

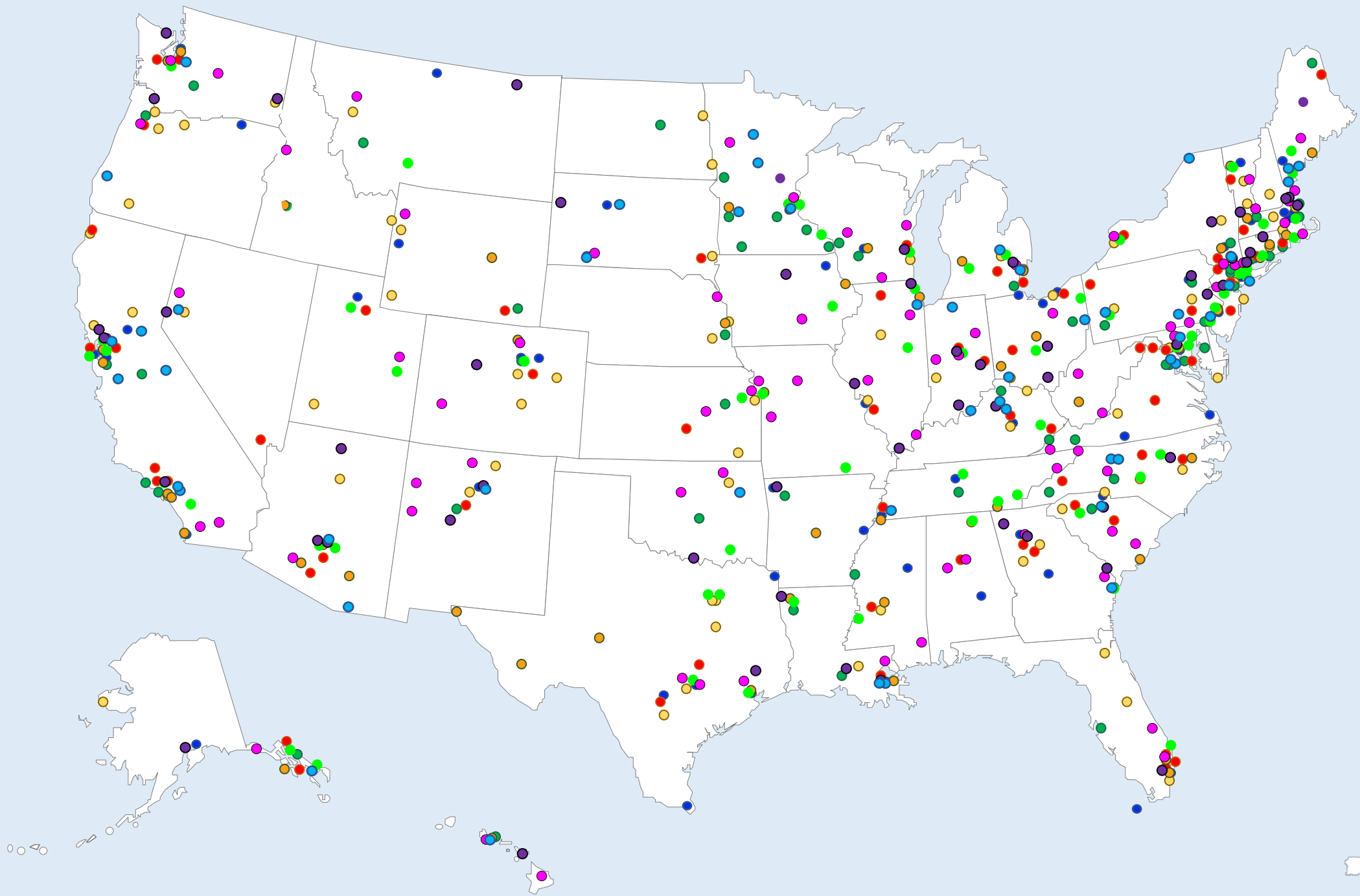
Doing the HOMEwork

Community Engagement in Creative Placemaking Projects

Reflections from the NEA Our Town Program

Our Town & Creative Placemaking





Artists, Designers, Culture Bearers



Illuminate



Energize



Imagine



Connect

OUR TOWN: Logic Model

PROBLEM STATEMENT: American communities everywhere face a distinctive set of local economic, physical, and/or social challenges. Yet community leaders are often unaware of solutions that stem from the successful adoption and integration of arts, design, and cultural strategies.



OUR TOWN GOAL: Sustained support and recognition of arts, design, and cultural strategies as integral to every phase of community development across the United States.

**National
Endowment
for the Arts**
arts.gov



Project Community Contexts

Local Our Town projects respond to and are shaped by community type, existing social and human capital, existing policies, local assets, and other community development activities.

Project Inputs

Our Town projects require:



Leadership



Cross-sector partnerships



Financial resources



Community buy-in

Project Activities

Creative placemaking strategies strengthen local communities by:



Envisioning



Connecting



Illuminating



Energizing

Arts tactics advance creative placemaking strategies through:

- Artist residencies
- Arts festivals
- Community co-creation of art
- Performances
- Public art
- Cultural planning
- District planning
- Creative asset mapping
- Public art planning
- Artist/designer-facilitated community planning
- Design of artist space
- Design of cultural facilities
- Public space design
- Creative business development
- Professional artist development

**Innovation/
Systems
Change
Outcomes**

Project activities as well as local community change lead to:

Sustained cross-sector partnerships and collaboration

Replication or scaling of project activities

Long-term funding streams and policies that enable creative placemaking

**Local
Community
Change
Outcomes**

Increased integration of arts, design, and cultural strategies among local, cross-sector partners, leading to economic, physical, and social change.



Economic Change

- Local business and job growth
- Professional development/training



Physical Change

- Beautification
- New construction



Social Change

- Civic engagement
- Social cohesion

And more

Objective: Strengthening Communities

Economic Change: Economic improvements of individuals, institutions, or the community including local business growth, job creation/labor force participation, professional development/training, prevention of displacement, in-migration, and tourism.

Physical Change: Physical improvements that occur to the built and natural environment including beautification and/or enhancement of physical environment, new construction, and redevelopment (including arts, culture, and public space).

Social Change: Improvements to social relationships, civic engagement and community empowerment, and/or amplifying community identity including civic engagement, collective efficacy, social capital, social cohesion, and community attachment.

Ultimate Goal – Drive Systems Change

Systems Change: Improvements to community capacity to sustain the integration of arts, culture, and design into strategies for advancing local economic, physical, and/or social outcomes including partnerships with other sectors, civic and institutional leadership, replication or scaling of innovative projects, long term funding, training programs, and permanent staff positions.

Assessing Community Engagement in Applications

QUESTION: Describe substantive and meaningful engagement with the intended community (e.g., residents and other stakeholders) in the development of the shared vision for your project and its implementation. If you have worked with this community in the past, discuss your previous engagement. Also, discuss your planned process to engage the community going forward, and as appropriate, how you plan to be inclusive of underserved populations.

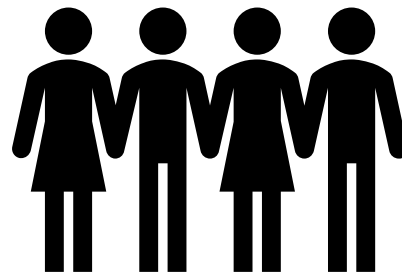
Assessing Community Engagement in Applications

Evidence of thoughtful engagement throughout the application:

- Budget
- Project participants
- Organizational partners
- Letters of support

Assessing Community Engagement in Review Process

- Composing grant panels with those that have unique expertise in community engagement (including those beyond the arts/culture fields)



In Our Town/Creative Placemaking Projects...

- Political environments change
- Partnership projects that are centered on community needs/desires aren't easy and often take longer than you might expect
- Project activities can change dramatically throughout project period

Key is for funders to offer flexibility and emphasize the importance of engagement and “table setting” up front in creative placemaking work

Technical Assistance Offerings for Grantees

Offered in partnership with Local Initiatives Support Corporation (our cooperator), TA is offered to grantees in following areas:

- Developing partnerships and identifying shared values
- **Crafting inclusive community engagement methods & techniques**
- Designing a creative placemaking evaluation plan
- Documenting your project and communicating success
- Utilizing calls for artists, contracts and agreements in your work
- Securing resources for creative placemaking

Photo: Pre-Enactment Theater

