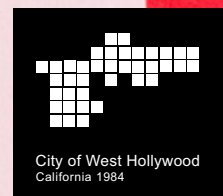


# Laurel Avenue

## Artist Residency Program

Arts Division  
[weho.org/arts](http://weho.org/arts)  
[@wehoarts](https://www.instagram.com/wehoarts)





# Overview

The Laurel Avenue Artist Residency Program (working title for the “Program”), located at 1343 N. Laurel Avenue, West Hollywood, will support local artists with affordable workspace, demonstrate a commitment from the city to working artists, and make a positive cultural difference in the lives of residents, workers, and guests of West Hollywood. The Program will consist of two distinct artist residency programs, the Elsie Weisman Artist Fellowship and the Laurel Avenue Artist Studios, that will run concurrently at the site. The property was donated to the city in 1997 by Elsie Weisman, with the stipulation that it be preserved as a park. Weisman hosted brilliant thinkers like Albert Einstein, Mahatma Gandhi, Buckminster Fuller and Eleanor Roosevelt at her in-home salon, a think tank she called the Modern Forum. The Program honors Weisman’s history of hosting salons with dignitaries and culture makers and the Laurel House and Park will continue to be a place for public discourse about cultural production.



# History of the property

Built in 1914, the Laurel House is an excellent example of Colonial Revival architecture, and the only example in West Hollywood. The expansive property, a half block south of Sunset Boulevard, is lush with trees and shrubbery. It is an oasis among the densely packed apartment buildings that surround it. The property was donated to the city in 1997 by Elsie Weisman, with the stipulation that it be preserved as a park. Weisman grew up in the house and died in 2000 at the age of 101. Weisman hosted brilliant thinkers like Albert Einstein, Mahatma Gandhi, Buckminster Fuller and Eleanor Roosevelt at her in-home salon, a think tank she called the Modern Forum.



In 2010, the West Hollywood City Council directed staff to develop a plan to open the grounds at 1343 N. Laurel Avenue as open space on a temporary/interim basis for public use. In 2011, the city converted the front of the property into Laurel Park. From 2013-2014, the City conducted an extensive community visioning process for the Laurel property. The community expressed support for several potential uses during the visioning process, including activation as an Arts and Cultural Center, access to more community gathering spaces, maintenance and/or enhancements of the property's use for peacefulness and beauty, preservation of the house and gardens, activation through new features and programming, and continued use for dog walking.

In October 2022, the City Council confirmed that the Laurel House and Park should be used for arts and culture programs and directed staff to issue a Request for Proposals for a qualified architectural design firm to continue the programming and design process. The City Council also recommended that additional features of the renovation should include dedicated space for the city archives, gallery

and exhibition space, studio maker space, and maintaining the grounds for public use. From December 2022 - September 2023 the city hosted five community meetings to seek input from the community on the Laurel Avenue Artist Residency Program., City Council approved an agreement with the architectural firm Page & Turnbull to complete a schematic design to renovate and convert the Laurel House and Park into public space, including an artist-in-residence component for a minimum of four artists. On January 25, 2024, the Arts and Cultural Affairs Commission approved the Program.



# WeHo Arts: The Plan

The Program will actualize several recommendations outlined in the WeHo Arts: The Plan, a community-based cultural plan. The Plan is structured by 5 principles (Space, Engagement, Support, Visibility, and Experimentation) and 20 recommendations. The Program will provide a physical space for the arts, in their myriad forms, for creation and presentation. The Program will bring people together to create community through meaningful arts and culture engagements. And the Program will position the City of West Hollywood as a leader in the region, and perhaps the nation, in its support for artists in the presentation of compelling new work.

**The Laurel Avenue Residency Program will specifically address five (5) of the WeHo Arts: The Plan's recommendations, including:**



- **Improve and expand arts uses** in existing City-owned facilities and open land. (SPACE, R1)
- **Spearhead an initiative** to address affordable housing and workspace needs for artists, arts organizations, and small creative businesses. (SPACE, R3)
- **Foster community** by bringing people of all ages together through meaningful, high quality, art-making experiences, with a focus on populations that are isolated or disconnected from the City's current arts programming. (ENGAGEMENT, R6)
- **Continue to convene people** in structured, informal dialogue, and/or art making experiences in order to maintain relationships and understand community dynamics as they evolve over time. (ENGAGEMENT, R8)
- **Commit to a culture of experimentation and learning**, which can support West Hollywood's electric atmosphere and place the arts at the center of conversations about the City's future (EXPERIMENTATION, R20)



# Program

The Laurel House and Park will be transformed into an arts and culture hub consisting of both public and private space. All arts and culture programming, and the City Archives, will be operated by the Arts Division. All artists are expected to participate in all open studio events (2-4 times/year), and provide one educational forum, performance, and/or workshop for the community. The park facilities will be enhanced, and it will remain open to the public for dog walking. The public park hours will remain the same, dusk to dawn. The landscaping and facilities will be maintained by the City's Facilities and Field Services Division.

## **Main House, Community Exhibition Space, First Floor (Mostly Public Space)**

The first floor will include a series of gallery spaces, a large kitchen, an office, restrooms, and a green room. The gallery spaces will maintain dedicated days/hours, and will be programmed with arts and culture events such as exhibitions, performances, educational forums. A portion of the gallery space will be dedicated to exhibiting work related to the City's History and/or history of the house. The kitchen will be used primarily by the residents of the house but will also be available for catering during events. An office will be made available for the Program Administrator. The restrooms will be accessible when the house is open to the public. A flex space will serve as a green room for performers, staging area for events, and extension of exhibition space. An elevator will be added to provide accessible access from the basement to the second floor.

## **Main House, Artist Residences, Second Floor (Private Space)**

The second floor of the house will include four live/work units and a shared laundry room for artist residents. Each unit is a one-bedroom apartment with a bathroom, designated bedroom, and designated workspace. One unit includes two bedrooms and an accessible bathroom. The second floor will only be accessible by artist residents and staff.

## **Main House, Artist Work Room, Basement**

### **(Private Space)**

The basement will include space for storage and a work room for artist residents who need to work in a dark space, such as a filmmaker or digital artist, or require a soundproof room, such as a musician or composer. The basement will only be accessible to artist residents and staff.

## **Chauffer's Cottage, City Archives**

### **(Public/Private Space)**

The chauffeur's cottage will be transformed into the City Archives. The front of the cottage will include two modest reading rooms. The back of the cottage will include an office, restroom, storage, and a climate-controlled room for the archives. The public will be able to access the reading room space by appointment to meet with the archivist to view archive materials.

## **Garages, Local Artist's Studios**

### **(Public/Private Space)**

The garages will be converted into four day-use artist studios for local West Hollywood resident artists, with a shared accessible restroom. Each individual studio will have a work sink, storage space, table and chair. The studios may have the capacity to support teaching artists and art making workshops, providing access to affordable creative workspaces to the community. The facilities will be in continuous use and subsidized.

## **Community Plaza, Performance Space**

### **(Public Space)**

A new outdoor performance space will be added between the main house and the garages. The space will be able to accommodate small-scale events organized by the Program Administrator, such as chamber music or poetry readings, with an audience capacity of about 80 people. Performers will have access to the green room in the Main House during events. The public will have access to the restrooms in the Main House and/or shared garage restroom during events. A detached storage shed for event supplies and chairs will be added to the site, south of the Garages.



Two artist residency programs, the **Elsie Weisman Artist Fellowship (Artist Fellowship)** and **Laurel Avenue Artist Studios (Artist Studios)**, will run concurrently at the site. US-based interdisciplinary artists, selected for the Artist Fellowship, will reside in the main house. West Hollywood resident artists selected for the Artist Studios will have access to subsidized studio space (converted garages). The interlacing of Work and Live/Work residences will

set up channels for local, national, and international connections. All artists are expected to engage with community members, which may include regular open studio hours, public presentations and exhibitions, and workshops. All Artist Fellowships will be an 11-month term. All Artist Studio residences will be for a 2-year term. There will be a one-month transition period between each residency cohort to allow for maintenance, purchase of new supplies (if necessary), etc.

### Laurel Avenue Artist Residency Goals

- Serve as a cultural hub for the City of West Hollywood, and as a dynamic and accessible cultural destination for the community.
- Ensure that the program is accessible, open, inclusive, equitable, and responsive to the community's need for affordable space.
- Cultivate relationships between local West Hollywood resident artists and national artists by providing opportunities for collaboration and networking.
- Ensure the representation of a wide range of artistic disciplines, as well as diverse cultural and aesthetic approaches.
- Support the resident (local) arts and culture community with the intrinsic value of affordable space.

- Foster active engagement and visibility with West Hollywood residents, cultural tourists, innovators, arts leaders, and producers from all creative fields.
- Leverage the prestigious and competitive reputation of the Program to promote the City of West Hollywood as a vibrant, inclusive, dynamic, and creative community.

### Laurel Avenue Artist Residency Program Artist Eligibility (applies to all applicants)

- Applicants must be at least 25 years old.
- Evidence of 3-years of professional practice as an artist.
- Teams are welcome to apply, however only one unit will be made available per approved application.
- Applicants at any stage of their career are welcome to apply.
- Artist Fellowship and Artist Studios will have additional specific criteria.







## Laurel Avenue Artist Residency Program (PROGRAM)

**Elsie Weisman  
Artist Fellowship**  
(Artist Fellowship)

Visiting artists who  
Live/Work in the House

**Laurel Avenue  
Artist Studios**  
(Artist Studios)

West Hollywood resident  
artists who utilize the  
subsidized studio space

## Elsie Weisman Artist Fellowship

(working title) – 4 artists

The Artist Fellowship is a funded artist opportunity designed to allow an artist to focus on professional and artistic development while immersed in a neighborhood of the City of West Hollywood. During the Artist Fellowship, artists are invited to research for an upcoming project, develop and present a new project, or use the time to explore an innovative technique that will further the artist's individual practice.

The program will bring in a diverse group of artists working in a range of disciplines, including, but not limited to, visual art, dance, design, music, literature, filmmaking, performance, new genres, community-based art, social practice, and environmental-based art practices. Each cohort of artists promises an inspiring and surprising series of artistic intersections, revelations, and expansions.

Artists will live and work in the four apartments in the Laurel House, for a term of 11-months. A public program will accompany the residency and may include activities such as artist-organized programs, open studios, lectures, exhibitions, and performances.

## The city will provide Artist Fellows with the following (subject to final approval of operating budget):

- A monthly stipend
- A one-time travel honorarium to go to and from the site
- A “family dinner” prepared by a chef once per week
- A queen size bed, linens, dresser, worktable and chair in each live/work space
- Basic kitchen supplies in the shared kitchen
- WiFi
- Shared laundry unit in the house
- A residential parking permit (if necessary)
- Coordinated professional development and personal networking opportunities
- A hosted meal for Fellows and invited guests 1-2 times a year
- All other provisions must be provided by the artist
- Funding to purchase tools or equipment that may be required to produce the Fellow's artwork may be requested. All tools and equipment purchased by the allowance will remain at the Laurel House, as property of the City, for use by future Fellows

## Goals for the Elsie Weisman Artist Fellowship

- Provide dedicated space, time, and resources to artists for incubation, thought or creativity, and work.



- Support the creative process of art making by providing artists with the conditions to live and work concurrently while advancing their own artistic practice.
- Select artists representing a wide variety of aesthetic viewpoints, racial and ethnic backgrounds, cultures, disability perspectives, and/or geographic areas.
- Support artists to develop bold new work.

## Elsie Weisman Artist Fellowship Eligibility

The Artist Fellowship welcomes any art practice, including but not limited to visual art, dance, design, music, literature, filmmaking, performance, new genres, community-based art, social practice, and environmental-based art practices. Diverse artistic points of view will be sought. Artists at any stage of their career may apply. An arts organizations may sponsor an artist's application with a commitment to match funds (see Partnerships).

## Artist selection criteria:

- Quality of portfolio: A professional body of excellent work with examples of achievements
- Strength of proposal for the residency period: Why is it important to do the work in West Hollywood and Los Angeles County? Why is the proposed work important to the artist's practice at this time?
- Potential for community enrichment: The promise of contributing to the aesthetic life of neighbors, artists, institutions, and/or publics.
- Relevance of art practice to contemporary urgencies: Why does this work matter now?



## Laurel Avenue Artist Studios

(working title) – 3 to 4 Local Artists

The cost of studio space in the Los Angeles basin is prohibitive for many practicing artists. With the Laurel Avenue Artist Studios, the City of West Hollywood is investing in its resident artists by offering them space and time. Through a lottery, qualified artists will be allotted the studios for a two-year renewable term. Workspace and related educational programs will be available to the community. The resources invested into this component of the Program demonstrates a commitment from the city to its community of working artists for artistic growth and generation, and a boon for all neighbors who like living in a creative city.

Studio space will be provided to 3-4 local, West Hollywood residents, artists for a two-year period. The primary use of the Artist Studio space is for the creation of new work. The Artist Studios will have defined working hours from 8:00 a.m. - 10:00 p.m. Those artists who meet the minimum qualifications defined by the Arts and Cultural Affairs Commission will be eligible for the subsidized studio space. Staff will review applications according to the defined criteria to

qualify artists. Qualified artists will be included in a pool of eligible artists for 2-cycles. Qualified artists will be selected by lottery on a bi-annual basis. Artists who are in good standing with their studio agreement with the city are also eligible to submit their qualifications into the lottery for a second term in the Artist Studios.

One studio space can be utilized as a shared facility and/or workshop space with planned events. An example of a shared workshop space can resemble a fashion workshop, outfitted with worktables, sewing machines, clothes racks, dress form, etc. to support the Drag Artist community. Another example of a shared workshop space can resemble a ceramics studio with a kiln, worktables, drying racks, etc. to meet the requests made by the community during the outreach process. There will be no storage in the shared space. The Program Administrator will program the space according to its designated use. Alternative uses for the shared space will be determined by the Arts and Cultural Affairs Commission.

### The city will provide Laurel Avenue Artist Studios with the following (subject to operating budget approval):

- Subsidized rent for the Artist Studio
- A “family dinner” prepared by a chef once per week
- WiFi
- Access to a shared gender-neutral restroom
- A work sink, worktable, and 2 chairs in every studio
- All other materials must be provided by the artist

### Goals for the Laurel Avenue Artist Studios

- Provide dedicated studio space at an affordable price for West Hollywood artists.
- Foster relationship building and networking between artists.
- Support artists to develop bold new work.

### Laurel Avenue Artist Studios Eligibility Criteria

- Applicants must reside in the City of West Hollywood.
- Artist’s Statement that describes professional experience, background, goals, and potential for community enrichment in their art practice.
- Evidence of a professional portfolio: Applicants must present a portfolio/body of work that exemplifies the type of work the applicant will create in the studio.



# Review process

The City’s Cultural Equity Statement, creativity, and critical thinking will guide all processes for the Laurel Avenue Artist Residency Program. The Arts and Cultural Affairs Commission will be the decision-making body for approving the artistic guidelines, evaluation criteria, term of the Artist Fellowship and Artist Studios, and final selection of artists for the Laurel Avenue Artist Residency Program, with its Performing Arts and Cultural Affairs (PACA) Subcommittee making recommendations based on recommendations from the Advisory Panel.

The City of West Hollywood will host two open calls for the Program – Artist Fellowship and Artist Studios. All applications will be reviewed by staff to confirm that the applicant meets the minimum qualifications. All qualified applications for Artist Studios will be entered into a lottery selection process.

## Advisory Panel

The City will employ a peer review panel, Advisory Panel, process for all Artist Fellowship applications. The rich ecosystem of cultural, artistic, and educational activity in Los Angeles County will be tapped at all levels to create an advisory panel for the Program with a goal to

find the right balance between neighborhood voices and artistic voices, making the program accessible as well as artistically rigorous.

The advisory panel will serve a 3-year term to provide input in defining artistic guidelines, evaluation criteria for the artist selection process, review of artist applications, term of the Artist Fellowship and Artist Studios, and recommendations for Artist Fellows. The advisory panel may elect to define a theme to the call to artists to which applicants respond.

The panel will consist of eight individuals to include the Program Administrator, one Arts Commissioner, one resident from West Hollywood (ideally someone who lives in a close vicinity of the property), arts administrators, artists/performers, curators, and arts professionals, representing a wide variety of artistic mediums such as, but not limited to, visual art, dance, design, music, literature, film-making, performance, new genres, community-based art, social practice, and environmental-based art practices. Arts Division staff and the Program Administrator will facilitate the Advisory Panel.



# Operations

City Arts Division staff will oversee all production and consultants required for the Program, such as contract positions, guest curators, independent review panelists, advisors, and the Program Administrator.

## **Program Administrator**

The city will contract with a Program Administrator with artistic vision, cultural competency, and deep knowledge of the Los Angeles arts and culture scene. Duties will include acting as the primary liaison between the city and the artists, organizing public programs, mounting exhibitions, problem-solving, organizing site visits from arts professionals (tailored to the artists' needs) for professional development, and facilitating meaningful engagement with neighbors. The Program Administrator will be encouraged to provide creative influence on the Program, run all practical and philosophical aspects of the Artist Fellowship and Laurel Avenue Artist Studios, and execute the public programming.

## **Cultural Facility Supervisor**

It is recommended to have a dedicated city facility staff person and/or contractor (or two) assigned to this site. This person will be an all-around handyperson, knowledgeable about the cultural facility and park grounds, and available to be always on call (24/7) in case of facilities disruption - plumbing, electricity, wifi, etc.





## Partnerships

### Arts Organizations

Affordable housing for artists is a significant struggle in the Los Angeles region. The city will develop relationships with art and cultural spaces both large and small. Large art and cultural spaces could include established arts institutions, art schools and universities in the region. Small art and cultural spaces could include arts organizations and artist-run initiatives.

A partnership with an arts organization will extend the awareness of the City of West Hollywood's artist residency opportunity and support the presentation and development of artists and content from under-represented communities and disciplines. **An Artist Fellowship could result from a partnership with an independent arts organization whose mission aligns with the Program goals.** Eligible organizations are those who regularly host artist projects and residencies but are lacking artist housing. It is recommended to introduce one partnership per year, however it is not required to take place every year.

It is expected that an arts organization who intends to partner on an artist's application will contact the city in advance to confirm eligibility. If the partnership artist is selected, the arts organization is required to match funds to support the artist's monthly stipend. A sliding scale match, depending on the size of the

partnering institution, is recommended. All other aspects of the Artist Fellowship will remain the same. The partnership Artist Fellow will live/work at the property and simultaneously support the goals of the Program and the sponsoring arts organization.

## Public Relations

It is recommended to hire a public relations consultant to provide services for the first 3-cycles (3-years), at a minimum. The Program's founding Advisory Panel, a network of colleagues and institutions, will be a key asset in promoting its launch, new life, and possible futures, as professional word of mouth is one of the most powerful promotional tools. Additionally, targeted outreach to outlets such as E-Flux, Hyperallergic, ArtNews, Artist Communities Alliance and others will be engaged. Social media will be key to any public relations campaign and print material will be distributed locally.

## Evaluation

It is recommended to hire an evaluation consultant to develop metrics to assess the program's success over time and provide an annual report to the City Council.

# Budget

The operating budget's personnel costs include an Advisory Panel, a full-time Program Administrator; a Cultural Facilities Supervisor(s), a chef; a Public Relations consultant; and an evaluation consultant.

The Artist Studios and Artist Fellowships budget includes stipends to assist Artist Fellows with living expenses, such as health insurance, materials, food, and transportation; and a one-time travel honorarium for Artist Fellows to and from the site. The programming budget includes expenses for temporary exhibitions, public programs such as educational forums and open studio events, resident critiques and discussions, as well as costs related to networking and building community with artistic and institutional partners.

The budget for furnishings, fixtures, and equipment includes kitchenware, linens, and bedding for each unit; kitchenware for the communal kitchen; laundry appliances, and artist's tools and equipment. All tools and equipment purchased by the city will remain at the house for use by future resident artists.



The public relations and marketing budget includes electronic and print mail collateral. And, anticipated routine costs will include utilities, internet/WiFi, security, maintenance, property insurance, all maintenance of furniture and fixtures, and equipment.

**Revenue Streams:** For a sustainable program, the City of West Hollywood should anticipate budgeting for the bulk of the program's operational requirements. A percentage could come from other government sources such as Federal, State, and County agencies. Additional funding could come from local partners, such as those connected to Artist Fellows or other specific programming, further defined the previous section about 'Partnerships.' Most funders, such as the National Endowment for the Arts, The Warhol Foundation, the California Arts Council, and the California Community Foundation, will fund specific programs and community engagement initiatives. Grant applications are stronger when the budget shows that operational funding is covered by the city.







## Future Programming

As the Artist Residency matures, new layers of programming can be developed. It is recommended that these initiatives be considered in years 5 - 7. For example:

### **Embedded Government Art Worker**

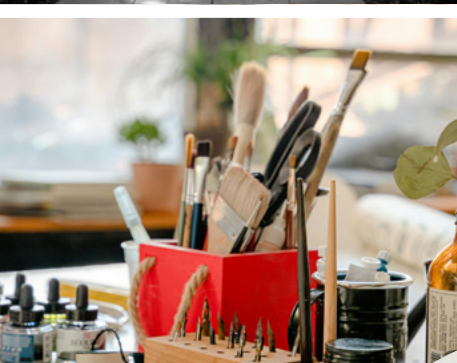
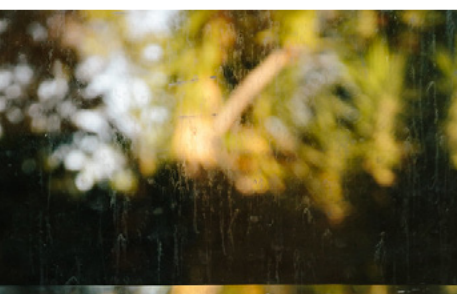
An artist works within the City of West Hollywood on a project defined by the city or by the artist in coordination with the city. This initiative gives everyone the opportunity to learn and look at their own work anew. Constituents benefit from a different voice in their government. Staff may learn new skills to enhance their work. West Hollywood will join a small but growing community of government-embedded artist residences.

### **Global Exchange**

Artists and thinkers from across the world are invited to work individually and collectively on shared concerns about a topic targeting local problems and international commonalities. The ideas exchanged and developed could play a significant role in addressing urgent issues that are global in scale, local in effect.

### **Affordable Housing Pipeline**

This approach incubates artist citizens through the stabilization of home, providing facilities for artists and a pathway to stable housing. Eligibility is geared toward residents of Los Angeles County / Southern California. West Hollywood will lead the way to address the housing crisis while supporting a swell of creativity and diversity in the city.



# FAQ's

## ● How long are Artist Fellow's expected to be on-site?

- Artist Fellows are expected to live/work on-site for most of the year. Fellows should not be absent for more than 3 weeks. The city understands that life situations may arise without warning, and the city will work with individuals to the best of its ability to accommodate their needs.

## ● How many public engagement events are expected from artists in the Program?

- All artists are expected to participate in all open studio events (2-4 times/year), and provide one educational forum, performance, and/or workshop for the community.

## ● Are non-participant significant others allowed?

- All requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

## ● Are pets allowed in the Program?

- All requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

## ● Are children allowed?

- Artist Fellowship applicants with children will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Currently there is no funding for childcare services.

## ● Is there parking at the site?

- There is no onsite parking provided. The site is surrounded by residential permit parking, 2-hour limit. A parking garage is located about ½ block away at the corner of Sunset Blvd. and Laurel Avenue. Artist Fellows can apply to receive a residential parking permit.

## ● What are the working hours for the Artist Studios?

- The Program site is in a residential zone. For this reason, the Artist Studio hours are defined as 8:00 a.m. - 10:00 p.m. No noise shall be made by any stereo, television, musical instrument, or similar device that is plainly audible from 25-feet or more outside of these hours.

# Timeline of Major Activities

## YEAR 0

To occur the year prior to anticipated opening

- Hire operations staff
- Finalize strategic plan and all foundational texts related to the Program
- Establish the template contracts for the Artist Fellowship and Artist Studios
- Publicly introduce the program
- Issue the annual call for applications for the first cohort of Artist Fellows
- Issue the biannual (every 2-years) call for applications for the first cohort of Artist Studios
- Assemble Advisory Panel I (3-year term)
- Make Artist Selections
- Execute artist contracts
- Furnish and supply apartments for incoming artists
- Assess maintenance requirements and execute as needed



## ANNUAL ACTIVITIES

- Issue the annual call for applications for Artist Fellows
- Assemble Advisory Panel
- Support the artists in finding their way into and through the Program
- Allocate resources for on-site arts and culture programming
- Make artist selections
- Public relations and marketing
- Evaluate the Program



## YEAR 1

- Usher in the first cohort of Artist Fellows and Artist Studios (2-year term)
- Public relations and marketing campaign begins (3-year term)

## YEAR 2

- Close out previous year
- Usher in the new cohort of Artist Fellows (II)
- Issue the biannual call for applications for Artist Studios
- Issue a call for applications for the next Advisory Panel (3-year term) and make selections



## YEAR 3

- Close out previous year
- Usher in the new cohort of Artist Fellows (III)
- Usher in the new cohort of Artist Studios (II, 2-year term)
- Public relations and marketing campaign concludes
- Evaluate the public relations and marketing campaign and determine next steps



## YEAR 4

- Close out previous year
- Usher in the new cohort of Artist Fellows (IV)
- Issue a call for applications for Artist Fellows (V)
- Issue a call for applications for Artist Studios (III, 2-year term)

