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New Bay Area Project to Forge a Culture of Readiness and Resilience for Artists

[BAARN/Bay Area Arts Readiness Network](#) will create infrastructure to prepare artists facing increasing and overlapping crises. Readiness planning and network-building are keys in crisis mitigation and management.

November 25 - NCAPER, the National Coalition for Arts Preparedness and Emergency Response, has announced the launch of the [“Bay Area Arts Readiness Network \(BAARN\)”](#) program, supported by an \$845,000 grant from the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation. Spanning from early 2025 through 2027, this initiative will provide training and resources to enhance artists’ resilience and emergency preparedness while fostering the growth of artist-run networks across ten Bay Area counties.

“Maintaining business functions in the face of interruptions, and mitigating risks to their artworks and operations, are skillsets which many artists need but have not yet acquired,” said NCAPER Executive Director Janet Newcomb. The key to maintaining business continuity is the creation of readiness plans, and developing the infrastructure to activate those plans in an emergency. Bay Area residents are familiar with the risks posed by earthquakes and fire, as well as the repercussions of the COVID-19 pandemic – and are increasingly facing overlapping crises. This program will take a holistic approach to help artists withstand various threats: not just these expected types of events, but also communications disruptions, financial upheavals, loss of space, and even incidents of violence or civil unrest. Strategies to plan for “slow” disasters such as climate change and gentrification are also increasingly important.

BAARN combines the experience and resources of the nation’s two leading organizations promoting readiness, response and recovery in the arts sector. Since 2006, NCAPER has promoted policies which embed the arts in community readiness and crisis response, delivered educational programs which build bridges between the arts and emergency management sectors, and created publications and techniques to speed the recovery of those in the arts and creative sectors. One of NCAPER’s core functions is organizing Response Facilitation Calls following a widespread disaster, allowing those impacted to connect with one another, and with a ‘brain trust’ of those who have disaster experience and expertise to share. For this project, NCAPER will team up with the Performing Arts Readiness project (PAR). Since 2017, PAR has been adapting and applying the emergency management expertise of the cultural heritage community to the country’s performing arts sector. PAR grants have supported the creation of “Circuit Rider” mentoring programs in rural and urban communities, and individual readiness plans for dozens of performing arts organizations. An expanding roster of professional development offerings

ranges from fire safety and cybersecurity to festival security, archiving legacy materials, and community recovery through arts and culture. Particularly relevant to the BAARN project is PAR's work in developing and funding readiness and response networks in rural and urban communities, and NCAPER's relationships and experience with the arts funding community. The BAARN project is the most recent, and most ambitious, of their collaborative efforts to pilot and model new practices to strengthen the arts sector.

The BAARN program aligns with the Hewlett Foundation's goal to "ensure Bay Area artists and culture bearers shape and benefit from the services, policies, and practices that most impact their creative agency and economic well-being." Adam Fong, Program Officer at the Hewlett Foundation, noted, "Preparedness is a critical component of economic well-being for artists. Bay Area artists are more likely than most to work multiple part-time jobs, and to be self-employed. That means they have very little backup in any crisis, whether from natural disaster or otherwise. Funding and professional development through the BAARN project can help protect and empower local artists and the invaluable cultural practices they sustain.

BAARN Project Director Tom Clareson emphasized the importance of networks in crisis management. "Research shows that social cohesion and connections to both personal and professional networks are key factors in post-disaster recovery," said Clareson. "This project will support existing artist-focused networks while also developing new ones. Through preparedness training, network development, and funding, BAARN will strengthen the capacity of these networks to support members before, during, and after crises." Clareson also shared that the project will develop curricula, case studies, and replicable models that can be adapted for use in other communities across the country.

For more information, visit www.ncaper.org/BAARN or email info@ncaper.org.

About NCAPER

The National Coalition for Arts Preparedness and Emergency Response (NCAPER) is a voluntary task force composed of national, regional, state, and local arts organizations, public agencies, and foundations. Founded in 2006 in response to the devastation caused to artists and creative economies by 21st-century disasters, NCAPER promotes readiness and effective emergency response within the arts sector. By fostering relationships between the arts and emergency management fields, NCAPER advances the arts as a vital component of community health and recovery.

About the Performing Arts Readiness Project

Performing Arts organizations are uniquely vulnerable to a wide range of emergencies, leading to potential loss of income and assets. The Performing Arts Readiness (PAR) project empowers these essential community hubs by offering educational and informational resources. Through the PAR project, performing arts organizations across the nation learn how to protect their assets, sustain operations, and be better prepared for emergencies.

About the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation

The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation invests in creative thinkers and problem solvers who are working to ensure everyone has an opportunity to thrive. The Performing Arts Program makes grants to

support meaningful artistic experiences for communities throughout the Bay Area. Its aim is to ensure Bay Area communities honor and support their own and each other's artistic and cultural vibrancy, and the power of the arts and artists to advance individual self-expression and collective self-determination.