



A CHIEF CULTURE OFFICER AIDS THE SUCCESS OF DIVERSITY, EQUITY  
AND INCLUSION WITHIN LOCAL ARTS AGENCIES

Channie Jones

Major paper submitted to the faculty of Goucher College in partial  
fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of  
Master of Arts in Arts Administration  
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## Abstract

<b>Title of Thesis:</b>	A Chief Culture Officer Aids the Success of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion within Local Arts Agencies
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Local arts agencies can function as community builders by addressing diversity, equity and inclusion. Research has shown that diversity, equity and inclusion policies and practices lead to greater success in local arts agencies. Local arts agencies across the country have been addressing diversity, equity and inclusion in various ways. For local arts agencies to make greater progress in diversity, equity and inclusion within their organization, they need to employ a position that focuses on its implementation. A position such as or related to a Chief Culture Officer can aid a local arts agency's diversity, equity and inclusion efforts by integrating them into the organizational areas of human resources, programming and grantmaking. Research from interviews, reports and studies have shown that a position such as or related to a Chief Culture Officer can improve local arts agencies internal practices and external services to its constituent arts organizations. Employing a Chief Culture Officer is feasible for local arts agencies that have accessible personnel funding and diversity, equity and inclusion invested leadership.

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Introduction</b>		1
	Concepts in Support of a Chief Culture Officer	3
	Chief Officer and Diversity, Equity and Inclusion	
	Research Methodology	4
	Summary of Research	4
<b>Chapter I:</b>	<b>LOCAL ARTS AGENCIES NEED A CHIEF CULTURE OFFICER</b>	
	The Leadership Distinction between Local Arts Agencies	7
	Governance of a 501(c)(3) LAA	8
	Organizational Structure for a Chief Culture Officer	10
	Local Arts Agencies and Community Partnerships	11
	Local Arts Agencies' Allocation of Resources	11
	Challenges of Implementing the Position of a Chief Culture Officer	12
	Local Arts Agencies Decision to Employ a Chief Culture Officer	14
<b>Chapter II:</b>	<b>DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION IN LOCAL ARTS AGENCIES AND ARTS ORGANIZATIONS</b>	
	Local Arts Agencies' Progress in Diversity, Equity and Inclusion	16
	Engagement through Diversity, Equity and Inclusion within Local Arts Agencies	17
	A Chief Culture Officer Promotes DEI and Manages Cultural Shifts	23
<b>Chapter III:</b>	<b>CONTRIBUTIONS OF CHIEF CULTURE OFFICERS TO ITS ARTS COMMUNITY</b>	
	The Importance of Internal Culture	26
	Impact of Chief Culture Officer	27
	Benefit of an Organization Employing a Position that is Dedicated to DEI	29

<b>Chapter IV:</b>	<b>BENEFITS OF FORMALIZING THE CHIEF CULTURE OFFICER ROLE IN A LOCAL ARTS AGENCY</b>	
	The Potential Impact of a Chief Culture Officer in Local Arts Agencies	31
	Chief Culture Officer can be Economically Beneficial to Local Arts Agencies	31
	Chief Culture Officer can be Culturally Beneficial to Local Arts Agencies	33
<b>Conclusion</b>	Summary of Research Findings	36
	Local Arts Agencies Addressing Diversity, Equity and Inclusion	36
	Arts Organizations Addressing Diversity, Equity and Inclusion	37
	The Challenges of LAAs Addressing Diversity, Equity And Inclusion	38
	Arts and Culture Leaders Addressing Diversity, Equity and Inclusion	39
<b>Works Cited</b>		42

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 1:	PERCENTAGE OF EQUITY TARGETING LAAS MENTIONING EACH SOCIAL IDENTIFY BY REGION	18
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## Introduction

Art and culture are valuable pillars that support a foundation of a growing community. As stewards of these pillars, arts administrators cultivate the emerging artistic talent and creativity of community arts organizations. Diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) is vital to the cultural growth of a community. Because of its necessity, arts organizations and local arts agencies (LAAs) should prioritize DEI. There has been a growing trend of LAAs addressing DEI within their practices, but there needs to be more evidence to validate the success of these efforts. The Grant Makers in America article “Local Arts Agencies: Growing, Serving, Advancing” states:

In 2015, Americans for the Arts partnered with the National Endowment for the Arts to conduct the Local Arts Agency Census, the most comprehensive survey of the local arts agency field ever conducted. Its purpose was to illuminate the ever-adapting role these organizations play in ensuring the arts have a vital presence in every community.... Local arts agencies use the arts to build bridges between cultures and connect communities. Sixty-one percent of LAAs increase the diversity of the arts organizations and individuals they serve through their programs, funding, and partnerships. One-third of LAAs (35 percent) felt they “have an appropriate level of diversity” in their organization.

Thirty- nine percent have written diversity policies for staff, and 29 percent have policies for their boards. Not surprisingly, board and staff at LAAs with written diversity policies are less likely to be all white (27 percent for boards, 39 percent for staff), compared to agencies with no written policies (45 percent for boards, 58 percent for staff). (Cohen et al.)

Though there has been progress, LAAs need additional DEI support in implementation and oversight to fulfill this persistent deficiency.

Cultural equity embodies the values, policies, and practices that ensure that all people—including but not limited to those who have been historically underrepresented based on race and ethnicity, age, disability, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, socio-economic status, geography, citizenship status, or religion—are represented in the development of arts policy (Cornfield et al. 1).

A position such as a CCO could help LAAs build diverse community partnerships by being a liaison to the community.

Lambert Strategy Group describes the role of a CCO in the article, “Chief Culture Officer: How Can This Role Help.”

The CCO is responsible for incentivizing a team by promoting communication, alignment, goals and recognition. Think of it as an objective person analyzing the "culture" of a team. In 2017, a Chief Culture Officer ensured that evolving strategies, ideas and initiatives, on both a small and large scale, are in correspondence with the Company's overall mission and business goals. (“Chief Culture Officer”)

The mission of many nonprofit arts organizations is to serve all of their communities, and a CCO analyzing the LAAs team and assisting with DEI goals could ultimately impact the mission of all of its constituent arts organizations.

### Concepts in Support of a Chief Culture Officer

A study of LAAs conducted by Americans for the Arts in 2018 shows that LAAs are lacking in their success to address DEI. The 2018 Profile of Local Arts Agencies study surveyed 537 LAAs about their programs, budget and operations. The survey questioned how DEI pertains to a LAA's vision, policy, partnerships, programming, professional development and financial services. The survey identified that only fifty percent of LAAs have adopted a diversity, equity, and inclusion statement ("2018 Profile").

The capacity of LAAs to implement a position such as a CCO was assessed by research into the organizational structures and support of cultural arts in the communities served by those LAAs. The findings from this research are included in the discussion of LAAs' ability to implement DEI within their policies and practices. "LAAs are community connectors. Ninety-two percent maintain at least one partnership with a community agency or organization, and 76 percent have three or more ongoing collaborations" (Cohen et al.) As a cultural leader and keeper of public trust, the CCO works in partnership with stakeholders, including civic leaders, artists and organizations, to guide the future improvements to the community. The cultural vitality of a community is determined by the presence, participation and support of the arts. A champion such as a CCO could provide greater impact.

### Chief Culture Officer and Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Research Methodology

LAAAs can better achieve long term success in the areas of DEI within their arts communities by employing a CCO to provide human resources, grantmaking and community engagement guidance to their constituent arts organizations. Interviews with staff of LAAAs provided an understanding of how leaders address the social and economic needs of their constituent arts organizations which will be discussed further in the paper. The policies and practices implemented by LAAAs to successfully address DEI through human resources, grantmaking and community engagement which will also be explored.

Interviews about DEI implementation in community partnerships, programming, diverse leadership and professional development were conducted with leaders of local arts organizations and consultants to understand their perspectives on these important issues. The role of a CCO is more prevalent in non-arts industries resulting in limited research on the position within the arts industry. Industries such as technology, healthcare, manufacturing and businesses in other industries have solidified the role of the CCO to improve the effectiveness of their organizations. This type of position could be transferable to the arts and might achieve greater progress toward DEI.

### Summary of Research

The value of a CCO and its contribution to a healthy organizational culture within LAAAs and arts organizations will be examined. For example, organizations with a healthy organizational culture can experience higher staff productivity which in turn improves its artistic service to the public.

According to The National Utilities Diversity Council, data indicates organizations with a diverse workforce are 35 percent more likely to financially outperform the industry median. Scientists have concluded that diverse teams bring new and varying perspectives to problem solving, even helping companies avoid groupthink. The benefits of inclusion, diversity, equity, and access abound. Every organization is unique and defines diversity and inclusion differently—racial, cultural, socioeconomic, physical, gender, geographic, and more.

Through careful discussion with board members, senior management staff, and other key stakeholders, arts and culture leaders can create clarity and focus from the start in program planning, strategic planning, board recruitment, executive search, vendor relations, and overall hiring processes. Organizations with limited resources or experience in these matters should make it a priority to work with an outside facilitator who can navigate these complicated and sometimes challenging organizational changes. Ensuring that inclusion, diversity, equity, and access are central principles in all business practices will have a lasting impact on the success of individual organizations, the broader arts and culture sector, and the communities that they serve for years to come. (“Inclusion, Diversity, Equity”)

As suggested, an outside facilitator can assist in navigating these organizational changes. A CCO within a LAA could serve that role of facilitator for the LAAs constituent arts organizations.

The paper will support the concept of LAAs employing a CCO. Chapter I will highlight LAAs' need to employ a CCO. Chapter II will discuss the state of DEI within LAAs and their constituent arts organizations. Chapter III will examine the contributions that a CCO could make to his or her arts community. Finally, an argument for the validity of the role of Chief CCO within an LAA will be presented in Chapter IV.

## Chapter I LOCAL ARTS AGENCIES NEED A CHIEF CULTURE OFFICER

### The Leadership Distinctions between Local Arts Agencies

LAA's are formed using different legal structures such as private 501 (c)(3) organizations or LAA's that are divisions of municipal government. A 501 (c)(3) organization is governed by a board of directors and managed by a professional staff typically including an Executive Director. An LAA that is a part of municipal government ultimately reports to the mayor and city council. While the structures are different, both types of entities exist to serve the local arts community and its constituent arts organizations. The difference is in the perceived authority of a municipal official and an executive director of a nonprofit LAA. While municipal officials represent a taxing authority, a nonprofit relies on the municipal tax base for its funding but has no direct control over the size of its contribution from the city. The "Local Government Funding of Local Arts Agencies US" *Statista* reports that the total appropriations of local government funding of local arts agencies in the United States amounted to around 477.6 million dollars ("Local Government"). If all members of the community are funding city initiatives through their taxes, then multicultural representation of all citizens should exist as one of the goals within a LAA.

A LAA that is a part of municipal government could appoint a CCO and give him or her the necessary power to carry out cultural policy to impact DEI. This could be accomplished more readily than it could be for a private 501(c)(3) because the municipality can appropriate the funds for the position and vest the CCO with the authority to implement DEI across the entire arts community. This budgetary power translates into a perceived power to lead the DEI efforts. A LAA organized as a private 501(c)(3) must work within its own leadership structure to create a comparable position and must divert funds from other uses to do so. Working within a structure that includes a board and staff that must adopt common thinking in order to allocate the necessary funds can be challenging.

#### Governance of a 501(c)(3) LAA

The 2017 “Leading with Intent” report by Board Source identified that nonprofit organizations lacking diverse boards, “may result in strategies and plans that ineffectively address societal challenges and inequities, or even reinforce them (“Leading”). It is important to have diverse leadership including within the board and staff because a broad range of perspectives can create policies that fulfill the organization’s mission and effectively serve a diverse community.

If policies are to become practices, then there needs to be a level of support from the board and staff to encourage a diverse and equitable work culture. A CCO could affect the cultural growth of LAAs through recruitment and retention practices. When creating a strategy to address the lack of representation, the board must first recognize that diversity is linked to the success of an organization.

The “Diversity Matters” report measured the relationship between diversity and financial performance of an organization. The report identified that, more diverse companies are better able to win top talent, and improve their customer orientation, employee satisfaction, and decision making, leading to a virtuous cycle of increasing returns. That in turn suggests that diversity beyond gender and ethnicity and race as well as diversity of experience is also likely to bring some level of competitive advantage for firms that are able to attract and retain such diverse talent. (Hunt et al.)

Organizations that create inclusive policies attract and retain diverse leadership and staff.

It is the responsibility of the Board Chair to prioritize diversity on the Board by implementing recruitment strategies that target leaders of color. As a member of the staff leadership team, the Executive Director has the role of encouraging employees to prioritize organizational measures of diversity including increasing the retention rate of employees of color and including diverse voices in decision making. The 2017 “Leading with Intent” Board Source report states that,

[Nonprofit] boards are no more diverse than they were two years ago, and current recruitment priorities indicate this is unlikely to change. Despite reporting high levels of dissatisfaction with current board demographics — particularly racial and ethnic diversity — boards are not prioritizing demographics in their recruitment practices. Nearly a fifth of all chief executives report they are not prioritizing demographics

in their board recruitment strategy, despite being dissatisfied with their board's racial and ethnic diversity ("Leading").

A CCO could help with the diversification of the board and staff. The *Fast Company* article, "The Top Three Nonprofit Jobs Of The Future," states, "That's all part of the CCO's job description, as is responsibility for the organization's DEI efforts. The more that nonprofits double down on these issues, the more growth opportunities there will be for culture officers to take charge of them" (Ward). A CCO, held accountable for his or her performance in improving DEI practices, could impact the diversity of the board, staff and programming by the establishment of goals and objectives for the recruitment and retention of key personnel.

#### Organizational Structure for a Chief Culture Officer

Leaders within LAAs have to be responsive to the cultural shifts that are happening across the United States so that they can better address the needs of people that are underserved. It is essential for LAAs and the leadership of their constituent organizations to embrace those shifts to better advocate for cultural rights. In Grant McCracken's "Chief Culture Officer: How to Create a Living, Breathing Corporation," he describes how a CCO can provide solutions that impact the long term and sustainable growth of an organization. A CCO, by forecasting cultural shifts (McCracken 103) could help advise arts organizations how to broaden their audiences by providing programming that appeals to diverse communities.

### Local Arts Agencies and Community Partnerships

Americans for the Arts believes that an LAA plays, “a key role in uniting and connecting with local partners to address community needs and make their communities more healthy, vibrant and equitable” (“What do Local Arts Agencies”). LAAs value collaboration between organizations because the outcome diversifies its community partnerships which in turn will broaden their audiences (Cohen et al.). Community relations could be improved by a CCO through his or her effective networking guidance, which could lead to improved partnerships between local arts organizations.

### Local Arts Agencies’ Allocation of Resources

A CCO within a nonprofit LAA could have financial responsibilities which might include identifying additional sources of local, state and private funding and ensuring the equitable distribution of funds. The “Visualizing Equity in Grant Making Report” was conducted by the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies (NASAA). The data from state and LAAs’ grantmaking was analyzed to determine state distribution of funds to LAAs that serve various cultural groups including by race, income and education levels. The report highlights a disparity in racial equity in allocations of funding:

21% of state arts agencies report serving Black/African Americans populations;  
19% of state arts agencies report serving Hispanic/ Latinx populations;  
6% of state arts agency awardees report serving Asian populations. (National Assembly of State Arts Agencies)

Effective implementation of equitable grant allocation includes creating funding opportunities for underrepresented individual artists, cultural groups and organizations.

Thirteen percent of local arts agencies have grantmaking or funding programs that adhere to a diversity policy for constituents (“Research Report”). Constituent arts organizations rely on LAAs for funding and financial guidance to be sustainable. A CCO would ensure that the LAA is fulfilling its responsibilities to arts organizations within the community by providing, “direct investment in the arts and culture community through grants and other financial support programs for artists and arts and cultural organizations or groups” (“What do Local Arts Agencies Do?”).

### Challenges of Implementing the Position of a Chief Culture Officer

Though the role of a CCO is more prevalent in the for-profit sector, there are challenges to implement the leadership role within an arts community and LAA (Ward). The LAAs may receive criticism for the board's choice of a CCO if the community does not think the person accurately represents diversity in their community. Another concern is that funding this position would lessen funding for other projects. If the executive leadership team within a LAA does not see the benefit of employing a CCO, then the advisory role, at least not in this form, will not be available to the arts community.

Michelle Patrick, Performing Arts Manager at City of Las Vegas formerly served as the Community Arts Development & Americans with Disabilities Specialist at the Nevada Arts Council. During an interview, Patrick discussed, while at the Nevada Arts Council, that she facilitated workshops that devised DEI initiatives within the arts community. There she launched a cultural discussion program to help eliminate assumptions about culturally different communities and to build partnerships throughout the southern region of Nevada. Prior to her programming, the LAA did not have formal

policies and practices that focused on diversifying their board, staff, audience, grantmaking or programming.

Patrick agreed that a CCO would be beneficial to a LAA but has concerns about the organizational support. Before introducing the role in a LAA, she recommended that the staff and board attend DEI training to first receive information on the meaning of DEI and how it impacts the LAAs' internal policies and practices. This method creates a shared responsibility amongst the board and staff in how they want to proceed in creating DEI initiatives that serve the arts community.

The Caldwell Partners' article, "Could Appointing a Chief Cultural Officer be the Right Move for your Company?" states,

Some might argue that the ranks of leadership are already crowded enough, and although culture is important, further expanding the C-suite is not the answer. "I'm not sure we need a CCO, just engaged leaders who give thought to what it means to be a 'culture carrier,'" said Dave Winston, leader of Caldwell Partners' Industrial Practice and the leader of the Dallas office. Regardless of whether firms decide onboarding a CCO would be beneficial to them or not, one thing is for sure: Culture is important, and leaders have a key part to play in establishing and maintaining it. Indeed, opined Winston, "tone at the top' does more to influence [culture] than anything else" – but all too often, leaders misunderstand what setting this tone actually means ("Could Appointing").

While progress in DEI might be achieved with “engaged leaders” (“Could Appointing”), having a designated leadership role allows the CCO to focus on internal and external practices impacting culture within a business and nonprofit organization without responsibility for other business functions.

Whether a for-profit business or nonprofit arts organization, the leadership teams within both must recognize the importance of both internal and external culture. Winston acknowledges the influence the executive leadership team has when establishing a sense of culture within an organization (“Could Appointing”). A CCO, within an executive leadership position in an organization, could be influential in the internal management and external community relations of an organization.

#### Local Arts Agencies Decision to Employ a Chief Culture Officer

When faced with the option to employ a CCO, LAAs need to consider how current constituent arts organizations internally manage DEI and how the LAA can enhance their practices. McKinsey & Company research supports the benefit of a CCO within organizations to improve internal programs and policies (Hunt et al.). Recognizing the inability of many arts organizations to fund a CCO position, the benefit of internal programs and policies can be multiplied by sharing the knowledge and efforts of a CCO with constituent arts organizations of the LAA.

Chapter II provides support for LAAs employing a CCO by providing evidence of LAAs deficiencies in addressing organizational practices of DEI. LAAs cannot create equitable policies to service their constituent arts organizations without identifying their internal administrative biases. If a LAA does not have DEI embedded in practices and

policies, then it will not be equipped to assist constituent arts organizations in their DEI community efforts.

## Chapter II

# DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION IN LOCAL ARTS AGENCIES AND ARTS ORGANIZATIONS

### Local Arts Agencies' Progress in Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

DEI initiatives within the arts, naturally attract broader audiences and new participants to the arts. A CCO could lead and regulate DEI policies and practices of LAAs in the areas of grantmaking and community engagement. Again, as the primary focus of such a position there is accountability and the ability to concentrate on those things that would impact DEI. The Americans for the Arts report “Equitable Investment Policies and Practices in the Local Arts Field” provides data on how LAAs apply cultural equity in their policies and practices in grantmaking and community engagement (Lord). In 2018, Americans for the Arts commissioned the Profile of Local Arts Agencies, a survey that examined how, when, and where 537 LAAs across the nation consider equity in the deployment of their funds, time, space, and staff (“Research Report”). The report investigates LAAs’ equitable investment in arts and culture including staffing, board representation, DEI, grantmaking and programming.

The report states, “Each year the United States’ 4,500 local arts agencies collectively invest an estimated \$2.8 billion in their local arts and culture ecosystems. This includes an estimated \$600 million in direct investment in artists and arts and culture

organizations through grants, contracts, and loans” (Lord). The report suggests that LAAs are increasing their investment and developing strategies to make equity a priority. The *Equity and Engagement in the Arts: Regional Differences in the Missions of Local Arts Agencies* in the United States report also shows growing trends in LAAs investment in DEI. The report states that, “LAAs identify cultural inequities and address them with grant programs, education programs, public art programs, and capacity-building support for local underrepresented groups” (Cornfield et al. 2).

Data gathered from the 2018 Profile of Local Arts Agencies survey pointed out deficiencies in LAAs’ practices related to their investments in DEI. Only half of these DEI policies were committed to writing. “LAAs equally rely on written and unwritten informal policies related to diversity, equity, and inclusion, depending on the policy area. Written policies were most prevalent in terms of staffing, hiring, boards or commissions, grantmaking, contractors or interns” (Lord). “Among all respondents, 50% currently adhere to a policy of their own making or one adopted from another agency or parent organization. This is an increase of twenty-one percent since a similar survey in 2015” (Lord). While these results are encouraging, it is likely that a CCO dedicated to improvement in DEI could demonstrate to organizations the value of written policies for which organizations could hold themselves accountable in areas of grantmaking.

#### Engagement through Diversity, Equity and Inclusion within Local Arts Agencies

In the Arts Consulting Group article “Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Access: Why Now in the Arts and Culture Sector?” the firm examines the impact of DEI in the Arts and Culture Sector.

Since audiences connect to organizations through their programming, it is important that content and engagement strategies seek to develop a relationship with the communities in which they serve. Organizations that invest in more structured engagement reap benefits that affect all areas of the business and have a long-term impact. Diversity work should be driven by the mission of the organization. (“Inclusion, Diversity, Equity”)

A CCO, with a narrower focus than an Executive Director, could make it their professional objective to steward DEI initiatives, such as DEI mission alignment and audience engagement of their constituent arts organizations within their community.

The challenge is identifying what cultural inequity looks like in each arts community then creating a policy that promotes inclusive practices. For LAAs that did incorporate equity and engagement in their mission statements, there was a regional trend on prioritization of specific identities that are shown in Table 1.

Table 1  
 Percentage of Equity-Targeting LAAs Mentioning Each Social Identity by Region in Equity report.

<u>Social Identity</u>	<u>All Regions</u>	<u>Midwest &amp; Northeast</u>	<u>Coastal South &amp; West</u>	<u>Inland South &amp; West</u>
<u>Race</u>	<u>71%</u>	<u>71%</u>	<u>50%</u>	<u>100%</u>
<u>Age</u>	<u>65%</u>	<u>57%</u>	<u>75%</u>	<u>67%</u>

<u>Ability</u>	<u>65%</u>	<u>86%</u>	<u>25%</u>	<u>67%</u>
<u>LGBT</u>	<u>59%</u>	<u>57%</u>	<u>25%</u>	<u>83%</u>
<u>Socioeconomic Status</u>	<u>59%</u>	<u>71%</u>	<u>25%</u>	<u>67%</u>
<u>Ethnicity</u>	<u>53%</u>	<u>71%</u>	<u>25%</u>	<u>50%</u>
<u>Gender</u>	<u>53%</u>	<u>43%</u>	<u>25%</u>	<u>83%</u>
<u>N</u>	<u>17</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>6</u>

[The above table] shows the percentage of LAAs mentioning each of the seven most prevalent social identities by region. This table’s depth of description greatly enhances a granular understanding of regional trends and anomalies in targeting social identities. As reported on the basis of the findings [in this table], race is the most frequently targeted social identity, but this table adds regional specificity.... (Cornfield et al. 8)

LAAAs vary on how they address social change, specific to their geographic market, through civic engagement. Art-based civic engagement includes activities that can be used to address cultural differences and strengthen the community. As demonstrated by Kelly Lee, Chief Cultural Officer, at the Philadelphia Office of Arts, Culture, and the Creative Economy, a CCO position could be instrumental in illustrating the importance of using programming as an entry point in community engagement (Baker). One of the types of programs offered by the Philadelphia Office of Arts, Culture, and the Creative Economy is the Neighborhood Arts Programming which, supports free arts and cultural programming in Philadelphia’s public neighborhood spaces year-round. Neighborhood Arts Programming encourages Philadelphians to connect with their communities and public spaces while closing the gap in access to opportunities for creativity. Initiatives include Performances in Public Spaces, Culture in Neighborhoods and Creative Avenues (“Programs”).

This is an example of community engagement through programming. Another example is the Southeast Connecticut Cultural Coalition that has partnered with a community foundation to provide board training and community engagement programming, including community conversations about DEI that feature curated exhibitions by artists of color (Bury).

The Metro Nashville Arts Commission is a LAA that changed its internal practices by creating professional development training and staff discussions on how to increase public access and inclusion within the arts community. These training sessions include racial diversity awareness through recruitment and onboarding hiring procedures.

The goal for these organizational practices is to embed the priority of DEI in the organizational culture. Caroline Vincent, Executive Director of Metro Nashville Arts Commission, believes that a CCO could help the LAA efforts in DEI initiatives. Currently Metro Nashville Arts has tried to shift from DEI being the sole responsibility of one staff member to a shared responsibility amongst all staff members. Vincent believes for their organization, “DEI needs to take place from a more distributive model” (Vincent). The agency is currently questioning if they need to hire a specific staff member to lead or if this responsibility can be shared between multiple staff members. The ultimate goal of any arts organization should be the inclusion of DEI practices into daily operations. However, a dedicated resource such as a CCO might be required to help achieve that goal.

Diverse community voices in the leadership, staff and volunteers can be enhanced within a LAA through recruitment practices. The working paper, “Diversity on Cultural Boards: Implications for Organizational Value and Impact”, shows the racial and ethnic composition of arts boards across the nation. There is a benefit of having a CCO within a LAA executive team because according to this study, the majority of LAA executive leadership is white. The leadership within agencies being predominantly white precludes a diverse perspective in decision making.

The mean size of the arts boards in the study was 14 members (with a standard deviation of 10). On average, 91 percent of board members were white, 4 percent were African-American or black, 2 percent were Hispanic, and 3 percent were in the “Other” category. (Ostrower 7)

As a response to the racial inequity of arts leadership, LAAs like Metro Nashville Arts Commission have created programs to address the lack of diverse leadership.

Metro Nashville Arts Commission (Metro Arts) created the Racial Equity in Arts Leadership (REAL) program designed to drive racial equity in Nashville's arts sector. REAL brings together arts administrators, executive leaders of cultural institutions, community-based arts organizations, and individual artists for regular seminars and organizational workshops that provide insight into how institutional practices such as hiring processes and arts programming choices can advance racial equity in our community. REAL participants meet regularly to address challenges they encounter as they work to build more equitable practices in their institutions. ("Racial Equity in Arts Leadership")

Programming not only requires representation of the cultural makeup of the community, but organizations should strive for a staff makeup that is representative of the community. In the Forbes article, "Is Diversity Good for Business?" Llopis writes about how diverse representation within leadership leads to more informed decision making and planning. "Two-thirds of our new hires last year were women and minorities...That is a huge demographic shift and you have to be prepared to retain those individuals by developing them, providing the right mentorship and sponsorship, and helping them advance into leadership roles" (Llopis). Diverse leadership within an arts organization can create authentic events and programs, to appeal to the diverse community that the organization serves.

The Society for Human Resource Management article “Workplace Diversity and Inclusion Gets Innovative” is about the current shift in recruitment and retention of diverse employees. Organizations are putting diversity and inclusion at the forefront of practices because of the added benefits of having a diverse staff (Parsi). As stated earlier, The National Utilities Diversity Council reports that organizations with a diverse workforce have shown an increase in profits and inclusive decision-making practices (“Inclusion, Diversity, Equity”).

As previously mentioned, the Arts Consulting Group firm examines the impact of DEI in the Arts and Culture Sector.

Education and community engagement departments with diverse staffs are becoming more common. However, building diverse curatorial and artistic teams remain a challenge for all areas of the arts and culture sector. The same is also true in areas of administration and executive leadership where inequities are most pronounced. Organizations cannot remove individual bias but they can look at their policies, procedures, and behaviors to minimize institutional biases that may be impacting the organizational goals around diversity. (“Inclusion, Diversity, Equity”)

With a growing percentage of the US population being people of color, organizations want their organizations to reflect this changing customer base (Parsi).

#### A Chief Culture Officer Promotes DEI and Manages Cultural Shifts

John Cusano served for over a decade as the Community Development Coordinator for the Connecticut Office of the Arts, Department of Community and

Economic Development and now works as an arts consultant. During an interview, he discussed how LAAs are not receiving enough assistance in implementing DEI practices from the local or state government. The lack of resources and funding prevents LAAs from addressing DEI in an authentic and impactful way. The current organizational practices such as committees that address DEI and training programs designed to understand DEI are not always beneficial or effective in improving DEI in the organization's community.

When discussing LAAs organizational practices, Cusano states, "Many of the best practices are largely influenced by for-profit corporate practices. These practices are not sufficient or relevant to the 21st century. These practices are no longer effective in providing the necessary support to the arts community." In addition to practices that Cusano addresses such as the inadequacies of just having an equity statement, he suggests that there needs to be a behavioral change within the leadership of the LAA in order for them to be effective in creating and implementing DEI policy. In terms of the recommendation to employ a CCO, Cusano agreed that it would be helpful to have a position such as a CCO to focus on DEI in the areas of grantmaking, human resources and community engagement. Although in support of such a position, he thought that the organizational, structural change within arts organizations could also be used to achieve more success in DEI.

A CCO could be responsive to trends and cultural shifts to better address DEI as these trends and shifts unfold. In the corporate sector, firms often have a designated position to track these changes. A CCO could fill that role in a LAA thus influencing the entire arts community by distributing the information to constituent arts organizations. A

*Nonprofit Quarterly* article titled, “Staging a Comeback: How the Nonprofit Arts Sector Has Evolved since the Great Recession”, explains that the unforeseen growth in underrepresented populations caused audience engagement challenges for arts organizations. Their traditional programming did not represent the changing population or appeal to a broad audience. This oversight resulted in people feeling not welcomed to traditional arts institutions (Cunniff and Hawkins). Chapter III will examine how leadership, that includes a CCO within a LAA, could help bridge the divide between audience and arts organization by providing guidance on the demographic changes facing the arts.

## Chapter III CONTRIBUTIONS OF CHIEF CULTURE OFFICERS TO ITS ARTS COMMUNITY

### The Importance of Internal Culture

LAAAs like some for-profit businesses question the impact that a CCO can have, but data has demonstrated that ignoring internal culture can negatively affect an organization.

Some for-profit organizations have not yet been sold on the importance of culture-building, dismissing it as nothing more than the latest gimmick, but there is an abundance of research suggesting that failure to bolster corporate culture leads to a cavalcade of undesirable realities. These include reduced employee engagement, low performance, high turnover, lackluster customer service and depleted company loyalty among both consumers and workers. According to Forbes contributor Erika Andersen, in the 2012 Forbes article, “The Most Important Reason People Fail in a New Job”, Andersen cited a statistic that claimed as many as eighty-nine percent of hires that don’t work out can be attributed to cultural misalignment. With these types of numbers in the mix, companies ignore culture at their peril (“Could Appointing”)

A LAA that finds itself with high turnover and lackluster customer service cannot effectively engage its communities.

### Impact of Chief Culture Officers

The city of Philadelphia’s statement on diversity is: “Diversity and a culture of inclusion benefit from the presence, participation and opportunity for full involvement of individuals from different races, ethnicities, sexual orientations, abilities, genders, gender identities or expressions, national origins, religions, beliefs and socio-economic backgrounds (Executive Order No.1-16, 1). One of the duties of Philadelphia’s Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer is to work within the city government to provide guidance to the Mayor, city departments, agencies, authorities, boards and commissions to, “Develop, design and work with the relevant agencies to implement a strategic plan to accomplish the City’s diversity and inclusion vision and goals” (Executive Order No.1-16, 3).

As in the Philadelphia example, a CCO within a LAA could provide strategic planning support for both the LAA and its constituent arts organizations. Important strategic planning practices include identifying the need for diverse leadership and targeting staff and board candidates from underrepresented groups for recruitment, retention and leadership promotion. Another practice that could be a part of a strategic plan is creating opportunities for diverse communities to engage with the organization such as creating multicultural programming that is inclusive of a broad range of audiences.

The article from *Fast Company*, discussed previously in relation to the responsibilities of a CCO, states:

Other industries have already started adopting Chief Culture Officers, and many nonprofits are now following suit. As community needs change, nonprofits at every level of the sector are searching for better ways to deliver their services. Like every business, nonprofits are also seeking opportunities for scale and efficiency. They, too, are often walking a fine line between the pressures of meeting today's goals and planning for the future. To do all this, nonprofits will have to invest in both the people and technologies they'll need to fulfill their missions in the future as many already are. (Ward)

It is more efficient for LAAs to hire a CCO to provide guidance to its constituent arts organizations on the impact of DEI in all areas of their business than it is for those organizations to employ their own staff with those skill sets. There is a need for understanding of multiculturalism within arts organizations to better serve the arts community, but many organizations lack the resources to fund a dedicated position.

Executive teams within corporate organizations recognize the influence multiculturalism has on the workforce and consumer satisfaction. In the Society for Human Resource Management article, "Chief Culture Officers Fill a Growing Need", Kathy Gurchiek interviews culture expert Debbie Robbins. Robbins discusses how smaller organizations are following the success of larger organizations like Google and Zappos to employ a CCO to manage culture and build sustainable growth. During the interview, Robbins states that, "The building, managing and merging of cultures has

become a full-time job in the new economy. These demands now exceed the capacities of most HR divisions and call for a new kind of specialist” (qtd. in Gurchiek).

The CCO position has its origins in the for-profit sector; arts organizations can reap the same benefits as for-profit organizations by adding the position to an executive leadership team within an arts agency. This position promotes policies and practices that create an inclusive arts culture by being a champion for DEI and cultural equity.

Americans for the Arts provides the following definition:

Cultural equity embodies the values, policies, and practices that ensure that all people—including but not limited to those who have been historically, and continue to be, underrepresented based on race/ethnicity, age, disability, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, socioeconomic status, geography, citizenship status, or religion—are represented in the development of arts policy; the support of artists; the nurturing of accessible, thriving venues for expression; and the fair distribution of programmatic, financial, and informational resources. (“Definition”).

#### Benefit of an Organization Employing a Position that is Dedicated to DEI

In this global workforce, diversity is perceived as a performance enhancer for organizations.

Companies that exhibit gender and ethnic diversity are, respectively, 15% and 35% more likely to financially outperform those that do not. According to global management consulting firm McKinsey & Company, research indicates

that organizations with more racial and gender diversity bring more sales revenue, more customers and higher profits. (Parsi)

It is clear that there is value in practices of DEI. By employing a CCO within a LAA those practices could be efficiently and economically provided to constituent arts organizations. The benefits of DEI practices would be enjoyed by all constituent arts organizations within the community.

## Chapter IV BENEFITS OF FORMALIZING THE CHIEF CULTURE OFFICER ROLE IN A LOCAL ARTS AGENCY

### The Potential Impact of a Chief Culture Officer in Local Arts Agencies

A CCO could provide LAAs with more efficient methods of identifying, measuring and implementing DEI policies within LAAs by being tasked to integrate DEI in operations, programming and governance. The Southeastern Connecticut Cultural Coalition is a LAA that is in the beginning phase of addressing its internal practices by creating professional development training and coordinating community discussions. Wendy Bury, Executive Director of Southeastern Connecticut Cultural Coalition, believes that a CCO can help LAAs create policies and practices in support of DEI within the community. From her perspective, having a CCO as an additional employee in an organization with limited staff would be extremely beneficial to a LAA. Bury acknowledges the difficulty in addressing DEI issues, especially since it is uncommon for LAAs to have a human resource department to provide DEI resources to its staff and constituent arts organizations.

### A Chief Culture Officer Can Be Economically Beneficial to Local Arts Agencies

The added value a CCO brings to LAAs, is that he or she could improve the effectiveness of their daily operations and create a trickle-down effect to their constituent arts organizations. As a leader, he or she could ensure that a LAA builds the artistic community by leveraging, “their broader network and resources to drive public goodwill

and communicate the importance and value of arts and culture in healthy, equitable and vibrant communities" ("What Do Local Arts Agencies Do?").

In the Lambert Strategy Group article, "What is the Chief Culture Officer?" the firm describes the role of a CCO and how the position within an organization can contribute to its economic success.

Cultural identity in business is essential because, as Business Model Canvas originator Alexander Osterwalder describes: "Corporate cultures of many organizations are outdated." Indeed, companies with a chief culture officer or similar roles tend to retain more employees and cultivate a better culture of excellence. (Lambert Strategy Group)

A CCO could provide a more valuable internal analysis of an organization than an outside consultant. McCracken in his support of a CCO position recommends that, "We need someone with an enduring knowledge of our culture and our corporation" (McCracken 39). As discussed earlier by Ostrower, strong internal culture leads to better understanding of external constituents. In this way, a CCO can provide solutions that impact the long term and sustainable growth of an organization.

Sustainable DEI practices could be accomplished by an arts organization using the arts as a development tool to improve the economic function and cultural vitality of its community. The "Neighborhood Diversity, Economic Health, and the Role of the Arts" report examined how diversity creates a positive impact on the city's economic and social productivity. "Policymakers continue to implement policies to maintain or increase diversity in the hopes of generating economic growth" (Foster et al.). Equitable

grantmaking practices encouraged by a CCO can distribute funds within a community to assist with the economic growth.

Granting organizations often require arts organizations to have well developed community partnerships that represent a broad audience. “Across the country, arts organizations are actively seeking to broaden their relevance, appeal, and reflection of America’s changing demographics. Arts funders are involved in this effort, too. Both Grantmakers in the Arts and the Ford Foundation have made racial equity an organizational priority” (Cunnifee and Hawkins). With the aid of a CCO’s guidance on presenting a DEI case, constituent arts organizations will be more likely to receive funding from granting organizations which support sustainability.

#### A Chief Culture Officer Can be Culturally Beneficial to Local Arts Agencies

A CCO could build a LAA’s staff’s cultural awareness and, in turn, broaden the community’s cultural awareness.

The baseline for creating an inclusive work environment is by addressing organizational policies and practices that were influenced by unconscious biases. This process of workforce development is a people centered approach that uses education as professional development to create an open, culturally sensitive and productive work culture. (Parsi)

The desired result can be accomplished by LAAs assuming responsibility to train their constituent arts organizations on DEI with CCOs creating the training and helping arts organizations become more culturally aware.

The outcomes of DEI training can lead to culturally inclusive and healthy work environments. The National Council of Nonprofits article “Why Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Matter for Nonprofits” states,

We believe that embracing diversity, equity, and inclusion as organizational values are a way to intentionally make space for positive outcomes to flourish, whether in the nonprofit capacity building or public policy spheres...For some organizations, the moral imperative of equity may be enough to spur action. Others may be moved by data showing that diversity can boost the quality of decision-making and that a diverse workplace can encourage people to be “more creative, more diligent, and harder-working” Studies have also shown that a more diverse staff can foster enhanced innovation. And when board members, employees, and others who shape the values and activities of a nonprofit come from a wide array of backgrounds, they each bring unique perspectives that shape, blend, and influence how to advance the nonprofit’s mission and solve problems in potentially more inclusive and innovative ways. (“Why Diversity”)

In the Harvard Business Review article, “Proof That Positive Work Cultures Are More Productive,” Emma Seppala and Kim Cameron state, “In sum, a positive workplace is more successful over time because it increases positive emotions and well-being. This, in turn, improves people’s relationships with each other and amplifies their abilities and their creativity.” As indicated earlier by Ostrower, a strong internal culture leads to a better relationship with external audiences. By understanding their diverse communities,

arts organizations deepen their connection to existing patrons and broaden their appeal to attract new audiences. Organizational practices that recognize diversity can become embedded in LAAs so that DEI becomes a priority of the LAA and its constituent arts organizations.

## Conclusion

### Summary of Research Findings

As change agents, arts administrators must address the needs of both existing and future community demographics by maintaining transparency and demonstrating equitable decision-making while responding to changing community profiles. LAAs can function as community builders that integrate underrepresented groups and cultures with the perspectives of the current white majority arts leadership to create new visions for a thriving artistic community. A position such as a CCO or related position is a necessity to a LAA because it fulfills the arts community's expectations on how the public should be supported ("What Do Local Arts Agencies Do?"). While there is no national study to measure the success achieved in DEI implemented by a CCO within a LAA, research and studies have reported that DEI policies and practices within a LAA improves organizational staff diversity and decision making which leads to greater success in efforts to serve their constituent arts organizations.

### Local Arts Agencies Addressing Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

Data gathered from findings in the 2018 Local Arts Agency Profile showed how participating local arts agencies invest in DEI. The most prevalent areas of investment by local arts agencies: programming, 36%; partnerships, 25%; grantmaking, 23%; marketing, 20%; services, 19%. This mix of investment types demonstrates that LAAs can adopt a variety of DEI practices despite their budget size. LAAs' functions that improved when DEI practices were applied were grantmaking, community partnerships, programming, leadership and professional development.

Though there has been progress in LAAs efforts in establishing DEI in its policies and practices, the hiring of a leadership position such as a CCO can strengthen LAAs internal DEI structure through staff and board recruitment and retention of leaders of color. A CCO can also enhance LAAs external services by integrating DEI practices through equitable grantmaking, culturally authentic programming and diversifying community partnerships. There is a need for LAAs to change their current efforts because evidence shows that the art sector has not achieved enough success in DEI (Cohen et al.).

It is clear from evidence that the position of a CCO is not the only way to incorporate DEI into LAAs and influence constituent arts organizations, but having a person to singularly focus on that work increases the probability that greater success can be achieved. In order for LAAs to implement DEI practices, a DEI organizational strategy is required. A position such as a CCO that understands DEI and the organizational structure and operations of LAAs could develop a strategy to impact LAAs' internal human resources, grantmaking and programming practices. This position not only could improve LAAs DEI initiatives but also enhance its role of distributing resources, stewarding public trust and holding arts organizations in its community accountable to specific DEI goals. With the guidance of a CCO, LAAs could create strategies to creatively problem solve and engage the public as to how they can better address community issues and build capacity.

#### Arts Organizations Addressing Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

As arts organizations take an internal assessment of biases and strides towards DEI, those organizations will require resources to sustain their DEI efforts. Arts organizations could lobby their LAA to employ a position such as a CCO to develop and

instruct in DEI best practices. With advisory from a CCO, arts organizations are more likely to diversify programming, staffing and community partnerships to engage a broader audience. A CCO could assist an organization with achieving its strategic planning goals by overseeing organizational performances and then identifying areas of improvement to create policies. This approach to centralize DEI efforts leads to an arts community working toward a common community-wide goal towards a united goal of DEI that is overseen by a position such as a CCO.

### The Challenges of LAAs Addressing Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

For LAAs that are financially capable and have DEI-invested leadership and staff, a position such as a CCO could still face barriers in actualizing the LAA's DEI goals. The barrier that presents a challenge to LAAs actualizing their DEI goals is the systemic marginalization of underrepresented communities which in turn limits those communities' access to the arts. This can be addressed by LAAs first integrating elements of DEI and cultural equity within their internal organizational practices. A LAA can accomplish success in the areas of DEI within their arts communities by establishing diverse board and staff leadership that values and implements DEI within their human resources, grantmaking and programming policies and practices to increase their constituent arts organizations' DEI policies and practices. The difficulty is achieving that without a more focused approach to change in each constituent organization. A position such as a CCO can influence the internal function of a LAA as a part of the senior leadership which in turn could lead to influence in the LAA's constituent arts organizations.

Another challenge that LAAs face is having funds available to implement DEI initiatives. “When parsed by budget size, the main finding is that midsize LAAs (\$100,000-\$1 million) spend a significantly higher percentage (over one third of their total budget) on payroll and personnel, and a significantly smaller percentage on grants and contracts” (Lord). If one third of mid-sized LAAs funding is for personnel, then investment in a DEI based leadership position such as a CCO will be influential to LAAs current DEI areas of investment and can be budgeted for long term DEI success. A CCO is a beneficial financial personnel investment because this leadership position impacts all facets of a LAA including the prevalent DEI areas of investments of programming, partnerships, grantmaking, marketing and services previously mentioned in the 2018 Local Arts Agency Profile. Since LAAs are already investing in these areas, hiring a CCO can enhance their current DEI efforts.

#### Arts and Culture Leaders Addressing Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

Arts administrators function as arts and cultural leaders whose forward-thinking challenges current policies that do not uphold cultural rights. Despite a socioeconomic system built to serve the majority in power, many of our nation’s leaders have considered how the arts can become an equalizer among all citizens. President John F. Kennedy was a cultural leader who worked with a combination of arts advocates to ensure equitable and democratic cultural rights for all Americans.

President John F. Kennedy was at the forefront of promoting cultural rights as a civil right. He, like other cultural leaders, was an advocate for the arts and supporter of

those in the progressive, creative communities. In 1963, President John F. Kennedy gave remarks at Amherst College about the future of the arts.

I look forward to an America which will reward achievement in the arts as we reward achievement in business or statecraft. I look forward to an America which will steadily raise the standards of artistic accomplishment and which will steadily enlarge cultural opportunities for all of our citizens. And I look forward to an America which commands respect throughout the world not only for its strength but for its civilization as well. And I look forward to a world which will be safe not only for democracy and diversity but also for personal distinction (Kennedy).

We have yet to realize President Kennedy's dream.

Though LAAs do not require a CCO to achieve success, they are in need of effective DEI policies and practices that are managed by a DEI invested member of its senior leadership team. A person in a position of power and influence could establish change in LAA's DEI policies and practice as well as influence their constituent arts organization's policies and practice. This person within a LAA could enhance the presence of arts and culture in the community.

The CCO could support LAAs' efforts by, "providing free or broad public arts and cultural experiences and opportunities to their community" ("What Do Local Arts Agencies Do?"). As the national population of minority groups grows, LAAs will need to adapt their policies and practices to accommodate for more diverse stakeholders, staff and board leadership. If attention is paid to cultural shifts, then LAAs could receive the same improvement that for-profit organizations experience when hiring a CCO or related position. Businesses that appoint someone to focus on culture often do so following

periods of rapid growth, after a merger or acquisition to ensure consistency throughout the new organization, or to support a change in business strategy (Gurchiek).

If LAAs do not adapt to the surrounding culture by employing a position such as a CCO to recognize cultural shifts within the community, then they eventually will face conflict by failing to represent the entire arts community. LAAs that are representative of all of the demographics of their communities have a social and economic advantage. The advantage of an organizational structure with a position such as a CCO is that he or she can create and govern local policies that implement DEI that benefit the LAA and constituent arts organizations. Now is the time for DEI to be considered at all levels of arts organizations, with a CCO being the ultimate solution for organizations with the resources to employ the position.

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