

## Theory of Change

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### Arts and Culture

We believe that arts and culture are among the region's most important assets and are critical to creating economic opportunities and a high quality of life for residents in all communities.

*Rationale:* The Greater New Orleans region has an extraordinary mix of cultural assets including nationally respected professional organizations such as the Louisiana Partnership for the Arts and regional art councils, world-class museums, thousands of individual professional and amateur artists, noteworthy historic organizations and sites, dynamic ethnic and religious arts activities that account for 40 percent of all cultural employment in the state<sup>1</sup>. The arts and culture sector in the region is supported by a rich mix of nonprofit organizations with varied degrees of sophistication in both programmatic and administrative initiatives. This sector continues to experience growth, with New Orleans boasting 29 arts and culture nonprofits per 100,000 residents, well above the national rate<sup>2</sup>. This growth in the sector is in part, the result of the social services need of many cultural producers in the region who are part of the working poor, and whose incomes have not recovered since Katrina due to decreased performing venues and paying audiences<sup>3</sup>. For example, musicians are reporting bringing home only two-thirds of their pre-Katrina earnings<sup>4</sup>. Arts and culture organizations continue to experience increased demand for social services at the same time that available funding for the sector is declining<sup>5</sup>. It is important that we focus support in this sector in order to preserve and enhance its vitality.

#### A. ULTIMATE GOAL(S)

To help preserve and grow the rich cultural heritage of the Greater New Orleans region and ensure that the originators and producers of creative goods and services can continue to enhance community life.

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<sup>1</sup> Louisiana: Where Culture Means Business, Mt Auburn Associates, July 31, 2006. <http://www.mtauburnaassociates.com/reports/louisiana.culturalBusiness.pdf>.

<sup>2</sup> Greater New Orleans Community Data Center New Orleans Index at six: Measuring Greater New Orleans' Progress Towards Prosperity. August 2011.

<sup>3</sup> Sweet Home New Orleans: 2010 State of the New Orleans Music Community Report.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup><http://www.theind.com/news/10647-short-sighted-solons-gut-arts-funding>.

## B. OBJECTIVES

- By 2016 low-income originators and producers of creative goods and services will have experienced a 20 percent increase in income, facilitated by arts and culture social service providers ; and
- By 2016, increase the number of local and state law-makers voting in support of favorable legislation and long-term support for arts and culture by 20 percent.

*Rationale:* The negative effects of declining funding in the arts and culture cut across the unique arts, cultural, historic and heritage characteristics of the Greater New Orleans region. Focusing attention on the most socially and economically vulnerable originators and producers of dance, music, theatre, literature, poetry, media and visual arts etc. will influence their ability to remain productive, continue to make their home in the region and to preserve the vitality of the region's arts and cultural landscape. Without dedicated efforts to educate lawmakers of the importance of the arts and culture to the state and local economies and to the quality of life of all residents, it is likely that public funding for arts culture will continue to decrease. These objectives can be achieved with a reasonable amount of resources, efforts and application. When achieved, they will have a positive effect on the entire arts culture landscape including the fine arts, the region's rich expressions of customs, belief, traditions, history and heritage, public spaces, landmarks, parks etc.

## C. WHAT WE FUND

To most effectively meet these objectives, the Greater New Orleans Foundation will, through its IMPACT program, support organizations that:

1. Work to improve the quality of life for artists and performers in our region;

*Rationale:* Many artists in the New Orleans region struggle to survive amid staggering conditions of poverty and a continued lack of institutional recognition and support for their work. They require a range of social support services including financial management and planning, employment opportunities, legal assistance, affordable housing, mental and physical health care, etc. to maintain control over their productive lives.

2. Make the case for increased public support for the arts; and

*Rationale:* Although, the region continues to experience an increase in arts and cultural activities, the level of public and philanthropic support to maintain and enhance the sector's infrastructure is inadequate and according to national trends the sector is experiencing losses in charitable giving<sup>6</sup>.

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<sup>6</sup> Economic data from Americans for the Arts' studies, *Arts & Economic Prosperity* and *Creative Industries*.

*D. OTHER WORK WE DO IN SUPPORT OF THESE GOALS/OBJECTIVES*

The Foundation supports the arts and culture through many donor advised funds and competitive grantmaking programs. The latter include the Selley Foundation, Freeman Challenge and Cox charities. Information about these grantmaking opportunities can be found at on our website. In addition, through its Organizational Effectiveness (OE) work the Foundation is committed to increasing the advocacy and overall effectiveness of the region's nonprofits, including arts and culture organizations.

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