

"COMMUNITY ORGANIZING" PROGRAM LAUNCHES FOR CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS

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By NYC Department of Cultural Affairs

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30 NYC cultural nonprofits will participate in the Community Organizing 101 pilot, building on recommendations from CreateNYC

Participants will receive training in strategies from the field of community organizing to help strengthen their relationships with residents, especially those from historically marginalized groups

New York – The NYC Department of Cultural Affairs (DCLA) today announced the launch of [Community Organizing 101: Engagement Tactics for Cultural Organizations](#), a pilot course that will train staff from cultural organizations around the city in strategies for sustained community building. During public engagement conducted for [CreateNYC](#), residents and cultural workers called for the City to support cultural groups in efforts to establish stronger connections with their neighbors and engage new audiences. Representatives from 30 DCLA-funded organizations from all five boroughs will participate in this free pilot course, providing them an opportunity to establish new peer networks and learn how to integrate the tools of community organizing into their work in the cultural sector.

"Community Organizing 101 will help organizations create strategies to go beyond community 'outreach' to meaningful engagement, to bring the social benefits of culture to New Yorkers across the city," said Cultural Affairs Commissioner Tom Finkelpearl. "Our city's cultural sector – and the people it serves – benefits tremendously when our arts and culture organizations can become hubs of community activity and connection."

This program grows out of CreateNYC's commitments to build the capacity of cultural organizations and to improve access to culture for historically marginalized groups. Throughout the cultural plan's public engagement process, organizations asked for support in connecting with new audiences, neighbors, supporters, and advocates, as a way of deepening their relationships in their communities. The field of community organizing has a long history of tapping into grassroots networks and resources to bring about significant and positive change. This course will demonstrate how tactics of community organizing often used by neighborhood groups or in social advocacy movements may also be applied by arts organizations.

Community Organizing 101 also delivers on CreateNYC commitments to help community-based networks to learn from one another, coordinate their efforts, and scale up through collective action. Course participants will leave with new skills supporting their efforts to ground themselves more deeply within their communities. They will learn how better to identify and connect with new audiences. In addition, the program's emphasis on collaboration and peer learning will enable participating organizations to continue sharing resources and experiences beyond the duration of the workshop.

"The insights gained from the CreateNYC public engagement process continue to provide fertile soil for new approaches to bringing arts and culture to all New Yorkers," said Ben Rodriguez-Cubenas, Chair of the CreateNYC Citizens' Advisory Committee. "Our city's cultural organizations told us they want to learn how to draw more deeply on the richness of their own neighborhoods while reaching out to as yet undiscovered audiences. Community Organizing 101 will use proven principles of community organizing to convene, empower, and galvanize participating groups to do just that."

The workshops have been designed and developed by community organizing experts [Community Change Inc.](#), in partnership with DCLA. Community Change Inc., an NYC-certified Minority Business Enterprise, is a capacity-building consulting firm that supports schools, school districts, government agencies, not-for-profits, and institutions of higher education in strengthening their services and connections to youth, families and communities. Community Organizing 101 is free to participants, thanks to funding dedicated to the implementation of CreateNYC cultural plan goals and priorities.

The following groups will participate in the Community Organizing 101 course. Images from some of their current community programming are available in [for download here](#).

- apexart Curatorial Program
- Art Start
- Ascension Music Chorus Orchestra
- Bronx River Art Center
- Chocolate Factory Theater
- Dance/NYC
- Dances for a Variable Population
- Dancewave
- The Latin American Workshop
- ETHEL's Foundation for the Arts
- Goddard Riverside Community Center
- Historic Districts Council
- Hook Arts Media
- ID Studio Theater Performance and Research Center
- Keen Theater Company
- Kundiman
- Los Pleneros de la 21
- Maysles Documentary Center
- Mount Vernon Hotel Museum and Garden
- The Noble Maritime Collection
- On Site Opera Inc
- Opus 118 Harlem School of Music

- Staten Island Arts
- Target Margin Theater
- UnionDocs
- viBe Theater Experience
- Waterwell
- Working Theater
- The Writers Room
- Wyckoff House Association

About NYC Department of Cultural Affairs

The New York City Department of Cultural Affairs (DCLA) is dedicated to supporting and strengthening New York City's vibrant cultural life. DCLA works to promote and advocate for quality arts programming and to articulate the contribution made by the cultural community to the City's vitality. The Department represents and serves non-profit cultural organizations involved in the visual, literary, and performing arts; public-oriented science and humanities institutions including zoos, botanical gardens, and historic and preservation societies; and creative artists at all skill levels who live and work within the City's five boroughs. DCLA also provides donated materials for arts programs offered by the public schools and cultural and social service groups, and commissions permanent works of public art at City-funded construction projects throughout the five boroughs. For more information, visit www.nyc.gov/culture.

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