



2017 Our Town Projects for Building Knowledge

A Blade of Grass Fund (aka A Blade of Grass) New York, NY

Primary Partner: **Americans for the Arts**

\$100,000

To support The Civic Imagination: A Toolkit for Effective Artist and Municipal Partnerships, a Knowledge Building project. In response to increasing interest in incorporating art practices into the work of municipal agencies, A Blade of Grass will collaborate with Americans for the Arts to develop a toolkit and training materials for municipal agency leaders and artists to partner successfully. The project collaborators will conduct a national field scan of existing programs and develop an interactive toolkit complete with framing, case studies, web-based videos, and tools to guide planning, implementation, and evaluation. The resources will be refined through pilot workshops, and disseminated broadly. This project is expected to clarify effective artist-civic partnership models, and to provide a practical guide for navigating challenges that might occur.

American Planning Association Chicago, IL

Primary Partner: **Americans for the Arts**

\$100,000

To support Creative Placemaking: Planning and the Arts, a Knowledge Building project. The American Planning Association (APA) will partner with Americans for the Arts to develop creative placemaking training that will provide information to planning professionals on how to include artists and integrate creative placemaking into planning and community development work. Training resources will be developed based on a field scan of existing models and toolkits and establishing a consolidated, accessible, and continuously maintained platform for these resources. Project partners will work with the Boston Metropolitan Area Planning Council to apply the training materials through a demonstration project. In addition to serving APA members, the resources are also expected to benefit urban designers, architects, historic preservationists, developers, landscape architects, and others working in place-based professions.

Arizona State University Tempe, AZ

Primary Partner: **Center for Performance and Civic Practice**

\$100,000

To support The Creative Placemaking Policy Fellows program, a Knowledge Building project. The Arizona State University's Herberger Institute for Design and the Arts will partner with the Center for Performance and Civic Practice to establish a Creative Placemaking Policy Fellows program. The program will convene practitioners who have led successful partnerships between the arts and community development fields. Fellows will meet to exchange knowledge and document lessons learned. The aggregated findings will identify potential barriers to successful creative placemaking and strategies for overcoming them, and find ways to infuse the work across the community development field. Additionally, fellows will each produce a training tool, such as a podcast, video, or piece of writing, for dissemination. This program complements fieldwide efforts to build more effective cross-sector knowledge exchange, and to more deeply understand the role of higher education institutions in advancing creative placemaking field development. As many as eight fellows will complete the program during the course of the grant project period.

Artspace Projects, Inc. Minneapolis, MN

Primary Partner: **University of Minnesota Center for Urban and Regional Affairs**

\$75,000

To support research on equity, inclusion, and wealth-building through artist spaces, a Knowledge Building project. Artspace and the University of Minnesota's Center for Urban and Regional Affairs will perform research on affordable housing for artists, and how benefits accrue for their residents and surrounding communities. Research themes include demographic inclusion, financial benefits to artist tenants, and best practices for achieving equitable neighborhood outcomes. The research responds to growing interest in artist housing among developers, many of whom lack information about practices that support equitable outcomes for artists and broader communities. Findings will be shared through relevant publications, at Artspace's annual conference, and at other gatherings of partners interested in the intersection of equity, the arts, and community development.

Center for Land Reform, Inc. (aka Center for Community Progress) Flint, MI

Primary Partner: **Rebuild Foundation**

\$75,000

To support A Bridge Between Policy and Placemaking for Vacant Property Revitalization, a knowledge building project. The Center for Community Progress will partner with Rebuild Foundation to convene community development and creative placemaking practitioners for two learning exchanges. With a focus on sharing best practices on creative placemaking as a strategy for improving vacant properties, the learning exchanges will bring arts leaders from two cities challenged with vacant properties to a third city that has been successful in addressing similar challenges. Following each exchange, the partners will conduct assessments to identify challenges and opportunities in each city represented. Findings will be shared with the Center for Community Progress's network of policy makers, local government officials, and community development practitioners through its annual convening.

Main Street Ottumwa Ottumwa, IA

Primary Partner: **Ottumwa Area Arts Council**

\$50,000

To support Inspiring Opportunities with the Arts across the state of Iowa, a Knowledge Building project. Main Street Ottumwa and the Ottumwa Area Arts Council will partner to facilitate "train-the-trainer" workshops for Main Street Iowa program directors and committee members, local arts organizations, public health officials, and transportation professionals to integrate creative placemaking into their work. Training resources will be disseminated statewide through conferences for state planning professionals, and will be tested through a demonstration project. The partners expect to train approximately 75 Main Street Iowa representatives from across the state, as well as approximately 50 Iowa-based community development and arts professionals, with the anticipated impact of integrating creative placemaking strategies into 50 Iowa communities and establishing an ongoing statewide peer network.

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National Arts Strategies, Inc. Alexandria, VA

Primary Partner: **Local Initiative Support Corporation**

\$75,000

To support the Creative Community Fellows program, a Knowledge Building project. In partnership with the Local Initiative Support Corporation and faculty from Northwestern University and University of Oregon, National Arts Strategies will incorporate community development knowledge into its Creative Community Fellows program, which provides training and support for creative placemaking practitioners. Specific elements of the project will include establishing a peer learning and network-building program, developing a series of participatory online learning modules, and delivering training sessions focused on forming cross-sector partnership models for fellows. During the project period, as many as 24 fellows from a mix of urban, suburban, and rural communities will participate.

National Association of Counties Research Foundation (aka NACoRF) Washington, D.C.

Primary Partner: **Americans for the Arts**

\$100,000

To support the Creative Counties Placemaking Challenge, a Knowledge Building project. The National Association of Counties Research Foundation will facilitate networks of county officials and arts professionals to advance creative placemaking in rural and mid-sized communities. Through in-person workshops including skill building sessions, panel discussions, and tours of successful creative placemaking projects, the project will focus on county-level leaders to build creative placemaking capacity among local governments. NACoRF will collaborate with Americans for the Arts to develop workshop curricula and deliver training webinars. During the grant period, the project will engage approximately 48 participants representing communities with populations no greater than 250,000 residents.

National Consortium for Creative Placemaking Union, NJ

Primary Partner: **South Arts**

\$50,000

To support Growing the Creative Placemaking Field in Appalachia, the Southeastern U.S., and the Mountain States, a Knowledge Building project. The National Consortium for Creative Placemaking will partner with regional arts organization South Arts and will coordinate with state arts agencies to convene regional summits and knowledge exchanges for creative placemaking and community development practitioners. The project also will include creation of a creative placemaking leadership guide and leadership coaching for professionals working on statewide and sub-regional efforts. Additional training and resources will be disseminated through freely available online webinars.

National Performance Network, Inc. (aka NPN) New Orleans, LA

Primary Partner: **Paul Bonin-Rodriguez, PhD**

\$75,000

To support the National Performance Network's Creative Placemaking Research and Archiving Project, a Knowledge Building project. The NPN and the Visual Arts Network (VAN) will partner with Paul Bonin-Rodriguez, PhD, to research and archive creative placemaking case studies and best practices in the 31 states represented by NPN's membership. Products will include a series of written reports, interactive video conferences and panels, blog posts, and filmed short interviews and oral histories, all of which will be accessible through NPN's website. Research findings also will be disseminated through dedicated sessions at NPN's membership convenings. Through this project, NPN/VAN will deepen engagement with its membership, promote effective reflection and evaluative efforts, and better articulate the social change benefits of artistic production. The project will reach NPN/VAN's national network of 77 organizational members.

Smart Growth America (aka Transportation for America) Washington, D.C.

Primary Partner: **Americans for the Arts**

\$75,000

To support Transportation for America's Arts, Culture and Transportation: Equipping Transportation Professionals and Artists with the Creative Placemaking Tools to Successfully Collaborate, a Knowledge Building project. Transportation for America will partner with Americans for the Arts to lead trainings to teach transportation professionals to engage with artists and arts organizations and vice versa, equipping them with the requisite skills to complete creative placemaking projects. Knowledge will be delivered through trainings in three competitively selected cities, and will be applied to specific transportation issues, such as improving pedestrian safety and reducing disruptions caused by road construction. Anticipated benefits include local policy improvements to facilitate artist/transportation professional collaborations and streamlined permitting processes. Trainings will form the bases for web-based toolkits that will help others to lead similar efforts in their own communities.

Springboard for the Arts St. Paul, MN

Primary Partner: **University of Minnesota Morris Center for Small Towns**

\$100,000

To support Creative Placemaking Training and Workbook for Rural Practitioners, a Knowledge Building project. Springboard for the Arts will develop creative placemaking trainings and resources to support artists and community development practitioners working together in rural and metropolitan communities. Springboard will develop curricula tailored for artist and community development audiences, deliver a series of in-person trainings, establish peer practitioner working groups, and launch a freely accessible online workbook based on the curricula. One stream of training will be designed for practitioners working in rural communities. In partnership with the University of Minnesota Morris Center for Small Towns, these resources will be rolled out at the Rural Arts and Culture Summit. The project is expected to result in as many as 80 practitioners from an estimated 20-35 communities prepared to implement their own creative placemaking programs that engage hundreds of local artists and thousands of community members, and also train 75 artists to be more effective working cross-sector in their communities.

Tamarack Foundation, Inc. Charleston, WV

Primary Partner: **Arts and Humanities Council of Jefferson County**

\$50,000

To support Arts Organizing Toolkits for West Virginia Communities, a Knowledge Building project. The Tamarack Foundation for the Arts will partner with the Arts and Humanities Council of Jefferson County to develop creative placemaking toolkits for local and regional arts councils across the state of West Virginia. The project includes building a cultural asset map of the state, compiling local best practices in creative placemaking, and making the resources accessible through an online interface and through convenings. The project will educate policymakers about the role of creative placemaking in stabilizing communities undergoing economic transition.

Trust for Public Land San Francisco, CA

Primary Partner: **City Parks Alliance**

\$50,000

To support the Adoption and Integration of Creative Placemaking among Parks Practitioners, a Knowledge Building project. The Trust for Public Land (TPL) will partner with the City Parks Alliance to continue building creative placemaking knowledge among park development professionals by piloting a technical assistance program. The collaborators will convene workshops with parks and creative placemaking stakeholders in two pilot cities. Best practices will be documented and disseminated to the City Parks Alliance's network, which includes thousands of civic and community leaders, city officials, funders, and parks and recreation authorities.



2016 Our Town Projects for Building Knowledge

Art of the Rural Winona, MN

Primary Partner: **Rural Policy Research Institute**

\$50,000

To support phase three of Next Generation: The Future of Arts & Culture Placemaking in Rural America. Art of the Rural, in partnership with the Rural Policy Research Institute (RUPRI) based at the University of Iowa, will continue to disseminate knowledge on creative placemaking as a strategy to improve rural communities. During the first and second phases of this work, Art of the Rural developed a digital learning commons and facilitated rural peer exchanges in Minnesota, Iowa, and Kentucky. The third phase will support the expansion of the digital learning commons, a fellowship program to build the capacity of rural communities to undertake creative placemaking work, and a national conference to unite a broad network of rural leaders working across the country. RUPRI will continue to share best practices on rural arts and cultural strategies to its diverse network that includes Delta Regional Authority, Rural Local Initiatives Support Corporation, U.S. Department of Agricultural Rural Development, state agricultural offices, and more.

buildingcommunityWORKSHOP Dallas, TX

Primary Partner: **Housing Assistance Council**

\$75,000

To support the integration of creative placemaking and design strategies into the work of the Housing Assistance Council (HAC) and their community-based partner network. The buildingcommunityWORKSHOP will provide training to a core group of HAC regionally based housing specialists, develop a repository of best practices, facilitate a peer-exchange program, and publish articles that reach rural housing developers. Through training and demonstration projects, affordable housing developers and residents will be empowered to participate in the community design process and ultimately create more livable, vital places that celebrate the unique culture of the community. HAC reaches 6,500 rural practitioners and helps build the capacity of local organizations to develop affordable homes in rural America, and maintains a special focus on particular groups and regions such as Indian country, the Mississippi Delta, farmworkers, the Southwest border colonias (communities within the mainly rural US-Mexico border region with marginal conditions related to housing and infrastructure), and Appalachia.

Center for Land Reform, Inc. (aka Center for Community Progress) Flint, MI

Primary Partner: **Katy Brett Renn**

\$25,000

To support A Bridge Between Policy and Design: Creative Placemaking on Vacant Properties. Center for Community Progress will partner with consultant Katy Brett Renn to equip local city leaders from across the country with knowledge, systems, and creative placemaking tools to transform vacant lots in ways that support equitable revitalization. Project activities include a learning exchange between local government, community development, and arts leaders; an assessment of policy barriers that impede the ability of local organizations to implement creative placemaking on vacant properties; and a transmission of lessons learned to Center for Community Progress' network. As a national leader on solutions for blight and vacancy, Center for Community Progress serves as the leading resource for local, state, and federal policies and best practices that address the full cycle of property revitalization, from blight prevention through the acquisition and maintenance of problem properties, to their productive reuse.

Chamber Music America New York, NY

Primary Partner: **Project for Public Spaces**

\$100,000

To support the sharing and implementation of creative placemaking approaches within the chamber music field. Chamber Music America will facilitate a pilot artist residency program in Louisiana cultural districts to explore how ensembles and other performing artists can integrate their work into the civic fabric of neighborhoods more effectively. Louisiana Office of Cultural Development will identify cultural districts for the pilot program, with a focus on places ripe for experimentation with the performing arts. Following lessons learned through the pilot artist residency program, Chamber Music America, in partnership with Project for Public Spaces, will design interactive learning sessions, webinars, and best practice case studies that ultimately will inform a creative placemaking toolkit for ensemble musicians nationwide. Chamber Music America is the national service organization for ensemble music professionals, with thousands of members that include individual musicians, ensembles, presenters, artist managers, composers, educators, and others in the national chamber music community.

FORECAST Public Artworks (aka Forecast Public Art) St. Paul, MN

Primary Partner: **American Planning Association**

\$100,000

To support a partnership between Forecast Public Art and American Planning Association (APA) to translate knowledge of the public art field into learning tools for urban planners. This collaboration will result in creative placemaking curricula and continuing education units for urban planners to influence the livability of mid-size American cities. The resulting curricula for the pilot public art certificate program will focus on best practices in planning and designing healthy cities through the public art lens, including guidance on working with artists, tactical strategies for implementing public art projects, meaningful community engagement, and racial and economic equity. In year two, Forecast will facilitate an APA chapter and a team of regional artists in planning, designing and creating temporary demonstration projects to test the effectiveness of the training. APA is an independent, nonprofit educational organization with approximately 40,000 members and subscribers and provides leadership in the development of vital communities across the nation.

Opera America New York, NY

Primary Partner: **Tucson Pima Arts Council**

\$50,000

To support learning and capacity building for opera companies to become agents of community building in cities across the country. Drawing on the expertise of Tucson Pima Arts Council, Opera America will establish a creative placemaking community of practice by forming a cohort of field leaders and opera companies who will develop, implement, refine, and assess the impact of pilot projects. The project will result in the development of case studies and other best practice resources for the field of opera. A multimedia art form, opera possesses a unique capacity to enrich the lives of diverse audiences, support community building, and communicate universal human stories. Serving the entire opera field, Opera America, with a membership of more than 150 professional opera companies, supports the creation, presentation, and enjoyment of opera.

PlanSmart NJ Trenton, NJ

Primary Partner: National Consortium for Creative Placemaking

\$50,000

To support Partnership for Better Creative Placemaking. The project will improve the capacity of communities in New Jersey to implement creative placemaking projects more effectively. In partnership with National Consortium for Creative Placemaking and New Jersey State Council on the Arts, PlanSmart NJ will facilitate community coaching, build a statewide community of creative placemaking practitioners, conduct research on the creative sector, and train artists and local leaders. An independent, nonprofit planning and research organization that shapes land use policy across the state, PlanSmart NJ will build a statewide community of creative placemaking practitioners that demonstrate the value of arts and culture in community building and achieving economic and social equity.

Tucson-Pima Arts Council, Inc. (aka TPAC) Tucson, AZ

Primary Partner: **Naturally Occurring Cultural Districts NY**

\$75,000

To support Cultural Belonging and Transformation: Placemaking from the Community Up. The project will focus on how arts and cultural practices can positively affect public health, participatory budgeting, criminal justice reform, land stewardship, and the Appalachian economic transition from coal. Tucson-Pima Arts Council, Naturally Occurring Cultural Districts NY, LA Commons, Arts & Democracy, and Kentucky Cultural Organizing Alliance will partner to conduct workshops, learning exchanges, trainings across the country, and will research issues relevant to underserved communities. The project will unearth creative approaches for inclusive civic engagement, and ultimately build community capacity to participate in local planning processes. Project partners will convene diverse audiences, including artists, culture bearers, educators, community developers, planners, activists, and policy makers.



2015 Our Town Projects for Building Knowledge

Alternate Roots Atlanta, GA

\$100,000

To support Southern ROOTS of Creative Placemaking, a project to identify, document, compile, and disseminate best practices in fourteen southern states. ROOTS will produce regional and local convenings, a learning cohort of multi-generational artists, and a retreat for over 200 southern artists and cultural organizations. Project activities will bring together a diverse audience of social practice artists, community organizers, social justice organizations, and other key leaders that are working to improve livability in their communities and instill a sense of pride in place. ROOTS will work to heighten the visibility of creative assets and establish pathways for artists to more effectively lead community and cultural development projects.

Art of the Rural University City, MO

Primary Partner: **Rural Policy Research Institute**

\$75,000

To support Next Generation: Future of Arts and Culture Placemaking in Rural America. Art of the Rural, in partnership with the Rural Policy Research Institute at the University of Iowa, will expand the potential for rural creative placemaking within broader cultural and development-based conversations through a digital learning commons, a national convening, regional networking activities, and knowledge exchanges in rural Iowa, Kentucky, and Minnesota. An extensive network of rural arts and community development partners will help to execute the project, including Appalshop, Des Moines Social Club, Springboard for the Arts, United States Department of Agriculture Rural Development, Wormfarm Institute, M12 Collective, Double Edge Theater, and Kentucky Governor's Office.

National Alliance of Community Economic Development Associations Washington, DC

Primary Partner: **Americans for the Arts**

\$100,000

To support the Creative Placemaking Immersion Program, a partnership between National Alliance of Community Economic Development Associations (NACEDA) and Americans for the Arts (AFTA). Project partners will conduct a national scan of existing creative placemaking practices, and will exchange information via convenings and peer networking. AFTA will also deliver direct project assistance to three NACEDA member organizations that will utilize arts and cultural strategies as agents for physical, social, and civic transformation in low-income neighborhoods. The project will offer a unique hands-on opportunity for cross-sector learning and will be guided by additional partners that include ArtPlace America and Local Initiatives Support Corporation. NACEDA is an alliance of 42 state and regional community economic development associations in 28 states, including over 3,500 community-based development organizations.

Springboard for the Arts Saint Paul, MN

Primary Partner: **International Downtown Association**

\$50,000

To support Springboard for the Arts, in partnership with International Downtown Association (IDA), to build the capacity of downtown development practitioners to implement creative placemaking projects. Activities will include sharing existing models of where and how artists are working with business districts, developing toolkits, delivering training sessions that coincide with IDA convenings, and providing direct assistance to pilot communities on creative placemaking projects. IDA members and other business districts will expand their understanding of the value of working with artists and learn new approaches of how they can work together. Conversely, the project will increase the capacity of artists and arts organizations to work more effectively with economic and community development experts.

Trust for Public Land San Francisco, CA

Primary Partner: **City Parks Alliance**

\$100,000

To support Nature of Community: Parks and Creative Placemaking Colloquium and a Creative Placemaking in Parks field guide. The Trust for Public Land and City Parks Alliance will produce a dedicated colloquium to exchange creative placemaking strategies for public park spaces, facilitate peer-to-peer learning, and encourage dialogue among a diverse audience of parks and community leaders, landscape architects, arts and cultural not-for-profits, city leaders, and artists, curators, and art administrators. The outcomes and guidelines that emerge from the colloquium will be incorporated into the field guide for parks administrators. The Trust for Public Land has offices in approximately 30 states, and has helped protect, design, and develop more than 813 parks, playgrounds, and gardens in cities throughout the United States.