TRUST TRANSFER PROJECT
Report of Evaluation Findings

Jessica M. Payne, Ph.D.
June 2021

Submitted to the
Community Music School of Springfield
and
Springfield Cultural Partnership
TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY 1

INTRODUCTION 4
OVERVIEW 4
EVALUATION METHODS 5

EVALUATION FINDINGS 6
FINDING 1: ENGAGEMENT AND COMPENSATION 6
FINDING 2: SCALING AND SUSTAINABILITY 9
FINDING 3: CROSS-SECTOR PARTNERSHIPS 12

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS 13
RECOMMENDATIONS ERROR!

APPENDIX A: FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS 14

APPENDIX B: TRUST TRANSFER PARTICIPATING ARTISTS 15

APPENDIX C: TRUST TRANSFER COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONAL PARTNERS 16
One of TTP’s greatest outcomes is becoming a catalyst for us to reimagine how and who we partner with to motivate change in our everyday lives. TTP bridges the gap between local creatives and organizational leaders, with the hope of building positive and sustainable cross sector relationships throughout the community that ensure the opportunity for continued strong collaborations on demand... to tackle future health initiatives that impact Springfield.

– Vanessa Ford, TTP Manager

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Black & Latinx communities continue to be impacted by COVID-19 at significantly higher rates, and to have lower vaccination rates, compared to state and national averages. With the closure of arts venues and cancellation of in-person events, artists have lost both significant income and the opportunity to showcase their artistic work.

In 2021, the Community Music School of Springfield (CMSS) and the Springfield Cultural Partnership (SCP) established the Trust Transfer Project (TTP) to address these patterns. TTP appointed Vanessa Ford, a trusted member of the faith community, a recognized civic leader, and prolific artist to serve as Project Manager. Forming a team, she and CMSS and SCP project founders used their established relations with people throughout the city to invite Springfield’s leaders, influencers, and community organizations to serve as TTP Sponsors. TTP tasked Sponsors with inviting and compensating local Black and Latinx artists to create new artwork in variety of languages and artistic mediums, and to include evidence-based messaging around COVID vaccines and stopping the spread.

An initial project evaluation led by Jessica Payne, Ph.D. of Jessica Payne Consulting tracked process measures tied to recruitment, partnerships, sponsorships, stipends, artwork, marketing, and social media. JPC facilitated three focus groups with 10 TTP Artists and 9 TTP Sponsors (n=19) regarding the experience, creative process, and impact of participation. The evaluation sought to measure the following project goals:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trust Transfer Project Goals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1. ENGAGE AND COMPENSATE</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To support organizational partners to engage, empower, and economically compensate regional Black and Latinx artists of all ages to produce culturally relevant artwork that offers public health messages regarding community safety during the COVID-19 pandemic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2. SCALE AND SUSTAIN</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To establish and scale sustained grassroots communication structures that increase access for Springfield residents to accurate, culturally relevant, and respectful public health information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3. PARTNER ACROSS SECTORS</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To activate a network of sustainable, cross-sector partnerships among Springfield organizations to serve as Trust Transfer sponsors for projects that focus on use of the arts to improve community health and wellbeing.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
FINDING 1 - ENGAGE AND COMPENSATE: TTP organizational partners engaged, empowered, and economically compensated Black and Latinx artists of all ages in Springfield to produce culturally relevant artwork with public health messages regarding community safety during the COVID-19 pandemic.

- TTP successfully engaged Black and Latinx artists of all ages to participate and receive a stipend or artwork they submitted to the project. TTP successfully tapped a broad constituency of first time and established artists. TTP Artists included 75 individuals, aged 10-65, 90% of whom self-identified as Black, Latinx, or BIPOC. TTP Artists produced 100 works of art that include digital, pencil, ink, crayon, marker, acrylic, and watercolor on paper; chalk and spray-painted sidewalk murals; poetry and spoken word; music videos; and puppetry. They received $35,000 in stipends for their work—just under half of the $75,000 project budget. This was the first time many Artists—including youth and adults—had shared their artwork publicly.

- Serving as paid TTP Artists was an empowering experience that increased participants’ confidence as creatives, their sense of agency as community leaders, and recognition of the value of their voice and perspective. TTP Artists who participated in the evaluation focus groups consistently reported increased confidence in themselves as artists and creatives. In addition to valued stipends, the opportunity to reflect on their own experience and that of their community was a new and welcome chance to express themselves and develop themselves as leaders with strong voices.

- TTP Artists produced culturally relevant and accurate messaging regarding public health safety during COVID. TTP Artists and Sponsors described experiences of connection, recognition, and relationship building that inspired artists to create works that reflected their experience of themselves and their community. The project allowed participants to express pent up emotions and observations about the suffering, pain, and loss caused by the pandemic.

FINDING 2 – SCALE AND SUSTAIN: TTP established and is now set up to scale sustained grassroots communication structures that increase access for Springfield residents to accurate, culturally relevant public health information.

- Documentation and dissemination of information about TTP and TTP Artists and their artwork fostered broad engagement, trust, transparent communication, and the elevation of art as a vehicle for community conversation, communication, and transformation. The TTP website and Facebook pages were primary channels for project outreach and recruitment of Sponsors and Artists. Both sites saw significant hits, including return hit rates averaging between 2 to 2.3 among users. Widespread marketing to publicize project activities was complemented by information sessions at local community, faith, and arts organizations. TTP documented project engagement via digital, video, aerial, and photographic media. The project garnered widespread media coverage via local newspapers, television, radio, and community newsletters. TTP leads leveraged additional funding and the project received recognition on a regional, state, and federal scale as an exemplary strategy to link public health, art and community building activities during the pandemic.

- TTP Artists conveyed their continued interest and intent to participate in TTP and their expectation that the project will evolve as a conduit to address other community and health issues. All 10 TTP Artists in focus groups (100%) indicated that they hoped to continue to be involved in the project. Many spoke of new relationships and networking connections, expanded work opportunities, and ongoing ways they expected to participate in TTP and other community initiatives.

- Project leads intend to sustain TTP with a new focus on food security and youth mental health, along with continued participation in other community activities. Currently, these include the city’s annual Naturalization Ceremony and Veterans’ Day celebrations.
FINDING 3 – PARTNER ACROSS SECTORS: TTP activated a diverse network of sustainable, cross-sector partnerships among Springfield organizations to serve as TTP Sponsors for projects that focus on use of the arts to improve community health and wellbeing.

- Project leads successfully recruited and contracted with community leaders and organizations throughout the city of Springfield working across the business, faith, community, culture, arts, and education sectors. 32 community leaders, influencers, and organizational leaders entered into partnership agreements as TTP Sponsors, at an engagement rate of 89% with a remaining 11% expected to join the project in July or August 2021. TTP Sponsors and their organizations serve dominant BIPOC and/or mixed BIPOC/White populations and represent multiple sectors including faith (25%) arts and music (22%), business (19%), community centers (16%), education (9%) and non-profit business (6%). Sponsors ranged in age from 35-65, reflecting the broad span of influencers who lead key Springfield organizations.

- All 9 TTP Sponsors who participated in evaluation focus groups (100%) indicated that they participated in TTP due to established relationships and trust with the Project Manager and leads, and that they expected to continue participating as the project evolves in the future.

Findings from this evaluation indicate that the TTP has met its initial goals, and perhaps exceeded them. Project leads capitalized on their established trusting relationships to successfully engage organizations and influencers throughout Springfield and across multiple sectors. TTP Sponsors in turn capitalized on the trusting relations they had with individuals in their distinct communities to identify a cohort of TTP Artists who are predominantly Black and Latinx and of all ages, artistic media, and stages in their work as creatives. Resulting artwork reflects culturally relevant, diverse, and multi-faceted dimensions of residents’ experiences of the pandemic. TTP Artists unanimously conveyed that participation increased their confidence as creatives and community leaders with valuable skill, voice, and insight to influence community health. Sponsors and Artists alike have a significant commitment to TTP as a platform for continued artistic production related to ongoing and emergent public health issues.

In championing TTP Artists as frontline agents and activists for community health and wellness, TTP aligns with a growing movement in response to the pandemic. According to a report by the University of Florida, “Artists in the United States and around the world have mobilized in response to COVID-19 to enable rapid and widespread communication of health information and to help people to connect, cope, and be well in the short and long term. The arts are one of the most powerful means for communication and coping we have at our disposal today.”
Trust Transfer Project – Report of Evaluation Findings 2021

One of TTP’s greatest outcomes is becoming a catalyst for us to reimagine how and who we partner with to motivate change in our everyday lives. TTP bridges the gap between local creatives and organizational leaders, with the hope of building positive and sustainable cross sector relationships throughout the community that ensure the opportunity for continued strong collaborations on demand... to tackle future health initiatives that impact Springfield.

- Vanessa Ford, TTP Project Manager

INTRODUCTION

Overview

Black & Latinx communities continue to be impacted by COVID-19 at significantly higher rates, and to have lower vaccination rates, compared to state and national averages. With the closure of arts venues and cancellation of in-person events, artists have lost both significant income and the opportunity to showcase their artistic work.

In 2021, the Community Music School of Springfield (CMSS) and the Springfield Cultural Partnership (SCP) established the Trust Transfer Project (TTP) to address these patterns. TTP appointed Vanessa Ford, a trusted member of the faith community, a recognized civic leader, and prolific artist to serve as Project Manager. Forming a team, she and CMSS and SCP project founders used their established relations with people throughout the city to invite Springfield’s leaders, influencers, and community organizations to serve as TTP Sponsors.

TTP tasked Sponsors with inviting and compensating local Black and Latinx artists to create new artwork in variety of languages and artistic mediums, and to include evidence-based messaging around COVID vaccines and stopping the spread. According to Ford, “We trust each organization to do the work and allow them to choose how to root it in their communities. The organizations transfer that trust to their artist and youth participants, empowering them to make the project into something that is meaningful for them.” The funding stream for the TTP prioritized economic benefit for artists. TTP Sponsors volunteered their time and received mini grants to pay the artists they selected for their submitted work.

“Trust is the most important element of this project as we seek to create a new paradigm for cross sector partnerships,” explained Vanessa Ford. “TTP bridges the partnership gap among artists, the faith community, health institutions and community organizations as we come together in unity towards a common goal—in this case, Covid mitigation. Out of the darkness of this pandemic comes a shining ray of hope. Artists are lifted up and encouraged as their gifts make room for them to create as they help in the effort to stop the spread of COVID-19.” Providing a platform to affect change and support Springfield’s non-profit community organizations and working artists to promote health and wellness in their communities, the project sought to transfer trust from leaders, to organizations, to artists, and through artistic media, out to the broader community.

TTP received $75,000 from the Massachusetts Office of Housing and Economic Development’s 2021 Urban Agenda Grant Program, supporting community-based solutions to workforce and small business challenges. The project was inspired by The BeHealthy Partnership, a coalition of Baystate Health Community Health Centers, Caring Health
Center, and Health New England. It was an outgrowth of the Massachusetts Cultural Council’s CultureRx initiative piloted in Springfield in 2020, which brought together the Public Health Institute of Western Mass, Caring Health Center, and Community Music School of Springfield as design partners for this new statewide initiative that advances the role of culture as a protective factor for the health of everyone in the Commonwealth.

Trust Transfer Project Goals

1. ENGAGE AND COMPENSATE
   To support organizational partners to engage, empower, and economically compensate regional Black and Latinx artists of all ages to produce culturally relevant artwork that offers public health messages regarding community safety during the COVID-19 pandemic.

2. SCALE AND SUSTAIN
   To establish and scale sustained grassroots communication structures that increase access for Springfield residents to accurate, culturally relevant, and respectful public health information.

3. PARTNER ACROSS SECTORS
   To activate a network of sustainable, cross-sector partnerships among Springfield organizations to serve as Trust Transfer sponsors for projects that focus on use of the arts to improve community health and wellbeing.

Evaluation Methods

Local community research and engagement specialist Jessica Payne, Ph.D. and her firm, Jessica Payne Consulting (JPC) led the TTP project evaluation in collaboration with the project team. An initial evaluation phase took place after the project team had secured agreements with Sponsors, once Artists had submitted their work, and early in the marketing and dissemination phase. The evaluation design focused on establishing and tracking process and outcome measures associated with the project goals (see text box).

The evaluation tracked process measures tied to recruitment, partnerships, sponsorships, stipends, artwork, marketing, and social media. Focus groups with 10 TTP Artists and 9 TTP Sponsors (n=19) addressed the experience, creative process, and impact of participation. Analysis of resulting data used basic statistical analysis and thematic coding to identify patterns of perspective and experience.

The project evaluation entailed several limitations. Three focus groups were timed to allow as many participants as possible to attend, but necessarily limited the data pool. Since focus group attendees self-selected to participate, results may be biased towards those with strong investment in the project. The evaluation included process data associated with marketing and dissemination of TTP artwork, but the immediate and long-term impact of the project on residents’ views and actions relative to COVID were beyond the timeframe of this initial study and remain to be assessed.

This report presents findings from the evaluation relative to each of the project goals and Conclusions and Recommendations for continuation of the project. Appendices include the Focus Group Questions, and lists of Participating Artists and Community Organizational Partners.
EVALUATION FINDINGS

Finding 1: Engage and Compensate

TTP organizational partners engaged, empowered, and economically compensated Black and Latinx artists of all ages in Springfield to produce culturally relevant artwork with public health messages regarding community safety during the COVID-19 pandemic.

TTP successfully engaged Black and Latinx artists of all ages to participate and receive a stipend for artwork they submitted to the project.

- TTP Artists included 75 individuals, aged 10-65. Of those artists, 65 or 90% self-identified as BIPOC, including 51 who self-identified as Black, 30 as Latinx, and 9 as BIPOC (68%, 40%, 12%, respectively). TTP Artists included 10 who self-identified as White (13%).
- TTP Artists produced 100 works of art that include digital, pencil, ink, crayon, marker, acrylic, and watercolor on paper; chalk and spray-painted sidewalk murals; poetry and spoken word; music videos; and puppetry.
- TTP Artists received $35,000 in stipends for their work—just under half of the $75,000 project budget. Funds paid to artists include $10,000 for Chalk for Change installation of sidewalk murals by 7 TTP Artists, and $250 for each TTP Artist stipend dispersed to 32 organizational Sponsors. The project budget not paid directly to TTP Artists supported fees for Springfield-based professionals who 8identify as Black and Latinx and several specialists who identify as White.

Every city has its own culture and people have their own distinct culture, their nationality. When you ask people from the city to create the art, they’re really able to tap into the voice of the city, the heartbeat of the city. The people who actually live it, they are actually going through it. So you’re telling the story of where you’re at and what you’re dealing with. (TTP Artist)

People are dealing with a lot of things based on what’s going on in the world. So as small as you are, as old as you are, we still have things inside that you might not be able to verbalize, but that you might be able to articulate easier through art. (TTP Artist)

I think it was building the conversation. Because people still have their opinions on whether they want to get vaccinated or not... So it’s, ‘OK, even if I do have a different opinion than you, we can have a conversation about it and really get down to the facts of what it is and what knowledge we should be spreading.’ So from what I’ve seen in my experience, it was really just the dialog and not being afraid to talk about it. (TTP Sponsor)

I believed in it when I heard about it... We were trusting [the project leads] to give us their take and now their trust is in us to get our own voice out. (TTP Artist)

After speaking with the artist and giving her background of what we were looking for, I had to trust her creativity and what she was going to produce and I really enjoyed seeing what came from that. (TTP Sponsor)
Serving as paid TTP Artists was an empowering experience that increased participants’ confidence as creatives, their sense of agency as community leaders, and recognition of the value of their voice and perspective.

- TTP Artists who participated in the evaluation focus groups consistently reported that participating in the project boosted their confidence in themselves as artists and creatives.
- TTP Artists consistently described the opportunity to reflect on their own experience and that of their community as a new and welcome chance to express themselves and develop themselves as leaders with strong voices.
- TTP successfully tapped a broad constituency of first time and established artists. For both youth and adults, this was the first time many had shared their artwork publicly. Several adult artists had been creating work for many years, but felt recognized and seen for the first time because of being specifically asked by a TTP Sponsor to participate. Serving in this way was a source of validation and a chance to be creative while at the same time engaging in and helping the community.
- TTP Artists and Sponsors alike took special note, without prompting, of the importance of the artist stipend. Numerous participants noted that artists tend to be underpaid or not paid at all. Several TTP Artists said they would have participated without pay because of the project cause and the people who invited them, the stipend conveyed trust and respect for their time, talent, and investment in their community.

I had to trust myself enough to be able to come up with this piece, because COVID-19...is definitely a controversial topic. When you’re passionate about something, that’s when your confidence comes through. I [thought] about so many things that youth in Springfield are struggling with. My piece was not only to empower myself, but to help me trust and transfer my trust to the other people who may be able to relate to what my piece was about. (TTP youth artist).

Knowing that I’m a community speaker and that I have a passion for this, they just go hand in hand. So it gives me a little bit more of a confidence booster, and it makes this all worthwhile, because I’ve spoken to a lot of people and I’ve touched a lot of people, and I want this to be my statement. (TTP youth artist).

I want people to know that it takes a village. I want people to listen to me. I may be 17 and some people may underestimate me, but... the fact that it’s come down to a 17-year-old means I have to hit it in places where it may be controversial. (TTP youth artist).

Being a photographer, I usually get paid by my clients for the work that they want. I was asked to focus on a broad subject and it was up to me as an artist to really show my creative side and get compensated for being creative... Normally I would share my work for free if it was creative. But here, not only am I creating an original piece that I’m happy to get compensation for it. So that 2 was a win win. (TTP Artist)
The process and creation of TTP artwork produced culturally relevant and accurate messaging regarding public health safety during COVID.

- Participant accounts indicated that the project, the level of community engagement, and the artwork itself are grounded in the lived experience of people of all ages and backgrounds.
- TTP Artists and Sponsors described a process of connection, recognition, and relationship building that inspired artists to create works that reflected their experience and perception of themselves and their community during the pandemic.
- Adults and youth alike expressed their passion and sense of obligation to accurately depict the impact of the pandemic in their lives and community, or what one TTP Artist referred to as “my 2020.”
- TTP Artists described a desire and need to use art to express pent up emotions or observations about the suffering, pain, and loss caused by the pandemic.

This project gave me the resources, the opportunity, the time frame, everything I needed to express what confined me in 2020. If you lose somebody, to cry is medicinal. So I feel like this was my cry; this is what made me express and let go of it. Being able to put my 2020 on a canvas was pretty much what gives me the motivation to keep going along with this project. (TTP Artist)

I wanted my piece to be an eye opener for people who have suffered from COVID-19 or other events in 2020. Those people who are dealing with mental illnesses, physical illnesses; people who just bravely suffered. I want people to be able to see that. (TTP Artist)

I was honored and proud for my kids to create art, but also overwhelmed to find out how they felt about their 2020 experience. I had no idea that they felt so strongly about it. I thought they were just happy to be out of school, but I was so wrong. Sometimes we don’t ask kids their perspective on things, but this project made me think differently. (Parent of TTP Youth Artist)

The art created is an expression of the artists’ life stories and the particular ways that their community has been impacted by the pandemic. This project has provided an opportunity for Springfield’s Metro Center and South End communities to share and process the grief caused by the pandemic, reducing isolation and supporting each other. (TTP Sponsor)

The TTP allowed people to express what they needed to get through, what they wanted to work through, and their perspective on the whole situation, because obviously everyone’s being affected differently (TTP Sponsor).
Finding 2: Scale and Sustain

The Trust Transfer Project is a vehicle that can move forward to convey a lot of messages, a lot of things that we’re going through in the area. And it can tap into the voices that aren’t necessarily heard as much and allow them to express that voice in a way that other people can hear, and hopefully gravitate people together. I think basically once all of this art is disseminated, it’s going to do a lot for the culture and bring an emotional response (TTP Sponsor).

Seeing the message portrayed in different forums helps those who don’t think it’s a big deal. Seeing it from different angles can inspire them to open their mind to the message of, “Oh, this seems like it’s serious,’ and it makes them think about it more and ask questions. Especially for those who don’t just read messages. Seeing the visual helps a lot, whether they understand the language or not. (TTP Sponsors)

Some of the art pieces are actual conversation starters. The child who discovers, ‘I can actually do this stuff’ or ‘I like doing the stuff’—they have that piece at home that depicts the message of safety. If someone’s in the room, they want to know, ‘What’s this about?’ And it gives the child a chance to speak to the matter. I think the potential is there for the influence to go beyond appeals. Just the fact that I have the piece, it’s in a permanent place where others can come in and see it. It’s a conversation starter and that’s a way of getting the information out and in the minds of others. (TTP Sponsor)

Trust Transfer Project is a vehicle that can move forward to convey a lot of messages, a lot of things that we’re going through in the area. And it can tap into the voices that aren’t necessarily heard as much and allow them to express that voice in a way that other people can hear, and hopefully gravitate people together. I think basically once all of this art is disseminated, it’s going to do a lot for the culture and bring an emotional response (TTP Sponsor).

Seeing the message portrayed in different forums helps those who don’t think it’s a big deal. Seeing it from different angles can inspire them to open their mind to the message of, “Oh, this seems like it’s serious,’ and it makes them think about it more and ask questions. Especially for those who don’t just read messages. Seeing the visual helps a lot, whether they understand the language or not. (TTP Sponsors)

Some of the art pieces are actual conversation starters. The child who discovers, ‘I can actually do this stuff’ or ‘I like doing the stuff’—they have that piece at home that depicts the message of safety. If someone’s in the room, they want to know, ‘What’s this about?’ And it gives the child a chance to speak to the matter. I think the potential is there for the influence to go beyond appeals. Just the fact that I have the piece, it’s in a permanent place where others can come in and see it. It’s a conversation starter and that’s a way of getting the information out and in the minds of others. (TTP Sponsor)
TTP information and media were and continue to be widely disseminated via television, radio, the project website and social media platforms. The marketing team used a grassroots approach to circulate information and TTP branded posters of TTP Artists’ work to TTP Sponsor organizations, during community and organizational meetings, and via word-of-mouth.

Media coverage included an article by the Project Manager, Vanessa Ford in AfAmPOV, a showcase on the Connecting Point website, and coverage on MassLive, 22 News WWLP, The Republican newspaper, and WTCC 90.7FM.

Since June, the TTP website and social media platforms have been a primary channel for sharing and pushing out visual, audio, and written documents of TTP artists and artwork. To date, the website has received 2527 hits, from 1077 users, 1073 of whom are new users. The average of 2.35 hits per viewer suggests a level of engagement that brought people back to the site to learn and see more. This pattern also applied to the TTP Facebook page. Since early June, the page received 244 likes and 1965 impressions in less than 28 days. The average of 2 clicks on distinct images per day per person, and 10 clicks per week per person indicates varied engagement and return visits to the site.

TTP leveraged further funding and recognition on both a regional and national scale as an exemplary strategy to link public health, art and community building activities during the pandemic. The project received an additional $26,500 from the Davis Foundation and the Community Foundation of Western Massachusetts. Early on, TTP garnered focused interest from the MCC, which activated its CultureRx program at CMSS during a convening of state and national stakeholders who learned about TTP as an exemplary partnership addressing health and wellness through the arts. Tracking the project closely, MCC shared a TTP project video with the U.S. Centers for Disease Control (CDC), which expects to review the TTP evaluation report and showcase the project as a pioneering public health strategy.

With the pandemic, people were using TTP as a way to build whatever opportunities they could. There’s actually someone who’s going to compensate me for the work that I’m doing? Especially in the city of Springfield, there’s a lot of artists who have done their due with giving free art out. Artists are underpaid or not paid at all. So it feels good to be paid for our work. (TTP Artist)

All we ever cared about was to be able to create a positive impact for the generation coming after us. So you got to start small with a couple of kids, and then... you’re going to have five, then twenty. If you make it consistent, it will grow. I think there’s a lot of potential here. So many people are coming together [for this project] right now. (TTP Sponsor)

These children don’t even realize the talent that they have. So to bring out their talents and then make think, ‘Well, I didn’t realize I am good.’ Like one of them,... she did a beautiful job, then she’s like, ‘I think I love drawing.’ And doing that message, it’s making her actually do more. It does have a ripple effect. It makes others say, ‘Wait a minute, I want to try too.’ They are the future. You have to show them, ‘Yes, you have the power to make a difference because you have the power to see what your strengths are and be leaders.’ (TTP Sponsor)
TTP Artists conveyed their continued interest and intent to participate in TTP and their expectation that the project will evolve as a conduit to address other community and health issues.

- All 10 TTP Artists and Sponsors in focus groups (100%) indicated that they hoped to continue to be involved in the project.
- TTP provided relational and creative jump starts for Sponsors and Artists alike. Many spoke of new relationships and networking connections, expanded work opportunities, and ongoing ways they expected to participate in TTP and other community initiatives. For example, one TTP Artist began getting requests for copies of the work she submitted, which has drawn traffic to her website, revitalizing her creative practice and contributing to her livelihood.
- TTP has served to bridge many divides of race and ethnicity, age, and communal association. For example, one Sponsor who self-identified as White is employed at a prominent downtown business. His values aligned well with the project and he was enthusiastic about serving as a sponsor. However, he was not familiar with any youth of color in the city. The Project Manager introduced him to two young men who identified as Black. They and their Sponsor have formed a strong connection that they expect to continue, and that would not have happened without TTP.
- Project leads indicate their intention to sustain TTP with a new focus on food security and youth mental health, two prominent issues identified by city officials and documented in a 2019 Community Health Needs Assessment. CMSS has sponsored musicians to offer ‘placemaking concerts’ to create a festive atmosphere at food distribution sites as a way to help remove stigma around food insecurity, and expects to continue these as ongoing TTP activities. Other upcoming initiatives include engaging TTP Sponsors and Artists as part of the city’s annual Naturalization Ceremony and Veterans’ Day celebrations.

---

1 See Baystate Medical Center’s 2019 Community Health Needs Assessment.
Finding 3: Partner Across Sectors

TTP activated a diverse network of sustainable, cross-sector partnerships among Springfield organizations to serve as TTP Sponsors for projects that focus on use of the arts to improve community health and wellbeing.

Project leads successfully recruited and contracted with community leaders and organizations throughout the city of Springfield working across the business, faith, community, culture, arts, and education sectors.

- 32 community leaders, influencers, and organizational leaders entered into partnership agreements to serve as TTP Sponsors, at an engagement rate of 89% relative to the 36 invited to participate in the project. The remaining 4 or 11%, unable to participate initially, are joining the project in July or August 2021.
- TTP Sponsors and their organizations serve dominant BIPOC and/or mixed BIPOC/White populations. Sponsors ranged in age from 35-65, reflecting the broad age span of influencers and individuals who lead key Springfield organizations.
- TTP Sponsors represented multiple sectors including faith (25%) arts and music (22%), business (19%), community centers (16%), education (9%) and non-profit business (6%).

TTP Sponsors’ main reason for participating was their trust and connection with at least one of the project leads.

- All 9 TTP Sponsors who participated in evaluation focus groups (100%) indicated that they participated in TTP due to established relationships and trust with the Project Manager and leads, and that they expected to continue participating as the project evolves in the future.

Each participating organization is seen as an equal partner with complementary skills, resources and contributions that are valuable to the community. We convened organizations, youth and working artists, some of whom are developing group projects such as a breastfeeding mothers’ group at WIC creating poetry together. (TTP Sponsor)

The artwork and messaging coming out of this has been diverse, unique, and will foster connections and understanding across faiths, races and cultures. It uplifts the artists and enriches their communities, creating hope, pride, and visibility. (TTP Sponsor)

I had to trust the person that asked me to do it... That’s huge in any project, knowing that you trust the person, that the project is legit and it’s going somewhere. That allows you to take the step forward. (TTP Artist)

Knowing the people that ask you, their place in the community and having that foundation from working with them, I didn’t have to question what she asked for. I said, ’I’m going to create some work for you, without a doubt.’ So that definitely created that trust. (TTP Artist)

Some of these artists, particularly the young artists, haven’t done anything like this before. When they...display their artwork for the first time, they need to trust the individual that they are relinquishing their work to. That’s the trust factor that I look for. (TTP Sponsor)
CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Findings from this evaluation indicate that the TTP has met and exceeded its initial goals. Project leads capitalized on their established trusting relationships to successfully engage organizations and influencers throughout Springfield and across multiple sectors. TTP Sponsors in turn capitalized on the trusting relations they had with individuals in their distinct communities to identify a cohort of TTP Artists who are predominantly Black and Latinx, and include people of all ages, artistic media, and stages in their work as creatives. The resulting artistic submissions reflect culturally relevant, diverse, and multi-faceted dimensions of residents’ experiences of the pandemic. TTP Artists unanimously conveyed that participation increased their confidence as creatives and community leaders with valuable skills, voice, and insight to influence community health.

The evaluation found that TTP Sponsors and Artists have a significant investment to TTP as a platform for continued artistic production related to public health issues. Even once Artists submitted work, they continued to be in touch with their Sponsors, made connections and began collaborating with other Artists to produce new works, and saw themselves as poised to remain active in the TTP process. Project leads have already begun laying the groundwork of funding and networking to use TTP to catalyze future arts production and community engagement around food insecurity and youth mental health.

A motto used among TTP project leads is “Voice, Choice, Connection with Integrity and Agency & Activism.” The evaluation captures this motto in motion through the experience of TTP Artists and Sponsors. In championing TTP Artists as frontline agents and activists for community health and wellness, TTP aligns with a growing movement in response to the pandemic. According to a report by the University of Florida, “Artists in the United States and around the world have mobilized in response to COVID-19 to enable rapid and widespread communication of health information and to help people to connect, cope, and be well in the short and long term. The arts are one of the most powerful means for communication and coping we have at our disposal today.”

It is recommended that the project conduct further community conversations, focus groups, and public health data collection to measure response of Springfield residents to TTP’s efforts to offer public health messaging around COVID safety and vaccination. Specifically, future evaluation could help to determine if and how residents’ knowledge, attitudes and behaviors may have shifted as a result of TTP art and messaging, including data comparing testing and vaccination rates before and throughout TTP implementation. Future evaluation could also continue to track TTP impact on artists’ confidence, earnings, creative production, and connectivity with peers and organizational Sponsors. Continued tracking of Artist and Sponsor participation is also warranted to measure the demographic reach of the project.

APPENDIX A: FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS

1. Describe your role in the TTP.

2. Why motivated you to participate in TTP?

3. What stands out as the best part of your experience of the TTP?

4. What did “trust transfer” look like in your experience?

5. How did you and members of your community respond to the artwork and its messages – starting with yourself?

6. Based on your experiences, what influence did the artwork and/or TTP project have on the knowledge and choices community members made relative to COVID safety and vaccination?

7. Where specific messages more readily taken in by community members than others? This could relate to formats, artistic styles, content, and also settings and spaces where the project and the artwork was shared or discussed.

8. What did you learn about communication and influence between young people and adults in this project?

9. Did you connect with or network with people and/or organizations you didn’t know before? How did that happen and what difference did that make?

10. Sponsors: What worked well in the project process and communication - from when you initially heard about or were invited to participate, through to the completion of your participation?

11. Artists: What worked well in the project process and communication - from when you initially heard about or were invited to participate, through to the completion and dissemination of your art work?

12. What would improve the project and process for supporting you in your roles in the project?

13. Are there other ways we could improve the project?

14. Would you participate in the project again, and if so, why?

15. Is there anything else you’d like to share before we end?
APPENDIX B: TRUST TRANSFER PARTICIPATING ARTISTS

Marc Austin (@marc_austin_is_crazy/)
Amalia FourHawks
Ayah Awkal
Brianna Woodard
Chantal Nortez Jr
Chauncey Hill "Chauncey Crafts"
Common Wealth Murals
Cora Swan
Darius Johnson
Frankie Borrero
Gabriela Sepulveda
"The Ivory Bunny"
Geordane Blake
GiaDawn Smith
Glorimer Medina-Morales
Huda Sarhanl
Isabella Dell’olio
Jamielianys Rivera
Jashua-Mark Campbell
Joe Velez
Jordan Holmes
José Gamaliel Crespo Rosado
Journee Waters
Joy Smith
Jozafina Klimczac
Justin Haynes
Kareem Awkal
Ken Harris
Make-It Springfield
Marcus Holmes
Mari Chavez, Made of Sea and Stars
Minister Ebony Hopper Robinson Minister
Renee Ross
Nero (Nero @uncle_ro/)
Neville Brothers, Blues to Green
Ramiro @ramirostudios
Rebecca Eunoia
Renee Ross
Repo @reponueve/
Rick Marshall
Sheldon Smith
Sommers Smith
Sonido Musica
Souls @soulsnyc/
Steve @budahnyc/
Tafari Mills
Talyn Neville
Taylor H.
Wanda Dávila
Wane One (@waneonecod/ Warmington)
Zahide Cure
APPENDIX C: TRUST TRANSFER COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONAL PARTNERS

Abundant Life Worship & Praise Tabernacle
Art for the Soul Gallery, Inc.
Blues to Green
Boys & Girls Club Family Center
Celestial Praise Church of God
Common Wealth Murals / Fresh Paint Springfield
Community Foundation of Western MA
Community Music School of Springfield
Islamic Society of Western MA
Leadership Pioneer Valley Inc.
Legacy Sounds, LLC
Make-It Springfield
Marc Austin Designs
Mt Calvary Baptist Church
Mt. Zion Baptist Church
NAI Plotkin

New North Citizens’ Council, Inc.
New Valley Bank & Trust
RMC Strategies
South End Community Center
Spanish Christian Church
Spirit of Springfield
Spring of Hope
Springfield Cultural Partnership Incorporated
Springfield Technical Community College
Springfield-North Tapestry WIC
Square One
The Springfield HUB
Urban League of Springfield
Visionary Acts
White Lion Brewing Company
Whole Truth Temple