



TOOLKIT



HOW DO YOU BRING THE USDAC TO YOUR COMMUNITY? *START A USDAC OUTPOST!*

People across the U.S. have told us they want easy ways to connect locally through the USDAC for support, sharing, and collaboration. That's why we started USDAC Outposts. An Outpost is a group of four or more individuals committed to enacting USDAC values in their community. Let our team of organizers, policy experts, social media mavens, and culture shift advocates help your Outpost succeed!

Here's how to (1) jumpstart your Outpost; (2) set your own agenda of learning, relationship-building, and taking action through USDAC National Actions and local projects and campaigns; and (3) connect with other Outposts everywhere.

**THIS TOOLKIT WILL GIVE YOU ALL
THE INFORMATION YOU NEED TO GET STARTED.**

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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ARTS AND CULTURE

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Dear Citizen Artist,

Thanks for stepping up to co-create a USDAC Outpost! You're joining thousands of people who understand that cultural democracy needs all our voices and all our creativity—all across the U.S., from the smallest town to the largest city.

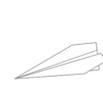
Outposts are the USDAC's newest avenue of engagement. Any four Citizen Artists can fill out a simple **application** to open an Outpost. Once granted a charter, each Outpost will have access to technical assistance and advice from the USDAC Office of Instigation, have access to powerful, user-friendly digital organizing tools, take part in a national network of learning and exchange, and promote its work through the USDAC.

In this Toolkit, you'll find all you need to create a successful USDAC Outpost. Please feel free to contact us with questions. You can always reach us at hello@usdac.us.

Together we create!

The USDAC

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QUICKSTART GUIDE

STEP ONE: JUMPSTART YOUR OUTPOST BY CHOOSING A FIRST PROJECT. On [pages 5 and 6 of this Toolkit](#), you'll find four options for an initial Outpost project to jumpstart your organizing. Each is grounded in concrete aims and a realistic estimate of time and effort needed. Each will enable you to learn more about potential participants and allies and assess community needs and interests as you go. To get your Outpost up and running, just complete one of the listed tasks in your first six months.

STEP TWO: PLAN YOUR FUTURE ACTIVITIES. As your experience with your first project unfolds, map out your next few months of activity. Do you want to launch a learning community, reading and discussing key writings or sharing skills? Are there local issues already engaging artists, creative activists, and allies that you want to support? Are there key times ahead—holidays, USDAC National Actions, other events—you want to take advantage of to build engagement in culture shift? You'll find lots of great activity ideas in the [National Action Toolkits](#) in the Outposts Public Folder and [on pages 10 and 11 of this Toolkit](#).

STEP THREE: ENLIST PARTNERS. Identify the key organizations and individuals you want to involve for maximum impact. Consider how you will do that: invite other groups to cosponsor events? Invite representatives to learning meetings to present and engage in dialogue about their work, exploring possible collaborations? Take part in others' events and build relationships that way? You'll find advice on [page 9 of this Toolkit](#).

STEP FOUR: PROMOTE YOUR EVENTS. Access the [media resources](#) in the Outposts Public Folder for advice on how to plan and execute press and social media outreach.

STEP FIVE: TAKE PART IN THE NATIONAL USDAC OUTPOST NETWORK. All chartered Outposts will receive information on quarterly Outpost video calls, Citizen Artist Salons, and other USDAC learning and networking activities. Any other time you need information or advice, contact us at hello@usdac.us and we'll be glad to help.

TO DOWNLOAD OUTPOST MATERIALS

A range of Outpost materials are available for download from the [Outposts Public Folder](#).

When you go to that link and find something you want to use, download it to your computer. Click on the document you want. If it's a PDF, once you click on the document, on the upper right of your screen, you'll see icons to print or to download. If it's a Word or similar file, once you open it, under the File menu, you'll see "Download as," giving you all available options. Choose the one you want, then download to your computer.



WHAT ARE OUTPOSTS?

A USDAC Outpost is a group of four or more individuals committed to enacting USDAC values in their community. The USDAC is building a nationwide network of Outposts, providing technical assistance and advice in local cultural organizing, connecting Outposts nationally to learn with and from each other, and amplifying local efforts to shift culture toward empathy, equity, and belonging.

The USDAC provides each Outpost:

- This start-up Toolkit with resources, information, and ideas to help you jumpstart an Outpost and set your own agenda of learning, relationship-building, and action.
- A small batch of USDAC swag.
- An official Outpost certificate, suitable for framing.
- Support in taking part in USDAC National Actions such as the People's State of the Union.
- A listing on the USDAC website.
- Support from the USDAC Office of Instigation in formulating your plans.
- Access to Action Network to create your own e-list, send out eblasts, track activists, create petitions, actions/events, forms, fundraisers, and more.
- Fiscal sponsorship in applying for funding for Outpost activities and projects.
- Regular online video calls connecting Outposts with each other and with experienced USDAC organizers.

In return, Outposts:

- Complete a jumpstart project in the Outpost's first six months.
- Take part in USDAC National Actions in ways relevant to local needs and resources.
- Keep the USDAC informed of Outpost activities so we can help promote them.
- Take part in video calls to stay connected with the USDAC network.



*Project Row Houses
Houston, TX*

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JUMPSTART YOUR OUTPOST!

WITHIN THE FIRST SIX MONTHS AFTER RECEIVING A CHARTER, THE MEMBERS OF EVERY OUTPOST COMPLETE AN INITIAL TASK OF THEIR OWN CHOOSING. Each task is made clear and accessible with measurable aims and a realistic estimate of the time and effort needed. Each will enable you to learn more about potential participants and allies and assess community needs and interests as you go. *Just choose one of the following projects.* (If none of the first three tasks seems quite right for your community, please call on us to help you design a first project that does fit.)

- **RECRUIT 10 LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS TO TAKE THE PLEDGE TO #HONORNATIVELAND**, joining hundreds of others who have already acted to acknowledge the Indigenous people who've lived in the area where their events are being held. Or start a petition targeting a local public or private organization, urging commitment to regular acknowledgment. (Read all about this initiative and download the guide [here](#).)

Working with a team of four, you should be able to secure pledges in less than four hours apiece; a petition campaign can succeed with a team of eight investing eight hours each.

- **HOST A STORY CIRCLE EVENT**, and support three other individuals or organizations to do the same. Since 2015, based on the conviction that democracy is a conversation, not a monologue, the USDAC has been inviting people to share their stories and using them to inspire artists and policymakers. Every winter, the USDAC invites everyone to meet in a home, school, house of worship, or other space to share stories of the state of our union. More than 400 Story Circles have been hosted so far! Read all about the People's State of the Union, download the free Toolkit, and sign up to host a PSOTU Story Circle [here](#). If the time isn't right for PSOTU, focus the four Story Circles on another USDAC National Action such as [#RevolutionOfValues](#), or on any issue or opportunity that would benefit from truth-telling and deep listening.

Working with a team of four, planning, promoting, and hosting a Story Circle should require less than six hours apiece; supporting three other Story Circles should add three hours apiece.

- **FORM AN ARTISTIC RESPONSE CIRCLE**, preparing yourselves to offer care and consolation, support creative protest, or help build community resilience in the event of natural or civil disaster. It's about readiness: your circle can research and connect with potential partners in the arts community and among emergency management agencies, create an alert system to mobilize creative response, plan scenarios in the event of a natural disaster or civil emergency, and be ready within six months to respond to whatever may come. The USDAC's *Art Became The Oxygen: An Artistic Response Guide*, offers thorough guidance on models, approaches, values, ethics and much, much more. Download it [here](#). You'll also find an Artistic Response Circle planning guide in the [Outposts Public Folder](#). We'll be happy to help you gather allies and support each other in honing your skills.

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Working with a team of four, you should be able to make a great deal of progress meeting two hours or less every other week.

- **DESIGN YOUR OWN STARTER PROJECT.** If you already have a cultural organizing project in mind, let us help you and your fellow Outpost members find models, allies, and support in the USDAC's national network of 12,000+ Citizen Artists. Or explore **USDAC Toolkits and Guides** for ideas from your own Super PAC to #DareToImagine Imagination Station to HI-LI projects. All you need is a goal and a timeline for achieving your first milestone. Let us help you!

Once your Outpost has chosen and completed your first task, you can take things to the next level.

**ART BECAME THE OXYGEN:
AN ARTISTIC
RESPONSE GUIDE**

ABOVE: MIRROR SHIELDS AT STANDING ROCK
DESIGNED BY CANNUPA HANSKA LUIGER

BY ARLENE GOLDBARD
CHIEF POLICY WORK
WITH AN ESSAY BY AMELIA BROWN
MINISTER OF EMERGENCY ARTS

SUPER P.A.C. TOOLKIT

In the midst of this volatile election cycle, what kinds of participatory projects can activate people, reminding us what democracy actually looks like—both within and beyond electoral politics?

With the airwaves full of polarizing rhetoric, what creative public interventions can disrupt narratives of hate, uplifting love, connection, and equity?

USDAC Super PAC (Participatory Arts Coalition) will spur creative public participation leading up to and during the 2016 presidential election, inviting artists and allies to show the country how democracy is practiced. Anyone can join as an *ExtraSuperDelegate*, creating a *Super Public Act of Compassion* or *Super Participatory Act of Culture* that fosters dialogue and connection, activates civic agency, and encourages full democratic participation.

THIS TOOLKIT WILL GIVE YOU EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO TAKE PART.

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**HONOR NATIVE LAND:
A GUIDE AND CALL TO
ACKNOWLEDGMENT**

Marchers at Standing Rock 2016. Photo by Nicholas Ward

We call on all individuals and organizations to open all public events and gatherings with acknowledgment of the traditional Native inhabitants of the land.

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**#DARETOIMAGINE
TOOLKIT**

Forging the world we want to live in requires social imagination, the capacity to envision alternatives to what is, together making reality. What if instead of another holiday commemorating the past, we took time to envision and celebrate the future?

From October 10-18, 2015, individuals and groups across the U.S. will #DareToImagine our communities 30 years from now. We'll dream together of a more just, sustainable, and vibrant world, and looking back from the future, we'll celebrate the creative work that brought it into being.

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HOLD A FOUNDING MEETING

This annotated agenda for a USDAC Outpost organizing meeting suggests a series of activities to help introduce people to the USDAC and the value of an Outpost, engaging them in co-creating it. Even if you've already applied for and received your Outpost charter, you may need to introduce new people to the concept and help them feel connected. Or you may be further along in your organizing, so not need so much introductory material. Feel free to use what makes sense for your situation and adapt as needed.

When you invite people, be sure to share the basics: a one-page description of the USDAC appears on page 14 below, and on pages 15 and 16, the USDAC's Working Agreements and Statement of Values. Link people to the [Outpost page of the USDAC website](#) so they can read Outpost basics. "Holding Space Principles" in the [Outposts Public Folder](#) will help to ensure a good experience.

AGENDA: A USDAC OUTPOST FOR [YOUR COMMUNITY NAME HERE]

DATE/START & END TIME/LOCATION/RSVP INFORMATION GO HERE; WE'VE USED 7-9 PM.

AS PEOPLE ARRIVE: Invite each participant to invent a unique USDAC title and write it on a name tag along with first and last names. Offer some fun suggestions: the Minister of Public Possibility; Street Art Czar; Secretary of Bedtime Stories....

7:00 PM WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS.

NOTE: We've found it works well to do a round of creative personal introductions, then show a USDAC short video to kick things off. The [2016 People's State of the Union](#) video works well, and find other videos [here](#). Creative introductions could be something like this: share your name, what you do, and the name of a song that says something about where you're coming from right now. Or tell people what your favorite heritage food is, and what you love about it. Keep introductions short by saying each individual has up to one minute (less if there's a big crowd).

7:20 PM OUTPOST INTRODUCTION AND Q&A.

NOTE: Explain why you decided to start a USDAC Outpost and respond to questions about what's involved. Share the suggested jumpstart projects listed on [pages 5 and 6 of this Toolkit](#).

7:35 PM WHAT NEEDS DOING?

NOTE: Focusing on the topics listed below will help you clarify need, purpose, and objectives. If your group isn't too large, we suggest giving people five to 10 minutes to free-write about these questions, then share and discuss them together. If there are more people than would make this manageable, divide into groups of three to six, give time for free-writing and discussing this in small groups, then return to the group of the whole to share and discuss the main points emerging from each group.

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- Why does your community need a USDAC Outpost? What aspects of the USDAC and your community make it seem like a good idea to start an Outpost?
 - Discuss the suggested jumpstart tasks. What is your sense of the most engaging and effective local projects that an Outpost could focus on in your community? What is most needed?
 - Who are your potential allies? Who is already working for cultural democracy locally? What would it take to engage them in a meaningful way?
 - What could each person offer in terms of ideas, energy, skills, connections, etc.?

8:15 PM NEXT STEPS

NOTE: After summarizing and discussing people's responses during the previous agenda section, take stock. What emerged as priorities? If there's one clear priority, you can move to project planning. If you choose one of the three jumpstart projects, the USDAC supplies checklists and other materials to make planning easy.

If you feel something else would be a more effective jumpstart for your Outpost, you'll need to create a plan. Download the [Project Planning Proposal Form](#) in the [Outposts Public Folder](#). Using it as a guide, facilitate a brief discussion of the idea you chose: what are the important questions you need answered? What are the important considerations to keep in mind? After this general discussion, assign at least two people to carry out the research and planning needed to complete the Planning Proposal Form, and to share the results with everyone else by a specified deadline, with discussion to follow at your next meeting.

If there's no clear consensus, have a general discussion of the top two ideas. Ask for working groups of two or more to develop them further for consideration at the next meeting. If people actually volunteer and carry out this important prep work prior to ideas being considered, that will give you a reality-check. If no one volunteers to develop one of the ideas, that means it doesn't have much juice and should be tabled.

8:30 PM NEXT MEETING and TASK REVIEW

Set a date for your next meeting far enough in advance to accomplish the work the group has taken on. Confirm people's tasks and deadlines: who will be on working groups, what are their deadlines, how will they share their work? If people have agreed to perform tasks such as reaching out to potential partners and allies, confirm their responsibilities and deadlines and how they will report back. Make sure everyone knows what they've agreed to do, when, and how.

9:00 PM CLOSING

It's important to end on time. If time is short, use a brief closing such as going around the circle and asking each person to share one word. If you have more time, try a creative closing such as learning and singing a song, or writing a collective poem using the ["Where I'm From" exercise](#), with each person taking one line.



ENGAGE ALLIES AND PARTNERS

LEARN YOUR COMMUNITY

No matter how long you've lived in a community, there's always a lot to learn about who lives there and why, the history that has led to this moment, the resources and obstacles that can help or impede the development of a vibrant, equitable, inclusive local cultural life.

There's a useful compilation created by former USDAC Cultural Agents (it's called "Diverse Participation") including ideas for research and activities along these lines in the [Learning Resources](#) section of the Outpost Public Folder.

START OUT AS YOU MEAN TO GO ON

If you want your Outpost to be truly inclusive and equitable, it's important to reflect those values from the outset. Don't start with a core of people who are similar in age, race, gender, etc., then try to "diversify." Start out as you intend to go on.

At any public event, the people in the room will shape the experience. If you're holding a planning meeting or hosting a public event of any type, carefully consider whom you're hoping to attract. If you want certain voices to be present—young people, for instance, or recent immigrants—try to partner with organizations they trust, taking the time to personally invite them into the space so everyone feels welcome.

Partnering requires listening and sharing: finding out what potential partners care about, what they see as needed and possible in your community, then together imagining ways you could braid those aims and concerns with others that have emerged from prior conversations with different prospective partners. If everyone has a stake in what happens and a shared conviction that all respect, are listening to, and care about each other, your partnership will be much stronger.

TRY TO MAKE EVERY ASPECT WELCOMING

A fundamental USDAC principle is making room for all voices to be heard. If you're planning a public event, be mindful of access. Things to consider include:

- Is the space you've chosen easy to get to? Is there adequate public transit and/or parking?
- Is the space you have lined up wheelchair accessible? Is there an ADA bathroom on the premises?
- Are children welcome at the event? If not, it can be easy and rewarding to coordinate volunteer or rotating child care at or near the event.
- Do you need interpreters for ASL or other languages?
- Is the space you've chosen inviting and easily accessible to members of the community or communities you are hoping to involve? Is there any reason people wouldn't feel welcome there?

The [Event Planning Resources](#) section of the Outposts Public Folder has an Event Checklist that describes everything you need to make people comfortable and welcome.



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OUTPOST ACTIVITIES

WHAT WILL YOUR OUTPOST DO? A MENU OF POSSIBILITIES

PICK A JUMPSTART PROJECT. See [pages 5 and 6 of this Toolkit](#) for four tasks you can take on to jumpstart your Outpost. Each one has a specific goal and requires a modest amount of volunteer time. Every Outpost completes one jumpstart project within its first six months.

BE A LEARNING AND ACTION COMMUNITY. How can people learn together in ways that lead to action?

- **Start a reading and discussion group** around art and social and environmental justice. We're glad to recommend relevant readings to share, discuss, and consider as guides to your work.
- **Invite a USDAC guest speaker** to your community to lead a workshop, teach and lead Story Circles, or offer talks.
- **Create participatory learning experiences.** Especially if people don't have time for an ongoing learning group, start with a one-off workshop, a salon, or a series of evening programs.

THE USDAC AS A CONNECTOR. Use the USDAC to bridge to many sectors and interests in your community.

- **Offer the USDAC's [National Actions](#) as arts-based ways to engage people** from many backgrounds and identities in working on issues of equity,

environment, or other aspects of social justice. For example, people who have not used creative storytelling before are likely to be impressed with the way [People's State of the Union](#) Story Circles build participation and relationship.

- **Integrate a USDAC presence in local festivals and other public events.** If a local festival has devolved into a stroll with snacks, leaving people hungry to create and interact, use that opportunity. Set up a table or booth, offer participatory art experiences, enlist Citizen Artists. Check out the USDAC [HI-LI Database](#) and [National Action Toolkits](#) for ideas!

- **Use USDAC initiatives to bridge institutional boundaries.** Is yours a college community? Is it rare to see campus-community collaboration? Or are there cultural institutions that say they want to serve the whole community, but are widely perceived as belonging to a privileged few? Design a program that invites the larger

community into an institutional setting in new ways. For example, read in [Cultural Agent Betty Yu's blog](#) about the USDAC New York Field Office's daylong event at the Brooklyn Museum, "City of Justice."

- **SHARE YOUR ARTS-BASED SKILLS.** Think of your Outpost as a repository of arts-based skills and approaches.



Standing for Cultural Democracy platform launch at CULTURE/SHIFT 2016, St. Louis, November 2016.

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- **Enliven Planning Efforts.** Are people in your community contemplating new programs or initiatives? Arts-based planning can easily be more exciting and often more effective than the conventional kind. Consult the USDAC for ideas: hello@usdac.us.
- **Sponsor a Design Lab or Hackathon.** Partner with other groups to convene a Design Lab or Hackathon to generate ideas about how to build awareness and action on an issue.
- **Conduct participatory arts action research projects.** Action research is learning by doing. For example, use arts-based methods to elicit opinions and observations about a local issue, documenting via photography or video and text. Then feed the results back to the community through an exhibit, website, or forum.

MOUNT A POLICY INITIATIVE. [Standing for Cultural Democracy: The USDAC's Policy and Action Platform](#) includes 10 powerful, visionary, and practical ideas for new policies needed to nurture cultural democracy.

- **Does your community need a Policy on Belonging?** With immigration status and identity so contested,

people may easily feel unwelcome in their own communities. Public agencies and other institutions may adopt policies or design projects that exacerbate the problem. The USDAC's [Policy on Belonging](#) is a powerful tool that shows exactly how to review public or private actions for their impact on creating a culture of belonging—or its opposite. What impact would it have on your community if an official Policy on Belonging was in place?

- **Have you heard of a Cultural Impact Statement?** For decades, an environmental impact study has been required prior to approving interventions that might affect endangered plants or animals. Right now, there is no comparable standing in law or policy for human community, human cultural fabric. Often decisions are made that displace the residents of longstanding neighborhoods—rezoning, or tearing down a block to build a new stadium—without any consideration of the damage to social fabric. What would it take for your community to pass a [Cultural Impact Study](#) requirement? And how would things be different?



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RESOURCES AND DOWNLOADS

ACTION NETWORK

Outposts get organizer access to Action Network, the same suite of powerful, user-friendly digital organizing tools that we use for our main USDAC organizing (it was created by and for progressive non-profits). Action Network will allow you to create your own e-list, send out eblasts, track activists, create petitions, actions/events, forms, fundraisers, and more. The USDAC's Office of Instigation will offer training for your team to get you started and will provide ongoing technical assistance. Using Action Network will be a key piece in widening your reach and building local momentum.

FISCAL SPONSORSHIP

If you are seeking grants for your Outpost's work and need fiscal sponsorship (a nonprofit umbrella that can submit grant applications), the USDAC can help. Contact us at hello@usdac.us.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE, SUPPORT, AND NETWORKING

The USDAC's Office of Instigation is made up of experienced organizers, policy experts, promotion and social media mavens, all of whom are eager to help your Outpost succeed. You'll have regular access through one-to-one conversations, by email, by taking part in USDAC trainings and Citizen Artist Salons, and by participating in quarterly Outpost video calls.

AVAILABLE DOWNLOADS

The following materials are available for download from the [Outposts Public Folder](#). Check back as we will be adding new resources regularly. Additional resources such as recordings of past Citizen Artist Salons, videos, blog posts about USDAC organizing, the Statement of Values (in English, Spanish, and Chinese), and more can be found at the [USDAC website](#).

When you go to that link and find something you want to use, download it to your computer. Click on the document you want. If it's a PDF, when you click on the document, on the upper right of your screen, you'll see icons to print or to download. If it's a Word or similar file, once you open it, under the File menu, you'll see "Download as," giving you all available options. Choose the one you want, then download to your computer.

ACTION RESOURCES

- National Action Toolkits (folder)
- Intervention Toolkit
- Sample Imagining Flow
- USDAC Planning Proposal Form
- Event Planning Resources (folder)

Media Resources (folder)
Event Checklist
Sample Founding Meeting Agenda
Sign-in Sheet
Story Circle Instructions
USDAC name tags

OUTPOST INFO & GRAPHICS

Logos
USDAC Working Agreements and Values

LEARNING RESOURCES

Learning from Cultural Agents
An Act of Collective Imagination
Holding Space Principles
Self-Discovery Exercise
Standing for Cultural Democracy: The USDAC's Policy and Action Platform
Standing for Cultural Democracy summary
Glossary



ABOUT THE USDAC

THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ARTS AND CULTURE (USDAC) is a network of artists, activists, and allies inciting creativity and social imagination to shape a culture of equity, empathy, and belonging.

To create a just and welcoming world, all of us need social imagination, the capacity to envision and enact change. Yet as a society, we've failed to prioritize the programs and policies that cultivate creativity, empathy, and collaboration. Social institutions seldom allow us to show up as whole, creative humans. Too often, the stories we're asked to accept limit possibility, depicting us only as consumers and workers rather than creators and communicators.

Together, we can rewrite these stories. We affirm the right to culture and pursue cultural democracy that:

- welcomes each individual as a whole person
- values each community's heritage, contributions, and aspirations
- promotes caring, reciprocity, and open communication across all lines of difference
- dismantles all barriers to love and justice

To advance this vision, the nation's only people-powered department*:

- Engages everyone in weaving social fabric and strengthening communities through arts and culture
- Builds capacity and connective tissue among socially-engaged artists and cultural organizers
- Generates momentum and public will for creative policies and programs rooted in USDAC values
- Infuses social justice organizing with creativity and social imagination

Art and culture are powerful means of building empathy, creating a sense of belonging, and activating

the social imagination and civic agency necessary to make real change. When we feel seen, when we know that our stories and imaginations matter, we are more likely to bring our full creative selves to the work of social change. That not only makes our work more effective, we have more fun.

Our national actions invite everyone to perform a future infused with the transformative power of arts and culture. Our local organizing helps communities dream aloud and turn their dreams into reality. We connect people across regions in an ever-expanding creative learning community by sharing vital information, generating inspiring actions, and devising cultural policies and programs to catalyze a profound culture shift in the service of social and environmental justice. Together, we're creating new narratives of our power and possibility and scaling up strategies for equity and belonging.

The USDAC is not an outside agency coming in; it's our inside agency coming out! Radically inclusive and vibrantly playful, the USDAC offers pathways of engagement for any individual or organization eager to deepen a commitment to creativity and social change.

Culture shift is an all-hands-on-deck effort: whether you're already performing this work or new to creative organizing, join the people-powered department today!

THIS IS AN ACT OF COLLECTIVE IMAGINATION. ADD YOURS.

*The USDAC is not a government agency.

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APPENDIX: USDAC WORKING AGREEMENTS AND VALUES

For USDAC Office of Instigation, Cultural Agents, Field Offices, Regional Envoys, Bureaus, Outposts, and other USDAC collaborators. The USDAC is many things: a performance, an act of collective imagination, an experiment. Part of the experiment is to behave with each other with the same sensitivity, accountability, and collaborative spirit we envisage for the humane democratic communities we are trying to build. Even as we organize and execute toward impact, we bring a spirit of playfulness and joy to the endeavor. We're serious about the change we seek to bring about, but avoid taking ourselves too seriously. We all agree to accept and abide by the following working agreements.

ASK QUESTIONS

There are no stupid questions; all of us are free to ask for information, clarification, consideration whenever needed. We agree to ask questions before reaching decisions. We agree to communicate and ask for help when needed. We agree to familiarize ourselves with USDAC's aims, activities, and plans, so that we can understand and discuss our work in that context.

STAY RESPONSIVE

We work with fixed timeframes and deadlines; there is always a point where planning and decision-making end and implementation begins. In all communications, we will specify:

- (a) what we are seeking (e.g., awareness, response, ideas, objections, etc.);
- (b) a deadline for response;
- (a) modes of response (e.g., email, online discussion, etc.); and
- (c) clarification that non-response will be taken for consent to whatever is being proposed.

We understand that if we don't respond within specified timelines, our viewpoints may not be included. Not everyone needs to weigh in on everything; each of us can pick our priorities and trust the group to take care of the rest.

We agree to keep our USDAC colleagues apprised of our progress, submitting regular reports using the methods provided. We understand that we are accountable to

each other for fulfilling our responsibilities. If unforeseen circumstances prevent us from doing so, we agree to communicate in advance and help find another way to complete the task.

RESPECT PERSPECTIVES

We are a diverse group comprising individuals who see things in different ways. We agree to do our best to see issues from multiple perspectives rather than holding fixed positions. We agree to see our fellow USDAC activists as allies and to value all input, treating everyone with equal respect.

HOLD VISION

While we work with many specific details, we agree to stay in touch with our vision and do our best to see the big picture.

REPRESENT THE USDAC

The USDAC has many opportunities to share our vision and message through social media, press, and public events. Everyone is free to take part in this within a framework that ensures a consistent message: we agree to keep USDAC leadership apprised of press opportunities and collaborate on our public statements. While media representatives may inquire about our own individual work and affiliations (and each of us is free to provide that information), we agree to keep the USDAC's work front and center in media opportunities.

The USDAC's success depends on our ability to tell compelling stories of our work on the ground. We agree

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to enlist fellow activists and artists in documenting our process, and to share that documentation with our colleagues.

COMMUNICATE DIRECTLY

If issues arise between us, we agree to communicate directly or use the power of the group to constructively raise and resolve them, rather than triangulating.

RESPECT CONFIDENTIALITY

We are free to share USDAC materials for recruiting and briefing purposes, and to talk about USDAC conversations in general terms (e.g., “we shared several different opinions about X...”). But to maintain a culture of safety and openness for our work together, none of us will share recordings of strategic discussions or learning opportunities, or quote each other’s contributions to such discussions directly by name or other identifier without express permission.

NON-DISCRIMINATION

The USDAC is founded on the principles of cultural democracy: pluralism, participation, and equity. We cannot endorse or permit invidious prejudice to contaminate our work: actions or speech that discriminate against or insult any group on account of race, ethnicity, religion, orientation, ability, or other such characteristics will be grounds for cancellation of an Outpost’s or a Field Office’s charter and expulsion from the USDAC for Cultural Agents, Regional Envoys, and others.

NON-VIOLENCE

The USDAC’s work is grounded in constructive, creative action. We cannot endorse or permit violent acts or speech to contaminate our work: actions or speech that threaten the physical well-being of others will be grounds for cancellation of an Outpost’s or a Field Office’s charter and expulsion from the USDAC for Cultural Agents, Regional Envoys, and others.

USDAC STATEMENT OF VALUES

We hold these truths to be self-evident:

Culture is a human right. As expressed in the 1948 United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights, “Everyone has the right to freely participate in the cultural life of the community.” It is our sacred duty to remove impediments to the exercise of this right and to ensure that the means to exercise this right are available to all. In a cultural democracy, we are obliged to monitor the impact of public and private actions with these duties in mind.

Culture is created by everyone. The art, customs, creative expressions, and social fabric of every community and heritage contribute to the vibrancy and dynamism of our common culture. Our cultural institutions and policies should reflect this, rather than privileging favorites.

Cultural pluralism is a social good and the wellspring of free expression. Its support and protection require equitable distribution of public resources, particularly to correct past injustices and balance an excess of commercialization.

Culture is the sum-total of public, private, individual, and collective action. We seek balance so that no sector dominates or controls cultural expression or access to cultural resources. We advocate an arts ecology in which all sectors work together to support cultural development for the benefit of all.

The work of artists is a powerful resource for community development, education, healthcare, protection of our commonwealth, and other democratic public purposes. Indeed, artists’ skills of observation, improvisation, innovation, resourcefulness, and creativity enhance all human activity. We advocate complete integration of arts-based learning in public and private education at all levels. We advocate public service employment for artists and other creative workers as a way to accomplish social good, address unemployment, and strengthen social fabric. We support artists who place their gifts at the service of community, equity, and social change.