Alliance of Artists Communities launches a new strategic plan rooted in equity, as an invitation to join in the building of an artist residency field that is inclusive, just, joyful, and accessible.

For Immediate Release

Contact: Miranda Macaulay Miller
mmiller@artistcommunities.org

September 1, 2021 — The Alliance of Artists Communities has announced a new three-year strategic plan — a road map for the development of “equitable capacity” in the artist residency field.

In conjunction with the release of the strategic plan, the organization announced it has changed its name from the Alliance of Artists Communities to Artist Communities Alliance (ACA) (ACA pronounced “Ah-kah”).

“For 30 years, Artist Communities Alliance has held the belief that cultivation of new art and ideas is essential to human progress. Artist residencies are indispensable platforms for artists across disciplines,” states ACA Executive Director, Lisa Funderburke Hoffman. “At the same time, many artist residencies have not addressed inequities and organizational cultures and climates that disproportionately fail Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC), and Deaf and disabled artists. We see an urgent need to support organizations’ efforts toward greater access and equity.”

ACA calls for structural change in the residency field to create inclusive, just, joyful, and accessible environments where artists and staff can thrive. ACA’s three-year strategic plan sets a course for supporting organizations in assessing equitable practices across all areas of operation as well as developing the tools and policies needed to sustain change.

Equitable Capacity is a concept coined by Lisa Funderburke Hoffman in 2020 and refers to the strengthening of an organization’s “muscle” to be equitable in policies, practices, and processes. Often missing from the conversation around dismantling white body supremacy in the arts is the assertion that this work cannot be done programmatically, episodically, or in one area of an organization. Sustained equity can only occur within a container of intensive, self-reflective, and continued practice. Equitable capacity offers a framework for this container, and outlines the foundation of assessment, inquiry, and culture shift that is needed to address equity gaps and nourish change.

The vehicle for operationalizing this work is ACA’s Five Pillars of a Healthy Residency – an adaptable framework to guide organizations in assessing their own equitable practice across Identity, Program Design, Operations, Resource Development, and Stewardship. Equitable capacity is measured across each of the five “pillars” allowing organizations to identify strengths and weaknesses and prioritize their work. The adaptable framework focuses on how practices in each of these areas affect the climate and
culture of the organization. The framework is currently being refined and field-tested with staff and leadership of 16 partner residencies as part of the McKnight Artists Residencies consortium and will be shared as a tool later this year.

**ABOUT ARTIST COMMUNITIES ALLIANCE**
Artist Communities Alliance (ACA) is the international service organization for artist residency programs and artist-centered organizations. ACA’s mission is to advocate for and support artist residency programs as a means of advancing the endeavors of all artists. Founded in 1991, ACA currently has more than 400 members in 50 U.S. states and 20 countries, and works on behalf of 1,500 residency programs worldwide. Since 2004, ACA has provided more than $4 million in direct grant funding to artists and artist residency centers.