

Public Art and Environmental Health: Navigating the Intersections

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SHIFTWORKS

Community + Public Arts



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About Us

Shiftworks Community + Public Arts is a Pittsburgh-based nonprofit organization working across southwestern Pennsylvania to collaboratively shape the public realm and catalyze community-led change. Through community-engaged artist projects, Shiftworks supports the growth of social, cultural, and neighborhood assets. Shiftworks achieves this by delivering civically engaged public art, artist services, public programming, and client services.

Formerly the Office of Public Art (OPA), Shiftworks launched in 2005 through partnership between the public and private sectors to support and advance the role of public art in the Pittsburgh region. The organization flourished, developing an ecosystem for public art in the region and establishing its reputation as an organization with valued and skilled collaborators, planners, and implementers. In 2023, OPA adopted the name Shiftworks Community + Public Arts. This change signaled a years-long shift for the organization, which had moved away from the role of a behind-the-scenes collaborator into that of a leading agency. Today, Shiftworks pursues new initiatives, builds systems, and develops the resources necessary to create a sustainable and diverse ecosystem for public art in southwestern Pennsylvania.

Public art can be a catalyst for community change. Art physically enhances public spaces, making neighborhoods and communal areas more beautiful. Art can also revitalize and entertain, generating economic opportunities. But public art and the practices of artists can also create platforms for and amplify the voices and talents of community members who have been disenfranchised, overlooked, or ignored in civic processes. Through public art projects and programs, communities are deeply engaged in shaping the future of our region—becoming more connected, resilient, and innovative through the process.

Shiftworks is guided by four principles:

1. Artists are agents of social, civic, and cultural change.
2. Community members are highly valued collaborators with expertise in their neighborhoods.
3. Equity and social justice are the foundation of our work.
4. A successful public art landscape depends upon a thriving network of public art practitioners.



Shiftworks believes that the impact of public art is its capacity for catalyzing social change, building cohesion, and amplifying shared knowledge. To accomplish this, the organization provides expertise, tools, and networks to support public arts in southwestern Pennsylvania. This work can only be accomplished with sufficient resources to equitably invest in artists and communities to create public art and lead community-engaged practices.



The Environment, Health, and Public Art Initiative

In 2018, with funding from The Heinz Endowments, Shiftworks released an open call for organizations to be part of a project at the intersection of environment, health, and public art. With the help of an advisory committee composed of local stakeholders, three community-based organizational partners with environmental health and advocacy at the heart of their missions were selected. In 2019, Shiftworks collaborated with the three organizational partners to issue an open call for artists. Through this process, three artists were brought on board with the mission of collaborating with the organizational partners to create works of temporary public art addressing an environmental issue impacting Pittsburghers, as part of the Environment, Health, and Public Art (EHPA) Initiative. Through community meetings, stakeholder conversations, and research, these artists developed the following pieces:

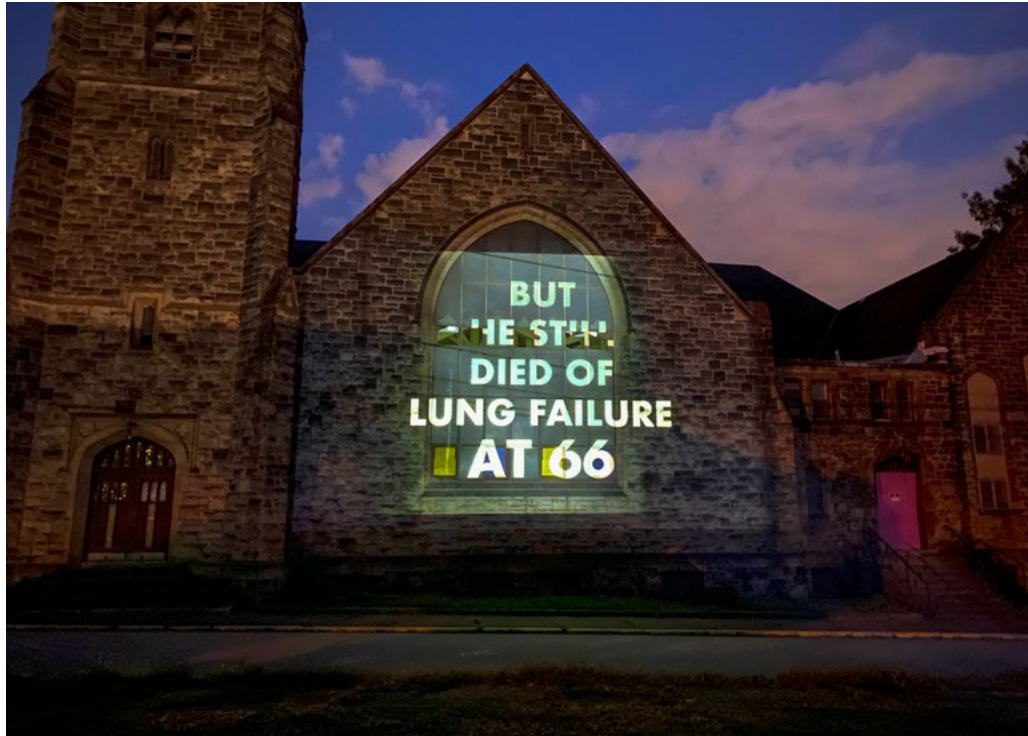


Nine Mile Run Viewfinder by Ginger Brooks Takahashi, 2021, photo courtesy Lindsay Dill.

Nine Mile Run Viewfinder, a series of portals for seeing, hearing, and smelling the waterway beneath our feet. Artist Ginger Brooks Takahashi created this



artwork to bring attention to the connections between Nine Mile Run, the stormwater and sewer systems, the Monongahela River, and the water we drink. Brooks Takahashi collaborated with Center for Civic Arts in partnership with UpstreamPgh (formerly Nine Mile Run Watershed Association). Based in Wilkinsburg, both organizations build awareness and steward efforts for improved water and air quality in their community and the larger watershed.



How Did This Happen?
by Aaron Henderson,
2021, photo courtesy
artist.

How Did This Happen?, a temporary public artwork created by artist Aaron Henderson in collaboration with North Braddock Residents For Our Future (NBRFOF) and The Breathe Collaborative. NBRFOF, based in North Braddock, PA, seeks to promote community health and clean air while fighting unconventional gas drilling and major source polluters in the Mon Valley. NBRFOF is a member of the Breathe Collaborative. The project consists of site-specific projections displayed at a series of projection events in the Mon Valley and across the state.





Dirt is Beautiful workshop with SEd Cart at Etna Garden by artist Mary Tremonte, 2020, photo courtesy Kate Zidar.

Dirt is Beautiful, a project that advocates for healthy land and healthy communities, created by artist Mary Tremonte in collaboration with Grow Pittsburgh. Grow Pittsburgh advocates for healthy land and healthy communities by raising awareness of soil health in neighborhoods across the Pittsburgh region.

These works all launched from 2020 to 2021. A virtual discussion was held with the artists in the spring of 2021 and community programming occurred throughout. After the success of this initiative, The Heinz Endowments was eager to support another round of this program.

While the original EHPA blueprint resulted in impactful engagement between artists and the communities supported by their partner organizations, Shiftworks was interested in investing time into assessing both the successes and challenges of the process and potentially finding alternate approaches that could better meet the needs of both artists and community members. This decision was also informed by the critical disruptions that were caused by COVID-19 and the organization's subsequent reassessment of practices and processes that had previously been considered "best practices." Therefore, before recreating EHPA using the same model, Shiftworks sought funding to investigate the landscape of public art with a focus on environmental health issues. Supportive of Shiftworks' process, The Heinz Endowments provided funding for an exploratory process that would, in combination with lessons learned from the first round of EHPA, inform the next iteration of the program.



Research and Benchmarking

With support from Executive Director Sallyann Kluz and under the direction of Associate Director Divya Rao Heffley, Shiftworks embarked on a process to better understand what other relevant projects might exist, which artists and organizations are focusing their public arts efforts on environmental health issues, and how the EHPA Initiative might evolve based on these findings. Tess Wilson was hired in January 2023 as Research and Events Associate, with the primary objective of researching this intersection and drawing out potential learnings. Throughout the research process, Wilson and Heffley worked closely together to scope, navigate, and assess this project.

To establish a foundation for this research, it was necessary to get a better understanding of the existing intersection of environmental advocacy and creative art practices. At the start of this process, Wilson consulted four resources that examine a variety of perspectives on the interplay between art, culture, and the environment, and range in scope from sector-wide to hyper-regional. An additional resource became available to the team in 2023, and was considered as well.¹ These five resources are:

Grantmakers in the Arts’ “Funding at the Intersection of Art and Environment: A Field Scan” (2015) includes interviews with funders that, to some degree, prioritize projects with a focus on environmental health. The field scan offers successes and lessons learned from this group of funders, including a recommendation to other prospective funders to incorporate environmental issues not only in their calls for applications, but also in their operational policies and values.

“Farther, Faster, Together: How Arts and Culture Can Accelerate Environmental Progress” is another field scan that explores creative placemaking projects as a tool for sustainable community development. This report includes an overview of projects and articles, as well as interviews with artists and environmentalists, all as avenues to understanding how creative placemaking can holistically and urgently address environmental challenges.

“Aesthetic Perspectives: The Full Framework” (2017) encourages practitioners to “reclaim aesthetics” from its complicated history as a way to frame Arts for Change projects. The proposed approach uses a framework that embraces the

¹ For an in-depth review of these five resources, refer to Appendix A.



entire process of developing a creative project rather than focusing exclusively on the final product. This framework includes eleven attributes of aesthetics, defined and explored through examples in the report.

More examples of this framework in action can be found in **“Pittsburgh Artists Working in Community: A Case Study of Aesthetic Perspectives in Action”** (2019). This report explores three recent Shiftworks Community + Public Arts projects (including the EHPA Initiative) through the lens of the Aesthetic Perspectives framework. It includes lessons learned and project successes, as well as insight into how other organizations might successfully use the framework.

Another regional example of rethinking strategic approaches to community engagement and the arts can be found in the **“Creative Advocacy Playbook”** (2023) from New Sun Rising and its offshoot, Riverwise. Growing out of a long history of working with organizations and municipal leaders, this guidebook summarizes their strategy of shared capital (financial and cultural) as a way to support communities, and how “creative advocacy”—a method of engagement that is built and deployed in the same way as artistic practice—can further empower grassroots efforts.

These examinations of how funders, community-based organizations, and artists approach environmental health, the arts, and the places where they overlap provided context for the rest of this research. As both environmental health and public art can be expansive in definition and implementation, it was helpful to explore a range of approaches to these intersections.

Initial research included taking a broad look at individuals, projects, and organizations with work connected to environmentally focused public art. The scope started wide—including Shiftworks' own regional projects and encompassing international initiatives—and was built through Wilson's research, in conjunction with input from the entire Shiftworks staff. Their unique backgrounds and experiences with a wide variety of projects was invaluable to this process. Eventually, the list was narrowed down using the following guidelines in order to create a list that would offer insight into how to design a project like EHPA. The projects, artists, or organizations in the reference list all met at least one of these conditions:

- Within or adjacent to Shiftworks' regional focus of southwestern Pennsylvania,
- Addressed environmental issues relevant to the region,
- Took an innovative and creative approach to environmental issues,



- Focused on environmental health or environmental justice, or
- Supported public art with a focus on environmental health and environmental justice.

Researching these projects, organizations, and artists provided tangible examples of the variety of ways in which the intersections of environmental justice, environmental health, and art can be approached.² Notable examples included:

Live Forever, a brass installation that was part of a larger project commissioned by the Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs. Like other pieces in this project, this collaboration between Jenna Didier and Oliver Hess was installed on the side of Fire Station 94 in Los Angeles, where illuminated sculptures modeled after succulents react to ambient humidity levels, which can be a warning sign of fire risk. Budget: \$100,000. Timeline: Installed in 2011.



Jenna Didier and Oliver Hess (Didier Hess), *Live Forever*, 2011. Photograph courtesy of Mayoral Photo.

² Refer to Appendix B for a bibliography of the projects and reports benchmarked and to Appendix C for a list of organizations researched.

Freshwater, by Jean Shin, was a series of sculptures featuring the freshwater mussel, highlighting the responsibility we all share to care for our watersheds. This was part of Water Marks, a public art program along the Delaware Waterfront in Philadelphia, PA, with support from the VIA Art Fund and the Yaverland Foundation. Budget: Unknown. Timeline: June to November 2022.



Jean Shin, *Freshwater*, 2022. Photograph courtesy of Philadelphia Contemporary.

Water Bar was a collaboration between Bluestem Communications, the Mississippi Watershed Management Organization, and the Works Progress studio, and was displayed at the Northern Sparks Arts Festival. Environmental advocates staffed a mobile bar cart where tap water was served to visitors, sparking conversation about the health of water systems in Minnesota and the surrounding region. Budget: \$3,000. Timeline: 2015.



Water Bar, 2014. Photograph courtesy of Mississippi Watershed Management Organization.



Interviews

In order to gain a deeper understanding of the variety of ways in which these entities approached environmental health, the arts, or the intersection of these fields, interviews were held with several contacts from the reference list. These conversations gave Shiftworks an opportunity to learn how these entities view the environment and the arts.

Interviews were held with the following people:

Justin Dula and the **Pennsylvania Office of Environmental Justice**. Within the state's Department of Environmental Protection, this office supports Pennsylvania residents in low-income communities as they navigate permits and other processes. Dula is the Director of this office, and leads outreach to families disproportionately impacted by environmental health issues.

Emily Elliott, Daniel Bain, Megan Lange of the Pittsburgh Water Collaboratory. The Collaboratory grew out of a project within the Department of Geology & Environmental Science at the University of Pittsburgh, and has since become an information hub for water research in the region. The group provides scholarly and logistical support to organizations or advocacy groups in and around Pittsburgh.

Ashley Funk and the **Mountain Watershed Association**. This watershed association is a conservation nonprofit with a focus on the Youghiogheny River watershed. Through projects that restore and preserve this region's natural resources, the Association advocates for and empowers its community.

Alyssa Lyon, Principal Consultant of **Black Girl, Green World (BGGW)** and Director of the **Black Environmental Collective**. BGGW's purpose is to deliver comprehensive consulting services with a specialization in coalition building and strategic organizing. With a focus on innovative approaches to addressing environmental justice and racism, BGGW's mission is to enhance the socioeconomic sustainability and efficiency of Black and Brown communities through environmental reparation and systemic change. The Black Environmental Collective, housed at UrbanKind, is an advocacy group made up of leaders of color, focused on the environmental health needs of Black communities in Pittsburgh.



Rafiqqa Mohammed and the **Pennsylvania Environmental Justice Advisory Board**. Mohammed is a working artist and environmental advocate in Harrisburg, PA, who serves on the Advisory Board.

Uzma Noormohamed and **E(ART)H Chicago**. Through an extensive and intricate community engagement process, the E(ART)H Chicago team worked with twelve artists to install public art in sites around Chicago, with a focus on environmental justice communities.

E(ART)H Chicago Background

The E(ART)H Chicago initiative began as a project of the Illinois Science and Energy Innovation Foundation (ISEIF), a nonprofit formed as a statewide effort to increase energy literacy and advance electric energy infrastructure. With funding from energy providers ComEd and Ameren, as well as Builders Initiative, the Chicago Frontlines Funding Initiative, the Regeneration Fund, and the Joyce Foundation, the ISEIF distributed \$700,000 in grant funding to artists through the E(ART)H Chicago project. These grants supported the creation of twelve public art pieces on display in neighborhoods throughout the city.

Community perspective was centered early and often in the project's timeline, beginning with outreach to nearly 100 community organizations, with the purpose of providing context to potential stakeholders. After this initial outreach, seventy-five participants—including artists, environmentalists, community leaders, scientists, and others—were invited to participate in three brainstorming sessions throughout 2021. Stipends were provided for any participants who were not receiving institutional support to attend, and a facilitator

experienced in community engagement was hired. These meetings resulted in the creation of a framework for the E(ART)H Chicago project; this group determined the “why, what, and how” of this project.

Building on this framework, the Steering Committee created and released a request for proposals and established a Review Committee that included an opportunity for public nominations. The application process was purposefully straightforward and streamlined, with the goal of lowering the barriers to entry for applicants. This approach, combined with a rigorous outreach process that included information sessions, resulted in an astounding number of applications. The Review Committee, an Art Advisory Committee, and the Steering Committee reviewed all applications using a rubric developed from the initial co-created project framework. Ultimately, 30 proposals were selected as finalists and interviewed, and twelve of these were selected for installation. Artists were given a year to complete their pieces, and activation events took place in each of the twelve featured neighborhoods throughout 2023.

Heffley and Wilson conducted these interviews with the goal of learning how the EHPA Initiative might draw from their organizational missions and environmentally focused projects. These discussions were guided by the following questions, which were adapted to fit the circumstances and purview of each interviewee (those alterations are in brackets):

- What environmental justice concerns exist in our [your] region?
- How can community organizations address these inequities? How does your organization [project] approach environmental health?
- What partnerships are valuable when planning these types of projects or initiatives? What is the best way to build these relationships? What approaches have been successful in your experience?
- How can or should community members be involved in the environmental advocacy process?
- If a funder handed you a blank check, what programming or outreach would you implement or undertake? How is funding best used when it comes to environmental health initiatives or projects?
- How can artists join the conversation? What can art bring to the conversation?
- Which other projects and people can we learn from as we plan this iteration of EHPA?

Key Interview Findings

These interviews were invaluable, as they offered perspectives and experiences from a range of individuals – from working artists to government employees to academic researchers. Understanding the various ways these individuals and their organizations take on environmental issues proved to be eye-opening and set a foundation for the collaboration that followed this stage of the program. From these conversations, several key findings emerged (and can be found in bold below):

From their interview with Uzma Noormohamed, Heffley and Wilson learned about the methods of engagement and community-centered program design employed by E(ART)H Chicago, a public art project focused on climate change and other environmental issues. Community perspectives were prioritized from the beginning of the planning process and determined much of the design and trajectory of the work. The E(ART)H Chicago process is evidence that **an impactful project depends on community input throughout—from planning to implementation to evaluation—and compensates community members for their time.** The request for artist proposals was created with a low barrier to entry: questions were short

and simple, a range of funding possibilities was available, and multimedia applications were accepted. This allowed for **applicants who do not consider themselves artists or who have never participated in a large project before to feel comfortable applying**, and therefore invited perspectives that could have otherwise gone unrecognized.

A similar finding came out of the conversation with Justin Dula, who noted that the Office of Environmental Justice often works with organizations that might not consider their work to be environmental, or that might not consider themselves to be environmental advocates. Because this office works primarily in the realm of environmental crises, they find that while environmental justice might not be a primary concern, it is at the root of many of the issues with which these organizations deal. He has found that supporting communities individually reveals much more about the daily injustices people face than does a statewide approach. While both art and environmentalism might seem distant or achievable for some, **art has the power to bring attention to the unseen systems and infrastructures that have tangible effects on our daily lives** and can help people express their experience of environmental issues in unique ways.

When the Mountain Watershed Association addresses its communities' specific environmental needs, it depends on public input. During this process, Ashley Funk noted, it is vital to find leaders within a community and work closely with local officials. This can also be an important step in understanding the various ways community members experience environmental issues, as **“environmental justice” and “environmental art” are broad terms—so much so that active participants in both practices might not directly identify with either one.**

Similarly, Rafiyqa Muhammad highlighted how art can be an effective method for engaging those who might feel distanced from environmental conversations. To mitigate this, Muhammad ensures her own programming is accessible to a wide variety of perspectives. She also emphasized the importance of incorporating community perspectives into environmental justice projects, and that this practice requires meeting community members where they are. A first step to building community connection should be **embedding yourself in existing structures and acknowledging the assets that already exist within a community.**

The Pittsburgh Water Collaboratory echoed the value of embedding environmental work in an impacted community. Their organization often begins building relationships by attending meetings and making sure community members know the kinds of support their group can offer. By maintaining a meaningful presence in a community over time, relationships are likely to be collaborative instead of extractive. Emily Elliott also drew attention to the environmental progress that has been made in the region—and how reframing environmental justice conversations to include successes can be an effective approach. This was a powerful reminder that **there is room for joy and celebration in conversations about environmental health.**



Celebrating the work that is already being done also came up in the conversation with Alyssa Lyon of BGGW and the Black Environmental Collective. What if, Lyon asked, **we met a community's basic needs so that artists and environmental advocates within that community can continue doing the work they already do?** Perhaps arts organizations can think differently about the ways they work with artists. Supporting art can look like providing support for the artists already doing the work.³



Relationship Building

Key findings from these interviews made it clear that any movement forward in planning the next iteration of EHPA would need to be built with and alongside community members. As the Principal Consultant of BGGW and Director of the Black Environmental Collective, Lyon is a strong voice for environmental justice in the region and was an obvious choice as a collaborator. Because of her deep connections to community organizations and the network of environmental advocates she supports, she was an ideal thought partner as we considered next steps. With Lyon, Heffley and Wilson began to investigate how Shiftworks might begin to build community connections through the lens of environmental health. The team sought to build relationships with organizations that exist at the intersection of environment, health, and wellbeing and are based in Black and historically disinvested communities. During this stage, it was vital to approach relationship-building without a set plan or a specific end goal in mind. Instead of a product, creating community connections was the ultimate goal of this collaboration, which led the team to create a luncheon discussion series.⁴

³ For a comprehensive overview of key interview learnings, refer to Appendix D.

⁴ Refer to Appendix E for an overview of the team's collaboratively generated goals and guiding principles, dated October 2023.





Monthly Luncheon Series

Pittsburgh, as reports like 2019's "[Pittsburgh's Inequality Across Gender and Race](#)" indicate, is not a healthy place for Black women to live and raise their children. Because of this, Lyon, Heffley, and Wilson prioritized this specific Pittsburgh community—Black women—as a group with whom Shiftworks should build relationships. As relationship-building was the ultimate goal of this outreach, an informal but regularly occurring approach seemed to be the best format. Eventually, the team determined that a series of casual and intimate luncheons with guests from key local organizations was an ideal format for this engagement.

Contacts at three organizations were invited to join Lyon, Heffley, and Wilson for a series of luncheons as a way to learn more about their personal experiences as Black women in Pittsburgh, as well as the ways their organizations support Black women. These organizations are all deeply connected to Black and historically disinvested communities, as evidenced by their engagement, programming, location, and practices. In the invited organizations, community is strongly reflected in their senior leadership, board, staff, funding, sponsorships, and partnerships.

In the same vein as the collaboration between Lyon and Shiftworks, these luncheons were not designed to produce a specific product. The purpose of these meetings was strictly connection and conversation with Black women who work at Black-led organizations serving Black Pittsburghers. Each luncheon was held at a Global Majority–owned restaurant and each attendee was provided lunch and a stipend for their time.⁵

5 Shiftworks uses the term Global Majority to describe people who are Black, Brown, Asian, Latino/a/e/x, Indigenous American, and/or indigenous to the Global South. We continue to use specific terms that refer to race, ethnicity, or nationality as they apply to individuals and/or groups (i.e. Chinese American, Black, Chicano, etc.).

Our language is informed by the work of Jamaican-British educator Rosemary Campbell-Stephens, who coined the term Global Majority and wrote that, "Globally, these groups currently represent approximately eighty percent (80%) of the world's population making them the global majority." Shiftworks has built upon the work of Campbell-Stephens, adapting the language she developed from within a British context to operate within the context of living and working in the United States.

Shiftworks recognizes that no term used to broadly describe race or ethnicity is comprehensive or adequate. Language and the discussion around race and ethnicity are forever-evolving. As a result, Shiftworks continuously discusses the ethnic and racial terms we use as an organization. Community feedback is encouraged and will be implemented into staff discussions about organizational language. To provide feedback, please contact Dominique Chestand, Shiftworks Operations Manager, at dominique@shiftworkspgh.org.



The invitees were:

Yazmin Bennett-Kelly, the Director of the Allegheny BIRTH Initiative at Healthy Start Pittsburgh, an organization that supports caregivers in Allegheny and Westmoreland Counties through programming, resource-sharing, and community-building.

Demia Tyler, the Director of Strategic Initiatives at Healthy Start Pittsburgh.

Sharnay Hearn-Davis, the Founder of the Sisters Lifting as We Climb Network, a group that coordinates support and community for Black women in the Pittsburgh region.

Shanell Lamere, an artist and videographer for the Sisters Lifting As We Climb Network.

Muffy Mendoza, the Founder and CEO of Brown Mamas, a network of support for mothers of color.

Luncheons 1 and 2: Introductions at Echt Coffeehouse and Deeper Connections at Wings and a Prayer

The purpose of the initial luncheon was to introduce any attendees who did not already know one another and to strengthen existing relationships through conversation. When asked how each organization fit within the environmental health discourse in Pittsburgh, each woman explained that this was a role for other organizations, not their own. For Lyon, Heffley, and Wilson, this was a surprising response, as they believed the work of all three organizations belonged at the heart of environmental health in the region.

Luncheon 3: Place as Environment at Cafe on the Corner

Starting with the third luncheon, guest artists were invited to join the group, to both expand our discussion on the intersections of art and environmental health, as well as focus them through their own unique creative approaches. For this luncheon, Pittsburgh-based artist Njaimeh Njie posed three questions to the attendees:

- What did the street your parents grew up on look like?
- What did the street you grew up on look like?
- What does the street that you want your kids to grow up on look like?

As this conversation blossomed, everyone shared their experiences of growing up in Pittsburgh as the group metaphorically journeyed through various neighborhoods together. This conversation emphasized the importance of building community resilience at home as a catalyst for power and mobility.

Luncheon 4: The Body as Environment at Ujamaa Collective with lunch from Bombay to Burgh

Pittsburgh-based artist and business owner Lakeisha Wolf graciously hosted everyone at her retail and education space, Ujamaa Collective, for the fourth luncheon. To frame the discussion, Lakeisha posed this question to the group: “When did you learn to care for yourself?” After lunch and conversation, she led the group in a body butter and aromatherapy workshop, with affirmations shared throughout. One such affirmation, which was accompanied by a guided mindful lotion ritual demonstration, was “I am present and aligned with where I’m meant to be.” The conversation included discussion of the womb as the first environment, and of the importance of caring for oneself in order to care for others.

Luncheon 5: Community as Environment at the River Roots Rainwater Project in Larimer with lunch from Showcase BBQ

The final luncheon was held at the River Roots Rainwater Project in Larimer, a community rain garden built through a collaboration between Pittsburgh-based artist Alisha Wormsley and Larimer community members. Alisha joined the group for lunch and led everyone in a discussion about survival, asking everyone to consider how much more is needed for survival than just water, food, and shelter. She shared her own survival kit and posed the question: “What would you bring to contribute to your survival and also to the survival of the folks with you?”

Post-Luncheon Book Discussion: Emergent Strategy

During the fourth luncheon, adrienne maree brown's groundbreaking foundational text, *Emergent Strategy*, was discussed serendipitously. Primarily, it was brown's emphasis on building networks through a narrow and deep approach rather than a wide-reaching and surface-level one that resonated with the team. While not explicitly inspired by the book, this framework for relationship-building had been an important part of the luncheon series, and is a lens through which the future of the EHPA Initiative might be examined.

Because of this book's presence in the conversation, a follow-up convening is being planned, which will involve a book discussion featuring this text. The format of the book discussion will mirror that of the luncheons, with stipends and no specific outcome besides conversation and connection. As a parting gift and in preparation for this gathering, all attendees were presented with a copy of *Emergent Strategy* during the fifth luncheon at the River Roots Rainwater garden.



Key Learnings from the Luncheon Series

While the luncheons were primarily intended to build relationships with partner organizations, these meetings provided the team with vital insights that will inform Shiftworks' current work and, ultimately, also shape the future evolution of the organization's environmental engagement. These key learnings brought new ideas for programming into focus, as well as clarified what could be built upon the EHPA Initiative's foundation. Directions for growth gleaned from these luncheons include:

- Continuing to build relationships as Shiftworks plans the next steps for the EHPA Initiative. Relationship-building and -keeping will remain a cornerstone of the organization's commitments moving into implementation and beyond.
- Reflecting on language used when confronting environmental issues. If the majority of the luncheon participants did not identify with the term environmental health, then the conversation must shift in order to have necessary conversations with the people who are directly impacted by these issues.
- Meeting people where they are. This necessitates acknowledging existing assets, operating within existing structures, finding the people who are already doing the work, and supporting the collaborations that already exist.
- Lowering the barriers to entry as much as possible by simplifying the application process and welcoming organizations, individuals, and partnerships alike. This also requires providing customized support to applicants so they understand what is possible through this work.
- Holding true to the heart of Shiftworks' work in Civically Engaged Public Art by supporting partnerships between artists and communities, leveraging strengths in project and program management, and continuing to prioritize process over endpoint.





Sharing Findings with the Shiftworks Advisory Committee

Before the fifth and final luncheon, Wilson and Heffley met with the Shiftworks Advisory Committee to share findings from the program. As the benchmarking and research phase was coming to a close at this point, this meeting was also an opportunity for the committee to share insights and inform recommendations for next steps. After Wilson and Heffley shared the various stages of the process, from benchmarking, interviews, and key findings to building partnerships, engaging, reflections, and next steps, the committee responded with their initial reactions.

While generally supportive of the project as a whole, the committee highlighted the critical need for Shiftworks to center disability justice in the EHPA planning and implementation process. Those who are living with a disability are at elevated risk from issues of environmental health in the Pittsburgh region and beyond. To date, the EHPA Initiative has neither centered nor foregrounded disability justice, an issue that must be addressed as this initiative moves forward. The team has incorporated this invaluable insight into recommendations for next steps. A disability justice framework will be a fundamental aspect of the planning process moving forward.





Exploring Funding

As Heffley and Wilson considered future possibilities for the EHPA Initiative, they began exploring funding options outside the arts. Specifically, they searched for funding with an environmental justice focus. With the passage of the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) in 2022, a large amount of funding was allocated towards supporting environmental justice work. Administered by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the Environmental and Climate Justice (ECJ) Program will eventually disseminate \$2.8 billion in financial assistance to eligible organizations across the country. This funding is intended for the planning and implementation of a wide range of projects benefiting historically disinvested communities. An additional \$200 million is available in technical assistance, which includes grant writing support and application guidance.

There are several avenues of funding within the ECJ Program, including the Community Change Grants Program. This funding stream of approximately \$2 billion will support community-driven projects that expand community capacity to adapt for climate resiliency and address environmental injustice. These projects will be implemented through partnerships, either between two community-based organizations (CBOs) or between a CBO and a Federally Recognized Tribe, local government, or institution of higher education. Approximately 150 awards will be disseminated at a \$10–20 million level, and approximately 20 awards will be disseminated at a \$1–3 million level.

During this exploratory process, the team learned that other institutions in Pittsburgh were interested in pursuing the EPA funding stream as well. Two organizations—New Sun Rising (an operational and financial supporter of Pittsburgh projects and organizations) and their partner RiverWise (a community convener in nearby Beaver County)—created a joint application. To maximize the potential for Pittsburgh to be able to take advantage of the Community Change Grants Program, they have expressed interest in partnering with local organizations if they are granted these funds. The extent of these partnerships is unknown at the moment, but this could create exciting opportunities for the region.

Shiftworks and Black Girl, Green World learned that Assemble (a local educational organization) was also exploring similar funding streams, which led the three organizations to begin to work together as the EHPA Collective. This group is currently developing a project that will build agency in and fellowship around environmental health issues in the Pittsburgh region. An evolution of the luncheon series, this project is imagined as a series of artist-led community engagement circles centering additional Environmental Justice communities at the frontlines of the environmental health crises in Pittsburgh. The collective is currently exploring funding sources for both the planning and implementation stages of this project.





Next Steps

Findings from the benchmarking process, interviews, and luncheons, as well as ongoing conversations with partner organizations and feedback from the Shiftworks Advisory Committee, led the team to create a series of recommended next steps for the EHPA Initiative:

Consider how to develop an engagement practice that includes additional community members who are central to the environmental health crises facing the region.

- From the beginning, the process must evolve with input from community members themselves. It must consider the perspectives of those most impacted by environmental injustice and include the Disability Justice community.

Maintain relationships and nurture connections with local environmental justice stakeholders.

- As the luncheon series concluded, Heffley and Wilson reconnected with the Pittsburgh Water Collaboratory and Mountain Watershed Association. They also forged new connections with Three Rivers Waterkeeper and Mural Arts Philadelphia. Continuing these ongoing relationships and reaching out to other stakeholders in the region will expand possibilities for future collaboration.

Build Shiftworks' capacity to support organizations that seek to explore the intersections of public art and environmental justice.

- Aligning with the existing Shiftworks model, this assistance should be iterative and highly adaptable to the needs of the organization, the artists involved, and the communities served. This support should meet organizations, artists, and communities where they are.
- Perhaps an organization already works with an artist and simply needs material support that will enable this work to continue. Or perhaps an organization that works directly within the context of environmental justice is interested in partnering with an artist for the first time. Shiftworks can play a valuable role in these scenarios, offering operational guidance, network building, and more.



Explore what an expanded luncheon model might look like.

- Luncheons could engage additional communities critically impacted by environmental health issues, including the Disability Justice community, rural communities impacted by the expansive cycles of coal and oil extraction in the region, families in the Mon Valley downwind and downriver from Clairton Coke Works, and others.
- The model could be not just replicated, but also adapted to fit shorter and longer timeframes and a range of capacities from stakeholders and participants.
- A playbook or toolkit could be created and made available for others to implement in their own communities.

Identify short-term and long-term funding needs to support both continued engagement and program development, and seek funding to support ongoing relationship-building and maintenance

- As Heffley and Wilson learned from E(ART)H Chicago, effective community engagement requires time, staff, and funding. The process and findings documented in this report will serve as a helpful framework for potential funders as evidence of the value of slow and deliberate relationship-building.
- As part of the EHPA Collective, Shiftworks is in conversation with Assemble and Black Girl, Green World. Together, they are pursuing joint exploration of potential funding opportunities for their artist-led community engagement circle programming and more.

Although the EHPA planning process is drawing to a close, the collaborative work of building partnerships and connections continues as Shiftworks moves from planning to implementation. From 2024 to 2025, Shiftworks is focused on grant writing and fundraising, identifying potential collaborators, developing a concept for future outreach and engagement, and putting a plan in place to implement the program.

After investigating the intersection of environmental health and public art, Wilson and Heffley identified concepts and insights that will inform the next iteration of this program. These findings, along with the relationships—both new and existing—that were strengthened through interviews and luncheons, will inform and guide not only this program's development, but also the broader work of Shiftworks long into the future.





Appendix A: Literature Review

Funding at the Intersection of Art and Environment – GIA Reader (2015)

FARTHER, FASTER, TOGETHER – ArtPlace (2018)

Aesthetic Perspectives: The Full Framework – Americans for the Arts (2017)

Pittsburgh Artists Working in Community – Aesthetic Perspectives (2019)

Creative Advocacy Playbook – New Sun Rising (2023)

In doing research for the Environment, Health, and Public Art (EHPA) 2.0 project, it was necessary to get a better understanding of the existing intersection of environmental advocacy and creative art practices. Art has often been—and continues to be—at the center of environmental movements. The current urgency of the climate crisis has resulted in a wider understanding that creative thinking and artistic approaches to advocacy are not just impactful and fundable, but are also increasingly vital to any future environmental progress. The following five resources examine a variety of perspectives on the interplay between art, culture, and the environment, and range in scope from sector-wide to hyper-regional.

Seeking funding is an undeniable reality for many nonprofits, especially those that work in the realms of environmental advocacy or the arts. For *Grantmakers in the Arts' Funding at the Intersection of Art and Environment: A Field Scan* (2015), Helicon Collaborative interviewed funders that, to some degree, prioritize projects at this particular intersection. These interviewees included staff from the Kresge Foundation, the Robert Rauschenberg Foundation, the George Gund Foundation, the Compton Foundation, and ArtPlace America. While some funders understand an environmental focus is essential from a sustainability perspective, others are responding to an increase in environmentally-focused funding requests from nonprofits, artists, and projects. Relevant to the EHPA 2.0 research, there are also funders who think art and culture can comment on and advance the progress of environmental movements in ways other approaches cannot. This field scan concludes with successes and lessons learned from this group of funders, including a recommendation to other prospective funders to incorporate environmental issues not only in their calls for applications, but also in their operational policies and values.



Farther, Faster, Together: How Arts and Culture Can Accelerate Environmental Progress is an in-depth field scan of creative placemaking projects as a tool for sustainable community development, also conducted by Helicon Collaborative and commissioned by ArtPlace in 2018. This report includes an overview of projects and articles, as well as interviews with artists and environmentalists, all as avenues to understand how creative placemaking can help us holistically and urgently address environmental challenges. Key to this understanding, the report emphasizes, is acknowledging the fundamental role that culture and cultural norms play in our approach to sustainability and environmental movements. Culture shapes our interactions with the world around us, and many of the environmental crises we face today are—if not direct results of—at the very least perpetuated by the lens of cultural norms. Therefore, the report suggests that broad cultural shifts are necessary for the progress of current and future environmental movements. Ultimately, this field scan concludes—with ample evidence provided by case studies throughout—that projects at the intersection of art and environment are especially impactful because they have the potential to “spark public demand, build community capacity and agency, bridge scales, enrich the built environment, and nurture sustainable economies.”

Under the umbrella of cultural shifts, *Aesthetic Perspectives: The Full Framework* (2017) encourages practitioners to “reclaim aesthetics” from its complicated history as a way to frame Arts for Change projects. To that end, The Evaluation Learning Lab and the Animating Democracy team at Americans for the Arts developed a framework that embraces the entire process of developing a creative project rather than a singular final product. This framework includes eleven attributes of aesthetics, defined and explored through examples in the report. These attributes are: commitment to change, communal meaning, disruption of norms, cultural integrity, emotional experience, sensory experience, risk-taking, openness, resourcefulness, coherence, and stickiness. Some examples of projects that embody one or multiple attributes include the New River Valley Planning District Commission, a project that encouraged high school students to address community health issues through video arts; *Gasland*, a film that examined one man’s dealings with a predatory gas company; and Pop-Up Resource Village, a fleet of three repurposed buses that provided safe space and education for families and individuals impacted by incarceration.

More examples of this framework in action can be found in *Pittsburgh Artists Working in Community: A Case Study of Aesthetic Perspectives in Action* (2019). This report explores three recent Shiftworks Community + Public Arts projects (including the EHPA Initiative) through the lens of the Aesthetic Perspectives framework. It includes lessons learned and project successes, as well as insight into how other organizations might successfully use the framework. In some cases, as the report points out, although certain attributes might already be part of an artist’s practice, naming and defining this aspect of the process can provide a helpful structure for creative partners and arts organizations alike. Helpfully, the report also includes questions—developed using the framework as a guide—that were used to inform the

selection process for EHPA project partners, and could be adopted by other organizations. This report provides practical and regionally relevant examples of how this framework might be applied to arts projects.

Another regional example of rethinking strategic approaches to community engagement and the arts can be found in the *Creative Advocacy Playbook* (2023) from New Sun Rising and its offshoot Riverwise. Growing out of a long history of working with organizations and municipal leaders, this guidebook summarizes their strategy of shared capital (financial and cultural) as a way to support communities, and how “creative advocacy”—a method of engagement built and deployed through the lens of artistic practice—can further empower grassroots efforts. “Creative advocacy” emphasizes the importance of thinking beyond the status quo and embracing cross-sector collaboration in innovative and values-driven ways. This report not only helps stakeholders understand why and how to implement this approach in their engagement efforts—it also explores what challenges can keep communities from undertaking this strategy. These reasons include community trauma and community mindset, both essential factors to consider as one plans environmental advocacy projects.





Appendix B: Benchmarking Bibliography

Projects

“Art of Environmental Justice in an Expanded Field: A Symposium on Creative Activism and Eco-Politics across Boundaries.” High Meadows Environmental Institute, 2017. <https://environment.princeton.edu/videos/art-of-environmental-justice-in-an-expanded-field-a-symposium-on-creative-activism-and-eco-politics-across-boundaries/>.

This 2017 day-long institute brought together a group of international artists in conversation about environmental justice. l

Bartlett, Heidi Wiren and Celeste Neuhaus. *Conflux*, September 2022, commissioned by the Pittsburgh Creative Corps, in partnership with Shiftworks Community + Public Arts and Riverlife, Pittsburgh. <https://shiftworkspgh.org/event/conflux/>.

This performance event transformed a riverboat into an immersive art experience on the Allegheny, Monongahela, and Ohio Rivers.

Braddock, Alan. “Art of Environmental Justice in an Expanded Field: A Symposium on Creative Activism and Eco-Politics across Boundaries.” High Meadows Environmental Institute, 2017. <https://environment.princeton.edu/videos/art-of-environmental-justice-in-an-expanded-field-a-symposium-on-creative-activism-and-eco-politics-across-boundaries/>.

Carruth, Alison. “Blue Lab.” <https://allisoncarruth.com/lab/princeton-blue-lab/>.

A multidisciplinary group out of Princeton that creates stories and art addressing environmental issues.

“City as a Living Laboratory.” <https://www.cityaslivinglab.org/>.

This organization works with artists and community leaders to address environmental issues.

“CURRENT:LA WATER.” CURRENT:LA. <https://www.currentla.org/archive/index.html>.

This 2016 public art biennial presented by the City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs (DCA) Public Art Division featured art and programming addressing environmental issues with a focus on water.



Cusick, Jessica, Sam Durant, Jess Garz, Rick Lowe, and Robert Ruello. *Transforma*. <https://www.transformaprojects.org/pdfs/transformaBook.pdf>.

This book documents the projects supported by Transforma in New Orleans between 2005 and 2010.

Davis, Brangien. "Duwamish Revealed: A Celebration of Seattle's Only River." *Seattle*, July 8, 2022. <https://seattlemag.com/food-and-culture/duwamish-revealed-celebration-seattles-only-river/>.

An expansion on Kavage and Kistler's previous work on the Duwamish River in Seattle, WA, this arts festival included temporary art installations along the river, accompanied by events.

"Deep Time Chicago: Cultural Change in the Anthropocene." *Anthropocene Curriculum*, 2016. <https://www.anthropocene-curriculum.org/project/deep-time-chicago>.

This multidisciplinary approach to climate change discussion, including readings, performances, and more.

Didier, Jenna. "Live Forever." <https://www.jennadidier.com/live-forever/>.

This collaboration between Jenna Didier and Oliver Hess was commissioned by the Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs and resulted in a permanent public art installation that interacts with local humidity levels.

"E(ART)H Chicago." Illinois Science and Energy Innovation Foundation, 2023. <https://earthartchicago.org>

This project featured 12 public art installations around Chicago.

"Fossil Free Fest—#fossilfreeculture." <https://www.fossilfreefest.org/fff2020/>.

Biennial festival featuring music, art, and conversation about funding, creating, and living without fossil fuel dependence.

Kirksey, Eben. "Recipe 3: Multispecies Communities." In *The Multispecies Salon*. Duke University Press, 2014. <https://www.multispecies-salon.org/working/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/Multispecies-Communities-A-Recipe-for-Thneeds-Reseeds-byEben-Kirksey.pdf>.

This chapter details the Thneeds Reseeds project by Deanna Pindell.

"LandLab Program." Schuylkill Center for Environmental Education. <https://www.schuylkillcenter.org/departments/art/LandLab-Program.html>.

LandLab is the Schuylkill Center's immersive artist-in-residence program, providing artists or teams with resources and support to create innovative, site-specific installations or performative artworks.

“Living Barge Project: A Collaboration between Sarah Kavage and Nicole Kistler.” The Living Barge Project, 2006. <http://www.livingbarge.com/>.

This temporary art installation included a barge filled with native plants that floated along the Duwamish River in Seattle, WA.

Matteson, Shanai. “Water Bar: Water Is All We Have.” Open Rivers Journal (blog), February 8, 2018. <https://openrivers.lib.umn.edu/article/water-bar/>.

Water Bar was a 2014 Minneapolis, MN, project that involved a mobile bar cart that offered water samples and conversation about river conservation.

“Monongahela Riverfront Walkability Project.” <https://monrivertowns.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Monongahela-Riverfront-Walkability-Project-EXEC-SUMMARY-short.pdf>.

This plan for renovation and revitalization of the Monongahela riverfront includes public art and environmentally conscious design.

Mosher, Eve. “HighWaterLine.” Science History Institute. <https://www.sciencehistory.org/sensing-change-highwaterline/>.

For this project, Even Mosher traces a chalk line ten feet above sea level, displaying the impacts of climate change.

Nicola. “Cross-Species Dining: An Interview with Natalie Jeremijenko and Mihir Desai.” Edible Geography. <https://www.ediblegeography.com/cross-species-dining-an-interview-with-natalie-jeremijenko-and-mihir-desai/>.

This project uses innovative and experimental recipes to spark conversations about environmental issues.

Not An Alternative. “We Refuse to Die.” Carnegie Museum of Art, 2023. <https://www.werefusetodie.org/>.

Incorporating works for display outdoors and in museums, this project seeks to give voice to communities on the frontlines of fracking sites and other industrial zones.

Padgett, Christopher and The Genesis Collective. “Boom & Bust.” Riverwise Storytelling, 2022. <https://boomandbust.movie/>.

In this film, residents of Beaver County, PA, travel to the Gulf Coast exploring the experience of living next to a cracker plant.

Pindell, Deanna. “We All Share the Same Water.” <https://sharethewater.blogspot.com/>.

This 2012 public art project in North Carolina that also served as an improvement to the existing stormwater runoff system.

“Recycled Artist in Residency.” <https://www.rairphilly.org/what-is-rair-1>.

This collective in Philadelphia offers artists in residence access to raw recycled material.

Shin, Jean. “Freshwater.”

<https://philadelphiacontemporary.org/projects/jean-shin-freshwater>.

This exhibit of installations in Philadelphia highlighted the importance of freshwater mussels to the Delaware River watershed.

“The Art and Walkability Project; Mural for Wheaton Maryland.”

<https://www.theartandwalkabilityproject.com>.

In 2022, a mural by Eric B. Ricks was installed in Wheaton, MD, in an effort to improve urban walkability and appeal.

“The Fundred Dollar Bill Project.” <https://fundred.org/>.

This collective art project included hand-drawn dollar bills to bring attention to lead poisoning through public water.

“Unsettling Matter, Gaining Ground.” Carnegie Museum of Art, 2023.

<https://carnegieart.org/exhibition/unsettling-matter-gaining-ground/>.

This multimedia exhibit comprising new works and pieces from the CMOA archives examine the impacts of fossil fuel economies. #Air #Appalachia #Pollution

“World Garden Commons–The Fargo Project.” The Fargo Project.

<https://thefargoproject.com/world-garden-commons/>.

This community garden in Fargo, ND, includes a storm water basin, as well as recreational fields and public art.

WaterMarks. “WaterMarks.” <https://www.watermarksmke.org>.

A framework to engage community members in Milwaukee in conversations about water access, equity, and systems. The program pairs local artists with scientists and organizes walks around the city.

“Walk Around Philadelphia –JJ Tiziou.”

<https://www.jjtiziou.net/project/walk-around-philadelphia/>.

Twice a year, JJ Tiziou leads walks along the border of Philadelphia.

“Walking the Edge–JJTiziou.” <https://www.jjtiziou.net/walking-the-edge/>.

This exhibit is made up of multimedia art—including video, practical art, sculptural, and more--submitted by members of the public in reaction to Walk Around Philadelphia.

#Walk #MidAtlantic



Reports

ArtPlace America. "Farther, Faster, Together: How Arts and Culture Can Accelerate Environmental Progress." Helicon Collaborative, 2018. <https://www.artplaceamerica.org/view/pdf?f=/sites/default/files/public/pictures/environment.pdf>.

An in-depth field scan of creative placemaking projects as a tool for sustainable community development.

Borstel, John and Pam Korza. "Aesthetic Perspectives: Attributes of Excellence in Arts for Change." Americans for the Arts, 2017. <https://www.americansforthearts.org/sites/default/files/Aesthetic%20Perspectives%20Full%20Framework.pdf>.

A report that encourages practitioners to "reclaim aesthetics" from its complicated history as a way to frame Arts for Change projects.

Frasz, Alexis. "Funding at the Intersection of Art and Environment: A Field Scan." Grantmakers in the Arts, 2015. https://www.giarts.org/sites/default/files/26-3_Frasz.pdf.

A report that sums up interviews with funders that, to some degree, prioritize projects at the intersection of art and environment.

Laramee Kidd, Susannah. "Pittsburgh Artists Working in Community: A Case Study of Aesthetic Perspectives in Action." Animating Democracy, 2019. https://www.americansforthearts.org/sites/default/files/PittsburghArtists_HiRez.pdf.

This report explores three recent Shiftworks Community + Public Arts projects through the lens of the Aesthetic Perspectives framework.

Rossi-Keen, Daniel and Scott Wolovich. "Creative Advocacy." New Sun Rising, 2023. https://drive.google.com/file/d/1BaoamMokt_Bkiq9HH06lWc2E25zim6l1/view?usp=sharing.

A framework for communities and artists to advocate for shared goals.



Appendix C: Organizations Researched

Regional Stakeholders: Organizations	Who are they?	What do they do? What issues do they tackle?	Website
3 Rivers Outdoor Co	They sell gear and coordinate trips. They also offer programming and are invested in environmental issues (especially with local impact)	Outdoor outfitter; education	https://3riversoutdoor.com/
412 Food Rescue	412 Food Rescue directly transfers food to nonprofit partners that serve those who are food insecure.	Food distributor	https://412foodrescue.org/
412 Justice	412 JUSTICE is a multiracial, intergenerational, and multi-issue organization that focuses our efforts around economic, environmental, and education justice.	Community engagement organization	https://412justice.org/
Allegheny Cleanways	Allegheny CleanWays is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization formed in 2000 to “engage and empower people to eliminate illegal dumping and littering in Allegheny County.”	Waste cleanup and environmental advocacy	https://www.alleghenycleanways.org/
Allegheny County Clean Air Now	Allegheny County Clean Air Now (ACCAN) was founded in June, 2014 to give a voice to the residents living downwind from the DTE Energy's Shenango Coke Plant on Neville Island.	Clean air advocacy	https://www.alleghenycleanways.org/
Allegheny Land Trust	Allegheny Land Trust (ALT) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization helping local people save local land in the Pittsburgh Region. Protecting more than 3,700 acres of green space across 42 different municipalities in Allegheny and Washington Counties, ALT works to protect land of significant value to our region's unique scenic landscape, biodiversity, and water quality.	Environmental advocacy; land acquisition/conservation; recreation and education	https://alleghenylandtrust.org/
AppalShop	Using art to tell stories about Appalachia and make change in that region.	Multimedia organization; education	https://appalshop.org/



Assemble	Assemble is a nonprofit organization and community space for arts and technology education located in Pittsburgh's Garfield neighborhood.	Education and advocacy	https://assemblepgh.org/
Audubon Society of Western PA	Audubon Society of Western Pennsylvania connects the people of southwestern Pennsylvania to birds and nature through our programs, projects, and places.	Environmental advocacy; education; conservation	http://www.aswp.org/
Bike Pittsburgh	BikePGH is transforming our streets to make biking and walking commonplace for all Pittsburghers in order to improve our quality of life and reduce the harmful effects of car dependence in our communities.	Transportation advocacy; education	https://bikepgh.org/
Black Girl, Green World	BGGW's purpose is to deliver comprehensive consulting services with a specialization in coalition building and strategic organizing. With a focus on innovative approaches to addressing environmental justice and racism, BGGW's mission is to enhance the socioeconomic sustainability and efficiency of Black and brown communities through environmental reparation and systemic change.	Education; community advocacy	
Braddock Library	The Braddock Library mission is to provide reliable access to resources that engage compassionate and creative neighbors.	Education; access; community programming	https://braddockcarnegielibrary.org/
Breathe Project Breathe Collaborative	The Breathe Collaborative is a coalition of citizens, environmental advocates, public health professionals and academics working to improve air quality, eliminate climate pollution and make our region a healthy and prosperous place to live. The Collaborative powers the Breathe Project through science-based work and a community outreach platform.	Clean air advocacy	https://breatheproject.org/
Brown Mamas	Brown Mamas is a testament to their original idea that making moms better moms, makes dads better dads, children become better adults and, ultimately, communities become better communities.	Maternal health advocacy; education	https://brownmamas.com/



Center for Coalfield Justice (Washington and Greene Counties)	The Center for Coalfield Justice is working with residents in Washington and Greene Counties to shift that power back to the people who love and care about the places they call home.	Anti-pollution advocacy	https://centerforcoalfieldjustice.org/
CMOA/CMNH	Pittsburgh's natural history museum.	Education; programming	https://carnegiemnh.org/
Communitopia	Communitopia's purpose is to slow climate change and create healthier communities.	Education	https://www.communitopiapgh.org/
Creatives for Climate	Creatives for Climate is a non-profit global network of professionals using creativity to take climate action.	Advocacy through art	https://www.creativesforclimate.co/
DC Ecotone Renewables	Ecotone is dedicated to building the tools necessary to empower communities to redevelop and grow through sustainable food practices.	Food waste advocacy	https://www.ecotonerenewables.com/
Eden Hall Foundation	From improving access to health care to funding twenty-first century medicine programs, Eden Hall Foundation is committed to giving everyone who lives in Southwestern Pennsylvania a chance to live long—and live well.	Funder; education	https://www.edenhallfdn.org/
Fair Shake Legal Services	Fair Shake Environmental Legal Services is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit law firm that believes all people and communities should have access to the tools of change, and that everyone has the right to make decisions about the air, water, and land where they live, work, and play.	Legal counsel; environmental law	https://www.fairshake-els.org/
Fallingwater	Fallingwater preserves Frank Lloyd Wright's masterpiece, conserves the site for which it was designed, and interprets them and their history for present and future generations of the world community.	Conservation; education	https://fallingwater.org/
FracTracker	FracTracker, the project, was originally developed to investigate health concerns and data gaps surrounding western PA fracking. Today, as a non-profit organization, FracTracker Alliance supports groups across the United States, addressing pressing extraction-related concerns with a lens toward health effects and exposure risks on communities from oil and gas development.	Clean water and soil advocacy; data and research support	https://www.fractracker.org/



Frick Environmental Center	The Frick Environmental Center is a welcome facility, education hub, and gateway to Frick Park. Free and open to all, this cutting-edge facility enhances visitor experience and inspires learners to discover one of Pittsburgh's largest parks.	Education; conservation; recreation	https://pittsburghparks.org/frick-environmental-center/
GASP	Group Against Smog and Pollution (GASP) is a 501 (c)(3) non-profit in Southwestern Pennsylvania working for a healthy, sustainable environment. Founded in 1969, GASP has been a diligent watchdog, educator, litigator, and policy-maker on many environmental issues, with a focus on air quality in the Pittsburgh region.	Air quality advocacy; policy change	https://www.gasp-pgh.org/
Get the Lead Out, Pittsburgh	"Get the Lead Out, Pittsburgh" is a public awareness campaign designed to shine a light on lead poisoning in Allegheny County, help families who are impacted by lead poisoning, and enact changes to make our community safer.	Clean water and soil advocacy	https://gettheleadoutpgh.org/
Green Building Alliance	By promoting sustainable development, GBA supports equitable communities in the Pittsburgh region.	Sustainable infrastructure	https://www.gba.org/
Grow Pittsburgh	Grow Pittsburgh develops and supports food-growing initiatives and programs across the region as a key way to improve the social, economic, environmental, health, and educational realities of Pittsburghers.	Environmental education organization	https://www.growpittsburgh.org/
Healthy Start Pittsburgh	Healthy Start Inc. supports women, children, fathers, families and communities through comprehensive community-based programming, systems coordination, advocacy, research and training. Our programming spans Allegheny and Westmoreland Counties.	Reproductive justice; advocacy	https://healthystartpittsburgh.org/
Hollow Oak Land Trust	Founded in 1991, the Hollow Oak Land Trust is a nonprofit conservation organization that protects and connects greenspace with an emphasis in the Pittsburgh Airport Corridor.	Education; conservation	https://hollowoak.org/
Homewood Children's Village	Homewood Children's Village develops programs and works with partners to address the health needs of the community in areas that include physical health, behavioral and mental health, nutritional health, and physical activity.	Recreation; education; community advocacy	https://hcvpgh.org/



Housing Authority of the City of Pittsburgh	The Housing Authority of the City of Pittsburgh (HACP) is a municipal corporation, formed under the United States Housing Act of 1937, charged with providing decent, affordable housing for low-income persons.	Housing	https://hacp.org/
Lawrenceville Clean Air Now	Formed in late 2018, with the support of Lawrenceville United, Lawrenceville Clean Air Now (LCAN) is a growing group of people who live and work in the Lawrenceville neighborhood of Pittsburgh.	Clean air advocacy	http://www.lunited.org/lawrenceville-clean-air-now-lcan/
Lawrenceville United	Lawrenceville United is an inclusive, resident-driven, non-profit organization that works to improve the quality of life for all Lawrenceville residents.	Community advocacy; education	http://www.lunited.org/
Mountain Watershed Association	MWA has restored more than 70 percent of the Indian Creek Watershed and prevented countless sources of additional pollution in the broader Youghiogheny River Watershed	Restoration; clean water advocacy; education	https://mtwatershed.com/
New Sun Rising	New Sun Rising amplifies local environmental justice projects and nonprofits through operational and financial support.	Environmental justice; funding	https://www.newsunrising.org/
New Voices Pittsburgh	New Voices is unapologetically Black and queer and dedicated to the work of Reproductive Justice, a framework founded and built specifically for Black women, girls, femmes, and gender-expansive folx.	Reproductive justice	https://newvoicesrj.org/
Operation Better Block	The mission of Operation Better Block, Inc. is to strategize, organize and mobilize, block by block, to benefit the Homewood Community.	Community advocacy	https://operationbetterblock.com/
Outdoor Afro	Outdoor Afro celebrates and inspires Black connections and leadership in nature.	Programming; outdoor recreation; community building	https://www.meetup.com/Outdoor-Afro-Pittsburgh/
PA Office of Environmental Justice	The Office of Environmental Justice was established as a point of contact for Pennsylvania residents in low income areas and areas with a higher number of minorities.	Statewide advocacy; equitable access	https://www.dep.pa.gov/PublicParticipation/OfficeofEnvironmentalJustice/



PennEnviro-Screen	The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (PADEP) created the PennEnviroScreen framework which provides an annually updated snapshot of undue environmental burden on vulnerable communities. This model combines Pollution Burden and Population Characteristics data in order to identify Environmental Justice (EJ) Areas in accordance with the EJ Policy, which will increase public participation in the permitting process of proposed facilities.	EJ communities	https://gis.dep.pa.gov/PennEnviroScreen/
Pennsylvania's Office of Outdoor Recreation	The mission of the Pennsylvania Office of Outdoor Recreation is to unite, grow, and strengthen Pennsylvania's outdoor economy.	Environmental economy; conservation; recreation; education	https://www.dcnr.pa.gov/Recreation/OfficeofOutdoorRec/
Pittsburgh Regional Transit (PRT)	Pittsburgh Regional Transit (PRT) is building on ten years of sustainability initiatives to establish the agency's first climate action plan.	Equitable transit	https://engage.rideprt.org/
Pittsburgh Water Collaboratory	The collaboratory bridges efforts in water research, governance, and action. By connecting universities, local governments, non-profits, & community groups, they aim to align efforts across the region. They work to ensure that data & expertise are accessible to those who need it, that research responds to real needs, & that students are prepared to solve real challenges.	Water advocacy; data and research support	https://www.water.pitt.edu/
Powdermill Reserve	Powdermill Nature Reserve is Carnegie Museum of Natural History's environmental research center.	Conservation; education	https://carnegiemnh.org/visit-powdermill/
Protect PT (Westmoreland and Allegheny Counties)	Protect PT (Penn-Trafford) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to ensuring residents' safety, security, and quality of life by engaging in education and advocacy to protect the economic, environmental, and legal rights of the people in Westmoreland and Allegheny counties.	Community advocacy; legal advocacy	https://www.protectpt.org/
Rachel Carson Trails Conservancy	The Rachel Carson Trails Conservancy, Inc. is a nonprofit 501(c)(3), volunteer-based organization dedicated to the development, protection, and promotion of hiking, biking, and walking trails throughout western Pennsylvania.	Recreation; conservation	https://rachelcarsontrails.org/



Reimagine Appalachia	A coalition consisting of groups from WV, KY, PA and OH with a blueprint to amplify Appalachian voices.	Advocacy	https://reimagineappalachia.org/
Resilient Pittsburgh	In 2014, the City of Pittsburgh joined the 100 Resilient Cities Network, powered by the Rockefeller Foundation, and with the support of the RAND Corporation, has since engaged with more than 2,000 Pittsburghers to understand the City's resilience challenges and develop analyses, reports and actions to address them.	Advocacy	
Riverlife	Creating, activating, and celebrating Pittsburgh's riverfronts, connecting people through exceptional places and experiences.	Water advocacy; recreation	https://riverlifepgh.org/
Sisters Lifting As We Climb Network	This network serves as a conduit to advance economic mobility for Black women while amplifying their voices and visibility in the City of Pittsburgh and beyond.	Community building	https://www.thesistersliftingasweclimbnetwork.org/
The Auto Body Shop	Pittsburgh-based resource van supporting bodily autonomy & community care. Free info + supplies!	Reproductive justice	https://www.instagram.com/the.auto.body.shop
The Black Unicorn Library and Archive Project	The Black Unicorn Library is a Black queer feminist library and archive.	Equitable Pittsburgh; Black history	https://www.theblackunicornlibrary.org/
Three Rivers Waterkeeper	Three Rivers Waterkeeper (3RWK) was founded in 2009 and aims to improve and protect the water quality of the Allegheny, Monongahela, and Ohio Rivers.	Water advocacy; conservation; recreation	https://www.threeriverswaterkeeper.org/
Tree Pittsburgh	Tree Pittsburgh is an environmental non-profit organization dedicated to strengthening and building community vitality by restoring and protecting the urban forest through tree planting and care, education, advocacy, and land conservation.	Environmental education	https://www.treepittsburgh.org/



Ujamaa Collective	Ujamaa Collective is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization founded with a social mission to act as a catalyst to advance African Women by providing a fair trade marketplace for cultural, artistic and entrepreneurial exchange through cooperative economics in the Historic Hill District and beyond.	Education; community advocacy	https://www.ujamaacollective.org/
UpstreamPgh	Pittsburgh-based nonprofit that works to secure equitable and just access to clean, natural water for all.	Environmental education; watershed restoration, rain gardens, rain barrels; stream monitoring; water quality	https://upstreampgh.org/
UrbanKind	Founded in 2016 to lift up the voices of overburdened and under-resourced residents in Pittsburgh and surrounding areas, UrbanKind Institute is a Pittsburgh-based think-and-do tank. Rooted in a commitment to equity and justice, they bridge the gap between community experiences, public policy and academic research, bringing different people and ideas together.	Community advocacy	https://urbankind.org/
Venture Outdoors	Venture Outdoors is a Pittsburgh-based non-profit connecting people to the benefits of getting outdoors. Since 2001, their team of Outdoor Educators and Volunteer Trip Leaders have guided people of all ages and stages to hike, bike, run, paddle, geocache, and more.	Recreation; education	https://ventureoutdoors.org/
Washington Green Solutions	Washington Green Solutions is a consulting organization looking to improve projects, programs, and engagement strategies in Environmental Justice (EJ) communities around many social issues.	Environmental justice	https://www.washingtongreens.com/
Water Equity Taskforce	The original Water Equity Taskforce was the first-ever cross-sector, multi-city endeavor to intentionally make water management outcomes and processes equitable. The Taskforce was comprised of cross-sector Learning Teams from Atlanta, Buffalo, Camden, Cleveland, Milwaukee, Louisville, and Pittsburgh.	Clean water advocacy	https://uswateralliance.org/water-equity-taskforce/



Watersheds of South Pittsburgh	Watersheds of South Pittsburgh (WoSPgh) works to demystify and clean up these streams by reconnecting people with the waters and building support for long-term green initiatives.	Conservation; clean water advocacy	https://wospgh.org/
Western PA Regional Data Center	The Western Pennsylvania Regional Data Center provides a shared technological and legal infrastructure to support research, analysis, decision making, and community engagement.	Data and research support	https://www.wprdc.org/en
Western Pennsylvania Conservancy	The Western PA Conservancy protects and restores exceptional places to provide our region with clean water and healthy forests, wildlife and natural areas for the benefit of present and future generations. The Conservancy creates green spaces and gardens, contributing to the vitality of our cities and towns, and preserves Fallingwater, a symbol of people living in harmony with nature.	Conservation; education; programming	https://waterlandlife.org/
Winnie Palmer Nature Reserve	The Winnie Palmer Nature Reserve is a 50-acre reserve at Saint Vincent College.	Conservation; education	http://www.wpnr.org/
Women for a Healthy Environment	Women for a Healthy Environment (WHE) is a group of women united by a passion for learning more about the environmental topics raised at the Women's Health & the Environment conferences.	Education; advocacy	https://womenforahealthyenvironment.org/





Appendix D: Key Interview Learnings

1.

Things we already do that were reinforced; things that already inform our approach

Art has the power to bring attention to the unseen systems and infrastructures that have tangible effects on our daily lives.

Interview: Ashley Funk and Mountain Watershed Association

“Through art, some of these complex topics can be more easily communicated to the public”

“I think most people don’t understand why there are these orange ponds just sitting here. ...You have a lot of orange iron pigment, but some organizations will sell that pigment to artists. ...You can take the pigment and make you know, tie dye out of the orange.”

“There’s a couple who own a screen press. shop here and on their own accord, they made these...prints about garlic mustard and how to use it.”

“With mining...some indigenous nations say [coal] is like the liver of the earth because it acts as a filtration system underground. But when you take that out, you’re not going to have a filtration system and it ends up creating very visibly polluted water. ...It’s an interesting way of shifting that narrative about why it shouldn’t just be okay to take out this entire geologic layer. It does have a really significant impact on the earth.”

Interview: Justin Dula and the PA Office of Environmental Justice

“Some people express themselves better through creative activity than they do through words. ...We’d use that in the planning field...like, okay, how tall is this building? Let’s use building blocks and show what it will look like on your street. It becomes much more approachable. ...Draw your community and you really see the places that people value because they make it to their map. So how can we use those tools to get out information on the environmental side that people might not express in words or don’t think about in that way?”



Interview: Emily Elliott and the Pittsburgh Water Collaboratory

“One of the things that captures my imagination all the time, is what Ginger was trying to address in her first project--that all the streams and creeks where kids would be playing and developing a love for science and slimy things and asking questions and and doing the sort of things that helps foster an interest in science and also a connection to a place--all of that's buried. I feel like kids in the city are deprived of that experience. ...It bothers me that we're the city of three rivers, but there's hardly anywhere where you can publicly access the three rivers. ...It's absolutely, in my personal opinion, crazy, that

almost all of the streams are impaired for some reason or another. That's completely inexcusable. And it just means that that's what people's priorities are. Not people's, but policymakers, budget people.”

“I think I did the calculation once. ...I think it's the equivalent of 15 million Olympic sized pools' worth of stormwater runoff containing raw sewage per year enters the waterways around here. ...It's even hard to find a volume equivalent to put that in context, and I don't think people realize that.”

“I think there's a major gap in terms of awareness of the CSOs and how they're actually impacting the regional water. ...There's definitely a lot of folks that are swimming and navigating on the main rivers right after rain events, which could be really, really bad for their health. **...It's one of those things that there's opportunity for more awareness and education and I always see the power of art being that transformative awareness in terms of education.**”

“Artists can say things that we can't say and they can do things that we can't do.”

Interview: Rafiyqa Mohammed and the DEP Environmental Justice Advisory Board

“When white men come into Black communities or Latino communities and basically tell you that they run this sh*t. That's not okay. So how come that's a health issue? Because it's a stress issue. It's a trauma issue. So when we talk about environmental and stress and trauma and illegal dumping and all those things, **there's a lot of art pieces that we can do but I am one of those that [think] we have to educate if we're going to move forward in this area and do this, we have to use art as a very strong message. We have to use it as education.**”

Interview: Uzma Noormohammed and E(ART)H Chicago

“Many artists want to engage topics of climate and environment. It's natural, artists want to engage the topics that society is thinking about and reflecting on and having a hard time with, so they have something to say about that.”



Interview: Alyssa Lyon and the Black Environmental Collective

“There is a way to draw out lived experiences that are data and facts through this very awesome throughline through networks and people and draw out environment. Like, **what does this look like to these people?”**

“Everybody in the city has a role to rewrite the narrative on how people were being brought on once the industry collapsed. We all moved on to meds and eds, but that was really for elite folks. ...**Pittsburgh has a chance to rewrite the narrative about how people are included. That includes y’all. How are you bringing people along? Not just including them or making them the destination. I know that might seem daunting but we’re thinking about the process and not necessarily the product.**”

Inviting community perspective requires meeting community members—embedding yourself in existing structures and acknowledging what assets already exist.

Interview: Ashley Funk and Mountain Watershed Association

“We’re trying to engage residents who might be leaders on issues...they can then amplify our work and help to spread the word and engage more of their neighbors. ...That makes an impact speaking with decision makers.”

“Normally for a meeting we would send a mailing with it to everyone within a certain radius of a proposed plant. ...Around here mail is typically what works best, not everyone is online. And we would have it at some type of community center and...we always since the pandemic have made sure that everything is both online and in person.”

“And at these monthly meetings, particularly when it’s in a lower income community, we have a full meal for people to eat. And we also make sure there’s a childcare corner...just to try to make it more accessible because it can be hard to take time out of your day to learn about these things. ...**It’s a continual engagement that we make sure we’re having in the areas that we’re working. And a lot of times when we do this, it creates this foundation where people who are really committed and want to devote more time...they might eventually form their own community group.**”

“[Make] sure that it is outside or like a community park or somewhere that people are gathering, regardless of whether something is happening. And it could also be a longer, maybe not singular event...you miss it and then it’s gone, but maybe some different installations or opportunities to engage...some place like a public public park or a place where people are visiting already. ...**My background was in human-centered design. You’re not just going to get your answers from a meeting. There needs to be different forms of**

engagement so people are actually taking part but not just online, because that creates a sequestered feedback group versus actually going to the places you're intending to impact and trying to engage there initially."

Interview: Emily Elliott and the Pittsburgh Water Collaboratory

"One of the things Megan has heard over and over again when she goes to community meetings... "Okay, we need this. How can you help. ...We're still trying to find our footing in terms of how we end up participating with different communities but I think the intention is to work alongside a partner to develop a research plan or question strategy and dissemination."

"We tried to embed ourselves throughout these meetings to say, Hey, we're here. If you have questions or research or want to explore something, reach out and we can try to connect you with resources and or work toward a partnership or start to build something. ...We've held other spaces like community meetings of sorts, where we have predetermined topics and have a conversation and try to identify more community input in that space as well."

"One of the things I keep in the forefront is the mantra from the engaged research community that you have to ask people what they want...you have to be listening. And that's one of the reasons we tried to send people to as many meetings as we could and because you can hear what's going on. ...Because just acting on what we perceive as need just leads to a lot of wasted time. ...Listening is really important."

"A lot of scientists drive me crazy because, 'We're gonna go engage them. We're gonna tell them all we're gonna give them these lesson plans.' And it's like, you never ask them any questions. ...It works best when there's a two way street."

Interview: Justin Dula and the PA Office of Environmental Justice

"[We are excited to be] able to do more proactive outreach. One of the tenets of environmental justice is putting the voice of the affected communities first, and we've always wanted to do that."

"Trying to go to where people are, it's labor intensive, but if you can join someone's community group meeting, then you have that built-in audience around environmental justice in particular, or even environmentalism as a whole. ...**There are a lot of people who are directly affected by these things who don't consider themselves environmentalists.**"

"We were attending people's monthly meetings and giving information. ...Trying to do programming that you manage, but then also programming that you can take in a box to someone else's meeting where their group is already meeting, and [seeing] what information you can get. And then trying to reach people in different ways...there's the ideal



of the in-person programming but for folks who can't make that can you record one and put it on the website? Is an online survey a good way to get broad but shallow feedback? What can you do to balance the input? ...We're trying to figure out how to do that as an agency as well."

Interview: Rafiqqa Mohammed and the DEP Environmental Justice Advisory Board

"Being on the ground, listening to our concerns, doing something about our concerns, which can be just guidance, resources. All that goes a long way. Sometimes people just want you to listen."

"You really have to always know who's at your table. I'm not sure who's at your table. ...I would have a lot of my community residents though, because we live in this stuff. We're the experts. It's impacting our health, our children's health. We gotta breathe it. We got to deal with it. We see the gun violence. We see the illegal dumping. We see the litter. I lived in the smack of it."

Interview: Uzma Noormohammed and E(ART)H Chicago

"But we believe that people know what's best for them, and they want what's best for them. And so we have to respect that and so let's just ask them. And I remember going to our board and saying this is a risk. But you know, just because we have the money and the power doesn't mean we have all the answers."

Interview: Alyssa Lyon and the Black Environmental Collective

"I think anything that feels like that drop-in and pull-out is gonna feel extractive, even if it's meant to be this long term thing. I think a part of imagination is being able to see yourself in the future."

"At the end of the day, what is your community commitment and investment?"

"I think there's this idea of decentralizing in this work that needs to happen. ...We feel like we always are putting out events, but the same people who show up are ourselves. ...We had coffee here, but maybe we could have had coffee at Everyday Cafe, that would be different. Or if you guys are just having meetings, or every week in different communities, and folks start to question who you are, what you're doing there. That also doesn't really take a lot of time and energy."



2.

Things that we have started doing, but maybe not to the degree they were stated

If an arts application process strives to be inclusive, it should be approachable, have a low barrier for entry, and include financial support; applicants who do not consider themselves artists or who have never participated in a large project before should feel comfortable applying.

Interview: Justin Dula and the PA Office of Environmental Justice

“There’s a chance to make something...tangible for people and engage with people who don’t traditionally engage around environmental issues. And maybe vice versa as well. Sometimes people think of art as something very distant and lofty and something I could do if I had more money or more safety, but not something I can do right now.”

“The complexity of funding is often very difficult for community groups to successfully achieve so we tried to do some grants one-on-one to explain to people what the basics are. For first time applicants we recorded that and kept that on the website. And we did that in Spanish as well as English. And then we tried to put all our grants together on one page and organize them by who the the applicants would be.”

“[We try] to give money to small community-based organizations where we can. ...Every funding source has strings, but ideally you don’t want to require them to be a nonprofit because that’s its own level of paperwork. ...**Often the most valuable community leaders are just a strong community advocate within their community. They don’t necessarily have a larger organization around them or they’re bringing together a large and loose network and you want to be able to try to take advantage of that.** ...Those people on the ground who have strong roots who are not part of an affiliated organization, trying to find ways to give them money, and find ways to give them the technical assistance to apply for money directly is another thing we’re trying to do.”

Interview: Uzma Noormohammed and E(ART)H Chicago

“It’s very cumbersome to fill out grant applications. ...Just lowering that barrier as much as possible...we had a very bare bones LOI process, and that was just to make sure that people checked all the boxes. ...And we allowed answers by video for almost all of the proposals, which was very popular. ...We also allowed for folks to give tentative budgets and just asked minimal questions, just recognizing that people don’t have the capacity and organizations don’t have the capacity. **It took very little to qualify for this. You have to be a Chicago**

resident. ...I think that the people that did qualify and that ended up receiving grants, did have some level of experience with the community. That was more of a priority than the public art piece of this...we funded a lot of people who this was the first time they did public art. ...We want to find the people who want to do this work that haven't done it before, that haven't been identified as environmental artists, and we want to make sure that it can have its reach out into the communities."

"Environmental justice" and "environmental art" are broad terms—so much so that active participants in both practices might not consider themselves to be.

Interview: Justin Dula and the PA Office of Environmental Justice

"There are a lot of people who are directly affected by these things that don't consider themselves environmentalists. They will never come to DEP protection meeting. They don't consider it an environmental justice concern, even if they even know what it is. But they care about their community...and they don't want their basements to flood, so trying to get out of reaching the groups who consider themselves environmental focus groups and touch on how the environment affects everyone's everyday life."

"We hear those comments and then we take that and translate that into...flooding relates to climate change or the Clean Waters program or other things like that. ...Not asking them to use the magic environmental words, but translating it after the fact."

Interview: Uzma Noormohammed and E(ART)H Chicago

"There are plenty of organizations that want to do this work around literacy or educating and organizing their neighbors around environmental topics. But they might be housing organizations. They might be financial literacy organizations. They might be health organizations, public health organizations, but they're looking at the intersection between the work that they're already doing and environmental work. ...We said, we believe there are probably artists that are doing other things that can that have a lot to say and organizations that have a lot to say on environmental topics, who are not self identifying as environmental artists and who might not be identified by others as environmental artists."

"So I think that's really the thing here, if you want to get the people who haven't really done this before, **you have to reach really far and wide. Because it just assumed that you don't know who wants to get involved.**"

Interview: Rafiqqa Mohammed and the DEP Environmental Justice Advisory Board

“Who are you targeting? Who are we going after? Because I’m gonna be very honest about what I’m doing. I’m going after Black people in the city of Harrisburg that have been impacted for decades, longer than me. And they’re the ones that need the help.”

“When people think about public art they think about murals, they think about paintings, but art is so broad and I would love to be much more equitable and inclusive.”

Interview: Alyssa Lyon and the Black Environmental Collective

“Anchoring yourself in some partnerships that can help draw on important things that are not at the top of everyday conversation. ...I’m sure people think about art, they’re thinking about murals. ...But everything is art, like the jazz man on the street playing his trumpet.”

3.

Directions for future engagement that we suspected and were highlighted as critical

An impactful project depends on community input throughout—from planning to implementation to evaluation—and compensates community members for their time.

Interview: Uzma Noormohammed and E(ART)H Chicago

“Community engagement was a big part of this too, is like in addition to creating this piece, you know, how is the community being engaged along the way and afterwards.”

“Who is in the room...that’s a lot of why we’re having these conversations to make sure that it’s not just the same people in the same organizations that we work with for every project, that we include community members, that you have community expertise from community members themselves. ...A community perspective on the review committee is such an important piece of that process.”

“We wanted to have a co-creation process. ...We let...people know...would you please share this with everyone who is in your network so that they can attend these workshops because what these workshops will then do is create our proposal, and then we’ll get the proposal out there for people to apply to. ...Really, all they had to do was check a box saying ‘I don’t have institutional support’ [and they] received a stipend for attending the workshop. ...**We were very mindful during this entire process of not extracting from the community and making sure that at the very least we were compensating people for their time.**”

“Community engagement was a big part of this too. ...In addition to creating this piece, how is the community being engaged along the way and afterwards? That’s what all of these activation events are right now is part of the programming, and then a lot of the pieces also have ongoing programming.”

Interview: Justin Dula and the PA Office of Environmental Justice

“Once you start talking to communities and community groups, you never know what is going to come up and it’s often very different than when you’re crunching numbers or looking statewide.”

Interview: Rafiqqa Mohammed and the DEP Environmental Justice Advisory Board

“[You] just can’t come in communities and set up shop. I’ve seen that happen a lot. ...We need to know when you’re coming. Because I know for a fact I cannot go in white communities and set up shop and dictate what I want to do and how I want to do it.”

“People need to feel comfortable. We need to trust. We need to know who you are. We know who’s in our communities and who is not.”

“We have to make this a holistic approach because bits and pieces are not working. Working in silos are not working. And when communities know that, we’re coming as a unified force with your community and residents first.”

“Be mindful when you ask for our volunteer service. Because people abused that. And that’s why you have a hard time getting people to volunteer and we’re doing all the work, but [other] people get that check. ...We have to come to a holistic approach with this. And at the end of the day, it’s all about respect.”

Interview: Alyssa Lyon and the Black Environmental Collective

“I think it’s being present, being consistent, and being frequently present. And then how are you making space for voices to show up in the process?”

“Maybe there could have been a couple of residents there [in the advisory committee meetings] too. And so I think always leaving space in the decision-making process or the leadership process for community. And so if you do have those kinds of reviews, they have to be from community-based people that maybe are not affiliated with any organization.”

“Question what kind of feedback you want. And really assess who you’re going to get that from. And I think that would have helped you choose different people in the room.”



“You don’t want to pilot something. Then someone’s like, ‘Yeah, remember, last year we had this for four months or whatever.’ ...We were able to maintain that because we were able to create enough community buy-in that we all agree that this is something we enjoy.”

Supporting art can look like providing support for the artists already doing the work.

Interview: Ashley Funk and Mountain Watershed Association

“We don’t often have people investing in public art and rural places.”

Interview: Justin Dula and the PA Office of Environmental Justice

“We want to build these community-based organizations’ ability to get federal grants. ...But we initially thought, how can we take on the paperwork function and the administrative function, because we can handle that and then we’ll do the paperwork and just pass the money through to you as a larger organization. We want these communities to get that experience so that when this money is dried up, they have that experience and can apply for grants.”

Interview: Uzma Noormohammed and E(ART)H Chicago

“What we learned is that outreach is very, very, very expensive. And this is what I keep telling all the funders—outreach is very expensive. And if we’re not going to fund the outreach, this is just going to fall flat. It’s not going to be an equitable program. So if you want this to be equitable, you have to fund the outreach, and not just the person-to-person outreach, which is the most expensive but you’ve got to have mass media outreach as well because it’s got to look compelling enough for people to show up.”

Interview: Alyssa Lyon and the Black Environmental Collective

“And I think it’s going to the next level--we’d have to go beyond. We need artists in the city. Well, we’re not really paying artists, not really allowing them to have a sustainable life. We’re having an access issue. And so the first thing that the Hill District did was say, ‘Okay, well, let’s put them in a home, let’s give them a sustainable foundation, so that they can chase after their opportunities. ...I think that’s one part of it. And I think as you all start to create a pipeline to access, that’s another part of it.”

“And that’s usually what’s holding folks back. That’s what holds me back. I’m trying to get folks to understand environmental justice, but how are we attacking these basic needs first?”



“Like, there’s this innovation. Like, I have an idea. And then they go straight to implementation. And then there’s a huge preparation process that is left out. And so where do you find yourselves in the preparation process? Well, talk to me about solar panels all you want, but...you got money to fix this man’s roof? It’s the preparation that I feel like is missing.”

“[The thing] about giving in a non-profit space is, I’m giving you this money but I’m not letting go. ...And I think there’s a way to say, ‘Hey, guys, we’re just gonna give you time. ...Supporting the practice. **Are we supporting art? Or are we trying to control the process? And so how are you uplifting art as a practice? ...And I think you can reinvent art as a practice in communities by holding these spaces open and saying, we are having an open conversation in your community. We’re just facilitating. ...That makes art active, that makes art conversational, that makes art accessible.**”

“You might go into Homewood or whatever. And people might want a big mural or some kind of structure. They might just want First Fridays. What does that include? Maybe a stage, maybe some setup, maybe some lights and a constant recruitment of artists. ...And then as that starts to come to a close, you create a sustainability plan with that community around **this effort**. And maybe it’s just you’re constantly help them find the artists and they have to do everything else. [You] rent the equipment, maintain the land, whatever it is. ...How are you piloting things to help folks create a sustainability plan? It’s putting it back in the community’s hands , we help this community sustain this piece of art aspects.”

4.

New or fresh takes on future engagement that we’re excited to further consider

There is room for joy and celebration in conversations about environmental health.

Interview: Uzma Noormohammed and E(ART)H Chicago

“What came up through the engagement process was...**people identified that they wanted to have joy rather than doom**. This was an overwhelming thing...especially if it was something they were looking at in their neighborhoods every day.”

“There were organizations like the Filament Theatre...targeted towards kids and it’s very interactive. And they had one of the loveliest performances because that’s the one that took place in the forest. And it was all based on nature play and it was on the southeast side, which is a majority black and brown neighborhood and they were like, these people are

not getting out into the forest preserve because there's just years of historical barriers. So there's all these initiatives trying to get more Black and Brown people in the outdoors—to spend time in nature. And what better way to do it than to bring your young kid and then you're the caregiver that comes with them. And you know, you see that kids have a ton of fun just playing with mud. And they had actors do this really lovely piece about what it takes to grow something from a seed to a sprout. And I cried, it was just so beautiful. And they're not an environmental theater company and they don't identify as such, but they saw this call and they said we could do something really great here."

Interview: Emily Elliott and the Pittsburgh Water Collaboratory

"Celebration appeals to me...it is a celebration instead of a talk about how bad things are. Because I feel like so much of society is in a place where we realize how bad things are all the time and it can just be extremely overwhelming."





Appendix E: Goals and Guiding Principles, October 2023

Goals

We seek to build relationships with organizations that exist at the intersection of environment, health, and well-being and are based in Black and historically disinvested communities. These communities are often not only excluded from conversations about environmental health, but also disproportionately impacted by climate change and environmental health issues. These historically marginalized populations often know they are impacted but may not have the capacity and resources to prioritize environmental health issues and concerns. As such, we seek to support organizations that are deeply connected to these communities, as evidenced by their engagement, programming, location, and practices. In these organizations, community is strongly reflected in their senior leadership, board, staff, funding, sponsorships, and partnerships.

We seek to support artists and creative workers who are already deeply embedded in these communities. We believe that artists are agents of social, civic, and cultural change and that community members are highly valued collaborators with expertise in their neighborhoods. We believe that artists and the arts have the potential to support communities in addressing their self-defined needs as well as organizations in building awareness about their work and its impact.

Guiding Questions

- How can we highlight the role of environmental health in the work of each organization?
- How can we engage the arts in highlighting the role of environmental health?
- How can we support/uplift work that may already be happening?
- How can we support needs that have already been defined by the community?
- How are these organizations engaging or seeking to engage with artists?
- How can we support the unique needs of each organization in regard to environmental health and the arts?
- How can we support artists who are already part of each organization's community?



- How can we support an expanded form of relationship building?
- How does environmental health show up in the organization's work?

Guiding Principles

- Be additive, not extractive
- Be informative rather than alarmist.
- Incite awareness and collectivity rather than angst
- Seek to build relationships and learn how we can best support each organization
- Listen to the needs expressed and defined by communities
- Uplift environmental justice and health work that's already happening
- Seek to identify how artists and the arts can contribute to or build awareness
- Support artists who are already deeply embedded in or working with their communities
- Expand our hearts and our minds
- Support communities in telling their own stories
- Be contextual and specific rather than taking a one-size-fits-all approach
- Don't put outcomes or deliverables ahead of relationship building
- Customize the process to fit each organization's unique needs
- Seek to harness collective power by finding opportunities for celebration, as opposed to feeling powerless in the face of the issues around us
- Our process will be informed and guided by the relationships we build
- Our outcomes will be informed and guided by the relationships we build
- Magnify the role of the arts in environment, health, and well-being





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