



# The Giving Common

An Initiative of the Boston Foundation

[www.thegivingcommon.org](http://www.thegivingcommon.org)

## Boston Dance Alliance Inc.



### General Information

19 Clarendon Street  
Boston, MA 02116 6100  
(617) 4566295 0

**Website**

[www.bostondancealliance.org](http://www.bostondancealliance.org)

**Organization Contact**

Debra Cash [info@bostondancealliance.org](mailto:info@bostondancealliance.org)

**Year of Incorporation**

1994

# Statements & Search Criteria

## **Mission Statement**

BOSTON DANCE ALLIANCE builds capacity for dance by identifying and creating shared resources, information, and productive partnerships to help dance flourish across the Boston community and New England region. We are an independent service organization representing dancers, choreographers, teachers, presenters, allied arts and cultural professionals, arts journalists and scholars, wellness and health providers, and dance enthusiasts brought together across dance genres and geographies. BDA strives to increase cultural equity and access to dance for diverse communities, build dance audiences, and promote quality and sustainability.

## **Background Statement**

Established by a group of passionate volunteer dancers and dance lovers in 1984, Boston Dance Alliance was incorporated as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit in 1994. In 2004 it hired its first professional Executive Director, Ruth Birnberg. During Birnberg's ten-year tenure, the BDA established its portfolio of programs and services, including the commissioning and manufacture of a rentable, portable sprung wood dance floor, enabling dancers to present their work safely in any setting; a fellowship that allows choreographers a chance to work intensively with their dancers and pay them for an extended rehearsal period; an annual Open Call audition that attracts more than 100 dancers across a variety of genres and streamlines the audition process for small, self-presenting Boston dance companies; fiscal sponsorship so that unincorporated companies and dance projects can accept tax-deductible donations to support their work; professional development workshops on a variety of business topics; a membership directory to build connections and awareness; and regular discounts to performances, classes, workshops, dancewear, health and wellness services and more.

In 2015, Debra Cash, a well known arts reporter and arts research consultant with more than 30 years of participation in Boston's cultural community, succeeded Birnberg as Executive Director, with a new focus on increasing the organization's range, cultural partnerships, and financial and organizational sustainability.

**Impact Statement**

Boston Dance Alliance under Executive Director Debra Cash continues to increase BDA's portfolio of services and our reach across communities and dance genres. We established a new partnership with the Boston Public Schools called Raise the Floor! to provide our unique portable dance floor to the students and teachers free of charge. We inaugurated Dancer Health Day, where area clinicians provide dancers with free wellness screenings. Partnering with the Lyric Stage, and with the support of The Boston Foundation, we offer quality, below-market rehearsal space at Lyric Stage studio. In the three years of BDA's dancewear distribution initiative, we have provided almost \$80,000 worth of new dance shoes, tights and other dancewear to financially disadvantaged youth and adults, including 1,000 pairs of ballet slippers as a corporate gift from Capezio. BDA's Dance and Disability initiative, launched with a daylong conference in June 2016 called Wheels UP!, now provides free referrals for dancers with disabilities and their families, caretakers, and teachers.

BDA's website and weekly newsletter spotlighting performances, workshops, classes, professional dance opportunities and more is the most comprehensive dance calendar in New England. One future goal is to expand participatory dance listings and outreach to social dancers. As a member of a Boston Foundation taskforce, we are working actively with other organizations to improve and communicate available professional development offerings to dancers, choreographers, teachers and others in the field.

**Needs Statement**

Boston Dance Alliance has been able to accomplish a great deal within a tiny budget, but to continue to provide innovative programs and a high degree of personalized service to our constituents we must increase our operating budget in order to

- 1) compensate and expand staff time
- 2) Cover costs associated with resources that have been donated in the past (our office and program venues)
- 3) Continue to serve low-income artists and do outreach to public schools and low-income dance students without regard to ability to pay.

### **CEO/Executive Director Statement**

At a time when the existence of the National Endowment for the Arts is threatened and the budget for the Massachusetts Cultural Council is continually under challenge, Boston Dance Alliance is in a unique position to leverage existing information and resources and create new programs that serve all who love dance. We are a respected, independent organization and are proud to have been recognized for our excellence and achievements by the Massachusetts Nonprofit Network as one of four state finalists in the small nonprofit category in 2017.

Boston Dance Alliance envisions, designs, and provides distinctive resources, such as BDA's nationally recognized portable dance floor so that dancers can share their work with new audiences and in new settings without making prohibitively expensive capital investments. Our direct business services, such as fiscal sponsorship, allow choreographers and dancers to raise funds without the overhead and expense of establishing nonprofit status. BDA consolidates information on performances, classes, and resources, and shares that information through a variety of mechanisms, from one-on-one consultations with our members to broad-based social media postings. We are able to build robust partnerships with other cultural sector players to insure that the needs of social, professional and student dancers are met.

BDA makes the dance activity that exists in Boston visible to a broad range of audiences and potential participants -- and our intention is to increase our reach in the years ahead. We believe that this visibility will, in turn, help to create an environment where dancers want to live, create, and perform.

Boston Dance Alliance is a small organization with a hard-working Board providing funds, advice, and encouragement across functions such as marketing, fundraising and governance. We recently completed the prestigious Bloomberg Philanthropies AIM program, which has helped us build our capacity and efficiency.

We have made the necessary investments in our own infrastructure to make our ambitions bear fruit. We have strengthened existing programs, launched new ones, and have others in the planning stages. This is a time of renewal and experimentation for dance in Boston and a great time for Boston Dance Alliance.

### **Board Chair Statement**

A supportive, diverse, and collegial board of directors who are generous with their time and financial resources is one of BDA's ongoing strengths. Directors are attracted to serving BDA for a variety of reasons. Some are working artists (dancers or choreographers), who can offer the perspective of BDA's primary constituency. Board members have also included former professional dancers now working in fields such as law, finance, and business management, who want to retain a close connection with dance and the arts. Still others are avid recreational dancers and dance enthusiasts. All of us are engaged in seeing that BDA fulfills its mission while meeting high standards of professionalism and accountability to its supporters.

The Board is continually energized by the challenge of growing and diversifying BDA's donor base as the organization transitions to providing services and resources beyond the primarily, but not exclusively, modern dance community that it served for more than 25 years. The long-term plan is ambitious for a small organization that serves working artists and dance companies with financial challenges that make it difficult for them to offer significant financial support to BDA beyond their membership dues. We recognize that increasing revenue from floor rentals and fiscal sponsorships in conjunction with individual donations, corporate sponsorships, and foundation grants is critical to our ability to take BDA to the next level. To that end, a subcommittee of the Board has been working closely with the staff to ensure that BDA's website offers state-of-the-art resources for members and non-members looking for information about performances, classes, workshops, production space and technicians, advocacy activities, and much more. Board members have also been involved in overseeing initiatives to enhance operational efficiency and save expenses through updated technology, and in developing new fundraising events in addition to our Annual Gala.

### Service Categories

Dance

Alliances & Advocacy

Professional Societies & Associations

### Geographic Areas Served

Please review online profile for full list of selected areas served.

# Programs

## **Portable dance floor**

### **Description**

Portable sprung wood dance floor rental and Raise the Floor!

The Boston Dance Alliance floor enables dancers to perform in any setting, from grassy outdoor conditions to parking lots to indoor spaces that have unsafe cement or linoleum floors. The floor is routinely used by self-producing dance companies and by organizations such as the Somerville Arts Council, Dance for World Community, Gardner Museum, and Boston University and for festivals and events throughout New England. In May 2016 BDA launched a special program to provide the floor, with delivery, assembly, inspection and return, to the Boston Public Schools free of charge. It has been used successfully for school programs on the Parkman Bandstand, in school environments, and for teacher training.

### **Budget**

16000

### **Category**

Arts, Culture & Humanities, General/Other Dance

### **Population Served**

General/Unspecified, ,

### **Program Short Term Success**

This program has already proven successful, with for instance, the Somerville Arts Council arranging to use this shared resource eight times over the course of the summer months, making a popular series of free dance performances available outdoors across the city.

### **Program Long term Success**

The BDA portable floor enables dance to occur in previously unsafe or inaccessible spaces both indoors and out; the ultimate success of this program is the increasing use of the floor by dancers of all genres and levels of expertise to present work to a wide variety of audiences of all types. Ultimately, the floor helps to bring Boston dance to public awareness and enables dancers to reach new audiences.

### **Program Success Monitored By**

BDA has an online reservation system and tracks where and when the floor is being deployed; each company/presenter keeps track of his or her own audience engagement numbers and other success metrics. We have regular feedback from renters by phone and email.

### **Examples of Program Success**

See above. Somerville Arts Council use of the BDA floor  
<http://www.somervilleartscouncil.org/dancefest/2015>

## **BDA Dancewear distribution program**

<b>Description</b>	Since 2015 BDA has distributed almost \$80,000 of new, unworn dancewear (toe, tap and jazz shoes, dance sneakers, tights, leotards) to local dance schools, companies, and the Boston Public Schools to give to financially disadvantaged dance students and performers. This unique BDA initiative partners with local dance retailers and manufacturers who are able to donate surplus inventory to a nonprofit.
<b>Budget</b>	3000
<b>Category</b>	Arts, Culture & Humanities, General/Other Dance
<b>Population Served</b>	Poor, Economically Disadvantaged, Indigent, ,
<b>Program Short Term Success</b>	The BDA Dancewear Distribution success has been demonstrated in the universal delight of its organizational recipients and its recognition, in 2017, with its first direct corporate gift of 1,000 pairs of ballet slippers from Capezio.
<b>Program Long term Success</b>	This program will be successful to the extent that it contributes to a time when financial disadvantage creates no barrier to dance training, participation and performance. Given adequate supplies, we would be happy to distribute dancewear beyond the Boston metropolitan area.
<b>Program Success Monitored By</b>	BDA's Dancewear Distribution's success will be measured by the continued participation of and interest by retailers, manufacturers, dance organizations and schools. We will know which goods are in most demand based on lottery requests. While this program is by definition opportunistic, we can urge retailers to provide certain types of dancewear or certain sizes.
<b>Examples of Program Success</b>	Since 2015 we have been able to donate over 300 pairs of new ballet pointe shoes, retailing at \$70+ per pair, to the dance company director whose request for supplies for his low-income dancers initiated this program.

## Dance and Disability

<b>Description</b>	Everyone deserves the chance to dance, regardless of physical or cognitive limits. In June, 2016 BDA convened Wheels UP!, a regional meeting of people interested in promoting and developing physically integrated dance activity. That event launched BDA's dance referral service which connects dancers with disabilities and their families and/or caretakers with the resources they need to participate in rehabilitative, social dance or performance. We have been especially gratified to support teachers who want to include students with disabilities in dance activities in classrooms or school assemblies and those who bring the joy of dancing to senior citizens with physical or cognitive impairments.
<b>Budget</b>	10000
<b>Category</b>	Arts, Culture & Humanities, General/Other Dance
<b>Population Served</b>	People/Families with of People with Physical Disabilities, Adults, Veterans
<b>Program Short Term Success</b>	Boston Dance Alliance is constantly building its network in the service of its referral service. Since the inception of this program, we have been able to match teaching artists to classrooms, dancers to teachers, and caretakers to opportunities.
<b>Program Long term Success</b>	Currently, physically integrated dance and even dance with senior dancers who are able bodied are seen as a novelty. The long term success will be when people with mobility impairments feel they can be dance artists; major choreographers have skills working with dancers who have different ways of moving (for instance with wheelchairs); and audiences come to appreciate such difference and find it beautiful.
<b>Program Success Monitored By</b>	We partner with the Massachusetts Cultural Council's accessibility manager to identify gaps and opportunities in disability access for dancers.
<b>Examples of Program Success</b>	The Cotting School wanted to include dance in its summer session for children with a range of disabilities. Boston Dance Alliance identified a number of teaching artists who might be appropriate. One of these recommended candidates was hired, and she created a completely new curriculum of adaptive flamenco dancing, which she is now offering as part of her year-round professional portfolio.

## **Fiscal sponsorship for Boston dancemakers**

<b>Description</b>	BDA's fiscal sponsorship program is an indispensable benefit of membership in our organization. By providing the umbrella of our legal nonprofit status, choreographers and dance companies can raise the funds they need to do their work, and by offering tax deductions to their donors, are in a position to raise significantly more funds than they could otherwise. (See case below.) Currently BDA sponsors approximately 25 organizations in both ongoing and one-time projects, from small, self-producing independent choreographers to groups producing community dance festivals.
<b>Budget</b>	20000
<b>Category</b>	Arts, Culture & Humanities, General/Other Dance
<b>Population Served</b>	Adults, Adolescents Only (13-19 years),
<b>Program Short Term Success</b>	Many independent artists have gotten their first grants through BDA's fiscal sponsorship program; this not only makes their presentations possible, it also gives them the confidence to approach larger donors.
<b>Program Long term Success</b>	BDA's fiscal sponsorship program is already a success, as described above. Certainly, one sign of success is that no artist will feel the need to incorporate before they are organizationally ready to take that step merely in order to obtain funding.
<b>Program Success Monitored By</b>	Fiscal sponsorship depends on the varying needs and incorporation status of the dance artists in our community, so utilization of this program waxes and wanes. We have a regular stream of new fiscal sponsees in addition to those who continue year after year.
<b>Examples of Program Success</b>	BDA's most exciting example of fiscal sponsorship happened recently when a BDA fiscal sponsorship beneficiary was able to raise over \$50,000 to support a major project in part because that donation was tax-deductible to the individual donor.

## Program Comments

### **CEO Comments**

BDA has made significant investments in software and improved management procedures to make our programs efficient and transparent. Our main concern is that with one full time ED and one half-time operations and membership associate to address daily operations, we are stretched very thin.

# Management

## CEO/Executive Director

<b>Executive Director</b>	Ms Debra Cash
<b>Term Start</b>	Feb 2015
<b>Email</b>	dcash@bostondancealliance.org

### **Experience**

Debra Cash is Executive Director of Boston Dance Alliance. A long-time member of Boston's cultural community, she has reported, taught, and lectured on dance, performing arts, design, and cultural policy for print, broadcast, and internet media. Her roles have spanned journalism, education, consulting, and advocacy for the rights of creative professionals.

A longtime consultant to the National Endowment for the Arts and New England Foundation for the Arts, Debra has served on panels and nominating committees for the Massachusetts Cultural Council, The Boston Foundation, The LEF Foundation, The Yard, Boston Center for the Arts, and the New Hampshire State Council on the Arts. She regularly presents audience engagement lectures for World Music/CRASHarts and other leading regional presenters. She is Scholar in Residence at the Bates Dance Festival and has served in that same capacity at the Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival. She was the manager of research and documentation for the 2016 National Convening on Physically Integrated Dance funded by the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation.

Debra was a dance critic for the Boston Globe for 17 years, followed by a five year stint at WBUR, and seven as a founding Senior Contributor to *The Arts Fuse* which she now serves as a member of its Board.

Debra has taught at Emerson College, the Boston Conservatory, and Northeastern. She earned her B.A. at Brandeis University and a Master's degree in Design Studies at the Harvard Graduate School of Design. Before coming to Boston Dance Alliance in 2015, she led an international research consultancy.

## Former CEOs

<b>Name</b>	<b>Term</b>
Ruth Birnberg	2004 - Dec 2014

## Staff Information

<b>Full Time Staff</b>	1
<b>Part Time Staff</b>	1
<b>Volunteers</b>	25
<b>Contractors</b>	0

## Staff Demographics - Ethnicity

<b>African American/Black</b>	0
<b>Asian American/Pacific Islander</b>	0

<b>Caucasian</b>	1
<b>Hispanic/Latino</b>	1
<b>Native American/American Indian</b>	0
<b>Other</b>	0 0

### Staff Demographics - Gender

<b>Male</b>	0
<b>Female</b>	2
<b>Unspecified</b>	0

### Formal Evaluations

<b>CEO Formal Evaluation</b>	Yes
<b>CEO/Executive Formal Evaluation Frequency</b>	Annually
<b>Senior Management Formal Evaluation</b>	N/A
<b>Senior Management Formal Evaluation Frequency</b>	N/A
<b>NonManagement Formal Evaluation</b>	Yes
<b>Non Management Formal Evaluation Frequency</b>	Semi-Annually

### Plans & Policies

<b>Organization has a Fundraising Plan?</b>	Under Development
<b>Organization has a Strategic Plan?</b>	No
<b>Does your organization have a Business Continuity of Operations Plan?</b>	No
<b>Management Succession Plan?</b>	No
<b>Organization Policy and Procedures</b>	Under Development
<b>Nondiscrimination Policy</b>	Yes
<b>Whistleblower Policy</b>	Yes
<b>Document Destruction Policy</b>	Yes
<b>Permit?</b>	Yes

### Collaborations

Boston Dance Alliance is committed to leveraging strong partnerships within the creative sector across Massachusetts, the region and nation. To that end we are currently working closely with a number of key players a) The Boston Foundation, with whom we are working to develop shared and coordinated resources for artist professional development; b) Boston Center for the Arts, with whom we have partnered to expand the impact of our fellowship program for choreographers c) Boston Ballet, which partners on issues of dance and disability access d) The Dance Complex in Cambridge, with whom we partner to deliver workshops on business topics and whose centralized

venue we use to hold our Audition and Dancer Health Day events e) MassCreative, for which ED Debra Cash serves on the Leadership Council.

## Awards

### **Awards**

<b><u>Award/Recognition</u></b>	<b><u>Organization</u></b>	<b><u>Year</u></b>
Arts Innovation and Management grant recipient	Bloomberg Philanthropies	0
Support for Wheels UP! Town Hall on Physically Integrated Dance	Barr Foundation	2016
Vision Fund Capacity Grant	The Boston Foundation	2016
State Finalist (one of 4) in Small Nonprofit category.	Massachusetts Nonprofit Network	2017
Champion of the Arts Award to Debra Cash	OrigiNation Cultural Arts Center	2017
Operations Support	The Boston Foundation	2017

## Affiliations

<b><u>Affiliation</u></b>	<b><u>Year</u></b>
Dance USA	2004
MASSCreative	2012
Americans for the Arts	2016

# Board & Governance

## Board Chair

<b>Board Chair</b>	Ms Alicia Downey
<b>Company Affiliation</b>	Downey Law LLC
<b>Term</b>	Jan 2016 to Dec 2018
<b>Email</b>	Alicia@downeylawllc.com

## Board Members

<b>Name</b>	<b>Affiliation</b>	<b>Status</b>
Constance C. Chin	Norman B. Leventhal Map Center of Boston Public Library	Voting
Alicia L. Downey	Downey Law LLC	Voting
Dr. Lauren Elson	Spaulding/Partners, Harvard Medical School	Voting
Angela Gomes	Skadden	Voting
Laura Howenstine	Wellington Management	Voting
John Michael Kennedy	JMKPR	Voting
David Parker	The Bang Group	Voting
Marsha Parrilla	Danza Organica	Voting
Murray Sackman	Independent consultant, theatre producer	Voting
Aysha Upchurch	Independent consultant	Voting

## Board Demographics - Ethnicity

<b>African American/Black</b>	3
<b>Asian American/Pacific Islander</b>	1
<b>Caucasian</b>	6
<b>Hispanic/Latino</b>	0
<b>Native American/American Indian</b>	0
<b>Other</b>	0

## Board Demographics - Gender

<b>Male</b>	3
<b>Female</b>	6
<b>Unspecified</b>	0

## Board Information

<b>Board Term Lengths</b>	3
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<b>Number of Full Board Meetings Annually</b>	6
<b>Board Meeting Attendance %</b>	90%
<b>Written Board Selection Criteria?</b>	Yes
<b>Written Conflict of Interest Policy?</b>	Yes
<b>Percentage Making Monetary Contributions</b>	100%
<b>Percentage Making In-Kind Contributions</b>	60%
<b>Constituency Includes Client Representation</b>	Yes

### Standing Committees

Executive  
 Finance  
 Development / Fund Development / Fund Raising / Grant Writing / Major Gifts  
 Marketing  
 Nominating

### Additional Board Members and Affiliations

<u>Name</u>	<u>Affiliation</u>
Carl Alleyne	Boston Mobile Dance Studio
Thelma Goldberg	The Dance Inn
Gretchen Hayden	Chhandika, Chhandam Institute of Kathak Dance
Marsha Parrilla	Danza Organica

# Financials

## Fiscal Year

<b>Fiscal Year Start</b>	July 01, 2017
<b>Fiscal Year End</b>	June 30, 2018
<b>Projected Revenue</b>	\$269,400.00
<b>Projected Expenses</b>	\$264,033.00
<b>Endowment?</b>	No
<b>Credit Line?</b>	No
<b>Reserve Fund?</b>	Yes
<b>Months Reserve Fund Covers</b>	2

## Detailed Financials

### **Revenue and Expenses**

<b>Fiscal Year</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2015</b>
<b>Total Revenue</b>	\$283,540	\$324,891	\$192,746
<b>Total Expenses</b>	\$277,012	\$300,338	\$177,722

### **Revenue Sources**

<b>Fiscal Year</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2015</b>
<b>Foundation and Corporation Contributions</b>	--	--	--
<b>Government Contributions</b>	\$0	\$0	\$7,100
<b>Federal</b>	--	--	--
<b>State</b>	--	--	--
<b>Local</b>	--	--	--
<b>Unspecified</b>	--	--	\$7,100
<b>Individual Contributions</b>	\$240,984	\$266,628	\$87,564
<b>Indirect Public Support</b>	--	--	--
<b>Earned Revenue</b>	\$8,853	\$16,069	\$83,076
<b>Investment Income, Net of Losses</b>	--	--	\$1
<b>Membership Dues</b>	\$13,660	\$13,270	--
<b>Special Events</b>	\$19,782	\$28,908	\$15,005
<b>Revenue In-Kind</b>	--	--	--
<b>Other</b>	\$261	\$16	--

## Expense Allocation

Fiscal Year	2017	2016	2015
Program Expense	\$220,393	\$249,829	\$165,544
Administration Expense	\$40,287	\$35,300	\$9,068
Fundraising Expense	\$16,332	\$15,209	\$3,110
Payments to Affiliates	--	--	--
Total Revenue/Total Expenses	1.02	1.08	1.08
Program Expense/Total Expenses	80%	83%	93%
Fundraising Expense/Contributed Revenue	6%	5%	3%

## Assets and Liabilities

Fiscal Year	2017	2016	2015
Total Assets	\$106,328	\$99,800	\$72,516
Current Assets	\$106,328	\$99,800	\$72,516
Long-Term Liabilities	\$0	\$0	\$0
Current Liabilities	\$2,731	\$2,731	\$0
Total Net Assets	\$103,597	\$97,069	\$72,516

## Short Term Solvency

Fiscal Year	2017	2016	2015
Current Ratio: Current Assets/Current Liabilities	38.93	36.54	--

## Long Term Solvency

Fiscal Year	2017	2016	2015
Long-Term Liabilities/Total Assets	0%	0%	0%

## Top Funding Sources

Fiscal Year	2017	2016	2015
Top Funding Source & Dollar Amount	--	--	--
Second Highest Funding Source & Dollar Amount	--	--	--
Third Highest Funding Source & Dollar Amount	--	--	--

## Capital Campaign

Currently in a Capital Campaign?

No

## Comments

### CEO Comments

BDA's operating income is augmented by funds received as part of our fiscal sponsorship program. While they pass through to sponsees, these funds are not always disbursed during the year in which they are received from donors.

### Foundation Staff Comments

Financial summary data in charts and graphs are per the organization's IRS Form 990s. Contributions from foundations and corporations are listed under individuals when the breakout was not available.