



WASHINGTON STATE  
ARTS COMMISSION

**August 5, 2013**

## **WASHINGTON STATE ARTS COMMISSION DIRECTOR TO STEP DOWN, EXECUTIVE SEARCH BEGINS**



ArtsWA Executive Director, Kris Tucker. Photo by Weldon Wilson.

**Olympia**—The Washington State Arts Commission’s Executive Director, Kris Tucker, has announced that she is stepping down, effective January 2014. First appointed in 1999 by then-Governor Gary Locke, Ms. Tucker has led the agency through some of the state’s best economic times—and the worst. “This decision did not come easily,” she told the 23-member Board of Commissioners in her announcement. “I love my job and am proud of what we have accomplished together. But the agency is now well-positioned for a leadership transition.”

According to state statute, the Commission leads the search process to recommend three candidates to the Governor. The Governor then selects the next director. “Washington has a vibrant arts community that is deeply embedded in both our culture and our economy,” said Governor Jay Inslee. “Kris has done great work, and I look forward to continuing our efforts to further strengthen the arts in Washington.”

Key accomplishments during Ms. Tucker’s tenure include:

- Achieved passage of State Poet Laureate legislation by the 2007 State Legislature.
- Improved stewardship and conservation of the State Art Collection.
- Initiated the Creative Vitality Index (CVI) as a tool to inform policy makers about the economic, social and quality-of-life dimensions of culture.
- Administered grant programs annually to allocate federal, state and private funds through competitive review processes, in support of arts projects, cultural organizations, and targeted initiatives.
- Attained two major grants from the Wallace Foundation for the Arts Participation Leadership Initiative; and the State Art Participation Initiative. ArtsWA was the only state arts agency nationally to receive both grants.
- Launched Arts Education Research Initiative to research, document and promote effective arts education in Washington public schools.
- Initiated partnership with Washington State Parks to provide Folk Arts in the Parks, bringing quality folk arts programming to state parks venues across the state, supported by the National Endowment for the Arts and by State and private funds.

“Kris has been a tremendous force in moving the arts forward statewide,” said Board president, Cindy Finnie, from Port Townsend. “She has seen us through some tenuous times while simultaneously raising the profile of our agency to the national level. We will miss Kris tremendously but look forward to finding the next leader who will continue to build on Kris’ legacy and the state’s commitment to the arts.”

The Washington State Legislature acknowledged the public value of the arts in 1961 by establishing the Washington State Arts Commission, now called ArtsWA. Since then, ArtsWA has been nurturing the arts to serve Washington communities as economic drivers, educational assets, civic catalysts, and cultural legacies. For more information about ArtsWA, visit our website at [www.arts.wa.gov](http://www.arts.wa.gov)

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