A strong arts sector is fundamental to a thriving and globally competitive Chicago. The Chicago Cultural Plan 2012 presents an opportunity to strengthen the cultural sector citywide and ensure the arts play a prominent role in the growth and vitality of Chicago.

**Culture Counts Coalition**

To maximize this opportunity, Arts Alliance Illinois, the League of Chicago Theatres, the Chicago Cultural Alliance, and others formed the Culture Counts Coalition, over 80 diverse organizations from across Chicago that have come together to promote public engagement in the Chicago Cultural Plan 2012 and develop consensus around the actions needed for Chicago to realize its full potential as a global leader in the arts.

As a coalition of organizations who employ thousands, represent tens of thousands of artists and arts administrators, and attract millions of visitors to the city annually, we have a stake in the development of a forward-thinking and comprehensive strategy for Chicago’s cultural and economic future.

**Recommendations for the Chicago Cultural Plan 2012**

Taking into account the priorities and initiatives included in the draft of the Chicago Cultural Plan 2012, and adding the passion, experience, and practical knowledge of the Coalition, below are the initiatives that the Coalition views as most critical to positioning Chicago as a global capital for creativity, innovation, and excellence in the arts.
Recommendation 1: Infuse the arts throughout city government.

The arts and culture are acknowledged as a fundamental driver of community health and prosperity and is integrated into civic life.

Priority initiatives:

- Conduct an audit of permitting, licensing, zoning, and granting processes to identify ways to make city regulations more culture-friendly.

- Set up distinct classifications for cultural functions as well as organizations and artists within permitting, licensing, and zoning, including regulations that encourage artist live/work spaces.

- Develop an implementation strategy that fosters support for culture in the day-to-day operations of city agencies, such as the Chicago Transit Authority, the Chicago Department of Transportation, the Chicago Park District, and the Chicago Public Library.

- Establish funding for culture as a percentage of infrastructure project costs across the city and include cultural projects in Infrastructure Trust initiatives.

Recommendation 2: Invigorate arts education.

Equitable access to arts education is available for every child, every grade, every subject and every public school.

Priority initiatives:

- Issue mandate from mayor, board of education, and Chicago Public Schools CEO on non-negotiables for arts education in all schools.

- Develop and implement a Chicago Public Schools district-wide plan for arts education, including arts education curriculum in all schools, professional development opportunities for teachers and administrators, and a simplified process for collaborations among schools and arts providers.

- Expand opportunities for lifelong learning in both formal and informal arts.
Recommendation 3: Strengthen the operating environment for artists and arts organizations.

Chicago has a robust and growing community of artists, arts and cultural organizations, and creative professionals.

Priority initiatives:

- Expand grants to support operating expenses for arts organizations.
- Update the Percent-for-Arts Ordinance to reflect global best practices.
- Establish a task force to examine new funding mechanisms for culture.
- Develop a dedicated funding stream for arts and culture, to support both organizations and individual artists.

Recommendation 4: Make the arts a priority in neighborhood development.

Neighborhoods are vibrant hubs for arts and cultural activity and stimulate local growth.

Priority initiatives:

- Increase cultural spaces in every neighborhood and better leverage existing spaces such as museums, parks, and libraries for artist residencies and cultural activities.
- Integrate neighborhood artistic and cultural assets into the design of neighborhood transportation hubs and gateways.
- Create an "Artists Corps" of young artists trained to work in low-income schools and their communities.
- Establish "Creative Enterprise Zones" with incentives for the concentration of cultural organizations, galleries, performance spaces, and creative industry.
Recommendation 5: Strengthen Chicago as a global cultural destination.

Chicago is recognized internationally as a global cultural destination.

Priority initiatives:

- Develop a comprehensive cultural tourism strategy that includes cultural activity across the entire city.
- Support program and leadership exchanges between Chicago and international cultural communities.
- Position Chicago’s higher education sector as an incubator of creative talent and seek to leverage the sector’s increasing strength both culturally and as an economic tool.

Recommendation 6: Hold the City accountable to the 2012 Chicago Cultural Plan.

The City implements those initiatives in the Chicago Cultural Plan 2012 that will do the most to strengthen the cultural sector citywide and ensure the arts play a prominent role in the growth and vitality of Chicago.

Priority initiatives:

- Establish a “Mayor’s Cultural Plan Commission” responsible for advising and overseeing implementation of Chicago Cultural Plan 2012 initiatives.
- Identify funding needs for Chicago Cultural Plan 2012 initiatives.
- Regularly communicate progress to the public on implementation of the Chicago Cultural Plan 2012.
The Culture Counts Coalition

As of September 26, 2012

3 Walls
Actors' Equity Association
Adventure Stage
African American Arts Alliance
Albany Park Theatre Project
Apollo Chorus
Arab American Action Network
Art Institute
Arte y Vida
Arts & Business Council
Arts Alliance Illinois
Audience Architects
Auditorium Theatre
Barrel of Monkeys
Black Ensemble Theater
Borderbend Arts Collective
Bronzeville Children's Museum
Casa de Cultura Brasileira
Changing Worlds
Chicago a cappella
Chicago Artists' Coalition
Chicago Arts Partnerships in Education
Chicago Classical Recording Foundation
Chicago Cultural Alliance
Chicago Dramatists
Chicago Human Rhythm Project
Chicago Jazz Philharmonic
Chicago Moving Company
Chicago Public Art Group
Chicago Shakespeare Theater
Chicago Sinfonietta
Chicago Symphony Orchestra
Chicago Urban Art Society
Chicago Youth Symphony Orchestras
Chinese-American Museum Collaboraction Theatre Company
Columbia College
DANK-HAUS German Cultural Center
Deeply Rooted Productions
Diasporal Rhythms
Elastic Arts Foundation
eta Creative Arts
Goodman Theatre
Hubbard Street Dance
Hyde Park Art Center
Ingenuity Incorporated
Institute of Puerto Rican Arts & Culture
Intuit: The Center for Intuitive and Outsider Art
Kartemquin Films
Kavi Gupta Gallery
Lawyers for the Creative Arts
League of Chicago Theatres
Lillstreet Arts Center
Links Hall
Lira Ensemble
Little Black Pearl
Lookingglass Theatre Company
Lyric Opera
Merit School of Music
Midwest African-American Heritage Preservation
Muntu Dance Theatre
Museum of Contemporary Art
Music House, Academy of Music and Dance
National Museum of Mexican Art
National Veterans Art Museum
Old Town School of Folk Music
Pedagogical Arts
Phantom Gallery
Poetry Foundation
Polish Museum of America
Pullman State Historic Site
Redmoon Theater
SAG-AFTRA
Silk Road Rising
Sixty Inches from Center
Steppenwolf Theatre Company
Street-Level Youth Media
Thodos Dance
TimeLine Theatre Company
Ukrainian Institute of Modern Art
Urban Gateways
Victory Gardens Theater
Voice of the City