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Houston Endowment Inc. Awards \$1.4 Million Grant to Mid-America Arts Alliance to serve Houston Arts Organizations

Urban Arts Capacity Building: ENGAGE Houston

(Kansas City, Mo.) – Houston Endowment has awarded a three-year \$1,410,000 program grant to Mid-America Arts Alliance (M-AAA) to fund a unique project designed to build the governance, planning, resource development, and civic engagement capacities of small-to-midsized arts and culture institutions in the greater Houston area. Called **ENGAGE Houston**, this program will help staff and board members of 30 of Houston's urban arts and culture organizations to build a strong web of cultural leadership in Houston and empower those institutions to strengthen and sustain themselves and their community for the future.

M-AAA, a nonprofit regional arts organization serving Texas and four other states, worked in formal partnership with Houston Endowment in 2011 to assess organizational development needs and training preferences of an array of arts, history, and culture organizations in the Houston area. **ENGAGE Houston** will call on those assessments to create locally-focused, community-relevant professional development training that will provide cooperative learning opportunities and stimulate peer networking. This grant provides an opportunity for M-AAA to leverage its long-standing Hands-on Experiential Learning Project (HELP) model to address the unique needs of Houston's cultural infrastructure using an outcome-based evaluation approach to ensure effectiveness.

"We are so pleased to have Houston Endowment as a supporter in this initiative," said Mary Kennedy McCabe, M-AAA Executive Director. "The focused needs-based training efforts of **ENGAGE Houston** will ultimately result in strengthened cultural institutions – a benefit to all residents and visitors of the Houston area."

About Mid-America Arts Alliance

Mid-America Arts Alliance brings more art to more people by annually producing and managing more than 450 exhibition, performance, and professional development opportunities in more than 175 communities with more than 1,500 related educational programs. Each year our programs reach more than one million people regionally, nationally, and internationally. We are especially committed to enlivening the cultural life of underserved communities that lack the resources to provide cultural programs and services to their constituents.

Founded in 1972, Mid-America Arts Alliance is a nonprofit regional arts organization based in Kansas City, Missouri. We work in partnership with the state arts agencies of Arkansas, Missouri, Nebraska, Oklahoma, and Texas, the National Endowment for the Arts, the National Endowment for the Humanities, and the Institute of Museum and Library Services. For more information, visit <http://www.maaa.org>.

About Houston Endowment Inc.

Houston Endowment supports nonprofit organizations and educational institutions that produce and maximize enduring benefits for the people of the greater Houston area. Jesse H. and Mary Gibbs Jones established Houston Endowment as a private philanthropic foundation in 1937 to help create a community where the opportunity to thrive is available to all. For more information, visit <http://www.houstonendowment.org>.

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