

# ARTPLACE

## Invitation for Letter of Inquiry September 15, 2011

ArtPlace is a collaboration of major foundations, the National Endowment for the Arts and various federal agencies to accelerate creative placemaking across the U.S.

Participating foundations to date include Bloomberg Philanthropies, The Ford Foundation, The James Irvine Foundation, The John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, The Kresge Foundation, The McKnight Foundation, The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, The Rockefeller Foundation, Rasmuson Foundation and The Robina Foundation as well as an anonymous donor. In addition to the NEA, federal partners are the departments of Housing and Urban Development, Health and Human Services, Agriculture, Education and Transportation, along with leadership from the White House Office of Management and Budget and the Domestic Policy Council.

ArtPlace believes that art, culture and creativity expressed powerfully through place can create vibrant communities, thus increasing the desire and the economic opportunity for people to thrive in place. It is all about the local.

As of September 15, 2011, ArtPlace invites Letters of Inquiry from initiatives involving arts organizations, artists and designers working in partnership with local and national partners to produce a transformative impact on community vibrancy.

If you wish to apply, please complete the Letter of Inquiry online at [www.artplaceamerica.org](http://www.artplaceamerica.org). All requests must be submitted by November 15, 2011.

### The Definitions

1. **Creative placemaking:** art, culture and creativity expressed powerfully through a specific place that can create vibrancy.
2. **Vibrancy:** attracting people, activities and value to a place and increasing the desire and the economic opportunity to thrive in a place.

### The Ingredients

There are many creative placemaking strategies that have been deployed successfully in communities across America, and we applaud them. However, ArtPlace will favor investments that reach for new possibilities and work with a variety of partners who together are committed to increasing the vibrancy of their communities. ArtPlace sees its role as providing venture funding in the form of grants, seeding entrepreneurial projects that already enjoy strong local buy-in and will occur at places already showing signs of momentum, integrate with a community's economic development and community revitalization strategy and have the potential to attract additional private and public support to the community. We want to learn alongside those doing this groundbreaking work and spread the lessons they are learning to other communities across the U.S.

We are looking for initiatives involving arts organizations, artists and designers working in partnership with local and national partners in such fields as economic development, transportation, neighborhood development, entrepreneurship, sustainability, health, etc.

## **The Equation**

Locally specific arts production and creative engagement (creative placemaking) can act as a magnet for people, activity and development, thereby signaling that something exciting is happening in a place. This “pull” factor, evident by changes in vibrancy, can create the critical mass necessary to stimulate the desire and the economic opportunity to thrive in a place.

**Creative Placemaking --> Vibrancy --> Quality of place so powerful that it changes the trajectory of the community and ultimately results in increases in per capita income and improved economic integration.**

Please only submit if your work is exemplary, innovative, distinctive and also part of a portfolio of strategies among community partners (not simply supporters or endorsers) who aim to produce a transformative impact on vibrancy in your community.

## **Measuring Impact**

ArtPlace is developing a set of vibrancy indicators that will be available for use First Quarter, 2012. These indicators will be used to assess the level of vibrancy of different areas within cities, and importantly, to measure changes in vibrancy over time in the communities where ArtPlace invests.

We define vibrancy as places with an unusual scale and intensity of specific kinds of human interaction. While we are not able to measure vibrancy directly, we believe that the measures we are assembling, taken together, will provide useful insights into the nature and location of especially vibrant places within cities.

We will use three broad sets of indicators to measure urban vibrancy: people, activity and value.

Changes in indicators should occur at the neighborhood level but need to be additive at the city level over time. Improvements in vibrancy should not reflect merely the rearrangement of activity within a city but an increase in aggregate levels of activity.

## **Deadlines**

- September 15, 2011 – Letters of Inquiry invited for submission
- November 15, 2011 – Deadline for submitting Letter of Inquiry
- January 2, 2012 – Selected applicants notified to submit full proposals
- February 24, 2012 – Deadline for submitting full proposals
- May 31, 2012 – Successful applicants notified

## **Application Review**

Proposals will be submitted to the ArtPlace staff and are reviewed by the ArtPlace Operating Committee. Recommendations from the Operating Committee are then reviewed and confirmed by the ArtPlace Presidents Council.

Early submissions are encouraged, and proposals will be reviewed upon receipt.

## **Evaluation Criteria**

- Is art, art making or artists at the heart of the initiative?
- Is it likely that the initiative will result in increased vibrancy?
- Is the initiative integrated into a broader set of strategies to increase vibrancy?
- Is the leadership and organizational capacity present to complete the initiative successfully?
- Can the initiative demonstrate new understanding in the field?

## Frequently Asked Questions

These FAQ are intended to answer as many of your questions as possible. Please thoroughly read through all questions and answers before sending an inquiry to the ArtPlace staff whose resources are limited.

If you do not see your question posted here, please send an email to [bridget@artplaceamerica.org](mailto:bridget@artplaceamerica.org).

**1. How much will ArtPlace award to a single organization?**

The decision will be made on a case-by-case basis by the awards panel.

**2. What is the total funding available through ArtPlace?**

ArtPlace made a total of almost \$12 million grants in 2011 and expects to make grants in that amount again in 2012.

**3. What size grants will ArtPlace make?**

In its first year, ArtPlace made grants ranging in size from \$1 million to \$63,100. The average grant was \$349,784 and the median grant was \$275,000.

**4. Who makes up the awards panel?**

The awards panel is comprised of members of the ArtPlace Operating Committee. Each funder and each participating federal agency has one representative on the Operating Committee. Only funders are voting members of the Operating Committee. Awards are confirmed by the Presidents' Council of ArtPlace.

**5. What percentage of my project budget will ArtPlace award?**

While ArtPlace has no firm guidelines established to answer this question, ArtPlace expects your organization to have a substantial financial stake in any project you propose and to use its funds to leverage additional local support.

**6. Will ArtPlace make only one award per community?**

No, ArtPlace has made multiple awards to organizations in a single community. Although the different organizations are not official partners, they are all working together on a commonly shared goal for that community and were in close physical proximity.

**7. What kinds of entities will ArtPlace fund?**

ArtPlace will only fund non-profit organizations and local governing bodies. However, if you are an individual artist, designer or a for-profit organization, you can use a nonprofit fiscal agent.

**8. What kinds of initiatives has ArtPlace funded?**

A complete listing of ArtPlace-funded initiatives can be found at [www.artplaceamerica.org](http://www.artplaceamerica.org).

**9. How long should the proposed project be?**

Proposed projects should be one year in length, and begin between June 1, 2012 and December 31, 2012. If your project is part of a multi-year initiative, you may describe the broader vision but your application should reflect only the activities or phases of work that will occur within the yearlong grant period.

**10. Should we submit letters of support for our work?**

No. If you are working in partnership with other organizations to increase vibrancy in your community, please include information about the partnership and the common strategy you are

pursuing together in the narrative sections of the Letter of Inquiry. We do not want and do not need letters of support.

**11. Will an ArtPlace award affect whether an applicant is eligible for grants from participating foundations or the NEA?**

No. ArtPlace is an independent initiative of foundation partners and various federal agencies, including the NEA. Applications to ArtPlace are subjected to an independent evaluation process specific to ArtPlace. An award from an individual foundation or any of the programs it may fund has no effect on whether an organization will receive an award from ArtPlace and vice versa. Similarly, NEA has introduced the Our Town grants. Submissions to Our Town and ArtPlace are evaluated by different processes and on different criteria. An award from Our Town has no effect on whether an organization will receive an award from ArtPlace and vice versa.

**12. Can I request panel comments or feedback after my project has been reviewed?**

ArtPlace will not provide feedback or panel comments.

**13. Are NEA funded organizations eligible to submit a Letter of Inquiry?**

Yes. ArtPlace is not a program of the NEA. NEA funding does not impact ArtPlace eligibility.

**14. Is a project eligible to receive funding from ArtPlace if funding for the same initiative has been received from a foundation participating as an ArtPlace funder?**

Yes. If you receive funding from participating ArtPlace funders, it will not impact ArtPlace eligibility.

**15. Are artists' and designers' fees eligible expenses?**

Yes, as long as they are incurred during the period of support. Fees for other individuals involved in the project also are eligible, such as fees for artists, choreographers, musicians, designers, architects, facilitators or other consultants.

**16. Can salaries for administration or additional fundraising be funded?**

Salaries for administration and project management are allowed, but fundraising is not an eligible expense.

**17. Are state bodies eligible to submit an LOI?**

Yes, all 501c3 and local governing bodies (including state bodies) are eligible to submit a Letter of Inquiry. Individuals and for-profit entities may also submit using a fiscal agent.

**18. Will projects outside of the U.S. be funded?**

No. ArtPlace will only fund projects located in the U.S. However, the community in which you intend to have impact can span into another country.

**19. Will projects located in Puerto Rico be eligible for funding?**

Yes. Projects located in Puerto Rico are eligible to receive funding.

**20. Will ArtPlace fund projects in rural communities?**

Yes. Communities of all sizes are encouraged to submit a Letter of Inquiry to ArtPlace. You can see our full list of first round grant recipients on our website, which includes rural, suburban and urban projects.

**21. Can one organization submit multiple Letters of Inquiry?**

Yes. An organization is allowed to submit multiple Letters of Inquiry for distinct projects. Each Letter of Inquiry will be reviewed independently.

**22. Can an organization submit a Letter of Inquiry and act as a fiscal agent for an individual artist?**

Yes. An organization may serve as a fiscal agent and submit its own proposal.

**23. Will ArtPlace grants be subject to the reporting and auditing requirements associated with federal programs?**

ArtPlace is not a federal program. The reporting requirements will be similar to those required by the private foundations participating in ArtPlace, rather than the federal government.

**24. Does ArtPlace have a grant request range?**

No. ArtPlace does not specify a request range for projects. You may see the full list of first round grants and their amounts here: <http://www.artplaceamerica.org/grants/>.

**25. Is there a recording for the Letter of Inquiry webinar held on October 3?**

Yes. The webinar recording may be viewed here: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VL2zOI075xQ>.

**26. Will ArtPlace consider renewals to projects that received grants in the first round?**

Yes. First round grant recipients are eligible to submit a Letter of Inquiry for the second round of grants. However, please note that ArtPlace will expect to see evidence of success before additional grants are made.

**27. Can the scope of the project be statewide?**

Yes. The scope of an ArtPlace project can be statewide; however, statewide or regional projects should be focused on driving sustained vibrancy in local communities.

**28. Will ArtPlace fully fund a project or is there a required match?**

There is no required match to receive ArtPlace funding. However, ArtPlace does anticipate that many of its investments will leverage other funding.

**29. How can we see the Letter of Inquiry questions before filling out the online form?**

The Letter of Inquiry Worksheet below includes all of the questions in the online form. Please use this as a guide for completing your Letter of Inquiry. ArtPlace will not generate copies of submissions, so we encourage you to save a copy before you submit online.

**30. Are there restrictions in terms of size of organization?**

ArtPlace eligibility is not dependent on meeting minimum or maximum operating budget requirements.

**31. Can ArtPlace funds be used for programming? Planning? Implementation? Capital projects?**

Yes. As long as the work is likely to produce sustained vibrancy in the community, ArtPlace funds can be used for all of these types of projects or a combination of these activities.

**32. Are performing arts programming eligible for ArtPlace funding?**

Yes. We encourage submissions for performing arts programming as well as visual arts programming.

**33. Is there a preference for programs that are scalable and/or replicable?**

While there is no preference for programs that are scalable or replicable, ArtPlace will place preference on projects that provide new learning to inform the creative placemaking field.

**34. How does ArtPlace define authentic partnership?**

If the organization or individual partner has a role in the execution of the project, then it is likely an authentic partner. This role could be programmatic or financial in nature.

**35. For renovations or other capital projects, does ownership of the building or property have to be a 501(c)3?**

No. As long as there is an interest that allows the project to fulfill its long-term strategic goals, there are no restrictions in terms of property ownership. City owned buildings, a condominium space, long-term leases with developers/individuals, as well as fee simple ownership are all viable alternatives.

**36. Will ArtPlace support research or publications about creative placemaking projects?**

ArtPlace does not intend to invest in further research unless that work is likely to create sustained vibrancy — changes over time in the people in a place, the activities in a place and the value created in a place.

**37. Are award amounts the same as requested or are they ever reduced?**

In its first round of funding, ArtPlace awarded some projects the full amount requested and some projects at a level lower than the amount requested.

**38. Can an organization apply for both an ArtPlace grant and also the revolving loan fund?**

Yes. Applying for a grant does not preclude an organization from also applying for the revolving loan fund and vice versa. Full guidelines for the revolving loan fund are available here: <http://nonprofitfinancefund.org/forms/artplace-loan-inquiry>.

**39. I have more questions. Whom do I contact?**

You can direct questions via email at [bridget@artplaceamerica.org](mailto:bridget@artplaceamerica.org). However we have attempted to answer all questions here. We encourage you to submit your original ideas in your Letter of Inquiry.

**Contact**

You can direct questions via email to [bridget@artplaceamerica.org](mailto:bridget@artplaceamerica.org).

## Letter of Inquiry Worksheet

If you wish to apply, please use this worksheet to prepare all your responses before completing the Letter of Inquiry online at [www.artplaceamerica.org](http://www.artplaceamerica.org). ArtPlace will only review Letters of Inquiry submitted through its website. All requests must be submitted by November 15, 2011.

Name of organization or individual applicant:

One sentence description of the work for which you are seeking support:

Amount requested from ArtPlace:

Annual operating budget:

Name of fiscal agent (if applicable):

Name of contact person:

Address:

City:

State:

Zip:

Email:

Phone:

Website:

Type of Organization (Non-Profit, For-Profit, Government, Individual):

Address of the proposed work (if different from address above):

How did you become aware of this funding opportunity? (Please select all that apply)

National news article

Local news article

Social media

Web

Industry publication or email

Funder (Please list)

Association (Please list)

Other (Please list source)

Describe the work you want to do for which you are seeking ArtPlace support. (250 words maximum)

What impact do you hope your work will have? (100 words maximum)

If your work is part of a larger portfolio of strategies to change the trajectory of your community, please name the major partners in the development and execution of those strategies. (Please do not list supporters, only full partners.) (100 words maximum)