



Art Outdoors Event Tool

This tool, based off the experiences of an APLI partner whose goals were to engage younger audience members and improve its neighborhood, can help you plan an arts event outdoors. The larger your vision, the stronger the need for wide buy in and collaboration, and for timing it to coincide with an already existing neighborhood event.

1. Build a strong, internal project team that includes staff from all departments, the contributions of whom are welcomed equitably, regardless of job title.
2. Commit time and resources to building relationships with businesses, community organizations, and artists/musicians. Trust is the most valuable commodity and takes time and effort to build.
3. Try something new! Stretch your artistic presentations by conducting research, asking for advice, and taking advantage of serendipity. Young staff members are a great resource.
4. Set the physical boundaries of your event space to create the potential for critical mass of attendees.
5. Seed opportunities for use of social media by participants, such as posting Twitter hash tags on signs, but avoid being overly directive or it will change the flavor. Having posts come directly from participants has an authenticity you can't buy and reaches beyond your existing networks.
6. Be prepared to troubleshoot event logistics, and be surprised and grateful at where you may find friends and helpers. You never know who can get a dumpster moved at the last minute.
7. Remember that such events are about fun! All involved, from staff to visitors, should be able to tap into and enjoy that aspect.
8. Think about long-term benefits rather than the immediate return to the organization. If your mission is grounded in the community, think of the effort as investment of capital with an impact that accrues over time.



Arts Organization Coalition Tool

There's power in partnering. What can your organization accomplish with another organization or two that you couldn't get done on your own? Avoid common partnering mistakes and maximize wins with this Arts Organization Coalition Tool.

1. Identify local partners. Which organizations in your area share similar, non-exclusive goals? Are there organizations in “siloes” that could partner up, sharing resources, and multiplying impact?
2. Strive for consistency. Meeting in-person as a leadership team on a consistent basis provides the foundation for trust and support.
3. Bring those you're serving into the mix, giving them an active role in shaping the programs for themselves and their peers.
4. They know their community in essential ways. Both formal and informal roles are valuable.
5. Explore the power of shared leadership, resources, and responsibility across organizations to build meaningful relationships. Even if a project proves to be short term, the relationships are a foundation for important future opportunities.



Cultural Ambassador Team Tool

Want to build strong, two-way relationships with cultural ambassadors who can help you better serve diverse communities? Use this tool, drawn from an APLI partner's experience, to reduce your learning curve and point you toward success.

1. Embrace the value of collective brainstorming with open eyes. Prepare to allocate significantly more time when many voices are at the table.
2. Acknowledge the fact that your organization has much to learn about specific cultural communities, their stories, and their perspectives.
3. Break a large production concept (and daunting budget total) into phases and workshops so that the costs are incremental, and build elements of the project over time.
4. Identify and encourage a few key individuals who “get it” to build a group of ambassadors.
5. Stay the course in gaining trust with different communities, and enjoy the ride when building relationships that take unexpected paths. Identify a point person from your staff who flourishes in that role and who is empowered to make decisions and take action.
6. Be prepared to handle language barriers. Find timely and respectful ways to communicate.
7. Be willing to turn timelines—and the whole building—into something elastic. Standard theater processes are not likely to be appropriate.



Intercultural Team Tool

Want to repeat the successes and skip the slip-ups of APLI partners who built relationships, grew audiences, and collaborated on artistic ventures with diverse communities? Here is a list of best practices for partnering with a cultural community that's new to you.

1. Be prepared to build a gradual process of cultural awareness on all sides. Learn preferred methods of communication within a community and understand the impact of traditional roles, taboos, and holidays. This is fundamental to the success of the project.
2. Hire a project coordinator or pick a volunteer point person who is a respected member of the community and who is willing and able to tirelessly move the project forward. Their work will be further enhanced when connected to an organization in the community that provides a project home and offers additional credibility and support.
3. Designate a point person on staff who can build and sustain these relationships.
4. Maintain fluid communication between the project coordinator and your staff and contract team.
5. If you're making art together, bring an open mind to concept and content. The community may have formats or approaches that do not fit your existing models and expectations.
6. Learn to shift expectations around timeliness and deadlines, keeping in mind that different cultures have differing norms about these concepts. Scheduling audio or visual taping with outside sources increases the pressure around deadlines and structure.
7. Move away from email communication. Telephone and face-to-face conversations are critical. Assess (and budget for) the need for language translation services.
8. Have a plan for how you will carry the relationship forward after the formal mentorship period ends.