



ART OF THE RURAL

**Next Generation: The Future of Arts & Culture Placemaking in Rural America** engages artists, organizations, and communities across the public and private sector to advance collaboration, share innovative strategies and research, and elevate emerging leaders in the field. This initiative is designed and facilitated by Art of the Rural and the Rural Policy Research Institute in concert with a range of regional and national partners and supported by The University of Iowa and The National Endowment for the Arts.

**Next Generation operates through three interlinked activities:**

**1 – Regional Networks** that self-define their objectives, enhance linkages across the community and economic development, arts, and policy communities, and design projects and convenings that best serve the needs and opportunities of their regions. Facilitated by co-chairs from different sectors and guided by an intergenerational Working Group, this inclusive, collaborative effort welcomes a range of partners to the table.

**2 – A Digital Learning Commons** that offers an inclusive platform for storytelling, research, and best practices and fosters an inclusive space for deeper collaboration and learning exchange. Through the production and release of case studies, policy briefs, publications, videos and podcasts, this digital Learning Commons will assert the essential role of arts and cultural organizations in economic and community development.

**3 – A Rural Creative Placemaking Summit** that enhances cross-sector collaboration, elevates intercultural perspectives within the field, and builds policy presence for deeper consideration of rural creative placemaking. Held **October 12-14, 2016 at the University of Iowa**, this gathering will share reflections from Regional Network members, connect lessons across geographies, and build deeper cross-sector collaborations. Together, we will present a sustained argument for the centrality of rural creative placemaking – as a field, and as a strategy for development and community sustainability.

### **Regional Networks**

Regional Networks are designed to spark exchange, collaboration, and public policy interest across generations, sectors, and rural and urban regions. Participants in these networks include national, regional, state and local governments, arts and culture organizations, universities, communities and the private and nonprofit sectors. Through these diverse networks, Next Generation will facilitate acknowledgement of shared interests to enhance common mission collaboration across regions.

An initial cohort of Regional Networks in Iowa, Kentucky, and Minnesota are currently building these relationships. In each, Next Generation will facilitate three integrated strategies for rural advancement:

**1 – A Regional Network Working Group** that advances institutional, public and private support for Regional Networks while informing policy and practice across the region.

**2 – Collaborative Projects** designed with Next Generation leadership to enhance cross-sector networks and articulate a common mission for their shared region.

**3 – Regional Convenings** to facilitate the convergence of these cross-sector networks. The first round of these gatherings will occur in summer of 2016.

**In Iowa**, Next Generation will facilitate further development of rural-urban dialogues, strengthen network structures for rural practitioners, and seek to deepen appreciation for the value of rural arts and culture in urban Iowa. Iowa partners include the Des Moines Social Club, the Iowa Arts Council, the University of Iowa College of Public Health, and USDA Rural Development.

This network is co-chaired by Matthew Harris, Administrator of the Iowa Arts Council, and Bill Menner, USDA Rural Development State Director in Iowa.

**In Kentucky**, Next Generation will expand the work of the Kentucky Rural-Urban Exchange and frame new models of community-driven development. Through connecting young innovators with senior leadership, this Regional Network will create opportunities for cross-sector and inter-generational collaboration. Kentucky partners include Appalshop, the Kentucky Arts Council, the Kentucky Department of Tourism, Arts, and Heritage, the Kentucky Highlands Investment Corporation, the Kentucky Valley Educational Cooperative, and the SOAR initiative.

This network is co-chaired by Sandi Curd, Promise Zone Coordinator for the Kentucky Highlands Investment Corporation, and Lori Meadows, Executive Director of the Kentucky Arts Council.

**In Minnesota**, Next Generation will document stories and develop toolkits from rural Minnesota's creative placemaking exemplars and share the models of groundbreaking Minnesota public policies on a national level, via Creative Exchange and national partner networks. Minnesota partners include Springboard for the Arts, the evolving Rural Arts and Culture Summit network, and state USDA Rural Development.

This network is co-chaired by Michele Anderson, Rural Program Director of Springboard for the Arts, and Colleen Landkamer, USDA Rural Development State Director in Minnesota.

### **Next Generation Convenings**

While Next Generation seeks to build a comprehensive Digital Learning Commons and host a range of online resources, we believe face-to-face convenings are essential to building the field and advancing our collective knowledge. These convenings occur on both a national and regional level.

Together, Regional Network Working Groups and Regional Partners are planning Next Generation Regional Network Convenings for summer, 2016. These will be the first opportunity for the newly established networks to connect young innovators with senior leadership to create opportunities for cross-sector and inter-generational collaboration. The first round of convenings will take place at the following venues:

**Iowa Regional Network Convening:** July 12-13, 2016, Des Moines Social Club.

**Kentucky Regional Network Convening:** May 20, 2016, Appalshop in Whitesburg.

**Minnesota Regional Network Convening:** June 28, 2016, Springboard for the Arts in Fergus Falls.

### **Rural Creative Placemaking Summit**

Held October 12-14, 2016 at the University of Iowa, the Rural Creative Placemaking Summit seeks to enhance cross-sector collaboration, elevate intercultural perspectives within the field, and build policy presence for deeper consideration of rural creative placemaking. This gathering will share reflections from Regional Network members, connect lessons across geographies, and build deeper cross-sector collaborations. Together, we will present a sustained argument for the centrality of rural creative placemaking – as a field, and as a strategy for development and community sustainability.

The Summit will focus on the changing face of rural America and will offer 20-30 scholarships for people of color and LGBTQ persons to attend and present. This process toward greater inclusion in the rural creative placemaking field will be guided and informed by many individuals and organizations within the AOTR and RUPRI networks. These networks will be joined by our Advisors, who will bring representatives from their own organizations, networks, and sectors. Guided by Regional Networks and Advisors, the Summit will offer pre-conference sessions to build mentorship relationships across these regions and within the national network.

Following the Summit, Next Generation will welcome further Regional Networks and debut its Rural Creative Placemaking Exchange, providing the opportunity for one-on-one comparative learning and network-building between individuals and organizations, on the ground in their local communities. A second Summit will be held in 2018, coinciding with the release of a field-spanning publication of case studies, a redesigned Digital Learning Commons, and a comprehensive policy report.

### **Knowledge Building and Learning Commons**

To assert the essential role of the arts and culture in regional development, the metrics built by Next Generation will validate program and policy exemplars as an essential component of knowledge building in this field. Representing the experiences of the Regional Networks and National Advisors, Next Generation's research agenda will produce Regional Network case studies, short-form videos and podcasts, a detailed project report, a Next Generation Conference, and a "Creative Placemaking in Rural America" publication. Each of these resources will be developed throughout the project timeline and will be accessible on the digital Learning Commons.

The **Digital Learning Commons** ([ruralgeneration.org](http://ruralgeneration.org)) is designed as an inclusive platform for features, commentary, and best practices from across the rural arts and culture field. The Learning Commons addresses two of the major challenges facing rural practitioners – geographic distance and access to information and networks – and establishes a digital intermediary through which deeper collaboration can develop within and beyond Next Generation. Through collaboration with Regional Networks, the site provides a crucial link between online and on-the-

ground learning and exchange, and its contents are openly cross-posted with partners and media outlets. The Learning Commons is developed with Arts and Ideas to combine social giving, civic engagement, and dynamic storytelling into a single platform.

### **National Advisors**

Next Generation National Advisors are a committed cadre of national leaders in their respective disciplines, and each contributes significant expertise, networks, and vision for rural advancement. Advisors will assist in Next Generation program design and the national conference, and will participate in innovation labs on shared language and new methodologies for rural creative placemaking.

Advisors include: Kiley Arroyo, Cultural Strategies Council (CA), Paul Bonin-Rodriguez, University of Texas-Austin (TX), Dudley Cocke, Appalshop / Roadside Theater (VA), Sue Curry, Dean of Public Health, University of Iowa (IA), Jay Dick, Americans for the Arts (DC), Cheryll Lee Hills, Region Five Development Corporation (MN), Judi Jennings, Kentucky Foundation for Women / Social Justice Funders Network (KY), Tim Lampkin, Lampkin Consulting Group (MS), Linda Langston, National Association of Counties (IA), Zach Mannheimer, Iowa Business Growth Company (IA), Nikiko Masumoto, Masumoto Family Farms (CA), Donna Neuwirth, Wormfarm Institute (WI), Amrita Ramanan, Double Edge Theatre (MA), John "Bob" Reeder, Rural LISC (MD), Michael Rohd, The Center for Performance and Civic Practice / Sojourn Theatre (IL), Richard Saxton, M12 Collective (CO), Theresa Secord, Retired, formerly Maine Indian Basketmakers Alliance (ME), William Turner, Prairie View A&M (TX), Laura Youngbird, Plains Art Museum (ND), Laura Zabel, Springboard for the Arts (MN).

### **Translating Value**

In our first year, we have designed opportunities to integrate rural creative placemaking practices into national conversations: Next Generation has planned and facilitated programming on rural placemaking at the National Rural Assembly and the Rural Arts and Culture Summit and other national convenings, and has widely published interviews, essays, and stories about the initiative. To learn more, visit [ruralgeneration.org](http://ruralgeneration.org)

### **Next Generation Project Activities**

#### **2015**

- Summer:           Rural Arts and Culture Summit (Minnesota)  
                          Kentucky Rural-Urban Exchanges  
                          Community Development Society Conference presentation
- Fall:                National Rural Assembly: Rural Placemaking panel, social networking events  
                          Iowa Working Group meeting

## **2016**

- Winter: National Advisors call  
Public release of digital Learning Commons  
External survey for Regional Networks' asset / deficit mapping  
State Co-Chairs call  
Regional Case Studies identified
- Spring: Regional Network Working Group meetings  
National Advisors call
- Summer: Regional Network Convenings in Iowa, Kentucky, Minnesota  
Working Groups meetings  
National Advisors call  
Recruitment of Intercultural Rural Leaders Scholarship awardees
- Fall: Recruitment of RUPRI Next Generation Fellows  
National Conference  
    Pre-conference session with Advisors and Fellows  
    Post-conference session with Working Group Co-Chairs and Partners  
Regional Networks, Scholarship Awardees, and Advisors offer reflections/  
podcasts  
Learning Commons updated for inclusion of Fellows / new Regional Networks

## **2017**

- Winter: Evaluation / documentation collection  
National Advisors and Fellows meetings
- Spring: National Exchange Program  
Regional Network case studies released  
Convenings in two new regions
- Summer: Rural Arts and Culture Summit (Minnesota)
- Fall: National Rural Assembly  
National Advisors meet and Fellows meetings

## **2018**

- Winter: Rural Creative Placemaking publication released
- Spring: Next Generation National Conference
- Summer: Next Generation report release and Learning Commons redesigned