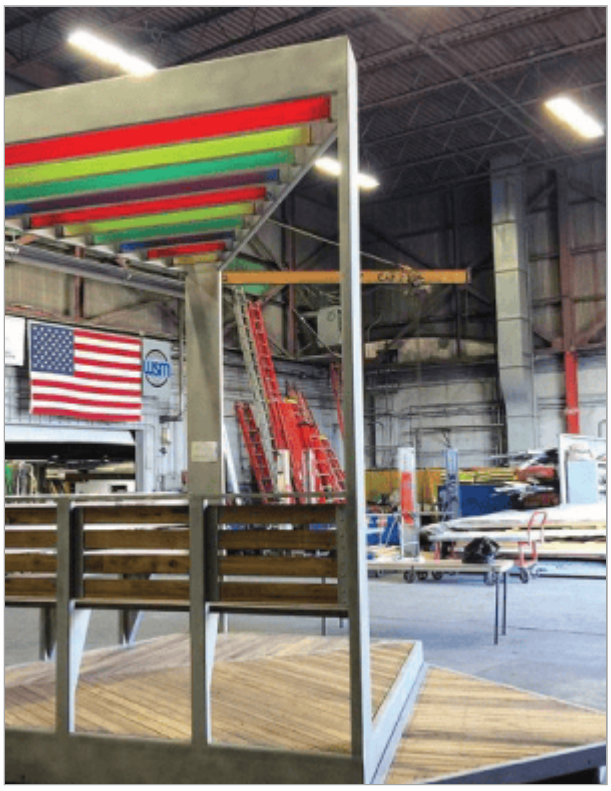
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Commentary/Op-Ed - February 2016

The City's Next Steps to Ensure Vibrant, Creative Communities

The city's new Building Community Capacity initiative aims to fortify small and midsized art organizations in communities outside of Manhattan. In this *Gotham Gazette* op-ed, CUF Senior Researcher Adam Forman shares several ideas for making the initiative a success – helping strengthen cultural organizations in the midst of neighborhood change.

by Adam Forman

In January 2016, the Department of Cultural Affairs (DCLA) announced a promising new initiative called "Building Community Capacity" that aims to fortify small and midsized art organizations in communities outside of Manhattan. In this*Gotham Gazette* op-ed, CUF Researcher Adam Forman encourages the DCLA to look to other nonprofits and city agencies for inspiration and points out specific models to replicate.

Launched in conjunction with Mayor de Blasio's rezoning proposal in East New York, Building Community Capacity has several worthwhile objectives. They include: helping organizations with board development and fundraising capacity, equipping arts leaders with essential management skills, activating underused spaces for cultural activities, and streamlining the permitting process.

To assist with board development and fundraising capacity, Forman highlights the Robin Hood Foundation's Board Placement Program that connects talented, committed and wealthy individuals with social service nonprofits throughout the city. To help arts administrators develop their management skills, Forman suggests that the DCLA look at the New York City Economic Development Corporation's Fashion Fellows and consider launching a yearlong training and networking program for administrators of cultural organizations. He also points out the potential of partnering with the Department of Education to find underutilized spaces within the neighborhood's public schools.

The new initiative is consistent with several of the recommendations from Creative New York, our recent report on the city's arts economy. The report found that a number of small and mid-size arts organizations in low- and middle-income neighborhoods are financially strained. To address this issue, it encouraged the de Blasio administration to integrate the arts into its rezoning proposals, ensuring that existing artists and arts organizations are supported, preserved, and fortified.

Click here to read the full op-ed.

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