

## Culture Priorities for Chicago's Next Mayor

Chicago's arts and creative sector is a chief contributor to its long-term vitality and sustainability. Home to world-class museums and performance arts venues, field-defining community arts centers and art schools, the city employs an estimated 134,000 artists and creative sector employees and 111,000 full-time equivalent jobs across small, mid-sized and large cultural institutions and creative businesses. Chicago's generative and still burgeoning creative economy—especially in the last ten years— has contributed to Chicago's rapid growth in cultural tourism (57M visitors in 2018), as well as film and television production which together generated \$423M for the local economy and close to 14,000 jobs. Additionally, the development of new performance and music venues (Free Street Theater's Storyfront, Green Line Arts Center, Logan Center for the Arts, Thalia Hall), and visual and literary arts centers (American Writers Museum, Mana Contemporary Chicago, National Museum of Puerto Rican Arts and Culture, Stony Island Arts Bank) over the last five years has earned Chicago the distinction of having the nation's third largest artist and creative worker labor force with their combined wages accounting for 3.5% of total salary and wages.

Though several studies have credited arts and culture for being a critical driver of economic revitalization and resilience in Chicago (Savills Studley, 2018), there has also been an ongoing cry to municipal leaders and decision-makers beginning in earnest with Arts Alliance Illinois' 2014 "Creative Economy in Illinois" report to "take additional steps to support the growth of [the local] creative economy." In 2015, nonprofit arts sector spending alone delivered \$247M in local government revenue an increase from \$166M in 2010 (*Arts & Economic Prosperity 5*). Indeed, when asked for their primary motivator for visiting Illinois, 46.8% of non-residents indicated it was specifically to attend an arts and culture event. It is important to note that excluding the cost of admission, nonprofit arts and cultural event attendees spend an average of \$35.08 per person, with all non-admission related, event spending by arts audiences contributing another \$2.25B to the local economy.

In addition to a plea for deeper creative sector investment towards the goal of even greater economic growth, there have been continual calls to increase racial and ethnic diversity among creative workers. The workforce is currently estimated as being 76% White, with Blacks and Latinos comprising about 9% each, and Asians, 6%. There is also a need to support existing residents on Chicago's South and West sides as well as in culturally-specific neighborhoods further north in developing and sustaining arts offerings, venues, creative businesses and entrepreneurship.

In response to the opportunities and gaps identified above, the Joyce Foundation's Culture Program investments are guided by three strategies on which we would welcome the opportunity to partner with the new mayoral administration:

I. Arts Access and Participation

The Foundation aims to strengthen arts presenting, programming and instruction capacity at neighborhood-based arts organizations led by or serving communities of color and/or set in low income communities.

- We support programs and initiatives that reduce the costs of or distance to high quality arts experiences in communities where limited arts access has been documented. In addition, we welcome partnerships with arts and cultural organizations located in these communities that expand or improve their programmatic and operational capacity. We

also welcome research and evidence-based initiatives that seek to better understand the impact of arts access on individual and community quality-of-life outcomes.

II. Arts Leadership and Workforce Development

The Foundation seeks to ensure equitable access to decision-making and economic mobility by supporting career opportunities and professional development for racially underrepresented arts leaders and workers in Chicago.

- We support the education and preparation of racially underrepresented arts administrators, board members, stewards, funders and creative industry workers for positions in key organizations of all sizes across Chicago. Past and current partnerships have worked to expand racial and ethnic diversity in stage and media production through apprenticeships; have aided recruitment and support of racially diverse early to mid-career and executive arts administrators; and have investigated methods for training adults with low income/low education attainment for creative sector careers.

III. Creativity and Cultural Production

To ensure that Chicago is recognized as home to thriving and diverse creative communities where the next generation of artists and makers can flourish in their careers, the Foundation makes investments that support the careers of artists (with an emphasis on underrepresented artists and artists of color) and enable their practices to develop and become more visible.

- We support artistic commissions, exhibitions, residencies, community-based practice, and professional development that elevate the contemporary and historical work and contributions of artists of color. We continue to invest heavily in artists' efforts to address timely issues facing their communities. Our support often takes the form of underwriting public art, free and public performance, and programming that allows artists and residents to interface and collaborate directly with each other.

In addition to its direct investments, in working with its partner and peer arts stakeholders, the Joyce Foundation recommends that Chicago's next mayor considers three priorities currently attracting the most consensus in the sector:

**1. The Need to Diversify and Dedicate New Revenue Streams for Artists and Arts Organizations:**

The new mayoral administration has an opportunity to learn from tested state and city-level initiatives to expand existing resources and secure alternative revenue sources to fund arts and culture. In realizing that their large residential population of artists contributes to the profile and prestige of their cities, both New York City and Los Angeles have sought to increase the amount of grant, housing, and artistic development support offered. Cuyahoga County in Ohio and the state of Minnesota are two examples of municipal efforts to expand arts access through, respectively, a cigarette tax and by imposing a three-eighths of one percent tax on themselves for 25 years, in the name of cleaner water, better parks and trails and sustaining its arts and cultural heritage. In other cities, such as Indianapolis and Paducah, KY well-thought home-ownership initiatives for local artists has served to stem vacancy rates. In Detroit and Memphis initiatives to train new entrepreneurs of color, has pushed back against gentrification and bolster inclusive economic access and retail. These are all models and results have resonance in

Chicago where culture spending is tied to the city' hotel tax that has remained largely unchanged.

**2. The Need to Expand and Equitably Invest in Creative Small Businesses and Entrepreneurship:**

With the proliferation of arts and creative sector businesses being singled out as a catalyst for the economic revitalization in cities like Detroit, Indianapolis, Chester (PA), and Richmond (VA), the next mayoral administration has the opportunity to similarly grow local momentum by aiding the development of creative small business incubators; expanding access to business capital through new loan financing and forgiveness programs; helping artists and arts organizations gain access to dormant and underutilized buildings in neighborhoods where there are little or no arts facilities; calling on developers to similarly invest in direct and indirect supports for creative small business and entrepreneurship development; and focusing the above in South and West side neighborhoods where the federation of creative small business and entrepreneurial activity can revitalize dormant retail corridors, relieve high unemployment, increase visitation and cultural tourism, and contribute to positive neighborhood perception.

**3. The Need for Equitable Support for Non- and For-Profit Arts Organizations and Venues:**

Studies of Chicago's arts and creative sector have noted inequity in arts access and investment on the South, West and Southwest sides of the city in comparison to the Loop and the Near North Side. There are many areas of the city where there are no permanent or easily identifiable arts organizations or performance venues where residents can view or participate in visual or performing arts. For example, of the 200+ theaters in Chicago, only four are located on the South Side, and none on the West Side. Demands by residents and arts stakeholders for equity in resource allocation and infrastructure development are mounting. In communities of highest need, existing and potential proprietors need help navigating licensing policies—such as those that regulate Performing Arts Venues or Public Places of Amusement. There is need, especially, to create additional supports for those smaller venues likely to be based in neighborhoods. Though studies indicate there is vast room for growth in this sector that contributes \$2.2 billion in annual revenue to Chicago's economy, current and prospective operators are dissuaded by inordinate fees and sometimes hard to decipher or meet operational parameters.