



Philadelphia Cultural Fund Reflects On 2017 Impact, Shares Vision For 2018

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PHILADELPHIA – Over the course of the last year, the City of Philadelphia’s Philadelphia Cultural Fund (PCF) has continued to serve a unique role in Philadelphia by being the largest, solely dedicated funder of the arts in the city. In 2017, the PCF distributed \$3,031,772 to support 302 Philadelphia-based arts and culture organizations and programs. PCF grants provided almost 5 million free arts and culture experiences for Philadelphians and a total of 439,000 youth attended PCF supported programs either in or outside of school in 2017. These grants are unique in that they provide general operating money to arts organizations, the most needed and rare funding, where the majority of foundations award program-specific grants.

“As the City’s primary funder of arts and culture we are committed to removing barriers to applying for a grant, especially small arts organizations that are traditionally considered ineligible for foundation support,” said Barbara J. Silzle, Executive Director of the Philadelphia Cultural Fund. “Over the next year we will be exploring with the City how to better serve those cultural organizations that are not being served by traditional art funders.”

The 2017 grantees represent an increase of 18 from the 284 grantees awarded in 2016. 38% of these organizations are small and have an operating budget under \$150,000. The 2017 grant cycle also saw 24 first time grantees, 12 of which are established organizations, groups that have been producing work for 5 or more years, and 12 of which are new and emerging organizations, groups that have been producing art related programming for more than 12 months. For first time grantees, PCF’s financial support could open the door to new funding opportunities for organizations that are doing critical work within isolated or non-mainstream communities throughout the City.

This rise in 2017 applications can be attributed to the continued outreach efforts of PCF Executive Director, Barbara J. Silzle and Program Manager, Michelle Currica. During the 2017 cycle, 65 organizations participated in information sessions held throughout the city as well as via teleconference. The information sessions introduce first time applicants to the PCF and its processes and help returning applicants hone better ways to present and articulate their work or challenges. At the conclusion of the grant process PCF furthers its impact by providing feedback to all applicants to better prepare them to apply in the future.

Through an annual allocation to PCF from the City of Philadelphia each year, the City funds arts organizations and programs that deliver valuable cultural experiences in each council district. This distribution of funds can be attributed in part to the diversity of the peer panelists, members of the Greater Philadelphia arts and culture community, who provide an all-lens view when reviewing the grant applications.

The PCF has awarded over \$45 million in grants since its founding in 1991 as a 501 (c) (3) nonprofit organization. Over the last three years, the PCF has seen an increase in their applicant pool meaning the number of organizations that receive grants has significantly grown. They expect to support as many as 320 Philadelphia based arts organizations and programs in 2018. Last year was this first time the City requested a report about grantee district and programming locations in order to get a full picture of the PCF’s reach.



Philadelphia Cultural Fund 2017 Grantees by Home and Programming Districts

“The Cultural Fund’s reported data on the number of funded activities in each council district, for 2017 provides us with a baseline for a how we can move towards more equitable distribution of experiences across Philadelphia,” said Chief Cultural Officer Kelly Lee. “The stable funding to the PCF provided under the Kenney Administration will allow us to work with PCF to increase the equal accessibility of funded activities and increase the support for the smallest and most vulnerable of organizations. This City support is often the only grant these organizations receive to continue to do the valuable work they do in each and every neighborhood.”

The PCF’s impact can be quantified by statistics and data however, it is most evident when the impact is articulated by the arts organizations directly. “The support that you provided goes towards deepening and growing our holistic after school leadership institute in arts, academics, and

athletics,” said Advocate Center for Culture and Education, a 2017 first time grantee. “Your contribution will reach every aspect of the work that we do.”

For more information about the Philadelphia Cultural Fund and the local arts organizations and programs it supports, visit philaculturalfund.org. For questions about the application guidelines, please contact Barbara Silzle at barbara@philaculturalfund.org, 267-419-7643.



Left: The Village of Arts & Humanities (Staff members Aviva Kapust, Brenda Toler, Mike O'Bryan) received the 2017 Councilman David Cohen Award.

Right: University City Arts League Art in Schools, 2016 Youth Arts Enrichment recipient.

About the Philadelphia Cultural Fund

Established in 1991 to support and enhance the cultural life and vitality of the City of Philadelphia and its residents, the Philadelphia Cultural Fund, through the combined efforts of the Philadelphia City Council and the Mayor, promotes arts and culture as engines of social, educational and economic development and has played a key stabilizing role for numerous organizations by providing much-needed general operating funding. www.philaculturalfund.org