

Building Links between Arts and Community Engagement

The arts have traditionally played a significant role in the culture and history of New Mexico and continue to contribute substantially to the state's economic and civic livelihoods. The McCune Foundation supports efforts to build and diversify audiences for arts and culture, particularly programs and organizations that seek to leverage arts, creative expression, and aesthetic experiences for the purpose of inspiring and driving higher levels of community and civic engagement.

Arts and cultural organizations, along with artists and cultural workers, are essential components of New Mexico's public life, cultural identity, and economy. However, arts and culture are too often relegated to supporting roles or viewed as luxuries by policy makers. While we all enjoy art that is created purely for the sake of art, there is also great power in work that functions as a catalyst for connection and positive change. The Foundation encourages arts and cultural workers to amplify their role in New Mexico's communities by using arts as a vehicle to: inspire open and respectful dialogue; harness creativity in order to facilitate positive social change; empower individuals and communities through creative expression and access to arts education; and build collaboration and partnership within the arts community and across sectors (such as social services, economic development and education) to leverage resources and serve communities.

The McCune Foundation prioritizes its support for arts and cultural programs and initiatives as well as short- and long-term projects across artistic disciplines that creatively address the following specific leverage points:

Key Leverage Points

The Foundation defines **community engagement** arts as work that intentionally involves diverse community members in collaborative, art-based (visual, performing, literary and media arts) creative work and active participation. Effective and impactful arts and community engagement is evidenced by: (a) reciprocity between artist(s) and community; (b) creative expression and high-quality aesthetic experiences, which build community connections; (c) active engagement among diverse and multigenerational participants in shared cultural experiences; (d) social dialogue and civic engagement; and (e) a meaningful product and improved community capacity that outlast the engagement.

Arts and community engagement can drive programming and outreach for arts organizations, and it can also serve an integral and catalytic role in community planning, economic development, capacity-building, civic engagement and other development efforts.

Collaboration and partnership. The Foundation prioritizes programs and organizations that establish partnerships among arts and cultural partners to leverage resources, share costs, and identify opportunities to improve engagement and service to communities. Examples include shared advertising and marketing costs for similar programs, coordinated programming in communities and schools, and collaborative place-based audience building. The Foundation also prioritizes initiatives and projects that are built on collaboration among arts organizations and communities.

In addition, the Foundation also supports cross-sector partnerships (i.e. arts organizations in partnership with social service organizations or arts organizations in partnership with community planning initiatives, etc.) that broaden impact for arts organizations, creatively engage community and further the work in other areas such as education, civic engagement, economic development and other Foundation priorities.

Education. The Foundation recognizes the value of programs and organizations that offer relevant, transformative, and quality arts education opportunities for educators, K-12 students and elders. In particular, the Foundation is interested in both in- and out-of-school programs that encourage long-term participation in the arts, ensure financial accessibility, and intentionally support cultural and economic diversity among participants, teachers and staff. Programs that coordinate closely with other groups and organizations to create strategic opportunities for broader impact are prioritized.

Build and diversify audiences. The Foundation supports work that seeks to grow and diversify audiences for the arts in New Mexico, especially where these efforts extend across multiple organizations or geographies. Younger people and populations not typically served by arts and cultural events are also prioritized for audience building activities.