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**Mesa Arts Center to receive two grants from National Endowment for the Arts**

Includes Arts-based Community Development Investment for Mesa

Mesa, AZ (May 10, 2016) – Mesa Arts Center has been selected to receive two grant awards from the National Endowment for the Arts for fiscal year 2017, including an Our Town grant for \$75,000 in support of the D-Lab Festival project and an Art Works award of \$15,000 in support of the Jazz from A to Z program.

National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) Chairman Jane Chu announced 64 awards totaling \$4.3 million supporting projects across the nation through the NEA's Our Town program, which supports creative placemaking projects that help to transform communities into lively, beautiful, and resilient places with the arts at their core. The NEA received 240 applications for Our Town this year and will make awards ranging from \$25,000 to \$100,000.

Chairman Chu also approved more than \$82 million to fund local arts projects and partnerships in the NEA's second major funding announcement for fiscal year 2017. Included in this announcement is an Art Works award of \$15,000 to Mesa Arts Center to support the Jazz from A to Z program.

"The arts are all around us, enhancing our lives in ways both subtle and obvious, expected and unexpected," said NEA Chairman Jane Chu. "Supporting projects like these from Mesa Arts Center offer more opportunities to engage in the arts every day."

"I know I share the sentiments of our partners at the Downtown Mesa Association (DMA), Neighborhood Economic Development Corporation (NEDCO), and the City of Mesa's Office of Downtown Transformation in saying how appreciative we are of the NEA's support for the D-lab Festival. We are excited about the project's potential to benefit all of downtown by engaging the public in thinking about what features they want in their urban center, and experiencing different ways of inhabiting, connecting and enjoying the public spaces in downtown Mesa," said Cindy Ornstein, Arts and Culture Department Director for City of Mesa and Executive Director of Mesa Arts Center. "We're also pleased to receive continued NEA support for the Jazz from A to Z program which, in partnership with Jazz at Lincoln Center and ASU's School of Historical, Philosophical and Religious Studies, delivers educational programming integrating jazz music, jazz history and American history that has deep and lasting impact on students and teachers alike."

**Our Town Grant project description: D-Lab Festival**

The D-Lab Festival is a project designed to enhance and expand the Downtown Lab Project (D-Lab), an initiative implementing a series of temporary, low-cost experimental projects to activate

Downtown Mesa. From wayfinding and public art to renovating nondescript alleyways into pocket parks, the D-Lab project was developed to create a more pedestrian-friendly, livable and activated environment in downtown Mesa. In collaboration with partners including NEDCO (Neighborhood Economic Development Corp.) and DMA (Downtown Mesa Association), Mesa Arts Center will invite artists to submit concepts for temporary interactive art/design installations that enhance public spaces and connectivity. Twenty to twenty-five proposals will be selected for implementation of prototypes for a festival in the fall of 2017, at which the public can provide feedback on projects they would like to see made more permanent in the future. Artists will also lead residencies in nearby neighborhoods and develop collaborative community arts projects for presentation in those neighborhoods and invited for participation in the D-Lab Festival.

**Art Works Grant project description: Jazz from A to Z**

Jazz from A to Z is a Collective Impact project by Mesa Arts Center, Arizona State University's School of Historical, Philosophical and Religious Studies, and Jazz at Lincoln Center. Jazz from A to Z is an extensive program which will serve 150 music, history, and grade level educators in the state, 50 Arizona State University history and music students, and over 1500 elementary to high school students to help them develop meaningful connections with jazz through educator workshops, student National History Day preparation and exhibits, jazz clinics, a Band Director clinic, Jazz for Young People concerts, and an Essentially Ellington Regional Festival.

For a **complete list of projects** recommended for NEA grant support, please visit the arts.gov.

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**About Mesa Arts Center**

Mesa Arts Center, owned and operated by the City of Mesa, is a unique, architecturally stunning facility located in the heart of downtown Mesa. Arizona's largest multidisciplinary arts center is home to four theaters, five art galleries in the MCA Museum, and 14 art studios. Guests, patrons, and students come to Mesa Arts Center to enjoy the finest live entertainment, performances and festivals, world-class visual art exhibitions, and outstanding arts education classes. The Mesa Arts Center mission is to inspire people through engaging arts experiences that are diverse, accessible, and relevant. For more information, visit [mesaartscenter.com](http://mesaartscenter.com).