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**Date:** July 16, 2014

## **Virginia Commission for the Arts congratulates “Play the City” on its recent Our Town grant from the *National Endowment for the Arts***

*Richmond, Virginia* - National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) Chairman Jane Chu announced plans to award 66 Our Town grants totaling \$5.073 million and reaching 38 states in the Our Town program's fourth year of funding. Virginia will host one of those projects with funding recommended to the City of Charlottesville for a total of \$50,000.

This year's Our Town projects demonstrate again that excellent art is as fundamental to a community's success as land-use, transportation, education, housing, infrastructure, and public safety, helping build stronger communities that are diverse in geography and character. Our Town funds arts -based community development projects in a way that is authentic, equitable, and augments existing local assets. Since Our Town's inception in 2011 and including these projects, the NEA will have awarded 256 Our Town grants totaling more than \$21 million in all 50 states and the District of Columbia.

The NEA grant will support Play the City, a series of public workshops and artist residencies, to enhance neighborhoods in Charlottesville. The project will begin with asset mapping to establish a baseline of artists, activities, infrastructure, and arts organizations in the city. Artists then will be invited to reside in Charlottesville and develop projects that build on the community's assets and celebrate their unique identity. City of Charlottesville, Piedmont Council for the Arts, and Bridge Progressive Arts Initiative will lead community workshops and select the artists that will implement public art and design ideas. This project will engage residents of the Strategic Investment Area, an area of the city designated for targeted investment and improvement. The area is home to 2,968 residents, with 338 public and low-income housing units.

"The City of Charlottesville, Piedmont Council for the Arts, and Bridge Progressive Arts Initiative demonstrate the best in creative community development and whose work will have a valuable impact on its community," said Chairman Chu. "Through Our Town funding, arts organizations continue to spark vitality that support neighborhoods and public spaces, enhancing a sense of place for residents and visitors alike."

The NEA received 275 applications for Our Town this year. Recommended grant amounts ranged from \$25,000 to \$200,000. For a **complete listing of projects** recommended for Our Town grant support,

please visit the NEA web site at arts.gov. Project descriptions, grants listed by state and by project type, and resources are available as well.

The Twitter hashtag is #NEAOurTown14

**The Virginia Commission for the Arts** supports the arts through funding from the Virginia General Assembly and the National Endowment for the Arts. The Commission distributes grant awards to artists, arts and other not-for-profit organizations, educational institutions, educators and local governments and provides technical assistance in arts management.

For further information about the Virginia Commission for the Arts and its programs, contact the Virginia Commission for the Arts, 1001 East Broad Street, Suite 330, Richmond, VA 23219-2010; 804-225-3132; arts@vca.virginia.gov; [www.arts.virginia.gov](http://www.arts.virginia.gov)

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The following are sample tweets for you to use if you like or feel free to create your own tweet. Whichever you prefer, please use the hashtag #NEAOurTown14.

Go [name of state].Excited 2 host #NEAOurTown14 grant(s)! Art in #communitydevelopment makes places better. Go to arts.gov. (124 characters)

Go [name of state].Excited 2 host #NEAOurTown14 grants! #creativeplacemaking makes places better. Go to arts.gov (116 characters)

Congrats to [@org] and [@org] 4 receiving #NEAOurTown14 grant. Making [name of state] a better place. Go to arts.gov (118 characters)

Helping make US a better place w/ our #NEAOurTown14 grant. #creativeplacemaking #art in #communitydevelopment Go to arts.gov (127 characters)

#NEAOurTown14 & #creativeplacemaking. Changing places, connecting people in [name of state]. Go to arts.gov (111 characters)

#NEAOurTown14, #art in #communitydevelopment. Changing places, connecting people in [name of state]. Go to arts.gov (119 characters)

Excited! #NEAOurTown14 includes [number] grants in [name of state] Among only 66 grants awarded in US by @NEAarts. Go to arts.gov (132 characters)