

Arts Council of Indianapolis, Inc. (Indianapolis, IN)

To support the expansion of Arts For Awareness, a program that supports local arts organizations in developing and implementing arts-based substance use disorder (SUD) prevention, education, and recovery programs in Marion County, Indiana. Arts For Awareness builds on research that finds arts-based programs can improve community awareness of SUD and reduce stigma, promoting resilience and recovery. Supported by the City of Indianapolis and the Opioid Settlement Fund, the program supports collaborations between SUD experts and local arts organizations to develop arts-based activities aimed to prevent or create awareness of SUD or addiction. Key partners include the City of Indianapolis Office of Public Health and Safety and the Marion County Public Health Department, which will ensure the work is informed and evidence-based. The project also includes the creation of a cohort of arts and community health leaders focusing on social connection and field building, as well as a program evaluation that will document the program for future replication and expansion.

Connecticut Players Foundation, Inc. (aka Long Wharf Theatre) (New Haven, CT)

To support multidisciplinary performance events and post-show conversations designed to facilitate social connection and deepen a sense of communal belonging through theater. Long Wharf Theatre will develop as many as six performance events at multiple sites across New Haven and featuring local artists. Performances will be developed in partnership with local curators well-versed in creating powerful public engagement events that are anchored in live, in-person engagement of audiences. Curators will include Elements of Abundance, a collective that leverages art to build trust and foster healing among communities of color. Key partners will include local drama therapists and licensed therapists, who will develop a trauma-informed protocol for facilitating and measuring post-show conversations that foster social connection and affirm the sense of belonging among audience members. This project will advance Long Wharf Theatre's efforts to strengthen partnerships and deepen connections with New Haven residents, and present theater-based experience that centers local narratives.

Efforts of Grace, Inc. (aka Ashé Cultural Arts Center) (New Orleans, LA)

To support the I Deserve It! program, which hires and trains local artists and culture bearers to serve as community health workers. Recognizing the value of artists as trusted messengers and change makers, the program was conceived as an innovative way to address health disparities and reach populations historically underserved by traditional public health approaches. I Deserve It! community health workers will facilitate a series of arts-based health education and outreach programs to foster healing and connect participants to health resources, drawing on their talents as poets, performers, musicians, storytellers, and visual artists. Key organizational partners will include New Orleans East Hospital, Louisiana Department of Health's Metropolitan Human Services District, Ujaama Economic Development Corporation, Tulane University School of Public Health, and the Center for Black Health and Equity. The project will include support for professional development to enable community health

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workers to educate other healthcare facilities interested in working with artists to deliver health education and outreach, with an ultimate goal of driving broader adoption of artists as community health workers.

Flamboyant Foundation, Inc. (Washington, DC)

To support a series of artist-led participatory design workshops in the rural town of Lajas, Puerto Rico. Following the devastating impacts of Hurricane Maria in 2018, Flamboyant Foundation has been working to strengthen the capacity of local cultural organizations to serve as community hubs for disaster preparedness and response. Building on this work, this project will pilot a series of artist-led participatory design workshops focused on facilitating collaboration among residents to develop works of art that address resilience. Resulting artworks will reflect local culture and creativity. Key partners include Escuela Montessori Alejandro Tapia y Rivera, PamLab Design and Engineering, and local artists. The project is expected to improve community resilience by fostering social connection and encouraging community dialogue around disaster preparedness and response. The project includes a program evaluation, which will document the participatory design activities and report on the unique role cultural organizations can play in strengthening social connection and community resilience.

Harmony Project Productions Inc. (Columbus, OH)

To support a series of rehearsals, public performances, and community service activities by a new statewide community chorus network designed to strengthen social connection and belonging. Harmony Project Productions and the Ohio Arts Council will recruit up to 1,000 individuals from musical groups across Ohio that have demonstrated a commitment to community health and engage those individuals in rehearsals, public performances, and community. Following, a public concert in May, Harmony Project Productions will work with participating musical groups to design and implement programs within their local communities with an aim to develop a statewide network of health-focused arts organizations. Through participation in the statewide chorus network and associated activities, members are expected to build a stronger sense of belonging and social connection. As a project partner, the Ohio State University Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Health will perform a program evaluation that documents the role of community choir in individual and community well-being. The Human Service Chamber of Franklin County will facilitate connections with human service agencies and support coordination of community service projects undertaken by choir members. Project partners will focus on recruiting people for the choir from populations that are at risk for social isolation, such as Alzheimer's patients, incarcerated people, and students.

National Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition (Minneapolis, MN)

To support a series of artist-led virtual workshops that foster healing and respond to the collective trauma experienced by those affected by the federal Indian boarding school system. Between 1819 through the 1970s, the United States implemented policies establishing and supporting Indian boarding schools across the nation. The purpose of federal Indian boarding schools was to culturally assimilate American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian children by forcibly removing them from their families, communities, languages, religions, and cultural beliefs. This virtual healing workshop series will be led by masters of traditional Native American artforms and will provide participants with at-home supplies and group virtual instruction in a range of media such as beading, weaving, pottery, and painting. Hands-on exposure to Native art forms is intended to support healing and social connection by relieving stress, boosting self-esteem, and by supporting connection with collective and intergenerational histories, cultures, and teachings. The project will support engagement of a licensed mental health professional and fieldwide learning through public webinars and protocols on how to

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facilitate virtual healing art workshops for marginalized and trauma-impacted communities while valuing participant experiences, stories, and cultural beliefs.

Portland Community Media (aka Open Signal) (Portland, OR)

To support salaries, stipends, student stipends, and project resources and supplies for a series of media production workshops focused on mental health issues for youth. Open Signal will engage community youth to identify mental health issues important to them, support them in deepening their media literacy, and help them develop media segments on those issues for broadcast on cable and digital platforms. Participants will learn production skills such as writing, visual composition, sound editing, animation, and research. Organizations serving unhoused and foster care populations, such as Project 48, Outside the Frame, and Multnomah County Office of Homelessness Services, will serve as key project partners. A licensed and nationally certified art therapist will help to incorporate therapeutic techniques and ensure the project provides a supportive environment for participants. The project is expected to inform best practices in youth mental health arts programming design and delivery, with lessons learned shared later with other nonprofits via national arts networks.

Springboard for the Arts (St. Paul, MN)

To support artist-led projects focused on improving social connectedness and mental health in rural Otter Tail County and the greater Minneapolis-St. Paul area. As many as ten participating artists will collaborate with local social service organizations to develop new creative projects focusing on improving mental health among populations particularly vulnerable to social isolation. Committed partners include Mahube-Otwa Community Action, Ain Dah Yung Center, and the Aliveness Project. The project will build on Springboard's Artists Respond program, which facilitates artist collaborations on small-scale projects addressing community challenges. It is expected to establish a replicable model for partnership with artists in advancing community well-being and belonging.

Urban Health Plan, Inc. (Bronx, NY)

To support Arts for Everybody, an arts-based social prescribing program and arts engagement activities at three community health centers in the South Bronx, along with a national gathering of communities leading arts and health work. Project activities reflect the next phase of Urban Health Plan's work to expand social prescribing and arts programming offerings to their patient network, building on their participation in One Nation/One Project, a time-limited initiative designed to catalyze arts and health programs across the country. The project includes various arts-based activities such as art classes, exhibitions, murals, and live performances, making arts participation an integral part of healthcare delivery at community health centers. Partners include New York City-based cultural organizations that will work to integrate arts programming into patient care with the goal of enhancing the patients' physical, mental, and spiritual well-being. Americans for the Arts, National Association of Community Health Centers, National League of Cities, the Center for Arts in Medicine at the University of Florida, and local arts and community-based organizations will serve as key project partners in disseminating lessons learned and developing programming at gathering planned for early 2025. This project has the potential to serve as a model for other health institutions nationwide, demonstrating the impact of arts-based interventions to improve health.

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