

Media Contact: Katelyn Yoshimoto
katelyn_yoshimoto@jtpr.com
312-573-5492

THE CHICAGO COMMUNITY TRUST ANNOUNCES *SMART GROWTH*

Thirty-One Nonprofits will receive \$3 million over four years

CHICAGO – February 25, 2015 – The Chicago Community Trust today announced the 31 nonprofits selected for the 2015 *SMART Growth Program*. The *SMART Growth* program was established to help small arts and cultural organizations to engage their boards and staffs in strengthening management practices that effectively support their missions, enabling them to contribute to their communities and to the cultural ecology of the region.

“The Trust believes that affordable and accessible arts opportunities are essential assets in every community, and this priority was affirmed by over 4,500 residents who participated in the creation of the 2012 Chicago Cultural Plan,” said Suzanne Connor, senior program officer for arts and culture at The Chicago Community Trust, and one of the designers of the *SMART Growth* process. “This methodology empowers founders, Board members and staff leaders to recognize strengths and reallocate their limited resources toward lagging management areas so that the foundation is solid and they can cope with challenges like the loss of a founder, changing demographics or a tough economy.”

Small community-based arts and cultural organizations (those with an operating budget less than \$1 million) in Cook County were invited to apply for the *SMART Growth* capacity-building grant program. Chosen from a pool of 136 applicants, the 2015 *SMART Growth* class is:

- [American Blues Theatre](#)
- [Audience Architects](#)
- [Center for Arabic Language and Culture](#)
- [Cerqua Rivera Dance Theatre](#)
- [Chicago Slam Works](#) (Chicago Poetry Slam)
- [Chicago West Community Music Center](#)
- [Chinese American Museum of Chicago](#) (Chinatown Museum Foundation)
- [Erasing the Distance](#)
- [Filament Theatre Ensemble](#)
- [Green Star Movement](#)
- [Guild Literary Complex](#)
- [High Concept Laboratories](#)
- [Hyde Park Suzuki Institute](#)
- [Imagination Theatre](#)

- [Mariachi Heritage Foundation](#)
- [Maywood Fine Arts](#)
- [Mitchell Museum of the American Indian](#)
- [Najwa Dance Corps](#)
- [National Museum of Puerto Rican Arts and Culture](#)
- [National Veterans Art Museum](#)
- [Pride Film and Plays](#)
- [Red Clay Dance Company](#)
- [Rivendell Theatre Ensemble](#)
- [2nd Story](#) (Serendipity Theatre)
- [Snow City Arts Foundation](#)
- [South Side Community Art Center](#)
- [Spudnik Press Cooperative](#)
- [The Arts of Life](#)
- [The Miracle Center](#)
- [True Star Foundation](#)
- [West Point School of Music](#)

Through a grant to the Arts & Business Council of Chicago, *SMART Growth* provides an individualized assessment of each nonprofit, evaluating critical business functions, such as their financial management, income generation and board governance. This signature program of the Trust also provides organizations with valuable training in the *SMART Growth* methodology, which includes establishing outcomes that are Specific, Measurable, Actionable, Realistic and Timed. Organizations then receive three years of general operating grants, which range from \$15,000 - \$50,000 per year.

Established in 2006, past *SMART Growth* graduates include the Jazz Institute (2006), the Ukrainian Institute of Modern Art (2010) and Ensemble Espanol Spanish Dance (2010). A total of 70 cultural organizations are alumni of the Smart Growth program.

#

About The Chicago Community Trust

[The Chicago Community Trust](#), our region's community foundation, partners with donors to leverage their philanthropy in ways that transform lives and communities. The Trust, together with its donors, grants more than \$100 million annually to nonprofits working to develop new audiences to sustain the region's vibrant arts organizations, protect the human services safety net for those hardest hit by the recession, stem the devastating effects of foreclosures on our neighborhoods, elevate teaching to meet world-class standards and improve conditions for healthy and active lifestyles. By connecting the generosity of donors with the needs of the community, the Trust ensures that our region thrives today and for future generations.