



## **Working with Multiple Agencies Focus Group**

**May 11, 2017; 1-2:30pm**

**Location: Department of Cultural Affairs, 31 Chambers Street, 2<sup>nd</sup> Fl, New York NY 10007**

**Facilitators: Kathleen Hughes and Shirley Levy; Note taker: Nadia Elokdah**

### **I. Introduction by DCLA and HSC**

- Introduced the Cultural Plan, planning process, and opportunities for engagement during phase two
- Presented main questions for discussion
  - With which agencies are your organizations engaged, and what form does that engagement take (e.g., grant recipients, service delivery, consulting, commissions, other, etc.)?
  - How did these partnerships form? Who contacted whom, how, etc.?
  - Describe the process for securing a partnership?
  - Which partnerships have been most successful and why?
  - What are some of the challenges your organizations face when looking to work with the City?
  - What are some examples of partnerships that were attempted but failed, for whatever reason?
  - How can the City reduce barriers to engagement?
- The CreateNYC team, with DCLA, has already helped organize over 180 focus groups and community meetings.
- The goal of the cultural plan is to create policy, program, and project recommendations over the short, medium, and long term.

### **II. Open Discussion about organizations which work with multiple City agencies**

Children's Museum: DOHMH, DHS, ACS, DOE, NYCHA; goal is to create permanent, long term impact cultural programs and serve as an agent to connect agencies alongside private funding.

- Stemming from work with ACS and DOE, we have collaborated with both to get sign off on a new early childhood program and curricula.
- DOE Early Childhood
- DOH – Deputy Commissioner level (through DM Buery) very interested in literacy
- Culture brings to the table the ability to design, create in space.
- Frustrations around staff turnover and inconsistency



- Huge amount of research and capacity put into production of metrics, indicators, and other stats. Produced data ad nauseam, not carried forward or utilized beyond.
- Private funding with Kellogg Foundation and NYCT

We segregate people by age, which is not a natural unit of distribution. We need whole family/whole household programming and support.

Arts Connection - DYCD, DCLA, DOE, DOH, all service delivery or prof development relationships

- Cornerstone grant, seen much improvement with DYCD under current mayoral administration. School building undergoing renovation and the process has been extremely burdensome navigating between interagency communication and coordination. Programs suffer due to the time spent navigating administrative issues.
- DOE – Arts Office, teach teachers how to produce a Broadway production; other offices for regular contracts
- DCLA – 38 years, very fruitful and supportive.

WCS: Bronx Zoo/NY Aquarium

Over 12: DYCD, seasonal hiring, ladders

DOE: Urban advantage, UPK sign up location

DEP: plastics campaign through aquarium

Parks: Natural Areas Conservancy, Zumba in park (zoomba)

DVS: Disabled veterans

NYCHA: Access to groups, fatherhood event, employment workshops

NYPD/FDNY: parks events, community Mayors' 1,000+ youth with disabilities

DOH: Breastfeeding awareness

- Education or professional development, nature conservation work, access programs, tabling opportunities for agencies, grants, these relationships are typically formed in two ways. Agencies that want to partner with us since WCS is higher profile. We approach agencies with projects that we think are important, and if they have interest they bite.

Irondale Ensemble: NYPD: letter to Police Commissioner, suggest the arts as a training tool for the arts – office called to discuss pilot project. Beginnings of a good relationship (3<sup>rd</sup> cycle, 18 months);

- Happy to do as long as we have other funding; NYPD collects data, supports our work programmatically; good relationship with Deputy Commissioner of Collaborative Policing.



- Unsure of how the relationship can grow if they do not contribute to the financial support of the work / cultural programming.
- Many contracts / not many partnerships. Cultural organizations need to be willing to bend to establish consistent partnerships – DCLA and sector need to investigate how to get other Agencies to understand HOW to have partnerships with arts and cultural organizations.

CH: challenge in getting agencies to invest time, resources, and MONEY (not always); understanding the culture of the agency is essential and the work we have to do as cultural orgs looking to partner. From our perspective, **the money is essential as an indicator, demonstration of the value and support of the work as part of the solution.** We feel there is hesitation from the Agencies to spend agency budget on the arts as an appropriate mechanism toward achieving the goals of their missions.

- We get to the agencies mostly by pitching to them.
- DHS; DCLA; ACS (justice and family); DOP; DOE (arts and special projects); District 79; Office of safety and youth dev; Social Services; Children’s Cabinet; Young Men’s Initiative

CUNY Creative Arts Team: pseudo-city agency. Pitched / proposed and project grows. We pitched to NYPD, DYCD, DOC, DCLA (CASA grants)

- Some partnerships work well and others don’t. Mission driven are more successful collaborations.
- When it’s clear that there is a policy driven strategy, we do well when we pitch an arts-based solution to solve the need for the policy.
- Most unsuccessful are when we are asked to fill a gap, i.e. literacy problem, theater can help, agency measures impact (test scores); but the arts group can only have limited hours to work and the supports needed to have impact in a true way.
- Being asked to be a social worker wearing an arts smock is never successful. There are structural issues around budgets and concerted planning on the part of City government and Council.
- If arts groups are not allowed access to the site/community in a real way, we are not able to do quality work.

University Settlement: SU-CASA grant run through City Council

- Grant cycle moved and the Councilmember chooses location sites – this puts arts groups and artists in a difficult position of producing 6 month engagement in 3 months and don’t get to achieve the quality of work and social cohesion through the arts as if the structure of the process happens on time and program delivered to



**Gibney Dance:** long history with DCLA – arts to transform in communities of women victims of domestic violence.

- Over 21 years, we were unable to build connections with Office to combat domestic violence or other social service agencies within the City. Through an orchestrated connection via DCLA – we met Commissioner and built an amazing successful series of programs in only a few years.
- We've also now connected Agency to DOE to foster more of this work at Community Schools.
- Barrier is the institutional walls of agencies – need human, personal connection to build collaborations and quality programming.
- Agencies with whom we are partnering do not fund this work or contract our organization. We get agreements to do work in DOE community schools and then need to approach private funders to support the work happening.
- Our work, salaries, general operating are not considered as necessary to our work. Our sector primarily consists as program/project based. This destabilizes us.

**Casita Maria:** DYCD, DOE, NYCHA Our Town Grants, Partnership for Parks to do outdoor, MOME for NY Music Month and subway ads, MTA metrocard deal to advertise 6 train festival. DCLA Immigrant Initiative.

- Parks permits only \$28, fairly easy to acquire/navigate. Would be great to streamline Parks and Sound Permits (NYPD – organized by precinct with different permit rates and processes)
- Grants to bring in artists, paperwork for bringing in artists is prohibitively burdensome since we are required to list all the partners with whom we work. If new artists
- DOT has been really committed to helping us work on our pitch and prepare for the Public Design Commission presentation.

**WHEDCo.** And BMHC: Public space activation and programming in Parks and other outdoor spaces

- DOT Weekend Walks Program, Parks concerts and art installations, DCP and DDC on commercial corridors and under the elevated.

**AMNH:** on-site parks person, we always get Parks permit.

- DOE – programming since foundation. Urban advantage, significant partner, but all funding came from the Council.



- NYCHA – partnership citywide, developments in 40 council districts – all funding came from Council (bundled by Speaker)
- Size, reach, funding, capacity ALL ARE NEEDED to thrive in City Agency partnerships
- City Agencies need to know we are not ONLY places to visit
- DDC has a STEM Office and do a lot of STEM programming – so now we do more work with DDC.
- DCLA has a really robust calendar of cultural events. DCLA to serve as conduit between orgs and Agencies to bridge divide, figuring out the way into other partnerships with other Agencies, and align mission critical programs and policies with Cultural / Arts organizations.
- Agencies come to us when we need scientific expertise – what is the exchange?
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**III. STRATEGIES / RECOMMENDATIONS: Best thing is to get the money through DCLA – DCLA needs to find ways to convince other agencies that the field is to be trusted and have already been vetted by DCLA another City agency. Reduce the burden on the cultural organizations.**

- Best thing is to get the money through DCLA – DCLA needs to find ways to convince other agencies that the field is to be trusted and have already been vetted by DCLA another City agency. Reduce the burden on the cultural organizations.
- DCLA to serve as conduit between orgs and Agencies to bridge divide, figuring out the way into other partnerships with other Agencies, and align mission critical programs and policies with Cultural / Arts organizations.
- How do we collaborate to raise contentiousness and create arts and culture as a necessity.
- Behavior change is not accomplished by knowledge, affect and emotional learning. Spread this across other Agencies.
  - Help to disseminate this research.
- Authenticity of arts – authentically present arts and culture of and to the public. We are in a very unique position, A LOT of consciousness raising needs to happen to those outside of the sector.
- This kind of work changes the nature of audience within our work. This is important.
- How do we increase the value of expertise of field (artists, arts admins, scientists, etc.)?
- Is art valued? How do we capture the value and impact and integration of arts, culture, and science in NYC that is both public and City government facing?
- Cool Culture program as an idea is great, but the support of this kind of access is beyond the tipping point.



- City Cultural Organizations are more often asked to do much for the City for free. Grateful to partner with the City, looking for understanding in partnerships. Better management of programs that provide free membership to Cultural Institutions.
- We are the positive parts of the city, and we are key to thriving city life, learning, shelter, etc.
- Cultural organizations / Arts are essential to transformation and thriving lives of NYC residents. Our work is essential to City governments work on justice.
- NYC Inspires stories – we all have amazing success stories

#### IV. **Discussion and Recommendations –**