



Elevating the unique attributes of a community through the voices of its residents. Photo: NuLawLab/Northeastern University

We position culture and creativity as drivers of more just communities.

As a national program that supports place-based activities, our vision is that creativity is valued widely as an integral resource for healthy and sustainable places and for residents of color to live abundant and self-determined lives.

Our core beliefs include:

- Residents possess the imagination, wisdom, and lived experiences necessary to create enduring community solutions.
- Asset-based community development approaches that involve artists and creative practices offer the most significant potential for healthy, sustainable, and economically just outcomes.
- Cross-sectoral strategies inclusive of creative practices and practitioners can contribute to shifting the narratives, systems and policies that support climate-resilient neighborhoods and the health and well-being of residents – especially those of color with low incomes.

These beliefs anchor our priorities for investing in creative strategies – in place, with people and through partnerships – that advance the pre-conditions for long-term change. This includes resident agency, narrative change and collective action. There are countless examples of how culture and creativity (and creative practitioners) have contributed to the civic, social and cultural infrastructure that enable long-term change.

- They **Reframe** problems through different lenses and apply creative, place-based and human-centered processes that contribute to more equitable, healthy and sustainable solutions.
- They **Restore** the social fabric and support interpersonal engagement and trust, such as interactions with neighbors or informal community-building activities.
- They **Reimagine** how the arts, community development and planning (and related) fields work harmoniously to promote more resilient communities and just practices.

We Invest Through Three Focus Areas:

Advance Creative Strategies in Place:

We work to invest in creative practices that strengthen resident agency, social cohesion and narrative control and that promote collective action for equitable and long-term change in neighborhoods.

Invest in People Mobilizing for Change:

We work to support the care and strengthen networks of creative practitioners, cultural strategists and community leaders who are centering community voice and agency in cross-sector local and national initiatives.

Strengthen Cross-Sector Partnerships:

We work to fortify an enabling environment that connects creative practices and drives systems change while recognizing the challenges communities of color face are too large to solve on our own.

Legacy Initiatives

Through these initiatives, we invested in learning communities for peer exchange and explored new approaches to supporting community-driven priorities. These initiatives are no longer active.



BASED

Building and Supporting Equitable Development

The BASED initiative explored the advancement of community development through arts and culture. This national program provided a platform for continued learning of leading practitioners and Kresge staff around emerging field priorities, such as strengthening racial equity and inclusion best practices within the community development sector.

Culture of Justice

Reimagining Community Justice Through Arts and Culture

Created to ignite new approaches to community justice, this national initiative centered around a grantee cohort of five community-based organizations that are using arts and culture to reimagine justice in their local cities. Culture of Justice was a joint effort of Kresge’s Arts & Culture Program, the Boys and Men of Color Working Group and the Human Services Program.



FreshLo

Fresh, Local & Equitable

Fresh, Local & Equitable (FreshLo) sought to improve access to healthy food, ignite entrepreneurship, spur economic development and integrate arts, culture and community-engaged design – which we call Creative Placemaking – to spark neighborhood revitalization in cities around the country. FreshLo was a joint effort of Kresge’s Arts & Culture Program and the Health Program. With FreshLo, Kresge was the first national funder to intentionally integrate food, art and community to drive equitable neighborhood revitalization.

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