

INVOLVING YOUTH IN  
NONPROFIT ARTS ORGANIZATIONS

A CALL TO ACTION



PREPARED BY  
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COMMISSIONED BY  
THE WILLIAM AND FLORA HEWLETT FOUNDATION

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# CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION BY MOY ENG  
ADVISORY COMMITTEE

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY .....	1
1. CHALLENGE: ENGAGING A NEW GENERATION .....	6
Current Pressures .....	6
Future Trends .....	8
Call to Action .....	9
2. PROJECT OVERVIEW .....	10
3. YOUTH PROGRAMS IN CALIFORNIA NONPROFIT ARTS ORGANIZATIONS.....	12
Survey Overview .....	12
Methodology.....	12
Profile of Respondents .....	13
4. SURVEY RESULTS .....	17
Governance Programs .....	17
Membership Programs.....	20
Financial Support Programs.....	20
Advocacy Programs .....	21
Audience Development Programs .....	21
Artist Support Programs .....	21
Program Participants .....	23
Organizational Support .....	24
5. CASE STUDIES.....	26
Internship Programs.....	26
Volunteer Programs.....	32
Board Programs .....	35
Financial Support Programs.....	37
Advocacy Programs .....	37
Audience Development Programs.....	39

6. ANALYSIS.....	43
7. YOUTH PROGRAMS IN THE NONPROFIT ENVIRONMENTAL SECTOR.....	47
Comparative Survey.....	47
Case Study: Sierra Club.....	50
Case Study: Rainforest Action Network.....	52
Analysis.....	54
8. CONCLUSIONS.....	55
Working with Youth.....	55
Youth Programs in Nonprofit Arts Organizations.....	55
Barriers.....	55
Benefits.....	57
Opportunities.....	58
9. RECOMMENDATIONS.....	59
For Nonprofit Arts Sector.....	59
For Nonprofit Arts Organizations.....	60
For Funders.....	61

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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THE WILLIAM AND FLORA HEWLETT FOUNDATION

April 2007

Dear Colleagues,

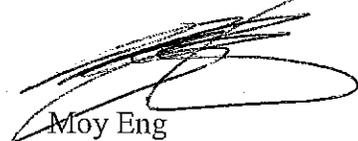
The issue of generational succession in the arts sector looms ever larger as the exodus of the baby boomer generation begins.

All of us will need to marshal our best ideas if we are to compete successfully for the next generation of leaders and patrons in an increasingly competitive marketplace.

By shining a spotlight on this complex subject, we hope this report will spark a national discussion about what arts organizations must do if they hope to garner their share of the next generation's best and brightest.

We encourage organizations throughout the country to create forums to explore the issue and suggest steps that must be taken to master one of our most important challenges in the coming years.

Respectfully submitted,



Moy Eng  
Program Director, Performing Arts  
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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## CHALLENGE

The future of nonprofit arts organizations, large and small, depends on attracting the best new talent to administer their affairs, to serve as artists and audiences, and to act as advocates, boosters, and financial supporters. Given the shrinking pool of younger people and the increased competition for their attention, action to meet this pressing, and increasingly complex, challenge can no longer be left to a vague future date.

Leaders in the nonprofit arts field need to address the issue of youth involvement in depth, as soon as possible, and come to a consensus about:

- What is at stake
- How they might systemically approach efforts to recruit, retain, mentor, train, and manage youth
- What the potential advantages might be of collaborative action
- What they might do to improve communications and relationships with younger people
- How they can position their organizations in the larger marketplace
- How they will finance and manage these efforts

No quarter of the arts community can afford to remain silent or fail to participate in crafting a response to this looming problem.

Some of these strategies may demand a broad, systemic approach in the sector at large; others may best be undertaken by individual arts organizations. This research project was designed to advance both kinds of initiatives.

## PROJECT OVERVIEW

Our research project had three parts:

- a survey of youth programs in California nonprofit arts organizations,
- case studies of twelve successful programs, and
- a comparative analysis of youth programs in the nonprofit environmental sector, with an in-depth look at two leading organizations.

In order to make recommendations for immediate action, we wanted to identify

- barriers that impede the involvement of young people,
- proven approaches for successfully recruiting, retaining, mentoring, training, and managing youth,
- best practices in exemplary youth programs that might have broad application,
- lessons learned from current approaches, and
- the organizational benefits of youth programs.

## CONCLUSIONS

Other than nurturing the next generation of artists, the nonprofit arts sector has done little to capitalize on its present bridges to youth. To date, there is no systemic approach to the challenge of generational succession in the areas of governance, membership, advocacy, or financial support.

Individual arts organizations have had isolated successes with youth programs, and there have been some noteworthy national efforts. However, the vast majority of organizations have too few young people on their boards of directors or staffs, even fewer young activist advocates or financial supporters, and no means of tracking their young audiences.

Other nonprofit fields, for whatever reasons, have made greater progress in capturing the energy and attention of youth. The arts sector has identifiable advantages that may, if they are exploited soon, allow it to make significant gains, but with competition among all sectors heating up, this window of opportunity may be limited.

As a whole, the nonprofit arts sector faces formidable barriers to bringing more young people into its sphere, most notably its limited financial resources. Budget constraints and revenue stagnation continue to impede the ability of all organizations to compete for young people's interest and involvement. Given the decline in dedicated public and corporate support for the arts, identifying and securing new sources of income will be difficult. However, perhaps the most significant barrier is a lack of awareness and sense of urgency that the arts need to start moving to address the challenge. Leaders across the field must come to a collective recognition that involvement of young people is critical and that every organization must make that involvement an immediate priority.

Fortunately, there are many opportunities for involving young people. Bridges to them already exist. By allocating more staff time and financial resources, the sector should be able to craft comprehensive, sophisticated and sustainable programs that extend those initial contacts into sustained involvement.

# RECOMMENDATIONS

As its first step in developing a comprehensive strategy for generational succession, the nonprofit arts sector must recognize the absolute need to act now. To compete for the next generation's best and brightest, the field needs a consistent, unified, systemic approach. And this requires consensus that recruitment of young people and retention of their involvement is critical to the future of all nonprofit arts organizations.

## FOR THE NONPROFIT ARTS SECTOR

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As a field, the nonprofit arts sector needs to intensify its efforts to

- convince young people of the value of involvement in the arts,
- widen bridges and lines of communication to the next generation, and
- involve young people in areas heretofore outside the scope of their experience, for example, financial support and advocacy.

### OUR SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS

#### **1. LAUNCH A NATIONAL DIALOGUE ABOUT YOUTH INVOLVEMENT IN THE ARTS.**

As soon as possible, leaders in the field should convene forums and discussion groups in major urban and regional centers across the country to address the issue of generational succession and youth involvement. Arts service provider organizations are urged to include such discussions at their national conferences and meetings and appoint task forces to recommend specific, concrete actions tailored to their memberships. As a followup to this report, researchers nationwide are encouraged to systemically evaluate existing outreach programs, including internship programs, volunteer efforts, and high school and college recruitment efforts.

The sector-wide goal should be to quantifiably expand the involvement of young people in the nonprofit arts by 2010.

#### **2. DEVELOP A SECTOR-WIDE STRATEGIC PLAN TO: 1) aggressively market the benefits of involvement with the arts to young people, and 2) create a nationwide grassroots corps of young activists and advocates for the arts.**

Compared with other social justice, political, and health causes, the arts may be at a comparative disadvantage in the battle for young people's passion, idealism, and even sense of outrage. This may make it harder for the field to recruit new leadership, staff, supporters, and, in the long term, media coverage, corporate support, and public backing. Recruitment of young people to the arts will depend in large part on their perception of the benefits the sector can offer in return. The arts community must identify the specific tangible and intangible benefits it can offer youth and market its strengths in an aggressive way. This effort must be national in scope.

The nonprofit arts sector is missing an enormous opportunity by failing to recruit, mobilize, and train young people to advocate on its behalf, lobby legislators and other decision-makers, and put pressure on both corporations and the media to support the field. Young people might constitute another arm of the sector in its attempts to make its case—and bring fresh vitality, energy, and passion to the effort. Moreover, this introduction to grassroots advocacy might move young people to greater future involvement in nonprofit arts organizations and set a foundation for future public support. To this end, the arts sector should set a goal of creating a nationwide corps of young grassroots activists and develop and implement a strategic plan to realize that goal.

To make its case to young people, the field needs tools and materials that demonstrate why arts and culture are important to their generation, how the nonprofit arts sector is currently threatened, and what the future might look like without renewed support. Marketing materials, created with input from young people as to form and style, should be created and widely distributed to arts organizations.

### **3. ESTABLISH A STRONG PRESENCE ON COLLEGE CAMPUSES.**

The various arts disciplines should build on their ties to local high schools and establish a physical presence on college campuses across the country, whether through one-time presentations associated with performances or the establishment of arts chapters. This will be an important step toward educating and informing college students about

- the value of arts and culture to society,
- the need for grassroots activism,
- opportunities for involvement with nonprofit arts organizations, and arts administration as a viable career path.

## **FOR INDIVIDUAL NONPROFIT ARTS ORGANIZATIONS**

Our research identified three key actions any arts organization must take if it wants to successfully expand the participation of young people in any aspect of its work.

**1. COMMIT FULLY TO THE GOAL OF GREATER YOUTH INVOLVEMENT.** As a whole, an organization must recognize the direct benefits of a youth engagement initiative and enlist support from every segment of its operations. Commitment must be organization-wide—not limited to isolated individuals—and everyone must take responsibility for reaching clearly identified goals, including the board and senior staff.

**BUDGET ADEQUATE FUNDS.** It must budget for the costs of such effort, make the commitment to expend the requisite funds, and ensure that there is a funding source to cover such costs. The costs and expenses need not be significant or unduly burdensome, but they must be realistic.

**ALLOCATE STAFF TIME.** It must allocate sufficient dedicated (not volunteer) staff time to professionally manage the various aspects of a youth involvement program over the life of the program. Staff time may or may not be a program budget item. It is entirely possible to run effective youth programs without the addition of new staff, but in small organizations committing staff time to one area is usually at the expense of another area. Programs striving to engage young people necessarily take time to grow and develop, and thus the time commitment must be for the long haul.

**2. MOVE QUICKLY TO ADD YOUNG PEOPLE AS BOARD MEMBERS.** Recruiting young people to become Board members can be an effective first step in getting them involved in organizational governance, and can lead to their future involvement in other areas.

**3. EXPAND AND STRENGTHEN TIES TO HIGH SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES.** College campuses are potentially fertile recruiting grounds for all youth involvement programs, and existing high school programs should be seen as pathways for stepped-up recruitment efforts.

## FOR FUNDERS

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**1. IDENTIFY WAYS TO HELP THE NONPROFIT ARTS FIELD AS A WHOLE TO ADDRESS THE ISSUE OF GENERATIONAL SUCCESSION.**

**2. SUPPORT EXPANDED RESEARCH INTO YOUNG PEOPLE’S VIEWS, OPINIONS, ATTITUDES, HABITS, AND BEHAVIORS IN RELATION TO THE ARTS.** Support for expanded such research would produce data that will be essential in helping the field decide on the most effective strategies to recruit and retain talented young leaders.

**3. SUPPORT REGIONAL, STATE AND NATIONAL MEETINGS OF ARTS LEADERS TO DEVELOP STRATEGIC APPROACHES TO INVOLVE QUANTIFIABLY MORE YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE ARTS BY 2010.** Opportunities must be created so that all sections of the nonprofit arts sector, including all disciplines, in every territory, can thoroughly discuss and debate the challenges of generational succession, and provide input to arriving at workable ways to address those challenges, and that dialogue must begin immediately.



# 1. CHALLENGE: ENGAGING A NEW GENERATION

Every organization that hopes for a long life must attract and groom its next generation of leaders, workers, and supporters. Yet strategies for renewal—and the difficulty of realizing them—vary widely between the public and private sectors, and even among fields within each sector.

In the world of nonprofit arts organizations, the issue of generational succession has become an acute challenge. How will the arts sector compete to attract the best and brightest for the future? How will it transfer knowledge and wisdom from retiring baby boomers to the next generation of leaders and staff, advocates and volunteers, donors and patrons, and artists and audiences?

Granted, attracting young people to the ranks of any nonprofit sector is a tough task in today's marketplace. The arts field now faces particularly complex pressures and future trends that will make it even harder to recruit and involve talented youth. Finding succession strategies suited to the heterogeneous mix of nonprofit arts organizations—which differ greatly in size, mission, and operation—must start with a high-level analysis of these common trends.

## CURRENT PRESSURES

**GRAYING OF THE FIELD.** As baby boomers in the arts approach the end of their careers, nonprofit organizations must act quickly to establish a flow of new, qualified, energetic leaders and decision-makers to take their place. This entails both offering new opportunities for youth involvement and also converting that involvement into long-term commitment. For the field to be green again, arts professionals must develop strategies today to turn interns into administrators, volunteers into board members, and audience members into active supporters.

**DECLINING PARTICIPATION IN THE ARTS BY YOUNG PEOPLE.** According to a study released by the National Endowment for the Arts in November 2006, "The Arts & Civic Engagement: Involved in Arts, Involved in Life," based on a 2002 survey of 17,135 adults (ages 18 and older), young adult (18 – 34) participation in the arts has declined over the past twenty-year period. Attendance at performing arts events showed a marked decline, 18-34 years old went from having the highest rate of literary reading across all adult categories to the lowest rate, and the rate of volunteerism by the 18 to 34 age cohort declined as well. If young people are less engaged in the arts than they were just twenty years ago, that may make it that much more difficult for the arts sector to recruit and retain the participation of this age group.

**DECLINING FUNDING.** Many groups, however, are already so underfunded that it's hard for them to maintain a long view to the future. The metropolitan area nonprofit ecosystem is fiercely competitive, and arts organizations are working to survive in a highly unstable funding situation in which all sources of support—public, foundation, corporate, and individual—remain depleted.

While this problem may be less severe for large cultural institutions in major urban areas that have the advantage of greater financial resources, both mid-sized arts organizations and smaller rural and suburban organizations continue to struggle. In fact, the mid-sized arts organization is in a particularly precarious position: poised for growth, but finding such growth extremely difficult to achieve given the current funding climate.

**DIFFICULT RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION.** This has an obvious and drastic effect on recruitment of the next generation of leaders and staff. Declining public funding of the arts and increased

competition for funding from other sources make it almost impossible for all but the wealthiest arts organizations to offer competitive pay packages. Although there is some indication that executive staff salaries have increased, they have not kept pace with gains in the private sector, and arts pay remains below par.

This means nonprofit arts organizations invariably find themselves disadvantaged when searching and competing for the best candidates in the small pool of qualified young leaders. Only those organizations with deeper pockets can afford to conduct sophisticated and exhaustive searches for candidates. Foundations have for some time recognized this problem and provided funding for professional executive searches, but at some point this advantage needs to be extended to the whole field.

Inability to bring the most talented young people into the fold makes it that much more difficult to cultivate future leadership from within. And turnover continues to plague nonprofit arts organizations with poor compensation packages. Mid-career administrators face increasing pressure to leave the arts field for more financially rewarding careers in the private sector. How will the arts sector retain their experience—and attract their future successors?

**UNDERSTAFFING.** Unfortunately, adding new employees, retaining and training current staff, and expanding boards are far too often just items on an organization's wish list. In part because foundation and government support have often excluded basic operational costs, some nonprofit arts organizations have expanded their programming without adequate administrative resources to manage it.

Understaffing makes it difficult to focus on more than the day-to-day tasks of survival, let alone planning long-term strategies for youth involvement and offering salaries competitive with the for-profit world. It is critical for arts organizations to realize that as a business, they are talent driven, and that they must invest, not only in their programs, but also in their people.

**CROWDED MARKETPLACE.** Only with the highest degree of inside talent will nonprofit arts organizations seize the imagination, passion, idealism, and grassroots power of youth as new contributing artists, employees, audiences, volunteers, and interns. In the crowded marketplace of entertainment, employment, and social causes, the nonprofit arts sector must stand out with engaging products and opportunities. What do young audiences want, and how can arts organizations effectively market to them? How do administrators adjust their time-honored strategies in order to reach youth through the technologies and media they favor? How do the arts organizations improve the effective tracking of audiences and, specifically, their efforts to attract the next generation? The time to answer these questions is now.

**STATUS OF THE ARTS.** Much of this pressure is on the entire sector as much as it is on any single organization. Marginalization and undervaluation of the arts have impeded growth in the field for some time. Declining public funding and the diminished availability of arts education only add to the perception of nonprofit arts organizations as nonessential, which further exacerbates the problem of youth involvement.

To ensure its future, the nonprofit arts sector must challenge ingrained ideas—both within the field and in the public at large—about the status of the arts in society and the value of the arts administrator as a “professional.” Engaging the next generation promises to turn young supporters into voters who back the arts with tax dollars; citizens who perceive the arts as a core value, rather than a luxury; artists who choose to create within the nonprofit arts infrastructure, rather than outside it; and professionals who pursue arts administration as a rewarding, attractive career path.

## FUTURE TRENDS

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Projected demographic, employment, and funding trends indicate that present difficulties with generational succession in the nonprofit arts sector will only become more intense.

### DEMOGRAPHICS

**SMALLER POOL OF WORKERS.** There are fewer people in the generations immediately behind the 78-million-strong group of boomers, signaling greater competition for workers in every field in the near future.

**RETIRING BABY BOOMERS.** What will be the social impact on the next generation as baby boomers retire from the workforce? As youth become the primary caregivers for aging boomers in the future, their caretaking responsibilities will likely have a direct effect on their employment, spending, priorities, attitudes, and leisure pursuits—and, presumably, on their involvement with the arts.

**GREATER WORKER MOBILITY.** America's demographics are changing: growth in diversity, shifts in age ratios, and increasing turnover in all job categories. With family ties less a determinant of residence and with mobility for all people more common, the arts sector must find ways to avoid systemic turnover in its leadership and retain those leaders it does attract and train.

### EMPLOYMENT

**DECLINE IN QUALIFIED CANDIDATES.** According to the Employment Policy Foundation (EPF), between 2003 and 2013 over 30 million new job openings (in all fields, for-profit and nonprofit) will be created for candidates with at least a two-year college degree. However, only 23 million new graduates will be available to fill these positions, leaving a shortfall of qualified candidates for 7 million positions.

And as the rise in women in the workforce continues (linked both to the greater number of women who head single-parent households and to the greater need for double incomes to support two-parent households), fewer women will likely be able to afford the time commitment and low pay of running small arts organizations, particularly in rural and suburban communities.

**HEIGHTENED COMPETITION FOR EMPLOYEES AND VOLUNTEERS.** With a smaller pool of qualified candidates projected to replace retiring boomers, competition for the best and the brightest—already fierce—will become exponentially more intense. Recruitment of young workers and leaders will pit nonprofit arts organizations against private companies, government, and other sectors of the wider nonprofit universe, as well as each other. All nonprofits will continue to find it difficult to compete with the benefits the private sector can, and will, offer.

And as nonprofits experiment with new models of organization—for example, changing to for-profit status or merging in new combinations and collaborations—this competition will likely rise. Is the arts field overbuilt, as some have argued, and will marketplace dynamics force consolidation? How will that impact a systemic approach to the involvement of young people?

**MORE FREQUENT TURNOVER.** If workers must increasingly make employment decisions based purely on compensation, even in rural communities, frequent turnover is more likely, and key leaders of smaller organizations may remain in their posts for a shorter period of time. Both trends will increase the need for the ongoing cultivation of a larger pool of job applicants, including young candidates.

## FUNDING

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**RIISING DEMAND FOR GOVERNMENT SUPPORT.** As changing global economics impact national and local jurisdictions, fierce demands on scarce resources may further reduce public funding for nonprofit arts organizations, making it even harder to maintain current, or hire new, staff. For example, will rising gas prices—which directly impact the cost of operating police, fire, school, and government vehicles—force local governments to cut arts funding even deeper to balance their budgets? Potentially, this further marginalization of the arts sector may work against attracting new generations to the field or securing new tax dollars from voters.

**INCREASING COMPETITION FOR DONOR DOLLARS.** Scores of worthy causes and dramatic natural and human emergencies continue to lay claim to public generosity, resulting in donor fatigue. Future projections suggest that the nonprofit arts sector must make a concerted effort to connect with the next generation of donors in order to attract a market share of philanthropic giving. There is no guarantee that the patron system of wealthy individuals supporting certain cornerstone cultural institutions in our larger cities will continue; the new generation of civic philanthropists may indeed abandon them and shift their support to other priorities. Nonprofit arts organizations of all sizes and types must consider this possibility—and develop strategies to tap into the potentially lucrative younger market as meaningful financial donors to the arts.

## CALL TO ACTION

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Clearly, the future of the nonprofit arts sector depends on attracting the best new talent to administer its affairs, to serve as artists and audiences for its creative output, and to act as its advocates, boosters, and financial supporters. Action to meet this pressing, and increasingly complex, challenge can no longer be left to a vague future date.

Leaders in the nonprofit arts field need to address the issue of youth involvement in depth, as soon as possible, and come to a consensus about:

- What is at stake
- How the nonprofit arts sector might approach efforts to recruit, retain, mentor, train, and manage youth systemically
- What the potential advantages of collaborative, synergistic action might be
- What it might do to improve communications and relationships with young people
- How it can position itself in the larger marketplace
- How it will finance and manage these efforts

No quarter of the arts community can afford to remain silent in this discussion or passive in crafting and implementing workable strategies.

Some of these strategies may demand a broad, systemic approach in the sector at large; others may best be undertaken by individual arts organizations. This research project was designed to advance both kinds of initiatives.



## 2. PROJECT OVERVIEW

### OBJECTIVES

The goal of this project was to promote new strategies for generational succession in the nonprofit arts world by exploring its current efforts to involve young people, and assessing the strengths and weaknesses of those efforts, in six areas:

- Governance
- Membership
- Financial support
- Advocacy
- Audience development
- Artist support

In order to make recommendations for immediate action, we wanted to identify

- barriers that impede the involvement of young people,
- proven approaches for successfully recruiting, retaining, mentoring, training, and managing youth,
- best practices in exemplary youth programs that might have broad application,
- lessons learned from current approaches, and
- the organizational benefits of youth programs.

### APPROACH

Our primary research focus was on identifiable, measurable, ongoing programs to involve young people—as opposed to beneficial results achieved through wider, generalized organizational efforts. For example, if a group had an audience development program directed at the general public that generated greater youth attendance at a particular performance, that effort was not considered in this study unless the result was quantifiable.

Our research project had three parts:

- a survey of youth programs in California nonprofit arts organizations,
- case studies of twelve successful programs, and
- a comparative analysis of youth programs in the nonprofit environmental sector, with an in-depth look at two leading organizations.

We chose to examine the nonprofit arts sector in California because its size and diversity of arts organizations—of all types, budgets, constituencies, and disciplines—allow the analysis of broad concerns common to the nation as a whole.

### SURVEY

Based on guidance from an advisory committee, we sent an online questionnaire to a representative sample of California nonprofit arts organizations to determine the history, size, operation, funding, management, and degree of success of their programs to involve youth in our six areas of interest. We investigated not only how those programs are working today, but also how they might be transitional steps to young people's long-term commitment to the arts sector in the future.

## CASE STUDIES

We then conducted followup telephone interviews with twelve organizations with ongoing programs that successfully involve young people in one or more of our interest areas. Case studies of these programs were developed to show what is actually being done within the field, and what others might accomplish without substantial time or financial commitments.

## COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

Finally, to compare the arts sector's efforts to involve youth with those in another sector of the nonprofit universe, we looked at organizations within the environmental movement.

Key foundation officers helped identify organizations within the environmental field that have identifiable and successful programs to involve youth in their operations. Research into ten of those groups resulted in followup telephone interviews with senior leadership at half those organizations.

From that group of five, we selected two—the Sierra Club and the Rainforest Action Network—as high-profile representatives of the whole of the environmental field's efforts and experiences. Through in-depth interviews with two leaders of those two organizations, we examined their youth programs, methods, and results, looking for ways nonprofit arts organizations might replicate their success.

# 3. YOUTH PROGRAMS IN CALIFORNIA NONPROFIT ARTS ORGANIZATIONS

## SURVEY OVERVIEW

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We defined “young people” as between 16 and 30 years of age and classified them in three groups:

- High school: 16 up to 18 years of age;
- College: 18 up to 24 years of age; and
- Post-college: 24 up to 30 years of age

Specifically, our survey sought to identify specific programs to recruit young people, and to assess their current involvement, in six areas of California nonprofit arts organizations:

- Governance: As members of boards of directors and advisory committees; full- and part-time paid staff; and volunteers
- Membership: As full “members” of arts organizations
- Financial support: As financial donors to arts organizations
- Advocacy: As activists on behalf of the arts
- Audience development: As current and future audience members
- Artist support: As artists involved in youth programs

## METHODOLOGY

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**SURVEY INSTRUMENT.** With the services of Survey Monkey, we developed an eighty-question, online, interactive survey instrument that allowed multiple-choice and open-ended responses. All respondents were required to complete a section on the involvement of young people as members of boards of directors and advisory committees, full- and part-time employees, and volunteers, as well as to provide information on the numbers of such young people and their racial/ethnic backgrounds, areas of involvement, and ages.

Each organization was then asked to describe specific programs that solicited the involvement of young people in the six areas noted above and the ages and racial/ethnic backgrounds of participants in those programs. In addition, we asked each respondent to provide information about these programs, including costs and staff oversight and management time. Finally, each organization was asked to describe positive outcomes, problem areas, and guidelines for replicating their programs elsewhere.

**ADVISORY COMMITTEE.** An advisory committee of leaders from all areas of California’s arts community was created to review the survey instrument and, based on their knowledge of extant programs and efforts, to recommend organizations for our survey sample.

We sought to balance our master list according to the following criteria:

- **Geography:** Organizations from both Northern and Southern California; from urban, suburban, and rural areas
- **Discipline:** Organizations in all areas of the nonprofit arts field (e.g., dance, music, theater, film, visual arts, et. al.)
- **Size:** Organizations ranging in budget size and in number of employees

- **Base of Support/Constituency:** Organizations reflecting California’s diversity of race, ethnicity, gender, and culture

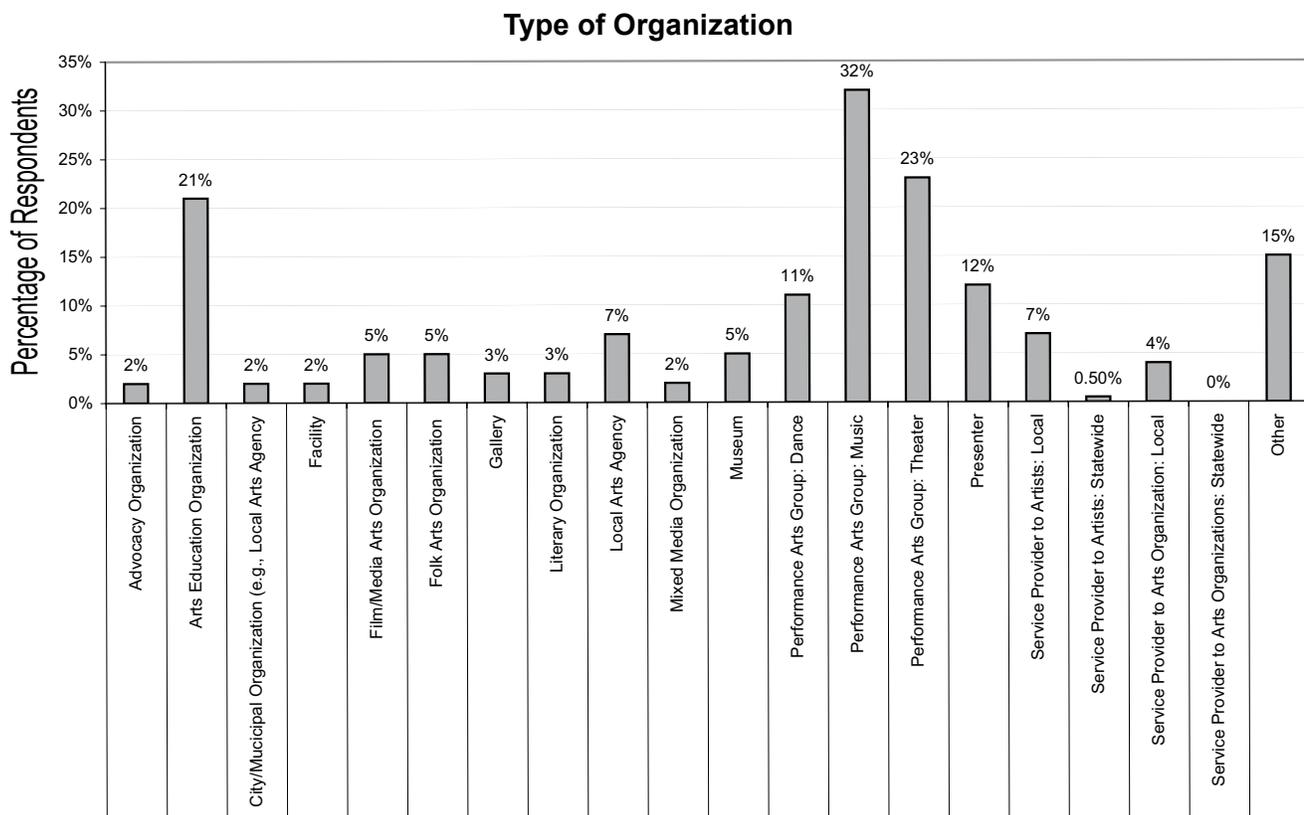
**SURVEY SAMPLE.** A total of 720 organizations comprised our final master list, with the characteristics above considered in a balance-weighted selection process. In October/November 2005, we emailed these organizations a description of, and a request to participate in, our survey, along with an URL link to the questionnaire. Four weeks later, and another four weeks after that, we sent followup emails to organizations that had not yet responded. The survey was closed in January 2006.

**REVIEW OF RESULTS.** Survey results and case studies were subsequently sent to the Advisory Committee for review and comment. Committee members met twice via telephone conference calls to discuss the survey results and the implications of the data collected, including recommendations as to what the next steps might be for the field.

## PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS

A total of 222 organizations responded to our survey invitation and, after deleting 36 responses that lacked required fields, we obtained a pool of 194 valid respondents for analysis (a 27% response rate).

**TYPE OF ORGANIZATION.** As the following chart indicates, the total respondent pool included a cross-section of all categories of arts organizations, in all disciplines, serving different constituencies, both private and public. Note that organizations were able to identify themselves in more than one category.



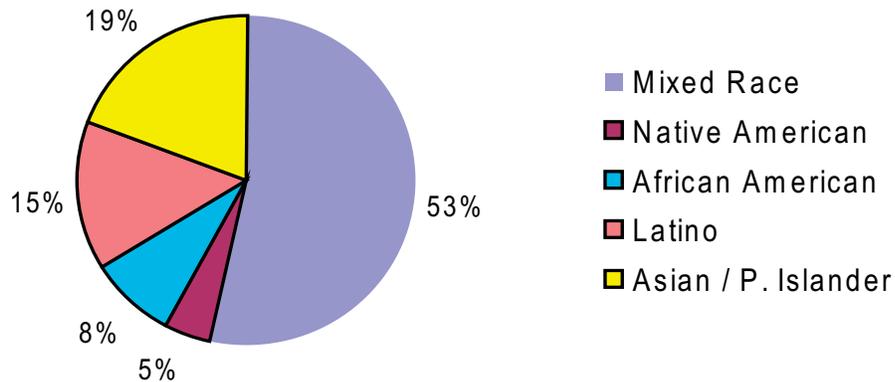
**ANNUAL BUDGET SIZE.** Respondents were primarily organizations with smaller budgets, as is typical of the whole of the nonprofit arts sector.

Annual Budget of Responding Organizations of Last Fiscal Year

<b>Less than \$250,000</b>		<b>38.7%</b>
\$250,000 up to \$500,000		16.7%
\$500,000 up to \$1 million		16.7%
\$1 million up to \$3 million		15.1%
\$3 million up to \$5 million		4.8%
\$5 million up to \$10 million		3.2%
Over \$10 million		4.8%

**BASE OF SUPPORT/CONSTITUENCY.** The majority of respondents indicated that their organization’s base of support/constituency was not linked to any particular racial, ethnic, or cultural group; that is, their services or programming were not targeted toward any one social group. Those who did identify a particular racial/ethnic constituency for their organization were as follows:

Organizations Identifying a Racial/Ethnic Constituency



Thirty-eight percent of the respondents identified themselves as multicultural organizations, and of that group, the breakdown was as follows. Note that there was a high incidence of organizations that reported a particular racial/ethnic/cultural focus yet noted that their constituencies included people in several categories.

**Multicultural Organizations of Responding Organizations' Primary Constituent Base**

African American		9.30%
Native American		5.30%
Latino		16%
Asian/Pacific Islander		21.30%
<b>Mixed Race/Ethnicity</b>		<b>64%</b>
Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual/Transgender		10.70%

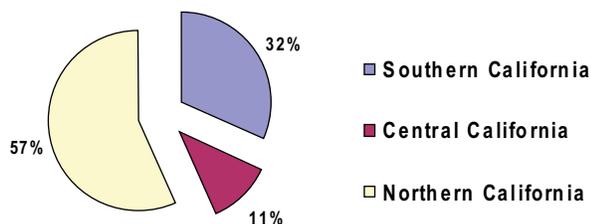
**NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES.** Respondents also reflected the small size of the average arts organization.

**Total Number of Employees of Responding Organizations, Excluding Employed or Affiliated Artists or Performers.**

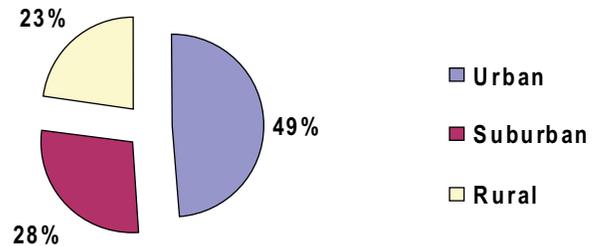
Less than 3		31%
3-10		41%
11-20		12%
More than 20		15%

**GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION.** Respondents represented all geographic areas of California—North, South and Central regions—as well as urban, suburban, and rural communities.

**Respondents by Region**



**Respondents by Type of Community**



Respondents were located in forty-two of the state's fifty-eight counties. The three major metropolitan areas (San Francisco, Los Angeles, and San Diego) represented 36% of the total respondent pool.

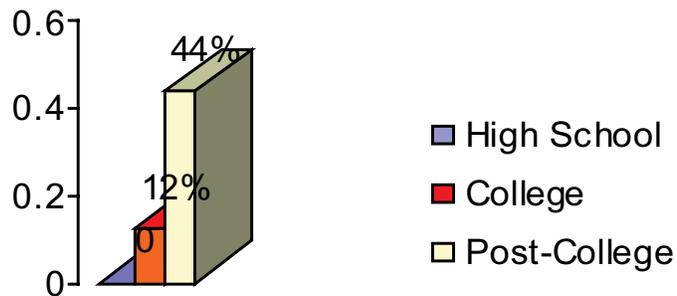


# 4. SURVEY RESULTS

## GOVERNANCE PROGRAMS

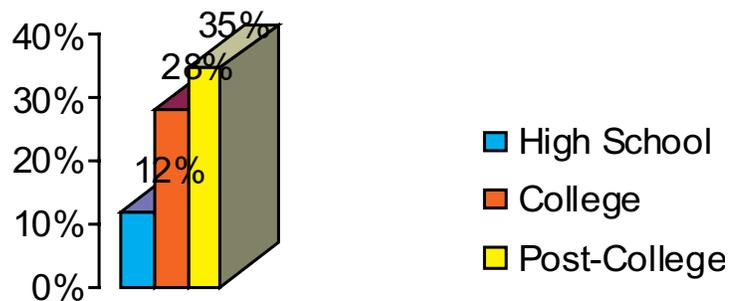
**FULL-TIME STAFF.** Not surprisingly, none of the responding arts organizations had any full-time employees in the high school age category. Twelve percent had full-time college-age employees, and 44% had full time post-college-age employees. Employment for the latter two age groups was predominantly in the area of artistic/technical production, followed by clerical and marketing work.

### Organizations with Full Time Youth Employees



**PART-TIME STAFF.** For part-time staff, the numbers jumped to 12% with high school employees, 28% with college-age employees, and 35% with post-college-age employees. Even more so than young full-time employees, young part-time staff were concentrated in the area of production work.

### Organizations with Part-Time Youth Employees

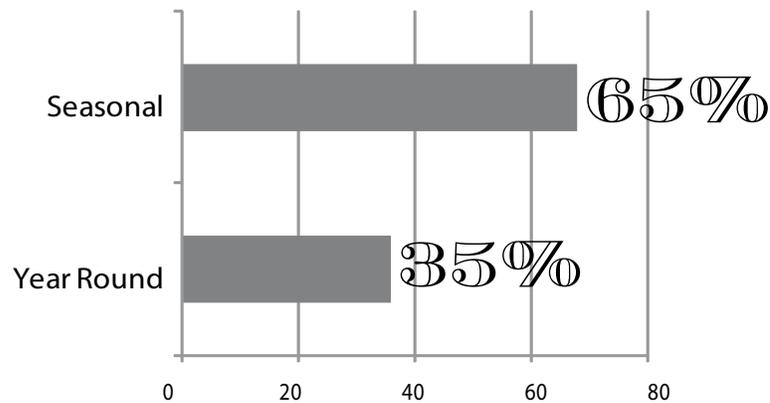


Eighteen percent of the respondents reported having a program or defined approach to recruit young people for staff positions. Of those organizations:

- 20% had successfully recruited a high school student as part-time staff,
- 40% had successfully recruited a college-age staff member, and
- 51% had successfully recruited a post-college-age staff member.

**INTERNS.** Sixty percent of responding organizations had some sort of internship program. Twenty two percent of those programs involved high school students, 54% college-age interns, and 24% involved post-college-age interns.

Nearly two-thirds (65%) of all programs operated seasonally.



Interns worked in all areas of arts organization management, with the largest percentage performing production work (ushers, stage hands, set designers, docents, etc.), followed by clerical support. Note that organizations were able to identify more than one primary area of work for their interns.

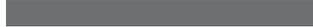
Interns' Principal Area of Work

		Response Percent
Executive		10.1%
Marketing		43.4%
Programming		37.2%
Clerical		44.2%
Development		31.8%
<b>Production</b>		<b>55.8%</b>
Public Relations		27.1%

**VOLUNTEERS.** Approximately 39% of responding organizations had young people participating in volunteer programs—often in meaningful numbers, in each age category, and across ethnic lines. Volunteering connected the largest number of young people to arts organizations (although audience participation was not tracked).

Volunteers worked in all organizational areas, with the greatest number of organizations using volunteers to support performances or exhibitions. Event planning and office administration were the next most common volunteer tasks.

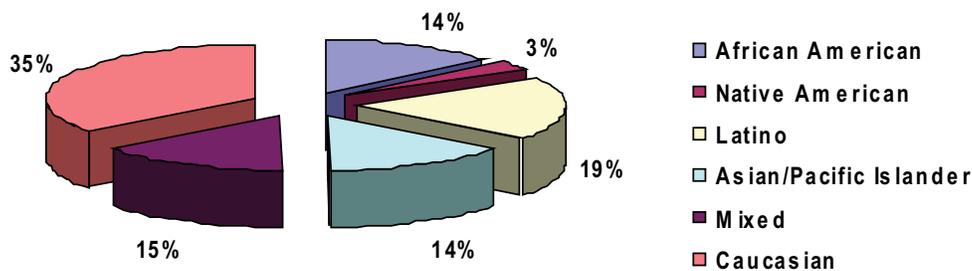
In Which Areas Do These Volunteers Participate?

		Response Percent
Executive		10.1%
Marketing		43.4%
Programming		37.2%
Clerical		44.2%
Development		31.8%
<b>Production</b>		<b>55.8%</b>
Public Relations		27.1%

**BOARD MEMBERS.** There was negligible involvement of high school— or college-age young people on boards of directors. Three percent of the respondents had a high school board member, 4% had a college-age board member, and 15% had a post-college-age person serving on their board.

The racial/ethnic background of all youth board members is shown below.

Racial/Ethnic Background of Youth Board Members



The majority of these recruitment programs were longstanding efforts:

- 69% had been in existence more than three years,
- 17% for one to three years, and
- 14% for less than one year.

**STANDING/ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS.** Only 4% of the respondents indicated any participation by young people on a standing/advisory committee affiliated with their organizations. Of those few organizations with such panels or committees:

- 64% had at least one high school student member,
- 63% had at least one college-age member, and
- 64% had at least one post-college-age member.

## MEMBERSHIP PROGRAMS

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A subset of nonprofit arts organizations—principally music, theater, and dance performance groups and museums—offers memberships. Often these memberships are primarily fundraising mechanisms. We wanted to determine how many organizations with membership programs purposefully sought to recruit young people, and, if they did, what success they had. We also wanted to know if they charged dues for their members, and, if so, whether young members paid the same or less than other members.

- Twelve percent of our respondents reported that they had a membership program that purposefully sought young members between 16 and 30 years old.
- Ten percent successfully recruited young members, with over half of such respondents attracting members in each of our three age categories.

The majority of those charging young people dues—58%—did not charge them less than they did other members.

## FINANCIAL SUPPORT PROGRAMS

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We also wanted to find out if there were any programs that specifically sought to increase financial contributions from youth, apart from appeals aimed at all age categories. Only 4% of our respondents identified any such effort to solicit funds from young people specifically.

Of those few organizations that attempted to increase financial support from young people:

- 60% estimated the total aggregate annual amount contributed by all young people between 16 and 30 years old was \$2,500 or less. The remaining 40% calculated those receipts between \$2,500 and \$5,000.
- Approximately 60% reported spending less than \$5,000 in solicitation efforts, 20% reported spending no funds, and 20% reported spending between \$5,000 and \$10,000.

Half of the respondents to this section of the survey identified their target groups as specifically Asian/Pacific Islanders, and half as Caucasian. Only one-third of these financial support programs had been in existence more than three years.

## ADVOCACY PROGRAMS

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We wanted to ascertain how many arts organizations had programs that sought to involve young people in their advocacy efforts. Approximately 3% of the organizations responding reported having such a program. Those few respondents making such an effort were service providers or city/municipal organizations.

That young people were virtually not involved in any advocacy work on behalf of respondents suggests that advocacy is not a primary effort of individual organizations, but rather a collaborative function of the field as a whole—whether on a local, regional, statewide, or national level.

## AUDIENCE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

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Nineteen percent of the respondent pool had programs specifically aimed at increasing the number of young people in their audiences; other respondents indicated that their general audience development efforts targeted young people.

For the most part, intentional youth programs employed four strategies:

1. **Discounts** for adolescents and high school— and college-age students: half-price tickets, matinee discounts, and two-for-one offers
2. **Family performances**
3. **School outreach:** class offerings; “Meet the Artists” programs; backstage tours and pre-curtain talks; and partnerships with school districts
4. **Value-added elements for young adults:** networking opportunities and events; complimentary beverage and food vouchers; and group ticket discounts

Some large-budget performance organizations reported having created next-generation auxiliary groups to court the young professional market. The structures of these auxiliaries ranged from ad hoc to highly organized (with identified leaders, regular meetings, committees, and agendas). These subgroups were not highly defined within the organizations’ decision-making structures of staff or boards, but there was some indication that they might funnel young leadership into the official governance structure and serve as a tool for increasing young people’s involvement.

## ARTIST SUPPORT PROGRAMS

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As history might have predicted, the one area in which nonprofit arts organizations proved to be substantially involved with young people on a sustained and systemic basis was artist support. Fifty-eight of all responding organizations reported having such programs for youth.

If respondent organizations that are not arts discipline based are factored out (i.e., municipal agencies and organizational service providers), the percentage of respondents with programs providing support to young artists climbs to approximately 79%. The reason this figure is not even higher might be that some organizations are too small or haven’t the resources to support such programs, or have not yet been in existence long enough to develop such programs.

Opportunities for young artists to publicly perform or exhibit their work and to receive professional training were the most common forms of support that organizations provided.

### Types of Support Programs Offered to Young Artists

Professional development assistance (e.g., workshops on the “business” of being an artist)		31%
Professional training in the artistic discipline		71.8%
Provision of work/rehearsal space		25.4%
<b>Opportunities for public performance/exhibition of the artists’ work</b>		<b>78.9%</b>
Mentoring one-on-one		49.3%
Group services (e.g., insurance coverage)		4.2%
Other		8.5%

Young artists were served by the full spectrum of discipline-based arts organizations in our respondent pool, with the largest outreach within the music discipline, where 62% of the music organization respondents had a program to support young artists.

Visual arts		25.70%
Dance		30%
Theater		35.70%
<b>Music</b>		<b>62.90%</b>
Film		5.70%
Mixed media		10%
Literary		10%
Folk arts		10%
Other		7.10%

Artist support was also the area in which arts organizations reported the largest financial commitment. As more large performance-based organizations (symphonies, operas, ballets, and theater companies) had such programs, of our respondents, an impressive 24% spent more than \$50,000 in annual program support.

Annual Budget for Young Artist Support Program

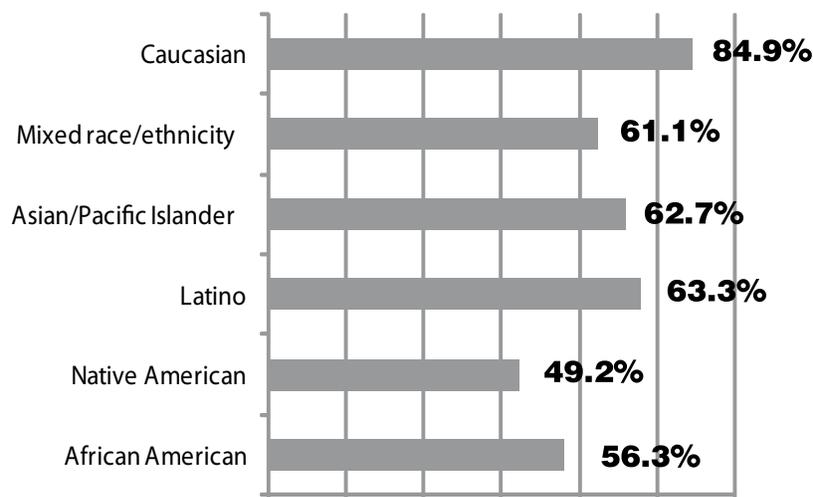
None		7% of responding organizations
Less than \$5,000		20%
\$5,000 to \$10,000		22%
\$10,000 to \$25,000		18%
\$25,000 to \$50,000		9%
<b>Over \$50,000</b>		<b>24%</b>

This area is also the one in which arts organizations have the greatest experience with youth. Eighty-seven percent of the programs supporting young artists had been in existence more than three years.

## PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS

Virtually every organization with a defined program or effort to involve young people reported significant participation of youth across racial/ethnic lines, a sign that organizations consciously tried—with measurable success—to reach all members of their community. Respondents with one or more young people as full- or part-time staff or as interns reported measurable diversity in their racial/ethnic backgrounds. Nearly half to two-thirds of the respondents had at least one African American, Native American, Latino, or Asian/Pacific Islander employee or intern.

Organizations with Employees or Interns in Racial/Ethnic Category

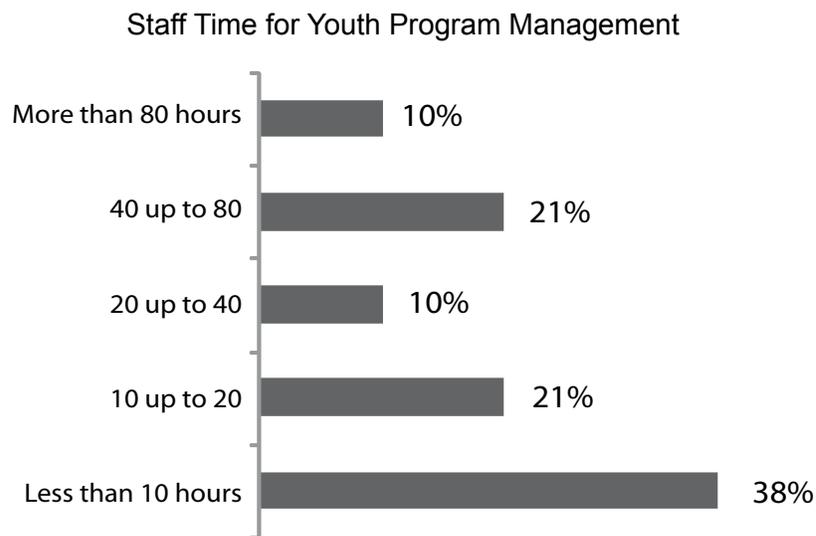


Organizations that identified their client/constituent base as predominantly from a specific racial/ethnic/cultural group naturally reported a higher involvement of youth in that group, but even these organizations reported diversity among their program participants. There seems to be both awareness of the need and a concerted effort to recruit broadly among youth of all backgrounds, with fair results.

Organizations based in urban areas with varied racial/ethnic/cultural populations from which to recruit logically demonstrated the most success in involving a diverse mix of youth, but even suburban and rural areas appeared to be making progress in their inclusiveness. The one area in which diversity was still only marginally reflected was in the composition of boards of directors in rural areas.

## ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT

**ADMINISTRATION.** Staff time to administer youth programs varied widely across the respondent pool, as shown below.



**FUNDING.** Funds to recruit young people to take part in organizational governance (as staff, board and standing/advisory committee members, interns, and volunteers) principally came from a general budget. However, a substantial number of organizations reported drawing at least some funding for such outreach efforts from multiple revenue sources.

### Sources of Funds Used to Support the Youth Program(s)

<b>General budget</b>		<b>80.6%</b>
Individual contributions		58.3%
Foundation grants specifically for program		63.9%
Corporation grants specifically for program		44.4%
Public funds (city, state, or federal)		58.3%
Earned income		52.8%

In the area of youth artist support—the area in which arts organizations allocated the most funds—organizations drew on a similarly wide spectrum of funding sources for their programs.

**Responding Organizations Using Funding Source to Support Youth Artist Program**

<b>General budget</b>	████████████████████	<b>71.9%</b>
Individual contributions	████████████████████	63.2%
Foundation grants specifically for program	████████████████████	63.2%
Corporation grants specifically for program	██████████	43.9%
Public funds (city, state, or federal)	████████████████████	52.6%

**Note:** Artist Support Programs

Although there are many exemplary programs providing support to young artists—through instruction, master classes, performance and exhibition opportunities, mentoring, provision of technical support, and apprenticeships—we did not profile any in this report. This is because there is widespread awareness and knowledge of these programs in the field, as well as substantial experience in their design and implementation. Artist support programs are also uniquely customized to each discipline and to individual organizations within each discipline.

## 5. CASE STUDIES

In each of the six areas we had investigated, we conducted follow-up telephone interviews with twenty of our respondents whose ongoing youth involvement programs promised to serve as models for the non-profit arts sector. Twelve of those programs were then chosen to be featured as detailed case studies in this report.

The organizations profiled below reflect some of the approaches taken by groups of different sizes and areas of discipline in different areas of the state. While there are many other excellent programs in each category, as well as outstanding efforts outside California, we limited our coverage to thumbnail profiles of just a representative sample of organizations and their programs to increase youth involvement.

### INTERNSHIP PROGRAMS

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Arts organizations are most advanced in their use of internship programs to recruit young people into organizational management, and thus, indirectly, to address the issue of leadership succession. The incentive for most organizations to offer internships is to get much needed, and cost-effective, staffing support in a variety of areas. However, we also saw a genuine commitment to provide the interns with meaningful work and to introduce them to the workings of a nonprofit arts organization as a future career path.

Internship programs are organized in several ways: by municipal, educational, and private organizations, and then offered to individual organizations; and by individual organizations themselves. These programs are usually of short duration and commonly offer an exposure to nonprofit arts organization culture rather than a substantive immersion in the field. Whether by design or accident, programs often lead to an intern's subsequent involvement in the sponsoring organization in some capacity. For that reason, internships may potentially be useful as an intentional strategy to recruit young people's long-term involvement.

*Note:* The data in the boxed organizational profiles in the following section refer to the named organization, and are separate from any featured program it may operate. Thus, the Los Angeles County Arts Commission itself has an internal program for three interns per year. The internship program described in the narrative description is a program the Commission offers to other organizations.

### LOS ANGELES COUNTY ARTS COMMISSION

<i>Organization Profile</i>	
Type:	Municipal Arts Agency
Budget range:	\$5 million–\$10 million
Total employees:	20+
Youth employees	
Full-time:	2
Part-time:	1
Internship program:	Yes
Number of interns:	3 per year
Program status:	Year round

### LOS ANGELES COUNTY ARTS INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

**DESCRIPTION.** In partnership with the Getty Foundation, the Los Angeles County Arts Commission administers a model community internship program, providing 125 college-age interns to nonprofit perform-

ing, presenting, literary, and municipal arts organizations in Los Angeles each year. During the course of the internships, participating organizations gain the assistance of “extra staff” to help with special or seasonal projects. Participating organizations play an important role in training, educating, and mentoring undergraduate student interns who may go on to arts leadership positions on staffs or boards.

**HISTORY.** The Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors established the Arts Internship Program as a companion program to the Getty Multicultural Internship Program, which provides interns to museums and visual arts organizations.

**PURPOSE/GOALS.** The purpose of the county’s program is to provide undergraduate students with meaningful on-the-job training and experience working in nonprofit arts organizations, and to assist those organizations to develop future leaders. Through this program, students can develop a deeper understanding of the work involved in nonprofit arts administration, better understand the role of the arts in a community, and develop “real life” business skills that can be put to use in their future careers.

**DURATION.** Ten weeks.

## **PARTICIPANTS**

**ELIGIBILITY.** Students eligible for internships are currently enrolled undergraduates, residing in or attending college in Los Angeles County, who have completed at least one semester of college by June and who will not be graduating before December of the current year’s program. Candidates can be pursuing all areas of undergraduate study and need not have demonstrated a previous commitment to the arts.

Ineligible to participate as interns are students currently employed as staff by participating organizations, or students who are related to staff or board members of the organization.

**TIME COMMITMENT.** Internships are full-time positions of approximately forty hours a week during regular business or program hours. For arts organizations, this may include evening or weekend hours. However, interns are not scheduled to work more than an eight-hour workday, unless the organization has a four-day/forty-hour work week or similar schedule.

## **ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT**

**ADMINISTRATION.** Upon approval of an organizational internship, grant funds of \$3,500 are awarded directly to the organization. It is the responsibility of the grant recipient organization to administer, manage, and pay interns this amount for their ten-week period of service. A lesser rate of pay cannot be negotiated.

In order to assist organizations with the expense of payroll taxes or parking, the Los Angeles County Arts Internship Program funds \$500 per student intern to the organization.

**SUPERVISION.** In addition to his or her role as mentor, trainer, work-planner, and evaluator, a supervising mentor has several other responsibilities defined by the internship program. Within the first two years of participation, mentors must complete a mandatory orientation. They are also required to complete evaluations of interns and the internship program at the end of each summer.

**RESOURCES.** Sponsoring organizations must designate workspace and necessary equipment for each internship position requested, and they must be adequate and appropriate for the job duties and responsibilities to be assigned to the intern. Interns must work in professional arts office locations or production

facilities. Home office locations are not eligible as intern work sites. Likewise, it is not acceptable for the organization to assign work to an intern to complete at home.

**EDUCATIONAL BENEFITS.** Several educational components are offered to interns, including field trips with discussion leaders, off-site meetings, and a bus tour of arts activities and organizations throughout the county. These events, which are funded by the Getty Foundation, are mandatory for interns and are an integral part of the program. Educational events are considered a paid part of the intern’s workday.

**COMPENSATION.** Interns are paid on a weekly or biweekly schedule. Housing, transportation, and other costs are not provided. However, it is recommended that organizations give interns parking compensation, either out of the \$500 the organization is awarded for administrative purposes, or out of other organizational funds.

## RESULTS

- Following their participation in the program, 78% of student interns report that they would consider a career in arts administration. Note that the program does not require a prior interest in or commitment to the arts.
- Ninety-three percent of both interns and their supervisors believe the interns have learned skills that have better prepared them for the workforce.
- The program provides a first-time office work experience to nearly 20% of all participating students.
- For 55% of the students, the internship is their first full-time paid job.

## KEY ADVICE

- Start small. By starting with something manageable as a pilot program, you can see what works and what doesn’t.
- Make sure you have sufficient staff to oversee and manage your program. The Los Angeles County Arts Commission and the Getty Foundation staff are both interested in providing information or ideas to organizations interested in replicating their programs.

## THEATREWORKS



### Organization Profile

TYPE:	PERFORMANCE ORGANIZATION/THEATER
BUDGET RANGE:	\$5 MILLION–\$10 MILLION
TOTAL EMPLOYEES:	20+
YOUTH EMPLOYEES	
FULL-TIME:	13
PART-TIME:	0
INTERNSHIP PROGRAM:	YES
NUMBER OF INTERNS:	6-15 PER YEAR
PROGRAM STATUS:	YEAR-ROUND

## WORK-EXPERIENCE INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

**DESCRIPTION.** TheatreWorks offers a work-experience program that enables students, pre-professionals, and career-changers to work side by side with a staff of artists and administrators. Up to fifteen interns work in their primary area of interest as well as participate in cross-departmental activities, including arts administration, community engagement, costume construction, costume stock management, development,

dramaturgical research, marketing, new works, production management, props, scenic art, scene construction, special events, and stage management.

**PURPOSE/GOALS.** Interns are immersed in a professional work environment and mentored by one or more staff members, who provide guidance and instruction as needed.

**BUDGET.** \$10,000.

## **PARTICIPANTS**

**ELIGIBILITY.** The program is generally open to applicants who are college age or older. Exceptional high school seniors are considered for the summer program only. Applicants must hold U.S. citizenship or possess a legal work permit prior to application.

**TIME COMMITMENT.** The year-round program offers individually designed internships of three to nine months in duration. Summer internships begin on or around June 1 and run through mid-August. Fall/winter/spring internships average three to five months in length.

Summer interns work full time and for a minimum of six weeks. They must log at least 100 hours, regardless of how that time is structured. All interns participate in full-day workdays on Wednesdays. Dates and hours for fall/winter/spring interns are individually determined. They may work part time if desired for a minimum of twelve weeks, but one of their workdays must be Wednesday. Specific scheduling is arranged with the department supervisor.

**RESPONSIBILITIES.** Interns' responsibilities include assisting the Development department with mailings; filing for any/all departments; working the front office reception desk (trafficking receivables, answering phones, assisting the public); updating staff lists, charts, calendars, schedules; assisting in the maintenance of a clean, productive office environment; assisting the Ticket Services department in subscription processing; assisting with theater lobby display set up; and assisting with script library maintenance.

The Arts Administration internship affords students a broad overview of theater operations. Interns assist with projects in all areas of company administration, including crossover departments such as production management and casting. Tasks are entry-level in nature, but context and background are given to all projects, providing a significant learning experience. Interns are not asked to do tasks that are not already part of the regular staff workload.

One day each week, interns from all departments come together to support general company operations. On Wednesdays, interns assist in the warehouse in costume rentals or props or in other labor-intensive projects. Cleaning and organizing rehearsal halls or distributing marketing materials to retail stores are examples of other possible Wednesday workday projects. In addition, interns are expected to work on large company special events such as opening night receptions, the annual Season Announcement, or large patron fundraisers.

## ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT

**EDUCATIONAL BENEFITS.** Interns are invited to attend departmental meetings, design presentations, attend guest speaker events, and take part in a brown-bag lunch series on a myriad of career-related topics. Private portfolio reviews and resume critiques are also available upon request.

**COMPENSATION.** Internships are unpaid. Housing is not provided, but the organization does assist interns in locating appropriate local rental situations. Qualified interns may apply for paid stipends on a running crew or in the organization’s inside sales department to supplement their income while working with the company.

**EVALUATION.** Interns are expected to produce written goals and meet with their intern manager and staff mentors for evaluation and followup. At the completion of their internship, interns receive oral evaluations and/or recommendations, letters of reference, and a certificate of achievement.

### KEY ADVICE

- Given that every department head may have an individual management style, try to address the challenge of giving every intern an equivalent management experience.
- At the outset of an internship, be sure to resist the temptation to give students-in-training grunt work.

## EAST SIDE ARTS ALLIANCE

	<i>Organization Profile</i>	
	TYPE:	COMMUNITY ARTS
	BUDGET RANGE:	\$250,000–\$500,000
	TOTAL EMPLOYEES:	3–10
	YOUTH EMPLOYEES	
	FULL-TIME:	0
	PART-TIME:	7
	INTERNSHIP PROGRAM:	YES
	NUMBER OF INTERNS:	5 PER YEAR
	PROGRAM STATUS:	YEAR-ROUND

The East Side Arts Alliance (ESAA) is as much a community action organization as it is a community arts organization, and it operates on a nontraditional governance model. Although it doesn’t have a traditional internship program, ESAA is premised on the full integration and involvement of the young people who comprise its core constituency.

## YOUTH LEADERSHIP INITIATIVE

**DESCRIPTION.** ESAA’s art workshops are geared to older youth, aged 16 to 25, a group the organization believes is least served by traditional neighborhood programs—which usually focus on parents, families, or young people already enmeshed in the criminal justice system. ESAA uses its workshops to meet young people on their own “turf” as graffiti taggers, hip-hop artists, and dancers. By providing young artists with the tools and information they need to succeed, ESAA enables them to be agents of change in their own neighborhood.

The organization currently serves over 100 youth. Established ties with schools, community programs, churches, and parents, as well as the residence of all core staff in the neighborhood (many of their families have lived there for generations) help the program operate well on many levels.

**PURPOSE/GOALS.** ESAA’s mission includes a stated intention to be in the neighborhood for the long haul. A part of this commitment is the recruitment of a core group of young people who will “run the show.” Regeneration is listed as a top priority in all of the organization’s literature.

## **PARTICIPANTS**

**RECRUITMENT/SELECTION.** ESAA recruits older students from its ongoing arts workshops to take on positions of leadership.

**TRAINING.** Ongoing training for all core staff and student interns—a key element of the program—includes monthly mandatory discussion groups and assigned readings on topics that inform program delivery.

**RESPONSIBILITIES.** The organization has no full-time staff and a small (three-person) board of directors. The core staff is composed of eleven members, of which seven are under 30 years old. Three are students between the ages of 18 and 24 recruited from the organization’s programs; four are young people aged 24 to 30 who act as teachers and program coordinators. This core staff group functions as the main decision-making body for the organization, which operates on the principle of consensus.

## **ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT**

**RESOURCES.** Film screenings and invited guest speakers help students see their role as artists as being a crucial component of community building. An active advisory board regularly schedules small gatherings and workshops with staff and students.

**EDUCATIONAL BENEFITS.** Teachers in the workshops are established artists in their own fields. Their credibility with young people helps market the workshops.

## **KEY ADVICE**

- This is a very time-consuming model that requires community commitment.
- Organizations considering this kind of model should be aware that it is difficult to convince young people to work for very low wages. Not being able to offer full-time pay or benefits to any staff compounds the potential for burnout and the loss of key leaders.

# VOLUNTEER PROGRAMS

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Recruiting volunteers is a widespread and long-established practice within the arts field. Traditional uses of volunteers range from ushers and docents to stagehands and production crews, from event organizers and staffers to fundraisers, and from clerical workers to pro bono consultants. The two programs profiled below are creative variations on this theme.

## LOS ANGELES OPERA

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	<i>Organization Profile</i>	
	TYPE:	PERFORMANCE ORGANIZATION/MUSIC
	BUDGET:	\$10 MILLION+
	TOTAL EMPLOYEES:	20+
	YOUTH EMPLOYEES	
	FULL-TIME:	20
	PART-TIME:	7
	INTERNSHIP PROGRAM:	YES
	NUMBER OF INTERNS:	3 PER YEAR
	PROGRAM STATUS:	YEAR-ROUND

## CAMPUS OPERA CLUBS

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**DESCRIPTION.** The Los Angeles Opera has a program that supports existing, and helps launch new, college and high school opera clubs. There are approximately ten campus opera clubs currently working with the organization, including substantive partnerships with Cal Tech, Cal State LA, and the magnet Cleveland High School in Reseda, California, which offers high school students before- and after-school classes covering the aesthetics, history, and appreciation of opera.

**BUDGET.** \$2,500, used principally for honorariums for opera artists who appear at club events.

## PARTICIPANTS

**RESPONSIBILITIES.** Club members provide the organization with a pool of volunteers and new audience members. Volunteers participate in the opera's educational outreach program to schools, "Opera Challenge"; act as program mentors; serve as test audiences for special programming; work with the opera's core education program: teacher training for Los Angeles Unified School District teachers; and join the organization's main volunteer group, the Opera League of LA.

## ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT

**ADMINISTRATION.** LA Opera provides complimentary tickets to dress rehearsals, special performances, and other events (including lunches with company members); arranges for opera musicians and artists to perform on campus for college clubs; and supplies materials ranging from props and costumes to DVDs, books, and educational materials.

**RESOURCES.** Providing educational materials and performance gear to clubs costs the organization little or nothing, since this inventory is often just taking up space at the opera yet is of great interest and value to students.

**EDUCATIONAL BENEFITS.** Students' participation as mentors and in the opera's education programs often qualifies them for class credit.

## RESULTS

The program has been so successful that an email listserv newsletter just for campus opera club members is being planned.

## KEY ADVICE

- There is great potential for opera clubs—and other discipline-based clubs—on both college and high school campuses. If additional pay can be allocated to high school teachers who support before- and after-school programs, this may encourage them to get involved.
- Maintain flexibility in scheduling volunteers from student clubs. Their free time depends on their class schedules and is usually confined to weekends.

## CALIFORNIA SHAKESPEARE THEATER (CAL SHAKES)

<i>Organization Profile</i>	
TYPE:	PERFORMANCE ORGANIZATION/THEATER
BUDGET RANGE:	\$3 MILLION–\$5 MILLION
TOTAL EMPLOYEES:	20+
YOUTH EMPLOYEES	
FULL-TIME:	8
PART-TIME:	25
INTERNSHIP PROGRAM:	YES
NUMBER OF INTERNS:	3 PER YEAR
PROGRAM STATUS:	YEAR-ROUND

## AMBASSADOR PROGRAM

**DESCRIPTION.** The California Shakespeare Festival has an “Ambassador” program that is a cross between a volunteer program and an audience development tool.

**PURPOSE/GOALS.** The objective of the program is to introduce young people to theater and convert that introduction into ongoing support.

**MARKETING.** The theater purposefully tries to incorporate humor and language familiar to the target age group in all program marketing materials. Networking opportunities for twenty- and thirty-somethings are heavily promoted.

## PARTICIPANTS

**RESPONSIBILITIES.** Young “Ambassadors” serve as a link to the community’s needs and wants and connect the theater to their networks of friends.

## ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT

**BENEFITS.** Young people recruited by the Ambassadors get discount tickets to the theater, plus value-added elements such as free drinks, special events, pre-performance receptions, and post-performance parties catered to their age group.

## RESULTS

In one year, the theater tripled the number of tickets sold to people under the age of 30: from 1,000 in 2004 to 3,000 in 2005. The program has thus far yielded one board member under 30, and two advisory board members under 35.

## KEY ADVICE

- Be patient; this model takes a significant number of years to bear fruit.
- Be prepared to spend some effort convincing your board that the program's ultimate potential justifies the initial expenditure to launch it.

# BOARD PROGRAMS

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Approximately one of every five arts organizations has at least one young person (primarily post-college age) on its board of directors, but few of those members were recruited as part of an ongoing, intentional program to seat young people.

## TRAVELING JEWISH THEATER

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<i>Organization Profile</i>	
TYPE:	PERFORMANCE ORGANIZATION/THEATER
BUDGET RANGE:	\$500,000–\$1 MILLION
TOTAL EMPLOYEES:	3–10
YOUTH EMPLOYEES	
FULL-TIME:	3
PART-TIME:	5
INTERNSHIP PROGRAM:	YES
NUMBER OF INTERNS:	3 PER YEAR
PROGRAM STATUS:	YEAR-ROUND

## BOARD FELLOW PROGRAM

**DESCRIPTION.** The Traveling Jewish Theater’s Board Fellow Program brings young people onto its board for a one-year term. The board currently has ten members, of which three are Fellows.

**HISTORY.** The theater participated in a pilot program of the Jewish Community Federation that recruited young people who were interested in fellowships with community-based organizations and then assigned those candidates to participating groups. The program was successful, encouraging the theater to start its own standalone version of the Board Fellowship Program.

**PURPOSE/GOALS.** The theater expects that the program will consistently, over time, yield a pool of young board members.

## PARTICIPANTS

**SELECTION/RECRUITMENT.** Potential candidates are identified in two ways. Current board members are asked to submit names of potential Fellows at their annual meeting. And, because the executive director and staff have made it a point to build relationships with their major donors and long-term ticket subscribers, they are able to identify young people who are good prospects.

Once candidates have been identified, the executive director and board chair hold informal talks to narrow the pool. Final candidates are individually invited to discuss participation over lunch. Each identified prospective Fellow is then asked to attend one board meeting so that she or he might determine if the program is of interest.

**TRAINING.** New Fellows are provided board material packets that include an outline on “50 Ways to Be Involved.” These materials serve as a starting point for a discussion as to how each Fellow can best integrate into the organization.

**TIME COMMITMENT.** One year.

**RESPONSIBILITIES.** No mandatory committee assignments or work is required of the Fellows so that the experience may not become over-burdensome or discouraging for young participants. Fellows are nonvoting members.

While the board has a “give or get” policy, it intentionally does not specify a specific dollar minimum that Fellows are obliged to raise. However, the board chair and executive director do sit down with new board members and set an amount to raise that is reasonable (and, to use their language, “personally significant” to each individual).

## ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT

**Administration/Funding.** There is no direct extra expense associated with implementing the program. While it does require additional staff oversight time, the organization considers that the benefits outweigh the costs.

### KEY ADVICE

- Although there are direct immediate benefits to the Fellows’ participation, be aware that the core of the program is a “nurturing for the future” and part of a wider investment in the community.
- It is extremely important to inspire young people as they begin a board involvement.

## TAHOE ARTS PROJECT



<i>Organization Profile</i>	
TYPE:	PRESENTER/ARTS EDUCATION
BUDGET:	\$250,000
TOTAL EMPLOYEES:	3 OR LESS
YOUTH EMPLOYEES	
FULL-TIME:	0
PART-TIME:	0
INTERNSHIP PROGRAM:	NONE

### HIGH SCHOOL BOARD REPRESENTATIVES

**DESCRIPTION.** Two high school representatives sit for one-year terms on the Tahoe Arts Project’s board of directors. The full board ranges between twelve and twenty members—currently fourteen—plus the student representatives.

**HISTORY.** The organization began recruiting young people to sit on its Programming Committee as a natural extension of its role as a presenter to schools. By involving the audience it serves, the group found it could maximize the appeal of its programming offerings and gain input on its artist roster decisions. Three years ago, it expanded this youth recruitment program to include board members.

## PARTICIPANTS

**SELECTION/RECRUITMENT.** In conjunction with the principals of the two participating high schools, the group’s executive director conducts the initial selection of candidates. Criteria for selection, which is an informal process, include knowledge of the program, desire to participate, and capacity to effectively represent the organization to the student body of the school. Because the organization has a long historical relationship with the schools and an executive director who has been in office over a decade—and because it operates in a relatively small community—the schools, students, and community at large have a widespread awareness of what it does.

**TRAINING.** New participants in the program attend an orientation meeting.

**TIME COMMITMENT.** One year.

**RESPONSIBILITIES.** Participants are nonvoting members of the board, sit on the Programming Committee (which includes middle school members as well), and attend monthly board meetings. In a sense, the young board participants are expected to act as liaisons between the school and the organization.

**BENEFITS.** A bonus benefit to potential student representatives is the fact that participation looks good on their college applications.

#### KEY ADVICE

- Be sure to recruit young board members who can communicate well with their peers.

## FINANCIAL SUPPORT PROGRAMS

Our survey did not identify a single specific, ongoing program to solicit financial support from young people as a distinct subgroup of potential donors.

## ADVOCACY PROGRAMS

Advocacy remains the province of regional or statewide coalitions of arts organizations banded together specifically for that purpose. Yet there appears to be virtually no sustained, identifiable effort by these coalitions, or by individual organizations, to recruit young people as advocates for the arts. Service provider groups may provide technical assistance to some local or regional advocacy forums, but the Carlsbad effort described below was the only one cited by survey respondents.

## CITY OF CARLSBAD/OFFICE OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS

	<i>Organization Profile</i>	
	TYPE:	MUNICIPAL ARTS AGENCY
	BUDGET RANGE:	\$500,000–\$1 MILLION
	TOTAL EMPLOYEES:	10–20
	YOUTH EMPLOYEES	
	FULL-TIME:	0
	PART-TIME:	3
	INTERNSHIP PROGRAM:	YES
	NUMBER OF INTERNS:	1 PER YEAR
	PROGRAM STATUS:	YEAR ROUND

## ARTS-IN-EDUCATION COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

**DESCRIPTION.** Though not technically a youth program, the Arts-in-Education Community Advisory Committee functions as an information clearinghouse and advocacy support group for including the arts in K—12 Carlsbad schools.

**HISTORY.** Using an initial grant from the California Arts Council, the City of Carlsbad Office of Cultural Affairs created this committee to organize community support for arts education.

## **PARTICIPANTS**

**SELECTION/RECRUITMENT.** The committee has an open membership and is composed of school administrators, PTA members, teachers, arts organization representatives, and parents. Many of the teacher and parent members fall within our definition of young people. Direct recruitment of students and other young people to serve on the committee is in the planning stages. Average membership numbers approximately thirty-five.

**TIME COMMITMENT.** Four meetings per year.

**RESPONSIBILITIES.** In addition to its lobbying efforts, the committee holds fundraisers and other events to draw attention to issues related to arts education in Carlsbad schools. Events include Family Art Nights and Open Houses tailored to each school.

## **ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT**

**ADMINISTRATION/RESOURCES.** The city's Office of Cultural Affairs acts as a resource, providing news about developments in the area and information about arts activity at each individual school. It also

- brokers introductions and meetings between committee members and other segments of the community, including specific arts organizations;
- markets and advertises the committee meetings, agendas, and issues to the wider community;
- supports the committee's efforts to celebrate Arts Education Month each year in March;
- publishes a quarterly newsletter, Arts Brag, for schools, teachers, libraries, and city officials using content provided, in part, by the Advisory Committee.

## **KEY ADVICE**

- Arts education can be a hard sell to school districts facing budget cuts. Advisory committees like this one can provide a useful venue for discussing what is, and can be, possible.
- With this kind of advisory committee, a municipal agency like the Office of Cultural Affairs can leave the "touchy" work of arts education advocacy to citizen activists.

## AUDIENCE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

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Efforts to expand the youth segment of audiences are increasing in number and in success. Available funding and resources largely determine whether performance-based arts organizations can include audience expansion initiatives in their marketing strategies. A vast majority of the respondents to our survey indicated they would expand such efforts if they had the means to do so.

Audience expansion programs targeting young people typically combine three to four elements:

- Discount or free tickets to young people
- Special “family” or “youth” performances and events
- Exposure and instruction via master classes, workshops, behind-the-scenes looks, and, in some cases, an auxiliary company such as Youth Orchestras
- School outreach programs, including classes, assemblies, and auditions

The most successful programs combine elements of these four approaches as part of a master strategy to attract young people.

Increasingly, performance organizations are expanding the venues through which they market their efforts to young audiences, including the use of Web sites such as MyPlace.com and Artsopolis.

## CYPRESS PERFORMING ARTS ASSOCIATION

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	<i>Organization Profile</i>	
	TYPE:	PRESENTING ORGANIZATION
	BUDGET RANGE:	\$250,000–\$500,000
	TOTAL EMPLOYEES:	3–10
	YOUTH EMPLOYEES	
	FULL-TIME:	1
	PART-TIME:	0
	INTERNSHIP PROGRAM:	YES
	NUMBER OF INTERNS:	3 PER YEAR
	PROGRAM STATUS:	YEAR-ROUND

The Cypress Performing Arts Association (CPAA) mounts programs designed specifically to increase the number of young audience members. Instead of offering young people a one-time exposure to its work, the organization strives to make a lasting impact.

## CALL AND RESPONSE

A piece written by a young American composer is combined with two older works in the standard chamber music repertoire, and the resulting three-piece program is presented at community centers and elementary, middle, and high schools throughout the Bay Area. Teachers and community center leaders receive lesson plans with listening examples prior to CPAA’s visit in order to prepare students. All participating students receive free scholarship tickets to the world premiere concert at San Francisco’s Yerba Buena Center for the Arts.

## ADOPT-A-SCHOOL

Each year, CPAA selects five Bay Area schools and supports their overworked and understaffed music departments. By supplying four classroom visits per year, invitations to special events, and chartered bus transportation, CPAA has generated a heightened interest in, and dedication to, music and the music profession, as demonstrated by concert attendance and conversations with both students and orchestra directors.

## STRING DAY

This one-day intensive workshop is designed to bring young Bay Area chamber musicians together. After being selected through a rigorous application process, young musicians are placed into chamber music groups and rehearse throughout the day. Coaching by the Cypress String Quartet, a master class, a sight-reading session, and a final concert round out the day. Close interaction with quartet members has proved to be a successful way to connect young people with CPAA and inspire them to return to its concerts long after String Day has passed.

## MUSIC & CONVERSATION

This series brings young world-class artists, such as the Cypress String Quartet, to San Jose State University students. In a relaxed concert environment, artists speak directly to the audience about their work and the process of creativity. The audience is also invited to ask questions and participate in a free interchange of ideas.

### KEY ADVICE

- Of all the CPAA audience development programs, direct interaction between young musicians and Cypress String Quartet members has the greatest impact on concert attendance. By establishing a level of trust, professional musicians generate a personal commitment to and from young musicians, who then continue to stay involved with the organization.
- Communication is the biggest obstacle when dealing with young musicians. It is important to update them with information; however, because they are so mobile and largely unavailable during business hours, you must often depend on them to stay in touch with your organization.
- Poll young musicians directly about what they'd like to see offered or in which programs they would be inclined to participate.

## WILL & COMPANY



### *Organization Profile*

CATEGORY:	PERFORMANCE ORGANIZATION/THEATER
BUDGET:	\$500,000–\$1 MILLION
TOTAL EMPLOYEES:	3–10
YOUTH EMPLOYEES	
FULL-TIME:	3
PART-TIME:	5
INTERNSHIP PROGRAM:	YES
NUMBER OF INTERNS:	3 PER YEAR
PROGRAM STATUS:	YEARROUND

## BRING STUDENTS TO THE THEATRE

**DESCRIPTION.** This multipart program is based on a partnership with two Los Angeles high schools to produce onstage performances (two programs last year). The Residency component lasts between four and twelve weeks, depending on the company's and the school's schedules, and involves classes taught by the company's actors and production team. The participating high school's teachers are involved in curriculum development. From the total pool of students in the Residency classes, twenty participate onstage in the actual production.

The second component of the program involves bussing students from as far as two hours away to see performances of literature-based plays during a two-week run at the Los Angeles Theatre.

**HISTORY.** Will & Company is part of the Arts Community Partnership Network, a program operated and funded by the Los Angeles Unified School District. This program offers a roster of artists to the district's 700 schools and provides each school with an annual fund to cover costs of art offerings made available by participating arts organizations.

## **PARTICIPANTS**

**RECRUITMENT/SELECTION.** Criteria for determining partner schools are not formalized, but include scheduling considerations, school interest, and teacher involvement.

## **ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT**

**RESOURCES.** Audiences are provided study guides and workshops in conjunction with performances, including multicultural materials.

## KEY ADVICE

- Secure contacts at participating schools who can assist in managing this type of program.
- Set aside ample time for planning and implementation.
- Programming in the spring works better for schools than in the fall because funding allocations are still being sorted out early in the school year.
- Be flexible and easy to work with when partnering with a school.

## MARIN SYMPHONY

	<i>Organization Profile</i>	
	CATEGORY:	PERFORMANCE ORGANIZATION/MUSIC
	BUDGET:	\$1 MILLION-\$3 MILLION
	TOTAL EMPLOYEES:	3-10
	YOUTH EMPLOYEES	
	FULL-TIME:	0
	PART-TIME:	1
	INTERNSHIP PROGRAM:	YES
	NUMBER OF INTERNS:	3 PER YEAR
	PROGRAM STATUS:	YEAR-ROUND

## YOUTH AUDIENCE DEVELOPMENT

**DESCRIPTION.** The Marin Symphony's efforts to expand young audiences include:

- Half-price student tickets
- An annual "Family Concert" sponsored by a local classical music radio station
- "Sit-In Concerts" in the local schools, where audience members sit next to Youth Symphony musicians
- "Try the Instruments" programs following the concerts described above
- Master classes taught by visiting composers

**HISTORY.** The organization's previous school outreach performance efforts were eliminated due to state budget cuts. Unfortunately, the extremely high costs of living in Marin (especially housing costs) have forced many families with young children to leave the county, reducing the pool of young people from which to draw audiences.

## PARTICIPANTS

**RECRUITMENT.** The symphony sends local colleges season subscription offers and publicity materials targeted to young people, and it books Youth Symphony performances at venues convenient and familiar to its target audience (for example, malls). Concert production apprentices are recruited from local high schools and the Youth Symphony as part of the organization’s internship program.

## KEY ADVICE

- When possible, cultivate the concept of “family attendance” at concerts. Growth in this area supports greater participation in youth programs, such as the Youth Symphony; helps develop corporate support and interest; and raises community awareness of your organization.

## CABRILLO FESTIVAL OF CONTEMPORARY MUSIC

<i>Organization Profile</i>	
CATEGORY:	PERFORMANCE ORGANIZATION/FESTIVAL
BUDGET:	\$500,000–\$1 MILLION
TOTAL EMPLOYEES:	3–10
YOUTH EMPLOYEES	
FULL-TIME:	0
PART-TIME:	1
INTERNSHIP PROGRAM:	YES
NUMBER OF INTERNS:	3 PER YEAR
PROGRAM STATUS:	YEAR-ROUND

## FREE FAMILY CONCERTS

**DESCRIPTION.** This concert series gives children their first exposure to symphonic music and to its composers. The program starts with a “petting-zoo” tour of the orchestra, during which the entire audience is led in small groups through the orchestra sections. After everyone has met the musicians and their instruments up close, the Festival Orchestra performs a special program of new music for young audiences. Because the concert is free, every member of the community has access, regardless of economic means.

**HISTORY.** Launched in 1993, this series has become a favorite of families with young children. For example, in 2005, composer Libby Larsen performed as narrator in her special work for young audiences, “All Around Sound.” Composed in 1999, “All Around Sound” is a five-part piece for orchestra, recorded sound, and actor, and the performance encourages listeners both to experience the poetry of music and to investigate the science of how a common sound becomes an artistic sound.

## KEY ADVICE

- A program of this kind is expensive. (The Cabrillo organization was not able to fully fund its free concert series for the first five years.)
- Free admission does not guarantee that people will come.
- Make the program for children. Let go of the standard trappings of presenting symphonic music, and make the concert hall kid-friendly.

## 6. ANALYSIS

On the positive side, our research confirms that nonprofit arts organizations already have many established points of intersection with young people, particularly

- a longstanding presence in schools and in communities,
- vital internship programs, and
- ongoing young audience initiatives.

Many of these efforts to connect with youth have been piecemeal to date, evolving without intentional design. Yet they point to new areas of opportunity, which should yield more young contributors to nonprofit arts organizations—if they employ more sophisticated recruitment strategies.

For example, established connections with high schools remain underexploited, and strong links to college campuses—a major source of volunteers for the environmental movement, as shown in Chapter 4—have yet to be forged. We urge nonprofit arts organizations to take greater advantage of their existing bridges to wider young markets:

- Adapt current Web sites to communicate more clearly and engagingly with young people
- Tap younger artists involved in their organizations to act as recruiters and contact points
- Capitalize on the arts' intrinsically attractive and engaging product to appeal to youth

On the negative side, several factors work against the development of robust youth recruitment programs, primarily the lack of staff time, money, and high-level organizational commitment. Many groups are admittedly unable to offer competitive compensation packages to entry-level candidates. To offset these deficits, nonprofit arts organizations should consider how to package their involvement opportunities more attractively:

- Delegate more autonomy and decision-making authority to young employees and volunteers in order to increase their interest and commitment
- Allow young workers more opportunities to hone their analytical skills—assignments that both appeal to youth and groom them for future leadership
- Emphasize to entry-level prospects the non-monetary, but significant, benefits of the working environment in arts organizations and the valuable nature of the work itself

Granted, small-budget arts organizations are the least likely to have the resources to maintain exemplary youth involvement programs or to offer competitive pay packages yet they are arguably the ones that need the most outreach success if they are to attract new leaders and supporters.

## GOVERNANCE

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In individual arts organizations and the field as a whole, the foundation for launching efforts to identify, recruit, and retain young people to serve as staff and board members is largely already in place: outreach programs, internships, and volunteer and mentoring programs.

Some 44% of our survey respondents had post-college-age young people in non-executive (primarily production and clerical) full- and part-time positions. The percentage of organizations with college-age people in full- or part-time staff positions dropped to 12%, and the percentage of high school employees was negligible. Part-time employment of these latter two age groups was frequently seasonal.

Therefore, while the total number of young people currently employed as staff remains relatively low and is inconsistent across the field, there is indication that greater effort aimed at recruiting young people for entry-level positions would succeed in swelling those numbers measurably, and that such efforts would be neither prohibitively time consuming nor expensive. Low pay may, however, continue to negatively impact retention of those new hires over time (as it continues to make recruitment of middle- and senior-level managers difficult).

Sixty percent of respondent organizations had internship programs for young people, where they were heavily concentrated in the production area. Two-thirds of these programs were seasonal and directly related to performances and exhibitions; they also varied widely in the level of sophistication. We found little evidence that organizations made any definable or quantifiable attempt to encourage interns' transition into areas of greater involvement, for example, as board members, advocates, or financial supporters.

Young people were actively recruited as volunteers, with 39% of respondents declaring they had a program to do so. However, the vast majority of this recruiting effort was made to support the areas of production (e.g., seeking young people as stagehands, ushers, or docents) and event planning (e.g., seeking workers for an organization's annual major fundraising event). A high proportion of young volunteers made only a seasonal commitment.

Therefore, we found that although internship and volunteer programs are widespread, they too often remain stopgap measures. These programs are not regarded as important tools in an arts organization's overall strategy to expand young people's involvement beyond the staging of a specific production or supporting a particular event. Too often the experience is unsatisfactory for both the organization and the intern or volunteer, and thus an opportunity is squandered.

Efforts to recruit young people to sit on boards of directors were relatively minor, with 15% of the responding organizations having at least one post-college-age board member. Only 7% of the respondents had a college- or high school—age person on their boards. Even this minor inroad was not by design, as only one-third of the organizations with younger board members had ongoing programs to generate that participation.

These findings confirmed that the involvement of young people on arts organizations' boards of directors has been neglected far too long. Similarly, we found negligible effort to involve youth in standing or advisory committees. This failure to include young people in the decision-making process sends the wrong message to the very group that the field wants to cultivate. It also hinders wider and deeper knowledge of, and appreciation for, the arts within that group, and has the unintended consequence of mystifying arts administration and governance as a career path.

Most importantly, it denies the nonprofit arts sector a much-needed perspective and influx of new energy and ideas. While it may be difficult for organizations to expand their boards with people who bring money, skills, networks, or other assets with them, it may be axiomatically easier to attract young people. Recruiting young people to governing boards should receive the same priority as recruiting members from diverse racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds—and those efforts should be developed and implemented immediately.

We may find that groups with a specific racial/ethnic base of support or constituency show a greater cultural openness to sharing decision-making with young people and elevating them to positions of governance—thus helping the current arts sector change its leadership culture.

## MEMBERSHIP AND FINANCIAL SUPPORT

Only 4% of our survey respondents had a self-defined, identifiable program that specifically targeted young people as potential financial donors. The few such programs being tried have yet to produce any meaningful income (when calculated as a percentage of the total income raised by the organization from all individual donors). Only 12% of organizations courted young people as a separate membership class, but there was no evidence that their status as members was part of a strategy to motivate them as financial supporters.

The reasoning behind this lack was not a subject of inquiry of this project. We note though that increasingly today, young people do have discretionary income and can afford philanthropic donations, particularly donations under fifty dollars. Gifts of this size may or may not be considered large expenditures by the average young person today, they certainly would be considered meaningful by all but the largest cultural institutions.

The nonprofit arts field might consider pilot programs to see if younger markets might not be successfully solicited as financial donors on a rate of return that justifies the time and expense.

## ADVOCACY

The nonprofit arts sector has thus far failed to capitalize on a potentially powerful tool in its attempt to make a case for its value and to attract increased public support. Less than 3% of our survey respondents had a program to actively recruit, train, and deploy young people to act as advocates for either their organization or the arts in general.

In stark contrast to the environmental sector, there is virtually no strategy in the arts to involve young people as activist advocates or to use their involvement as advocates to transition them to other subsequent organizational roles. For whatever reasons (lack of funds, time, and other resources; a legacy of advocacy being outside the job description of their leaders; or disinterest), arts organizations do not seem to integrate the advocacy function as one of their core activities. Thus, unfortunately, they are not using this conduit to recruit young people.

## AUDIENCE DEVELOPMENT

Almost one in five organizations we surveyed (19%) had an identifiable program to recruit younger audience members, efforts that were overwhelmingly limited to four strategies: discount ticketing, family days, school outreach efforts, and young adult “value-added” programs.

Overall, we found that most organizational efforts at audience development do not specifically break out young people as an identifiable and distinct target market. While scarce time and financial resources are major factors in determining whether organizations embark on specific strategies to attract younger audiences, the making of a commitment to address the issue seems an equally important consideration.

Groundbreaking programs in this area show a great deal of creativity and strongly indicate probable success for any organization making a similar attempt. Maximizing the value of expanded youth audiences, and sustaining them over time, will doubtless require greater planning and management, including the introduction of tools such as tracking and polling, currently unaffordable to most of the field.

## ARTIST SUPPORT

Arts organizations, both visual and performance based, proved most sophisticated in their efforts to provide access, means, and support to new artists. Nearly 80% of the performance-/exhibition-based arts organizations that responded to our survey provided meaningful services and instruction to emerging art-

ists, especially dancers and musicians. Programs ranged from mere exposure to the art form to opportunities for performance or exhibition to highly rigorous professional training.

Granted, there is a greater history of arts organizations reaching out to young people as emerging artists than for any other type of contributor. Time and money appear to be the primary barriers to further expansion of such efforts. A less apparent, but major, inhibiting factor continues to be the lack of arts education in schools.

When children experience sequential, curriculum-based arts education from kindergarten through twelfth grade, attracting them to support all areas of arts and culture is ultimately a much easier task. As this type of education is introduced in California schools, it is arguable that students will show even greater interest in artistic expression, which may eventually result in increased support for emerging young artists as well as efforts to involve them in broader aspects of the arts.

### RACIAL/ETHNIC DIVERSITY

In all of the above areas, whenever survey respondents reported an identifiable program to involve young people, they also made a conscious effort to recruit participants from all of California's diverse racial and ethnic populations. Moreover, those efforts proved to be relatively successful—an encouraging sign for developers of new programs.

### FUNDING

Only in the area of artist support are arts organizations yet making any significant financial investment in expanding the involvement of young people. The average budget expenditure is somewhat skewed by the sizable expenditures of the largest urban cultural performance institutions (primarily symphonies and opera and ballet companies).

### STAFF OVERSIGHT

Only in the largest, longest-running, and most ambitious youth programs was staff oversight greater than ten hours per month, clearly indicating that organizational commitment is not significant.

## 7. YOUTH PROGRAMS IN THE NONPROFIT ENVIRONMENTAL SECTOR

Although the nonprofit world is diverse and large, organizations within it face many of the same issues concerning governance, fundraising, structure, and generational succession. To enlighten the experience of the arts field—and to look for beneficial lessons and models—we chose to examine youth programs in nonprofit environmental groups, which have had high-profile successes involving young people.

The very different approaches to youth involvement in these two sectors can be largely explained by the difference in their missions. Because the mandate of environmental groups is the protection of the environment and its ecosystems, most organizational activity entails advocacy, education, and lobbying—directed at both government and business. A subset of the larger sphere of social justice nonprofit organizations, these grassroots groups depend to a great extent on young staff and volunteers to carry their messages and put pressure on decision-makers. Thus they have created a more sophisticated infrastructure to recruit young people to be part of the apparatus that serves their mission. Capitalizing on the inherent idealism and passion of youth, they have tapped into those twin characteristics to a greater extent than have the arts.

The mission of the nonprofit arts sector, on the other hand, concerns the delivery of a product: art, both tangible and performancebased. In a wider sense, the field is also involved in the process of creating the product, that is, in creativity itself; in widening access to the arts; in providing services to artists; and in promoting the value arts and culture bring to society. So, while the nonprofit arts sector needs to exert influence on public opinion, its primary concern is to secure funding rather than to promote some government or corporate action.

This fundamental difference between the arts and environmental sectors—one generating a “product” and the other promoting grassroots activism—makes comparison somewhat difficult. However, there are enough similarities for the arts sector to learn from the environmental movement’s example. The environmental field is admittedly far ahead in involving young people as advocates and lobbyists and arguably more successful at recruiting and training volunteers. Yet both sectors still grapple with issues of generational succession in terms of leadership and governance; both have yet to seriously look to younger people as sources of donated funding; and both are still experimenting with how to compete for young employees in an ever more competitive marketplace.

Our study therefore examined three areas of mutual concern in order to identify best practices:

- Marketing: How do environmental organizations target young people and market to them?
- Program structure: How do they structure programs to involve young people?
- Sustainability: How do they maintain youth involvement over time?

### COMPARATIVE SURVEY

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We researched ten organizations in the environmental field, then conducted telephone interviews with leaders from five. Young people’s strong interest in environmental issues and their willingness to be recruited to the cause apparently stem from several broad factors.

**SENSE OF URGENCY.** Environmental organizations have successfully stirred an immediate call to action through extensive media coverage and urgent messages targeted to university campuses, to citizens with high levels of education and wealth, and to regions of the U.S. with a strong history of social action.

**IDEALISM ABOUT SOCIAL JUSTICE ISSUES.** Young people are arguably more idealistic and passionate about social justice issues and committed to their solutions than are their elders. The environmental movement has been largely successful in tapping into this youthful mindset and commitment. Inherent in being involved with these organizations is the belief that the actions of a single individual can make a difference; the promise of being part of something bigger than oneself and effecting positive change is highly attractive to young people.

**PEER PRESSURE.** Peer pressure has also likely made environmental protection one of the young generation's most sacrosanct values.

**GLOBAL APPEAL.** Environmental issues also have the advantage of being relevant to people across all lines of geography, gender, age, income, education, race, ethnicity, religion, nationality, and politics.

A formal survey of young people to determine what induced them to become involved with environmental organizations, what benefits they derived, and why they chose this form of activism over any other would be valuable, but was beyond the scope of this study.

## MARKETING AND RECRUITMENT

Two common characteristics run across environmental organizations' marketing efforts aimed at youth:

- a major focus on, and recruitment at, high schools and colleges, and
- extensive use of the Internet as the primary means of communication and transmission of information.

While nonprofit arts groups make similar efforts, they are dwarfed in depth and scope by the work of environmental organizations, particularly in their sophisticated use of the Internet. A hallmark of their approach is accessibility, that is, making it as easy as possible for potential young participants to join up. Web sites are simple to access, easy to navigate, and comprehensive in the information provided. Campus visits, a decentralized decision-making model, and social events are all designed to give potential young recruits a reason to say yes to involvement.

## PROGRAM STRUCTURE

Youth are offered real leadership roles and delegated meaningful decision-making power at the outset of their recruitment. Equipped with substantial background information, resources, and training, young people quickly feel able to do what is asked of them.

They are also offered a variety of ways to interact with their peers at the local level, including outings and other social events. The environmental field seems to appreciate that youths respond to social situations that allow them to interact with their peers as part of a larger enterprise. Organizations are also highly conscious that young people must both perceive and experience their involvement as enjoyable—even fun. Activities are age appropriate and always involve the target market itself in planning.

## SUSTAINABILITY

Moreover, most environmental organizations seem to appreciate the importance of having meaningful victories that will motivate and inspire young people to continue their involvement. This field also appears to

have taken to heart the notion that to retain young people, young people themselves must control much of their involvement. Decisions must not be made for young people, but must be made by them.

## **BENEFITS**

In addition to enjoyable networking with their peers, young volunteers and staff gain two significant benefits from their involvement in environmental organizations: empowerment and respect. By delegating authority and decentralizing decision-making, these youth programs confirm respect for the abilities, critical thinking skills, intelligence, and dedication of their young recruits.

To explore these findings further, we took an in-depth look at two organizations that represent the sector's approaches to involve young people: the Sierra Club and the Rainforest Action Network.

## CASE STUDY: SIERRA CLUB

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The Sierra Club is one of the oldest and largest of all environmental organizations (over 700,000 members). It also has one of the longest-running, most comprehensive, and most ambitious efforts to involve young people as part of its operation. Established in 1896, the organization was widely regarded as old guard in 1996 when it garnered major media attention and raised its profile by appointing then-23-year-old Adam Werbach as its president. This single act helped the organization position itself as attractive and relevant to young people and heralded the beginning of its substantive youth outreach efforts.

Today the Sierra Club is a model of youth outreach. Its Sierra Student Coalition (SSC), the centerpiece of its youth involvement program founded by Werbach in 1991, describes itself as “a broad network of high school and college students [with 250 affiliated groups] from around the country working to protect the environment. The SSC is run by volunteers who work on national and local campaigns that promote smart energy solutions and protect the environment.” Its official mission statement is “to empower youth to organize effective, tangible victories and develop the future leaders of the environmental movement.”

### NATIONAL STRUCTURE

The SSC is the student wing of the Sierra Club, but is largely self-governing, with a seven-member volunteer Executive Committee charged with setting national campaign priorities, allocating the annual budget, prioritizing national campaigns, and serving the volunteer membership and chapter structure of the organization. Executive Committee members are elected annually by the SSC membership, and all are high school or college students. There is a small full-time staff based in Washington, D.C., to coordinate operations, but subcommittees handle the major operational functions described below.

**THE CONSERVATION COMMITTEE** is responsible for planning and developing national campaign priorities and for developing relevant campaign resources in coordination with SSC staff. Each campaign has a national strategy, but is designed to be run on college campuses or in local communities with national support.

**THE TRAININGS COMMITTEE** provides the means to impart the skills needed by the organization’s activists (all volunteers and members are called “activists”). Six to eight major workshops are scheduled during the school year, and another five to seven during the summer.

**THE ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE** is responsible for assuring that the SSC is upholding its commitment to the club’s Principles of Environmental Justice. Its members work with the Trainings Committee to incorporate EJ education into SSC training sessions and with the Conservation Committee to assure that EJ is incorporated into all campaigns.

Two support departments complete the structure. The Outings Department organizes regional trips into the wilderness—designed to inspire and engage local SSC members. The Communications Department maintains the Web site, publishes a monthly email newsletter, assists with media relations, and does graphic design work.

## CHAPTER STRUCTURE

The lifeblood of the SSC is the nationwide network of Campus and Community Organizers.

**CAMPUS ORGANIZERS** work on local high school and college campus campaigns that support the SSC's national- and state-level priorities. This is an entry-level position in the SSC, and no prior experience is necessary.

**COMMUNITY ORGANIZERS** facilitate coalitions of existing campus- and community-based groups to jointly pursue local campaigns consistent with the SSC's national issues. A community organizer position becomes available only once there are at least two functioning and registered SSC campus groups within a community to organize and coordinate.

**A CHAPTER ORGANIZING TEAM** (the equivalent of the national Executive Committee) is formed when there are multiple campus groups or community campaigns that have a compelling reason to work together on a common statewide campaign. The team is charged with mentoring Campus Organizers by planning state trainings or conferences and assisting in implementing national- or state-level SSC campaigns in their community. A Chapter Organizing Team consists of up to seven Community Organizers representing and overseeing the state campaign efforts.

**A CHAPTER ORGANIZING CHAIR** is elected by the Chapter Organizing Team to serve as its representative to the SSC national organization and to coordinate state-level organizing efforts. In lieu of a Chapter Chair, a Community Organizer may serve as the representative to SSC National. A chair position will become available only when there are at least two community organizers in a state and six active campus groups that want coordination.

## CASE STUDY: RAINFOREST ACTION NETWORK

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The Rainforest Action Network (RAN), founded in 1985, is more typical of a pure grassroots, political action organization, and its youth outreach efforts mirror that orientation. A mid-sized organization with an annual budget in the \$4 million range, RAN describes itself as “made up of 36 staff members in San Francisco, California, and in Tokyo, Japan, plus thousands of volunteer scientists, teachers, parents, students, and other concerned citizens around the world, who believe that a sustainable world can be created in our lifetime, and that aggressive action must be taken immediately to leave a safe and secure world for our children.”

Its official mission statement is “to campaign for the forests, their inhabitants, and natural systems that sustain life by transforming the global marketplace through education, grassroots organizing, and non-violent direct action.”

Dubbed “the most savvy environmental agitators in the business” by the *Wall Street Journal*, RAN uses hard-hitting marketing campaigns to align the policies of multinational corporations with widespread public support for environmental protection. Its primary efforts put pressure on those multinational corporations to take environmentally sensitive actions.

Because RAN is basically a grassroots advocacy organization, it recruits and involves young people as both staff and volunteer activists. Like many grassroots organizations in the social justice sphere, RAN taps into youth’s idealism and sense of outrage, but is careful to maintain their motivation by realistically setting attainable campaign goals that give its membership victories and a sense of power. It also offers students an opportunity to be part of something bigger than their day-to-day world, a particularly powerful incentive among college-age people. College outreach efforts include over 100 campus visits annually (during which RAN provides trainings) and attendance at over a score of conferences. Another hallmark of this field is that collaboration among groups is the norm.

As is the case with the Sierra Club, RAN uses the Internet heavily in its educational and communications efforts. Even more than the Sierra Club, RAN is involved in providing materials and resources for teachers and students K—12 as part of a comprehensive education component of their overall strategy.

The Rainforests in the Classroom program educates and inspires students to take an active role in protecting the Earth. A network of over 5,000 teachers receives the organization’s monthly newsletter, which provides opportunities for classrooms to get involved and highlights how students and teachers are learning about the environment and helping to make a difference. Poetry, poster and letter drives, and contests are designed to encourage decision-makers to think about how their actions will affect future generations. RAN’s Rainforest Pen Pal program and World Rainforest Week activities offer unique opportunities for communication across continents and are designed to increase awareness of key issues.

Teachers are offered a free Teacher’s Packet, which includes *Rainforests Forever!*, a curriculum supplement for grades 3 to 6 that introduces easy and important ways to save the rainforests. The kit also presents the connections between rainforests and students’ daily lives, as well as lesson plan ideas and various fact sheets. In addition, the organization has a Rainforest Heroes program for children—its future activists—that includes an email newsletter and a Web site that offers actions for students to take, ways to support the organization’s programs, and teacher resources such as lesson plans and ideas.

RAN's dependence on recruiting young people as its activists has made it particularly savvy at building bridges to young markets, effectively communicating with those markets, and allowing its young activists to communicate with each other. The organization uses its Web site to make information about its activities easily accessible, straightforward, and constantly updated with new data. Mentoring, follow-up speakers, and other tools to facilitate student involvement are provided as well.

According to RAN's executive director, Michael Brune, the keys to attracting young people are:

- Giving them meaningful work.
- Providing ways for them to exercise their analytical skills.
- Trying to think like young people. The easiest way to know how they think is to ASK them.

He also cautioned that RAN's success in recruiting and involving young people depends on the organization's commitment of financial resources and its acceptance that there will be little top-down decision-making. He readily admitted the problem of cyclical turnover among young staff and volunteers, a reality that his organization accepts as part of the territory. He also acknowledged that the whole of the environmental movement has yet to fully involve supporters from the full range of racial and ethnic populations in the United States.

## ANALYSIS

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The nonprofit arts sector should take a long, hard look at the success of the environmental movement in recruiting young activist foot soldiers who make its case to government decision-makers, the media, and the general public. There may be value in any approach that encourages young people's involvement in any level of arts organizations, since that exposure may ultimately lead to a greater commitment.

### MARKETING

As a result of their successful recruitment of young volunteers and supporters, environmental organizations have more youths at low- and mid-level staff levels than do arts organizations. Whether because of the input of these staffers or otherwise, these organizations have become fairly adroit at using the Internet and other communication methods with which young people feel comfortable. Moreover, they have turned over some communication functions to younger recruits themselves.

### PROGRAM STRUCTURE

Environmental organizations have crafted programs that allow young people wide latitude in determining how they organize and manage their participation. There is substantial delegation of authority, and potential young participants are offered a broad array of options for becoming informed and involved. These two factors—self-government and the ease of becoming involved and trained—are the hallmarks of much of the movement's success in attracting substantial numbers of young people, and the arts can learn from that approach.

While the environmental sector is somewhat ahead of the arts field in terms of involving young people in governance positions, they are no further along in terms of involving young board members. In fact, environmental groups may actually lag behind the arts in engaging workers and volunteers from a wide range of racial, ethnic, and class backgrounds.

### SUSTAINABILITY

The combination of effective ongoing marketing, delegation of authority, and ease of involvement doubtless helps environmental organizations sustain the participation of the young people they attract. Yet sustainability continues to be a problem even for these groups. In interviews, nearly every leader in the environmental field lamented systemic turnover, and expressed frustration and resignation at this problem.

### BARRIERS

As a whole, the nonprofit arts sector faces formidable barriers to bringing more young people into its sphere, most notably its limited financial resources. Budget constraints and revenue stagnation continue to impede the ability of all organizations to compete for young people's interest and involvement. Given the decline in dedicated public and corporate support for the arts, identifying and securing new sources of income will be difficult. Most likely, existing youth programs will continue to be run on an ad hoc basis with volunteer management, which hampers a professional effort. Time is one of the arts' scarcest resources. Money equals staff which equals time.

However, perhaps the most significant barrier to progress is a lack of awareness and urgency. Leaders across the field must come to a collective recognition that involvement of young people is critical and that every organization must make that involvement a top priority. With a large percentage of organizations involved in a daily struggle to survive, with fundraising demanding more and more executive staff time, it is understandable that the field doesn't have the luxury of dealing with all the long-range issues it ought to address. But there is a growing consensus that the matter of generational succession has been neglected for too long and that systemic efforts to address the problem must begin in earnest.



## 8. CONCLUSIONS

Other than nurturing the next generation of artists, the nonprofit arts sector has done little to capitalize on its present bridges to youth. To date, there is no systemic approach to the challenge of generational succession in the areas of governance, membership, advocacy, or financial support (for details, see “Analysis,” Chapter 6, p. 43).

Individual arts organizations have had isolated successes with youth programs, and there have been some noteworthy national efforts. However, the vast majority of groups have few young people on their boards of directors or staffs, even fewer young activist advocates or financial supporters, and no means of tracking their young audiences.

Other nonprofit fields, for whatever reasons, have made greater progress in capturing the energy and attention of youth. The arts sector has identifiable advantages that may, if they are exploited soon, allow it to catch up, but the window of opportunity may be limited. Under this pressure, it is important to review the lessons learned from pioneering nonprofit arts organizations so far.

### WORKING WITH YOUTH

Respondents in our study generally agreed that successfully recruiting, retaining, mentoring, training, and managing young participants in arts programs requires a specific understanding and appreciation of that age group. They offered the following advice for program designers, leaders, and mentors.

- Be consistent and patient. Establish clearly defined expectations and workplace obligations.
- Listen. Involving young people means accepting their input as meaningful.
- Be encouraging and supportive. Build relationships with the young people you recruit.
- Show genuine respect for the youth contributing to your organization. Young people intuitively know when they are being patronized and marginalized (even if unintentionally)—an instant turn-off.
- Don’t assume traditional means of communication will work. Communicate with young people using their methods and tools.
- Engage parents, if possible and appropriate.
- Involve your community in recruitment efforts.
- Allocate adequate staff for oversight and involvement. Take young people’s academic and personal schedules into account when setting up and managing your program.
- Do not design a youth program to get “cheap help.” This must be a byproduct, not a goal.
- Start small and grow gradually. Budgets must be realistic both in terms of the expenses involved and how those funds will be raised.

### YOUTH PROGRAMS IN NONPROFIT ARTS ORGANIZATIONS

Individual arts organizations committed to involving youth should be aware of the following barriers, best practices, and benefits reported by respondents to our study.

#### BARRIERS

Not surprisingly, when asked to identify one to three problems or barriers they thought significant in designing, implementing, and expanding their youth programs, respondents most often cited a lack of resources. Scarce resources included:

**FUNDING.** Lack of funding was overwhelmingly cited as the biggest problem in launching and maintaining successful youth outreach efforts. Numerous respondents cautioned that youth programs need to be overseen by a full-time staff member hired for that purpose and that adequate funding is critical to a program's success.

**STAFF TIME.** Inadequate staff time was the second most commonly listed barrier. Youth involvement efforts require substantial oversight, yet staff time remains scarce.

**TIME FROM LAUNCH TO RESULT.** Youth programs need to be nurtured and grown over time, and there are no instant results or gratification. Respondents cited the necessity of organizational commitment over the long haul.

## **OTHER BARRIERS AND CONCERNS INCLUDED:**

**EXPERIENCE AND MATURITY OF ENTRY-LEVEL YOUNG PEOPLE.** Several respondents commented on how time consuming the training and monitoring of entry-level young people can be, particularly if it is necessary to instill a work ethic and sense of responsibility.

**RELIABILITY OF YOUNG PEOPLE.** The respondents mentioned above cited numerous instances in which young people did not reliably honor commitments made, do their work professionally, take direction, or show initiative.

**RETENTION.** Systemic turnover of young staff—particularly after the investment of scarce time and other resources—was another oft-cited problem. Many respondents pointed out the difficulty in retaining young people, due largely to their mobility, competing academic and social commitments, and preference for jobs with higher pay.

**SCHEDULING.** Young people were often not reliably available when needed because of academic commitments and other demands on their time. This was particularly true of high school students.

**UNREALISTIC EXPECTATIONS ON THE PART OF YOUNG PEOPLE.** Several respondents noted that young workers often have little understanding and appreciation of what is expected of them, and what they can expect in return. This is particularly detrimental in the nonprofit workplace, where, of necessity, staff members are expected to be highly self-motivated, self disciplined, and able to act on their own initiative.

**LOGISTICS.** Respondents also noted the difficulty of providing adequate workspace, computer access, and other resources to young participants.

**TRAINING.** A number of respondents mentioned their lack of funds and time to provide adequate training to new entry-level workers, and their disincentive to provide extensive training to a group of individuals who are not likely to remain with the organization long enough to amortize the cost and time expended.

Finally, a number of respondents from smaller organizations despaired that although they sought to expand their outreach to young people—and fully appreciated its value and potential benefit—the scramble for funding had them in a survival mode, unable to address this, or other, high-priority issues.

## BEST PRACTICES

Organizations profiled in our project's case studies shared a number of common threads in the strategy, design, and implementation of their successful youth programs. Notably, success was not predicated on the size of the organization, program budget, or any other specific organizational characteristic—suggesting that good outcomes are possible for organizations of all types.

**STRATEGY.** A number of organizations intentionally used their programs as steps in a larger strategy to involve young people, with interns graduating to staff positions, and Fellows moving to full board membership, for example. Several groups internalized modest expectations for their programs at the outset. By not banking on specific outcomes, they allowed their programs to evolve to success.

Many integrated the Internet and word-of-mouth marketing by their young participants in their outreach strategies, relying on participants' positive experiences to recruit new candidates. Consulting with advertising experts—and with youth in the target market—proved very valuable to recruitment efforts.

Finally, a majority of successful programs gave a high priority to offering their young participants concrete benefits. They noted that the greater the perceived benefit to the young person, the greater the actual benefit to the organization.

**DESIGN.** Several organizations built programs on their long standing relationships with their communities and audiences. Personal knowledge of their constituents enabled them to identify and recruit young people more easily and to identify potential candidates who would likely meet the needs of the organization and simultaneously benefit from the experience.

A high percentage of profiled organizations had programs involving a partnership with another sector of the community, for example, schools. Organizations noted, however, that program planners should not assume that local schools will necessarily be willing partners. Finally, successful programs intentionally designed a rewarding, positive experience for young people that would be fun. They advised new program planners to think out of the box in terms of the benefits they could offer to the youth they sought to involve.

**IMPLEMENTATION.** Many successful organizations said flexibility was essential in implementing this type of youth program, particularly in the early launch stages. A majority built their youth programs slowly over time, starting modestly and growing gradually. This required a long-term commitment of time and resources, but paid dividends over time. The recruitment phase was particularly recognized as taking more time than expected.

Organizations also cited the importance and advantage of soliciting input from young people in program decision-making—a best practice emphasized by the environmental sector.

## BENEFITS

Although respondents confirmed that funding and managing a successful youth program can be an ongoing challenge, they universally lauded the benefits to their organizations:

- Expansion of the audience and membership base
- Exposure of the art form to the next generation
- Early cultivation of future supporters, advocates, volunteers, audiences, and leaders
- Increased community support for, and public awareness of, the organization
- Enhanced perception of the organization's value and relevance, not just by young participants, but by all segments of the community

- Inspiration and infusion of fresh energy, ideas, idealism, and enthusiasm
- Satisfaction in building increased confidence, self-esteem, interest, and maturity in young participants
- Validation of young people's sense of involvement
- Improved programs and performances informed by the youth perspective
- Enhanced appeal to funding organizations
- Ease in identifying new leadership candidates and adding young people to staff

## OPPORTUNITIES

Fortunately, there are as many opportunities for involving young people as there are obstacles. According to government census statistics, Arts and Performing Arts is the fourth largest category of college majors, with over one million students identifying this field as their area of study. The arts are an attractive product with a far larger constituent base than the field might realize.

Bridges to young people—the pathways to introductory arts programs—already exist. By allocating more staff oversight time and financial resources, the field should be able to craft more comprehensive, sophisticated, and sustainable programs that extend those initial contacts.

Recruitment of young people as board members promises to enhance the visibility of the arts sector, increase the viability of arts administration as a career path, and enlist those recruits as ambassadors for the field. This should be a relatively easy area in which to make real progress, provided boards place the same high priority on age diversity as on race and gender diversity when recruiting new members. Young people are typically open to the invitation to sit on boards, and the arts sector would greatly benefit from extending that invitation to them.

The arts also can dramatically increase the involvement of young people as volunteers—and then convert those volunteers into more committed long-term contributors. The Los Angeles Opera approach of identifying existing, and helping to create new, clubs in colleges and high schools has great potential for expanding the involvement of young people in arts organizations.

New and more sophisticated marketing techniques aimed at young people can lead to greater audience and volunteer expansion. Existing emerging leadership programs, both national and local, should be widely supported and nurtured in order to expand professional training opportunities in the arts for young people. And continued refinement of internship programs can similarly help solve the arts sector's leadership succession issue.

The nonprofit arts sector has forged solid partnerships with individual schools and school districts by offering for years significant programs to students, and the field can continue to build on this foundation to recruit more young people.

On a national scale, the improving economy may provide a long-awaited opportunity to recover some of the public funding for the arts lost in the first half of this decade.

Finally, there is growing recognition that involving young people in the arts must be a priority for the field, and that sea change in attitude may prove a powerful impetus for action.



## 9. RECOMMENDATIONS

As its first step in developing a comprehensive strategy for generational succession, the nonprofit arts sector must recognize the absolute need to act now. To compete for the next generation's best and brightest, the field needs a consistent, unified, systemic approach. And this requires consensus that recruitment of young people and retention of their involvement is critical to the future of all nonprofit arts organizations.

### FOR THE NONPROFIT ARTS SECTOR

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As a field, the nonprofit arts sector needs to intensify its efforts to

- convince young people of the value of involvement in the arts,
- widen bridges and lines of communication to the next generation, and
- involve young people in areas heretofore outside the scope of their experience, for example, financial support and advocacy.

### OUR SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS

#### **1. LAUNCH A NATIONAL DIALOGUE ABOUT YOUTH INVOLVEMENT IN THE ARTS.**

As soon as possible, leaders in the field should convene forums and discussion groups in major urban and regional centers across the country to address the issue of generational succession and youth involvement. Arts service provider organizations are urged to include such discussions at their national conferences and meetings and appoint task forces to recommend specific, concrete actions tailored to their memberships. As a follow up to this report, researchers nationwide are encouraged to systematically evaluate existing outreach programs, including internship programs, volunteer efforts, and high school and college recruitment efforts.

The sector-wide goal should be to quantifiably expand the involvement of young people in the nonprofit arts by 2010.

**2. DEVELOP A SECTOR-WIDE STRATEGIC PLAN TO: 1) aggressively market the benefits of involvement with the arts to young people, and 2) create a nationwide grassroots corps of young activists and advocates for the arts.** Compared with other social justice, political, and health causes, the arts may be at a comparative disadvantage in the battle for young people's passion, idealism, and even sense of outrage. This may make it harder for the field to recruit new leadership, staff, supporters, and, in the long term, media coverage, corporate support, and public backing. Recruitment of young people to the arts will depend in large part on their perception of the benefits the sector can offer in return. The arts community must identify the specific tangible and intangible benefits it can offer youth and market its strengths in an aggressive way. This effort must be national in scope.

The nonprofit arts sector may be missing an enormous opportunity by failing to recruit, mobilize, and train young people to advocate on its behalf, lobby legislators and other decision-makers, and put pressure on both corporations and the media to support the field. Young people might constitute another arm of the sector in its attempts to make its case—and bring fresh vitality, energy, and passion to the effort. Moreover, this introduction to grassroots advocacy might move young people to greater future involvement in nonprofit arts organizations and set a foundation for future public support. To this end, the arts sector should set a goal of creating a nationwide corps of young grassroots activists and develop and implement a strategic plan to realize that goal.

To make its case to young people, the field needs tools and materials that demonstrate why arts and culture are important to their generation, how the nonprofit arts sector is currently threatened, and what the future might look like without renewed support. Marketing materials, created with input from young people as to form and style, should be created and widely distributed to arts organizations.

**3. ESTABLISH A STRONG PRESENCE ON COLLEGE CAMPUSES.** The various arts disciplines should build on their ties to local high schools and establish some kind of physical presence on college campuses across the country, whether through one-time presentations associated with performances or the establishment of arts chapters. This will be an important step toward educating and informing college students about

- the value of arts and culture to society,
- the need for grassroots activism,
- opportunities for involvement with nonprofit arts organizations, and arts administration as a viable career path.

## **FOR NONPROFIT ARTS ORGANIZATIONS**

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Our research identified three key actions any arts organization must take if it wants to successfully expand the participation of young people in any aspect of its work.

**1. COMMIT FULLY TO THE GOAL OF GREATER YOUTH INVOLVEMENT.** As a whole, an organization must recognize the direct benefits of a youth initiative and enlist support from every segment of its operations. Commitment must be organization-wide—not limited to isolated individuals—and everyone must take responsibility for reaching clearly identified goals, including the board and senior staff.

Budget adequate funds. It must budget for the costs of such effort, make the commitment to expend the requisite funds, and ensure that there is a funding source to cover such costs. The costs and expenses need not be significant or unduly burdensome, but they must be realistic.

Allocate staff oversight time. It must allocate sufficient dedicated (not volunteer) staff oversight time to professionally manage the various aspects of a youth involvement program over the life of the program. Staff oversight time may or may not be a program budget item. It is entirely possible to run effective youth programs without the addition of new staff, but in small organizations committing staff time to one area is usually at the expense of another area. Programs striving to engage young people necessarily take time to grow and develop, and thus the time commitment must be for the long haul.

**2. MOVE QUICKLY TO ADD YOUNG PEOPLE AS BOARD MEMBERS.** Recruiting young people to become board members can be an effective first step in getting them involved in organizational governance, and can lead to their future involvement in other areas.

**3. EXPAND AND STRENGTHEN TIES TO HIGH SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES.** College campuses are potentially fertile recruiting grounds for all youth involvement programs, and existing high school programs should be seen as pathways for stepped-up recruitment efforts.

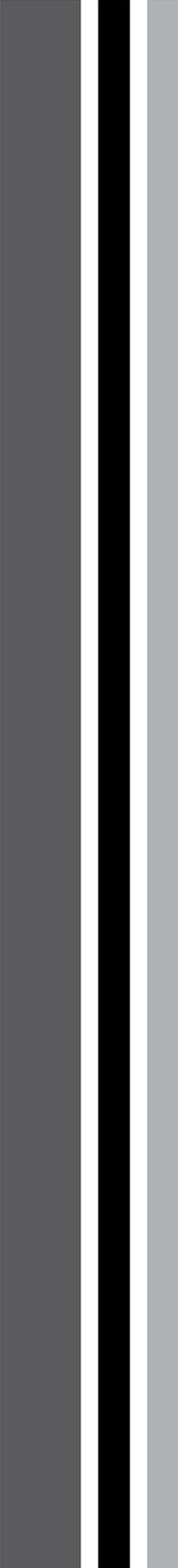
## FOR FUNDERS

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**1. IDENTIFY** ways to help the nonprofit arts field as a whole to address the issue of generational succession.

**2. SUPPORT EXPANDED** research into young people's views, opinions, attitudes, habits, and behavior patterns in relation to the arts. Support for expanded research into young people's views, opinions, attitudes, habits, and behavior patterns in relation to the arts would produce data that will be essential in helping the field decide what strategies to adopt to recruit and retain the talented people who will build its future.

**3. SUPPORT REGIONAL,** state and national convenings of arts leaders to develop strategic approaches to involve quantifiably more young people in the arts by 2010. Opportunities must be created so that all sections of the nonprofit arts sector, including all disciplines, in every territory, can thoroughly discuss and debate the challenges of generational succession, and provide input to arriving at workable ways to address those challenges, and that dialogue must begin immediately.



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