

MAKING THE CASE FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

As we worked through the collaborative inquiry process, we determined that each of us would have to begin by communicating why community engagement is vital to the future of arts organizations.

Excerpts from 5 LDI Making the Case Statements

The very origins of art were communal: a means of expressing ideas, connecting to fellow humans, sharing culture, and serving the social health and greater good of the communities that created it... Relationships must be the driving force if we are to sustain our organizations and the field itself.

-Judy Oliver-Turner, Hands On Children's Museum

Unless our arts organizations continuously evaluate our missions and evolve our programming to reflect the communities in which we serve, we run the risk of becoming irrelevant and impotent as a force for social and cultural change in our cities.

-Shirley Elliott, Tulsa Performing Arts Center Trust

Arts play a strong role in community making. Engagement and participation serve to build community... Without strong relationships; we cannot align our efforts with our community needs, motivations, and experiences.

-Sharon Fantl, Redfern Arts Center/Keene State College

The opportunities provided by authentic engagement with community far outweigh the challenges... In learning what is important to our communities, we can create projects that inspire and have a lasting impact. It's a way to make arts a relevant and necessary commodity in the lives of our community.

-Bobby Asher, Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center

In the advent of the 21st century, there is a symbiotic and converse relationship between the sustainability of the arts sector and the sustainability of the community in which it exists. Communities are more vibrant and sustainable with a thriving arts sector. Artists/arts organizations have access to more resources and greater support in thriving communities – more freedom and resources in which to fulfill their missions.

-Rachel Y. DeGuzman, Rochester City Ballet

Some Questions to Consider When Answering: Why it is Important to Know and Connect with the Community, From the Perspective of Your Own Experience?

1. **How would you define your community?** *This answer could be different for each of us. At this point in time, what is your understanding of your community? It could be that your*

mission statement helps define your community.

2. **Where would you begin in order to make the case?** *Who are your audiences for this*

case statement? Your staff? Board? Donors? Community partners?

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for a user to write their response to the question below.

3. What would be lost in your community, if your organization did not exist?