

ADVANCING FISCALLY SPONSORED ARTISTS & ART PROJECTS

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR NYC CULTURAL PLANNING



A Call to Action

It is the overarching recommendation of the project partners, targeted to the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs (DCLA) and CreateNYC planning team, that the City's forthcoming cultural plan seek to advance fiscally sponsored artists and arts projects and to substantively engage local fiscal sponsors in the plan's implementation.

In advocating for a role for the fiscally sponsored arts across planning mandates and the policies, programs, and budgetary allocations the plan may generate, the partners aim to address inequities in the cultural sector that limit opportunities for sponsored artists and projects and to increase the delivery of public value to the people of New York.

The three specific actions offered here are grounded in the comprehensive survey research and informed by discussion among the nine fiscal sponsor partners. They are neither comprehensive nor absolute, but reflect the most pressing priorities of the partners for meeting identified workforce needs and removing barriers to creativity and effective management. The City's leadership could generate visibility for this key segment of the arts ecology and drive additional engagement and investment, locally and nationally.

Making the case for these priorities and realizing their implementation will require continued advocacy by the fiscal sponsor partners and the wider population of sponsored artists and arts projects. Join us! Weigh in to endorse these recommendations and to offer your own to the CreateNYC planning team at CreateNYC.org!



1. Strengthen Funding for Fiscally Sponsored Artists & Projects

First and foremost, the study recommends the cultural plan include solutions to increase the availability of New York City government funding to fiscally sponsored artists and projects. In particular, the project partners recommend:

- In the short term, increasing the City's funding allocations to existing decentralized grant programs with borough arts councils and partners such as New York Foundation for the Arts for which fiscally sponsored artists and projects are already eligible;
- Conducting a short-term assessment and then refreshing existing decentralization programs to better serve sponsored groups, with a focus on sharing information and learning; standardizing grant applications and reports; advancing equity in the distribution of resources by geography, discipline, and workforce demographics (especially ethnicity, race, disability, and gender); and incentivizing best practices for grantees, for example, by requiring funded projects to provide living wages;
- In the mid- and long-range, adding funding programs with existing or new partners that provide grantees with multiyear and general operating support to meet artistic and operational needs identified through survey research and/or achieve additional priorities for the City that may arise through planning (for example, targeted investment in disability arts as advocated by the Disability. Dance. Artistry. Task Force and Dance/NYC);
- Exploring mid- and long-range opportunities for DCLA to additionally provide greater direct financial support to fiscally sponsored artists and arts projects, which may include making City Council member funds available for fiscally sponsored artists and arts projects based in every Council district; and
- Ensuring that fiscal sponsors and fiscally sponsored artists and arts projects are present at every stage of developing, implementing, and evaluating the success of City funding initiatives impacting their work.

2. Bridge Identified Gaps in Access to Critical Resources

To supplement strategic City funding of sponsored artists and projects, the project partners advocate attention to meeting those needs identified as most critical by the fiscally sponsored arts workers who responded to the survey. Specifically, they recommend:

- Meeting the need for access to affordable presentation space through the creation of new spaces and the protection, repurposing, and increased use of existing spaces, using survey findings organized by geography, creative discipline, and identity categories to guide action;
- Meeting the need for access to affordable development space, using survey findings to guide action; and
- Intervening to support fiscally sponsored artists and arts projects in identifying and accessing resources that may already exist by strengthening communications environments and expanding technical assistance and training. The City could achieve efficiencies of scale by coordinating this work with local fiscal sponsors, many of whom are already providing support services to their sponsored artists and projects.



3. Increase Diversity, Equity & Inclusion in the Sponsored Arts Workforce

The workforce demographic survey findings reveal key opportunities to foster equity in the fiscally sponsored arts landscape that may be addressed through cultural planning and implementation. In particular, the project partners recommend:

- Expressly and equitably including fiscally sponsored artists and arts projects in DCLA's ongoing diversity initiatives and relevant research, policies, programs, and funding. As stated, this study directly responds to a recent Ithaka S+R workforce demographics report on DCLA grantees, which excluded sponsored arts workers;
- Developing targeted initiatives based on the survey findings to:
 - Reverse entrenched patterns of exclusion of African, Latina/o/x, Asian, Arab, and Native American (ALAANA) populations in the fiscally sponsored arts workforce that mirror similar patterns among traditional DCLA grantees;
 - Amplify the voices of disabled New Yorkers, who are represented in this study and are as yet uncaptured among the majority of DCLA grantees; and
 - Create opportunities for members of the Millennial and aging populations, particularly those in the Silent Generation (born pre-1945), who are underrepresented in the workforce; and
- To achieve scale and impact, building the individual and collective capacity of fiscal sponsors to advance diversity, equity, and inclusion in their networks. The City could provide fiscal sponsors with training, technical assistance, and financial resources to offer sponsored artists and groups relevant programs: for example, antiracism training and training on how best to engage disabled New Yorkers.