

IN 2019 WE LEARNED

CultureSource staff learned the lessons below from our peers, partners, programs, and experiences in 2019.

ABOUT OUR **SECTOR**

- Artists and arts organizations' hunt for permanent space (at the right price, in the right location, with the right amount of autonomy) is constant and often demoralizing—and if acquired, can lead to abnormal amounts of scarcity, volatility, and crisis in their practice. *(from a financial analysis of Detroit Arts Support applicants and insights from the local and national field)*
- The high frequency with which people collaborate in our Southeast Michigan cultural sector makes us unique, vibrant, and resilient within the national landscape. *(from the chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts at the National Council on the Arts meeting in Detroit, June 2019)*
- Youth in our region have a remarkable interest in creative sector careers, and if nurtured early by employers willing to hire and train them, their interest can power long-lasting sustainability of our field. *(from the Heritage Works youth workforce development survey)*

ABOUT **CONNECTING** WITH AUDIENCES AND PATRONS

- Our arts and culture colleagues are still trying to use traditional platforms and strategies for marketing. These professionals need new models, resources, and coaching to manage this complex dimension of their work. *(from the many requests we get to post/share people's work)*
- Presenting work in public spaces that people already traverse as pedestrians is an ideal way to expand your audience. *(from the success of re-locating CulturePop activities in 2019)*
- Talking about the greying of audiences is disrespectful—people of any hair color in your audience should be valued as humans interested in creativity and celebrated for investing in being present with you in your space. *(from our interactions with the Teresa Bonner, executive director of Aroha Philanthropies)*

ABOUT **FUNDRAISING** IN THE ARTS

- Of \$428 billion in total charitable giving in 2018, the arts received only \$20 billion. And while charitable giving continues to increase year-to-year, the dollar amount going to the arts has not. [Yes, be disturbed by this news.] *(from the Arts Funders Forum during 2019 Miami Art Week)*
- Fundraising success isn't dependent on being a professional grant writer or having one on staff; it's about being a compelling storyteller—and we've seen some of the region's smallest and scrappiest organizations hit homeruns in making their case for support. *(from Detroit Arts Support focus groups and Creators of Culture grant review panels)*

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- If a funding opportunity info session is offered—GO! Successful funding applicants are often the ones who attend. *(from our administration of local funding programs and dialogues with grantmakers nationwide)*
- In fundraising, there aren't as many tricks as people think. Focusing on fundamentals gets you far: avoid a transactional style, say thank you, and be clear about your needs and realistic impact(s). *(from our Sustainable Fundraising workshop series with Aly Sterling Philanthropy)*
- People are increasingly willing to donate to projects that have clear, positive community impacts, even if not incorporated as a 501c3 nonprofit; this comfort can be buoyed by intermediary organizations that help facilitate financial transactions of or act as allies to those informal or unincorporated activities. *(from our experience attending the National Network of Fiscal Sponsors conference and as a fiscal sponsor)*

ABOUT MANAGING AND DEVELOPING AN ORGANIZATION

- To grow and develop CultureSource, we must do the following, among other things:
 1. Embrace big and new strategic directions; though, hold them lightly and be open to influence;
 2. Encourage productive tension between ideas to generate multiple new pathways forward.*(from our participation in the EmcArts adaptive leadership program)*
- Impact investing offers exciting opportunities to connect creative economy projects by social entrepreneurs with trillions of dollars in assets being managed in the US. Not enough of our arts and culture colleagues know about this. *(from Laura Callanan of Upstart Co-Labs)*
- Related to succession planning, individual and institutional philanthropists should consider specifically investing in interim leaders to help organizations reduce vulnerabilities during executive staff transitions. *(from the Koya Leadership Partners succession planning residency)*
- As rapidly as digital technologies are developed or decommissioned, artists are integrating them into their practices. It is essential for cultural institutions to understand and engage these patterns, as well as make big, scary investments themselves in new tech that advances their mission. *(from dialogues with the National Endowment for the Arts media arts director, Jax Deluca)*

So What?

In 2020 and 2021, CultureSource programs and services will interrogate and respond to these insights. Our team looks forward to dialogues with people who share or disagree with them, or who want to collaboratively address them.



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