

## **United Arts Fund Monthly Network Call**

March 29, 2022

3:30 – 4:30 p.m.

### **AGENDA**

3:30-3:35pm – Welcome, Agenda, Introduce ACG SRP Consultants

3:35-3:45pm – Attendee Introductions

### **3:45 – 4:20pm – Moderated/Guided Conversation with ACG**

Introduce the SRP process and team. Working with AFTA for SRP to work with external partners to understand AFTA's relationship with on-the-ground partners and what that impact is. Today is about listening and learning.

- Constituent meetings, constituent survey, Convention activities

Goal of SRP is to look at environment, structure, and environment – get AFTA aligned with the needs of the field, whatever the field means. Nothing is assumed, staff, board, member structure is on the table. This is one way to talk with ACG.

The process is structured as follows:

#### **Phase I (Month 1 -2)**

Prepare, Align and Assess

#### **Phase II (Months 3-6)**

Ask, Listen and Learn

#### **Phase III (Months 7-8)**

Understanding and Strategize

#### **Phase IV (Month 9)**

Plan and Lead

**Concept of support – your work in UAF or the folks you're supporting – What are the places where outside support, regionally and nationally, and where are those places you go to get that?**

Money is always good. Defining the stakeholder groups within the sector, and helping to create structure around what those stakeholder groups are. Who are the players so we can mobilize them?

Have valued AFTA as the convener, no matter what level. Small meetings of people doing the same thing Deborah is doing, while also having a larger group to network with. Opportunities for people to have deep dives (like Sundance). Research specific to UAFs – has credible value to leadership. The AFTA website is a valuable tool to find resources. AEP research is also invaluable.

- Does the research and convening come from other places? The most valid is at AFTA, but pull from Giving USA, AFP and other areas. The focus on the arts sector is important.

These are all good tools, but for what purpose? Not seeing AFTA standing up as the thought leader. Why is it essential to continue lifting up the arts – talk about the future and then what? Who will carry the flag? AFTA has an opportunity to do that, but how can that happen?

- Who else might be filling that space? I don't see it. It's becoming hyper local.

The UAFs are filling the void at the local level. Research, convening, thought leader at local level. Might be nice to have a national body that is supporting us in local efforts to anchor those efforts.

A lot of organizations are really evolving related to local conditions. United Ways and united funds are going to look differently very quickly. Regularly call other UAF leaders outside of monthly calls to connect. Thought leadership, technical support, research is valuable. AFTA is the only one doing the advocacy work at the Federal level. AFTA has the capacity to do that level of capacity.

- What is meant by technical assistance? Working with ACG to help understand the changes that are happening with the UAF model. Training for staff who are new to this field. UAF work is so specialized. There isn't a peer-to-peer model, the UAFs are unique in each of their communities.

**How is the UAF model changing?** Models were assumed to be local support by the business community. We need a single org to outsource funding and that org will provide significant operational support. Now UAFs want to change/expand the ways they serve the community. Some do shared service, some do technical assistance, some operate facilities. That looks differently depending on the community. Are we more similar to LAAs or are we still a "thing"?

Things are accelerating and changing. Evolution is needed. While we are a UAF, we are asked to operate as an arts council, and a facility operator. Shift from supporting legacy institutions to an Arts+ focus.

- Is this just COVID? That's the question. Worry about the legacy institutions and the large percentage of operating support UAFs provide. The residents want something different from what the businesses have invested in.

ArtsFund has been doing a lot of soul searching about what our ROI is. We can't raise the money we need. The advocacy, leadership development, capacity building gives them the credibility. The grantmaking/fundraising gives the legitimacy within the business community. Can't escape any points of the triangle, but the goal is to sustain the appreciation of the arts at the state level. AFTA can play a huge role. There is funding there. The private dollars are not there in the way they were to support the huge budgets of the legacy institutions. How are we positioned to get the support for a \$1 Trillion industry as though we were aerospace.

When we move out of our downtowns, they don't have symphonies, ballets, they have DV shelters, healthcare, daycare services etc. Spend too much time spinning places with the workplaces.

- Arts can help support and integrate with other services. Meaningful relationship with community and what does that look like. Worries me that there are less and less UAFs all the time.

Many more charitable choices than before. But relying on donor funding. The arts funding matrix is skewed. Healthcare money comes from Medicare and Medicaid – what's the federal equivalency for the arts?

Don't have a way to capture data yet at the local level. What are the tools like AEP that can cover more territory at the local level?

Increasing expectation of service delivery. Where your money is coming from, but the things you're supposed to accomplish seems to grow. Are you experiencing this?

Because we are sensing a great need for change. Change is difficult. Legacy institutions feel entitled to certain dollars to be given in a certain way. Community is driving the change.

Race, accessibility, access, growth – all big changes – perhaps there's an acknowledgement that arts can play a larger role in fixing that. The infrastructure isn't there for arts to play that larger role. What was an expectation to funnel X amount of dollars to a small amount of organizations, now is that plus arts supporting DV shelters in rural areas for example. There's no infrastructure to do that.

This is still not a good time. ARPA was a one and done deal, it didn't address the deep need.

Small business in America isn't a model that works well for the arts. Small business private equity firms buy up small businesses, finding ways for economies of scale. This doesn't happen in the arts.

UAF set up – these days, when you're thinking about A/C in your community? How broad is that definition?

Had an antiquated definition about who could receive GOS – now gone away with that, doing an analysis of each org we want to bring in to create a group of who defines A/C in the community. Definition has expanded, sampling of everything.

“Cultural ecosystem” – need to provide for artists, as well as the outlet.

**4:20-4:30pm – Wrap up and adjourn**