

MetLife Foundation

DANCE / USA

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Dance/USA Receives Funding from MetLife Foundation to Support the New Stages for Dance Pilot Program

*Program will provide theater rental subsidies to dance artists and companies
in Philadelphia, Chicago, and San Francisco*

Washington, DC—Dance/USA, the national service organization for professional, not-for-profit dance, has received a \$150,000 grant from the **MetLife Foundation** to support the **New Stages for Dance** (NSD) pilot programs in Chicago and San Francisco and the third year of the program in Philadelphia. The program, which runs for two years beginning this May, provides theater rental subsidies for dance artists in these three communities, allowing them to increase their visibility and audience-building capacity by performing in major venues that would typically be beyond their financial means. As administrator of this grant, Dance/USA will partner with its branch office **Dance/USA Philadelphia**, as well as two member service organizations—**Audience Architects** in Chicago and **Dancers' Group** in San Francisco.

“In this climate of reduced resources, declining touring opportunities, and more focus on community development, New Stages for Dance will offer dance artists and companies the opportunity to solidify their home bases and strengthen their seasons,” notes Dance/USA Executive Director **Andrea Snyder**. “We are so pleased that MetLife Foundation recognizes this need and is willing to support this program in three selected cities. Our hope is that the model developed by Dance/USA Philadelphia and expanded to Chicago and San Francisco will continue to grow and assist more dance artists and companies in more cities over time.”

The high expense of renting a theater limits dance artists' and companies' ability to perform a regular “home season,” thereby reducing their capacity to attract an audience, build boards, garner media recognition, or amass a donor base. Dance/USA believes that home season support for dance artists and companies is critical to the survival of the art form.

“MetLife Foundation has a longstanding tradition of supporting the arts because we believe that it plays a vital role in enriching our communities,” said **Dennis White**, president and CEO of MetLife Foundation. “We are pleased to begin this new partnership with Dance/USA to provide opportunities for dance companies to perform in their own communities.”

Dance/USA Philadelphia, which launched its Theater Rental Subsidy pilot program in 2008 with support from the William Penn Foundation, serves as a successful model for the New Stages for Dance program. In its first and second years, the program supported 18 companies at six participating theaters. As it enters its third year of the program (now as part of New Stages for Dance), Dance/USA Philadelphia's director, Lois Welk, will serve as a mentor to Chicago and San Francisco in their pilot programs. In Chicago, Audience Architects has identified four venues that are under consideration for participation while in San Francisco, Dancers' Group has already selected its four theaters. Both organizations will also assist

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participating dance companies with Internet advertising and marketing opportunities mainly through their respective websites—SeeChicagoDance.com and DancersGroup.org.

The NSD pilot includes an evaluation component, with identical audience surveys being distributed in all three communities. A survey to measure the impact of the program on the artists/companies will also be developed. The results of both surveys will be compiled into a report and available on Dance/USA's website.

Details about how dance artists and companies may apply for NSD funding in each community will be forthcoming from the respective service organizations.

ABOUT DANCE/USA

Dance/USA is the national service organization for the professional dance field. We believe that dance is essential to a healthy society, demonstrating the infinite possibilities for human expression and potential, and facilitating communication within and across cultures. Dance/USA sustains and advances professional dance by addressing the needs, concerns, and interests of artists, administrators, and organizations. By providing services and national leadership, Dance/USA enhances the infrastructure for dance creation, education, and dissemination. Learn more about Dance/USA and our branch offices by visiting our website, www.danceusa.org.

ABOUT METLIFE FOUNDATION

MetLife Foundation was established by MetLife to carry on its longstanding tradition of corporate contributions and community involvement. Grants are made to support health, educational, civic and cultural organizations and programs throughout the country. Recognizing the vital role the arts play in building communities and educating young people, MetLife Foundation contributes to the arts and culture by focusing on increasing opportunities for young people, reaching broader audiences through inclusive programming and making arts more accessible for all people. For more information about the Foundation, please visit its web site at www.metlife.org.

ABOUT DANCE/USA PHILADELPHIA

Since it was established in 2007, Dance/USA Philadelphia, a branch office of Dance/USA, has served the greater Philadelphia dance community by providing centralized leadership and advocacy, offering resources that increase the capacities of dance artists and organizations, and enhancing the vitality and visibility of the professional dance community. Its mission is to advocate for dance as an art form and vital component of the Philadelphia cultural environment; to build the capabilities of dance artists and organizations, and to enhance the public's awareness and support for dance.

ABOUT AUDIENCE ARCHITECTS

Audience Architects' mission is to build new and broader audiences for Chicago area dance organizations by providing community-wide audience development initiatives for dance performances and instruction, professional development opportunities, and direct service to the field. Audience Architects was formed in 2006 to operate SeeChicagoDance.com, a comprehensive website that serves as an audience development tool to drive ticket sales and build awareness for dance in Chicago. SeeChicagoDance.com has proven to be of great value to the public and not-for-profit dance organizations alike, providing free visibility to 200 companies, venues, and presenters, and amassing a subscriber database of 9,000 dance devotees. In 2008, Audience Architects began representing Chicago dance companies at the Arts Midwest and Association of Performing Arts Presenters conferences, providing an affordable alternative to dance companies who can not afford to attend booking conferences or who do not have the in-house expertise to book tours on their own.

ABOUT DANCERS' GROUP

Founded in 1982, Dancers' Group is a service organization that assists and supports the San Francisco Bay Area dance community by creating a nexus of resources, expertise, and knowledge. Working to advocate for dance in the Bay Area and beyond, Dancers' Group assists in the creation and production of engaging, original dance. Dancers' Group's programs support the second largest dance community in the country through public presenting, print and online publications, fiscal sponsorship, re-granting, and advocacy work. Dancers' Group also serves artists at multiple stages in their careers, and assists dancers, choreographers, teachers, funders, dance companies, students, writers, critics, and audiences in the passionate pursuit and enjoyment of art.