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**CHICAGO CULTURAL PLAN 2012 UNVEILED**

*New Cultural Plan was Developed Over Months of Meetings with Stakeholders and Community Members Across Chicago; Community Input Led Directly to a New Initiative to Develop an Arts Education Plan for Chicago Public Schools*

CHICAGO - Mayor Rahm Emanuel and Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events (DCASE) Commissioner Michelle Boone today unveiled the Chicago Cultural Plan 2012, the first new plan for strengthening the city's arts and cultural sector in more than 25 years. The Plan was developed after months of meetings with stakeholders and community members across the city and includes input from thousands of Chicagoans. The new Plan will serve as the central planning document for enhancing Chicago's thriving arts and culture sector, supporting creativity, innovation and excellence in the arts. The final Plan and executive summary can be downloaded at [www.chicagoculturalplan2012.org](http://www.chicagoculturalplan2012.org) or [www.cityofchicago.org/DCASE](http://www.cityofchicago.org/DCASE).

"Chicago already boasts an incredible arts and cultural sector, from marquee events downtown to creative and innovative shows in our neighborhoods," said Mayor Emanuel. "Fueled by participation from residents from all corners of the city, Chicago's new cultural plan identifies ways the arts can build community, stimulate economic development, create jobs, attract visitors and foster innovation for years to come."

The foundation of the plan was laid by input from thousands of Chicago residents. In February, DCASE launched a series of town halls, neighborhood meetings, social media exchanges, art sector workshops and stakeholder forums to solicit external input for crafting a new vision. Residents, artists, arts administrators and culture enthusiasts are now encouraged to embrace the plan and take action to help make hundreds of initiatives reality.

"The Chicago Cultural Plan 2012 represents the ideas and passion of Chicago's greatest asset - its citizens," said Commissioner Michelle T. Boone. "This input helped us craft a vision for the city's future cultural life that values making the arts more accessible to all; ensuring cultural activities are abundant in every neighborhood; and identifying new ways for residents and visitors alike to experience Chicago's vibrant creative scene."

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The Chicago Cultural Plan 2012 contains a set of 10 initiatives with 36 recommendations and over 200 ideas. The result is a call to action for communities, individuals, government, cultural institutions, non-profits and corporations to work together to ensure success. The ten initiatives of the plan include:

1. Reinvigorating arts education and creating new opportunities for lifelong learning.
2. Attracting and retaining artists and creative professionals.
3. Elevating and expanding neighborhood cultural assets.
4. Facilitating neighborhood planning of cultural activity.
5. Optimizing city policies and regulation that impact the arts and creative industries.
6. Strengthening capacity within the cultural sector.
7. Promoting culture's value on Chicago's economy and our way of life.
8. Strengthening Chicago as a global cultural destination.
9. Developing and sustaining innovation in culture.
10. Integrating culture into daily life – across public, nonprofit and private sectors.

Throughout the public engagement process, a top concern was improving access to arts education for Chicago's children. As a direct result, Chicago Public Schools is developing a new Arts Education Plan, to be finalized in the coming months. Today, an "Arts Abstract" for the CPS Arts Education Plan was released in conjunction with the release of the City's new Cultural Plan, which outlines the following goals:

- Dedicated weekly arts instructional time in the classroom, with more teachers and dedicated supplies and resources;
- Significant increases in professional development and training for teachers, principals and arts partners;
- Increased community partnerships for schools, tapping the resources of Chicago's cultural institutions and community organizations;
- Increased funding assistance and strategies to ensure arts instruction in every school.

"The CPS Arts Education Plan aims to elevate the arts to a core subject to ensure that every CPS student will receive a comprehensive and sequential study of the four art forms – visual art, music, dance and drama – from preschool through high school graduation," said Barbara Byrd-Bennett, CEO of the Chicago Public Schools. "Arts education will be tied to learning in the other subjects such as math, reading and science, to develop the skills students will need for success in the 21<sup>st</sup> century workforce: creativity, innovation, critical thinking and communications skills."

The proposed 2013 City budget includes a \$1 million investment to support some of the new initiatives that will be implemented through the Chicago Cultural Plan 2012. Half of this will be directed towards initiatives that are being developed for the Arts Education Plan.

"Every time I open the paper these days I read that our country needs the workforce of the 21st Century to be collaborative, flexible, innovative and imaginative. Those are exactly the skills students learn through the arts," said world-renowned cellist Yo-Yo Ma. "Additionally, research shows us again and again that children who study the arts are more likely to graduate high school, attend college and contribute to the economic and civic life of their communities. The visionary plan for arts education announced by Mayor Emanuel today will be transformational for the students of Chicago."

"Art revitalizes communities, offering a shared experience and fostering civic pride, while arts education in schools gives voice to young hearts and minds. This self-realization boosts their potential to contribute back to the community," said Renée Fleming. "With civic leaders, educators and artists working together, Chicago will lead the nation in harnessing the power of the arts for the public good."

"The arts uniquely inspire, invigorate and involve us," said Damian Woetzel. "The energy and enthusiasm created by the arts today at Perez Elementary is a model for every neighborhood and school in Chicago and beyond."

Many of the recommendations in the City's Cultural Plan are ready now and will take little time to initiate at minimal cost. In fact, nearly one third of the plan's initiatives have an estimated cost of less than \$50,000 to implement. Some initiatives of the Plan are already underway, including: increasing neighborhood access to the arts by leveraging existing public spaces such as Chicago Department of Transportation plazas, libraries, parks and schools; activating vacant spaces for cultural programming; and marketing cultural assets in neighborhoods as visitor destinations for both Chicagoans and tourists.

### **About the Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events**

The Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events (DCASE) is dedicated to promoting and supporting Chicago's arts and culture sector. This includes, but is not limited to: fostering the development of Chicago's non-profit arts sector, independent working artists, and for-profit arts businesses; presenting high-quality, free or low-fee cultural programs accessible to residents and visitors; and marketing the City's cultural assets to local, regional, and global audiences. DCASE produces nearly 2,000 public programs, events and support services annually, generating millions in economic benefits for the City of Chicago. For more information visit [www.cityofchicago.org/DCASE](http://www.cityofchicago.org/DCASE) or join us on Facebook or on Twitter @ChicagoDCASE.

For additional information on the Chicago Cultural Plan please visit [www.chicagoculturalplan2012.com](http://www.chicagoculturalplan2012.com), e-mail at [culturalplan@cityofchicago.org](mailto:culturalplan@cityofchicago.org) or call (312) 744-3316. Chicagoans can join the conversation on Facebook and Twitter @ChiCulturalPlan.

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