Core Member Organization Opportunity:

Connection Sparks

Do you find yourself wishing you could connect to the staff of other organizations in a less structured but intentional way? Or maybe you've been wanting to connect with a kindred organization in a different place that you've been admiring from afar (we call these "organizational crushes"!).

Connection Sparks are an ongoing opportunity for Creative Change Coalition Core Member Organizations to connect with peer community organizations locally or across distance to exchange ideas, deepen relationships, and build a community of practitioners at home and afar.

In this non-competitive process, Core Member Organizations enter the drawing by completing a simple form. 10 organizations receive $2,000 in each cycle (2 cycles per year). In exchange, we request a photo and your answers to a brief reflection and feedback survey.

Not sure if you are a Core Member Organization? Check the Coalition Map www.creativechangecoalition.org, or email Sara@springboardforthearts.org.

Please review all Connection Sparks details in this packet before completing a submission.

Questions? Email Sara Sawicki at sara@springboardforthearts.org

Connect to other place-based organizations that overlap in mission, values, geographic reach, target communities, topical focus, and/or mutual admiration.

For example, these organizations might be:

- cultural community-based
- direct service
- neighborhood or regional
- arts and culture focused
- topically focused
- rotary associations
- libraries
- economic development
- housing
- business associations

Basically, you could use this opportunity to connect with any organizations that you are curious about because they also do work that benefits community in a shared place. If you are an arts-based organization - we encourage you to use this opportunity to think outside of the arts box.

We know when you have time to connect, you share ideas, rekindle relationships, find ways to support each other, and even coordinate together to leverage your work to achieve more positive outcomes for your communities.

When you work in community, every day goes too fast and every day there is something new, so sometimes an external opportunity (or excuse) is what can help you carve out a bit of time to slow down and connect to the people and organizations that can help you learn, grow and feel inspired.

Creative Change Coalition Core Member Organizations are eligible to apply for $2,000 to complete one of the following:

1) PEER ORGANIZATION MEETING

- **Host a local meeting in your place/location with 6-10 staff members of different organizations to catch up, share what's working, what's exciting, and listen for ways to align work and support one another.**
- At least two of the organizations represented shall be outside the Host's primary sector. For example, if Host organization is an arts and culture organization, two (2) of the other organizations should be outside of that.
- These organizations do not need to be Coalition Members (and may not even fit the description) but should share geography and some overlapping goals. For example you might invite the main street business association, local gallery, arts organizations, library, housing developer that has a public plaza, senior center that hosts art workshops, and your town planner.
- The stipend is meant to support Connection Sparks activity such as your time, meeting hospitality, travel stipends if other organizations are distant, childcare, etc.

2) PEER ORGANIZATION EXCHANGE

- **Visit in person with leadership of at least one peer organization that is 75 miles or more away from you, for self-structured learning and connecting in their place.**
- Examples might be an organization in another region that does similar work, work that you aspire to do, or has grown in a way that intrigues you. They do not need to be Creative Change Coalition members, but they probably fit the description.
- The stipend is meant to support Connection Sparks activity such as your time, meeting hospitality, childcare, etc.
- Travel must take place within the United States.

CONNECTION SPARKS ARE NOT FOR:

- Conference attendance (even if "meeting" other orgs there)
- Virtual meetings
- Planning or implementing a project

Eligibility:

- Must be a Creative Change Coalition Core Member Organization. If you are unsure, check the Coalition Map, or email Sara@springboardforthearts.org
- Core Member Organizations are eligible to enter a submission in any cycle, provided other eligibility criteria are met.
- This opportunity is designed for organizations, if your submission is drawn we will contract with and pay the organization. If you have any questions about this, please reach out.
- Your organization may only receive support for a Connection Spark once every two years, provided you completed your Connection Spark activity within the guidelines. If you do not complete your Connection Spark activity within the guidelines, your organization will be ineligible for future Connection Sparks opportunities.

Responsibilities:

- Complete an in-person peer organization meeting or exchange within six months of signing the agreement.
- Consider reaching out to those you know less and are curious about.
- You must meet and/or travel to connect in-person with staff of organizations for this activity. Meeting with independent individuals is not the focus. Meeting virtually is not eligible activity.
- For peer organization meetings: the staff of organizations invited must span multiple types of entities and sectors that share overlapping goals/communities/geography with your organization. Examples include cultural community-based, direct service, neighborhood or region, topically focused, libraries, economic development, housing, business associations, etc.
- For peer organization exchanges: Travel must take place within the United States.
- Listen, learn, share, laugh, eat and maybe even conspire/collaborate.
- The meeting or exchange must be a new activity/effort. These funds are not meant to support or add to existing or ongoing gatherings, exchanges, or programs. The funds cannot be used towards conference attendance (or similar).
- In lieu of a “Final Report,” complete a brief feedback and reflection survey that we will share with you. It will include a request for at least one photo and brief (just a couple sentences!) reflection - about who you met with, connections made, interesting things learned.

Timeline:

- 2 drawing deadlines per year (May & November) for activity from either July - December or January - June.

Process:

- Submissions: Gather and submit request information online
- Drawing & Notifications: within two weeks after the current deadline, 10 organizations will be awarded in each cycle.
  - *Note: You may elect to have your submission roll over to the following cycle if it is not drawn in the current cycle.*
- Acceptance and stipend disbursement: $2,000 within two weeks of signing agreement
- Activity: Complete Connection Sparks and Feedback & Reflection Survey within 6 months of signing the agreement

Submission Requested Information:

- Organization and primary contact information
- Organization mission statement
- Type of Connection Spark: Peer Organization Meeting or Peer Organization Exchange
- Describe what you plan to do, discuss, connect on. What is exciting or useful to you about doing this? (Just a few sentences.)
- Which organizations are you hoping to invite or meet? Please list name(s) and location. You do not need to have talked to them already.
- If known, when and where do you hope the gathering/exchange would take place.

Click here to submit