

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR NYC CULTURAL PLANNING - 3/31/17

In order to support a healthy, vibrant and truly diverse New York City landscape The Field recommends a deeper and intentional commitment to the equitable support of artists, small companies and historically under-represented and under-resourced artists, organizations and communities in New York City.

BIG DREAM! Create a Center for Arts and Culture Equity based on the City's Center for Health Equity. Like the Center for Health Equity, this new organization would strengthen and amplify the Department of Cultural Affairs work to build equity in the arts and culture sector. This newly created organization will be charged with supporting, operationalizing, documenting, evaluating and researching equitable best practices and policies in the arts and culture sector. The Center for Arts and Culture Equity will work with the DCLA to ensure that internally and externally the DCLA is moving itself and the City arts and culture sector from an emerging practice in social justice toward an intentional, embedded and authentic practice. The Field would be honored to work in partnership with DCLA and the Mayor and other leaders to launch this new agency.

http://www.aesa.us/conferences/2013_ac_presentations/Continuum_AntiRacist.pdf and
http://media.wix.com/ugd/413133_d648d96e0ec74ea6b87ae19723e7cc3d.pdf

In the meanwhile and on the pathway toward the creation of the Center for Arts and Culture Equity, The Field recommends the following to the Cultural Plan:

- **TRAININGS: Mandatory anti-racism training and ongoing professional development for all DCLA grantees.** If the City is truly committed to equity and inclusion then anti-racism training and ongoing support must be connected to funding and program implementation. This training is specifically mandated for any white-led organizations (senior staff and Board) that offer or propose to offer “diversity, equity or inclusion” programming or “pipeline” projects. We recognize that making any training mandatory is complicated to implement, fund and track and must be thoughtfully planned and implemented.
- **FUNDING:** Increase support for individual artists, and fiscally sponsored artists, companies and small organizations – particularly those in under-resourced boroughs - who are often left out of the current Arts Council grant programs and decentralization programs due to onerous application processes, under-resourced Councils, anemic outreach and insufficient funding.

The Field recommends supporting a more holistic and equitable funding mechanism by:

- **In the short-term:** Increase funding to borough arts councils equitably. Provide baseline support to the Councils based on artists' populations by borough.
- **In the mid-term:**
 - analyze and revamp the current Arts Council system (from staffing, outreach, budget, DCLA funding, application, adjudication, etc) and move towards a borough wide common application and system that significantly simplifies the process and builds toward equitable support.

- connect the Councils’ support to current demographic and census studies documenting artists populations.
 - increase funding and infrastructure support (staffing etc) to historically under-resourced Councils like the Bronx.
 - create new funding tiers at the Arts Councils for start-up artists/groups and for larger projects. Ensure community engagement and simple application processes.
 - consider opening up funding to individual artists and fiscally sponsored projects and companies via City Council discretionary funding and initiatives – with a simple application process.
- Additionally, bolster CDF grantees with increased funding for infrastructure and administration. Create a true multi-year renewal process that is less onerous and time-consuming. Revamp the current adjudication process that includes information about prior year funding amounts that biases panelists to keep DCLA funding flat with prior year funding.
- **LIVABLE WAGES:**
 - Require that all DCLA grantees pay livable wages to all artists who perform, create, sit on panels etc. Encourage transparency in payment structure and job descriptions.
 - Encourage all DCLA grantees discontinue the practice of unpaid internships. Set a base pay standard for all internships.
- **SUPPORT INTENTIONAL AND AUTHENTIC “PIPELINE” PROJECTS** Since the DCLA Diversity Survey was released, several new programs have been launched with City-funding to “build the pipeline” of artists and administrators of color. Much of the funding has been granted to larger, white-led organizations to launch new “diversity initiatives” and pilots. Many of these organizations seem to have little or no training to offer such programs authentically, sensitively or intentionally. In addition, many of these programs focus on entry-level work and not senior leadership positions. Lastly, many smaller, people of color-led organizations that offer ongoing and long-term Fellowships and other training initiatives etc should be supported for their services.

The Field looks forward to working in partnership with the DCLA to strategically support the full spectrum of arts and cultural makers in our City. We thank you for the opportunity to present our recommendations.