

**CULTURAL SECTOR PROJECT PLAN FOR RECOVERY
DRAFT PLAN FOR REVIEW (JANUARY 16, 2007)**

NOLA CULTURAL RECOVERY PROJECTS

Excerpt from the BNOB Executive Summary: “Cultural life is central to the identity and the economy of New Orleans. Katrina threatened the City’s very existence and decimated its cultural economy. Museums, arts centers, performing halls and other cultural venues have suffered extensive physical damage, as have commercial arts establishments such as galleries and recording studios. Thousands of musicians, visual artists, writers, dancers and theater artists, craftspeople, culinary artists, and media artists have been forced to leave the City. Our social aid and pleasure clubs, Mardi Gras Indian tribes, second line companies and bearers of neighborhood-based, indigenous cultural traditions – the heart of the unique traditions that nourish the City’s musical and visual culture – have been shattered by the storm. The cultural sector’s audience base of local people and tourists has been severely reduced. . . .

Given the cultural sector’s central place in New Orleans’ identity, economy and social fabric, substantial and strategic investment in rebuilding and revitalizing the creative industries is essential to the long-term future of the City.”

Overview: No city in the nation has a richer cultural fabric. New Orleans is home to world-class cultural organizations and a vibrant contemporary arts scene. Arts and culture is a fulcrum of community improvement. When artists and arts organizations move into neighborhoods like the seventh or the ninth ward, they spur new enterprise and investment. When residents create colorful murals on blank walls or transform vacant lots into lush community gardens, blighted neighborhoods are turned into beautiful urban oases. When elementary and secondary school students join in arts and cultural activities, their academic and social skills improve dramatically. Although the cultural industry can spur the growth of the commercial and hospitality sectors, it needs serious investment. The time has come to capitalize upon the cultural industry and to give it a seat at the table where the important civic decisions are made.

Because of the important role the cultural sector plays to the life of New Orleans a cultural sector project recovery plan is being submitted for inclusion in the city-wide Unified New Orleans Plan.

About This Plan: In November 2006 participants of the NOLA Cultural Roundtable were invited to submit a cultural plan to the Unified New Orleans Plan (UNOP). The mandate from UNOP was for a cultural plan that was project specific and focused only on the community’s recovery needs. The NOLA Cultural Roundtable is a grassroots organizing effort focused on building bridges and connections among and between the arts and culture community. This Recovery plan was created with the input of Roundtable participants including cultural organizers, activists and programmers (see attached addendum). The recovery projects identified in this plan were created from the following goals in the Bring New Orleans Back (BNOB) Cultural plan:

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Invest in our creative talent pool by assisting artists, cultural institutions, and cultural entrepreneurs.

- Provide funding to restore cultural organizations to full operation.
- Assist artists in regaining their footing with cultural employment that serves the public.

Support neighborhood-based cultural traditions, repair damaged cultural facilities and build new cultural venues.

- Repair and restore uninsured damage to cultural properties.
- Develop housing and work spaces for artists, cultural workers and community-based cultural traditions.

This plan proposes two overarching programs that address the recovery needs of the cultural community: the NOLA REstored Cultural Program and the NOLA Rebuilds Cultural Program. These programs contain various project components that will speed the recovery not only of the cultural community, but of New Orleans as a whole.

NOLA REstored Cultural Program is a program that invests in the return of cultural organizations, artists, and cultural tradition-bearers to their pre-Katrina strength. These projects are monitored by a nominated advisory committee and implemented/managed by selected cultural Intermediaries. All project support is distributed based on an application for support that is reviewed by the advisory committee. The project components of this program are:

Project 1: **CULTURE INVESTS PROJECT:** A fund that supports the operations of cultural institutions, musical organizations, performing arts organizations, community-based cultural organizations and tradition-bearers. These funds can be used for stabilizing an organization's infrastructure and/or for organizational planning in the post-Katrina reality. Various intermediaries would be used to ensure that a diverse segment of the cultural population is reached.

Project 2: **CULTURE WORKS PROJECT:** A cultural employment project that supports 1) visual artists' efforts to create public art in the repair of parks, schools, libraries and other public spaces; 2) writers, filmmakers, and photographers efforts to document the city, creating histories and guides that adequately present the city in its new reality; and 3) architects, master builders, craftsmen, etc. efforts to restore the city's built environment. This project would allow employers to hire and subsidize the salary or stipends of workers.

Project 3: **CULTURE RETURNS PROJECT:** Cultural employment opportunities that create jobs for performing artists to perform in parades, festivals and other important community or neighborhood-based cultural activities. This project could also support displaced New Orleans artists by allowing employers to bring

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artists back to the city to perform. Project support would be flexible and could be use for artists' fees, travel and/or housing.

Project 4: CULTURE TRANSFORMS PROJECT: Cultural employment that 1) returns arts educators to the schools, and/or 2) utilizes partnerships between cultural organizations and schools to bring students to cultural facilities and/or send the organization's artists into the schools. Integral to this project is a data collection and documentation process for creating a coordinated effort of identifying and informing education administrators, teachers and artists of arts education and arts-in-education opportunities.

The NOLA REbuilds Cultural Program is a program that invests in the recovery of our cultural facilities and in finding housing and/or facilities for cultural workers, artists, educators and organizations displaced by Hurricane Katrina. The program is overseen, managed and implement by a Cultural Community Development Corporation that will:

- 1) Document and coordinate the various efforts currently focused on artist housing and workspace needs, such as Sweet Home New Orleans (a partnership of many groups including Jazz and Heritage Foundation and Festival, Tipitina's Foundation, Arabi Wrecking Crew, Neighborhood Housing Services, the Musician's Union, etc.); Side by Side (Ashe Cultural Arts Center, LANO); Habitat for Humanity; Arts Council of New Orleans; National Performance Network; Contemporary Arts Center; New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Foundation and Festival; New Orleans Performing Arts Coalition; Social Aid and Pleasure Clubs Task Force; Actors Fund (national); Music Cares (national); Jazz Federation of America (national); Artspace (national); Urban Main Street projects; and the Louisiana Cultural Economy Foundation.
- 2) Identify and develop additional strategies that address housing and workspace needs through the use of low and no-interest loans, sweat equity, rent subsidies and partnerships.
- 3) Identify and acquire neighborhood/community facilities that are no longer being used and can be reused to address the shortage of housing and workspace for artists, cultural workers and organizations. These facilities could be places that are totally repurposed for the cultural community, or places that can become multi-use workspaces and be shared by the cultural community (such as school auditoriums, park & recreation centers, empty store fronts, etc.).
- 4) Administer a fund that supports uninsured damage to cultural facilities.

The above programs and accompanying projects do not reflect the full scope of the cultural community's recovery and rebuilding needs. These projects focus only on the recovery needs that demand immediate attention. This plan should therefore be viewed as one part of the larger vision, which was outlined in the BNOB Cultural Plan (see attached addendum).