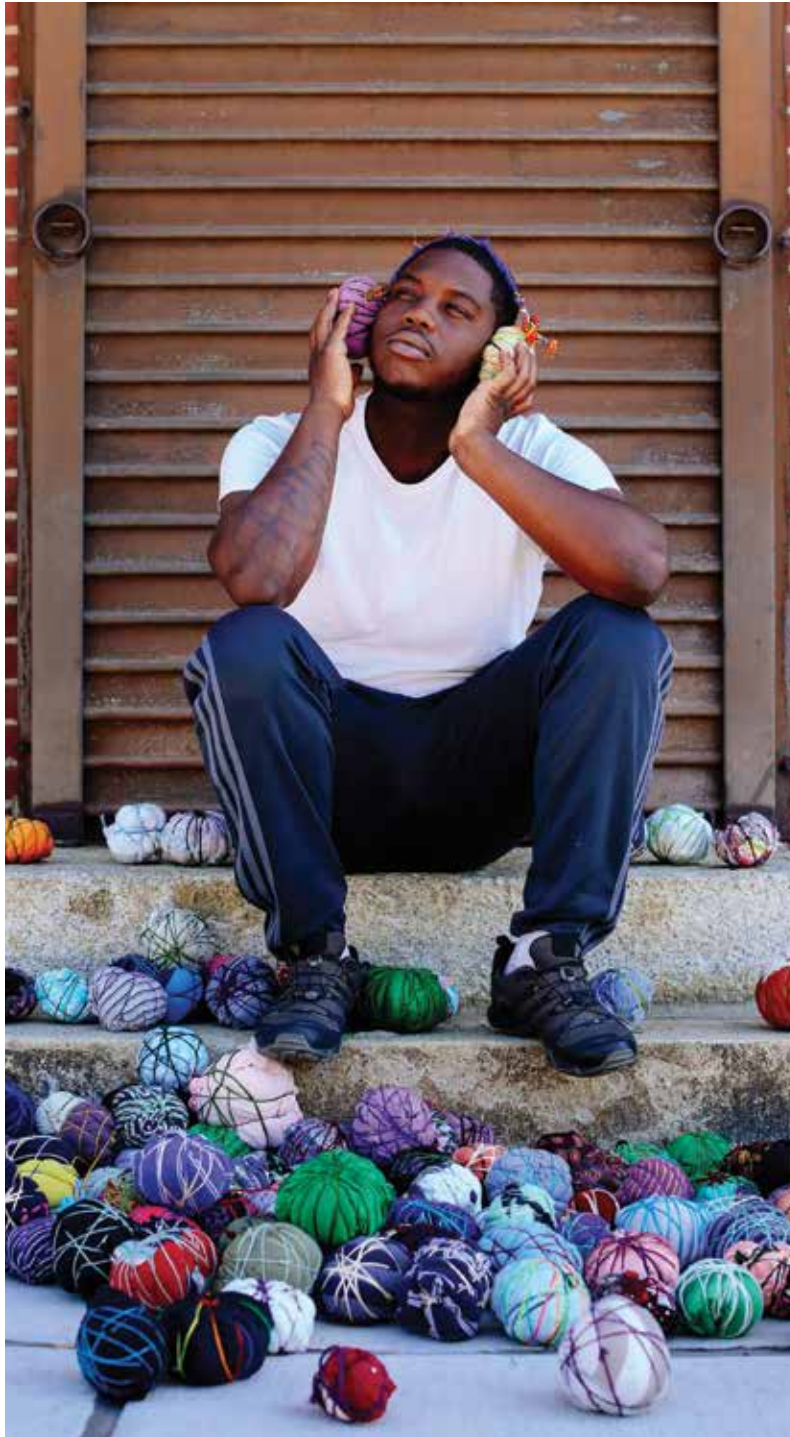


# Creating Change through Arts, Culture, and Equitable Development: A Policy and Practice Primer

## Executive Summary



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# **Creating Change through Arts, Culture, and Equitable Development:** A Policy and Practice Primer

## **Executive Summary**

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Milly Hawk Daniel  
Jeremy Liu**

# Acknowledgments

Our deep gratitude goes to the dozens of artists, creative cultural leaders, public officials, and culture bearers who contributed their experience and analysis to this research. They are listed by name in the Appendix.

This research would not have been possible without the generous support of The Kresge Foundation. We want to thank especially Regina Smith, managing director, arts and culture, and Maria Rosario Jackson, senior adviser to arts and culture, who provided invaluable guidance in this endeavor.

At PolicyLink, Chief Executive Officer Angela Glover Blackwell and Chief Operating Officer Josh Kirschenbaum helped conceptualize and frame both the initiative and this paper. Victor Rubin, vice president for research, provided excellent editorial guidance and content feedback. Lorrie Chang, program associate, contributed to the process framework, providing research, drafting the policy spotlight case studies, locating images, and reading and rereading multiple drafts. She was relentless in refining the document, being attentive to language and context, and pushing its accessibility to multiple audiences. Axel Santana, program coordinator, provided research, citation, and production help. Heather Tamir, editorial manager, provided editorial oversight and her ever-insightful improvement of language and form, with additional editing assistance from Paula Card Higginson. Mark Jones contributed the design and beauty of this document, with some additional support from Jacob Goolkasian, production designer. Magie Ramirez, a PhD-elect intern, contributed substantive conceptualization and research, and drafted the promising practices case studies.

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# Executive Summary

Collectively, arts and culture enable understanding of the past and envisioning of a shared, more equitable future. In disinvested communities, arts and culture act as tools for equitable development—shaping infrastructure, transportation, access to healthy food, and connecting community identity to the development of a vibrant local economy. In communities of color and low-income communities, arts and culture contribute to strengthening cultural identity, healing trauma, and fostering shared vision for community.

## Bridging Two Movements

Across the United States, growing movements focused on equitable development and community-centered arts and culture are uniting to strengthen the equity impact of their work. The equitable development movement—which brings a racial and economic equity lens to the community development field—depends on the engagement of communities of color and low-income communities in prioritizing, designing, and implementing aspirations for the futures of their neighborhoods, cities, and towns. The community-centered arts and culture movement—made up of social justice artists, arts and culture agencies with a focus on racial equity, and cultural centers that serve communities of color and low-income communities—leads in securing cultural assets, building greater social cohesion, and feeding economic vibrancy.

Over the last decade, increasing collaboration between these two movements is yielding transformative and creative change. Arts and culture are critical elements of an equity framework; they reflect the assets of communities and enable cohesion in a pluralistic nation. Without equity, community redevelopment can improve a physical place but leave the people behind, stifle broad creativity, bring economic benefit only to a few, lead to a homogeneous community, or displace many. The tools of arts and culture can accelerate equity, build communities of opportunity, and design for broadly shared prosperity.

Committing to achieving equity requires responses to three questions: who benefits, who pays, and who decides. By reflecting the needs of people and place, arts and culture offer the means for engaging diverse and pluralistic communities in exploring such questions, and working together to find answers. To determine the desired outcomes, equity is the measure for success and a guide for course correction.

The manifestation of these growing movements—equitable development and community-centered arts and culture—has, in recent years, been referred to as creative placemaking by the National Endowment for the Arts, the philanthropic collaborative ArtPlace America, and other field leaders. Through work across scores of communities, there is growing recognition of the need to focus on advancing policies that can accelerate equity results. *Creating Change through Arts, Culture, and Equitable Development: A Policy and Practice Primer* describes some of those policy opportunities, documents their emergence across America, and offers a framework for moving equity policy and equitable development across multiple sectors aided by the use of arts and culture practices.

## Creating Change through Policy

Historically, the United States has used policy to support arts and culture to create community change. During the Great Depression, the Works Progress Administration (WPA) percent-for-arts programs levied on public works and commercial development not only supported artists, but also enhanced urban and rural infrastructure and acknowledged the role of art in civic welfare. This notion was expanded in the mid-1960s with the establishment of the National Endowment for the Arts and the National Endowment for the Humanities. In the 1980s and 1990s, as cities recognized the importance of incorporating the cultural sector into government programs, municipal departments of cultural affairs were established. More recently, the Obama Administration advanced the practice of connecting arts and culture to infrastructure and equitable development by offering benefits in competitive funding streams for creative innovation across multiple agencies.



The desired outcome of equitable development is the establishment of communities of opportunity that are characterized by just and fair inclusion, that build public will for equity solutions, and that expand the capacity of local leaders and residents to drive resources toward improving the quality of life in underinvested communities. The power of arts and culture to engage community leverages that outcome and is exemplified by innovative state- and local-level arts and culture agencies that offer equity considerations to partnerships integrating arts, culture, and community development.

*Creating Change* illuminates the intersection of arts, culture, and equitable development, and documents the policies and best practices that are defining, informing, and expanding the field. The report shows the impact of activity emerging at the intersection across nine sectors: arts and culture; transportation; housing; infrastructure and community investment; economic development and financial security; health and food; youth and education; open space and recreation; and technology and information access. Case studies within each sector illuminate promising approaches that can be brought to scale through policy change, which can become the basis for systemic support for arts and culture as a mechanism to advance equity.

## Principles for Advancing Change

In the fields of community-centered arts and culture and equitable development, engaged artists and community development institutions are merging their efforts to create large-scale impact. They are generating community vitality and connecting neighborhood and cultural identity to vibrant city, town, or tribal economies. Federal, state, and local policies to support the interconnected growth of arts, culture, and equitable development can be advanced in six principal ways:

- 1. Map the artistic and cultural assets** of cities, towns, states, tribal communities, and the nation, with a focus on the cultural resources in communities of color and low-income communities.
- 2. Evaluate economic conditions, including current investments in public works and arts and culture**, using data disaggregated by race, ethnicity, income, and neighborhood.
- 3. Identify barriers to resources for communities of color and low-income communities, and restructure processes** to engender access.
- 4. Work with artists, designers, young people, and culture bearers to engage the community and inform equity-driven processes** for community development.
- 5. Expand equity-focused arts and culture investments across public agencies**, through community-driven arts and culture plans, budget appropriations, and targeted allocations to disadvantaged communities, artists of color, and cultural institutions serving communities of color and low-income communities.
- 6. Ensure that governance and staffing are representative** of the populations served by the agency.



**Above: 1)** A community collaborative project with Lanre Tejoso, artist-in-residence, transforms discarded street materials into beautiful objects, while exploring loss and trauma in Philadelphia. (*The Village of Arts @ Humanities/ Breanne Furlong*); **2)** Faith Bartley, People's Paper Co-op fellow, poses for figure drawing for Ladies Night—a monthly nonjudgmental, intergenerational space that brings women together in N. Philadelphia through art. (*The Village of Arts and Humanities/Mark Strandquist*); **3)** Community square dancing at Carcassonne Community Center in Blackey, KY, a partner of Applashop, as part of "Performing Our Future Institute." (*Lafayette College/Clay Wegrzynowicz*)



## Sectors for Innovation and Policy Change

The nine sectors highlighted in the report and summarized below are elements of comprehensive equitable development. The current role of arts and culture in each sector and the policy approaches that can help achieve equitable communities of opportunity are described. Promising practices in each sector offer examples of how community development strategies can combine with arts and culture strategies to achieve equitable development outcomes.

### Arts and Culture: *Nourishing the Soul of Communities of Opportunity*

Public sector investments in arts and culture can provide a foundation and be a catalyst for delivering racial and economic equity. Arts and culture strengthen the connection between neighborhood identity and development. While arts, culture, and equitable development initiatives are growing, most public arts and culture agencies still have a limited focus on the equity roles their resources can play. Arts organizations serving communities of color, in general, are much less secure, having far smaller budgets, facilities, communities served, and staffing than their counterparts among White communities. Few communities have a strong alignment between demographic shares of the population and shares of arts and culture investments. When aligned through equity policy, public appropriations to the arts from federal, state, and municipal sources can contribute to the growth of vibrant community and economic outcomes, and forge strong agencies that can partner with other sectors.

### Transportation: *Connecting Arts, Culture, and Vibrant Economies*

Transportation is a critical link to opportunity, connecting people to jobs, schools, health care, and grocery stores. Equitable transportation systems account for diverse cultural needs for, and uses of, transportation. They spur economic growth and improve a community's built environment to make places livable and sustainable. Policy change to advance equity in transportation can influence federal, state, regional, and municipal transportation authorities that provide for everything from bus service and commuter rail systems to paratransit services, bicycle lanes, and sidewalks. Design processes informed by arts and culture can shape investments

in facilities and operations to result in systems that work better for the people who need them most. The sector's significant resource investments can deliver lasting arts and cultural assets for communities. Engaging artists and cultural organizations in the development of such services strengthens organizing and advocacy efforts and results in more equitable transportation systems, community design, cultural districts, and public spaces.

### Housing: *Anchoring Cultural Communities*

High-quality affordable housing in neighborhoods that provide access to good schools, jobs, transportation, and a robust cultural community is critical for the success and well-being of children and families. Arts and culture can play defining roles in housing development, neighborhood stabilization, and anti-displacement strategies. Artists can engage specific cultural communities in meeting the challenges of neighborhood change by helping to craft and embrace a vision of an inclusive community future—one in which residents can stay in a place and thrive as it is revitalized. New affordable housing developments can reflect cultural aesthetics in design, and offer live-work space for artists and culture bearers as well as space for arts programming. Among the key resources at the intersection of housing and arts and culture are programs such as the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Community Block Grant program and the Low Income Housing Tax Credit program that can be invested to anchor cultural communities and invest in artists' housing and live-work space.

### Infrastructure and Community Investment: *Creating Vibrant Foundations*

Substantial support for arts and cultural investments in low-income communities and communities of color can be leveraged from infrastructure investments and public resources for development projects. Most cities and federal projects set aside 1 to 2 percent of the cost of large public infrastructure projects for public or community arts programs. Direct capital investments in arts and culture facilities are also made through local revenues such as tourism and hotel taxes. The federal New Markets Tax Credit and Historic Tax Credit programs are examples of public-private approaches that can explicitly finance arts and culture through investments in venues, organizations, and other physical and business assets. Because both programs target disinvested, blighted, and low-



income communities, they can be important sources of support for equitable development and cultural preservation in low-income communities and communities of color.

Advocates and coalitions can help develop equity criteria to screen proposed investments, and to shape programs, policies, and initiatives. This can help ensure that infrastructure investment and community development serve the needs and priorities of the community and include arts and cultural facilities that deliver on equity.

## Economic Development and Financial Security: “Greening” the Creative Economy

Creative industries account for more than 700,000 businesses across America and almost three million employees. Beyond the more conventional definitions of museums, performing and visual arts, film, and music included in these figures, other related cultural businesses that enlarge these numbers are critical to placemaking and offer jobs and participation in local economies. Hundreds of thousands of small ethnic restaurants, grocery stores, and other businesses create local jobs, boost neighborhood economies, and enrich cultural life. These types of enterprises serve as centerpieces for downtown redevelopment, anchor neighborhood renewal, and create vibrant public spaces throughout a city or small town. However, in spite of their contributions, artists, culture bearers, and cultural entrepreneurs of color are largely shut out of conventional financing, and the tax dollars from tourism they help generate almost never flow back into their communities. *Creating Change* highlights equitable access to fair credit and job training in creative industries supported by public revenues, including low-cost lending and grants for artists, arts and culture organizations, and cultural entrepreneurs. These policies can strengthen the economic foundations of small businesses and individual artists, and can encourage young people to learn and practice cultural arts. Public and private investment in collaborative activities that showcase local artists and cultural entrepreneurs, and equitable allocation of the tourism revenues that artists help generate can foster equity in economic development.

## Health and Food: *Healing Trauma, Feeding Well-Being*

Arts and cultural practices form essential elements of a health equity agenda and can be supported through a wide range of policies and practices. The Affordable Care Act’s focus on strengthening community clinics in underserved communities promotes culturally resonant care and can enhance efforts to address trauma, racism, and health disparities to increase individual, family, and community resilience. Access to healthy food supports cultural traditions as an important component of improving health and the economy in vulnerable communities. The federal Healthy Food Financing Initiative, for example, provides grants and tax credits to build and upgrade full-scale grocery stores, cooperatives, farmers’ markets, mobile markets, food hubs, and other retail outlets that can reflect the culture of communities. And, public art that reflects cultural context can enhance powerful health-supportive amenities including parks, active recreation infrastructure, and clinics in communities that have been underserved.

## Youth and Education: *Grounding in Arts and Culture*

Arts and culture activities can support young people to connect to their community, find meaning and direction in life, and gain valuable skills. Communities have structured policy reforms that enable youth to find positive pathways after experiencing poor education outcomes or involvement with the criminal justice system. Many youths exposed to such programs emerge from these reforms to become policy leaders, artists, or cultural facilitators of community life and development. In Alaska, for example, Native youth have found employment in arts and tourism jobs that connect them economically to their culture.

The Black Lives Matter movement has engaged a new generation of young people in calling for justice through cultural alliances and in the use of art as an inspiring force in movement building. The California Alliance for Boys and Men of Color brings together youth, community organizations, foundations, and leaders in government, education, public health, and law enforcement to pursue policy and systems reforms at the local and state levels. Incorporating arts and culture into their work strengthens it significantly—focusing young people’s activism and elevating educational outcomes.





**Above:** Temporary art installation in Seattle's Rainier Valley East-West Neighborhood Greenway, funded in part by the Office of Arts & Culture's Public Art Program, featuring the work of Kemba Opiio. ("Art Interruptions 2016" makes its way to the Rainier Valley East-West Neighborhood Greenway with whimsical temporary installations by [SDOT Photos](#) is licensed under [CC BY 2.0](#))



## Open Space and Recreation: *Aligning Cultural Practices and Public Spaces*

Open spaces provide public commons—culturally driven places for gathering, political action, reflection, and recreation. Shared open spaces act as visible, living anchors for communities, especially important in times of transition or disruption. Neighborhood parks offer the close connections to nature, locations for cultural festivals and gathering places, and for low-cost exercise, yet millions do not have access to safe parks close to home. The federal Land and Water Conservation Fund, along with state and local parks bonds, are the major sources of funding for parks, and can prioritize equity investments in underserved communities. The potential for arts and culture to be more integrated into open space and parks in underserved communities can be prioritized through a community's long-range comprehensive plan. And local governments can involve artists in strategies to engage historic and new communities of color in the design and planning of creative open space.

## Technology and Information Access: *Opening Doors to the Creative Economy*

Technology and digital media innovations, enabled by broadband access, are transforming the power to make and create, design and build, and imagine and learn. Technology, in turn, is informing and informed by arts and culture. Technology and digital media have unprecedented potential to give agency and economic power to communities working to build economic inclusion in the new economy. Technology and digital media create tremendous opportunities for diversity and inclusion of expression, ideas, and cultures. Public policy can address the vast inequalities in digital access that remain for low-income communities, tribal communities, and communities of color in access and representation. Federal broadband grants generate critical growth in high-speed communications for underserved communities, create thousands of long-term jobs, and substantially increase household income each year. Recently modernized federal programs valued at \$10 billion across federal agencies now include broadband as an eligible expenditure. Federal Community Facilities programs can now bring broadband to health clinics and recreation centers and in turn create greater access to creative technologies for underserved youth and artists.

## **A Creative Way Forward**

The nation's prosperity depends on how it addresses equity and honors the wisdom, voice, and experience of its diverse communities. Arts and culture are vivid expressions of that wisdom and experience, and provide the means to unify an increasingly diverse society. The intersection of the community-centered arts and culture and the equitable development movements—and the policies to secure and support that intersection—can help deliver just and fair inclusion for all.

At the heart of *Creating Change* are inspiring stories of communities of color, low-income communities, and new immigrant and rural White communities, drawing on their cultural roots, lifting up creative expression, and steering public resources to transform their lives and the places where they live. The report presents policy and planning process frameworks that can help policymakers, public agencies, philanthropic organizations, community advocates, and artists invest in arts, culture, and equitable development that reflect and strengthen diverse communities.

Such action, innovation, and investment can integrate and bolster arts and culture to serve growing pluralities, restore crumbling infrastructure, and revitalize disinvested communities. Leveraging these opportunities requires policy change built on new alliances, new partnerships, and renewed commitments to equity. Federal, state, and local policy must intentionally lift up and support the cultural riches that join people together, nourish the spirit, enliven communities, and create a vibrant nation.

Read the full report at <http://www.policylink.org/focus-areas/infrastructure-equity/arts-culture-equitable-development>.



# Appendix: Interviewees and Contributors

\*Note: All roles and organizations reflect where each person was at the time of the interview, not necessarily where they currently are.

<b>Organization</b>	<b>Contact Name and Role</b>
<b>Alaska Native Heritage Center</b>	Steven Alvarez, Director of Arts and Education
<b>Allied Media Projects</b>	Jeanette Lee, Executive Director
<b>Appalshop</b>	Dudley Cocke , Director of Roadside Theater
	Ada Smith, Institutional Development Director
<b>ARCH Development Corporation</b>	Duane Gautier, Chief Executive Officer and President
<b>Arts &amp; Democracy</b>	Caron Atlas, Director
<b>Artspace</b>	Naomi Chu, Director of Real Estate Operations, Property Development
	Colin Hamilton, Senior Vice President, National Advancement
	Wendy Holmes, Senior Vice President, Consulting and New Projects
<b>Ashé Cultural Center</b>	Carol Bebelle, Co-Founder and Executive Director
	Jo Ann Minor, Associate Director of Administration and Operation
<b>Berea College Promise Neighborhood</b>	Sherry Taubert, Project Director
<b>Bush Foundation</b>	Erik Takeshita, Community Creativity Portfolio Director
<b>Chicago Public Art Group</b>	Jon Pounds, Former Executive Director
<b>Chinatown Community Development Center</b>	Roy Chan, Community Planning Consultant
<b>Chula Vista Community Health Improvement Partners</b>	Dana Richardson, Senior Director, Community Health and Engagement
<b>City of Chicago, Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events</b>	Julie Burros, Former Director of Cultural Planning
<b>City of Los Angeles, Department of Cultural Affairs</b>	Danielle Brazell, General Manager
<b>City of New Orleans</b>	Ashleigh Gardere, Senior Adviser to Mayor Mitchell J. Landrieu; Director of The Network for Economic Opportunity
<b>City of New Orleans, Cultural Economy</b>	Asante Salaam, Outreach Manager
<b>City of New Orleans, Office of Workforce Development</b>	Brandi Ebanks, Program Manager
<b>City of Promise</b>	Sarad Davenport, Director
<b>City of Seattle, Office of Arts and Culture</b>	Randy Engstrom, Director
	Kathy Hsieh, Cultural Partnerships and Grants Manager
<b>City of Seattle, Race and Social Justice Initiative</b>	Diana Falchuk, Deputy Manager
<b>Communities United for Restorative Youth Justice (CURYJ)</b>	George Galvis, Executive Director
<b>Destiny Arts Center</b>	Cristy Johnston-Limón, Executive Director

<b>East Bay Center for Performing Arts</b>	Jordan Simmons, Artistic Director
<b>First Peoples Fund</b>	Lori Pourier, President
<b>Foundation for Louisiana</b>	Flozell Daniels Jr., President and Chief Executive Officer
<b>Hacienda Community Development Corporation (Portland Mercado)</b>	Nathan Teske, Fund Development Manager
<b>Institute for Sustainable Communities</b>	Christopher Forinash, Director of U.S. Programs
<b>La Clínica de La Raza</b>	Jane Garcia, Chief Executive Director
<b>Miami-Dade County, Department of Cultural Affairs</b>	Deborah Margol, Deputy Director
	Michael Spring, Department Director
<b>Nashville Arts Commission</b>	Jennifer Cole, Executive Director
<b>Nathan Cummings Foundation</b>	Maureen Knighton, Senior Vice President for Grantmaking
<b>National Association of Latino Arts and Culture</b>	María López De León, President and Chief Executive Director
<b>National Compadres Network</b>	Héctor Sánchez-Flores, Executive Director
	Jerry Tello, Co-Founder and Director of the National Latino Fatherhood and Family Institute
<b>National Endowment for the Arts</b>	Jason Schupbach, Director of Design Programs
<b>New York City, Department of Cultural Affairs</b>	Tom Finkelpearl, Commissioner
<b>Newark Department of Economic and Housing Development</b>	Baye Adofo-Wilson, Deputy Mayor
<b>Northside Achievement Zone</b>	Sondra Samuels, President and Chief Executive Officer
<b>PA'I Foundation</b>	Vicky Holt Takamine, Executive Director
<b>Pillsbury United Communities</b>	Chanda Smith Baker, President and Chief Executive Officer
<b>Pregones Theater</b>	Rosalba Rolón, Artistic Director
<b>Project Row Houses</b>	Rick Lowe, Founding Director and Executive Director
<b>Providence, Department of Arts, Culture and Tourism</b>	Lynne McCormack, Former Director
<b>Queens Museum</b>	Jodi Hanel, Former Co-Interim Director
	Prerana Reddy, Director of Public Programs and Community Engagement
<b>San Francisco Arts Commission</b>	Tom DeCaigny, Director of Cultural Affairs
<b>San Francisco Public Utilities Commission</b>	Laura Page, Former Program Manager
<b>Tohono O'odham Community Action (TOCA)</b>	Terrol Johnson, Co-Founder, President, and Chief Executive Officer
<b>Toledo Arts Commission</b>	Marc Folk, Executive Director
<b>Tucson Pima Arts Council</b>	Roberto Bedoya, Former Director of Civic Engagement
<b>U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Office of Economic Resilience</b>	Katheryn Dykgraaf, Program Analyst
	Dwayne Marsh, Former Senior Adviser
<b>Urban Peace Movement</b>	Nicole Lee, Executive Director
<b>Washington DC, Office of Planning</b>	Kimberly Driggins, Former Associate Director
<b>Youth Justice Coalition</b>	Kim McGill, Organizer

# Author Biographies

## **Kalima Rose**

Kalima Rose is vice president for strategic initiatives and co-leader for arts, culture, and equitable development at PolicyLink. In partnership with communities of color; low-income communities; tribal communities; and equity-focused municipal, regional, state, and federal leaders, she has helped win new investments, resources, and jobs for disinvested communities, underemployed workers, and firms and artists of color. Her experience spans sustainable communities, fair and inclusionary housing, equitable development, and national strategies in anti-displacement policy. She is a practicing poet and loves to work with artists and arts and culture organizations.

## **Milly Hawk Daniel**

Milly Hawk Daniel, PolicyLink vice president for communications, leads a team of creative professionals in advancing equity through print, broadcast, and digital platforms. A book editor, speechwriter, and communications strategist, she has a long association with arts and culture, especially jazz. Her contributions to cultural activities are fed by a passionate belief that arts and culture are essential for building and sustaining community, in contributing to the economic vitality of neighborhoods, and in nurturing the spirit of places and the people who live, work, play, and learn in them.

## **Jeremy Liu**

Jeremy Liu, senior fellow for arts, culture, and equitable development at PolicyLink, is an award-winning artist, community builder, social entrepreneur, and real estate developer. He works to integrate arts and culture into equitable development work and co-founded Creative Ecology Partners, an art and design studio for community development innovation that created the Creative Determinants of Health and the National Bitter Melon Council. His award-winning art projects and published writings often operate at the intersection of community planning, art, and creative placemaking.







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