

Community Arts Access Listening Guide

Begin with listening rather than with a predetermined project.

The Community Arts Access Listening Guide helps partners develop a shared understanding of the community before deciding what a partnership should provide. Use the prompts to gather perspectives from students, families, educators, artists, community members, and organizations about where arts learning already occurs, who currently has access, where barriers remain, and what meaningful arts opportunities would look like locally.

Listening should surface both needs and assets. Pay particular attention to knowledge, traditions, relationships, spaces, people, resources, and practices that may not initially be identified as part of the formal arts education system. The goal is not to produce an exhaustive community assessment, but to identify the insights that should shape future partnership decisions and determine whose voices still need to be included.

At the conclusion of the conversation, identify the three most important insights that should influence partnership design and the people or groups who should be invited into the next stage of the process.

Community/Region

Participants & Perspectives Represented

Listening Prompts:

- Where do young people already make, perform, share, or encounter art*?
- Which students have the fewest opportunities, and what barriers shape that pattern?
- What would meaningful arts access look and feel like to students and families?
- Which local traditions, culture bearers, artists, spaces, and networks should be recognized?
- What has been tried? What built trust? What caused fatigue or harm?
- Which times, locations, communication methods, and supports would make participation feasible?
- What should remain locally owned even if the work becomes regional?

Three insights that should shape partnership design:

#1

#2

#3