The New York Community Trust: The Edward and Sally Van Lier Fund

Evaluation Report

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THE EDWARD AND SALLY VAN LIER FUND

The New York Community Trust’s Edward and Sally Van Lier Fund provides support for talented, culturally diverse, economically disadvantaged young people who are seriously dedicated to a career in the arts.

INTRODUCTION

For 25 years, The New York Community Trust (The Trust) has been administering its Edward and Sally Van Lier Fellowship Fund (the Fund), providing indirect support to hundreds of talented young artists, many of whom have become accomplished professionals widely respected in their field.

Edward and Sally shared a lifelong passion for the arts. During their lives, they helped young adults enjoy New York City’s cultural offerings. Now, the charitable fund the couple set up at Sally Van Lier’s death in 1988 grants awards to nonprofits around the city to support pre-college and post-college scholarships and programs for young artists.

Edward Van Lier came from an affluent family of Dutch descent. He was a developer who worked in real estate and owned buildings in Manhattan. Born into a family of Hungarian immigrants at the turn of the century, Sally Van Lier worked in theater, initially as an actress and later offstage on the production side. She struggled to launch a career in show business and got her first big break in 1923 when she won a local beauty contest and subsequently landed a role in the Ziegfeld Follies on Broadway.

The Van Liers did not have children. Instead they befriended a number of young women. They invited their young friends to join them on their excursions, taking them to museum exhibitions, concerts, and dance and theater performances. They took pleasure in encouraging their young friends to pursue the arts and develop their skills and talent. It is within this context that the Van Lier fellowship program was born.

At their death, the Van Liers set up a fund with The New York Community Trust, requiring that it be disbursed to “provide education assistance and training to gifted young persons who aspire to a career in the arts.” The purpose of the Van Lier Fund was to enable aspiring artists who would never have the money to afford classes to get into the best college programs or, when they graduated, establish themselves as working artists.

In 1991, The Trust began making grants to arts organizations to award Van Lier fellowships to economically disadvantaged artists from traditionally underrepresented groups at two critical points: pre-college, for training to help them prepare for admission to a college or conservatory; and post-college, to develop a body of work and make the transition from student to professional artist.

Since its founding, the Fund has awarded more than $16 million to more than 100 arts training groups, including Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, Ifetayo Cultural Arts Academy, and Dancewave, a pre-professional performing arts training center in Brooklyn.

Fellows have gone on to win prestigious awards, such as Guggenheim Fellowships, MacArthur “Genius Grants,” and Pulitzer Prizes, gaining national as well as international recognition as a result. These leading visionaries are working at the
foreground of their artistic disciplines, effecting social change, engaging communities, and working with young people. Their stories are compelling; a few have been highlighted in this report.

Of the artists interviewed for this evaluation, all stated that their fellowship experience represented a turning point; it helped them find their artistic voices and instilled in them the confidence they needed to advance their careers.

Over time the Edward and Sally Van Lier Fund has had a multiplier effect, impacting the individual artists served as well as the New York City–based arts organizations that receive the grants. The degree to which the Fund has enriched New York City’s arts and culture scene cannot be measured in numbers. Yet without a doubt the Van Liers have enabled innovative artists, whose voices otherwise might not have been heard, to enter the field of arts and culture. Their influence has shaped the arts discourse, making it more diverse, introducing new perspectives, and pushing the boundaries of their artistic genres.

The Van Liers may not be a household name; however, as their legacy continues to grow and name awareness increases, the Fund’s role in the lives of the fellows, who are making significant contributions to contemporary arts and culture, will be better understood.

At this 25-year mark, and in recognition of a drastically changed New York cultural landscape, it was time to look back and assess the impact of the program, which had not been evaluated since 1999. The Trust wanted to know whether the Van Lier Fund had met its overarching goals and, more specifically, to identify what worked well and where improvements could be made.

The findings in this report are based upon information gathered from a combination of the online survey that was conducted, interviews with fellows and grantees, and a review of The Trust’s documents. These were used to assess and measure the effectiveness of the program. A detailed outline of the methodology used can be found in appendix A on page 28.

Snapshot of Van Lier Funding History

Since its inception in 1991, the Van Lier fellowship program has awarded 312 grants to 104 New York City arts and cultural organizations; 67 organizations received support for initiatives at the post-college level, while 50 organizations received support for pre-college training programs (13 of the organizations overlap). Grants totaled $17,098,000, of which $16,017,000 was paid through the Van Lier Fund; the remaining $1,081,000 came from other sources. The impact of the investments has been significant. The grants have not only had profound effects on the lives and careers of the young people supported through the programs but have also diversified the field of arts and culture.

**NYCT DATA**

### Total Fellowship Disbursal, Pre- and Post-College

- **44%** Pre-College
- **56%** Post-College

$17,098,000 has been disbursed by NYCT for the Van Lier program since 1991. $9,576,500 (56%) was for post-college programs, while $7,521,500 (44%) has been for pre-college programs.

### Total Grants Issued, Pre- and Post-College

- **43.9%** Pre-College
- **56.1%** Post-College

312 Van Lier grants were disbursed from 1992 to 2015. 137 (43.9%) were pre-college grants, and 175 (56.1%) were post-college.
Summary of Van Lier Funding

- **137** Pre-College Fellowship Grants Issued
- **50** Organizations Received Pre-College Grants
- **175** Post-College Fellowship Grants Issued
- **67** Organizations Received Post-College Grants
- **912** Pre-College Fellows Supported
- **962** Post-College Fellows Supported
- **$7,521,500** Disbursed for Pre-College Programs from the Van Lier Fund and other sources
- **$9,576,500** Disbursed for Post-College Programs from the Van Lier Fund and other sources

Impact of the Van Lier Fund on the Field and New York City

Over its 25-year history of grantmaking, the Van Lier Fund has supported 104 organizations—a widely diverse group—and nearly 2,000 fellows. As an early champion of “diversity” it has been ahead of the curve, serving artists of color from traditionally underrepresented communities. The interviews confirm that the Fund has made a substantial impact on the fellows’ careers and on New York City’s arts and culture field in general.

In partnering with such a wide array of New York City–based arts institutions through the Van Lier Fund, The Trust has been able to extend its footprint and exert its influence on New York City arts and culture. It has been consistent in tracking the racial distribution of the fellows, as well as of the staffs and boards of its grantees. Many of the grantees’ staffs and boards became more diverse within the past decade, though the survey that informs this report does not make clear whether this was a result of The Trust’s funding.

Another way to assess the impact of the Van Lier grants on the field and on New York City as a whole is to examine major trends and changes in the cultural environment. For example, the topic of diversity is trending due to Mayor de Blasio’s initiative “to promote diversity among the staffs, boards, and audiences of the city’s cultural organizations.” These goals have been core to The Trust since its inception and are deeply embedded in its institutional DNA.
This report summarizes the outcomes and learnings of a six-month evaluation process based on survey responses, interviews with former fellows and grantees, and the consultant’s knowledge of the field. It makes recommendations that will keep the program relevant and in service of the talented New York City–based artists it targets.

The report evaluates the activities and impact of the Van Lier Fund and brings to the surface questions and significant issues relevant to the grant program. It does so while taking into consideration the fast pace of change and evolving needs of the organizations that support such artists.

Included in the report are individual stories and statistics that celebrate the richness of the diversity as well as the multidimensional aspects of the Van Lier fellowship program.

**Research and Analysis**

Research included a survey, a document review, site visits to the grantee organizations, and interviews with key staff as well as former fellows. Through the survey responses and interview protocols, we examined the programs, priorities, and challenges of nearly half of the 104 organizations that received Van Lier funding. What we found is a field that is struggling but enormously resourceful, that places the needs of artists first, and that is incredibly generous—in sharing wisdom and insights, in its trust in the creative process, and in continually striving to develop greater resources for artists. In this report, we briefly describe the challenges organizations face in the current economic climate, and views on sustainability.

The survey was sent to 98 organizations, of which 53 participated—a diverse group of fellowship programs representative of the overall field. The survey explored programming, board and staff composition, evaluation procedures, feedback on the application process and reporting requirements, and financial data, as well as extensive information on the fellows.

Sifting through all the survey responses, listening to hours of interviews, and going through the data to tease out its meaning represented a large part of the process. We sorted the data according to subgroups within the field, looking for patterns and then examining how those patterns interacted with other factors. This report tells the story that unfolded from our research. It incorporates the qualitative information with metrics and data culled from the survey, as well as perspectives and anecdotes collected from the interviews with fellows and grantee organizations.

Assessing the Van Lier Fund is more of an art than a science, balancing numbers and nuances, weighing indices with anecdotes. Underlying all of this is a basic understanding that The New York Community Trust’s Van Lier Fellowship Fund has been successful in meeting its goals. While there is room for improvements to be made, there are also many good practices to shine light on.

**Survey Response Rate**

98 organizations invited; 55% (54) filled out the survey, 45% (44) did not.

SOURCE: SURVEY
THE EDWARD AND SALLY VAN LIER FUND AT THE TRUST

Background

The specific goals of the Fund were identified in 1988, when staff undertook a comprehensive review of the training and educational opportunities available to young artists. The review found that “gifted minority youngsters had the least chance of receiving the kind of early training and support needed to gain admission to college and conservatory programs.” Thus, The Trust determined that the Fund would target young people from culturally diverse backgrounds, specifically those from economically disadvantaged households, who are in pursuit of a career in the arts. This determination aligns with the two major goals of The Trust’s art programs:

» Promoting diversity, equity, and access in and to the arts; and

» Developing talented, young, culturally diverse, and disadvantaged artists.

The Fund makes grants to organizations that provide young people with access to education, training, professional development, presentation opportunities, and other kinds of support at two critical junctures of their development:

» Pre-College: Fellowships to talented young people for training to prepare for college, conservatory, a professional company, or another advanced training program

» Post-College: Fellowships for emerging artists to help make the transition from formal training to professional careers through education, training, mentorship, production, and public presentations, as well as other forms of support

The 1999 Report

The evaluation undertaken by Carroll Presha Enterprises in 1999 confirmed that the Van Lier program was, indeed, effective in fulfilling its mission, advancing the careers of many aspiring artists as well as benefiting the organizations whose training programs helped catalyze those careers. Moreover, the evaluation concluded that the grantee programs “have been successful in seeding the field with talented pre-professionals of color.” This report builds on that evaluation and includes many similar observations and recommendations. Issues raised include, but are not limited to, terminology used by The Trust; naming and acknowledgment of the Van Lier Fellowship Fund; the financial fragility of the field; the desire to connect with other grantees; networking opportunities for the fellows; and the need to put in place structures that will allow The Trust to track the progress of each fellow’s work over time.

Annual Docket

The Trust awards approximately 7 to 13 multi-year grants annually. The most recent 2015 docket totaled nearly $900,000, with seven organizations in the post-college category, each receiving an average of $128,000 over two to three years. This contrasts with the approximately $700,000–$750,000 that used to be disbursed over one year. Some of these monies are paid directly to the post-college fellows in the form of stipends, while the pre-college fellows receive help with local transportation, travel monies, meals, materials, costumes, classes, and workshops. They are paid a fee when they perform or when an internship is a component of the fellowship.
Budget and Grant Size

While the grant size remained capped at $60,000 for many years, it was raised in 2014 to $90,000. This year, grants have been capped at $150,000, to be paid out over two or three years depending on the number of fellows served, and afforded by increased earnings from the endowment. Increasing the grant amounts has enabled the Fund to remain relevant at a time of diminished foundation support, and when real estate prices and cost of living have escalated to levels not seen before.

The budget for the Van Lier Fellowship Fund seems appropriate given the scale of the program and the number of proposals/applications received. The majority of interviewees thought the grants were large enough, enabling them to cover the expenses of two or more Van Lier fellows as well as some administrative costs. Some would like to pay their post-college fellows higher stipends, bringing them in closer alignment to a living wage.

Clarity of Purpose and Program Continuity

The Van Lier Fund’s commitment to the professional development of young artists, as well as to the arts institutions that support them, has been consistent with the goals of its grantmaking. A component of its effectiveness is its clarity of purpose. Running through several interviews was the theme of being clear about and staying true to the program’s purpose. Inflexibility in terms of program identity and purpose has allowed The Trust to be flexible with details and to orient itself toward problem solving. Clarity of purpose has provided a position against which to weigh opportunities and make decisions regarding, for example, when and how to work with new grantees that are starting new fellowship programs in geographic areas that have been hard to reach.

With so many foundations changing their priorities, the Fund continues to provide unwavering support to young artists, and it has proven a reliable funding source to the intermediaries that serve them. Grantees expressed appreciation for this consistency and described The Trust as a reliable funder in support of their work.

As one interviewee stated:

*It has become increasingly rare to get foundation support for actual artists and their work. New York Community Trust is one of the very few that does this.*

Grantees uniformly report that the program director is forthcoming and articulate in discussions about Van Lier Fund priorities and focus. Grantees found her to be accessible, flexible, and compassionate. She is viewed with high regard, respected for her knowledge of the field and well known within it. Her leadership and strong presence within arts and culture in New York City were repeatedly acknowledged during the interviews.
Field Scan of Van Lier Fund Grantees

Since 1991, the Fund has supported a broad cross section of organizations across all five boroughs. Their fellowship programs have served as important pipelines in the development of artists’ career regardless of a given grantee organization’s location, size, or institutional profile, or whether it is separately run or part of a larger program.

The programs are vigorous and multifaceted, offering professional training, deep mentorship, presenting opportunities, and access to financial resources and, often, stipends. What they have in common is a strong commitment to providing artists with equitable access to opportunities and power structures. Supporting intermediaries large and small, mainstream and community-specific, has enabled The Trust to reach its target constituency: artists from traditionally underrepresented groups.

Grantees have ranged from large establishments—such as the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Museum of Modern Art, the Whitney Museum of American Art, Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, the Public Theater, and Jazz at Lincoln Center, all located in Manhattan—to small and midsize institutions, including many with strong ties to their local communities. Examples include El Puente and Ifetayo Cultural Arts Academy in Brooklyn; Pregones Theater, Pepatián, and Ghetto Film School in the Bronx; Maysles Institute and the Studio Museum in Harlem; and in Queens, Socrates Sculpture Park and Queens Council on the Arts. Staten Island remains a challenge.

Since 1991, NYCT has given out a total of $17,098,000 in Van Lier funding. The vast majority of this money has been awarded to organizations in Manhattan ($13,706,000 or 80%). Totals and percentages for the other boroughs are: Brooklyn - $1,445,000 or 8.5%; The Bronx - $854,000 or 5%; Queens – $843,000 or 5%; and Staten Island – $250,000 or 1.5%.

There is a significant degree of spatial clustering, as well as a lesser degree of spatial dispersion, of Van Lier organizational grantees between 1991 and 2015 (actual data). Most grantees have been and still are located in various parts of Manhattan. However, there have been 30 grantees (29%) in boroughs other than Manhattan since 1991.
Grantmaking Results: Impact on Artists

Grantees repeatedly commented on the critical role Van Lier support played in the successful implementation of their results-driven programs. With these grants, organizations were able to make deeper investments in their fellows, providing the intensive training and professional development opportunities needed to advance their careers.

We have found that the longer the fellowship program (programs should last for a minimum of nine months), the better the results. In addition, the quality of mentorship and of introductions made are important indicators of a high-impact program.

Results have been transformative and life changing. Artists uniformly described their fellowship experience as a time of growth. They talked about finding their artistic voice and gaining the confidence needed to take their education or career to the next level. Van Lier support has enabled aspiring artists to graduate from leading colleges—often with scholarships—and pursue careers in the arts. Early-career artists, on the other hand, were able to attend some of the most prestigious arts programs in the city and present their work to New York audiences, often for the first time. This public exposure led to new work opportunities and helped launch the careers of many artists.

Pre-college fellows uniformly stated that they would not have been able to pursue a degree in the arts if not for the training and mentoring they received. Post-college fellows were able to make substantial jumps in their careers because of the exposure and strategic guidance received, as well as introductions and opportunities to explore new techniques and to present, perform, or publish their work.

Being part of a larger community of artists was also cited as vital to the fellowship experience. The sense of community that develops among the fellows surfaced as a key feature of a quality program, as did the value of becoming part of a larger network. Many met fellow artists with whom they ended up collaborating, expanding their practice as a result.

A good reputation among artists was also viewed as crucial to the programs’ success. In addition to time, mentorship, training, and professional development, artists noted the stipends, attentive staff, and networking opportunities as important. All artists we spoke with said they would recommend the experience to others.

The feedback we received was mostly positive, with the exception of one issue: stipend size. All of the post-college fellows we interviewed commented on its modest size. While grateful to receive the stipend, these fellows spoke about their struggle just to survive. They were juggling their fellowships with other jobs to cover basic living costs, as well as, in many cases, to pay off their student loans. Larger stipends would have allowed them to devote more time to their fellowship projects while alleviating some of their financial stress.

“Receiving the Van Lier Fellowship changed my life. I felt emboldened to experiment and become the artist I am today. It led to the release of my first album and allowed me to introduce my work to New York audiences for the first time. This exposure led to so many opportunities and allowed me to become a full-time musician.”

- Darius Jones, Roulette (2009)
Jazz composer and saxophone player

Image: Peter Gannushkin
The role of the mentor cannot be overstated. Fellows spoke about how their mentors helped them achieve their goals and challenged them to work outside of their comfort zone. They talked about the significance of having access to someone who can offer advice, provide encouragement, critique their work, and make introductions. Many of the fellows we interviewed are still in touch with their mentors; they have developed long-lasting friendships or have become regular collaborators.

It is interesting to note that many of the fellows we spoke with have become mentors or part-time educators themselves, often at the same organizations where they did their fellowships. This speaks to the sense of community that was nurtured and the desire to give back to their younger peers.

**Mentorship and Networking Opportunities**

Niegel Smith received his fellowship at Second Stage Theater at the age of 24, after graduating from Dartmouth College. He got his first big break through a connection he made with Bill T. Jones, to whom his mentor introduced him during the fellowship. Mr. Jones ended up hiring him to work as assistant director of the critically acclaimed Broadway musical *Fela!*

"I can directly track that work to having that fellowship. I can not tell you how important it is for us to have an organization look after us, to have someone invest in me and my career early on. It opened up doors that I otherwise would not have had access to. The relationships I made are invaluable."

- **Niegel Smith**, Second Stage Theater (2004–05)
  Theater director, performance artist, and artistic director of the Flea Theater

"I would not have been able to accomplish what I’ve accomplished or stay afloat at high school without Rosie’s. I wouldn’t have been able to get into LaGuardia High School of Music and Art and Performing Arts without their help and push. My academic coordinator helped me apply to college. Overall, the experience instilled a lot of confidence in me and helped me become a better person. I learned life skills and was able to get the training I needed to become a better performer. Rosie’s helped me professionalize. It kept me off the street and out of trouble."

- **Kya Brickhouse**, Rosie’s Theater Kids (2014), 18 years old.
  Theater major at DePaul University, Chicago, IL

"El Puente allowed me to use my voice in a different way; one that I never knew I could. I was exposed to the different aspects of theater and the power of art to effect social change. This changed my view of theater. Now, I know that I can make a difference."

  Theater major at Emerson College, Boston, MA
Jean John Daniel (born 1996) is a junior at Medgar Evers College in Brooklyn, a college of The City University of New York, where he is studying dance and psychology on a partial scholarship. He plans to transfer to Howard University’s dance program and pursue his master’s degree after graduating, and to establish himself as a professional dancer and educator.

At age 16, he received the Van Lier fellowship from Ifetayo Cultural Arts Academy, where he already had been taking classes and performing with the youth ensemble, a pre-professional touring company that tours nationally. The fellowship nominates the very best of those performers and invites them into the Van Lier fellowship program.

Fellows engage in a two-year intensive training program, which includes classes and workshops presented by some of the most renowned choreographers working today. The fellows perform across the country on world stages. Daniels said that performing before a large audience at the renowned Apollo Theater and meeting Michelle Obama when he performed at the White House “set the bar, and raised my standards.”

In addition to the professional training, Daniels received guidance on the college application process and was able to attend his first-choice college on a scholarship. As a college student, Daniels remains involved with Ifetayo as a teacher and mentor.

I don’t know where I would be today without Ifetayo. I have grown significantly as a performer, as well as physically and mentally. It opened up my world and allowed me to discover my passion. I have grown significantly because of Ifetayo. My kids are going there, and my children’s children are going there. I’m staying there forever.

My fellowship opened new doors, which allowed me to accomplish so many other things. I had a place to go after school and on weekends, [to] take free classes, and have academic support at the same time. I got to see a lot of free shows, learn about all aspects of the performing arts, and perform professionally. I would not have been able to stay afloat in high school nor would I be attending this college on a scholarship if it weren’t for the fellowship. Overall, it helped me become a better person.

Kristoffer Diaz (born 1977) is a playwright of Puerto Rican descent who grew up in Yonkers and now lives in Brooklyn. He is currently a New Dramatists resident playwright and a speaker, and he teaches playwriting at New York University. He earned both his bachelor’s and graduate degrees from NYU. He is the recipient of numerous awards, including the Guggenheim Fellowship, The Playwright’s Center Jerome Fellowship, and the New York Times Outstanding Playwright Award.

He was a Van Lier fellow from 2005 to 2006 at New Dramatists, which “gives playwrights time and space in the company of gifted peers to create work, realize their artistic potential, and make lasting contributions to theatre.”

His first full production, the play The Elaborate Entrance of Chad Deity, was a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize in Drama (2009) and went on to have 25 productions nationwide. “Being a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize changed my career overnight,” Diaz said. The play also won the Lucille Lortel Award, the Obie Award, a Drama Desk nomination, and the Jeff Award for Best Production and Best New Work. His work has been produced, commissioned, and developed at the Public Theater, Dallas Theater Center, Second Stage, Geffen Playhouse, American Theater Company, and many others. As a screenwriter, he has developed original television pilots for HBO and FX.

Diaz attributes the successful rise of his career directly to the Van Lier fellowship. He described the fellowship as providing...

an amazing opportunity to access resources early in my career, when I needed it most, such as rehearsal space, mentors who provided guidance on practical issues, and peers who gave me feedback on my work. The Van Lier fellowship gave me exactly what I needed at that time. I developed a new play at New Dramatists and connected with actors,
directors, and others that I continue to work with. The relationships I developed, and the exposure my final project received, led to countless opportunities.

The Van Lier fellowship opened so many doors and led to significant connections, which led to other connections. I certainly would not be doing what I’m doing if I hadn’t received the Van Lier fellowship at New Dramatists. It provided the connective step for me and was a turning point. I went from being a struggling playwright to a playwright whose plays are actually produced. It eventually led to the first full production of my play, which led to me being a Pulitzer Prize finalist.

Vijay Iyer (born 1971) is an American jazz pianist, composer, bandleader, producer, electronic musician, and writer based in New York. In early 2014 he was appointed professor of the arts at Harvard University. He is the recipient of many prestigious awards, including an Alpert Award in the Arts in 2003 and, most notably, a MacArthur Fellowship, which he received in 2013.

Iyer performs around the world with ensembles, most frequently in his trio with Stephan Crump and Marcus Gilmore, featured on three albums. One of those albums, Accelerando, was voted No. 1 Jazz Album of the Year for 2012 in three polls surveying hundreds of critics worldwide, while another, Historicity, was a 2010 Grammy nominee for Best Instrumental Jazz Album. The latter was named No. 1 Jazz Album of 2009 by The New York Times, The Los Angeles Times, and NPR, among many others. On the strength of these recordings, Iyer was named 2010 Musician of the Year and 2012 Pianist of the Year by the Jazz Journalists Association. Iyer is also known for sustained multi-year collaborations.

He was awarded the Van Lier fellowship in 2002 by Creative Capital, a commissioning foundation, which provides project support and professional development opportunities to groundbreaking artists. The fellowship provided him with financial support, strategic counseling, and professional development services. At that time and as a result of the fellowship, he was able to develop his most ambitious project to date. Entitled In What Language?, a song cycle about airports, fear, and surveillance before and after 9/11, the project premiered in 2003 at the Asia Society and ended up touring nationally. The exposure led to new commissions by major establishments such as the Brooklyn Academy of Music, Harlem Stage, and many others. He stated that this opportunity represented a turning point in his practice.

Iyer describes the fellowship as an empowering experience: “It helped me understand that I didn’t have to be poor if I wanted to live as an artist.” The fellowship enabled him to expand his practice by engaging in his first interdisciplinary collaboration, a genre-bending production that allowed him to push his artistic boundaries.

Most important, the resources and professional development services that came with the fellowship allowed him to realize the project on a scale that otherwise would not have been possible.

*It allowed me to make music that doesn’t fit into any genre. It also allowed me to realize that I can collaborate with anyone... It helped me understand the different spheres of art. For me, my music is about moving the needle aesthetically, and that brings a certain transformative experience with a message.*

Jessie Montgomery (born 1983) is a New York–based African American violinist, composer, and educator. She has been recognized as an important emerging composer and has received grants from the Joyce Foundation and the Sorel Organization. She has also received numerous commissions from the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra, Symphony Space, and the Young People’s Chorus of New York, among others. She is one of the founders of PUBLIQuartet and regularly performs with Catalyst Quartet. She received her undergraduate degree from Julliard School and earned her master’s degree from New York University.

She received two Van Lier fellowships, one at the pre-college level from Third Street Music School Settlement (1995), which provides access to high-quality music education, and the other at the post-college level from American Composers Orchestra (2011), which increases opportunities for emerging American composers and generates
broader awareness of their work. She emphatically stated that both fellowships “came at critical junctures that allowed me to take my career to the next level.”

She received the Van Lier fellowship at Third Street when she was in high school, but had been taking classes there since she was four years old. She received her first fellowship once she had made the decision to “play the violin for the rest of my life.” As part of the fellowship, Third Street gave her a violin to play, which she said she otherwise would not have been able to afford. She also got to work with a new teacher, whose fee was partially underwritten by the fellowship. This teacher gave her the technical training and push she needed to take her violin practice to the next level.

It completely changed the way I play. It gave me a lot of confidence. Without the Van Lier fellowship, especially in high school, I would have missed out on having the opportunity to study with a really good teacher and play a high-quality violin. I wouldn’t have been able to afford it. The training I received allowed me to play at a much higher level. Because of that, I was able to attend Julliard.

She received her post-college fellowship not long after receiving her master’s degree from NYU, where she had studied film scoring, thinking by taking that route she would be able to make a living as a composer. But when she received the fellowship, she was able to follow her dream to pursue a career as a new-music composer.

American Composers allowed me to produce my first major production and showcase my work to New York audiences for the first time. They gave me a check, plus additional production monies. It allowed me to experiment and to stage my first interdisciplinary work. The experience I gained from that was invaluable. And the exposure I received from that concert gave me a really big push. I connected to so many composers and got introduced to the new-music world. This has led to so many other opportunities. I discovered all these things about myself, and what I really wanted to do with my career.

Xaviera Simmons (born 1974) is an African American visual artist who has developed an interdisciplinary practice that encompasses sculpture, video, photography, installation, live performance, and choreography. Based in Brooklyn, she has built a reputation as an internationally recognized artist.

Simmons received her BFA from Bard College after spending two years on a walking pilgrimage retracing the transatlantic slave trade with Buddhist monks. She completed the Whitney Museum’s Independent Study Program in Studio Art, as well as a two-year actor-training conservatory with Maggie Flanigan Studio.

She received her one-year fellowship in 2012 when she was accepted into the Studio Museum in Harlem’s highly prestigious artist-in-residence program. The residency is well known and highly respected and has therefore been effective in launching the careers of those who participate in it. Simmons was no exception. The fellowship allowed me to make a substantial jump in my career; it emboldened me and engaged me in important conversations. Now, my work is part of the collection; it is incredible to be part of that lineage. Becoming part of the Museum’s community has had many benefits. It has allowed me to grow professionally, as well as establish a lifelong relationship with the Museum. I think it’s important to give back, which is why I continue to work with the Museum’s youth program.
Awareness of Role and Place in Arts Ecology

There is no doubt that the Van Lier Fellowship Fund program holds a singular place in the larger philanthropic arts field. Although it is not alone in providing direct support to artists through organizational grants, we were not able to identify other funders comparable to the Van Lier program in terms of its exclusive focus on aspiring and early-career artists.

Awareness of other players in the philanthropic community, as well as a sense of the Fund’s place beyond that, is important, even in the ecology of foundations specific to targeted populations or artistic disciplines. Such awareness is useful in helping to ensure the Fund remains relevant, and, when appropriate, in creating alliances and collaborations.

The external comparison with eight “best in class” complementary national grant programs can be found in appendix C on page 38. The market research points to the differences and similarities between New York Community Trust’s Van Lier Fellowship Fund and other philanthropic institutions.

Grant Tracking

The Trust’s staff produces dockets for each grant round, which are shared with the board. The Trust also tracks its grantees, detailing the purpose of each grant and, when available, listing the names of the fellows and their projects. It is clear that the Van Lier grants receive due administrative consideration. Moreover, program director Kerry McCarthy makes site visits and attends performances and events; she is also easily accessible by phone and email.

The tracking of the grants is consistent; documented facts about the grants and grantees range from how many applications came in and how many grant dollars were awarded to the location and size of grantees, disciplines, number of fellows, and grant purposes. A brief “project description,” or summation of the grant’s objectives, is on record for every grant made, and often includes the names of the fellows and their accomplishments. The project description offers a sense of the scope and depth of the program, along with details on the fellows served. These internal documents were often referred to during the evaluation and will continue to be useful in the future.

The National Dance Institute provides a comprehensive dance program in 39 New York City public schools that reaches 6,000 professional teaching artists. Its advanced program, the Celebration Team, selects 200 students to its semi-professional performance troupe. The group sought support to provide four two-year fellowships in dance. During the second half of the grant period, the group continued working with Van Lier fellows Brandon Parks, Nataki Rennie, Olivia Morgan, and Flor Massey. Fellows participated in the group’s advanced program, which included two performance troupes that gathered every Saturday for three to five hours of instruction and rehearsals, and the Irene Diamond Summer Institute, a month-long intensive in ballet, modern, jazz, tap, ethnic dance, music, choreography, and theater. Brandon Parks, Nataki Rennie, and Flor Massey received full scholarships to participate in Triple Arts, a two-week musical theater intensive led by Broadway stars Charlotte d’Amboise and Terrence Mann. Mentored by teaching artist Bianca Johnson, Parks created original dance choreography and a monologue. He also worked on vocal music with the group’s music director, Jerry Korman. He started studying Musical Theater at the Professional Performing Arts High School (PPAS) in fall 2013. Rennie was also mentored by teaching artist Bianca Johnson. She started studying at PPAS in fall 2013. Massey was selected as one of five dancers to represent the group and perform at the 60th Anniversary Celebration of the China Welfare Institute Shanghai Children’s Palace in Shanghai, China. Morgan received a scholarship for after-school ballet and modern classes. Despite her desire to pursue the opportunity to attend a performing arts high school in the city, her family decided to relocate to New Rochelle, where she attended a local high school and continued her dance training at the Dance Ministry Institute. The grant was spent in alignment with the project budget, primarily supporting personnel.

SOURCE: NYCT
Specific indicators of progress are set as evaluative benchmarks for each grantee, establishing the aims for the specific grant made. The indicators are fairly precise. For instance:

*Emerging playwrights (two each year) get a $15,000 stipend and health insurance. Fellows set artistic goals for the yearlong residency, meet monthly with staff to review progress, and participate in at least three playwriting programs, such as a five-month collaborative workshop with actors and directors, an eight-day writers’ retreat, a 10-month writers’ group, and roundtable readings of their work. (Three years)*

**Reporting Requirements**

All grantees are required to submit interim and final reports about their funding. A scan of some of these documents shows that they are rich in information, and thoughtful and direct in summarizing the purpose, goals, and impact of their grants. This study did not include a comprehensive overview of these reports; however, the information provided could be more carefully studied and analyzed as a way to gain a larger understanding of the Van Lier Fund’s impact.

**Requests for Proposals**

In 2009, The Trust eliminated discipline-specific RFPs as a way to streamline the application process. Since 2012, separate RFPs have been issued for each level of development, alternating years between the pre- and post-college grant applications. This system works well, as most organizations receive multi-year grants for periods of two to three years. Grantees repeatedly stated the importance of receiving multi-year grants, as they allow for advanced planning, greater financial stability, and flexibility.

A percentage of the grant monies can be used to underwrite related operating expenses, of which grantees were extremely appreciative given the challenge of raising sufficient overhead funds. These fellowship programs tend to be demanding of staff time given the mentoring, training, one-on-one meetings, and hands-on engagement required to make the fellowships truly impactful.

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**“Shopping Bag Intricacies” (selection) »**

Designer: Gustavo Galvan, Van Lier Fellow
Created as part of Snug Harbor Artist Residency Program

Photo courtesy Snug Harbor
The following section examines different aspects of the Van Lier Fund. It provides a snapshot of the Fund’s procedures and practices not yet covered. In particular, this section highlights issues raised in the survey responses as well as in the interviews. They fall into five categories: External Communications; Selection of Fellows; Grants by Location; Gender and Racial Diversity; and Larger Field Issues. Here, we have integrated the learnings with our recommendations, which have been earmarked for easy reference. Recommendations reflect input and suggestions made by the grantees and fellows as well as by the evaluator.

1. Improving External Communications

A. Name Recognition: Leveraging Van Lier Fellowships for Greater Impact

It is worth remarking that naming is a notable issue, and that the Van Lier name could be better leveraged to promote a stronger sense of identity, both for the fellows and for The New York Community Trust’s arts and culture community.

When asked if grantees notify fellows of their fellowship status, 86.3% of the organizations responded “yes”; none of the groups answered “no.” The remaining 13.7% sometimes, though not consistently, informed the parents of fellows at the pre-college level but not the fellows themselves, or weren’t sure. Sometimes grantees opted not to inform artists when the fellowship program was part of a larger program.

Both interviewers spoke to former fellows who were not aware that they had been Van Lier fellows, despite the high number of respondents who claim to inform their fellows. We also know of several fellows who had, unbeknownst to them, been the recipients of more than one Van Lier fellowship. Those who did know about their fellowship felt validated by it and were proud of the recognition, listing it in their bios and résumés.

» Require grantees to inform artists that they are Van Lier fellows, and to leverage the name by encouraging fellows to include it in their résumés, bios, and other promotional materials. The Trust may want to stipulate this requirement in very clear terms both in its call for proposals and in the award letters.

B. Leveraging the Web to Enhance Prestige

The Trust can use its website in more dynamic ways to enhance the prestige associated with the Van Lier fellowship program. This can be accomplished in the following ways:

» Highlight fellows (and their accomplishments) on a dedicated digital platform. The Trust could add a “Fellows” section to its website, listing the fellows by year, artistic discipline, and affiliated organization, starting with the current round of fellows. Grantees would be required to supply the Fund with names, pictures, artistic disciplines, and contact information for each of their fellows.

» Make more strategic use of social media. A private Facebook account could be set up for the fellows, connecting them to each other and thereby mobilizing the network.

» Create a “Fellow of the Month” profile. This could be a way to share the fellowship experience more publicly, by highlighting progress made, goals met, or projects completed.
These communication strategies will generate broader public awareness and understanding of the program. They will also optimize the social and professional validation afforded by the awards. Moreover, these strategies will allow The Trust to establish a direct link with the Van Lier fellows and track their progress in the long term. Such a system may incentivize the fellows to keep The Trust informed of their activities, and set the stage for networking opportunities.

Further, listing the fellows on the website will simultaneously allow The Trust to track them. Whether The Trust retains its one-time-only fellowship policy or, as recommended in the next section, decides to allow artists to receive the fellowship once each at the pre- and post-college levels, this would provide a means to ensure compliance. Compliance has heretofore been impossible given the lack of a central tracking system.

Enhanced branding and communication will bring the Van Lier arts fellowship to life and introduce a networked way of working together.

C. Streamlining the Application Process

The mission of the Van Lier Fund’s work in training and professional development has been clearly articulated to grant seekers and to the field, as have The Trust’s interests and goals. This information is most widely accessible on The Trust’s website, where most grant seekers go when looking for information about the Van Lier Fund.

The guidelines for applying for a Van Lier fellowship are fairly straightforward and clear, specifying the two core grant strategies (pre- and post-college programs), as well as the qualifications and criteria that guide the decision-making process. What follow are recommendations that would help streamline the application process by providing greater clarity on issues that repeatedly were raised in the survey, in interviews, and in conversations with The Trust.

Artistic Disciplines

The Fund supports a wide range of artistic disciplines, and “the arts” is intentionally very broadly defined. There are some disciplines, however, that do not fall into the categories supported by The Trust. A clearer articulation in the “Qualifications of Fellowship Program” section of the website would prevent grant seekers from sending in applications that do not qualify for funding, and alleviate the need for staff to field inquiries about eligibility.

» List the areas that do not meet current guidelines. Include areas that used to be funded and no longer are, such as professional development for arts administrators and curatorial practice, as well as paid internships (unless they are a component of the fellowship program). These should be listed along with other areas not funded by The Trust, such as film production (pre and post), fashion, and interior design. Greater clarity will increase efficiency.

» Consider adding a “Frequently Asked Questions about the Van Lier Arts Fellowships” section to the guidelines. This would be a good place to address eligibility, as well as to clarify other issue areas raised during the evaluation.
Age Cap

The 30-year-old age cap was considered by some grantees to be “too restrictive” or “seemingly arbitrary.” According to these respondents, students are taking longer to get their college degrees, graduating at older ages compared to previous decades, and increasingly starting their professional careers at or around the 30-year mark. This trend has been confirmed by the National Center for Education Statistics, which concluded that the number of older students nationwide increased between 2000 and 2012.¹ This may be due to the higher enrollment costs at the college and conservatory levels, though other reasons for lifting the age cap were also cited by the interviewees. It should be noted here that a number of fellows interviewed for this report were well into their 30s by the time they received the fellowship.

Raise the age cap. The Trust has not been strict in enforcing the age cap; given the flexible approach already in place, it may want to consider relaxing this policy in a more formal way. Raising the age cap would indicate that The Trust is responding to changes in the external environment and is sensitive to field needs. This latitude will be appreciated by the Fund’s grantees, particularly those having difficulty adhering to the 30-year-old age cap.

One-Time Fellowship Policy

The pre-college grant application states: “Fellowships may not be awarded to youth who have previously received Van Lier fellowships at your or other organizations.” The policy is not explicitly articulated in the post-college requests for proposals and has been challenging to enforce without a central tracking system in place.

Establish clarity about the one-time-only fellowship policy. The Trust may want to consider changing its policy and allowing fellows to receive the fellowship once at the pre-college level and once at the post-college level. (Jessie Montgomery’s two fellowship awards makes the case. Refer to her profile on page 13.)

¹ http://nces.ed.gov/fastfacts/display.asp?id=98

Hiatus Year

To ensure the program remains as dynamic and diverse as the artists served, grantees are now required to take a hiatus after six years. This policy was instituted in 2014 and has caused anxiety among some repeat grantees. Longtime grant recipients were particularly concerned about the loss of income.

As one interviewee candidly stated:

“We don’t take this support for granted; it has to be earned. Next year, we will be on an off-cycle, which will make for a difficult year. We won’t be able to continue on the arc we’re on, because it’s very difficult to fill that void and to get artist-specific support.

Moreover, not all organizations interviewed were aware of this policy.

Communicate the hiatus policy more clearly, in The Trust’s printed materials as well as on the website. It should also be included in the award letters for additional clarification.

Integrate The Trust’s capacity-building program with the Van Lier arts fellowship program. This would allow The Trust to continue working with its strongest partners during their off years. Many of the small to midsize groups that serve lower-income communities, communities of color, or other underserved populations are struggling, because they have limited access to capital, especially to foundations, wealthy donors, and other sources that can contribute income over periods of time. This diminishes their annual revenue and ability to establish financial reserves, which can in turn constrain their programming and prevent them from building their capacity. Support from The Trust’s capacity-building initiative may help alleviate some of the anxiety grantees are feeling, as well as provide a strategic way to strengthen these organizations. (For more information and background, please refer to the section “Sustainability and Funding,” on page 23.)
D. Terminology: Using Empowering Language to Describe Diversity

Several grantees raised the issue of terminology and thought that more empowering language could be used.

» Update language in both internal and external communications. Terms such as “minority” and “underserved” were considered disempowering and also lacking in clarity. Instead of “minority,” grantees preferred descriptions like “artists of color” or self-identifying terms.

E. The Grantees Speak: Feedback on the Application Process

Uniformly, grantees described the application process as straightforward and properly scaled.

When asked to rate it, most survey respondents gave the process a “3” rating on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being “not difficult” and 5 being “very difficult.” When asked if they would recommend any changes to the application process, the large majority answered “no.” This was reiterated in the interviews, during which grantees stated that the application and reporting requirements were properly scaled to the size of the grants and were fairly standard.

Grantees did not find anything particularly problematic about the application process. In fact, when speaking on the topic, grantees frequently contrasted The Trust with various government agencies whose procedures were considered “cumbersome” and “overly bureaucratic.” The suggestions described below seek to address a few minor, though nonetheless commonly cited, concerns or questions.

» Provide more lead time between the RFP and application deadline.

» Clarify the one-grant-only policy. Many grantees were under the impression they could apply to only one program area, and some opted to apply for a capacity-building/organizational-development grant to meet higher institutional priorities. As recommended above, a few sentences detailing the one-grant-only policy in the “Frequently Asked Questions about the Van Lier Arts Fellowships” section would make it easy for grant seekers to become familiar with The Trust’s policies.

» Provide more detail on the selection procedures and standards. The website already offers a list of the Fund’s review criteria, but grantees asked for greater transparency.

Survey Responses:

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*On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being 'not difficult' and 5 being 'very difficult, please rate your experience in applying to The New York Community Trust for Van Lier grants.* By far, most survey respondents (25) rated the application of moderate difficulty. The weighted average level of difficulty was 2.65; more respondents rated the application less than moderately difficult (19) than more than moderately difficult (7). 51 out of 53 respondents answered this question.

SOURCE: SURVEY

2. Selection of Fellows

A. Determining Financial Need

The process for evaluating financial need remains nebulous, as there are no guidelines in place to help organizations make that determination. Several grantees found it problematic to ask artists for their financials when they were already aware of the financial struggles common to artists. A number of grantees were up front about the fact that they make a point of not asking applicants for financial information.
As one organization’s director bluntly stated:

We think it would be extremely onerous to have as part of our application process a submittal of demonstrated financial need. The process of doing that would significantly decrease our pool of applicants. We know that the majority of early career artists we work with have financial needs, many of whom are struggling to make a living in New York. Instead we check their resumes and bios, their educational history, and age; these are all indicators of their status.

Others found it challenging to tailor the process given the complexity of the applicants’ financial situations. They asked for guidance on the issue and requested that The Trust provide them with a resource guide or tool kit.

- Develop a tool kit to help grantees determine financial need. A one-size-fits-all solution won’t be helpful given the wide range of organizations and institutional cultures. A resource guide of proven practices, to be culled from grantees, would be beneficial for grantees that find it challenging to determine need.

B. Diversity of the Fellows

In a similar vein, some grantees found it challenging to attract a diverse applicant pool. This group of grantees asked for a recruitment guide to help them improve their outreach efforts and achieve better results.

A significant number of grantees acknowledged that their grants incentivized them to pay greater attention to the racial composition of their applicant pool, helping to instill a greater sense of organizational awareness of issues related to diversity, equity, and access.

Another repeat grantee, Kathleen Gilrain, executive director and chief curator of Smack Mellon, stated:

Van Lier funding helped our organization become really aware that we had to make sure we have a diverse applicant pool, and that has enabled us to support a range of artists that have gone on to be really significant players in the New York art world and beyond.

Socrates Sculpture Park, a repeat grantee, is a case in point. John Hatfield, executive director, talked about how working with a more diverse group of artists helped the organization build stronger relationships with local residents, who mostly hail from the public housing projects.

- Develop a “Recruitment Diversity” resource guide. The Fund places particular emphasis on increasing the racial and ethnic diversity of the fellows. A resource guide based on good thinking and replicable practices will help grantees better meet this goal.

3. Grants by Location: Expanding The Trust’s Outreach to the Outer Boroughs

Groups based in Manhattan received by far the most funding, with awards totaling just under $14 million (80%) from 1991 to 2015; organizations in Brooklyn, the borough with the second-highest share, received just over $1.4 million (8.5%) in funding during the same period. Brooklyn’s share has increased since 1999, when the last report recommended The Trust become more proactive in recruiting. The Bronx, Queens, and Staten Island still lag significantly. They received $854,000 (5%), $843,000 (5%), and $250,000 (1.5%) respectively.


- 71% Manhattan
- 29% Outer Boroughs

SOURCE: NYCT
In a city with the diversity and demographics of New York, it makes sense to give attention to the outer boroughs where many of the culturally specific and community-based initiatives are based, particularly as this strategy aligns with The Trust’s overarching goals. Institutions in the outer boroughs are challenged to compete with the more visible Manhattan-based organizations, and recruiting organizations located in Queens, Staten Island, and the Bronx has proven difficult, despite The Trust’s efforts to enlist them. More remains to be done in this regard.

» Broaden The Trust’s outreach, and establish a more proactive recruiting process. Recruiting can be done informally, by reaching out to existing grantees and asking them for recommendations. Trusted colleagues who provide funding in the outer boroughs could also be approached. Alternatively, The Trust may consider tapping into a small group of field advisors—arts and culture experts with deep roots in community—who could offer advice and make recommendations. Whatever the approach, seeking out new mission-aligned grantees in the outer boroughs will require a greater on-the-ground presence.

4. Gender and Racial Breakdown of Fellows

The survey revealed a well-balanced gender ratio, with females faring slightly better than men.

Both the survey and grant-tracking documents revealed that the Fund has been particularly successful in targeting artists of color; they are the ones receiving the highest percentage of the Fund’s grant monies. Within this group Black/African American artists rank first, followed closely by artists who fall in the Hispanic/Latino category. Asian American and European Americans are in the minority.

» Consider adding new categories to better reflect the multiple ways in which people self-identify. New categories could include “Mixed Race” and, possibly, “Middle Eastern,” as was suggested by one grantee.
5. 2015 Larger Field Issues

A. Sustainability and Funding

As part of the assessment we asked 13 organizational leaders to speak to the challenges and uncertainties of the nonprofit arts sector. We also asked them to share their vision of the future. What we found is a group adept at maximizing resources though many are stretched to their limits. These organizations are being forced to make hard choices about where to focus their resources and how to cope with changes in the external environment. What follows is what we heard about their issues and challenges, as well as the aspirations they put forward.

Funding Climate and Financial Health

Many of the small to midsize organizations we interviewed continue to feel the lasting impact of the economic downturn that began in 2008. Before that, institutions, both large and small, had been relatively successful in attracting support for their fellowship programs, usually from a combination of foundations, government agencies, and corporations.

Financial health has been further compromised by the changed funding landscape post-recession, and many foundations have changed their organizational priorities. Some have stopped funding arts and culture altogether, while the budgets of most government agencies continue to shrink. And although dwindling support has impacted the entire arts ecosystem, it has disproportionately affected many of the small to midsize institutions. Of the few corporations that still fund arts and culture, most have shifted their charitable giving away from the small to midsize organizations, directing their support toward mainstream institutions instead. In light of this, grantees repeatedly expressed concerns about their long-term sustainability and are taking steps to strengthen their financial health.

As one grantee stated:

Instead of moving around their priorities, foundations should be looking at sustainability.

While most arts institutions have recovered from the severe economic downturn, many of the smaller groups are still struggling to secure additional funding sources for their fellowship programs. Unfortunately, a significant number of grantees are finding this challenging. Some have had success in cultivating individuals, or by engaging in cross-sector partnerships with various government agencies that fund education rather than the arts. Others have had to cut core programs and lay off staff. For those organizations, the issue of sustainability remains an open question in light of their financial fragility and field challenges.

Develop a more coherent and interconnected grantmaking program. Encourage grantees to apply for The Trust’s capacity-building grant during their hiatus year, when needed and if appropriate.

Investing in organizations will help them effectively run robust fellowship programs. By directing resources in this way, The Trust will make positive inroads in the area of sustainability and will help grantees become more resilient and adaptive to the changed environment.

Cultivating Long-Term Partnerships and Repeat Grantees

Over the years, The Trust has provided ongoing support over multiple grant periods to its strongest grantee partners. This commitment over periods of three to six years has brought with it many benefits.
Van Lier Impact on Grantee Organizations

*Has the Van Lier Fellowship Program grant had an impact on your organization? Please rate the level of impact below, with 1 indicating little to no impact and 5 indicating a great deal of impact.* Most of the 51 survey respondents who answered this question indicated a great deal of impact (rating of 5: 32 respondents [63%]; rating of 4: 14 [27%]). The weighted average score was 4.5.

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Van Lier Leverage

*Has Van Lier funding enabled you to leverage additional support for your fellowship program?* While 23 (43%) of the respondents said yes, 17 (32%) were unsure and 13 (25%) said no.

SOURCE: SURVEY

Grantees uniformly stated that funding from The Trust helped validate their programs in the eyes of the broader funding community. Survey responses also indicated that Van Lier funding helped grantees to leverage additional support.

This speaks to The Trust’s reputation in the field. Nevertheless, many grantees are finding it increasingly challenging to secure foundation support for their programs and have had to find alternative ways to meet their bottom lines.

Some allocate monies from their general operating budgets, while others have scaled down their programs. A small number have discontinued their fellowship programs altogether. In the current climate, sustainability is a real concern.

» Engage in more rigorous tracking of The Trust’s most fragile groups or grantees with newly launched fellowship programs to ensure program goals are met. Grantees are already required to submit interim reports detailing their progress and any challenges faced. Site visits and regular check-ins will enable The Trust to keep a closer eye on the organizations that are most fragile or that are running new programs with no established track records.

The most beneficial aspect of our relationship with NYCT has been its commitment over time. I can’t tell you how important that is for an organization like ours. Knowing that we have partnered with The Trust for so many years has been incredible, and I do consider NYCT a partner.

- John Hatfield
  Executive Director, Socrates Sculpture Park

Image courtesy Socrates Sculpture Park
B. Affordability: The Rising Cost of Living and Working in New York City

Nearly all of the 26 people interviewed for this report cited affordability as a major threat to the vitality of the arts in New York. This despite the fact that the city’s creative economy has grown, according to a June 2015 study conducted by the Center for an Urban Future.²

The issue of affordability was also raised in the 1999 report, which recommended that The Trust raise its giving levels to address financial inequities. Sixteen years later, working artists and nonprofit arts organizations face more intense financial challenges than ever before.

Increasingly, artists are relocating to other parts of the country where rents and cost of living are more affordable. Of the grantees we met with, all expressed concern about the long-term impact of rising cost levels on New York City’s arts and culture sector. Not only are artists leaving the city in increasing numbers, but small to midsize arts organizations are beginning to follow suit.

One of the interviewees expressed her concerns about the impact rising costs will have on New York City’s creative community:

New York is going to lose its creative community; artists and cultural producers will no longer be able to afford to live here and make their work. The boroughs will become the same, and people will be working to make three-figure salaries. This is affecting everybody who lives here and is changing our audiences. We are witnessing the displacement of low-income communities, who used to live in our neighborhood.

Interestingly, in the next 5 to 10 years, escalating real-estate prices will force small to midsize Manhattan-based arts institutions to the outer boroughs. Many of The Trust’s Manhattan-based grantees anticipate that they will have to leave Manhattan when their leases are up for renewal, though most stated they would prefer to stay.


=C. New York City’s Arts and Culture Ecology: The Larger Context

The interviews provided rich insights into the challenges and opportunities faced by nonprofit arts institutions. We heard time and again about the challenges they are encountering caused by increased demand for their services, growing competition for philanthropic dollars, exorbitant real-estate prices, and the rising cost of living.

Grantees repeatedly stated their desire to work more closely with their philanthropic partners, advocating for more personal involvement. As one interviewee shared:

Philanthropy should follow organizations who are morphing and changing, and who are responding to changing times. We are doing that by producing new programs, evolving our organizations and changing in aggressive ways. There are new things that come with that, such as developments in technology to which we have to adapt. We are addressing issues as they arise, such as the changing demographics, new economy, and climate change. We need to be responsive, and foundations should be responding in partnership with us.

Running through the interviews was the desire to come together as a cohort to connect with other Van Lier Fund grantees. Many feel isolated and want to break out of their silos. They also expressed a desire to work in closer partnership with The Trust to tackle some of the larger field issues, and to cultivate a culture of cooperation rather than competition. Bringing grantees together will catalyze new connections and strengthen existing ones. It will present opportunities for shared learning and foster a spirit of collaboration instead of competition. This will inform The Trust’s grantmaking and can lead to new ways of working together.

The 1999 report recommended that The Trust host an annual meeting for its Van Lier grantees. However, the interviewees in this study were less interested in an annual meeting. Instead, they would like to come together to talk about their
programs, share resources, and identify ways to cooperate and collaborate with each other.

» List grantees on the website along with short descriptions of the fellowships. This would enable grantees to learn more about the other fellowship programs and provide grant seekers with a better understanding of the range of programs funded.

» Become a learning organization by establishing a practice of listening and learning. The Trust may want to consider hosting an informal meeting for its grantees as a way to activate the network. This would provide grantees with an opportunity to meet each other, particularly those working in other disciplines, and to talk more in-depth about the fellowship programs, field challenges, and best practices, possibly leading to new discoveries and ways of working together.

As one grantee stated when speaking about The Trust’s role:

_It’s not only about the check, it’s about participating in a larger conversation, and encouraging it. Creating an atmosphere where things can happen._

An active network will offer a platform for learning, one from which The Trust can benefit. Engaging grantees in this manner will enable The Trust to build on its strengths and to optimize and consolidate for greater impact.

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_El Burlador de Sevilla_

Director: Victoria Collado, Van Lier Fellow
Opened: July 30, 2015, at Repertorio Español
Photo by Michael Palma
CONCLUSION:
THE SUCCESS OF THE VAN LIER ARTS FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM

The Van Lier grants have such an immediate impact; directly serving artists—that is, unquestionably, its greatest value. (Dancewave)

The survey and interviews revealed the effectiveness of Van Lier support in providing talented artists with equitable access in and to the arts, contributing to their professional development in significant ways.

The Van Lier arts fellowship program is unlike any other in the nation. Many of the nearly 2,000 fellows served have been able to build impressive careers as a result of the support they received as youth or early-career artists. They have become influential artists with distinct artistic voices and, often, advocates for social change. Their success has been publicly acknowledged and is evident in the prestigious national awards many of them have won. Both the fellows and grantees commented on the significance of this early support and the transformative effects it had on their lives and artistic practices.

The Trust has been able to achieve this by partnering with a broad range of intermediaries—arts organizations whose services and goals align with those of the Van Lier Fund. Work with intermediaries that do more than just re-grant monies is difficult to document and assess. What these intermediaries do often takes place behind the scenes. No doubt, they are providing the artists with the training and resources required to advance their careers, and are adjusting their programs to meet changing needs. With The Trust’s support, these groups have been seeding the field with talented artists who have been able to build a name for themselves. In this way, The Trust has enriched the arts and culture field, locally and nationally.

By supporting arts institutions across multiple disciplines, The Trust has been able to reach a greater, more diverse pool of artists than it would on its own. As one grantee working in the performing arts candidly stated:

The impact of The Trust was ahead of other foundations. There is no other program like the Van Lier Fund. We would have applied if there were . . . By making sizable grants to young artists, The Trust is able to provide them with the rare opportunity to make professional work. (Repertorio Español)

A foundation’s leadership today stems from its values, its relevance, and its impact, as well as its effective engagement with the pressing issues of our time. This is a critical moment for the nonprofit cultural sector. The public support infrastructure is threatened, while foundations are changing their priorities. This has proven to be disruptive, negatively impacting many of the small to midsize organizations that have been supported by The Trust. Yet the number of and kinds of artists continue to grow, and their artistic diversity continues to increase.

To ensure continued relevance, The Trust must be aware of evolving external conditions affecting the arts and culture field, and adapt its grantmaking accordingly. This requires rethinking the nature and lengths of commitments. The recommendations made in this report are intended to do just that. They are a direct response to the knowledge gained from the survey responses and interviews, and to changes in the external environment. They seek to address practical issues related to grantmaking, as well as to tackle the field-wide challenge of sustainability.

This presents an opportunity for The Trust to engage its partners in fresh and meaningful conversations about how to work together for mutually beneficial results. We have proposed several ways to achieve this: by enhancing external communications, by using the website and social media as dynamic platforms, and by assembling grantees for discussion and exchange. The outcome of such discourse and debate can lead to a networked way of working together, and eventually to a more resilient field.
APPENDIX A

Methodology

Fulfilling the assignment received from The New York Community Trust, Third Streaming Advisory Services reviewed the Edward and Sally Van Lier Fund administered by The Trust.

The goals for the Van Lier fellowship program evaluation, as stipulated by The Trust, are as follows:

» Assess the importance of Van Lier Fund grants in the lives of the artists who received them—did the funds provide a significant credit that advanced their artistic careers?

» Assess the impact of the grants on the organizations receiving them—did the grant validate the agency’s work with disadvantaged populations? Did the grant lead to further diversification of the agency’s artistic programs, board, or staff?

» Conduct a survey of Van Lier grantees.

» Interview past grant recipients, including administrative staff at grantee agencies and benefiting artists.

» Provide a written evaluation that can lead to improvements in grantmaking.

» Provide a summary document that can be used as a promotional tool by The Trust’s communications team in conversations with future donors.

To meet this mandate, the evaluation followed a six-part methodology, summarized as follows:

1. A basic examination of The Trust’s internal and external documents, including program descriptions, requests for proposals, grant application and reporting procedures, analyses of grantee characteristics, previous evaluations, board documents, web pages, annual reports, and other materials. This work was greatly assisted by staff members who helped with the information-gathering process, and by Kerry McCarthy, program director, who provided valuable input and direction.

2. An online survey consisting of 61 questions, vetted by NYCT staff. The survey focused primarily on data collecting and metrics. It also included a series of qualitative questions regarding challenges and opportunities, descriptions of the fellowship programs, impact of the programs, and feedback on the application and reporting procedures.

3. Interviews with 13 former fellows, of which seven participated in pre-college trainings, and six at the post-college level. The interviews were conducted with artists of different backgrounds, ages, genders, cultures, and points of career in a variety of artistic disciplines. Interviews were conducted by lead consultant Yona Backer and by Marie Cieri (PhD, Rutgers University), a social/environmental geographer, cartographer, arts producer, and writer who recently completed an extensive evaluation for the Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts. With one exception, all interviews were done in person. The interview protocol was vetted by NYCT staff.

4. Interviews with representatives from 13 organizations representing all five boroughs and a mix of disciplines, constituents, and institutional sizes. Of the 13 interviewed, four offer training programs to pre-college students, while the remaining nine provide professional development at the post-college level. Three of the 13 organizations had not responded to the survey, hence those interviews also included select questions drawn from the survey. The interview protocol was vetted by NYCT staff, and included several questions pertaining to larger contextual issues related to New York City’s arts and culture field. With the exception of two interviews, all were conducted in person.

5. Market research and analysis of best practices in the field of cultural philanthropy, specifically looking at foundations that support fellowships.

6. Meetings with The Trust.
The Survey

An online survey of grantees was implemented in July 2015. The draft survey was reviewed by NYCT staff and revised before dissemination. It was sent to a total of 98 grantees; 53 groups responded, bringing the response rate to a respectable 54%. Of the 53 groups, 22 received funding for pre-college training programs, while the remaining 31 received funding for post-college professional development programs.

Respondents reflect a diversity of organizational sizes, locations, disciplines, and types of communities served. Follow-up calls and emails revealed that the remaining 46% did not respond because their organizations 1) had not received funding in 10 years or more, 2) had not kept accurate records, and/or 3) did not have the institutional memory to answer the questions. Thus, the majority of survey responses received came from the most recent grantees, primarily covering the past 10 years.

In addition to questions regarding quantitative information and data gathering, the survey requested detailed information regarding the specifics of the fellowship programs, along with feedback on the application process and call for proposals. It also asked respondents to share at least one “success story.”

In total, 51 surveys were completed and two were incomplete. The incomplete surveys have been factored into the final data for the responses provided. Refer to the following pages for the list of grantees who participated in the online survey, and for the survey instrument.

Interviews

The fellows as well as the grantee organizations uniformly expressed their appreciation for the opportunity to speak to us about the Van Lier fellowship program. The conversations were richly textured and filled with ideas, approaches, and suggestions. We are grateful to the participants for being so generous with their time and for sharing their thinking with us.

In-person interviews were conducted with 13 fellows and 13 representatives of grantee organizations; of the latter, the majority also participated in the survey. Interviews were intended to gain deeper insights into survey responses as well as to reach some of the organizations that were not represented in the survey responses. (See appendix B, page 35, for a list of those interviewed and for the interview protocols.)

The process of learning was further broken down into four primary areas, outlined below, with some overlap between them. This multipronged approach helped in prioritizing issues to explore and identifying opportunities for improvement.

Areas of Focus

1. Assessing the Van Lier fellowship program’s impact on the cultural landscape of New York and on the professional lives of low-income, aspiring artists targeted by the Fund.

2. Assessing grantee organizations, both the survey respondents and those interviewed, on the individual performance level as well as their ability to advance the careers of the fellows they train.

3. Gaining a comprehensive understanding of the challenges and opportunities facing arts organizations and the artists served within the context of New York City’s changing landscape.

4. Forecasting activities that identify future challenges, issues, and opportunities as they pertain to the larger arts and culture field.
Grantees Participating in the Van Lier Fellowship Survey

Alvin Ailey Dance Foundation, Inc.
American Composers Orchestra, Inc.
Ballet Hispanico
Ballet Tech Foundation
Bloomingdale School of Music, Inc.
Bronx Council on the Arts, Inc.
Brooklyn Conservatory of Music
Center for Book Arts, Inc.
Concert Artists Guild, Inc.
Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum
Creative Arts Team/New York University
Creative Capital Foundation
Dance Theater Workshop, Inc.
Dance Theatre of Harlem, Inc.
Dancewave, Inc.
Downtown Community Television Center, Inc.
Elaine Kaufman Cultural Center/Lucy Moses School for Music and Dance
El Puente de Williamsburg, Inc.
Flea Theater
Flux Factory, Inc.
Friends of Alice Austen House, Inc.
Ghetto Film School, Inc.
Ifetayo Cultural Arts Academy, Inc.
Jewish Community Center of Staten Island
Juilliard School
Lark Play Development Center
Manhattan School of Music
Martha Graham Center of Contemporary Dance, Inc.
Maysles Institute
Metropolitan Museum of Art
Movement Research, Inc.
Museum of Modern Art
National Dance Institute, Inc.
New Dramatists, Inc.
New York Theatre Ballet/The Dance Ring
Performance Space 122
Queens Council on the Arts, Inc.
Queens Museum of Art
Repertorio Español
Rosie’s Theater Kids, Inc.
Roulette Intermedium, Inc.
School of American Ballet, Inc.
Second Stage Theatre, Inc.
Smack Mellon Studios, Inc.
Society of the Third Street Music School Settlement, Inc.
Socrates Sculpture Park, Inc.
Studio Museum in Harlem, Inc.
Teachers and Writers Collaborative, Inc.
UrbanGlass
Volunteer Lawyers for the Arts
Wave Hill, Inc.
Women’s Project and Productions, Inc.
Young People’s Chorus of New York City
Survey Instrument

The New York Community Trust
Edward and Sally Van Lier
Arts Fellowship Program
Pre-College and Post-College
Program Assessment Online Survey

TELL US WHAT YOU THINK!

The New York Community Trust is evaluating the Edward and Sally Van Lier Fund, which has provided funding in the past and/or the present for your organization’s arts fellowship program. We would greatly appreciate your participation in this evaluation, as we expect it will help us improve The Trust’s service to your organization and to the fellows you support. Initially, we are asking you to fill out the survey below, which asks questions about both your overall fellowship program and the Van Lier Fund’s contribution to it. (Note that some of those who indicate willingness to be interviewed for the evaluation will be contacted by Third Streaming Advisory Services within a few weeks of filling out this survey.)

Your responses will be kept confidential.

* indicates a required question

* Basic Information
Person(s) filling out survey
Organization name
Direct project contact(s)

* Organization annual budget for most recent fiscal or calendar year (+ please indicate year)

* Fellowship annual budget for most recent fiscal or calendar year (+ please indicate year)

* Please provide a brief description of your fellowship program in the space below.

* How many years has your organization received a grant from the Van Lier arts fellowship program?

Was the Van Lier grant or grants you received for pre-college or post-college fellowships?

Are your Van Lier fellowships part of a larger program at your organization, or are they a separate program?

* How many fellows have participated in your fellowship program since inception? (Please provide exact total.)

* What percentage of the above total fellows were supported by the Van Lier arts fellowship program?

Please provide year-by-year totals of fellows who have participated in your fellowship program. Please enter 0 for years with no participants.

Please provide year-by-year totals of fellows who were supported by the Van Lier arts fellowship program. Enter 0 for years in which there were none.
Please list below the other funders of your fellowship program. Allow one line for each funder and please note, with the appropriate capital letter, whether amounts are for the fiscal [F] or calendar [C] year.

* Has Van Lier funding enabled you to leverage additional support for your fellowship program?

* Please provide a percentage breakdown of the racial distribution of the fellows who have participated in your program, in total:
  - Asian
  - Black/African American
  - Hispanic/Latino
  - Native American
  - White, Non-Hispanic
  - Other
  - Not sure

* Please provide a percentage breakdown of the racial distribution of the fellows who have participated in your program through a grant from the Van Lier arts fellowship program:
  - Asian
  - Black/African American
  - Hispanic/Latino
  - Native American
  - White, Non-Hispanic
  - Other
  - Not sure

* Please provide a percentage breakdown by gender of fellows who have participated in your fellowship program, in total:
  - Women
  - Men
  - Other
  - Not sure

* Please provide a percentage breakdown by gender of fellows who have participated in your fellowship program through a grant from the Van Lier arts fellowship program:
  - Women
  - Men
  - Other
  - Not sure

If the following data is available, please provide a percentage breakdown by NYC borough where fellows (total in the program) lived at the time of application to your fellowship program:
  - The Bronx
  - Brooklyn
  - Manhattan
  - Queens
  - Staten Island

If the following data is available, please provide a percentage breakdown by NYC borough of Van Lier fellows at the time of application to your program:
  - The Bronx
  - Brooklyn
  - Manhattan
  - Queens
  - Staten Island

Please provide a percentage breakdown of the racial background of your organization’s administrative staff (only). Please distinguish between administrative and program staff, if such categorization exists within your organization. If not, only provide figures in the next question.
  - Asian
  - Black/African American
  - Hispanic/Latino
  - Native American
  - White, Non-Hispanic
  - Other
  - Not sure

* Please provide a percentage breakdown of the racial background of your organization’s program staff (or of all staff, if your organization does not distinguish between administrative and program staff).
  - Asian
  - Black/African American
  - Hispanic/Latino
  - Native American
  - White, Non-Hispanic
  - Other
  - Not sure
* Did your staff become more diverse after you received support from the Van Lier arts fellowship program?

* Did your board become more diverse after you received support from the Van Lier arts fellowship program?

* Who is your organization’s fellowship program geared toward? Please select the discipline(s) your program covers.
  - Choreography
  - Curatorial
  - Electronic or digital media
  - Interdisciplinary arts
  - Playwriting
  - Visual art
  - Other (please specify)

* What are your fellowship program’s goals and objectives?

* What are its strengths and challenges?

What, if anything, would you change?

* What, exactly, are the fellows responsible for?

* What are the support services that your organization provides to help fellows accomplish their tasks?

* Does your organization provide a stipend to the fellows? If so, how much is currently provided to each fellow? If no stipend is provided, why not?

* How long does each fellowship last?

* Do you inform the fellows who are supported by the Van Lier arts fellowship program that they are supported by it?

If your organization informs the fellows who are supported by the Van Lier arts fellowship program, is this information also made public by the organization?

If you answered yes to the question above, please indicate how the information is made public:
  - Printed materials (please list)
  - Social media (please specify)
  - Organization website
  - Other (please specify)

* Who supervises the fellows?

* Provide information about the fellows’ supervisor (name, position).

* Is evaluating the fellows’ work part of the supervisor’s responsibility? If not, who evaluates the fellows’ work?

Please tell us if your program provides opportunities for the fellows to voice their interests and/or concerns...
  - ... about the program? Please explain.
  - ... about their work? Please explain.
  - ... about their supervision? Please explain.
  - ... about the evaluation process? If yes, how? If not, why not?

* Does the program provide opportunities for the fellows to develop peer and mentor relationships?
  - If yes, how? If not, why not?

Once fellows near completion or complete the program...
  - ... is there a system in place to assist with academic, conservatory, or career advancement? If not, why not?
  - ... is there a system in place to stay in contact with the fellows? If not, why not?

* Please describe how you evaluate your fellowship program.

* On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being “not difficult” and 5 being “very difficult,” please rate your experience in applying to The New York Community Trust for Van Lier grants.

* Is there anything you would recommend changing in the application process? If yes, please explain.
Please provide the names and contact information for up to three fellows who were supported by the Van Lier arts fellowship program who have successfully pursued careers in the arts and whom we might interview about your organization’s fellowship program.

Would you or someone else from your organization be interested in being interviewed about your fellowship program and the Van Lier arts fellowship program’s contribution to it?

Please share at least one success story of a past fellow for whom participation in your organization’s program impacted their subsequent education or professional career.

Please add any further comments about your fellowship program or about the Van Lier program grant to your organization.
APPENDIX B

Fellows Interviewed

Pre-College Fellows (7)
» Kya Brickhouse, Rosie’s Theater Kids, 2008–2013
» Jean John Daniel, Ifetayo Cultural Arts Academy, 2014
» Kristina Feliciano, El Puente de Williamsburg, 2014 (by phone)
» Halima Johnson, Cooper Hewitt, 2003; now works at Cooper as Youth Programs Manager
» Annabelle Liz, Cooper Hewitt, 2013–2014; attended the White House event in 2014
» Jessie Montgomery, Third Street Music, ca. 1995
» Brandon Parks, National Dance Institute, 2013

Post-College Fellows (6)
» Kristoffer Diaz, New Dramatists, 2003; currently a New Dramatists Resident Playwright, and previously a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize in Drama
» Darius Jones, Roulette, 2008; nominated for Alto Saxophonist of the Year in 2013 by the Jazz Journalists Association
» Jessie Montgomery, American Composers, 2011–2012; was not aware until Third Street Music contacted her for the interview that she had also been the recipient of the Van Lier Pre-College Fellowship
» Xaviera Simmons, Studio Museum in Harlem, 2012; her work is in the collections of the Guggenheim Museum of Art, the Museum of Modern Art, and the Studio Museum in Harlem, all in New York; the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago; and many others
» Niegel Smith, Second Stage Theatre, 2004–2005; Theater Director, performance artist, and currently Artistic Director at Flea Theater

Grantees Interviewed

Grantees: Pre-College Programs (4)
» Diane Jacobowitz, Executive and Artistic Director, Dancewave, Brooklyn; Dance
» Hoong Yee Lee Krakauer, Executive Director, Queens Council on the Arts, Queens; Visual Arts
» Frances Lucerna, Co-Founder, Executive and Artistic Director, El Puente de Williamsburg, Brooklyn; Dance/Theater
» Catherine Martinez, Managing Director, Downtown Community Television Center (DCTV), Manhattan; Film/Video

Grantees: Post-College Programs (9)
» Ken Chen, Executive Director, Asian American Writers’ Workshop, Manhattan; Writing
» Robert Frederico, Executive Producer, and Allison Astor-Vargas, Manager of Special Projects and Education, Repertorio Español, Manhattan; Theater/Production
» Kathleen Gilrain, Executive Director and Chief Curator, Smack Mellon, Brooklyn; Visual Arts
» John Hatfield, Executive Director, and Elissa Goldstone, Director of Exhibitions, Socrates Sculpture Park, Queens; Visual Arts
» Lynn Kelly, President and Chief Executive; Gabri Christa, Artistic Director; Kirstin Swanson, Director of Development; and Melissa West, Marketing and Communications Coordinator, Snug Harbor Cultural Center and Botanical Garden, Staten Island; Visual Arts
» Jennifer McGregor, Director of Arts and Senior Curator; Gabriel de Guzman, Curator of Visual Arts; and Barbara Giordano, Director of Development, Wave Hill, The Bronx; Visual Arts
» Troy Powell, Artistic Director, Alvin Ailey II, Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, Manhattan; Dance
» Lloyd Suh, Director of Artistic Programs, The Lark, Manhattan; Playwrights/Writing
» Alex Tonetta, Senior Development Officer, The Public Theater, Manhattan; Playwrights/Writing
**Fellows Interview Protocol**

### Queries

#### Fellow’s Personal Characteristics

How old are you now? (13–18, 19–22, 23–30, 31–40, 41–50, 51+)

Where do you live?

How old were you when you had a Van Lier fellowship? (13–18, 19–22, 23–30, 31–40, 41–50, 51+)

Where did you live then?

What is your gender? (F, M, T)

What is your racial/ethnic background? (African American/Caribbean American, Asian American/Pacific Islander, Latino/a, European American, Native American/Alaskan Native, Other)

What educational level had you attained when you participated in the program?

What educational level have you attained now, OR what educational level are you currently pursuing?

Please summarize what jobs you have had in your artistic discipline since you participated in the Van Lier fellowship program.

### Fellowship Description

Please describe your participation in the fellowship program. What were your specific tasks and responsibilities?

What did you find most useful about the fellowship?

Did you find anything problematic about the fellowship? If so, did you have a chance to voice your concerns to those in charge?

Was your work evaluated? If so, how was it evaluated? Did you have the opportunity to provide input into the evaluation?

What support services, if any, did you receive from the organization to help you carry out your specific responsibilities as a fellow?

Did you receive a stipend as a Van Lier fellow? If so, how much was it? Was the stipend adequate to meet your needs?

Were you asked to demonstrate financial need when you applied for the fellowship or to the program? If so, do you remember what kinds of information you and/or your parents needed to provide?

### Fellowship Evaluation

What did you do immediately after you completed the fellowship program? If relevant: Did the organization help you do this? If yes, how? If no, why not?

Did the fellowship enable you to explore new techniques or modes of expression?

Have you been able to leverage the fact that you were a Van Lier fellow?

How realistic were the expectations of the organization? Was the program overly ambitious or were the standards or expectations too low given the resources available during your fellowship?

Did the organization provide you with enough guidance to help take your career to the next level?

Were you able to develop new relationships with professionals in your discipline because of the fellowship? If so, how? If not, what do you think prevented this from occurring?

Did the Van Lier fellowship provide opportunities for you to function as a professional? [Note to interviewers: If this question creates any confusion, you can give some examples, such as being paid to perform, your name appearing in performance programs, teaching, qualifying for certain awards, etc.]

Did your relationship with the larger community in which you lived change as a result of your participation in the program?

From your perspective, where would you place the fellowship in your work and development as an artist?

Was there a turning point or moment of change, or a stimulus for change, that you can point to?
How would you summarize the Van Lier fellowship’s impact on you as an artist and a person? [Note to interviewer: This can be in terms of furthering the fellow’s education and/or career development, but could also be stated more personally, as in affirmation of one’s talent, confidence building, ability to work with materials or an instrument to which the fellow never had access, the value of having a particular mentor, learning from peers, being in a culturally diverse environment, etc.]

Is it difficult to ascertain financial need of the applicants for Van Lier fellowships? If it has been difficult, why?

Do you have recommendations for NYCT about ensuring that the fellowships reach the neediest individuals?

[Note to interviewer: If interviewing a representative of an organization that is not culturally specific to an African American, Asian, Latino, Native American, etc., clientele, ask the following question.]

Do you feel you’ve been successful in recruiting artists of color who are financially in need? Why or why not?

Do you inform the fellows they are Van Lier fellows? If not, why not? If you do inform them, do you encourage them to include it in their bios/CVs?

What other foundation grants has your organization received with purposes similar to the Van Lier grant(s)? Please describe what you consider the most important similarities and differences between these grants and your Van Lier grants.

In your view, are there important lessons NYCT could learn from other foundations about their NYC fellowship grants programs? Please be as specific as possible.

In most cases additional questions were asked, either based on that organization’s survey answers or because that organization had not responded to the survey.

In your view, are there important lessons NYCT could learn from other foundations about their NYC fellowship grants programs? Please be as specific as possible.

What do you believe is the evolving landscape for NYC arts and culture organizations—both opportunities and challenges—with respect to program focus, funding, organizational structure, audience, governance, technology, and any other factors you believe are pertinent? Please be as specific as possible.

What do you believe will be the most significant changes in arts and culture funding in NYC over the next three to five years, and why?

What in your view are the most urgent priorities with respect to the continuing health and vibrancy of NYC arts and culture organizations, and why?

What else, if anything, do you believe NYC foundations should do to anticipate/meet the opportunities and challenges you have described?
APPENDIX C

Market Research

Overview

Market research has clearly indicated that the Edward and Sally Van Lier Fund, in its dedication to supporting arts organizations and training programs to benefit individual artists in their pre- or post-college years, holds a unique place in arts philanthropy. Some funders provide program support without offering direct support to the artists enrolled; others support the fellows but not the program. The Van Lier Fund does both. And while it is not alone in this regard, the Fund’s singular focus on the development of early career artists in all disciplines sets it apart from other granting institutions.

This document presents an overview of foundations that fund fellowships and/or comparable programs. It provides data on and analysis of giving patterns, grant priorities, and goals in order to establish the place of the Van Lier Fund within the philanthropic arts ecology.

Altman Foundation

8 West 40th Street, 19th Floor
New York, NY 10018
Phone: (212) 682-0970
Fax: (212) 682-1648
info@altman.org

Basic Information

Date Established
1913

Focus
The Altman Foundation supports programs and institutions that enrich the quality of life in New York City, with a particular focus on initiatives that help individuals, families, and communities benefit from the services and opportunities that will enable them to achieve their full potential.

Average Annual Grantmaking Budget
$11.2M [2014]

Geographic Restriction
New York City

Average Grant Size
$75,000; range: $5,000–$300,000 [2014]

Average Number of Grants, annually
Less than 150

Average Grant Length
1 year, but up to 4

Programs
The Foundation supports initiatives in education, arts and culture, and communities and health, as well as services to nonprofits that enrich life in New York City.

Applications and Award Criteria

Application Process
Grant requests are submitted through downloadable forms. There are no deadlines. Proposals are reviewed in the order received. Grants are approved by trustees at regular meetings throughout the year.

Award Criteria
Values guiding the Foundation’s grantmaking include access, system-wide improvement, prevention and early intervention, self-sufficiency, the provision of high-quality services, and a focus on disadvantaged populations. As an investor, the organization is interested in creating the highest possible levels of human gain for the grant dollars available. In that mode, the Foundation reviews proposals with the following questions in mind:

1. Average annual grantmaking budgets are derived from disbursements for charitable purposes as recorded in the most recent publicly available IRS Form 990-PF filings; other data sources are as noted.
What are the results of the project—meaning outcomes for participants—that provide the return on our investment?

What are the chances those results will be achieved?

Is this the best use of our money, given all alternatives before us?

Most grants are awarded for programs and projects focused on direct service, capacity building, and systems change. In addition, the Foundation seeks to promote connections among complementary nonprofits and government organizations, as well as to invest in initiatives with potential to attract additional funding sources.

Comparative Analysis

How does the organization promote diversity, equity, and access in and to the arts?

Regarding arts and culture, the Foundation invests in organizations, programs, and projects that achieve results aligned with the following three objectives:

- to promote positive youth development through arts and cultural programming;
- to promote the acquisition of pre-professional arts skills among underserved youth; and
- to promote access to the arts and to cultural activities for underserved populations.

How does the organization develop young, culturally diverse, and disadvantaged artists, and how does this compare with the work of the Van Lier arts fellowship program?

While the Foundation funds several of the same organizations as the Van Lier program, as well as some similar initiatives, such sponsorship comes from an ambition to invest in direct service, capacity building, and systems change rather than Van Lier’s less abstract focus on the development of exceptional young artists.

What is the organization’s impact on artists’ careers and grant-recipient organizations?

As a nonprofit investor, Altman encourages innovation and funds organizations that provide high-quality, best-practice-based services that are tracked credibly and meaningfully. Its focus on human gain translates to a systemic and outcome-oriented approach. The Foundation encourages cultural change through increased access and services for disadvantaged populations, including youth from underserved communities. A good example is its support of Alvin Ailey Dance Foundation, which raised student retention rates in specific programming and fostered stronger relationships between alumni of the Ailey Athletic Boys company and the Ailey II company (feeding greater numbers of successful alumni into the company).

What is community perception of this organization and what broad recognition has it received?

Altman is known as a staunch, results-oriented, and laudably transparent supporter of youth, education, and health.

What are the outputs and outcomes associated with the organization and/or its programs? What trends and ideas are associated with the organization and/or its programs?

Facing fiscal uncertainty in 2007, the Foundation adopted a rigorous outcome-driven grantmaking approach; specific outcomes sought for arts and culture initiatives are as follows:

- to significantly increase the mastery of program-specific skills and other developmentally appropriate life skills;
- to measurably advance the academic progress of students;
- to enroll and retain promising students from underserved communities in the highest-quality pre-professional training in specific arts disciplines;
- to measurably increase the mastery of program-specific skills against a curriculum-based standard;
- to successfully transition participants to high-quality secondary, post-secondary, or professional opportunities; and
- to increase sustained engagement and participation of underserved populations in high-quality arts and cultural programming provided by established and meaningful organizations and institutions.

SOURCE

The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation

140 East 62nd Street
New York, NY 10065
Phone: (212) 838-8400
Fax: (212) 888-4172
inquiries@mellon.org

Basic Information

Date Established
1969, through consolidation of Avalon Foundation (est. 1940) and Old Dominion Foundation (est. 1941)

Focus
The Mellon Foundation supports exemplary institutions of higher education and culture as they renew and provide access to an invaluable heritage of ambitious, path-breaking work.

Average Annual Grantmaking Budget
$231M [2014]

Geographic Restriction
None apparent

Average Grant Size
$586,000; range $10,000–$10M [2014]

Average Number of Grants, annually
410 [2014]

Average Grant Length
1–3 years

Relevant Programs
The Mellon Foundation’s Higher Education and Scholarship in the Humanities program assists institutions of higher learning that train scholars and produce scholarship in the humanities, with the aim of promoting the social value of the humanities and fostering disciplinary innovation and collaboration. The Arts and Cultural Heritage program nurtures exceptional creative accomplishment, as well as scholarship and conservation in the arts, through support to both individuals and organizations. The Foundation is deeply committed to promoting a culture of diversity and inclusion, and both of the above programs prioritize institutions that foster such practices. Furthermore, its Diversity Program provides funding to help colleges, universities, and other pipeline programs attain greater diversity of both faculty and students.

Applications and Award Criteria

Application Process
All grants result from invitations issued by the Foundation to institutions with which staff have engaged in preliminary exchanges. If Foundation staff find that the project fits within the grantmaking priorities, staff will invite a grant proposal. Once invited, grantees should be prepared to work closely with program staff in refining the proposal, often through multiple drafts. Based on the final proposal, program staff will determine whether to bring a grant recommendation to the board of trustees at one of its quarterly meetings.

Award Criteria
The Foundation reviews proposals based on the merits of proposed projects, the likelihood of an organization achieving its stated goals, and the organization’s capacity to carry out the project activities effectively.

Comparative Analysis

How does the organization promote diversity, equity, and access in and to the arts?
Research, training, and recruitment programs that enhance diversity and inclusion in arts organizations are a key aspect of the mission of the Arts and Cultural Heritage program, while the fostering of diversity and inclusion is a cornerstone of the program in Higher Education and Scholarship in the Humanities.
How does the organization develop young, culturally diverse, and disadvantaged artists, and how does this compare with the work of the Van Lier arts fellowship program?

Early career and pre-professional development for artists is not a primary concern, though Mellon’s support of students in general, for liberal arts colleges, and also for curatorial training targets demographics similar to those ultimately served by the Van Lier artist fellowship program.

What is the organization’s impact on artists’ careers and grant-recipient organizations?

Mellon facilitates response to economic, demographic, financial, and technical challenges by supporting the enhancement of learning experiences as well as fostering greater collaboration, innovation, and diversity, both in higher education and in the arts.

What is community perception of this organization and what broad recognition has it received?

Mellon is a well-known, respected, reputable, and reliable funder of innovative, oftentimes groundbreaking, and occasionally monumental arts and humanities endeavors to increase access, promote new approaches, and address structural issues.

What are the outputs and outcomes associated with the organization and/or its programs? What trends and ideas are associated with the organization and/or its programs?

The Foundation promotes of diversity, access, and innovation in education and the arts; collaboration; and interdisciplinary as well as inter-institutional exploration.

Source

Basic Information

Date Established
1996

Focus
The Doris Duke Charitable Foundation focuses on grantmaking in the performing arts, environmental conservation, medical research, and child well-being, as well as preservation of the cultural and environmental legacy of Doris Duke’s properties, as guided by the will of Doris Duke (1912–1993).

Average Annual Grantmaking Budget
$79.9M [2014]

Geographic Restriction
None, but relevant programs focus on USA

Average Grant Size
$850,000; range: $20,000–$8M [2014]

Average Number of Grants, annually
94 [2014]

Average Grant Length
1–5 years

Program
The Doris Duke Charitable Foundation is a conglomerate of six programs and several additional initiatives. Respective programs sponsor doctoral-student research regarding child well-being, medical-student clinical research, and undergraduate environmental-scholar fellowships, administered by higher education institutions. The Arts Program has provided limited funding for fellowship programs, including the National Directors’ Fellowship, a five-year, 25-fellow joint-theaters initiative for emerging directors, initiated in 2014 with a grant from the Arts Program sub-initiative, the Fund for National Projects. Moreover, the Arts Program, through its emphasis on artistic creation and distribution, supports creation of particular works as well as residencies, touring, grantee meetings, and professional development for artists, through the funding of intermediary organizations. The separate Performing Artists

Doris Duke Charitable Foundation

650 Fifth Avenue, 19th Floor
New York, NY 10019
Phone: (212) 974-7000
Fax: (212) 974-7590
Initiative, a special 10-year program started in 2012, includes a “Building Demand grants” sub-initiative to support efforts to increase demand for jazz, dance, and theater among a specific target group by supporting artist residencies ranging in duration from one to 36 months, wherein artists develop related, catalytic projects and programs. In addition, the Doris Duke Foundation for Islamic Art, through its Building Bridges program, in 2015 sponsored a two-year, three-participant fellowship program with the Sundance Institute, the Doris Duke New Frontier Fellowships.

Applications and Award Criteria

Application Process
» Fund for National Projects applicants submit a letter of inquiry online to the Arts Program. Competitive proposals are reviewed by an advisory panel, which recommends the strongest applicants for Fund for National Projects grants.
» Artistic creation and distribution funding must be sought through intermediary organizations, as the Foundation does not make these grants directly.
» The Building Bridges program uses a biannual request-for-proposals process that begins with an “intent to apply” electronic postcard, followed by applicant submission of a brief letter of interest; full proposal submission is by invitation only for organizations selected by a letter-of-interest review panel. Applicants are also encouraged to attend informal application process webinars between submitting their postcard and letter of interest submission.
» For Building Demand grants, applications must be created jointly between an organization and a partner artist.

Award Criteria
» Fund for National Projects criteria include concept quality; understanding of the state of the performing arts and artist/organizational needs in the relevant fields of dance, jazz, and theater; project’s ability to address a significant, field-wide need; and organizational administrative and financial stability.
» Ideal Building Bridges projects are engaging, immersive, and interactive experiences that may be conducted collaboratively among several organizations and are tailored to the needs and interests of a specific audience, while also engaging US-based Muslim and non-Muslim populations.
» Building Demand grants support attempts by exemplary artists and organizations to reach audiences in new ways; artists and organizations must have a prior history of working together and the ability to mutually conceive demand-building activities.

Comparative Analysis

How does the organization promote diversity, equity, and access in and to the arts?
The Foundation supports the commissioning, production, and presentation of new work in the disciplines of dance, jazz, theater, and related interdisciplinary media, through national competitive initiatives administered by intermediary organizations; it also directly supports national organizations critical to the health of contemporary dance, jazz, and theater, as well as national projects that have the potential to improve the health of a given field. In addition, the Foundation funds organizational transformation initiatives through several independent grantmaking programs.

How does the organization develop young, culturally diverse, and disadvantaged artists, and how does this compare with the work of the Van Lier arts fellowship program?
Within the performing arts, the Foundation does not target a particular demographic. It is committed to supporting organizations and artists, regardless of age and background, in their efforts to create innovative work or address contemporary challenges.
What is the organization’s impact on artists’ careers and grant-recipient organizations?

Creation and distribution re-granting programs offer benefits to artists, including support in the creation of new work, professional development and networking opportunities, and participation in conferences and other meetings. Organizational impact is generally focused on the development of new, innovative strategies to build capacity and strengthen performing arts organizations, addressing such pressing issues as emerging technology and audience building.

What is community perception of this organization and what broad recognition has it received?

The Doris Duke Charitable Foundation is a national leader in the field of arts philanthropy and is recognized as such. It makes substantial investments in artists and organizations, supporting the creation of ambitious new works and affording transformational change on the organizational level.

What are the outputs and outcomes associated with the organization and/or its programs? What trends and ideas are associated with the organization and/or its programs?

Primary outcomes of interest include adaptation to the present cultural, financial, technological, and demographic challenges facing established organizations in the performing arts, including audience building. Meanwhile, an emphasis on innovative ideas, demonstrated excellence and sustained commitment to relevant causes, evaluative criteria, and strategic planning are strongly associated with the express wishes of founder Doris Duke.

SOURCE
http://www.ddcf.org/

Jerome Foundation
400 Sibley Street, Suite 125
St. Paul, MN 55101
(651) 224-9431
info@jeromefoundation.org

Basic Information

Date Established
1964

Focus
The Jerome Foundation supports the creation of new works by emerging artists as well as nonprofit arts organizations’ programs that advance the work of emerging creative artists, including choreographers, literary artists, performance artists, playwrights, composers, visual artists, and multidisciplinary artists.

Average Annual Grantmaking Budget
$3.8M [2014]

Geographic Restriction
Organizations and artists in Minnesota and New York City

Average Grant Size
$27,048 (organizations); $7,683 (individuals) [2007–2012]

Average Number of Grants, annually
90 (organizations); 66 (individuals)

Average Grant Length
1 year

Programs
In addition to supporting film, video, and digital production as well as travel and study and a new composer/sound artist fellowship program, the Jerome Foundation offers grants to not-for-profit arts organizations, and to fiscal sponsors applying on behalf of artists, for the creation, development, and production of new works by emerging artists in New York City and Minnesota, through its General Program grants. There is also a pilot
artist residency program executed in collaboration with Art Matters and the Camargo Foundation, part of the Jerome@Camargo program.

Applications and Award Criteria

Application Process
Each program has a unique online application. Most applications are processed on a first-come, first-served basis and scheduled for review in one of five board meetings each year. Composer/sound artist fellowship applications are presently being accepted following an open call, for consideration after June 2016.

Award Criteria
For organizational grants, preference is given to ongoing programs that serve artists, provide professional-level opportunities, ensure adequate payment for artists, and utilize open and inclusive procedures for identifying and selecting artists. Composer/sound artist fellows are selected by a panel of three experts, and then recommended for approval by the board of directors.

Comparative Analysis

How does the organization promote diversity, equity, and access in and to the arts?
In its focus on emerging artists, the Foundation supports those who have significant potential yet are underrecognized and have not received acknowledgment as established creators from fellow artists and other arts professionals.

What is the organization’s impact on artists’ careers and grant-recipient organizations?
The Foundation facilitates the creation of new works and programs.

What is community perception of this organization and what broad recognition has it received?
The Jerome Foundation is an organization known for scouting new talent and jump-starting careers of emerging artists now at the top of their fields (Spike Lee, August Wilson, Bebe Miller, Vijay Iyer), as well as for providing support to incubate important new works (including the musicals Rent and Once). It is also well regarded for the success of its travel program.

What are the outputs and outcomes associated with the organization and/or its programs? What trends and ideas are associated with the organization and/or its programs?
The Jerome Foundation facilitates emerging talent and new work as integral to the health of the American art ecosystem and promotes racial, gender, and cultural equity.

Basic Information

The Joyce Foundation
321 North Clark Street, Suite 1500
Chicago, IL 60654
Phone (312) 782-2464
Fax (312) 595-1350
info@joycefdn.org  

Focus
The Joyce Foundation supports the development of policies that both improve the quality of life for people in the Great Lakes region and serve as models for the rest of the country.
**Average Annual Grantmaking Budget**
$35.1M [2013]

**Geographic Restriction**
Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, and Wisconsin; culture grants are focused in Chicago, except for the Joyce Awards, which extend to other Midwest cities.

**Average Grant Size**
$140,000; range: $1,000–$700,000 [2013]; $50,000 [Joyce Awards, 2016]

**Average Number of Grants, annually**
251 [2013]

**Average Grant Length**
1–3 years

**Programs**
Programming provides support for community-based arts groups in Chicago and mainstream arts groups to expand their audiences, boards, and staffs to reflect the city’s diversity. Grantmaking also supports expanding opportunities for individual artists through fellowships, residencies, and commissions. In addition, the organization hosts the Joyce Awards, the only program supporting artists of color in major Great Lakes cities, which aims to strengthen cross-cultural understanding by bringing diverse audiences together through the production of new works.

**Applications and Award Criteria**

**Application Process**
Before submitting a formal proposal to the Foundation, prospective applicants write a two- or three-page letter of inquiry outlining the proposed project to the appropriate program officer. Letters of inquiry should be submitted at least six to eight weeks prior to the proposal deadline for a given grant cycle and program officers have discretion in scheduling review of a proposal. Proposals are submitted by email.

**Award Criteria**
Cultural grantmaking seeks to support
» cultural institutions with concrete, measurable plans to increase the participation of people of color in their audiences, boards, and staff through systemic analysis, interventions, and long-term change;
» initiatives to strengthen infrastructure and human capital of community-based arts organizations set in and primarily serving communities of color; and
» artists of color who create new work in partnership with nonprofit organizations, as well as residencies, scholarships, and other efforts to nurture artists’ work throughout their careers.

**Comparative Analysis**

**How does the organization promote diversity, equity, and access in and to the arts?**
The Joyce Foundation accomplishes these aims by supporting increased diversity consulting, board training/recruitment and placement, staff professional development, on-the-job training, artist-driven community projects, exhibitions/performances by artists/performers of color, and salary support for arts administrators, fellows, interns, and artists of color, as well as capacity-building initiatives for community-based arts organizations in and serving communities of color, including human capital development proposals. It is notable that work supported by the Joyce Awards, in addition to being new, must engage and build communities.

**How does the organization develop young, culturally diverse, and disadvantaged artists, and how does this compare with the work of the Van Lier arts fellowship program?**
The Foundation supports artists through residencies, scholarships, and professional development, as well as through new commissions. Grants are made in support of artists of color, though they are not restricted by age group. Further contrasting with the Van Lier program,
the Foundation provides artist and program support as one piece of a multi-pronged approach encompassing staff, board, and infrastructure development.

What is the organization’s impact on artists’ careers and grant-recipient organizations?
Building on a history of promoting greater diversity in the arts and supporting cultural institutions set in communities of color, the Joyce Foundation’s Culture Program supports a number of arts organizations in Chicago around efforts to build capacity, create important work, and reflect the community—from the boardroom to the stage—to achieve sustained diversification along with long-term operating success. In addition, since 2003, the annual Joyce Awards program has awarded more than $2.6 million to commission over 50 new works, facilitating collaborative relationships and innovative work, both for emerging and established artists and for community-engaged arts organizations.

What is community perception of this organization and what broad recognition has it received?
The Joyce Foundation is a prominent, progressive supporter of various political and cultural causes, with a diversified focus on issues affecting and organizations serving the US Midwest. Its support for Chicago-area performing arts organizations is particularly noteworthy. The organization is also a prominent supporter of the future Obama presidential library.

What are the outputs and outcomes associated with the organization and/or its programs? What trends and ideas are associated with the organization and/or its programs?
Promoting access, capacity building, and creativity are the main goals of the Joyce Foundation Culture Program, as inflected by the belief that funding racial diversity in the arts helps art to reflect the rich variety of life: different cultures, ideas, arts organizations, media, voices, languages, and questions. The objective is to strengthen the organizations resident within, and to support artists who explore and reveal, this complexity.

SOURCE

The Shubert Foundation
234 West 44th Street
New York, NY 10036
Phone: (212) 944-3777
Fax: (212) 944-3767

Basic Information

Date Established
1977

Focus
The Shubert Foundation is one of the nation’s largest private foundations dedicated to unrestricted funding of not-for-profit theaters, dance companies, professional theater training programs, and related service agencies.

Average Annual Grantmaking Budget
$22.5M [2013]

Geographic Restriction
USA organizations only

Average Grant Size
$48,000; range: $10,000–$300,000

Average Number of Grants, annually
466 [2013]

Average Grant Length
1 year

Programs
Shubert provides general operating support to not-for-profit, professional resident theater and dance companies. It also provides a limited number of grants to drama departments of private universities.

Applications and Award Criteria

Application Process
Grant requests are submitted using a form available through the Foundation website. To be eligible, applicants must submit complete and
current audited financial statements. In addition to the form and financial statements, applicants are required to submit current playbills, brochures, and/or reviews.

**Award Criteria**
The Foundation provides grants only to organizations that have an established artistic and administrative track record, as well as a history of fiscal responsibility. Criteria range from the general to those specific to each applicant and include the following:

- Record of artistic achievement
- Impact of the organization and its programs
- Record of developing new work
- Record of developing artists
- Other significant contributions to the field
- Administrative strength
- Ability to generate both earned and contributed income
- Fiscal stability

**Comparative Analysis**

*How does the organization promote diversity, equity, and access in and to the arts?*
The Foundation promotes these causes, among others, by funding a diverse portfolio of variously sized and scaled organizations nationwide. For example, since 2005 it has provided over $3 million to the New York City Department of Education for arts/theater programs; this grantmaking facilitated the High School Theatre Festival, which, among other developments allowed over 100 students from city high schools to perform on Broadway, in March 2015.

*How does the organization develop young, culturally diverse, and disadvantaged artists, and how does this compare with the work of the Van Lier arts fellowship program?*
Generally speaking, Shubert provides operating funds and does not support specific projects like fellowships; the organization does not by design assist young, diverse, or under-resourced artists. However, the Scholars program does provide assistance to students in graduate degree programs in the arts, and many of the initiatives made possible with Shubert money impact the Van Lier arts fellowship program’s core demographic (for example, see response above).

*What is the organization’s impact on artists’ careers and grant-recipient organizations?*
Rather than funding specific projects, Shubert is a provider primarily of unrestricted operating funds. Grants cover overhead costs and general operating support for professional theaters, dance companies, and related organizations.

*What is community perception of this organization and what broad recognition has it received?*
One of the largest private philanthropic organizations of its kind, Shubert is known for its emphases on theater and, secondarily, dance. It provides funding to professional companies that focus on production of theater and dance, along with select arts-related organizations that support the development of these disciplines.

*What are the outputs and outcomes associated with the organization and/or its programs? What trends and ideas are associated with the organization and/or its programs?*
Shubert Foundation grants go toward general operating support. Because it gives its funded organizations freedom in determining how the monies are used, outputs and outcomes vary widely.

**SOURCE**
http://www.shubert.org/

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**Surdna Foundation**

330 Madison Avenue, 30th Floor
New York, NY 10017
(212) 557-0010
grants@surdna.org

**Basic Information**

*Date Established*
1917; arts programs initiated 1994
Focus
The Surdna Foundation seeks to foster sustainable communities in the United States—communities guided by principles of social justice and distinguished by healthy environments, strong local economies, and thriving cultures. It has been guided by successive generations of the Andrus family.

Average Annual Grantmaking Budget
$38.4M [2013]

Geographic Restriction
Programs and organizations in the USA

Average Grant Size
$153,000; range: $500–$2M [2013]

Average Number of Grants, annually
251 [2013]

Average Grant Length
6 months to 3 years

Relevant Program
The Thriving Cultures program, one of several, supports artistic training programs for teen enrichment and efforts to involve artists, architects, and designers in community-engaged problem solving and development efforts; it also supports artists with financing and business training. The Thriving Cultures program generally does not fund fellowships.

Applications and Award Criteria

Application Process
Most applicants use an online letter of inquiry to apply for funding; applicants deemed a good fit by Surdna staff are asked to submit a proposal.

Award Criteria
In order to decrease and eventually remove barriers impeding access to opportunity in marginalized communities, the grantmaking program invests in emergent leadership in fields of interest, supporting those leaders in particular that address issues directly affecting them and their communities.

Comparative Analysis

How does the organization promote diversity, equity, and access in and to the arts?
Surdna promotes these causes primarily through its Thriving Cultures grantmaking programs, which support
» neighborhood and national organizations that understand artistic practice not solely as the pursuit of aesthetic excellence, but as the means to stimulate teens’ aspirations, build positive social skills, and cultivate empathy for others;
» organizations whose approach to community design prioritizes the immersive, transformative, and locally oriented; and
» artist self-sufficiency, as well as artists’ unique agency to acknowledge and celebrate cultures while also confronting local histories of oppression, violence, and racism.

How does the organization develop young, culturally diverse, and disadvantaged artists, and how does this compare with the work of the Van Lier arts fellowship program?
Surdna addresses this demographic by providing opportunities for rigorous artistic training; cultivating talented and innovative leaders who more closely resemble the communities they’re engaging with; encouraging means for artists to benefit financially from their work and to create opportunities for others; and sponsoring projects to support artist-guided, community-focused acknowledgment of difficult historical narratives related to past prejudicial actions and injustice.
Though, like the Van Lier arts fellowship program, Surdna grants provide art and career training opportunities for young, culturally diverse, and disadvantaged populations, Surdna’s focus is more on local or demographically motivated impact than on the development of exceptional individuals.

What is the organization’s impact on artists’ careers and grant-recipient organizations?
Artistic training is seen as a vehicle for improving teen life outcomes generally, rather than encouraging artist careers per se. Surdna’s grantmaking emphasizes art as it intersects with skill building, urban planning and economic
development, and engagement toward social change. As such, it impacts communities through the support of initiatives that connect residents to their cultures, to their own interests, and to one another.

What is community perception of this organization and what broad recognition has it received? Surdna is recognized for the important work it does in environment and community revitalization, as well as supporting arts and culture. Founded to engage in a range of philanthropic activities, the foundation today focuses on fostering sustainable communities in the United States, guided by principles of social justice and distinguished by healthy environments, strong local economies, and thriving cultures.

What are the outputs and outcomes associated with the organization and/or its programs? What trends and ideas are associated with the organization and/or its programs? Surdna contributes to the creation of just and sustainable communities, based on the belief that communities with robust arts and culture are more cohesive and prosperous, and also benefit from the diversity of their residents. In doing so, the Foundation supports artists as agents of social change.

SOURCE

The Tow Foundation

50 Locust Avenue, 2nd Floor
New Canaan, CT 06840
Phone: (203) 761-6604
Fax: (203) 761-6605
info@towfoundation.org

Basic Information

Date Established
1988

Focus
The Tow Foundation supports innovative programs and system reform in the areas of juvenile and criminal justice, groundbreaking medical research, higher education, and cultural institutions.

Average Annual Grantmaking Budget
$12.3M [2013]

Geographic Restriction
USA; primarily Connecticut and New York

Average Grant Size
$25,000–$1M+; $75,000 for playwright residencies

Average Number of Grants, annually
125

Average Grant Length
1–3 years; playwright residencies awarded in 2013 for 2 years

Programs
Tow initiated a playwright fellowship/residency program in collaboration with five New York theaters in 2013 to provide individuals with the time and resources to develop new plays to be produced by the sponsored theaters.

Applications and Award Criteria

Application Process
Normally invite-only, the process sometimes involves competitive submissions. Invitations are largely determined by previously established relationships, though they sometimes involve new organizations that fit Tow’s interests and foci. Year-to-year renewals are common, as is work with larger institutions to fund new programs.

Award Criteria
In pursuit of its guiding vision, Tow funds projects that offer transformative experiences to individuals and creates collaborative ventures in fields in which there exist opportunities for breakthroughs, reform, and benefits for underserved populations. Criteria for
grantmaking vary, but in general the foundation emphasizes leadership and support for innovative programs in the areas of juvenile and criminal justice, groundbreaking medical research, higher education, and cultural institutions. Support for strategic initiatives mainly goes to organizations that have been funded in the past.

Comparative Analysis

How does the organization promote diversity, equity, and access in and to the arts?
As in the case of the new playwright residency program, diversity, equity, and access might be achieved incidentally in Tow’s collaboration with theaters and/or within the new work facilitated.

How does the organization develop young, culturally diverse, and disadvantaged artists, and how does this compare with the work of the Van Lier arts fellowship program?
Tow provides young playwrights the opportunity to live and work on their craft in New York City without financial hardship, and to see their work produced by a major off-Broadway theater.

What is the organization’s impact on artists’ careers and grant-recipient organizations?
Tow facilitates early-career development and the creation of new dramatic work, as selected and orchestrated by grant-recipient theaters, thereby also strengthening the theaters’ relationships with talent and their artistic community.

What is community perception of this organization and what broad recognition has it received?
Since its inception as a family foundation over 25 years ago, Tow has grown into a supporter of difficult-to-support and collaborative new initiatives, developed through close and long-lasting relationships.

What are the outputs and outcomes associated with the organization and/or its programs? What trends and ideas are associated with the organization and/or its programs?
Tow empowers nonprofits and the systems they work within to change for the better, so that the individuals they serve can improve their own lives; in the case of the playwright fellowship/residency program, specific outcomes include the creation and production of specifically sponsored new works, something particularly uncommon.

SOURCE
http://www.towfoundation.org/