

# Queens Performing Artists & Workspace

"I Want to Do More  
Than Survive —  
I Want to  
Thrive"

June 2014

**Exploring the Metropolis, Inc.**

Workspace Solutions for NYC's Performing Arts Communities



Queens Workspace Initiative

# Queens Performing Artists & Workspace

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# Executive Summary

## Reason for Undertaking QWI

Exploring the Metropolis (EtM) has a singular focus on infrastructure, the physical workspace and funding/support systems that enable performing artists to create, rehearse and perform.

**Our purpose is to enable performing artists to maximize their artistry and to enlist cultural facilities in realizing this goal while broadening community exposure to the performing arts.**

As performing/multidisciplinary artists have been priced out of Manhattan and, increasingly, Brooklyn, the geographically and demographically diverse borough of Queens appears to have growing concentrations of these artists and groups. But we did not know whether Queens artists' need for affordable, suitable consistent space was being met within the borough.

## What is QWI?

Faced with this lack of available data, EtM conceived the **Queens Workspace Initiative**, a research project to analyze whether Queens facilities meet resident performing and multidisciplinary artists' workspace needs. With funding from the David Rockefeller Fund, the Christian A. Johnson Endeavor Foundation and the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, EtM studied performers' needs against the supply in cultural, educational, and community facilities.

## Process

Using our Steering Committee, interviews, focus groups, surveys, and existing data sets, EtM set out to identify the most pressing issues to Queens' performing arts landscape and recommend realistic solutions. These solutions primarily take the form of recommendations, potential pilot programs and evaluations that we, or partner organizations, may pursue from fall of 2014 through 2015.

## Queens Overview

Queens, NYC's largest borough by geographic area, is acknowledged as one of the most ethnically diverse places on earth. Notable cultural areas include Astoria, Long Island City, Jackson Heights, Flushing and Jamaica.

Queens has approximately 96 nonprofit performing arts organizations compared to Brooklyn's 274 and Manhattan's 2,721. At \$1.05 per resident, Queens' City-owned Cultural Institutions receive the lowest amount of per capita arts funding from the city.

Board support, individual giving and corporate giving vary widely for Queens arts organizations depending on region. Northwestern Queens organizations have higher levels of private giving than those in Southeastern Queens, which rely heavily on public funding. The

borough enjoys strong cultural leadership and a favorable political climate, but also has challenges; isolated communities, lack of philanthropic infrastructure and public transportation issues.

## Survey Findings

### Artists

We received complete survey responses from 132 Queens-based artists. For our surveys we included responses from anyone who self identifies as an artist within the disciplines of Music, Dance, Theater, Comedy/Spoken Word, Interdisciplinary, Multidisciplinary, or Performance Art.

The artists surveyed were highly concentrated in Northwestern Queens. Although we do not feel that our distribution is indicative of the multitude of artists in the borough, it does point to the fact that the burgeoning arts scene within Northwestern Queens is likely less isolated than other areas.

Our respondents included a healthy number of Theater and Music practitioners, and a smaller number of dancers. Other demographic traits were relatively evenly distributed including age and gender. Income distributions were in line with recent research. 93% of dancers, 90% of theater practitioners and 69% of musicians were only willing to pay \$20 or less per hour for rehearsal space. 78% of respondents wanted to both rehearse and perform more in Queens. One issue that arose qualitatively was a lack of suitable pianos for musicians within the borough, both for rehearsal and performance purposes.

### Facilities

We received completed survey responses from 23 Queens cultural facilities. For our surveys we deemed any space that hosted public performances of Music, Dance, Theater, Comedy/Spoken Word, Interdisciplinary, Multidisciplinary, or Performance Art to be a cultural facility. As with the artists survey, our facility respondents were largely concentrated in Northwestern Queens and the remainder was almost evenly split between Northeastern and Southeastern Queens. Dance, Music, and Multidisciplinary work were the most commonly presented creative forms among these facilities.

There were significant geographic differences in revenue streams. Northwestern Queens organizations get significantly more of their funding from private sources, while Southeastern Queens organizations rely heavily on public funding.

There seems to be excess rental capacity within most of Queens' cultural facilities. Data suggests that facilities may be pricing their spaces higher than local artists are willing to pay.

# Conclusions

## Borough-wide Recommendations

**Rehearsal Space Pricing and Utilization:** The fact that 90% of dancers and theater practitioners are only willing to pay \$20/hour to rent rehearsal space while only half of the facilities we interviewed are charging rates of \$20 or less suggests a disconnect. Solutions could include lowering prices, designing subsidies or crafting more in-depth cost-benefit analyses.

**Availability of Pianos:** A number of musicians noted the need for higher quality, properly tuned pianos within the borough. Potential solutions could include working with local piano manufacturers, engaging banks to provide favorable financing terms for facilities and encouraging foundations to subsidize costs.

## Jamaica

Based on our research, Jamaica emerged as the logical locale for pilot programs that will have the greatest potential impact on Queens' performing arts landscape. Public funders are committing resources and public transportation improvements and rezoning will boost prospects, but there is still a perception by some outsiders that the area is economically depressed and dangerous.

We believe resources should be committed in three areas:

**Cultural Leadership Development:** Jamaica has skilled cultural leaders, but they often lack the necessary support to grow their organizations. Offering Jamaica's leaders educational and professional development could have a substantive impact, and enable them to attract board members with greater capacity.

**Community Engagement and Arts Funding:** The lack of local individual support for the arts in Jamaica highlights the need to better engage the community. This could take many forms, and developing pathways to encourage private dollars will both engage a wider population in cultural activity and help provide much needed revenue diversification for organizations.

**Artist Housing and Live/Work Space:** Jamaica is one of the few areas in NYC that has access to transit, underutilized residential space, and a number of stakeholders behind its continued development. Seeing residential space go to artists could be a great complement to the neighborhood's likely trajectory.

## EtM History and Background

Exploring the Metropolis began in 1982 in response to the upzoning of the Theatre District to allow larger commercial buildings to replace the relatively anonymous but integral small buildings that supported theater and the performing arts. We began and continue to function as a neutral nonprofit facilitator, engaging in discussions on cultural space. Over the decades, we have been able to enlist the involvement and confidence of the performing arts communities and those in the public sector, both administrative and legislative.

In 2000, our first ongoing rehearsal and performance space program focused on two communities: musicians seeking workspace and cultural facilities with underused space seeking additional earned income. The result was a free database website, NYC Music Places, launched with support from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs and the New York State Council on the Arts. A similar site for dance went live in 2003, and in 2007 we added a final site for theater. Exploring the Metropolis began doing business as NYC Performing Arts Spaces (NYC PAS), which was transferred to Fractured Atlas in 2010. Our 2004 “Report on the Feasibility of an Orchestra-based Rehearsal Center in Manhattan” led to the opening of the DiMenna Center for Classical Music in March 2011, and our 2008 “Where Can We Work? A Report on Workspace Availability for New York City Musicians” led to the EtM Con Edison Composers’ Residency – now in its sixth year.

**David Johnston, Project Director**, is Executive Director for Exploring the Metropolis (EtM). An arts administrator and playwright/actor based in New York City, he worked at Culture Finder and New York Foundation for the Arts. At NYFA, he was part of the initial team responsible for conception of NYFA Source and helped to administer the New York Arts Recovery Fund. He joined EtM in 2002, and became Executive Director in the fall of 2012.

For EtM, when the organization was known as NYC Performing Arts Spaces (NYC PAS), he oversaw the NYC Music, Dance and Theatre Spaces website programs and special projects. He serves as liaison with government and foundation funders, outreach with local arts service organizations and councils. In 2007, along with Founder/Director Eugenie C. Cowan, he led a strategic planning process which led to transfer of the NYC PAS program to Fractured Atlas, completed in September 2010. He was Project Director for the 2010 study of dance rehearsal space needs “We Make Do, More Time is Better but Budget is King.”

David has a degree from the College of William and Mary and a certificate from the Professional Workshop at Circle in the Square. He is an award-winning playwright whose work has been produced in New York, Cape Cod, Los Angeles, Washington, London and Germany. He is an active member of the Dramatists Guild, Actors Equity, Blue Coyote Theater Group, BMI Librettists Workshop, and is a Resident Artist for 2011–12 with American Lyric Theater’s Composer Librettist Development Program.

**Prentice Onayemi, Consultant**, recently graduated from Columbia University’s MBA program. While there, he served as a consultant with Exploring the Metropolis’ Queens Workspace Initiative and co-authored two case studies on artists as social entrepreneurs that will be released by Harvard Business Review. Prior to earning his master’s, Prentice co-founded Jack – a performing arts venue in Clinton Hill, Brooklyn – and Asmi International – a nonprofit that trains NGO staff to facilitate literacy and creative self-expression workshops for survivors of armed conflicts and natural disasters. He also worked in talent strategy and operations with Achievement First, a network of charter schools, and trained non-violent offenders to build and install cabinets with Brooklyn Workforce Innovations. A proud member of Actors’ Equity Association and Screen Actors Guild, his credits range from children’s e-books to bringing the title character to life in “War Horse” on Broadway. Prentice holds a BFA in Drama from New York University and focused on real estate finance and social enterprise during his time at Columbia.

**Hillary Jackson, Program Associate**, performed with the Princeton Ballet and Milwaukee Ballet and was the recipient of an award from the National Foundation for Advancement in the Arts before leaving dance to pursue other interests. Her interest in music led to her role as label manager for Prime CD records, specializing in singer-songwriters and, later, the manager of XI Records, the label of minimalist composer Phil Niblock's Experimental Intermedia Foundation. In addition she has done promotional and administrative work for various new music artists and organizations including Eve Beglarian, Richard Einhorn, The Meridian Arts Ensemble and the MATA Festival. She has done technical production work at New York Theatre Workshop, Second Stage, Manhattan Theatre Club, Big Apple Circus, and the Lincoln Center Festival and was the Management Programs Research Associate at Theatre Communications Group (TCG). Hillary returned to dancing in 2000 and joined the administrative team of Dance New Amsterdam (DNA) in 2005 where she held the role of Finance Manager and, later, Education Director. She currently performs with Diane McCarthy & Dancers.

**Eugenie C. Cowan, Project Advisor and EtM Founder**, has built a career on strengthening New York's cultural infrastructure – its physical foundation – and on a love of music making.

Eugenie grew up in Buffalo, New York, which sparked her interest in architecture and where she inherited a keen design sense from her father. She worked for New York architectural firm Ballard Todd Associates, which focused on housing and planning. Working at the New York Chapter, American Institute of Architects she instituted outreach programs. As a free-lance conference consultant, she coordinated the pioneering Neighborhood Conservation for the National Endowment for the Arts, which resulted in Federal legislation.

In 1982 she founded nonprofit arts service organization Exploring the Metropolis, Inc. (EtM). This organization has an impact far beyond size: Studies and conferences in the 1980s showed public and private sector interests the negative effects of Times Square upzoning on theatre support systems. In the 1990s she led City-commissioned studies on adapting a former church into a cultural center in Jamaica, Queens (now Jamaica Performing Arts Center), and on a culture and tourism center in Harlem.

In 2001 after analyzing performing arts processes, she initiated through EtM the free online database [www.nycPerformingArtsSpaces.org](http://www.nycPerformingArtsSpaces.org) that connects performing artists needing suitable, affordable workspace and cultural facilities with underused space. This program has been transferred to technology-based Fractured Atlas. A study of the need for a dedicated orchestra rehearsal center was impetus for the DiMenna Center for Classical Music. A study of musicians' workspace issues led to the Con Edison Musicians' Residency Program for composers.

She is a founder and President of Bellerophon Publications, Inc., publisher of Metropolis, the magazine of architecture, design and culture. She also served on the Boards of the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, The Preservation League of New York State, Fractured Atlas and is called on to advise various music organizations. After 30 years as EtM Director, in the fall of 2012, she became Board Chairwoman.

# I. Introduction

## Reason for Undertaking QWI

Exploring the Metropolis (EtM) has a singular focus on infrastructure – the physical workspace and funding/support systems that enable performing artists to create, rehearse and perform. “Workspace” in this sense refers to rehearsal space, performance space or space for artistic research and development. **Our purpose is to enable performing artists to maximize their artistry and to enlist cultural facilities in realizing this goal while broadening community exposure to the performing arts.**

Since 2009, Exploring the Metropolis has administered the EtM Con Edison Composers’ Residency. This program, now entering its sixth year, provides juried composers free workspace in cultural facilities with suitable underused space, and requires the composer and host organization to partner in offering a free public program. Flushing Town Hall (FTH), part of the City’s Cultural Institutions Group (CIG), was our initial host facility and has continued as a partner in the program.

In the course of the residency’s application processes, we noticed that the number of applications from Queens composers was on the rise, and that they consistently ranked highest among the five boroughs in artistic criteria. As performing/multidisciplinary artists have been priced out of Manhattan and, increasingly, Brooklyn, the geographically and demographically diverse borough of Queens appears to have growing concentrations of these artists and groups. But we did not know whether Queens artists’ need for affordable, suitable consistent space was being met within the borough.

Initial conversations with local stakeholders revealed that there did not seem to be an adequate infrastructure in place to serve Queens’ growing population of performing artists. Further discussions with local arts organizations, artists and elected officials confirmed that an assessment of performing arts workspace had not been conducted and could be useful with regard to future strategic planning and policies.

## What is QWI?

Faced with a lack of available data on the health of Queens’ performing arts community, EtM conceived the **Queens Workspace Initiative**, a research project to analyze whether Queens facilities meet resident performing and multidisciplinary artists’ workspace needs. With funding from the David Rockefeller Fund, the Christian A. Johnson Endeavor Foundation and the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, EtM studied performers’ needs against the supply in cultural, educational, and community facilities.

## Process

Using our Steering Committee, interviews, focus groups, surveys and existing data sets, EtM set out to develop realistic recommendations and pilot programs that could be effectively implemented with the goal of strengthening the borough’s performing arts landscape.



## Steering Committee

EtM assembled a Steering Committee of Queens arts leaders, economic development officials, and nonprofit professionals with deep expertise in the borough's performing arts and space usage issues. This Steering Committee, which met in person and by phone, was valuable in providing connections to the community, asking insightful questions and pointing to additional areas of research.

## Interviews

Over 14 months, the EtM team met with academic researchers, Queens arts administrators, elected officials and staffs, artists, Business Improvement District (BID) staffs and directors, arts consultants, economic development and tourism officials, leaders of college arts programs and centers, historical societies, library officials, board members of arts organizations and top staff at public arts agencies. Interviews were conducted from February 2013 until April 2014. These interviews provided the most extensive and informative qualitative data. (See Appendix for complete listing.)

## Focus Groups

We solicited recommendations for our Artists Focus Group and our Facilities and Policymakers Focus Group from our Steering Committee, previous Flushing Town Hall Con Edison Composers-in-Residence, New York Foundation for the Arts, The Chocolate Factory, the Queens Library, the Historic House Trust, the Alliance of Resident Theatres/New York (ART/NY), the Office of the Queens Borough President and the Queens Museum.

The Artists Focus Group was held at the Queens Council on the Arts on September 24th, 2013. The Facilities and Policymakers Focus Group was held on September 26th, 2013 at the Harvest Room in Jamaica Market, a conference room space donated by the Greater Jamaica Development Corporation. Focus Groups were facilitated by the EtM team: David Johnston – Project Director, Prentice Onayemi – Consultant and Hillary Jackson – Program Associate. Eugenie C. Cowan – EtM Founder and Board Chairwoman, served as Project Advisor.

Artists, funders, policymakers and facility representatives were invited to the sessions. The Artists Focus Group of 14 participants included choreographers, dancers, theater directors, playwrights, actors, musicians, Community Board members and jazz composers. The Facility and Policymakers Focus Group, also 14 participants, included funders, library officials, cultural facility owners, Queens representatives from the City's Cultural Institutions Group, CUNY officials, theater groups and arts leaders.

## Surveys

The EtM team drafted two online surveys, one for Artists and one for Facilities. These surveys were refined with input from the Steering Committee, and then further revised with suggestions from the Focus Groups.

The surveys were launched on November 5, 2013 and were open until February 28, 2014. Surveys were disseminated with extensive use of social media and EtM's e-newsletters, and by:

- **Arts Organizations:** Dance/NYC, the Queens Council on the Arts, Battery Dance, Chamber Music America, the Queens Jazz Overground, One Percent for Culture, Dancers Responding to AIDS (DRA), Indie Theater Now, Emerging Leaders in New York Arts (ELNYA), New York Foundation for the Arts and the League of Independent Theater (LITNY.)
- **Elected Officials:** the Office of City Council Member Daniel Dromm, the Office of Queens Borough President Helen Marshall
- **Queens-based Blogs:** We Heart Astoria, Mission to (Dit)mars, Why Leave Astoria?

## Other Data Sets

To provide overview and context for the Queens Workspace Initiative, the following additional data sets were acquired: Queens demographics data from the Furman Center for Real Estate and Urban Policy at New York University, data on Queens cultural organizations from the New York State Cultural Data Project (CDP) and information on Queens cultural facilities from NYC Performing Arts Spaces. Data sets were supplemented with reports from Dance/NYC’s “Dance Workforce Census: Earnings Among Individuals, Ages 21–35” in 2012, and EtM’s previous report on dance for The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, “We Make Do: More Time is Better But Budget is King.”

# II. Queens Overview

## Basic Demographics

Queens, NYC’s largest borough by geographic area, consists of 178.28 sq. miles of territory bounded by the East River to the north and west, Newtown Creek to the south, and a somewhat jagged line to the east running from Little Neck Bay to Udalls Cove. Its estimated population of 2,296,175 lives on 109.24 sq. miles of landmass with the remaining 69.04 sq. miles being water.<sup>1</sup>

Acknowledged as one of the most ethnically diverse places on earth,<sup>2</sup> 47.7% of Queens’ population comes from one of over 100 different countries,<sup>3</sup> and 56.4% of the borough’s residents speak one of 137 languages other than English in the home. Queens has long been a launching pad for immigrant communities where newcomers establish a foothold in the United States en route to achieving the American dream.

## Regions Defined by This Study

For the purposes of this study, we broke Queens down into the following regions.

**Northwestern Queens:** Astoria, Corona, East Elmhurst, Elmhurst, Forest Hills, Glendale, Hunters Point, Jackson Heights, LeFrak City, Long Island City, Maspeth, Middle Village, North Corona, Rego Park, Ridgewood, Steinway, Sunnyside, and Woodside

<sup>1</sup> US Census data

<sup>2</sup> [www.nydailynews.com/new-york/queens/queens-diverse-places-earth-new-figures-show-article-1.430744](http://www.nydailynews.com/new-york/queens/queens-diverse-places-earth-new-figures-show-article-1.430744)

<sup>3</sup> American Community Survey

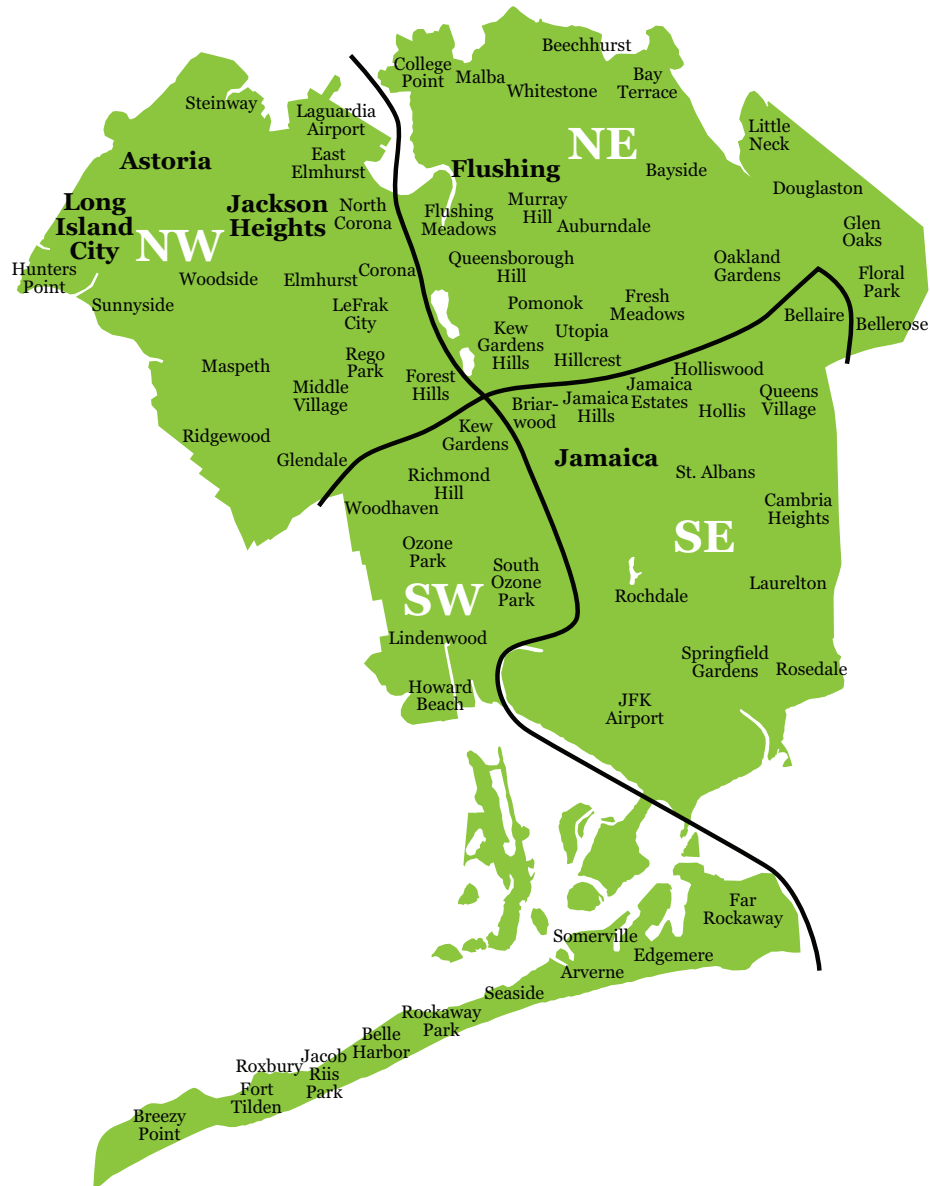
**Northeastern Queens:** Auburndale, Bay Terrace, Bayside, Beechhurst, Bellerose, College Point, Douglaston, Floral Park, Flushing, Flushing Meadows, Fresh Meadows, Glen Oaks, Hillcrest, Kew Gardens Hills, Little Neck, Malba, Murray Hill, Oakland Gardens, Pomonok, Queensborough Hill, Utopia, and Whitestone

**Southwestern Queens:** Arverne, Belle Harbor, Breezy Point, Edgemere, Far Rockaway, Fort Tilden, Howard Beach, Jacob Riis Park, Kew Gardens, Lindenwood, Ozone Park, Richmond Hill, Rockaway Park, Roxbury, Seaside, Somerville, South Ozone Park, and Woodhaven

**Southeastern Queens:** Bellaire, Briarwood, Cambria Heights, Hollis, Holliswood, Jamaica, Jamaica Estates, Jamaica Hills, Laurelton, Queens Village, Rochdale, Rosedale, Saint Albans, and Springfield Gardens

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**Regions Defined by This Study**



## Key Neighborhoods

Some of Queens' most notable neighborhoods include:

- **Astoria:** A middle-class area of Northwestern Queens with significant commercial activity, Astoria is popular among young transplants from Brooklyn and Manhattan. Known for its beer gardens and vibrant Greek population, Astoria is also the home of piano maker Steinway & Sons, Kaufman Astoria Studios (one of the oldest continuously used movies studios in the world), and a number of cultural organizations such as Museum of the Moving Image, Astoria Performing Arts Center, the Theatre Development Fund's Costume Collection and Queens Council on the Arts. In March 2014, the area bordered by 31st Street to the west, 34th Avenue to the north, Steinway Street to the east and 37th Avenue to the south was designated the Kaufman Arts District.
- **Long Island City:** Occupying Queens' westernmost territory, Long Island City was historically a commercial hub and has become one of the borough's most rapidly developing neighborhoods (median housing prices rose by 24% from 2012 to 2013).<sup>4</sup> One of the most culturally active hubs outside of Manhattan, Long Island City is home to Silvercup Studios, MoMA PS1, and a number of other arts organizations such as The Chocolate Factory, The Noguchi Museum, and Socrates Sculpture Park.
- **Flushing:** Primarily residential and indicative of Queens' reputation as a melting pot, Flushing also sports the fourth largest central business district in New York City.<sup>5</sup> Located in Northeastern Queens, its housing prices jumped 34% from 2012–2013, one of the largest increases in New York City during that time period.<sup>6</sup> Flushing is home to cultural institutions such as Flushing Town Hall and Queens Botanical Garden. According to census data, Flushing's population is 61% Asian.
- **Jackson Heights:** Boasting the most diverse census tract in NYC with immigrants from 51 countries speaking 21 languages,<sup>7</sup> Jackson Heights is a primarily residential neighborhood and destination for those hunting for authentic ethnic cuisine in New York City. Many of its cultural organizations focus primarily on individual ethnic populations, but the Jackson Heights Beautification group and the 82nd Street Partnership are behind a number of wider spanning events in the neighborhood.
- **Jamaica:** Historically known as a middle-class African-American neighborhood, Jamaica is home to one of Queens' largest public sector and transportation hubs. Formerly a predominantly residential neighborhood, it was rezoned in 2007 to foster increased multi-use and commercial development in its downtown area. Jamaica is host to a number of arts and culture organizations including Jamaica Center for Arts and Learning, Afrikan Poetry Theatre, and Jamaica Performing Arts Center.

<sup>4</sup> [www.nydailynews.com/new-york/big-prices-homes-citywide-article-1.1589737](http://www.nydailynews.com/new-york/big-prices-homes-citywide-article-1.1589737)

<sup>5</sup> [www.nyc.gov/html/dot/downloads/pdf/201201\\_flushing\\_report.pdf](http://www.nyc.gov/html/dot/downloads/pdf/201201_flushing_report.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> [www.nydailynews.com/new-york/big-prices-homes-citywide-article-1.1589737](http://www.nydailynews.com/new-york/big-prices-homes-citywide-article-1.1589737)

<sup>7</sup> [www.nydailynews.com/new-york/queens/queens-blocks-house-immigrants-51-countries-making-nabe-diverse-nyc-article-1.946795](http://www.nydailynews.com/new-york/queens/queens-blocks-house-immigrants-51-countries-making-nabe-diverse-nyc-article-1.946795)

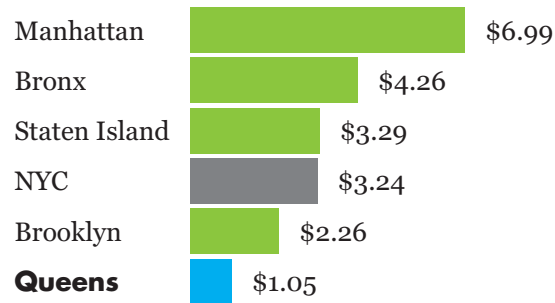
## Arts Landscape

Queens has approximately 96 nonprofit performing arts organizations compared to Brooklyn's 274 and Manhattan's 2,721.<sup>8</sup> That amounts to one organization for every 24,000 Queens residents, compared to one for every 9,500 or 600 residents in Brooklyn and Manhattan respectively.<sup>9</sup> On the whole, Queens performing arts organizations are much younger than those in Manhattan and Brooklyn with Queens Symphony Orchestra, one of its oldest with the exception of membership-based societies, being founded in 1953. In comparison, Brooklyn's Brooklyn Academy of Music was founded in 1861<sup>10</sup> and Manhattan's Metropolitan Opera opened its doors in 1883.<sup>11</sup>

New York City's Cultural Institutions Group (CIG) consists of 33 arts organizations operating within the footprint of City-owned land or buildings. Eight CIGs are located in Queens, and they are among the youngest of the 33 organizations. At \$1.05 per resident, Queens' Institutions receive the lowest amount of per capita arts funding from the city. Brooklyn and Manhattan receive \$2.26 and \$6.99 respectively.<sup>12</sup>

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### City Funding per Resident for the Cultural Institutions Group



## Cultural Data Project

The New York State Cultural Data Project (CDP) tracks financial and programmatic data from participating cultural institutions in the state. The New York State Council on the Arts (NYSCA) and the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs (NYC DCA) require applicants to fill out annual CDP profiles. Thus, CDP data provides an ongoing look at nonprofit cultural organizations within the state that seek public funding.

When looking at the most recent fiscal year of reports by Queens-based performing arts organizations from the New York State Cultural Data Project we noticed marked differences between the functioning of organizations.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>8</sup> [www.guidestar.com](http://www.guidestar.com)

<sup>9</sup> Guidestar and US Census data

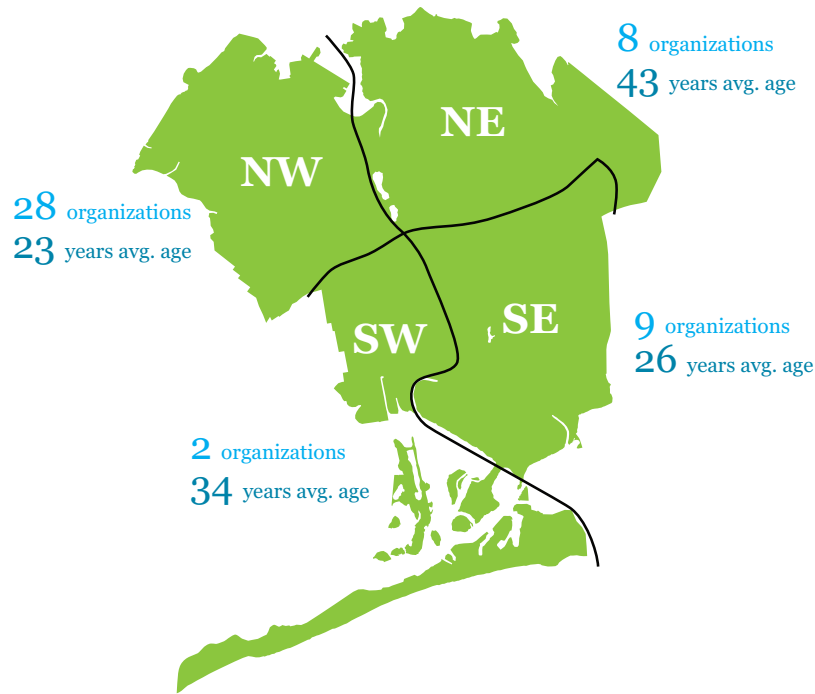
<sup>10</sup> [www.bam.org](http://www.bam.org)

<sup>11</sup> [www.metoperafamily.org](http://www.metoperafamily.org)

<sup>12</sup> Queens Borough Board Fiscal Year 2014 Expense & Capital Budget Priorities

<sup>13</sup> We included information on the most recent fiscal year of every Queens-based performing arts organization that submitted data in the 12 months preceding September of 2013.

**Distribution of Performing Arts Organizations** (source: NYS Cultural Data Project)



Of the 47 Queens organizations that submitted data in the 12 months preceding September 2013, more than half were in Northwestern Queens. Just two of the organizations were in Southwestern Queens and the remaining were split nearly evenly between the Northeast and Southeast. The average age of organizations in Northeastern Queens was 43 years, 15 years older than the borough average of 28 years. Northwestern Queens had the youngest average age, which is not surprising given the increase in both new residents and organizations over the past two decades.

One of the greatest disparities among Queens’ organizations becomes apparent through analyzing their fundraising sources.

**Income Sources of Queens Performing Arts Organizations** (average per area)

	NW		NE		SW		SE		All Queens	
Board	\$ 72,563	8%	\$ 14,171	2%	\$ 1,500	0%	\$ 1,185	1%	\$ 45,932	6%
Individuals	30,790	3%	21,458	3%	8,956	2%	3,485	2%	23,044	3%
Corporate	152,048	17%	16,079	2%	27,750	5%	4,720	2%	95,404	13%
Foundation	98,768	11%	104,850	16%	178,750	30%	14,333	7%	87,038	12%
Public	426,771	48%	397,410	60%	336,743	56%	164,934	86%	367,804	52%
Other	\$41,119	5%	73,563	11%	3,125	1%	857	0%	37,315	5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$895,405</b>		<b>\$659,741</b>		<b>\$596,824</b>		<b>\$192,479</b>		<b>\$707,984</b>	

**Board support** is vastly different depending on region. On average, southeastern and southwestern organizations' boards only contributed \$175 per member during the fiscal year. By comparison, northeastern organizations' boards contributed more than eight times as much with \$1,435 per member. Northwestern organizations have the highest average contribution per member with \$6,705, roughly 38 times the level for Southern Queens.

**Individual giving** is also uneven, with Southeastern Queens coming in last place at an average total amount of \$3,485 for the fiscal year per organization. In comparison, northwestern organizations raised \$30,790 on average, more than 8.5 times the southeastern figure.

Finally, **corporate giving** is another standout with the average northwestern cultural organization bringing in \$152,048 on average for the fiscal year. That figure is more than 32 times the \$4,720 that the average southeastern organization raised.

These numbers point to a potential area of growth for Southeastern Queens' cultural organizations. Despite being close to the average age of similar geographies' institutions, southeastern organizations are highly dependent on public funding from government sources which makes up 86% of their budgets on average. Such a high degree of dependence on one source of funding can create instability within these organizations' budgets over time.

## III. Opportunities and Challenges

### Opportunities

Despite being an underdog in comparison to its neighboring boroughs, Queens' performing arts landscape has many advantages.

- **Strong Leadership:** Vibrant and dedicated leaders have substantially grown a number of Queens' performing arts organizations. Skillful, imaginative arts leaders view Queens as a locale where they can have a great impact.
- **Favorable Political Climate:** A number of New York City's key political stakeholders have either a strong connection to Queens or a demonstrated commitment to the performing arts. The New York City Council Majority Leader and Cultural Affairs Chair, Jimmy Van Bramer, represents Northwestern Queens. Prior to his election to the City Council, he was Chief External Affairs Officer for the Queens Library. Queens Borough President Melinda Katz comes from an arts-focused family as her father founded Queens Symphony Orchestra and mother founded Queens Council on the Arts.<sup>14</sup> Tom Finkelpearl, Commissioner of the NYC Department of Cultural Affairs, was the former President and Executive Director of both the Queens Museum and MoMA PS1. Mayor de Blasio, the New York City Economic Development Corporation, and the Regional Plan Association are all looking to Queens (specifically Southeastern Queens) as an area of focus.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>14</sup> [www.crainsnewyork.com/article/20140504/ARTS/140509952/queens-nycs-new-arts-nexus](http://www.crainsnewyork.com/article/20140504/ARTS/140509952/queens-nycs-new-arts-nexus)

<sup>15</sup> Interview with Queens Borough President's Office conducted April, 29th 2014

## Challenges

Bolstering the performing arts in Queens requires addressing a number of challenges:

- **Isolated Communities:** 46.7% of Queens is solely residential (almost double Manhattan’s 24.7%) and the presence of individual pockets of specific cultures and language speakers makes borough-wide programming difficult.<sup>16</sup>
- **Philanthropic Infrastructure:** Queens lacks the philanthropic infrastructure of Brooklyn or Manhattan. Its organizations are younger, its residents contribute less money to the arts and the social culture of philanthropy is not as developed.

*“The challenge is that, though there is money in the immigrant community there’s not the habit of funding the arts. It’s not in their culture because back at home arts get funding from the government.” – Musician/Administrator, Focus Group Participant*

- **Transportation:** Queens has 81 subway stops, less than half of Brooklyn’s 170.<sup>17</sup> 40.5% of Queens’ residents commute by private car as opposed to 26.8% in Brooklyn and 9.8% in Manhattan.<sup>18</sup> In order for the performing arts in Queens to grow, venues will have to be increasingly accessible to both public transportation users and car drivers alike, whereas parking is rarely an organizational planning concern in Brooklyn or Manhattan.

*“I have to say to artists, don’t worry it’s Long Island City, it’s close!” – Jazz Composer, Focus Group Participant*

## IV. Survey Findings

As part of QWI, we conducted surveys of artists and cultural facilities within Queens. Highlights from the results are below.

### Artists

We received complete survey responses from 132 Queens-based artists. For our surveys we included responses from anyone who self identifies as an artist within the disciplines of Music, Dance, Theater, Comedy/Spoken Word, Interdisciplinary, Multidisciplinary, or Performance Art.

The artists respondents were highly concentrated in Northwestern Queens. Although this distribution may not be indicative of the multitude of artists in the borough, it does point to the fact that the burgeoning arts scene within Northwestern Queens is likely less isolated, better inter-connected and more engaged than its regional counterparts.

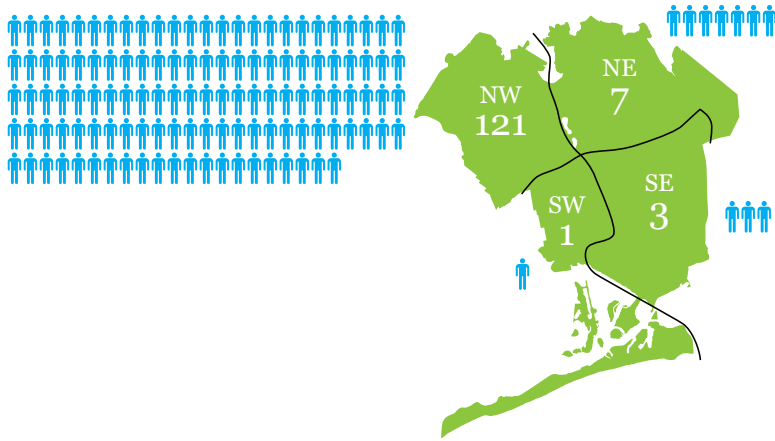
<sup>16</sup> [www.nyc.gov/html/dcp/pdf/landusefacts/landuse\\_tables.pdf](http://www.nyc.gov/html/dcp/pdf/landusefacts/landuse_tables.pdf)

<sup>17</sup> [www.mta.info](http://www.mta.info)

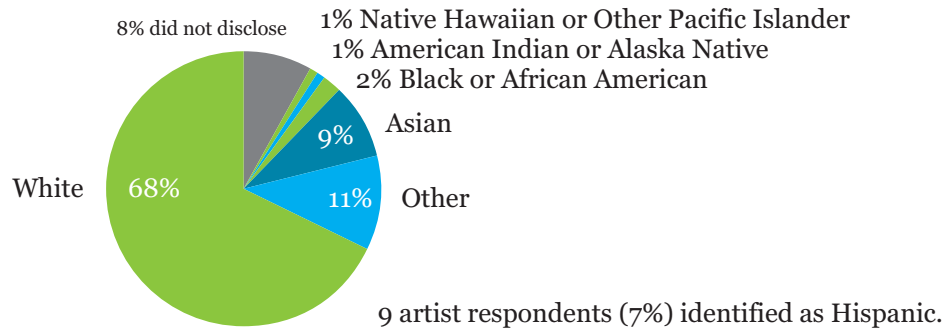
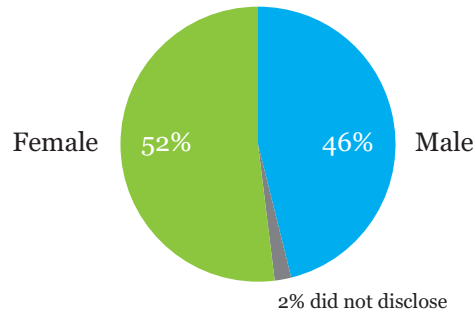
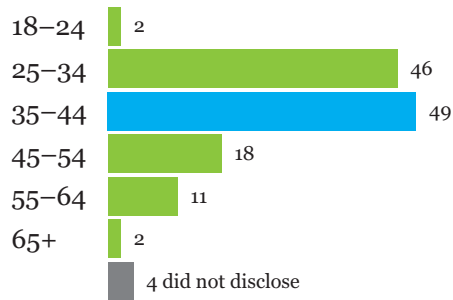
<sup>18</sup> Furman Center



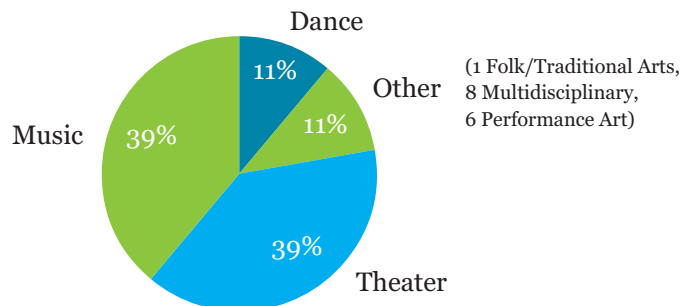
## Geographic Distribution of Artist Respondents



## Age, Gender and Ethnicity of Artist Respondents



## Disciplines of Artist Respondents



Our respondents included sizeable percentages of theater and music practitioners, and a smaller percentage of dancers. Other demographic traits were relatively evenly distributed including age and gender. Our respondents tended to be less indicative of the borough’s ethnic diversity, but that is likely due to some of the afore-mentioned characteristics of Northwestern Queens’ artistic community and its racial makeup. However, one-third of respondents indicated that they proficiently speak a language other than English.

Income distributions were in line with the previous decade of arts research, by EtM and others. Our 2007 study, “Where Can We Work? A Report on Workspace Availability for New York City Musicians” found that 63% of musician respondents reported an income below \$50,000, with 19% reporting an income below \$20,000. Dance/NYC’s “Dance Workforce Census: Earnings Among Individuals, Ages 21–35” in 2012, found that the average dance worker in New York City earned a total of \$28,000 a year, but only 55% of it from dance jobs.

### Respondents’ Income and Space Affordability

	Average Income	% Income from Arts	Only Willing to Pay \$20/hr or Less for Rehearsal Space
Dance	\$30,000–39,000	47%	93%
Music	\$40,000–49,000	39%	69%
Theater	\$40,000–49,000	43%	90%

*“Success to me means allowing artistic choices/ideas to determine the scope of my project rather than practical concerns.” – Choreographer, Focus Group Participant*

Average income overall was \$40–49,000 with 39% coming from the arts. Dancers’ average incomes were in the \$30–39,000 range while musicians and theater practitioners were in the same range as the combined average. 93% of dancers and 90% of theater practitioners were only willing to pay \$20 or less per hour for rehearsal space. Musicians had a slightly higher willingness to pay more with only 69% insisting on \$20 or less.

78% of respondents wanted to both rehearse and perform more in Queens. Over 80% of artists cited cost, size, and access to public transportation as their most significant factors in deciding on a rehearsal or performance space.

*“I want to do more than survive – I want to thrive. Which means, consistent dance making residencies and access to space. I want to be able to say I just taught at the Frank Sinatra school, now I am invited to the Greek Center to rehearse there and do workshops, then I go support an artist at a bar in Sunnyside. I am respected and recognized and people come to those places.” – Dancer, Focus Group Participant*

*“I know the number of dancers living in Queens is rising and I believe we need more quality space for rehearsals and performances in Queens.” – Choreographer, Survey Respondent*

One issue that arose qualitatively was a lack of pianos for musicians within the borough. Several respondents from Northwestern Queens mentioned that they would like more and higher quality pianos within rehearsal and performance spaces. One even highlighted that she is seeking to work with a local cultural facility in order to bring a performance quality piano to the area.

*“The biggest handicap is lack of a decent piano in the area.”*

*“availability of a REAL piano (grand, baby grand, etc. . . . not electronic and not an upright)”*

*“Western Queens needs a good performance quality piano”*

*“a tuned piano in good shape”*

*“decent tuned piano”*

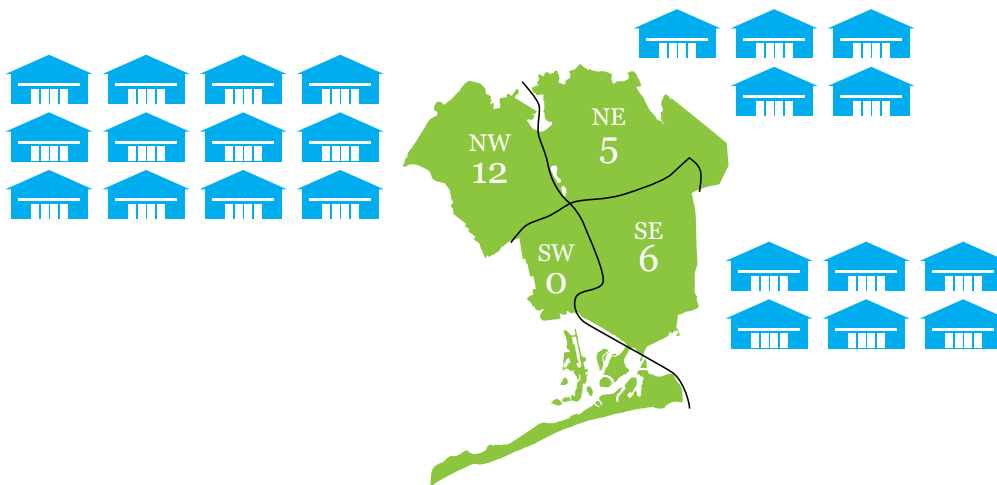
## Facilities

We received completed survey responses from 23 Queens cultural facilities. For our surveys we deemed any space that hosted public performances of Music, Dance, Theater, Comedy/Spoken Word, Interdisciplinary, Multidisciplinary or Performance Art to be a cultural facility.

As with the artists survey, our facility respondents were largely concentrated in Northwestern Queens and the remainder was almost evenly split between Northeastern and Southeastern Queens. This distribution is relatively consistent with the data from the Cultural Data Project.

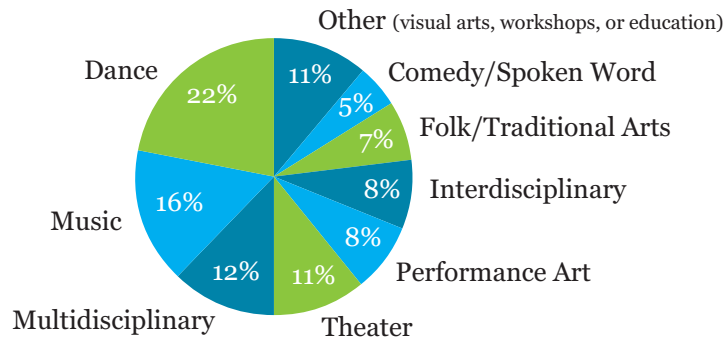
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### Geographic Distribution of Facility Respondents



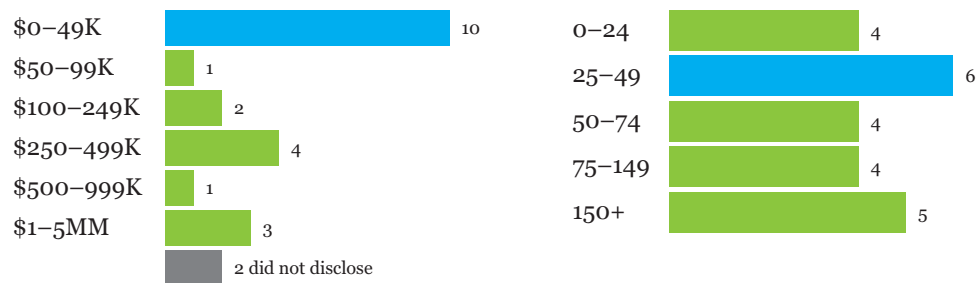
Dance, Music and Multidisciplinary work were the most commonly presented creative forms among these facilities. Roughly one-third of the work presented was either specific to a given culture or performed in a language other than English.

## Disciplines Presented by Facility Respondents



Our facility respondents showed a broad cross-section of budget sizes and number of performances in the previous year.

## Budgets and Number of Performances of Facility Respondents



There were significant geographic differences in revenue streams within our survey data. Our results echoed the findings from the Cultural Data Project in that Northwestern Queens organizations get significantly more of their funding from private sources; but we also noted that ticket sales make up a surprisingly small percentage of revenues. Southeastern Queens organizations rely heavily on public funding with 40% of revenue coming from public sources. There is a pronounced lack of major philanthropic support in Southeastern Queens.

## Facilities' Revenue Sources (average percentages; no data for Southwestern Queens)

	NW	NE	SW	SE
Public Funding	22%	19%	—	<b>40%</b>
Tickets	<b>9</b>	22	—	13
Rentals	12	7	—	18
Concessions/Merchandise	2	1	—	0
In-Kind	4	7	—	6
Other Earned	7	4	—	4
Educational	13	<b>21</b>	—	4
Private Donations	<b>31</b>	18	—	15
Other	0	1	—	0
Total	100%	100%	—	100%

*“The Bloomberg (administration) wanted cultural institutions to rely less on city funding. However that’s not really appropriate given their relative youth and Queens’ lack of concentrated wealth.” –Queens Arts Administrator*

There also seem to be significant differences in the percentage of Queens residents who support and work at the borough’s cultural institutions. The northeastern and southeastern facilities seem to be more neighborhood-oriented cultural centers with the vast majority of audiences, renters and staff residing in the borough. Southeastern Queens’ facilities are the most indicative of this with almost half of their artists also being locally based. Given their proximity to Manhattan, northwestern organizations unsurprisingly have more non-Queens residents in their audiences. 40% of their staffs do not reside in Queens.

### Participation of Local Residents (no data for Southwestern Queens)

	NW	NE	SW	SE
Audiences	75%	47%	—	76%
Renters	61%	58%	—	75%
Artists/Performers	34%	35%	—	46%
Staff	80%	61%	—	73%

The table below shows there seems to be excess rental capacity (time available) within most of Queens cultural facilities. When we looked at artists’ willingness to pay it seemed that over 90% of dancers and theater practitioners were only willing to pay \$20 or less for rehearsal space rentals. However, only 54% and 29% of dance and theater facilities respectively were charging \$20 or less for renting their spaces. The figures improve when looking at the percentage of facilities charging \$30 or less, but **this suggests that facilities may be pricing their spaces higher than local artists are willing to pay.**

### Occupancy and Rental Prices by Discipline

	Occupancy Rate	Facilities renting at \$20/hr or less	Facilities renting at \$30/hr or less
Dance	52%	54%	77%
Folk/Traditional	44%		
Multidisciplinary/Interdisciplinary	53%		
Music	40%	42%	75%
Performance Art	41%		
Theater	43%	29%	71%
Comedy/Spoken Word	25%		

*“Really finding affordable rehearsal space is key.” – Playwright/Director, Focus Group Participant*

Additionally we noted that for theater artists specifically, there seems to be unmet demand for weekend rehearsal space. Over 70% of theater artists said they would like to rehearse from 2–5pm on the weekends while less than 60% of facilities are available during that time. Facilities may be hosting their own programming during such key hours rather than renting space to other artists (i.e. matinee performances), however this does highlight potential unmet demand.

## Survey Conclusions

The path ahead in terms of bolstering the growth of Queens’ performing arts landscape requires different strategies for each of its unique geographies:

### Northwestern Queens

Northwestern Queens is in many ways at the forefront of the borough’s performing arts scene. Its many organizations have diversified revenue streams and programming that engages audiences from across the river in Manhattan. Additionally, as evidenced by the makeup of our survey respondents, the area seems to have an artistic community that is relatively well connected and engaged in what is happening within their neighborhoods and Queens as a whole. In terms of bolstering Queens’ reputation as an arts and culture destination, little needs to be done within Northwestern Queens. There does seem to be an issue around access to pianos, but otherwise this area seems to be healthy.

### Northeastern Queens

Northeastern Queens tells a somewhat different tale. With its large percentage of residential areas and touted diversity, cultural programming within this region can be difficult. Additionally, as is often the case with folk/traditional arts, there has been little expressed need for external engagement.

Through our discussions with elected officials, local leaders, and other stakeholders, it seems as though while the area’s largest organizations are pushing to better serve the diverse population as a whole, smaller organizations are content with the impact that they have on their culturally-specific communities. Engaging in programming that targets Northeastern Queens residents would likely require significant financial and human capital in order to address the needs of each sub-population.

### Southeastern Queens

Southeastern Queens seems poised for growth. Its healthy number of local organizations indicates a genuine interest in the arts within the region. However, those organizations’ historic underperformance in terms of private fundraising and board support points toward areas needing improvement. Additionally, given the presence of relatively fewer cultural and language barriers in comparison to Northeastern Queens, it is surprising that more artists did not respond to the survey despite our outreach. This suggests a disconnect between the cultural facilities and local artists, or simply a lack of desire to engage in the kind of research undertaken by this project. Regardless, this “disconnect” seems like a promising area for investigation moving forward.

## V. Analysis: Jamaica

Based on our research, Jamaica emerged as the logical locale for further analysis and activity. The number of cultural institutions, promising commitments of resources from the public and private sectors and engaged cultural leaders paint a bright future. And despite the low number of survey responses from Jamaica’s artists, we interviewed several who are keen to see the neighborhood achieve more of its potential as a cultural hub. However, reaching that goal will take a significant amount of strategic planning, resources and thoughtful implementation.

*“We have resources and it’s frustrating because they’re not being used.” –  
Local official, Jamaica*

### Opportunities

- City government, borough leaders, local government, private developers, nonprofit development corporations, local arts advocates and cultural facility managers are all focused on collectively boosting the community’s overall development.
- Jamaica is one of NYC’s most important transit hubs with connections to 49 bus, 10 rail, and 3 subway lines.<sup>19</sup> It also connects to the AirTrain from John F. Kennedy International Airport. The Long Island Rail Road’s upcoming East Side Access project will connect the Long Island Rail Road at Jamaica Station with Grand Central Terminal. The LIRR’s Jamaica Capacity Improvement includes a Cross-Borough Scoot Service between Jamaica and Atlantic Terminal in Brooklyn, which will provide a 20-minute ride between central Brooklyn and central Queens.
- Language is less of an issue in Jamaica, as 70% of households either speak only English or contain someone over the age of 14 who speaks English “very well.”<sup>20</sup>
- Jamaica was rezoned in 2007 to enable an additional 5,200 units of housing, 1.8 million square feet of commercial office space, 2.1 million square feet of retail space and 1,000–2,000 hotel rooms.<sup>21</sup>

### Challenges

- Board and individual support of Jamaica’s cultural organizations is the lowest of the regions of Queens we evaluated. (See table “Facilities’ Revenue Sources,” page 20) Fostering a more engaged philanthropic environment will be essential to the success of local organizations.
- Our artists survey respondents and the additional Jamaica-based artists we interviewed wanted to rehearse and perform more in their communities, but felt there were few opportunities. Availability, expense and lack of professional equipment were all cited as challenges.
- There is a misperception that Jamaica is an economically depressed, predominantly African-American neighborhood that is somewhat dangerous for outsiders.

<sup>19</sup> [www.jamaicacenter.org/about/getting-here/](http://www.jamaicacenter.org/about/getting-here/)

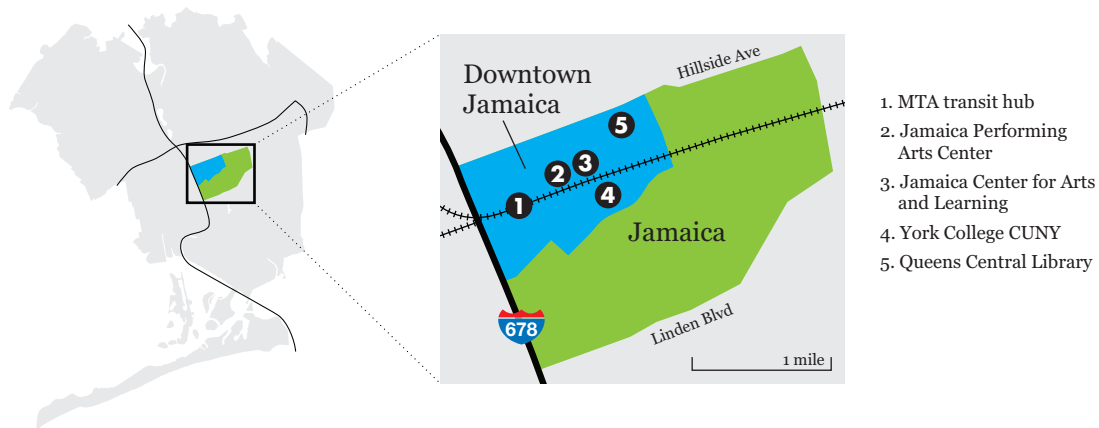
<sup>20</sup> American Community Survey 2012

<sup>21</sup> [www.jamaicacenter.org](http://www.jamaicacenter.org)

## By the Numbers

Jamaica itself occupies the geographic territory bounded by the Van Wyck Expressway to the west, Hillside Avenue to the north, 191st Street to the east and Linden Boulevard to the south. Given that significant portions of this territory are solely residential, we focused our research on Downtown Jamaica.

### Jamaica and Downtown Jamaica



Downtown Jamaica is the territory bounded by the Van Wyck Expressway, Hillside Avenue, 170th Street, and Tuskegee Airmen Way (formerly known as South Avenue). It houses a number of significant landmarks including:

- Jamaica Performing Arts Center – a 400-seat performance space
- Jamaica Center for Arts and Learning – black box performance space
- Transit Hub serving over 200,000 daily commuters
- Several public buildings including the Social Security Administration, New York City Family Court and Queens County Civil Court and Clerk’s Office
- Queens Central Library – a 275,000 sq ft. public library

Downtown Jamaica is also home to significant commercial activity and is known as NYC’s largest urban fashion district.<sup>22</sup>

Jamaica scores well on measures such as walkability (94/100) as it is estimated that one can walk to at least ten of approximately 447 restaurants, bars, and coffee shops within five minutes while in the neighborhood.<sup>23 24</sup> Its large amount of independent commercial activity and the number of local arts organizations and arts-related businesses nearly put it on par with the best locales in the nation. Also, from a purely economic development perspective, the volume of foot traffic in Jamaica speaks highly to its potential, with over 158,000 workers and 258,000 commuters passing through the neighborhood on an average weekday.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>22</sup> [www.jamaicacenter.org](http://www.jamaicacenter.org)

<sup>23</sup> [www.walkscore.com](http://www.walkscore.com)

<sup>24</sup> [www.jamaicacenter.org](http://www.jamaicacenter.org)

<sup>25</sup> [www.jamaicacenter.org](http://www.jamaicacenter.org)



In the future, it is likely that a number of new developments in the area will only increase its vibrancy. A 24-story, 240 room hotel is planned on Sutphin Boulevard.<sup>26</sup> Billions of dollars have been earmarked for upgrades and improvements to the Jamaica Station. Approximately 346 units of housing have been constructed since the 2007 rezoning, more than 500 are under construction, and another 600 are under development.

All of this development potential within Jamaica is an opportunity for its performing arts landscape to better engage in civic and public processes. The influx of capital may mark a tipping point whereby dynamic arts and culture leaders can potentially attract corporate support from companies seeking to invest in the broader community. The influx of new residents can help build the critical mass of local talent necessary to make Jamaica a cultural destination. And we at EtM think that investing the time, energy, and resources to prepare for this imminent shift would significantly improve Queens' performing arts landscape moving forward. Jamaica can be an affordable place for artists to live and make art, with a low risk of being priced out in the near future.

## VI. Conclusions

Queens is on the path toward a more vibrant performing arts landscape for artists, cultural facilities, and audiences. However, inadequate equipment within facilities, fundraising disparities within the borough, and a need for increased organizational/leadership capacity are deficits that must be addressed.

We have seen the great value of thinking creatively about partnerships and collaborations. A recent program, the CUNY Dance Initiative, was born out of recommendations in our study for The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.<sup>27</sup> This initiative will match New York City choreographers and dancers with available space in City University of New York facilities across the five boroughs, funded by the New York Community Trust and the Mertz Gilmore Foundation. This collaboration of funders, public facilities, students and artists could prove a model.<sup>28</sup>

The following recommendations highlight where we believe the borough could use the most support, and we are considering these issues as we move forward.

### Rehearsal Space Pricing and Utilization

The fact that 90% of dancers and theater practitioners are only willing to pay \$20/hour to rent rehearsal space while only half of the facilities we interviewed are charging rates of \$20 or less suggests a disconnect. Given that most of the facilities also reported underutilization, a solution could be as simple as lowering prices in order to capture additional revenue. However, the situation could be more complex than our numbers reveal and may need further analysis. It might be valuable to consider subsidies for space providers, sponsorship, and lower-cost alternative spaces.

<sup>26</sup> [www.gjdc.org/opportunities/hospitality/](http://www.gjdc.org/opportunities/hospitality/)

<sup>27</sup> "We Make Do: More Time is Better, But Budget is King," for The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, Nov. 1, 2010

<sup>28</sup> [online.wsj.com/news/articles/SB10001424052702304117904579501910269372196](http://online.wsj.com/news/articles/SB10001424052702304117904579501910269372196)

## Availability of Pianos

A number of musicians noted the need for higher quality, properly tuned rehearsal and performance pianos within the borough. Potential solutions could include working with piano manufacturers to provide discounted instruments to cultural facilities, engaging banks to provide favorable financing terms for facilities seeking to purchase pianos, and/or encouraging foundations to subsidize piano-related costs either through facilities directly or possibly via subsidized rehearsal time for musicians so that increased rental revenue can help cover piano-associated debt service.

## Jamaica

There are three primary areas where we believe that Jamaica could use support in the near-term:

### Cultural Leadership Development

Jamaica has skilled cultural leaders, but they often lack the support necessary to help them break through to the next level. According to the Office of the Queens Borough President, the reason that many Queens-based organizations do not receive more public funding is because decision-makers are not fully convinced of organizations' ability to manage and steward the funds. Offering Jamaica's leaders educational and professional development initiatives either through existing programs such as the NYC Department of Cultural Affairs' Community Arts Development Program (CADP) or a similar offering could have a substantive impact. Such programming should focus both on building organizational capacity to increase the scope of operations and building leadership capacity to increase overall efficiency and efficacy.

### Community Engagement with Arts Funding

The lack of local individual support for the arts in Jamaica despite its middle-class surrounding population and a healthy commercial sector highlights the need to better engage the philanthropic community through board building and private donations. This could take many forms from programs targeting local professional, civic, and social groups to matching grants that incentivize local organizations to look nearby for support.

Corporate funding will also become key as commercial activity increases. Developing pathways to encourage private dollars will both engage a wider population in the process of arts and culture activity and help provide much needed diversification to existing organizations' revenue streams.

### Artist Housing and Live/Work Space

Jamaica is one of the few areas in NYC that has access to transit options, underutilized residential space, and a number of stakeholders behind its continued development. Seeing some of the underutilized space go to artists could be a great complement to the neighborhood's trajectory. An influx of outside creative talent might help encourage local talent to view their backyard as a creative destination. And local talent in turn will benefit from living/working in the company

of the newly burgeoning creative communities spawned by live/work space. This strategy could lead to significant positive outcomes for artists, communities, and developers alike. Potential partners could include organizations such as the Actor's Fund Housing Development Corporation or Artspace – a national organization providing affordable housing units to artists and their families.

## VII. Final Thoughts and Next Steps

We embarked on the Queens Workspace Initiative 14 months ago with no predetermined conclusions. Our goal has been to strategically identify and analyze how to support the workspace needs of a broad and diverse performing artists population.

During this period, we have had the pleasure of meeting formally and informally with artists, local officials/stakeholders and cultural facilities. They ranged from classic musical revivals in Astoria, established experimental theater masters in Long Island City, carnatic music festivals in Middle Village, Korean opera and traditional dance in Flushing and spoken word poetry in Jamaica. We asked questions and we listened.

This discovery phase points toward potential for an expansive, productive cultural landscape across the borough. Our next phase will focus on integrating the arts and culture needs of Queens' diverse communities into recommendations to help long-range cultural and economic development planning within the borough.

We are grateful to our funders and local supporters for their early involvement.

# Appendix

## Exploring the Metropolis QWI Project Team

David Johnston, Project Director  
Prentice Onayemi, Consultant  
Hillary Jackson, Program Associate  
Eugenie C. Cowan, Project Advisor

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Queens Council on the Arts  
Queens Jazz Overground  
Queens Museum  
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Why Leave Astoria?

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Susan Latham, Director of Institutional Giving, The Actors Fund  
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Karla Florez Albor, dancer/musician/teacher  
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## Research/Data Sets

ArtPlace

Dance/NYC

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NYC Performing Arts Spaces, Powered by Fractured Atlas (Lisa Neidermeyer, Project Manager)

New York State Cultural Data Project

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