

Making Connections With BIPOC And ALAANA Arts & Culture Organizations

For the purpose of AEP6, BIPOC and ALAANA arts and culture organizations are defined as organizations that have a mission statement (or guiding principles) that is centered on advancing, creating, and/or preserving artistic and cultural traditions rooted in communities of color.

[Learn more](#)

Did we miss a resource that can be shared with other AEP6 Study Partners? Please email your ideas to:

Dr. Genna Styles-Lyas
Director of AEP6 Community Engagement and Equity
glyas@artsusa.org

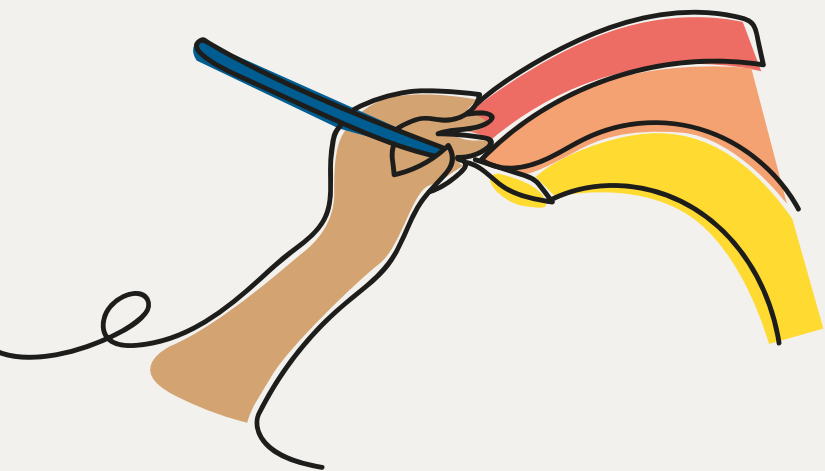
Introduction

Americans for the Arts is committed to addressing equity and inclusion as a critical component of AEP6 (Arts & Economic Prosperity 6) by centering and representing BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) and ALAANA (African, Latinx, Asian, Arab, Native American) identifying communities—a segment of the nonprofit arts and culture sector that has been underrepresented in past studies. This change is more than simply responding to a priority. It is transforming the study—a full shake-up of the methodology to reduce systemic bias in survey design, data collection and analysis, community engagement and communications strategies, and the creation of new narratives based on the study results.

Meaningful connections are important and must be real and based on trust. This document provides guidance for those looking to begin or advance that work as part of your AEP6 process. Americans for the Arts is here to help you make introductions, navigate conversations, and advise you on how to thoughtfully engage with BIPOC and ALAANA organizations to help support the AEP6 study and beyond.

Americans for the Arts' strategic priority to collaborate with diverse communities in the arts runs deeper than a surface-level connection. Our focus is to serve as a resource to help you develop mutually supportive relationships locally. We understand that this kind of work is not as simple as a Google search and appreciate the intentionality you will take in your research as you engage with different communities. Our hope is that you use this resource list with the support of the [Engaging Your Community](#) guide, to discover how to best set a roadmap to making new connections and long-term partnerships.

This is by no means an exhaustive list. As the AEP6 study advances and questions begin to arise from our study partners, we will continue to add resources to the AEP6 Playbook. Below, please find a series of insights and suggestions on how and where to connect with BIPOC and ALAANA arts and culture organizations in your community.



Making connections

Make a phone call

Picking up the phone to make a live connection is still a very powerful outreach effort. Introduce yourself, describe AEP6, share your interest in calling. Be honest and share your desire to build new partnerships with BIPOC and ALAANA arts and culture organizations, and how your organization can be a resource. But remember, this doesn't all need to happen in the first call. Use this outreach as a first step and introduction. As a reminder, don't forget to reference the [Engaging Your Community](#) guide as a resource for your outreach efforts.

Reach out to individual artists or organizations in BIPOC and ALAANA communities

Think about your organization's connections with individual artists and organizations in BIPOC and ALAANA communities. Start with the artists or staff you know and ask them for recommendations and/or introductions to other organizations that could participate in AEP6.

One thing to keep in mind as you make these requests of colleagues from BIPOC and ALAANA communities, it is important to remember that your organization is ultimately making the request. Therefore, the weight of the request should fall on your organization rather than individual artists or organizations in BIPOC and ALAANA communities.

Reach out to local chambers of commerce

Chambers of commerce are traditionally local associations established to promote and protect the business community's interests in a particular city or region. Many communities have chambers that focus on BIPOC and ALAANA communities. A local Black, Asian, or Hispanic chamber of commerce, for example, is dedicated to strengthening and empowering businesses representing their respective community. It may also be helpful to source the local/regional chamber of commerce to make an introduction if there are existing relationships across chambers of commerce. Finally, though many midsize and urban cities will have BIPOC and ALAANA-specific chambers, in less populated areas, services for BIPOC and ALAANA businesses/organizations may be housed under a regional chamber and/or "Mainstreet" organization. Potential opportunities or resources from the chamber of commerce include:

- Current list of BIPOC and ALAANA arts and culture organizations.
- Introduction to key leaders from BIPOC and ALAANA organizations who are engaged with chamber events and programs.
- List of local business events or community event calendar.

Reach out to community cultural HUBS

Sometimes within BIPOC and ALAANA communities, arts and culture programs and events are not always connected to a traditional arts and culture nonprofit. Look to the various organization types below that can serve as a potential resource.

- **Community Centers:** Neighborhood spaces that provide community-centered educational, recreational, and wellness-based services. These spaces often have arts-based programming that could help to connect you to BIPOC and ALAANA organizations.
- **Community & Economic Development Corporations:** CDCs and EDCs exist to support and help revitalize communities. Connect with them locally to help make introductions to BIPOC and ALAANA organizations.
- **Restaurants:** Cultural restaurants can serve as pillars in the community and often are a central point of information distribution about ongoing cultural programming in a community. They may also serve as a venue depending on the facility.
- **Faith-based organizations:** Many faith-based organizations host annual festivals, music series, and/or arts programming.
- **Cultural Markets & Marketplaces:** These spaces can offer an opportunity to develop a network of relationships to engage with diverse communities.
- **BIPOC and ALAANA Sororities and Fraternities:** There are many organizations that began at the start of the 20th century that are now global, supporting undergraduate and alumni chapters. These organizations generally have pillars that focus on arts and culture events for their region. Learn more here:
 - [National Pan-Hellenic Council](#)
 - [National Association of Latino Fraternal Organizations](#)
 - [National APIDA Panhellenic Association](#) (APIDA - Asian Pacific Islander Desi American fraternities and sororities)

Convention & Visitors Bureaus (CVBs)

A local organization that promotes and markets your community as a travel destination to leisure and business travelers, CVBs also provide free

local information and resources for people who live in those respective communities. They also have established relationships with local BIPOC and ALAANA organizations and can help make an introduction. Potential opportunities or resources from the CVB:

- Review your CVB's websites to source local events and member listings.

Did we miss a resource that can be shared with other AEP6 Study Partners? Please email your ideas to:

Dr. Genna Styles-Lyas
Director of AEP6 Community Engagement and Equity
glyas@artsusa.org

- Connect with CVB staff from departments that may engage with the local community stakeholders. Membership, partnership, community relations/engagement, or marketing staff members at CVB are a great resource.
- Attend CVB networking events to connect with potential leaders from the BIPOC and ALAANA communities.

BIPOC and ALAANA Professional Associations (Local/Regional)

Many local and regional professional associations can serve as a resource as well as an entity that hosts, produces, or sponsors arts and culture programming. Be sure to identify and connect with professional organizations locally to attend networking events to potentially meet key stakeholders from BIPOC and ALAANA communities. Here are a few examples of national organizations that may have local members or potential events in your community:

- [National Association of Latino Arts and Cultures](#)
- [The Native Arts and Cultures Foundation](#)
- [Arts Administrators of Color](#)
- [Black Theatre Network](#)
- [Women of Color in the Arts](#)
- [Black Artists+Designers Guild](#)
- [Association of African American Museums](#)

Social justice or advocacy organizations

These organizations use local events, online resources, and political advocacy to strengthen community relationships for BIPOC and ALAANA communities. Opportunities to explore could include identifying local chapters of national organizations in your community, attending networking events or community programs to connect with organizational stakeholders, or developing ongoing partnerships with organizations to support local events or initiatives. National Resources:

- [NAACP and the Urban League](#) (often have local or regional chapters)
- [Color of Change](#)
- [UnidosUS](#)
- [Asian American Federation](#)
- [Native Americans in Philanthropy](#)



Libraries

They're not just for reading quietly anymore. Many libraries have rotating art exhibits, art maker spaces, and music series. They may also be a venue

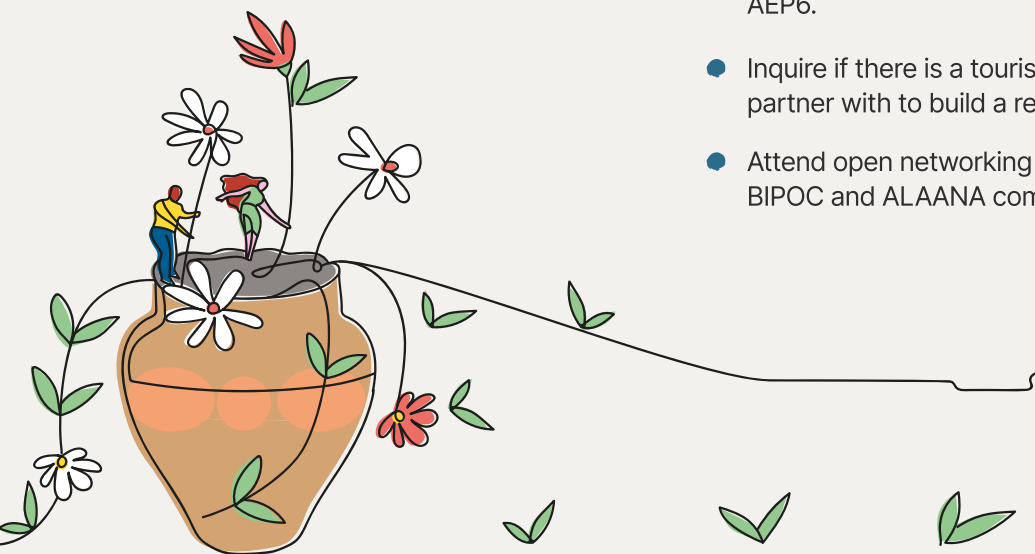
where local BIPOC and ALAANA arts and culture organizations host events or programming. Potential opportunities or resources from your local library:

- Connect with library staff to help make introductions to local community partners.
- Review community events calendars or bulletin board listings posted at the library for upcoming BIPOC and ALAANA organization events.
- Attend library events hosted by local community partners featuring arts and culture programming. Use this as an opportunity to network with key community stakeholders.

Universities

Universities, colleges, and junior colleges can host various university clubs for BIPOC and ALAANA student communities. Connect with the alumni relations department or arts and culture departments to begin outreach efforts. Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) are institutions of higher education in the United States that were established with the intention of ensuring an avenue of access to a college education for the African American community. Additionally, Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs) are defined as institutions with an enrollment of undergraduate full-time equivalent students that is at least 25% Hispanic. Be sure to connect with your local HBCU or HSI university or college as a resource and/or potential arts and culture

- Many HBCUs/HSIs have their own performing arts center, gallery, or museum. Connect with them to make sure they are a local partner for AEP6.
- Inquire if there is a tourism/hospitality program or course that you can partner with to build a relationship.
- Attend open networking events to meet key stakeholders from BIPOC and ALAANA communities.



Work with larger Arts & Culture Organizations

Use this resource to gather information on other local artists or organizations that may have worked with larger arts and culture organizations in the past and could have connections in the BIPOC and ALAANA communities. Potential opportunities or resources:

- Ask your contact for a recommendation or introduction to BIPOC and ALAANA organizations that may have partnered with the larger arts and culture organization on events or programs in the past.
- Attend networking events or programming during commemorative holidays or months that feature diverse cultural content while being mindful of your hosts.

Online search

Hopefully, as you have worked your way through the list, you have found many points of arts and culture connections to explore. An online search can also be very productive. For example, search “Festivals near me” (you’ll be amazed at how many may pop up). Be creative in your search criteria!

Managing new relationships

Once you have established new relationships with BIPOC and ALAANA organizations, it’s important that you continue to “show up.” As simple as this may seem, showing up can fall by the wayside as life gets busy and other priorities develop. It is critical to support BIPOC and ALAANA partner organizations by taking the long-term approach. Showing up signifies a commitment, ensuring an avenue of access to a college education and demonstrates that you mean what you say, you are invested in their work and want to have a deeper relationship.

