



Supporting Makers by Helping Maker Organizations: Nation of Makers

Born of the human desire to create, innovate, and re-imagine the world around us, and fueled by the development of low-cost tools, technologies and platforms that allow for more rapid and efficient designing, prototyping and fabrication, the maker movement has enabled students and adults alike to bring their ideas to life. **The maker movement starts with the community**; the ecosystem of makers and all that they do and create. More and more, we are seeing makers take on challenges both locally and globally, using their knowledge and skills to improve their lives and the lives of others in their communities.

In 2014, President Obama hosted the White House Maker Faire and launched the Nation of Makers initiative, focused on supporting the maker movement; creating more opportunities for students to participate in maker-focused learning experiences, facilitating entrepreneurship, and supporting initiatives in local and advanced manufacturing that make it easier for makers to scale production.

Since then, a large number of individuals, organizations and institutions have responded to President Obama's call to action. The [Maker City project](#), supported by the Kauffman Foundation, documents how the maker movement is having an impact on communities large and small across the U.S. More than 100 local government leaders have participated in the [Mayor's Maker Challenge](#) since it launched. More than 1,400 K-12 schools in 50 states have signed on to the [Maker Promise](#), co-led by Digital Promise and Maker Ed. 150 colleges and universities wrote [letters to President Obama](#) describing their commitment to creating more opportunities for making on their campuses and in their communities. This eventually led to the creation of the [Make Schools Alliance](#). Similarly, more than 130 libraries from around the country articulated their commitment to creating more makerspaces with help from the [Urban Libraries Council](#).

But there is still much work to be done. The maker movement has significant implications for education, economic and workforce development, manufacturing, healthcare innovation, community revitalization and social justice. **To build upon the efforts of President Obama's Nation of Makers initiative, and to continue to grow the coalition of diverse organizations that are working to support the maker community, an independent, non-profit organization called Nation of Makers is being formed.** The organization will serve and work with three main groups: makerspace organizers, maker event organizers and maker institutions (includes non-profit organizations, foundations, museums, libraries, schools and companies that support makers).

Nation of Makers' Mission

The mission of Nation of Makers will be to support the full range of organizations that impact makers by encouraging connections, broadly sharing resources, facilitating funding opportunities, engaging in policy development, and advocating for the maker movement. Nation of Makers will help maker organizations amplify the passion, innovation, creativity, and diversity of the maker community, and maximize both local and global impact.

Nation of Makers' Vision

The vision of Nation of Makers is to build a society where everyone has access to the tools, technologies, experiences and knowledge to make anything; to create a thriving, connected, and inclusive community of practice where collaboration fosters a culture of abundance.

Below are some examples of the initiatives that this organization could lead. These activities correspond to key needs identified by the maker community and those organizations who are currently supporting the community:

- Broadening access and increasing diversity - Creating and implementing a strategy for broadening access to Making for underrepresented groups and underserved communities.
- Facilitating funding and non-monetary resource opportunities- Making it easier for maker spaces and other maker organizations to secure funding by identifying existing opportunities, collaborating with funders to develop new grant opportunities, and connecting supporters who may have non-monetary resources to the organizations who need them.
- Launching a maker fellows program - Launching a program that aims to place makers with unique skills and experiences within organizations such as federal agencies, companies and research institutions to work on specific projects and inspire a culture of making within organizations.
- Sharing best practices - Gathering information and best practices from the maker community about starting and sustaining makerspaces and maker events to create a centralized location and resource library where these can be openly accessible.
- Advocating for the interests of the maker community – Participating in critical policy development processes impacting the maker community at the federal, state or local level. This can also take shape as key stakeholders across different sectors (government, academia, industry) are convened with the maker community, to identify and collectively develop ways to address key needs.

Next Steps and Timeline

A small [transition group](#) of maker community leaders are currently working on establishing Nation of Makers as an independent non-profit organization. In the coming weeks, Nation of Makers will identify its first board members, secure seed funding for the first 1-2 years of operations and will be asking for letters of support from the maker community. **The goal is to formally announce the creation of the Nation of Makers organization by November 15th.** As this timeline is very tight, we are requesting the participation of the community in building it up from the bottom up, top down, and horizontally. The reality is, just like the maker movement, the Nation of Makers is designed to be a full community effort, and Nation of Makers will not be successful in fully and completely addressing all of your needs, concerns, and interests without your participation. **We want YOU to be a part of the Nation Of Makers!**



How can I get involved in building the Nation of Makers?

Once Nation of Makers is up and running as an organization, we anticipate a formal membership structure and multiple ways for the community to participate as both leaders within and members of the organization. However, as we enter the final stretch between now and November 15th, there are number of **specific ways for you and your organization to get involved today.**

- Build the Movement In Your Community!

- **Host a Maker Meal!** (*Week of 11/13/16-11/19/16*)

#MakerMeals are the perfect opportunity for you to organize a small gathering of friends and colleagues and to spend a meal talking with them about why making matters. To find out more information about #MakerMeals, please see:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B2JwW1v2PEFIVzdMYXRzcVoyYms/view>

- **Write a letter of Support!** (*Due 11/10/16*)

One of the best ways to make a viewpoint heard is to have it come from many voices. Our goal is to have 300 letters of support written in support of the new Nation of Makers organization. Adding your letter of support underscores the importance of the collective action and removes any doubt that the movement already has widespread impact for good. Don't miss out adding your voice on this movement-building day! For more information about writing a Letter of Support, please see:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B2JwW1v2PEFIVc4VHpNU2Ihbms/view>

- **Write an Op-Ed or Media Piece!** (*NOT TO BE PUBLISHED BEFORE 11/15/16*)

Tell the world why the maker movement matters by sharing the news and inviting even more people to get involved. We're making something collectively that matters and now is the time to share about it. Help amplify by adding your voice and spreading the news through online and print media. Please note, we request that any Op-Eds or Media pieces NOT be published before 11/15/16. To find out more information about writing an Op-Ed or Media Piece, please see:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B2JwW1v2PEFicGJIV1RNaGNkYVk/view>

- Join the Conversation!

- **Sign up for our MailChimp Nation of Makers Newsletter** at http://bit.ly/nom_email_signup.

(To ensure the email does not get automatically filtered out of your inbox, please add the NoMTransitionGroup@gmail.com to your contacts list)

- **Join the Nation of Makers Slack Group** by emailing the Nation Of Makers at

NoMTransitionGroup@gmail.com. They will be able to directly add you to the Slack Group, where you can join the community's discussions, tiger teams, and all of the ground-up work to build the Nation of Makers!

- **Join the Community Conference Call** on Wednesday, November 9th @ 8:00 pm - 9:30 pm ET.

To join us, please dial (888) 330-1716; Code: 4031673#. Hope to hear from you soon!