

**A GUIDE**

**TO**

**MAPPING**

**NEIGHBORHOOD**

**CULTURAL**

**ARTS AND**

**ASSETS**





**October 2009**

Community Partnership for Arts and Culture (CPAC) expresses its appreciation to the Cleveland Neighborhood Development Coalition (CNDC), in particular Colleen Gilson, the Executive Director, and Wendy Albin Sattin, the Director of Planning and Development, for their advice and guidance provided during the development of this document.

## **The Context of Asset-Mapping:**

Given the magnitude of work, community development policy can often be daunting. This can lead policymakers to spend a great deal of time and resources on their community's problems and issues while paying less attention to its unique assets and aspirations. The strengths of distressed communities might be harder for many to readily call to mind; however, every community has assets that can be harnessed to drive community development efforts. Community assets come in many forms, encompassing local institutions (i.e. schools, libraries, parks, and businesses); local citizens' associations (i.e. block clubs, churches, and cultural groups); and the individual talents of all citizens regardless of age, disability, income level or occupation. Asset-based community development is driven from within the community, which re-engages the community at a grassroots level (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993). This guide outlines a method neighborhoods can use to identify and map a specific subset of their assets.

Community Partnership for Arts and Culture (CPAC) believes that communities can benefit from identifying their arts and cultural assets, incorporating them into community planning discussions, and utilizing them in broader revitalization efforts. The goal of this guide is to establish an interview protocol for identifying and then mapping a community's arts and cultural assets.

The assessment can be accomplished through a combination of interviews to various stakeholders including, but not limited to, individuals drawn from: personal contacts (i.e. friends and family); the economic sector (i.e. business leaders, chambers of commerce, investors); the educational sector (i.e. teachers, PTA, art schools); the political sector (i.e. ward leaders, block club leaders, political officials); the religious sector (i.e. clergy, lay church leadership); and community associations (i.e. social clubs, fraternal organizations). The goal of the interviews is to gain information on the community and identify its arts and cultural assets. The information can be used to generate a map of the arts and cultural assets in the neighborhood or community.

The term "arts and cultural" commonly invokes images of large arts and cultural institutions and often is attributed to only those activities that occur in galleries, theaters, or museums. However, these conventional perceptions of arts and culture do not adequately cover the full range of activities that qualify as artistic and cultural expressions. A limited definition may even lead some interviewees to respond that their communities do not have any such assets (Jackson & Herranz, Jr., 2002). For this reason, in order to identify the broadest range of arts and cultural assets the following list of interview questions is instructional (see Maine Arts Commission, n.d.):

For formal, sit-down interviews:

1. Who are the most creative individuals in your neighborhood?
2. What organizations or businesses are the most creative?
3. Who are the most active people, organizations and businesses in your neighborhood?
4. Does your neighborhood have arts and cultural groups, organizations and institutions?
5. Are there any natural features (i.e. parks, lakes, etc.) in your neighborhood?
6. Where are the neighborhood's gathering places?
7. What historic sites and buildings are in your neighborhood?
8. Are there any annual events or festivals (secular or religious) that take place in the neighborhood?
9. What traditions does your neighborhood have? How are they passed down (oral stories, written or electronic documentation) ?
10. What places hold special significance for the neighborhood? Why?
11. What products (i.e. art, food, furniture, or anything else that is made locally) are unique to your neighborhood? Who are the artists, crafts persons, or businesses that make them?
12. Who or what people, organizations or businesses in your neighborhood have influenced you the most? How have they influenced you?
13. Are there any other names (*the big apple*) or titles for your community or neighborhood? How did the names or title develop?
14. What are the arts and cultural groups in your neighborhood?
15. Who are the neighborhood's artists, musicians, dancers, actors, singers, writers, poets, carvers, quilt makers, furniture makers, instrument makers etc.? Where can you find art in your neighborhood?
16. Who else should I talk to?

For informal, “on the street” interviews:

1. What words come to mind when you think about your neighborhood?
2. How would you describe the people of your neighborhood?
3. What are common sights and sounds around your neighborhood?
4. What makes your neighborhood unique?
5. What makes your neighborhood beautiful?
6. What aspects of your neighborhood do you take great pride in?
7. What neighborhood affiliations do you have? (i.e. religious affiliations, political affiliations, teams, clubs, families, volunteer groups, cultural groups, and occupational groups)

After carrying out the broader analysis, the findings can be used to identify a list of “experts” (who may not see themselves as such) who can provide more detailed information on arts and cultural practices in the neighborhood including neighborhood and family histories; legends about the neighborhood and its people; folklore and ghost stories; testimonies; music; instrument making; dancing; theater; crafts; wood carving; pottery; fishing; cooking; gardening; and many others.

The results of these interviews can be used to develop a listing of the neighborhood’s categories of arts and cultural assets. Once the categories are identified, a listing of the specific assets that operate or exist in the neighborhood can be developed by using a combination of research methods such as: focus groups of stakeholders, individual interviews with stakeholders, surveys, an ocular/environmental scan, online research, and a review of media materials.

Specific sites can be identified, and these can be overlaid onto a map of the neighborhood. The map and related data can be used to inform all residents of the arts and cultural assets in their neighborhood. Beyond informational purposes, community developers can refer to the arts and cultural map in order to more fully engage arts and cultural assets in their development efforts. The information can be used by neighborhoods as marketing and branding tools to attract businesses, cultural consumers, and tourists. The most effective community development efforts must build upon a neighborhood’s particular niche and take into consideration the needs, goals, and aspirations of the neighborhood in which they are taking place. The arts and cultural asset map complements this concept, as it would provide community developers with a clear idea of the character and brand their particular neighborhood should take by showcasing its indigenous assets.

CPAC has compiled this guide in an attempt to encourage community leaders to take a deeper look into the wealth of arts and cultural assets that exist literally in their own backyards. The research included in this document is not exhaustive, but is meant to give neighborhood leaders an introduction and starting point for carrying out an arts and cultural asset-mapping project. An asset-mapping project can be as robust as a full-scale quantitative analysis of information gleaned from surveys or as simple as an ocular exploration of a community. For these full scale projects, it may be helpful to partner with local academic institutions or engage community volunteers in the project. For neighborhoods that do not want to undertake a large scale project, an asset-mapping project may even be something as simple as a photo contest whereby residents are encouraged to submit photos of places in their neighborhood that are special to them with captions explaining why. Whatever form an asset-mapping project takes must ultimately be driven by community stakeholders and residents, since they are the best judges of their neighborhood's needs and the stewards of their community's arts and cultural assets.

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## **About the Community Partnership for Arts and Culture:**

### **Vision**

The powerful competitive advantage generated by our distinctive arts and culture sector is widely recognized and supported both publicly and privately.

### **Mission**

To strengthen and unify greater Cleveland's arts and culture sector.

### **Guiding Principles**

In pursuing its vision and mission and acknowledging its beliefs, CPAC will:

- ♦ **LEAD:** Set direction with the arts and culture sector based on shared interests and potential impact on arts and culture organizations and individual artists.
- ♦ **ADVOCATE:** Position arts and culture as a driving force in building a vibrant community, particularly where community priorities and funding decisions are determined.
- ♦ **EDUCATE:** Inform community decision-making through credible research that identifies solutions for evolving needs and demonstrates the contribution arts and culture makes to the economy, education and quality of life.
- ♦ **CONVENE:** Provide opportunities for the community's diverse arts and culture constituencies to join together to learn about and take collective action on shared interests and objectives.

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## History

Community Partnership for Arts and Culture (CPAC) was formed by The Cleveland Foundation and The George Gund Foundation in 1997 to develop a regional, community-wide, strategic cultural plan. Northeast Ohio's Arts & Culture Plan (the Plan), released in May 2000, was the culmination of 9 major analytical studies and 42 regional public forums representing 30 months of quantitative and qualitative research. Upon delivery and implementation of the seven-county plan CPAC evolved into a service provider focused on filling functional gaps identified through the planning process: capacity building, public policy and research.

In 2003, CPAC launched its first capacity building program designed for individual artists, The Artist as an Entrepreneur Institute, which has served 345 artists locally and has subsequently been licensed by organizations in Florida, North Carolina and South Carolina. In 2004, through an innovative partnership with the Council of Smaller Enterprises (COSE), CPAC helped to launch the Arts Network, a program of COSE offering professional development resources, education and networking events, benefits programs and business savings to those in the creative industries.

CPAC's research and public policy initiatives led to the formation of Cuyahoga County's first regional arts and cultural district, Cuyahoga Arts and Culture, in 2005. In 2006, CPAC's public policy work led to the successful passage of Issue 18, a dedicated revenue stream of public sector support for Cuyahoga County's arts and culture sector, which generates \$19.5 million annually. In 2006, CPAC also designed and implemented a joint marketing group of twelve arts and cultural organizations in an effort to increase the profitability of direct marketing efforts. CPAC's continued efforts on behalf of individual artists led to the development of the first nationwide conference on artist-based community development in 2008 entitled, From Rust Belt to Artist Belt, and the first individual artist fellowship program in Cuyahoga County, the Creative Workforce Fellowship, in 2009.



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