Laura Zabel is the Executive Director of Springboard for the Arts, an economic and community development agency run by and for artists. Springboard provides programs that help artists make a living and a life, and programs that help communities connect to the creative power of artists. Springboard is a nationally recognized leader in artist-led community development, creative placemaking and cross-sector collaboration. Springboard’s work has been featured by the New York Times, PBS, Wall Street Journal, Stanford Social Innovation Review and The Guardian and directly impacts over 25,000 artists each year. Through their free toolkits, training and resources Springboard’s programs have been replicated in over 100 communities across the U.S. and internationally.

In the last year, Springboard scaled their artist emergency relief fund to support over 2,500 artists in their region and helped over 80 communities nationwide start their own locally-rooted emergency funds. Through their Artists Respond program, Springboard is supporting artists to respond directly to urgent community needs, including racial justice, social isolation, and rural-urban solidarity. In 2021, Springboard launched one of the nation’s first guaranteed income programs focused on artists, inspired by the city of St. Paul and Mayors for Guaranteed Income.

Zabel has been honored with numerous awards, including the YBCA 100, Gard Foundation Award of Excellence, Common Future Local Economy Fellowship and the Bush Foundation Leadership Fellowship. Zabel chairs the board of directors of the Metropolitan Consortium of Community Developers and serves as an advisor to Dakota Resources, The Laundromat Project, Local Initiatives Support Corporation and the University of Kansas Department of Theater and Dance.