

CONNECTING THE DOTS

Philadelphia's Artisanal Economy Context, Challenges, and Opportunities

Preliminary Takeaways from Dahlgren-Holiday Report
August 26, 2020



OBJECTIVES: *Phase 1 of the Research Assignment*

1. **Survey** a representative sample of Philadelphia artisans and service providers to better understand today's craft environment.
2. **Identify** the business needs of artisans, list the organizations currently providing services, and indicate where there are gaps.
3. **Summarize** examples of what other American cities have done to support their artisanal economies.

For the benefit of brevity and clarity, **artisan** will be used throughout the documentation as a shorthand for the wide range of identifiers that individuals use when describing themselves. This includes, but is not limited to, craftsperson, maker, artist, small batch manufacturer, sculptor, painter, ceramicist, and so on. It is not our intention to delegitimize any of these existing identifiers, to rebrand anyone, or to try to develop a new phrase for others to adopt.

Characteristics of Artisanal Manufacturers

- Company owned by skilled individual(s)
- Combine production, design, business, and training
- Small company (1 to 30) employing skilled workers
- Diverse set of talents under one roof
- Focused on high quality, diverse products
- Produce their own designs, create custom versions of their designs and produce other people's designs
- Work in small batches and small runs, often doing custom and one-off work as well
- Focused on ongoing innovation
- Businesses collaborate to meet demand
- Sales are regional, national, and or global
- Utilize triple bottom line and impact business models
- Depend on multiple markets (customer groups and sales strategies)



OVERVIEW: *Survey Activity*

From June-August, 2020, researchers surveyed 112 practitioners in the “artisan” sector, contacted 35 service providers, and conducted 25 individual and group interviews to gather information.



SURVEY RESULTS: *Barriers & Challenges Faced by Artisans*

- The general public, and other business sectors, perceive craft as a hobby, not a business
 - Artisans identify there are boundaries separating art, craft, making, etc.
 - The artisan sector lacks representation of the BIPOC community
 - Art and design colleges rarely offer instruction on how to make a living as an artist and designer
- Business have difficulty scaling up (e.g. investing in new technology, increasing workforce, reaching new markets, doing R&D)
 - There is an aversion to taking on debt
 - Covid-19 has cut off access to workspaces, markets, and peers
 - There is no central forum to exchange views

Note: The artisan community places a high emphasis on support services being vetted by other artisans.

SURVEY RESULTS: *Barriers & Challenges Faced by Artisans*

The survey showed artisans need help:

- Developing **Markets** for artisans' products
 - Improving access to **Capital** (loans and grants)
 - Providing training in **Business Skills** (e.g. business plans, pricing work, growth models)
 - Facilitating **Peer Interaction** (e.g. education, motivation, guidance, creativity)
- Assisting in acquiring **Real Estate** for studio/production (rental or purchase)
 - Supporting **Workforce Development**
 - **Advocating** for the sector (e.g. to the business community, local government, citizens)

Note: Of these services, practitioners saw **Access to Markets** as the greatest obstacle, and **Attracting Workforce** as the least significant issue.

OPPORTUNITY: *Local Branding Initiative*

Artisans identified a **Local Branding Initiative** [LBI] as a strategy and platform that could help the Philadelphia artisan economy and community.


Local Branding Initiatives in other cities create and implement multiple programs that help artisans face shared challenges and meet individual business needs.

Core LBI Programs:

- Online directory of makers
- Online membership platform
- Business development services
- Directory of technical assistance
- Marketing and promotion support
- “Made In” brand license

OPPORTUNITY: *Learning From Other Cities*

| LB I Name | City | Start Date | Capital Access | Market Access | Entrepreneur Education | Peer Network | Real Estate Access | Workforce Development | Advocacy | Number of Members |
|-------------------------------------------------|-------------------|------------|----------------|---------------|------------------------|--------------|--------------------|-----------------------|----------|-------------------|
| Bridgeway Capital Creative Business Accelerator | Pittsburgh, PA | 2016 | | | | | | | | 350+ |
| Design Core Detroit | Detroit, MI | 2008 | | | | | | | | 100+ |
| Made in Baltimore | Baltimore, MD | 2016 | | | | | | | | 200+ |
| Made in DC | Washington DC | 2016 | | | | | | | | 300+ |
| Made in NYC | New York City, NY | 2002 | | | | | | | | 1,400+ |
| Portland Made | Portland, OR | 2010 | | | | | | | | 140+ |
| Seattle Made | Seattle, WA | 2015 | | | | | | | | 600+ |
| SFMade | San Francisco, CA | 2010 | | | | | | | | 650+ |
| The Maker City | Knoxville, TN | 2016 | | | | | | | | 325+ |

The background of the slide is a complex, abstract composition. It features a dense arrangement of small, colorful geometric shapes, primarily squares and triangles, in shades of blue, yellow, orange, and black. Overlaid on these patterns are numerous long, thin, white paper strips that appear to be hanging or draped, creating a sense of depth and movement. The overall effect is a vibrant, textured collage.

Appendix A:

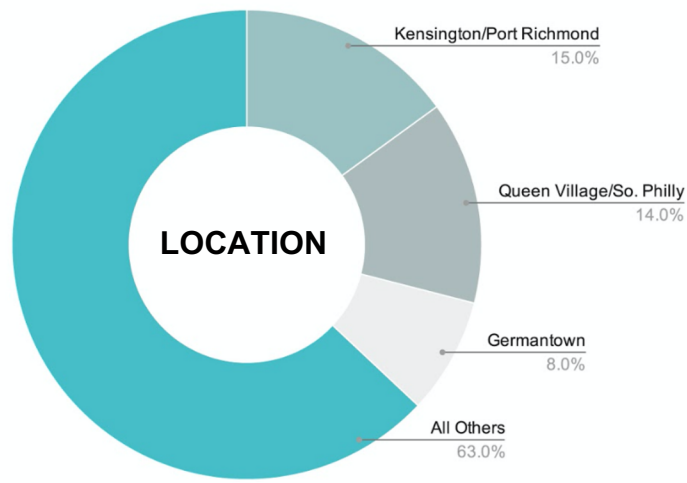
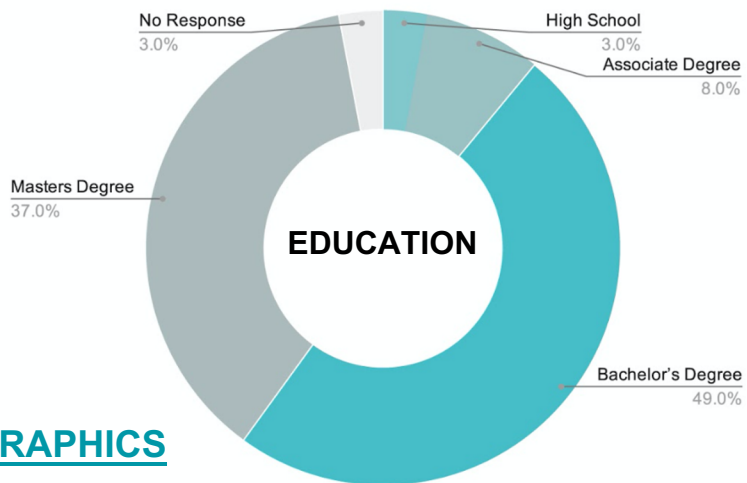
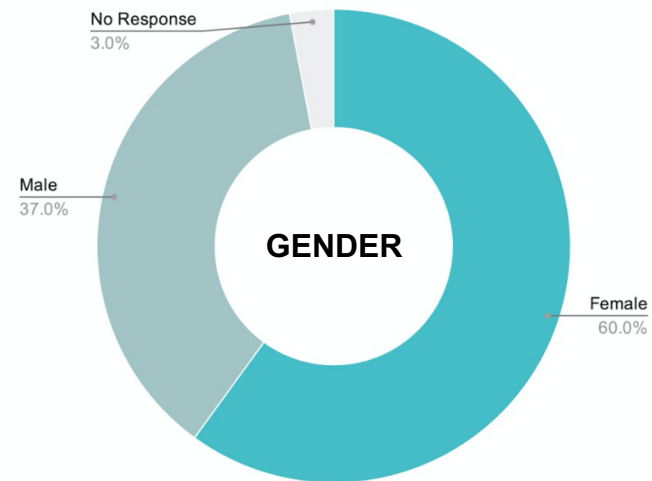
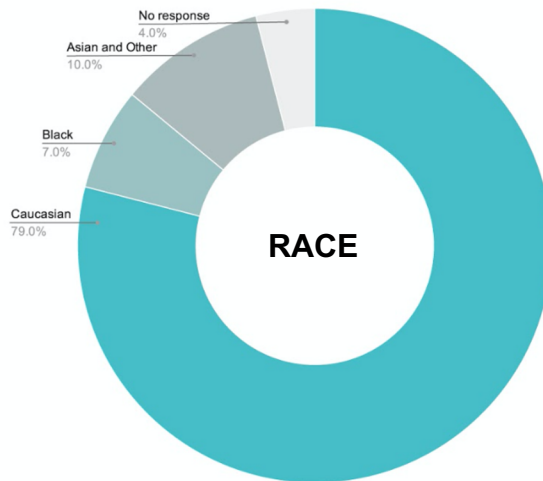
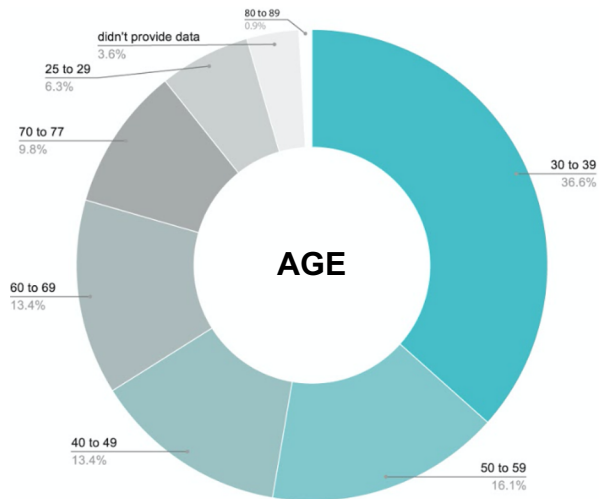
Demographic Data from Artisan Survey Respondents

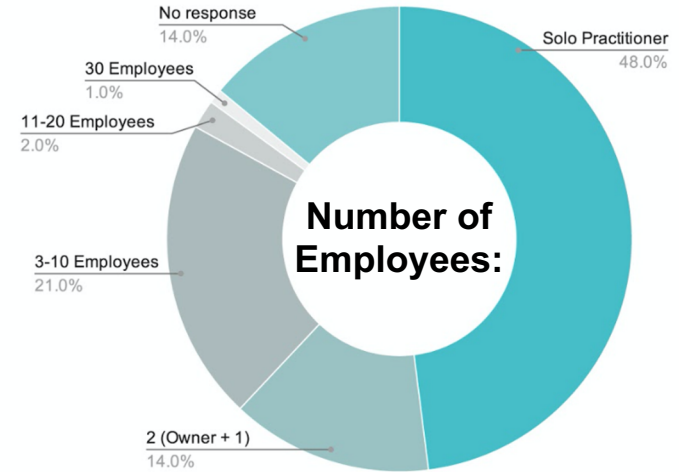
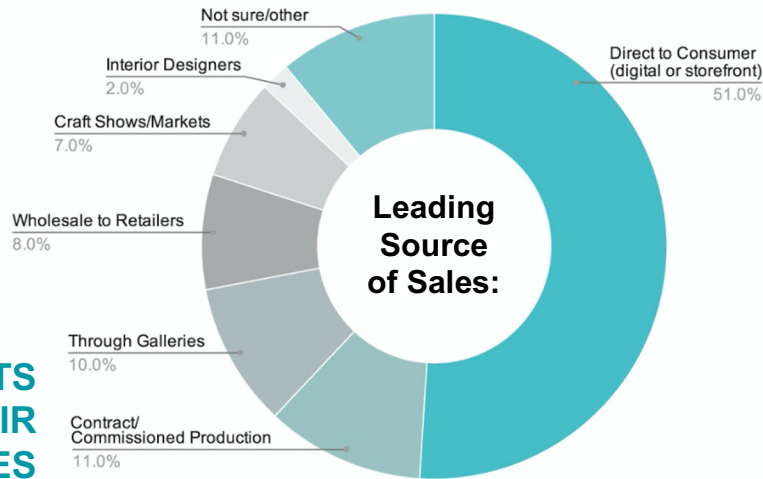
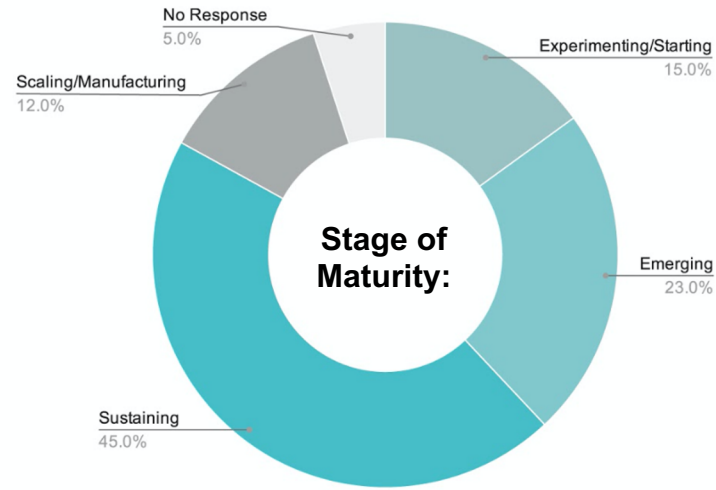
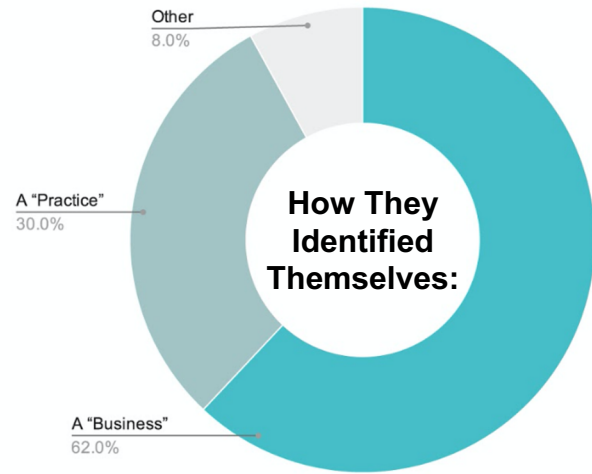
OVERVIEW: *Research Methods & Activity*

- Online Survey
 - 112 Artisans +
 - 17 Gallery Owner / Retailer +
 - 14 Service Provider / Non-Profit Organization +
 - 4 Designer +
- Group Discussions
 - 4 discussions, total of 19 participants
- 10 Individual Artisan Interviews
- 10 Supporting Network Interviews
- Literature review

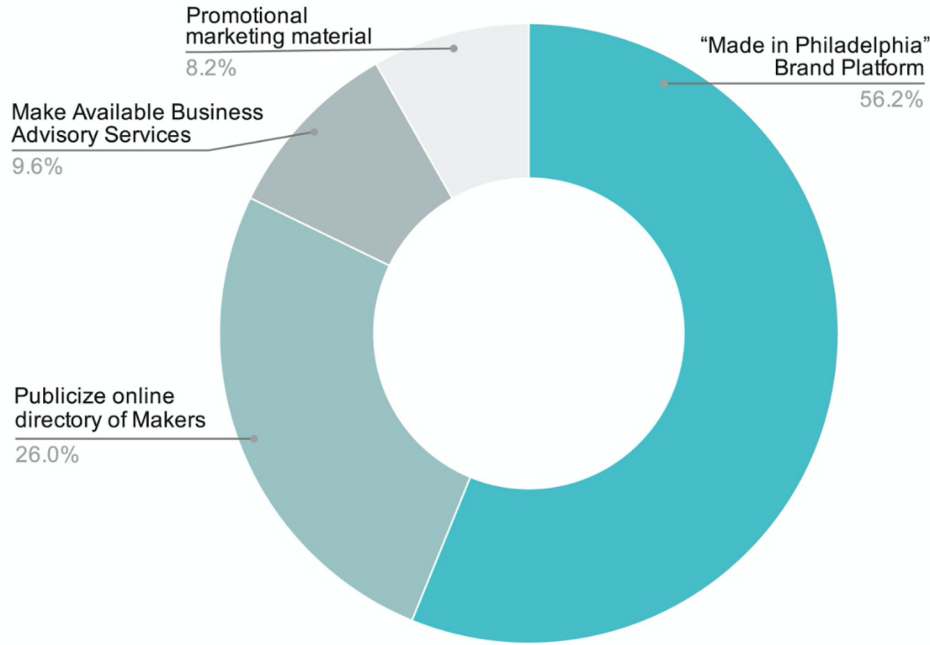
Objective: Determine what is needed to create a robust, city-wide ecosystem that supports the full artisan community, creating an equitable creative economy in Philadelphia.

DEMOGRAPHICS





**HOW RESPONDENTS
DESCRIBED THEIR
PRACTICES**



SURVEY RESPONDENTS ON NEW SERVICES

Which business service would be of greatest value to you?

1. Marketing
2. Accounting
3. Sales
4. Legal; Web Design (tied)

(Top 4 responses)

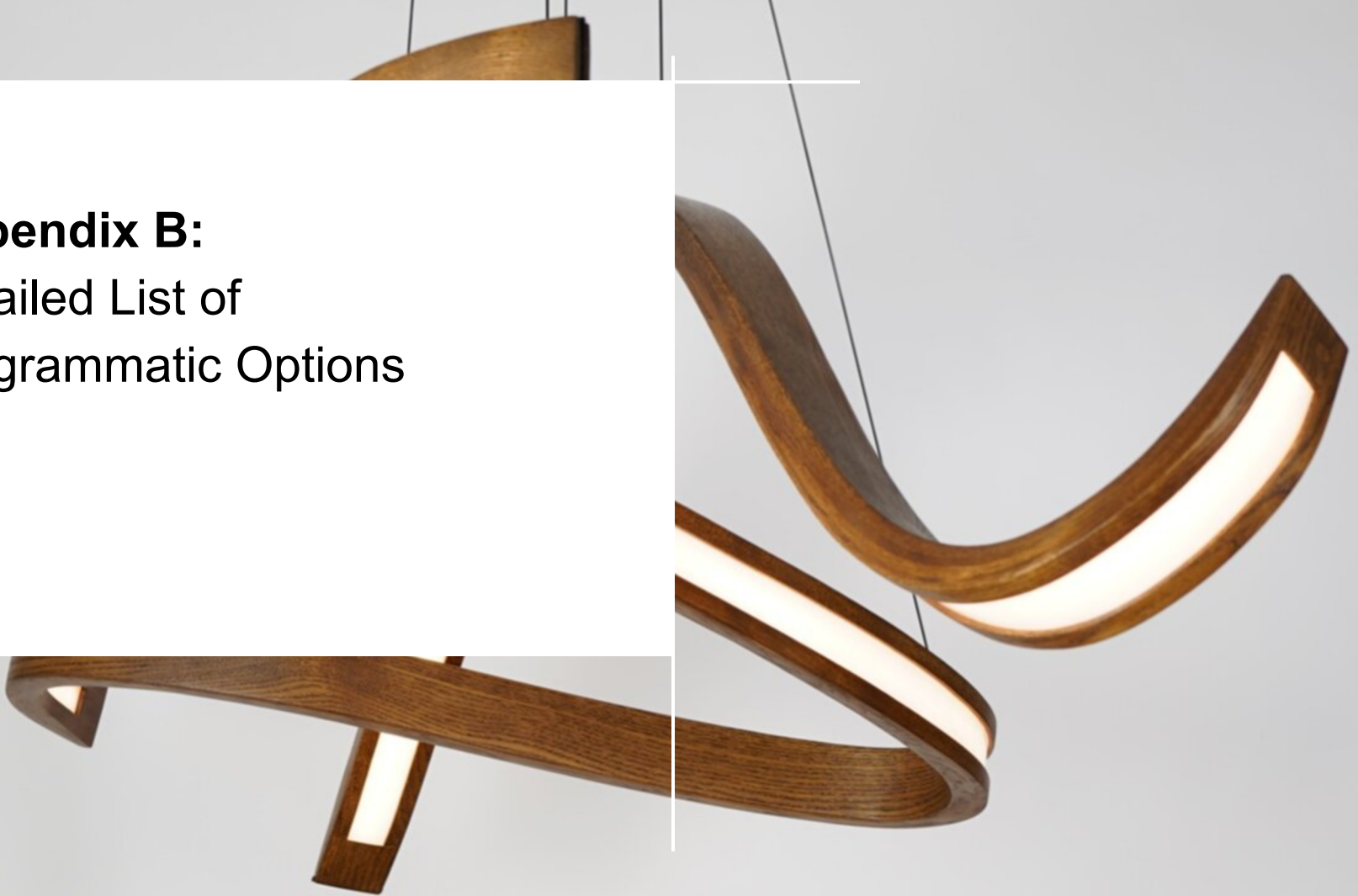
Which new services would you consider participating in?

1. Networking events/Peer Events
2. Online Directory of Makers and Producers
3. Online Directory of business Support Services
4. Made in Philadelphia Brand Platform
5. Promo / Marketing Events

(Top 5 responses)

Appendix B:

Detailed List of Programmatic Options



PROGRAMMATIC OPTIONS: *Access to Capital*

- **Resources Mapping** of capital access in region and beyond
- **Artisan Workshops** on business skills
 - topic examples: understanding capital, developing business models, pricing, etc.
- **Capital Providers Workshops** on artisan businesses
- **Crowdsourcing 101** training for artisans
- **Artisan Fund** partnership with a Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFI) to establish loan and grant programs for artisans

Note: Programs are listed in a specific sequence. First is considered least expensive, easiest to start, and would benefit the most artisans. The last is considered the most expensive, takes more effort, and benefits a smaller section of the artisan community. These sequence is applied to all the programmatic options.

PROGRAMMATIC OPTIONS: *Access to Markets*

- **Resource Mapping** of retail, gallery, and collector network in region and beyond
- **Fellowships and Residencies** with cultural sites in region for career development
- **Trade Group** to build supplier opportunities with commercial developers, interior designers and architects
- **Sellers Club** to improve number of skilled sellers of local products in region and beyond
- **New Storefronts/Galleries** increasing the number of spaces in the region where PHL-Made work is shown and made available

PROGRAMMATIC OPTIONS: *Access to Entrepreneurial Education*

- **Resource Mapping** of existing providers of technical assistance and professional services in region and beyond
- **Case Study Speaker Series** featuring local business owners
- **Artisan Business Workshop Series** on how to start a business
- **Mentorship Network** pairing experienced business owners with newer entrants
- **Scaling an Artisan Business Workshop** developed and delivered in partnership with Small Business Development Center (e.g. Temple SBDC)

PROGRAMMATIC OPTIONS: *Access to Peers and Community*

- **Peer Groups** involving monthly small gatherings
- **Artisan Database** to inventory artisans in the region
- **Buyers and Sellers Events** to connect artisans with buyers
 - examples: market faires, trunk shows, after holiday networking event, etc.
- **Biennial Artisanal Summit** bringing together all parts of Philadelphia's artisan ecosystem

PROGRAMMATIC OPTIONS: *Access to Workforce Development*

- **Resource Mapping** of organizations teaching skill sets for artisanal businesses
- **Open Innovation Event Series** with hands-on and virtual events oriented toward youth and young adults to “feed the pipeline”
- **Job Board** posting employment opportunities
- **Certification and Credentialing** involving artisan business owners developing guidelines for employment skill sets
- **Apprenticeships** for implementing the Certification/Credentialing recommendations

PROGRAMMATIC OPTIONS: *Access to Real Estate*

- **Resource Mapping** of artisan spaces and places
- **Real Estate Workshop** for at artisans interested in acquiring commercial property
- **Creative Placemaking** for artisans to work with real estate developers and owners to creatively use public and private spaces
- **Artisan as Developer Workshop** for artisans interested in building community by investing and managing real estate

PROGRAMMATIC OPTIONS: *Advocacy for the Artisan Economy*

- **Impact Statements and Annual Reports** illustrating the importance of the artisan industry and shared with consumers, city government, capital providers
- **Artisan Spotlight** digital programming featuring artisans sharing stories of working in Philadelphia and shared with Philadelphia Schools, consumers, and policy makers
- **Tours and Roundtables** virtual and in-person discussions, in artisan spaces, between artisans, decision-makers, and policy-makers
- **Anchor Procurement Engagement** committed to educating buyers at universities, government offices, and corporations on the impact of buying local
- **City Council and Mayor Engagement** committed to participating in council meetings to advocate for new policies that benefit artisans

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