



OUR TOWN 2015 PROJECTS FOR PROMISE ZONE AND STRONG CITIES STRONG COMMUNITIES

In his 2013 State of the Union Address, President Obama announced an initiative to designate a number of high-poverty urban, rural and tribal communities as Promise Zones, where federal departments and agencies would partner with each other and with local leaders to create jobs, leverage private investment, increase economic activity, expand educational opportunities, and reduce violent crime. NEA staff is strategically linking Our Town investments to community priorities within the designated Promise Zones. Staff also provides direct technical assistance to the zones, working with arts policy makers, local organizations and artists to drive positive community transformation.

The White House Council on the Strong Cities, Strong Communities (SC2) initiative has yielded new creative placemaking projects in cities hardest hit by the recession. NEA offers staff support to the SC2 Council, providing technical assistance to SC2 cities—leveraging their arts sectors in support of their revitalization strategies and long-term economic planning.

The following Our Town projects demonstrate the success to date of the NEA's work, with organizations in these two White House designations garnering federal funds on their own.

PROMISE ZONES

City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs

Primary Partner: **Alliance for California Traditional Arts**

Los Angeles, CA

\$200,000

To support Promise Zone Arts. The project team will create a cultural asset map focused on folk and traditional arts and orchestrate a series of site-specific cultural events that address the goals of improved educational opportunities, economic development, neighborhood safety, and livability. The City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs is partnering with the Alliance for California Traditional Arts and LA Commons on the project and will be advised by a ten-member task force and various expert consultants. Situated in central Los Angeles, the Promise Zone's population of 165,000 people consists of dense and culturally diverse underserved communities including Little Bangladesh, Little Armenia, Koreatown, and Historic Filipinotown.

Berea College

Berea, KY

\$100,000

Primary Partner: **Eight rural towns listed below**

To support cultural asset mapping in the Kentucky Highlands Promise Zone. Via a series of community meetings and workshops, Berea College will lead a comprehensive asset mapping process to identify local arts and cultural assets that can be leveraged to craft a rural revitalization strategy. Partners on the project include eight rural towns, Berea College, Kentucky Arts Council, and Kentucky Highlands Investment Corporation. The Arts Incubator of the Rockies will lend its expertise by providing artists, businesses, and Kentuckians with curriculums, tools, and resources to support and connect their work. Kentucky Highlands Promise Zone has an overall poverty rate of 30 percent, and includes the rural counties of Bell, Clay, Harlan, Knox, Letcher, Perry and Whitley County.

Cooper's Ferry Partnership

Camden, NJ

\$50,000

Primary Partner: **New American Public Art LLC**

To support C-Note, an artist-driven storytelling and public art project in Camden. Artists and designers will engage residents to collect oral histories and develop mobile kiosks that will transform vacant lots into hubs of storytelling and idea exchange. Cooper's Ferry Partnership, New American Public Art, and the City of Camden will engage community organizations and institutional partners to capture and document recorded stories from residents that will be presented as part of the public art kiosks. The project will lift up the voices of Camden residents, and will serve as a model for the power of public art to activate vacant spaces, improving community pride and public safety. The City of Camden has a population of 77,000.

Thunder Valley Community Development CorporationPrimary Partner: **Oglala Sioux Tribe**

Porcupine, SD

\$75,000

To support the design of pow wow grounds, studio spaces, and artist live/work space on Pine Ridge Reservation. New cultural facilities will provide much needed space for Oglala Sioux members to exercise their creativity, develop new skills, and establish new artisan businesses. Thunder Valley Community Development Corporation will lead the project activities, in partnership with Oglala Sioux Tribe, First People's Fund, and ArtSpace Projects, Inc. The project will serve the creative community of Pine Ridge Reservation residents, half of whom are under the age of 25. Pine Ridge Reservation is a Promise Zone with a 49 percent poverty rate and a population of 35,000.

City of San Antonio, Texas, Department for Culture & Creative Development

Primary Partner: **The United Way of San Antonio and Bexar County**

San Antonio, TX

\$100,000

To support artist residencies in San Antonio's EastPoint Promise Zone. The project will educate and empower local artists to generate community-driven public art projects in a challenged urban neighborhood. Public art and design concepts will complement capital improvement projects currently underway with allocated city funding. The City of San Antonio's Department for Culture & Creative Development and United Way will partner to oversee the residency program and provide community engagement training for artists. Located east of downtown, EastPoint Promise Zone consists of four square miles, and has nearly 65,000 residents and a poverty rate of 35 percent.

STRONG CITIES STRONG COMMUNITIES

Macon Arts Alliance

Primary Partner: **Macon Bibb County Urban Development Authority**

Macon, GA

\$134,370

To support an artist residency program and cultural plan for Mill Hill neighborhood. Via a national call, artists will be selected and embedded in the neighborhood to work with the local community on arts projects and programming. Consultants will collaborate with residents, visiting and local artists to conduct creative asset mapping to inform a cultural plan. Macon Arts Alliance and Macon-Bibb County will provide leadership for the project to ensure community participation and visioning that guides the future of Mill Hill and positions the arts as central to the revitalization strategy. Located within walking distance of the downtown business district, Mill Hill is a historically significant neighborhood. Macon has a population of 154,700 and is one of 14 cities designated by the White House in its Strong Cities Strong Communities program.

Good Work Network

New Orleans, LA

\$75,000

Primary Partner: **Ashe Cultural Arts Center**

To support Roux Carré. The project partners will provide an artist residency program and professional development training for 40 performing and visual artists. The artists will receive hands-on training in marketing and public relations, business development, fundraising, financial and back office management, and performance booking. They also will be offered space in Good Work Network's newly constructed outdoor market and performance space. The project incorporates a broad partnership with the City of New Orleans Mayor's Office of Cultural Economy, Ashe Cultural Art Center, Puentes New Orleans, Nfungotah Inc./Dance for Life, and the Good Work Network. It targets business development opportunities in the OC Haley neighborhood of Central City New Orleans, working with women and minority populations.

Creative Exchange Lab

St. Louis, MO

\$50,000

Primary Partner: **Harris-Stowe Foundation**

To support the East St. Louis Cultural Economic Development Neighborhoods Initiative. Multi-disciplinary project teams consisting of a resident youth, urban planner or designer, local artist, and university students will engage three East St. Louis neighborhoods in cultural asset mapping. Cultural assets may range from visual arts and historic architecture to less conventionally recognized cultural contributions such as church choral traditions and barber/beauty shop practices. The mapped assets will lead to unique cultural-economic development plans for each neighborhood, with the goal of greater community pride, economic development, and regional visitor attraction. The project is a partnership between the Creative Exchange Lab and Harris-Stowe State University, the St. Louis area's only Historically Black College or University.

Community L.I.F.T.

Memphis, TN

\$75,000

Primary Partner: **Memphis & Shelby County Office of Sustainability**

To support training for emerging musicians, programming for artist residencies, and a community-led design process in the Soulsville neighborhood. Local residents, businesses, students, and institutions will come together to re-imagine a vacant property as a creative community space. The Slim House Studio will host training, apprenticeship programs, and residencies for emerging musicians, performers, and visual artists. Community L.I.F.T., Memphis-Shelby County, and the Soulsville Neighborhood Association will collaborate to lead the community engagement process and oversee artist training and programming. Soulsville is home to the Stax Museum of American Soul Music, and is a low income neighborhood that is 94 percent African American.

buildingcommunityWORKSHOP

Brownsville, TX

\$50,000

Primary Partner: **City of Brownsville**

To support programming at Art Market Square, an arts incubator and cultural hub. Located in downtown Brownsville, Market Square will be transformed from a vacant storefront into an activated space that hosts artist installations, community meetings, performances, and studio workspaces. bcWORKSHOP will partner with City of Brownsville and Brownsville Museum of Fine Art to select local artists to receive entrepreneurship training and to lead arts projects alongside the community. Market Square will anchor the revitalization of the downtown district in Brownsville, a city with 181,000 residents located on the U.S./Mexican border.