



# Creative Partners

*How Intermediaries Support  
Artistic & Cultural Vibrancy*

MARCH 2021

Prepared for  
The Hewlett Foundation

Prepared by  
Informing Change &  
Open Mind Consulting

INFORMING  
CHANGE 



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## KEY TERMS

**Artists:** This report uses the term “artists” to describe individuals involved in the arts and culture sector in myriad ways, including creating, performing, producing, teaching, serving as administrators, and conducting arts advocacy.

**Arts organizations:** The term “arts organizations” is used to describe a broad array of entities including performing arts groups, community groups that engage with the arts as one part of their work, and groups focused on sustaining and celebrating culture within and across communities.

**Intermediaries and intermediary partners:** Within philanthropy, an intermediary is typically defined as a mission-driven organization that links donors and grantees, often, but not exclusively, by providing re-granting support. In this report, the term “intermediary partner” specifically refers to the intermediaries supported by the Hewlett Foundation’s Performing Arts Program. This group includes public foundations, nonprofits, and private foundations that offer both grants and non-financial supports to artists and arts and culture organizations. Some intermediary partners work solely in the arts while others support multiple causes in addition to the arts. All were included in this study because they received funding from the Hewlett Foundation’s Performing Arts Program at some point between 2015 and 2019.

**Bay Area:** This term is used as shorthand for the regional focus within California of the Performing Arts Program. During 2015-2019, this regional focus included the counties of Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, Napa, San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Santa Cruz, Solano, and Sonoma as well as neighboring Monterey County.

# Introduction

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Intermediary funders—often public foundations or nonprofits that can both receive large foundation grants and channel funding out to individuals or community groups—are important partners for many private foundations. These relationships can improve the capacity of each partner to achieve their desired impact. The Performing Arts Program (the Program) of the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation (the Foundation) supplements its direct grantmaking with grants to intermediary funders (herein referred to as the intermediary partners) that it believes are strategically aligned and positioned to directly engage communities and artists.

In early 2020, the Program debuted a [refreshed strategic framework](#).<sup>1</sup> This framework includes three strategies—Communities, Artists, and Youth—and one tool—Advocacy and Infrastructure—that is deployed across all three strategies to bolster its aims. The refreshed framework (the Framework) aims to respond to contextual trends, including demographic and economic shifts in the Bay Area and to encourage grantmaking that reflects the Bay Area’s diversity and supports the arts as they occur within its communities.



Once the Framework was released, the Program shifted its attention to assessing how the tactic of working with intermediary partners could support its implementation. To do this, it wanted to understand more about *who benefits* from the funds and services provided by intermediary partners of the Program and *how these partners are adapting* to external, contextual shifts.

Informing Change began the work of this evaluation by looking retrospectively. We considered the grants made and services provided by the intermediary partners during the five-year period of 2015–19. Then, building on the perspectives of both intermediary organizations and artists themselves, we identified areas of alignment with the Program’s Framework. When making final recommendations for the Program and the intermediary partners, we considered how the Framework could strengthen intermediary organizations and the potential role that intermediary organizations could play in strengthening the implementation of the Framework.

As the evaluation was about to launch in March of 2020, the Covid-19 pandemic began to cause unprecedented disruption to the performing arts sector. Theatres, clubs, concert halls, and venues of all kinds had to cease their operations due to public health requirements. Figuring out how to adapt to, respond to, and indeed survive the pandemic was top of mind for every artist, arts educator, or arts administrator we spoke with during focus groups or interviews. This evaluation—and the perspectives it synthesizes—are inherently tied to how that experience has shaped the sector.

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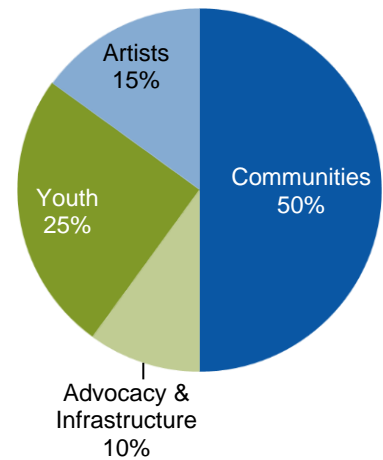
<sup>1</sup> Strategies for program areas are typically refreshed every five years at the Foundation.

## About the Performing Arts Program at the Hewlett Foundation

The Program currently makes grants to support meaningful artistic experiences for communities throughout the San Francisco Bay Area. Under its refreshed Framework, the Program aspires to award circa \$20 million annually through its new focus areas. Outside of funding to intermediaries, most grants are awarded in multi-year, general operating support. Communities grants support performing arts forms and practices that are relevant to and reflective of people living throughout the region. Artists grants help artists seize opportunities and embrace collaboration across artistic boundaries and sectors. Youth grants support work to ensure that Bay Area youth ages 5 to 25 have equitable access to high-quality, sequential, multidisciplinary arts education. Advocacy and Infrastructure grants support efforts necessary to undergird and sustain the sector. More information about the Hewlett Foundation Performing Arts Program can be found at <https://hewlett.org/programs/performing-arts/>.

## Performing arts grants by area (targets, 2021)

Exhibit 1



Prior to the 2020 Framework, the Program funded its intermediary partners to support parts of the arts ecosystem that it could not reach itself. These partners extended the Program’s reach primarily to individual artists and small organizations with budgets below \$100,000, which the Foundation did not fund directly.

Within the 2020 Framework, the Program funds intermediary partners because they have unique assets that connect them with communities, artists, and youth, and provide advocacy and infrastructure supports that are relevant and responsive to the people they serve. Grants to support intermediary partners of the Program can align to any or multiple areas of the Framework by helping the Program support community interests, extend its capacity to directly support artists and youth, and improve the infrastructure of creative performance and collaboration.

***“The intermediaries we support both advance our goals and exemplify our values. They are advocates and a locus for recognition and innovation that collectively amplify the artistic and cultural vibrancy across the Bay Area.”***

– The Hewlett Foundation

## About Informing Change & Open Mind Consulting

Informing Change and Open Mind Consulting worked jointly to complete this evaluation between April 2020 and February 2021. Informing Change, a strategic learning firm based in Berkeley, CA. combines the power of data with inclusive and participatory sense-making processes to complete evaluation, research, and strategy projects. Open Mind is an independent consulting firm based in Sonoma, CA., anchored to a client approach that combines research with direct social sector experience to help organizations tackle social problems that begin with people, spiral out to organizations, and intersect with complex systems. More information about the approaches we take and contexts that inform our perspectives can be found at [informingchange.com](http://informingchange.com) and [omconsult.org](http://omconsult.org).

## About this Evaluation

The retrospective piece of this evaluation draws on data about the financial grants and non-financial supports provided by the intermediary partners of the Program during the 2015–19 period. Twenty-six intermediaries were included in this study. For a list of these partners, see Appendix A.

We then aggregated and analyzed the self-reported, descriptive data alongside a body of qualitative data also gathered from the intermediary partners, to better understand how their work to date has reached artists and arts organizations. Through these lines of inquiry, we assessed potential alignment with the Framework and then sought to pinpoint roles that intermediaries are best positioned to play in future implementation of the Framework. In examining this potential for alignment, our evaluation findings explore the following with respect to each of the strategies and sector-wide efforts:

- **Communities:** In what ways can intermediaries expand and sustain opportunities to discover, develop, and experience artistic and cultural practices across Bay Area communities?
- **Artists:** What works in intermediaries' efforts to provide relevant, responsive, and equitable access to services, networks, and supports for artists throughout the region?
- **Youth:** How can intermediaries work with the Performing Arts Program to expand and sustain equitable access to high-quality arts education opportunities for children and youth?
- **Advocacy & Infrastructure:** What effective advocacy and infrastructure supports might intermediaries provide to help further sustain a vibrant and equitable arts ecosystem?

As noted, the **Covid-19 pandemic** was ongoing throughout our data collection. For example, when artists and intermediaries discussed changes in their work, the rapid and extensive adaptations of their work in response to new Covid-19 restrictions was top of mind compared to their response to other contextual changes. Data collection was also done remotely via virtual interviews and focus groups and the collection of self-reported data from the intermediary partners. The original design for the evaluation called for in-person observation of performances and events, a plan that changed given the cancellation of these events.

*“March 14, 2020. We got back from tour a day early and found that every single client—and we’re talking \$200K projected income—pretty much pulled back; the cancellations meant no payment.”*

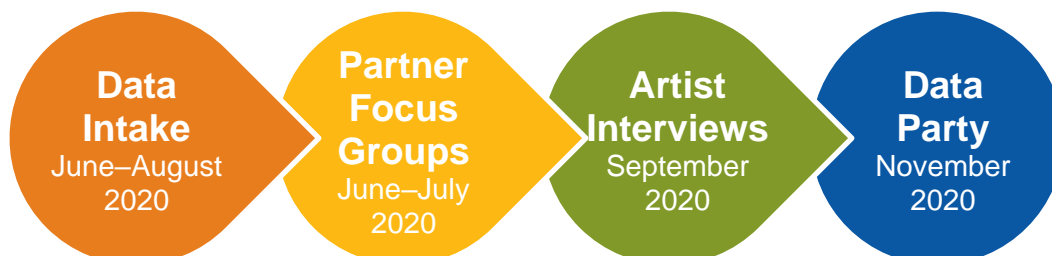
– Artist Interviewee

The year 2020 also saw an important racial justice reckoning in the United States generally, and in the Bay Area performing arts sector specifically. While the work of that reckoning continues, **the Black Lives Matter protests** also shaped how intermediary partners reflected on their work during the past year and the conversations we had with artists. Acknowledging these contextual factors sheds light on the sharp distinction between analysis of the retrospective data about intermediary partner's work between 2015–19, and the qualitative data collected from artists and intermediaries in 2020.

Respecting the value of artists' time was important to the Foundation and to the intermediary partners, as well as to our evaluation team. The artists and organizations that participated in gathering, sharing, and helping us to make sense of the data were provided with financial compensation for their time.

## Methods

A combination of qualitative and quantitative research methods was used during this evaluation.





These included focus groups for representatives from each intermediary partner organization to explore the multi-faceted roles they play and how they were responding to a rapidly shifting landscape; the compilation and analysis of self-reported data from each intermediary partner about their grantmaking and non-financial services completed between 2015–19 with the support of the Hewlett Foundation; and interviews with approximately 40 Bay Area artists, arts educators, and arts sector leaders. These gave insight into how well the grants and services offered by the intermediary partners meet the needs of artists at different points in their career and among a diverse array of communities. Not every intermediary partner was funded for all five years, some only report data for a subset of the years between 2015–19.

We also believed it was essential to engage the intermediaries themselves in helping us to make sense of where there is potential alignment with the refreshed Framework and where there are possible gaps. Thus, we also facilitated a participatory sense-making meeting (or “data party”) with all partners and the Hewlett Foundation together.



Photo by David Wilson, courtesy of Cultural Odyssey, San Francisco

# Descriptive Findings

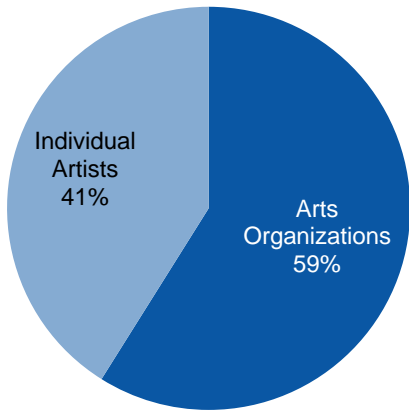
## ARTISTS & ORGANIZATIONS REACHED BY THE INTERMEDIARY PARTNERS: 2015–19

### Overall Grantmaking by Intermediary Partners

Twenty out of the twenty-six intermediary partners used the funds awarded by the Program to provide grants to artists and arts organizations, predominantly within the Bay Area.<sup>2, 3</sup>

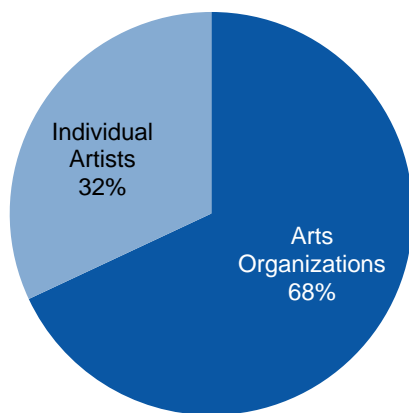
### Total re-grants in dollars by sub-grantee type

Exhibit 2 | n=\$19,468,938



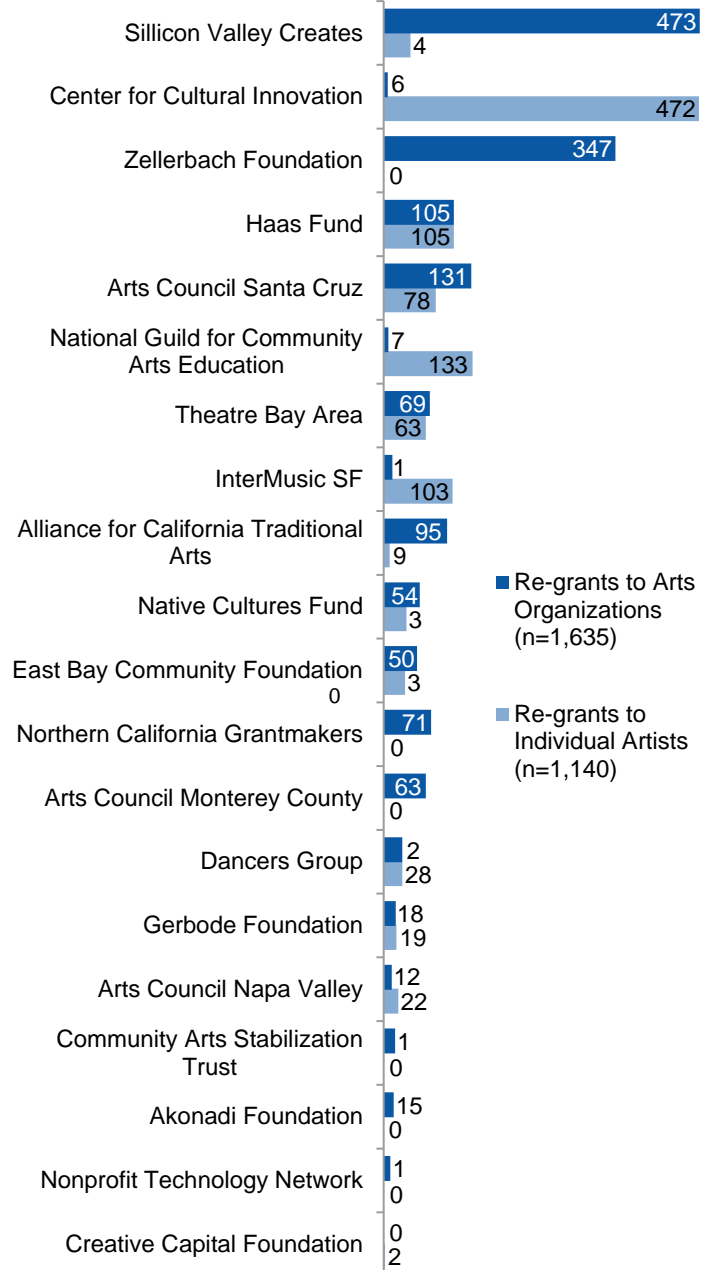
### Total number of re-grants by sub-grantee type

Exhibit 3 | n=2,775



### Re-granting by intermediary partner using Hewlett funds

Exhibit 4



<sup>2</sup> Intermediary partners self-reported the data aggregated here. This captures work done with the Hewlett Foundation's support. It is important to note that intermediary partners may also have provided other grants or services, with the support of other funding that is not captured here.

<sup>3</sup> Six organizations did not provide re-granting data: Teaching Artists Guild, Community Vision Capital & Consulting, Horizons Foundation, Marin County Office of Education, Sonoma County Economic Development Board Foundation, Third Sector New England



In total, intermediary partners provided 2,775 grants valued at \$19,468,938 to artists and arts organizations.

Music (36% of organizations, 21% of individuals), dance (29% of organizations, 14% of individuals), and theatre (21% of organizations, 18% of individuals) were the three primary areas of practice for the intermediary partners' grant recipients during 2015–19. Other grant recipients worked multi-disciplinarily or in visual mediums.

The purposes for which artists and arts organizations received grants from the intermediary partners represent an expansive array of styles and approaches to the arts. A sampling of just three of the hundreds of grants awarded by intermediary partners are listed below to give a hint of the grants at work.

- The Horizons Foundation awarded a grant in 2016 to AfroSolo Theatre Company which intended to use the funding to highlight the work of a Black LGBT solo performing artist in a spring festival. The grant supported the development and world premiere of a theater piece that speaks to the LGBT experience in the African American community.
- The Alliance for California Traditional Arts awarded a 2015 grant to the musician Karl Cronin to create a song cycle tracing the story of a white English-American transgender abolitionist set in the American South in the early nineteenth century.
- The East Bay Community Foundation awarded a 2018 grant to the Peralta Hacienda Historical Park to support indoor and outdoor exhibits combining fabric, painting, and graphic design to tell the stories of Oakland's undocumented day laborers.

Intermediaries varied in the number of grants they gave out, with a range of between 2 and 513 grants awarded (Exhibit 4). Because of this wide variance, the trends we report in regranting may more heavily reflect the practices and priorities of the few intermediaries who were giving out more grants.

### Grants to Organizations

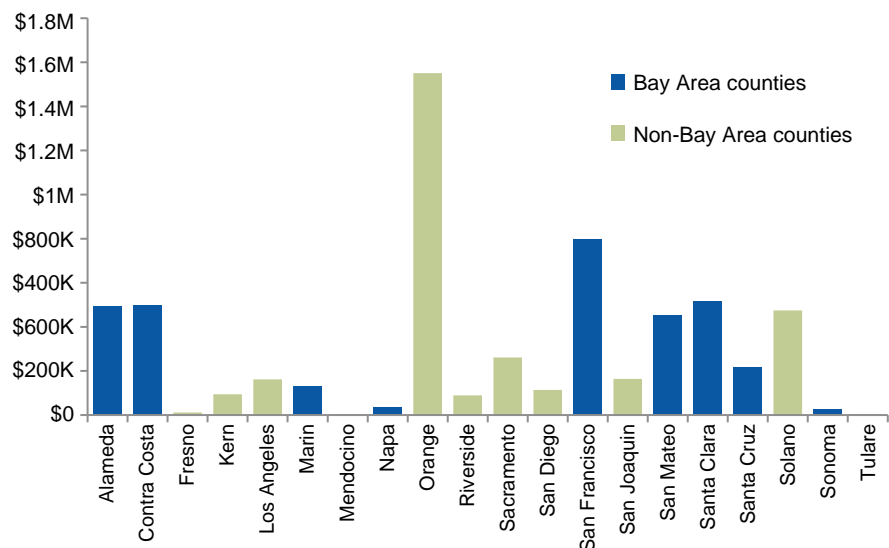
During the 2015–19 period, the intermediaries collectively awarded 1,635 grants to 917 arts and culture organizations. The total dollar value of these 1,635 grants was \$13,245,201.

Most grants awarded to organizations by intermediary partners were small in size, timebound, and reached very small, often volunteer-run arts organizations. These grants primarily supported arts and culture groups; some also supported community organizations or youth-serving organizations that use the arts as one strategy among others in their programs. The most frequently awarded grant size was \$5,000 (mean was \$8,191, median was \$3,850). These award amounts to arts organizations are highly variant—the minimum grant size is \$400 while the maximum is \$118,298. The most frequently awarded grant term was 12 months (mean was 10.6 months, median was 12 months).

The median budget size of grantee organizations was \$158,000 and the median staff size was just one. Looking at

**Average organizational budget size by county**

Exhibit 5 | n=1,203



average organization budget size by county, there are some seemingly significant differences (Exhibit 5).<sup>4</sup> Organizations based in rural counties like Mendocino County and Tulare County have much smaller average budget sizes compared to denser counties like San Francisco County and Alameda County. While a few larger grantees do bring the mean staff size to four, it was more common for a grant recipient to be all volunteer-run than to report having paid, full-time staff positions.

There was little “overlap” in support (a recipient being funded by more than one intermediary). Most grant recipients received support from just one of the intermediary partners. Of the 917 organizations supported, only 138 received grants from two of the intermediary partners, and just 24 received grants from three of the intermediaries, the remaining 755 received support from only one partner (Exhibit 6).

### Grants to Artists

Intermediary partners helped the Program to get funding directly to a significant number of individual artists. During the 2015–19 period, the intermediaries collectively awarded 1,149 grants to individuals working in the arts and culture sectors. The total dollar value of these grants was \$6,223,737. There was also extremely little overlap in funding to individual recipients. Individual grant recipients typically received support from only one of the intermediaries. As with funding to organizations, most grants to individuals were very small and were timebound. The most frequently awarded grant size to an individual artist was \$1,000 (median was \$1,000, mean was \$5,459). The most frequently awarded grant term for an individual artist was 12 months (median was 4 months, mean was just over 7 months).

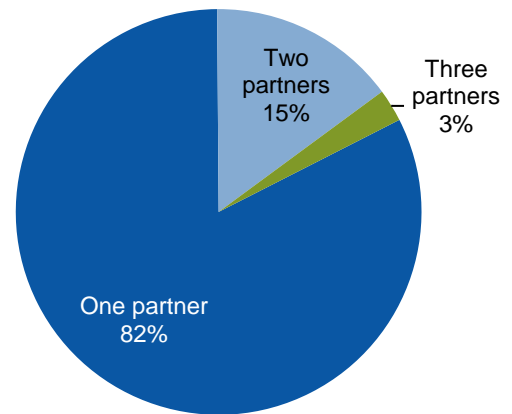
### Geographic & Demographic Distribution of Grants to Artists & Organizations

Geographically, recipient organizations and individual artists were heavily concentrated in the Bay Area (as expected due to the Program’s regional focus), though some are in other parts of California, other states, or even working internationally (Exhibit 7)<sup>5</sup>. Ninety-three percent of recipient organizations and 72% of recipient individuals were based in the Bay Area (inclusive of Monterey County).

Within the Bay Area, recipient organizations were concentrated in a few major urban hubs. Nearly half of the grants (48%) went to organizations in San Francisco or San Jose; with an additional 9% going to organizations based in Oakland, and the remainder spread in smaller concentrations

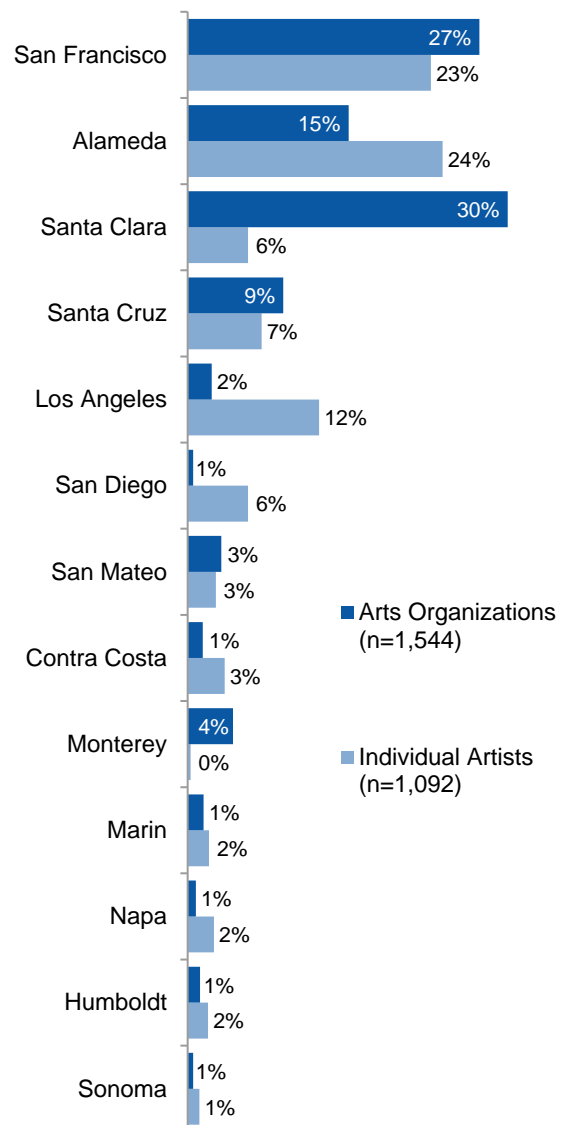
### Number of funding partners, by organizations

Exhibit 6 | n=917



### Grant recipient location by county

Exhibit 7



across the Bay Area. Individual recipients of support were also relatively concentrated in a limited number of urban areas. Two-thirds of individuals who received grants live in these nine cities (note that two are not in the Bay Area)—San Francisco, Oakland, Los Angeles, Berkeley, Santa Cruz, San Diego, San Jose, Richmond, and Napa—and, as the quote below exemplifies, arts organizations do have reach beyond their home cities.

***“We’re based in Oakland and that’s where most of our work takes place, but because it is a gentrifying city, we go wherever the Latinx community is moving—so now we go out further to Contra Costa or Hayward.”***

– Arts Organization

Being predominantly located in urban centers with a high cost of living is a significant contextual factor for artists. Almost every interviewee mentioned gentrification and the high cost of living in the Bay Area as a challenge facing their work. Given that the majority of organizations and individuals who received grants are based in San Francisco, San Jose, and Oakland, this is likely a challenge for most of the grant recipients.

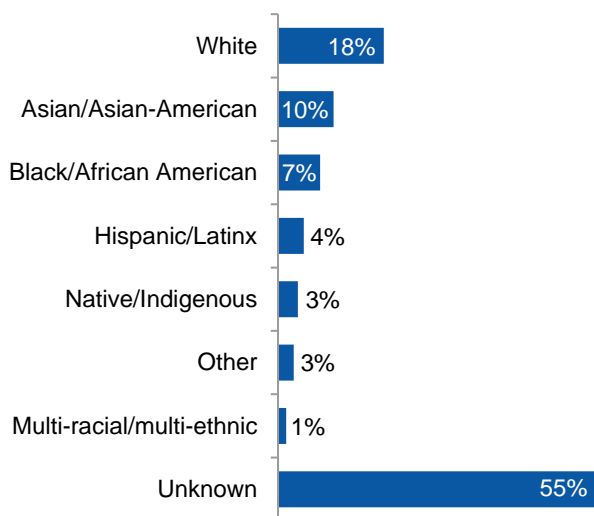
***“Being in the Bay Area, at the nexus of the civil rights movement for people with disabilities and a cutting-edge experimental dance scene, it was a perfect place to evolve... But I tell young people now, don’t move here unless you have a spouse who makes really good money, a trust fund, or an insurance settlement, because it’s going to be too hard.”***

– Artist

When describing their work in 2020, the intermediary partners situate it within multiple communities, both specific and broad, and describe it as inclusive of diverse demographics. However, the practices around collecting data about race, ethnicity, gender, and other demographic categories, at least during the 2015–19 period, were inconsistent, and there are gaps in what we know about the artists supported and the audiences and communities that they ultimately engaged during this period.

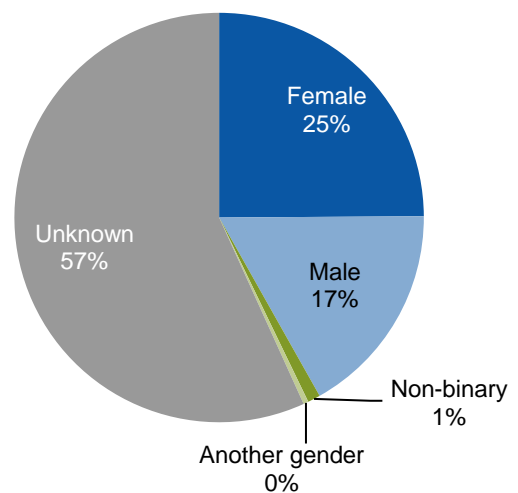
**Artist race/ethnicity**

Exhibit 8 | n=1,149



**Artist gender**

Exhibit 9 | n=1,149



<sup>4</sup> Monterey County is not included in this graph because there is only one Monterey County organization for which we received budget data.

<sup>5</sup> This chart only shows the counties with a share of 1% or more.

Intermediary partners were not able to report the race or ethnicity of over half of the individual artists to which they provide grants. Collecting this data is also not required by the Foundation. Of grants for which they were able to report the race of the recipient, they reported that 25.9% of grants awarded between 2015–19 went to individual artists of color (Exhibit 8). Ultimately, the actual representation of artists of color, relative to their white counterparts, as recipients of grants awarded to individual artists during the 2015–19 period, could not be determined. Intermediary partners were able to report the gender of the grant recipient, and women received more grants (58%) than men (40%) or non-binary artists (2%). We also cannot determine the racial or ethnic make-up of audiences or communities reached (from this data) by the supported arts organizations and the individual artists. This is because, in total, the intermediary partners reported 85% of all grants awarded as “no race/ethnicity focus” or “do not know” for the audiences reached.

## NON-FINANCIAL SUPPORTS & OTHER ROLES PLAYED BY INTERMEDIARY PARTNERS

During the 2015–19 period, **17 of the intermediary partners reported offering non-financial supports** and services to artists, arts educators, and arts and culture organizations. Geographically, these support services reached individuals and organizations throughout the Bay Area. The most frequently cited location was the city of Oakland, which is also a hub for recipients of grant support.

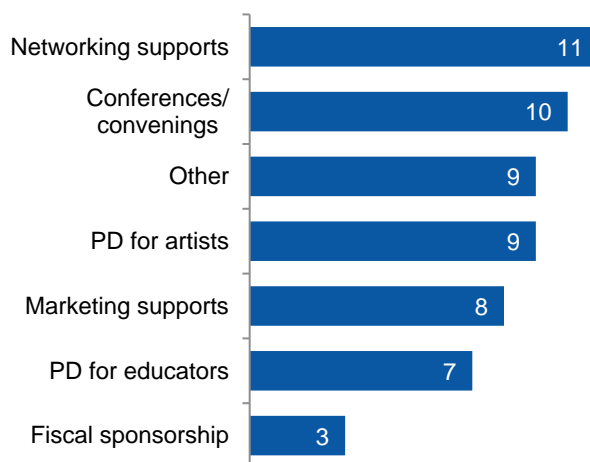
The intermediary partners most frequently mentioned race/ethnicity as the type of diversity they consider in the provision of non-financial supports. For example, when conducting outreach for professional development programs, prioritize recipients for technical assistance, or when considering the students or audiences reached by recipients of marketing support. Because arts educators were a strong sub-group of professional development support recipients, youth (both in in-school and out-of-school settings) were another important demographic group reached.

The types of non-financial supports provided by intermediary partners during 2015–19 were myriad. An example of just a handful out of dozens includes:

- Arts Council Napa Valley supported an Education Alliance that played a leadership role in the adoption of the Napa Valley Unified School District’s (NVUSD) Arts Education Master Plan in 2016, assisted in the establishment of the district’s first Visual and Performing Arts Coordinator and the resulting new infrastructure for arts education districtwide, supported ongoing professional development for arts educators, pushed forward relationship and trust building with arts teachers, and fostered a commitment from the district to build a systemic program for arts education in the schools.
- Creative Capital hosted the 2019 Creative Capital Artist Retreat, with 18 attendees from the Bay Area. Creative Capital reports “with 87 awardees presenting 74 projects, the Retreat was an inspiring testament to the power of artists and their impactful projects that transcend sectors and disciplines to create lasting change. Through career-development workshops and one-on-one appointments with invited consultants, our awardees were given extensive tools to continue developing and disseminating their projects and were connected to a national network of people poised to help their projects succeed.”

### Direct services provided by intermediaries

Exhibit 10 | n=17



- Center for Cultural Innovation (CCI) managed the California Arts Leadership Now, or CAL-Now network (a network that had previously been managed internally by the Hewlett Foundation and the James Irvine Foundation under different names). CCI facilitated connections among the CAL-Now members to build community and cohesion, promoted the exchange of resources and learning among participants, and exposed network participants to places and ideas that inform their development as leaders in the field.

The most common types of non-grant support offered were **networking, conferences, and professional development (PD) for artists or arts educators (Exhibit 10)**. Marketing support and fiscal sponsorship services were also provided by multiple intermediaries. These are in-line with the conceptual categories for the roles of intermediaries defined in a 2013 publication from Grantmakers for Effective Organizations<sup>6</sup> that described intermediary roles within a philanthropic context.

### Adaptation to Change

Intermediaries' location within the sector positions them to have solid working relationships with both funders and artists or arts organizations. This multiplies the "finger in the wind" effect for them, giving them the ability to be especially aware of changes in the landscape in which they work. This helps them to adapt to changes more rapidly, whether those changes are related to Covid-19, affordability and gentrification, the extent of local support for the arts and culture, or even to leverage some of the ways in which changing technology opens up greater visibility for artists.



Nonetheless, structural dynamics in the nonprofit and philanthropic sector can hinder positive adaptation. For example, access to space, grant processes, grant size, the limitations of the 501c3 model, and typical nonprofit organizational structures or hierarchies were all mentioned by intermediaries as limiting factors to adaptation.

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<sup>6</sup> Grantmakers for Effective Organizations. (2013). Smarter relationships, better results: Making the most of grantmakers work with intermediaries. Available from GEO at <https://www.geofunders.org/> or viewable at <https://www.issuelab.org/resources/24414/24414.pdf>



# Intermediary Work in Context

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Drawing on input from the intermediary partners themselves (through focus groups and a participatory analysis session) and artists who receive support from the intermediary partners (through interviews), a broader context emerges for situating the descriptive findings presented above. In addition, qualitative findings help provide for an understanding of the meaning, purpose and intention behind the work undertaken by intermediaries during the evaluation period. These data also allow for consideration of historical shifts already underway within the arts and culture sector during the evaluation period. A brief consideration of two major societal events that unfolded in 2020, and which have indelibly shaped the performing arts sector for the future, will help to foreground the presentation and analysis of the findings and that follow in subsequent sections of the report.

## **A Pandemic of Epic Proportions**

Covid-19 is, unsurprisingly, a significant disruptive factor behind many of the changes currently impacting the intermediary partners. Intermediaries are pausing long-term strategies in favor of short-term responses to a rapidly shifting context, economic hardship, and increased uncertainty. Covid-19 specific short-term responses that intermediaries are exploring include rent subsidies for artists, thinking about what safe gathering spaces to participate in the arts and culture will look like, surveying artists and collecting new data related to Covid-19, and exploring the creation of a Works Progress Administration (WPA) style program for culture workers. For intermediaries that offer direct services, some moved in-person programs online. For example, teaching artists created activity bags for kids and then taught the activities through weekly Zoom calls.

Intermediaries are taking on new roles and starting new programs in response to Covid-19. They more frequently find themselves playing the role of “navigator,” first by undertaking rapid needs assessments and then by helping artists and organizations connect to resources and support and sharing information on protocols for re-opening safely.

*“[After Covid-19 hit] we partnered with six artists who then partnered with two of our larger local arts organizations to activate and get 800 grab-and-go bags [of arts materials] to our Boys and Girls Clubs with curated activities [guided by] weekly Zoom lessons.”*

– Intermediary Partner

Individual artists, not just intermediaries, are also taking on new types of work during Covid-19. Artists themselves are setting up listservs for sharing resources, hosting webinars and trainings on how to apply for funding and organizing with the arts community to advocate for resources.

*“I started this program called Connecting Communities with Funders. This was a free opportunity for community artists, BIPOC dancers, artists rooted in culturally-based dance forms and culturally-based art forms. Seventy-eight people registered for the series, mostly people who have never attended a grant outreach program, never attended grants training programs, never applied for grants. They have never even heard of a lot of these foundations. Because I’ve been in the community for 15 years, I’ve been on the ground... I know these people because I am these people.”*

– Artist



## Reckoning with Racial Inequity

Efforts to address racial injustice and inequity in the arts sector didn't begin in 2020, but they did find a new urgency. This urgency was driven at a national level by social protest and outrage over the murders of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor. It was escalated by the tepid immediate response to those events by major arts institutions who seemed to issue “boilerplate” responses without a serious examination of their own role in perpetuating systemic racism.<sup>7</sup>

In response, artists shared their experiences of racism and demanded changes. In June 2020, a collective of BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) theatremakers wrote and published the “[Open-Letter to White American Theater](#).” This statement, issued jointly by over 300 BIPOC theatremakers and accompanied by a petition of support with over 50,000 signatories, provides testimony about the lived experience of racism and articulates a set of demands to transform the work environment in the sector. Also in June of 2020, Bay Area theatremakers published the “[Living Document of BIPOC Experiences in Bay Area Theater Companies](#).” This document provides testimony of experiences of racism in regional theatre, opera, music, and dance companies and offers an equity action plan. These advocacy efforts are of historical significance and were important contextual factors influencing the intermediary partners in 2020. For instance, Theater Bay Area hosted a gathering via Zoom to discuss the Living Document and anti-blackness in Bay Area theaters. The documents, and their demands, were also top of mind during most interviews and focus group discussions. During these discussions, intermediary partners described making the following changes in response to the demands described in the documents: hosting or participating in community conversations on anti-racism,<sup>8</sup> conducting an internal equity audit or assessment, forming an internal equity council, exploring alternative staffing structures, increasing outreach and support to Black-led organizations, and changing the language used by the intermediary—specifically, “creative activity” vs. “new/making work”—to shift the value to the artist rather than the product.

## A Greater Orientation to Power Sharing

During the past decade, perhaps in response to rising inequity or out of frustration with top-down models of funding and working for change, demands and expectations for power sharing have quickened throughout the nonprofit and philanthropic sector.<sup>9</sup> Study participants are aware of this, with some intermediaries taking intentional steps to advocate for this kind of change and to attenuate power differentials within their own organizations. A sensitivity to language, leadership and representation are palpable in intermediaries' discussions related to arts, culture, and community—how things are said, who says them, and who is not showing up in conversations and institutional leadership roles. This context is important for understanding the findings that follow. The push for a greater orientation to power sharing and a more critical examination of philanthropy's role in perpetuating inequity<sup>10</sup> is occurring in real-time and influencing and being influenced by arts and culture funders and grantees. This influence shows up in how intermediaries describe their work and the roles they play in the arts ecosystem.

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<sup>7</sup> McHenry, J. (2020, June 3). Black theatre workers call out racism on Broadway. *Vulture*. Vox Media. <https://www.vulture.com/2020/06/black-theater-workers-call-out-racism-on-broadway.html>

<sup>8</sup> These include a caucus on building an anti-racist organization, town halls on anti-racism work, a forum on centering the voices of traditional artists, participating in a participatory budgeting process for the City of LA, a conversation on the BIPOC pipeline in the performing arts. In addition to these community conversations, one intermediary also reported beginning weekly staff discussions on anti-racism.

<sup>9</sup> See, for instance, Lewis, J. (2020, February 26). How can philanthropy build, share, and wield power to create a more equitable world? National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy. <https://www.ncrp.org/2020/02/how-can-philanthropy-build-share-and-wield-power-to-create-a-more-equitable-world.html> or Wong, N. & McGrath, A. (2020, November 20). Building a trust-based philanthropy to shift power back to communities. Stanford Social Innovation Review. [https://ssir.org/articles/entry/building\\_a\\_trust\\_based\\_philanthropy\\_to\\_shift\\_power\\_back\\_to\\_communities](https://ssir.org/articles/entry/building_a_trust_based_philanthropy_to_shift_power_back_to_communities)

<sup>10</sup> See, for instance, Manriquez Wrenn, C. and Brancaccio, D. (2019, Dec 3). Changing the field of philanthropy. Marketplace. <https://www.marketplace.org/2019/12/03/changing-philanthropy-decolonize-wealth/>

# Alignment with the 2020 Performing Arts Framework

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A more formative part of this evaluation was an exploration of the potential for alignment between the work that intermediary partners do, and the Performing Arts Program Framework adopted in 2020. This evaluation required a close analysis of the descriptive findings above and input from the intermediary partners themselves (through focus groups and a participatory analysis session), artists who receive support from the intermediary partners (through interviews), and the Performing Arts team at the Hewlett Foundation (through our meetings with them and their participation in the data analysis session).

A distinction must also be made between work that intermediaries completed during the evaluation period under Hewlett's prior program strategy, and the future contributions intermediary organizations could make to the more vibrant Bay Area arts ecosystem aspired to under the 2020 Framework. Looking from both angles, we identified a set of themes and salient trends in the data, which point to the most promising alignment among intermediary practices, roles, and functions and each of the areas of the Framework. These themes are then followed by a presentation of supportive findings that describe intermediary experiences in more detail.

## COMMUNITIES

*In what ways can intermediaries expand and sustain opportunities to develop and experience artistic and cultural practices across Bay Area communities?*

The current group of intermediary partners recognize the diversity of the Bay Area as a boon to the arts and are interested in **cultivating and fostering a robust, diverse arts ecosystem**. Supporting the arts in diverse communities goes beyond one-on-one relationship-building work. It ultimately requires intermediary partners who can build in mechanisms that increase their **accountability**, for the funding or programming they offer, to those communities. It also requires intermediaries to be responsive to those communities and to have the capacity of **adaptability** to contextual factors or feedback from their communities, which is also a way of further demonstrating accountability in action.

It is important to note that communities are never monoliths. Indeed, both intermediary partners and artists reflected to us that they experience blurriness of boundaries between "artist," "community," and "audience" when they describe their work<sup>11</sup>. With the Framework in mind, expanding community-based arts practice will require embracing this blurriness.

***"I have a hard time thinking about them as an audience; [the work is] so collaborative."***

– Artist

***"Since we work in folk life, the idea of community is inherent to the definition of art and artists and culture-bearers. It's really the idea that any group of people who share at least one thing in common could be a community and that the art and culture shared within that group is an expression of that community's values and standards of beauty."***

– Intermediary Partner

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<sup>11</sup> This perhaps reflects a shift of the last two decades towards "social practice art." Social practice art emphasizes art making processes that focus on the inclusive process of community engagement and co-creation instead of a finished object or product. This also marks a return to some traditional and folk practices that did not historically create sharp delineations between "artists," "audiences," and "communities."

***“I think that a lot of the folks in our community who are creating art don’t see themselves as artists. One example is, there is a mom who’s lived in Fruitvale forever, and she does all of the paper flowers for all of the street poles in Fruitvale for Día de Los Muertos and other occasions. She just does it. She does not see herself as an artist, but she is bringing art to that whole community. She is bringing culture to that whole community, and they’re seeing themselves reflected in the art all around them.”***

– Arts Organization

## Supportive Findings

Several intermediaries described intentional efforts to link together more artists and communities. For example, by gathering grantees regularly for networking and professional development opportunities, making introductions for artists to other funders and resources, hosting conferences for knowledge sharing, or helping artists gain more exposure through things like press and virtual bulletin boards.

In the specific context of 2020, intermediaries also reported adapting their offerings to meet community needs. Some of the ways they did this were by expediting grant funding or releasing grant requirements, extending deadlines, setting up emergency response funds, creating a Covid-19-specific loan product with a low interest rate, and, for services to the sector that came with a fee, moving to a pay-what-you-can pricing structure.

As demands within the Bay Area arts ecosystem for stronger anti-racism actions have grown, intermediaries also demonstrate their accountability to Bay Area communities and that arts ecosystem by increasing their focus on support for artists of color, especially Black, Indigenous, and Latinx artists. They also note and desire to address past and current inequities in the availability of funding for artists with disabilities and low-income, rural, and non-English speaking artists.

At the same time, intermediary partners are realistic about the work still required to dismantle practices of white supremacy in the arts and within arts funding. They describe “time” and “space” barriers to doing this work. The time to invest in the relationship-building work they see as central to supporting arts in communities, and access to more affordable physical spaces for arts to occur within communities. They also note the metaphorical “space” allowed by the flexibility of unrestricted funding and, as grantees themselves, seek out flexible funding structures. Finally, they echo again the need to move supports to the arts in communities beyond the 501c3 model, which may not be how community-based artists organize themselves, especially in marginalized communities.



Photos by Juan Ocampo, courtesy of Los Lupeños de San José

***“We, as funders, have built these mechanisms that box people out and say, ‘Well, your budget doesn’t look like this. We don’t believe you can fundraise to that degree because***

*you haven't received those grants in the past.' Well, there's a racist construct that that's built on, and that is why they haven't received those grants in the past."*

– Intermediary Partner

*"I've noticed that a lot of the funds or grant opportunities that I've seen are just one-year—smaller grants for projects. And I see a lot of multi-year grants for community organizing, which also makes sense because policy and systems-change work takes time. So that makes sense. But a question I have is, what could multi-year support for arts-based organizations look like, and how can that really help us push ourselves to create new work that also supports the social and systems change that our communities want to see?"*

– Artist

## ARTISTS

*What works in intermediaries' efforts to provide relevant, responsive, and equitable access to services, networks, and supports for artists throughout the region?*



Photo by Christine Jade, courtesy of Vân-Anh Võ

As we saw in the 2015–19 data, intermediary partners built and operated the infrastructure that enabled dozens of large grants to be transformed into thousands of smaller grants to artists and community arts groups. When foundation grants are inaccessible and government-backed supports for the arts are limited, the infrastructure that intermediary partners offer becomes a critical web of support, particularly for community-based arts and culture. During a pandemic, with public health restrictions prohibiting live performances, this web becomes a safety net.

A clear theme within the findings is that this infrastructure works most smoothly—intermediary partners provide the most relevant supports to artists—when they **nurture strong relationships** with those artists and their communities. Intermediaries are most valued by artists when they demonstrate care and attention to the relationships that they hold with grant applicants and recipients.

Providing responsive and more equitable access to their grants, supports, and networks is best understood as a more pronounced orientation toward **inclusivity** within the arts and culture sector. In our use of this term, inclusivity is intermediary capacity to break down the power dynamics that accompany grant-giving and to allow a flexibility in their administrative practices that is in service of reaching those artists who face greater systemic barriers to accessing their supports.

### Supportive Findings

Relationships and relationship-building is, from both the intermediaries' and the artists' perspectives, the foundation to all other work done and the key to maintaining responsiveness. In shorthand, this was described as using a "people first" rather than a "institution first" lens. In practice, this looks like taking the time to walk an artist through the application process, attending a grant recipients' performance, or proactively making an introduction between an artist and a prospective collaborator or funder. It does not mean nurturing such a



closely-knit “inner circle” that the intermediary could become closed to new voices or emerging artists. It can also be seen when intermediaries report having frequent, routine, one-on-one communications with grantees, when they intentionally open spaces for community conversations, and when they proactively conduct outreach to artists and communities. For example, a good practice shared by some intermediaries is to begin conversations with prospective grantees before they even apply. Artists also note that they appreciate candid and constructive feedback on their applications (and conversely, that vague declines are unhelpful). An example of opening a space for conversations that build relationships is an intermediary partner who created a multi-stakeholder roundtable on the high cost of real estate and the Oakland arts ecosystem.

When intermediaries rely on practices that reinforce top-down power dynamics among artists and arts organizations and funders, they diminish inclusiveness. Artists described practices that increased structural barriers to accessing support as demoralizing and limiting of the potential for new relationships to develop within the arts ecosystem. These practices, as described by artists, include:

- Making overly-restricted grants
- Failing to understand and invest in capacity building
- When providing capacity-building support to a community-based arts organization, failing to hire a capacity-building consultant that is culturally competent and acceptable to the community
- Distributing funding through criteria based solely on Western definitions of arts/art genres
- Tying grant size solely to organizational budget (rather than stated need, for example), such as “only giving grants that are no more than X percentage of an organization’s budget,” practice that artists perceive as unfairly favoring higher-budget arts organizations
- Using lengthy or complicated grant application forms

Overall, artists worry that funder practices, including those used by intermediaries, privilege those who can employ professional grant writers and make it harder for arts funding to be inclusive of emerging artists and arts groups.

Conversely, when intermediaries are doing their work with greater inclusivity, they are both better partners to artists. These practices make the intermediary more accessible to artists. “A positive stance is an open one,” according to intermediaries—openness to difficult conversations and openness to not setting the agenda for those conversations. For example, one intermediary shared that they had experimented with having a town hall-style meeting with grantees with no agenda, just space for community leaders and organizations to share what was on their mind.

Other structural practices that artists favor when intermediaries use them to support inclusion include:

- Providing free workshops for anyone who wants to learn about applying for a grant
- Making application forms easy to complete

***“You have two ears; you have one mouth. You have to work twice as hard to listen as to talk. So it requires a way of being a vessel that requires listening and being in service, and to continue to be in service at this incredible time where we can shift and share power in ways that we have been talking about for a long, long time, and it’s in our hands.”***

– Intermediary Partner

***“They (the intermediary partner) understand what it takes to be in the trenches, and they know that their role is to support that, but that we are in this together, and they make it really clear that they have expectations of us, too. We need to contribute to their cause as well, so I think it’s a good relationship.”***

– Artist

- Reducing or eliminating written grant report requirements; for example, by replacing them with a meeting that brings the funders and grantee partners together for a collective stock-taking and reflection session
- Offering flexibility on reporting deadlines and requirements

***“In native culture communities, when there is loss, everything stops for upwards of a year or longer. So if an artist or culture bearer has a death in their community, the project stops. And we want to support that 110%.”***

– Intermediary Partner

***“We should not be having to spend 15 hours writing a proposal that is for \$5,000. And then only 10 people get it. \$5,000? Those kinds of things are nuts.”***

– Artist

For some intermediaries, practicing inclusivity has also meant shifting the language they use on a day-to-day basis to eliminate embedded hierarchies. These intermediaries report, for example, using the term “colleague” rather than “beneficiary” to describe a grantee. Instead of using terms such as “reporting” and “evaluation,” they are talking about “learning with” their colleagues or partners.

***“Rather than just sending a funder a report and saying, ‘here are the grant outcomes,’ let’s get the funders, and their grantee partners in a room and let’s do a collective meaning-making session. It’s not good enough that funders are simply having this conversation with themselves. As people [who] hold the power and money, you need to be in the room to hear and listen.”***

– Intermediary Partner

These calls for shifts in grantmaking practices by artists and intermediaries alike echo a broader movement that has been building within philanthropy for some time and that pushes for greater trust in grantees and more flexible support for their work (see discussion of power sharing above).

## Relevant Supports at Different stages of Artist’s Careers

Though most of our findings are consistent across artists at all stages of life, we did find Bay Area artists face different obstacles and look for different kinds of support from the intermediary partners at different stages in their careers.

**Early Career & Getting Established.** The cost of living and creating in the Bay Area especially impacts young artists. Artists in this phase (which, it should be noted, did not correspond to age, as some began their careers later in life) especially sought more support from intermediaries with entry into professional networks and connections to performance spaces.

**The Intermediate Stage/Scaling.** Artists and creative organizations can struggle when they no longer qualify for “emerging artist” grants but have not quite reached the professional or organizational stability necessary to compete with well-known institutions for larger grants. Artists may find fewer resources to help hone their skills once they are no longer considered newcomers. Without support at this point, creative organizations can fail as their DIY ethos struggles to address staff turnover, rent increases, or audience shifts.

**The Big Break.** Once artists achieve wider recognition, they may wish to pursue opportunities on a national or global scale. Several interviewees specifically noted a gap in support for artists stepping up to the national stage.

**Retirement (or lack thereof).** Having the financial stability to scale back commitments as they age felt out of reach to some artist interviewees. Artists at this phase both have much to offer (they can be tapped by intermediaries to mentor or network with younger artists) and need retirement support. One intermediary specifically provided coaching for seasoned arts leaders contemplating retirement which was deemed helpful by artists.



While many intermediaries and artists alike focused on the quality of practice in terms of *ways of working*, the artists we interviewed did have specific feedback on types of supports that they want to see more. Two types of desired supports not currently offered that were most frequently requested by artists were:

1. Help navigating the ways that technology is changing the arts (everything from how to select the right electronic ticketing platform to support with streaming work and offering online classes during the pandemic).
2. Help navigating human resources challenges and best practices, especially for small arts groups not yet large enough to hire in-house human resources staff.

## YOUTH

*How can intermediaries work with the Performing Arts Program to expand and sustain equitable access to high-quality arts education opportunities?*

Organizations that provide re-grants or non-financial supports to youth artists or arts educators are a minority of the intermediary partners included in this study. The insights we gleaned from speaking with them and with arts educators themselves are also synthesized within the overall discussion of findings relevant to “artists” and “communities” above. However, there are also some unique roles in which intermediary partners align with the Youth strategy of the Framework.

First, intermediaries role as advocates can have a specific benefit to efforts to advance public sector support for arts education. A few intermediaries have strong ties to government agencies and are positioned to be strong advocates for the arts in schools. Several intermediaries also award funding to artists who work with youth in out-of-school settings (for instance, during after-school time or by working with youth who are incarcerated). This indicates a specific capacity to extend access to arts education beyond the Bay Area’s K-12 schools.

### Supportive Findings

Intermediary partners reported that 17% of grant recipient organizations and 8% of individuals have youth (during the 2015–19 period), were youth (younger than age 18), or served youth as their primary audience. Additionally, seven intermediary partners reported providing professional development supports to arts educators that work primarily with youth. Work with youth supported by the intermediary partners did include school-based arts education, but went beyond the classroom, extending to youth orchestras, out-of-school dance groups, arts workshops within juvenile detention facilities, and the online space through the creation of video content for children. This speaks to the value of incorporating intermediary partners who can support youth engagement beyond the classroom within the overall intermediary strategy and the potential that has to extend to other classroom-based arts education efforts supported by the Program.

Youth benefited from but also shaped offerings. One intermediary convened the National Youth Artist Network, noting, “We had an entire young creative network that was just for young artists or young creatives under the age of 21. And it was a space led by them and for them only.”

Ultimately, some intermediary partners also help expand the reach of grantmaking for arts education and provide support services, such as professional development, that may complement the Performing Arts Program’s direct grantmaking in this area.

***“I am an educator at a large public middle school in San Rafael. In San Rafael, even though we’re in a very affluent county, we also have a lot of low-income neighborhoods. Our middle school has pretty much every strata of socio-economic life.*”**

*About [10] years ago now, I took over an old wood shop and transformed it into a maker-space under a broad umbrella that can pull in things as technical as electronics and robotics and coding, or as informal as crafting and pure art projects. We have formal classes we teach. We have informal clubs that have drop-in sessions. I would say the vast majority of the 1,400 students that come through our school each year have some experience in our program here.”*

– Arts Educator

*“I would love for young people to understand how to be supported as artists... I wish, when I was younger, that I had just accepted ‘I’m an artist’ and moved on to, ‘So now, what do I do to find support? Who are the people who can mentor me? What kind of financial decisions can I make?’ I didn’t know enough about those types of things when I was young... So now when I speak to young people, I say, ‘yeah, I do get paid to come in here.’ Sometimes the kids at juvenile hall think I volunteer. I explain to them that I get paid and talk to them about being a working artist. Some of them talk about wanting to be rappers, and so then I’ll talk to them about my experience in the music industry... I talk to them about what that means... So the world that I dream of would be one where young people are really encouraged.”*

– Arts Educator

## ADVOCACY & INFRASTRUCTURE

*What effective advocacy and infrastructure supports might intermediaries provide to help further sustain a vibrant and equitable arts ecosystem?*

Intermediary partners see themselves as an essential part of the infrastructure that supports the arts and culture ecosystem in the Bay Area. They do this by playing a variety of roles that go far beyond “re-granting,” which is the role they are most frequently assigned. Some of these are formal services that intermediaries offer alongside of, or instead of, financial grants. Others, more nuanced and informally played, are a set of practices that intermediaries bring to their day-to-day work, but which can go unrecognized or unformalized, even within the intermediary’s organizational structure.

*“Quit looking at intermediaries like we are doing the stuff that you can’t do, which is true. And instead look at us as a major part of an infrastructure, an entire support system...”*

– Intermediary Partner

### Accountability Infrastructure

Intermediaries also support the Performing Arts Framework by creating mechanisms and practices to increase the accountability of funds provided to the priorities and interests of artists and communities.

The mechanisms by which they do this range from proactive solicitation of input to more participatory grantmaking processes in which artists and communities actively participate in grant review and decision-making. One intermediary partner, for instance, shared a process for having a committee of cultural practitioners from around the state review and award grants. Inviting artists to serve on the Board of Directors of the intermediary would be a further opportunity to build-in decision-making accountability to artists.

## Supportive Findings

We categorized the “less seen” roles that intermediaries play as advocate, amplifier, network builder, knowledge broker, fundraiser, and community problem-solver.

Intermediaries played the role of **advocate** when, for instance, they represented grantee needs to funders, including the Foundation. Intermediaries reported speaking on behalf of grantees with funders to request that they waive certain grant requirements in response to Covid-19, waive matching grant requirements, convert restricted funding to unrestricted support, or enable the use of re-granting dollars for emergency funds. Some also advocate for the arts with government. For instance, by building public support for the arts, directly advocating around policies that impact artists, or by working with city councils and school districts to craft arts or arts education master plans.

Intermediaries played the role of **amplifier** when they actively promoted their sub-grantees or worked to amplify the messages created by those organizations. For example, they reported showcasing grantees at presentations and on their website, producing a poster series for a grantee, adding opportunities to support local artists to their newsletters, and centering the voices of artists in their own communications.



Intermediaries are connected to other funders and donors, arts organizations, schools, artists, and communities. Leveraging this multiplicity of connections, intermediaries are active in **building networks** and see themselves as the “glue” of the arts world and an important part of arts infrastructure. For example, they proactively engage in networking to broaden their constituency base, connect artists to one another and to other resources, intentionally support collaborations between artists and organizations, and foster knowledge sharing and networking among artists via conferences and formal and informal networks (e.g., the National Young Artist Youth Network).

Intermediaries have their eyes and ears on the ground and often gather and synthesize data from and about artists for funders and the arts community. When they do this, they act as a kind of **knowledge broker**. For example, one intermediary reported conducting a landscape study on how arts organizations can access government support and philanthropic resources with a focus on LGBT and POC communities. Another developed a cultural asset-mapping methodology. A third created a self-assessment tool for arts education organizations.

Intermediaries act as **fundraisers (for artists and arts groups)** when they use their platform to raise additional funds for sub-grantees, regardless of whether those funds might pass through their coffers. This fundraising is vital to expanding support for artists and included pitching sub-grantees to internal donor-advised fund holders,

other institutional donors, and other individual donors, creating a platform for artists to fundraise on, and directly soliciting additional donations for artists via their own networks. At least one endowed intermediary partner also reported using funding from their own corpus to add to the funding provided originally by the Hewlett Foundation.

The least formalized and most often unrecognized role is what might be called a **community problem solver**. This can involve, but goes beyond, some of the roles already mentioned above to encompass ways in which the intermediary partners report taking thorny problems facing the arts and the communities in which they work. Examples of this included efforts to problem-solve with arts organizations around challenges it faces as a labor force, such as issues raised by AB5.<sup>12</sup> In another example, an intermediary helped a community figure out how to begin offering teaching artist residencies in schools. Others became hubs for resources and information after the disasters of wildfires and Covid-19.

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<sup>12</sup> California Assembly Bill 5, or AB5, in a nutshell, expands the scope of workers that are classified as employees and not as contractors. Californians for the Arts provides analysis of AB5, the follow-up legislation AB2257, and related analysis and resources on their website here: <https://www.californiansforthearts.org/ab-5>

# Summary of Recommendations

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As the Foundation seeks to implement the Framework, we highlight some opportunities to strengthen tactics and work towards its strategic goals based on our analyses.

## FOR THE HEWLETT FOUNDATION

1. Retain the tactic of working with intermediary partners to support implementation of the refreshed Framework. This evaluation has identified several important strengths of intermediary partners that benefit the Framework's implementation. In particular, these are their technical capacity to deliver grants beyond 501c3 recipients; their positioning within the ecosystem which leads them to play multiple roles including as advocates, fundraisers, and network and knowledge builders for the arts; their reach to arts educators working with youth both within and beyond K-12 schools (which may complement the Foundation's direct grantmaking within its Youth strategy); and the multiplicity of relationships they hold, which inclines them to be more responsive and adaptive to communities.
2. Define the Program's priority communities in the Bay Area. A central challenge to understanding the extent to which the Performing Arts Program can and does reach and engage diverse Bay Area communities is that there is yet no clear definition of the priority communities. Many of these are defined by race and ethnicity, but to no extent are these the only considerations. Priority communities do not exclude other communities, but rather take a central importance and role in determining intermediary readiness to support the strategies, monitoring successes and challenges implementing the refreshed Framework, and approaches to community engagement more broadly.
3. When defining priority communities, consider the implications of the expansive and comfortably messy definitions of "artist," "audience," and "community" within the Framework. For both artists and intermediaries, the boundaries between how and to whom they apply the terms "artist," "audience," or "community" are fuzzy ones, and many see a hefty degree of overlap between these definitions. That may make them difficult terms to build strategic programmatic areas around. If it is important to have specific focus areas within the Framework, consider more bounded ways to define those areas—or plan for and appreciate the messiness of the boundaries.
4. Select intermediaries that, as a cohort, demonstrate success or a high degree of promise for relationship-building and engaging priority communities. The cohort level is also the place to consider whether, across the collective supports provided by multiple intermediaries, there is an adequate range in offerings to reach artists at different phases of their careers and artists who receive funding in different ways (e.g., as self-employed individuals, as 501c3s, as informal community groups, or as small businesses).
5. Ensure that the Framework's intermediary partners are helping to build more expansive and enriching relationships within the arts ecosystem, responsively and equitably engaging communities, with special attention to communities that may face greater barriers to accessing financial support for their arts and culture organizations. We designed a rubric for gauging the capacities of intermediaries that hold the most promise for meeting this charge, advancing both the Framework and the Program's support of artists, audiences, and others in your priority communities (see Appendix B).
6. Without demographic data about the artists supported by intermediary partners, it will be difficult to accurately understand whether historical inequities in funding persist. We recommend that the Foundation and its intermediary partners develop a consensus that specifies what demographic data will



be collected and aggregated. This shared commitment will help the Foundation to understand if it is reaching its priority communities and may also allow intermediary partners to monitor progress on related goals of their own.

7. Perhaps more than other fields, arts and culture is an especially diverse ecosystem in terms of the variety of institutions and entities that are engaged. School districts, juvenile detention facilities, local banks, city planning offices, cafes, restaurants, city parks, night clubs, and more are all engaged by artists. Engage intermediary partners that also hold relationships with these “non-traditional allies” to the arts.

## FOR INTERMEDIARIES:

1. Continue to define and to be transparent about the priority communities for your grants or non-financial supports and about the decision-making process.<sup>13</sup>
2. Continue to dismantle funding practices that have privileged white and/or higher-socio-economic status artists in grant application and award processes. Every organization is starting from a different place when it comes to this work and there is knowledge on how to do this that intermediary partners already hold. For intermediaries that engage in grantmaking, additional resources include the publication [Grantmaking with a Racial Justice Lens](#) by Rinku Sen and Lori Villarosa and the “[Checklist of Potential Actions for Incorporating DEI in your Grantmaking Practice](#)” created by Nancy Chan and Pamela Fischer as just two places to start for guidance on doing the practice of grantmaking in an anti-racist way, whether or not the grants are explicitly focused on racial justice.
3. Improve or develop ways of consistently tracking relevant demographic data to ensure that grants and services are not disproportionately benefitting white artists or communities, given the racial and ethnic diversity of the Bay Area.
4. Keep funding beyond the 501c3. One of an intermediary’s “super-powers,” especially for those that are themselves public nonprofits, is the bureaucratic capacity to grant beyond 501c3 recipients with greater ease. Given the variety of forms that emerging arts organizations take (individuals, groups, nonprofits, small businesses, etc.), intermediaries can be especially important channels for supporting the arts in community.
5. Where possible, increase the size of grants and the availability of multi-year support for artists and arts organizations. In interviews, artists frequently expressed frustration with the small size of grants relative to the full cost of producing arts and cultural work.

## CONCLUSION

While this evaluation set out to examine a single set of grants to a group of intermediaries, it was conducted in the broader context, that of the devastation that the Covid-19 pandemic has wreaked on the arts. The New York Times recently reported: “professional creative artists are facing unemployment at rates well above the national average—more than 52% of actors and 55% of dancers were out of work in the third quarter of the year, at a time when the national unemployment rate was 8.5%.”<sup>14</sup> In the Bay Area, this wave of closures and layoffs crashed amid a sea already fraught with the perils of gentrification, a high cost of living, increased wildfires due to climate change, growing economic inequality, and a housing crunch.

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<sup>13</sup> For example, the California Native Cultures Fund uses the “Grants” page of its website to share who its grants are for, who the decision-makers are, and how the decision-making process works: <https://www.hafoundation.org/Grantseekers/Native-Cultures-Fund/Grants>

<sup>14</sup> Farago, J. (2021, January 17). What we owe the arts. *The New York Times*.



This evaluation identified a set of capacities that, when held by intermediary partners, align them strongly with the Program’s Framework. Intermediary partners have the potential to, and many succeed in, enriching arts and culture in the Bay Area further through the relationships they build, the collaborations they broker, and their awareness of and connections to the diverse array of entities that influence the health of the sector, from the banks that offer loans to emerging theatre groups, to the government agencies that can be brought to the table, to the local cafes that host independent musicians’ performances.

In such a challenging context, the intermediary strategy is a promising, perhaps essential, pathway to supporting the arts, and, more importantly, the people who make up the arts and culture sector. This is not to say that intermediaries themselves don’t have work to do. While it is likely that some progress is occurring, and that even the 2020 data would show more diversity than the 2015–19 data, intermediaries must escalate their efforts to uproot systemic racism and reach more artists of color.

Despite the challenges of the past year, the stories we heard in the context of this evaluation illuminated the ways in which the arts have sustained and supported our communities during the pandemic. We watched video of children performing the *folklorico* they were learning, now from home; we heard about dance classes being offered online to a now international audience; we learned about online support groups starting up and about arts classes for families offered over Facebook Live. Much of this work was made possible because of support that artists received via the intermediary partners.

Investments in intermediary partners, especially during the next few years of recovery, are well-aligned with the overall work of the Performing Arts Program. Within challenging contexts, intermediary partners, especially those that are grounded in and responsive to artists and their communities, are well positioned to weave a web of support for the arts in the Bay Area.

# Appendix A: Intermediary Partners & Interviewees

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Informing Change would like to acknowledge and thank the intermediary partners of the Hewlett Foundation who contributed to this report by sharing their data and participating in focus groups. We would also like to express our deep appreciation to the artists, art educators and administrators, and community leaders in the Bay Area who participated in our interviews.

### Intermediary Partners

- Akonadi Foundation, Beloved Community Fund
- Alliance for California Traditional Arts, Living Cultures Program
- Arts Council for Monterey County, Community Arts Program
- Arts Council Napa Valley
- Arts Council Santa Cruz County
- Center for Cultural Innovation
- Community Arts Stabilization Trust
- Community Initiatives, Teaching Artists Guild
- Community Vision Capital & Consulting
- Creative Capital Foundation
- Dancers Group
- East Bay Community Foundation, East Bay Fund for Artists
- Horizons Foundation, Community Issues Program
- Humboldt Area Foundation, Native Cultures Fund
- InterMusic SF
- Marin County Office of Education, Teaching in and Through the Arts
- National Guild for Community Arts Education
- Nonprofit Technology Network
- Northern California Grantmakers, Arts Loan Fund
- Silicon Valley Creates
- Sonoma County Economic Development Board, Creative Sonoma
- Theatre Bay Area
- Third Sector New England
- Wallace Alexander Gerbode Foundation
- Walter and Elise Haas Fund, Creative Work Fund
- Zellerbach Family Foundation, Community Arts Program

### Interviewees

- Adam Singer, Davidson Middle School
- Angela Wellman, Oakland Public Conservatory
- Angelica Medina & Jahaira Fajardo, In Lak'ech Dance Academy
- Anne Huang, World Arts West
- Ariel Luckey, Rematriate the Land, Sogorea Te' Land Trust
- Argo Thompson, Left Edge Theatre
- Bhumi Patel, writer, dancer, choreographer, educator

- Devi Peacock, Peacock Rebellion
- Dillon Delvo, Little Manila Rising
- Eki Shola Abrams, musician
- Jacob Yarrow, Green Music Center
- Jeanette Harrison, Alter Theater
- Joy Tang, Destiny Art Center
- Judith Smith, AXIS Dance Company
- Kaitlin McGaw, Alphabet Rockers
- Leilani Salvador-Jones, BAY-Peace
- Lisa Mezzacappa, Bassist, composer, ensemble leader
- Maddy Clifford, writer, musician, and educator
- Maritza Martinez, Somos Familia
- Michael Moran, Oakland Theater Project
- Mina Morita, Crowded Fire
- Pat Wayne, CREATE CA
- Rhodessa Jones, Cultural Odyssey
- Roberto Bedoya, Cultural Affairs, City of Oakland
- Sharon Bridgforth, writer and performing artist
- Tara Malik, RYSE Center
- Tony Ferrigno, Cashion Cultural Legacy and Los Lupeños de San José
- Vanessa Sanchez, dancer, choreographer, educator
- Wanda Ravernell, Omnira Institute

## Appendix B: Intermediary Capacities for Advancing the Framework

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The overall findings point to shifting expectations among intermediaries, artists, and diverse communities—by race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, immigration status—for more enriching and expansive relationships within the arts ecosystem. The extent to which any intermediary engages with one or more of the Hewlett **priority communities** should therefore be a primary consideration moving forward, given that relationships will play a significant role in advancing the Program’s refreshed Performing Arts Framework. Evaluation findings also support and affirm the salience of more relational and direct roles among intermediary organization staff and the artists and communities they impact.

Taken together, these expectations for more enriching and expansive relationships prompted a closer analysis of the overall report findings, which yielded five broad intermediary capacities that Hewlett should consider when working with intermediary partners under the new Framework. The capacities orient towards greater support for artistic and cultural vibrancy, within a more artist-centered and community determined Bay Area arts ecosystem:

1. **Depth of relationships:** The extent to which an intermediary relates to artists, organizational leaders, and community members in ways that foster relationships that go beyond mere transactional interactions.
2. **Adaptability and responsiveness to change:** The extent to which an intermediary is willing and able to modify, adjust, and change their approach or type of support in response to both anticipated and unanticipated internal or external shocks to the Bay Area’s arts ecosystem.
3. **Inclusivity, with cultural competency:** The extent to which an intermediary recognizes and mitigates the power dynamics that accompany grant-giving and affirms and ushers artists and culture workers from a range of backgrounds toward greater support and visibility within the Bay Area’s arts ecosystem.
4. **Cultivating and fostering a robust, diverse arts ecosystem:** The extent to which an intermediary cultivates and fosters a more eclectic and robust Bay Area arts ecosystem through advocacy, visionary leadership, and mutual partnerships that elevate artists and cultural workers from more diverse communities.
5. **Accountability to artists, communities, and youth:** The extent to which an intermediary enables its own priorities and offerings to be shaped by the needs and priorities of artists, communities, and youth.

A rubric was designed and organized around these five broad capacities to help Hewlett identify the range of attributes—practices, roles, and functions—that offer the most promise for advancing the refreshed Performing Arts Framework. The rubric should be applied as a tool to guide good thinking about the type of intermediary attributes that show the most promise for enhancing the arts ecosystem in ways that Hewlett desires, and that advances the goals of the refresh Framework.

The Program team should use the rubric to first build internal Program sensitivity for identifying desired capacities in current and future intermediary partners. Conversations with current intermediary partners would offer rich opportunities for mutual exploration and discussion of the rubric capacities. Moving from left to right, attributes of each capacity are organized by the degree to which they allow for more expansive and enriching intermediary-grantee relationships—a hallmark of the overall findings. Seen as a continuum of even greater possibilities, intermediaries may also use the rubric to reflect upon their approach and orientation toward enriching and expanding the Bay Area arts ecosystem. Subsequent uses of the rubric could then include conversations with future intermediary partners to gauge and calibrate their contributions to advancing the Framework.

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CAPACITIES			Fully embedded practice and/or leading the field
	Dabbling	Making it a habit	
<b>Depth of relationships</b>	Staff of the intermediary hold relationships with grantees, making time for them when asked.	Staff are routinely checking in with grantees. They may attend performances; help artists build audiences or link artists to new communities they desire to impact and engage.	There is a mutual sense of commitment between the intermediary and supported artists and communities; staff listens to artists and communities, mutually shares ideas and insights related to artistic and cultural work(s); becomes creative partners with artists, communities, and arts organizations.
<b>Adaptability and responsiveness to change</b>	Flexes administrative rules and procedures in select situations and times of crisis to better support artists and communities (e.g., suspending some requirements as part of Covid-19 response).	Makes a broad, ongoing effort to make programs accessible and responsive to different communities (e.g., by offering application forms or programs in multiple languages); recognizes changing needs for artists at various stages of their career and adjusts supports accordingly.	Pivots and adapts to ecosystem changes; Recognizes and responds to social movements and societal shifts in the desire for greater power sharing through changes in programming, leadership support or decision-making practices.
<b>Inclusivity, with cultural competency</b>	Has identified and is working to change internal practices that may perpetuate, even unintentionally, systemic inequities in arts and culture funding (e.g., shares information that demystifies grantmaking).	Demonstrates awareness of the varying contexts in which artists work and within which communities experience arts and culture. Adapts practices to ensure it is a welcoming institution for all artists and communities.	Is actively working to end systemic inequities in the sector, beyond its own internal practice (e.g., opens doors for BIPOC artists, culture workers, and others who may have faced historical barriers, to access greater funding and opportunities, facilitates community conversations on equity).



CAPACITIES			Fully embedded practice and/or leading the field
	Dabbling	Making it a habit	
<b>Cultivating and fostering a robust, diverse arts ecosystem</b>	Offers services and supports to artists that go beyond direct grantmaking or financial assistance.	Champions grantees, amplifying their work or advocating for issues that will support them, as appropriate. Institution plays a role in channeling arts and culture support to more diverse and new populations with regards to race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity and others who have faced historical barriers.	Adopts more formal role to enhance the arts ecosystem and is identified by artists and communities as a field visionary or forward-thinking force within arts and culture; advocates to advance public sector support for artists, cultural workers, arts organizations, and the arts.
<b>Accountability to artists and communities</b>	Collects data to demonstrate that funding or services reach artists and communities. Invites artists and community members to give input and feedback on intermediary performance.	Collects data that is meaningful to artists and communities; artists and community members are asked to shape and inform the intermediary's priorities.	Artists shape how the intermediary defines community and determines audience in multiple ways; artists and community members participate in decision making related to resource allocation.

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