

# Wallace Excellence Awards City Partners Report

## Final – April 30, 2013

### Washington State Arts Commission

**Request ID #:** 20080452

**Grant start date:** January 1, 2009

**Grant end date:** April 30, 2013

**Grant amount:** \$1,300,000

**Period covered by report:** 1/1/09 - 4/30/13

### Introduction

With the support of The Wallace Foundation, the Arts Participation Leadership Initiative (APLI) has since 2009 enabled the Washington State Arts Commission (ArtsWA) to present a series of programs and services to advance arts participation.

ArtsWA offered a series of forums presenting nationally recognized thought-leaders and local experts for discussions about changing demographics, arts participation trends, and approaches for engaging new audiences. Related workshops provided opportunities for arts leaders to examine their practices and work on new solutions to arts participation challenges.

Innovations regrants supported 13 innovative and experimental projects. Five networks of arts managers formed as “Communities of Practice” to work on arts participation projects and to share insights and challenges; we provided each a regrant of Wallace Funds to support their projects. Additionally, nine of Seattle’s largest arts institutions received direct funding from the Wallace Foundation (Wallace Excellence Awards) to pioneer effective practices to engage more people in meaningful experience in the arts, and to pursue audience research efforts.

We have documented the APLI throughout with written “responses” to the forums, video recording of forums, a research synthesis, documentation of re-grants, and two summative videos (a short and long version).

This report reviews all activities related to the APLI for the entirety of the 4-year effort. Progress indicators addressed below include those specified in the 2008 grant award letter from the Wallace Foundation, as well as those specified in the amendment of May 2012. This report provides summary information for each activity, listed in the order of funding.

Also enclosed, as specified in the 2008 agreement:

- List of APLI project activities.
- List of Wallace Excellence Award and APLI grantees.
- Summary of APLI expenditures.
- Fiscal year 2012 year-end budget, as presented to the Board of the Washington State Arts Commission.
- Federal Assistance Certification for 2012. (As a public agency we do not have an annual audit, nor do we submit a Form 990.)
- List of our current Board members and five key staff for the APLI.

## Activity Descriptions and Progress Indicators

### Wallace Excellence Award cohort

ArtsWA convened the cohort of the nine Wallace Excellence Award (WEA) grantees 14 times in Seattle between January 2009 through December 2012. The cohort also met with the Wallace City Partners in Philadelphia (April 2009) and Chicago (June 2011).

The WEA cohort convened five times in 2012. ArtsWA facilitated the convenings:

- **February:** Quick project updates and conversation with Daniel Windham. The cohort agreed to organize the next meetings as opportunities for more in-depth presentations of their research findings.
- **May, August, October:** Each WEA grantee shared its research findings.
- **November:** WEA cohort met with Karen Gershowitz for a work session on “Exit Strategies” – i.e. completion of the Initiative and continuing the practices.
- **December:** Before the APLI forum, the WEA cohort met to review the findings of the Slover Linett study, “Connecting with Audiences.”

The cohort meetings built collective knowledge about the nine projects and provided a setting for idea-sharing, as well as for mutual support. The meetings gave participants a new appreciation of the challenges of working with new audiences. Through the presentations, participants developed a common vocabulary for research methodology, and they shared ideas for building on the 4-year APLI project involving WEA grantees.

In 2012, the WEA cohort agreed on the importance of distilling the findings of their audience research into a format that they could share with their boards, staff, and colleagues throughout the region and nationally. ArtsWA reallocated the APLI budget to include funds to hire Slover Linnett to create a synthesis of the audience engagement insights from the research and evaluation studies completed by the nine WEA grantees. The resulting report, “Connecting with Audiences,” was presented at the December 2012 APLI forum (see below), and is available online at [www.arts.wa.gov](http://www.arts.wa.gov).

“It is always enlightening to hear what our peers are doing. We always hear of things that are of interest to us.”  
WEA participant  
February 2012 survey

In addition to numerous insights gained through interviews with the WEA cohort, Slover Linett identified nine “audience engagement takeaways:”

- Build audience engagement strategies and new formats as legitimate cultural experiences in their own right.
- Humanize the institution, the art, and the artists.
- Provide tools to help audiences share cultural experiences with others.
- Offer a variety of experience types—from “receptive” to “active”—to enable patrons to self-select based on their preferences and needs.
- Allow patrons to tailor the amount and type of content with which they interact.
- Programs or activities that are social in nature should also be either art-focused or content-focused, or both. Bring audiences behind-the-scenes to make the artistic process more accessible, familiar, and relatable.
- Go beyond opening your doors to newcomers—actively invite them and then welcome, orient, and listen to them.

- Be wary of over-discounting; emphasize the value and benefits of the experience to make the cost “worth it.”
- Don’t rely solely on programs and benefits that make attendance more convenient; such strategies only remove barriers without providing an active reason to participate.

The WEA cohort also discussed developing a “toolkit” of one-page instructions for specific tasks related to building arts participation; they agreed to self-organize to develop such a tool. It may be that other APLI documentation (“Connecting with Audiences” and “Stirring Up Participation”) can serve this purpose.

### Seattle forums

ArtsWA hosted nine APLI forums to offer Seattle-area arts leaders the opportunity to explore arts participation concepts with guest speakers. The forums, held at the Seattle Center, included a featured speaker, one or more pre-identified “respondent,” and facilitated discussion. Forums were videotaped.

Forum topics and guest speakers:

- **August 26, 2010.** *Activating Your Audience.* Featured speaker Alan Brown and facilitator Jerry Yoshitomi, with Daniel Windham and Sandra Jackson as respondents.
- **November 18, 2010.** *Who’s New in Town: Arts Organizations Respond to Changing Demographics.* Featured speaker Salvador Acevedo, with workshop facilitator Jerry Yoshitomi and a follow-up webinar.
- **February 17, 2011.** *Personal Engagement in the Arts through Digital Media: Where We’ve Been and Where We’re Going.* Featured speaker Hanson Hosein, with workshop facilitator Scott Macklin. Two workshops in Seattle, one in Tacoma and a follow-up webinar.
- **May 25, 2011.** *Engaging Young Adult Audiences, 21-35.* Featured speakers Peter Boal and Linda Garrison, with workshop facilitator Jerry Yoshitomi and a follow-up webinar.
- **October 3, 2011.** *Innovation: Connecting to a New Era of Arts Participation.* Featured speakers Richard Evans and Jerry Yoshitomi, with a follow-up webinar.
- **October 12, 2012.** *Making Art, Making Change: Trends and Transformations in Uncertain Times.* Featured speaker Manuel Pastor and respondent Josephine Ramirez, with workshop facilitator Holly Sidford.
- **June 28, 2012.** *Research into Action: Pathways to New Opportunities.* Featured speakers and workshop facilitators Kendra Lawson and Janelle McCoy, with a follow-up webinar.
- **December 13, 2012.** *Connecting with Audiences: Insights from Seattle’s Wallace Excellence Awards Initiative.* Featured speakers and workshop facilitators Chloe Chittick Patton and Sarah Lee, Slover Linett consultants, and Wallace Excellence Awardees; follow-up webinar.
- **March 19, 2013.** *Stirring Up Arts Participation: Thirteen Projects.* Featured speakers Claudia Bach and Alan Brown. Showcasing all 13 Innovations grantees in rapid-fire presentations accompanied by drummer Eduardo Mendonca.
- **March 19, 2013.** *Taking Stock of Audience Development: APLI Wrap Up.* Featured speaker Alan Brown, with respondents Jerry Yoshitomi and Karen Hanen.

“I wanted to let you know how much I appreciated the recent APLI Forum. It was very well organized, informative and inspiring. Thank you for all you done to help advance the field through these forums and funding.”

Kathleen Allen, SYSO  
March 2013 email

### **Workshops in Seattle and other Puget Sound communities**

Forums were followed by a workshop for facilitated round-table discussion of key concepts. Webinars were held approximately one month after each forum, drawing people unable to attend the forum, as well as providing an opportunity to reinforce the forum learnings. We also supported participation at the 2013 Cultural Congress, where APLI project findings and summaries were on the agenda in a well-attended workshop. (The Cultural Congress is an annual 3-day conference for arts leaders from across the state; 250 attended in 2013.)

In early 2011 we decided to hold workshops in conjunction with the Seattle forums, instead of in various locations as a separate event. Attendance at Tacoma workshops did not meet expectations, and we wanted to build on the value of interacting with the content immediately after the forums.

The last workshop (March 2013) was developed as a “What’s Next? Wrap-up Session” with Alan Brown and two respondents as speakers on building demand for the arts.

### **Working papers/artistic response**

We contracted with a different writer for each forum, seeking community-based writers so that we would have a variety of voices reflecting on these sessions. Results were mixed; some of the writers had difficulty understanding the subject matter and/or putting their thoughts in writing. Five of the nine resulting articles are posted online. Two articles were published in the *Grantmakers in the Arts Reader*:

- “Embracing Diversity in the Arts: Random Reflections on the Coming Tide of Change,” by Ron Chew, published Fall 2011. See <http://www.giarts.org/article/embracing-diversity-arts>.
- “Arts and Social Change from an Artist’s Perspective,” by Byron Au Yong, published February 2013. See <http://www.giarts.org/article/arts-and-social-change-artist%E2%80%99s-perspective>.

### **Technology network**

Eight forums were videotaped and offered in their entirety on the Seattle channel. Seven forums were followed about a month later by a webinar featuring the guest speaker.

“The Art of Cultivating New Audiences” is a 13-minute professionally produced video providing an overview of the 4-year APLI. See [www.arts.wa.gov](http://www.arts.wa.gov). (The videographer also created a 3-minute version that summarizes the material with effective interviews and visuals.)

An online portal will facilitate access to APLI materials, including reports, summaries, webinars, and video. The portal is designed to encourage the leaders of arts organizations to develop skills and expertise in building arts participation, especially among youth and young adults, among diverse populations; and through new technology. The portal is currently under construction, with completion anticipated soon.

## Regrants

Three cohorts of arts organizations benefited from Wallace Foundation grant dollars.

- Nine Wallace Excellence Award grantees received direct funding from the Wallace Foundation.
- Five Communities of Practice grantees received ArtsWA regrants of Wallace Foundation funds.
- Thirteen Innovations grantees received ArtsWA regrants of Wallace Foundation funds.

Please see the attached “Three Cohorts of Grantees” for a detailed listing of the organizations awarded funding through this project.

Five Communities of Practice received grants for specific participation-building projects in 2011; three of these projects were continued with second-year funding in 2012. See further detail about the Communities of Practice below.

Innovations grants were awarded to 13 arts organizations in King and Pierce counties, for projects taking place June through December 2012. These one-time grants provided up to \$30,000 for short-term arts projects, the goal of which was to support innovative, “quick turnaround” projects to build arts participation, particularly to engage teens and young adults and/or to diversify audiences from specific ethnic communities. Grantee projects also explored social media and technology tools that arts organizations can use to boost participation by these key demographic groups. The projects ranged from singular experiments to jump-starts for stalled initiatives, from creating new working methods within an organization to building new relationships internally. All were either short-term stand-alone projects or core elements of more extended projects. The grantees met in January 2013 for a workshop on social media and storytelling. The workshop also included sharing a 3-minute update on each project. These projects were documented as “case studies,” and the grant application specified that grantees were expected to fully participate in the information-gathering: meeting with the documentarian, sharing information, and participating in a forum to discuss the projects.

## Documentation

Innovations Grants: A team led by AdvisArts Consulting was selected to document the Innovations grants. The resulting report, “Stirring up Arts Participation: Thirteen Projects—ArtsWA INNOVATIONS Grants 2012” is attached and available at [www.arts.wa.gov](http://www.arts.wa.gov). AdvisArts identified six practices from the Innovations projects that characterize evolving approaches to participation in the arts sector:

1. Embedding the work of the organization within a community.
2. Broadening curatorial methods.
3. Experimenting with setting.
4. Cabling opportunities together.
5. Integrating digital technology with strategy and programming.
6. Combing arts content with socializing.

“Thanks again for a fantastic wrap-up event for the APLI grants. I kept thinking “Oh, THAT was an APLI thing? And THAT?” Seems like all the coolest stuff that happened around here over the last year was somehow tied to this program. Success!”

Holly Arsenault - TeenTix  
April 2013 email

Explains the report:

“ArtsWA Innovations grants included a core element of documentation, and the requirement that there be intentional reflection and learning from the projects undertaken. This aligned with a primary component of the Arts Participation Leadership Initiative: the sharing of knowledge and information regionally and nationally.”

Communities of Practice: We contracted with consultant Merica Whitehall for a 15-page summary report on the Communities of Practice (CoP) cohort of five organizations. The report includes an overview of the five CoP projects, including project goals and lessons learned over the 4-year period. The report is available at [www.arts.wa.gov](http://www.arts.wa.gov).

Wallace Excellent Award Research: We contracted with Slover Linett Strategies for “Connecting with Audiences,” a synthesis of the audience engagement insights from the research and evaluation studies completed by the nine WEA recipient organizations. The report is attached, and is also available at [www.arts.wa.gov](http://www.arts.wa.gov).

### **Advisory Group**

ArtsWA convened an advisory group to offer guidance and support. The Advisory Group met six times (including a scheduled meeting in May 2013) to share updates, discuss and review strategies for the future, build support, and consider connections with other local efforts such as the “Dynamic Adaptability” series of arts leadership forums, and other research/documentation.

Advisory Group members:

Claudia Bach, AdvisArts Consulting  
Ellen Whitlock Baker, UW Evans School of Public Policy  
David Brown, Pacific Northwest Ballet  
Carri Campbell, Seattle Public Schools  
Kathy Hsieh, City of Seattle Office of Arts and Cultural Affairs  
Jim Kelly, 4Culture  
Jim McDonald, Paul G. Allen Family Foundation  
Margit Rankin, Artist Trust  
Steve Sneed, Seattle Center  
Huong Vu, Boeing  
Merica Whitehall, Festal  
Mayumi Tsutakawa, ArtsWA  
Kris Tucker, ArtsWA

Additionally, Kris Tucker provided regular updates and related discussion to/with a group of Seattle-area arts funders that meets bimonthly.

### **Communities of Practice**

Five Communities of Practice (CoPs) were identified in 2010 as interactive learning cohorts in which members who are linked professionally learn from each other through sharing information and experience. The CoP participants also worked together on a project that reinforces the APLI conceptual framework among a broad group of arts leaders over an extended period of time. This engagement built attendance at APLI forums and put into action the APLI concepts. Jerry Yoshitomi provided technical support and convened the CoP leaders four times. In 2011, each CoP received a grant for a specific participation-building project; three of these projects were continued

with second-year funding in 2012. Examples: King County local arts agencies are working with their local city governments to identify and engage communities representing new demographics in order to expand their participation in arts programs. Festal ethnic festivals are contracting young artists to interview, and create and upload to Vimeo, short videos on immigrant issues and cultural practices.

### **Continuing the work, building on the concepts**

The APLI has created considerable momentum around building arts participation: common vocabulary, better information, richer conversation, curiosity about new approaches, support for experimentation and ongoing learning. We are actively seeking opportunities to share the information, documentation, and stories at conferences and through our networks. The WEA cohort, CoPs, Innovations grantees and Advisory Group are encouraged to do the same. To facilitate this, we are providing on our website the 13-minute and 3-minute videos, PowerPoint presentations from the forums, and documentation reports. We hope these materials will have value for at least five years.

Innovation within an arts organization requires organization capacity, local context, funding, and the support of senior leadership. It also requires an expectation of innovation throughout the organization: encouragement to do something different, interest in ideas, curiosity, ability to forge new relationships (internal and/or external) some form of “capital” to act on something new, using technology and social media to attract audiences representing younger and diverse or newcomer populations, and the discipline to examine and learn from what does and doesn’t happen.

The next steps for Seattle, King and Pierce County arts organizations to continue the work should include further incentives for innovation, including grant dollars for new efforts, but also a commitment to documentation and ongoing learning. Too often the sector is focused on fundraising for operating support: sustaining the organizations and facilities instead of building engagement and growing demand.

We have a commitment to share the findings in conversations throughout the region and, as possible, at national settings. We are proposing sessions to Grantmakers in the Arts (Philadelphia, October 2013), Arts Northwest Regional Booking Conference (Tacoma, October 2013), International Conference of Social Theory, Politics and the Arts (Seattle, October 2013), and National Arts Marketing Project (Portland, OR, November 2013).

*Please contact me for any further information or clarification.*

*Thank you again for your generous support of this initiative*

*and your investment in building arts participation in the Puget Sound region.*

Submitted by:

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April 29, 2013