



Museums for America

Sample Application MA-252042-OMS-22
Project Category: Community Engagement

Yerba Buena Center for the Arts

Amount awarded by IMLS:	\$250,000
Amount of cost share:	\$461,298

The Yerba Buena Center for the Arts (YBCA) will launch its YBCA Co-op Membership Program, a recently piloted membership framework that centers artists and communities as intrinsic to audience building, ongoing engagement, and onsite programming. The museum will convene regularly with focus groups to collect feedback to strengthen the program by ensuring it directly serves the needs of artists, as well as expand outreach to a greater number of artists and community members from across the Bay Area. Program participants will have access to ongoing use of the museum's rehearsal, studio, and meeting spaces, generating increased community engagement through art prototyping festivals, convenings, exhibitions, performances, lectures, and screenings. By co-creating this program with and for artists and communities, the museum hopes to reach those who have been historically marginalized from or unable to participate in traditional museum membership programs.

Attached are the following components excerpted from the original application.

- Narrative
- Schedule of Completion
- Digital Product Plan

When preparing an application for the next deadline, be sure to follow the instructions in the current Notice of Funding Opportunity for the grant program and project category to which you are applying.



1. STATEMENT OF NEED

The Proposed Project. Yerba Buena Center for the Arts (YBCA) seeks support from IMLS Museums for America for *YBCA Co-op Membership*, a program which seeks to radically reimagine the membership model for today's museums through centering artists and communities as intrinsic to robust audience-building, ongoing engagement, and dynamic onsite activation—ensuring that membership has an organization-wide integration with the artists and communities with whom we work. With the goal of expanding participation and engagement by transforming our campus in the heart of San Francisco's South of Market neighborhood into a membership-driven home for diverse artists and communities who will transform our in- and out-door spaces into a dynamic arts studio and vibrant urban oasis, *YBCA Co-op Membership* will be co-created with and for artists and communities.

With key support from IMLS, YBCA aims—over the two-year grant period—to market, implement, advance, document, evaluate and disseminate with the field, an experimental membership model which addresses the role museums can play in serving and co-creating with artists and community members historically underserved by the sector, while radically increasing in person cultural activity and engagement in the wake of the pandemic. During this time, we will launch and assess a new membership framework for art museums across the country, one that moves beyond the quid pro quo structure of traditional membership programs to one that is based in a shared commons and solidarity economy philosophy, which prioritizes people, participation, and cooperative ownership over profits and traditional hierarchies. Through its reimaged membership structure, YBCA is investing in establishing a pipeline for fostering deep engagement with our organization, which could lead to new donors and philanthropic relationships.

Prior to the IMLS grant period, YBCA will design and launch a pilot that is co-created with a core group of artists already in deep relationship with YBCA, involving approximately 250 Bay Area artists and hundreds of community members in this first iteration. IMLS funding will support the post-pilot phase of the project, applying our learnings and expanding our membership program to reach a greater number of artists and community members and tracking and evaluating outcomes. During the pilot as well as for the post-pilot phase, the number of community members who can participate is unlimited. Our focus will be to reach artists and community members from across the Bay Area who have been historically marginalized from or unable to participate in traditional museum membership programs.

The vision for *YBCA Co-op Membership* is to create a new kind of membership program that directly addresses and serves the needs of artists and communities, while leveraging member involvement to generate a constant state of arts activity, programming and engagement throughout our spaces through artist member-led art prototyping festivals, convenings, exhibitions, performances, lectures, film screenings, transforming YBCA's site into a dynamic cultural hub that attracts participation from communities across the Bay Area and beyond. Over the last several years, YBCA has worked intensively with groups of diverse artists to understand how cultural organizations can be more responsive and co-design services and programs that fill existing gaps and meet evolving needs of working artists and communities. On a city-wide scale, through YBCA's partnership with the San Francisco Arts Alliance, we led the design, analysis and data collection for surveys, which assessed the ravaging economic and social impact of COVID on San Francisco's cultural community. Through this robust array of learnings, data and feedback we have identified the following challenges:

- Ongoing financial insecurity of artists and communities of color exacerbated by COVID's disproportionate impact;
- A critical need to create new and rebuild existing artist-led communities, cooperatives and collaborations in the wake of the pandemic;
- A lack of public platforms and resources for artists to share work, ideas and programming with each other and with communities across the Bay Area;
- Very few spaces where artists can independently and together develop, incubate and present new work; and
- Growing recognition that artists are undervalued community assets that contribute to community health and wellbeing, including food security and community safety.

We envision offering a robust and evolving array of membership benefits, ranging from free rehearsal space, free studio space, free meeting space, invitations to shared learning experience led by other members, participation in group performances, screenings and exhibitions, discounted and free tickets to YBCA events, as well as the opportunity to influence where YBCA directs its advocacy efforts. YBCA will explore innovative ways to attract artists and communities to our campus and into the membership program over the pilot. At YBCA, artists and community members will have the opportunity to develop projects, collaborate and share resources, as well as have a platform for engaging with fellow artists and the public. Critical to the design of the program will be an emphasis on leveraging YBCA's expansive facilities and resources to establish a member-driven cultural hub that hums with ongoing activity. Through the *YBCA Co-op Membership* program, YBCA will become known as a continually energized 21st century agora or public gathering place for ideas, artistic discourse and exchange, civic engagement, experimental arts programming, and community-building which will transform the indoor and outdoor spaces surrounding YBCA with ongoing community participation, promoting connection, curiosity, and inquiry. In the aftermath of COVID shutdowns, our aim is to boldly reengage our community and bring audiences back to our campus, while at the same time building the next generation of audiences.

Recognizing that many working artists, especially those of color, experience disproportionate financial challenges and with the aim of eliminating all barriers to participation, memberships will be on a sliding scale, pay what you wish basis. Central to the *YBCA Co-op Membership* model is the Timebank concept, a reciprocity-based skill and expertise trading system in which participation and engagement is the currency. For example, with the *YBCA Co-op Membership* Timebanking system, a craft-based artist could offer a quilting workshop for other members and the wider community, creating an opportunity for learning and engagement, as well as a chance to promote the craft and present new projects. We envision the Timebank system could take many different shapes with the aim of providing a framework for members to share resources, inspiration and knowledge with each other. Through promoting self-determination and drawing on collective cultural assets and wealth, YBCA seeks to establish long-term ongoing collaborative relationships with artist-members and synergistic partnerships with communities and new audiences that fall outside of the transitional transactional paradigm. To this end, YBCA will draw on its experience designing, launching and refining the Artist Power Center (APC), an online platform focused on relief for Bay Area artists and artist enterprises who have been disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 health and economic crisis and building the strength of the creative community for the long term. The APC has connected the most vulnerable low-income artists and struggling artist enterprises to relief and economic opportunities and recovery and rebuilding efforts, enabling YBCA to serve its regional community of artists through the ongoing pandemic recovery and has the capacity to advance the museum field's role in empowering art and culture in service of an equitable and regenerative future.

In addition to addressing the current conditions, challenges and opportunities for artists and in the museum sector, the *YBCA Co-op Membership* unites three core elements: extensive learnings and key elements from our past IMLS-funded *YBCA:YOU* membership program, our commitment to an artist-centered approach across every facet of our organization, and our vision of establishing a new cooperative structure to support and strengthen the capacity of artists, which is co-designed, co-decided and co-owned by artists.

YBCA's Membership Evolution – Supported by IMLS, the James Irvine Foundation, the Panta Rhea Foundation, Bernard Osher Foundation, and Adobe Foundation, *YBCA:YOU* transitioned from a pilot into a full-scale program from 2011 to 2019. *YBCA:YOU* membership included an All-Access Pass to YBCA's broad array of multidisciplinary programs and access to experienced professionals—*YBCA:YOU* LiveGuides—who served as counselors, case managers and advisors, helping participants navigate the program and explore the multiple ways in which their lives can be changed through engagement with the arts. Instead of following a predetermined path, *YBCA:YOU* members were encouraged to curate their own experiences, choosing from more than 200 artistic and public programs. Evaluation data gathered during *YBCA:YOU*'s tenure, demonstrated the ability to transform the relationship between YBCA and its more than 1,400 *YBCA:YOU* participants from the transactional (exchanging money to “see art”) to the experiential and the personal (creating individualized, participatory, meaningful experiences with art). The initiative garnered national attention and was cited by Elizabeth Merritt, Founding Director of the Center for the Future of Museums, in the American Alliance of Museums' TrendsWatch 2015 for the program's focus on personalization. *YBCA:YOU* fundamentally reimagined the contours of the relationships between audiences, artists, curators and the museum, encouraging greater exposure to the arts, longer-term engagement with specific artists, active participation in the art experience, and engagement in forums for deeper investigations of art in the context of the broader social and cultural dialogue. In designing our reimagined membership model, we sought to expand successful elements from our prior programs, including free participation, building a community of people who inhabit the arts center, and creating opportunities for members to share their skills and knowledge.

YBCA's Artist-Centered Model – YBCA is no longer a museum focused on traditional, transactional relationships with artists. We have made an institution-wide shift into an inclusive home, laboratory and public platform for diverse artists who are using their creative, social and civic power to drive equity, health and wellbeing. Our new organizational vision is grounded by our Diversity, Equity and Access lens and fueled by our belief that artists are essential leaders of community regeneration. We are committed to supporting artists as critical actors, problem solvers, innovators, and enterprise builders. While YBCA was in the process of identifying the need for substantive changes before the pandemic, our Board of Directors and Staff used the time we were physically closed to listen to the artists and communities we serve and involve them in our planning process with the aim of creating a vision for what YBCA needs to be in our current moment. This intensive work involved staff and community gatherings, deep conversations with YBCA's artists and community members, who identified a strong need for an artistic home where they could form lasting collaborative relationships, create and present new work, engage with audiences and have a voice in decision-making and leadership.

With significant support from the public and private sector funding communities, including: the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, National Endowment for the Arts, as well as the IMLS, YBCA has significantly expanded, evolved and deepened its relationship with artists that have been historically underserved by museums, through a range of programs and new initiatives, including the **Senior Fellows** Program where artists work with YBCA over multiple years designing public programs and work directly with the board and staff; the **YBCA 10**, a cohort of 10 artists annually selected to step into a deep year-long relationship with YBCA to focus on artistic and creative projects that impact community health and wellbeing; the **San Francisco Guaranteed Income Pilot**, the first-ever program distributing monthly Guaranteed Income payments to San Francisco artists living in poverty; the **SF Creative Corps**, which mobilized artists to provide creative education, encouraging COVID safe behavior in public spaces throughout San Francisco; support and resources for **Artist-Led Convenings** across California; and the **Artist-Led Giving Circle**, a group of national BIPOC artists who are identifying and supporting artists and arts businesses who are advancing health and wellbeing in their communities. Most recently YBCA was selected by the California Arts Commission (CAC) to distribute over \$1.95M in relief payments to artists of color across the state. Given YBCA's movement towards an artist-centered model, it was a logical next step to reimagine our membership program with artists at the core.

Shared Commons Vision – The *YBCA Co-op Membership* is grounded in YBCA's overarching strategy to move away from a traditional market-based cultural framework towards a Shared Futures/Floor model, which emphasizes a solidarity economy through sharing resources, strengthening relationships, and emphasizing interdependence. YBCA seeks to provide each artist member with a core group of services and resources, bolster their unique contributions to the cultural community and remove membership cost as a barrier to inclusion. By placing value on collaboration, participation and knowledge-sharing as a way to contribute to membership, YBCA is setting the *YBCA Co-op Membership* pilot within a larger effort to transform the arts and cultural sector through seeking alternatives to business-as-usual to create economic and racial justice. We envision YBCA playing a leading role in developing a national and international network to support and strengthen the capacity of artists.

Lastly, but perhaps most importantly, a more acute awareness of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Access (DEIA) issues within YBCA, as well as the museum sector as a whole has influenced our thinking and planning. Over the last several years, YBCA has championed an internal DEIA process and created a DEIA staff committee, including emphasizing creating more opportunities for artists and cultural workers of color. Since 2017, 75% of the artists YBCA has worked with are BIPOC. This approach is also reflected in our diverse leadership and board, which has prioritized hiring staff and recruiting board members of color. To this project, YBCA brings years of experience pioneering and evolving programs, including the Creative Ecosystem, that support a community of artists and provide opportunities for incubating and sharing powerful work and ideas and also engage diverse communities across the Bay Area.

The Need, Problem, or Challenge Addressed. As a whole, our nation's cultural sector is facing a crisis of inclusion and access. In particular, the art museum field is confronting a history of profound inequity rooted in a culture that values transactional exchanges and devalues relationship-building, collaboration, and resource sharing. Most museum membership programs do not serve artists and underserved communities and are in fact, inaccessible for our country's increasingly diverse and multicultural population. Further, artists and museums are among the most disproportionately impacted by the pandemic. According to a recent study, 63% of artists are now unemployed with many grappling with poverty and struggling to get their basic needs met. Artists have had their projects and collaborations disrupted, their communities dispersed and their contributions to society have been historically undervalued and overlooked. Per the

American Alliance of Museums' 2020 study, over 1/3 of museums across the country are in danger of closing and audiences desperately need to be rebuilt for our "new normal" (for example, during the pandemic closures, YBCA's membership shrunk from 1,400 to 68 members). These findings are coupled with the unrepresented challenges of welcoming in person audiences back to museums and cultural institutions as pandemic-related closures and restrictions are lifted. Viewed within the context of pre-COVID decreasing attendance at museums and a growing demographic of younger audiences who are moving away from traditional museum experiences in favor of new modes of cultural participation, the situation is dire. YBCA believes this is an unprecedented and imperative opportunity for museums to foster creative solutions. During the pandemic, we examined critical external issues to artists and the arts and museum fields; listened to our communities to more deeply understand current barriers, struggles and evolving needs; and discussed, debated and articulated potential solutions. We asked ourselves what is needed by artists, community members and the museum world in this time of extreme division and reevaluation? How, through its own efforts to center artists at the core of our organization, can YBCA establish a membership platform for other museums? And how, through a new membership model, can YBCA make a meaningful contribution to the cultural life of our city?

YBCA's Co-op Membership was designed to test a radical rethinking of the relationship between the museum, artists and its visitors, moving from the casual, consumerist paradigm that exists within most arts institutions to one that is relationship-driven, deeply experiential and meaningful for the participants, both artists and communities. This new model centers the needs of artists and communities and responds in new and creative ways both to the established and new audiences we desire to serve (younger, low-income, people of color). In keeping with YBCA's mission to operate at the cutting edge of the field, the *YBCA Co-op Membership* will serve as a new membership model for other museums, of various size and scope, wishing to redefine the nature of their institution's relationship with their constituencies. Through regular focus groups and other methods for collecting ongoing evaluative feedback, the *YBCA Co-op Membership* experience will continue to be co-created with participants, ensuring the program continually adapts and responds to today's community needs.

YBCA has a strong history of implementing art and civic projects that create impactful change for underserved communities, as well as a dynamic track record of successfully completing complex, organization-wide projects. While our *YBCA Co-op Membership* is in its early stages, we have significant experience creating conditions for artists and creative thinkers to come together and imagine and test bold new concepts and experiments that can lead to lasting change.

At the helm of YBCA's transformational model is CEO, Deborah Cullinan. One of the leading thinkers on the pivotal role arts organizations can play in shaping our social and political landscape, Deborah's deep commitment to integrating artists into the systems, structures and civic life that make up our communities and cities and her belief that cultural institutions must lead the way in this effort is at the core of YBCA's new vision. Working closely with Deborah is YBCA's Chief of Strategy and Revenue, Penelope Douglas who brings expertise in shared futures and cooperative organizational models to YBCA's new vision. Penelope and Deborah, along with YBCA Chief of Program, Meklit Hadero, a prominent Ethiopian American vocalist, songwriter, composer and cultural activist, have worked collaboratively to figuratively and literally open YBCA's doors to the wider community with activated and accessible public spaces, cross sector partnerships, open calls, and invitations for artist-driven ideas.

Who Will Benefit. To date, our work exploring directions for YBCA's membership framework has involved collaboration with artists, community members, and YBCA staff members. Through consultation with artist advisors we have developed focused language for those populations we are prioritizing: American Indian and Alaska Native, Asian and Asian American, Black and African American, Disabled, Indigenous and Indigena, Latinx, LGBTQIA2S+, MENASA, and Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander. While the full spectrum of diverse San Franciscans and Bay Area residents will benefit from the project, our outreach will be targeted to the following communities:

- Artists, communities and current YBCA members who are already engaged with YBCA through a range of programs that specifically serve populations that have been underserved by the cultural sector.
- Artists and community members living in underserved and LMI census tract San Francisco neighborhoods where YBCA has deep relationships and a history of civic engagement work, including South of Market (SoMa), Tenderloin, Excelsior, Portola, Bayview-Hunters Point, and Mission District.
- Bay Area low-income artists, arts and gig workers, including immigrants, artists of color, women, LGBTQIA+ people and minority owned artist enterprises.
- Local, regional and national museums, fellow cultural organizations interested in serving their communities.

Advancing YBCA's Strategic Plan. Underpinning all of YBCA's activities is the belief that communities are the best builders of their own solutions and artists are central to this work. Our strategic imperative is to build the capacity of artists working in service of their communities. We seek to propel programs that result in: robust resources for and deep partnerships with artists, economic security and employment opportunities for artists, strategies to uplift and regenerate San Francisco's neighborhoods, and identifying and testing new investment models for the cultural sector. Our strategic plan goals, updated through a major institutional reorganization in response to COVID, are rooted in a philosophy that equitable change depends upon systems and inquiry that are community-driven. We are dedicated to piloting, strengthening, and refining this work so it can reach its full potential as a model for the field.

Addressing MFA Program Goals. The *YBCA Co-op Membership* addresses the Community Engagement category of the IMLS MFA through investing in resources to provide a non-traditional platform for a community of artists to collaborate, design and host programs, and activate YBCA's spaces with the goal of engaging diverse communities and audiences. We believe this process starts with transforming YBCA from a traditional top-down hierarchy to a transparent, artist-driven organization through giving decision-making power and authority to the artists we work with. Grounded in strengthening trust and building empowered relationships with artists and communities that have been historically disinvested, ineffectively served or otherwise marginalized by mainstream cultural institutions, the project offers a collaborative new methodology of sharing power, integrating programming, engagement and community transformation that has the potential to have wide-reaching impact on the museum field's efforts to dismantle systemic barriers to inclusion and access.

2. PROJECT WORK PLAN

Activities and their Sequence. Since September 2021, YBCA has laid significant groundwork for developing the *YBCA Co-op Membership* concept—with additional **pre-grant activities** to take place January 1, 2022 through August 31, 2022:

- Activity 1.** Meetings with focus groups of artists and community members to conceptualize *YBCA Co-op Membership*.
- Activity 2.** Work with an arts experience designer to create events and programs which engage artists and communities.
- Activity 3.** Designing an evaluation process and materials.
- Activity 4.** Outreach to 250 artists currently in deep relationship with YBCA and current YBCA members to join the pilot.
- Activity 5:** Hire Membership Manager to oversee *YBCA Co-op Membership* program.
- Activity 6.** Launching the *YBCA Co-op Membership* Pilot.
- Activity 7.** Designing and implementing Timebank element of *YBCA Co-op Membership*.
- Activity 8.** At the end of the pilot, evaluate outcomes and transition into a full program.

During the IMLS grant period from September 1, 2022 to August 31, 2024, the following activities will take place:

- Activity 9:** Using learnings from the pilot phase to create and refine the public *YBCA Co-op Membership program*.
- Activity 10:** Design robust Marketing/PR Plan and promote *YBCA Co-op Membership Program* to diverse artists and communities across the Bay Area.
- Activity 11:** Onboard and orient new artist and community members into the *YBCA Co-op Membership* with welcome activities and Timebank activation.
- Activity 12:** Ongoing onsite participation. Participants select from and attend an array of arts events and member-led Timebank learning sessions and activities.
- Activity 13:** Coordinate ongoing use by members of YBCA's rehearsal, studio and meeting space.
- Activity 14:** Evaluation Surveys. Every six months, participants are sent an evaluation survey online via SurveyMonkey to provide quantitative and qualitative feedback on their experiences as members of the *YBCA Co-op Membership*, as well as ensuring the program is accessible and meeting its shared commons vision .
- Activity 15:** Ongoing Feedback Loops. At regular intervals, YBCA will reconvene with focus groups of 25–30 artists and community members to share more in depth qualitative feedback with YBCA.

Project Risks. The *YBCA Co-op Membership* framework is an opportunity to shift historic channels of power and decision-making so that BIPOC artists are shaping the institutions of today and tomorrow as leaders and inject community participation, voice, and energy into the museum and art center model. Through past civic engagement initiatives, YBCA has built strong buy-in for this work among our Board and staff, while also building relationships with partners and

stakeholders who will be instrumental to our success. We know that building trust with the artists and communities who will take part in YBCA's *Co-op Membership* is essential to fostering the conditions to effectively implement this project. Over the course of the IMLS grant timeframe, we will build on this affirmation and troubleshoot as needed, continually reorienting toward identified goals. YBCA has a talented project team to carry out this work, and we will regularly monitor our capacity to complete the work plan as envisioned. YBCA has learned that in order for our projects to serve as catalysts for transformation, programming must be adaptive. We anticipate pivots and course changes in response to the unfolding COVID-19 health crisis and political, racial and economic unrest, making flexibility more critical than ever. We acknowledge the inherent challenges of implementing organization transformation and reaching for ambitious public engagement goals. However, it is imperative, especially now, to shift the perception of artists so they are seen as much-needed social change makers and problem solvers in this uncertain time in our collective history. Throughout the IMLS grant period, we will be adaptive and pivot as needed to become a true home for diverse artists and community members.

Time, Personnel, and Financial Resources. YBCA's new membership model is a collaboration between YBCA's Development, Marketing and Programming departments. To lead and implement the project, we bring critical professional expertise, including Deborah Cullinan, YBCA Chief Executive Officer, Penelope Douglas, YBCA Chief of Strategy and Revenue, Jonathan Moscone, YBCA Chief Producer, and Meklit Hadero, YBCA Chief of Program, all respected leaders in the arts with substantial experience supporting transformative programming aimed at diverse audiences. Sandra Arnold, YBCA's Director of Philanthropy will oversee the project. YBCA's Community Experience (CE) team, led by Natalie Just, Senior Manager of CE, will be responsible for providing world-class customer service, including ensuring members feel safe, welcome, and encouraged to participate in cultural life after the extended absences necessitated by the pandemic, including Natalie Just, Senior Manager of CE, who manages the four-person team, Lead CE Representative, responsible for leading, growing and training a team of CE Representatives, and two CE Representatives, who, as the first line of contact for members and visitors represent the organization to the public. Lauren Ruffin, YBCA's Interim Chief of Marketing, will lead the marketing and communications plan, while Chris Safford, YBCA's Chief of Finance & Operations, will manage the project finances. Lauren Frankel, YBCA's Senior Manager of Evaluation and Impact will coordinate and implement the evaluation. In addition to the artists who are collaborating on pilot design, YBCA is working with Alex Jones, an experience design expert with a theater background, who will work with our focus group of artists and community advisors to identify and advance the most inspiring ideas around how membership activities integrate into physical experience at YBCA. Together we will thoughtfully and strategically build this new endeavor into an impactful and groundbreaking initiative that is deeply guided by community needs, feedback and input.

The cost share for this IMLS grant will come from a variety of sources, including other grant requests to foundations, contributed revenue from individuals, corporate sponsorship of the *YBCA Co-op Membership*, and YBCA's earned income from facility rentals to clients in the for-profit creative community. As we embark on the pre-IMLS grant phase, YBCA is focused on fundraising for this work. We are in early conversations with prospective funding partners who are dedicated to identifying new ways to reach and engage diverse audiences and increasing community participation in civic life.

Tracking Progress toward Intended Results. The project will feature an evaluation plan that includes regular member surveying, focus groups and systematic check-ins. Based on ongoing learnings, we will routinely pivot the program in response to ensure we continue to successfully serve our members. Evaluation will be conducted using in-house expertise, led by our Senior Manager of Evaluation and Learning. Artist and community member co-creation will be a central complement of our process, with built in feedback loops that ensure we are on track.

Sharing Project Results. A crucial component of the *YBCA Co-op Membership* project is sharing our process, results, and learnings with our community throughout the grant period. We will implement a communications plan in which we regularly share information and updates online through our YBCA website, newsletter and through emails sent to our constituents, ensuring we keep all participating communities and stakeholders well-informed. Given our focus on furthering equity and inclusion as a cornerstone of the *YBCA Co-op Membership*, we will consider all of our communication methodology from an accessibility vantage point, including researching and experimenting with ways to bridge digital barriers, including hybrid high- and low-technology combinations, such as phone calls, social media campaigns, letters and posters, as well as new technology to reach hearing and sight disabled people, as well as non-English speaking audiences.

3. PROJECT RESULTS

Project's Intended Results. The specific, measurable outcomes we evaluate will be decided upon as we develop a comprehensive evaluation plan; however, from initial conversations with our project team, community participants, partners, and other stakeholders, we believe measurable outcomes tied to these central project goals would be of value.

Measurable Results and Evaluation. YBCA seeks to achieve these specific, quantifiable outcomes:

- By January 2023, launch *YBCA Co-op Membership* as a full program with a simultaneous evaluation/monitoring track to assess and make adjustments as the project evolves.
- Serve a minimum of 500 artists and 500 community members over the first year of the IMLS grant period, with a focus on artists and communities of color.
- Create an inviting, welcoming, and safe space as we emerge from the pandemic;
- Progress towards establishing a Shared Commons structure for the *YBCA Co-op Membership*.
- Establish a vibrant home for artists to gather, experiment, share resources and drive programming initiatives;
- Offer artists and community members critical resources to develop and share work and build community;
- Create a pipeline for diverse artists already engaged with YBCA through other programs to become more deeply involved with YBCA;
- Generate large-scale participation at YBCA, including robust, ongoing engagement of historically underserved communities; and
- Inspire the museum sector to adapt YBCA's model to their own specific contexts.

Changing the Intended Audience's Knowledge, Skills, Behaviors, and Attitudes. For close to a decade, YBCA has been testing, evolving, and iterating membership models. We are now making major investments and expansions to dramatically propel the impact of this work—for YBCA, as well as for the national museum and cultural sector. Through the *YBCA Co-op Membership*, we are identifying new methods to build and ensure ongoing, inclusive community participation. By radically shifting from the traditional transactional membership paradigm to a model that prioritizes relationships, collective knowledge and resource sharing, we anticipate that both participating artists and community members will have profoundly changed attitudes and behaviors, ultimately leading to greater buy-in for and adoption of cooperative and collective opportunity building approaches at other cultural institutions and museums. We anticipate the greatest impact to be on Bay Area artists and the historically overlooked community members and audiences who are new to YBCA's programming, hopefully discovering a new or enriched relationship with museums through their engagement with YBCA, and looking to YBCA as a resource for robust ongoing cultural participation going forward. Through their experiences, community members as well as partners across sectors will gain skills and a deeper understanding of the power of collaborative, creative problem solving, while also becoming more inclined to participate in public and civic life.

Tangible Products. At the end of the two years, products to share with the field will include: creative projects generated by artist members with critical input from the general public; a final report led by YBCA's IMLS grant team; professionally produced videos created from project documentation; and a refined program model, serving as a tool for other cultural institutions wanting to fully integrate civic participation and large scale community engagement into their work.

Sustaining Project Benefits. While continuing our relationships with current foundation partners, we will also seek new funding partners throughout the grant period, particularly with foundations and individual donors who care deeply about transforming the cultural sector's inclusion, equity, and access in the service of community-driven change. At the same time, YBCA is investigating innovative investment, market-building and equity-focused strategies for artists, including convening partners from the private and public sectors to develop new pathways for supporting community-based, artist-first strategies. Project benefits will be further sustained by the YBCA Co-op Members who will be investing in community building and in each other through contributions and knowledge sharing of all kinds. IMLS support for the *YBCA Co-op Membership* in this pivotal moment of model formation will be critical; however, once the two-year grant period concludes and we have evidence-based data and outcomes available for the greater public, we believe we can attract additional contributed revenue from individual donors, institutional funders and corporate sponsors to sustain this initiative in the long term, offering a strong model that leads the way to new knowledge, insights, momentum, and possibilities around the role a museum can play in igniting social change on a local, regional, and national scale.



Yerba Buena Center for the Arts
 IMLS Museums for America: *YBCA Co-op Membership*
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	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug
Before the Grant Period Begins, September 2021 - August 2022												
Meetings with focus groups of artists and community members to conceptualize program			█	█	█	█						
Onboarding and working with an experience designer			█	█	█	█	█	█	█			
Designing an evaluation process and materials				█	█	█						
Outreach to 250 artists currently in deep relationship with YBCA for pilot participation				█	█	█						
Outreach to current YBCA members and new community participants for pilot			█	█	█	█	█	█				
Hire Membership Manager to oversee program implementation				█	█	█						
Launch the YBCA Co-op Membership Pilot						█	█	█	█	█	█	█
Design and implement Timebank element of program					█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█
Ongoing evaluation and learning through regular assessment							█	█	█	█	█	█
In depth learning session to assess outcomes and transition into a full program												█
	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug
IMLS MFA Year 1, September 2022 - August 2023												
Use learnings from pilot to create and refine the YBCA Co-op Membership program	█	█	█									
Design robust Marketing/PR Plan engaging diverse artists & communities across Bay Area	█	█	█	█								
Onboard and orient new members through welcome activities and timebank activation					█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█
Participants select from and attend an array of arts events and member-led activities					█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█
Coordinate ongoing use by members of YBCA's rehearsal, studio and meeting space					█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█
Participant evaluation surveys assessing ongoing feedback around member experience							█				█	
Reconvene artist and community member focus groups for in-depth qualitative feedback										█	█	



TYPE

What digital products will you create?

We plan to create web pages which will be a part of our organization's website, ybca.org. This will include "Membership" web pages that explain the *YBCA Co-Op Membership* as well as "Event" web pages for any public events/programs related to the project. From the video-documentation collected during our work, we will create several YBCA-produced short videos that will be shared online via YBCA's YouTube channel and other social media platforms. We will also be leveraging photography on YBCA's website and social media platforms. Additionally, we will utilize an online survey tool to gather feedback and evaluate the project, and will share our learnings on our website and social media platforms. All web pages, video, and social media content will be created and/or produced by YBCA's in-house marketing department.

AVAILABILITY

How will you make your digital products openly available (as appropriate)?

Our digital products will be openly available online and accessible via standard web browsers and apps. No special tools or access will be required.

ACCESS

What rights will you assert over your digital products, and what limitations, if any, will you place on their use? Will your products implicate privacy concerns or cultural sensitivities, and if so, how will you address them?

YBCA will not post any copyright protected digital products associated with this project. Anything posted by YBCA will be available for public viewing or sharing. YBCA will monitor total reach, views, and shares of all pieces of digital content created. This will inform subsequent content strategies.

SUSTAINABILITY

How will you address the sustainability of your digital products?

YBCA will archive all webpages on the organizational website for future reference. All video content will be archived on YBCA's YouTube and social media channels.