

Dear Seattle City Council Members,

I am honored to submit my application for the open District 2 position. I have been a resident of the Beacon Hill neighborhood for over two decades. During that time, I've been fortunate to form meaningful relationships with people throughout the Southeast Seattle community, from the CID to Beacon Hill, and from Columbia City to Rainier Beach. District 2 is my home, the epicenter of my own community, and the place where I've been proud to raise my daughter.

I have long been interested in running for public office. In 2006 I opened the Youngstown Cultural Arts Center and was appointed to the Seattle Arts Commission; a few years later I joined the Board of the Washington Bus and watched President Obama get elected. Each of these experiences piqued my interest in running for office, and I was preparing to run for Seattle City Council in 2013 before being appointed to lead the Office of Arts & Culture. While I hadn't considered running in recent years, I have felt called to this moment.

The re-election of Donald Trump presents significant and real threats to our community, and specifically to our most vulnerable populations—and I want to do everything I can to support the residents of our city with practical and compassionate solutions. The second reason is more optimistic: From the opening of Waterfront Park to the World Cup in 2026, Seattle is entering a World's Fair moment. In the coming years, Seattle has the opportunity to embrace its role as a beacon on the global stage, a worldwide leader in culture, creativity, and innovation, while also leading a transformational downtown recovery.

I have a extensive City experience that is relevant and useful to hit the ground running and be ready to work from day one: Over 15 years of experience working with and for the City, including 8.5 years as the Director of the Office of Arts & Culture (ARTS), during which I served in three different administrations under five different Mayors. During that time, I co-chaired multiple subcabinets, including Livability and Affordability, Good Governance, Future of Work, and COVID Recovery.

The issues of public safety, affordability, and homelessness are the most significant policy and funding challenges of this moment, for both District 2 and the city overall. I have a track record of effective collaboration and would build coalitions that address these key areas of need. Downtown recovery and the Comprehensive Plan are also urgent matters in the coming years. I will contribute meaningfully to each of these areas on day one.

Among the City's many priorities, racial equity and social justice are among the most essential to Seattle's thriving future. Both have been central to my personal and professional practice for my entire adult life. In 2006 I founded the [Youngstown Cultural Arts Center](#), an inclusive and multicultural hub of civic life. In 2008, I co-founded [FEEST](#), a nonprofit that empowers youth to organize and build their collective confidence and power. In 2011 and 2012, I helped to establish new multi-user models both [Washington Hall](#) and [12th Ave Arts](#).

While I was Director of ARTS, we established a national model for advancing racial equity through cultural policy. We restored arts education to all Seattle public schools through the [Creative Advantage](#), transformed the vacant third floor of [King Street Station](#) into a cultural hub that centers underrepresented artists of color, and created the first cultural space affordability program in the country, leading to the creation of the [Cultural Space Agency](#) PDA.

Since leaving this City job in 2021, I've continued to work in similar spaces as a consultant, developing a [Creative Economy Strategic Plan](#) for the Washington State Department of Commerce, leading the creation of a [Cultural Masterplan](#) for Waterfront Park and a [Cultural Strategies for Downtown Revitalization](#) plan for the Office of Economic Development.

All these experiences, opportunities, and relationships have prepared me to serve effectively and collaboratively as a member of the City Council, where I will build coalitions and consensus with all of my colleagues to pursue tangible policy solutions that deliver material outcomes for the entire city, particularly in Southeast Seattle. This collaboration has defined my career.

As a Councilmember, I promise to be a thoughtful and collaborative partner to my fellow electeds, accountable to the residents of District 2, and work hard every day to make the lives of Seattleites better.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this application.

Best,

Randy Engstrom  
District 2 Resident

## **PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE**

### ***Co-Founder and Principal – Third Way Creative LLC, Seattle, WA***

#### ***2021-Present***

Conceive, develop, and manage a consulting firm that specializes in cultural policy, racial equity, creative economy, and civic art strategies. [Projects](#) include:

- ***City of Seattle – Cultural Strategies for Downtown Recovery:*** Working under contract with the Office of Economic Development, developed a comprehensive plan including 5 goals and 27 strategies to transform Seattle’s center city through cultural interventions.
- ***Washington State Department of Commerce – Creative Economy Strategic Plan:*** In partnership with Western States Arts Federation and Cultural Planning Group, convened a statewide work group that defined the creative economy and developed a strategic plan to improve Washington state’s creative sector, economy, and workforce.
- ***Friends of Waterfront Park – Cultural Master Plan:*** Engage over 150 stakeholders via facilitated listening sessions to produce a values-driven plan that will guide the opening, programming, and visitor experience of the newly redeveloped Waterfront Park in Seattle.
- ***City of Ottawa – Reflection/Inflection Project:*** Led an Artist team to develop a Civic Art Strategy and cultural recovery plan for Canada’s capital city which included extensive community engagement and program development.
- ***Western States Arts Federation –Creative Vitality Summit:*** Worked with WESTAF’s Director of Impact and Public Policy to design, program, and facilitate a series of two-day convenings of national practitioners around creative economy, cultural policy and racial equity between 2021 and 2024.

### ***Adjunct Faculty – Seattle University School of Arts Leadership, Seattle, WA***

#### ***2021-Present***

Teach in both the undergraduate and graduate Arts Leadership programs. Classes taught include:

- ***Resource Development in the Arts***
- ***Public Policy and Advocacy in the Arts***

### ***Director, Office of Arts and Culture – City of Seattle, Seattle, WA***

#### ***2012-2021***

Led Seattle’s civic arts agency, managing a staff of 45 with an annual budget of \$16 million; oversaw 8 grant funding programs, managed the City’s public art program, and developed and implemented new initiatives related to arts education, cultural space affordability, racial equity and creative economy:

- ***Increased budget by 150%*** - Successfully worked with 3 Mayor’s Administrations, the City Budget Office, the City Council and the Seattle Arts Commission to grow the Office’s budget from \$6 million in 2012 to \$16 million budget in 2020.
- ***Built strong relationships with multiple agencies*** – Established deep and lasting partnerships with multiple City departments, including Economic Development, Transportation, Education, Human Services, Civil Rights, Waterfront, and Planning and Community Development; created multiple shared positions in other departments to foster collective impact. Co-chaired multiple subcabinets including Youth Opportunity, Future of Work, Affordability and Livability, and Good Governance.
- ***Planned, launched and developed a comprehensive Arts Education Initiative*** – The Creative Advantage is a collective impact partnership between the Office of Arts & Culture,

Seattle Public Schools, and the Seattle Foundation to ensure equitable access to arts education for every student in Seattle. It has successfully restored arts education to every public school in Seattle.

- **Established a focus on Cultural Space Affordability** – Created a program to help artists and cultural organizations preserve and expand access to affordable space, including funding resources, land use tools, and utilization of city owned property; through this area of work the Office of Arts & Culture relocated into the long vacant third floor of King Street Station in 2019, establishing a permanent and affordable cultural hub for the community.
- **Develop and implement several programs focused on Race and Social Justice** – In close partnership with the Office for Civil Rights and building off of the City’s Race and Social Justice Initiative, the Office established a number of programs to advance this work including trainings for staff and the arts community, dedicated funding, and a nationally celebrated cohort project.
- **COVID Response and Recovery** – Served as lead for philanthropic partnerships and community recovery throughout 2020. Co-Authored Seattle Recovery plan with more than 200 staff and partners.

**Founder and Principal – Reflex Strategies, Seattle, WA  
2011-2012**

Conceived, developed, and managed a consulting firm that specialized in strategic planning, facilitation, and organizational development for cultural and community-based organizations and public agencies. Projects included:

- **Central District Forum for Arts and Ideas - Interim Director:** Worked with the Board to execute an organizational turnaround, bringing financial and operational sustainability to one of Seattle’s only organizations dedicated to presenting the work of Black Artists.
- **Historic Seattle/4Culture - Project Facilitator:** Worked with King County’s arts agency and Seattle’s most established preservation organization to steward, facilitate, and create an operational plan for the historic Washington Hall building as it is transformed into a dynamic cultural performance and gathering space in Seattle’s Central District.
- **Capitol Hill Housing – Project Facilitator:** Helped a local public development association plan and create 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue Arts, a multi-user arts facility in Seattle’s Capitol Hill Neighborhood.
- **W.K. Kellogg Foundation - Project Manager:** Developed a replication manual and training curriculum for the youth-led Food Empowerment Education Sustainability Team (FEEST) program; ran a series of trainings in 9 cities nation-wide to assist in their development of a similar program.
- **Northwest Folklife - Retreat Planning and Facilitation:** Worked with board and staff to plan and facilitate an annual organizational retreat, helping to refine vision, mission, goals, and economic model.
- **Seattle Art Museum - Facilitator:** Worked with SAM and other partners to facilitate a retreat and recommend next steps for the Community of Thinkers collaborative, seeking to improve access to quality creative learning opportunities for young people.

**Founding Director - Youngstown Cultural Arts Center, Seattle, WA  
2005- 2011**

**Deputy Director - Delridge Neighborhoods Development Association (DNDA), Seattle, WA  
2009 - 2011**

Established and oversaw all operational aspects of a 25,000 sq ft Cultural Arts Center comprised of various hourly and daily rental spaces as well as 7 year-round tenant organizations

- Acted as a liaison and facilitator between DNDA, the Artist tenants, the Cultural Center tenants and program partners, community organizations, and the wider arts and civic community.

- Oversaw more than 20 staff including the Program Director, Operations Director, Rental Manager, House Managers, Technical Staff, and Interns.
- Prepared financial reports and develop the Center’s annual operating budget (\$350,000-\$550,000).
- Oversaw the maintenance and utilization of facilities which include the theater, media lab, recording studio, and workshop.
- Managed the preparation, coordination and implementation of special events and programs.
- Oversaw fundraising and development efforts.
- Developed, recommend and implemented long-range planning.
- Developed and planed partnerships.

***Interim Director - King County Food and Fitness Initiative (KCFFI), Seattle, WA  
2009-2010***

Led a multi-sector systems and policy change collaborative as part of a Kellogg Foundation funded national initiative, from its planning phase to its \$1.2 million implementation

- Served as conduit and primary relationship steward between national funder, local stakeholders, and regional media.
- Managed staff, youth, volunteers, and agency partners to meet the goals and objectives of the KCFFI Community Action Plan.
- Facilitated all Leadership Council and Strategy Action Team meetings.
- Prepared and managed all budgets.
- Ensured that youth and community voices were represented in all facets of the work.
- Worked with Initiative partners to prepare a successful Communities Putting Prevention to Work (CPPW) application for Public Health Seattle King County; Awarded \$150,000.
- Built and maintained strategic partnerships across the food and fitness sectors, both regionally and nationally.

**EDUCATION**

*Masters in Public Administration*

December 2009, University of Washington, Evans School of Governance and Public Policy, Seattle, WA

*Bachelor of Arts in Public Affairs*

June 1999, The Evergreen State College, Olympia, WA

**AWARDS**

- Network of Schools of Public Policy, Affairs, and Administration: **Alumni Spotlight Award** (2019)
- City Arts Magazine: **Future 20: The Advocate** (2011)
- Americans for the Arts: **Emerging Leader Award** (2009)
- Puget Sound Business Journal: **40 Under 40** (2009)

**VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE**

- LANGSTON – Board Member (2016-Present)
- Cultural Space Agency – *Co-Founder and Board Member* (2020 – 2024)
- Grantmakers in the Arts – *Board Member* (2016-2023), *Chair, Racial Equity Committee* (2018-Present)
- Getting Creative Workers to Work Coalition – *Member* (2020-2022), *Steering Committee* (2021-2022)
- US Urban Arts Federation – *Member* (2012-2021), *Co-Chair* (2016-2019)

- Food Empowerment Education Sustainability Team (FEEST) – *Co-Founder, Board Member* (2012-2019), *President* (2012-2015)
- Washington Bus Educational Fund- *Board Member* (2009 - 2015), *Board President* (2011-2014)
- Seattle Arts Commission – *Member* (2005 -2011); *Chair* (2011), *Vice-Chair* (2009- 2010)  
*Chair, Facilities and Economic Development Committee* (2006-2010)
- One Reel – *Board Member* (2011- 2012)
- Delridge District Council - *Board Member* (2008 - 2011)
- Puget Sound Food Policy Regional Council - *Member* (2010 - 2011)
- Artopia Festival/Georgetown Carnival- *Production Manager* (2006-2011)
- 4Culture Real Estate Task Force - *Member* (2008-2009)
- Cultural Overlay District Advisory Committee - *Co-Chair* (2008-2009)
- Greater Duwamish District Council - *Board Member* (2006-2008)



**EXPLANATIONS FOR RESPONSES ON PAGE 1:** (Use additional sheets if necessary. For assistance, please call the Seattle Ethics and Elections Commission at 206-684-8500.)

1. Please provide the name and address of each person or entity for which you answered Yes on page 1

**Name:** Randy Engstrom (Third Way Creative)

**Address:**



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2. Please provide the name and address of each entity for which you answered Yes on page 1.

**Name:** Randy Engstrom (Third Way Creative)

**Address:**



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3. Please indicate (i) the name of the person holding the position (you or an immediate family member); (ii) the title of the office, directorship, trusteeship or employment held; and (iii) the name and address of the entity.

**Person holding the position:** Randy Engstrom

**Position held with entity:** Director (2012-2021)

**Entity name:** City of Seattle, Office of Arts & Culture

**Entity address:**



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4. Please describe the relationships, employment history or financial interests for which you answered YES on page 1.

As principal of Third Way Creative, I held a contract with the Office of Economic Development from 2023-2024 to produce a Cultural Strategies for Downtown Recovery plan.

From 2012-2021 I served as Director of the Office of Arts & Culture (ARTS).