

Oregon Arts Commission

Strategic Plan 2011 – 2016

Values, goals, philosophy approved at Oregon Arts Commission teleconference, February 1, 2011

Plan elements confirmed September 30, 2011 Commission meeting

Plan Updated September 14, 2012

Values Statement

The arts and culture are touchstones of community and civic life and it is essential to preserve, stabilize and develop their central role to benefit Oregonians and Oregon's quality of life. The Oregon Arts Commission believes:

- Art brings people together, strengthening communities.
- Art is critical for our students.
- Art adds value to Oregon's economy.
- Art is fundamental to a healthy society.

The Commission's role is:

- To lead through advocacy, policy development and planning.
- To seek funding for and make grants to arts organizations and artists.
- To build coalitions and encourage collaborations among the public and private sectors, arts and culture organizations, and artists.
- To ensure the arts touch the lives of all Oregonians.

Goals To ensure that:

- Oregonians have wide access to the arts.
- Oregon arts organizations across the State have the skills and resources to offer high quality programs.
- Public and private support for arts and culture is increased and leveraged.
- Oregonians have access to quality arts learning opportunities.
- Oregon artists are supported in creating work of acknowledged high quality.

Philosophy for Implementation

The Oregon Arts Commission will work toward realizing these goals using four primary means:

- Leadership activities that link and leverage the arts with other issues and sectors.
- Grant funding to arts organizations, artists, and other nonprofit entities.
- Partnerships with other agencies, funders, and sectors to increase funding and other resources to assist arts groups and others in realizing these goals.
- Communication and technical assistance.

Broad themes for the plan:

1. Critical infrastructure funding. Arts organizations need improved training and resources as well as grant funds to provide essential services and access to the arts.
2. Provide organizational and stabilization expertise. The Commission, building on the 2009-11 Capacity initiative, will continue to strengthen the capacity of Oregon-based non-profit arts organizations and individual artists/entrepreneurs.
3. Connect untraditional partners. The Commission should use its position within Business Oregon to develop stronger connections within the economic development spectrum to boost the arts and creativity sector's capacity to grow, particularly through the expanded marketing and promotion of the work of Oregon artists. The Commission will also seek new funding partners to support its overall efforts.
4. Tell the story. Building public awareness of the deep impact the arts and creative sector have on Oregon's quality of life, its economy and community well being should be undertaken through stronger marketing and communications efforts.

The Plan

Outcome # 1:

Oregonians have wide access to the arts.

The arts provide considerable public benefit to Oregonians and Oregon communities. Oregon is home to a wealth of arts groups, from the largest regional theatre in the United States to emerging new creative ventures in its urban cores to small, rural community-based groups. This plan calls for stronger communications about the public benefit of the arts and increased efforts to promote Oregon's arts beyond the state. The plan also calls for the Oregon Arts Commission's continued leadership to realize the bold fund development vision of the Oregon Cultural Trust. The Commission will increase its efforts in arts advocacy on all levels. A new element of the plan will address significant interest in the arts community to identify and secure different revenue sources for the arts.

Sustain and Strengthen Current Oregon Arts Commission efforts:

- Support high-quality arts programs across the state and tell the story of the art works that are created and produced here.
- Serve as lead advisor to the Governor and other state agencies regarding the value of the arts, and encourage investment in the arts by other public sector entities, such as education, tourism, economic and community development.
- Strengthen and communicate key messages of the value of the arts to Oregonians and the public benefit of arts and culture. Maximize communication efforts to increase their reach such as cross-marketing information between the Cultural Trust and Arts Commission, and Oregon's cultural partners working in heritage and the humanities.
- Maximize use of technology to disseminate news and best practices; expand information offered online through the Commission's website.
- Recognize the work and contributions of artists, arts advocates, and arts organizations through the Governor's Arts Awards and other means.
- Align arts advocacy plans with the Cultural Trust advocacy plans, developing strategies and linking elected officials with the Trust's ongoing work and accomplishments.
- Contribute, as a core partner, to the growth of the Cultural Trust, using messages and strategies that are as innovative and persuasive as the Trust's unique revenue strategies.
- Contribute to the work of and partner with the Cultural Advocacy Coalition, developing new strategies to ensure public support on all levels for the Arts Commission and Cultural Trust.
- Link the arts with economic development issues through staff leadership in the management of the Business Oregon Department.
- Convene an annual Arts Summit for professional development of the field, to facilitate advocacy strategies, and celebrate accomplishments;
- Continue to convene the statewide arts community on multiple levels:

- to increase professional development of the field;
- to facilitate advocacy strategies; and
- to celebrate accomplishments.

Implement New Efforts:

- Develop a leadership network of 100 key individuals, “grass tops,” who can facilitate communication and contribute to strategic advocacy efforts;
- Initiate an advocacy and training program for elected officials regarding public art policies and the potential of the arts to contribute to community development.

Research and New Program Development: The Commission will consider the following:

- Determine the feasibility of developing and implementing an over-arching arts advocacy campaign, potentially linking with the promotion of the Oregon Cultural Trust.
- Identify a designated group of local elected officials who can champion local arts efforts and contribute to statewide advocacy efforts in partnership with other arts and culture advocates and groups like the League of Oregon Cities and Association of Oregon Counties.

Outcome # 2:

Oregon arts organizations have the skills and resources to offer high-quality programs across the state.

Over 1,300 cultural organizations provide programming for Oregonians and visitors to our state. Most are arts organizations - museums, dance companies, orchestras, festivals, galleries, community schools of the arts, public radio and television stations, local and regional arts councils and more in communities in all corners of the state. These organizations offer public programs, employ staff and artists, and contribute to cultural understanding, community building and Oregon's economy. This plan calls for continued investment in Oregon's arts organizations, building their capacity through technical assistance and funding to increase public benefit. The plan provides for new investment in arts groups using Capacity Grants to strengthen their overall management, leadership and standards.

Strategic Actions

Sustain and Strengthen Current Oregon Arts Commission efforts:

- Provide strategic operating support grants and other specific targeted grant funds to enable Oregon arts organizations to fulfill their missions of making the arts accessible to Oregonians.
- Sustain and grow the *Arts Build Communities* program to support local arts projects and activities that link the arts with rural or community development efforts.
- Support Oregon's regional and local arts groups with training, technical assistance, and communication so their increased capacity will benefit Oregon communities.
- Recognize and support the unique statewide arts programs offered by partner agencies like the Oregon Folklife Network and the Portland Art Museum's Northwest Film Center.
- Leverage resources, financial and other, to strengthen the offerings of Oregon arts groups. The Commission will build on its successful funding partnership with The Ford Family Foundation. This will be measured by increased partnerships with foundations, local governments and other entities.
- Identify, support and disseminate "best practices" through the development and dissemination of the Arts Commission's monograph series.
- Offer capacity building, support and technical assistance to:
 - Build leadership for local and regional arts groups
 - Improve the sustainability and business practices of arts groups
 - Leverage skill building and training offered by partner organizations such as the Regional Arts & Culture Council, Arts Northwest and NAO.

Research and New Program Development: The Commission will consider the following:

- Develop new strategies to support the arts: incentives for artists, the development of new or different public art strategies, tax incentives or strategies.

Initiate a network of peer experts.

Outcome # 3:

Public and private support for arts and culture is increased and leveraged.

Oregon's arts, cultural and creative sectors contribute to the state's competitiveness through their innovation and unique products and programming. Public support for the arts in Oregon should reflect the richness and depth of the artists and arts groups who live and work here. To sustain the vitality of the arts sector, its capacity and infrastructure must be supported and future leadership cultivated and ensured. This plan calls for new efforts to leverage the Commission's capacity as a grantmaker and funder, working with others to distribute funds. Oregon's economy of the future will be based on innovation and knowledge. With the right investment, the arts sector will be a more vibrant contributor to it.

Strategic Actions

Sustain and Strengthen Current Oregon Arts Commission efforts:

- Collect information and data to actively and effectively advocate for adequate state funding for the arts in Oregon.
- Form partnerships with public/private partners and foundations to leverage resources to bring the arts to Oregonians.
- Support the growth and development of the Oregon Cultural Trust Fund, maximizing growth of the endowment through increased use of Oregon's cultural tax credit, sales of the cultural license plate and outreach to Oregonians about the importance of cultural philanthropy.
- Continue to measure Oregon's "creative vitality," disseminating data for Oregon's arts and cultural employment and participation.

Research and Explore New Program Development: The Commission will consider the following:

- Research and consider new financial incentives [tax and other public policies] that will grow or leverage assets to benefits Oregon's artists and arts groups.
- Examine ways that the Arts Commission's capacity to distribute funds fairly and equitably might be expanded by its serving as a conduit for other public or private funders' support of the arts in Oregon.

Outcome # 4:

Oregonians have access to quality arts learning opportunities.

Oregon has mandated content standards for arts learning, and recent efforts have increased high school graduation credit options in the arts. Many arts organizations have articulated a strong commitment to high-quality arts education programming and outreach, and the artists who deliver these programs are increasingly committed to meeting educational goals. Professional development opportunities for teachers are inconsistent, as is pre-service training for teachers in Oregon. Despite this, leading researchers and employers continue to articulate the critical need for innovative, creative graduates for Oregon's future workforce.

The ramifications of continuing budget reductions for Oregon's public education in general and arts education in particular are far-reaching. Many districts have reduced to 4-day weeks, class sizes and demands on teachers continue to grow as graduation rates decline and the ongoing emphasis on tested subjects, which do not include the arts, has directed attention away from the arts. Of particular significance to the Arts Commission is the severe reduction in arts education programming, with fewer arts specialists in schools, significant reductions in the numbers of in-class artists' residencies, the high cost of providing art and school supplies for many students, a reduction in field trip opportunities and lack of access to after-school arts programming. Add language addressing Oregon's new 10 year budget process and the shift from an elected school superintendent to an appointed Chief Education Officer.

Strategic Actions

Sustain and Strengthen Current Oregon Arts Commission efforts:

- Offer discretionary grants to arts organizations to provide arts learning opportunities and experiences for students in pre-K to 12, both in schools and in the community. In 2013, the program will transition from support for a variety of arts education projects to a pilot program of fewer but larger grant awards, possibly over 2 years that will be outcome based.
- Support arts education activities undertaken by the Commission's operating support grantees.
- Using Oregon-based research and data, increase understanding of the benefits that in-school arts education and arts organizations produce for students, schools and communities.
- Advocate for quality arts education programs for every Oregon student, working together with the Oregon Department of Education and other strategic partners. Which strategic partners should be called out in the plan?
- Partner with arts education colleagues on statewide or special initiatives such as Poetry Out Loud, the Imagination Conversation, institutes, residencies and other activities.
- Initiate the Oregon Arts Education Partnership, a regular "convening" that brings together the leaders, key practitioners and known advocates of arts learning in Oregon to network and learn from each other, identifies best practices, and builds critical mass for the advancement of arts learning across Oregon.

- Identify and disseminate best practices in arts learning and program information to colleagues and other funders using monographs, Arts Education Congress/Summit, and the online forum.

Implement New Efforts:

- Collaborate with partners to better assess arts learning progress in Oregon and to support Oregon-based research and data collection.
- Offer leadership for the development of a “partnership” or “coalition” to build capacity in the arts learning field; this could include networking opportunities for practitioners, funders’ round tables in partnership with Grantmakers of Oregon, support for increased funding, training and professional development opportunities.
- Strengthen strategic partnerships with the Right Initiative, the Oregon Education Investment Board and other regional/local programs. One example might be convening teaching artists in dialogue in conjunction with other professional development efforts.

Research and New Program Development: The Commission will consider the following:

- Consider collaborative funding with foundations or other strategic partners (possibly businesses) to support projects and research with measureable data. These efforts could attract funding and contribute to more understanding of the benefits of arts learning across Oregon.
- Brand Oregon arts education research as an Arts Commission priority.

Develop a process for identifying and cultivating leadership in Oregon for arts education through a new peer network of individuals. Support leadership for arts education in the Oregon Department of Education.

Outcome # 5:**Oregon artists are supported in creating work of acknowledged high quality.**

Oregon is home to an estimated 21,000 professional artists - and more who participate in and create art as a hobby or avocation. In 2010, the state outperformed the U.S. on a per capita basis in four of the eight categories measured by the Creative Vitality Index (CVI™). Artists and other creative workers are a large part of that vitality. In 2010, one of the highest performing categories was the number of creative jobs. Over \$290 million was generated in non-profit arts and arts-active organization revenues in the state. Oregon artists' work and workspaces are now increasingly promoted through Oregon's tourism marketing efforts. This plan calls for increased support for Oregon artists, including the potential development of an all-encompassing artist service organization.

Strategic Actions:**Sustain and Strengthen Current Oregon Arts Commission efforts:**

- Continue to offer competitive Artist Fellowship grants and promote the work of those artists awarded with funding.
- Empower the existing public art advisory committee to strengthen Oregon's pioneering 1% for Art program with the addition of a curatorial oversight group and training and skill building for public officials who make decisions about public spaces.
- Continue training, information and capacity building offerings for artists of all types,
- Maximize the Arts Commission's placement in Business Oregon to increase links and leverage with creative industries in Oregon through partnerships with Greenlight Portland, Oregon Film, the Portland Creative Coalition and others.
- Disseminate information more effectively and document achievements.
- Use best practices and strategies to sustain Oregon's leading public art collection, established in 1975.

Implement New Efforts:

- Expand "Creative Oregon" coverage of individual Oregon artists using the Commission website and new technology.
- Forge stronger links with Travel Oregon and regional destination marketing efforts in all regions of the state to increase and better quantify the impact of cultural tourism.

Research and New Program Development: The Commission will consider the following:

- Leverage stronger partnerships with the arts and other groups that directly serve and fund Oregon artists to better offer support to Oregon creative artists.
- Evaluate the potential benefits of implementing different incentives, tax credits or exemptions to attract artists and creative workers to Oregon and to encourage the development of their work.
- Develop a broader support organization for artists like Washington State's Artist Trust that can leverage public and private support for artists in direct and indirect ways.