



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **Common Field to End Operations in December 2022**

LOS ANGELES, CA – The Board of Directors and leadership of Common Field today announced that following an extensive internal review and audit, the organization will begin an intentional sunseting process and will close as an organization in December 2022. The Board of Directors unanimously approved the process and path towards sunseting on March 17, 2022.

Common Field will approach the sunseting process as a programmatic initiative with the intention to continue providing learnings, tools, and resources for the greater arts and culture field. The organization's leadership will work to archive and organize Common Field's life and work, ensuring its accessibility to the public beyond 2022. Common Field will also keep all programmatic and collaborative commitments for 2022, including completion of the fellowship program and a fall gathering in Seattle.

In a letter to Common Field's community announcing the decision, the Board of Directors and staff wrote: "Having considered several paths forward with trusted field colleagues, our primary funder and financial advisors, Common Field's leadership believes the decision to sunset holds the founding values of the organization most responsibly, and addresses all the complex challenges the organization faces intentionally. Sunseting this organization is not an easy decision, but it is the responsible one."

In late 2020, Common Field began an extensive internal review process instigated by feedback received from staff and constituents. In response to the findings of the review, the board transitioned to new staff leadership and the organization committed to conducting a 360° Organizational Audit. The resulting report provided Common Field's leadership with understanding of the organization's value to the field, but also uncovered evidence that expressed an internal culture of harm, missteps in the approach to supporting the community, and critical lapses in communications that led to a lack of attention towards ensuring long-term organizational sustainability.

During the process, Common Field's leadership also identified a set of critical, concurrent, and unforeseen structural and financial challenges that posed both a short- and long-term threat to Common Field's ability to embark on planned long-term visioning. The most notable of these challenges being the organization's inability to meet the 501 (c)(3) Public Support Test requiring that 33.3% of all earned income within a public charity over a 5-year period be from public entities including individuals, government, and municipal agencies, and/or public charitable foundations. Within Common Field's current structure and limited capacity and resources, the organization would be unable to meet this financial requirement and would lose its charitable status, placing its staff, network, and programs in even greater jeopardy.



Upon announcement of this decision, Common Field released its full audit report that provides deeper insights into the experiences of its staff and network, along with the challenges that led to the organization’s decision to sunset. The *REIMAGINE POWER: An Audit of Common Field’s Power Dynamics* report is available to the public at <https://bit.ly/CFauditfindings>

“Our hope is that the life and dissolution of Common Field will provide learnings, healing, resources, and inspirations to begin mapping new paths forward for our field,” the Common Field leadership team wrote in the introductory letter to the audit report. “We hope to frame our process, experience, and vision for this audit report in the spirit of being accountable, responsible, and reasonably transparent — tenets that have guided our work over the last 24 months that led to our sunseting decision.”

As Common Field moves through its intentional sunseting process, the organization plans to take its learnings as well as the lessons found in the audit report to offer a path forward for arts organizations that face similar challenges, and as a blueprint for the greater arts and culture fields to address harm to its traditionally marginalized communities.

More information about Common Field’s sunseting process, including a summary of important questions and answers about the process, is available at <https://bit.ly/CFsunset>

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### **About Common Field**

Common Field is a national network of independent visual arts organizations and organizers that connects, supports, and advocates for the artist-centered field. Launched in 2015 as a fiscally-sponsored project and then a 501c3 organization in 2017, the Common Field network has over 900 members across the country. Programs include national convenings, grants, research, resources, forums, meet-ups and advocacy. Our vision is to increase understanding, involvement and knowledge of artists organizations and their value, and increase their capacity through national connectivity, dialog understanding and support.