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Suzanne Gunther

202-518-2660

sgunther@naceda.org

NEA Awards 1st Ever National Field Building Grants for Creative Placemaking

\$100,000 Our Town Grant Awarded to National Alliance of Community Economic Development Associations

July 15, 2015, Washington, DC - Connecting nonprofit community developers and artists to uplift low-income communities is the purpose of a \$100,000 Our Town grant awarded today by the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) to the National Alliance of Community Economic Development Associations (NACEDA). The NEA initiated a national field-building component to its Our Town program for the first time in its history in 2015. NACEDA is one of five national organizations receiving these first-time field building awards.

The mission of the NEA's Our Town grant program is to transform communities into lively, beautiful and resilient places with the arts at their core. NACEDA will use its Our Town grant to develop systematic approaches to engaging nonprofit community developers in creative placemaking with arts-based associations.

"The arts reveal the heart and soul of our nation," said Secretary of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Julián Castro. "We're proud to work with the NEA to create neighborhoods of opportunity where culture is honored and creativity can flourish. Together with our partners, we'll give more Americans the chance to experience life in a vibrant and thriving community."

"The community development and arts fields already work together to improve low-income neighborhoods, but they approach the work differently and, too often, separately," stated NACEDA Executive Director Frank Woodruff. "By bringing together community developers and artists as creative placemaking partners with shared goals, we will forge strong relationships that promote physical, social and civic transformation in low-income communities."

NACEDA will partner with Americans for the Arts to develop creative placemaking immersion programs in at least three regions of the country. The programs will facilitate relationship building while providing training and technical assistance to community developers and artists.

"To the NEA, the future of creative placemaking relies on investing in partnerships that embed the arts in long-term community development," said NEA Director of Design Programs Jason Schupbach. "The NACEDA and Americans for the Arts partnership exemplifies a new and exciting approach to this work and we look forward to sharing the results of their project with the field."

NACEDA will provide approximately \$69,000 in technical assistance, resources, and training to facilitate at least three regional creative placemaking immersion programs among their members. NACEDA and Americans for the Arts will issue a request for proposals to NACEDA members in Summer 2016 that encourages strong participation with local and regional arts partners. The two national membership organizations will launch the program with a national scan of creative placemaking knowledge and relationships pertinent to community development practitioners and their arts-based partners.

"Creative placemaking is a vital mechanism utilizing the transformative power of the arts to create and sustain a place that residents and businesses can not only be proud of, but enthusiastically call home," said Robert L. Lynch, president and CEO of Americans for the Arts. "We look forward to working with NACEDA to develop these programs, which will benefit local businesses, create local jobs, boost tourism revenue, and improve the quality of life for residents."

NACEDA Board Member Jamie Schriener-Hooper, Executive Director of the Community Economic Development Association of Michigan, commented, "The state of Michigan has invested significant time and resources in placemaking, including arts-centered creative place-making, to improve our great state for people of all backgrounds. This new partnership will bring national resources to communities in a valuable and collaborative new way."

The NEA announced 69 Our Town awards totaling almost \$5 million today. For a complete listing of projects recommended for Our Town grant support, visit the NEA web site at www.arts.gov. Project descriptions, grants listed by state and by project type, and resources are available as well. The NEA's online resource, [Exploring Our Town](#), features case studies of more than 70 Our Town projects along with lessons learned and other resources. The Twitter hashtag is [#NEAOurTown15](#).

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The National Alliance of Community Economic Development

Associations(NACEDA) is an alliance of 42 state and regional community economic development associations in 28 states and the District of Columbia. Our network of associations includes over 3,500 community-based development organizations across the country. NACEDA leads the community development field and its partners in shaping and influencing strategies that advance community prosperity. Our member organizations are champions and thought leaders for community development at the state and local levels. View our website at www.naceda.org.

Americans for the Arts is the leading nonprofit organization for advancing the arts and arts education in America. With offices in Washington, D.C. and New York City, it has a record of more than 50 years of service. Americans for the Arts is dedicated to representing and serving local communities and creating opportunities for every American to participate in and appreciate all forms of the arts. Additional information is available at www.AmericansForTheArts.org.

About the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA): Established by Congress in 1965, the NEA is the independent federal agency whose funding and support gives Americans the opportunity to participate in the arts, exercise their imaginations, and develop their creative capacities. Through partnerships with state arts agencies, local leaders, other federal agencies, and the philanthropic sector, the NEA supports arts learning, affirms and celebrates America's rich and diverse cultural heritage, and extends its work to promote equal access to the arts in every community across America.