A CREATIVE PLACEMAKING FIELD SCAN

TRANSFORMING THE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SECTOR THROUGH ARTS & CULTURE

Centering people and the social determinants of employment

CO-AUTHORED BY
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ABOUT ARTPLACE AMERICA

ArtPlace America (ArtPlace) is a ten-year collaboration among a number of foundations, federal agencies, and financial institutions that supports and strengthens the field of creative placemaking – the intentional integration of arts, culture, and community-engaged design strategies into the process of equitable community planning and development. We work to enlist artists as allies in creating equitable, healthy, and sustainable communities in which everyone has a voice and agency. To this end, we've invested over $100 million to grow the field of creative placemaking through demonstration projects, in-depth investments in organizational change, research, and convenings – embedding knowledge and resources within existing networks and supporting local ecosystems to own and evolve the practice.

✳NORC at the University of Chicago

ABOUT NORC AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

NORC at the University of Chicago is an objective, non-partisan research institution that delivers reliable data and rigorous analysis to guide critical programmatic, business, and policy decisions. Since 1941, NORC has conducted groundbreaking studies, created and applied innovative methods and tools, and advanced principles of scientific integrity and collaboration. Today, government, corporate, and nonprofit clients around the world partner with NORC to transform increasingly complex information into useful knowledge. NORC conducts research in five main areas: Economics, Markets, and the Workforce; Education, Training, and Learning; Global Development; Health and Well-Being; and Society, Media, and Public Affairs.

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FOREWORD

ArtPlace America (ArtPlace) is a ten-year collaboration among a number of foundations, federal agencies, and financial institutions that supports and strengthens the field of creative placemaking – the intentional integration of arts, culture, and community-engaged design strategies into the process of equitable community planning and development. We work to enlist artists as allies in creating equitable, healthy, and sustainable communities in which everyone has a voice and agency.

In looking, systemically, at who does community planning and development work in America's communities, we have found that our colleagues may generally be organized into ten sectors: Agriculture & Food, Economic Development, Environment & Energy, Health, Housing, Immigration, Public Safety, Transportation, Workforce Development, and Youth Development. As a core part of ArtPlace's research agenda, we are exploring how arts and cultural practitioners have long been and may increasingly be partners in helping to achieve each of these sector's goals.

In each of the ten sectors we produce a 'field scan' to illuminate key priorities in that sector, and to offer a framework for understanding the ways that arts and culture contribute to local, place-based outcomes in that sector. Each field scan serves as the starting point for a working group tasked with taking the analysis and findings one step further, helping ArtPlace identify the best practices that warrant formal case studies, key methods for evaluating success, and strategic framing of the material in a way that resonates with people most likely to take up creative placemaking practice in a given sector.

When we began our inquiry in the Workforce Development sector, researchers from NORC at the University of Chicago had recently released a report commissioned by the James Irvine Foundation entitled, *The Role of the Arts and Creative Expression in Employability and Economic Opportunity* (2018). Rather than reinvent the wheel by beginning our own research inquiry anew, ArtPlace joined forces with NORC to build on their findings through dialogue and learning with practitioners.

What follows, then, is a hybrid document - one in the series of ten 'field scans' that we have conducted as part of this work, combined with proceedings and key themes from the working group. Each field scan is not an end in itself, but an initial inquiry that informs ArtPlace's knowledge and network building work as well as those working at the intersection of art and community development more broadly. Our ultimate goal is for these two audiences to develop a shared language and a set of mutual goals, so that communities across the country will ultimately benefit from these powerful, cross-sector collaborations and synergies.

Jamie Hand
Director of Research Strategies
ARTPLACE AMERICA

INTRODUCTION

In November 2018, researchers from NORC at the University of Chicago (NORC) issued a report funded by the James Irvine Foundation entitled _The Role of the Arts and Creative Expression in Employability and Economic Opportunity_. The report examined the role of the arts in preparing and assisting those struggling with financial hardship to seek and gain living-wage employment. It indicated that while little formal research has been done on using the arts and culture to contribute to job readiness, employability and economic opportunity, some programs and organizations have already adopted and successfully implemented these approaches. These programs have demonstrated that artistic, cultural, and creative practices can play an important role in achieving employability goals.

As part of its cross-sector initiatives aimed at understanding the role the arts can play in each of ten community planning and development sectors, Artplace America (ArtPlace) set out to build on the findings outlined in the NORC report. This was the impetus for organizing the _Arts, Culture, and Workforce Development Working Group_, whose mission would be to identify ways to advance initiatives informed jointly by the arts and workforce development fields and to implement next steps to support lasting change.

The Working Group took place January 29th & 30th, 2020, in Chicago, IL. It was co-hosted by ArtPlace America, NORC, and national workforce intermediary Jobs for the Future. A group of 39 participants - artists, advocates, workforce development practitioners, and more - gathered for two days to learn together and discuss opportunities for moving work at this intersection forward. A full description of the Working Group, including notes and major themes, can be found in Appendices A and B. The list of all working group participants can be found in Appendix D.

What follows is a synthesis of learnings from the working group and a framework, based on those learnings, that outlines six ways that arts and culture help to advance the workforce development sector. A case study illustrating each approach is provided to ground this framework in place-

based arts and cultural practices. The goal of this research process and analysis is not to create rigid categories for funders or policymakers to adopt, but rather to create on-ramps for more collaboration at the intersection of arts, culture, and workforce development. Our findings show that enlisting the power of artists, cultural workers, and creative practices in various aspects of workforce development can help the sector move more quickly and impactfully towards the ultimate goal of supporting healthy, equitable, and sustainable communities.

This research largely took place before the COVID-19 pandemic, the economic impact of which is still evolving in the U.S. and worldwide; many of the dynamics described in this report are now even more dire for the many individuals and communities navigating the loss of livelihood.

"INTERSTITIAL SPACES ARE WHERE THE MAGIC HAPPENS."

-WORKING GROUP PARTICIPANT

"HOW CAN ARTISTS BE THE TRANSLATORS?"

-WORKING GROUP PARTICIPANT

CHICAGO WORKERS' COLLABORATIVE RESISTANCE THEATRE
PHOTO BY JOEL MAISONET

HOW ARTS AND CULTURE CAN ADVANCE THE WORKFORCE SECTOR

METHODOLOGY

Based on an analysis of over fifty projects, interviews with over thirty artists and practitioners, a literature review, and the initial findings in NORC's paper, ArtPlace researchers drafted a set of 'typologies' to help clearly articulate - in language specific to workforce development - how practitioners are using arts and culture to impact workforce-related goals across the U.S. The draft typologies were shared with the Working Group for review and critique; what follows are the revised typologies, as well as some additional framing of key takeaways gleaned from the working group conversation that helped to inform the changes made. Case studies illustrating each typology are based on interviews with project leaders and information available online, and each was reviewed for accuracy by project leaders. Additional case studies, including descriptions of working group host Sweet Water Foundation and working group participants, are included in Appendix A.

BUILD POWER AND DRIVE POLICY CHANGE

Shifting the power dynamics so that workers and community members are more in control of the workplace dynamics that impact them most directly is critical to changing both short and long-term conditions. Movement-building strengthens workers' solidarity and community, helping them to have more agency over their labor and to more effectively rely on each other. It is also key to changing local, regional, and federal legislation that can ensure fair labor standards, increase wages and benefits, and provide opportunities for skill development. In order to increase pressure on politicians and other policymakers to make these changes and shift the power balance long-term, community organizing and building strong movements are critical.

Arts and culture can build power and drive policy change by:

Strengthening collective action and coalition-building by sharing workers' stories; uniting disparate groups around a common vision; improving individuals' confidence and agency; organizing stakeholders through creative and cultural practice; changing minds of power-holders; coordinating action; and more.

CASE STUDY: THE CHICAGO WORKERS' COLLABORATIVE, CHICAGO, IL

The Chicago Workers' Collaborative (CWC) is focused on organizing to improve conditions and policies for low-wage workers. Its mission is to "promote the creation of stable, living wage jobs with racial and gender equity for temporary staffing workers." Theater activist Jasmin Cardenas first connected with the CWC through the Lookinglass Theatre, which in 2016 mounted a play about workers' conditions. After the show closed, Jasmin began independently offering Theatre of the Oppressed workshops to CWC members, with the goal of seeing if Theatre of the Oppressed techniques could help CWC strengthen its organizing.Initial programing showed that CWC members were able to build confidence and leadership

skills, process trauma, and raise awareness for worker abuse. In 2018, the team received a grant through the Center for Performance and Civic Practice's Catalyst Initiative to continue their work, and the group named itself the "Workers Resistance Theater" (a longer case study from that grant is available <u>here</u>). Requests from worker-organizers continued to increase given the numerous positive benefits the program was having on them individually and as a collective body. Pieces of theater are now integrated into protests, performances in parks and other cultural sites around Chicago, and worker meetings. This theatrical technique has become a valuable organizing tool within this labor organization where Jasmin continues to partner as an independent artist. Worker leaders in the theater group have now worked with other worker groups in the Chicagoland area, training them to use Theatre of the Oppressed as an organizing tool in their own organizations.

CHICAGO WORKERS' COLLABORATIVE RESISTANCE THEATRE
COURTESY JASMIN CARDENAS

IMPROVE RECRUITING, HIRING, AND ADVANCEMENT PRACTICES

Many large institutions (firms, unions, and others) can all too often perpetuate systemic racism and rely on dominant (white, male, able-bodied, etc.) cultural biases during hiring and advancement processes. Life and work experience that don't fall into dominant definitions of "excellence" are often undervalued. In addition, lack of fluency with non-dominant cultures can prevent employers from seeing youths' and workers' skills, culture, or behavior on level playing fields.

Arts and culture can improve recruiting, hiring, and advancement practices by:

Helping recruiters, human resource staff, and other managers identify and break down their own biases and structural barriers through creative means; utilizing storytelling to build bridges between people from different backgrounds; using creative means to recruit and advance overlooked employees; and more.

CASE STUDY: WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE OF NY, STATEWIDE, NY

The Workforce Development Institute of NY (WDI) is a non-profit organization that works to increase and retain living-wage employment opportunities across New York State. To further its mission, WDI uses a range of strategies to help job seekers build skills and strengthen employers' ability to hire and promote workers. As part of WDI's sector-based initiative to bolster the creative economy in New York, WDI published two anthologies of personal essays about working by reflective practitioners. The first, *Working Stories* (2015), features 19 essays about work experiences and career development. The second, entitled *Creative Lives: Essays by Creative Practitioners*, focused on the arts and culture sector and features 17 essays from a range of creative practitioners— a film producer, exhibition designer, playwright, photojournalist, and software applications designer—that shed light on their career pathways and speak

to the challenges and opportunities of working in the creative economy. To make this information accessible to employers and beyond, WDI organized a series of presentations by the authors and both books are available at no cost via its website.

"ARTS SHIFT CULTURE AND CULTURE SHIFTS POLICY."

-WORKING GROUP PARTICIPANT

'WORKING LIVES" AUTHORS
COURTESY WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE OF NYC

HIGHLIGHT THE SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF EMPLOYMENT

The existing workforce development system can take a narrow view of employment, focusing only on people's economic contributions and not considering psychological, biological, and social elements of life surrounding employment like access to education, transit, and more. Typical evaluation measures required by funders and government agencies often focus too narrowly on the number of jobs created or filled, or the number of participants in a workforce program.

Arts and culture can highlight the social determinants of employment by:

Expanding the lens of a workforce program to treat people holistically, including mental and emotional health, quality of life, and work; promoting and advocating for more realistic time horizons for workforce programs such that they account for long-term development and growth processes; making visible the need for creating or supporting the social programs necessary to equitably participate in labor market including child care, health care; and more.

CASE STUDY: COALFIELD DEVELOPMENT, WAYNE, WV

Coalfield Development is a non-profit organization in West Virginia that aims to end the intergenerational cycle of poverty in Appalachia through a holistic model of economic and workforce development. Coalfield Development provides professional, academic, and personal training for chronically unemployed community members, and simultaneously oversees a family of social enterprises in fields such as solar energy, sustainable construction, mine-land reclamation, agriculture, and artisan trades. These social enterprises generate desirable jobs for their program participants as well as revenue to support the organization's operations. Coalfield Development's social enterprise training program offers a 33-6-3 workforce development model which places an emphasis on the holistic needs of each worker. As part of this program, "crew members"

agree to a 2.5-year contract that culminates in an Associate's Degree, and includes 33 hours of paid work, 6 credit hours of higher education, and 3 hours of personal development mentorship each week.

"RETURN ON INVESTMENT CAN'T BE MEASURED IMMEDIATELY WHEN THE WORK IS ABOUT DEVELOPING HUMANS."

-WORKING GROUP PARTICIPANT

BUILDING AGRICULTURAL INFRASTRUCTURE
COURTESY COALFIELD DEVELOPMENT

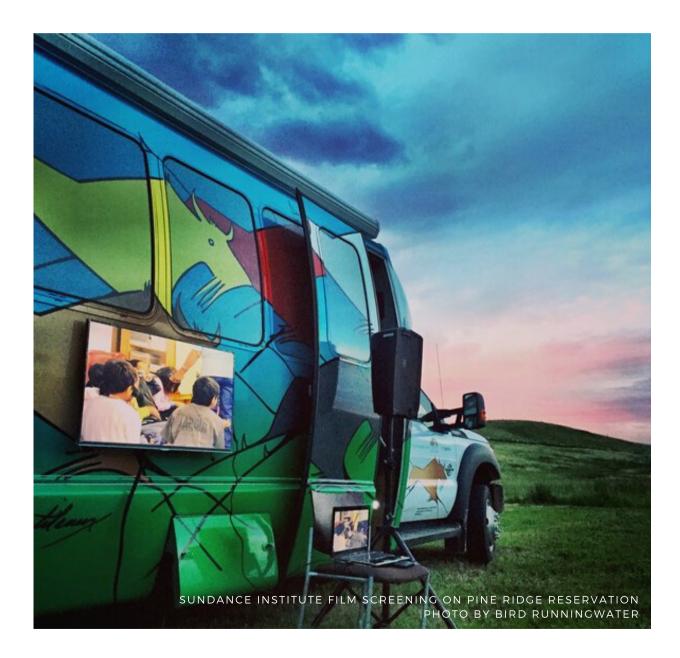# CREATE REGENERATIVE JOBS AND FIRMS

Current workforce pathways prioritize large industries, such as health care, technology, and others; legal and financing systems similarly privilege the creation of 'standard' business entities. The existing workforce system often has a limited definition of what constitutes jobs and industries at all, leading to the exclusion of entire populations. Women, economically disadvantaged people, African Americans, people of color, Native Nations, queer and trans communities, and others are disproportionately prevented from starting their own ventures, accessing capital, earning income from undervalued labor, owning the means of production, and exercising decision-making.

Arts and culture can create regenerative jobs and firms by:

Envisioning and creating new or overlooked cultural businesses, job types, industries, and cooperatives; increasing access to capital by raising the flag about worthy cultural investments such as crafts, culinary arts, festivals, and others; increasing the success of worker ownership through engagement in arts and culture that strengthens bonds and opens new pathways to more reciprocal relationships, and more.

CASE STUDY: FIRST PEOPLES FUND, PINE RIDGE, SD

First Peoples Fund is a non-profit organization headquartered in South Dakota that supports Indigenous artists and culture bearers across the country. Founded in 1995 by Jennifer Easton as a donor-advised fund of the Tides Foundation, in 2003 the organization established itself as an independent non-profit and continues to build on Jennifer's vision. The organization's programs and services focus on strengthening the ability of individual Native artists to contribute to economic growth, cultural preservation, and the overall welfare of Indigenous communities. First Peoples Fund sees Indigenous culture as inextricable from career pursuits, and their Rolling Rez Arts program is a prime example of how the organization supports artists as a way to bring about positive change in Native communities. Launched in 2016, Rolling Rez Arts is a mobile arts space, business training center, and credit union office that travels around

the Pine Ridge Reservation providing local artists with access to resources and retail services while offering the broader community easier access to artists' wares. By expanding access to capital and culturally sensitive business training, First Peoples Fund supports Native artists' entrepreneurial ambitions, which in turn helps their communities to imagine and build regenerative forms of labor.

SUNDANCE INSTITUTE FILM SCREENING ON PINE RIDGE RESERVATION
PHOTO BY BIRD RUNNINGWATER

CONNECT WORKERS TO OPPORTUNITIES

Given barriers related to class, racial, geographic and other forms of oppression, not all people have the same access to social infrastructure - the relationships, networks, and/or institutional credentials that allow them to gain employment, retain their jobs, move up in the workplace, or connect to growing industries. In addition, many workers cannot fully participate in the labor market given the lack of publicly subsidized childcare, discrimination based on criminal records, and more.

Arts and culture can connect workers to opportunities by:

Exposing youth and underemployed adults to a wider range of jobs and pathways to high growth industries; building bridges between potential workers and new professional development opportunities; helping justice-system involved people overcome discrimination or legal barriers; providing bridges between community-based organizations and educational institutions; and more.

CASE STUDY: VOZFRONTERA, NOGALES, AZ

VozFrontera is an initiative for youth engagement, leadership, and local arts incubation in Nogales, Arizona, a border town where many youth leave after high school because they have trouble connecting with employment opportunities locally. Through documentary arts mentoring and artist- and scholar-in-residence programs, as well as startup entrepreneurship training for local youth, VozFrontera furthers a mission "to build more equitable and vibrant communities by celebrating the everyday expressions of culture, heritage, and diversity in the Greater Southwest." Founded by the Southwest Folklife Alliance (SFA) following an iterative community engagement process and local needs assessment, VozFrontera operates within the community of Nogales through a series of projects and initiatives in partnership with SFA, the University of Arizona, and other local organizations and individuals. While conducting the local needs assessment, SFA heard from residents and leaders that they want to build stronger connections between older and younger generations and for local youth to gain skills and access to economic opportunities in Nogales.

Now, VozFrontera regularly connects participants with artists, entrepreneurs, and leaders from a variety of industries, providing mentorship that expands and strengthens local youth's social networks and empowers them to become Nogales' next generation of leaders.

"WE NEED POLICIES AND PROGRAMS IN PLACE TO EXPOSE CHILDREN TO CREATIVE JOBS EARLY IN THEIR EDUCATION."

-WORKING GROUP PARTICIPANT

VOZFRONTERA PARTICIPANTS
COURTESY SOUTHWEST FOLKLIFE ALLIANCE

BUILD TECHNICAL AND CRITICAL SKILLS

Access to educational and training resources is inequitable. The U.S. economic system privileges investment in schools, professional development opportunities, and more for middle and upper-class communities. Meanwhile, low income, rural, Black, people of color, Native Nations, people with disabilities, and other communities that experience oppression are left at a disadvantage when it comes to gaining the technical skills needed for a wide range of jobs.

Arts and culture can help build technical and critical skills by:

Supporting all kinds of learners to bolster technical skills like programming, design, and research through creative means; engaging emotionally with youth and adults to help foster socio-emotional learning; opening up new employment pathways in the arts; and more.

CASE STUDY: JUXTAPOSITION ARTS, MINNEAPOLIS, MN

Juxtaposition Arts (JXTA) is a youth-powered social enterprise and community-rooted art and design center based in North Minneapolis. The organization was founded in 1995 by Roger and DeAnna Cummings and Peyton Russell to address conventional schools' failure to engage Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) youth meaningfully, and to provide participants with the tools necessary to develop their creativity into viable career paths. Twenty-five years later, what started as an after-school program has now evolved into a multi-faceted cultural institution that employs over 70 young artist and designers and 30 teaching professionals, and supports hundreds of young people across Minneapolis and beyond to develop the skills, connections, and confidence they need to become leaders in the creative industries. With an emphasis on hands-on learning and self-determination, JXTA provides free after-school and summer training programs for youth ages 8-21, and year-round paid apprenticeships in six revenue-earning production studios called JXTA labs that allow for young adults ages 14-21 to work side-by-side with

professionals in graphic design, textiles and screen printing, ceramics, public art, environmental design, urban planning, and community engagement. JXTA labs earned over $500k in 2019 and are on track to beat that in 2020. The organization also offers apprentices the opportunity to participate in a concurrent college and career pathways program that offers additional mentorship, workshops, internships, and field trips as a way to deepen skill building and pipelines to college and careers.

"YOU HAVE TO GO FROM A PASSION PROJECT TO SOMETHING THAT IS CREATING A LIVING FOR MULTIPLE PEOPLE. THAT IS REGENERATIVE."

-WORKING GROUP PARTICIPANT

JXTA PUBLIC ART & MURAL LAB
COURTESY JUXTAPOSITION ARTS

CONCLUSION

As ArtPlace approaches the end of its ten year mandate and other organizations take up the mantle of supporting arts driven community development, we hope that this paper can support and inspire new or deepened collaborations between arts, culture, and workforce development organizations, communities, and policymakers.

After the working group, ArtPlace continued in dialogue with working group participants and other partners to evolve several ideas for how to move this work forward. As a direct next step, ArtPlace is working with the Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC) to support and expand their peer cohort and systems-change initiative, the *Arts & Wealth Building Learning Lab*. This effort directly responds and seeks to move forward several of the findings above by lifting up the ability of arts and culture to connect workers to opportunities, build technical and critical skills, shift policies, create regenerative jobs, and more.

Seven highly regarded place-based organizations from around the country, all of whom demonstrate success at the intersection of arts and workforce development, are participating: Project Row Houses (Houston, TX), Juxtaposition Arts (Minneapolis, MN), Sweet Water Foundation (Chicago, IL), Coalfield Development (Wayne, WV), Village of Arts and Humanities (Philadelphia, PA), HeritageWorks (Detroit, MI), and the Steelyard (Providence, RI). Local LISC offices in those geographies, alongside national LISC program areas, will collaborate as well. The Learning Lab objectives are to deepen relationships between arts organizations and larger systems, analyze gaps and opportunities in these partnerships in order to create stronger pathways for individual wealth building and training, and create a methodology for measuring impacts of this work specifically in relation to arts organizations.

As community development practitioners, communities, and cultural workers continue to utilize creative means to support the needs of workers, the policy, funding, and evaluation systems intended to support them must evolve to reflect these efforts. This paper highlights the extraordinary work that many across the country are doing to support their communities in innovative ways and who are transforming the workforce development sector as they go.

CREDITS

APPENDIX A: WORKING GROUP SUMMARY

By Gwendolyn Rugg, Terese Schwartzman, and Michael Reynolds, NORC

The *Arts, Culture and Workforce Development Working Group* was jointly organized by Artplace America, NORC at the University of Chicago, and Jobs for the Future (JFF). It took place on January 29 and 30, 2020 at NORC's headquarters in Chicago's Loop district. A diverse and inspiring group of thirty-nine workforce leaders, policymakers, investors, researchers, artists, educators, and community activists from across the country took part. Each participant brought their unique perspective and experience to the working group as a leader in their field or community. Appendix E contains a list of participants with short bios. In addition to those named in Appendix E and the authors, Darlene Bradley, Erin Eife, Adelle Hinojosa, Michael O'Neal, Zeljka Rogic, and Amelia Solorio at NORC worked tirelessly behind the scenes to make the work the working group went smoothly.

At the start of the meeting, Jamie Hand, Artplace's Director of Research Strategies, noted and discussed the following major meeting objectives:

- Receive and share feedback on how arts and culture can advance workforce sector goals
- Explore the challenges and opportunities encountered in doing this work
- Cultivate a deeper mutual understanding of the perspectives of both the arts and non-arts practitioners
- Strengthen the network of stakeholders and champions who can help advance an intersectional way of working
- Develop recommendations to support practitioners in using arts-based strategies to provide transferable skills and contribute to the whole individual, not only to one's role as a worker

Jamie informed the participants that a key goal of the working group was to build upon the findings of the NORC report by having the working group identify key challenges and opportunities at the intersection of the arts and workforce development, and identify the ways in which this work can be embedded in organizations and institutions to move it forward.

Deepa Gupta of Blue Lotus Advisors, the working group facilitator, shared her view that the experience was similar to building a new field for which there is no road map. Deepa pointed to the fact that the majority of the working group members had already accomplished work in this area without a map, which is one of the reasons they had been invited. Their feedback on the successes and challenges they encountered would be important in considering the path forward.

Wide-ranging and varied activities took place throughout the two-day meeting to 1) elicit feedback from working group members on relevant challenges and opportunities they had experienced and 2) determine the next steps needed to push forward the work of incorporating the arts into workforce development practice and policy. A synthesis of the major themes, challenges and opportunities that emerged from these activities is discussed in Appendices B and C.

Activities throughout the two days were aimed at promoting free dialogue among working group members, sharing knowledge about current programs and strategies in the arts and workforce sectors, and expanding ideas about what is possible at the intersection of the two sectors.

Working Group Activities: Day One

INTRODUCTIONS AND ORIENTATION

Day 1 began with individual introductions. Participants and conveners shared details about their professional and personal roles as well as vignettes about the first job they held. Conference organizers Gwendolyn Rugg and Jennifer Novak-Leonard from NORC then provided an overview of their recent research on the intersection of the arts and workforce development, and ArtPlace's Danya Sherman presented preliminary ideas on ways that the arts, culture, and creativity could play a role in workforce development. Danya shared that a central aim of the working group was to explore these ideas, referred to as "typologies." The conference organizers requested the working group think outside the box about these typologies and invited the group to interrogate, expand, and/or revise them over the next two days.

The six preliminary typologies for how the arts might play a role in the workforce development sector were:

1. Hard or Technical Skills Development
2. Soft or Essential Skills Development
3. Access to Quality Jobs in Various Industries

4. Access to Quality Jobs in the Creative Industries
5. Sustainable Employment and Ownership
6. Power and Policy Shifts

SHARING OUR VANTAGE POINTS: EXPLORING CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

The next peer learning activity divided working group members into six smaller groups, each composed of individuals with a range of professional and personal vantage points, and provided time for the small-group members to share personal insights and experiences on challenges and opportunities they had experienced in their field of work.

Each small group participant was asked to answer the following two questions as part of the discussion:

1. What brought you to this field of work?
2. From where you work, what is the single biggest challenge or opportunity you see in having the desired impact?

Shared challenges and opportunities were identified when the working group met as a whole following the smaller group discussions. In closing the exercise, Deepa, the working group facilitator, offered three questions for each participant to consider throughout the remainder of the working group activities:

- Who are the agents you are thinking about for action or change?·
- Where in the system are these agents located?
- How can you work effectively with them?

VISIT TO THE SWEET WATER FOUNDATION

The working group spent the afternoon at the Sweet Water Foundation located in Chicago's Englewood/Washington Park neighborhoods. Sweet Water, an ArtPlace grantee whose work incorporates all six typologies outlined at the beginning of the working group, was established in 2014 and practices Regenerative Neighborhood Development (RND). Sweet Water describes RND as a "creative and regenerative social justice method that creates safe and inspiring spaces and curates healthy, intergenerational communities that transform the ecology of so-called 'blighted' neighborhoods." Youth and worker engagement is an integral part of Sweet Water's model which combines hands-on work opportunities with education to better prepare individuals for future employment opportunities. Sweet Water's executive director, Emmanuel Pratt,

describes Sweet Water's positioning as "the third sector of the economy between the public and private sectors."

During the visit, the working group shared a meal and got to know the Sweet Water team and apprentices, who led an immersive tour of their indoor and outdoor facilities which span four city blocks. Working group members learned about Sweet Water's practice of RND, including the approach used in educating and co-creating with the youth and the other volunteers involved in their work. Through this practice, workers and volunteers develop both hard and soft skills, including those that enable them to present all aspects of their work, including why decisions were made to pursue a particular area of work, what was involved in completing this work, problems encountered during the work and how problems were solved. Sweet Water workers and volunteers regularly make presentations to visiting practitioners, scholars, funders, and other visitors, such as the working group. To ensure workers are serious about the educational aspect of the work, Sweet Water enters into social contracts with each worker and they review the contract together after three-month trial periods.

As a result of its unique approach to training, Sweet Water has learned not to seek funding opportunities that only use traditional data-driven measures to determine success. The Sweet Water team encouraged working group members to reflect on how they want to measure success in their own work, and in the collective efforts of the working group, and make this an intentional objective in discussions with collaborators and funders. Deepa, the facilitator, asked the working group to consider the following question for upcoming discussions: **How should we measure outcomes when conceiving of and enacting new approaches to workforce development?** Working group members agreed that this question is paramount since such approaches are not yet sufficiently valued by most organizations, including funders. Working group members found the visit to Sweet Water to be a powerful demonstration of how to incorporate critical workforce skills into the process of community development.

Working Group Activities: Day Two

CHICAGO WORKERS' COLLABORATIVE PERFORMANCE

Day 2 began with an interactive performance by the Chicago Workers' Collaborative (CWC). The CWC was formed in 2000 to help temporary and other low-income workers seek fair working conditions and to promote the creation of stable, living wage jobs with racial and gender equity for temporary workers. For the working group, temporary workers involved

with CWC and trained in Theater of the Oppressed methods staged a performance of factory workers in a production line based on their real workplace experiences. The performers subsequently asked the working group to point out abuses they observed during the performance. As part of the discussion following the performance, the performers shared how being involved with the CWC, and in particular being involved in acting out real life scenarios they had experienced, helped them understand their rights and options as temporary workers. It also empowered them to speak up about abuses they experienced and taught them how to help others experiencing abuse. The working group noted the connection between this activity and the discussion on Day 1 around typology six: Power and Policy Shifts.

PRESENTATION PAIRINGS

Presentations on the challenges faced and successes achieved by four creative practitioners and ArtPlace grantees followed the CWC performance. Each presenter described their work while a working group participant from a different sector noted key takeaways and potential next steps at the end of the presentation. The objective of the presentations and responses was to increase dialogue and understanding between arts-based practitioners and workforce-based practitioners, and to facilitate mutual learning and bridge-building.

Grace in Action Church and Collectives (Detroit, Michigan)

Meghan Sobocienski, Director of Grace in Action Collectives, described the place-based initiative's growth into a network of worker-owned cooperatives and youth-run collectives. The initiative had recently started a loan fund to reinvest in and enable their cooperatives to scale up. The respondent, Esteban Kelly from the U.S. Federation of Worker Cooperatives, praised Grace in Action's relationship-building and scale-up model for its cooperatives, which are founded on principles rather than rigid replication. Esteban also discussed the importance of striving to both meet community needs and reinvest in the community through initiatives such as Grace in Action's loan fund.

Coalfield Development (Wayne, West Virginia)

Brandon Dennison presented as the founder and CEO of Coalfield Development, which incubates social enterprises designed to diversify Appalachia's coal-based economy and cultivates opportunity, including arts-based practices, for people facing barriers to employment. As part of being involved in Coalfield's social enterprises, workers attend community colleges and are expected to use three hours per week to reflect and journal. Brandon pointed out similarities to Sweet Water in the use of ritual routine and reflection and their approach to determining the

measures they use for success. The respondent, Randy Smith from the Rural Community College Alliance, discussed the challenges of economic development unique to rural areas and stressed the use of the arts in building necessary skills.

First Peoples Fund (Rapid City, South Dakota)
Bryan Parker, the Rolling Rez Arts Coordinator for First Peoples Fund, discussed the program he oversees which works with sixteen Native artists who learn how to present their art to buyers, increase their earning ability, grow professionally and serve as community leaders. In addition, Rolling Rez serves as a mobile arts unit, business development center and bank for the 30,000-member Tribal population covering the size of Connecticut. The respondent, Deron Johnston from the Brownsville Community Justice Center, posed a series of questions to the working group related to how to move away from a one-size-fits-all approach to workforce development and create more community-centered programs like Rolling Rez Arts. Deron also brought up the notion of shifting from a workforce development lens to a more holistic community development lens.

The Alliance for Media Arts and Culture (Spokane, WA)
Wendy Levy, Executive Director of the Alliance for Media Arts and Culture, discussed the organization's mission to transform the world through stories. The organization has existed for forty years and collaborates with universities, long-standing and new companies, and cultural institutions to advance media arts and story-telling. The Alliance had recently built the Arts2Work program, the first federally-registered arts apprenticeship program which provides access to professional, on-the-job training in the media industry. The respondent, Tammi Fergusson, Intergovernmental Relations Coordinator from the White House Initiative on Historically Black Colleges and Universities, described similarities to the work she does with other government departments promoting the use of arts and culture in STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics) learning and apprenticeships. Tammi also discussed the need to build employment infrastructures and working conditions in which young people of color can thrive.

RAPID IDEATION AROUND THE SIX TYPOLOGIES

For the concluding activity of the working group meeting, six white boards were set up in the conference area, each devoted to one of the six typologies explored on Day 1: Hard or Technical Skills Development; 2: Soft or Essential Skills Development; 3: Access to Quality Jobs across Industries; 4: Access to Quality Jobs in the Creative Industries; 5: Sustainable Employment and Ownership; and 6: Power and Policy Shifts.

Now that the working group had been exposed to a range of programs using the arts for workforce development and the challenges and opportunities these programs had faced, participants were divided into smaller groups that moved from one board to the next every ten minutes. At each board, members were asked to write (via post-it notes) their ideas on who to engage, how to overcome challenges, and the next steps needed to successfully use the arts to achieve the outcome articulated in the typology. Participants were also encouraged to consider where these ideas might be situated within the "local workforce system", a system designed to encourage thinking about workforce and community systems with the goal of creating employment opportunities for all. Fellow participant Lauren Eyster from the Urban Institute had described this system at the beginning of the activity. Suggestions would now be based on what had been learned and what ideas had been sparked over the past two days. A conference organizer was positioned at each board to prompt critical reflection and add key points from discussions that took place. The entire working group met at the end of this activity to review and discuss potential next steps that had emerged from this rapid ideation.

"THE GOAL IS NOT A TIGHT, HAPPY STORY. FUNDERS NEED AN HONEST AND OPEN PICTURE OF THE SYSTEMS THAT PEOPLE HAVE TO DEFY TO ACHIEVE THAT STORY."

-WORKING GROUP PARTICIPANT

APPENDIX B: SYNTHESIS OF MAJOR THEMES

By Gwendolyn Rugg, Terese Schwartzman, and Michael Reynolds, NORC

Following the Working Group, NORC and Artplace compiled and carefully reviewed notes from the discussions and materials generated from the interactive exercises that had taken place over the two days. Five overarching and inter-related themes emerged as key challenges and/or opportunities to further the integration of artistic and creative practices in the workforce development sector. These were the need to:

1. Break down silos
2. Create relevant educational pathways
3. Close the skills and assets gap
4. Challenge conceptions of what constitutes success/positive outcomes
5. Creatively use interstitial spaces

SILOS

Breaking down existing **silos between and among individuals, organizations, and sectors** was emphasized by many as critical to successfully integrating the arts with workforce development. To make this cross-sectoral approach work, individuals and organizations must be willing and able to **partner with a variety of agents, and learn how to both identify and access resources across disparate channels**. The working group noted that the existence of silos or barriers between sectors, including among non-profit organizations, currently presents a significant obstacle to implementing change within their professions. One working group member provided an example of the barriers faced by those in workforce development programs as a result of siloed support opportunities. This participant stressed that the concept of 'employability' should not be siloed since it is not only limited to skill sets: "What's actually a workforce development issue is child care access, but workforce development funders don't want to deal with that. The top-down siloed approach doesn't want to deal with the real challenges that workers face." Working group members agreed that helping individuals stay engaged in training and other educational programs in the face of challenges such as needing child care or help with transportation was critical.

The importance of a **non-siloed approach to the learning opportunities** that are offered to workers was also discussed; one example included the benefits of incorporating financial management and other skills development into arts-based training programs. A working group participant who runs a workforce program for audio and video production talked about trainees learning financial education and budgeting alongside their creative work: "They come wanting to be a rapper but leave also knowing how to manage a budget."

To counter the current, more siloed structure that exists within and between the workforce and arts sectors, the working group concluded that it was important to **identify the key agents that need to be engaged across sectors to achieve change, and involve them in the work**. In so doing, it would be important to start from the bottom up: "Rather than starting from the federal government for example, program designers should ask local workforce boards about their needs, challenges and opportunities." In the same vein, the working group noted the importance of an integrative systems approach to bringing about change. "Co-partner" and "a partnership approach" were the processes frequently referenced by the group to counteract the challenges presented by silos. As one participant emphasized when noting the importance of partnerships, those with power should maintain an ethos of "nothing about them without them." In other words, every action and decision should be made in collaboration with the people who those actions and decisions ultimately will affect.

Finally, the working group stressed that 1) knowledge about existing opportunities and 2) insights of what is working as new programs evolve must not be siloed in distinct economic or disciplinary sectors. As one working group member stated regarding the persistent challenges (and payoffs) of breaking down silos: "It's the cross-sector stuff that we have to keep working at, but getting people to operationalize that is the big leap."

RELEVANT EDUCATIONAL PATHWAYS

The working group agreed that arts training is often intricately linked to building other skills desired by employers. These skills span both the "soft" and "hard" realms: technical skills (digital media, programming, music production), management skills, financial skills, and verbal and written communication skills. The group stressed that what is needed are **new educational pathways that help promote the development of these skills** and to think critically about what these pathways should be. Connected to the challenge of silos discussed above, the working group noted that these pathways should be "relevant", "flexible", and "break current silos." The importance of forming partnerships to build these new

educational pathways was stressed in this discussion as it was above. Partnerships between employers and educational institutions were noted as particularly important.

The working group pointed to the need to plant the seed for using the arts for skills development in K-12 education. One commented, "We need policies and programs in place to expose children to creative fields early in their education. If students are not exposed, they are not likely to pursue them." Especially stressed throughout the working group, however, was the **role community colleges can play** in this effort. Community colleges were viewed as a "linchpin for economic development," more focused on vocational training than traditional four-year colleges, and well-positioned to foster employer-educational partnerships since they are often more "open to innovation." A challenge to overcome, however, was the perception that without a four-year degree, a person is "destined to poverty, which is not the reality." Working group participants agreed it was necessary for society to move past this misconception.

Participants also discussed an important step for conceptualizing new educational pathways for incorporating the arts in workforce development: **forming partnerships between community/arts organizations and educational institutions**, rather than "the educational institution having the only ownership of the path." This was deemed critical to ensuring that new programs were relevant. Emphasizing the **apprenticeship model** as a crucial part of these educational pathways came up frequently during discussions. The working group suggested conducting an awareness campaign about the availability of apprenticeship funding which could benefit community colleges since they tended to have restrictive funding streams that frequently "don't allow for creative solutions" for workforce training. Suggestions were also made to advocate for more federally funded apprenticeship programs and seek private philanthropic funding for such programs as well.

Working group members discussed the fact that recruiting students to enroll in these more formal programs was a challenge. The working group noted that many who would want to be part of these new, more relevant educational pathways faced other more pressing life challenges such as "keeping the lights on" that could prevent them from attending. One suggestion for addressing this challenge was to ensure employers paid students for apprenticeship programs.

THE SKILLS AND ASSETS GAP

Needing to close the widening gap between the skills people have and the skills employers need also repeatedly arose among the working group and

is closely connected to the development of more relevant educational pathways discussed above. While the potential solutions to the skills gap challenge overlap with those discussed above (i.e. new educational pathways with innovative curricula and apprenticeships), an interesting perspective arose within the working group as to how to conceptualize this challenge. A participant suggested that in some instances the skills gap may be on the part of employers rather than workers: "Is the problem actually a skills gap (putting 100% of the onus on the workers to learn new skills) or is there also a gap on the part of employers not seeing all the valuable skills workers already possess? Should the onus be on employers and educators to better recognize the skills people do have?" The working group suggested the emphasis shift to the assets individuals and communities already have and away from the more standard focus on gaps.

DEFINING SUCCESS AND POSITIVE OUTCOMES

Across the board, the working group emphasized **the need to change how employers and funders define and measure success**. Concerning employers, participants said it was critical to talk to employers about their perceptions of what constituted successful outcomes for workers. Such discussions would ideally widen employers' views of who is 'employable', where employers should look for qualified job candidates, and what metrics should be used to gauge both employability and workplace success.

The discussion around funding was wide-ranging. Working group members noted the need to change the "wants of funders" in order to be able to "pursue what you know needs to be done." It was deemed important to help funders ask the right questions and understand that the complexities involved in improving outcomes do not always lead to "tight, happy stories." Even successful stories likely contain missteps or challenges, and these need to be recounted to help funders understand the full picture. These stories need to include such elements as: "What happened after 6 months? What was the journey to getting the job? What were the barriers faced on the way to the successful ending?" Being transparent with funders about challenges was considered key since funders need an "honest and open picture of the systems that people must defy to achieve their story."

Determining the **appropriate indicators** to use to measure success and discussing these indicators with funders was also considered critical to future relationships and funding opportunities. The working group emphasized the need to move away from the "tyranny of the quantifiable." While measures may still be quantifiable, they need to be based on

realistic outcomes (the number of Sweet Water's social contracts successfully entered into, as an example) and, whenever possible, be determined in conjunction with the individuals at the center of those measures. One working group member provided the following example: "When I work with tribes, we have them help determine what the metrics should be to achieve their own goals. Return on investment can't measure things immediately when the work is about developing humans."

Further exploring this topic, participants discussed the idea of transactional vs. transformational change. While programs and their funders are often focused on outcomes as measured by transactions, there could be a need to focus more on how these transactions may result in personal transformations. In this vein, working group participants discussed how program outcomes related to "regeneration" may be more appropriate than the current outcomes buzzword of "sustainability." They also further noted the need for longer-term investment by funders to support programming and partnerships predicated on this outcomes model.

USING INTERSTITIAL SPACES

Interstitial space is defined as an in-between or intermediate space. Interstitial spaces are considered to be an important means of innovation. They were introduced to the working group by the team at Sweet Water, who consider interstitial spaces between more formal education and workforce systems to be integral to the work they do—to be "where the magic happens." The concept of interstitial space strongly resonated with the working group, and participants returned to this concept to describe the working group itself: a space to exist between—and potentially shift—both the arts and workforce sectors. Working group members were intrigued by the idea of making such spaces more decipherable. The concept of interstitial space also came up with regard to meeting the expectations of funders: one participant commented, "We often hear that it [the outcome we are aiming for] is not quite a workforce outcome and it's not this other kind of outcome either. How do we get funders to be more open to outcomes that fall between what they are looking for?"

APPENDIX C: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES IN WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

By Danya Sherman and Jamie Hand, ArtPlace America

In addition to the themes synthesized above, below we summarize the challenges and opportunities specific to the workforce development sector that working group participants surfaced in our two days together.

SUMMARY OF CHALLENGES

Learnings related to the overall national labor economy context included:

- There is a scarcity of high quality, living wage jobs
- There is a lack of social safety net, making employment difficult for those who cannot afford health care, child care, and more
- Structural barriers to education and social networks that provide a leg up in workforce development persist, and disparately affect lower income communities, communities of color, rural regions, etc.
- There is a mismatch and lack of federal and regional coordination between jobs available in specific sectors and the availability of training in those sectors
- There is a lack of support within the workforce sector and economy overall for arts and culture and the creative economy

Attendees noted that further barriers exist within firms themselves:

- There is a lack of accountability on the part of employers' compliance with and adherence to fair labor practices
- Racial, gender, sexuality, ability, and other forms of bias in recruiting, hiring, advancement, and human resource management persist

We heard that the current government-supported workforce system, intended to address the above challenges, frequently embeds and reproduces structural and institutional barriers itself. Many participants shared that the workforce system:

- Is fractured / decentralized
- Is underfunded (not able to meet the scale of need)
- Assumes labor to be primarily financial and transactional (rather than taking a holistic human-centered perspective)
- Prioritizes capital / corporate wealth accumulation
- Frames and measure success without accounting for structural barriers, assuming individuals are starting from the same place and have the same needs and objectives for growing/succeeding as a worker

SUMMARY OF OPPORTUNITIES

Participants also shared many ideas for how to overcome these challenges, described and grouped below.

To address overall labor economy barriers, many opportunities exist to rebuild and reinvest in a more holistic workforce system:

- Support and build locally-engaged national movements in support of high quality, living-wage jobs
- Support and build locally-engaged national movements in support of investing in social safety nets
- Invest in education and social network building in disinvested areas/communities (through the workforce system and outside of it)
- Incentivize regional collaboration, peer-learning, and field-building
- Re-build trust that institutions have for community members
- Invest equitably in arts, culture, and the creative economy - both by educating policymakers and funders about the value of arts and culture jobs and skills, and educating people (future workers) about jobs within the creative economy, and jobs that provide opportunities to use artistic and creative skills beyond the creative economy

Employers themselves can align with worker movements and others working on anti-oppression by:

- Supporting and building locally-engaged national movements in support of fair labor practices
- Incentivizing and providing training for firms, hiring managers, and others around removing bias

Opportunities to rebuild the workforce system from bottom-up are myriad:

- Re-structure and centralize the workforce system; create holistic approaches to building pipelines that take the social determinants of employment into account
- Build the system around a holistic, human-centered approach
  - Create more interstitial, cross-sector space
  - Trust and invest in local innovation, expertise, and models
  - Invest in education and job training equitably, refine and rebuild the pipeline
- Establish new curricula, training programs, and apprenticeships in community colleges, historically black colleges and universities, and within community, cultural, faith-based organizations
- Educate people about creative and other kinds of jobs earlier in their development
- Invest more heavily in the creation of jobs in underfunded sectors (including the arts sectors)
- Prioritize worker development and wellbeing rather than shareholder and executive wealth accumulation
- Re-build impact and measurement system to focus on the above (redefine success)

"HEY, YOU KNOW WHAT'S ACTUALLY A WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT ISSUE? CHILD CARE ACCESS. BUT WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT FUNDERS DON'T WANT TO DEAL WITH THE REAL CHALLENGES THAT WORKERS FACE."

-WORKING GROUP PARTICIPANT

APPENDIX D: WORKING GROUP PARTICIPANT LIST

Joe Altepeter, Downtown Women's Center
Marsha Armstrong, City of Newark
James Bryant, Full Employment Council of Kansas City
Jasmin Cardenas, Independent Artist and Chicago Workers' Collaborative
Lisa Chensvold, National Fund for Workforce Solutions
Tamara Clunis, Amarillo College
Angie Datta Kamath, The City University of New York (CUNY)
Brandon Dennison, Coalfield Development
Lauren Eyster, Urban Institute
Tammi Fergusson, White House Initiative on HBCUs
Chris Hope, The Loop Lab
Esteban Kelly, US Federation of Worker Cooperatives
Seung Kim, Local Initiatives Support Corporation
Deron Johnston, Brownsville Community Justice Center
Abigail Langston, PolicyLink
Wendy Levy, Arts2Work / The Alliance for Media Arts & Culture
Kelly Miyamura, Hawaii P-20 Partnerships for Education
Jennifer Novak-Leonard, Northwestern University
Bryan Parker, First Peoples Fund
Leslie Payne, James Irvine Foundation
Emmanuel Pratt, Sweet Water Foundation
Jia Li Lok Pratt, Sweet Water Foundation
Judilee Reed, The William Penn Foundation
Nelda Liliana Ruiz, Southwest FolkLife Alliance / VozFrontera
Meghan Sobocienski, Grace in Action
Randy Smith, Rural Community College Alliance
Facilitator: **Deepa Gupta**, Blue Lotus Advisors

Jobs for the Future
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NORC at the University of Chicago
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ArtPlace America
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TRANSFORMING THE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SECTOR THROUGH ARTS & CULTURE