

# 2016 Our Town Grant Program:

## *Tips, Tricks, and Inspiration for a Successful Project Proposal\**

*\*Please note this webinar will focus ONLY for Arts Engagement, Cultural Planning, and Design projects NOT Knowledge Building.*

**Jason Schupbach**, Director of Design Programs  
**Jen Hughes**, Our Town Program Manager



**National  
Endowment  
for the Arts**  
arts.gov

# Agenda

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- Introduction
- Our Town Application Tips
- Mechanics of a Competitive Proposal
- Application Review Process
- Online Resources
- Examples

A watercolor painting of a boat on water with a blue sky and a blue banner overlaying the text.

# INTRODUCTION: *THE ARTS AND PLACE?*

core  
trees and places to  
sit.  
+ blowers

**Jobs**

**Transit**

**Safety**

**Enviro**

**Schools**

**Businesses**

# **SOCIAL OFFERINGS**

# **SOCIAL OFFERINGS**

## **OPENNESS**

**SOCIAL OFFERINGS**

**OPENNESS**

**AESTHETICS**

**Jobs**

**Transit**

**Safety**

**Enviro**

**Schools**

**Businesses**

**Arts**

**Jobs**

**Transit**

**Safety**

**Arts**

**Enviro**

**Schools**

**Businesses**

# OUR TOWN APPLICATION TIPS



# Tips for a successful application

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- Follow directions.
- Use proper grammar.
- Use plain language (i.e. no jargon).
- Tell a story.
- Revisit review criteria.

# What makes a proposal competitive?

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- Involved partnerships.
- Tied to community planning efforts/goals.
- Evidence of community engagement.
- Concrete anticipated project outcomes.

# Ways to Avoid Common Pitfalls

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- Give a clear picture of what you want to do.
- Focused, cohesive project activities.
- Give sense of the community.

# Ways to Avoid Common Pitfalls

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- Set the scene.
- Use all parts of the application to tell your story.
- More than the one required letter of support.
- Personalized support letters.



# MECHANICS OF A COMPETITIVE PROPOSAL

# Thinking About Project Outcomes

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## What to ask yourself:

- What are you trying to achieve?
- How can the arts help achieve your community's intended outcomes?
- How can you potentially measure the impact of your project on the community?

# Thinking About Project Outcomes

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## Livability outcomes examples:

- Growth in civic engagement
- New avenues for expression and creativity
- Job and/or revenue growth
- Positive changes in migration patterns
- Design-focused changes in policies, laws, & regulations

# Discussing Community Engagement

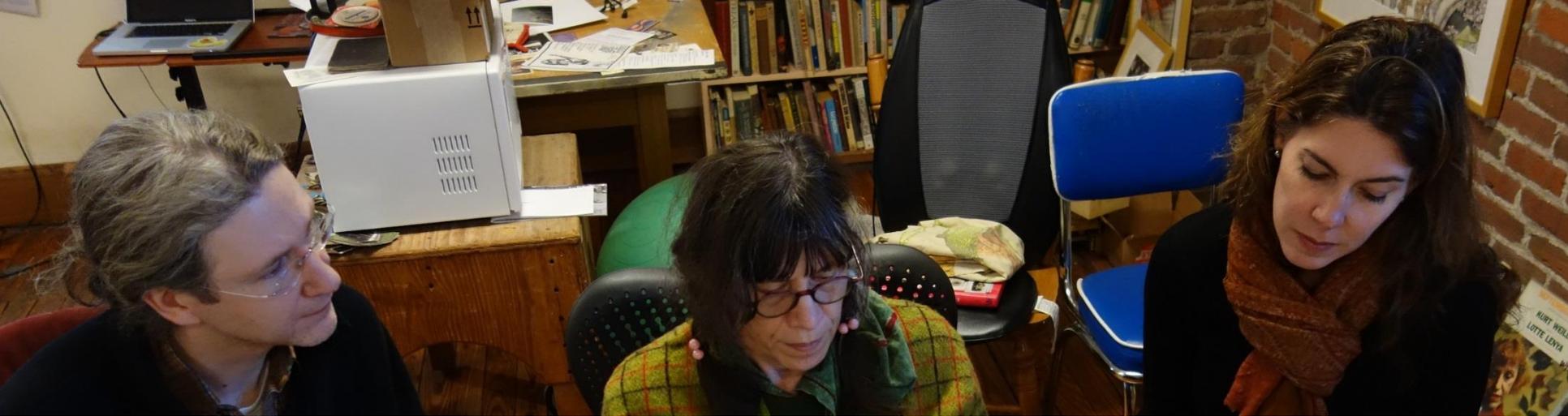
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- Use Intended Beneficiary section to talk about your work with the project community.
- Show you understand the community and its needs, and describe how this project fills those needs.
- Discuss how you have worked with the community in the past.
- Show evidence you will work with the community throughout the project period.

# Presenting Compelling Work Samples

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- Use images, audio, video, PDF to convey the artistic excellence of organizations/individuals involved.
- Choose work samples relevant to the project and include a short description.
- Convey aspirations if artist/designers/consultants have not yet been selected.
- Be selective and purposeful for each sample.



# APPLICATION REVIEW PROCESS



# Review/Approval Timetable

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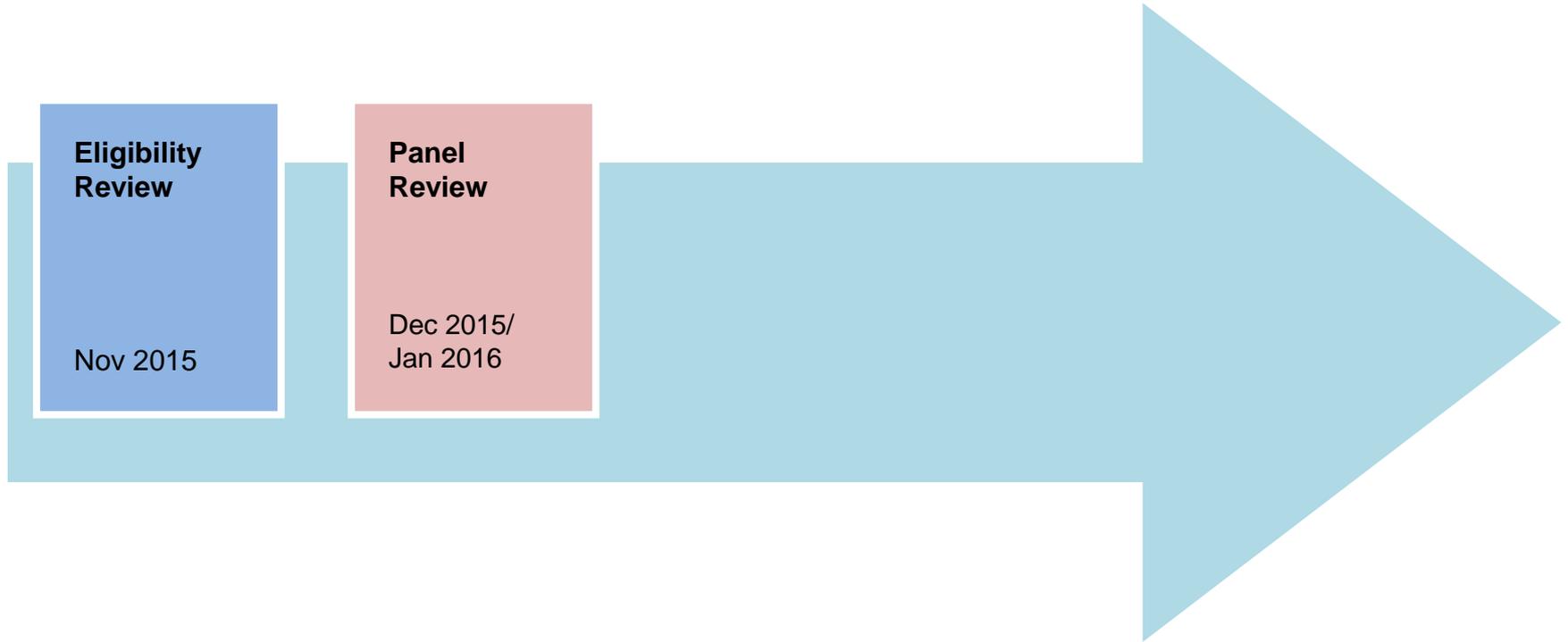


Eligibility  
Review

Nov 2015

# Review/Approval Timetable

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# Panel Review Process

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- It is a **peer review** process.
- Each panel has **6-7 panelists** (one layperson, the rest field experts).
- Panelists:
  - are selected from the **American public**.
  - **read, score and comment using review criteria** on all applications in their panel.
  - convene via **conference call** to discuss applications.

# Common Panelist Concerns

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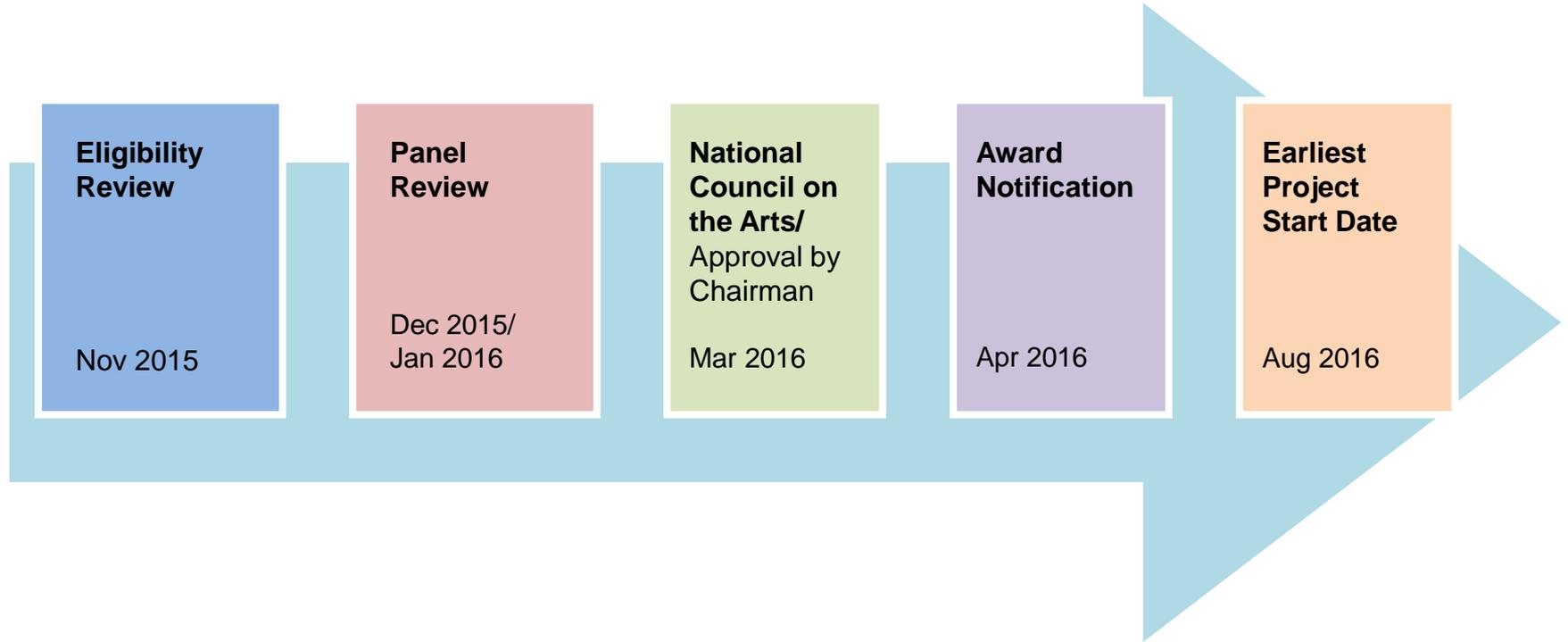
- Lack of confidence in ability to complete project.
- Fail to show evidence of working with intended beneficiaries.
- Fail to discuss selection process for artists/designers/consultants.
- Public art is just plop art, with no maintenance plan.

# Common Panelist Concerns

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- Work samples are poor quality, do not show artistic excellence, and/or do not give an idea of intended outcome.
- Budget is not large enough and/or does not adequately pay artists.
- Project is **not innovative or catalytic.**

# Review/Approval Timetable



# ONLINE RESOURCES



## RELATED MATERIALS

- [Exploring Our Town Case Studies](#) 
- [Creative Placemaking Resources](#)
- [Our Town Guidelines Webinars](#)
  - [How to Apply \(July 29\)](#)
  - [Tips, Tricks, and Inspiration for a Successful Project Proposal \(August 5\)](#)
- [FAQs](#)
- [Sample Application Narratives](#)
- [Online Tutorial: Using the Grant Application Form \(GAF\)](#)
- [Grants.gov](#)
- [Accessibility Requirements Tutorial](#)
- [Press](#)

The RELATED MATERIALS box on the side bar holds links to a wealth of resources including:

- **FAQs**
- **Sample application narratives**
- **Blog posts (found in the features section of the “creative placemaking resources” link)**
- **Exploring Our Town case studies**

# [www.arts.gov/exploring-our-town/](http://www.arts.gov/exploring-our-town/)

## EXPLORING OUR TOWN

Creative placemaking projects strategically link communities and local governments with artists, designers, and arts organizations to improve quality of life, create a sense of place, and revitalize local economies.



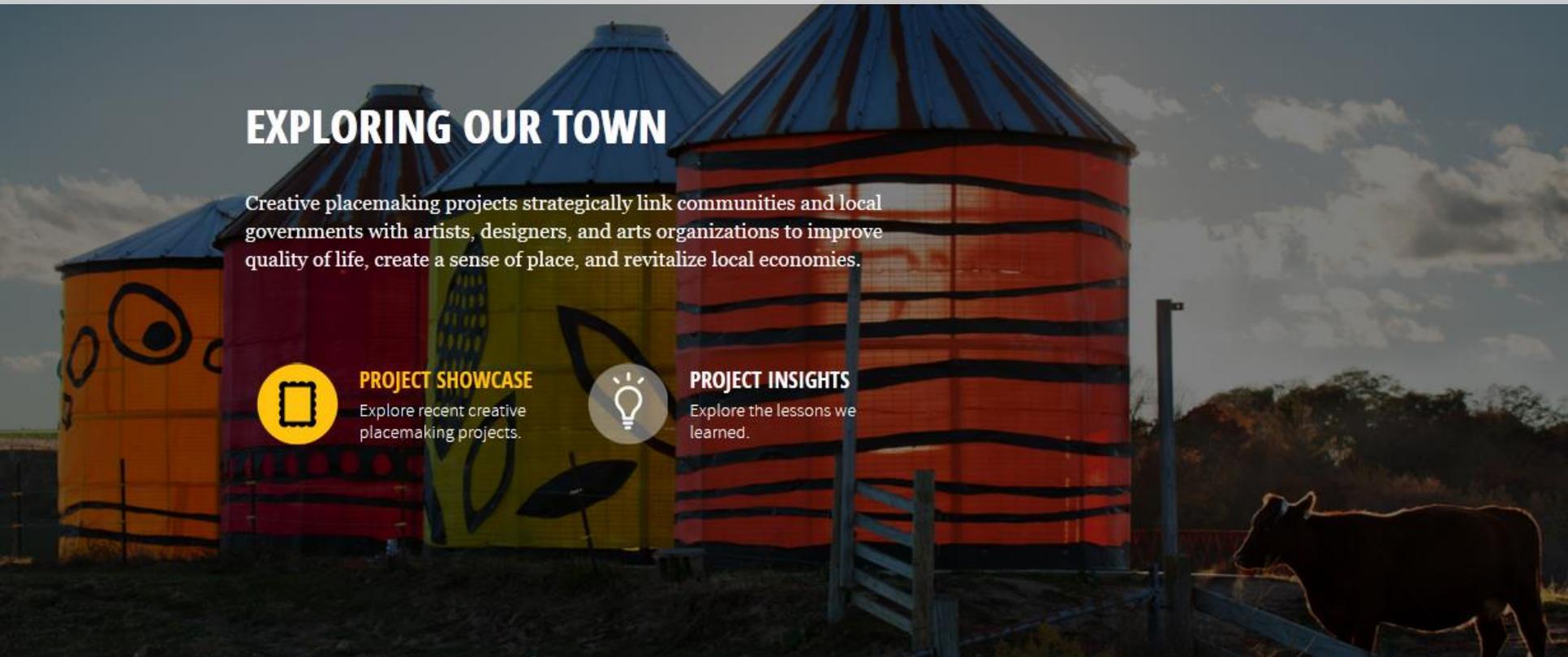
### PROJECT SHOWCASE

Explore recent creative placemaking projects.



### PROJECT INSIGHTS

Explore the lessons we learned.



# Project Showcase

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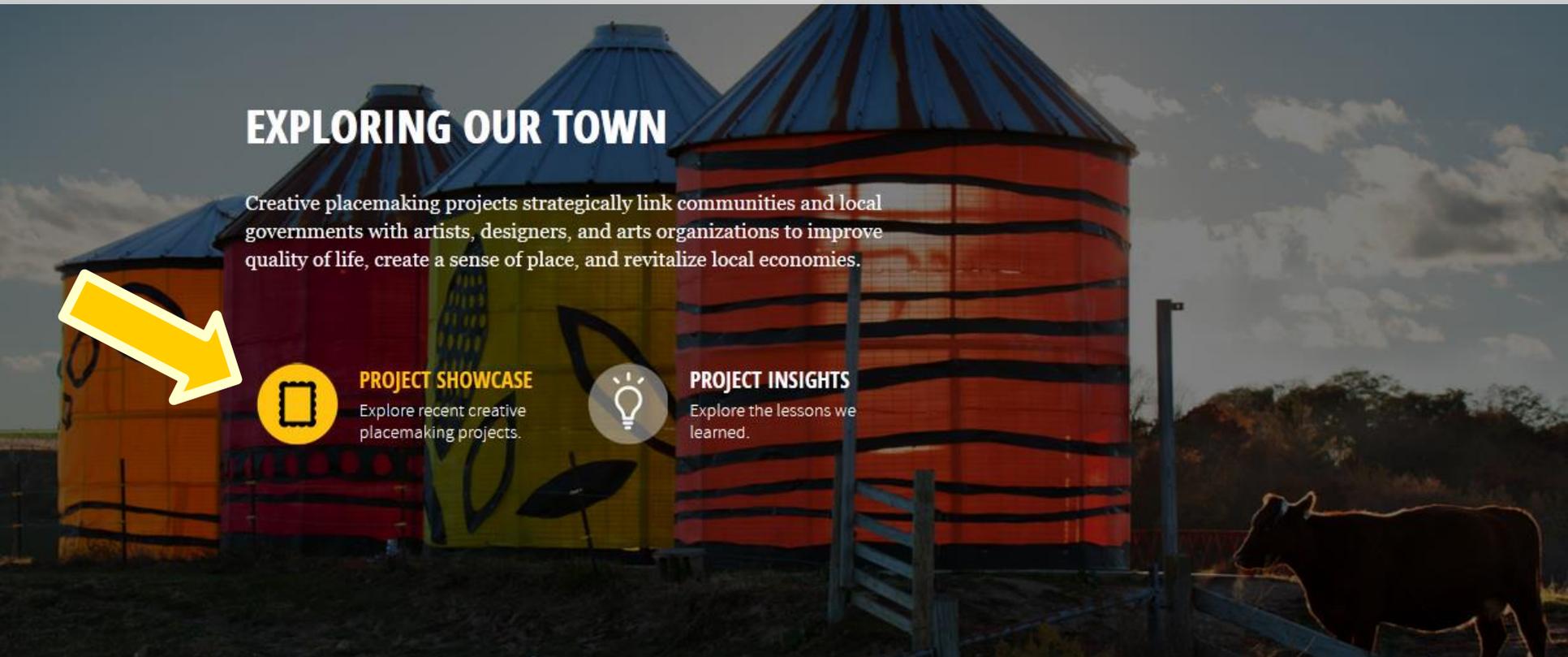
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# NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS

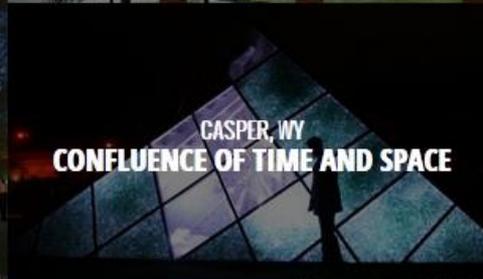


## EXPLORING OUR TOWN

- Showcase
- Insights
- Overview

- All Projects
- By Project Setting
- By Project Type
- By Project Location

- Grid
- Map



# Story Example

JACKSON, MS

## ART GARDEN

Julian Rappin

COMMUNITY ARTS ENGAGEMENT

FESTIVALS AND PERFORMANCES

PUBLIC SPACE

MID SIZED URBAN

***How can the arts be used to turn uninviting, downtown space into vibrant, active public space for gathering and increase the livability of the district?***

When the *Mississippi Museum of Art* (MMA) moved into a new building in downtown Jackson, it had a surface parking lot as its neighbor. With a growing number of people living downtown, MMA set out to transform the parking lot into a public open space that the museum could use as a performance and gathering venue. By providing new green space in the downtown area, the museum was able to enhance the livability of the district while bringing the visual and performing arts to a broad new array of Jackson residents.

Overview



Place



Community



Local Needs



Vision



Partnerships



Logistics



Anticipated



# Ways to Search for Projects

EXPLORING OUR TOWN

Showcase

Insights

Overview

All Projects

By Project Type

By Project Type

By Project Location

Grid

Map

ASSET MAPPING

COMMUNITY ARTS ENGAGEMENT

COMMUNITY DESIGN

CREATIVE ECONOMY

CULTURAL DISTRICT PLANNING

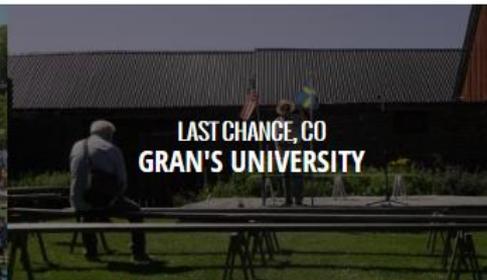
CULTURAL FACILITIES AND SPACES

FESTIVALS AND PERFORMANCES

PUBLIC ART

PUBLIC SPACE

Community Arts Engagement is a variety of programming, performance, and event activities which leverage art to engage community members in cultural, social and economic development.



# Project Insights

## EXPLORING OUR TOWN

Creative placemaking projects strategically link communities and local governments with artists, designers, and arts organizations to improve quality of life, create a sense of place, and revitalize local economies.



### PROJECT SHOWCASE

Explore recent creative placemaking projects.



### PROJECT INSIGHTS

Explore the lessons we learned.



EXPLORING OUR TOWN

Showcase

Insights

Overview

Project Insights by Project Process by Project Setting by Project Type

Here we gather insights and lessons learned from the Our Town projects managers. Click below to discover how to do a successful project.

PROJECT PROCESS

Learn how creative placemaking projects happen.

EXPLORE

PROJECT SETTING

Learn how place affects creative placemaking.

EXPLORE

PROJECT TYPE

Learn how to do different types of creative placemaking projects.

EXPLORE

# Ways to Search for Insights

EXPLORING OUR TOWN

Showcase

Insights

Overview

**Project Insights**

by Project Process

by Project Setting

by Project Type

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## PROJECT PROCESS

Creative placemaking projects include a wide range of approaches and activities. From revitalizing public spaces to creating local business opportunities, their size and scope are as varied as the locations in which they occur. Here, we gather lessons learned from Our Town project managers, and provide guidance in how best to harness the power of the arts to create vibrant local communities. Click on the tabs below to learn more.

UNDERSTANDING COMMUNITY

ENVISIONING THE PROJECT

MAKING IT HAPPEN

MEASURING PROJECT RESULTS



Project Insights by Project Process by Project Setting by Project Type

UNDERSTANDING COMMUNITY

ENVISIONING THE PROJECT

MAKING IT HAPPEN

MEASURING PROJECT RESULTS



How do creative placemaking projects happen? The right strategic team must be put in place, team will have to meet head-on the needs for implementing community engagement strategies, developing communications plans, managing evaluation tasks, and creating on-going funding strategies. Hear from Our Town project managers on these lessons and more below.

LESSONS LEARNED:



- + Look Beyond Traditional Funding Streams
- + Never Underestimate the Importance of Project Communication
- + Invest in Community Engagement
- + Create Clear and Consistent Roles and Responsibilities

## LESSONS LEARNED:

### ✘ **Look Beyond Traditional Funding Streams**

Sources for Our Town project funding are as diverse as the projects themselves, and range from large-scale private philanthropic donations, to municipal bond dollars, to small contributions made by local businesses. Many projects find funding through cross-sector partnerships, such as in *New York City* where an artist residency program in senior centers was funded from different city health and human services agencies.

Other projects happened through a combination of small-scale local resources, like funding from non-arts local government agencies, donations from local businesses and individuals and local foundations. Seeking out these types of resources can also help to establish a network of community ties that can provide later social and political support as well. As project manager Cindy Steinhauser from *Dubuque* says, “Take advantage of the resources (no matter how little they seem) that people make available. If all it does is create awareness and help that person or organization feel connected to the event, that’s important for the project’s long-term success too.”

### + **Never Underestimate the Importance of Project Communication**

### + **Invest in Community Engagement**

### + **Create Clarity – and flexibility - in Partnership Roles**

### + **Establish Clear Leadership Roles**

### + **Remember Large Scale Projects Require Patience**

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## RESOURCES:

*Alternate Roots*

*Animating Democracy*

*Art of the Rural*

# Public Art Resources

## PUBLIC ART

Ranging from temporary pieces to permanent installations that enliven urban infrastructure, public art can be a powerful catalyst for change.



ALL PUBLIC ART PROJECTS

### RESOURCES:

[\*Creative Time\*](#)

[\*Public Art Archive\*](#)

[\*Public Art Network\*](#)

[\*Public Art Now\*](#)

[\*Public Art Review: Forecast Blog\*](#)

[\*State Public Arts Policies\*](#)

# Evaluation Resources

||| ANTICIPATED IMPACTS    ||| UNEXPECTED IMPACTS

## MEASURING PROJECT RESULTS

Most creative placemaking projects have results that are both tangible and intangible. While some of these results are easily observed and measured, many require more sophisticated evaluation techniques. Read on to learn how Our Town Project managers measured success.

### LESSONS LEARNED:

- + **Project Evaluation Most Often Happens In-House, So Be Prepared in Advance**
- + **Measure What You Value and People Will Value What You Measure**
- + **Be Open to Experimentation, and Let Evaluation Inform Your Processes**

### RESOURCES:

[\*Animating Democracy: Answer 5 Basic Questions to Focus Your Evaluation\*](#)

[\*Animating Democracy: Funder Exchange on Evaluating Arts & Social Impact\*](#)

[\*Animating Democracy: Theories of Change\*](#)

# Evaluation Resources

[HOME](#)[ABOUT](#)[GRANTS](#)[NEWS](#)[LIFETIME HONORS](#)[PUBLICATIONS](#)[ARTISTIC FIELDS](#)[CONTACT](#)

[Home](#) » [Artistic Fields](#) » [Research & Analysis](#) » [Arts Data Profiles](#)

## Arts Data Profile #8



### NEA Arts & Livability Indicators: Assessing Outcomes of Interest to Creative Placemaking Projects

#### Title of Dataset

NEA Arts & Livability Indicators

#### Periodicity

Various. See the [Validating Arts & Livability Indicators \(VALI\) Study: Results and Recommendations](#) .

#### Source/Sponsor

A large variety of data sources can be used to track arts and livability indicators. The briefs and county data tables presented in this ADP draw from the following four sources: American Community Survey (Census Bureau); County Business Patterns (Census Bureau); Uniform Crime Reports (FBI); and Occupational Employment Survey (OES).

#### Geographic Coverage

Various, including counties and Census tracts

#### Research Topic

Relationships of creative placemaking to community livability outcomes

### ARTS DATE PROFILE #8

- [Introduction](#)
- [The Validating Arts & Livability Indicators \(VALI\) Study: Results and Recommendations](#)
- [Use Case Scenarios for the NEA Arts & Livability Indicators](#)
- [County Data Tables Supporting the NEA Arts & Livability Indicators](#)
- [Data Sources for Arts and Livability Indicators](#)
- [Introduction to Local Arts & Livability Indicators Catalogue](#)
  - [Catalogue](#)
- [Selected Research Resources about the Arts and Livability](#)



# EXAMPLES OF GRANTEES



**KEY**

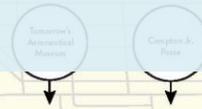
- Buildings (general)
- Churches
- School and Youth Programs
- Parks
- Community Centers
- Senior Centers
- Public Art

\* Public Facilities and Private Nonprofits.  
For complete data go to [lacac.org](http://lacac.org)

# ASSET MAPPING/CULTURAL PLANNING

Cultural Asset Map of Willowbrook and Adjacent Areas

**LOS ANGELES COUNTY ARTS COMMISSION**  
 Los Angeles, CA  
 \$100,000



# Why was it compelling?

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- Capitalized on already existing area investment.
- Built on previously completed planning work.
- Clearly described community and previous work with them.
- Directly involved community in project planning.
- Outcomes: Blight mitigation, job creation, community cohesion.



**PUBLIC ART**

**GREATER COLUMBUS ARTS COUNCIL, INC.**  
Columbus, OH  
\$150,000

PHOTO: Craig Collins.

# Why was it compelling?

---

- Intended to sow the seeds of an on-going city-wide public art program.
- Intended to change area perception of public art.
- Scheduled in conjunction with the city's bicentennial celebrations.
- Clearly laid out and explained work samples.
- Outcomes: Community engagement, tourism promotion, economic development, increased area vibrancy.



# PUBLIC SPACE DESIGN

**ARTSBUILD**  
Chattanooga, TN  
2011  
\$250,000

PHOTO: City of Chattanooga | Economic and Community Development.

# Why was it compelling?

---

- Focused on addressing resiliency and community health.
- Continued downtown revitalization.
- Connected area into a cohesive whole.
- Linked importance of the public art installation to the project as a whole.
- Outcomes: Create a gathering space for community, encourage active lifestyles, reduce area crime.



# CREATIVE ENTREPRENEURSHIP

CITY OF NEW HAVEN, CONNECTICUT  
New Haven, CT  
\$100,000

# Why was it compelling?

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- Expanded a successful pilot program.
- Established strong partnerships.
- Built on already existing area assets.
- Outcomes: Decrease vacancy, grow creative economy, increase area foot traffic and businesses.



# ARTS ENGAGEMENT

CITY OF SAN JOSE, CALIFORNIA  
San Jose, CA  
\$250,000

# Why was it compelling?

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- Clearly linked to community.
- Expansion of previous creative placemaking.
- In line with multiple area strategic plans.
- Launched in parallel with other initiatives.
- Will continue beyond grant period.
- Outcomes: More engaged community, new partnerships, increased activity downtown.



# INNOVATIVE PROGRAMMING

Dance Place  
Washington, DC  
\$150,000

# Why was it compelling?

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- Building on area revitalization.
- Plan for programming to continue beyond grant period.
- Detailed previous work with the community.
- Outcomes: Increased economic opportunities for artists, area visitors, community engagement.

# Questions?

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**Contact us at [OT@arts.gov](mailto:OT@arts.gov)**

Guidelines available now at: <http://arts.gov/grants/organizations-apply>



**National  
Endowment  
for the Arts**  
arts.gov