



A Sense of Place



To Do List

The "A Sense of Place" project uses creative placemaking and the power of African-American and African diaspora people, arts, culture and history to foster a loving and supportive multicultural community in Vermont.

- 1. Build interest, support and trust by keeping your community informed:** Issue press releases, maintain an active social media account, use community newsletters and outreach to keep your community informed about project activities. The more informed your community is, the more likely they are to support your work.
- 2. Invest in finding and building relationships with artists of African descent:** Many artists of the African diaspora in Vermont are marginalized and "hidden" in the White majority mainstream community. Invest in the time and effort needed to identify artists and to build relationships with them. Work with African-American/African diaspora-led organizations and other leaders and organizations who are known, respected and trusted in the African-American/African diaspora community.
- 3. Build a network of community liaisons to expand your reach:** Find allies and supporters in the community who can help with community outreach through word-of-mouth, social media, newsletters, informal meetings, and flyers.
- 4. Consider issuing a Call for Artists Proposals:** The Clemmons Family Farm issued a call for artists proposals that was likely a major first in the state of Vermont: a call specifically focused on finding and promoting art and artists with expertise and focus areas in African-American and African diaspora art. If your organization is serious about increasing the representation of diverse artists, earmarking funds and opportunities for those who have been under-represented and marginalized is a strong step forward.
- 5. Find a VIP champion- or two or three:** Identify well-known and respected individuals who can help to bring people together and add credibility to your work. Long-standing inequities in the philanthropic sector mean that organizations led by African-Americans, indigenous people and other people of color generally have less social capital and less access to networks of wealth and influence. Focus on identifying one VIP to help open doors and opportunities that may otherwise be closed due to historic inequities.
- 6. Recognize the negative impacts of daily micro-aggressions, racism and stress on artists of African descent who are living in social isolation:** Build opportunities for social support, communing, celebrating and healing for artists of African descent into your programming: help artists to take care of themselves and be sure they are fairly compensated for their creative work.



7. Explore strategic partnerships with organizations and individuals specializing in social justice and mental health: Arts and culture programs may not have the expertise needed to address social justice and mental health needs that arise when working with artists who are members of oppressed or marginalized populations.

8. Focus on "quick wins" during the first year of implementing your project: Get a few small, fast and easy accomplishments under your project's belt to maintain enthusiasm and show some tangible outputs while you slog through the hard stuff.

9. Monitor community feedback: Develop a survey to assess how your project's activities are being perceived and to receive suggestions for improvement. Be open to suggestions and new ideas.

10. Check in with your collaborating artists frequently: Ask for feedback and advice, keep your finger on the pulse of your community of collaborating artists to find out what is important to them, how they are feeling, what the challenges are and what their hopes and ambitions are. Use the information and advice you receive to develop a better, more responsive program that empowers artists while it also strengthens overall social well-being.