

Hello, we're **Americans for the Arts**. **We are committed to addressing equity and inclusion as a critical component of the Arts & Economic Prosperity 6 study (AEP6).**

We Address Equity And Inclusion By...

01. **Centering and representing** Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) and African, Latine, Asian, Arab, Native American (ALAANA) identifying communities — a portion of the nonprofit arts and culture sector that has been underrepresented in past studies.
02. **Transforming** the AEP6 study and committing to a full shake-up of the methodology to reduce systemic bias in survey design, data collection and analysis, community engagement and communications strategies, and the creation of new narratives based on the study results.

MAINTAINING & STRENGTHENING COMMITTED COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS WORKBOOK

This **digital workbook** is part of a series of Americans for the Arts community engagement resources intended to help local and statewide research partners identify, connect with, and maintain relationships with BIPOC and ALAANA arts and culture organizations in their community. It is a result of research, practitioner experience, and community engagement with our local and statewide research partners.

HOW TO USE THE ARTS & ECONOMIC PROSPERITY 6 DIGITAL WORKBOOK:

This guide aims to help our partners consider additional and effective approaches to building and maintaining authentic and mutually beneficial relationships with BIPOC and ALAANA organizations

Go your own way: You can scroll through this digital workbook in any order—workbook engagement is not linear.

Do the work: You can type out your answers in the interactive sections and download a PDF version of this site with your answers upon completion.

Privacy: This work is for your eyes only, unless you choose to share. We do not record answers or any information about your engagement with this digital workbook, even if you choose to download the PDF with your typed answers.

What we ask of you: This guide prompts our partners to be curious, acknowledge challenges, and push through those challenges thoughtfully.

Take what you need: We recommend that you use this resource as a “choose your own pathway” activity. Take what you need. This is by no means a required assignment for our AEP6 partners, and your engagement with this resource (or lack thereof) will not impact your ability to participate in the AEP6 study. However, we encourage each of our partners to review each section as they are published and consider how the content can inform and guide future steps in maintaining community relationships.

We are doing the work with you: We acknowledge that Americans for the Arts is striving to do better with maintaining and strengthening our own relationships. We are excited to do this work alongside each of our 400 participating communities.

Americans for the Arts believes that language and identity go hand-in-hand and are vital to how we name and organize any community.

We use the terms BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) and ALAANA (African, Latine, Asian, Arab, Native American) to represent People of Color and Communities of Color. While these terms do not fully encompass or represent the complicated and multi-layered nature of indigeneity or ethnic and racial identities, they are commonly used terms in our work.

We invite and encourage you to examine and explore the terms used in your community and that are important and valued by individuals you interact with, support, and engage. Americans for the Arts has a **Language Bank** that we use to organize terminology related to our work. In addition, Americans for the Arts endorses and is working to uphold the actions and principles set forth in the **Cultural New Deal** to improve conditions for and with the priority communities listed therein.

Strategy 05.

DRIVE ADVOCACY

The primary goal of the AEP6 study is to provide local, state, and national arts and culture organizations advocacy resources. This goal should be amplified by your organization. As a driver toward accomplishing this goal, in addition to the economic impact analysis of the full nonprofit arts and culture industry, this study will provide an economic impact analysis of the industry's BIPOC and ALAANA arts sector. This analysis will demonstrate the economic power of a historically overlooked segment alongside the cultural and social benefits.

CONSIDER THIS

Take a moment to think through the below prompts. Your answers to these prompts could lead to the identification of possible solutions

There is great power in data and, in turn, great responsibility. You are encouraged to share resources and/or templates that will empower BIPOC and ALAANA organizations to leverage the results of this study.



1. Break it down.

Work with the communities to ensure they understand the power of advocacy and what it means.



2. Help tell the impact story.

What events, opportunities, and platforms do you have, or can you create, to help tell the impact story for BIPOC and ALAANA creatives?



3. Devise social media posts and infographics.

Can you work collaboratively with BIPOC and ALAANA creatives and organizations to devise social media posts and infographics that tell the impact story?



4. Create resources.

Can you help give or create resources that will have a positive impact for these organizations

CONSIDER THIS



5. Leverage your position.

What are ways you can leverage your position to support the entire ecology of art and culture in your community?



6. Disrupt systems and policies.

What are ways you can disrupt systems and policies that marginalize BIPOC and ALAANA organizations?

YOUR TURN...NOT CHECKING THE BOXES, BUT CONNECTING THEM

RED

In the **RED** box below, write down the systems or policies at your organizational level or at the local/state/federal level that unfairly affect marginalized communities.

PURPLE

In the **PURPLE** box, write down all the resources you have or can create to help advocate for these organizations.

PINK

In the **PINK** box, write down what other ways you can leverage your organization to support all organizations in your community.

“Nothing about us without us”

Disability Activists Michael Masutha and William Rowland

HOLD YOURSELF ACCOUNTABLE

Keep working to understand and center the needs of the community you are advocating for. Think harder about how you are driving advocacy. Resist the feeling that you must do the advocacy for the organization or that advocacy only works from the “seat” at your “table.” How can you provide resources for the organization to be its own biggest champion?

Bonus: Consider taking a “show and ask” approach. Show the interested organization its economic impact using the AEP calculator. Ask the organization to consider the amount of money that its audiences may have spent on food, clothes, flowers, and gas to come to an event. Amplify that BIPOC or ALAANA organizations can use this impact as a point of advocacy. This sets the stage to work with the organization(s) of interest and build out an advocacy plan with its interest and understanding. Write out questions that will help organizations understand their impact and the value of advocacy.

GET CURIOUS: LET’S TAKE A DEEPER DIVE

The following can help you dive into some resources, root causes, drivers, and examples of how this intentional work can be pushed forward to break disconnection, distrust, and disinvestment cycles.

Performative Practice

One of the major goals of AEP6 is to build relationships through advocacy beyond the scope and timeline of the AEP studies. This is now a commitment that must be made to each of the BIPOC and ALAANA organizations that goes beyond a surface performative representation.

It has to be more than a post on social media and a statement of solidarity.

Root your work in relationships, be transparent, decenter your experiences, invest, and be consistent. Go outside your comfort zone into the stretch zone and take some risks. This will shift your work from performative action to transformative action.

Advocacy, Fear, & Stress

Advocacy is an activity by an individual or group that aims to influence decisions within political, economic, and social institutions. This definition can look different in action depending on what the Local Art Agency, or the like organization, can or cannot do. Advocacy does not only mean lobbying. We are using the term “advocacy” with the intention of championing organizations for system change, amplifying the impact of the BIPOC and ALAANA organizations, and leading the push for powerful data. Sometimes fear gets in the way of our best intentions to take the risk of advocacy. Then stress over the outcomes results in stunted progress.

There are partners who live in parts of the nation where equitable advocacy can be very challenging. We have heard that some BIPOC and ALAANA organizations’ events have been pushed to underground channels because they have been over-policed in the past. Some partners have been reticent to reach out and engage with certain communities because of the reaction they fear they will receive and the stress about thinking through it all. Fear and stress are stumbling blocks to this process, but there is power in advocacy. Thoughts like: “I wish I could advocate, but I am afraid to say the wrong thing,” or “People have lost their jobs for speaking up, and I’m stressed about how advocating will impact my position,” are real and intimidating. Advocacy takes personal bravery and institutional will, but the payoff, in either case, is often trust and credibility.

Sometimes it will take privilege and power to take steps to protect, publicly support, and dismantle systems against a marginalized group of people.

Thinking about doing this advocacy work with, and not for, a community will organically bring people together. Then lean into transparency and connection. Transparency is critical in moving past fear and establishing goals for advocacy.

Additionally, people who worked with you on the AEP6 study should not hear about the results for the first time when you are presenting at the launch event. Defining talking points, projecting the findings, connecting, and being inclusive in the process of data visualization and storytelling are the basic groundwork. If the advocacy is not “successful,” we will still build our resiliency to keep trying through the deep relationships with the organizations and the people. Stay connected and stay strong.

Fear happens in the emotional section of the brain, similar to the stress response from Chapter 2, inside the engagement zones. The difference is that this sort of fear gets in the way of advocacy, but the logical brain has the opportunity to dampen the response. Gather a group of people with similar goals, or a coalition. Having groups support each other can reduce stress and fear. Then take a breath, think of the simplest ways to advocate, and start from there. Like simply showing up!

Need help? Check out the resource list at the end of this section.

KEY TAKEAWAYS:

- 1. Critically and intentionally disrupt marginalizing systems and policies.**
- 2. Use resources to make lasting impact.**
- 3. Move past fear and leverage your position to advocate.**

Save your work...and show it off

(but only if you want to)

If you want to share your work, feel free to post your downloaded PDF or share a story about this experience on the AEP6 Slack Channel. If you aren't yet a part of the Slack Channel, please reach out to **AEP6CommunityEngagement@artsusa.org** for support or access.

If you do not wish to share your work, please know that we do not save, record, or attribute the answers you have typed here or downloaded into your PDF. Your work here is completely private unless you choose otherwise.

RESOURCES

Local Arts Agencies & Resources

Maintaining Connections: Drive Advocacy with Elisheba:
<https://youtu.be/EXzg6meZkKI>

Maintaining Connections: Drive Advocacy with Sandra:
https://youtu.be/PcSM_4sakio

Getting Equity Advocacy Results | GEAR SNAPSHOT

https://www.policylink.org/sites/default/files/GEAR_Snapshot_buildthebase_magcloud_0.pdf

Can LA's Arts Sector Become More Equitable?

<https://hyperallergic.com/805968/can-las-arts-sector-become-more-equitable/>

Neighborhood Arts Network: Arts & Equity Toolkit

<https://www.chapmanculturalcenter.org/site/user/files/1/ArtsEquityToolkit.pdf>

Equity Is the Driving Force: How Advocacy Led to Oakland's New Cultural Development Plan

<https://www.policylink.org/blog/advocacy-led-to-oakland-cultural-dev-plan>

Equitable Investment Policies and Practices in the Local Arts Field

<https://www.americansforthearts.org/by-program/reports-and-data/legislation-policy/naappd/equitable-investment-policies-and-practices-in-the-local-arts-field>

Arts & Economic Prosperity 5 Calculator

<https://www.americansforthearts.org/by-program/reports-and-data/research-studies-publications/arts-economic-prosperity-5/use/arts-economic-prosperity-5-calculator>

Justice & Equity

Performing Wokeness

<https://www.thecrimson.com/column/better-left-unsaid/article/2018/10/1/gray-performing-wokeness/>

Roadblocks to productive Activism & Barriers of Performative Allyship

<https://www.instagram.com/p/CB8-XCeFc5I/>

A concise approach to being a true advocate for your BIPOC coworkers

<https://www.fastcompany.com/90606556/a-concise-approach-to-being-a-true-advocate-for-your-bipoc-coworkers>

Types of Advocacy

<https://cedwvu.org/resources/types-of-advocacy/>

Brain & Body Responses

Your brain when you're anxious

<https://kidshelpline.com.au/teens/issues/your-brain-when-youre-anxious>

Stress effects on the body

<https://www.apa.org/topics/stress/body>