

Georgia Council for the Arts FY25 Bridge Grant Panelist Biographies

Panel 1

LeeAnna Anglin

General Manger

Albany Symphony Orchestra

Dougherty County

LeeAnna Parr Anglin was born and raised in Albany, GA. She graduated from Albany schools, and after graduating, married and began her family. She raised five children and worked as a homemaker and home school teacher, seeing her children through graduation from high school. LeeAnna has worked in retail and operated her own business as an artist. She worked as a volunteer for Ballet Theatre South, the Albany Little Theater, and the Albany Symphony. She began working as an assistant to the Albany Symphony Executive Director in April of 2017 and began working in her current position as the General Director of ASO in June of 2020.

Stephen Barwick

Development Director

Callanwolde Fine Arts Center

DeKalb County

Nonprofit professional with more than 17 years of experience in nonprofit management, fundraising, event management, grant writing, operations, and program management. He currently serves as the Development Director at Callanwolde Fine Arts Center. He has previously served in development roles at Friends of Disabled Adults and Children, Dad's Garage Theatre Company, and Year Up Greater Atlanta. He has a BA from DePaul University and MA in Nonprofit Management and Leadership from the University of Georgia.

Jason LeBlanc

Artistic Director

Washington Little Theater

Wilkes County

Jason is the Artistic Director for the Washington Little Theater in Washington, GA, where his responsibilities range from coordinating productions to cleaning the lobby. He is a digital art & media specialist by trade. After graduation, he worked as a product designer for a local wholesaler. He has eight years of experience directing theatrical productions of all types and sizes. He has led casts to top placings at state-level competitions and has also judged regional One-act competitions. He serves as a theatrical consultant and dramatic coach for local schools and has led the theater for six years.

Melissa Macker

Executive Director

The 567 Center for Renewal

Bibb County

Melissa Macker is the founding executive director at The 567 Center for Renewal and has served in that role since 2010. She oversees The 567's art gallery, art education program, and other events. The 567 brings creative life to downtown Macon through exhibits, art classes, creative events, and small business development. Melissa has a Bachelor's degree from Auburn University and a Master's from the University of Florida.

Mandy Maloney

Former Executive Director, Rome Area Council for the Arts

Floyd County

Former executive director of Rome Area Council for the Arts (RACA) in Rome, Ga., Mandy Maloney is a Calhoun, Ga., native who studied Communications at Columbus State University. After spending time in California, she returned to Northwest Georgia where she has lived for nearly a decade. No stranger to the arts, Maloney made her acting debut at age 5 as Mrs. Claus. She has remained closely connected to her passion ever since, active in the Rome Little Theatre where she directs, produces, acts and serves on the board of directors. She has also been an integral part of local arts programming as a Young Actors Camp instructor and youth education instructor, and also as the Rome Little Theatre junior program director. Maloney attends St. Mary's Catholic Church. She currently serves as Director of the South Rome Early Learning Center. She has a Bachelor's degree from the University of West Georgia.

Marquitta Minniefield

Founder/ED

Minniways

Fulton County

Marquitta Minniefield is the Founder and Executive Director of Minniways, her creative business development and administrative company. A native of Ohio, Marquitta has a degree in media production, with a minor in theatre. She has more than ten years of experience in media production, event planning, administration, and business development.

Panel 2

Chris Davidson

Board Member

Rome Area Heritage Foundation

Floyd County

Chris Davidson is a nonprofit arts leader and coach with over 20 years of experience driving collaborative innovation across public, private, and nonprofit sectors. Hailing originally from the Midwest, Chris has lived in Rome, Georgia with her family since 2009. She has served on the boards of the Historic DeSoto Theatre Foundation, Rome Little Theatre, and the Rome Historic Preservation Commission, and she currently serves on the board of the Rome Area Heritage Foundation, as the President of the Rome High Theatre Boosters, and as the Grant Program Director of The Chiaha Guild of Arts and Crafts. She's spent most of her career in community building and the arts, most recently as the executive director of Rome Little Theatre where she led the organization out of peril and into a period of unprecedented strength and growth. She's also been lucky enough to dabble in TV and film alongside some talented and famous folks, though she is neither. Chris completed her undergraduate work in urban studies and business at The University of Tennessee and her graduate work in nonprofit management at Harvard University. A self-proclaimed data-fiend, Chris has proven success in out-of-the-box problem-solving, strategic planning, project management, and stakeholder engagement, and a track record for building and strengthening organizations in startup, growth, and transitional stages. With a commitment to fostering inclusive teams and communities, Chris seeks to leverage her experience and skills to support nonprofit organizations and help them maximize their impact.

Erin Dreiling

Executive Director

Atlanta-Fulton Public Library Foundation

Fulton County

Erin Dreiling believes in the power of libraries to transform communities. She focuses on strengthening partnerships between the Foundation, the library system, and local organizations to create positive change and build lasting support for our libraries. With a rich background in nonprofit management, Erin previously worked for the Community Foundation for Greater Atlanta in communications and programmatic positions. Throughout her tenure, she directed all aspects of marketing and communications for the organization, with a focus on brand strategy, messaging and relationship development, and managed several community impact programs and large-scale community events. Before joining the Community Foundation, Erin served in nonprofit administration and fundraising roles with several Atlanta organizations including the Alliance Theatre, the Center for Puppetry Arts and Actor's Express. She holds a degree in fine and performing arts from Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts and is certified in project management from the Project Management Institute. Erin is currently the president of the Parent Teacher Association at Burgess-Peterson Academy and is active in the East Atlanta community, where she lives with her husband, two sons, one dog and five fish.

Jo-Ann Lawrence

Grants Manager

Hammonds House Museum

Fulton County

Jo-ann Lawrence is a non-profit professional with experience in the theatre, ballet, and museums, as well as healthcare, child-welfare, early education, and disability services. Her expertise lies in operating non-profits. Specifically, program creation/management, strategic planning, board management, grant writing, grants training, grant making, and annual funds. A few examples of Jo-ann's past hands-on work are managing two historic theatres, running a city-wide arts education program in Chicago, managing a health system grant making program, and creating programming for youth in foster care. Lawrence graduated from Butler University with a B.S. in Arts Administration and from Columbia College Chicago with a M.A. in Performing Arts Management. Jo-ann recently formed Ascension Nonprofit Development, LLC to bring all of her interests and efforts under one umbrella.

Bridget McCarthy

Director of Engagement & Education

Stage Door Theatre

DeKalb County

Bridget is a multi-hyphenate theatre maker and currently serves as the Engagement and Education Director at Stage Door Theatre. Previous favorite credits include: Peter and the Starcatcher, Circle Mirror Transformation, Midsummer...Dream (Stage Door Theatre), Henry V, Much Ado about Nothing, Hamlet (Atlanta Shakespeare Company), The Little Prince (Synchronicity Theatre), Matilda (OnStage Atlanta). As a therapist and trauma informed theatre maker, Bridget has worked at the intersection of theatre and mental health with dozens of institutions and universities, including Shakespeare and Company, Alliance Theatre, Geva Theatre, Ensemble Theatre, Shakespeare Behind Bars, and many more. She has also worked with transformative justice focused nonprofits like Recovery Rising, Justice Arts Coalition, Connecticut Department of Corrections, Georgia Department of Corrections, and New Haven Housing Authority as an applied theatre facilitator creating original pieces of community engagement theatre. Finally, her solo show, Fat Juliet, has toured nationally and features Bridget's love of stand-up comedy, Shakespeare, and AC/DC. In 2021, Bridget partnered with trauma therapist Amanda Edwards to pioneer the role of Mental Health Coordinator, co-founding the Association of Mental Health Coordinators. MHC is a new helping profession within the performing arts supporting responsible and compelling portrayal of mental health and challenging or traumatic themes. This includes individualized training, dramaturgy, assessment, cultural intervention, choreography, and crisis management. Within this role, Bridget has worked with Netflix, PassionFlix, Discovery, and many independent and student film projects as their inaugural Mental Health Coordinator. Bridget holds a BA in Theatre and Spanish from Hope College, an MS in Clinical Counseling from New England College, and (as of summer 2020) is a candidate in Doctor of Behavioral Health program at Arizona State University. Additionally, Bridget holds certifications as a Trauma and Resilience Trainer (CTRT), a Certified Clinical Trauma Specialist (CCTS), and is a Certified Mental Health First Aid instructor with the National Council for Behavioural Health. In 2020, they were recognized by Young Nonprofit Professionals of Atlanta as a member of their "30 Under 30" Cohort.

Shanita Newton

*Owner, Creative Director
Newton Creative Consulting
Richmond County*

Shanita Newton, a native of Augusta, Georgia, is an artist, philanthropist, and visionary leader. As the owner and creative director of Newton Creative Consulting, she specializes in branding and web design, making a meaningful impact on small businesses worldwide. Additionally, she consults and manages a range of creatives and artists, including Trey McLaughlin and the Sounds of Zamar. Shanita's passion for arts administration and her educational background enable her to lead Creative Impressions, a choral-arts-centered non-profit youth organization. Through her leadership, she furthers the organization's mission to empower youth through high-quality choral, civic, and cultural experiences. Shanita holds a Master of Science in Business Entertainment from Full Sail University and a Bachelor of Science in Health Science with a focus on non-profit organizations from Columbus State University. She is a member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated, and a proud mother to her son, Harrison Spencer Newton.

Maria Zouves

*Co-Founder and President, Savannah VOICE Festival
Chatham County*

Maria Zouves is an educator, director, producer and writer. She is Executive Director of the Sherrill Milnes VOICE Programs – VOICEexperience Foundation and Co-Founder and President of the Savannah VOICE Festival – which she co-founded with her husband, Sherrill Milnes, to provide training for aspiring young artists and foster new audiences for the vocal arts. The Greek-American soprano has sung leading roles in the regional U.S., made her Carnegie Hall debut in 1997, and has recorded under the VAI label. Ms. Zouves has directed, taught, and produced events all around the world, having worked with the International Vocal Arts Institute (IVAI) in Montreal and Puerto Rico, the International Institute of Vocal Arts (IIVA) in Chiari, Italy, and at the Savonlinna Opera Festival in Finland. From 2007 to 2011, she served as Vice President and Associate General Director of Opera Tampa, the resident opera company of the Straz Center for the Performing Arts. She has taught workshops at Southern Illinois University, Drake University and served as interim opera director at Northwestern University.

Panel 3

Joseph Alonso

*Board Member
Georgia Humanities
Fulton County*

Joseph Alonso is a member of the Board for Georgia Humanities, where he has served on the grants committee, as a grant review panelist, and as a panelist for the Governor's Awards for the Arts & Humanities. He has also served as a Judge at National History Day Georgia and as a script reader for the Essential Theater Playwright Festival. Alonso is a founding member of his new firm. He is the former President of the North Fulton Bar Association, and a graduate of Leadership North Fulton and the Young Lawyers Division Leadership Academy. He has served as Board Chair for the Children's Development Academy (CDA) 2022-2023, a nonprofit organization in Roswell, Georgia. He has a BA from Emory University and JD from Tulane Law School.

Jennifer Kimball

*Managing Director, Essential Theatre
Fulton County*

Jennifer has been a production and stage manager in the Atlanta performing arts community for over 20 years, serving currently as the Managing Director at the Essential Theatre, Production Manager and interim Managing Director for Théâtre du Rêve, and co-producer of the Stripped Bare Arts Incubator program with Synchronicity Theatre. She is the Assistant Stage Manager for the Concert Hall at the Schwartz Center for the Arts at Emory University, a member of the Network of Ensemble Theaters, and most recently joined the Board of the Atlanta Green Theatre Alliance.

Shelton Land

*Executive Director
Douglass Theatre
Bibb County*

Dr. Shelton Land, PhD, is Executive Director of the Douglass Theatre in Macon. Land brings more than 15-years of nonprofit and performing arts leadership experience. Before joining the Douglass Theatre, he served as Vice President of Education with United Way of Central Georgia (UWCG). Dr. Land is a native of Virginia. He earned a Bachelor of Science Degree in Mass Communication from Norfolk State University (NSU), a Master of Social Work Degree from Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU), and a PhD in Public Policy & Administration with a concentration in Nonprofit Leadership and Management from Walden University.

Amy Loch

Executive Director

Southeastern Quilt and Textile Museum

Carroll County

Amy Loch is the Executive Director of the Southeastern Quilt and Textile Museum in Carrollton, Georgia. Amy has worked in the museum and cultural arts field for over 20 years, serving in many positions from curatorial to administrative. She excels at expanding community partnerships, organizational visibility, and increasing attendance and revenue. She has served on multiple local community boards and was the Treasurer of the Mountain Plains Museum Association. She holds a master's degree in public history and undergraduate degrees in History and Business.

Leah-Lane Lowe

Senior Director of Grantmaking and Operations

The Zeist Foundation

Fulton County

Leah-Lane Lowe is Senior Director of Grantmaking and Operations at The Zeist Foundation. She started her career as an intern with the Center for Women in Charleston, SC, where she fell in love with nonprofit work. Before joining The Zeist Foundation, she dedicated herself to fundraising for Fernbank Museum of Natural History, The CDC Foundation, Public Broadcasting Atlanta/WABE (90.1), and The High Museum of Art. For many years, Leah-Lane served the Cabbagetown neighborhood as the Chomp & Stomp Festival Games Coordinator, Sponsorship Chair, and the Vice President of the Cabbagetown Initiative, LLC. She currently volunteers as a grant reviewer for the Fulton County Arts Council, the Georgia Council for the Arts, and with the Toomer Elementary PTA. She is an alumna of the Atlanta Regional Commission's Arts Leaders of Metro Atlanta (ALMA) program. She holds a Bachelor's degree in Studio Art (Painting) with a minor in Women Studies from the College of Charleston and a Master of Public Policy (MPP) from the Andrew Young School of Policy Studies at Georgia State University.

Sementa Mathews

Executive Director

Lowndes/Valdosta Arts Commission

Lowndes County

Sementa Mathews is Executive Director of the Lowndes/Valdosta Arts Commission. She previously served as the Public Information Officer for the City of Valdosta. A graduate of the University of Hawaii with a Bachelor of Arts in Journalism, she also holds a Master's in Public Administration from Valdosta State University. She has served as Adjunct Professor in Communication Arts at Valdosta State and as a trainer in the University of Georgia's Carl Vinson Institute of Government.