

Fairmount Park Conservancy Is One of Six Organizations Nationally to Receive \$3 Million Investment from ArtPlace America: Goal to Incorporate Arts & Culture into Community Development Work

President Obama highlights ArtPlace's Community Development Investments—a new grant program to aid local organizations in deploying creative placemaking strategies to shape the social, physical, and economic futures of their communities

Philadelphia, PA – Aug. 31, 2015 – Today, President Obama announced that the Fairmount Park Conservancy is one of six organizations selected to participate in the [ArtPlace America](#) Community Development Investments (CDI) program. Over the course of three years, the Conservancy will receive \$3 million to incorporate arts and cultural strategies into its core work.

“Philadelphia has long been known for its expansive and historic park system and its vibrant arts and cultural sector,” stated **Philadelphia Mayor Michael A. Nutter**. “With this tremendous investment from ArtPlace America, our parks and our city’s cultural community have an opportunity to collaborate on strategies that will highlight Philadelphia’s leadership of innovative community development and creative placemaking.”

He added, “I congratulate the Fairmount Park Conservancy for their continued efforts in bringing increased resources and expanded partnerships to our park system, which directly impacts all of Philadelphia’s neighborhoods and communities.”

Since 2011, ArtPlace America has invested \$67 million in 227 creative placemaking projects in 152 communities of all sizes across 43 states and the District of Columbia. ArtPlace will draw from these projects, as well as its philanthropic, federal and financial institution partners to support the six CDI participants along their organizational change journey.

“Arts and culture are too often left out of community planning conversations,” said **Jamie Bennett, ArtPlace’s Executive Director**. “The Fairmount Park Conservancy is prepared to demonstrate the unique value that artists and arts organizations can bring to its civic life and economic development initiatives. They will serve as a national model for any place-based community development organization looking to work more comprehensively and inclusively to build a healthy, thriving community.”

ArtPlace will work with the national research and action institute PolicyLink to identify, organize, and share the best practices, processes, and insights for any community looking to work in this more comprehensive and inclusive way.

“Fairmount Park Conservancy has been invaluable to Philadelphia,” said **Laura Sparks, Executive Director of the William Penn Foundation** and member of

the ArtPlace collaboration. “We are thrilled that they will now be partnering with ArtPlace to incorporate arts and culture into the community engagement, planning, and implementation of their work going forward. Philadelphia’s artists and arts organizations stand ready to work in collaboration with the rest of their neighbors in building a stronger and more unified city.”

In addition to The Fairmount Park Conservancy, the organizations selected as part of the CDI program represent a diverse range of place-based organizations working across a broad spectrum of community contexts:

- **Cook Inlet Housing Authority** (Anchorage, AK), a tribal housing authority that focuses on affordable housing development and broad neighborhood revitalization strategies
- **Jackson Medical Mall Foundation** (Jackson, MS), an anchor health services facility that promotes local economic and community development opportunities with a health-based lens
- **Little Tokyo Services Center** (Los Angeles, CA), a neighborhood-based community development organization that focuses on affordable housing development, social services, and community organizing and planning.
- **Southwest Minnesota Housing Partnership** (southwestern Minnesota), a rural community development corporation that engages in comprehensive housing and community development
- **Zuni Youth Enrichment Project** (Zuni Pueblo, NM), a youth development organization that promotes healthy lifestyles among Zuni youth and families.

“The Fairmount Park Conservancy is incredibly honored and excited to have been selected as one of six national participants in Art Place America’s Community Development Investments Program,” said **Kathryn Ott Lovell, Executive Director of the Fairmount Park Conservancy**. “Building upon the rich history of arts and culture within Fairmount Park, we look forward to working with Philadelphia’s extraordinary local artists, arts organizations, and cultural institutions as we infuse arts strategies into our efforts to enhance and activate our city’s parks and recreational spaces.”

Originally founded as a fundraising arm for the former Fairmount Park Commission, the Fairmount Park Conservancy’s mission and work has evolved dramatically in recent years beyond solely fundraising to position the organization as a collaborative leader and partner of Philadelphia’s park system. Today, the Conservancy works closely with Philadelphia Parks & Recreation to develop and implement projects and programs that support, improve, and enhance Philadelphia’s parks and serve the communities that depend on them through park stewardship, civic initiatives, and environmental education.

Michael DiBerardinis, Deputy Mayor for Environmental and Community Resources and Commissioner of Philadelphia Parks & Recreation, said, “Receiving this investment from a national organization like ArtPlace America confirms

that Philadelphia’s model of collaboration and partnership in parks stewardship is not only working – it’s showing a way forward for other cities around the country.”

Participation in ArtPlace’s Community Development Investment program will help the Conservancy continue on its growth and impact trajectory, as the funding will be used to build the Conservancy’s organizational capacity in service of new arts-based partnerships and to implement new programming and projects ideas that emerge from those partnerships. Participation in the Community Development Investments program will help the Conservancy introduce arts-based strategies into its work and measure how those strategies can help achieve organizational and community goals and execute projects that involve the arts in community planning, engagement, programming, design, and development.

The Fairmount Park Conservancy will host a community forum for anyone interested in learning more about their work and ArtPlace’s CDI program on October 22, 2015, at 4pm at the Please Touch Museum (4231 Avenue of the Republic, Philadelphia, PA).

To view the full list of Community Development Investments please visit www.artplaceamerica.org.

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ABOUT THE FAIRMOUNT PARK CONSERVANCY:

The Fairmount Park Conservancy exists to champion the Fairmount Park system. Its mission is to work as a collaborative partner to lead and support efforts that preserve and improve Fairmount Park to enhance the quality of life and stimulate the economic development of the Greater Philadelphia Region. The Fairmount Park Conservancy fulfills its mission by leading signature capital projects, innovative programs, and historic preservation efforts throughout Fairmount Park; by developing and leveraging resources for the park; and by promoting the parks’ unique assets and contributions, including nearly 50 historic properties now under Conservancy management. The Fairmount Park system covers more than 10,200 acres and is considered one of the largest urban park systems in the world. It includes a network of more than 100 neighborhood parks and contains some of the region’s most famous treasures and attractions.



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The Conservancy works in close collaboration with Philadelphia Parks & Recreation, the City department that is most engaged in the lives of residents and visitors alike on a daily basis. Through its programs, policies and physical amenities, Philadelphia Parks & Recreation promotes the well-being of the City, its citizens and visitors, by offering beautiful natural landscapes and parks, historically significant resources, high quality recreation centers and athletic programs, along with enriching cultural and environmental programs.

For more information, please visit fairmountparkconservancy.org or myphillypark.org.

ABOUT ARTPLACE AMERICA: ArtPlace America (ArtPlace) is a ten-year collaboration of foundations, banks, and federal agencies that exists to position art and culture as a core sector of comprehensive community planning and development in order to help strengthen the social, physical, and economic fabric of communities. Visit www.artplaceamerica.org for more information.

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