

What Matters to You?

Arts & Culture, Evidence, and a Prescription for Belonging

9:30-10:45



Aly Maier Lokuta, MA
Assistant Vice President for Arts & Well-Being,
NJ Performing Arts Center



What matters to you?



Taking part in the arts is a positive health behavior

Slide credit: Aly Maier Lokuta and NJPAC Arts & Well-Being



Access to the arts is a social determinant of health

Slide credit: Aly Maier Lokuta and NJPAC Arts & Well-Being



Arts & culture are public health

Slide credit: Aly Maier Lokuta and NJPAC Arts & Well-Being



Community arts organizations are community health centers

Slide credit: Aly Maier Lokuta and NJPAC Arts & Well-Being

A RICH AND GROWING EVIDENCE BASE

24% Lower loneliness

48% Lower risk of depression



Attending a concert or going to a museum 1 — 2 times per month has a similar protective value as exercising an hour or two per week.



Emotional well-being
Life satisfaction
Social cohesion
Self-efficacy
Flourishing



Antisocial + criminalized behavior
Substance use
Cognitive decline
Frailty
Early mortality

76% of Americans say they would be likely to follow an arts prescription from their doctor

THE ECONOMIC CASE

Benefit to individual	Benefit to wider society	
INDIVIDUAL IMPACT QALY ^D and WELLBY ^E benefit	HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE IMPACT Healthcare costs avoided	PRODUCTIVITY IMPACT Includes both paid and unpaid productivity

Table 13 Society-wide benefits assuming benefits apply across the entire adult population

#	Model name	Per person impacts	Engagement rate	Engagement level	Society-wide benefit
1	General engagement and general health in adults	£992	46%	18,780,000	£18.64bn
2a	Attendance and mental health in adults	£649	18%	7,383,000	£4.79bn
2b	Participation and mental health in adults	£448	56%	22,731,000	£10.19bn

Source: Frontier Economics.

Frontier Economics & DCMS (2024)

Key findings



The estimated financial value of health and productivity benefits through all arts engagement in Wales (including but not limited to ACW activity) is at least **£588m** a year.

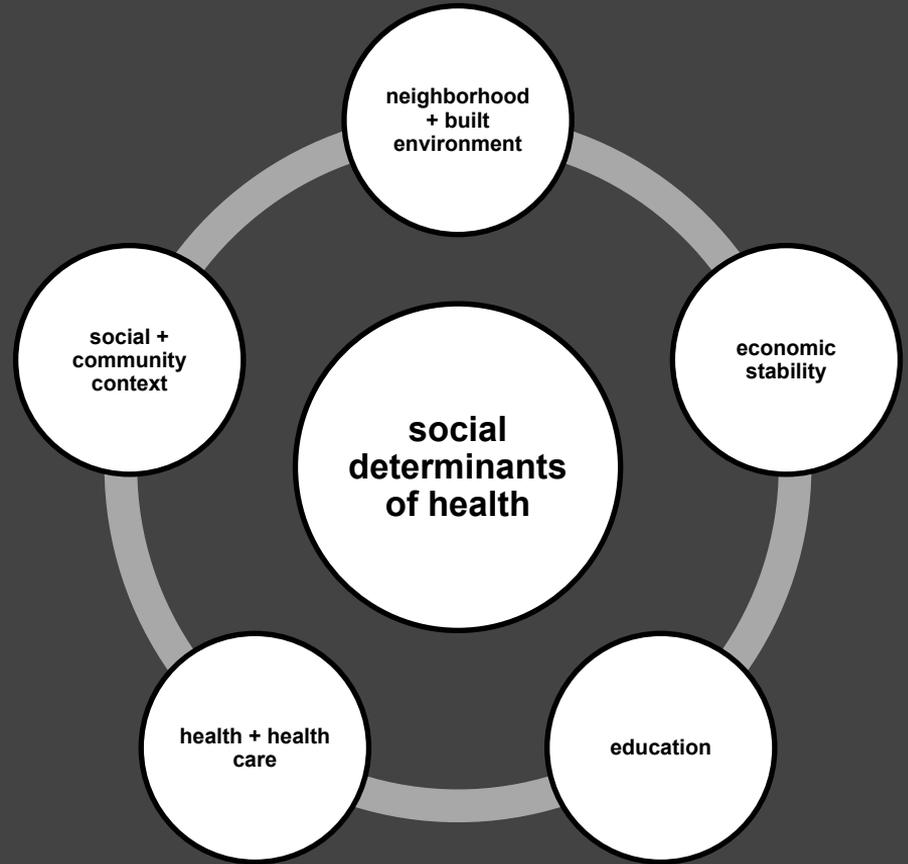
Key findings



We estimate ACW's investment in multi-year funded organisations generates a financial Return on Investment (ROI) of **£11.08** for every **£1** invested in terms of health, wellbeing and productivity benefits.

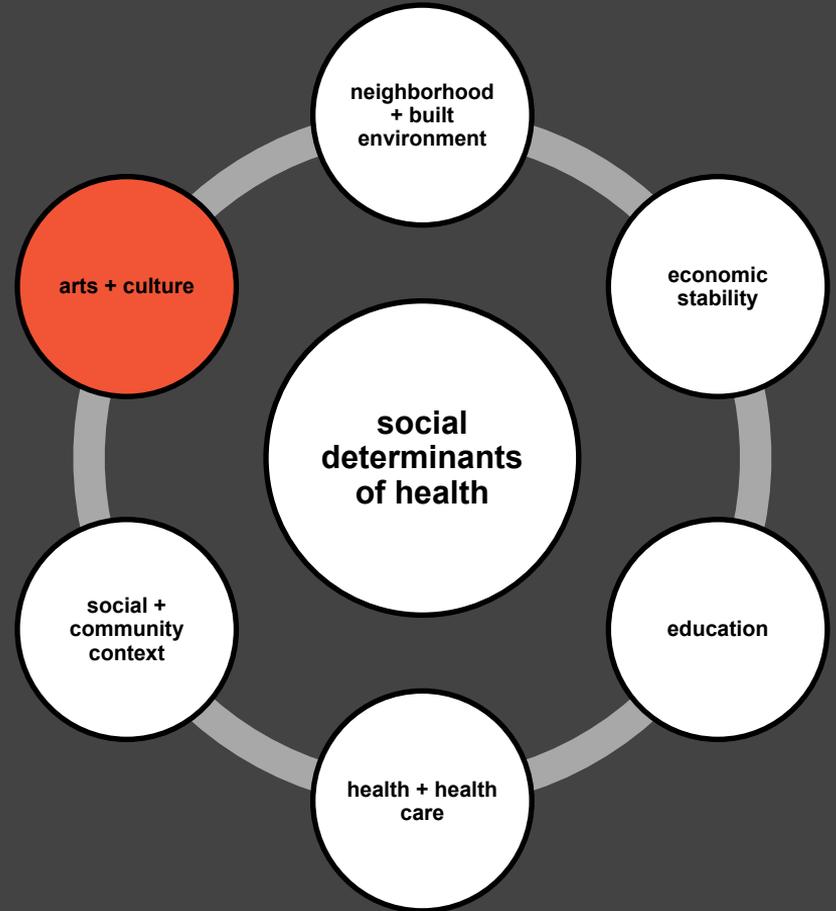
SOCIAL PRESCRIBING

Social prescribing is a model that enables health care providers and social service professionals to connect individuals with non-clinical supports and community resources that address individual and community needs based on the social determinants of health.



ARTS PRESCRIBING

Integrating arts referrals into systems of health and social care where recipients are receiving referrals for community resources aligned with social determinant of health needs.



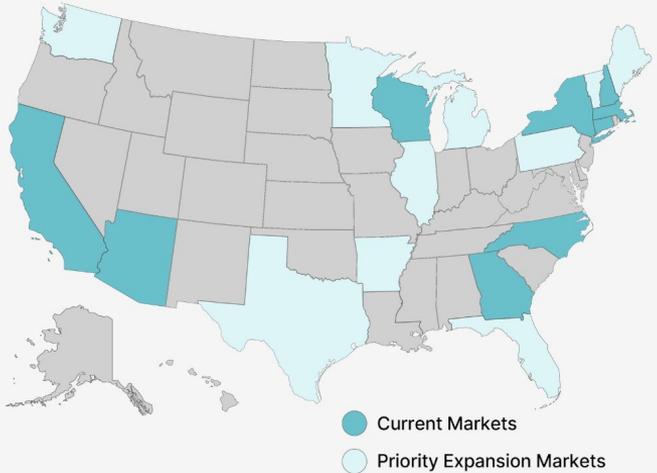
US ARTS PRESCRIBING LANDSCAPE

Case Study Sites



- | | | | |
|----------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------|
| 1 Atlanta, GA | 7 Berkshire County, MA | 13 Lexington Park, MD | 19 Harlan County, KY |
| 2 Newark, NJ | 8 Stockbridge, MA | 14 Palo Alto, CA | 20 Gainesville, FL |
| 3 Barrington, MA | 9 St. Petersburg, FL | 15 Bronx, NY | 21 Boston, MA |
| 4 Alameda County, CA | 10 Salt Lake City, UT | 16 Boston & Stoneham, MA | 22 Texas + |
| 5 Springfield, MA | 11 Arkansas | 17 Dallas, TX | 23 Gainesville, FL |
| 6 Long Island, NY | 12 Williamstown MA | 18 Orlando, FL | |

SocialRx is building a national social prescribing movement. The map below shows our current markets served, where are actively building, and where we are headed next.



NJPAC ARTS & WELL-BEING



Arts in Health Research Lab

Measuring impact through a partnership with Rutgers School of Public Health and Mason Gross School of the Arts



Arts in Healthcare

Enhancing patient care and staff well-being through the arts at Newark Beth Israel Medical Center



ArtsRx

Increasing access to the arts through free referrals to local arts programs by local health partners



Health Promotion

Addressing key health issues through events and programs with community health partners



ACCESS: Education

Ensuring safe and effective practice through accessible and affordable workforce development

ARTSRX



who

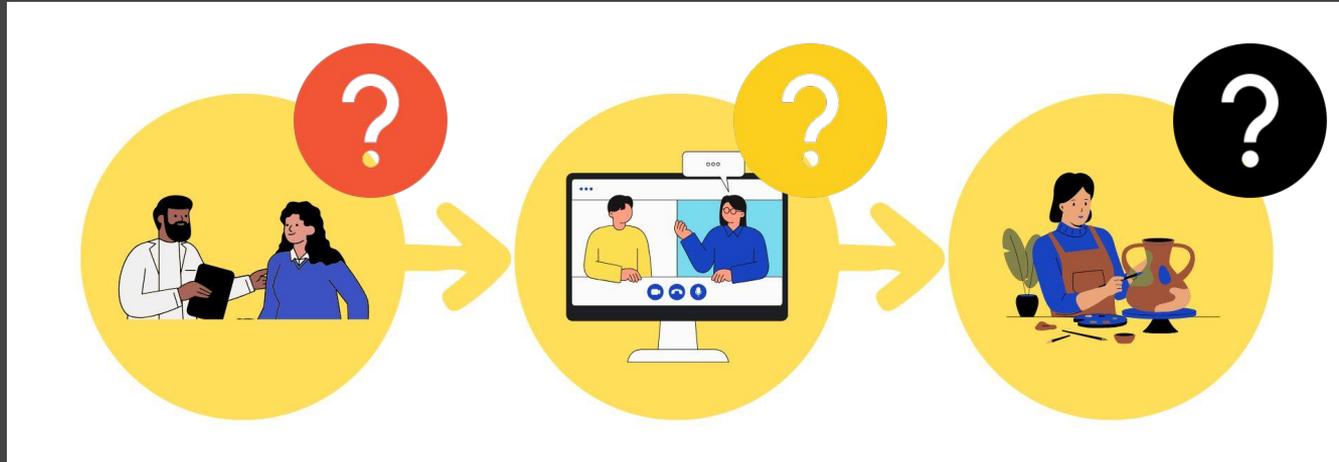


how



what

ARTSRX

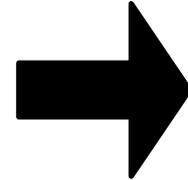
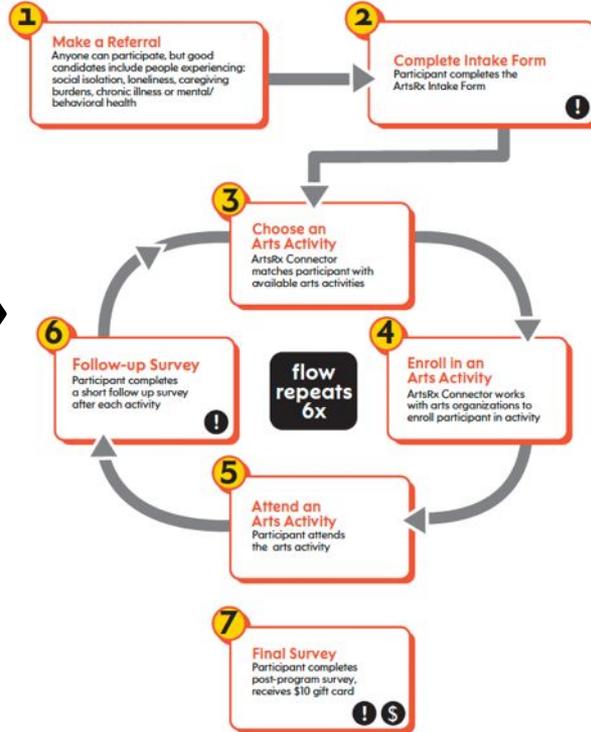
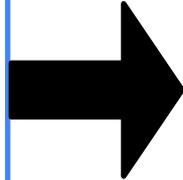


**Health or
Social Care
Referral**

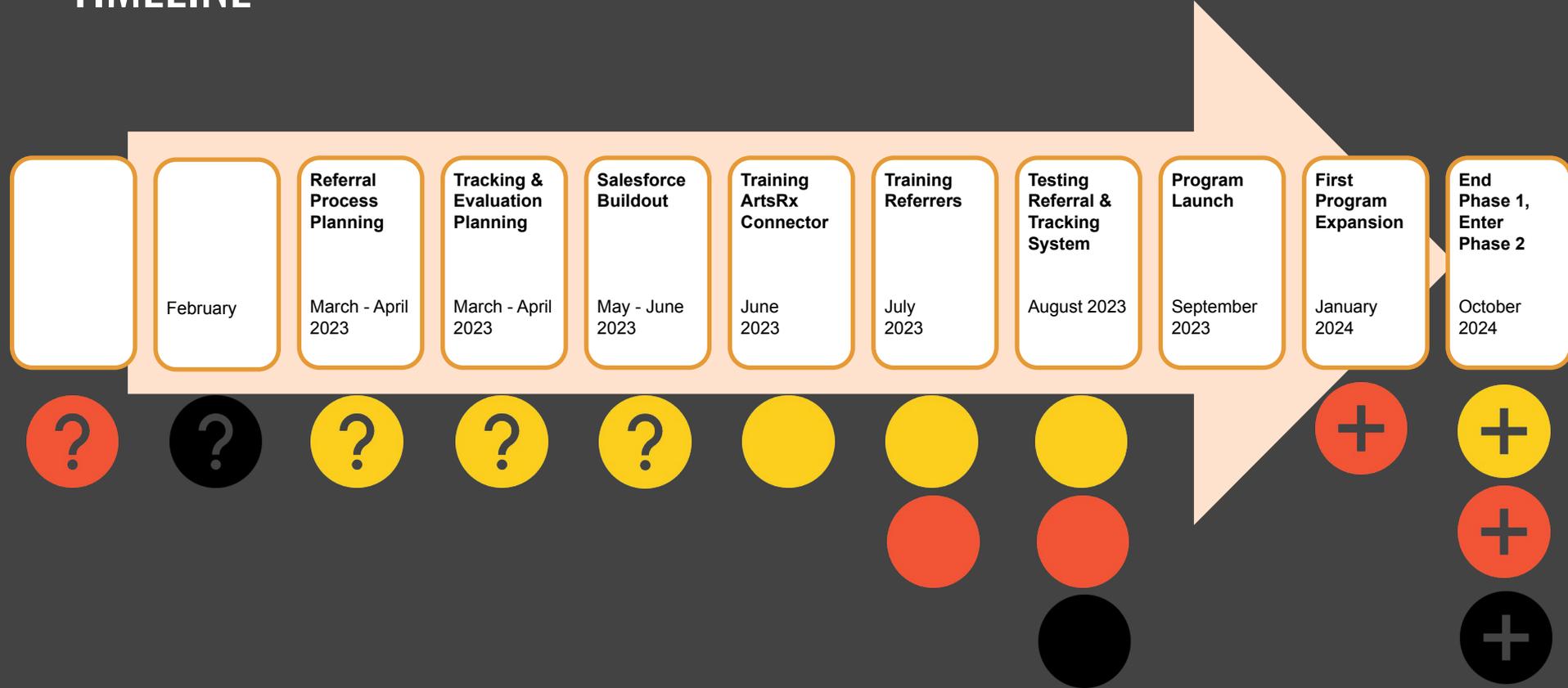
**ArtsRx
Connector**

**Local Arts
Activities**

ARTSRX



TIMELINE

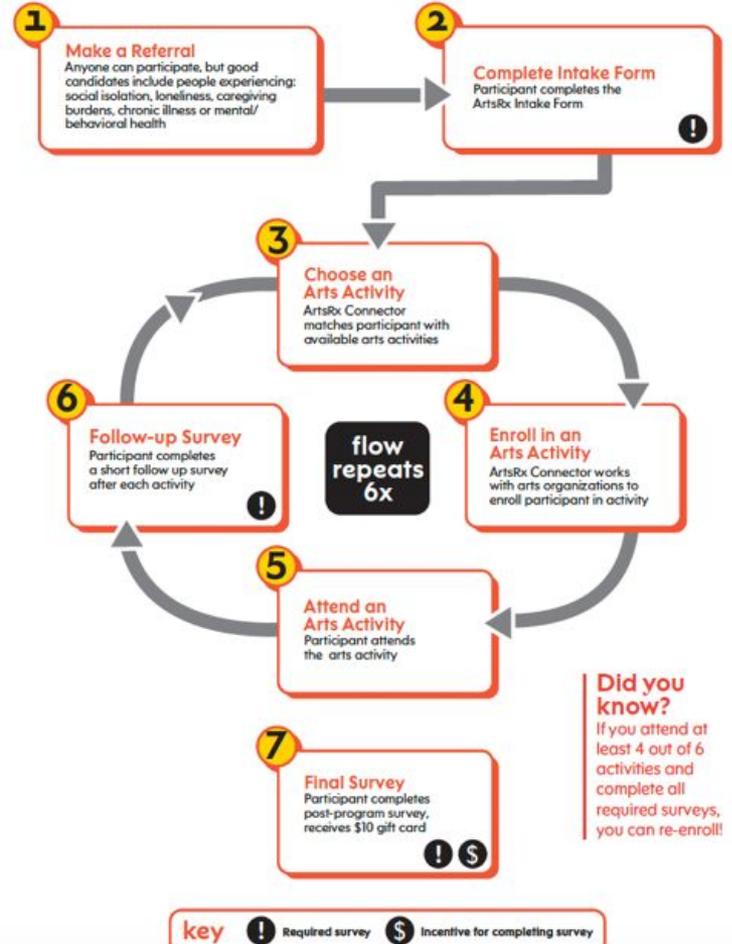


ARTSRX

Making a referral:

- 6 referral sources
- Who is a good candidate?
 - Anyone can benefit from engagement in the arts, but the ArtsRx program is particularly beneficial for those experiencing chronic illness, social isolation, loneliness, people who are caregivers, and those experiencing some mental health challenges.
- What do they receive?
 - 6 opportunities to engage in the arts over 6 months
 - Ability to bring up to 2 guests each time
 - All free, with concierge registration by ArtsRx Connector

artsrx referral process



ARTSRX

Intake Form

- Demographics
- Current rate of arts participation
- Arts interests
 - Organizations, modalities
- Well-Being metrics
 - UCLA-3 Loneliness
 - Social Connectedness Scale
 - Self-Efficacy Scale

artsrx referral process

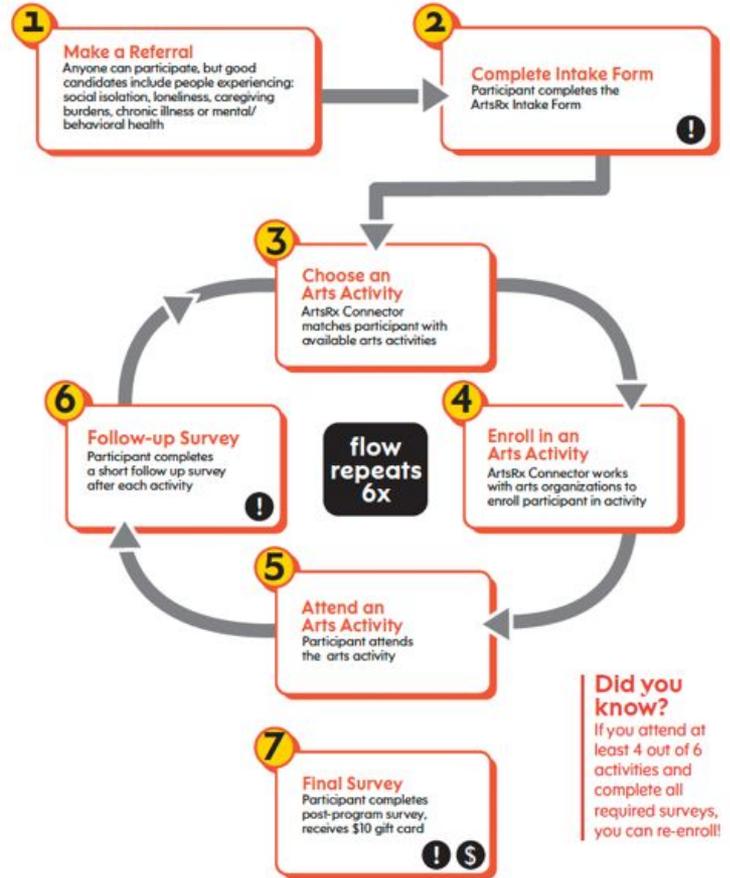


ARTSRX

ArtsRx Connector

- Personalized recommendations for arts activities
- Office hours
- Phone, text, email communication
- Handles all registration
- Sends/checks automated follow-up surveys

artsrx referral process



key ! Required survey \$ Incentive for completing survey

ARTSRX

Exit Survey

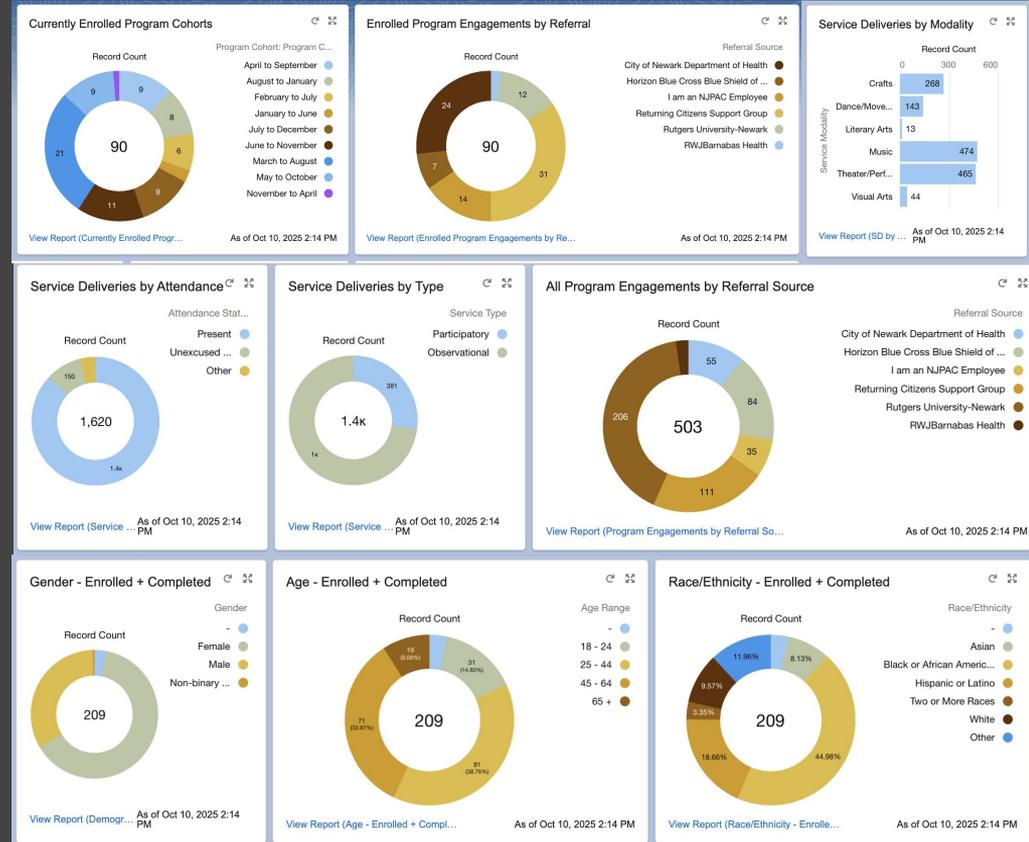
- Current rate of arts participation
- Well-Being metrics
 - UCLA-3 Loneliness
 - Social Connectedness Scale
 - Self-Efficacy Scale
- Did you enjoy the activities?
- Are you more likely to engage in the arts?
- Did participating impact your well-being?

artsrx referral process



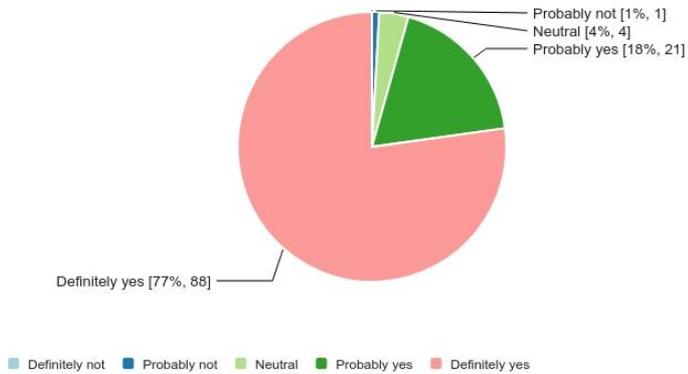
ARTSRX - SALESFORCE DASHBOARD

- 249 enrolled or completed participants
- Over 1600 arts activities attended
- ~75% of activities chosen are observational (vs participatory)
- Demographics mirror Newark
- \$118,000 contributed to local arts organizations
- \$50,000 of NEA Our Town grant distributed directly to arts organizations



PRELIMINARY DATA

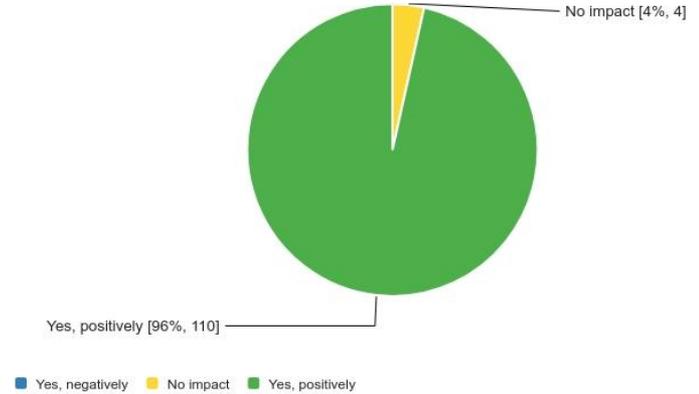
After participating in ArtsRx, are you more likely to seek out opportunities to engage in arts and cultural activities?



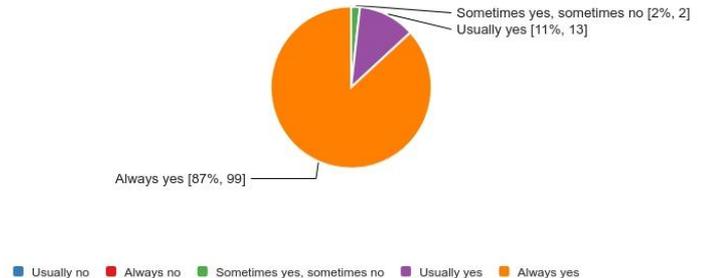
85% attendance rate

49% engagement rate

Did participating in ArtsRx impact your well-being?



Overall, did you enjoy the activities you participated in through ArtsRx?



FUTURE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- **Barriers and Facilitators:** A mixed-methods evaluation of barriers and facilitators to ArtsRx program engagement.
- **Psychosocial change:** Are there changes in flourishing (sample 1), loneliness, self-efficacy, and social connection (sample 2) from pre-test to post-test?
- **Dose threshold:** Does the number of events attended predict the level of change in flourishing, loneliness, self-efficacy, and social connection from pre-test to post-test? Is this a linear effect or are there diminishing returns after a certain number of events?
- **Social partners:** Does attending events with others (vs. alone) predict the level of change in flourishing, loneliness, self-efficacy, and social connection from pre-test to post-test? Are participants less lonely in activity follow-ups if they had attended the event with others vs. alone?
- **Event Type:** Does participant loneliness, self-efficacy, and social connection in activity follow-ups differ following participatory vs. receptive events?
- **Baseline Psychosocial Profiles:** Do baseline levels of flourishing, loneliness, self-efficacy, and social connection predict the number of events attended? Do baseline levels of flourishing, loneliness, self-efficacy, and social connection predict psychosocial change across program?
- **Care Utilization Analyses:** Including: ED visits: frequency, number, and costs; Inpatient admissions, including number and costs; outpatient visits: primary care and behavioral health; chronic disease management visits; total cost of care

PARTICIPANT STORIES

It has been a blessing to experience entertainment that touches the heart and soothes the soul.

It was nice to have something to look forward to and have the time to be creative.

It provided me a comfortable and safe environment to be amongst my peers in an arena that's not intimidating. It also allowed me the opportunity to try and mend broken friendships/relationships by allowing friends or family to share the healing experience with me at every event. Thank you.

These experiences have given me a new perspective on life.

It has been wonderful and I look forward to more events. ArtsRx has enriched my life beyond my wildest dreams.

My experience with ArtsRx has been very meaningful. It provided me with a safe space to express myself creatively while also supporting my mental and emotional well-being. I appreciated how the program encouraged reflection and gave me tools to manage stress in healthier ways. The sense of community was just as valuable.

This experience has been so fulfilling for my mental health. Working as a MCM, I don't take out enough time for myself. This has really shown me, sometimes I need to engage more with my community.

It made me understand how amazing community could really be.

Haven't been to any activities in over thirty years. I would like to thank my connector.

It was my first time at a concert since 1993 and it felt great to see Chicago live in concert!

Arts Rx State of the Field: From National Trends to State Impacts

Panel discussion #1



Renee Griffin
Creative Aging & Partnerships Officer,
Senior Services, Inc.

2017 Age-Friendly Forsyth Community Survey

County-wide randomized telephone survey of 1,002 older adults

21 community conversations

4+ years of Aging with Purpose Pilot with program participants

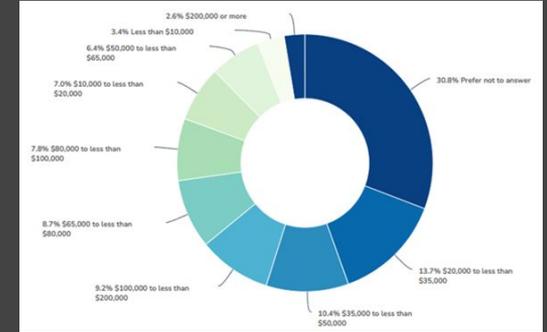
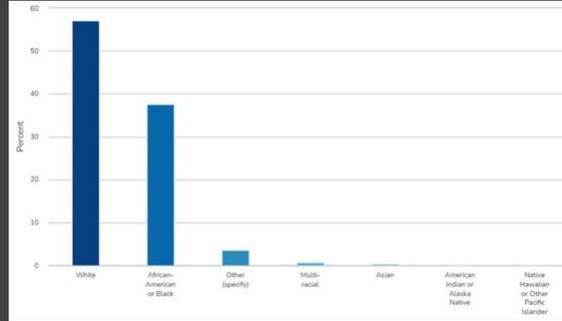
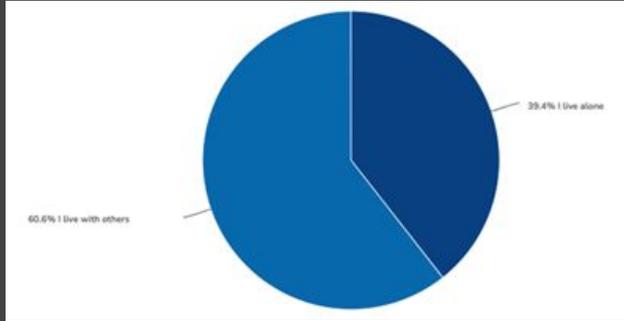
- Kindermusik-Bridges
- WFU-IMPROVment®
- UNCSA-Music in Motion
- In-Home Art Lessons
- 40+ Stage Company



2025-26 Age Friendly Forsyth Community Survey

780 paper and digital surveys submitted.

Presently conducting Community Conversations



2025-26 Age Friendly Forsyth Community Survey



Early quantitative data indicates:

- 98.7% have a Primary Care Physician
- 69% would like to be more physically active
- 33% said they lack companionship; 26% said they sometimes or always felt isolated from others
- 33% were not doing enough with regards to social activities
- Where in Forsyth County would you go if you needed help with a problem? (Check all that apply); #1 67% Family, #2 61% PCP
- Where would you go for information about aging services, programs and opportunities? #1 answer: 56% Doctor

2025-26 Age Friendly Forsyth Community Survey

If a doctor or other health professional recommended that you participate in an arts activity at no cost, would you do it?

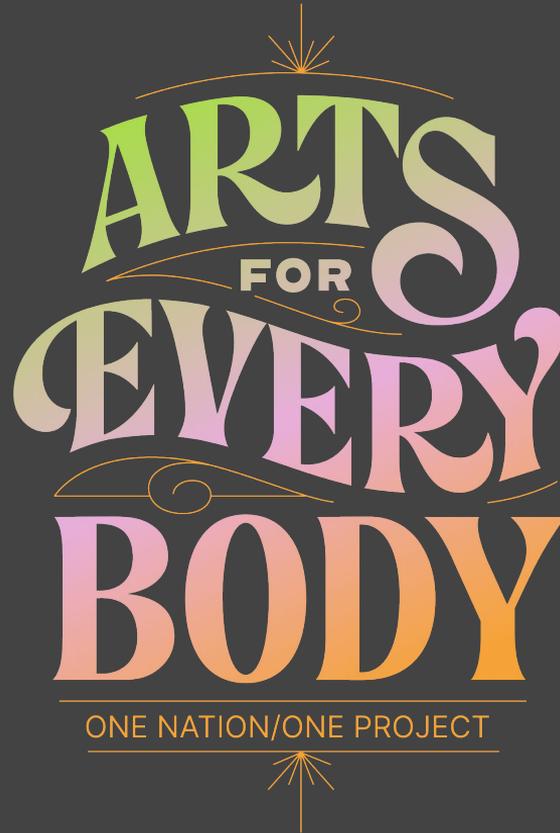
- 88% Yes
- 12% No





Shannon Stokes
Founder, Healing Unlimited Wellness Collective

Arts For EveryBody and Community-Based Arts Prescription



“What if the arts, health, and public sectors came together to heal US communities?”

THE 18 SITES

Sites were led by local artists, municipal officials, and community health leaders, working together to create large-scale participatory arts projects that advance health, equity, and community connection.





ARTS FOR EVERY BODY
WINSTON-SALEM, NC

Creative Wellness Community Day

A FREE ARTS AND HEALTH FAIR

10AM - 3PM

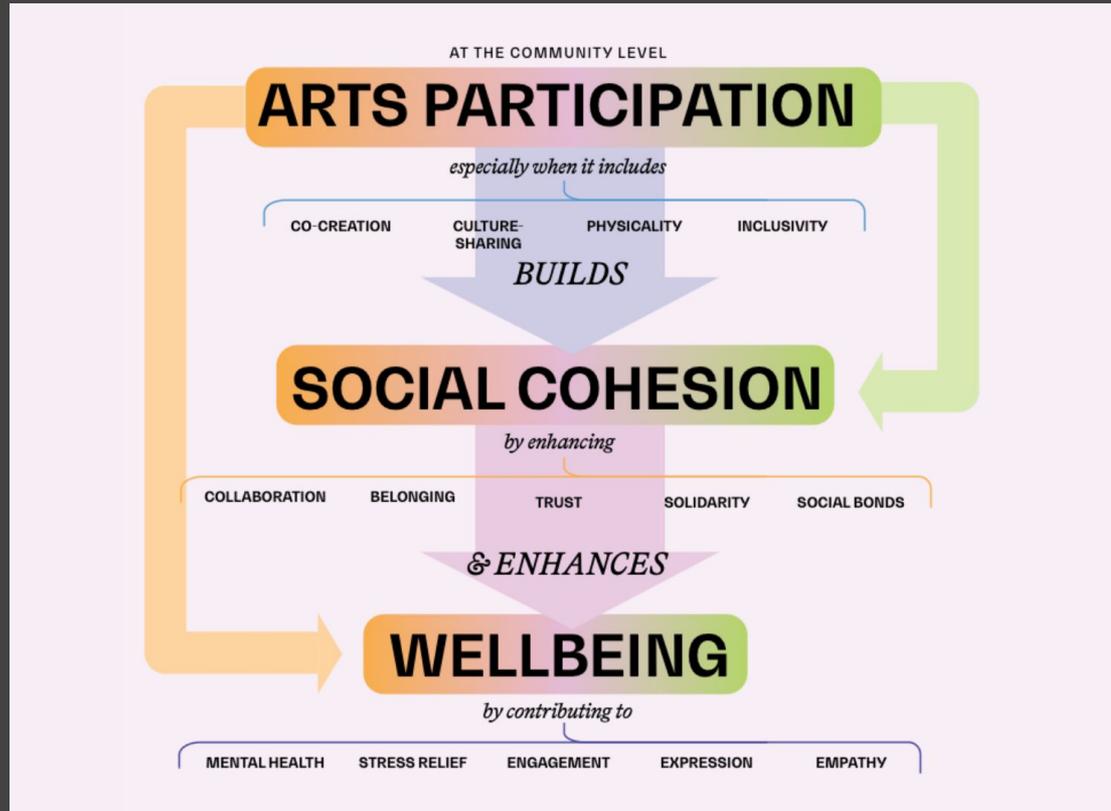
27 JULY

UNITED HEALTH CENTERS
@ PETERS CREEK PKWY
2101 Peters Creek Pkwy
Winston-Salem 27127

MUSIC - PERFORMANCES - EXHIBITS
FAMILY FUN - FOOD TRUCKS
HEALTH SCREENINGS



Arts For EveryBody Theory of Change



Focus Group Key Take-Aways for Winston-Salem, NC

Arts Engagement

Winston-Salem offers a wide variety of arts opportunities across disciplines. Barriers include safety concerns, lack of awareness, limited resources like childcare or transportation, and feelings of exclusion in certain spaces.

Social Cohesion

Community ties exist through jobs, churches, geography, and shared activities, but cohesion is weakened by cliques and reluctance to engage beyond familiar groups.

Community Health and Wellbeing

Perceptions of wellbeing are mixed: while some communities are thriving, others report disconnection, fear, and mental health struggles.

Relationships Between Arts Engagement, Social Cohesion, & Wellbeing

Arts participation is widely seen as a bridge between social connection and wellbeing.

Arts For EveryBody to Community-Based Arts Prescription

Expanding inclusive, well-promoted, and safe arts opportunities can strengthen both cohesion and wellbeing in Winston-Salem. Addressing structural barriers, reducing stigma, and ensuring access to resources like childcare and transportation will be key to making arts participation a lasting tool for community health.

Learn More About Arts For EveryBody

AFEB Website



Final Impact Report





Christina Soriano, MFA, MBA

Reynolds Professor of Dance, Co-Director Wake the Arts Center
and the Wake Forest University Neuroarts Lab

Wake Forest Expands Leadership in Neuroarts Through Global Collaboration, Community Partnership, New Research Investments, and Prestigious Recognition

Establishing the Wake Forest Neuroarts Lab

To advance this work, Wake Forest is pleased to announce the creation of a Neuroarts Lab, supported through the Strategic Framework. This new interdisciplinary hub builds on more than a decade of faculty innovation, including the nationally recognized work of Christina Soriano



Christina Soriano (L) and Christina Hugschmidt (R)

Wake Forest Joins the International NeuroArts Blueprint Initiative and the Neuroarts Academic Network

In September 2025, Wake Forest was invited to join a global coalition of academic institutions through the [NeuroArts Blueprint Initiative](#)—a partnership led by Johns Hopkins University's International Arts + Mind Lab Center for Applied Neuroaesthetics and the Aspen Institute's Health, Medicine & Society Program, with support from The Music Man Foundation. This international effort aims to integrate the arts into mainstream medicine, public health, and society, grounded in research demonstrating the transformative effects of creative expression on health and well-being.

The Wake Forest University Neuroarts Lab



We connect artists, researchers and communities to elevate arts-based research and improve quality of life in North Carolina to drive national impact.

We are a hub for researchers, artists, community members, and healthcare providers who want to create programs, experiences, and research about the neuroscience and health effects of the arts..



Can the creative act of writing a lullaby for your baby who is in the NICU establish a stronger bond between mother and child and enhance your quality of life as a new mother?



Lullaby Project

This is a program of Carnegie Hall's Weill Music Institute.



Maya Angelou Research Center for Healthy Communities (MARCH)



Wake Forest University
School of Medicine



WAKE FOREST
UNIVERSITY



Kimberly Gayle Montez, MD

Associate Professor, General Pediatrics and Adolescent
Medicine, Pediatrics



Marisol Norris

Cultural Worker. Music Therapist. Educator. Scholar-Activist.



Katherine Ann Sauder, PhD

Associate Professor, Implementation Science,
Public Health Sciences

Can the arts enhance the quality of life of patients while they are receiving hemodialysis for ESRD, end-stage renal disease?



Wake Forest University
School of Medicine



Amret Thompson Hawfield, MD

Associate Professor, Nephrology, Internal Medicine



Isabella Weidman

HES major, WFU Class of '27, Dance Minor



WAKE FOREST
UNIVERSITY



Tracy McGinnis

Vice President of philanthropy and strategic initiatives,
Southminster





- Established in 1987
- Non-Profit 501c3
- Continuum of Care
- Single Site on 27 acres in Charlotte, NC
- 490 Residents
- Over 400 Employees



EDUCATION

- College Scholarships
- Professional Education
- Early Literacy
- Site Based Internships
- Intergenerational Programs



ARTS

- Teaching Artist Education
- Annual State Symposium
- Research Studies
- Access to Art for Vulnerable Populations
- Specialized Art Programming



HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

- Intergenerational Play Park
- Food Insecurity
- Public Spaces
- Interventions & Research

\$5,400,000

Creative Aging Symposium 2015



- Arts and Science Council & Creative Aging Network
- Tate Hall @ CPCC
- CSO, Charlotte Folk Society, Arts+
- Not about adding activity to someone's day – rather fundamentally changing the nature of the relationship





Tours and Art Classes for Adults with Early Stage Dementia & Their Care Partners

MUSEUM MEMORIES

PROMOTE SOCIALIZATION
 PROMOTE SELF-ESTEEM
 ENHANCE MEMORY
 REDUCE STRESS
 CALL OLD MEMORIES
 PROMOTE WELL-BEING
 PROMOTE CONNECTION

SOUTHMINSTER
 southminster.org/charitable-giving
 TRACY MCGINNIS | 704.551.7129 EXT. 6129
 mcginnis@southminster.org



Photo by Peter Zay, Photographer, Charlotte Hall

Come get into the swing of Dance for Parkinson's Disease (PD)

join the **MOVEMENT**
 to rediscover the sweetness of motion

“

I sometimes cannot walk
 but I can dance.

| Dancer with Parkinson's |

“

It's an amazing thing to see people who come
 into the building one way and leave another.”

| Mark Morris |



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CHARLOTTE SYMPHONY, QUEENS UNIVERSITY AND SOUTHMINSTER PARTNER FOR NEW ALZHEIMER'S TRUST

January 9, 2018 | CHARLOTTE, NC—The Charlotte Symphony has partnered with Queens University and Southminster for an exciting new study examining how those with dementia and Alzheimer's respond to live symphonies.

Formed on the basis of the restorative power of music, the partnership is an expansion of the Symphony's award-winning Mind Program, which has used professional orchestra musicians over Charlotte and surrounding area hospitals, nursing homes, and assisted care centers for nearly 40 years.

"We all know that powerful music can take you back to remembering its memories," explains Dr. Deborah Charlene, Executive Director and CEO, "that emotional connection with classical music, perhaps Beethoven and Southminster for this very important study."

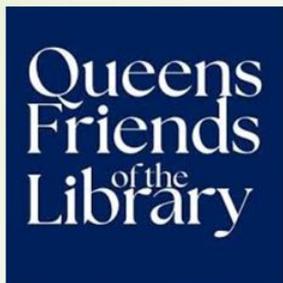
The partnership was initiated through relationships between Southminster and Queens University. Queens University's Psychology Department will conduct the behavioral study, supported by the 100+ page journal, consisting of 10 performance locations. Charlotte Symphony artists Deborah Malachuk and Mark Morris bring together Alzheimer's, autism and high-need students across our service.

The success of the Alzheimer's research study is determined whether music has a positive effect on memory recall or if having live orchestral exposure to instrumental music makes a difference in recognition.

The performance will also take place at Complete Care Management's MusicPart and Southminster facilities to learn the most effective way to make up the study participant group.

"The Music Therapy Program at Southminster is a long history of meaningful personal experience and with the Charlotte Symphony through its ongoing 'Mind' work of transforming the way of life, research and enhancing the intellectual and cultural lives of its community," says Dr. Deborah Charlene, Executive Director of the Department of Art, Design and Music at Southminster.

The study has been formally vetted by an Institutional Review Board to ensure that ethical practices are being followed and to ensure there will come full participation in the study.











Lifetime Arts



WAKE FOREST
UNIVERSITY



SOUTHMINSTER



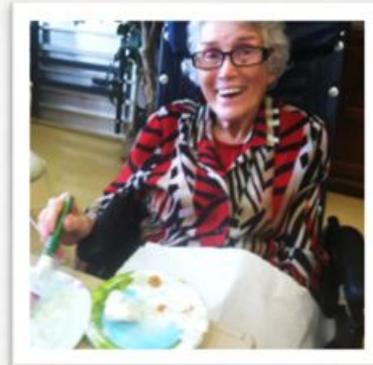
Lia Miller

Co-founder/Executive Director – Creative Aging Network – NC

Opportunities

Leverage cross-sector partnerships

- Health and long-term care settings
- Community health workers on arts-infused wellness programming
- Universities/colleges (prof. pathways for teaching artists)
- Non-traditional: BIPOC, LGBTQ+, housing, intergenerational



Opportunities

Advance Equity and Access

- Scholarships/subsidies
- Culturally responsive practices
- Engage at community level for input/program development
- Engage youth to reduce ageism
- Equitable funding streams (based on needs)



Opportunities

Capitalize on Policy Momentum

- Advocate for arts in aging policy (Lifetime Arts)
- Integrate arts into AAA plans
- Encourage local gov'ts to include arts in aging initiatives



Challenges

Fragmented Infrastructure

- Alleviate through shared language and goals across sectors
- Joint planning
- Funding for partnerships!



Challenges

Funding limitations

- Diversify (public, private, earned)
- Support small community orgs to access funds
- Build capacity for evaluation=IMPACT



Challenges

Professional Development

- Expand ongoing professional development (CAN-NC, Lifetime Arts)
- Expand network to share skills, strategies, best practices
- Create credential pathways for creative aging/arts on prescription facilitation



Impact

Capacity + Professional Development

- Arts in Health Systems - hospitals, clinics, mental health, aging services (preventative health and care plans)
- Education + Workforce Development (apprenticeships/certifications) – build career pathways that recognize creative aging as a profession
- Aging Networks & Policy Bodies – weave arts into broader aging plans and initiatives
- Local Leadership – support grassroots and community orgs outside of major urban areas





Heather Ikemire, Ph.D
Executive Director, Lifetime Arts

What is Creative Aging?

Creative aging is the practice of intentional artistic and creative engagement throughout our lives to support our health, connection, and purpose as we age.

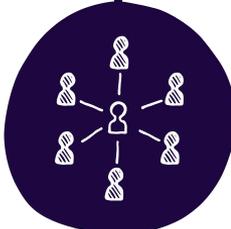
It recognizes that creativity is lifelong—and that older adults are essential cultural contributors across all art forms, skill levels, and communities (Lifetime Arts, 2025).



Three Trending Issues in Healthy Aging With Links to Creative Aging



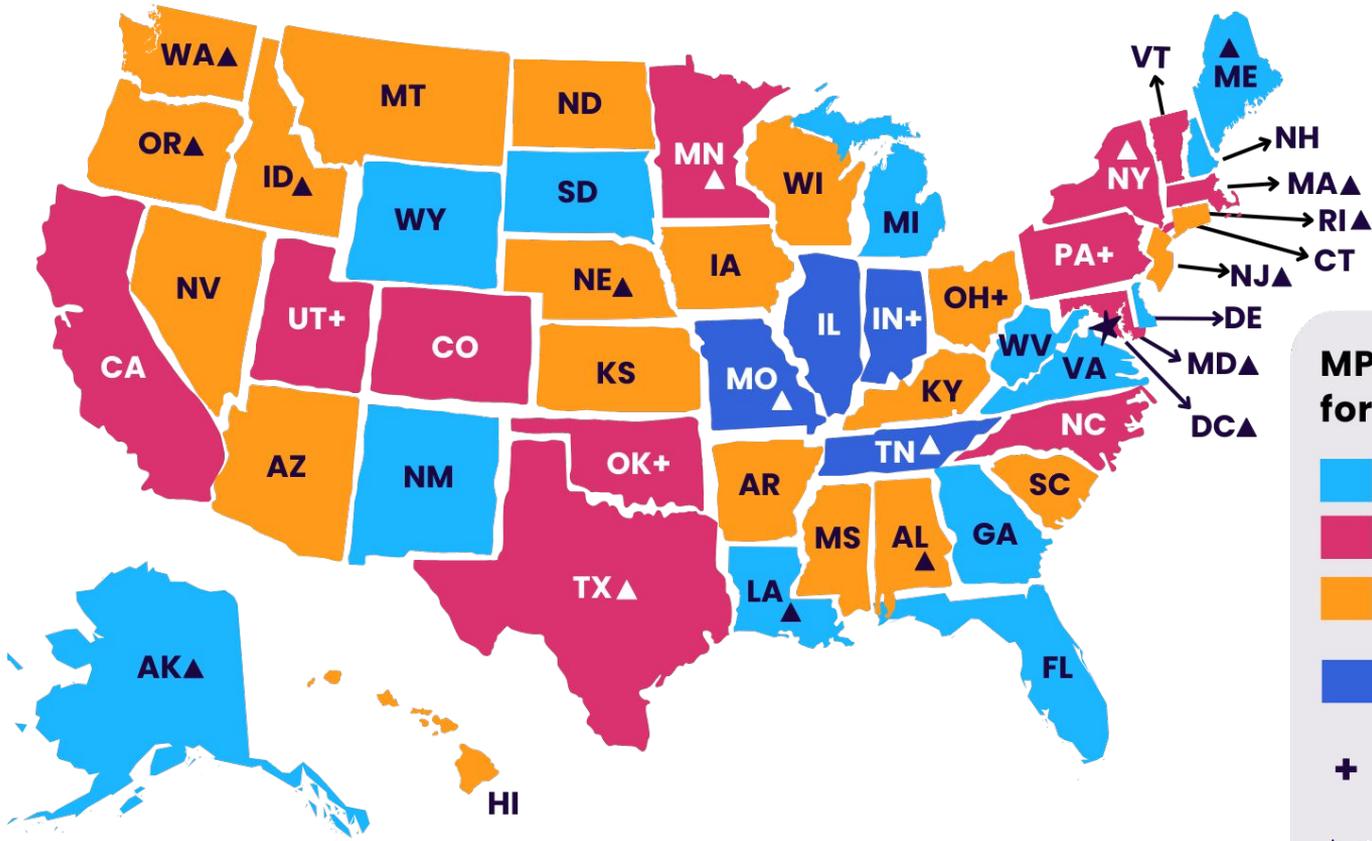
Brain Health: Creative learning and expression stimulates cognitive function, memory, and neuroplasticity.



Social Connectedness: Arts engagement builds community, reduces loneliness, and strengthens emotional resilience.



Livable Communities: Creative aging programs promote local inclusion, intergenerational exchange, and neighborhood vitality.



MPA/OOA State Plans for Aging

- OAA State Plans Only
- MPA in Implementation
- MPA in Development/Some Activity
- Governor's Order/Legislation to Develop MPA
- +** Mentions Creative Aging Specifically in OAA or MPA
- ▲ △ Mentions Arts and Music Generally in OAA or MPA

All states include Older Americans Act (OAA) State Plans.

Continuous updates available at MultisectorPlanForAging.org

POLICY BRIEF RECOMMENDATIONS:

Creative Aging in the Healthy Aging Ecosystem

- **Elevate awareness of creative aging and its linkage to healthy aging.**
- **Embed creative aging in state and federal policies centered on healthy aging**
i.e., Multisector Plans for Aging, Older Americans Act State Plans, and age-friendly efforts.
- **Accelerate diffusion and investment of creative aging, particularly in the private sector.**

Access Our Brief!



Or visit
CreativeHealthyAging.org

Arts Experience 1

Movement with Christina Soriano