



Building Links between Arts and Community Engagement

The arts play a significant role in the culture and history of New Mexico and contribute substantially to the state's economic and civic livelihoods. The McCune Foundation supports efforts that seek to leverage arts, creative expression, and culturally relevant, transformative 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, especially at the local level. The Foundation encourages and supports New Mexico's arts and cultural workers to:

- Inspire open and respectful dialogue
- Harness creativity in order to facilitate positive social change
- Increase the visibility of the perspective of diverse individuals and communities through creative expression
- Increase equitable access to culturally relevant, transformative arts experiences

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.

Building Links Between Arts and Community Engagement Leverage Points

Community Engagement – In the context of the arts, the Foundation defines community engagement as work that intentionally involves diverse community members in collaborative creative work, and active participation that honors community cultural wisdom and practices, both traditional and contemporary.

Effective, responsive arts and community engagement is evidenced by: (a) reciprocity between artist(s) and community; (b) creative expression and high-quality arts experiences that 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/or improved community capacity that outlasts the engagement. Arts and community engagement can drive programming and outreach for arts organizations. It can also serve an integral and catalytic role in community planning, economic development, capacity building, civic engagement and other community development efforts.

Collaboration and partnership – The Foundation prioritizes programs and organizations that establish alliances among arts and cultural partners to leverage resources, share costs, and identify opportunities to improve the engagement of 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 through the collaboration of communities and arts and cultural organizations.

In addition, the Foundation supports equitable cross-sector partnerships that broaden impact for arts organizations, creatively engage community, and further the work in/of other sectors (such as any of our other eight priority areas).

Education – The Foundation recognizes the value of programs and organizations that offer culturally relevant, transformative, and equitable arts education opportunities for educators, youth and elders. In particular, the Foundation is interested in programs that encourage viable pathways to long-term participation in arts and cultural work, 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.