

# Company One Theatre



**FOUNDED:** 1998

**CURRENT ORGANIZATION BUDGET:** \$530,950

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Company One Theatre was founded in 1998 to unify Boston's diverse communities through innovative, socially provocative performance and the development of civically engaged artists. Boston has more arts organizations per capita than any other city in the United States, and yet arts participation is limited to a narrow segment of the city's population. To address the imbalance of participation, inclusion, and access to the arts, Company One intentionally brings together residents from a wide range of backgrounds to create and participate in relevant, contemporary theatre. The Company provides a rare and vital community space where audience, staff, actors, and students represent and reflect the true population of the city. Building on shared artistic experience and broadened arts participation, Company One Theatre is uniquely positioned to build community across social divides and effect social change.

- Only 11% of Boston arts audiences are people of color, while the resident population is 53%; the median age in the city is 31, and yet less than 34% of traditional arts audiences are under the age of 45
- 31% of Company One audiences are people of color, 55% are under the age of 35, and 31% are low income

## Investment Opportunity

Company One Theatre seeks an investment of \$800,000 over the next two years to increase its diverse audience base and to double the number of students participating in its award winning education programs. In order to accomplish these goals, the organization will invest in staff infrastructure to build capacity for expanded educational programming, and develop and staff innovative marketing and outreach programs for growing and broadening audience participation.

## Two-Year Goals

- Increase paid FTEs from six to fifteen
- Increase the number of Boston public school students enrolled in *Stage One* education programs from 400 to 800
- Increase the number of high school students participating in the *Stage One* apprentice/workforce development program
- Expand reach and impact by growing audience size from 9,000 to 18,000 while maintaining diversity

## Ways to Invest

### FINANCIAL

- \$25,000 funds the *Stage One* education program in one Boston public school
- \$15,000 funds a two-year development process for a world premiere production written by a woman playwright in the BCA PlayLab
- \$3,000 funds a school year stipend for one student apprentice

### IN-KIND

- Hosting a fundraising event
- Set building and rehearsal space
- IT support
- Catering sponsorship for youth events
- Office furniture
- Housing and travel for visiting artists



## Leadership & Governance

Co-Founder and Artistic Director Shawn LaCount holds an M.A.Ed. in theatre education from Clark University and an MFA in Directing from UMass, Amherst. He is the recipient of two Elliot Norton Awards for Outstanding Director. He has taught at the Boston Arts Academy, Huntington Theatre Company, Tufts University, Stage One, and UMass, Amherst.

### Company One Board of Directors, Executive Committee

Joan Lancourt, *Kennedy School of Government (retired)*  
Victoria Marsh, *WGBH*  
Elisa Choi, *Harvard Medical School*  
Will Tilton, *Shire Pharmaceuticals*  
Salma Abu Ayyash, *Roxbury Community College*  
Sarah Champnois, *Company One Theatre Managing Director*

“  
The Boston [theatre] scene today is open to a much more diverse set of opportunities . . . to embrace a wide open dialogue on the subjects of race, ethnicity, and identity . . . a good part of the story rests with the emergence of Company One.

ED SIEGEL, WBUR



## THE COMPANY ONE THEATRE MODEL



## THEATRE FOR SOCIAL CHANGE

**Inclusion:** Company One produces 4–6 plays and 1–3 workshops of new plays per season. Artistic leadership select plays that portray authentic stories and experiences from marginalized populations that are rarely seen on traditional stages. Casting is done locally to contribute to the city’s economic engine. Pre-professional actors and theatre artists, particularly people of color, are mentored and supported through the company’s extensive artistic development process. Company One leads the BCA PlayLab, an incubator for developing new work by women playwrights to promote the voices of women in the theater. Finally, Company One offers two “Pay-What-You-Want” performances of each production, ensuring that theatre is truly accessible to all.

**Relevance:** The company presents works that deal with pressing social issues relevant to our contemporary experience. Company One provides a vital forum for public engagement and civic dialogue through shared artistic experience and interactive community events offered free of charge in conjunction with each production.

**Collaboration:** The company partners with schools, cultural and community organizations for each production. Partnerships aid the company to find talent in diverse populations and to reach diverse audiences. Company One employs the *C1 Street Team*, a group of young adults charged with building community partnerships and organizing inclusive events around the populations and social issues connected to each play produced in the season.

**Excellence:** Since 2007, the company has been awarded 15 Eliot Norton Awards and 10 Independent Reviewers of New England awards. Excellence is vital to achieving the mission of the organization. Company One has proven that when theatre is inclusive, quality is enhanced rather than diminished.



I am a big fan of Company One’s work. Not only do they work incredibly hard as a company to make sure they are providing opportunities to playwrights, directors, actors, and designers of all genders, races, and backgrounds, but they also work to make theatre accessible.

BROADWAY WORLD



## MENTORING AND EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Forty-three percent of Boston high school students receive no arts education during four years of schooling, despite studies showing that arts curriculum leads to higher academic achievement for students in low-income neighborhoods. Company One Theatre’s educational program, *Stage One*, addresses this need by providing arts courses in six Boston public schools that lack arts curriculum. *Stage One* uses theatre as a means to build self-confidence, expand cultural awareness, and inspire creative and original thought. The program provides school day instruction focusing on student written work and performance, culminating in school wide performances. *Stage One* is a recipient of the Massachusetts Cultural Council’s Gold Star Award.

Company One partnered with the Boston Department of Youth Employment and Engagement to create the *Stage One Apprentice Program*, which offers current Boston public high school students school year and summer employment in a positive, creative, and safe space. Youth in the apprentice program gain valuable professional work experience as administrators, technicians, designers, and artists at Company One. Senior staff mentor apprentices in the areas of writing, management, and resume development.

## FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

Company One currently operates on an annual budget of \$530,000, which does not include over \$275,000 in donated staff time. In order to create a sustainable business model that will continue to grow and thrive beyond the founders’ tenure, Company One needs to increase earned revenue and diversify funding sources to pay for all staff salaries.

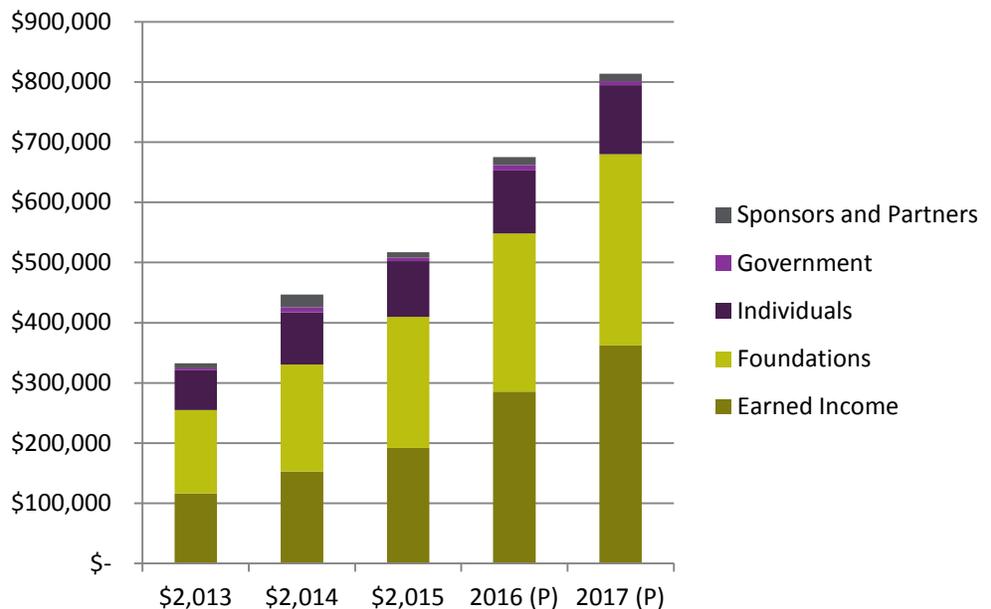
### Key Investors

- BOSTON CULTURAL COUNCIL
- EDVESTORS’ BPS ARTS EXPANSION FUND
- MABEL LOUISE RILEY FOUNDATION
- THE BOSTON FOUNDATION
- THE SHUBERT FOUNDATION
- TOMFOHRDE FOUNDATION

### Partners

- ARTS EMERSON
- BOSTON ARTS ACADEMY
- BOSTON CENTER FOR THE ARTS
- BOSTON CULTURAL EXCHANGE NETWORK
- BOSTON DEPT. OF YOUTH EMPLOYMENT AND ENGAGEMENT
- BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
- HUNTINGTON THEATER CO.
- SUFFOLK UNIVERSITY

Revenue by Source



## Success Story: Briana Valdez

Briana is a 17-year-old Boston public school student who has worked at Company One Theatre for the past 1.5 years through the *Stage One* Apprentice Program.

“Through my time spent working at Company One Theatre, I’ve learned many things beyond theatre. I’ve learned financial literacy, how to write a cover letter and resume, how to build a set, how to reach out to the community, how to utilize social media for marketing, how to interact with customers, how to solve problems on a larger span, and how to speak my ideas.

“Working at Company One Theatre opened up the door to many opportunities for me, from networking with bankers or organization directors to shadowing professional set, costume, lighting, and sound designers.

“I am now a better speaker, communicator, thinker, and problem solver. Each of these improvements will take me far in life, and I will always have Company One in my heart to thank for them.”



## PROGRAM PERFORMANCE AND ORGANIZATIONAL HEALTH

Below is a summary of the key measures that Company One Theatre will track to demonstrate progress, capture lessons learned, and make course corrections as needed. Note: Fiscal year September 1–August 31.

	FY 2015	FY 2016 (P)	FY 2017 (P)
<b>PROGRAM PERFORMANCE</b>			
Increase earned revenue	\$192,000	\$285,000	\$362,000
Increase audience size	9,000	14,000	18,000
Number of Boston public school <i>Stage One</i> program participants	350	770	800
Number of <i>Stage One</i> apprentices employed by the company	13	20	20
<b>ORGANIZATIONAL HEALTH/CAPACITY-BUILDING</b>			
Convert in-kind staff to paid staff	\$40,300	\$195,000	\$308,000
Number of <i>C1 Street Team</i> members (marketing and outreach) in network	4	10	15
Create a development plan	Develop plan	Create job description for development staff	Recruit and hire
Total contributed revenue	\$325,000	\$390,000	\$451,000
Total revenue	\$517,000	\$675,000	\$813,000

## SOCIAL IMPACT

Company One has a rigorous survey program to track audience demographics. The company recently began measuring “intrinsic impact,” which describes audience members’ level of connection to both audience and art, as well as their inspiration to take action based on their theatre experience.

Other metrics used to track social impact include employment numbers to measure contribution to the local economy; awards to determine excellence; premieres and new play development to gauge social relevance and the promotion of marginalized voices in the theatre.

INDICATOR	
Percentage of people of color in audience	31%
Percentage of low-income people in audience	31%
Audience under the age of 35	55%
Number of employed artists and staff annually	75–100
Regional theatre awards since 2007	25
New plays developed through the BCA PlayLab since 2011	14
Local premieres of new works	66

