

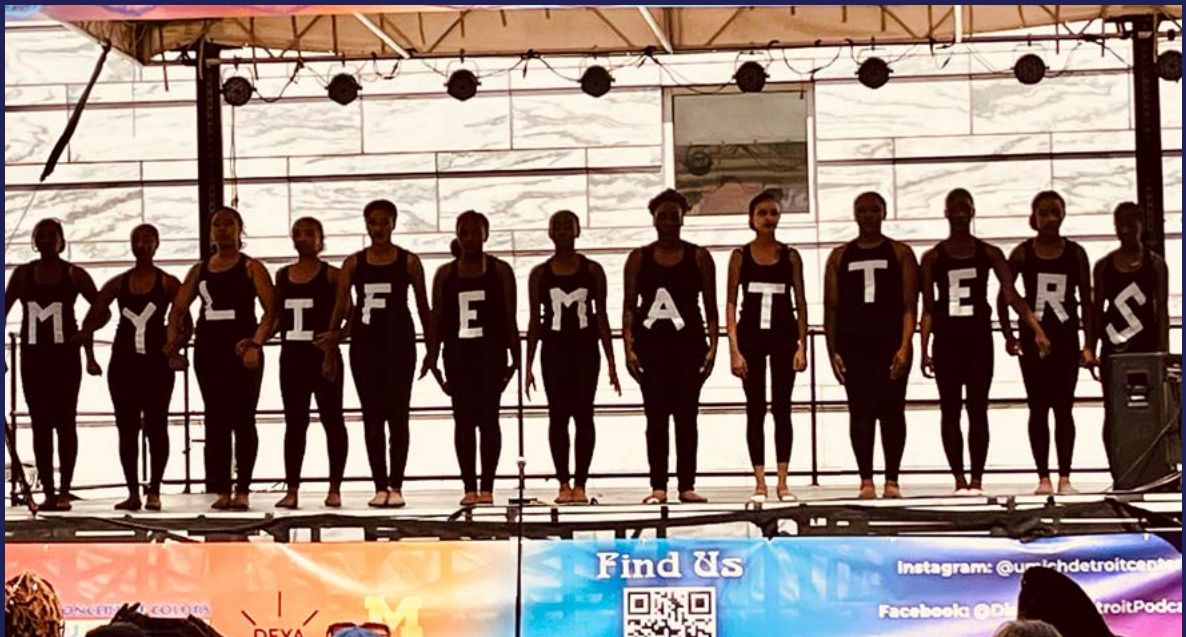


a program of



POWERING YOUTH ARTS THROUGH COLLECTIVE ACTION

**A COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT, PLANNING,
AND DESIGN PROCESS FOR DETROIT YOUTH ARTS**



By
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Funded in part by grants from
The Kresge Foundation
The Ralph C. Wilson Jr. Foundation
The Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan
The Children's Foundation



“DEYA was integral in connecting local Detroit organizations to Diversify by Design’s nationally focused Design= curriculum kit. Acting as catalyst and facilitator, they enabled our program to reach exponentially more students in the Detroit area. We would not have built such a strong network in Detroit without DEYA’s influence.”

- AMANDA YOUNG, DIRECTOR OF PROGRAMS, IMPACT COLLABORATIVE



I am proud to partner with Detroit Excellence in Youth Arts (DEYA) which leverages cross-sector collaboration to buttress artistic experiences in schools.”

- DR. NIKOLAI VITTI,
SUPERINTENDENT, DETROIT PUBLIC
SCHOOLS COMMUNITY DISTRICT

“Parents don’t know what’s available for their kids to participate in the city... There is a cultural and communication gap with messaging.”

- YOUTH ARTS PROVIDER

“[On equitable access to funding] The big organizations have access to lobbyists and the people. We have a better story and have had a better impact, but can’t get in the room with the people to have a conversation and get the attention to get the big money dollars. We are ready for it.”

- YOUTH ARTS PROVIDER

“The two key things are outreach and, and transportation. I mean, having assistance with outreach, being able to actually tap into some of the school networks or, you know, whatever it takes to make more people aware of our program.”

- YOUTH ARTS PROVIDER

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YEARS AGO, MY MOTHER happened upon an article in the *Detroit Free Press* highlighting the creative efforts of a visionary, Mrs. Joyce Ivory. Her non-profit organization, Young Artists & Company, Inc. was featured as a visual arts training ground for Detroit's youth. I was a shy, awkward eight-year-old, and when I expressed interest in drawing, my parents jumped at the opportunity and enrolled me.



That singular experience has shaped every aspect of my life and career choices since.

As a sophomore at Henry Ford High School, I split my days attending Crockett Vocational Technical training school and spent an endless number of hours drawing and painting in the visual arts program. At Eastern Michigan University I started my journey as a Literature

major, but always pulling me back was the love for visual arts embedded deep within. I wanted to teach young people the gifts I had been taught, so BFA with teaching certification it was.

Grad school took me out of the K-12 classroom and into the field, landing me as manager of an art school, an adjunct professor at Oakland University teaching visual arts integration to elementary educators acquiring their teaching certification and supervising arts education majors during the last leg of their certification journey. And now I'm an ambassador and council member for the State of Michigan Arts and Cultural Council (MACC). What a full circle moment! I could not have predicted any of these stops along the way, but I am certain that my time and mentoring at Young Artists & Company, Inc. laid the foundation and gave me confidence to pursue my passions.

Over the past twelve months, my partner Rick Sperling and I have embarked on a journey to understand at a systems-level, the needs, barriers, opportunities and best practices of youth arts providers in the city of Detroit. Our purpose in forming DEYA was ultimately simple at its core.

As a former certified arts educator in the classroom and a former youth arts organization head with a combined 50+ years' experience as youth arts practitioners, we shared experience after experience of what we wished we had, gaps that have long gone unaddressed and countless what-ifs about all the possibilities of how we could have served more young people and brought greater equity to the communities where we worked.

We both came to believe that such equity was only possible through collective action. Said simply: What might be possible that we can't accomplish on our own, but we can get done if we work together?

This report is a culmination of those experiences, leading to a year of listening, learning and engagement with the youth arts community that resulted in six recommendations and the idea of what's possible together with a newly conceived Detroit Youth Arts Providers Network. Designed, led and governed by the people of the Network.

I am encouraged by the efforts and contributions from the community to this project to see to it that Black and Brown youth in the city of Detroit will have abundant opportunities, access and a future that includes an endless pursuit of their talents in every imaginable field after discovering them through the arts.

I dedicate this research effort to the countless shy, awkward eight-year-old Black and Brown girls like I was who, like I did, will find their voices through the arts. It is an honor and privilege to be able to use my voice and this incredible platform to support the young people of Detroit having the access that my parents and my mentor, Mrs. Joyce Ivory gave me — the opportunity to follow their own path through the arts.

Nafeesah Symonette, MA
DEYA Co-Founder & Program Director

OWE MUCH TO YOUTH ARTS. Growing up, a severe speech impediment never hindered me on stage; theatre was my sanctuary. However, at age 8, my community theatre group disbanded. Suddenly there were no theatre opportunities for elementary students in Ann Arbor. It was my mother, Doris Sperling – an educational equity activist and teacher – who championed a solution. Collaborating with drama educators at Ann Arbor’s three high schools and Detroit theatre professionals, she founded Young People’s Theater, which is still going strong 46 years later. Through YPT, from age 11 till high school graduation, I had an artistic home again.

Fifteen years later, I saw many Detroit youth lack access to theatre while working with the Attic Theatre in several Detroit schools. I was inspired by my mother’s legacy of mobilizing to fill arts equity gaps when I founded Mosaic Youth Theatre of Detroit, now in its 31st year.

Throughout my 27-year tenure at Mosaic, while celebrating our impact on countless young artists, I grappled with deep-rooted access and equity issues. The shifting demographics were palpable: the once-diverse backgrounds of Mosaic members became narrowed, with up to 50 percent of our youth ensemble coming from outside Detroit, and Latinx participation dwindling to none. Financial constraints further limited participation, especially among those in under-invested neighborhoods.

Despite recognizing multiple barriers – transportation challenges, cultural isolation, and dwindling in-school exposure opportunities – Mosaic’s solo efforts were not able to address them in a significant way. These issues persisted in my subsequent role as the lead Arts Consultant for Detroit Public Schools Community District (DPSCD).

When the pandemic threatened all arts education programs, I recalled my mother’s tenacity in organizing to fill gaps to meet the needs of young people and proposed to DPSCD the creation of year-long virtual mentorships in all art forms. Given the green light to raise the money and coordinate it, I initiated – with Dr. Vitti’s consent – a fund at

the Children’s Foundation called DEYA (Detroit Excellence in Youth Arts) to manage the fundraising for a new initiative called RAMP-UP (Rigorous Arts Mentorship Program – Under Pandemic). The result was that 13 arts organizations provided 51 mentors to teach virtually with more than 150 DPSCD students every week throughout the entire shutdown year.

While the DEYA fund proved crucial during the pandemic, its success illuminated a broader opportunity to address Detroit youth arts’ equity and access challenges. I recognized DEYA’s potential to become a collective impact initiative, given its unique position liaising between multiple stakeholders.

Departing DPSCD, I launched DEYA as an independent initiative under Connect Detroit but sought a co-leader for this endeavor. Nafeesah Symonette, with her immense arts education background, passion for empowering Black and Brown youth, and dedication to youth arts equity, emerged as the ideal counterpart. Together, we embarked on a 12-month needs assessment and design journey.

I am excited to share our insights with all who champion a more equitable, inclusive, and sustainable future for Detroit’s youth arts sector.



Rick Sperling

DEYA, Co-Founder & Program Director

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

POWERING DETROIT YOUTH ARTS THROUGH COLLECTIVE IMPACT

On July 1st, 2022, Detroit Excellence in Youth Arts (DEYA) began a 12-month process to identify, learn, assess, and build a Detroit youth arts ecosystem that would be the basis of a Detroit Youth Arts collective impact initiative.

The needs assessment process utilized both qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis focusing on four categories: needs, barriers, opportunities, and best practices. Data collection included three elements 1) youth arts provider interviews, 2) youth arts provider small group convenings, and 3) youth arts stakeholder focus groups, conducted by JFM Consulting Group.

Youth Arts Provider Interviews

Between August and November 2022, DEYA interviewed 52 unique Detroit youth arts providers. DEYA defines youth arts providers as organizations and programs providing ongoing arts experiences for Detroit youth.

Youth Arts Provider Small Group Convenings

In January of 2023, DEYA conducted six hybrid small group convenings with 49 individuals from 40 unique providers who participated in the youth arts provider interviews.

Youth Arts Stakeholder Focus Groups

In April of 2023, JFM Consulting Group, led by Jane Fran Morgan, conducted Focus Groups with 47 key Detroit youth arts stakeholders: youth in arts (14), parents (9), classroom arts teachers (15), and teaching artists (10).

KEY FINDINGS

As a result of DEYA's assessment, four key findings were identified.

Detroit youth do not have equitable access to youth arts opportunities

- Detroit youth arts programs **disproportionately benefit** youth living outside the city and those with greater economic mobility. Providers noted that there is a higher percentage of suburban youth in many of their Detroit-based programs than in past years and that suburban schools often devote more funds to bringing in arts programs for their students than Detroit schools. In youth focus groups, the need for “lower costs” and more access to a “wider variety of arts programs” were seen, after **transportation**, as the top barriers to Detroit youth participation.

- Access to youth arts opportunities is powerfully limited by **lack of out-of-school-time transportation options**. Transportation was mentioned as a key barrier in 77% of interviews and was listed as the greatest barrier by the participants in the small group convenings. Youth, parents and teaching artists focus groups also identified transportation as a top need/barrier.
- **Inadequate operational funding** hampers youth arts providers' ability to provide abundant, high-quality arts programming. While most local funding is project-based, providers mentioned funding for staff (62%) and funding for operations (56%) as two of their most significant needs in the interviews. Providers and parents both emphasized the need for diverse "trust-based philanthropy," with a greater focus on unrestricted multi-year funding to help organizations be sustainable and to grow to reach more Detroit youth. Furthermore, 67% of providers mentioned fundraising support as their top need, and in the small group convenings, providers ranked "collective fundraising" as one of their top five "sustainability" priorities.
- **Black and Brown youth from under-invested communities in Detroit experience the greatest level of arts inequity in southeastern Michigan**. In the small group convenings, providers stressed that racial and economic inequity was at the root of many of the barriers facing youth and youth art providers. Further, providers acknowledge the disparity in funding and access for BIPOC-led organizations. In the convenings, there was a focus on supporting BIPOC-led organizations and programs, honoring and acknowledging cultural representation, and utilizing culturally specific programming and culturally responsive pedagogy.

Schools and Youth Arts Programs need to work together to address this inequity

- Coordination between **Detroit schools and youth arts providers** has been significantly limited, creating a barrier for community partnerships to support students and teachers. In fact, 44% of interviewees mentioned "school partnerships challenges" as a significant barrier to serving more Detroit youth. Classroom arts teachers identified "more visits from teaching artists" as a top need, while parents recommended "more in-school programs." An overall recommendation of the stakeholder focus groups (youth, parents, teaching artists and classroom arts teachers) was "encouraging schools to emphasize the importance of arts in their curriculum."
- Detroit youth today have significantly **less exposure to the arts** than youth in previous generations. Relatedly, there is less consistent parent involvement, based in part on a lack of parent understanding of the **educational value of the arts** and a lack of appreciation for the **college and career opportunities** the arts can provide. Lack of exposure to the arts and inconsistent parental support were listed in the small group convenings as top "equitable access" barriers, listed only below transportation.
- Youth, classroom teachers and youth arts providers expressed a need for more **platforms where the talents of young people can be showcased** both in schools and in the community. Such **collaborative platforms** can also help quality arts programs gain more exposure and visibility, especially in partnership with schools.

Detroit has an abundance of high-quality youth arts providers

- While 52 youth arts providers were interviewed, a total of **more than 70 ongoing youth arts programs** serving Detroit youth exist.
- **Community-based youth arts providers offer impressive wrap-around services** for youth and families, from providing mental health counseling to financial support to families in crisis to moving youth into their dormitories in college. These incredibly valuable services are difficult to fund since they require working with a relatively small number of youth in a comprehensive and deep manner.
- Detroit youth arts programs have a strong focus on **youth voice and creative youth development**. These programs are creating safe spaces for youth to develop themselves personally, artistically and professionally.

Collective Action is needed to make Youth Arts in Detroit more equitable, accessible, inclusive and sustainable

- A lack of **community awareness** was highlighted as both a significant obstacle for providers and a major barrier for youth and families. Providers listed the need for **centralized communication** as one of their highest priority issues. A need for a “communication hub” and a “community partners directory” were listed among the highest priorities for field and sector building in the small group convenings. Additionally, there were strong feelings among providers and classroom arts teachers that a communication hub was necessary for “stronger arts advocacy.”
- Smaller grass roots organizations have more effective **community engagement** strategies than larger organizations, while larger organizations have **greater resources for marketing and outreach**. Collaboration between smaller and larger organizations may be able to help the field maximize recruitment efforts.
- More support is needed for **teaching artists**, who are the lifeblood of the sector yet often lack youth development training, certification, and economic and professional stability. In the teaching artist focus group, there was a call for “more cooperation among organizations” and “better communication about resources.”
- Emerging from the needs-assessment convenings, providers expressed the desire to create a collective network of organizations and programs providing ongoing youth arts experience for Detroit youth. A community-led design team and Charrette was formed to design a structure for a **Detroit Youth Arts Provider Network**. The community-led design team collectively authored a mission statement for this emerging network:

The Detroit Youth Arts Providers Network exists to unite and elevate Detroit’s youth arts providers, large and small. With unwavering commitment to racial and economic equity, the Network creates a platform to help all providers achieve visibility and access to resources, funding and opportunities. The Network serves as a conduit between youth arts providers and their communities, ensuring providers have the requisite tools needed to enact change and enrich the lives of the children of Detroit as they develop crucial life skills shaped by the discipline of the arts.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the results of the 12-month needs assessment, planning and design process, DEYA makes the following recommendations to make youth arts in Detroit more equitable, accessible, inclusive, and sustainable through collective action.

- **RECOMMENDATION 1: Develop a network for Detroit Youth Arts providers to collectively address sector-wide issues.**
- **RECOMMENDATION 2: Create citywide peer networks for classroom arts teachers, youth, teaching artists, and parent advocates.**
- **RECOMMENDATION 3: Develop a citywide OST (out-of-school-time) transportation system to overcome barriers to youth participation.**
- **RECOMMENDATION 4: Collaborate to attract new national and regional funds for youth arts in Detroit.**
- **RECOMMENDATION 5: Develop centralized communication for Detroit youth arts organizations and stakeholders to increase awareness and accessibility of arts opportunities.**
- **RECOMMENDATION 6: Create more collaborative platforms to showcase youth and youth arts providers, and to enhance coordination and support.**

DEYA FOCUS AREAS

The learnings from the 12-month process also led to DEYA clarifying its roles and focus areas moving forward.

Networks: DEYA serves as a backbone, providing support for Detroit youth arts networks by acting as a non-voting coordinator and facilitator while raising funds for network initiatives.

Infrastructure: DEYA provides resources and planning support for infrastructure improvements and other funding that supports the entire city of Detroit youth arts sector. This includes addressing out-of-school transportation for all youth arts opportunities and identifying and securing national and regional grants to support the sustainability of youth arts in Detroit.

Platforms: DEYA provides collaborative platforms to elevate the work of youth, youth arts providers and school arts programs, including through micro-grants for youth throughout the city, mentorship, programs, youth arts showcases, and healthcare partnerships.

Advocacy: By centralizing information, grass-roots marketing, and policy advocacy for the youth arts sector, DEYA is committed to delivering a catalog of youth arts providers for schools and community centers, creating a centralized database and/or website, marketing the activities of the Detroit youth arts sector, and advocating for policy change to support youth arts in Detroit.

FOUNDATIONAL CONCEPTS

COLLECTIVE IMPACT VS. COLLABORATION

DEYA's goals are firmly based in the concept of Collective Impact. While sometimes used as a synonym for Collaboration, they are quite distinct. Collaboration is defined as "the action of working with someone to produce or create something." While collaboration is usually time-limited, with a short-term goal, Collective Impact, by contrast, is "a network of community members, organizations, and institutions who advance equity by learning together, aligning, and integrating their actions to achieve population and systems-level change." (source *Collective Impact Forum*)

There are five key conditions of Collective Impact.

Table 1: The Five Conditions of Collective Impact

THE FIVE CONDITIONS OF COLLECTIVE IMPACT	
Common Agenda	All participants have a shared vision for change including a common understanding of the problem and a joint approach to solving it through agreed upon actions.
Shared Measurement	Collecting data and measuring results consistently across all participants ensures efforts remain aligned and participants hold each other accountable.
Mutually Reinforcing Activities	Participant activities must be differentiated while still being coordinated through a mutually reinforcing plan of action.
Continuous Communication	Consistent and open communication is needed across the many players to build trust, assure mutual objectives, and create common motivation.
Backbone Support	Creating and managing collective impact requires a separate organization(s) with staff and a specific set of skills to serve as the backbone for the entire initiative and coordinate participating organizations and agencies.

Source: *Stanford Social Innovation Review*

IMPACT NETWORKS

We began this needs assessment, planning and design process by examining the work and process of *Impact Networks: Create Connection, Spark Collaboration, and Catalyze Systemic Change* by David Ehrlichman and the documentary, [Impact Networks: Creating Change in a Complex World](#). This documentary and book offer the structural components of a blueprint to design a Collective Impact Network. More importantly, they offer a universal why and how. An “Impact Network” is a disruption to the status quo with the goal of catalyzing systemic change, while not abiding by the rules of a hierarchical structure or top down model. Rather it employs the collective engagement of members of various sectors convening around a shared common goal. Therefore, the managers of the network are not the “bosses,” instead they act as independent/neutral facilitators, whose purpose it is to coordinate the network and provide a platform that helps move it forward.



CENTERING BLACK AND BROWN YOUTH FROM UNDER-INVESTED COMMUNITIES

Overwhelming research confirms the benefits of Youth Arts on adolescent development, health, education, and college/career pathways—especially for Black and Brown youth from under-invested communities. Findings shared in the research article “It Just Made Me Want to Do Better for Myself”: *Performing Arts Education and Academic Performance for African American Male High School Students*, conducted by Calvin Wesley Walton, et al, at Georgia Southern University, suggest increased access to “arts-based school curricula and ... performing arts learning experiences

may improve school outcomes for African American males who attend U.S. public schools.” Youth Arts programming has been shown to be uniquely impactful in developing 21st Century Innovation Skills and Social-Emotional Learning (SEL), keys to economic mobility and lifelong success that go far beyond the Arts. With this in mind, as we set out on the development of a collective impact initiative designed to pursue community driven common goals, we felt it was important to prioritize the population that would benefit the most from an equitable youth arts ecosystem. While not excluding any Detroit young person, we will be “centering” the youth that have the least access to youth arts opportunities: Black and Brown youth from under-invested communities.

DETROIT YOUTH ARTS PROVIDERS

When we did our initial scan of programs that provide youth arts experiences for Detroit youth, it became clear that much of this work was not being done only by “Youth Arts Organizations.” While Detroit has several acclaimed Creative Youth Development organizations who focus 100% of their nonprofits’ efforts on supporting artistic experiences for youth, many organizations do not fit that description. Some are education departments or programs of major arts institutions. Others are arts-focused programs within non-arts organizations – often sports, recreation, youth development or social service agencies. Most are nonprofits, but some, such as dance studios, rely mostly on tuition paid by students and families. Some provide lessons and comprehensive training but are not incorporated as nonprofits, using a fiduciary to seek grant funding. The great majority of the entities are located within the city, while a few are located outside of the city but either serve mostly city residents or have specific programs located in Detroit specifically designed to serve youth in the city.



The one thing that united these entities was their histories of — and/or plans for — providing *ongoing* arts experiences focused on youth in the city of Detroit. “Ongoing” does not necessarily refer to being “year-round” since some programs only take place during the school year or only in the summer. It refers to programs where young people can find an artistic “home” where they can have experiences, often sequential, that will last for years of their childhoods and teens. Because of the diversity of entities who are providing or seeking to provide ongoing youth arts experiences for Detroit youth, we refer to them as “Detroit Youth Arts Providers” rather than organizations, programs, departments, etc.

BUILDING AN ECOYSYTEM:

A 12-MONTH PLANNING AND DESIGN PROCESS



On July 1st, 2022 DEYA set out on a 12-month process to identify, learn, assess and build a Detroit youth arts ecosystem that would be the basis of Detroit's Youth Arts collective impact initiative. DEYA became an "incubation program" of the nonprofit Connect Detroit, an organization with more than twenty years of experience in developing and mobilizing citywide initiatives. With Connect Detroit providing back office support and guidance on community engagement, as well as acting as DEYA's fiduciary, we began this 12-month process which included the following:

1. Interviews with Detroit youth arts providers from across the sector.
2. A mapping project to determine where youth arts opportunities are located in the city and where the students are coming from who attend them – with the goal of determining "youth arts deserts" where you have the least arts opportunities and access.*
3. Engage a national funding consultant to identify the opportunities and feasibility of DEYA bringing new national funds into the city to support youth Arts.*
4. Small Group Convenings of Detroit youth arts providers to delve deeper into the needs, barriers and opportunities identified from the provider interviews.

5. Focus Groups with classroom arts teachers, youth artists, teaching artists and parents to identify the needs, barriers and opportunities of youth arts in Detroit from their perspectives.
6. The publishing of a comprehensive Report on DEYA's Community Needs Assessment, Planning, and Design Process (this report) to share with all sectors of the community.

*While #2 and #3 did not take place during the 12-month period due to unexpected delays in funding (they did begin in July of 2023), additional "Emergent" strategies developed during the 12 months as a byproduct of the above activities. These include:

- The creation of a community-led Design Team and Design Charrette, tasked with developing a proposal for the structure of a Detroit Youth Arts Provider Network. This emerged from the small group convenings because of strong feelings from many participants that a Network was needed and that they did not want to wait until the end of the planning process to start creating it.
- The creation of a Detroit Youth Arts Directory, where providers could share their programs with the community and also from which catalogs could be created to share with schools and community centers interested in providing a site for provider programs. During the Design Charrette, this idea was unanimously considered something that the providers had great capacity to create immediately and, once again, did not want to wait until the end of the 12-month process to start.



NEEDS ASSESSMENT ACTIVITIES



DEYA designed a plan to conduct a needs assessment of the youth arts community. It was vitally important to begin here for several reasons. One, we did not want to make any assumptions about the needs of the community and were committed to hearing directly from providers. Two, we wanted to use this time to offer transparency into who we are, our purpose in conducting this research and ultimately to build trust amongst the community. Our needs assessment process included interviews with youth arts providers, small group convenings of providers to further explore the results of our interviews, and focus groups with other key stakeholders to round out our assessment.

DETROIT YOUTH ARTS PROVIDER INTERVIEWS

Planning

We began our assessment process by asking individual youth arts providers about capacity, barriers and what an equitable youth arts ecosystem should and perhaps could look like in the city of Detroit.

We started with a list of approximately 20-30 creative youth development and/or youths arts driven organizations that either provide ongoing arts programming or provide an arts program component within a non-arts environment. Along the way we were introduced to a number of exceptional youth arts providers and ended this leg of our journey having interviewed 52 Detroit youth arts providers. While we capped our interviews at 52 organizations, there were more that emerged and will continue to emerge.

Methodology

DEYA's research approach is at the intersection of equitable access, collaboration and field building, using both quantitative and qualitative data to identify specific points of interest. This learning process began with community outreach to various stakeholders in the youth arts provider ecosystem. Four specific "parent-codes" (i.e. overall subject categories) needing to be clarified or further deconstructed for understanding, were identified prior to the start of these conversations: 1) needs, 2) barriers, 3) opportunities and 4) best practices. The themes were combined under two "parent codes," Needs/Barriers and Opportunities/Best Practice. After three months of assessing these parent codes through community conversations, 52 unique youth arts providers were identified and subsequently engaged in the process. DEYA began an intensive coding process which identified sub-themes related to the parent-codes, derived from the conversations. The table below lists the needs and barriers most commonly raised during our interviews, listed in order of frequency of mentions.

Below, **Table 2** shows in order of hierarchy, the themes that emerged under the parent code, Needs/Barriers.

Table 2: Identified Community Needs & Barriers

Needs/Barriers	Percentage of Respondents Mentioning Specific Need/Barrier
Transportation Challenges	76.9%
Fundraising Support	67.3%
Funding for Staff	61.5%
Funding for Operations	55.8%
School Partnerships Challenges	44.3%
Youth Identity/Self Esteem, Interpersonal Relationships, Artist Assimilation, & Absence of Artist Mentorship	44.2%
Support or Pipeline for Teaching Artists	34.6%
Space Capacity	32.7%
Parent Involvement	23.1%
Inequity/Unequal Benefit for Suburban & Economically Mobile Youth	21.2%
Family Life Issues and Crisis	19.2%

Data Analysis: Needs & Barriers

Interviews were grounded in the mission of sharing, learning and moving toward collective action, and participants offered a critical view into their individual and collective concerns as well as opportunities and new ideas. Through these rich conversations, **Transportation, Funding (fundraising support as well as funding for staff and operations)** and **School Partnership Challenges** emerged as the three greatest needs and subsequent barriers to young people accessing arts opportunities in Detroit.

- Lack of accessible **Transportation** (76.9%) for youth participants and teaching artists contributed to the inability of a young person being able to get to an afterschool program or hindered their ability to get home if the program took place directly after school on school grounds.

- Funding**, including
 - 1) Support** (67.3%), specifically the need for unrestricted grant funded support, the opportunity to apply for larger grants requiring a costly annual audit or the opportunity to collaborate on grant funding with cross-sector entities for the organizations, proved to be a significant barrier to the ability to expand programming, have operational support and hire more staff.
 - 2) Staff** (61.5%) **and 3) Operations** (55.8%), the ability to attract and hire full-time employees with benefits and the ability to pay both full and part-time staff competitive salaries and wages befitting the workload, requirements and talent needed to keep youth arts organizations operating at a high level. Additionally, the greatest challenge to the organizations being sustainable and able to increase their capacity was the lack of funding for ongoing operational costs. For both staffing and operations, the fact that many funders only funded programming led organizations to be less sustainable and avoid growth.
- School Partnerships Challenges** (44.3%) were often seen as an obstacle to providing youth arts experiences for Detroit youth. Many providers expressed that there was a lack of transparency in how smaller organizations can engage with schools to provide services – often free-of-charge to the schools. In addition, many found that bureaucratic red-tape became a sometimes insurmountable obstacle to serving youth in Detroit schools. Furthermore, for many providers, the lack of funding available from Detroit schools has led them to provide services to schools outside of Detroit who have funding to offer, even when their mission is specifically to serve Detroit youth.

Below, **Table 3** lists the opportunities and best practices identified by our interviewees in order of frequency.

Table 3. Identified Community Opportunities & Best Practices

Opportunities/Best Practices	Percentage of Respondents Mentioning Specific Opportunities/Best Practices
Mental Health Support	13.5%
Year Round Programming	9.6%
Summer/Camp Programming	9.6%
Neighborhood Based Programming	9.6%
SEL-Social Emotional Learning	9.6%
Youth Workforce Development	9.6%
Safe Space - Trust based	7.7%

Data Analysis: Opportunities & Best Practices

Participants acknowledged that the arts, specifically their respective organizations, support young people in myriad ways that show immeasurable benefit to the recipient and the community. While the data shows that the conversations leaned heavily toward the discussion of needs and barriers, the interviews also identified 7 opportunities and best practices by and for youth arts organizations.

13.5% respondents indicate that **Mental Health Support** provided by certified practitioners, which several organizations currently provide, is an opportunity and necessary resource needed to support young people in Detroit based youth arts programs. Participants shared that because the arts naturally lends itself to creating spaces where young people can feel safe to be vulnerable, leading them to open up in ways that youth arts providers are not qualified to handle. Young people share personal challenges related to school, home and personal life that require professional guidance and additional wrap around services. The suggested opportunity is having a team of shared mental health providers, including other wrap around service providers, who would be contracted to carry caseloads for multiple youth arts organizations and engage with youth participants on a bi-weekly to monthly basis.

In no order of hierarchy, the following 5 themes emerged at 9.6% to complete the second most frequently discussed opportunities and best practices. **Year Round Programming, Summer/ Camp Programming, Neighborhood Based Programming, SEL-Social Emotional Learning and Youth Workforce Development.** Robust, ongoing and accessible programming are opportunities that allow youth arts organizations to connect with as many young people as possible. Providers being able to offer a broader platform increases the opportunity for engagement with more young people to ultimately help them develop arts and social emotional skills. These skills can transfer directly to post-secondary, workforce and career readiness. Post-pandemic, the challenge of supporting young people “where they are” requires ongoing, sustained relationship building with intentional support in the areas needed for the individual.

7.7% of the Needs Assessment respondents indicate as an opportunity and best practice their ability to create and maintain a safe, protective and vulnerable space for the young people who actively participate in their respective programs. It is noted that each of these opportunities and best practices stand to cast a wider net and serve more youth by collaborating with multiple youth arts organizations who share the same interests in supporting their participants’ overall well being.



Findings

Utilizing individual provider interviews, our qualitative data offers first hand accounts of the identified needs, barriers, and opportunities and best practices from practitioners providing daily access to youth utilizing the arts as their vehicle.

Below, **Table 4** shows the emergent key needs/barriers from the Youth Arts Providers Interviews.

Table 4. Key needs/barriers from the Youth Arts Providers Needs Assessment Interviews

Key Barriers/Needs	Rationale
Disproportionate benefit to youth living outside of the city.	Many providers indicated that, while their programs were focused on youth in the city of Detroit, a significant number of youth from outside of the city were benefiting from their programs. Multiple providers indicated that the 50-75% of the participants in their Detroit-located programs were youth who lived outside of the city (not including youth from Highland Park and Hamtramck who are within Detroit city outer boundaries). In addition, some Detroit providers reported that the majority of their in-school programming was taking place in Suburban schools who had more funding and less red-tape than Detroit schools.
Equitable Access for Detroit Youth	Identified as target areas to address equity in youth arts access. This includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transportation • Economic mobility • School partnerships • Micro-grants for youth • Marketing • Workforce & college readiness • Exposure recruitment • Parental support
Sustainability for Programs and Organizations Serving Detroit Youth	Identified as ways the youth arts ecosystem could be sustained to support greater access and opportunity for youth arts participation. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unrestricted funding • Sustainable funding • Organizational mini-grants • Fundraising support • Access to larger grants • Collective fundraising • Funding for sustainable growth
Field and Sector-Building for Programs and Organizations, Teaching Artists and Arts Educators	The leading needs identified by practitioners in the field: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth arts advocacy • Teaching artists ecosystem • Organizational cross-membership • Organizational capacity • Sector-wide coordination • Community partners catalog • An information hub

While it did not surface as a pointed discussion in most of the interviews, DEYA acknowledges that racial and economic inequity are at the root of the needs and barriers described in the interviews. Honoring and acknowledging representation and cultural identity, disparity in funding and access for BIPOC-led organizations is core to pursuing this collective impact work.

Other Discoveries

While the interviews served to uncover the needs and barriers to participation in youth arts within the city of Detroit, we also acknowledge what is collectively working well and want to highlight areas previously not considered.

Below, **Table 5** shows discoveries gleaned from the Youth Arts Providers interviews.

Table 5. Discoveries from the Youth Arts Providers Needs Assessment

Discoveries	Rationale
Wrap Around Services	Small organizations provide wrap-around services for participating families including, transportation, groceries, prepared meals, tutoring, etc.
Community Engagement	Intentional and relevant connection to the surrounding community, offering a safe space for youth and partnerships with other organizations.
Youth Voice and Development	Organizations provide targeted and intentional opportunities for youth voices to be heard and to support their development as they make choices to move into the workforce or college.
Teaching Artists Support	Currently the youth arts ecosystem lacks a coordinated effort to support Teaching Artists to move them from the instability of a "gig-worker" to an employee of an organization with benefits. Additionally, there is no structure in place to support their professional growth, development and career mobility.

YOUTH ARTS PROVIDER SMALL GROUP CONVENINGS

After concluding the individual provider interviews, DEYA presented all 52 organizations with the opportunity to convene in small groups to discuss and analyze the findings. 49 individuals representing 40 organizations volunteered to participate in the small group convenings over 6 sessions.

In these small group convenings, facilitators shared the initial findings (see Table 3 and 4) and then offered an opportunity for open discussion. The discussion prompts below encouraged the participants to ponder the following

- What resonates with you?
- What questions are raised?
- What thoughts do you have?
- Are we missing anything?

After a robust and engaging discussion, the participants were asked to place, in order of priority, each of the themes listed under the initial findings. The following Tables 6, 7, and 8 express what the representatives of the youth arts organizations collectively identified as highest to least priority for the youth arts ecosystem.

Equitable Access for Detroit Youth

Table 6. Prioritization Ranking of Equitable Access Themes

Equitable Access Themes	Prioritization Ranking Out of 10
Transportation	1
Exposure	2
Parental Support	3
Economic Mobility	4
Marketing	5
School Partnerships	6
Recruitment	7
Micro-grants for Youth	8
Health Support	9
Workforce & College Readiness	10

Sustainability for Programs/Orgs Serving Detroit Youth

Table 7. Prioritization Ranking of Sustainability Themes

Sustainability Themes	Prioritization Ranking Out of 7
Unrestricted Funding	1
Sustainable Operations Funding	2
Access to Larger Grants for Small Groups	3
Funding for Sustainable Growth	4
Collective Fundraising for Major Funding	5
Fundraising Support	6
Organizational Mini-grants	7

Field/Sector-Building for Programs/Organizations, Teaching Artists and Arts Educators

Table 8. Prioritization Ranking of Field/Sector Building Themes

Field/Sector Building Themes	Prioritization Ranking Out of 6
An Information Hub	1
Teaching Artists Ecosystem	2
Community Partners "Catalog"	3
Youth Arts Advocacy	4
Organizational Cross-membership	5
Sector Capacity	6

Overall, across the three categories, the highest ranked priorities were in order:

1. Unrestricted Funding
2. Information Hub
3. Teaching Artist Ecosystem
4. Community Partners Catalog
5. Youth Arts Advocacy
6. Sustainable Operations
7. Transportation



FOCUS GROUPS

To get closer to a place of understanding needs, barriers, and opportunities from the community regarding youth and the arts, DEYA engaged JFM Consulting Group, a Detroit-based planning and evaluation firm, to design and facilitate six focus groups. The stakeholders that the community conversations revealed as voices needing to be heard in order to move this work forward included: Youth, Parents, Classroom Arts and Music Teachers and Teaching Artists.

The goals of the coordinated focus groups included:

1. Better understand the arts programming landscape in Detroit;
2. Identify gaps/needs in youth arts programming; and
3. Acquire recommendations from artists, art/music teachers, parents, and youth to improve arts programming in Detroit.

The recommendations from each of the sub-groups interviewed were as follows.

Youth Recommendations: Largely, youth were satisfied with the programs available to them in Detroit. However, there were a few suggestions that could improve Detroit arts programs:

- City- or school district-wide artwork showcases where students can network and display their work;
- Lowering the costs of some programs;
- A larger variety of arts programs offered, especially at school; and
- Increased time to practice their arts during school hours, either in their arts classes or having a free “creativity” hour.

Parent Recommendations: Overall, parents were satisfied with the programs in which their children are enrolled. However, there were some suggestions to increase access and improve arts programs across the city of Detroit. These recommendations are as follows:

- Increased funding
- Provide transportation from school to after-school programs via shuttles or free bus passes
- Provide more in-school programs
- Outcome/artwork showcases
- Funding/rental program for instruments

Teacher Recommendations: Teachers provided their arts and music educators perspective on what could be done to improve arts education in Detroit. They recommended:

- Inviting teaching artists to come in more frequently to classrooms
- Additional instruction time
- Advocating that the arts is equally important to students education as sports or STEM
- Further support from principals/school board
- Bussing for afterschool programs
- Clearer budgets
- Sense of community among arts teachers via Facebook groups or networking events
- More freedom in curriculum
- Allow students to self-select electives

Teaching Artist Recommendations: In addition to their own strategies, teaching artists would like to see some additional support to combat the previously mentioned challenges from other organizations and schools, which include:

- Providing transportation
- Combine contemporary art forms with classically accepted forms
- More communication as to what's available for the youth
- Requiring arts programming in schools
- Funding for supplies for the children
- Less competition, more cooperation
- Jamborees or arts showcases

JFM identified four overall challenges that were present in all of the focus groups. Below, Table 9 shows the concluded recommendations based on key findings from the focus groups report.

Table 9. Focus Groups Major Challenges and Recommendations

Major Challenges	Recommendations
Transportation	<p>Transportation to arts programs was noted as a challenge to varying degrees by participants in each of the six focus groups. Therefore, any strategy to increase access to arts programming for children in Detroit will need to address transportation. Specifically, DEYA may want to consider the feasibility of implementing transportation recommendations such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing bussing/shuttles to arts programs • Providing bussing/shuttles from after school programs to home • Securing grants for bus passes
Funding	<p>Funding for arts programs was noted as a challenge to varying degrees by participants in each of the six focus groups. Specifically, DEYA may want to explore organizing instrument/equipment rental programs and/or acquire funding from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foundations • School Grants • Other funding sources
Lack of marketing/ Showcases	<p>Participants in all six focus groups mentioned that to increase access to the arts, advertising needs to be done to inform Detroit youth of the programs that exist. DEYA may want to consider encouraging arts programs to increase flyering and school advertising. Additionally, DEYA could host community-wide events to increase arts programming visibility such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District wide arts competitions • Arts showcases • Galleries • Meet & greets after performances
Attendance	<p>The last major challenge noted primarily by teacher and teaching artists was attendance. Largely, to increase attendance and participation in the arts, DEYA could provide recommendations to Detroit schools, emphasizing the importance of the arts, and suggest that schools:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow students to choose art classes • Encourage equal participation • Provide more diverse arts classes youth would be interested in • Require arts in school curriculum to reduce after-school activity conflicts

Go to the ConnectDetroit.org/DEYA/FocusGroups for the full Focus Groups Report prepared by JFM Consulting Group including key finding and recommendations.

EMERGENT STRATEGIES



The consensus of the small group convenings was that some sort of coalition or network would be needed to address these issues and that we should start working on that immediately. In response to that feedback, we began the next step of our process: forming a Detroit Youth Arts Network Design Team.

THE DETROIT YOUTH ARTS NETWORK DESIGN TEAM

Formation of the Design Team

To develop the Design Team, DEYA enlisted the support of the 52 organizations interviewed as a part of the Needs Assessment. We shared chapters 1 and 5 from the book *Impact Networks*, which we used as a foundational text for this work. We encouraged potential participants to read these selections and to email us with any thoughts they may have had on designing the youth arts providers network or multiple networks that would serve to support the youth arts ecosystem.

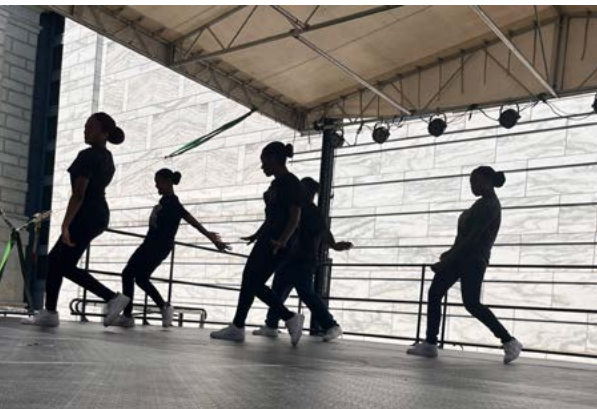
Design Team Preparation

To prepare for the first three Design Team gatherings, DEYA facilitators focused on the 3 Ps, Purpose, Participants, Potential:

1. The first session focused on the **Purpose**, “why” the network should exist
2. The second session focused on **Participants**, exploring the “who” – who should be represented in this Network, what are the parameters for participation and membership
3. The third session focused on the networks **Potential**, the “what” — things we can do together that we can't do alone

Initial Design Proposal

As a result of the three weeks of meetings of the Design Team, the following proposal was developed.



PURPOSE — Why the Network Should Exist

The Detroit Youth Arts Network exists to unite and elevate Detroit’s youth arts providers, large and small. With unwavering commitment to racial and economic equity, the Network creates a platform to help all providers achieve visibility and access to resources, funding and opportunities. The Network serves as a conduit between youth arts providers and their communities, ensuring providers have the requisite tools needed to enact change and enrich the lives of the children of Detroit as they develop crucial life skills shaped by the discipline of the arts.

PARTICIPANTS — Who Should the Network Engage to Advance the Purpose

The Detroit Youth Arts Network will engage all those who are providing high quality ongoing youth arts opportunities for and with Detroit youth. Centering black and brown youth and leadership, members of the Network will have a sincere commitment to building a youth arts ecosystem which can empower every Detroit young artist, helping them find their voice and achieve their dreams. With an understanding that there is currently significant racial and economic inequity between youth in the city of Detroit and youth in the surrounding suburbs, this Network will focus on youth arts providers located in the city and/or those who are committed to serving Detroit residents, especially those who have been traditionally under-represented in youth arts programs.

POTENTIAL — Things We Can Do Together That We Cannot Do Alone

- Building a community of support
- Creating power through collective action
- Bringing new resources to the field to improve sustainability
- Accelerating shared learning
- Reducing duplication of effort
- Including diverse voices
- Breaking down organizational silos



THE YOUTH ARTS PROVIDERS NETWORK DESIGN CHARRETTE

“A Design Charrette is an intensive, hands-on workshop that brings people from different disciplines and backgrounds together with members of the community to explore design options for a particular area.” (www.involve.org.uk)

Design Charrette

As with the Design Team, nominations for Design Charrette members came from the 52 interviewed providers. The initial gathering included 16 participants from 12 youth arts providers/ organizations. This enthusiastic group included many participants from the Design Team and other youth arts providers who participated in the Needs Assessment interviews.

The purpose of this gathering was to have the youth arts providers examine closely the proposed Detroit Youth Arts Providers Network, providing insight, questions, and challenges to the proposed design ideas. Additionally, the facilitators led the Charrette through a deep examination of the Design Team recommendations. Gathered in small groups, the participants were charged with identifying the areas in which they thought the Network had high or low capacity and where the Network would have high or low degree of impact.

A high percentage of Design Charrette participants determined that there were seven areas that the Network had both a high capacity to achieve and could have a high level of impact. These are listed in the following table.

Below, **Table 10** high impact/high capacity areas determined at the Design Charrette.

Table 10. High-Impact/High-Capacity Areas

Role of the Network	Specifics
Addressing Barriers (57% High Impact/High Capacity)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Address out-of-school-time transportation • Need for health support services • Lack of awareness • Develop collaborative platforms where multiple youth arts providers can strategize and share resources and expertise to make youth arts more accessible and inclusive
Collaborate in Fundraising (94% High Impact/High Capacity)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide development/fundraising training • Help organizations to hire development staff to create collaborative proposals which organizations would not qualify for by themselves because of the size, capacity or geographic limits • Identify funding to support sustainability and infrastructure benefiting the entire sector
Create a Directory (100% High Impact/High Capacity)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides teachers, principals, and after-school sites with a catalog of community partnership opportunities to support their students • Improves awareness of opportunities for youth, parents and families • Creates greater connectivity between youth arts providers, creating a platform for greater collaboration and less duplication in the sector • Create a directory of all ongoing youth arts opportunities for Detroit youth
Support Youth Voice (67% High Impact/High Capacity)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth leadership teams to steer the course of youth arts in Detroit • Create a Detroit young artist congress, where youth arts providers will nominate members from their individual youth advisory councils
Advocate/Market the Importance of Youth Arts (46% High Impact/High Capacity)	Intentional collaboration with parents, schools, funders and policymakers, including open houses, DEMO days, youth arts showcases collaborative platforms and other events to more effectively inform the public of the quality, diversity and impact of Detroit youth arts
Provide Collective Professional Development (59% High Impact/High Capacity)	Provide opportunities for all youth arts providers – including classroom teachers and teaching artists – to access the most cutting edge learning to support their students, including development in <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SEL • Trauma-informed practices • Anti-racist education • Culturally-responsive pedagogy
Develop Affinity Cohorts (73% High Impact/High Capacity)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow for growth and sharing with peers from multiple organizations, including youth arts executive leadership, teaching artists, program coordinators, parents, alumni, etc

The Design Charrette concluded with new thoughts and ideas around what the Network could do and potentially be. After the Charrette, DEYA encouraged participants to contribute further thoughts on a shared document in an effort to keep the conversation growing.

Based on the feedback of the Charrette, a draft Charter for the Detroit Youth Arts Provider Network was created, building on the Purpose, Participants and Potential identified by the Design Team and adding a proposed Governance and Decision-Making structure. The proposed charter can be found at [ConnectDetroit.org/DEYA/Charter](https://connectdetroit.org/DEYA/Charter).

RECOMMENDATIONS

OVERVIEW

1. Catalyze and Convene a **Network for Detroit Youth Arts Providers**
 - a. Share **best practices** in areas such as youth mental health support, DEI, SEL, Creative Workforce Development and Culturally Responsive Pedagogy across the sector.
 - b. Collectively fundraise specifically to **support provider operating costs** (staffing, space, administrative) which allow organizations to be sustainable and grow to meet the needs of young people.
 - c. Improve **connectivity between Youth Arts Providers and Detroit Schools and Community Centers.**
2. Create **Citywide Peer Networks** for Classroom Arts Teachers, Youth, and Teaching Artists.
3. Work across sectors to develop a citywide **OST (Out-of-School-Time) Transportation** system.
4. Work collectively to **attract new national and regional funds** to support youth arts in Detroit, especially for infrastructure funding that will benefit the entire city.
5. Develop **centralized communication** for Detroit youth arts.
 - a. directory of youth arts providers
 - b. mapping of in-school and out-of-school-time arts opportunities
 - c. shared marketing and advocacy tools
6. Create **Collaborative Platforms**

RECOMMENDATION #1

Catalyze and Convene a Network for Detroit Youth Arts Providers

There is a need for a Detroit Youth Arts Provider Network to allow providers the connectivity and collective power to address the large and complex issues and opportunities facing the sector. During our research, these three specific recommendations were seen by providers as priorities for a Network.

- a. Collectively fundraise specifically to **support provider operating costs** (staffing, space, administrative) which allow organizations to be sustainable and grow to meet the needs of young people.
- b. Improve **connectivity between Youth Arts Providers and Detroit Schools and Community Centers.**
- c. Share **best practices** in areas such as youth mental health support, DEI, SEL, Creative Workforce Development, Wrap-around services and Culturally Responsive Pedagogy across the sector.

A community-led Design Team and Design Charrette developed the proposed charter for this self-governing Network.

RECOMMENDATION #2

Create Citywide Peer Networks for Classroom Arts Teachers, Youth, and Teaching Artists

In addition to a Network for youth arts providers, the focus group research has made clear that there is a need for the development of Peer Networks for 1) Classroom Arts Teachers, 2) Youth in the arts and 3) Teaching Artists who are regularly hired or contracted by youth arts providers.

CLASSROOM ARTS TEACHERS

There currently exist peer networks for Detroit visual arts teachers (DATA: Detroit Art Teacher Association) and music teachers (The Music Education Committee of Detroit Harmony at the DSO). There is a need for similar networks for Detroit dance, theatre, literary and digital arts classroom educators. Furthermore, we recommend there be an umbrella Network for all Detroit Arts teachers to connect all educators in all arts disciplines throughout the city. We recommend that, consistent with the DATA and Detroit Harmony, these Networks include teachers from both public, charter and independent schools.

Areas of need these Networks may address include:

- A sense of community among arts educators
- Sharing information on funding and resources. (The MACC Arts Education Funding Plan Report for Fiscal Year 2023 indicates that only 5.5% of arts education grant awardees are from Detroit – the largest populated city in the state of Michigan. Traditionally these funds are applied for and awarded to teachers/districts in other parts of the State, even though Detroit has more K-12 students than any other Michigan city.)
- Advocating for state, county and city policies to enhance arts education.

YOUTH IN THE ARTS

Young people involved in the arts remain isolated from youth in other organizations, creating silos and division. A positive step is the increase in Youth Advisory Councils (YACs) and other youth leadership programs provided by Detroit Youth Arts Providers. Consistent with the youth focus groups and the Design Charrette’s focus on elevating “Youth Voice” it is recommended that a Detroit Youth Arts Congress be developed that would include representatives from all Detroit youth arts programs, both in and outside of school hours. This Congress will be able to represent the voices of the peers in setting the agenda for youth arts in Detroit.

TEACHING ARTISTS

Arts professionals who work part-time as instructors, tutors, and mentors for youth artists – also known as Teaching Artists – are the “life-blood” of the Detroit Youth Arts sector. They do a significant amount of the out-of-school arts teaching for youth arts providers, as well as, at times, collaborating with classroom teachers. Because the majority of funding is project-based, youth arts providers can afford to contract them on a project-by-project basis, without taking on harder to fund full-time positions. Unfortunately, this situation has made Teaching Artistry very challenging and inconsistent work. It has gradually become “gig work” where, because arts programs often take place at the same time, it is extremely difficult for Teaching Artists to piece together full-time employment – even though there is great demand for their services. A Peer Network for Teaching Artists may provide:



- A supportive ecosystem where Teaching Artists can share information on opportunities;
- A critical mass that could leverage funded Teaching Artist training and certification; and
- Collective power to work with the Detroit Youth Arts Provider Network to coordinate schedules to allow for the opportunity of full-time employment with benefits.

RECOMMENDATION #3

Work across sectors to develop a citywide OST (Out-of-School-Time) Transportation system

As the data from the Needs Assessment interviews, small group convenings and focus groups make clear, the lack of out-of-school-time (OST) transportation (after-school, evenings and weekends) has been identified as the most significant barrier to youth participation, especially for youth from under-resourced and under-invested communities. Some interviewees identified the lack of accessible OST Transportation as the greatest cause of inequity between the “have and have nots” in metro Detroit.

In the interviews and stakeholder meetings, there were several nuances to this that were learned.

1. Groups did not see mass transportation (buses, trains, light rail, etc.) as a realistic part of the solution. This was true for two reasons related to the large size of the City of Detroit:
 - a. The size of the city and current mass transportation options made it unlikely that mass transportation could meet the needs of youth on the far east and west side of the city.
 - b. Concerns that having students as young as 11-years-old dropped off at stops/stations a long way from their homes, especially in the darkness during the winter months, would not ensure the safety that parents would require.
2. Detroit's OST Transportation needs were more akin to rural communities where pick up and drop-off needed to be directly to and from home residences rather than to areas.
3. There were many success stories on a small scale that involved students being picked up by organization shuttles at young people's schools directly after school and brought to a youth activity site. The challenge to organizations scaling this model is, once again, the vastness of Detroit and the lack of capacity to provide these services to more than a handful of schools. Also, many of these organizations struggled to provide door-to-door transportation for students who did not have reliable transportation home in the evening hours after the program had ended.

These conversations led to the recommendation that a city-wide system was needed, most likely also including youth from Highland Park and Hamtramck who live within the greater Detroit footprint.

The recommendation for such a system was even supported by organizations who had achieved relative success in students getting to their program. One organization which objectively has raised the most money for transporting their students to their program has expressed that they are still "struggling." They pointed to the need for a third-party entity to focus on this so that they, as a youth-supporting program, could reach more students and not have so much of their time focused on hiring and keeping drivers and vehicle maintenance.

There was also a strong feeling that this OST transportation needed to be coordinated by an independent entity to take the pressure off individual organizations.

RECOMMENDATION #4

Work collectively to attract new national and regional funds

Even prior to Covid, Detroit has had great recent success attracting national and regional funds to support community development, infrastructure, entrepreneurial and summer jobs. Unfortunately, Detroit has brought in very few national and regional funds to youth arts or arts education.

Many providers and educators spoke of the need to have access to larger funding that they see schools and youth arts providers in other urban cities able to access. From our research we have found that national and regional funders tend to prefer supporting citywide and sector-wide initiatives which have the ability to impact multiple organizations and an overall greater number of youth. Other cities such as Chicago, Boston, Houston, Los Angeles, Austin, San Diego and Pittsburgh have had more success bringing in national and regional funding because of their

ability to provide funders with intermediaries who can ensure equitable access to funding for organizations and schools of all shapes and sizes. These intermediaries collaborate with local government and public school districts to bring in funds that those public entities are not able to secure alone.

The key is approaching national and regional funders as a connected and coordinated sector. We saw this play out during and after the pandemic. The cities who already had youth arts networks and citywide arts education partnerships before the pandemic were better able to get and mobilize ARPA recovery funds to support youth arts in their cities. This is why DEYA lives by the saying “Build the bridge before you need it.” Not only does working collectively increase Detroit’s ability to bring in national and regional funds to support youth arts, but it also prepares the city and the sector to be more responsive and resilient for the next regional or national crisis.

RECOMMENDATION #5

Develop centralized communication for Detroit youth arts

There was strong consensus in all of our convenings that there was a definite need for more centralized communication from and within the Detroit Youth Arts sector. One of the greatest barriers to participation was identified as a lack of awareness of what opportunities exist for Detroit young people.

Providers often spoke of parents and families who were surprised to learn about the services they were providing. A general refrain from many in the communities is that there are not enough arts programs for their children “these days.” While it is accurate that there are fewer opportunities through schools and community centers today compared to earlier generations, it is clear that much of the community is unaware of the plethora of arts opportunities that are available through providers.

That communication gap starts with the providers and arts educators themselves. As we compiled our list of Detroit youth arts providers, many providers and teachers admitted that they had not heard of a large portion on the list. Collaboration was made even more difficult when people were not aware of the potential partners. We saw those connections start to blossom at our convenings with providers exchanging contact information and excitedly setting meetings to discuss collaboration opportunities.

An information hub with centralized communication will also benefit potential funders, volunteers, policy-makers, etc. DEYA has already begun the planning process for such an information hub, which will include:

- A directory of youth arts providers
- Mapping of in-school and out-of-school-time arts opportunities
- Shared marketing and advocacy tools

RECOMMENDATION #6

Create More Collaborative Platforms

Before the 12-month process began, DEYA was already aware of the need for Collaborative Platforms to support Detroit youth arts. DEYA began as a fund to address the challenges faced by DPSCD during the Pandemic. It was only by creating a platform where 13 Detroit arts organizations, multiple funders, and numerous teachers could collaborate that RAMP-UP (Rigorous Arts Mentorship Program – Under Pandemic) could be enacted to provide online mentors for over 150 students during the school closures of the 2020-21 school year. Creating a collaborative platform was the only way to mobilize effectively to meet the unique needs of the youth during this crisis.

At the request of Concert of Colors founder Ismael Ahmed and with funding by the Skillman Foundation via CultureSource, DEYA facilitated an outdoor Youth Stage at the DSO in the summer 2021 and an outdoor Youth Stage and Art Fair at the DIA in the summer of 2022. These featured the work of 12 Detroit youth arts providers and showcased performances and artwork by more than 80 young performing and visual artists (who were all compensated for their participation).

In July and August, DEYA launched a pilot of Youth Arts by Prescription (YaRx) in partnership with Children’s Hospital of Michigan (CHM), with funding from the Children’s Foundation and the Michigan Arts & Culture Council (MACC). With artistic leadership by Detroit-based lead artists, Jasmine Rivera and Jon Dixon, YaRx provided a collaborative platform for performances and interactive experiences at CHM by 7 Detroit youth arts providers. Additionally, young people and mentors from 5 other arts providers participated in the creation of a documentary to be shared with CHM patients and their families, exposing them to arts opportunities where they could potentially participate after discharge from the hospital. Rivera and Dixon were selected via the MACC grant based on their experiences at CHM battling health challenges as a child.

Other showcases that were highlighted by the community were Detroit Public Schools Community District’s “Evening of Fine Arts” at the Fox Theatre and DPSCD Art Exhibit at the DIA, along with the “all-city” opportunities provided by DPSCD. These were seen as great showcases for youth artists, although there was a desire by some that there be showcases that highlight the work of all Detroit youth, not just those enrolled at DPSCD schools. In the Focus Groups, parents recommended more “outcome/artwork showcases” and youth recommended more “city or school district wide artwork showcases so students can network and display their art.”

DEYA will continue to support the creation of more Collaborative Platforms through funding and coordination. DEYA will not act as a “program provider” only as a conduit for expanded programming. DEYA is talking informally with the Riverfront Conservancy, Detroit Parks and Recreation, Detroit Public Television and the Joe Louis Greenway Partnership to create new Collaborative Platforms to showcase youth artists and youth arts providers in these public spaces.

NEXT STEPS



While the 12-month Ecosystem-Building Planning process ended on June 30, 2023, the work did not stop. It was decided that we would seek to convene the entire sector at one time, something that DEYA had not done to date. On September 7th, 2023 we will host the first Detroit Youth Arts Provider Summit.

To prepare for the Summit, there were several convenings that we scheduled for the months of July and August, 2023. These included a Design Charrette Phase II to finish the Charter proposal for a Detroit Youth Arts Network, that would be presented for approval at the Summit. The convenings also included conversations about the potential for developing a Creative Workforce (career pathways in the Creative Industries) collective of members who were focused in that area. This was a concept brought up by one of the providers in conjunction with Grow Detroit's Young Talent (GDYT), the Mayor's Summer Jobs program. And finally, we scheduled two sessions – one in-person and one virtual – for providers to respond to a draft of this report. We felt it was essential that community members had an opportunity to provide their input before the report was shared with the public. After feedback was provided, the first public release of the report was at the September 7th Detroit Youth Arts Provider Summit.

In addition, with necessary funding secured, we officially began the Mapping Data project with Data Driven Detroit and the national funding consultancy with Samantha Ender Advisory. It is expected that these reports will be completed by the end of 2023.

DEYA FOCUS AREAS MOVING FORWARD



Through the 12-month listening, and learning and convening process, it became clear what areas DEYA should – and should not – focus on to move the collective impact work forward. At the beginning of this process, there was a sense that DEYA would be the leader of a citywide DEYA Network encompassing all of the stakeholders in all sectors. We learned through this process that this was not the most effective or appropriate role for DEYA if we wanted to achieve collective impact.

First, it became clear that having one Network was not practical or feasible. In order to create effective Networks, we realized that each Network had to be made up of peers who can connect on a peer-level. The community decided that a “Provider” Network would be most appropriate for the first Network, bringing together entities on a business-to-business level. Collectively, we understood that there were several groups of individuals essential to Detroit’s youth arts ecosystem: classroom teachers, youth involved in the arts, and teaching artists. Therefore, three additional “Peer” Networks were necessary and would take the same level of engagement as the work done with providers over the past 12 months to establish coordination.

Secondly, we experienced some resistance to DEYA being in a leadership role for the Networks. There was a perception by some that in trying to take the lead in the breaking down of barriers for the sector, we would be setting ourselves up as new “Gatekeepers” – thus creating new barriers. Through our conversations and by researching successful impact networks we learned that the best role we can take is not as leaders – the sector already has great leaders – but by acting as a “backbone” and supporting the Network rather than leading it. If there is to be true collective impact, it is necessary that the Networks be self-governing.

Finally, it became clear that the Provider Network was not the only way DEYA could effectively work toward systems change. While a major part of DEYA’s work is catalyzing and supporting Networks, the Provider Network is not DEYA and DEYA is not the Network. Initiating planning and raising resources to support improved infrastructure would benefit not only the members of these Networks, but the city as a whole. In addition, creating collaborative platforms to showcase youth artists and youth arts providers was a positive action that did not need to be done through the Networks. And advocating for youth arts was an action that would support all of those involved in youth arts, whether they are part of a Network or not.

In the table below, DEYA’s four focus areas are defined.

Table 11. Four Focus Areas of DEYA

DEYA Focus Area	Description
Impact Networks	DEYA serves as a backbone, providing support for Detroit youth arts networks by acting as a coordinator and facilitator while raising funds for network initiatives
Infrastructure	DEYA provides resources and planning support for infrastructure improvements and other funding that supports the entire city of Detroit youth arts sectors. This includes addressing out-of-school transportation for all youth arts opportunities and identifying and securing federal and national grants to support the sustainability of youth arts in Detroit
Platforms	DEYA provides collaborative platforms to elevate the work of youth and youth arts providers, including through the Launch Award micro-grants for youth throughout the city, mentorship programs and youth arts showcases and awards
Advocacy	By centralizing information, grass-roots marketing and policy advocacy for the arts sector, DEYA is committed to delivering a catalog of youth arts providers for schools and after-school sites, a centralized database and/or website, marketing efforts to support Detroit youth arts in general and advocating for policy change to support youth arts in Detroit

APPENDIX

DETROIT YOUTH ARTS PROVIDERS PARTICIPATION IN DEYA 12-MONTH ECOSYSTEM-BUILDING/PLANNING PROCESS

KEY

NR = Needs Assessment Report

NI = Needs Assessment Informal

SG = Small Group Convenings

SF = Summer/Fall 2023 Convenings

YD = Youth Arts Directory

DT = Design Team

DC = Design Charette

CP = Collaborative Platform Participant (RAMP-UP, CoC Youth Stage, YaRx, etc.)

CP+ =Multiple Collaborative Platform Participation

	NR	NI	SG	SF	YD	DT	DC	CP	CP+
Art Squad at SAY Detroit Play Center	•								
Artlab J	•		•		•				
Arts & Scraps	•				•				
Black & Brown Theatre	•		•	•	•		•	•	
Capturing Belief	•				•				
COMPAS: Center of Music & Performing Arts Southwest	•			•	•		•		
Citywide Poets at InsideOut Literary Arts Project	•				•				•
Civic Youth Ensembles at Detroit Symphony Orchestra	•		•	•				•	
Class Act Detroit	•		•		•	•			

	NR	NI	SG	SF	YD	DT	DC	CP	CP+
CCS Community Arts Partnerships	•		•	•	•		•		•
Crescendo Detroit	•		•	•	•			•	
Culture Academy				•					
Dainty Fyah	•		•					•	
DanceAbility Detroit								•	
DESIGNCONNECT Detroit	•			•	•	•	•		
Detroit Children's Choir	•		•				•		
Detroit Creativity Project	•		•	•	•	•	•		•
DIME Detroit	•							•	
Detroit Institute of Arts	•		•	•					
Detroit Opera	•		•		•			•	
Detroit Suzuki	•		•	•	•				
Detroit Windsor Dance Academy	•		•		•			•	
Detroit Youth Choir	•						•		
Detroit Youth Volume								•	
E. WILL & Co. LLC					•				
Eisenhower Dance Detroit	•		•	•	•			•	
Girls Rock Detroit				•	•				
Heartbeat Detroit	•		•		•				
Heidelberg Arts Leadership Academy	•		•						
Heritage Works		•	•	•	•				•
Hope for Flowers	•		•		•			•	
imagINe nation					•				
Inner City Dance Scope	•		•						
JitMasters				•					
La Carpa Theatre	•		•						
LaShelle's School of Dance	•		•		•			•	
L!FE Leaders				•					
Live Coal	•			•	•		•		
Living Arts	•								
Matrix Theatre Company	•		•	•	•		•		
Michigan Arts Access				•					

	NR	NI	SG	SF	YD	DT	DC	CP	CP+
MSU Community Music School-Detroit	•		•	•	•				•
Mint Artists Guild	•		•	•	•				•
Mosaic Youth Theatre of Detroit	•								•
Motor City Street Dance Academy	•		•		•			•	
MOVE/Just Speak					•				
MOCAD	•		•	•	•				
Music Hall Center for the Performing Arts	•		•	•	•				•
Neighborhood Arts School	•		•		•	•	•		
Motown Museum/HitsvilleNext	•		•		•			•	
Overture Program of Sphinx Organization	•		•	•	•				•
ProjectArt Detroit	•		•	•	•				
Que Blackout at RTTM Community Center	•		•		•		•	•	
Seven Mile Music, Arts and Coding	•		•		•				
STEAM Lab at Detroit Boxing Gym	•		•						
Shakespeare in Detroit	•		•	•	•			•	
She's a Genius	•		•		•	•	•		
Single Frame Films				•	•				
Teen HYPE	•							•	
The Carr Center	•		•		•	•	•		•
Underground Music Academy	•		•						
We are Culture Creators	•								
Y Arts		•	•						

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Needs Assessment Interviewees

Afa Dworkin	Damien Crutcher	Kelly Rossi
Alise Alousi	Debra Kang	Kristopher Johnson
Allison Harris	Debra White-Hunt	Larry Lunsford
Alvin Lockett Jr.	DeLashea Strawder	LaShelle Goodman
Ambra Redrick	Delicia McCatty	Laura Scales
Amy Johnson	Denise Allen	LaVell Nero
Ana Abrantes	Donnell Mosley	Leah Barterian
Andaiye Spencer	Emilio Rodriguez	Mandisa Smith
Andrea Scobie	Emily Harper	Margaret Edwartowski (informal)
Ang Adamiak	Eric Taylor	Mercedes Patino
Angel Ingram	Ethan Holben	Michael Reyes
Anne Bak Marine	Ethan Nelson	Mikel Bresee
Anthony White	Franky Heard Hudson	Natasha Granger
Ben Piper	Gina Ellis	Paola M. Smith
Benito "Mav One" Vasquez	Ivy Horn	Rashard Dobbins
Beth Hagenlocker	Jason Gillespie	Rhonda Greene (informal)
Billy Mark	Joanna Anderson	Romain Blanquart
Bruce Hunt	Jocelyn Chen	Samuel Bessiake
Candace Cox-Wimberly	Jonpaul Taylor	Sarah Clayman
Carollette Phillips	Julie Gervais	Suma Rosen
Charmin Archer	Joori Jong	Tracy Reese
Christine Pellecchia	Katy Locker	Trisha Palmer
Clay Coda	Khary Mason	Vickie Elmer
Craig Ester	Karilú Alarcón Forshee	Waaheed
Crystal Palmer	Kate Brennan	Yvette Rock
Cye Cureton	Keisa Davis	

Design Team

Candace Cox-Wimberly, She's a Genius
 Gina Ellis, The Carr Center
 Juliet Nelson, DESIGNCONNECT
 Martha Burch, Neighborhood Art School
 Nancy Hayden, Detroit Creativity Project
 Paola M. Smith, MSU Community Music School – Detroit
 Rashard Dobbins, Class Act Detroit



Design Charrette

Alvin Lockett Jr., Que Blackout
 Amy Johnson, Matrix Theatre Company
 Debora Kang, Detroit Symphony Orchestra
 Ivy Horn, CCS Community Arts Partnerships
 Kelly Rossi, Detroit Creativity Project
 LaVell Nero, Detroit Youth Choir
 Marco Andrade, COMPAS, Southwest Detroit Business Association
 Mercé Culp, Teaching Artist
 Mikel Bresee, CCS Community Arts Partnerships
 Natasha Granger, CCS Community Arts Partnerships
 Yvette Rock, Live Coal

Thought Partners, Lead Artists, Donors & Consultants

Adam Kind	Darell Campbell Jr.	Jennifer Richard
AJ Quackenbush	Deena Fox	Jeremiah Steen
Akil Alvin	Dierk L. Hall	Jessica Care Moore
Alan Brown	Dominick Porter	John Armstrong
Alandra Chune Jackson	Douglas Ferrick	Jon Dixon
Albi Taipi	Douglas Graham	Joni Starr
Alissa Novoselick	Ed Moore	Jose Nava
Alycia Meriweather	Edmund Alan Jones	Julian Goods
Amanda Coffee	Elliott Attisha	Julianna Sanroman
Amanda Young	Feodies Shipp III	Karilú Alarcón Forshee
Amp Fiddler	Fiona Colson	Karisa Antonio
Amy DeWys	Frank McGhee	Keir Coleman Ward
Amy Nederlander	Freddi Kilburn	Kelsey Thompson
Andrew McGuire	Frederick Cannon	Ken Fisher
Andrew Stein	Gabriel Doss	Kenyatta Stephens
Angela Kee	Gary Schwartz	Khary Kimani Turner
Angela Sherman	Gene Sperling	Kisha Verduco
Anika Goss	George Westerman	Kristine Patnugot
Ann Eskridge	Georgeann Herbert	Kurt Metzger
Anne Sperling	Gerald W. Smith	Laura Lyons
Ashanti Norwood	Gillian Gainsley	Lauren Perdue
Awenate Cobbina	Glenda Myhand	Lauren Wright
Barb Whitney	Glenda Price	Leenet Campbell-Williams
Blanca Zelaya	Grace Serra	Lisa Brush
Branden Hood	Gretchen Gonzales Davidson	Loraine Gutierrez, PhD
Brittni Kellom	Heather Vaughan-Southard	Malika N. Pryor
Camille Walker Banks	Herman Gray	Maria Franklin
Cara Graninger	Holly Bass	Mark Wallace
Carlyn Robinson	Irene Sperling	Marsha Battle Philpot
Chanell Contreras Scott	Ismael Ahmed	Ma Teresa Penman
Christopher Burt	Jacqueline Suskin	Maureen Stys
Cully Sommers	Jane Fran Morgan	Meeghan Prunty
Danielle Boone	Jasmine Rivera	Melanca Clark
Dannielle Ragland	Jennifer Foster	Michael Gielniak

Michael Sperling	Punita Thurman	Stephen Henderson
Michael Williams	Rachel Frierson	Steve Hamp
Mike Han	Rachel Tronstein Stewart	Steven Shewfelt
Monica Rodriguez	Ralph Valdez	Sydni Warner
Morae Griffin	Renee Rodriguez	Tammie Jones
Nandi Comer	Rich Homberg	Tammy Miller
Nate Wallace	Sade Benjamin	Tara Miller
Nicholas Symonette Jr.	Samantha Ender	Ted Houser
Nikita Buckhoy	Sandra Riney	Terry Whitfield
Noah Urban	Sara Plachta Elliott	Timothy Slusser
Oliver Ragsdale	Sarah Cohen	Tony Saunders
Omari Rush	Sarida Scott Montgomery	Ulysses Newkirk
Orlando Bailey	Sherelle Streeter	Vickie Elmer
Pamela J. Moore	Shirley Stancato	Virginia Fallis
Paul Dimond	Shuna K. Hayward	Vito Valdez
Paul Sznawajs	Sinéad Nimmo	Yvonne Mejias

Community Partners

Children's Foundation
 Children's Hospital of Michigan
 CultureSource
 Detroit Harmony
 Detroit Public School Community District
 Detroit Public Television
 Detroit Riverfront Conservancy
 Digital Detroit Media
 Grow Detroit's Young Talent
 Michigan Arts Education Instruction & Assessment (MAEIA)
 University of Michigan Detroit Center

Collaborative Platform Funders

Children's Foundation – Youth Arts by Prescription (YaRx)
 DPS Foundation – Rigorous Arts Mentorship Program – Under Pandemic (RAMP-UP)
 Gardner-White Furniture – Lead funder of Youth Micro-grants
 Marshall Mathers Foundation – RAMP-UP & Youth Micro-grants
 Michigan Arts & Culture Council – YaRx
 Motown Museum – Concert of Colors Youth Stage
 SEE Optical – Youth Micro-grants
 Seller Leher Family Foundation – RAMP-UP
 Skillman Foundation – Funder of Concert of Colors Youth Stage and Art Fair, 2021, 2022

Planning/Ecosystem-building/Needs Assessment Funders

Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan
 Kresge Foundation
 Ralph C. Wilson Jr. Foundation

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"It is imperative that all students have access to an equitable delivery of arts education that includes dance, media arts, music, theatre, and visual arts that supports their educational, social, and emotional well-being, taught by certified professional arts educators in partnership with community arts providers."



"ARTS EDUCATION IS ESSENTIAL" - A STATEMENT ENDORSED BY OVER 50 NATIONAL ARTS EDUCATION ORGANIZATIONS

Electric -
A divine
energy of
collective
power for
good."

- POST-IT NOTE FROM
DESIGN CHARRETTE

"We should prioritize so we don't burn out quickly. We're highly motivated, but have lower capacity than we realize."

- POST-IT NOTE FROM
DESIGN CHARRETTE

"When you look at Chicago, when you look at Cleveland, when you look at Philly, when you look at DC, there is a 'next level' that is visible all the time, that [youth] think is achievable and accessible. We really don't have a 'next level.' So therefore, the parents say you want to be a what? Where? How?"

- YOUTH ARTS PROVIDER

"[Youth out-of-school-time transportation] is a perennial and long existing problem in Detroit. It seems strange to me that someone hasn't taken this on as their issue to fix."

- YOUTH ARTS PROVIDER

“Just what is the bandwidth of these families who are supporting their children and having to do multiple things and multiple activities and are very busy?” That type of support from guardians, as well as transportation, is an ongoing issue. It is an ongoing barrier.”

- YOUTH ARTS PROVIDER



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