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NASAA event pivot

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>>CART Provider: Standing by. Diane Jamie Omari
LaPlaca Cohen National Assembly of
State Arts Agencies NASAA.

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>> This is mostly so we can check
visuals and audio and make sure
everything is up to insufficient.
Kelly wanted to check pronunciation
of a couple of names. She will be
pinch hitting today for Pam who is

the last I heard stuck in traffic
evacuating Louisiana.

>> Never a dull moment.

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>>CART Provider: Standing by.

>> Eric: .

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>> Eric: Good afternoon

everybody. Welcome to the first session
in our shifting policy and practice
learning series. Pivot part 1.

If you have not already done so, we
have quite a number of people on
this call. 125 at this moment so
if you would please mute yourselves
if you haven't at this time just
to provide cleaner aud wroe for
everyone. It is really good to see
so many of you today. Before we
begin I would like to take just a
moment to call our attention to the
physical lands we all call home.
NASAA does this at the outset of
convening to convey respect and to
the original people places and
cultures of this country. If you
would just join me in a moment of
reflection to honors lands which we
occupy to commit to stewardship for

the First Nations part of the past
, present and future of America.

All right thank you all.

As we begin this session today I want to acknowledge many states are coping with natural disasters right now. For our colleagues affected by hurricane Laura, Derocho wild fires and other perils we at NASAA wish you comfort safety and resilience in our recovery efforts and making it through tough times. A few quick housekeeping notes before I turn over to Kelly Barsdate to get the content kicked off I'll be collecting questions for the Q&A portion via chat today. So feel free to send them at any time. I'm also going to provide time during Q&A for those joining only by phone. So don't worry about that just get your questions ready and I'll make sure to call that out. You'll see that my name if question question, space Eric Giles so I should be at the top of your list at all times just click on that if you will. And if you have technical questions I'm here to help you schts I can as well so send me a chat that way. Finally, we are recording this session and posting it to our YouTube channel and our website as soon as I am able to edit it and get it up I expect by Monday. So please take #1k3 check it there. I will send out an email afterwards letting you know it's available with that I'm going to turn things over to Kelly.

>> Kelly: Thank you very much Eric and hello to all. Thank you for joining this first session in

our shifting policy and practice areas . It warms my heart to see the faces of so many friends and colleagues today transcending all kinds of distance to come together as a field. As you all know in ordinary years we have gathered in person. At assemblies to learn, to see our peers and to celebrate together. Unfortunately that's not possible right now. We're especially sad that we won't be joining our former hosts the institute of Puerto Rico an culture in San Juan at this time but we can bring the spirit of San Juan to wherever we are today by using some nifty Zoom backgrounds from discover Puerto Rico so I myself am enjoying this backdrop of old San Juan but there are others from which you can choose and Eric will share that link in the chat. Like many of you NASAA is fully embracing the digital learning power to engage more people. Going online is making our content accessible to everyone regardless of your ability to travel we're also making today's sessions more inclusive by providing captions not just in English but in Spanish translation as well. Eric will be circulating another link in the chat with more information how to access those. From now through October NASA has a menu of provocative sessions that focused on state arts agencies and the new realities that the arts are facing. This year has challenged us over and over again from the public health crisis to the economic upheaval

of COVID-19 to the societal reckoning that have exposed the cracks in American justice and government institutions. We've all been affected personally and professionally too. NASAA knows that state agencies are going to rise to meet this moment by supporting each other and finding new ways to serve communities and this learning series from now through October is designed to help you. We're going to tackle some tough issues, financial crises, funding, equity, political polarization to name a few. But even as we call those tough questions, we'll share abundant bright spots, offer raise of hope give you practical actions you can take to move your agency forward. Our first two pivot sessions today and tomorrow are great examples we've enlisted an all-star cast to reflect on what the arts landscape looks like now, where it might head next, and how grant makers can make a difference. For the field evolution this will be followed tomorrow by a part 2 fifth session that drills more deeply into state arts agency adaptations. To kick things off today we have Omari rush executive director of culture source in Mishkeegogamang. Omari is the first vice chair of the NASAA broordz and he will be leading the conversation. Joining him are Maurine Knighton from the Doris Duke charitable foundation, Diane Jean-Mary from LaPlaca Cohen and Jamie Bennett from ArtPlace America. This phenomenal brain trust of good friends will spend the first part of the session

exploring today's theme but all of you online will have a chance to weigh-in. To make comments, to ask questions, along the way. Drop a chat line to Eric Giles the question mark that he mentioned in front of his Zoom name does not indicate an identity crisis but rather his reSeptember it activity to your observations and questions throughout the session so just drop him a line any time and with that I'm going to get out of the way and turn things over to Omari.

>> Omari: Really great to be joined by Maurine Jamie and Diane on this call this video call today.

I appreciate you all-time as panelists and everybody in the room as just like a curious folks who want to learn share and connect thank you for being with us. I'll say in addition to what Kelly shared I'm bringing to this conversation my identity as the chair of the state of Mishkeegogamang council for cultural affairs and because we are in a state agency context I want to give a shout out to what they are doing at NCACA in Mishkeegogamang.

I'm so proud of that state agency and it's leader Allison Watkin and the whole team for what they've been helping to helpful navigate some pretty tricky times and pretty tricky landscape. And so thinking about that landscape in the session, Diane, Jamie, Maurine I'm going to actually ask you if we could just kind of popcorn around just kind of rapid fire. Just though get us on the same page about what this landscape is. What things are characterizing the

landscape right now. And we'll just go rapid fire Diane Jamie Maurine, Diane Jamie Maurine just something that, an observation something you noticed what's defining it. If I were to go first I would say boycotts you know, particularly new. How about we give it a go. Diane, Jamie, Maurine.

>> Diane: I love the hot potato style of questioning I'll go first won't state the most obvious one what's plaguing the sector is a lot of invention.

>> Omari: Jamie.

>> Jamie: Maybe I'll just add reflection to the mix.

>> Maurine: I'll add to the mix uncertainty.

>> Omari: We're going to go around a couple of times so there's plenty to say. Even think about just like I'll add mine I'll say political par tanship via the election.

>> Diane: Every org is having to be a health and culture brand in this moment so attention to the health and safety of their audiences.

>> Jamie: In terms of health and safety of themselves exhaustion and self care.

>> Maurine: Then I would certainly be remiss if I didn't observe the societal reckoning with which we are all dealing.

>> Diane: Historian's and relics of the past to bring us to a closer understanding of where we are in the context of that reckoning.

>> Jamie: I'm actually calling in I'm temporarily in Canada so I find myself think about the truth and

reconciliation frame Canada has been involved in and maybe America is going to pick that up as well.

>> Maurine: Segueing from there Jamie as well we are at a point of no return. That really depending which way we turn is going to define really the future of this country and the character of it as well.

>> Omari: One more round.

>> Diane: Rethinking what culture is, what it means, who the holders of those culture, that beacons of culture ultimately could and should be and considering how best to cocreate to broaden access to truly transform within the organization but also in the larger societal context.

>> Jamie: Maybe I've been, a colleague got me thinking recently about strong ties and weak ties sociological notion strong ties, family, church, coworkers, weak ties the person I see every morning buying coffee even though I don't know her name and in this moment of physical distancing many have lost weak ties so I've been thinking a lot about that.

>> Maurine: On the flip side of the coin it is a moment where we really appreciate differently the power and importance and value of connection. And even though weak ties have the capacity and potential to become something greater including having greater import and prominence in our lives.

>> Omari: Great. Thank you for being willing to hold the hot potato to use Diane's metaphor. At

the beginning of this call. Folks on the call I would actually now invite you all to participate a little bit. But slightly more maybe metaphorical or creatively your words are creative, panel, that was great and that is and I also want to get you warmed up in using the chat. It would be wonderful for you all to think about the landscape and what you're experiencing in your daily life what it all means to you and to in three words express that landscape or define that landscape and share it with everybody in the chat. It can be abstract, it can be literal, use emojis, those are allowed. But it would be great to see how people are responding and feeling about the landscape and what it means to them. Again, literally abstractly, in image, you name it, you got it. Thank you for participating. Maurine, I will start with you in asking you know to reflect on that landscape and how you know our arts and culture sector is experiencing it. Things have been tough before. Does this feel like a familiar kind of toughness, does it feel new, how, what are you thinking about it.

>> Maurine: Thanks Omari and first I'm from the south so my mother would kill me if I didn't say hello and good afternoon to everyone so let me take care of that before I move on. Thank you for inviting me to be a part of this. You know, this is a moment, Omari in answer to your question that is both the same and different than what we've encountered before. You know

when this first began and especially in New York City where I work, and the shut down took effect folks really began to think about it especially my colleagues in arts philanthropy in the private side what are proxies that can help us figure out a way forward folks spent a lot thinking about 9/11 and how the landscape was altered in the face of and aftermath of 9/11 then thought oh, maybe it's the recession of 2008-2009. While there are shadows of each of those events, that are directly affecting the arts and culture landscape this is also different in that I think we will likely emerge perhaps not completely unrecognizable but significantly transformed. I think that with the prior two events that I mentioned, the general idea was well how do we get through this period so we can return to business as usual. And while there are still folks in the field who are thinking that way, I think it is less likely to in be in reality. I think the truth is we've never met this time before and so we are trying to figure out step by step the way forward. Folks in private philanthropy for example understand that you cannot ask for the same types of information that reflect out as far or project out as far especially budgets for example from grantee's and expect them to give you robust information because no one understands what's going on and calls on us to do say okay I'll take your projections for the next quarter or six months

realizing that's about as far as anyone can responsibly share. So that's just one example but I'll stop there. So the bottom line Omari is that this is a very, very different landscape although there are some parts of the terrain that may look somewhat familiar.

>> Omari: Thanks Maurine, Diane what would you say?

>> Diane: So much rang true in what you said. Things that feel familiar that are true of both of those events you mentioned 9/11 and the 2008, 2009 recession are the uncertainty and the great need for healing. Those are still incredibly true of this moment we found ourselves in today. But there are also some things I feel novel to this time and I would agree wholeheartedly that the notion to transformation feels permanent in this moment, it feels like it's not up for question we must transform if we're going to move forward in any way that moves us forward as institution, a society, as a public. But one thing we're seeing in our work and we're seeing that LaPlaca Cohen and advisors to the field we have 300,000 foot view of what's happening in the sector across many disciplines we field research related to the field of culture but told through the hearts and minds of audiences themselves and when we started culture track in 2001 in the wake of 9/11 we felt this great need for togetherness and connection. One of the heart parts of where we find ourselves today as a field is that we actually

cannot come together to physically connect so that requires a level of creativity and invention we haven't seen before. So that it's not just another Zoom call just another meeting to create moments for us to have novelty again in our lives, to have adventure and wonder again in our lives and ultimately look back at the role of the arts, the most essential role of the arts in distilling our human experience helping us process uncertainty, process who we are as humans, to each other, and to help us bridge that divide to a greater more connected more just society. I think that's where we're really seeing our landscape move toward and those who are planning for return back to normal I think they will be looking at the other entered of this wishing they would have chosen a different path.

>> Omari: Yeah, thanks for that. The distancing is tricky. Jamie thinking about terrain and space, I mean and places, ArtPlace, and thinking about difficulties, what are you sense and feeling across a variety of places? You know like how does difficulty intersect with place in this moment?

>> Jamie: Yeah, so maybe what I'll add is my experience and as I've been talking with colleagues around the country many of them have shared that this moment isn't so much creating new problems as it is putting a magnifying glass on problems that long existed. So something that was a problem yesterday is still a problem today but

hundredfold, 1,000 fold and I think about sort of the wealthy arts organizations that have endowments wealth invested in the stock market were fine before the pandemic fine during the pandemic, will be fine again after it. I think a lot about sort of the way the criminal justice system works and sort of quote Brian Stephenson we have long in this country a criminal justice system that treats you better if you were rich white and guilty than poor black and innocent. I think a lot about rural America and how it's been cut off and disconnected from broadband access and other infrastructure in place for the more urbanized parts of the country. And I think a lot about sort of older Americans who often struggle with social isolation and in ways that are just being compounded and magnified. What I'm hoping is that this moment might bring a new urgency to the problems that folks have been working on for 40, 50, 60, 70 years and that as Maurine said this might be a point where we say now is the moment to fix these things that we've been all too comfortable putting up with for far too long.

>> Omari: So for all three of you whoever wants to jump in, Jamie that last bit you said this might be a moment to actually fix those things. What does might mean? You know like do you think it will be? Are you hopeful that it is going to be? Do you see regression already happening? Do you see tons of progress already happening?

>> Diane: I think insofar as it's costly to the organization to not pursue change, they are going to put it off for as long as possible. But we're not in that moment anymore. We have the entire nation from so many different angles, people voting with their dollars as consumers, people on the streets protesting, brands and organizations being boycotted. We have this outcry for change and as long as the public continues to hold our field accountable and as long as staff board leaders within organizations continue to hunt for their place in this change, I think that it's necessary for us all to fight where we are and to pursue justice where we are asked to find our place in the movement that we seek to change. So the night, I feel pretty confident this is a time unlike any other and that every single individual, every single organization, every single country is looking itself in the mirror and realizing that we have some things to atone for and we have a lot of change that is on the road ahead and if we do not we will become irrelevant and that is where it becomes costly. To maintain your relevance in our society, to maintain your relevance in the lives of people, we have to be in conversation with all of us and not just dialogue but actually backing that with action, with change, with sustained long-term commitment to seeing transformation that lasts not just to tomorrow, not to next quarter but to generations ahead.

>> Maurine: I would love to pick

up on that Diane because what you said is spot on. I also want to second Jamie's point about the idea of might. I think that what we are seeing now is people figuring out their role and their responsibility that's happening on an individual basis, it's happening within our organizations and of course it's reflecting out to the country at large. But there are many choice points and every one matters. And many of us feel either ill-equipped or afraid and/or uncomfortable to do the things that could leave us on the right side of the ledger here. And so I do think that what we are seeing and have seen in the recent months both around the pandemic as well as around the economic crisis and let's not forget of course the demands for social justice is we're seeing so far a lot of performative engagement. And you know that's fine. That's a great place to start. But it has to be understood as a starting point, not an end point. But an opening really is what it represents. What happens next. And for how long and how deeply committed are you to what happens next. And what are you willing to do to bring it about. And so might is really exactly the right word to use.

>> Jamie: Maybe I'll just pick up and say I think this is a moment in which every organization in the U.S. is leading with it's values. And I'll use two examples from New York City where I'm normally domiciled one is an organization that has a 2 billion dollars

endowment that responded to this moment by laying off it's education staff. And the second is is an organization theater press New York City which was just recently profiled in the inside philanthropy an organization with less than a million dollars in an annual budget and they launched a \$50,000 relief fund to buy technology upgrades and provide cash subsidies for their staff. I think this is a moment where people are doubling down and leading with their values I don't know if it's true for others but we seem to have stunned Omari into dropping off the call. So Diane I wonder if you have an additional thought.

>> Diane: I think you're absolutely right Jamie this moment and you said it up top this is a great revealer, this moment of who you are, what you stand for, organizations are showing us where their values stand but when we think about these audiences too ultimately who we serve the audiences and communities they are also showing us where they stand and what they value. And they are looking for culture and the arts more broadly to provide for them a sense of escape and understanding and a sense of that drop shoulder moment where you're like yes we can breathe again we're all just clenching our fists and holding our breaths it seems for the last couple of months. And I do think that the arts instead of stepping to the back, to the fore, and waiting and listening for others to really tell

them what to do, that there's a real gap, a real moment in our landscape to step into the light and say you know we don't have this all figured out we're not going to do it perfectly but we will figure it out along the way broadcast what we are learning and collaborate with others and we will try to just march our way through this moment of uncertainty in order to help our staff and communities, with our families, lively hoods and ultimately with their connection to the arts more broadly.

>> Maurine: I would tag on once again Diane to say that you know we have again my earlier answer was that we've seen this time before and never seen a time like it basically. And I think the same is true with regard to every day folks's connection to the arts. I think that we often find ourselves at a place as folks who are cultural workers where we say the arts really matter, the arts increase quality of life, the arts deliver these cobenefits economically. We have lots of different ways to enter into a defense and explication of the power of the arts. And sometimes we're more successful and sometimes it sticks. Sometimes it doesn't. It's been insufficient up to this point even that degree there has been stickiness. So I think right now back to this notion that Jamie mentioned much earlier in the conversation around weak connections or relationships and/or thin engagement as some other folks would say and strong

connections or engagement as well.

So I think here is a time unlike others where folks can see that showing up different in a more powerful and legible way I think than perhaps at points in our past.

>> Diane: Everyone will remember if you helped them educate their children while they had to hold down a full-time job simultaneously like home schooling multiple kids people will remember if you were the place where activists came and made their posters for a Black Lives Matter march and where you let them use their facilities and I'm seeing a lot of that energy from the cultural institutions in my own neighborhood. But one thing that's been so invigorating for me in this time is that kind of tossing away of the elite snobbery that tends to follow the institution of culture and loosening up the suit and tie and saying we are with you we are human, we are figuring out, figuring things out too. And we want to help to make your lives easier. We want to help to make you more informed. We want to learning alongside you and I think it's only when you say that culture is truly for everyone and there isn't the elitist barrier of it just being for the upper echelon's of society to enjoy their own forms of art that they deem important. As soon as we shake all of that you can become much more embedded authentically within community.

>> Maurine: Right.

>> Omari: This is Omari, I'm still here. My video may be coming

in just a tad bit slow and in and out but I'm connected via phone. So that connection is stable. Diane picking up on what you just shared I guess I wonder if what other kinds of concrete kind of changes you all expect this moment to bring about like very direct practices that should be, should, must change might to must. Which that's a book title somewhere might to must. But if we change, if we think about what must change and kind of very specifically things that we should stop or start, are there other things that come to mind?

>> Diane: I think the very initial premise that culture is a white centered space will be forever altered by this moment. So historically it's been very white centered, designed for white audiences showing white art and every now and then within a year within a program, exhibition, education program we will get a little dash of color. And those days are long behind us. Partially because in this country we are realizing that American history involves all of us and that for us to truly understand where we are today we have to reckon with where we've been as a past it's not just black history, there's an actor that participated or active actor that participated in the history and creating the situations and the systems, infrastructure, sociocultural dynamics we are now in a moment of exposure for and all of that is coming to light even in the art that hangs on the wall and in the performances that get to

share the stage. So in that way I think that's a must. I think we can no longer silo people of color to smaller stages and smaller spots. We have to now thoroughly engage in a shared space of culture and see what magic can happen when you truly do welcome people of all background.

>> Omari: What's your sense about the practice of must, that must change?

>> Maurine: Omari I wasn't sure who you were calling on I apologize I couldn't hear that part.

>> Omari: Jamie.

>> Jamie: Oh, I was hoping it was Maurine apology. I think building on a piece of what Diane was saying, one of the things that my experience has been that oftentimes when groups like this gather we say we're going to have a conversation about arts and culture and then we end up having a conversation about the piece of arts and culture that's intermediated by nonprofit organizations. And I think in this moment there's been a really dramatic reminder to the nonprofit arts and culture sector that America's consumption of arts and culture is much broader than that we mediate and so we've got to think think about Beyonce and John Grisham and Sofia Vergara and the kinds of things available in the marketplace and we have to think about the folk and traditional and heritage informal art. And so one of the things I've seen in a really beautiful way is nonprofit arts and cultural organizations

welcoming in the informal arts and the commercial arts so we really can begin operating and curating as a continuum and to that notion that Diane was saying actually present a better mirror of who we are as Americans and what our stories are.

>> Omari: Solid I will just say that is certainly an energy that we're excited about in Detroit and Michigan to think about who is in who is out choosing to be out, being introspective about all of that and act on it. Maurine if we take this to the space of being a grant maker, for for philanthropies, what is your sense how that landscape is responding to these changes in the arts and culture field and what opportunities might be.

>> Maurine: Well I think that we are learning with the field. About what matters and how to identify choice points. So for sure we don't want to get ahead of where the field is but I do think there's important ways we can provide important signals. For example, one of the things Jamie just alluded to is the notion of opening our aperture's with regard to what matters what is important, what is worth supporting. I think that private philanthropy can through the grants it makes recognize informally organized groups that are not 5013C which won't be serving us well it's stopped everybodying us well as the only other main mechanism through which arts and culture is supported. So I think looking at the different ways groups are organized and being sure that we are accommodating that rather

than really clinging to old ways of doing things that no longer serve us. I already talked about flexibility, I gave the example of budget projections. But I think that's also something that we need to attend to more generally. I will jump on the band wagon that everyone else is already on of providing general operating support in cases where that is at all possible. And if it is not possible to be as flexible with grantee's as possible, so that they are not in fact subsidizing the work that we are funding them to do. I think also we have an important role to play with signaling who is doing the work that will help build communities. So if we're faced with a situation as I often am, where I can ask an organization of color for support for a piece of work and then I might be approached by a predominantly white organization that is asking for funding that is fundamentally the same in terms of the program at particular core of it. One of the important expectations that's typically a higher dollar ask than for the organization of color I should not automatically default to support the predominantly white institution for doing work that the organization of color has been doing since founding and in fact embedded in it's DNA. I think also it's important to help organizations remember that all of this work exists because of the artists themselves. So we have the obligation in fact to keep organizations honest and keep ourselves

honest about
having what we do be artist
centered and artist centric as well.
Finally, to understand that we are
partners to our grantee's. I often
say to my grantee's if you don't
win we don't win. The reason we're
giving them funding because we
think they can accomplish something
that helps further our strategies
and our mission. In fact. And so
we have to be available to them to
help them think
through issues, we have to be willing to
advocate for them to make
introductions so to network on their
behalf, to help them think about other
sources, resources. And so I
think that the
opportunity for us in private
philanthropy is to show up more fully, more
authentic and with great intention
to make a positive lasting impact.

>> Diane: Maurine can I ask you
a follow-up to that. In the
example you gave I think it's a
brilliant one would you ever in that case
kind of join the two organizations
and a collaborative network if
they have shared aims and very
different organizational capacity and
endowment sizes?

>> Maurine: That's a great
question. I wouldn't go so far as to
suggest it because the thing that
we know and the philanthropy world
when you ask a question sometimes
it can land as a demand or a
directive so I always try to be very
calm and respectful of that however
I would want to know whether each
of the organization is aware of
the work that the other is doing.

But it would have to be organic if they then becoming aware of each of the other's work decided we want to partner, then we would be interested in seriously considering that with the important caveat Diane often what we see in those partnerships is we see the larger budgeting institution which tends to be a predominantly white institution as the applicant, the money flows through them. And then there is a portion that is allocated to the organization of color. We try to do the opposite. So that it is the organization of color that in fact has the intellectual assets, intellectual property, networks, relationships, all of that that the larger budget institution is hopeful to gain access to then they are the ones who should manage the financial life of the project as well. So I look at those power dynamics often and seek out opportunities to shift them. Because that's an important invitation to everyone involved to understand and appreciate differently what each partner brings to the table.

>> Omari: Maurine, thanks for between your original answer and Diane's follow-up thanks for you know modeling just some super solid thoughtfulness related to the process. And as we just dig into this a little bit more, I'd like to pick up on something Jamie just put into the chat and talk about language a little bit. And you know open this up to any of you how you're thinking about language and how we might be able to shift, use

different words, understand when something is charged, what comes to mind specifically the question about what does informal mean and what is it relative to.

Thinking about you know many of the people on this call end up being communicators whether in guidelines or a partner to someone in the field. How are you all thinking about languages as part of your professional work?

>> Diane: I can start from the culture track. Just because we actually believe that we as a field can't define what culture is. That is our starting assumption we as the institutions cannot define it. So we ask the people to instead so each iteration of culture track we have the audience tell us what they think culture actually is, who it's for, what it does, what it's value ultimately is for us and our society and each year the list gets broader and broader and broader. So in this last iteration it wasn't just the muse logical fields and zoo's and akwar I can't they are talking about gaming and sports, and speaking culture what happens when you cook with your mom in the kitchen and share recipes with your cousin who might live in another country. Doing arts and crafts with your knitting group so that landed in our iteration of the study which fielded at the outbreak of the pandemic it went live in July and we field the study in March and April of this year. It was fascinating to see how with every iteration of our study the notion the audiences notion of what culture

ultimately is has continued to grow. And the connective tissue between those activities essentially is that it helps us understand the world and brings us together in a way that's meaningful to us that it enhances our lives. So when we're thinking about the collaborative landscape in what Maurine was saying the landscape of partners acknowledging who has participated in that sphere you're trying to get access to whether it's to broaden and diversify your audience or tap into some level of intellectual property or some level of cultural cachet another organization offers you have to pay attention to the dynamic of power and the dynamic of what's already in existence to acknowledge their people who have been steeped in this work for deck katsdz let's not create it an now we are not on page zero we can partner in a way that builds all of our capacity and impacts and helps us all serve our missions. So I think directionally the field is heed that way and audiences are asking us to think adventurously and widely who we consider our peers in the field. If you are a museum, your peer just might be Netflix and that could present a really interesting partnership in the future.

>> Omari: So Diane thanks for that. Jamie I'll go to you next and ask this for you to kind of muse on language. I'll actually ask the room if you might reembrace the chat function. Wouldn't it be great if everybody could just put a word in the chat that you are thinking

a lot about. How to use it, whether you want to use it, is it appropriate to use. You don't know the definition of it. What is culture , what is informal. Language is cheap and free to change and free to play with so it would be curious to see what words are really coming to mind for the room.

Jamie, thoughts about how the role language plays in grant making or the change we're looking to see in our field.

>> Jamie: Yeah, maybe it starts by sharing with, there's a colleague called Susan Nelson at TDC who many folks know and I was lucky enough to be listening and learning from her last week. She noted oftentimes in the nonprofit sector and oftentimes in philanthropy we talk about best practices and she observed that maybe we don't have any best practices we just have common practices. Right. And so that notion of common practices becoming solidified as best practices because of the language we use is that example that Maurine was digging into long been a common practice in philanthropy to invest more dollars in a white organization that's thinking about diversifying it's audience than investing in a different kind of organization that is generating content and has been since it's founding. And Maurine and I I can't remember how long ago it was Maurine you and I were on a panel for Sphynx in Detroit we talked about beginning in the late 80s and more in the 90s philanthropy

began engaging with multiculturalism began engaging with audience diversity and all of the attention was about changing the color of the faces in the audience at the symphony orchestra and we thought that was a problem that too many white people were going to the symphony orchestra but no one thought it was a problem that you know 90 plus% of the audience for tie codrumming were individuals of Japanese heritage. So because of the language we use I think we've forgotten symphony orchestras are culturally specific they are one of the art forms one of the cultural traditions that those of us who are part of the European Diaspora in America brought with us but we don't use the term Diaspora to talk about the European dDiaspora in North America so we end up investing in white arts and culture as the dominant culture and it's really important for everyone to engage in it. And I think far too often we invest in other culturally specific art forms in a way that treats them more like they are electives rather than the core of what we're doing. And I think a lot of that gets codified in language and language can sort of become an echo chamber where one idea begins bouncing back and forth and gains currency and becomes codified as a best practice.

>> Omari: Either Jamie as follow-up or Maurine as a follow-up to your earlier response what you're thinking in grant making what is what is your process of unpacking a practice, remixing a practice, you

know something that's been the way it is for awhile spoken the way it is for awhile. How do you even how do you all find you know where to start with changing things up?

>> Maurine: Well I mean you start by asking the people that you intend to benefit what they need. And then you have to be, you have to be genuinely interested in the answer and willing to make adjustments in response to what they've told you. You also have to be humble enough to realize you may not have all of the best ideas about how to resolve a challenge by yourself and that in fact partnership may be the best way forward. I think in addition to that you may need some help just looking at your current practices because when we are steeped in practices and we've been doing them for so long, they become engrained, embedded so we don't necessarily even have an objective eye toward recognizing things that in fact may be problematic. So I think for me I'm always doing what I call kitchen table conversations with folks from the field to say hey, what's going on, what do you see we're doing in fact I just did that week before last I had two different days of those conversations with folks from the field. Because I think it is presumptuous for us to think we know what to do. We don't often. I think we start by humbling ourselves and asking questions. And I think the last thing I would say about that Omari is that it would be important not to -- to gather as much information

as you can, do as much as you can but to not decide you are paralyzed by not having all the answers and/or not having sufficient authority. I think that's a reality for all of us, we typically all work within some sort of authorizing environment and where we may not, may or may not be the person ultimately with whom final decisions rest. But that doesn't mean there's nothing that can be done. What is it that is within your purview that you can do that could make a material difference. How can you advocate for and socialize other ideas and bring others with you. And so I think there are a number of places to start and the main thing though is to start. Taking that casting that critical eye at the work you feel comfortable with and that you've been doing and probably getting some positive feedback for over the years. But what is clear that may not be good right now even though it was fabulous a year ago.

>> Omari: Diane, you know thinking about this kitchen table conversations, with what I know of you and your work, you are in a position of putting together kitchen table conversations and being at them so I guess thinking about an organization, a client, a an activity in our sector how do you think about structuring those conversations who do you find you get a lot of value from having at that table.

>> Diane: You're exactly right to say Omari we often as a firm find ourselves in the critical moment

where an organization has enough self awareness to know it doesn't have it all figured out. There are plenty who have not reached that point and have not picked up the phone to call us. For those that do the ones that succeed the most have a level of openness to change. Have an openness to critically reassessing what they do and why when you're doing the workday in and day out as Maurine said it's hard to have a clear objective lens what's shifted around you, inside your organization, and we tend to be group therapists or organizational therapists helping these clients of ours across the entire cultural sector really understand their purpose who they serve what they stand for and clarifying that in a clear internally driven way now we get the best information that's never when we're sitting with just the leaders of an organization that's where we get a lot of their ambition and the vision they have you would ly want to clear the organization towards but it's when we get closest to those that have lived that organization day in and day out alongside visitors we get the most meaningful insights about what's at the core the gut of an organization. So it's front line staff, it's how you treat your volunteers and your guards in your organization, who is meeting with the parents and their students and institution of higher education who is making sure that faculty are taken care of in that context. We tend to look high and low at every

level of an organization interviewing their board, interviewing leadership and spending a lot of time with staff and with volunteers because that's ultimately at the heart of the org that's where their values are expressed. You find out really quickly how staff are treated how they are valued, and how they ultimately get to be decision-makers in their roles they get to have agency in their roles and to be able to tap into those choice points we spoke about earlier on in the conversation, to empower someone at every single level of the org is rare but it's ultimately what we think is required of an organization if it's going to be nimble and responsive and able to flex to this context of uncertainty. Only when you look at every angle of the org you're able to get that essential nature of the special secret sauce what an organization truly is.

>> Omari: Jamie I'm thinking about what Diane just kind of ended in talking about thinking of people at all different levels of the organizations and certain empowerment and voice and I think about what Maurine talked about in terms of working with authorizing, within an environment of authorization for authorizing agents and I guess I wonder how you think about making change in our sector in our field on when it is within the context of having some kind of authorizing agent that you have to work through or with. How do you think about being direct or indirect, short-term, long-term, maybe just talk a little bit about that.

And it's particularly curious for you because of the structure of ArtPlace too.

>> Jamie: Yeah. And so just as a little bit of context I'll say I'm currently working in a single member LLC organization. So we're neither a unit of government nor are we a nonprofit. But having said that, I've worked both within non-profits and worked within local government and federal government. And I think when you're talking about nonprofit, picking up on what Diane was talking about I think it's really important that we remember that when the idea of non-profits were created, the board was meant to function as representational democracy. Right. The board wasn't originally intended to just be money. It was originally represented, intended to represent the public and to ensure that the organization was doing good, was doing public good, publically incorporated organizations. And if we were to sort of think about representation al democracy and we were to think about some fictional country coming to the United States and saying we're representational democracy, and our version of representation al democracy is that a rich person picked three of his friends and they picked their successors in perpetuity we would laugh but that's the form of representational democracy that our nonprofit boards have. I think in terms of authorizing environment at the nonprofit level we have to think about how are our boards functioning and do they actually

represent the totality of the public that they are meant to. For those of us who are working within federal or state in the case of this call government entities, it's been my experience that a lot more is possible than we sometimes think is possible. And that I've been amazed at the change I've seen colleagues at every level of state government. Middle management, leadership, folks that are just beginning their career are able to make by not just accepting when someone says oh, that's not possible. But digging into the why is that not possible and is there a different way around it. So my experience has been that authorizing environments are actually far more flexible but in order to understand that, you sort of have to have patience and frustration with bureaucracy and understand the pink forms that are still the stuff of government and understanding how to shuffle them and redeal them.

>> Omari: Solid. Maurine I'm going to ask you to then kind of you know heard Jamie to go back to your comment about authorizing environments and just ask you to say a little bit more like in the context of what you aspire to do in your own work what you, the success that you aspire to see in your partners in the field, where does -- how do you think about how one navigates an environment where you have to that's characterized by maybe permission or that's characterized by a purse that is opened or closed by someone else.

>> Maurine: Well, I think one of the things actually is that often we won't even ask something. Because we have made a decision on behalf of others so I think the very first thing is to be willing to ask. I think that Jamie's point about being well versed in the context that you're in is really, really essential. But assuming that you have adequate information and grounding I think to make that ask can be the start of a conversation even if you don't get an immediate yes to whatever the question is. The other thing I think we often overlooked something like that importance of colleagues both inside and outside of whatever office it is in which we are working often we act as if we are going it alone and it can feel that way sometimes I admit but the fact is we are part of an Army of folks doing a piece of work to move the needle on certain conditions and circumstances who is it perhaps inside or outside your organization who could be a helpful thought partner to you who might have gone through something similar so again this notion of humbling ourselves to be willing to ask a set of questions how did you do this what was your first step. What should I anticipate if I try it. So I think that our colleagues are really rich sources of information that we can easily forget about sometimes. Even if there's no immediate information forthcoming just to have those connections to workshop ideas over time to be directed to other

resources I think is important. So I think inside your organization having colleagues there, you know the chances are if you're in certain environments you're not the first person to think of a thing. Maybe someone else has thought about that before. Perhaps they are in a different area. In my organization for example, maybe if I went to the child well-being program there may be some things that program has tried that the arts program is just thinking about for the first time. So going quote-unquote across the aisle to ask my colleague in another program that may not be arts but from which there might be important transferrable learnings to figure out how to proceed. So those are just two of the ideas that I would have in answer to your question.

>> Omari: You know Maurine thanks for that and just thanks for the reminder we do actually have each other. You know. And we can be great resources to each other. And I'm partly Kelly may give me a gold star for saying this but this is one of the great values from my prospective of NASAA is this network that has great opportunities for connectivity you know there have been resources posted in the chat from NASAA about things that relate directly to our conversation. And it just feels like a really great reminder for us all to remember that you know we can lean on each other. It's trickier though, it feels like, doing it in a time of social distancing where chance you

know Diane I believe you were talking about Diane or Jamie one of you was talking about those -- Jamie weak connections. And these moments of spontaneity and connecting with people. Encouragement for us to try a little bit more. Eric, I will invite you to participate in the facilitating Q&A I will say I'm seeing one question in the chat that is about helping form partnerships, I'm reading this as if you can't see the chat yourselves but the question we are considering brokering partnerships between large predominantly white led well-founded and smaller budget organizations BIPOC led and I would love to hear more about how to go about it resources types of facilitators thought partners to engage . And so for the panel to respond to that. Maurine one dimension if you respond to this I would be curious is the way in which you navigate offering suggestions you kind of spoke to this earlier ways in which you navigate offering suggestions and not having a partner here that as you must do. And certainly Diane just your experience related to helping people think about when something like merger is appropriate, just the steps, thought process. So yeah.

>> Diane: Maurine would you like to take it first?

>> Maurine: Yeah, sure. I think that again back to Jamie and one of the early comments which was about these connections, I think that the root of all of this is trust. Trusted relationships. So if you

have those trusted relationships with anyone, you can say certain things that you wouldn't say with folks where that does not exist or what might be called weak connections. You might not be as forthcoming you might not be willing to ask the provocative question. You might not be willing to really describe how the sausage is made. But when you have relationships that exist and are based on trust, you can have more forthright conversations so in terms of brokering these partnerships I think that hopefully you have the kind of relationship with a BIPOC led organization to say hey, what would you need for this partnership to be fruitful for you. What are the pitfalls because once again they've probably done this before. And they probably know the outcomes they want to avoid. So it's really important to ask those fundamental questions about what is a win and what is a challenge for an organization. So the most important resource is the relationship. And in terms of thought partners again, I think you have to ask the organizations who they trust, who they value, who they find useful in brokering these sorts of partnerships as well. So I think it really is about using that resource of the organization to help direct you in terms of how you can make what you do matter the absolute most.

>> Diane: I echo the sentiments and add just the perspective of my work. We do a ton of partnership strategy across the field and they

are absolutely based in this trusted relationships that Maurine has spoken to. Because without that trust, it feels like an empty check box in a way. So the first step for us is always understanding partnership to what end. If it's partnership to the end of trying to check a diversity box to say we have block vendors we have block partners anyone can see through that and it's not going to be a long-term sustainable relationship. It is going to feel after the official like will you state for that organization. We try to push our clients into the direction of reevaluating what they want to do and sometimes the motive and incentive is to diversify, feel more ethically grounded in who they are as a public serving institution but sometimes a partnership doesn't lead them to partner with this BIPOC led organization sometimes it's partnering with a white led organization that has a huge capacity in their endowment and ability to grant and tagging, coming together in one megapartnership to provide new pathways and funds directly to BIPOC led organizations so they can do their thing. It really depends on the angle of the partnership what you're trying to get out of it and making sure that you're explicit about what you're benefitting from, what the partnership organization is also benefitting from and ultimately that no one is being harmed along the way. We see a lot of ancillary harm done because organizations haven't quite

understood where they fit in the ecosystem and so if you're reaching out to totally new to start a relationship with a BIPOC led organization and you're doing it without the level of self awareness that it's not a happy accident that most white led organizations are well funded and BIPOC led organizations are not well-founded you don't have that organization you have the ability to create ancillary harm that you're not even aware of and so when we have our organizations who are really committed to diversifying their internal organizations, vendor network, audiences and communities, we ask them to do that thoughtfully and ask them to do it in a way that reassesses power dynamics

Maurine mentioned at the top of our meeting. Coming to that with a level of awareness and level of humility and grace to say here is what we ultimately want to get out of this here is what we hope you'll get out of it. You tell us what you want and need and let's see how we can help each other in sharing our audiences, sharing our spaces that was a big thing in a preCOVID area for organizations that are smaller to say yes we are the met, we will lend our exhibition space to this organization to enable this other thing because they don't have that capacity we will give that as a show of our partnership. Look at what resources you have in your own capacity and see what you can lend , see what you can share that does not necessarily need to be reciprocal exchange of equal value.

Because the dynamics that exist between these organizations are not equal. They have very different sets of capacity, very different sets of resources. And it doesn't make that other organization unworthy of being at the table. In fact it only increases the prominence of having that voice in your partnership network you just have to do it in a way that is thoughtful and a way that also takes into consideration those power dynamics we mentioned earlier on.

>> Jamie: And I can just tag on with three quick bumpers which is one, our colleague Lila Tamari who is on the call but had to drop-off when we were funding partnership work at ArtPlace she and her colleagues stood a policy where the partners anyone who is listed as a partner had to answer one of the application questions separately and that question was what do you want to get out of this partnership. And if those answers aren't all the same that's a leading indicator that this maybe isn't a partnership. The second thing Omari since you put us in the mind of language it's interesting to note in the question and responses to it we all assumed it was going to be large white institutions wanting to collaborate with BIPOC organizations. And if BIPOC organizations aren't wanting to collaborate with large white organizations that maybe is a leading indicator something is off and we might want to approach that a little bit differently. And then just lastly, whenever I think about

collaboration, I think of when George first was asked what it was like to collaborate with Stephen sonde I'm, first he would collaborate with him and I was collaborate him. That is important for collaboration.

>> Maurine: I wanted to tag on one additional thing here. Which is that often when there are two organizations of disparate size one that is larger and one less so, we typically have a frame that the smaller organization will get more out of it than the larger one so I think the invitation for us is to really check how we're valuing what each of the organizations is bringing to the table. I mentioned much earlier the intellectual capital and the relationships that organizations of color bring to the table but to be frank, too often we in the world of funding and philanthropy think of smaller organizations as less capable and while it's true if you look at their balance sheet they will not be as robust I think it all depends on how you count. We all at this point know this time quote perhaps that Albert Einstein said or not, it's a matter of some debate that everything that counts cannot be measured just to riff off of that. So I think that we have to reframe how we're thinking about from our perspective as Diane said to what end is the partnership and to be open to additional possibilities that perhaps those that might present to us at first blush about what the value add of partnerships

might be.

>> Omari: Thanks for that Maurine and I just wanted to call out, you know, again, this is personally fascinating to me and that is what you all continue to talk about doing and it's challenging assumptions. Maurine you're talking about thinking like challenging values and around well who does like you know who has an ability to bring more value there's always a large organization longer established what are Jamie the leading indicators that would tell us XYZ. As we think about doing our work, that approach and being able to do that yourself or with colleagues, just feels like such a rich process to invest in. Eric, I can ask another question from the chat but I'll turn it over to you for a second if you want to do your thing with Q&A.

>> Eric: No, go ahead Omari I think we're both perusing the same thing just leave me time for a couple of questions at the ends.

>> Omari: Perfect and folks I would say in terms of asking a question feel free to put it in the chat or raise your hand. Yes. Do the thing and then we'll figure it out. You know one question that I also noticed in the chat was around I'll say the word diversity and how one helps spur more diversity in a system that is, feels homogenous. How would you respond to that if somebody says for instance, our city is 95% white what are we supposed to do. Diane, Maurine, Jamie.

>> Diane: I'll return to the language question which is that the

word diversity itself is a bit of a grenade. It's vague right as a term it's used in very different ways. You believing you can have a city 99% white but great diversity and experience and income level and educational attainment. And to be specific and I know it's difficult because in our country race is the hot button issue that no one talks about more than anything else so to boldly wade in those waters and say exactly what you want to do, if it's bringing in more ethnic racial diversity in particular, that can even be pushed to exactly what you want to do. Maurine quoted the sometimes attributed to Einstein quote not everything that counts can be counted or measured and not everything that counts -- not everything that counts can be counted and not everything that can counted counts. I think is the full quote. That's true of moving the lever and quote-unquote diversity. So if it's to have a mirror that reflects your national portrait, state portrait, regional portrait it's up to you to define the limitations, guide rails of what you're ultimately trying to achieve and to be explicit about that and reflect on that and to hold yourself accountable to that. But I think when we use really loose terms like diversity, inclusion, it's often not specific enough for us to actually know what we're talking about so you never know if you've achieved it. So when it comes to cities that might be more homogenous I ask you to think more broadly

about your geographical boundaries because perhaps you can be telling a story of your state or of our nation more broadly. So that's just a starting place if you're thinking how can we kind of loosen ourselves from the homogeneity of one specific region.

>> Omari: Comment not required but I will open the floor Jamie and Maurine. Thank you Diane that was great.

>> Jamie: I will jump in with two quick things the first is we've a lot of conversations in the field about cultural equity and cultural equity is something there have been a lot of definitions thrown around. And the one that I tend to use is one that acknowledges that I have a right to see my own story told. And I have a responsibility to see the stories of other people. Right. So I have a right to see my own story and I have a responsibility to see other stories. Which means we both need to diversify the Philharmonic audience and diversify the Tyco drumming audience and I think about our colleagues at flushing town hall in Queens which is one of the most diverse places in the United States and their goal is to present all of the cultures represented in Queens and their goal you should not be able to look at the audience to tell what's on-stage. So they want everyone to come to see everyone. I think balancing that right and responsibility to see my own story and see the stories of other people is really helpful. And then an artist

project that I'll point folks to
there's a really interesting artist
prospect activity the Ghana think tank
who found it was problematic, the
first world was always fixing the
third world so they flipped that
paradigm and they create think
tanks in cress like he will Salva door
, more rack coIran and ask them
to solve first world problems and
there's an extraordinary project in
Westport cut account the homework
assignment is to Google Ghana
think tank and Westport Connecticut
and take a look at that
projects to expand our thinking
around this question.

>> Omari: Folks, I would just
as we kind of look toward closing
out and wrapping up, you know go to
this question of hope. Certainly
I mean I take tons of hope from
the ideas that panelists you all
expressed in general. So that's not
to say that now finally let's talk
about hope. But it would be nice
to have just very explicit and
direct conversation about that and
what is making you each very hopeful
what's making you smile and get
goose bumps as you move about your
day. And I'd also ask the room you
know if we're going to kind of
embrace
our inner poets a bit of a
challenge to come up with a phrase that
treats hope as an acronym. So if
you were going to write a phrase
that embodies hope and used hope, HO
PE as an acronym, what would
yours be. And you know that's a
tricky one. I believe in you all as
creative folks. And all the answers

are beautiful I'm telling you that already. I'd love to see what you come up with. So yes. Maurine, Jamie, Diane, hope, gillingy, goose bumpy smiley, what does it mean for you?

>> Maurine: At first a confession which is I am as my late partner would say a prisoner of hope. So I never lose it. In fact it's as essential as oxygen to my way of thinking. Having said that, you know there are times that look more or less positive in which one wonders how long will it take for meaningful shifts to occur. But I will tell you that one of the things that gives me great hope right now is that although for me as Jamie alluded to this earlier I feel like this is round three of these types of discussions around multi culturalism, cultural diversity, diversity, equity, all that that it feels as if there is a different kind of opening this time. It feels like it does have a bit more stickiness. And so I'm encouraged by that but finally honestly my daughter who is an adult and who is one of the smartest people I know and who is carrying the movement forward so I know that when I go take my nap, that the world is still in good hands because of her and her colleagues who are picking up I heard someone talk about this like a relay race not too long ago a few days sxag it does feel like there is a host of young people coming up behind us to whom we can pass the baton not only will they pick it up but they will run faster and longer perhaps. So that gives me hope every day.

>> Omari: Solid, thank you Maurine. Jamie, Diane, 45 seconds probably each.

>> Jamie: So I'll go quickly and say one of the things that gives me hope is for a long time the fill Lantropic sector has focused on innovation around new ideas and increasingly I'm seeing a focus on indigenous knowledge and traditional knowledge and remembering we had many of the ways of living sustainably figured out 11,000 years ago and sometimes the job isn't to invent sometimes the job is to remember. And so remembering ancestral knowledge is one of the things that gives me hope.

>> Diane: I love that. Maurine you're in good company I too am a very hopeful optimistic person and it's helped me navigate great challenges in my life. I am most inspired by the people who aren't waiting to see how the world changes before they go out and act and they do. I live in crown heights Brooklyn every time I leave my apartment to go for a run I see artists painting murals people saying hey there's no gym let's create one in the Park. People are recreating the structures that they once have lost and they are not waiting for institutions and bureaucracies to tell them it's okay to do it and I'm inspired by that level of just go-getter attitude that is still deeply entrenched in community and service. And excited to see how the field quote-unquote catches up to all of the energy that's already being put out there by the

artists and the individuals in the communities themselves.

>> Omari: Great Diane thanks for that. And again, Maurine, Jamie, Diane, thank you for sharing, thanks for kind of filling us up with some super solid bits of insights, hope, ideas, for demonstrating collegiality and for doing the work you do day in and day out. We all appreciate it. I've benefitted it and assuming Maurine has benefitted from it. So thank you NASAA for setting this table for us today. Super solid and thank you all for you know filling the chat with those wonderful acronyms expanded of hope it's really beautiful. Bonus points to Sunil for in my opinion coming up with the best one because of course it's appropriately use the O as Omari. So Eric take it away.

>> Eric: Thank you Omari. And we are about two minutes from our wrap time on this so rather than try and go further into audience Q&A I just want to assure everyone that if you have submitted a question via the chat, I will forward that to our presenters and gather some answers from them. And if you're on the phone and wanted to ask a question, please feel free to send me an email, I will do the same. I am always looking for an excuse to be in contact with these four great people so that will provide me hours of entertainment writing emails and hearing back from them. I also want to echo my thanks to Maurine, Diane, Jamie and Omari, you guys are great. This was an

incredible session. Thank you for kicking off our learning series with such an amazing 90 minutes. Thank you all so much. And I'm going to let everyone go 30 seconds early today. So look for the recording of this session coming up on our website and on our YouTube channel. We will also have a transcript available in the near future that you can find on our website. Thank you everyone, have a great rest of the day and I hope to see you all again tomorrow for pivot 2