



United Arts Fund Check In Call

July 28, 2020

3:30 – 4:30 p.m. EDT

Call recording available upon request.

I. As COVID case surges and national dialogue continues to be challenging – what are you learning, what developments have happened over the last month, how are things adjusting?

Hartford - Seeing lower cases, still looking at reopening, in Phase III although that timeline has been paused due to cases rising across the country. Outdoor experiences have had good experiences. Inching along in the right direction.

Memphis – numbers continue to rise. Some museums have opened slowly and with good results. Most performing arts organizations have begun to make calls on seasons through December. Most performing arts groups committing to go virtual. Schools will go completely virtual. Compiled lists for arts groups to think about virtual educational experiences with county educational system. Received emergency related funding to keep GOS grants flat. Provided one payment that represents what they gave groups last year at a minimum. Using this time at ArtsMemphis to reach some longstanding goals – making shifts in internal financial structures. Raised funds that were granted in the same year. Raising funds and later making commitments – now offsetting by 6 mo.

Dayton – in a state that was stable with COVID, now seeing cases rise. Museums opened with stipulations. Not had a lot of help from business or foundations. Got a grant to keep funding up for first 3 months of fiscal year. Estimating 30% cut in organizational grant funding. Workplace campaigns are reduced, can't reach employees. Performing arts groups seasons will be virtual. Renovation of historical building – Dayton Arcade.

Cincinnati – taken a step backwards with COVID, yet arts organizations were realistic about limitations. Campaign ends Aug 31, and are operating virtual workplace campaigns. Coming in at \$10.5 million off of \$12 million goal. Keep grants flat from emergency funding. Grants were whole from ArtsWave. Created dedicated funding for Black led organizations. Concerned at how we look out to next year and next Spring. Orgs likely not presenting in the Spring. How do we raise awareness and urgency to the public. People will be more uncertain 6, 9 months from now. How do we look ahead? How do we find resources to restart – we will need the arts on the other side of this. Will orgs be ready to recruit talent and have start up capital to meet the need. Employers will be smaller and virtual.

Seattle – Organizations reopening is top of mind. Conducted series of listening sessions. Getting at tensions with the groups of short-term realities and long-term planning. How can they reach their goals during the crisis? So many groups were on a great path, and now where is that? A lot of groups were able to pivot to digital are reaching groups they weren't able to reach before. Technology is a barrier, but everyone is having to train staff on the same skills. Using this pause as a moment to make sure that what wasn't working before is what we steer away from. Hard to have vision when there's so much uncertainty. Orgs want to be better and different but lack of vision. Corporate silence, lack of response to emails and inquiry. Polling local arts funding community about what funding strategies will work.

II. How are your campaigns and grantmaking efforts going? What's happening in your business community?

Dayton – people who support the arts continue to support the arts. Some are willing to throw out life support, but some have said they won't do it forever. Finding new dollars feels like a big wall. One of largest workplace campaigns asked why they should give money if there "isn't anything happening". Invest in research and development, new ways of doing business.

Cincinnati – has a strong civic pride. There's a lot that we can leverage by tapping into the business community's desire to rebound. Spend time talking with Chamber folks about talent attraction; corporate community is looking to ArtsWave to provide vision and how we get there faster. Having a hard time getting the transformative idea. Painting that vision is the way to engage business partners.

Memphis – corporate giving has been all over the place. Some have put all charitable giving on hold. How do we use this time to our benefit? Corporate partners are seeing ways to support the arts in time of pause. Our orgs are a way for companies to support the arts while programming is on hold. Economic prosperity study as it relates to jobs. Talk about how many people are employed in the arts. Community foundations diverting all funds to emergency funds. Corporate partners are picking up other areas.

Dayton - People want to be entertained people want to laugh and they want a sense of connection. Virtual theatre out there where every seat is the best seat in the house. Can a group of people do this? Grantees liked them before, now they really like them. Recognized power of unified voice. Is there a unified stage?

Seattle – looking to build on some plans from the last 4 months. Reviewing how we interface with corporations under the equity lens. What is our relevance in the next 10-15 years?

Cincinnati – programmatic retooling is important and necessary. Power is to aggregate small amounts of dollars. We have to have our eye on that unless we're willing to depart from that, and know whether there's someone else to pick that up. If they decided to stop doing it, there would be no one else to pick this up. Have to figure out other ways to aggregate small amounts of contributions to support the arts. What would it look like if the funding disappeared?

Seattle – people finding leadership from the advocacy. Advocacy will move the needle.

Barb – are your groups looking to the UAFs to look at the right steps for equity, or finding fear about shifting towards equity?

Seattle – looked at metrics for diversity vs a different model of success that looks at different structural changes. People are taking this angle. People are now saying they don't know what their success metrics are. Exploring this through their leadership training. ArtsFund is taking the leadership role and providing the space for these conversations to happen.

Cincinnati – Not looked to for training and coaching but for setting a standard. Have been on this road long before and had penalties and promotions in grantmaking for benchmarks. GOS recipients all have benchmarks that they have to hit in relation to diversity. In 18 months will be doing a census and holding people accountable to their goals. Created new cohort of staff members of color across organizations. Staff members of color have a support network. Have a patron and audience challenge more than an organizational challenge. How do we use boards to push audiences?

Dayton – put out first equity statement and proud to step into the role. Great model for so many things, especially for a predominately white community. Business community is stepping up.

Jacob's pillow prompted soul searching of other regional organizations. If you're doing programming, you have a well of experience of people who can address and expose structural challenges. Must create the space.

Article in NY times about racism in Opera. It wasn't Cincinnati Opera, it was a donor who said something at the opera. Another thing we can offer to corporate partners.

Community arts campaign consortium – originally had an idea for a national retail partner, but now is not the right time. Think about Amazon, how easy is it to designate based on zip code for regranting. How do we create a partnership that turns commerce into good for the arts. Don't have a clear mechanism for distribution, but our community arts campaigns do have that. Conversations with Orlando to approach foundations for DEI work. How do we use our communities as examples of where locales are as globally competitive communities about how different communities are responding for the need for more inclusive access to the arts? Approach a national Foundation. Push payroll deduction and workplace giving even in a virtual program. Sign on in one community that can distribute to where their employees are across the country. ← some ideas and examples.

Saved Notes from Chat Box:

- ArtsFund Focus Group Discussion Questions:
 - o What support do you need to be successful in your work? What, if any, new types of support do you need to be effective (in the wake of COVID and beyond)?
 - o What does ArtsFund need to be doing today to support your organization and your sector 5-10 years from now?
 - o (circling back to the now) In the wake of current local and national circumstances, whether related to COVID and its repercussions, ongoing racial injustice, economic inequities, or other pressing community conditions and concerns, what, if anything, is different about how your organization is approaching your work, and the work itself, in both the short and long term?
- Adding in, we also heard that staff leaders who've been feeling like they've had to make the case that equity is an important direction for their orgs, are feeling now that their boards (and others) are now understanding the need, and that there's less case-making for the need for change needed. Only time will tell, however, if that leads to actual change.