

CREATIVE COUNTIES PLACEMAKING CHALLENGE TEAM APPLICATION PACKAGE

INTRODUCTION

As local communities focus on health and economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, county leaders are looking for new strategies to improve their communities, reinvigorate local culture and make healthier, more equitable places for residents to live, work and play. The Creative Counties Placemaking Challenge **invites counties with populations of fewer than 150,000 to form multidisciplinary teams to** compete in a challenge competition to identify and strengthen ways to integrate arts into solutions to local challenges.

Teams that submit winning applications will **attend an in-person, one-day training and peer exchange workshop in July 2022**, in Denver, Colorado in conjunction with NACo's Annual Conference. National experts from Americans for the Arts (AFTA) will lead the training. In addition, teams that submit winning applications will attend virtual peer learning webinars and receive one-on-one coaching from the AFTA experts.

IMPORTANT DATES AND DEADLINES

Open Call for Applications: Wednesday, December 15, 2021

Team Application Deadline: Monday, February 7, 2022, 11:59 p.m. EST

Announcement of Selected Teams: By Monday, March 7, 2022

Kick-Off Webinar with Selected Teams: March 2022

Pre-Workshop Webinar: May 2022

In-Person Workshop: July 2022 in Denver, Colorado

Challenge Program Completion: January 31, 2023

PROGRAM INFORMATION

Who should apply?

Counties with populations of fewer than 150,000—or county/local arts agencies located within counties with populations of less than 150,000—who are looking to address unique local challenges and bolster their ability to grow their economies and resilience by employing the arts as core to the solution. *Note: Counties or county/local arts agencies must form multidisciplinary teams to apply. If a county does not have an official arts agency, a local arts nexus organization can apply. Multi-jurisdictional teams are permitted.*

Are there any requirements for the teams?

Yes. Teams must:

- Consist of at least one county official, one representative from the local arts community and one representative from the sector they wish to engage (e.g., transportation, behavioral health, youth services, etc.)
- Have no more than four and no fewer than three members and must have cross-sector representation. *A maximum of two representatives from a given organization may participate on the same team.*
- Team members must commit to attend the Challenge Kickoff webinar in March, the pre-Workshop webinar in May and the July one-day workshop, and be proactively involved with their mentor via regular communications (phone and email) for the duration of the project, March 2022 through January 2023. The team's Main Point of Contact must participate in-person for the Denver workshop and the other team members in-person or remotely.

Are teams encouraged to do anything?

Teams are encouraged to:

- Include working artist(s) on their team.
- Think about using creativity in unique ways that tackle public needs beyond the arts and culture sphere. *For example, an application that has the goal to create a local arts agency, while important, does not fit the spirit of this program. But rather, for example, consider how to use arts and culture to intervene in the opioid epidemic, or how to use arts and culture to help with fair housing initiatives.*
- Apply if they are from smaller counties (under 50,000).
- Evaluate their proposal to make sure it is appropriate in scope to the available resources.

Does a county or county/local arts agency need to be a NACo or AFTA member to apply?

No, counties or county/local arts agencies do not need to be members of NACo or AFTA respectively to apply for the Creative Counties Placemaking Challenge.

Is there an application fee?

No.

How will applications be evaluated?

Applications will be evaluated and weighted based on:

- Strength of the proposed partnership.
- History of past creative, cross-sector partnership experiences. *These past partnerships do not have to have been with each other. We are interested in team members' experiences with collaboration, not just your history with each other.*
- Clarity of issue to be addressed by the team.
- A clear team commitment to the Creative Counties process and discovery and the ability as a team to develop and follow through on a plan.
- Vulnerabilities in the community, including economic hardship and limited access to resources.
- Assets and opportunities in the community that support integration of arts to addressing community priorities.
- Quality and appropriateness of the team members to tackle the specific concerns being addressed.

Who will review the applications?

NACo and Americans for the Arts project staff will screen each application to ensure the key eligibility criteria are met, and a panel with issue-area and creative expertise will review applications. The panel will assign a final score to each application and rank them in score order and recommend for selection the most highly rated applications, taking into account geographic diversity in making final selections.

Will selected teams receive funding?

No, selected counties/regions will not receive a direct financial award.

What will teams receive?

Teams will be invited – and the team's Main Point of Contact expected – to attend the national team-based in-person workshop in July 2022 and will receive pre- and post-workshop technical support and mentoring, via virtual webinars and individual team conference calls.

Will selected teams need to pay a registration fee to attend the workshop?

No.

Will there be travel funds for selected teams to attend the workshops?

Yes, NACo has limited funding available to partially offset team travel costs.

What costs should teams anticipate attending the workshops?

NACo has a limited budget to offset some transportation and lodging costs to attend the workshops. Teams should expect to cover a portion of their transportation/lodging costs.

HOW TO PREPARE & SUBMIT YOUR APPLICATION

APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

1. Community Information.

- a. Community name.
- b. Name of county in which the community resides, if not the county itself.
- c. County population (based on latest census).
- d. Community population (based on latest census, must be fewer than 150,000), if not the county itself.
- e. State.

2. Letter of Interest. *A Letter of Interest of no more than 2,500 words must be submitted answering the following questions, in sequential order:*

- a. Briefly describe your community's population makeup (i.e., demographics).
- b. Describe your community's current economy including major industries, unemployment rate, poverty rate, assets and any future changes or transitions anticipated.
- c. Describe your community's current engagement with the arts in existing rural planning, design and/or creative placemaking efforts, if any.
- d. Describe your community's local challenge(s) that your team seeks to address through employing the arts (e.g., economic growth/recovery, jobs, health, transportation, resilience, equity, etc.).
- e. Why is your team interested in attending the creative placemaking workshop? Articulate how participation in the workshop will benefit the community and what types of rural planning, design or creative placemaking strategies or topics your team hopes to learn more about.
- f. Describe the ability of your team to achieve the goals and implement action items identified during the workshop, including how members of your team have worked and partnered together previously, accomplishments of individual team members, how you will collaborate on this joint effort, and any potential programs or funding sources that the team may be able to leverage.

3. Main Point of Contact. *The Point of Contact is the team member responsible for engaging with the project team on pre- and post-workshop conference calls, attending the in-person workshop and assembling any additional information upon request.*

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| a. First name. | d. Organization name. |
| b. Last name. | e. Email address. |
| c. Professional Title. | f. Phone number. |

4. **List of Team Members.** *Teams must consist of at least one county official, one representative from the local arts community and one representative from the sector they wish to engage (e.g., transportation, behavioral health, youth services, etc.). Teams must have no fewer than the required three members. Strong applications will include local artists or designers and representatives from arts nonprofits, community development organizations, area businesses and Chambers of Commerce, philanthropic organizations, hospitals, educational institutions, and/or other critical stakeholders in your community. A maximum of two representatives from a given organization are allowed to participate on a team. If you have questions about your team's make up, please contact the Creative Counties project team at creativecounties@naco.org for guidance.*
 - a. Name.
 - b. Professional Title.
 - c. Organization name.
 - d. Email address.
 - e. Phone number.
 - f. Sector the member represents (i.e., county, regional organization, workforce development, school, philanthropy, private sector, city, town, etc.).
 - g. Short biography highlighting role in the partnership.

5. **Work Samples.** *Work samples are a great way to show examples of projects that you and your partners have completed in the past and/or are working on now. It is up to you to determine the images or video clips that are most relevant to and best support your application. The work can be from any individual or partner involved in the project. Samples should be recent and of high quality. Each image/clip should include a title and short description. Note: Your application will not be judged negatively if you do not have work samples. Due to the nature of this program, some teams will not have work samples as they are just starting their initiative(s) or their previous work was not documented by media.*
 - a. **Images:** Images should be submitted in a single PDF. A maximum of 20 images will be reviewed. Each file has a size limit of 5 MB.
 - b. **Videos:** Videos should be submitted in a PDF with a URL that links to the video. Please include any necessary information on required passwords, plug-ins or navigation paths. A maximum of two videos will be reviewed for a maximum of two minutes each. If you would like a specific portion of a video reviewed, please indicate the appropriate time stamps.

6. **Letter of Commitment.** *Applicant must demonstrate intent and capacity to conduct follow-up activities, including implementation of ideas generated at the workshop and a project evaluation.*
- a. **Main Point of Contact.** Please have the Main Point of Contact commit to participate in the pre-workshop webinar, the in-person workshop, individual team mentoring calls and full cohort webinars, and to assembling any additional information as requested ahead of the workshop and at the conclusion of the team's mentoring.
 - b. **Other Team Members.** Please have all team members commit to participate in the pre-workshop webinar, the workshop (in-person or remotely), individual team mentoring calls, and at least two of the full cohort webinars.