



# CITY OF PHILADELPHIA ARTS AND CULTURE TASKFORCE-FINAL FINDINGS

**Submitted:**

**March 15, 2021**

Arts & Culture Taskforce

Co-Chairs: Raheem Manning & Ciarra Lambert

Members:

Anne Ishii, Barbara Wilson, Christina Vassallo, Cydney Brown, Eboni Zamani,  
Evon Burton, Germaine Ingram, Joyce Gambrell Drayton, LaNeshe Miller-White,  
Michael Fichman, Michelle Currica, Stanford Thompson, and Terry Fox



COUNCIL MEMBER  
**ISAIAH THOMAS**

# Arts and Culture Task Force

Authorizing the creation of the Philadelphia Arts and Culture Task Force.

This resolution was introduced on the 1st of October. It was adopted on the 8th.

Authorizing the Committee on Global Opportunities and the Creative/Innovative Economy to establish an advisory Task Force on Disadvantaged Communities, and further authorizing the Task Force to produce a report of findings and strategies for uplifting disadvantaged persons in Philadelphia through access to arts and culture.

Sponsors: Councilmember Thomas, Councilmember Oh, Councilmember Henon, Councilmember Bass, Councilmember Brooks, Councilmember Quiñones Sánchez, Councilmember Squilla, Councilmember Green

WHEREAS, The arts and culture sector nationally is a booming market with a valuation of over eight hundred billion annually, or nearly 5% of total US GDP, according to the National Endowment for the Arts in a 2019 report; and

WHEREAS, Philadelphia saw an over 4-billion-dollar economic impact from the arts and culture sector in 2017; and

WHEREAS, That economic impact created and sustained more than 55,000 jobs in the city; and

WHEREAS, The arts and culture sector in Philadelphia is a prime driver in the restaurant, hospitality, and tourism industries that have been among the worst hit economically by the pandemic; and

WHEREAS, Philadelphia is one of the largest cities in the nation and it provides many of the same benefits of New York City - an international airport, vibrant consumer base, esteemed colleges, and a strong workforce - with a lower cost of living and friendlier tax structure; and

WHEREAS, Philadelphia already has established roots in the arts and culture sector that position it to be a globally relevant player; and

WHEREAS, Despite the importance of the arts and culture sector, there have been few if any national level studies of diversity, equity, and inclusion in the sector; and

WHEREAS, The Disadvantaged Community Task Force hearings have made clear that the arts and culture sector requires additional attention and; and

WHEREAS, For Philadelphia to fully support and embrace the Arts and Culture sector, the sector must be represented by, be attended by, and speak to all of the City and its residents; and

WHEREAS, The Philadelphia Arts and Culture Task Force will collectively work to sustain existing business, institutions and projects, incentivize new investment, and expand educational and career opportunities within a revitalized and diverse arts and culture sector in Philadelphia; now, therefore, be it

THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA HEREBY RESOLVES:

SECTION 1. Creation of the Philadelphia Arts and Culture Task Force. The Philadelphia Arts and Culture Task Force (hereafter referred to as “the Task Force”) is hereby created as an advisory body of the Global Opportunities and Creative Innovative Economy Standing Committee of Philadelphia City Council.

SECTION 2. Composition of the Task Force. The Task Force shall be composed of fifteen (15) members confirmed by Council by resolution. Members of the Task Force shall come from a variety of areas of expertise within the arts and culture sector, including but not limited to: artists, actors, museum professionals, dancers, educators, musicians, funders, businesses, community groups, and academia. The Task Force shall appoint one of its members to serve as the Chair of the Task Force.

SECTION 3. Appointment of Task Force Members. Each member of the Global Opportunities and Creative Innovative Economy Standing Committee of Philadelphia City Council shall appoint one member. The Co-Chairs of the Disadvantaged Communities Task Force shall appoint an additional 3 members each. The Council President and the Mayor shall also appoint one member each.

SECTION 4. Function of the Task Force. The Task Force shall consider the history of the arts and culture sector in Philadelphia, evaluate the current state of the industry in Philadelphia, and develop a strategic plan for the prospering of Philadelphia as a competitive destination for an arts and culture sector fully representative of the city.

SECTION 5. Meetings of the Task Force. The Task Force shall be convened within 30 days of its creation and shall meet at such times as a majority of its members deem necessary and appropriate.

SECTION 6. Report of the Task Force. Within six months of its first meeting, The Task Force shall prepare and distribute to the Mayor, all Members of City Council, and any interested members of the public a report of its findings and its strategic plan.

# Executive Summary:

The Arts and Culture Taskforce (ACTF) comprises 15 individuals who are a diverse representation of Philadelphia's arts, culture, and creative economy community. With its youngest member being 17, the group also spans the spectrum generationally, ethically, and professionally as the collective group represents many different sectors and genres of the community. Co-Chaired by Raheem Manning and Ciarra Lambert, the ACTF met over a four-month period, conducted research, and met with community and government stakeholders to assess the state of arts, culture, and creative economy in Philadelphia pre and post COVID-19. The ACTF identified four main categories that summed up the most prevalent need for attention and reform. Those areas are Permeance, A Plan for Individual Arts and Small Organizations, A Plan for Youth in Arts, and A Plan for Nightlife Governance. The ACTF was organized into four subcommittees to address these areas. Below are the summaries of the solution proposals of each subcommittee; full findings are located in each subcommittee's report within this document:

## **Permeance:**

- Public funding/financial amnesty or relief for individuals and businesses unable to operate for as long as public health and safety restrictions remain.
- Creative economy members and businesses to be included in all Requests For Proposals (RFP) processes for city contracts.
- Expanding the social and economic definitions of who an artist is/what a business is.
- Charter the Office of Arts, Culture, and the Creative Economy and expand it into a department.
- Make the Chief Cultural Officer a position immune to Mayoral whims; the CCO should serve at the leisure of a commission of their peers in the sector.

## **Individuals and Small Organizations:**

- Extend the ACTF or establish a paid working group for 10 months to a year for deeper thinking and research to create a realistic but visionary strategy for stabilizing arts & culture in the city.

Support Independent artists and small arts and culture organizations by incorporating artists into all city agencies and/or established community hubs or places of worship, including placing artists in the school district. This would not only employ artists with the city but would greatly increase the productivity and creativity of city departments.

- Establish a Civil Service artists division. Create a set of civil service jobs that support city government initiatives through artists hired and paid by the city at a full-time livable wage.

Possible

partners: Office of Strategic



Partnerships, organizations already working with the PSD, and additional

- Philanthropic support.
- Help centralize and make more accessible the numerous existing opportunities and RFPs that the city has to offer. A central hub should be created, with an extensive outreach campaign, so that artists and small organizations know where to access these resources.

#### **Youth in Arts:**

- Stop programming deserts by creating a city-funded and supported, independently operated interactive virtual database/directory to serve as a resource for both students looking to find which organizations/programs are in their neighborhoods as well as identify the geographical gaps regarding city support and disproportionate funding in different disciplines within sections of the city.
- Increase funding in disciplines that reflect the cultural traditions and histories of the inhabitants of their particular communities.
- Fund an independently run arts truck (mobile library for arts products and instruments) that would coordinate with drop-off locations at public libraries and possibly zoning areas associated with Friends of the Park to get much-needed resources to students.
- It is important to note that the kids also expressed wanting more spaces to commune and present their talent.
- While experiencing Covid, the safest gathering spaces are outdoors. Our youngest ACTF member, Cydney Brown, collaborated with Mural Arts on the idea of a youth interactive mural.
- This mural will be initially painted by youth in visual arts and feature QR codes that link to youth performances, including poetry, music, and open letters. Cydney's idea allows for a safer way for kids to commune and showcase their talents.

#### **Nightlife:**

- Create a Nighttime Economy Office to improve and institutionalize good governance
- Reform licensing and regulations related to nightlife businesses
- Implement reforms to create a 24-Hour post-Covid city
- Provide enhanced support for artists, nighttime workers, and businesses to recover from the pandemic

Please note that the solutions above are not the complete findings of the ACTF, and to obtain a full understanding of what is needed in the arts, culture, and creative economy community, you must read the full findings.

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## **PURPOSE:**

Initiated as a byproduct of Philadelphia City Council's Disadvantaged Community Task Force, the Arts and Culture Task Force was created to aggressively engage Philadelphia's Arts, Cultural and Creative Economy in an authentic and meaningful way to provide policy and budgetary recommendations to City Council to best respond to the economic crisis created by the Covid Pandemic. The ACTF is particularly focused on identifying creative voices within black and brown communities throughout Philadelphia.

## **Vision:**

The ACTF aims to find new and innovative ways to better support artists, performers, and curators throughout the city of Philadelphia. Our mission focuses on the initiatives that will occur during, in the recovery of, and after the Covid-19 pandemic to ensure the Arts and Cultural economic sector receives the support it so desperately needs.

## **Members**

The members of the ACTF comprise individuals from a plethora of sub-sectors within the Arts, Culture and Creative Economy. The membership includes artists, educators, performers, curators, and writers, working in numerous mediums ranging from dance, to night-life curators. to the written word.

## **Structure:**

After several months of meeting with stakeholders in the Philadelphia arts, culture, and creative economy community, holding two public zoom meetings, and countless internal meetings and conversations about the well-being of the arts and culture sector in Philadelphia, the taskforce was organized into four sub-committees. The focus of the subcommittees revolved around the main areas in which our discovery identified as most neglected or most in need of dire improvement to better see the city elevate its arts culture and creative economy scene. The subcommittees are as follows:

- Permanence
- Individuals and Small Organizations
- Youth in Arts
- Nighttime Economy

## **Discovery:**

The Arts and Culture Taskforce consists of a diverse group of arts community stakeholders. Many team members did not know each other before our first meeting. The taskforce is very diverse with ranges in age, artistic genre, profession, who has received city financial support, and those who received or lost support before or after the pandemic. Some members are affiliated with several arts organizations within the community, and some are independent artists and entrepreneurs. The taskforce began its research with an information and suggestion dump of shared experiences and concerns.

The taskforce represents a good sample of the arts and culture community; however, with arts and culture being so expansive, it is impossible to represent every sector. To expand the taskforce's perspective and address the scope of the arts community's issues, the taskforce held two community town halls attended by a diverse group of over 70 participants each meeting. Feedback from the townhalls reflected concerns of equity and lack of support in the following areas: a sense of permanence within the arts (both financially and politically), the financial vulnerability of individual artists and small arts organizations/businesses, a focus or plan for our youth involving arts, and establishing and expanding nightlife presence within the community.

The taskforce met with city and state officials to discuss these concerns and further understand policies and practices that hinder or support the community, including councilmembers Isaiah Thomas, Katherine Gilmore Richardson, David Oh, Derek Green, Kendra Brooks, Mark Squilla, and Cindy Bass, state representative Jordan Harris, state senators Anthony Williams and Vincent Hughes, and United States Congress Members Brendan Boyle and Mary Gay Scanlon.

The taskforce met with members of the Greater Philadelphia Cultural Alliance (GPCA), the Office of Arts Culture and Creative Economy (OACCE), Philadelphia Industrial Development Corp. (PIDC), Philly Culture United, The Philadelphia Foundation, Mural Arts, Musicians Union Local 77, National Independent Venue Association (NIVA), Tax Justice for Artists, and arts lobbyist, Holly Kisner.

Discovering a multitude of perspectives, the taskforce decided to expand its reach by holding a potential partnering organization zoom meeting with the stakeholders mentioned in the paragraph above as well as members of the Philadelphia Cultural Fund, Samuel S. Fels Fund, Musical Fund Society of Philadelphia, PEW Center for Arts & Heritage, Philadelphia Museum of Art, Kimmel Center, Penn Academy Fine Arts, the Barnes Foundation, Settlement Music School, University of Arts, Academy of Vocal Arts, Temple University Boyer, Philadelphia Orchestra, Philadelphia Youth Orchestra, Annenberg Center for Performing Arts, Musicopia, Japan American Society of Greater Philadelphia, Free Library of Philadelphia, Philadelphia Academy of Music, Forrest Theater, The Walnut Street Theater, Curtis Institute of Music, Freedom Theater, Philadanco, World Cafe Live, Philadelphia Chamber Music Society, Painted Bride Arts Center, Mendelssohn Club, Arden Theater Company, The Collective,

WXPB, Community Murals & Preservation, Spiral Q Puppet Theater and Philadelphia Magic Gardens.

The taskforce participated in community panels and webinars with Mural Arts, PIDC, and a Digital Rally for Arts to help educate the community on the continued work it was doing for the sector.

The Arts and Culture Taskforce believed the best way to represent the community was to enlist artist volunteers to participate in research to help address issues uncovered during meetings and engagement with arts and culture stakeholders. The taskforce thanks volunteers who helped with the compiling of this report.

### **Problem Statement:**

Philadelphia is at a grave crossroads and our path forward will define both the resiliency of our economic rebound and our status as an arts and culture destination for years to come. An already shaky foundation was devastated to its core by the global pandemic that continues to have an impact on the city's individual artists and workforce, small cultural institutions, and all nightlife businesses. At the height of the pandemic, Philadelphia diverted course from other major cities and proposed a complete zeroing out of the entire budget for the Office of Arts, Culture and the Creative Economy. This dramatic \$4.4 million budget cut would not only halt grants to hundreds of cultural groups in the city, but also mean the end of the Philadelphia Cultural Fund, which provides the only financial support offered by the city to its growing population of performers and arts organizations. Although the final budget included the replacement of some of these funds after intense public outcry, the initial budget from Mayor Kenny sent a clear signal of the administration's disregard for the economic and social importance of arts and culture in Philadelphia's future.

This budget cut move is not new to Philadelphia as Mayor Street zeroed out the arts and culture budget and closed the office during the start of his second term. The disenfranchising rhetoric used in his financial and strategic plan FY05-09 stated that this act was done to "refocus on core activities; reduce expenditures on non-core city services." This language further supports this narrative that arts are specifically a non-essential extracurricular activity.

Historically, the city of Philadelphia has grossly underfunded and underserved its citizens depending on arts and culture compared to peer cities worldwide. The lack of advocacy and support from within the city government has left the arts and culture community out of the conversation and without sustained resources. The creative sector generates \$4.1 billion of economic activity in the Philadelphia region, yet continues to make up just a fraction of the city's budget even during an excellent fiscal year.

Significant disconnection and lack of awareness from city officials towards the arts and culture community have created a tumultuous relationship between government officials and the vast collective of stakeholders within the creative economy sector. It is clear that government officials view artists as disposable rather than vital entrepreneurs, and arts as a

luxury instead of both a viable career path and a public good. These perceptions allow the most vulnerable of these groups to be exploited in ways that are not financially or socially conducive to the city or its residents.

Philadelphia is a city of firsts, innovation, and a cultural hub for music, art, and entertainment that produces and attracts world-renowned talent. Philadelphia hails as the home of neo-soul, a music genre that speaks to the realness of the city and a grit that defines what it means to be a Philadelphian. Philadelphia received global praise for turning an issue of blight and graffiti into one of the world's most extensive mural arts programs. Philadelphia's story has always been and continues to be told through the arts and culture sector, but the future of that story is at risk. Rampant brain drain and lack of talent retention has Philadelphia's voice diminishing on the national scene. The city continues to produce fantastic artists that shape the character of Philadelphia, but this talent leaves for cities more invested in their craft and contributions. Talented Philadelphians fleeing the city limits is happening at an alarming rate and is the direct result of the lack of investment in arts and culture. Philadelphia has failed to create and maintain an environment that welcomes artists and entrepreneurs to flourish and instead forces them to take their talents elsewhere.

The city's lack of a permanent department of arts and culture with a dedicated revenue stream is a flagrant offense to its citizens. Philadelphia will remain behind other large cities, especially those in the northeast corridor. The city's absence of a plan for individual artists and small organizations leaves them vulnerable to trickle-down-economics by larger institutions also struggling to maintain funding. The disinvestment and lack of advocacy in youth-based arts fail our youngest citizens, leaving them with a truncated education and dangerously few outlets to express themselves. Philadelphia's gross disregard for investment into its nighttime economy holds it back from competing on a global scale for residents, tax revenue, and tourism dollars.

The arts, culture, and creative economy in Philadelphia is in dire need of a complete overhaul. Bold leadership is needed to address the ailing infrastructure, as well as transparency regarding oversight, order of operations, and policy changes. The city has to atone for its systematic disenfranchisement of the sector by establishing a permanent structure and funding source for arts and culture, develop a plan to provide advocacy and support for individual artists and small organizations, create an environment that centers youth access to the arts, and develop a plan for nighttime governance that encourages and not prohibits nightlife activities.



## **COVID-19 Effect**

The COVID-19 pandemic rocked Philadelphia and its economy. With almost a complete economic shut down of the city, the arts and culture community felt the heavy weight of the pandemic more than most. The arts and culture sector is highly driven by gig workers, self-employed entrepreneurs, and small business owners who usually do not have the safety nets that traditionally employed people have and therefore carried the brunt of the financial distress caused by the economic shutdown. Each sub-committee will explain the implicit effects that COVID-19 had on its respective part of the sector in detail, but the most devastating effect of the pandemic on arts and culture in Philadelphia is finding out how little the city cares for the contributions of the sector to the city and the region. The mayor proposed to cut all funding to the sector showing the city's lack of commitment to arts and culture.

## **Final Findings:**

The final findings and recommendations from the ACTF are organized into four sections of the same name as its four subcommittees. Each subcommittee conducted research, independently to assess, evaluate, and make recommendations for their perspective sector. Each subcommittee was given full autonomy on style and method of research and reporting. To respect the integrity and hard work of each subcommittee, their findings are reported in the format they have chosen to best relay their findings. For this reason, the style, and formatting of each section below may vary. All recommendations can be found under the solution statement section of each subcommittee report.

# PERMANENCE:

*“Arts and culture have only ever been described in Philadelphia’s City Hall as an optional supplement in fair weather economy.” -ACTF*

## **Problem Statement:**

The City of Philadelphia does not have a functional, permanent department advocating for the health and equity of the arts and culture sector. The sixth largest city in the United States (by population) needs an independent cultural affairs department that is respected by city leadership.

Arts and culture have only ever been described in Philadelphia’s City Hall as an optional supplement in fair weather economy. This is largely due to the misperception that “The Arts” are a non-essential diversion and are adequately supported by wealthy collectors and patrons, not requiring the attention of advocates for the working class, like our city leaders. Aside from the general insult of city leaders benefitting from the cache that a diverse community of cultural producers supplies them without their support, this interpretation fails to recognize that:

- this city is full of hundreds of thousands of cultural workers who represent hundreds of millions of dollars in earning potential,
- we are poised to contribute deeply and meaningfully toward a better future for Philadelphia,
- the power of diversion has kept humanity sane since COVID-19 dominated our reality.

One need only to look at our own coping tools throughout the pandemic to know that arts and culture (film and television, visual arts, public spaces, performance, literature) kept us from losing hope during isolation. The way that we are being reneged today will have catastrophic consequences in the long term, culturally, economically and politically. Our creative labor has helped to alleviate the psychological, emotional, and financial effects of COVID-19 on a widespread scale.

## **We are Everywhere**

What city leadership today fails to recognize is that arts and culture represent living, breathing communities which depend on their craft for physical well-being and survival in the world. Our work is present in every aspect of the city’s makeup: design and architecture define civic infrastructure; rhetoric, or letters, drive jurisprudence and communications; and art imbues all the billions of terabytes of media that Americans have consumed on an exponentially increasing basis throughout the pandemic.

Groundbreaking research in 2012 led by [Mark Stern at The University of Pennsylvania's Social Impact of the Arts Project](#), with the Office of Arts Culture and Creative Economy, revealed that:

*Concentration of cultural assets (commercial and public) was associated with lower morbidity—that is, incidence of chronic disease—particularly in non-white neighborhoods.*

Furthermore:

*With the decline in the presence of the arts and culture in low-wealth neighborhoods comes a decline in the potential of the arts to generate social impact.*

We know support for the arts and culture sector is possible and sustainable through models of other cities. There is a precedent being set by Allegheny County's investment in the quality of life via the [Allegheny Regional Asset District](#) (RAD), which has an annual operating budget of \$12 million. For the past 25 years, RAD has financially supported the county's libraries, parks and recreation, tourist attractions, and arts and cultural organizations. Allegheny County has committed to #RADworkshere—true support for Pittsburgh and its surrounding counties.

We've learned that Phoenix, Arizona, which has a slightly lower population than Philadelphia but a much smaller arts and culture sector, maintains a larger arts budget and a permanent Office of Arts and Culture that manages the city's public works contracts. In other words, the city entrusts its arts and culture officers to be landlords, making their service indispensable to the Mayor and City Council. What the Office of Arts and Culture does in Phoenix is also provide one of the only shelters for the American history of Latinx and Indigenous populations. Culture is the only guise under which some communities can continue to engender culturally specific relevance in American history at large.

Could the City of Philadelphia imagine trusting a healthy and functional Office of Arts and Culture to be a significant bureaucratic partner in running the city? Could the City of Philadelphia meaningfully provide for the communities making up its majority, by honoring their cultures? It currently does not.

Our city leadership needs to consider all of its responsibilities and opportunities.

The City of Philadelphia has a serious problem ahead of it with a history of limited imagination. City Council and the Mayor do not have to solve this alone. The creative economy has been, is, and can be an excellent partner and it can help redefine the city's vibrant future. Without their intentional partnership right now, the sector will not make it past COVID-19 or the recovery. The burdens on the city will continue. To quote the late, great artist Toni Cade Bambara who spent her last years in Philadelphia, "Cultural workers are mental health workers." When COVID-19 raged on, Philadelphia went dark, and arts and culture was the light or heartbeat that kept residents encouraged and entertained. The city is suffering an unprecedented state of anxiety. Let us help.

**Discovery:**

The Permanence Subcommittee of the Arts & Culture Task Force (ACTF) is dedicated to creating both short and long-term recommendations to City Council that will ensure the arts and culture sector is permanently recognized as an essential part of Philadelphia's unique character. The Permanence Subcommittee was formed on February 18, 2021 and includes the following members:

- **Michelle Currica**, multi-disciplinary artist, Grants & Operations Manager, Samuel S. Fels Fund
- **Anne Ishii**, writer and Executive Director of Asian Arts Initiative
- **Christina Vassallo**, curator and Executive Director of The Fabric Workshop and Museum
- **Eboni Zamani**, filmmaker, photographer, and writer, A&H Media

**Additional Contributors:**

- Nicole Allen White, Deputy Director of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion (interim) and Access Director of Government and External Affairs, Philadelphia Museum of Art
- Melissa Beatriz, documentary filmmaker, journalist, cultural producer and researcher; Co-Founder ;Presente! Media
- Nichole Canuso, dancer, choreographer; Founder Nichole Canuso Dance Company
- Anna Drozdowski, curator, producer; Co-Founder Thirdbird and thINKingDANCE
- Elizabeth Grimaldi, Executive Director, Fleisher Art Memorial
- Sophie Heng, photographer; Business Development Manager, Creative Economy and Keystone Opportunity Zone at City of Philadelphia
- Yolonda Johnson-Young, documentary filmmaker; Co-Founder SIFTMedia 215 (Sisters in Film & Television)
- Priscilla Luce, Executive Director (interim), Greater Philadelphia Cultural Alliance
- Katie Moore, dancer; Business Director at Kun-Yang Lin/Dancers
- Danny Orendorff, curator, writer; Executive Director, Vox Populi
- Nadine Patterson, independent writer, producer, director, documentary filmmaker; Program Manager, HipCinema Labs/SIFT
- Caralyn Spector, creative strategist and consultant; Principal, Davis Gay + Associates
- Mira Treatman, dance-theatre artist; Managing Editor, thINKingDANCE

The Permanence Subcommittee members met, via video conference, a total of six times between February 18, 2021 and March 12, 2021 and opened three of those meetings to the Philadelphia public to enlist ideas, feedback, and practical advice. Members of this subcommittee represented our work during every ACTF general meeting, as well as during the two Town Hall meetings and meetings with experts and advisors that were organized by ACTF.[1]

Additional information that guided our recommendations was gathered by attending City Council Committee meetings and digital teach-ins; conducting research on City strategic and financial plans, reports on creative economic impact (linked throughout this document); conducting research on Pennsylvania tax laws; and reviewing news articles, studies, and anecdotes shared by experts in the field, and the professional experiences of the subcommittee members, as well as those of our peers, staff, and fellow cultural producers in Philadelphia and beyond.

### **COVID-19 Effects:**

**March 25, 2020**, the Mayor's Office of Arts, Culture and the Creative Economy created a snapshot of Philadelphia individual artists and arts organizations: [Philadelphia Artists and Arts Organizations Impact Survey](#). The results were released on April 13 and estimated the economic impact of COVID-19 from March 25 through April 30, 2020.

Of note:

*The arts organizations estimate 2,257 event cancellations with a loss of 879,366 attendees. Total estimated financial loss is \$43,076,501 through April 30, 2020. As of April 10, 44.8% of arts organizations cancelled or rescheduled programs and events, 15.1% cancelled fundraisers, and 16.1% reduced salaries or furloughed or reduced staff.*

*Total estimated financial loss to individual / independent artists and employees of arts and cultural organizations from these days of lost work is \$5,521,848.*

**May 1, 2020**, Philadelphia Mayor Jim Kenney's revised budget eliminates funding for staff and all programs in the Office of Arts, Culture and the Creative Economy, including Art in City Hall, the Percent for Art Program, and the Philadelphia Cultural Fund —the [Art Blog](#).

Eliminating the entire OACCE from the fiscal year 2021 budget, in the wake of the new COVID-19 economy, in May 2020, was an unconscionable decision, made unilaterally by a city leadership that has no clear understanding that arts and culture is not an optional curricular activity, but represents a significant and diverse population of workers and residents of the city. This was compounded by the threat that the state funding agency, Pennsylvania Council on the Arts, would revoke its reimbursement-based pledged grant awards to over 80 nonprofit organizations throughout the state, many of which are based in the greater Philadelphia region.<sup>[2]</sup>

**June 16, 2020**, The arts community mobilized in response to the budget. [EMERGENCY ART ACTION TO FUND BLACK FUTURES](#)

**June 18, 2020,** [City Council gives preliminary approval to FY2021 Budget](#). Says it will defund the police (this did not happen); announces New Normal Budget; and allocates funding to PCF and the African American Museum in Philadelphia (AAMP), and critical investments in Philadelphians.

**September 2020,** Disadvantaged Community Task Force Meetings focusing on Art, Music, Culture and the Creative Economy inspires the creation of the Arts & Culture Task Force.

**Fall 2020,** All eyes on Philadelphia as the nation approaches Election Day 2020. Tensions rise around mailing versus in-person voting during the pandemic. Did arts and culture save our democracy? It certainly elevated Philadelphian civic pride and turn out:

- [“#VoteThatJawn and Fresh Artists tap an army of kiddos to turn out the parent vote”](#)
- [How Common made music for voting with a circus of clowns](#)
- [As Philly fought for the count of all mail-in ballots in Pennsylvania, a set of well-crafted mailbox costumes caught the attention of the internet. Creator Spiral Q has a lot more where they came from.](#)

**December 2020,** the Arts & Culture Task Force begins its work.

**January 2021,** The Greater Philadelphia Cultural Alliance’s COVID-19 Economic Impact Survey is published and reveals that “arts and culture organizations are adapting to the limitations of in-person gatherings in incredibly innovative ways. 41% of survey participants reported that their programming is fully virtual. However, many voiced concerns about staff capacity, digital infrastructure and screen fatigue.” Additionally, “organizations of all types and sizes have shifted their programs to meet the needs of the communities they serve” by creating mobile markets and food pantries, serving as city access centers for students, and using their outdoor spaces for other community-driven needs. Dance and drag artists were already somewhat performing on the Internet but they were making full-blown productions as early as April and June of the pandemic. Vinchelle, Black Girl Magic + Peek-a-boo Revous had Zoom productions, and live-streamed events early in the year. Brujo de la Mancha DJ’d dance parties were sponsored by the Rotunda.

In summary, the immediate loss of earned revenue for artists, companies and venues in March 2020 is still felt today, a year into the crisis. This devastation was compounded by the major loss of tax revenue for the City.

The catastrophic effects of the pandemic cannot be understated, but the arts are the antibody to this crisis. There was a lot of isolation but also innovation. Our ingenuity is not in opposition to the city’s infrastructure or technological innovation but a key component of it. The arts leaned into and shored up its technological power, connecting us when public safety required us to stay apart, and with little financial support.



### A way forward, a way out

We have just learned of [the passage of President Biden’s COVID-19 Relief Stimulus package](#), which will lead to \$1.3 billion in federal funding for Philadelphia, much of which will contribute to the deficits created by the pandemic-related shutdown (transit and education, most notably). Could this mean that arts and culture do not have to be pitted against other human services sectors in Fiscal 2022?

One might look to a city like Houston, Texas as a model for changing the scarcity mentality that deprioritizes arts and culture. Demographically and politically very similar to Philadelphia, Houston is a diverse blue dot in the middle of a red state. In the wake of pandemic-related shutdowns, Mayor Sylvester Turner—following guidance from the city’s arts agencies—advocated for and received \$5 million in federal relief funding specifically for artists and musicians, as well as for venues and nonprofits. They also advanced \$3 million in immediate dispersal of funds earmarked for civic projects, and another \$500,000 in individual grants through its equivalent of the Philadelphia Cultural Fund.

Philadelphia is the home of a significantly larger arts and culture business sector than Houston. With 500,000 more people in its city, Houston has fifty fewer [museums](#) and thirty fewer [equity theaters](#) than Philadelphia.

It is worth noting that one of the reasons Houston was better prepared for the COVID-19 economic crisis was because the arts sector had already been through rapid relief funding initiatives after Hurricane Harvey. So here is an opportunity for discovery: what can we learn from other city programs dealing specifically in crisis relief? The way we plan forward is not to treat these economic disasters as one-off events. We must prepare for *when* this happens again and not *if*.

### **Solution Statement:**

The Arts and Culture sector needs a permanent agency of cultural significance, bureaucratic rigor, and equity in its advocacy in City Hall; one that cannot be eliminated. It must be responsive, representative, and equitable, and it must protect the sector from being unfairly pitted against other human services budgets when dealt with the next local, regional, or national budget crisis.

One reason the arts and culture sector may feel small to city leadership is because our economy is divided into unnecessary silos. The permanent office we recommend must represent all sectors of the arts and all sizes of arts entities, including major institutions which are currently represented independently in the city’s General Ledger. Specifically, Philadelphia Museum of Art and Mural Arts must be overseen within this permanent agency, along with small businesses and independent artists.

The arts and culture sector understands the need to prioritize human services, which it also provides. We are sadly accustomed to reductions in funding and having to develop immediate and temporary solutions (described below). But again, further reduction of investment in cultural assets **will lead to permanent damage to our communities.**

The solution we are proposing is one of **conditional accommodation**. If the city can guarantee the arts and culture sector a permanent and significant agency in city government, as described above, with the highest and most integrated level of participation in all strategic planning and fiscal organization, and with the intention of protecting the most vulnerable communities, then we can agree as a sector, to willingly negotiate budgeting strategies. Much of the problem the arts and culture sector is experiencing with city leadership is not just that the funding is lopsided, but that we are not seen as a part of civic welfare.

The solution must incorporate the following fundamental priorities and precepts:

#### S.I.R.I.U.S.

- **Stimulus:** Public funding/financial amnesty or relief for individuals and businesses unable to operate for as long as public health and safety restrictions remain. Continued stimulus/relief until the economic impacts of COVID-19 are diminished.
- **Inclusion:** creative economy members and businesses to be included in all Requests For Proposals (RFP) processes for city contracts. Anti-racist and DEI frameworks to be employed across departments uniformly.
- **Representation/reconstruction:** Expanding the social and economic definitions of who an artist is/what a business is. Reconstruct the power dynamic of the arts in Philadelphia and its representation in city government. Charter the Office of Arts, Culture and the Creative Economy and expand it into a department. Make the Chief Cultural Officer a position immune to Mayoral whims; the CCO should serve at the leisure of a commission of their peers in the sector.
- **Ideation:** Civic engagement processes taking place in public spaces that can accommodate COVID-19 and public safety concerns. General public, creative economy, city government, philanthropy and corporations reimagine an arts-led recovery. Public spaces and the arts/humanities will be integral for our economic recovery and social reconciliation.
- **Ujaama (Cooperative Economics):** Philadelphia's creative economy is vast and diverse. A spirit and commitment to cooperation will be necessary as we move through the next five to ten years. We must collectively imagine and build a new future and system of economics, understanding the damage that racism,

sexism, homophobia, ableism, xenophobia and other forms of prejudice and discrimination have caused. Having the city as a partner increases the potential for broader cooperation and models of economic impact.

- **Sustainability:** These new systems need to survive beyond COVID-19 and specific economic crises. What we learn and build in the years to come may create safety nets for members of the creative economy, and—if developed from a human-centric framework—would support any non-traditional worker, sole proprietor, or small business (or non-profit).

### **Immediate Solutions are not Sustainable Solutions.**

Workarounds are great, and the arts and culture sector showed up with them. This itself is indicative of the innovation and perspicacity with which we can shepherd the city's recovery. However, we need continuity.

We have discovered many dysfunctional workarounds in the city, to make up for the lack of legislative support for the arts, including the disaggregation of the sector.<sup>[3]</sup> Here are some suggested long-term advancements of short-term solutions, to achieve sustainable growth of the sector and achieve continuity:

1. **Arts and Culture Task Force**
  1. Currently a volunteer group, this task force needs to be amended much as the charter for the Philadelphia Arts Commission, which serves city council and the mayor.
  2. The Commission will require a longer timeline for strategic planning. The planning that has taken place in this brief time cannot end with one budget.
2. **Office of Arts Culture and Creative Economy (OACCE)**
  1. As the office most closely resembling the structure of a permanent department at City Hall, we believe the OACCE must be re-organized to represent the entire arts and culture sector equitably.
  2. We recommend this office be re-chartered under the Department of Commerce as the Office of Arts and Culture.
    1. Under the Department of Commerce—where the OACCE was under Mayor Nutter<sup>[4]</sup>—the Office of Arts and Culture would manage all arts and culture affairs and trade, including the administration of funds to the Philadelphia Museum of Art and Mural Arts.
    2. Under the Department of Commerce, the Office of Arts and Culture would prioritize the representation of interests of independent arts and cultural producers, and small businesses which serve the culture sector (what Mark Stern calls “cultural assets”), equally.
  3. The new Office of Arts and Culture would also administer opportunity zone funding specific to the independent culture sector, including hospitality and leisure.

4. This office must work in cooperation with the permanent Arts and Culture Commission as an evolution of the Arts and Culture Task Force.
5. OACCE's role as funding institution versus functional bureaucrat or advocacy entity needs to be clarified.
  1. There is much confusion about the agency as it stands today, and very little support from the arts community. Its relationship to the Philadelphia Cultural Fund continues to cause confusion as well.
  2. We recommend a further definition of the distinct roles that this agency and Philadelphia Culture Fund have.
3. Philadelphia Cultural Fund (PCF)
  1. Restore and increase PCF funding.
    1. The Philadelphia Cultural Fund is a unique model for the distribution of City Funding. Nothing else like it exists in the country. "The Philadelphia Cultural Fund was established in 1991 when Philadelphia's Mayor and City Council authorized the creation of an independent nonprofit 501(c) (3) corporation whose mission is to provide funds to enhance the cultural life and vitality of the City of Philadelphia and its residents. PCF is managed by a professional philanthropy staff, with governance provided by a board comprising arts leaders, community members and representatives named by the Mayor and City Council President. Grant applications are reviewed through a transparent and robust process that includes site visits and peer panels. This operational structure enhances the integrity of the grant-making process and ensures continuity across mayoral administrations in terms of PCF-grantee relationships and funding practices. Grants are made from a city budget allocation to PCF and provide operating support for Philadelphia-based arts and culture organizations dedicated to creating, preserving and/or exhibiting visual, literary and performing arts, architecture, science, history and the humanities.<sup>[5]</sup>
    2. The PCF has demonstrated its commitment to arts and culture organizations despite economic turmoil and city cuts. PCF's budget was slashed by 42% in Fiscal Year 2011 as the city faced the Great Recession. PCF operated at 43% of its peak allocation from 2012 - 2014 while the city recovered. As PCF's grantee numbers rose, it initiated multi-year general operating support, serving as a reliable source of funding that fostered the continuity of long-standing small to mid-sized organizations. Annual grants supported the emergence of newly forming community-based organizations. Artful protest in 2014 led to a near restoration of \$3,140,000 and PCF operated under this allocation until 2020. In 2021 PCF's budget was zero-ed out when the Mayor announced the elimination of the Office of Arts, Culture and the Creative Economy. Although City Council provided PCF an annual allocation of \$1,000,000 to weather July 1, 2020 through June 30, 2021, this requires PCF to operate at 32% of its post-recession level funding. To a sector

that has been under-resourced for a decade, and is enduring a pandemic and global economic crisis, this allocation illustrates the city's perspective that culture is disposable.

3. PCF has tremendous public support from the arts and culture sector that is impossible to replicate or replace. Multiple participants in multiple meetings expressed their enthusiasm for PCF and excitement at the prospect of its full restoration.
4. Its grants administration already embodies the principles of S.I.R.I.U.S. that we demand. It is fit for a city of Philadelphia's diversity and size. PCF should continue to administer the city's arts grants.

#### 4. Greater Philadelphia Cultural Alliance (GPCA)

1. We recommend that GPCA provide free membership to all arts and culture entities regardless of tax status, with annual operating budgets of \$250,000 or less, through at least the 2022 fiscal year in order to widen the pool of applicants for COVID-19 relief funding controlled by GPCA.
  1. GPCA did much to facilitate relief funding throughout 2020, but as they are a membership organization, their service is to those paying dues.
  2. If the GPCA cannot amend its charter to include all types of cultural producers, we recommend that GPCA no longer be seen as a fiscal partner or an advocacy party to the city's arts and culture office. Instead, they may be regarded as a data portal, to offer valuable statistics.
    1. The data provided by the GPCA has proven invaluable to informing the funding landscape of which the city needs to become an integral part. However, it appears to have been misrepresented as a sufficient replacement for a functional arts office rather than as a supporting consultant. Because the GPCA does not represent the total arts and cultural economy (including individual artists and small businesses), we feel that its role should be compartmentalized.

#### 5. Illuminate the Arts Grant

1. While there is still confusion around the grant and the means by which it was acquired and will be distributed, the Arts and Culture Task Force is energized to assure its success.
  1. OACCE, the entity tasked with administering this grant must address the concerns around the high barrier to entry and lack of equity.
  2. We recommend the city allocate resources for a second wave of funding through this grant, to be distributed in Q3 2021.
  3. As this is viewed as much needed relief funding for human survival, there should be no requirement for artistic output from the grant.

We also recommend examining the following revenue models:

6. **Percent for Art:** Philadelphia's status as a world-class city for arts and culture is exemplified by its ability to draw national and international material-based artists via Percent for Art. We recommend expanding Percent for Art's service to Philadelphians in the following ways:
  1. Open the fund to include time-based arts such as dance, film, performance art and music.
  2. Increase recruitment of Philadelphia-based cultural producers and
  3. Reserve funds to ensure artists from, and residing in, Philadelphia receive commissions.
7. **Payments in lieu of Taxes Program (PILOTs):** Mostly used by major educational nonprofits to distribute wealth to public school works, i.e., University of Pennsylvania distributing funding to University City schools.
  1. There is an opportunity to leverage a PILOT program to designate payments from art schools to the arts sector. Specifically dedicated to the arts, larger nonprofits like Moore College of Art, Drexel University, PAFA and University of the Arts could be courted to support arts and culture.
8. **Mutual Aid projects:** We can learn from and collaborate with mutual aid initiatives rather than depend on them to fill the gaps in lower visibility communities.
  1. Many arts organizations and community groups organized mutual aid projects to bring resources to communities hardest hit by the pandemic.
    1. [Alliance for a Just Philadelphia](#)
    2. [Emergency Action to Fund Black Futures](#)
    3. QT Noir, [Till Arts Fund](#)
    4. The Village of Arts and Humanities, [Emergency Gap Fund for Black Working Artists](#)
    5. Small businesses throughout the city
  2. How do we protect pathways to arts for the populations most affected by COVID-19?
9. **Collaborations:** We can learn from collaborations developed in response to the 2020 crises. Notable examples:
  1. [Philadelphia Collaborative Arts Consortium](#), a group of five like-sized and like-minded visual arts organizations pooling resources to sustain access to contemporary art in Philadelphia.
  2. [COVID-19 Arts Aid PHL](#): Greater Philadelphia Cultural Alliance, Philadelphia Cultural Fund and the City's Office of Arts Culture and the Creative Economy with additional support provided by William Penn Foundation and The Barra Foundation
  3. REC Philly working with Wyncote on the [Black City Music grant](#)
  4. [No to Zero](#) campaign alliance (led by Vox Populi)
10. **Eliminate redundancy in Philadelphia's tourism agencies:** Bureau of Convention Center and Visit Philly are two agencies in a city that requires only one.
  1. We recommend combining the two agencies and funneling surplus funding toward that which makes tourism to this city so enticing: arts and culture.



## 11. Review the tax base

1. As a proposal, this initiative is long-term and serves the entire city, not just the Office of Arts and Culture.
2. Developers, corporations, and large nonprofit institutions must pay their fair share in taxes right now and for some time to come. From these taxes' funds could be redirected to support human services.

These sophisticated, complex workarounds reveal not only the grit and perspicacity of Philadelphia artists and cultural providers, but the need for cohesion and holism at the highest level of city governance so that city leaders do not take the sector for granted or lose sight of opportunities which the art sector can shepherd.

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<sup>1</sup> Advisors include Nicole Allen White, Deputy Director of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion (interim), and Access Director of Government and External Affairs, Philadelphia Museum of Art; Brendan F. Boyle, Congressman, 2nd District, Philadelphia; Vashti DuBois, Executive Director/Founder The Colored Girls Museum; Germaine Ingram, Public Art Committee member; Jane Golden, Executive Director, Mural Arts; Kelly R Lee, Chief Cultural Officer Office of Arts Culture and Creative Economy; Wit López, visual and performing artist and Founder, Till Arts Project; Priscilla Luce, Executive Director (interim), Greater Philadelphia Cultural Alliance; Mitch Menchaca, Director, Office of Arts and Culture, Phoenix, AZ; Barbara Sizle, Executive Director, The Philadelphia Cultural Fund; Terrill Haigler, activist, Ya Fav Trashman; Sanitation Worker, Philadelphia Streets Department.

<sup>2</sup> April 27, 2020, Pennsylvania Council on the Arts Executive Director Karl Blishcke informed grant recipients, “while it is conceivable that the commonwealth will be able to process your grant award agreement at a later date, the outcome is highly uncertain.” —[The Art Newspaper](#)

<sup>3</sup> FY05-09 Financial and Strategic Plans from Mayor John Street’s administration indicate a moment of discontinuity, when arts offices were defunded in favor of direct fees to major institutions. [https://www.phila.gov/finance/pdfs/FY05-FY09\\_Five\\_Year\\_.pdf](https://www.phila.gov/finance/pdfs/FY05-FY09_Five_Year_.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> The OACCE was originally just the Office of Arts & Culture that began under Wilson Goode in 1986. It was initially operated by the Deputy City Representative for the Office of Arts and Culture.

<sup>5</sup> From the PCF website, accessed March 10, 2021.

# INDIVIDUAL ARTIST & SMALL ORGANIZATIONS

*“Small arts and culture organizations throughout the city bring cultural muscle and civic connection to neighborhoods and provide places for local artists to develop ideas, hone their skills, and present their work.”-ACTF*

## **PROBLEM STATEMENT:**

Independent artists and small, community-based, arts organizations are the lifeblood of Philadelphia’s arts ecology. The ideas, creative risk-taking, and innovations that make Philadelphia a vibrant place for arts and culture come from the imagination, talent, and craft of Philly’s diverse and multi-disciplined community of artists working individually and in small collectives. Small arts and culture organizations throughout the city bring cultural muscle and civic connection to neighborhoods and provide places for local artists to develop ideas, hone their skills, and present their work. This critical arterial system has always been fragile. Individual artists survive only by their ingenuity at carving out precious time for their practice and piecing together a living from a patchwork of arts and non-arts sources. Community-based arts and culture organizations struggle to exist on scarce government funding, grants, donations, and sales that rarely, if ever, equal the real cost of their programming. This tenuous system exists on a razor’s edge during “good” times.

## **Under Supported and Under Capitalized**

Small arts organizations and independent artists in the city of Philadelphia are under supported. While this problem existed before the COVID-19 pandemic, coronavirus has only exacerbated the precarious nature in which Philadelphians in the arts sector are forced to operate. Like every citizen of Philadelphia, regardless of business sector, employees of small organizations and independent artists deserve to be able to provide for themselves and be offered opportunity to flourish.

Small arts and culture organizations are undercapitalized. There are too few avenues of direct support for independent artists and owners of small for-profit arts organizations, which results in most of them operating as “gig workers” or contractors, forcing them into difficult tax situations.

Because small organizations and independent artists are not well supported by the City of Philadelphia, we are often losing some of our greatest artists, minds, and cultural producers to other cities because artists cannot have sustainable economic lives in our city. Too often respected artists have abandoned or curtailed their practice to pursue professions that allow them to support themselves and their family.

### **Maintaining a Reputation**

If the City of Philadelphia is interested in maintaining a reputation as a thriving cultural destination, policies must be put in place to support and encourage working in our cultural sector. There is currently a lack of reliable streams of financial support and creative opportunities that would allow local artists to plan for sustainable careers, and for small organizations to be sustainable and responsive to the communities they serve. Access to resources must be democratized for all artists and small organizations. The City of Philadelphia must provide a mechanism for ensuring equity in allocation of resources and opportunities, a platform for capacity-building and collaboration, and a pipeline for effective communication across the arts and culture landscape.

### **DISCOVERY:**

The ACTF Subcommittee on individual artists and small organizations (I&SO) wishes to be clear about our ability to assess with detail the problems facing these specific sectors in Philadelphia. We want to acknowledge that this research process has been less than adequate timewise to be comprehensive, and we are not “experts” per se. We have approached this process as persons in the field, who draw firsthand from our experience, which in turn greatly influences our contribution to the ACTF Findings overall.

ACTF Individuals and Small Organizations Sub-Committee Members:

**Terry Fox**, Director Philadelphia Dance Projects

**Germaine Ingram**, Independent Artist

**LaNeshe Miller-White**, Executive Director of Theatre in the X & Theatre Philadelphia

**Barbara Wilson**, President, Caribbean Festival and Cultural Committee of Philadelphia

**Akina Abdullah**, Independent Artist and Entrepreneur

**James Jackson**, Executive Producer - Light Thief Productions

**Jamie Merwin**, Founding Artistic Director of Olive Dance Theatre

**Lauren Raske**, Artist/Owner at 7textures

**Jim Stephens**, Ropeadope Records Recording Artist, Composer, and Producer

**Mikhail Zorich**, Project Director for Multicultural Arts Exchange

The sub-committee met 3 times and in the interim individual members did research and presented it for their entire committee to consider. Several met with other leaders of other local organizations, the Greater Philadelphia Cultural Alliance, Mural Arts, Arts & Business Council, Philadelphia Classical Musicians group, Dance Community Conversations on Equity & Inclusion meetings, and Artist Coalition for a Just Philadelphia.

The members also attended ACTF Town Halls and nine meetings of the full Task Force. These sessions in many ways were informational but also aspirational, in terms of what might be done to address stronger and more focused support on the part of City Government; as in the end, a proposal is to be submitted to the Councilmember Thomas' office.

The information on small arts organizations as indicated through the Philadelphia Cultural Fund grants (which is certainly not the entire picture of all organizations producing art in Philly) gives one some perspective on the impressive volume and impact of this sector. And since artists' work is at the center of these organizations it demonstrates their presence also.

From the PCF website:

In 2020, 45% of the organizations funded operated with budgets under \$150,000, with little or no paid staff.

- 56% of grant recipients serve Philadelphia's Pre-K and school-aged children in and out of school.
- 6% of grant recipients are led by women.
- 36% of grant recipients are led by people of color.
- The 2020 grant recipients provided programming that served a Total Attendance of over 11 million people:
  - 5,008,291 Free
  - 6,116,887 Paid

PCF grant recipients have a significant annual direct economic impact on our community, with Direct expenditures of \$737,318,485 to benefit the local economy.

### **Arts and Culture Sector**

This arts and culture sector is a vital employer in Philadelphia. As indicated by the PCF grantees alone, it provides 19,272 paid positions (full-time, part-time, and independent contractors). So, this illustrates just a modest portion of total job activity.

This sector of artists and small organizations also has an extensive network with schools, presenters, galleries, other institutions, and organizations. Its reach includes employing collaborators in marketing and production, like graphic and exhibition designers, photographers, videographers, filmmakers, web designers, set designers, etc. It essentially continues to stimulate the local economy.

The committee realized that a strategy of "steppingstones" is needed to create a stable infrastructure from creating work through to presenting and engaging the community.

### **Other Research**

Additional research was also performed by Amy Smith and James Jackson with Ciarra Lambert and Raheem Manning to discuss the tax liabilities that small arts companies and individual artists face in the City of Philadelphia. A few examples were created:

#### *EXAMPLE A:*

*Hypothetical for-profit business - Small LLC production company*

*Based in the City of Philadelphia (owner lives & works in Philadelphia)*

*Employs 3-5 Philadelphia residents as independent contractors per year @ \$20,000 total*

*Employs 3-5 Philadelphia residents as temporary W2 employees per year @ \$10,000 total*

*Employs 1 part time W2 employee New Jersey Resident per year @ \$10,000 total*

*All other Profits & Losses pass through to Owner*

*Gross receipts: \$60,000 - \$80,000 per year*

*Net profit on Schedule C: \$20,000 profit*

*This for profit LLC would have paid about \$3,000 to the IRS as Self Employment tax on that net (15.3%) on top of whatever taxes he paid for the full return (regular tax brackets). Also, another \$600 to PA (about a 3% tax rate) on that net profit. And also \$800 to the City of Philadelphia on the NPT return. The gross numbers are under the \$100k cap so this LLC would not have been liable for BIRT.*

#### **EXAMPLE B:**

*Married couple, she's a choreographer making mostly W2 wage income, he's a theater sound designer making mostly independent contractor, self employed income. Their income level makes them eligible for CHIP, and they have a kid.*

*His Schedule C gross is \$42k and net is \$20k. She also had a smaller amount of Schedule C income, gross of \$8k, net of \$4k. She's already paying into the City Wage Tax coffers with her \$36k in wage income.*

*Together they are paying the IRS about \$3600 in SE tax, PA about \$700 and City NPT about \$900 JUST on their combined Schedule C income. Then there's additional tax liability for the entire return for the IRS and PA.*

*Obviously that City NPT liability \$900 is a significant amount of money to them, and it would be a serious benefit to be exempt from paying most or all of it.*

*Also, just to be clear, Schedule C filers, LLC filers are all considered "for profit".*

*PCF only funds non-profit 501c3 organizations or artists and groups that use a fiscal sponsor 501c3. All the individual artists in the City are considered "for profit" in the eyes of the taxing entities, and generally don't have access to PCF funds or other foundation funds (with a few exceptions). They earn money from performance fees, teaching fees, small grants or fellowships, or their services.*

Proposed solutions based on this research are below.

### **Resources Utilized**

The following is a sampling of resources used by the I&SO Committee to consider steps for implementation:

The arts make things possible, from better education to greater health outcomes to a more civically-engaged citizenry—but people do not always see the connection to the arts when budgeting plans are being made. From education and job security to housing, public safety, transportation, and more, the arts constantly intersect with Americans' day-to-day lives. Americans for the Arts has created an Arts + Social Impact Explorer tool that shows how the arts impact infrastructure, the economy, social justice, and more. Using this tool, we can find a way to utilize the skills of artists in all sectors. [www.americansforthearts.org/socialimpact](http://www.americansforthearts.org/socialimpact)

SMU/Data Arts, whose mission is to “empower arts and cultural leaders with high-quality data and evidence-based resources and insights to overcome challenges and increase impact. [culturaldata.org](http://culturaldata.org)

Driven by a public-private partnership, collective philanthropic effort, and a commitment to artists and communities the LA Arts Recovery Fund was able to raise \$38.5 million for Southern CA pandemic recovery for small and midsize arts organizations in Southern California. "The arts are vital to the well-being of our communities and our region's recovery in this pivotal moment, but our cultural sector cannot fulfill that mission without additional support," said Kristin Sakoda, director of the Los Angeles County Department of Arts and Culture. <https://philanthropynewsdigest.org/news/38.5-million-la-arts-recovery-fund-to-support-small-midsize-groups>

Tulsa, Oklahoma, with the support of the Kaiser Family Foundation, responded to the call to nurture the creativity of its local artists by providing 2-year fellowships---including a \$40,000 stipend, and fully subsidized living/studio space to artists. To date, 94 artists and arts workers have received a Tulsa Artist Fellowship. In June 2021, the Fellowship anticipates offering up to 10 awards for the 2021-2023 term.

Launched in April 2017, the citywide plan process included a research and discovery phase as well as a robust community engagement phase with a series of 14 meetings throughout Oakland, a survey of Oakland residents and the creation of a Cultural Asset map. The completed plan was adopted by Oakland City Council in July 2018.

Cultural Development Plan for Oakland, California 2018

<https://cao-94612.s3.amazonaws.com/documents/Cultural-Plan-9.24-online.pdf>

Social Aid and Pleasure Clubs New Orleans as models for financial assistance to artists when there is a special need.

Other major cities and institutions have been able to find ways to support artists through incubator programs. Examples of “incubators” include but are not limited to:

[Contemporary Art Lab - Arts Incubator - Philadelphia](http://www.contemporaryartlab.org)

[www.contemporaryartlab.org](http://www.contemporaryartlab.org)

offering a multi-disciplinary coaching program for innovative artists, emerging curators overlooked talented artists and rising collectors to help bring their artworks and projects to life.

[An Introduction to Arts Incubators | Americans for the Arts](https://www.americansforthearts.org/by-program/)

<https://www.americansforthearts.org/by-program/>

Arts incubators are a new, but growing, phenomena in the world of local arts agencies. They are facilities that create a nurturing environment for small and emerging arts organizations by offering low-cost or subsidized space and services.



### [Arts District Development — HADLEY](#)

<https://hadleyyates.squarespace.com/arts-district-development>

Arts districts are incubators of creativity & help stimulate economic activity. Via the arts, Hadley has worked to stimulate economic activity, neighborhood revitalization, and community engagement in Philadelphia, PA and in southern NM.

### [REC Philly - A Place For Creators](#)

<https://recphilly.com>

REC is the future of creativity and empowers independent creators to do more of what they love. Part creative incubator, part creative agency, REC is a physical space, digital application and community designed and dedicated to providing its members with the resources, education & opportunities to build sustainable & scalable businesses around their talent.

### [Artists U](#)

[www.artistsu.org](http://www.artistsu.org)

Artists U Artists U is an incubator for changing the working conditions of artists. Everything we do is artist-run, free, and open-source.

### [Blue Box Incubator | Anthony Tyrone Howard](#)

[www.atharts.com/work/bbx](http://www.atharts.com/work/bbx)

A unique space in the heart of North Philadelphia that sought to bring a unique artistic insight and community purpose to an underserved neighborhood. (Also used by Jill Scott while being in Philadelphia).

[National Sawdust](#) engages artists in an ecosystem of incubation to dissemination, programming groundbreaking new music in our state-of-the-art Williamsburg venue, and developing and touring new, collaborative music-driven projects — the National Sawdust DNA produces and presents world-class artistic work which embraces a wide stylistic approach to music.

### Existing Philadelphia Area Cultural Institutions

There are a number of existing cultural institutions serving small organizations and/or independent artists at this time:

- [Philadelphia Cultural Fund](https://www.philaculturalfund.org/about/impact/) whose mission is to provide funds to enhance the cultural life and vitality of the City of Philadelphia and its residents.  
<https://www.philaculturalfund.org/about/impact/>
- Createworkthrive.com, a project of [Small But Mighty Arts](#), will be a platform to connect artists to jobs, resources and opportunities in Philly
- [Vision Driven Artists](#) supports the visionary work of artists, community groups, and not-for-profit organizations by providing consulting, facilitation, and training services.
- **The Head and The Hand** a non-profit book publisher and writers' workshop featuring literary anthologies, chapbooks, and fiction and non-fiction titles
- **Photo Arts Center** is a nonprofit arts center and exhibition space dedicated to contemporary photographic practice.
- **In-Liquid** nonprofit organization committed to creating opportunities and exposure for visual artists through exhibitions in the InLiquid Gallery and satellite exhibition spaces, all while serving as a free, online, public hub that showcases Philadelphia's vast visual arts culture.
- **Asian Arts Initiative** uses art as a vehicle to explore the diverse experiences of all communities which include Asian Americans. It is a multidisciplinary arts center offering exhibitions, performances, artist residencies, youth workshops, and a community gathering space. Here, all of us can view and create art that reflects our lives, and think critically, creatively about the future we want to build for our
- **Leeway Foundation** supports women and trans artists and cultural producers working in communities at the intersection of art, culture, and social change.
- [Multicultural Arts Exchange](#)

When considering our proposed Solutions, consider the above local entities as key partners with an already existing infrastructure and relationship to our arts community.

### **COVID-19 EFFECT:**

The Global Pandemic wreaked loss on many fronts in our city and region. It has been a year of personal mourning and public isolation. Artists lost work not only in their art forms, but often in their secondary jobs that assisted in providing a living. The economic downturn is well documented, as businesses, restaurants and bars, theaters and galleries closed. Curfews were in force. The use of public transportation fell to 40% of normal use. The consequence of this Covid19 shutdown of commerce and social interaction will greatly reduce City tax revenues for 2020. The federal Stimulus Aid will give the City of Philadelphia \$1,112.7 million (as reported in The Inquirer 03/11/21).

The need for pandemic relief for artists and small organizations can be seen in the number of people served via relief efforts launched by individual organizations. An initiative of local foundations distributed via arts service and granting organizations tried to stanch the ravaged situation with \$4 million dollars to 1,025 individuals, \$3.25 million to 215 mid-sized arts and culture organizations, and \$250,000 to 252 small arts organizations. But this was still inadequate and did not reach many.

It must be noted how artists stayed present during this last year, providing online arts programming in all disciplines, often free or pay what you wish. They provided classes and workshops for people of all ages. It was not only a “do not forget about us” moment, but a generous unifying gesture to provide comfort and inspiration to a seriously traumatized citizenry. There were live in-person arts encounters as well; as the example of dancers entertaining the long lines of voters in November.

Painted Bride Art Center presented Celebrate Your Vote, a series of on-site performances at Philadelphia satellite election sites to serenade voters as they dropped off voting ballots. Local independent artists and small organizations: Movemakers Philly and Urban Movement Arts youth hip-hop dancers, hand drummer Karen Smith, performance poet Nina Lyrispect, and salsa Maestro Flaco participated.

The Bearded Ladies Cabaret created the Beardmobile, a 15-foot box truck modified to be a mobile performance unit bringing safe and socially distant art experiences to neighborhoods all over Philadelphia.

Multicultural Arts Exchange organized three virtual Marathons of Culture "When the Muses speak, the World listens" with the goal to diffuse political tensions. More than 30 artists of all genres from 5 different countries participated.

### **Solution Statement:**

Currently there is no reliable stream of financial support and creative opportunities that would allow local artists to plan for sustainable careers, and for small organizations to be sustainable and responsive to the communities they serve. There is a strong need to create an infrastructure for support and nurturance of this critical network of individual artists and small arts organizations. With this support, these artists and organizations can lend artistic and cultural vitality as well as economic and social capital to Philly neighborhoods and the city as a whole.

As stated in the Kenney Transition Committee Report (2015) “...a cultural planning process can serve as a platform to explore opportunities for increased support of Philadelphia’s cultural assets through public and private sources...”

A stable and permanent infrastructure would provide:

- A mechanism for ensuring equity in allocation of resources and opportunities
- A platform for capacity-building and collaboration
- A pipeline for effective communication across the arts and culture landscape
- Recognition of the unique characteristics and needs of neighborhoods throughout the city
- For a “development of Philadelphia’s shared vision for its cultural sector by engaging the city’s residents and cultural organizations” (Kenney Transition Report)

There is a shared sensibility among the I&SO Subcommittee members that there is a redundancy in having to repeatedly prove the value and worth of arts and culture, with artists at its center. Late in the process we received a copy of the Kenney Final Transition Report by the Community and Culture Committee (2015). Much of that Report with its more detailed research, aligns with our thinking and recommendations. But it also points to the fact that government officials appear heedless to the research and reluctant to take action. A large part of the “problem,” then, is not so much proving the needs of this sector and how to support it, but to convince government officials to take action.

That is why this committee suggests in the following solutions that the arts community get involved in electing a Councilmember At-Large representative from the cultural community, as well as demanding from all candidates a platform that demonstrates their commitment to the arts.

It is especially important that a reliable Office of Arts & Culture should be established more permanently, and that it be egalitarian and responsive to all its constituencies, including small organizations and independent artists.

We are heartened by the efforts of Councilmembers Thomas and Richardson to create the ACTF at this time. The severe economic realities brought on by the global pandemic have made this call for action imperative as we go forward in rebuilding our city, in every way including supporting artists and cultural entities of all sizes.

### **Recommended solutions:**

**WHAT** - All government solutions for urgent problems are often found in the most well-funded institutions, whether those institutions are geared towards solving those problems or not. Funding small arts organizations and individual artists by the city government would create the capacity for artists, the arts, and small organizations to be turned to for solutions.

**WHO** - We're talking about a full refocusing of problem-solving to use the arts as a potential solution to many problems encountered by the city. All departments and segments of the city should participate in this refocusing

- Extend the ACTF or establish a paid working group for 10 months to a year, for deeper thinking and research to create a realistic but visionary strategy for stabilizing arts & culture in the city.
- Support Independent artists and small arts and culture organizations by incorporating artists into all city agencies and/or established community hubs, or places of worship, including placing artists in the school district. This would not only employ artists with the city but would greatly increase the productivity and creativity of city departments.
- Establish a Civil Service artists division. Create a set of civil service jobs that support city government initiatives through artists hired and paid by the city at a full-time livable wage.

**Possible partners:** Office of Strategic Partnerships, organizations already working with the PSD, and additional philanthropic support.

- Help centralize and make more accessible the numerous existing opportunities and RFPs that the city has to offer. A central hub should be created, with an extensive outreach campaign, so that artists and small organizations know where to access these resources.

**Possible partners:** OACCE in coordination w/Small But Mighty Arts whose Create • Work • Thrive, an online resource, will launch in 2021.

- Tax credits/reform taxes for contracted workers and individual artists
  - Carving out Initiatives specifically for "For Profit" artists in the city
  - Change in tax for NPT; basically, being tax exempt for artist making under \$100,000 (number needs more research - Dept of Revenue NPT filers who were BIRT-exempt, and then of that group, how many had less than \$100k in net profit and what was the total NPT tax levied on that smaller group. This data would give a number that could be compared to offset taxes for large corporations like Comcast and Verizon as an annualized figure)
  - BRT cap is \$100,000 but that it is gross revenue
  - Arts & culture sector maintains a 3000% ROI

- Philadelphia brings in artists and audiences for many large events throughout the year, including Wawa Welcome America, the Roots Picnic, and Made in America. In order to ensure that Philadelphia artists are reaping benefits during these large-scale events we propose mandating 15% of artistic talent for these affairs be Philadelphia independent artists. Services for these events (sound, staging, technical workers, stagehands, vendors, etc.) should be requested through the RFP process or other processes that are already designed to increase local participation.  
**Possible partners:** Visit Philly/Tourism Offices
- Disband the non-functioning Mayor's Arts Advisory Committee and reconstitute with new members and a reinvigorated charge with the purpose of oversight. The purpose of this entity should be to monitor and report on the arts economy to Council and the public on a timely basis, and to support and ensure spending in the arts and culture sector.
- Create arts outreach programs in all city offices giving the arts more visibility in public spaces along with a centralized source for the availability and contact of these spaces  
**Possible partners:** Parks & Recreation, OACCE, DRWC, UCD, CCD, historic sites, INHP
- Have developers include creative and cultural community spaces in new development and renovation in every Philadelphia neighborhood and/or encourage use of underutilized commercial spaces. This could be realized by creating development tax credits and direct funding to small org/individual artists for use of vacant spaces.  
**Possible partners:** Phila Housing & Development Corporation, Arts in Sacred Spaces
- Create and give cultural landmark status with protection to culture sites, both nonprofit and private sites. (i.e., Chris' Jazz Cafe, Boot & Saddle)  
**Possible partners:** Philadelphia Historical Commission and Preservation Alliance of Philadelphia
- To ensure that artists and small organizations are represented in city government regardless of administration we propose that the arts community organize to elect a council member at-large who is a dedicated steward for art and culture.

## FUNDING

- A primary way to support arts and culture organizations and artists is by providing direct monetary support. City government should continue to develop foundation, corporation, and other private-public partnerships. Additionally, a direct set aside of a minimum of 1% of the overall city budget should be dedicated as a line item for spending in Arts and Culture. (Approximately \$60 million on a \$6 billion budget)

- Reconstitute the PCF to funding level of \$4 million. Mandate that PCF seek other funding resources. Include individual artists in PCF grant making. Make sure City Council reps on the PCF Board are engaged advocates for PCF and arts & culture
- Encourage a portion of each council person's discretionary fund to go to support arts.
- P.I.L.O.T. - Payment In Lieu Of Taxes

## IN SUMMARY

The Kenney Transition Committee Report 2015:

***“Cultural Planning is a comprehensive, community-based effort to develop a policy guide for the stewardship of a community’s cultural assets. Many cities develop cultural plans on a regular basis, including most of America’s largest. At present, however, Philadelphia does not have a cultural plan. The creation of such a plan can serve to guide the city’s cultural policy choices during the Kenney administration, ensuring that Philadelphia’s extensive cultural assets are protected, promoted and utilized to improve the lives of individuals and communities across the city, and contribute to the achievement of the Kenney administration’s broader goals for the city.”***

These are a few things presented with a small group of volunteers in a couple of weeks, imagine what can be built on this if we continue the conversation and work together to realize this compelling possibility. The City of Philadelphia has a reputation as a thriving cultural and artistic destination for both audiences and individuals trying to establish a career. This reputation creates a huge return on whatever money the city government spends and invests in the arts. In order to foster this environment and maintain this positive feedback, artists must be able to plan for sustainable careers. Small organizations can work best when they are sustainable and responsive to the communities they serve. It is only with a refocusing and reprioritization on the arts in budgetary decisions that the City of Philadelphia can ensure equity in allocation of resources and opportunities. With this investment the city can confront both emerging and existing challenges with a diverse and equitable response.



# Youth in Arts

*“Big cities like Philadelphia plagued with the ramifications of gentrification and continued disinvestment in schools need arts advocacy to aid in closing the academic achievement gap between children in high-income and low-income households; giving every kid a fair chance to compete at a high level for scholarships in post-secondary education.” –Youth in Arts Committee  
ACTF*

## **Problem Statement:**

The city’s inadequacy in arts advocacy on behalf of our youth has led to programming deserts and a lack of resources in disinvested communities which prohibit kids in those areas from participating in arts programs that can help them develop socially, academically, encourage mental health, and keep them busy and out of trouble. Big cities like Philadelphia plagued with the ramifications of gentrification and continued disinvestment in schools need this advocacy to aide in closing the academic achievement gap between children in high-income and low-income households; giving every kid a fair chance to compete at a high level for scholarships in post-secondary education. The city must appoint someone to focus solely on bringing these kids relief by partnering with arts programs to find these kids living in areas experiencing programming deserts, keep them engaged, and supplement their education. Research and data collection must be done within the arts to ensure equity, reach, and progress.

## **Discovery:**

The Youth in Arts subcommittee members are:

**Ciarra Lambert**-Chair and ACTF Co-Chair

**Joyce Drayton** – ACTF Member

**Stanford Thompson** – ACTF Member

**Cydney Brown**-ACTF Member

**Stacey Wilson** (flyygirl)

**Sharif Lacey** (Beyond the Bars)

**Joseph Conyers** (Project 440)

**Jim Wells** (Jr Music Executive)

**Aisha Winfield** (Junior Music Executive).

Although many studies have shown that students involved in arts are 4 times more likely to be recognized for academic achievement and 3 times more likely to be awarded for school attendance, the lack of large-scale experimental studies to further invest in this notion has consistently been an issue for Philadelphia. Pennsylvania, like many other states seldomly collects any data pertaining to the geographical context of where students are finding arts programs and who and what types of students participate, which results in a compilation of issues amplified by slow disinvestment in arts in Philadelphia public schools.

It is also interesting that our neighboring states, New Jersey and New York, have already implemented programs to incorporate arts education measures for the benefits of their students. In 2012, New Jersey was first in the nation to include arts education measures as part of their mandated annual School Performance Reports. In conjunction with the [New Jersey Arts Education Partnership](#), the [New Jersey Arts Education Census Project](#) collects data that summarizes the percentage of students enrolled in each artistic discipline (dance, music, theatre, and visual art) in addition to the percentage of students enrolled in any arts discipline in middle and high school. This data collection and collaborative idea came out of the Literacy in the Arts Task Force – a group of concerned citizens advocating for arts education in New Jersey who was tasked with doing similar research to what our Arts and Culture Taskforce has been tasked to do here in Philadelphia.

The 2019-2020 NJAEC report celebrated significant gains in arts education participation. More than 81% of all students in New Jersey participated in art programs every year which saw a 25% increase (250,000 students) in participation over the past decade. A 2017 Rutgers poll survey concluded that 9 out of 10 New Jersey residents saw arts education for youth as very important to somewhat important in terms of providing a quality education; as the skills taught through art lead to innovation, collaboration and accountability. Necessary partnerships between schools and arts programs allowed for their reach to go beyond the geography of the school buildings. This research also has provided a clear window for New Jersey officials to identify the geographical inequalities within the state and can allow for focus in those disinvested communities.

Other cities coping with the intricacies of low-income households and mass gentrification have also seen significant strides in student academic and social development once implementing this data collection, partnering with arts organizations and city advocacy.

Chicago Arts Partnerships in Education (CAPE), a program that facilitated and collected data from the collaboration of high-poverty school partnerships with community arts programs, saw huge progress in closing the academic achievement gap between high- and low-income students. Their findings *‘offer evidence that students at schools with an arts focus combined with arts integration programming scored higher on state academic tests than did students who received exclusively academic or conventional arts learning instruction.’* The study also states that *‘Because these findings are based on multivariate statistical methods, researchers were able to identify what sequence of factors was most predictive of achievements in student outcomes.’*

A study done by the Houston Education Research Consortium found similar positive social and academic impacts on students who participate in arts programs. Their study found that relative to students assigned to the control group, the treatment school students (those who participated in their arts program collaboration) reported a 3.6 percentage point reduction in disciplinary infractions, an improvement of 13 percent in standardized writing scores, and an increase of 8 percent of a standard deviation in their compassion for others.

Philadelphia is grossly behind in these matters as Philadelphia schools continue to disinvest in the arts and the students from lower-income neighborhoods continue to suffer through finding resources in their neighborhoods while their families are struggling to afford rapid rent increases and losing homes to gentrification.

A working study done by SIAP of the University of Pennsylvania titled, *Dimensions of Regional Arts and Cultural Participation: Individual and Neighborhood Effects on Participation in the Philadelphia Metropolitan Area*, concluded that the total participation rate of all the regional organizations in the study, excluding the Free Library of Philadelphia, shows that the highest rates of participation (per 1,000 residents) are concentrated in five sections of the region: Center City, suburban Montgomery County, Chestnut Hill and Mount Airy, East Falls, and the Art Museum area. Most of West Philadelphia, South Philadelphia, North Philadelphia, Delaware County, and lower Bucks County show relatively low overall participation in regional cultural organizations.

When sorting through geographical locations of the awardees of grants provided by both the Greater Philadelphia Cultural Alliance (GPCA) and the Philadelphia Cultural Fund (PCF), we found that funding (often controlled by the criteria of private investors and the mayor respectively) also reflects these geographical inequities which further results in programming deserts in these areas. The city must close the gaps on those inequities by providing more funding with balancing criteria. Although both organizations do a great job facilitating grants and data collection, both organizations are limited in those areas because of separate missions and oversight. GPCA is an organization that boasts many members and information and data collected by those members are broken down by different townships and not specific sections of the city of Philadelphia. Their data will always appear skewed because the inclusion of the other counties would interfere with the research needed to find programming deserts in certain areas. Also, we recognize that they offer plenty of resources for many artists outside of their membership, but their main concern is still those who are members. The Philadelphia Cultural Fund also has a mandated criterion reinforced by the mayor. It wasn't until the beginning of the pandemic until we saw the grant processes expand to individual artists and other 'for profit' sectors.

Another part of this study found in the University of Pennsylvania's Scholarly Commons titled "*Re-presenting the City: Arts, Culture, and Diversity In Philadelphia*" examined the links between civic engagement and ethnic and economic diversity in Philadelphia by analyzing the relationship of the geography of civic and community organizations to their socio-economic context. Specifically, they argue that "*arts and cultural organizations and engagement do not parallel division of race and social class; rather, they tend to concentrate in neighborhoods that are ethnically and economically diverse. Cultural policy and urban policy cannot afford to ignore the connections between diversity and cultural engagement. Arts and cultural institutions and engagement give identity to diverse urban neighborhoods.*"

This study found that diverse neighborhoods with higher levels of cultural engagement are precursors for economic revitalization for urban communities. Ethnically diverse neighborhoods within Philadelphia (like Mount Airy and Germantown) reportedly show that arts and cultural organizations make up more than a third of all social groups; while heavily populated African American neighborhoods of North Philadelphia are also home for many arts and cultural organizations, the large number of churches, community improvement groups, and other social organizations often overshadow them. **One could attribute this lack of engagement due to the lack of arts funding not evenly spread amongst Philadelphia's geographic landscape. Others attribute this to the types of disciplines available in those neighborhoods not speaking to the cultural histories and traditions of the inhabitants in those communities (ex: music production classes vs. learning to play the cello). Funding gaps within these disciplines also send a message that some disciplines are valued over others and therefore are not worth pursuing.** Gentrified areas will continue to see private revenue invested in their arts and cultural sectors, further enforcing newly identified neighborhoods, while historically black neighborhoods' arts and culture sectors will see further disinvestment.

It is also important to note that the Kenney Transition Committee released a proposal in 2015 where its first priority was to *Develop a plan for an expansion of after-school activities in areas of need utilizing services provided by recreation centers, libraries, and community partners in the arts and cultural sector to provide equitable access to services and programming, using the currently defined cluster system.*

### **COVID-19 Effect:**

Due to the COVID-19 challenges, youth were isolated and confined to their homes since on-site arts programming visitation was prevented which devastated youth participation. Virtual platforms were complicated for marginalized communities due to WIFI and computer access. Many arts programs in disinvested communities had program cutbacks, staff layoffs and closures which narrowed the field for available community arts resources. These arts and cultural organizations continue to face uncertainty. As COVID-19 begins to flatten, many arts organizations are in need of financial resources to formulate strategies to help with recovery.

The role that arts involvement plays in the lives of our youth go beyond academics, as participating in the arts leads to better health and well-being. In 2019, the World Health Organization's review of more than 3,000 studies from Europe concluded that the arts play a major role in preventing sickness and promoting health across the lifespan- which makes it more crucial to increase arts participation throughout the coronavirus pandemic.

Yael Silk, the Executive Director of the Arts Education Collaborative (AES) in Pittsburgh says that the arts help teach his students empathy and a better capacity of responding to unpredictability as seen by Covid-19. In an International Arts + Mind Lab (IAM Lab) article titled, *Why Arts Education Matters in the Age of Covid-19*, he describes how many of their arts teachers are finding ways to improvise with students struggling to find resources to

participate in arts classes, including, swapping out construction paper for coloring newspaper.

### **Solution Statement:**

While this proposal serves to inform and influence council members on the issues facing disparities with youth and arts, many councilmembers and members of the Philadelphia School District have already acknowledged these shortcomings. In a 2017 Philadelphia Inquirer article titled, “*Some Philly schools have rich arts programs, and others have none. How do you fix it?*”, many spoke to the uneven opportunities for some Philadelphia students to participate in arts programs. The article cited that an analysis of the city’s instrumental music programs done by Councilwoman Helen Gym’s office earlier that year, found that many city schools that lack such programs are concentrated in high-poverty areas that serve large numbers of minority students. These are areas where students could be finding relief and supplemental arts education through expanding and investing in arts programs in neighborhoods who are the most vulnerable.

Frank Machos, executive director of the school district’s Office of Arts & Creative Learning said, “*We still face that narrative of, ‘There’s no arts in the schools’..., but we’re the third-largest arts spender in the city, and we have the largest reach. We still see great opportunities to grow and reach more students.*” School district officials concluded that a “**five-year-plan** involving a [public, searchable map](#) will allow parents, arts organizations and other interested parties to see where resources — and gaps — are.” This searchable map is a great resource for finding some gaps within disciplines and regions, but it is not as interactive as it could be in helping to close those gaps. It is also unclear as to what other data it collects, which means that funding gaps in areas and disciplines are also unclear.

This sentiment was also acknowledged in the 2015 Final Transition report by the Kenney Transition committee when stated “*The Transition Committee believes that if the Kenney Administration immediately initiates an effort to understand what services currently exist in the city, where there is need for additional services, and commits to providing support to develop a strong network for schools to access services, it will be a tremendous step to **build the communities necessary to give every child a chance.***”

After several zoom meetings with the many organizations and stakeholders as well as students in the community, we’ve concluded that we must address these two issues; lack of arts participation opportunities and geographical data collection AND a lack of arts tools, instruments and technological resources or more simply put, *programming deserts and resources*.

To address the lack of data collection and programming deserts, we suggest a city funded and supported, independently operated virtual database/directory. This website will serve as a resource for both students looking to find which organizations are in their particular neighborhoods as well as identify the geographical gaps regarding city support and disproportionate funding in different sections of the city. Individual arts programs in the city will be encouraged to create a profile for their organization that anyone can search by location, discipline, resources needed to participate, and student participation capacity.



Other data like years in operation, operating budget, and student demographic could be collected by this database directory though may not be shown on the profile.

When researching other organizations that provide similar services, we realized and again agreed with the critiques provided in the Kenney Transition Committee report. The first being that programs like the ASAP Database does a wonderful job in trying to connect resources with students, but by design, its functionality lies heavily in resources for parents specifically and progress reports. A viable second option for such database could be the Philadelphia Free Library but with current layoffs and their main focus being on literary resources, it is unfair to assume they have the capacity to run or update such a database.

We've also considered reaching out to PCCY or United Way. Unfortunately, we didn't get in touch with PCCY but after speaking with members of United Way, though they expressed interest, we needed more time to speak with more people to figure out what department (if any) would be comfortable or had the capacity to run it.

There are ACTF youth and arts volunteers, including Stacey Wilson (youth arts educator/artist/designer) willing to create that site/database. Such a site could be created for an estimated startup of \$7000 which will include domain purchase, hosting purchase, web design, research, and maintenance for the year; after which, only estimated \$100 monthly for hosting and maintenance.

This website/database will help the city identify gaps in geographical programming, gaps in city support and funding, gaps in enrollment as well as empower our youth to make the best decisions on their independent paths through the arts.

To address the financial and covid restriction issues that result in a lack of arts resources available, we propose a city-funded and independently ran arts truck (mobile library for arts products and instruments), that would coordinate with drop off locations at public libraries and possibly zoning areas associated with Friends of the Park to get much needed resources to students.

In our research, we stated earlier that the Philadelphia Free Libraries were one of few organizations that has a diversified reach throughout the city, so naturally that would be a first choice for drop off locations. After speaking with both teen librarian Samantha Spots and Readby4th Philadelphia Parent volunteer, Erme Maula, although libraries are crucial to providing physical spaces and literary resources for our youth, arts programs like Adobe Photoshop and other music software are scarce or nonexistent in most libraries. In a generation where the internet and memes are abundant, our technological resources should be accessible to all youth. Providing the libraries with "arts-specific" laptops will allow the kids to use those programs without slowing down the larger monitors in the computer rooms. It will also allow the children to space out in the libraries, which would keep them safer during Covid 19. The libraries' current functions are mostly drop off/pick up and some libraries allow 30-minute visit times. The combination of arts products and software provided by the arts truck as well as laptops in libraries will give children in programming

deserts the tools and spaces, they need to have the opportunities to join arts programming whether online or closer to their neighborhoods.

To save on the costs of purchasing the truck, Mural Arts proposed the usage of their *Mural On the Move* mobile as an option. While some youth and arts volunteers from the taskforce; including members of Beyond the Bars, that have experience in driving/drop off musical instruments also volunteered for that position as driver, we were made aware by Mural Arts that as a city vehicle, we may be limited to only having a city worker as an option for this position.

In addition to the costs of the truck, we'd need to fill the trucks with those arts products and library laptops. Rather than guess what items would go on the trucks, we feel it may be smarter to invest in an overall spending budget for the kids. The kids will put the request in for what products they need at their local libraries. The local libraries will report those needs and then we will fill the trucks with those items.

The total operating budget for the arts truck throughout the end of the year, including 52 proposed drop offs, gas, and driver compensation will cost an estimated \$7000, not including the promotional aspect of the truck, the supplies on the truck, and only covering those 52 locations once.

It is important to note that the kids also expressed wanting more spaces to commune and present their talent. While experiencing Covid, the safest gathering spaces are outdoors. Our youngest ACTF member, Cydney Brown, collaborated with Mural Arts on the idea of a youth interactive mural. This mural will be initially painted by youth in visual arts and feature QR codes that link to youth performances, including poetry, music, and open letters. Cydney's idea allows for a safer way for kids to commune and showcase their talents. Murals typically cost between \$25,000 and \$40,000 depending on the size of the mural and I think it would be great for the city to find a private partner to match the city in splitting those costs.

Given the short amount of time we had to put together this proposal and the large amount of work done by the taskforce and our volunteers, I have no doubt that with more time and city collaborative advocacy we can provide a fuller and equitable experience for all of our city's youth.



# Nightlife

“True cities of the world never stop.”

*-New South Wales (Australia) - Sydney 24-Hour Economy Strategy<sup>1</sup>*

## **Problem Statement:**

Nightlife is integral to the spirit of Philadelphia - our music, food, theater and social gatherings are intricately tied up with the experience of nighttime in the City. Nighttime is known for economic dynamism and creative excitement, but sadly, it is characterized by widespread civic dysfunction. This must be and can be repaired.

The poor reputation of nightlife with the public has resulted in a prohibition-oriented attitude by much of the government. Growth is stunted by cumbersome licenses and expensive start-up costs which contribute to an undersupply of performance space and opportunity for artists. Barriers to access perpetuate the exclusion of historically disenfranchised individuals from ownership and management in the cultural scene and reduces opportunities for many artists. Many communities and artists are left without space to express themselves and gather. Immediate safety needs like harassment on the base of race, sexual orientation and gender identity, substance abuse, mental health disorders, anti-social behavior, and inadequate public transportation persist. But all these problems can be positively impacted with an intentional approach.

For Philadelphia to become a true center of arts and culture it must function and govern itself as a 24-Hour city. Certain kinds of arts and culture only happen at night, and nighttime is a gathering place for many communities in our city - not just creative ones. To support arts and culture and promote their recovery and growth, the City must take a proactive approach to governing the nighttime economy. This means changing the culture of “no” that has characterized the City’s relationship with nightlife. This will require legislation and reform, and (most importantly) the creation of a Nighttime Economy Office, to execute new policies, do civic engagement and practice good governance. This approach will keep Philadelphia competitive with peer cities. This infrastructure will also generate enhanced trust, more creative spaces, increased economic growth and stronger, safer nighttime arts and culture activity.

<sup>1</sup> <https://global.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/2020-09/24hour%20Economy%20Strategy%202020.pdf>

**Discovery:**

Nightlife subcommittee members are:

**Michael Fichman** – Chair and ACTF Member

**Raheem Manning**- ACTF CO-Chair

**Evon Burton** – ACTF Member

**Jim Stephens** -Ropeadope Records Recording Artist; Elite Music Group Founder and A&R

**Robert Del Femine** aka DEL, chief entertainment officer | managing partner, underground concepts

**George Lawrence** -Founder/Director of Operations, GL Agency

**André Coles** -BoyWonder, Musician and Concert Producer/Promoter, Executive Director - Roots2Rise

**Kerri Park** -COO, World Cafe Live

**James Jones** - Founder, GVOPHL

**Mark DeNinno** - Chef/Owner, Chris' Jazz Cafe

**Michael Morrow** - Founder at Illustrious Endeavors

The Nightlife committee specifically met with, and received guidance on nightlife reform from the following elected officials:

PA State Senator Anthony Williams, PA State Senator Vincent Hughes, and PA State Rep. Jordan Harris

Additionally, the nightlife committee also met with the following people and/or organizations:

NIVA (Kerri Park - Chief Operating Officer, World Cafe Live, Lead Organizer, Philadelphia Independent Venues Organizing Together), nighttime economy managers (Pittsburgh - Allison Harnden, Austin - Brian Block, NYC - Ariel Palitz and Jose Soegaard, Seattle - Scott Plusquellec, SF - Ben Van Houten), and the Bohemian foundation.

Resources/Research - Our recommendations are drawn from a range of sources, including:

- 24HrPHL 2019 survey of Philadelphia's nighttime economy<sup>2</sup>
- The Global Nighttime Recovery Plan Chapters 1-4<sup>3</sup>
- The Creative Footprint Project - a venue census in New York, Berlin and Tokyo
- Planning the Nighttime City by Roberts & Eldridge<sup>4</sup>
- A 2020 white paper on nighttime governance by Michael Fichman & John Michael LaSalle from 2020
- paper on the "night mayor" movement by Andreina Seijas and Mirik Milan Gelders in Urban Studies (including raw data provided by Seijas),
- Nighttime plans from New South Wales Australia and elsewhere,
- Personal communications from Camilo Guzman of Asobares (Bogota, Colombia), Kerri Park (World Cafe Live, PIVOT, NIVA), and Lutz Leichsenring (Berlin Club Commission).

<sup>2</sup>[http://24hrphl.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Survey\\_Facts09301.pdf](http://24hrphl.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Survey_Facts09301.pdf)

<sup>3</sup><https://www.nighttime.org/recoveryplan/>

<sup>4</sup>Roberts, M., & Eldridge, A. (2009). Planning the Night-time City (1st ed.). Routledge.  
<https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203609064>

## **COVID-19 Effect:**

The Covid-19 pandemic continues to devastate the nighttime arts, culture, and hospitality industries in Philadelphia. These businesses - many of which rely on assembly to operate - were the first to close and will be last to re-open. The Philadelphia Cultural Alliance estimates a revenue loss of over \$200 million for Philadelphia arts and culture businesses since March 2020<sup>5</sup>. Most operators see 2021 as their period of greatest need. According to data provided to the Task Force by the Philadelphia Controller's Office, in the year since March 2020, Philadelphia arts and entertainment-related wage tax payments were down 35% relative to the previous one-year period. Restaurants were down over 40%<sup>6</sup>. Because nightlife businesses represent the hardest hit slice of this industry segment (which also includes entertainment businesses broadly), the impacts are likely far worse. There is an urgent need to provide relief, coordinate the safe re-opening of these sectors and invest in their future by improving the operating environment to better support workers and artists and the overall economic recovery.

## **Solution Statement:**

We propose four categories of action items which Council can implement:

1. Create a Nighttime Economy Office to improve and institutionalize good governance
2. Reform licensing and regulations related to nightlife businesses
3. Implement reforms to create a 24-Hour post-Covid city
4. Provide enhanced support for artists, nighttime workers and businesses to recover from the pandemic

## **Create a Nighttime Economy Office to Improve and Institutionalize Good Governance**

Our primary recommendation is the creation of a Nighttime Economy Office to implement progressive nighttime policies and facilitate good governance. The purpose of this office is to convene public and private stakeholders in the nighttime arts, culture and hospitality sectors in order to facilitate engagement, resolve conflict, coordinate services, and promote good governance to further the Office's mission.

Our research indicates that the single most important factor in the success of a city's nighttime economy is good governance<sup>7</sup>. The most important supports for the nighttime economy are matters which require an administrative framework to execute. The Office isn't just about nightlife operators and entertainment. A central focus of the Office will be

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<sup>5</sup>Philadelphia Cultural Alliance (2021). Covid-19 economic impact survey. Retrieved March 14, 2021, from <https://philaculture.org/research/covid-19-economic-impact-survey>

<sup>6</sup> Analysis of Controller's Wage Tax data: [https://github.com/mafichman/ACTF\\_nightlife](https://github.com/mafichman/ACTF_nightlife)

<sup>7</sup> Fichman, M. A., & LaSalle, J. (2020). Without A Nighttime Governing Philosophy A City's Arts Cannot Thrive. Unpublished manuscript.

improving the quality of life for those who sleep at night through engagement related to nuisance and noise and the promotion of responsible business practices.

A Nighttime office will support and stabilize small businesses, entrepreneurs, and workers. Government services and city functions touch all aspects of the nighttime economy, but seldom perform as intended because they are not designed for 24-hour activity. A dedicated office can build the bridge.

Creating this office would align with a global movement towards nighttime governance. Over forty cities worldwide (including New York, Pittsburgh and Washington, DC) have founded similar offices to support their nighttime economies<sup>8</sup>. These offices are built to address crises and develop opportunities. They were created to preserve and promote creative spaces in the face of rising rents, dysfunctional licensing and enforcement relationships, and conflicts over noise or nuisance. They have performed well for their stakeholders during the pandemic - delivering information, business support and a seat at the table as complex relief was introduced, and procedures and rules changed rapidly.

These successful models must be implemented here in Philadelphia to help the nightlife sectors recover from the crisis and grow to be healthier and more robust than ever. Our proposal is based on our team's international research and consulting work, years of community engagement, local survey research, industry experience, and interviews with nighttime economy officers in five US cities.

The Task Force's Nightlife Committee has already written a detailed scope for the office at the request of lawmakers.

The Office, which should be housed in the City of Philadelphia's Department of Commerce, will execute its mission through **engagement** of public and private stakeholders with outreach, mediation, and assistance. It will **advocate** for the interests of nighttime economy stakeholders and historically underrepresented communities in the public square and in government administrative processes. The Office will **create** a strategic plan and economic impact study to find opportunities and risks within the industry. It will also **coordinate** with all relevant public departments to execute its mission.

The Office will be organized around the furtherance of four core principles:

*Safety, Inclusion, Creativity and Opportunity*

Its specific functions will include, but are not limited to:

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Seijas, A., & Gelders, M. M. (2021). Governing the night-time city: The rise of night mayors as a new form of urban governance after dark. *Urban Studies*, 58(2), 316–334. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0042098019895224>

1. Promote opportunity and economic recovery by facilitating access to government services, resources, best practices and funds for nightlife businesses and workers. Near-term focus will prioritize Covid safe operation.
2. Reduce nuisance, improve quality of life, and enhance trust by facilitating dialogue regarding complaints or licensing between nightlife operators, communities, and government stakeholders
3. Convene a regular working group of stakeholders from public agencies, nightlife entrepreneurs and workers, business districts, and residents
4. Provide input on planning and licensing decisions that have a direct impact on nightlife economic activity
5. Oversee a strategic plan for the Office and an economic impact study for the nighttime economy with a focus on arts and culture, supported by a year-one engagement campaign
6. Advocate for the interests of nightlife and the creative economy in public policy discussions and government business, with a focus on the interests of the nighttime workforce and marginalized communities
7. Promote and support best practices in harm reduction related to Covid, venue operation, substance abuse, mental health, sexual harassment and anti-social patron behavior in association with public health officials and non-profit partners.
8. Provide regular reports to an advisory board.
9. Conduct ongoing data collection and analysis related to activity in the city at night and the nighttime arts and culture sector in order to inform the Office's operations

These functions affect an ecosystem of individuals in the nighttime and creative economies.

The core private stakeholders of such an office include but are not limited to venue proprietors, artists and performers, creative industry entrepreneurs, service industry workers, allied professional workers in nighttime jobs, trade groups, patrons, neighbors and community members.

The core public stakeholders are included but not limited to public safety agencies, licensing and planning bodies, transportation agencies, business improvement and special services districts, advocacy offices, public health officials, arts and culture officials, tourism and convention officials.

## Reform Licensing and Regulations Related to Nightlife Businesses

Reforming the licensing processes associated with creating or running a creative venue or nightlife business will reduce the undersupply of creative space in Philadelphia and create more opportunity, transparency, and cost-certainty for operators. A 2019 survey by 24HrPHL of 365 Philadelphia nighttime industry professionals found that 96% of venue managers and owners surveyed favored licensing reform.<sup>9</sup> A Nighttime Economy Office can provide enhanced services to businesses navigating licensing processes.

### ***-Allow for Special Assembly Occupancy Licensing by right in more zoning categories***

*Occupancy licenses are available by-right in so few zoning categories that establishing a new creative space requires a variance and therefore a very high degree of risk and expense. This discourages many operators and results in an under-supply of space and an exclusion of creative operators and artists from lower-income and minority demographics.*

### ***-Create a commission to examine reform for assembly and entertainment licenses, specifically through lens of equity and barriers to opportunity.***

*Grassroots venues which focus on local entertainment are the “R&D” of the local creative economy, and they provide the environment where Philadelphia artists from part-timers to global superstars got their training. Large segments of Philadelphia’s population do not see themselves represented in the ownership and management ranks at venues, and this restricts opportunities for artists as well.*

*The persistence of unlicensed venues and the fact that over 50% of Philadelphia nightlife professionals told community organization 24HrPHL in 2019 that they’ve considered moving<sup>10</sup>, indicates that supply is not meeting demand. The costs and uncertainties of opening a venue are daunting, and the market is slanted towards the most sophisticated, well-financed operators. The process is so complex that 24HrPHL needed to develop a guide to licensure<sup>11</sup>, based on the consumer-friendly portal of Seattle, Washington, which has a nightlife advocate’s office.*

*Council should convene a commission on assembly licensing with the goal of reducing inequity and increasing opportunity by increasing the number of licenses, simplifying the process and making licensing and inspections fair and transparent. This commission should also examine a reduction in the redundancy of license types and should modernize and standardize measurement procedures for estimating occupancy.*

<sup>9</sup> [http://24hrphl.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Survey\\_Facts09301.pdf](http://24hrphl.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Survey_Facts09301.pdf)

<sup>10</sup> [http://24hrphl.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Survey\\_Facts09301.pdf](http://24hrphl.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Survey_Facts09301.pdf)

<sup>11</sup> [http://24hrphl.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/24HRPHL\\_playbook\\_linked.pdf](http://24hrphl.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/24HRPHL_playbook_linked.pdf)



## Implement Reforms to Create a 24-Hour Post-Covid City

Before Covid, there were significant problems in how the nighttime economy in Philadelphia functioned. The pandemic has put many industries on their backs, but it has also provided incentive to repair some of the broken structures. The existence of a Nighttime Economy Office will allow for good governance with an eye towards nighttime work and will allow for dialogue and coordination to encourage a safe, creative nightlife. This means better coordinated transportation, more harmony with neighbors, increased supply of venues, intentional investment in programming, less harassment and anti-social behavior, and potential more hours of creative entertainment. The last year has shown us that flexibility with licensing and public space can lead to amazing new streetscapes, experiences and opportunities. That flexibility can be our guide into the future.

### ***-4AM closing times, if planned and implemented carefully, would increase opportunities for artists, enhance revenue, and create dynamic districts***

*City and state legislators are interested in altering Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Law to allow for 4AM liquor licenses for Philadelphia County. These would be similar in some ways to existing 3:30AM private club licenses and would be enabled through City legislation for districts in which they are to be allowed. Coordinated planning of the use of 4AM licenses with an arts-first approach could create some of the most exciting and innovative music and arts districts in the country and expand Philadelphia's opportunities for musicians, artists, and technical staff. Failure to plan could be a public safety disaster.*

*4AM licenses should not be granted through "spot zoning" and should not be used only in far-flung areas. A thoughtful spatial plan for the use of extended hours can reduce closing time congestion in crowded districts. Amsterdam, for example, uses 24-Hour licenses to disincentivize binge behavior and crowding while using these licenses as incentives to leverage streetscaping improvements and agreements to use licensed premises for community activities. Safety ambassadors, streetscaping, noise management, and other services can improve 4AM districts and be funded through tax increment financing on alcohol sales.*

*The introduction of 4AM licenses will be implemented in the safest, most productive form with direct involvement from a Nighttime Office to coordinate stakeholders.*

### ***-Increase the safety of life at night by certifying harm-reduction services and authorizing supporting funds***

*Good nightlife must be safe and inclusive. Harassment, anti-social behavior, substance abuse and other behaviors are serious issues. They must be managed and discouraged through a harm-reduction framework in line with best practices in public health. Council should allocate funds to encourage and promote participation of venues in several forms of harm reduction training for their staff, at no cost to the establishment.*



*Participation can be incentivized by consumer demand for safe nightlife. Participants should receive certifications that can be publicly displayed to inform patrons. There are many examples of such programs. The City's rape crisis treatment center, Women Organized Against Rape, provides a "Safe Bars" training in harassment identification and de-escalation. The Philadelphia Office of Public Health has collaborated with 24HrPHL and venue Warehouse on Watts to host Narcan trainings for venue staff. In Bogota, Colombia, a "Safe Seal" certifying 16 safety requirements is a requirement for businesses to operate at later hours and also be included in official tourism promotional materials.*

*Additionally, encounters between law enforcement and residents outside of nightlife establishments can be diverted towards public safety officers who specialize in the areas of highest need. This would decrease the workload on police and prioritize medical and psychological interventions when necessary. Public squares in Amsterdam with strong nightlife activity use public safety ambassadors to help people find medical attention, or just help them into a cab home or onto the correct transit line.*

#### ***-Enhance the social safety net for precarious workers and gig workers***

*The social safety net and other protections have historically not worked well for gig workers, independent entrepreneurs and service industry workers. Nighttime workers and Black and Brown people have had some of the worst health and economic outcomes during the pandemic.*

*City Council should establish a permanent committee to examine the quality of life for artists, gig workers (including ride hail drivers and other on-demand logistics workers) and nighttime workers in the Philadelphia area. The committee should be actively listening to constituents and working with City Council to develop new policies.*

#### ***-Consider reform to City sound ordinances and enforcement***

*Live music is loud by nature, but it shouldn't be illegal. Council can liberalize the thresholds for what constitutes a "concert venue" and the sound parameters for a Special Assembly Occupancy License, and also consider sound restrictions. This would bring ordinances in line with a new priority for well-mediated outdoor commerce at night, and a new emphasis on the importance of nighttime creative spaces.*

*Sound reduction is also enforced by the PLCB and enforcement patterns and rules are confusing. The City and Commonwealth need to align their focus and communicate about enforcement through proactive mediation. Good relations between venues and neighbors regarding sound, mediated by the Nighttime Economy Office can improve the viability of creative space in the City*

**-Pass an “Agent of Change” law to preserve the cultural fabric of changing neighborhoods**

*“Agent of change” laws support the existing cultural fabric of a neighborhood and protect local anchor businesses from threats associated with new development. This allows for the vibrant character of a mixed-use neighborhood to thrive. These laws require that new development (not the existing use) mitigate the negative externalities they incur by locating near the existing use. For example, a new condo development adjacent to an existing music venue would be planned for sound mitigation rather than being able to levy complaints against the pre-existing venue so long as it operates within current regulations. San Francisco and other cities use such laws to put the onus on developers to negotiate and communicate with existing establishments during the development project.*

**-Reduce costs and red tape for nightlife businesses in order to create opportunities for art, culture, and safer nightlife.**

*Lower costs mean less nuisance in the nightlife environment. Lower costs also mean more funds and opportunities for artists. Research on venues and their urban context - like the Creative Footprint venue census in Berlin, New York and Tokyo<sup>12</sup> - see a correlation between costs and the investment in programming. This investment can come in the form of local or experimental art and music or enhanced customer experience. The quality of programming is thought to have a strong relationship with patron behavior. Better programming means more investment by patrons in the reputation and stability of a venue and its relationship with neighbors.*

**-Consider nighttime mobility, lighting, and design in the context of everyday legislation and planning to enhance safety for patrons and workers and to facilitate access to nightlife amenities**

*Music, art and culture are usually not the most economically dynamic use of real estate. These uses need a champion. Council should use its roles in real estate development, the design and regulation of public space, and the regulation of the right-of-way to prioritize nighttime activity and nighttime safety. For example, designs for public plazas and streets should include a mandate to design safe, lively activities or transportation options at night.*

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<sup>12</sup> <https://www.creative-footprint.org/>

***-Make some Covid-era outdoor commerce experiments permanent and enable activation of public space for art into the evening and nighttime hours***

*The past year has demonstrated the value of flexibility and experimentation in the role of commerce in public spaces, the licensed use of restaurants and bars, and the operation of venues. In February 2019, takeout orders from PA's Wine and Spirits stores would have seemed like an impossibility, but it has proven to be effective and successful. Some of these temporary solutions should be made permanent to facilitate more art and culture in the street. The new street is more vibrant and more geared towards people and social experiences. Neighborhood anchor businesses have taken on new community importance. For many, these adjusted models they've developed are necessary parts of their toolkit moving forward.*

***Council should consider making permanent some or all of the following:***

- Outdoor dining licenses on sidewalks and in parking areas*
- Selective street closures*
- Liberalized restrictions on pop-up commerce, food trucks, and take-out food and drink (for those holding R or H liquor licenses).*

*The existence of a Nighttime office will allow for better noise management, conflict resolution, harm-reduction and public engagement. These features can be integrated into corridor-specific nighttime planning and management areas at appropriate scales both in hubs and in neighborhoods.*

**Provide Enhanced Support for Artists, Nighttime Workers and Businesses to Recover from the Pandemic**

The passing of the Shuttered Venue Operators grant program by Congress in December 2020, provided a targeted first step towards relief but these venues are but a part of the nighttime employment ecosystem that has now been closed for twelve months and counting. Philadelphia must prioritize relief as a fiscal priority to ensure the survival of these powerful economic drivers. The remainder of 2021 will still be a tough time for nighttime workers, artists and businesses, and the City can play a role in making sure they can make the most of current opportunities, access relief and operate safely.

***-Provide a financial bridge for a wide category of workers associated with arts entertainment***

*There is an ecosystem of workers who contribute to and depend on an active and creative nightlife to pay their bills. This includes artists, as well as graphic designers, rideshare drivers, security personnel, photographers, set designers, promoters, facilities support staff, and the hospitality workforce. Many of these workers are fundamentally “unseen” - they work at night, their roles are hidden, and their employment relationships are often not formalized.*

*When launching grants, loans or other financing, Council should consider and give priority to this contingent of workers, and those in Black and Brown communities. The City can facilitate access to existing relief (including that available through the State and Federal government) with “wrap-around” services for lower capacity citizens and businesses including targeted outreach, advertising and increased attention to the most vulnerable.*

***-Tax holiday for entertainment businesses***

*A tax holiday will help operators get back on their feet with reduced costs, especially with anticipated reduced capacities and slow return for the remainder of 2021. Council should impose a moratorium for qualifying entertainment venues on both amusement tax and use & occupancy tax until six months after normal operations resume. Other possible cuts include a reduction on real estate taxes for 2021 for eligible entertainment venues under 1200 patron capacity. Venues should also be able to confirm that ticket refunds issued in 2020 can be deducted as expenses from BIRT calculations.*

***-Provide financial relief for venues and small businesses to manage capital costs and safe operations***

*Council should allocate immediate funds to provide emergency grants for small business relief in the entertainment sector to cover rent, operating costs, capital improvements to better accommodate public health, and procurement of any/all necessary PPE. This will add Philadelphia to a list of cities prioritizing this sector of their economy including Nashville, Austin, Chicago, Denver, Seattle, Tucson, Portland, and Memphis.*

*Small independent venues also need formal protection from eviction by commercial landlords until full operations can be resumed.*

**-Create clear laws and guidance for re-opening and operations**

*The Department of Public Health should work with stakeholders directly impacted by re-opening regulations and guidelines to strategize the safest and most effective path towards resuming full operations. The recovery of the nighttime economy, and particularly the entertainment sector, will be dependent on a comprehensive and cohesive plan in coordination at the City level with both the state and the region. The music industry can't simply re-open on a dime - scheduling and production shows can take months of planning. Intentional phases with specific references to this industry addressing both the concerns of the Dept of Health and business owners/operators will allow for both protection of guests and workers as well as economic recovery. If a Nighttime Economy Office can be quickly chartered, it can act as a central communication channel and engagement hub - Pittsburgh and New York both have regular informational engagement through their Nighttime offices.*

**-Promote the use of existing temporary assembly licenses with Covid-safe occupancy levels**

*Many artists want to do their own events but can't find a place to do it. Little-used temporary assembly licenses can put the city's under-used spaces to use for art and music. These licenses, which are the type used by the Fringe Festival for unique pop-up parties and events, are simple to acquire. Vacant storefronts with good circulation and egress can be used for pop-up music events. This will provide opportunities for arts and music and socialization and it will generate tax receipts in the short-term.*

*Council should consider how to make these licenses effective for Covid-safe occupancies. The Nighttime Economy office can facilitate deployment of these licenses in co-operation with L&I and provide consultation regarding sound management, fire code and more. An explicit interest by Council in this subject will signal that these types of little-used licenses should be fast-tracked and prioritized by L&I the way many other recent permits have been during the pandemic. Council should consider creating new types of licenses if necessary.*

**-Use the role of Council in land development to encourage the development of new creative spaces, even if they are not the “highest and best use” of available land**

*The recovery and elevation of arts and culture in the City requires the creation and preservation of space for its production, and that means looking at multiple “bottom lines” of the public good when it comes to real estate. There will be many actors looking to “buy low” while the economy is in a holding pattern, and most of them will not have arts, culture or nightlife in mind. Council's role in the land development process will be crucial in making sure that art has a place in competitive areas of the city during what might be a very fluid time for real estate.*



# ACTF MEMBER BIOS

## ACTF Co-Chairs:



**Raheem Manning** served as the Co-Chair of the ACTF and a member of the Nighttime Economy subcommittee. Born and raised in West Philadelphia Raheem is a graduate of Overbrook High School, Clark Atlanta University (B.A. Psychology), East China Normal University, (international business), and Thomas Jefferson University (MBA). He is the Founder and CEO of The Weekender Experiences, LLC a Philly based travel company that focuses on providing world-class group travel experiences for Black Professionals. Additionally, he serves on the board of four non-profit organizations whose main focuses are to provide college scholarships to Philadelphia students. He is an educator, business strategist, and community activist who has traveled to over 200 cities worldwide, almost 40 countries and every continent except Antarctica and believes that Philadelphia is second to

**Ciarra Lambert - Queen Jo (QJ)**, is a lyrical firebrand whose artistry is amplified by her role as house emcee for **DJ Matthew Law's #FNFP** Party. *Cleopatra's Rapture* marked QJ's 2014 debut. Crowned "Philadelphia's Best New Artist of the Year," QJ played her first major gig at the Firefly Music Festival the same year. After the defunding of Planned Parenthood in 2017, QJ collaborated with several local artists to create and perform at *Pussy Claps Back*, an annual fundraising benefit show that supports young girls' health and arts initiatives. In 2018, QJ was featured on Okayplayer. After opening for **Jungle Pussy**, WXPB dubbed her "a little bit boom-bap, a little bit house, and a whole lot of sexual liberation." Collaborating with director, Emilia Wieding, Queen Jo released a documentary tackling the issues of hip hop and feminism in a short documentary entitled, *HollaBack*, which won best short film at the Women in Hollywood film festival (2019) and a feature in the New York Hip-Hop film festival in 2019. She released *Broad Street Bella* that same year. Queen Jo has performed with **Ursula Rucker**, **Planet Booty**, **The Skins** and **Lion Babe**. Queen Jo is a 2020 alum of **Black Thought's** hip-hop master class, which culminated in a



performance at New York City's famed Carnegie Hall. Queen Jo's other recent achievements include a 2021 appointment to serve as co-chair of Philadelphia's Arts & Culture Taskforce and committee chair of the Youth In Arts subset.

### **ACTF Members:**



**Anne Ishii** is the Executive Director of Asian Arts Initiative, which has operated with a mission to “create community through the power of art” in the North Chinatown neighborhood of Philadelphia since 1993. She is Treasurer of the Philadelphia Mayor’s Commission on Asian Pacific American Affairs, Co-Chair of the Board of the Asian American Writers Workshop, and member of the Permanence Committee of the Arts and Culture Task Force, on top of volunteering her service to the field of arts and culture in the capacity of advisor and mediator. Anne is a writer and editor by trade, with a background in Japanese letters. Her work hinges on issues relating to gender and sexuality. In 2013 she

co-founded MASSIVE GOODS: a lifestyle brand and arts agency representing queer and feminist artists from Japan. MASSIVE has produced multiple volumes of graphic novels and a line of clothing and accessories. She has been published in BUST, Nylon, Slate, Publishers Weekly, the Village Voice, the Philadelphia Inquirer and many other publications. She has translated and rewritten over twenty books.

**LaNeshe Miller-White** is the Executive Director of Theatre Philadelphia, an umbrella organization that celebrates, and promotes the Philadelphia region's diverse and growing theatre community. She is a cultural producer, actress, and marketer, serving as the Marketing Manager for Painted Bride Art Center for over 10 years. She is a graduate of Temple University's School of Communications and Theater. She believes in using art for social change and is the Executive Director and Co-Founder of Theatre in the X, a West Philadelphia based theater company that produces accessible theater productions for Black audiences and provides opportunities for Black artists. She is on the Steering Committee of the Black Theatre Alliance of Philadelphia and she is a Philadelphia Arts & Business Council Designing Leadership and Digital Drawing Board Program Graduate.







**Terry Fox**, Director of Philadelphia Dance Projects (PDP), is a former choreographer/dancer. She is currently on the Faculty in MA Arts Admin Program of the Theatre & Dance Department at Rowan University. She has a BA from New York University, a MA in Dance from Temple University, and participated in the Whitney Museum of American Art Independent Study Program and The American Dance Festival. She co-founded Old City Arts, a group of “pioneer” artists who lived/worked in the Old City District in the late ‘70’s. Her dance work has been supported by The National Endowment for the Arts, the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts, and The Pew Center for Arts & Heritage, and presented by

P.S. 122, NYC, the WPA in DC, and Tanzfabrik in West Berlin among other venues locally and nationally. Her curatorial activities include among others, curator for “Something Happens When Everybody Moves: Dance as ritual, protest, and aspiration” at The Barnes, 2018, co-curating PDP’s Motion Pictures, a dance on film/video series from 2002-2012, and DanceBOOM at the Wilma Theater in 2006 and 2007. For many years she served as an Artist Curator at the Painted Bride Art Center, where she founded the Dance With The Bride series. She was the Managing/Artistic Director of the Danspace Project in New York City 1984-1989. She has served on numerous boards and panels.

**Cydney Brown** is the Philadelphia Youth Poet Laureate and author of “Daydreaming”. She is a Junior at Abington Friends School and has been writing poetry since she was in 5th grade. The Philadelphia Inquirer, 6abc, Philadelphia Citizen, and Fox29 featured Brown. She loves that there are no limitations to writing. She has recited her poetry at Benjamin Franklin Hall, Lincoln University, The Ideas We Should Steal Festival and The Kelly’s Writers house. Her poetry explores the topics of social justice, self-image, love, and human nature. She won first place in The National Hip Hop workshop poetry competition and loves to perform spoken word poetry. In school, she is the Clerk of the Poetry Club, Black Student Union, and Co-Clerk of the Literary Magazine. She is a Gold Award Recipient and has sold over 1,000 Girl Scout cookies. Cydney enjoys leading her mentoring program Project



G.O.O.D. (Girls Overcome Obstacles Daily), baking, teaching children tennis and posting on her poetry account @cydtalks. Cydney wishes to inspire people to speak their truth and share her poetry with the world.



**Michael Fichman** is a city planner, researcher and lecturer at PennPraxis at the University of Pennsylvania's Weitzman School of Design. He has spent 20 years in the music industry as a club DJ, record producer, record label owner and event producer - performing DJ sets worldwide as a representative of the classic sound of Philadelphia. He has released dozens of works under the names Michael The Lion and DJ Apt One, and has officially remixed artists as diverse as Wiz Khalifa, Todd Edwards and Harold Melvin and the Blue Notes. He is the organizer of the nightlife information and engagement group 24HrPHL and does research and consulting in the nighttime economy field worldwide. He is an editor of the multi-national Global Nighttime Recovery Plan effort and is the analytical leader

of the Creative Footprint venue census, which was most recently used to position Tokyo's nightlife sector for the Olympics. He is a long-time resident of West Philadelphia.

**Christina Vassallo** As Executive Director of the Fabric Workshop and Museum, in Philadelphia, Christina is redefining a living laboratory that commissions, presents, and collects experimental works of art. Previously, Christina spent six productive years as Executive + Artistic Director of SPACES, in Cleveland, where she provided creative direction and oversaw operations for one of the longest-running alternative art organizations in the country. Before relocating to Cleveland, she was Executive Director of Flux Factory, in NYC, where she set the course for an expansive art collective and residency program. She is currently completing the Chief Executive Program of National Arts Strategies, as well as a 2021 fellowship through the German Marshall Fund.







**Stanford Thompson** is a musician and educator who serves as the Founder and Executive Director of Play On Philly and Founding Board Chairman of El Sistema USA, bringing music education to students in underserved areas throughout Philadelphia and beyond. Recognized as a TED Fellow, Stanford believes that arts education is a powerful tool for positive personal and community change. Mr. Thompson serves on the faculty of the Global Leaders Program and regularly presents at major universities and music conservatories about leadership, entrepreneurship and social justice. As a consultant, he has guided the development of dozens of music programs across the United States and collaborated with major orchestras, higher education institutions, and arts organizations to develop new strategies and initiatives that help

provide equitable access to the arts. As a professional trumpeter, Stanford has performed as a soloist and member with major orchestras around the world and continues to perform chamber music and jazz. Stanford is a native of Atlanta, GA, a graduate of the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra's Talent Development Program and holds degrees from The Curtis Institute of Music and the New England Conservatory's Sistema Fellows Program.

**Joyce Gambrell Drayton** served as a member of the ACTF and a member of the Youth and the Arts subcommittee. Joyce was born and raised in Nicetown Philadelphia, a graduate of Olney High School, Cheyney University, (B.S. Elementary Education/ Special Ed. Minor and Temple University, (M.S.W). Joyce is the Minister of Music at the Nazarene Baptist Church of Nice town where she continues to serve for 64 years and to commemorate her church musician mother, Joyce founded the Georgia E. Gregory Interdenominational School of Music (GEGISOM) in 1996. Since 1999, GEGISOM has served over 5000 youth and 452 adults. While youth and music are her passion, Joyce is very involved in civic activities in her neighborhood, Ward Leader, Committee Person. Joyce is the author of "Distinguished Church Musicians in The United States, Composed and recorded several songs, of which one "I've Been Washed in The Blood also recorded by the Enon Tabernacle Mass Choir, Dr. Alyn Waller, Pastor. During graduate school she wrote a selection of poems entitled "Black and a Woman". A passionate visionary who views life through a resilient lens.





**Eboni Zamani** is a filmmaker, photographer and writer hailing from Philadelphia. She got her start in filmmaking in high school with a documentary about youth in the military. Visual and written storytelling became her outlet of choice. She received her degree from Pace University in Film and Screen Studies & African American Studies. She is currently writing and producing films and various media projects via her production company, Pearl's Girl Productions.

**Evon Burton** is an accomplished public relations professional, social media manager and music blogger. Through his work, he increases the awareness of hidden gems in the city of Philadelphia; may that be a community organization, an event or an entertainer.

In his position as marketing and outreach supervisor at Philadelphia FIGHT Community Health Centers, Burton manages and coordinates the organization's outreach efforts, and assists in FIGHT'S public-relations efforts. Philadelphia FIGHT offers medical care and supportive services care to those regardless of insurance or the ability to pay. Prior to working with the health centers, Burton represented and worked with numerous entertainers and nonprofit organizations, including independent R&B vocalist Goapele, West Philadelphia-based nonprofit ACHIEVEability, the Waheed Works dance project and the Uniquely You Summit for Girls. Burton is a proud native Philadelphian and currently resides in the Mount Airy section of the city. He graduated from Central High School and continued his education at Morehouse College, earning a bachelor's degree in business administration with a concentration in marketing and a minor in Spanish. Burton is a self-described "professional music fan." Music has always been his main source of inspiration. When experiencing any emotion - happiness, sadness, joy or pain - music is his refuge. Burton created the Anderson Street Project to unite music fans just like him. The online initiative is the go-to web destination for Philadelphia's R&B-loving community. It provides fans with up-to-the-minute updates about upcoming concerts, cool events and must-hear music projects. Burton was named Volunteer of the Year in 2011 by the Philadelphia Black Public Relations Society. In 2016, he was named a rising star in communications in the Billy Penn "Who's Next" series. In 2017, he was selected by Leadership Philadelphia to join its 2018 Connectors and Keepers program.





**Barbara H. Wilson**'s life's work is the focus and improvement of all communities, particularly the Caribbean-American communities, by delivering usable information and opportunities imperative to its success, which includes, but not limited to, community volunteers and leadership experience, non-profit and business experience, as well as governmental relations. Ms. Wilson is President of the Caribbean Festival & Cultural Organization of PA; Director for the Annual Caribbean Festivals held at Penn's Landing; Board member - Marcus Garvey Memorial Foundation fellowship awards for Doctoral Student hopefuls; former Chair of Team Jamaica Bickle (Philadelphia) at the Penn Relays; Member, Mayor's Commission on African &

Caribbean Affairs. Among her educational accomplishments, she holds an Associate of Science Degree in Business Administration [with Honors] from Community College of Philadelphia; First Class Certificates from the Jamaica Commercial Institute, The Institute of Commerce and Pitman Examinations Institute, London, England.

**Michelle Currica** immigrated to the United States from Georgetown, Guyana to Memphis, TN at the age of six. Since then, she has called a few special places home: Atlanta, Tsuno-cho (Japan) and now Philadelphia. In every place she's landed the arts have guided her connection to community and self-understanding. Now approaching her 10th year in Philadelphia, Michelle, the arts advocate, was forged through her time with the community: working for the Philadelphia Cultural Fund; serving as a Board Member for Spiral Q Puppet Theater, studying Aikido and collaborating with the membership in the Philadelphia Assembly (a collective of Philadelphia artists, activists, and culture bearers embedded in neighborhoods and communities, especially those prioritizing black women, black girls, and black people who are gender non-conforming. The General Assembly's primary focus is to ensure that those participating in, and reflective of the Assembly, who are keeping place can continue doing this work). The culmination of her love and loyalty to Philadelphia's arts and culture sector has been focused through her most recent endeavor, serving as a volunteer member of Councilmember Isaiah Thomas' Arts &





Culture Task Force. Artistically, Michelle strives to deepen her Aikido study, visual arts, and writing practices. She is the loving auntie to her cat-niece Gia.

**Germaine Ingram** is a Philadelphia PA-based jazz tap dancer, choreographer, song writer, vocal/dance improviser, oral historian and cultural strategist. She creates evening-length pieces that explore themes related to history, collective memory, and social justice, and designs arts/culture projects that explore and illuminate community cultural history. She collaborates with artists from diverse traditions and disciplines, including jazz/experimental music composers, site-specific choreographers, dance and vocal improvisers, African Diasporic culture specialists, and visual/media artists. Her work has been supported by the Pew Center for Arts & Humanities, the Independence, Leeway, Lomax Family, and Wyncote Foundations, and the Pennsylvania Councils on the Arts and Humanities. Among other awards, she was a 2010 Pew Foundation Fellow in the Arts, a Leeway Foundation Transformation Awardee, and a 2014 resident fellow at the Sacatar Institute in Itaparica, Bahia, Brazil. A former civil rights and trial lawyer, law professor and urban school district executive, she has served on many boards and steering committees dedicated to education reform, arts education, and advancing social change through arts and culture. Among her current civic involvements, she is active locally on the boards of the Leeway Foundation and Ars Nova Workshop, and on the Leadership Circle of IMPACT, a global initiative to support the field/ecosystem of arts, culture and conflict transformation.