

EAST STREET ARTS: A CREATIVE WORKFORCE ARTS PROGRAM

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New Haven, CT

Steps towards building a plan and timeline. Allow for changes and flexibility. Every program grows organically.

1-3 Months

- Identify Social Service organizations that may have an interest in developing alternative income generators and creative opportunities for the populations they serve.
- Write your unique mission statement for the project. Identify the opportunity, goals and project outcomes with a three year span.
- Survey members of the partnering social service organization to determine what talents, skills and interests attendees have or want to experience.
- Host a creative workshop and info session with the partnering organization. Ask staff to also participate and contribute ideas to the plan.
- Locate space for interested workshop students to gather. Provide adequate room for each person. Very often programs begin in makeshift spaces but should be brought to the forefront of communities if possible.

3-6 months

- Start workshops with warming up using a journal for each student to build their creative skills.
- Develop a learning path for students that are evaluated after 8 week sessions. Students should commit to a regular schedule to attend class. Transportation should be arranged ahead of time. Space must be ADA compliant and consider noise restrictions for sensitivities.
- Identify teaching artists in the community that have experience with persons with seen and unseen disabilities. Teaching artists without experience should attend a training session with a mentor in the field and create their unique workshop taking into consideration adaptive tools if necessary.
- Contact local, state and federal arts organizations as well as labor agencies to identify any funding sources for apprenticeship programs and job training programs.

6 months

- Develop a studio practice with rules about cell phones, break times for stretching, lunch, walks around the neighborhood, set up and clean up of the studio.

- **Everyone can create and participate.** Inclusion begins with the support staff and employees of the partnering organization. Art products require many steps and hands to be perfect. It may take a year to have a marketable product.
- At 6 months, students should have developed skills in working in the studio environment and with others in the production of handmade products or original art.
- With excellent branding and marketing materials in place, products can be sold in retail shops, on the internet and at open house events. Artisans can then earn meaningful income from a percentage of sales.
- Engage professional designers, marketing experts and others who will share their knowledge. Hold a sample sale to get feedback on products before you launch them into the market.
- Build local partnerships with businesses that have cast off materials, which can then be recycled into useful goods. Donations help decrease the cost of producing the products.
- Partner with local, state and regional arts agencies in providing art and cultural opportunities for diverse populations.
- The National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) mandates that each state provides access and resources for persons with disabilities to participate, learn skills and engage in the arts. Your project can help the State agencies achieve this civil right.

1 year and beyond

- Review the resources and grants that are a good fit for your project. Develop a funding committee to help with the grants.
- Meet with other organizations regionally who aspire to have arts programming that generates income. Also, include programs that are already established but also struggle for funding and policy changes.
- Develop a business plan and utilize colleges' MBA programs who are looking for projects to help with data, market analysis, accounting and evaluation.
- Reach out to the immediate community in learning about the history around the studio location. Products should reflect the particular feeling of the area. This outreach may bring cultural contributors to the project that have been previously unknown.
- Have an open house policy where visitors can learn more about the program and for them to sign up for unique community classes in the evenings.
- Utilize social networking, radio, print and news opportunities to tell the story of your workforce initiative, its place and its participants. Host annual events that bring the community of supporters together to meet the artists and artisans.