



# CREATIVE CITYMAKING & CREATIVE RESPONSE FUND EVALUATION

The Office of Arts, Culture & the Creative  
Economy at the City of Minneapolis

# THE OFFICE OF ARTS, CULTURE & THE CREATIVE ECONOMY, CITY OF MINNEAPOLIS

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## CREATIVE CITYMAKING & CREATIVE RESPONSE FUND EVALUATION TEAM

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Black, Native and other artists of color in Minnesota play a critical role in using the arts to respond to community emergencies. In particular, they're uniquely positioned to address immediate needs and opportunities in the communities most affected by police violence and other harm inflicted by the City of Minneapolis.

Even when there isn't a particular crisis, artists play a critical role in responding to the ongoing trauma of racism within Minneapolis local governance. These community artists are partners to City staff interested in relationship-based problem-solving and community engagement to advance racial equity.

The Creative CityMaking (CCM) program pairs City of Minneapolis staff from various departments with experienced local artists. With these partnerships, we aim to generate new approaches and new ways of thinking and acting that lift up the voices of Black, Native and other residents of color.

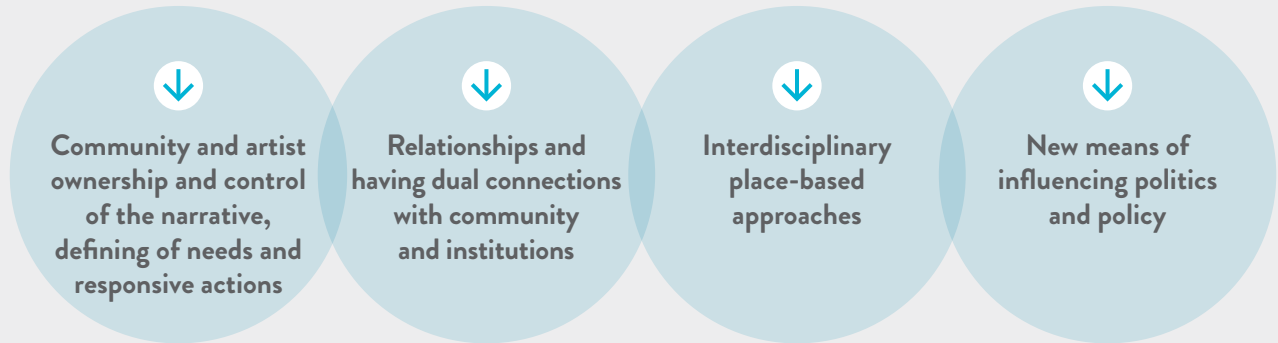
Originally funded by Artplace America in 2013, CCM was designed by the Office of Arts, Culture & the Creative Economy (ACCE) at the City of Minneapolis in collaboration with Intermedia Arts. The Kresge Foundation's Arts & Culture Program has been the most recent funder of CCM, including throughout 2020 when ACCE executed the program in the midst of a worldwide pandemic and the murder of George Floyd by the Minneapolis Police Department on May 25, 2020.

While standard CCM projects were underway, we established the Creative Response Fund (CRF) in the aftermath of the community uprisings in June 2020, repurposing grant resources provided by the Kresge Foundation to the CCM program. CRF focused on creative healing and support for

Black, Native and other artists of color respond to the immediate needs of the community members most impacted by inequities within the city, while working with the City enterprise to change perspectives, practices and policies.

communities directly impacted and affected by the escalation of trauma, stress and violence after the murder of George Floyd. We used these funds to mobilize and amplify the unique, specialized skills of artists and designers to engage with the community and expand the impact of healing and support. These grant dollars also recognized the unpaid labor of artists and designers as they responded to multiple health and racism emergencies in their communities.

We identified four common themes across projects and artist approaches to community healing in response to institutional violence:



## LEVELS OF IMPACT

The CCM and CRF programs are two strategies to achieve the City of Minneapolis’ stated vision to eliminate racial disparities. In both programs, Black, Native and other artists of color respond to the immediate needs of the community members most impacted by inequities within the city, while working with the City enterprise to change perspectives, practices and policies. This evaluation report discusses four levels of impact: community members; artists and artist networks; City staff; and City departments and City practices.



### Community members

In the midst of a pandemic that shut down all planned CCM in-person events, CRF artists still managed to engage 1,046 residents through healing-based in-person (COVID-19-safe) or remote events. Most of the participants were Black, Native or other residents of color. Artists created 39 interactive events, six semipermanent art installations, and digital media including three film series, an online multidisciplinary art exhibit and curated social media.



### Artists and artist networks

The investment in artists through both CCM and CRF led to healing for over 65 artists, as well as an expanded, sustained network of artists engaged in relationships with each other and with the City enterprise. Investment also created income opportunities for artists whose employment was curtailed by the halt to in-person events during the pandemic. The stronger the network of highly skilled social change artists, the greater those artists’ impact on their communities and the better their opportunities to earn income.



*“Reminding me to breathe and be mindful of much in the world around me even in the midst of trauma is important.”*

— Artist



## City staff

While many of the artist-designed strategies were cut short or not enacted because of COVID-19, City staff reported experiencing impactful personal and professional growth as well as expanded networks and community partnerships from their participation in CCM. They described how CCM influenced their thinking and approach to their work, which in turn impacts Minneapolis residents.



## City departments and City practices

Through CCM, City departments had an opportunity to establish new patterns for approaching and practicing community engagement. In some cases, those new approaches led to tangible outcomes for the City enterprise's equity goals.<sup>1</sup> For example, Census 2020, a CCM- and CRF-supported effort, saw an increase in completion rates by residents of color.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

While the CCM and CRF programs have been successful in their impacts, ACCE recommends that the City of Minneapolis more fully invest in and commit to an integrated model of leadership by Black, Native and other artists of color in its efforts to address racial inequity across the enterprise. CCM and CRF are different but equally necessary mechanisms for City system change that promotes racial equity. Each program offers the City the opportunity to invest in Black artists and other artists of color as leaders in community development and rebuilding efforts across the enterprise.

To ensure the success of these programs, the City needs to increase ACCE's staffing capacity to handle the high degree of project and people management required: Building bridging relationships and changing systems is complex, time-consuming and emotionally intensive work. The City and ACCE must continually adapt, learn and improve the CCM and CRF programs in an effort to deepen the focus on racial equity and create the identified conditions for success.





# INTRODUCTION & CONTEXT

## THE OFFICE OF ARTS, CULTURE & THE CREATIVE ECONOMY AND CREATIVE CITYMAKING

The mission of the Office of Arts, Culture & the Creative Economy (ACCE) is to grow social and economic capital in Minneapolis through investment in artist entrepreneurs and the creative sector. With the Creative CityMaking (CCM) program, we've developed innovative roles for artists within City government, demonstrating the social impact that artists and the creative sector can have on traditional government practices.

We began CCM in partnership with the nonprofit Intermedia Arts. In 2017, we started fully transitioning the program into the City of Minneapolis, administered by ACCE. CCM is part of a constellation of strategic City initiatives that work in partnership with residents toward the City's stated vision of eliminating racial disparities. CCM enacts the City's mission to take strategic action to "dismantle institutional injustice and close disparities in health, housing, public safety and economic opportunities."<sup>1</sup>

CCM addresses racial inequities by creating partnerships between City staff and experienced community artists, primarily Black, Native and other artists of color. The partnerships are intended to generate new field-tested arts-based approaches to developing healthy, equitable communities through engagement with Minneapolis residents and City staff. Together, City staff and artist partners wrestle with the assumptions, practices and policies that give white residents more access to decision-making power. They identify new ways to establish and operate practices that address white supremacy and center the voices and autonomy of Black, Native and other residents of color.

## The evolution of Creative CityMaking

ACCE worked with Intermedia Arts as a key partner in facilitating and implementing CCM since its demonstration year in 2013, when we imbedded seven artists in the Long Range Planning Division of the City's Community Planning & Economic Development Department (CPED). In 2015, nine more artists began partnerships, in the City Clerk's Office, Information Technology, Regulatory Services and Neighborhood & Community Relations. We also brought in a new artist team to continue the partnership with CPED. CCM activity in 2013 and 2015 engaged over 2,500 residents on key community and City planning issues. Most of these residents had not previously participated in a City planning process.

The program also engaged 49 City staff members focused on recognizing and shifting internal City culture to promote equitable relationships with residents of color. Of the 2015 artist-City partnerships, three projects were extended beyond 12 months, with one artist team continuing to partner with its City department for four years due to the demonstrated value to participating City staff. One of the departments later hired an artist partner as a staff member. Another artist, who had focused on electoral engagement during his CCM year, is now a sitting City Council member.

## 2019: ACCE's first year as sole program facilitator

As noted, in previous years we facilitated CCM in partnership with Intermedia Arts, a local multidisciplinary, multicultural arts center. Intermedia Arts played key roles as fiscal sponsor and in providing creative input and project management and logistical support for artist-City staff teams. It also hosted quarterly cross-team gatherings and a year-end exhibit and community forum. When Intermedia Arts closed unexpectedly in 2018, we needed to pivot quickly to assume the project management needs of CCM. We promoted a part-time program manager to full-time and hired a project manager to take on the responsibilities previously held by Intermedia Arts. Additional contractors were brought on as needed to support facilitation, design, development, implementation and project documentation.



# TIMELINE OF CREATIVE CITYMAKING

## PILOT

ACCE and Intermedia Arts work together to pilot, develop and implement the CCM program.

- Artplace America provides funding in 2013.
- NEA and Kresge provide funding 2014–2016.

2013

2014

2015

2016

2017

## GROWTH

ACCE hires part-time program manager (Amelia Brown) to manage three of the 2015 projects continuing beyond initial year. NEA awards additional funding to ACCE.

- CCM works with three artist-City staff teams (Regulatory Services, Neighborhood & Community Relations (NCR) and Long Range Planning) to extend their projects. NCR and Long Range Planning complete by the end of 2017. Regulatory Services continues to 2019.
- NCR hires one of its artist partners as a permanent staff member.
- ACCE receives Kresge funding.
- ACCE expands part-time program manager to full-time with Kresge funding.
- Program manager moves relevant CCM management functions from Intermedia Arts to ACCE. We expect Intermedia to keep delivering CCM program evaluation and training.
- CCM scopes new projects from City departments, choosing Race & Equity, CPED and Public Works, and recruits two artist teams for Race & Equity and one team for CPED. CPED later decides not to engage the artist team, and Race & Equity declines project management support.



## UNEXPECTED CHANGE

Intermedia Arts unexpectedly closes.

- ACCE redesigns program elements, creates new program structures and adds evaluation design and artist and City staff training into CCM work plan.
- CCM evaluates new project proposals due to Race & Equity's decline of project management support and CPED's withdrawal. Selects NCR and the Office of Sustainability to be in 2018 cohort along with Public Works. Begins artist recruitment.

## PANDEMIC & UPRISING

Three CCM projects had to pivot mid-year due to pandemic.

- One project team withdrew (Public Works).
- Two project teams continue with pivot plans, all complete by fall of 2020.
- CRF developed, 10 artist teams recruited from CCM artist pool.
- 10 CRF projects complete by January 2021.
- RFP for next round of CRF grants issued.

2018

2019

2020

2021

## NEW START

We complete artist recruitment, hiring and onboarding for NCR, Public Works and Sustainability projects.

- ACCE hires new CCM project manager (Teeko Yang).
- ACCE hires CCM evaluation team (Rainbow Research).



# COMPOUNDING CRISES: THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC AND POLICE VIOLENCE AGAINST BLACK AND OTHER PEOPLE OF COLOR

By March of 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic was in full force in Minnesota, and the governor declared a peacetime state of emergency. By the end of 2020, over 5,000 Minnesotans would have died from COVID-19 and over 400,000 Minnesotans would have been infected.<sup>2</sup> In addition to the direct loss of life caused by the pandemic, Minnesota saw increases in death through drug overdoses,<sup>3</sup> and it experienced documented increases in food insecurity, mental illness and depression, homelessness and the need for basic services.<sup>4</sup> Racial disparities exist in each of these areas, with Black, Native and other people of color experiencing disproportionate harm.<sup>5</sup>

During the pandemic, artists lost income and funding as gigs and in-person events were canceled. In the cycle of the CCM program, many teams had landed on proposed project plans in March and were about to start community engagement activities. The COVID-19 pandemic severely disrupted CCM project implementation and caused agreed-upon plans to be scrapped and exchanged for digital or remote-only formats. On top of that, artists and City staff were experiencing the fatigue and stress of income loss, job insecurity, working from home, increased at-home parenting responsibilities, and other COVID-19-related stressors.

Compounding this crisis, in May of 2020 the Minneapolis police murdered George Floyd, a Black resident, in the Powderhorn neighborhood of south Minneapolis. Public outcry and community protest against racially motivated police violence sparked an intense civil uprising and the destruction of buildings along Lake Street in south Minneapolis, including the 3rd Precinct Minneapolis Police station, buildings along Broadway in North Minneapolis, and other parts of the city.<sup>6</sup>

The two-block radius around the site of the killing, now known as George Floyd Square, saw a sustained occupation and became a self-described autonomous zone for remembrance and mutual aid, the future of which is now under negotiation. Past and present CCM artists and ACCE staff engaged as first responders at the site and in other impacted communities, providing immediate cultural care to predominantly Black residents in the midst of complex grief, rage and trauma. This labor was largely uncompensated. Artists, primarily Black or other artists of color, responded to the immediate needs of the community by being present in protest spaces, by holding spaces and conversations for grief and trauma, and by organizing for City accountability. Likewise, ACCE staff were present in the community, practicing deep listening to the needs of community members and artists.

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*“Emergencies not only create new problems, but compound existing issues. They also offer opportunities to create new solutions.”*

— Amelia Brown, from  
“Art Became the Oxygen:  
An Artistic Response Guide”

## Creative Response Fund

In response to the community uprisings, ACCE developed the Creative Response Fund (CRF) by repurposing Kresge Foundation grant resources that had been slated for projects canceled due to COVID-19. Our aim with CRF was to start the process of healing and support in the community by harnessing the unique perspectives, talents and relationships of artists and designers. Artists and designers who do this kind of community emergency response work are often unpaid. With these grant dollars, we were able to appropriately recognize their labor. We gave priority to Black artists with prior experience working with CCM or with communities that have historically experienced racial discrimination.

## BASIS FOR THIS EVALUATION

### Creative CityMaking 2019 cohort

Although cut short by the pandemic, in 2019 the CCM program provided resources and project support for three teams of artists to work in collaboration with Public Works, the Office of Sustainability, and Neighborhood & Community Relations.

#### **Neighborhood & Community Relations – 2020 census**

Artists Anna Meyer and Roxanne Anderson collaborated with the department to improve BIPOC and LGBTQIA participation in the 2020 census. The census has long been a tool used by government to organize and provide resources to communities, but it has undercounted the same communities that are also underrepresented in decision-making. By collaborating with community artists on the 2020 census, the City was acknowledging the historic racism of this tool and data collection process and evaluating how racial equity can become an organizing principle of the City's census activities.

#### **Department of Public Works – Midtown Greenway wayfinding**

A 2016 study, "Making the Connection: Midtown Greenway to Lake Street," found that traditional and unconventional wayfinding elements were needed on this greenway in the middle of Minneapolis so more people would use it, particularly communities near the trail that are unaware of it or don't feel welcome to it. Artists Molly Van Avery and Masanari Kawahara provided creative insight into community needs and expanded the definition of wayfinding to include access, learning and connection

to the greenway for underserved and underrepresented communities. These communities include those with low incomes, those whose first language isn't English, those with limited literacy and those who need Americans with Disabilities (ADA) accessibility.

#### **Office of Sustainability – Southside Green Zone**

The Southside Green Zone program was in transition from a more top-down, City-led process to a more community-led organizing structure. This initiative worked to promote environmental health and justice in the Phillips and Cedar-Riverside neighborhoods. These low-income, high-BIPOC communities are overburdened with environmental issues.

Artist Rory Wakemup collaborated with City staff and community organizers to co-create and organize community-led solutions for:

- Green economy and anti-displacement
- Air, water and soil quality
- Healthy food access
- Environmental health and energy efficiency in housing

## Creative Response Fund 2020

The Creative Response Fund, built from repurposed Creative CityMaking resources, formed a fiscal-agency partnership with Arts Midwest to quickly distribute grant proceeds. Ten current or former CCM artists were chosen for CRF projects and invited to create larger teams for implementation.

### Art for Nervous Systems

Lead artists: Candida Gonzalez and Creatives After Curfew

Artists created a series of four instructive healing murals aimed at making knowledge about simple herbal/energetic medicines accessible to the public. The murals shared information about medicine that can help our communities in times of change and healing.

Subjects included how to identify and use plantain weed to cure bug bites, common plants that grow in Minneapolis and the benefits of using them for tea, a simple meditation exercise and an energy-clearing exercise. The project not only provided useful information, but also affirmed the existence of non-monetized Indigenous healing knowledge.

Creatives After Curfew is a decentralized collective of BIPOC/queer artists and allies that mobilized during the community uprisings in June 2020 to share resources, skills and knowledge as a contribution to the movement. This evolving collaboration between Minneapolis artists creates art to soothe, remember, build and imagine a future rooted in justice and liberation.

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### Africanish

Lead artists: Caroline Karanja, Wasima Farah and Abla Elmi

A space to explore healing, storytelling and community building, this project explored the impact of the months of turmoil on the mental health and well-being of East African women and immigrants. The members of the collective shared their personal stories and the stories of the broader community on social media platforms. These stories were then integrated and reimagined as illustration and audio clips in an engaging digital storybook.

People viewing the storybook could comment on it and provide feedback and insight, creating a participatory experience.



## **New Neighbors: Building Community Through Film**

Lead artist: E.G. Bailey

“New Neighbors,” an award-winning film about race, culture, housing, belonging, safety and the policing of Black people, was selected for the 2016 Sundance Film Festival and has been screened at over 115 film festivals across the globe.

For the first time, director and screenwriter E.G. Bailey held a series of screenings in Minneapolis at parks, outdoor spaces and backyards. These screenings included community dialogue around the issues raised in the film, as well as the community’s issues and needs in the aftermath of the civil uprising.

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## **excited delirium**

Lead artist: D.A. Bullock

The artist created a series of five projections of Black artists and performers onto different damaged or destroyed spaces in North Minneapolis and the Bryant Central neighborhood. The projection experiences took place as an exhibition over one week.

The artist documented and delivered the experiences through a written journal and photos, then combined and edited the documentation into a final video.

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## **Harvest Feast**

Lead artists: Sayge Carroll and Keegan Xavi

This project was a partnership to connect arts and healing activities through food, art-making and acts of collective nurturing in the artists’ respective Northside and Southside neighborhoods. This joint community project connected two Minneapolis neighborhoods with events tailored to each location.

Each artist hosted a neighborhood gathering centered around food, music, performance and the distribution of arts activity kits and artist-made dinnerware. The artists also hosted “Tiny Art” workshops with YO MAMA’S HOUSE and distributed “Tiny Art Kits.”

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## **Communities’ Wisdom, Imagination and Connection (CWIC)**

Lead artists: Mankwe Ndosì and Griffen Jeffries

Six community events in the fall of 2020 engaged residents of the Phillips, Central, Powderhorn, Bryant, Bancroft, Corcoran and Standish neighborhoods in South Minneapolis. Through the use of creative practice and trauma-healing frameworks, artists created spaces where participants could share their wisdom, opinions and experiences. Events were outdoors or online and occurred in areas affected by the uprisings or in the sanctuaries of unhoused residents.

Community members had the opportunity to pull apart questions of justice, safety, accountability and culture-shifting that help us reimagine how we care for each other as we create the future of Minneapolis.

## **Rising From the Ashes**

Lead artists: Roxanne Anderson and Anna Meyer

The artists engaged in creative healing and support with communities disproportionately impacted by the violence and trauma of the murder of George Floyd and the subsequent uprising. Their project supported local queer, trans, Black, brown and Indigenous artists who were creating art during the uprising in Minneapolis.

The project artists facilitated a short series of online group sessions of healing support and dialogue with the community artists to support their own healing and creativity. They also curated an online art exhibit featuring the community artists' work.

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## **Haircuts for Change**

Lead artist: Sam Ero-Phillips

Artists hosted pop-up locations for haircuts and self-care along Lake St. and Chicago Ave. to support Black healing, Black beauty and Black community-building in South Minneapolis. The events were held in collaboration with BareBones puppet theater's fall 2020 performance: "PASSAGES: Mourning the Fires of Lake Street."

Artists created an intentional and beautiful space that adapted to and supported Black community members from all walks of life — families, elders, people with disabilities, LGBTQIA folks, children, women and men — to help them process grief. The project helped rebuild communities through micro-interactions, made practices of beauty and self-care accessible, and empowered people to leave with a little more self-love, inspiration and peace.

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## **At the corner of \_\_\_\_\_**

Lead artist: Sha Cage

A series of three site-specific videos were based on interviews and reflections with Black and brown community members. The videos met community members where they were in their daily lives — at the intersections of work and community — and gave them an opportunity to express what they were holding in that moment.

Participants could share creatively and speak the truth about their reality. Videos were shared on digital platforms and social media.

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## **CarryOn Homes Northeast**

Lead artists: Witt Siasoco and the CarryOn Homes team (Aki Shibata, Zoe Cinel, Preston Drum, Peng Wu and Shun Jie Yong)

The artists created an installation to celebrate immigrant contributions, promote healing through art-making and drive census participation in Northeast Minneapolis. Over six weeks, four events aimed to heal through art-making and to engage residents in the census process.

At each event, artists encouraged neighbors to contribute to a large installation of flags with messages of the importance of immigrants to Northeast Minneapolis.



## RAINBOW RESEARCH EVALUATION AND THIS REPORT

Rainbow Research, a nonprofit research firm known for conducting participatory and culturally responsive evaluations, served as the evaluation partner for the 2019 CCM cohort, and by extension for CRF. Its focus was using fractal thinking<sup>7</sup> to implement a developmental evaluation for adaptive action<sup>8</sup> and to observe and document lessons learned. Fractal thinking encourages observations of patterns that reflect across levels, understanding that the system changes we want to see must also be practiced within small interactions and individual relationships. In this model, Rainbow Research played the role of a reflective mirror embedded within CCM.

Rainbow Research identified patterns and points of tension throughout the duration of the 2019 CCM cohort and the CRF initiative. It continually shared observations and critical questions with us so we could adapt and evolve. In this highly participatory style of evaluation, Rainbow Research staff acted in the role of reflective partner and observer. They met monthly with Amelia Brown, CCM program manager and director of the evaluation rollout, to review observations based on collected data and discuss implications for the program or within the evaluation plan itself.

The evaluation sought to identify and document intended as well as unforeseen outcomes from the CCM 2019 cohort and the CRF grant program.

## Methods and roles

Rainbow Research, ACCE staff and additional consulting partners gathered data using methods including interviews, exit surveys, ongoing reporting mechanisms, and asking reflective questions at artist-City staff meetings.

Elliott Payne of Sense Datum played a crucial role in the evaluation at various touch points. As the evaluation began, Elliott led a series of meetings with ACCE staff and Rainbow Research to complete the evaluation plan and ensure alignment with other data and storytelling initiatives within the department.

Stuart Deets, Ph.D. candidate at the University of Minnesota working under the direction of Brenda Kayzar, Ph.D., founder of Urbane DrK Consulting and long-time research partner of ACCE, conducted a qualitative evaluation with CRF artists to explore their connection to their communities and their approach to healing.

Elliott, Brenda and Amelia also served as reflective partners to Rainbow, periodically reviewing fresh findings and helping to frame the evaluation analysis and reporting, with Brenda acting in Amelia's stead to complete the report (see page 43).

Teeko Yang, CCM project manager, designed artist playbooks with which to collect additional information, and she documented her own observations of the dynamics of artist-City staff teams, particularly points of tension, through monthly tracking.

## Key evaluation data collection activities

Method & Audience	Purpose	Lead Team Members
Midpoint interviews, CCM artists (2019 only) and City staff	Document definitions of success to date, lessons learned and adaptation	Rainbow Research
Reflective facilitation in CCM artist-City staff team meetings and during artist-City staff final gathering	Document outcomes, lessons learned	Rainbow Research
Exit interviews, CCM artists and City staff	Document outcomes, lessons learned	Rainbow Research
Exit surveys, CCM artists and City staff	Document outcomes	Rainbow Research
Ongoing monthly reporting (tension reports, artist playbooks)	Document progress toward project implementation and adaptations, sources of tension, and community engagement	Teeko Yang, ACCE
Entry interviews (before project implementation), CRF artists	Document artists' connection to community and approach to healing	Stuart Deets, UMN
Exit interviews, CRF artists	Document outcomes, lessons learned	Rainbow Research
Exit reporting, CRF artists	Document project implementation and community engagement	Teeko Yang, ACCE



To prepare for the final report, Rainbow Research recorded and transcribed all interviews and uploaded them into NVivo, a software that supports qualitative analysis. It grouped the data into categories defined by lessons learned and different levels of change (within artist-City staff partnerships, within the community and within the City enterprise). Rainbow Research held “Data Dive” meetings with the ACCE team and all participating artists and City staff during the analysis phase to review and contextualize its findings and identify major themes for this report. The findings presented here reflect the priorities of ACCE, partnering consultants and participating artists and City staff.

## Lessons learned and recommendations

The report’s findings are presented as lessons learned and recommendations. Lessons learned fall into four sections:

→ **Acknowledging pain in racial equity system change work.** Describes a consistent pattern of staff acknowledging harm done by the City enterprise, which we detected early in the evaluation, and how we responded. This finding was a priority issue for participating artists and City staff.

→ **Impacts.** Summarizes the impact of CCM and CRF on community members, participating artists and City staff, and the City enterprise.

→ **Creative Response Fund.** Describes how artists approached the design and implementation of CRF and integrates findings from the work of Stuart Deets and Brenda Kayzar.

→ **Latest iteration of Creative CityMaking.** Explores in more detail the best practices, challenges and suggestions defined by participating artists and City staff related to the CCM model.

We conclude the report with our recommendations for the Creative CityMaking and Creative Response Fund programs at the City of Minneapolis. Unless otherwise noted, recommendations are those of participating artists and City staff. These recommendations can show the way forward for any city or government enterprise considering adopting the CCM or CRF models of artist investment and partnership.

ACCE’s intention with this report is to contribute to the growing body of knowledge of the role and value of artist change-makers for city system change. Our vision is to re-create city structures around personal relationships, human interactions and the absence of racialized oppression.





# ACKNOWLEDGING PAIN IN RACIAL EQUITY SYSTEM CHANGE WORK

On May 25, 2020, Black community member George Floyd was murdered by Minneapolis police. This was the latest incident in a long history of police violence toward Black, Native and other residents of color, residents with other marginalized identities and some white residents. It came toward the end of the 2019 CCM cohort year that had already been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Systemic violence at the hands of police is part of a continuum of race-based violence perpetrated by city enterprises. The compounding racial traumas, including the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on communities of color, caused emotional anguish for every person of color and others who had been working tirelessly within the City enterprise and within the community to address white supremacy in government and its effects on Black, Native and other residents of color. The uprising after the murder added to the urgency of the conversation around racial equity within the City enterprise. City staff and artists identified this as a moment of possibility for significant structural change as the City was forced to confront hard truths about its practices.

Artists and City staff of color acknowledged experiencing harm in previous interactions with City bureaucracy or in their role as change agents within the City. Artists and staff of color described being disregarded and openly disrespected and experiencing bureaucratic barriers that discredited their expertise and professionalism (e.g., assumed incompetence or naivete).

Acknowledge that artists and staff of color are bearing the weight of navigating the painful tensions of doing racial equity system change work within a city enterprise while the city enterprise actively propagates harm to communities of color.

Further, when in the community, artists and staff must navigate the tension of representing or partnering with the City while community members are grieving the harm done to BIPOC communities by the City enterprise. This real tension, as well as the work climate within the City enterprise that discredits and undermines the leadership of Black staff and other staff of color, must be acknowledged and addressed for the City of Minneapolis to authentically work toward one of its goals: an absence of racial disparities. While this necessary acknowledgement is grounded in the present context of Minneapolis, it has implications for all sectors of government working to address racial disparities, as we expect similar patterns are occurring within city enterprises and other levels of government across the nation.

## Responding with self-care funds

ACCE recognized the experience of Black and other artists of color in the CCM program and understood that the emotional impact to them would be exacerbated by working in an environment charged with the impacts of a health pandemic, police murders and civil uprising. Therefore, as part of the specially created CRF grant program, we piloted the distribution of self-care funds. These funds explicitly acknowledged the spiritual, psychological and physical toll that doing racial equity and healing work takes on artists. The funds were distributed to each participating CRF artist to be used at their discretion at the completion of their projects.

We were not able to offer self-care funds to City staff of color given the parameters of the CRF program and funding, but we acknowledge that they also were navigating the tension and stress of being part of the City enterprise while simultaneously belonging to a community that experiences harm at the hands of the enterprise.



*“I especially appreciate that CCM and ACCE were willing to take on some of the hard questions and intense interrogation of [the] City enterprise that was contained in our projects. We did not shy away from the difficult parts that are required for true healing. I really cherish that type of support and honesty.”*

— Artist



CRF artists expressed appreciation for the self-care funds and the explicit acknowledgment of why such funds were needed. In discussing other ways to limit or heal from harm caused through association with the City enterprise, artists and staff identified additional recommendations and lessons learned for other city enterprises. These recommendations are separate from the broader recommendations for the CCM and CRF programs that appear later in this report. We were actively practicing some, but not all, of these recommendations within CCM or CRF.

<p><b>Follow Black leadership</b></p>	<p>Artists and City staff requested demonstrated commitment to resourcing and following Black leadership, such as through program models that directly resource Black artists and city structures that promote and recognize the leadership of BIPOC staff within city systems.</p>
<p><b>Offer easy payment processes and pay artists livable wages for their time</b></p>	<p>Improving payment processes to ensure on-time payments and offering guidance for artists to set hourly wages commensurate with their value are crucial for mitigating harm.</p>
<p><b>Streamline bureaucracy for artists new to city systems</b></p>	<p>Navigating the bureaucracy of permits and proper communication channels, and identifying who has authority over something is time-consuming and wastes the energy of new artists working in partnership with city enterprises. Efforts to streamline bureaucracy, such as providing mentorship on how to navigate city systems or providing a navigator to expedite processes, are ways to mitigate city-caused harm to artists.</p>
<p><b>Be wary of exploitative artist relationships</b></p>	<p>Notice and intervene in situations where artists or the work of artists (e.g., CCM or CRF) are being used for political gain or justification of actions taken by a city enterprise, but without the partnership of the artists. Artists fear that their voices and messages will be appropriated and commodified by others, such as partners in their projects (especially institutions like governments and nonprofits, but also commercial businesses).</p>
<p><b>Do not ignore best practices for developing conditions for success</b></p>	<p>This puts artists and staff in positions where they cannot be successful and exploits artists' relationships. As we discuss later in the report, when city departments do not cultivate the conditions for success (e.g., demonstrated commitment to internal change, leadership buy-in), they are more likely to directly harm artists of color.</p>

# IMPACTS

How this work affected community members, artists, City staff and the City enterprise



CCM and CRF projects impacted community residents, strengthened the networks of local artists and influenced the thinking of City staff.

ACCE's goal with the CCM program is to develop new arts-based approaches to engage traditionally excluded communities in City processes. We also aim to change City culture to achieve the stated City of Minneapolis vision of eliminating racial disparities. Our goal with CRF is to amplify artist-led healing efforts in response to City-enacted violence. While the intended outcomes are different, the community residents, participating artists and the City enterprise are the same; CCM and CRF work together to achieve the long-term goal of decreasing disparities. These projects, like the people involved, are interconnected.

## IMPACT ON COMMUNITY MEMBERS

CRF and CCM artists and artist-City staff teams showcased the power of BIPOC residents seeing themselves reflected in art and artist facilitators. This was critical to engaging residents in City processes, and it also served as a mechanism for building residents' sense of empowerment and community belonging. In addition to driving civic engagement in the moment, this work fostered future civic engagement and resident leadership in community development.

## Creative CityMaking

Due to COVID-19 cancellations, CCM artist-City staff teams were not able to report on residents directly engaged. While direct engagement did occur, it was in the context of artist relationship-building and prototyping, and it was not recorded. CCM artists were still able to create culturally resonant images and produce two video series in partnership with City departments.

- Graphic media for the “We Count Campaign” centering BIPOC and LGBTQIA communities around engagement with the 2020 census. Culturally resonant images were reproduced over 5,500 times as posters, fliers and T-shirts. Nine short videos featuring original poetry, music and art were viewed approximately 300 times.
- A four-part video series exploring key areas of the Southside Green Zone (land use, air and soil; self-determination and accountability; green economy and anti-displacement; and healthy food access) and highlighting the perspective of Green Zone council members, Native community partners and community members of color. The videos were viewed over 300 times.

## Creative Response Fund

CRF artists engaged:

**1,046** residents

through in-person and remote healing events. Artists reported that the majority of their participants were residents of color<sup>2</sup>

Artists created multiple avenues for engagement:

**39** interactive events

including various forms of participatory art-making and/or performance along with curated dialogues between residents and artists

**6** semipermanent art installations

consisting of 5 murals and a community altar and stage

## Digital media channels

**3** film series + An online multidisciplinary art exhibit + Curated social media



## Spaces for dialogue and healing

In the context of both COVID-19 and systemic racism and racial violence, CRF artists created psychologically and physically safe healing spaces, in some cases for BIPOC residents only and in other cases for residents of all races.



*“This experience provided a space for me to interact in different forms of healing with people of color who are queer and have many shared experiences with me which is difficult at any given time, but especially right now. This process allowed me to participate in different forms of healing that I might have interest in but never give myself the time to do. I’m grateful for this experience in so many ways.”*

– Community participant

In these spaces, residents engaged in necessary conversations around systemic injustice and racism. Many projects also included activities around the reimagining, reclaiming and remembering of spaces that had been destroyed. These conversations and reimaginings led to shifting narratives and perspectives, with residents asking different questions of themselves and the City. Artists described this process as essential to developing a relationship with residents and strengthening their sense of ownership, both of which can serve as a foundation for future engagement as the City redevelops these spaces and neighborhoods.



*“Each gathering ended with people wanting more of them — feeling how different they are from town halls, and how much more connected and active they felt. These gatherings could become part of the culture of how Minneapolis works on and works out how to move forward together as neighbors. They could be part of building the trust and connection that make everyone feel more belonging and more safety in our neighborhoods because we know and respect more of our neighbors.”*

– Artist



## IMPACT ON ARTISTS AND ARTIST NETWORKS

When funded, artists build the capacity of and support the advancement of other artists. Our investment in artists through both CCM and CRF led to healing for artists, as well as an expanded, sustained artist network engaged in relationships with each other and with the City.

Artists in both CCM and CRF reported participating in the program because of existing relationships and trust with ACCE. And for each artist with an existing relationship with ACCE, approximately four more artists, mainly Black and other artists of color, were brought into relationship with ACCE and were compensated for their expertise. Artists of color hire and mentor other artists of color — expanding the reach of ACCE beyond the pool of officially contracted artists to other new or established BIPOC artists.

Through contracts and other channels of accessing mentorship and influence, subcontracted artists in particular were able to grow their personal and professional networks, showcase their work to a larger audience, build their careers and, in some cases, learn, practice and build competency in new techniques. A subset of artists also acknowledged having a continued role within the City through new or continued contracts beyond the CCM or CRF programs.

CRF artists reported experiencing healing simply through participation in the CRF process. Additionally, one CRF project specifically focused on artist sustainability, healing and well-being to help artists continue on in community healer/activist roles.

### CRF

**13** artists funded | 92% BIPOC  
77% Black

**52** additional artists | 88% BIPOC  
58% Black  
were subcontracted and compensated for their work

### CCM

**5** artists funded | 80% BIPOC  
20% Black

**6** additional artists  
were subcontracted and compensated for their work



## IMPACT ON CITY STAFF

City staff involved in CCM reported experiencing personal and professional growth and expanded networks and community partnerships due to their participation.<sup>10</sup>



*“This relationship between us, I think this has had an impact on the City. ... On an institution level, I had a moment last week, when one of my [staff] was asking for resources for a family that was directly impacted by COVID-19, undocumented family, no insurance, and now in critical condition, and I’m asked what the City can do. My response was like what is the expectation of the City at this point? You think the City is going to reach out to each individual family and check in with them? That’s ridiculous. ... And my learning through this is.... it’s not just seeing the signs “We count,” it’s feeling them. We can communicate that to our residents that each and every one counts. So then I had to go back and talk with my staff person and then say, hey my response was not seeing the human being in that situation. So then we came up with a response — is there a way the City can acknowledge this human being going through a terrible situation right now, and why couldn’t we? And that’s tied back to this work, because I’m learning from [the artists].”*

— City staff

Staff reported the following impacts:

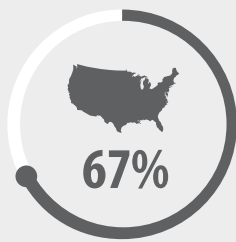
- ✓ **Built relationships and networks with artists they intend to continue; built new or extended relationships with community partners, specifically BIPOC community-based organizations and residents**
- ✓ **Influenced how they think about and approach their work, which in turn impacts Minneapolis residents**

Even staff with limited tangible outcomes reported they would be interested in participating again and would recommend CCM to other staff.

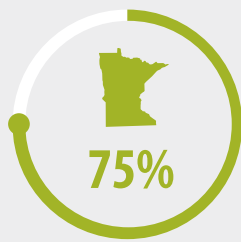


# IMPACT ON CITY DEPARTMENTS AND CITY PRACTICES

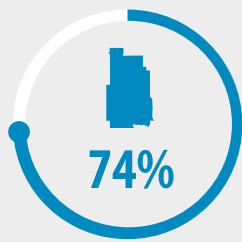
Through CCM,<sup>11</sup> City departments had an opportunity to practice new patterns for community engagement, despite many of the artist-designed strategies having been cut short or not fully executed because of COVID-19. Even when limited to graphic and digital media, such as the Census 2020 project, artists demonstrated how City messaging can be rooted in relationships and affirmation of the existence and worth of BIPOC and LGBTQIA residents. This work, along with additional efforts led by 2020 Census Operations and Engagement Manager Alberder Gillespie, made progress toward the department’s identified racial equity goal of improving self-reported census completion by Minneapolis BIPOC residents.



**National self-response rate for 2020 census**  
(66% in 2010)



**Minnesota self-response rate for 2020 census**  
(74% in 2010)



**Minneapolis self-response rate for 2020 census**  
(73% in 2010)



*“[We’ve had internal discussions] for weeks now about the need for culturally meaningful messaging in culturally meaningful ways. ... The City government cannot produce this image, this video, this song. Those messages are more meaningful, and the City cannot make them like that. ... Those examples from CCM [show] this is how it can be done differently, and should be done differently now in how messages go out.”*

— City staff





# CREATIVE RESPONSE FUND

What we learned about this new  
strategy piloted by necessity

The Creative Response Fund (CRF) was piloted out of necessity in response to a traumatized community reeling from the police murder of George Floyd, the resulting civil uprising, and a history of police violence toward Black, Native and other residents of color.

Funding was allocated directly to artists and designers who had a prior relationship with CCM, with priority given to Black, Native and other artists of color. Artists are deeply connected to communities and play a powerful role in helping them heal. Artists and their work are important connectors between communities and local government institutions, even without a specific City partner or City-directed goal. For example, unlike in CCM, there were no City department partners in the CRF program, so artists could define for themselves what healing meant and looked like in practice. Through this process, artists practiced a new way of partnering with ACCE for community engagement, in this case centered on healing.

Before the CRF projects started, Stuart Deets interviewed the artists about their backgrounds, experience and aspirations as community artists. From the resulting qualitative data, Deets, Brenda Kayzar and ACCE identified four common themes around artist approaches to community healing in response to institutional violence.



**Community and artist ownership and control of the narrative, defining of needs and responsive actions.** These artists and the communities they work with are deeply concerned with self-determination, especially as it relates to the community's perception of needs and control over their own narrative and supportive intervention.



**Interdisciplinary place-based approach.** While not all of the artists explicitly identified themselves as community artists, they all had interdisciplinary knowledge that comes only from a deep relationship to place. They used this knowledge and connection to place-based communities and spaces to their advantage when working with the community.



**Relationships and having dual connections with community and institutions.** Artists identified an obligation to the community to work ethically and responsibly while doing something worthwhile. They also acknowledged being wary of institutions in spite of their role and opportunity to work within them to accomplish their goals. Artists reported needing to know how to work within institutions as a survival tactic, not only as artists, but as people.



**New means of influencing politics and policy.** Artists were concerned with the political and institutional process and sought to introduce new means of influencing politics and policy while also bringing more communities and individuals into the local political process.

Self-determination, for both communities and artists, allows for artists' authenticity. As one artist framed it, self-determination allows artists to both speak truth and to hear the truth that community members are saying, without the community fearing they'll be exploited. Artists described their responsibility to listen and deliver on a need that the community has identified.



*"[The goal is not] to go in and tell [community members] what your ideas are that make their lives better. [For a project] to work, your obligation in that situation is to find out what the needs are. And to listen."*

— Artist

Moreover, because artists are perceived as authentic, they can help to bring new or underrepresented voices into the policymaking and political process, which potentially has high value for institutions looking to engage in transformative work.



*"I have a comfortability with the neighborhood. I know business owners, I know people that don't normally come to meetings. ... The goal is to get, you know, immigrant communities, people of color involved and renters you know, and that isn't the constituency that makes up the neighborhood boards."*

— Artist

Artists draw on relationships with community members to engage those who have not traditionally been involved in policymaking processes. Community members who were skeptical of City systems were more likely to participate in artist-led nonpartisan political activities, such as the census, due to the existing relationships that artists had with the community. Likewise, artists' rich knowledge of places, as reflected by their careful choices about where to host projects, allows them to tap into the history of a place and build on it to further the healing process.

The intentions of the artists' original project proposals remained after project completion, with artists emphasizing **community ownership, control and autonomy**. We directed funding primarily to Black artists and other artists of color to lead community response work, enabling them to expand and deepen their existing relationships with the Black community and other communities of color. All projects were described as expansions of prior or existing efforts that artist organizers were already doing in the community but without active compensation or institutional support.

Funding by the City demonstrated trust in artists' expertise and helped support artists' well-being. In addition to compensating artists for the healing work they already planned to do in the community, CRF funds allowed artists to compensate their collaborative partners, helping to strengthen those relationships. Artists sought partnership with other artists and informal and formal community healers and facilitators (e.g., barbers, youth) with whom they had previously worked and built trusting relationships. Artists sought collaborators with similar approaches to the role of arts in healing. Without this funding, neither artists nor their community collaborators would have been paid for this work. This investment approach drove the observed impact on artists and artist networks.

Given the two emphases on self-determination and relationship-based work, projects were **characterized by prototyping and adaptation, with an emphasis on process over product**. During project rollout, most of the artists veered substantially from their original plan as they followed the lead of community partners. Some projects initially planned to involve multiple locations shifted to a deeper investment in a single location. Conversely, other projects intended to focus on a particular location expanded to include a wider set of residents based on the request of community partners.

Many artist teams actively planned for this adaptation and iteration by first convening partners or prototyping the initial idea, then allowing the group or initial experience to inform next steps. Like other engagement efforts facilitated by artists in partnership with ACCE, in many cases the artists' deliverables were not products but experiences, conversations or processes. Because the funding structure did not require artists to submit updated work plans and wait for approval, it supported these continual adaptations.



*“Another important dialogue that has started in the aftermath of the pandemic and the protest is the need to trust communities of color, Black communities more, and to trust Black artists, and artists in general, more. By trusting artists to be more empowered, to engage with their communities as they best see fit, CCM took a right step in that direction.”*

— Artist



*“There is a need for steady financial support for leadership from within impacted communities, for the long-term slow work including relationship-building over time that leads to deeper community engagement and healing.”*

— Artist

# LATEST ITERATION OF CREATIVE CITYMAKING

What we learned about conditions for success

During the latest iteration of Creative CityMaking, ACCE took on the administrative and program support roles previously held by Intermedia Arts. While CCM is designed to be iterative and adaptive, our expanded role provided a new context and opportunity for learning.

We identified conditions for success within the partnering City departments, artist teams and the CCM program itself. These findings emerged both as “what worked” and as the flip side of challenges or barriers for the 2019 CCM cohort. We pose our findings in the form of questions and answers (conditions for success within partnering City departments and artist teams) or as opportunities for future learning (conditions for success in the program), both of which come from participating artists and City staff. We focused on the 2019 cohort experiences, but some artists and City staff also drew on previous experience with the CCM program.

# CONDITIONS FOR SUCCESS FOR PARTNERING CITY DEPARTMENTS

The following questions and answers illustrate what worked well when present within some teams, and they illuminate what caused barriers when absent for others.

**1 Has the City department demonstrated active commitment to addressing white supremacy at various levels (policies, practices, internal, etc.)?**

## THIS LOOKS LIKE:

- Doing internal work addressing learned and/or embodied white supremacy
- Supporting the transformation of artists' ideas and critiques into new or changed policies and practices that impact community

Promoting racial equity within the City enterprise requires creating culture change and new patterns of community engagement. But first we must confront and address the ways white supremacy is woven into and expressed through City policies and practices as well as through the bodies of City staff. Working to acknowledge and dismantle white supremacy within a department demonstrates a commitment to shifting the internal culture, which must happen before any real and meaningful community-facing shifts can occur.

Within the most recent cohort, CCM projects gained the most traction toward doing the internal work to address learned or embodied white supremacy when departments were also engaging in other efforts led by the Division of Race & Equity. In previous CCM cohorts we have seen some success in converting artists' ideas and critiques into new policies and practices.

**2 Is the City department ready to provide many opportunities for artists to interact with staff beyond the key staff contact? Is the department ready to support staff-focused change strategies?**

## THIS LOOKS LIKE:

- Deeper and broader staff engagement with the CCM project and culture change efforts

In many cases, CCM artists had regular contact only with the key City staff partner. If our intention with CCM is to impact culture change and shift City patterns of engagement and operation, the work cannot be focused only outwardly on community engagement. We must also see strategic change in how City staff and departments do their work.

CCM participants, including City staff, recommended requiring City staff and departments to demonstrate their commitment by providing staff interaction beyond the key staff partner and integrating artists into department teams. The core artist-City staff partnership would determine the best way to do this. Culture change requires changes in policies — and it requires shared language, shared practices and shared ways of being. Artists can be influential in creating culture change only if they have opportunities to engage with full staff teams beyond a single person.



3 Do the City department partners have decision-making authority and full buy-in from department leadership?

**THIS LOOKS LIKE:**

- Ability to pivot until a “yes” appears
- Leadership from multiple entities not a good fit

City department staff must be able to anticipate where project “no’s” and other bureaucratic barriers will arise, and to create the conditions that allow the team to pivot and adapt until a “yes” appears. Projects with cross-department or multijurisdictional leadership (e.g., multi-entity government collaboratives) were not set up for a “yes.” Without full buy-in from collaborating departments or jurisdictions and clear processes for approval, artist-City staff teams cannot meaningfully move forward.

CCM appears to work best within City departments and is not a good resource for committees or entities external to the City enterprise. Further, as partners, departments need to be clear about their own decision-making power structures so they can clearly share limitations with artist partners.



*“We don’t want to waste time on projects that won’t come to fruition. If you know the limitations — tell the artists that upfront. Have City staff say what is possible given the parameters. Those parameters should be set before you even put out the RFP.”*

— Artist



4 Can the City department provide a balance of clarity around what they want the work to do along with openness to the artist team's vision for how to best do the work?

THIS LOOKS LIKE:

- Willingness to try something new and acknowledgement that usual approaches to problem-solving and community engagement are ineffective

CCM is not a resource for City departments with a specific desired product; rather, CCM is a good fit for City partners who can provide clarity on their ultimate goal, along with openness toward how to accomplish that goal. City partners must provide a balance of structure with flexibility.

City staff are often the reality check within an artist-City staff team, applying the brakes to a project or narrowing the project scope. City staff can let the team know of project or department limitations and potential bureaucratic pitfalls to avoid. When this works well, it can help the artist-City staff team solidify reasonable and feasible plans that can be implemented within the project timeline and scope. If City staff aren't clear about limitations and the department's non-negotiable needs, even allowing for artist leadership, the project may progress to be too far outside the scope of what is useful to the City partner.

Yet if the brakes are applied too aggressively, projects will never reach the prototype stage or advance at all. City staff who desire complete control over a project are not a good fit for CCM. Similarly, if a department knows exactly what it wants and just needs someone to execute it, an artist contract may be a better fit. When a department has identified a problem or an opportunity and is open to exploring ways to address it and to critically assessing their assumptions about the problem, CCM is a good fit.

5 Are City staff partners prepared and ready to stay engaged amidst tension and conflict?

Conflict through this process reveals opportunities to challenge assumptions and adapt; it's an expected part of the process. Partners must be ready to continue engaging through conflict. At the same time, CCM program staff can anticipate needing to support teams to process conflict and be resilient and adaptive. This underscores the importance of having ACCE staff to act as liaison/mediator.



Photo: Leslie Clau

# CONDITIONS FOR SUCCESS FOR PARTNERING ARTISTS

The following questions and answers illustrate what worked well when present within some teams, and they illuminate what caused barriers when absent for others.

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**1 Are artists applying in a pair or as part of a team?**

Artist pairs or small artist teams work best, providing an avenue for peer support and sharing of project management tasks. Artists working alone tend to have more challenges in implementing CCM projects and seem to experience more frustration throughout the process.

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**2 Does at least one member of the artist team have previous experience navigating bureaucracy or working with some form of local government or institution? Is at least one member skilled in project management?**

Within artist pairs or teams, one person tends to take on more of the project management responsibilities. In addition, pairs or teams where one member has experience navigating partnerships in local government or other highly structured systems tend to be more successful.

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**3 Do artists have extensive existing relationships with community members and the City, as well as other artists?**

Artists are trusted community members leveraging their existing networks and established community reputation in this work with the City. Because the artists selected to participate in City projects often bring on additional artists to execute the work, their relationship with the City can provide avenues for new, less experienced artists in the network to gain experience and possibly become a lead CCM artist in the future.

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**4 Do artists see their body of work existing within a trajectory of advocating for system change and racial justice?**

In most cases, artists saw CCM as fitting into their existing trajectory of community-engaged artistry for social change. While meeting the needs of the partnering City department, the projects proposed by artists built on their past and future work in the community, with or without City partnership. CCM allows City staff to join as partners in this work and find the intersections between the needs of their department and the social change work of the artists and their communities.

## CONDITIONS FOR SUCCESS FOR THE PROGRAM

ACCE provided program support for CCM artist-City staff teams including facilitating artist selections, approving final project proposals, and providing ongoing logistical and project management support. At each of these key touch points, we learned best practices and opportunities for improvement.

### Supporting artist and department selection process

In alignment with our mission, we've built up social capital — trust and deep relationships — in the arts community. Many participating artists reported they would not partner with the City without our involvement. Likewise, we network with City staff to listen for and identify fertile soil within the City enterprise, i.e., departments ready for system change and/or with projects aligned with CCM goals.

Within the City enterprise, ACCE has built a reputation as an advocate for the interests of artists and for building the practical capacity of City staff to shift how they partner with artists (e.g., how to move from a transaction, like a standard artist contract, to a mutual partnership, as in the CCM program). Like a good matchmaker, we know both the strengths of artists and the context of City departments.

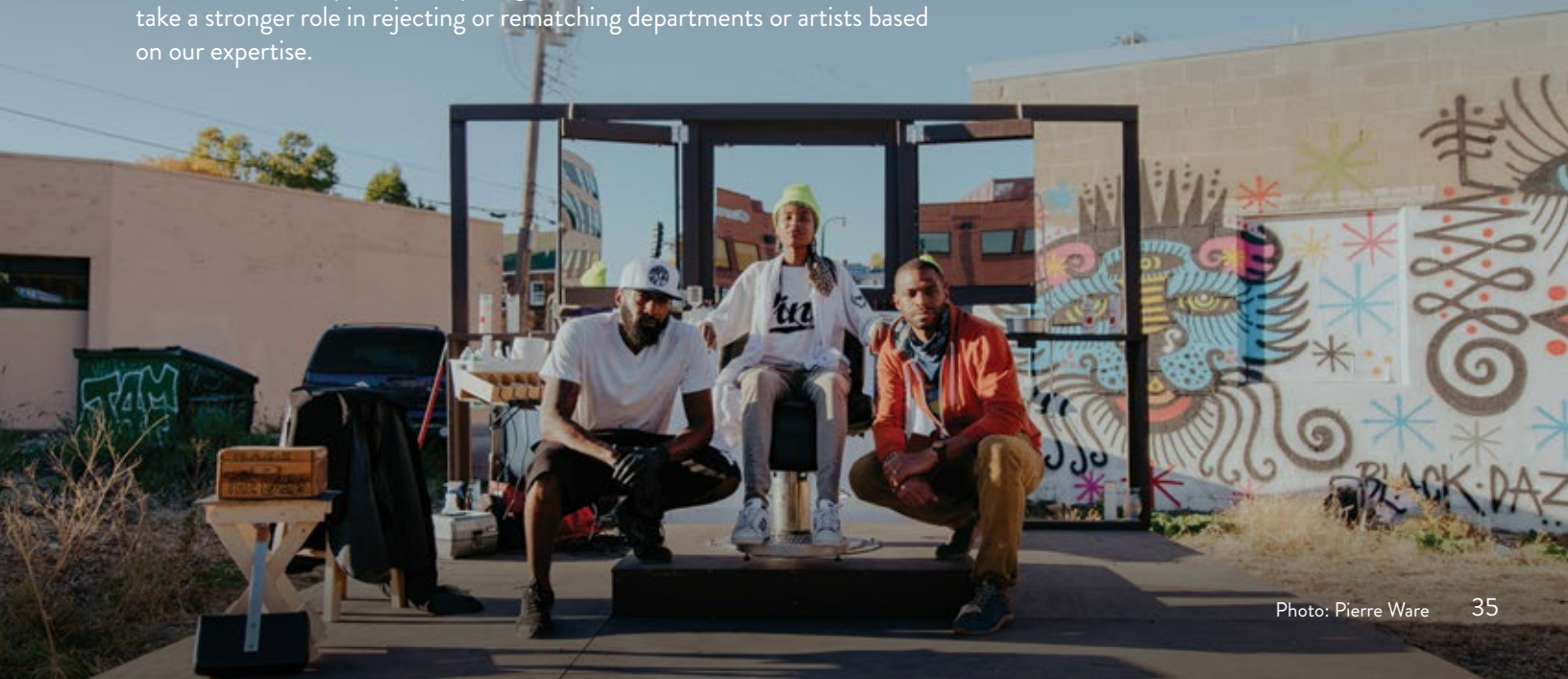
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### Opportunity for future learning:

- ✓ Lean into expertise: Both City staff and artists reported a desire for ACCE to more strongly influence who (both artists and City departments) should be selected for CCM participation.

During this iteration, we facilitated the selection process but were not a voting member of the selection committee, which included City partners and past artists. Although our recruitment work is highly rated, our guidance in the selection process was undervalued and not always considered in the final decisions. In retrospect, participating artists and staff recommended that we take a stronger role in rejecting or rematching departments or artists based on our expertise.

When asked to rate satisfaction with various components of the CCM process, City staff and artists alike most highly rated satisfaction with “Participant artist recruitment process (including the call for artists, information sessions and responses to inquiries).”



## Finalizing project proposals

The artist-City staff partnerships start with a time for relationship-building and context exploration during which artists are encouraged to test the City department’s assumptions around the problem and explore the history of the department’s relationship with the community. The artist-City staff teams then submit a proposal that guides the implementation of a project to address community engagement and advance racial equity.

All CCM artist-City staff teams experienced tension at this point in aligning the expectations of the artists with those of the City staff. We leaned on the expertise of Elliott Payne as an external consultant to facilitate when teams hit impasses, which proved crucial in making progress with final proposals.

Finally and practically, the approval process was intended to ensure the proposals made sense in connection to defined project goals and were realistic in time frame and context.

Source of Tension	Times Mentioned	Number of Teams
Proposal crafting	17	3/3
Project management	9	1/3
Communications	7	2/3
Technology	7	2/3
Logistics/scheduling	4	2/3
Contracting/payment	2	2/3
Other intracity processes	1	1/3



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## Opportunities for future learning:

- ✓ Better prepare artists and City staff for proposal development to ensure shared expectations align with CCM goals.
  - ✓ Clarify expectations for project ideation and approvals, including explaining reasons for proposal rejection.
  - ✓ Create and clarify shared language, definitions and expectations around racial equity and community engagement.
  - ✓ Make clear the process for updating work plans based on new and ongoing community input; ensure that City staff understand the value in this process.
- 

Participants reported a lack of common language or collective understanding around racial equity and what it means in action in arts-based community engagement. The selection committee denied project proposals because of a lack of community engagement features or racial equity lens that artists or City staff thought were included and self-evident. In particular, City staff who were newer to CCM asked for more concrete examples of activities a work plan could include and how to ensure they would address racial equity.

City staff and artist teams also requested support to ensure the feedback on their ideas would be productive and generative and allow them to prototype before finalizing their proposal. Likewise, artists and City staff requested space in the process to easily amend work plans in response to community feedback or pilot testing. Overall, artists wanted the work plan process to be more flexible and responsive. When asked to rate various CCM processes, City staff and artists expressed the most dissatisfaction with “Final approved proposal(s) process.”



*“I think that it made us look closely at how we think about how our artistic ideas address racial equity. It seemed to us that our ideas never really achieved that in the eyes of CCM leadership, and it would have been good to make sure we were on the same page with what racial equity looks like to each of us.”*

– Artist



*“I think one major surprise was the level of creative feedback around our ideas. I felt like we received a lot of critique/feedback on the ideas themselves, rather than clarity around expectations for the goals of the project. It felt like this element or layer was where there was a lot of hurt feelings, mostly because it was a layer to this process that was unexpected. I would just say that it would be helpful for future artists to know that their creative ideas will be under discussion with the CCM team. That in and of itself isn’t a problem, it is more of a problem when that wasn’t explained and then it was experienced.”*

– Artist

## Ongoing team and project support

ACCE staff, including the program manager and project manager, plus contractors hired to support the artists, including a graphic designer, copy editor and film and photo documenters, played intensive roles in artist-City staff team project management and in providing logistical support throughout. Project management was a huge lift in CCM; without our staff filling this role, City staff partners perceived that it would otherwise be their responsibility. City staff partners reported wanting to be co-thinkers with artists, and ACCE's role as project manager allowed them to engage collaboratively with artists. If City department staff were required to ensure proper documentation, timely submission of artist materials and administrative requirements for contractors, the artist-City staff interaction would shift strongly in a transactional direction.

Our staff were responsible for the technical, detailed progress and support of projects from point A to point B: "What are the things that we need in place and what are the tools we need to get this done?" We ensured projects kept moving forward, intervened at key points of high conflict to address tensions and clarify expectations, and identified ways to work within City systems, answering questions such as "Who do I talk to within the City to get this thing done? Who do I talk to in the City to get this permit?"

Departmental City staff described ACCE staff as being passionate and vision-focused, an asset for thinking through how to put equity into practice or otherwise solve problems in an accessible way. Our staff also stepped in as needed to provide logistical support outside the scope of their role to ensure it got done (for example, ordering supplies or coordinating an event). We also facilitated three program gatherings to bring artists and City staff across teams together for shared learning.

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### Opportunities for future learning:

- ✓ Increase ACCE's staffing capacity. The logistical support roles that CCM project teams asked our program staff to fill exceeded our capacity. Meeting these needs requires an additional full-time position. Otherwise this role would fall onto City staff partners, limiting the creative process and interfering with the partnering relationship.
  - ✓ Provide additional support to partnering City staff, either through targeted mentoring or more opportunities for cross-cohort learning. Increased capacity to provide this kind of support would deepen opportunities for learning and sharing across teams and cohort years, as well as strengthen efforts to build widespread culture shift within the City enterprise. This requires a dedicated staff position.
  - ✓ Ensure artists are aware of the full range of technical assistance and professional development opportunities available to them.
- 

Of various ACCE program support offerings and processes, City staff and artists highly rated satisfaction with "program gatherings (including orientation, winter gathering and spring gathering)."



*"Support [from ACCE project manager] was essential to our project. She stepped up early on to create structure for our team, including a timeline template, regular (weekly) check-in meetings, clarification on expectations, etc. Without that we would have floundered."*

— City staff

While City staff appreciated our onboarding and ongoing support, many still felt unprepared. City staff recommended that the program bring together City staff across departments who are engaged in CCM work. This would be an opportunity to relieve the sense of silos within the City enterprise and more intentionally build a shared language and vision for community engagement and racial equity practices. City staff suggested hosting dialogues on topics including:

→ **What does it mean for art or artists to advance racial equity? Share examples, share framework, create a common language.**

→ **What are governmental patterns of behavior that are relational versus transactional? What does this distinction mean in practice?**

→ **Identify the attitudes, behaviors and skills (“ways of being”) that help define how CCM practices are rooted in racial equity. “Simple Rules,” the current framework for adopting shared ways of being across projects, is not inherently antiracist. What would it look like to create shared practices and ways of interacting that are rooted in antiracism for collective internal accountability?**

Gatherings open to staff across the City enterprise would highlight the work of CCM to other departments and provide an avenue for them to learn from the approaches and understand the work. City staff partners likewise recommended providing opportunities for new City staff partners or new artists to be mentored by or to learn from previous CCM staff or artist participants.

“Simple Rules” are the current mechanism within CCM to have shared language about practices and ways of being, yet they were not consistently used either internally within the ACCE team or the CCM artist-City staff teams more broadly. We will consider refreshing Simple Rules and building in mechanisms to re-center them in racial equity. We’ll begin with our own team, whose practice in antiracist ways of being can prompt a broader practice within the City enterprise.

## Financial administration

Contracting and processing of payments was a consistent source of tension for participating artists who were not used to City reporting requirements. Generally, the artists had a better experience with nonprofit fiscal agents than with getting paid directly through the City, but this workaround doesn’t prepare artists for future engagement with the City’s system or the systems of other cities. We could put more effort into mentoring artists on the City’s payment system before program launch.

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### Opportunity for future learning:

- ✓ When capacity doesn’t allow for mentoring, outsource the financial parts of CCM to an organization with less bureaucracy than the City (e.g., easier invoicing, faster payment, etc.). However, use of a fiscal agent — a concession we’re able to make when using grant funds — is not permitted with City general funds unless it’s contracted to a third party.
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A photograph showing a person's hands using a squeegee to print a design on a red t-shirt. The design on the t-shirt is a stylized graphic with text. The background is a blurred workshop or studio setting. The image is overlaid with a green and blue gradient.

# FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS & CONCLUSIONS

After evaluating the latest iteration of Creative CityMaking and the pilot of the Creative Response Fund, Rainbow Research made the following recommendations.

- 1 Fully invest in an integrated model of artist engagement that recognizes the Creative Response Fund and Creative CityMaking as different but equally necessary mechanisms in the ecosystem for City system change that promotes racial equity.**

A key takeaway is that CRF funding, which directly resources artists, should be permanently integrated into how local government addresses racial equity, along with the standard CCM model of embedding artists into City departments. The City benefits from directly investing in and supporting the interests and existing work of artists to promote citywide healing in response to racial inequities and systemic racial violence. At the same time, we cannot stop investing in the full Creative CityMaking model. Each approach delivers on desired outcomes in different ways; cities and other governmental entities can use both models more effectively together.

Ricardo Levins Morales is a local artist organizer and one of the subcontracted artists brought into City engagement through CCM. He has popularized the idea of soil tending as an important component of racial equity system change work. Soil tending includes any effort that allows further seeds of racial equity work to grow and blossom. Many of the outcomes of CRF can be seen through this soil-tending lens; efforts to keep artist activists sustained and able to do their important work, efforts to soothe the nervous systems of traumatized community members, collective reimagining of city spaces, and the bringing together of residents to engage with one another — all are necessary soil tending that create the conditions for future civic community leadership, as well as engagement in future CCM projects and City processes.



CRF funding likewise expands the network of artists who are ready, able and interested in working in partnership with the City. CRF projects fostered community belonging, the reenvisioning of spaces and necessary dialogue among residents that will impact how able and willing they are to engage with the City enterprise moving forward.

However, CRF is not a substitute for the CCM model. CRF projects don't influence the way specific City departments do their work or invite City staff into critically reflective relationships. CCM is still the main mechanism that increases interactions between artists and City staff, and thus invites City system internal culture and policy change. And to fully realize the benefits of both CRF and CCM to city residents and the City system, ACCE must be fully funded and staffed to provide the essential support and expertise required for success.

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**2 Invest in the leadership and expertise of Black artists and other artists of color in community development and rebuilding efforts across the City enterprise.**

Apart from the structures provided by ACCE, the City can learn from the CRF and CCM models about how to trust and financially equip Black and other artists of color to provide leadership. Having Black artists and other artists of color as city planners and in other City leadership roles would allow the City to integrate their critical perspectives, existing relationships, established trust, and place-based knowledge and expertise into ongoing City planning and development efforts. As one artist described it, it would be an antiracist stance for the government to provide Black and other artists of color with the resources, access and power to do their jobs of community healing, engagement and City culture change well.

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**3 Recognize that even with full funding, this work is insufficient in addressing systemic racial inequity and racialized violence perpetrated by the City.**

As one participating City staff member suggested, the work of bringing about the City of Minneapolis' mission to "dismantle institutional injustice and close disparities" requires culture change, and culture change requires a multifaceted approach. The work of CCM and CRF must be invested in, but the City must also recognize that these two strategies work to complement other efforts to promote equity within the enterprise (e.g., the work of the Division of Race & Equity). It's also critical for City leadership to intervene to eliminate police violence and other forms of harm that the City enterprise perpetrates against Black, Native and other residents of color. Until that happens, our efforts at community healing and City system culture change will fall short of the City of Minneapolis' goals.

- 4 Fully fund the ACCE team so we can continue adapting, learning and improving CCM in an effort to deepen the focus on racial equity and create conditions for success.

Learnings from this year identified several conditions for success for City departments interested in the program, such as providing examples of previous efforts to address systemic racism and white supremacy, identifying clear decision-making authority, and offering specific avenues for embedding artists into the full City staff team. Rainbow Research also identified program opportunities such as providing additional clarity around program expectations, offering more support touch points, and creating avenues for exploring shared language and practices around artist engagement for racial equity. Implementing these best practices and conditions for success requires full funding of the ACCE team and support staff.

- 5 Streamline data collection and evaluation processes for ongoing projects to fully demonstrate long-term impact.

The latest iteration of CCM slowly onboarded support staff, including Rainbow Research as the evaluation partner, as projects progressed. Moving forward, engaging with evaluation partners earlier will ensure that we collect data in ways that limit the burden to artists and City staff. Improved data collection is essential to demonstrating CCM and CRF progress on key indicators that are important to City stakeholders. Also, with CCM now fully implemented within the City of Minneapolis, we have an opportunity to reflect on the past eight years of the program, evaluate its long-term impact, and move forward with better documentation of future successes.



# DEDICATION TO AMELIA BROWN



On January 16, 2021, our colleague and friend Amelia Brown passed away unexpectedly. Amelia was the City's first and founding staff member dedicated to the Creative CityMaking program when it began to transition from Intermedia Arts to the Office of Arts, Culture & the Creative Economy in 2016. She shifted to the full-time role of CCM program manager in 2017.

Amelia also founded Emergency Arts LLC, an organization that engaged artists as essential first responders in community crises, and she was a national leader in the field of arts-based emergency response. Amelia contributed her knowledge and vision on local and national boards as well as within ACCE, providing crucial leadership in the post-Intermedia Arts era at a time when the City enterprise was reckoning with the legacy of institutional racism.

As described by staff throughout the City, Amelia had the ability to take abstract visions and turn them into daily practice, and she knew how to help City staff do the same. She supported the ACCE team in keeping racial equity at the core of CCM. After the murder of George Floyd, she played a crucial role in advocating for the adoption of an important City resolution, authored by Council Member Phillippe Cunningham and Council Vice President Andrea Jenkins, which declared racism a public health emergency.

Amelia also served as the board chair of Springboard for the Arts. In that role, she guided the organization's Emergency Relief Fund for artists, which has issued more than \$1 million to date in support of artists in urgent need. This program allowed ACCE to partner with Springboard and contribute \$10,000 to support Minneapolis artists impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

To honor Amelia's memory, we want to share her reflections on 2020, which she contributed to ACCE's end-of-year newsletter.

Dear Arts, Culture & the Creative Economy Community,

As we reflect on the past year of 2020 and move into 2021, I share words, thoughts and questions that resonate with me about a year we will never forget:

1. **ESSENTIAL:** Artists are essential to our communities. Artists are essential in emergencies. *What is essential to you?*
2. **PERSISTENCE:** After years of advocating for artist-led projects, especially in emergencies, our office established the [Creative Response Fund](#). *How are you persistent?*
3. **HUMANITY:** Prioritizing Black artists to lead healing work in Black communities after the horrific death of George Floyd is one of the most heartbreaking and heart-honoring parts of my work at the City of Minneapolis. Black Lives Matter.
4. **HEALING:** Healers need healing. We are working to standardize resources specific to supporting artists healing themselves while they lead healing in our communities. *How are you healing?*
5. **DIRECTION:** When the road disappears, rely on your own inner compass. *Where are you going?*
6. **VISION:** I've said it for years and I'll say it again: Emergencies reveal what is already there, lurking below the surface. *What do you see?*
7. **HEALTH:** [Racism is a Public Health Emergency](#). Racism compounds and intersects with other emergencies, including COVID-19. *How are you addressing racism?*
8. **ACCOUNTABILITY:** Antiracist groups, elders and coaches are just a few ways we can be accountable toward addressing racism and becoming somatic abolitionists. *Who holds you accountable?*
9. **REMEMBER:** We remember those who suffer injustice and those who work for justice; those who have lost their lives and those who work to save lives. *Who do you remember?*
10. **LESSONS:** The surprising, the painful, the hard earned. *What are you learning?*
11. **TRANSFORMATION:** All is not lost. Every single struggle and every single challenge can be transformed. We can take what is useful and powerful with us. *How are you transforming?*

Thank you for being with us during an epic year and here's to a new year together.

— Amelia Brown, *Creative CityMaking Program Manager*



As readers of this report, you can honor Amelia's expertise, leadership and wisdom through her work.

Art: Creating Possibilities in Emergencies. Engaging the public through art for more effective emergency management of racism and related public health crises, 2020. [Read >](#)

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Art Became the Oxygen: An Artistic Response Guide. A Guide for Artists, Emergency Management Agencies, Funders, Policy-Makers, and Communities Responding to Natural and Civil Emergencies, written in 2017 by Arlene Goldbard with the U.S. Department of Arts and Culture, including an essay by Amelia Brown entitled "Six Principles for Arts and Emergency Management." [Read >](#)

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Artists & Aging: Access, Storytelling & Change, 2017. [Read >](#)

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Imagining New Futures: Artists & Aging Pilot, 2016. Creative Exchange, powered by Springboard for the Arts. [Read >](#)

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Photography & Participation: How Photovoice Engages and Rebuilds Communities, 2015. [Read >](#)

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Public Art and Preparedness: Lessons from Katrina, 2015. [Read >](#)

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Recovering the Story: How Arts Contribute to Emergency Recovery and Resilience, 2015. [Read >](#)

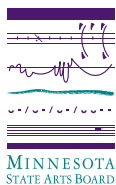
## NOTES

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7. Brown, AM (2017). *Emergent Strategy: Shaping Change, Changing Worlds*. AK Press.
8. Quinn Paton, M. (2010). *Developmental Evaluation: Applying Complexity Concepts to Enhance Innovation and Use*. Guilford Press.
9. Based on how artists reported demographics of participants, ACCE was able to quantify only a subset of all participants. Of those reporting disaggregated participant counts by race/ethnicity, 65% identified as Black, Native or other people of color.
10. CCM projects require partnership with City department staff; CRF projects did not directly engage City staff.
11. CRF projects did not directly engage City staff and consequently did not directly impact City practices.





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For reasonable accommodations or alternative formats please contact Gülgün Kayim, director, Arts, Culture & the Creative Economy, City of Minneapolis, at [gulgun.kayim@minneapolismn.gov](mailto:gulgun.kayim@minneapolismn.gov) or 612-673-2488. People who are deaf or hard of hearing can use a relay service to call 311 at 612-673-3000. TTY users can call 612-263-6850.

Para asistencia 612-673-2700. Yog xav tau kev pab, hu 612-673-2800. Hadii aad Caawimaad u baahantahay 612-673-3500.

**For websites**

If you need a reasonable accommodation to fully participate or if you need information in an alternative format, please contact 311 at 612-673-3000. TTY users call 612-263-6850.

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