



Supporting Cultural Advocacy, Policy, and Equity in New York City

Established in 2014, the New York City Cultural Agenda Fund in The New York Community Trust is a collaboration of grantmaking organizations that aims to:

1. **Strengthen Advocacy** – Fortify and connect the network of arts and culture advocates in New York City;
2. **Influence Policy** – Promote a cohesive and equitable cultural policy and integrate culture into City policies across multiple sectors; and
3. **Advance Equity** – Ensure small, community arts groups, groups led by people of color, and culturally and economically diverse artists are as valued for their contributions to the City’s cultural ecology as larger institutions.

Grantmaking

Since 2014, the Cultural Agenda Fund has been making investments in advocacy, policy, and equity efforts around New York City. The following is a list of our grants to date.

- A \$18,925 grant helped **Jack Arts** work with the **Sol Project** to provide a two-day racial equity training to 40 local performing arts leaders and then connect participants with ongoing education and organizing opportunities.
- The Fund awarded grants in June 2017 to help fortify cultural advocacy and advance local policy:
 - With a \$25,000 grant, **Arts East New York** hosted a series of art-based town halls to generate a forum for local civic engagement around the implementation of the cultural plan.
 - A \$22,000 grant helped the **Center for Arts Education** work with partners to increase voter awareness of existing state law mandating arts education around the 2017 municipal election.
 - **Design Trust for Public Space** used \$25,000 to help ensure immigrants and arts groups have a say in the redevelopment of Staten Island’s north shore.
 - **Disability/Arts/NYC Task Force** received a \$44,700 grant to help cultural workers become stronger disability advocates in the City.

- With a \$25,000 grant, **En Foco** strengthened and expanded a coalition of Latino arts groups based in the Bronx and East Harlem that advocate for cultural equity.
 - **Global Action Project** used a \$25,000 grant to engage youth in media arts activities to produce and promote youth-driven creative media pieces for the Dignity in Schools campaign.
 - The **League of Independent Theater** received a \$16,000 grant to provide advocacy trainings to its members, with a focus on encouraging its membership to form arts committees on community boards.
 - A \$25,000 grant helped **Theatre of the Oppressed NYC** use a theatrical strategy – its “legislative theater” model – to engage New Yorkers living with HIV/AIDS in recommending policy change to and with local officials.
- A \$33,250 grant to the **Advocacy Institute** supported training for arts advocates in local and state legislative advocacy. During the grant period, the Institute helped City arts advocates understand and untangle the most frequent and challenging barriers to advocacy, including political dynamics, legislative processes, and practical lobbying skills. More specifically, it delivered a two-day training that gave arts advocates a concrete understanding of legislative advocacy and related key players in local and state politics.
- \$325,000 in grants went to support projects stemming from the Fund’s 2015 Cultural Advocacy and Equity Program:
 - With a \$125,000 grant, **BRIC** worked with the **Museum of Contemporary African Diasporan Arts (MoCADA)**, **Mark Morris Dance Group**, and **Theatre for a New Audience** to pilot the Downtown Brooklyn Arts Management Fellowship, a salaried fellowship for emerging arts administrators from historically underrepresented groups.
 - A \$75,000 grant helped **El Puente** work with **Arts & Democracy**, **Center for Urban Pedagogy**, **Hester Street Collaborative**, and **NOCD-NY** to use its Blueprint for Culturally Healthy Communities, a document that details eight guiding principles of a “culturally healthy community,” in community planning processes in Bushwick and Gowanus, two of the neighborhoods that the de Blasio administration has identified for re-zoning.
 - **Naturally Occurring Cultural Districts New York** used \$125,000 to work with its collaborators (such as Casita Maria Center for Arts & Education, Community Voices Heard, Jacob A. Riis Neighborhood Settlement, and Staten Island Arts) to coordinate a citywide program to increase creative expression and artistic development in public housing communities. Activities took place in public housing sites around the City, such as Betances, Bushwick, Ingersoll, Fulton, Chelsea-Elliott, Queensbridge, Red Hook, and Park Hill/Stapleton.

- The Fund awarded eleven grants to ensure that a plurality of voices and perspectives influenced the development of New York City’s first cultural plan. Grantees included:
 - With a grant of \$10,000, **AMERINDA** organized the Native American arts community to generate a policy brief and ensure that Native American voices were included in the cultural planning process.
 - A \$10,000 grant helped **Asian American Arts Alliance** work with Asian American Federation to host a community-based town hall in Queens that gathered policy recommendations from Asian American artists and residents, and submitted findings to the City.
 - With \$10,000, **BRIC** took on convening and research activities to ensure that the needs of the Downtown Brooklyn arts community were included in the City’s cultural plan.
 - With a \$10,000 grant, **Caribbean Cultural Center African Diaspora Institute’s** Cultural Equity Coalition, a group of young (aged 25-40 years) cultural workers, produced policy recommendations that advance cultural, social, and fiscal equity in the cultural plan.
 - \$10,000 allowed the **Center for Arts Education** to work with the Alliance for Quality Education, the New York City Arts in Education Roundtable, and the City’s principals and teachers unions to ensure that the myriad voices of the City’s public school community were reflected in the cultural planning process.
 - A grant of \$7,000 supported **King Manor Museum** in collaborating with the Building Community Capacity Initiative in Jamaica, Queens to collect, process, and disseminate data on the cultural needs of Southeast Queens.
 - With a \$10,000 grant, **Loisaida** worked with Latino arts communities in Lower Manhattan to help shape the development of a comprehensive, culturally and linguistically competent, inclusive, and equitable cultural policy in New York City.
 - \$10,000 supported the **Martin E. Segal Theatre Center** in working with New York City Arts Coalition/One Percent for Culture, Center for Arts Education, The Field, Smithsonian Museum of the American Indian, and Gibney Dance to assess the sector’s understanding of advocacy and ensure that both academic and professional performing arts are represented in the cultural plan.
 - With a grant of \$10,000, **New York Foundation for the Arts** worked with Penn Flood Consulting and peer arts groups around the City to conduct focus groups and ensure that the voices of individual artists are incorporated into the cultural planning process.
 - A grant of \$10,000 allowed **Staten Island Arts** to select, train, and support 11 community ambassadors, who conducted neighborhood-based data gathering that was used to represent Staten Island in the cultural plan.

- Additionally, the Fund made a grant of \$33,500 to **Hester Street Collaborative**, which collaborated with Naturally Occurring Cultural Districts and artEquity to provide facilitation training to the community organizing grantees listed above. The training strengthened grantees’ capacity to facilitate meaningful dialogue around the City’s cultural plan. Participants learned creative and interactive methods for keeping discussions on track, leveraging diverse viewpoints, and sharing ideas that value the contributions of all community members.
- A \$400,000 grant to **Race Forward** supported racial equity training, coaching, and planning support for 60 arts groups. The project, called the “[Racial Equity in the Arts Innovation Lab](#),” comprises a training series and technical assistance program that guides participants through Race Forward’s racial justice curriculum and provides coaching to ensure that participants create work plans to advance racial equity at their respective organizations. Groups in the program receive participant stipends, and \$60,000 in re-granting funds will be distributed to arts groups at the end of the Lab.
- A total of \$90,000 in six-month planning grants (\$15,000 each) was awarded in January 2016 to the following six groups that participated in the Fund’s Cultural Advocacy and Equity Program:
 - **BRIC**, to plan for an ethnically-diverse arts management fellowship program (to be piloted in Downtown Brooklyn) with the Museum of Contemporary African Diasporan Arts, Mark Morris Dance Group, and Theatre for a New Audience;
 - **El Puente**, to create a blueprint for integrating arts and culture into neighborhood planning with Arts & Democracy, Elders Share the Arts, Groundswell, and Naturally Occurring Cultural Districts New York;
 - **Naturally Occurring Cultural Districts New York**, to plan for and test new ways to integrate arts and culture into public housing, in partnership with Arts & Democracy, Bronx Council on the Arts, Casita Maria, El Puente, Friends of the High Line, Groundswell, Museum of Contemporary African Diasporan Arts, Staten Island Arts, and The Laundromat Project;
 - **New York City Arts Coalition**, to plan for a potential merger with One Percent for Culture;
 - **New York Foundation for the Arts**, to explore ways to improve diversity within the nonprofit cultural workforce, in partnership with the Brooklyn Academy of Music, Brooklyn Museum, Harlem Stage, The Lark, Park Avenue Armory, and Printed Matter; and
 - **People’s Climate Arts**, to develop a training program, with Arts & Democracy and The Laundromat Project, for using creative strategies to advance social movements.

- Two grants totaling \$244,035 to the University of Pennsylvania’s [Social Impact of the Arts Project](#) supported new research on arts and social wellbeing in New York City. For more than 20 years, the Project has conducted research that demonstrates the non-economic benefits generated by the arts. For this grant, the group developed comprehensive measures of social wellbeing for New York City—including an inventory of cultural assets—and documented the relationship between wellbeing and the City’s cultural ecology. It completed its research in December 2016, and published its [findings](#) in March 2017.
- Two grants totaling \$80,215 to **The Graduate Center of the City University of New York** helped the group pilot a new cultural policy research fellowship, which was jointly overseen by CUNY’s Center for Urban Research and the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs. The fellow received training in data analysis and visualization and also generated briefs on current arts policy issues, harnessing existing datasets to produce materials for public dissemination and academic conferences. Additionally, the fellow produced two new studies – one on [City support to arts education in public schools](#) and one on the City’s IDNYC cultural memberships program.
- The **Cultural Advocacy & Equity Program** was a series of four workshops that afforded 49 arts advocates the space, time, and resources to collectively generate ideas for improving advocacy coordination and fostering an equitable arts and culture landscape. The Fund worked with [Race Forward](#), [The Opportunity Agenda](#), [i2i Experience](#), and [Hester Street Collaborative](#) to provide these workshops. The following groups were awarded \$2,000 grants to participate in the Program.
 - Alice Austen House
 - Alliance for Inclusion in the Arts
 - Artist Volunteer Center
 - Arts & Democracy Project
 - Asian American Arts Alliance
 - Asian American Writers’ Workshop
 - BRIC Arts | Media | Bklyn
 - Bronx Council on the Arts
 - Bronx Museum of the Arts
 - Brooklyn Academy of Music
 - Brooklyn Arts Council
 - Brooklyn Children’s Museum
 - Brooklyn Museum
 - Caribbean Cultural Center African Diaspora Institute
 - Center for Arts Education
 - Chamber Music America
 - Children’s Museum of the Arts

- Dance/NYC
- El Museo del Barrio
- El Puente de Williamsburg
- Elders Share the Arts
- The Field
- Flushing Town Hall
- Gibney Dance
- Groundswell Community Mural Project
- Harlem Arts Alliance
- Harlem Stage
- HB Studio
- Ifetayo Cultural Arts Academy
- Lark Play Development Center
- The Laundromat Project
- Lewis Latimer Historic House Museum
- Lower Manhattan Cultural Council
- The Martin E. Segal Theatre Center
- Museum of Chinese in America
- Museum of Contemporary African Diasporan Arts
- National Museum of the American Indian-New York
- Naturally Occurring Cultural Districts New York
- New York City Arts Coalition
- New York Foundation for the Arts
- One Percent for Culture
- Park Avenue Armory
- People's Climate Arts
- Printed Matter
- The Public Theater
- Queens Museum
- Spaceworks
- Staten Island Museum
- White Columns