

ART/WORK

***How the Government-Funded
CETA Jobs Program Put
Artists to Work***

Dec 10 2021 – Mar 31 2022

Curated by
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and **Jodi Waynberg**

CETA was this notion that art could be such an expansive field, and that being creative was a way of living. It was about fighting for something that we believed in. I think that I became a much stronger human being because of all of those CETA exchanges. It also just made it more fun.

– Candida Alvarez, former CCF artist, 2019

From 1974 to 1981, 200 localities across the nation—large and small, urban and rural—took advantage of the Federal Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA) jobs program to create public service employment and training opportunities for artists and cultural workers.

While not intended for artists, CETA nurtured a diverse cultural workforce, provided art services and engagement to hundreds of communities, and launched the careers of now-prominent artists and arts administrators, as well as beneficiaries who brought their experience to arts-adjacent fields or transferred it to other sectors. It also helped to nourish the community arts movement in New York and throughout the United States.

Providing full-time employment to nearly 20,000 artists and cultural workers—arts administrators, venue security staff, archivists—CETA provided more jobs for the arts community than any other government program since the New Deal’s Federal Project Number One, the arts program of the Works Progress Administration (WPA). At its peak, CETA invested \$200 million per year on arts and culture jobs, roughly the equivalent of \$800 million in 2021.

When CETA funding in New York City was made available for artists in 1977, six hundred were employed by five nonprofits. More than 300 of those artists were hired by the nonprofit Cultural Council Foundation (CCF)—the focus of this show. Despite major successes, federal funding cuts forced it to close in September 1980.

Although CETA has received far less attention than the arts programs of the WPA, in many respects it rivals the importance of the New Deal-era initiatives. Like the WPA, CETA legislation was written and adopted at a time of great economic crisis in the United States when the private sector could not create or provide a sufficient number of jobs. While the

WPA focused much of its attention on creating large-scale national and statewide projects with established artists, CETA was a locally-managed jobs program with no designated provision for artist employment. However, through the ingenuity of the arts community, CETA Title VI public service employment funds were used to send poets, dancers, actors, photographers, and painters, among many other specialists, into schools, libraries, museums and historical societies, nursing homes, hospitals, transportation hubs, correctional facilities, and community centers.

Across the country, CETA provided the first opportunity for many emerging arts organizations to gain stability or fill critical administrative roles, some of which were taken on by artists. It was also the first time that many cultural organizations could employ artists to create or increase public programming. As a result, CETA arts and humanities projects had a transformative impact on the general public's understanding of the breadth and depth of the expanding arts and culture sector of the time. CETA heralded a positive paradigm shift, bringing many new voices to the fore while also seeing the large-scale development of community arts projects, which, because of their nature, only exist now in the memories of their creators, the original participants, and the limited documentary material produced.

Now, as the United States faces a similar task of economic rebuilding after COVID-19, several CETA-like workforce development programs have emerged within the arts community. CETA's legacy serves as a precedent for envisioning how we can create sustained investment in arts labor today, and a model for the reimagining of employment in the cultural field within the framework of American infrastructure and labor force development.

The Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (1973-1981)

When Richard Nixon took office as President in 1969, he sought to implement a "new federalism" that called for decentralizing and distributing many federal government powers and monies to the state level.

During the early 1970s economic recession, the United States faced simultaneously rising rates of unemployment and inflation. To address the flailing economy and urgent need for employment and training, the Nixon

administration passed the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA) in 1973, marking a major shift in the federal government's policy on workforce support programming. The CETA legislation served to consolidate all job training and employment programs under one legislative umbrella; eliminate restrictive funding requirements; and most importantly, mark a major decentralization of policy-setting, decision-making, and financial control of training and employment programs from the Department of Labor in Washington D.C. to state and local governments, which were largely Republican-controlled. In this shift of power, state and local governments became "prime sponsors" and eligible for direct block grants of federal workforce funds. It was suggested that the decentralization of programming would allow for a more accurate assessment of local needs.

While the CETA legislation was in development, Congressional Democrats advocated for a public service employment (PSE) component and cited high unemployment and inflation as just cause for PSE inclusion. For Congressional Republicans, who believed that the Federal government should be the "employer of last resort," decentralization was a key feature.

With these compromises and concessions in play, CETA was enacted by Congress and signed into law in December 1973. When it launched, CETA included Title I, a major job training program, and Title II, a smaller public service jobs program. All CETA projects were to be federally funded and administered by the prime sponsors (local units of jurisdiction having populations of 100,000 or more).

During its existence, CETA contained a total of eight distinct sections, or "titles." Most CETA arts projects emerged from Title VI—funding for the Countercyclical Public Service Employment Program—which passed in December 1974 under President Gerald Ford. It was this Title VI program that provided temporary public service job opportunities during periods of high unemployment, thus offering support for many artists, who were often cyclically unemployed.

Perhaps one of the most significant differences between the WPA and CETA is that CETA did not provide any special categories geared toward artists, artwork, or cultural services. CETA was designed to target those with little or no education, language learners, and the chronically unemployed. Artists were able to work through CETA thanks to the Title VI provision of the legislation, which permitted the contracting of the "skilled unemployed" in public service.

CETA Arts Get Its Start

The first CETA artists project, developed in 1974 for the San Francisco Art Commission, was the brainchild of John Kreidler, who learned of the CETA legislation while working in Washington D.C. for the Federal Department of Labor and Office of Management and Budget. Having written his master's thesis on the WPA arts program and having previously studied the nature of Los Angeles' arts labor market, Kreidler was uniquely predisposed to recognize CETA's potential to employ artists in a public service mode similar to the WPA. He took that knowledge to the San Francisco Art Commission, whose Neighborhood Arts Programs (NAPs) was a good fit for the nascent CETA Title VI community service opportunity.

Kreidler wrote a proposal for CETA funding to support unemployed artists in San Francisco. The Art Commission, then headed by former WPA painter Martin Snipper, submitted the application to the Mayor's Office of Manpower, which served as the city's prime sponsor administering CETA monies. Eunice Elton, the Director of the Mayor's Office of Manpower, understood the needs of the local artists' community, as well as the contributions artists could make through public service.

In December 1974, the Mayor's Office of Manpower approved the Art Commission's proposal for 24 full-time artist positions, utilizing the recently-adopted CETA Title VI public service employment program. The first-come-first-served applications drew a crowd of nearly 500 artists, the first 100 of whom received applications. The limited supply led to tensions and fistfights in the queue, forcing city officials to recognize the volume and crucial needs of unemployed local artists. Shortly thereafter, the Office of Manpower expanded the funding offer an additional 90 positions for artists. Over 3,500 people picked up applications for the remaining slots.

Between 1974 and 1981, over 800 Bay Area artists were employed through CETA. In San Francisco, many worked for the Neighborhood Arts Programs, which developed culturally responsive arts programs at neighborhood community centers. It was the first program in the nation to employ local artists working in a variety of disciplines to provide workshops, performances, and other arts services that engaged and reflected local communities' identities and cultural practices.

Celebrated sculptor and art education activist Ruth Asawa recognized that CETA artists could benefit the Alvarado Art Workshop, an innovative program co-founded by Asawa that engaged parents and professional artists in public schools and community gardens. The 40 CETA artists assigned to the Alvarado Art Workshop transformationally strengthened and expanded the organization, which is still thriving as the San Francisco Arts Education Project.

When word of the Bay Area's successful CETA artist proposal spread throughout the country, cities across the nation similarly channeled Title VI CETA funds to develop programs for artist employment in public service roles.

CETA Arts in New York City

Talk of a New York City CETA artists project began in 1975 when the city was on the brink of bankruptcy. While New York received CETA monies at that time, its use for artist employment had not yet been approved.

Sara Garretson, Executive Director of the Cultural Council Foundation (CCF), Cheryl McClenney, Assistant Commissioner of the newly-autonomous Department of Cultural Affairs, and Ted S. Berger, Director of the New York Foundation for the Arts (NYFA), alerted the city's arts community to the possibility of CETA funds for 85 artist jobs and quickly began laying the groundwork for a CETA-supported artists project. However, the funds would not materialize for another two years. In the interim, Garretson, McClenney, and Berger collaboratively built the CCF Artists Project proposal with cautious optimism.

When Jimmy Carter became President in 1976, he expanded CETA allotments, particularly to public service employment. Because New York City was in financial trouble and unemployment was exceptionally high, additional CETA funds became available. In 1977, a large influx of Title VI funding encouraged Mayor Abraham Beame's administration to consider CETA project applications from the arts community. In February, the New York City Department of Employment called Sara Garretson requesting a formal proposal for 300 artists. It was due in one month.

CCF Artists Project

When it launched in 1978, CCF's Artist Project became the largest community-based organization under CETA contract (arts and non-arts) in the country, with 300 artists and a \$4.5 million yearly budget. An additional four New York City-based non-profits received smaller CETA funding contracts in 1977 to employ arts workers through the Title VI provision: Theater for the Forgotten, La MaMa, American Jewish Congress, and Hospital Audiences each managed an additional 50 artists.

After several rounds of revisions, incorporating critical input from an advisory committee largely comprised of artists, CCF's proposal won essential advocacy from elected officials and city agencies. The proposal's success required an immense amount of political support from New York City's Department of Cultural Affairs, as well as the Department of Employment and the Board of Estimate, a now-defunct but formerly powerful government body. Comprised of the mayor (then Abraham Beame), the comptroller, the city council president, and the five borough presidents, the Board of Estimate was responsible for a variety of municipal policies and decisions, including the city budget. Its members needed to be assured that their constituents would benefit. After a daylong, tension-filled presentation to the Board of Estimate, the CCF contract passed unanimously on October 20, 1977.

The Board of Estimate hearing was a day of high drama and considerable tension. I don't know if the Board of Estimate has ever seen anything like that. After we passed, the Board members all talked about how next time they hoped it wasn't 300 jobs, but 3,000. Everyone got into the spirit of it. At this point, the artists and administrators were jumping up and down, tears were coming down, and we were all hugging each other. It was great!

*– Sara Garretson, Executive Director,
Cultural Council Foundation, 1978*

Once green-lighted, the artists project was set to begin on January 3, 1978. While Garretson, McClenney, and Berger had already begun developing the application process, the team worked around the clock, seven days a week to prepare the project infrastructure, interview and selection processes, hire artists into administrative positions, and identify their community placements.

Even before the Board of Estimate officially approved the project, CCF hired Rochelle Slovin to be the Artists Project Director. Slovin had a background in theater, as well as extensive city government experience working for the New York City Planning Commission and for Bronx Borough President Robert Abrams. Slovin's administrative staff—demographically diverse and composed entirely of artists—was a key component of the project's effectiveness from the start. The administrators, including discipline and borough coordinators, were familiar with the realities of being an artist, and were thus well-prepared to empathize, negotiate, and advocate in ways that resonated with artists in the field.

CCF convinced the Department of Employment that the “first-come, first-served” application process used in many other places would not yield the highest quality participants for a CETA artists program in New York City. Instead, the screening process involved a written application, including proposals for public artworks that would involve a local community, and auditions and interviews with highly regarded panelists to identify candidates with a strong artistic practice who were well-suited for work in community settings.

CCF Artists Project hopefuls faced the federal Department of Labor's strict income eligibility requirements. Eligible applicants had to have been unemployed for at least 15 of the 20 weeks prior to CETA employment and meet stringent earned income caps for the previous 12 months: \$2,700 for a family of one and \$7,580 for a family of four. Strict requirements notwithstanding, between October 22 and November 4, 1977, CCF received 4,000 applications for its 300 artist positions. The massive and rapid response clearly demonstrated the severity of artists' needs.

CCF directly administered roughly 131 visual, literary, and performing artists. Seven additional organizations were chosen as subcontractors: the Association of American Dance Companies managed the dancers and choreographers; Jazzmobile and the Brooklyn Philharmonia would

hire musicians; the Association of Hispanic Arts (AHA) would organize a multi-disciplinary cohort of Latinx artists; the Black Theatre Alliance (BTA) administered actors, stage managers, and theater technicians; and the Foundation for Independent Video and Film (FIVF) coordinated film/videos makers. The project's administrators also had the foresight to include a project documentation unit comprised of three photographers, three writers and an archivist, which was overseen by the Foundation for the Community of Artists (FCA).

A New Way of Supporting Artists

The CCF Artists Project was structured to address three core objectives: support opportunities for its artists to develop and showcase their artwork, support local communities through arts services, and support the CCF artist community.

All CCF Artists Project employees were hired for 35-hour workweeks, earned \$10,000 a year (the equivalent of roughly \$40,000 in 2021), received health insurance, and were eligible for paid vacation time and sick leave, among other benefits. Four days of the workweek were to be spent in community-based assignments, while the fifth day was the artist's own to work on self-initiated projects. The CCF Artists Project was the only CETA artists project in the nation to provide for a paid "studio day"—another key element of the project's success. With this structure, the artists were encouraged to develop their resumes, portfolios, professional networks, and their artistic practice.

Another important element of artist support provided by CCF's infrastructure was copyright. Under the WPA, artworks became property of the federal government. Because CETA was decentralized and locally-managed, copyright and ownership retention varied from program to program. CCF began to consider the issue even before its artists project launched. Many artists felt that they should be awarded copyrights to their work created through the program given that their future income depended, in large measure, on revenue generated by past works. Garretson and Slovin negotiated with the federal Department of Labor and New York City Department of Employment for a contract change that granted artists ownership and copyright of all works produced during the contract period. In cases where work was produced for a community sponsor, wherein materials and supplies were provided by that sponsor, the artist and

sponsor signed separate letters of agreement, which were prepared on a case-by-case basis depending on individual circumstances resulting in some long and short-term shared copyrights.

The program's unique bi-weekly Pay Day meetings, where artists received their paychecks, aimed to foster a sense of community among the CCF artists, providing opportunity for feedback and encouraging collaborations within the cohort and across disciplines. In interviews conducted for this project, many a CCF alum has spoken fondly of Pay Day meetings, where they had a chance to become lifelong friends and collaborators with artists they otherwise would never have met. *PayDayNews*, an internal newsletter produced by the Cultural Council Foundation, was distributed to CCF artists and administrators at Pay Day meetings. *PayDayNews* was a forum for sharing both information about the CCF Artists Project and announcements about CCF artist and staff achievements within and beyond the program.

In CETA, you got this sense of being part of something bigger than you and your studio. To be part of this major artistic enterprise that was funded by the government was really special. We were this large team that fanned out over New York and worked together for the greater cause of beautifying and enriching the city. To this day, CETA was one of the highlights of my development as an artist.

– Ademola Olugebefola, former CCF artist, 2019

Exhibitions, performances, and festivals facilitated and organized by CCF created opportunities to present work developed during studio time. CCF administrators worked hard to create partnerships with agencies like the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey (which had a special department and budget for beautification projects) and could offer high-visibility, high-traffic venues like the Ninth Street PATH station and the World Trade Center.

A New Way of Supporting Community Arts

CCF staff received thousands of requests for artists from community organizations. Placement sites were either non-profits or social service

organizations. These could apply to CCF with a specific project, or could be proposed as a community work site by an artist in the program. Sponsors were responsible for covering all associated project costs except for the artist's salary. In the first year of the CCF Artists Project, assignments could range from a one-time lecture, demonstration, or workshop to several months.

The CETA contract stipulated that the CCF Artists Project offer clearly defined activities and services (all free to the public), including classes, workshops, and lecture/demonstrations, consultancies, design services, literary services, theater services, performances, and the creation of new murals, public sculptures, plays, dances, residencies, and exhibitions. It was to yield exact quantities, too—3,500 classes, 150 performances, 500 new works, and 25 exhibitions. The program far exceeded these goals. Beyond the quantification of labeled deliverables, the numbers proved that the project worked. The artists were employed in a way that made a significant impact on New York City.

The CETA project had a similarly significant impact on the artists. For many, this was their first time teaching children with learning differences or seniors with mobility challenges; their first chance to meet and engage with New Yorkers living far beyond their own boroughs; their first application of artistic skills and resourcefulness to public spaces and programs; and their first opportunity to partner with peers from vastly different backgrounds and pedagogies.

I had one CETA dance assignment at a Brooklyn public school, working with students who had learning differences. That was the first time that a light bulb went off in my head about the connection between dance and education. I didn't realize at the time, but that became the seed for spending the rest of my life in arts and education. I owe a lot to CETA because that project ended up sparking everything.

– Susan Griss, former CCF artist, 2021

The Brooklyn Philharmonia CETA Orchestra, Jazzmobile CETA Jazz Band and Afro-Latin groups, and theater artists from the Association of Hispanic Arts and the Black Theatre Alliance presented almost 400

free public performances. The CETA Orchestra, a 20-piece classical chamber ensemble, presented concerts in parks and at the Museum of Modern Art's Summergarden. In May 1978, Mayor Koch acknowledged their "educational and musical contributions" to the city by proclaiming "Orchestra of New York Week" on May 22. The Jazzmobile CETA Band played in schools, at art and street festivals, and presented a series of concerts/dances for seniors at the Roberto Clemente State Park in the Bronx. Dancers performed as a part of Sweet 14's program at Union Square, and in a two-month series in the garden of the Cooper-Hewitt Museum. Directors, writers, and performers presented "The First Four," and the "New Living Newspaper," productions that ran in Off Broadway theatres and then toured the Bronx, Brooklyn, and Queens.

Visual artists showed their work (paintings, photographs, sculpture, crafts pieces, film and video) in 36 exhibitions. Curators helped arrange exhibits at Bronx and Brooklyn museums, and, at the Snug Harbor Cultural Center in Staten Island, 150 new works of art by 70 artists were exhibited along with Sunday afternoon performances by dancers, musicians, and poets. In all, over 1,500 new works of art were created by CCF visual artists.

Year Two of the CCF Artists Project

When the CCF Artists Project contract was to be renewed for 1979, CETA-funded jobs to other NYC community-based organizations dropped by nearly 800. But the CCF Artists Project was again unanimously approved by the Board of Estimate—and expanded from 300 to 325 artists, with AHA, BTA, and FIVF continuing as subcontractors. CCF assumed responsibility for the dance and documentary portion of the program.

In the second year, the CCF administration organized the artist cohort into specialized teams: individual and group artist residencies (dance, literary, and visual), public art, documentation and neighborhood awareness, exhibition services, graphics and illustration design, and literary works. The project also developed a 25-member Performance Ensemble at Lincoln Center.

The Graphics Team designed the illustration for the MTA's 75th-anniversary poster; other clients included the New York Botanical Garden, New York Aquarium, and American Place Theatre. Dancers pursued their own choreography, and many of the resulting dance works were presented at

Queensborough College in a week-long festival of performances, lectures, and classes entitled “Celebrate Dance!” The Literary Works Team continued with “Words to Go,” a truck that took poets to readings in many outlying areas of the city. In addition, the Poetry Performance Troupe gave readings at several of the city’s cultural institutions, presenting CETA writers’ new work. Subcontractors greatly expanded their programs with new touring productions. Large-scale artworks were installed at Kennedy International Airport and the Human Resources Administration, which requested murals for a number of its facilities. The Municipal Art Society helped to facilitate the design, fabrication, and installation of a set of permanent, colorful ceramic murals in the Clark Street subway station.

Media Works, the CETA-funded team of film and video artists administered by the Foundation for Independent Video and Film (FIVF) (one of the original seven CCF subcontractors) offered technical consultancies, workshops, and created film and videos for community organizations across the five boroughs. Documentation of CCF Artists Project activities was also an important part of Media Works’ role. In the first year of the CCF contract, Media Works collected 35 hours of footage of the Artists Project. Using some of this material, Media Works produced *The Federal Artist*, which aired on Channel 13/WNET on August 12, 1979, and was spotlighted by the *New York Times*, the *Village Voice*, and *SoHo Weekly News*.

CETA Arts on a National Scale

The CCF Artists Project also gained national attention. The U.S. Department of Labor became more acutely aware of the fact that CETA was successfully employing thousands of artists nationwide. Beginning in mid-1979, the Department of Labor sponsored a series of six two-day regional conferences entitled “Putting the Arts to Work,” which were designed to encourage and assist local municipalities and arts communities in planning, designing, promoting, and managing artists projects under CETA. Directed by U.S. Assistant Secretary of Labor Ernest Green, the conference program and materials presented the CCF Artists Project as a model. Held in Atlanta, Dallas, Denver, San Francisco, Chicago, and New York City, conference attendees included local arts groups, state arts councils, CETA and arts program operators, CETA participants, federal and prime sponsor staff, and community organizations. “Putting the Arts to Work” provided workshops, a resource binder, network-building and resource exchange opportunities, and post-conference technical

assistance. CCF Artists Project Director Rochelle Slovin served on the eighteen-member national advisory committee that helped to guide the conference's development.

At the same time, CETA-funded programs nationwide had long faced political scrutiny. Hindered by scandals and allegations of misuse, and subject to shifting political ideologies and priorities, the legislation's reputation was marred in Washington and with the public. Although artists projects had excellent administrative and public service records, across the country they suffered by association. When the CETA legislation was reauthorized in October 1978, CETA participants were limited to 18 months of employment in a five-year period. CETA-funded artists in New York City formed the CETA Artists Organization (CAO) to work to ensure the continuation of jobs for artists under CETA and attempted to collaborate with other non-arts CETA laborers to fight the 18-month limit and proposed funding cuts. CAO hoped to organize other NYC artist organizations to develop a permanent artist employment program based on the CETA Artists Project experience.

The 1978 reauthorization legislation attempted to redress issues of fraud and mismanagement by requiring the Department of Labor to take a more active role in monitoring and evaluating local programs. This led to increased paperwork and reporting requirements, a reduction in local control and flexibility, and a larger federal footprint on what was intended to be a decentralized program. This turn of events created challenges for CETA program administrators, and further soured CETA's reputation with politicians and voters with a distaste for big government.

In August 1979, Congress voted to enact serious budget cuts for all CETA programs nationwide. The New York City Department of Employment, which controlled the federal funding contracts issued to local CETA programs, notified CCF of a 24% reduction in the overall program budget for fiscal year 1980, which began on October 1. While all Title VI programs would be reduced as a result, CETA arts programs in New York City would be eliminated. In September 1979, the CCF Artists Project administration drew up a schedule of several rounds of lay-offs, based on a lottery, that would gradually reduce the program to comply with the budget cuts. The lottery, held on September 10th, was supervised by a Certified Public Accounting firm. Artists' social security numbers were drawn for each of the planned reduction dates.

In November 1979, CCF created a Job Development Program to ease the strain of lay-offs and transition artists out of the CCF Artists Project in a still-dire economy. The Job Development counselors and placement specialists (many of whom were working artists) prepared the CCF artists to look for unsubsidized jobs, and assisted them in finding those positions. Job Development staff interviewed individual artists in an effort to better understand how to match professional goals with potential employers. Friday morning seminars led by outside specialists offered career development training that addressed navigating the press, working with art dealers and agents, unemployment insurance, bookkeeping, and resume and portfolio design, among other practical topics. Job Development program services were made available to artists even after they were laid off.

Sustaining CETA Arts

CCF artists and administrators lobbied to save the program through organized protests and intensive letter-writing campaigns. They received a tremendous outpouring of support from community organizations and individuals who had been enriched by the artists program. At the congressional level, CCF also had a significant ally in New York's 20th District Representative Ted Weiss, who had supported the public service approach to artist funding. On October 9, 1979, Weiss introduced legislation in Congress to establish a permanent program employing artists in community-based residencies. His "Federal Artist Program Act of 1979" (H.R. 5518) called for an initial three-year expenditure of \$60 million to employ 6,000 artists and used the CCF program as a point of inspiration. Weiss's proposal was well-received but never came to a vote or fruition. If signed into law, it would have continued a version of CETA's federally subsidized artist employment.

On April 14, 1980, Ronald Gault, City Commissioner of Employment, notified all New York City artists project contractors that they would face early shut-down on May 30, 1980—less than six weeks from the announcement. Gault claimed that the previous years' federal budget cuts were deeper than anticipated, and that CETA artists project cuts, originally projected at thirty-five percent spread over three fiscal years, would suddenly have to be taken in one year. CETA-funded artists and allies, representing all of the city's artists projects, organized a series of protests including a two-day "Art-A-Thon" demonstration at City Hall on April 23rd and April 24th.

Along with thirteen other members of Congress from New York, Weiss petitioned city and federal agencies to provide additional funds to extend all artists project until the end of their fiscal year 1980 contracts. As a result of these efforts, the Department of Labor made \$625,000 available to New York City to sustain local artists projects beyond the May 30 termination date and enable them to complete in-process public art projects and services.

The CCF Artists Project continued to operate with gradually reduced artist numbers until September 30, 1980, though most of the cohort had been laid off by June. A photo exhibition documenting over one hundred of the CCF artists' works opened at Lever House in September 1980, and received critical attention. Throughout its decline, project administrators sought both temporary and long-term solutions for saving or reimaging the program with different funding sources, both federal and local, and worked alongside artists and activists to facilitate opportunities for artist support.

It was a shame because, if the CETA momentum had continued, we might have a very different arts landscape today. I think it could have been amazingly successful if it had another five years to really develop. If government funding of the arts had been maintained instead of going into the private sector, the Job Development program would have had an easier time placing people in permanent jobs. So it was a double disappointment, because not only did CETA stop, but any hope that some of these small cap organizations could pick up from where we left off was also halted. And that was painful.

– Joan Snitzer, CCF Job Development Program Counseling Coordinator, 2021

By 1980, public discourse over CETA and federalism fixated on the size and role of the federal government. President Ronald Reagan, who had promised to scale back the allegedly excessive involvement of the federal government and return powers the states, repealed CETA in 1982, even though unemployment was nearly 10 percent. He replaced CETA with the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA), which provided for more direct involvement of state governors and private sector job training

programs. The JTPA did not include income support, and determined strict performance measurements.

The Future of *ART/WORK*

Because the national CETA initiative was decentralized and locally-managed, tracing its presence and impact is a challenge. Few programs had the funding and prescience to include a Documentation Unit, but CCF did. Their photographs, interviews, and records were compiled and donated to the New York City Municipal Archives and are now publicly available in a single repository. Such an immense documentation and preservation effort has made this exhibition possible.

I think what our Documentation Unit has been dealing with is not so much recording an object, artist, or event, but giving the future a sense of what this is all about, what lies underneath—the emotions and power that the artists bring forth.

– George Malave,
CCF Documentation Unit Photographer, 1979

Our project continues to research the histories of other CETA programs, artists, and projects in New York City—which were managed by other direct CETA contracts or sponsored by Borough Presidents—and across the country in an effort to better understand the full range of CETA's impact on arts workforce development across the United States. We are planning a traveling exhibit on the impact of CETA nationwide and the myriad artists careers and nonprofits it spawned.

We hope that you will join us in considering the importance of artists and arts workers in the American workforce, the role and history of the creative community in our social fabric, and the powerful ways in which public and private funding can support the transformational abilities of the arts, storytelling, and representation in cultural production.

This text is written for the exhibition ART/WORK: How the Government-Funded CETA Jobs Program Put Artists to Work, curated by Molly Garfinkel and Jodi Wayneberg, showing at City Lore Gallery and Cuchifritos Gallery + Project Space (NYC) from December 10, 2021.

CCF CETA Artists

LITERARY

Grover Amen
 Jacqueline M. Austin
 Barbara Baracks
 Cassia Berman
 Zoe Best
 Janet K. Bloom
 Doris Castellanos
 Daryl Chin
 Brenda Connor-Bey
 Charles Doria
 Ree Dragonette
 Sandra Esteves
 Arthur Flowers
 Gersami Karen
 Frederick
 Ed Friedman
 Nikki Grimes
 Neil Hackman
 Bob Holman
 Betsy Jaeger
 Chris Kraus
 Roland Legiardi-Laura
 Rose Lesniak
 Barry Levy
 Elouise Loftin
 Doughtry Long
 Sharon Mattlin
 Elyse Nass
 Pedro Pietri
 Norman Henry Pritchard
 Michael Scholnick
 Lynda Schor
 Nancy Stevens
 Bob Stokes
 Martha B. Tack
 Judd Tully
 Juan Valenzuela
 Richard Vetere
 Ali Wadud
 Nathan Whiting
 Ronald Melville Whyte

Dale Worsley
 Jeffrey Wright

PERFORMING

Ihsan A. Abdul-Rahim
 Antwanette D. Abel
 Claudia Jo Bader
 Deni Bank
 Amy Berkman
 Kathryn Bernson
 Martha Bowers
 Beverly Brown
 Glenn Cabrera
 Ladji Camara
 Charles Cookie Cook
 Terry Creach
 Kathy Danzer
 Gideon Davis
 David F. Dowd
 William Dunas
 Glen Eddy
 Stephen Edelstein
 Erica Eichenberg
 Noelle Ellington
 Carey Vedick Erickson
 George Ferencz
 Joan Finkelstein
 Jessica Fogel
 Deborah Genninger
 Jane Goldberg
 Barbara Lee GoVan
 Kenneth Grantham
 Pamela Greene
 Susan Griss
 Diane G. Grumet
 Valerie Hammer
 Holly Harbinger
 Andora Hodgkin
 Naaz Hosseini
 Stephanie Hampton
 Howard
 Judith Janus

Charles Raynor Johnson
 Olgalyn Jolly
 Richard W. Kerry
 Kenneth King
 Marcia Lane
 Carl Lee
 J.C. Lever
 John C. Lines
 Tzi Ma
 Nusha Martynuk
 Robin McCarthy
 Raymond McKethan
 Cynthia McPherson
 Dianne McPherson
 Stormy Mullis
 Brian J. Murray
 Rosalind Newman
 Eddy Olavarrio
 DeWayne Oliver
 Bonnie Panson
 Nancy Lewis Peck
 Robert Pesola
 Thomas Pinnock
 Deborah Judith Pope
 Bruce Porter
 Beth Prevor
 Dana Reitz
 Ozzie Rodriguez
 Gladys Roman
 Mitchell Rose
 Susan Sandler
 Nancee Sasaki
 Carol Foster Sidney
 Merian Soto
 Vic Stornant
 Elliott Vilein
 Irving Vincent
 Irene Wagner
 Neille Weissman
 David L. White II
 Cathryn Williams
 Levern Williams

Phil Wilson
James Wood
David Woodberry
Allie Woods
Marilyn Worrell
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Founded in 1999, **Artists Alliance Inc.** (AAI) is dedicated to launching, strengthening, and advancing the vision of emerging and underrepresented artists & curators through funded residencies, paid exhibition opportunities, and commissioned projects. Rooted in the Lower East Side (LES), a long-standing epicenter for creative experimentation and cultural diversity, AAI cultivates contemporary art practices that challenge the way we experience ourselves and our communities. As a dedicated advocate of sustainability for NY-based artists and the enduring community benefits of free and accessible contemporary art, AAI develops programming within larger institutions that hold vital social and cultural significance on the LES. For more information, visit artistsallianceinc.org

Founded in 1986, **City Lore** is New York City's center for urban folk culture. With a mission to foster New York City – and America's – living cultural heritage, City Lore encompasses a Lower East Side gallery space, performances, lectures, the People's Hall of Fame, a POEMobile that projects poems onto walls and buildings, and programs throughout the five boroughs. We document, present, and advocate for New York City's grassroots cultures to ensure their living legacy in stories and histories, places and traditions. We work in four cultural domains: urban folklore and history; preservation; arts education; and grassroots poetry traditions. In each, we seek to further cultural equity and model a better world with projects as dynamic and diverse as New York City itself. City Lore is a nonprofit 501(c)3. For more information, visit citylore.org