

STRATEGIC PLAN 2012-2016

As approved August 2012



OUR MISSION

The Arts Commission is a catalyst for the arts, advancing the role of the arts in the lives of individuals and communities throughout the state.

OUR VISION

The arts thrive and are celebrated throughout Washington State, and are woven in to the fabric of vital and vibrant communities.

GOAL 1: Be a voice for the public value of the arts.

The Arts Commission – now known as ArtsWA – was established by the 1961 State Legislature. Our founding legislation (RCW43.46) defines our key role and purpose:

The conservation and development of the state's artistic resources is essential to the social, educational and economic growth of the state of Washington. Artists, works of art, and artistic institutions contribute to the quality of life and the general welfare of the citizens of the state, and are an appropriate matter of concern to the government of the state of Washington.

Being a voice for the arts is about speaking up for the role of the arts in lives and communities. Advancing the arts requires building understanding of public support for the arts and advocating for resources and policies.

Objective 1: Build understanding of the public value of the arts.

- Expand appreciation of the arts as important to the people, communities and future of the state of Washington.
- Develop a shared understanding of how the arts support broader public goals.

Objective 2: Strengthen support for the arts and arts education through funding, legislation, program commitments, and leadership.

- Build long-term connections between the arts and elected officials, especially the Governor and the State Legislature.
- Maximize the effectiveness of Board members as advocates for the arts and for ArtsWA.

Objective 3: Connect the arts to broader community goals.

- Develop community partners outside the arts to connect and integrate the arts with national, regional and state-level agendas and opportunities.
- Partner with other state agencies to link the public value of the arts with their public policy goals, such as recreation, environment and health.

GOAL 2: Expand arts participation in communities across Washington State.

Arts participation contributes to healthy lives and vigorous communities across our state. The benefits are broad and various: personal and civic, beauty and celebration, economic and educational, individual and global. Recent research about arts participation is instructive in identifying motivations and barriers to participation in the arts, enabling more focused efforts to expand audiences, provide more meaningful experiences and diversify participation.

Objective 1: Support projects that build public participation in the arts.

- Provide grants that build participation and audience engagement with a wide range of arts experiences.
- Apply arts participation strategies to programs across the agency.
- Partner with statewide service organizations to reinforce and augment our impact across the state, specifically toward ArtsWA goals and priorities.

Objective 2: Build capacity of arts organizations and expand partnership networks to broaden arts opportunities.

- Support training and other services that improve the capacity of arts organizations, local governments and local arts agencies.
- Partner with community foundations, community organizations, and other partnership networks to broaden arts opportunities and connect the arts to key local issues.

Objective 3: Research, explore, and test innovative approaches to building arts participation that align with demographic and arts participation trends.

- Study economic and demographic trends so that programs and investments are current, relevant and flexible.
- Invest in promising practices to assess potential roles and opportunities.

GOAL 3: Strengthen K-12 arts education as part of, and fundamental to, basic education.

The Arts (dance, music, theatre and visual arts) are a core academic area, per state and federal law, however many schools across Washington state are not offering sufficient or consistent arts instruction. Learning in and through the arts leads to academic and social benefits for all students.

The arts support multiple pathways to understanding concepts across the curriculum, and they increase overall engagement in school. The arts help students develop the 21st Century Skills (e.g. creativity, communication, collaboration, critical thinking) and Habits of Mind (e.g. observation, dedication, determination), that support success in work and life. The arts help young people develop the skills and interests that lead to lifelong participation in the arts. All students should have equal education opportunity, regardless of zip code and regardless of parent/family support or interests.

ArtsWA connects the professional arts community with the K-12 education community, supports arts learning partnerships, develops the arts teaching workforce, and collaborates on the development and dissemination of strong arts education policies and practices.

Objective 1: Support local partnerships among arts organizations, schools and community organizations to strengthen high quality arts learning approaches.

- Invest in grant programs that support strong collaborations and best practices.
- Nurture these partnerships through trainings, convenings and other resources.
- Develop new resources and strategies to support participatory arts learning in conjunction with State Arts Collection acquisitions at K-12 schools.

Objective 2: Support and develop the arts teaching workforce of classroom teachers, teaching artists and arts education leaders.

- Foster collaboration among arts educators, and support aligned approaches.
- Cultivate the field of professional teaching artists, focusing on those working in K-12 schools, through initiatives such as the Roster of Teaching artists.

Objective 3: Engage with regional, state-level and national arts and education organizations to develop, align and promote policies related to supporting K-12 arts education.

- Maintain active partnerships with two key state-level organizations: the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) and ArtsEd Washington.
- Track and participate in key discussions related to arts education policy and emerging arts education models and initiatives.
- Build relationships with leaders across arts and education sectors.

GOAL 4: Improve stewardship of the State Art Collection.

Public art enhances public spaces and encourages community dialogue. The Washington State Legislature established the Art in Public Places program in 1974 to acquire artwork for K-12 public schools, colleges and universities, and State buildings. Today, the State Art Collection includes more than 4,500 artworks that are sited where people live, work and study. Stewardship of the State Art Collection has become a higher priority in recent years, to preserve the State's investment, minimize maintenance needs, and optimize public appreciation of this tremendous resource.

Objective 1: Acquire public art through processes guided by clear acquisition and collection care policies.

- Maximize the effectiveness of current policies and practices, including conservation reviews and ArtCare collection management policies.
- Fully implement the K-12 Pooled Funds initiative to better allocate funds for artworks in public schools.
- Consider trends and best practices to best serve ongoing and future program needs.

Objective 2: Actively engage communities with the State Art Collection.

- Facilitate and support local committees throughout the artwork acquisition process.
- Establish arts learning opportunities related to the State Art Collection.

Objective 3: Improve long-term care and conservation of the State Art Collection.

- Allocate available resources to maximize agency's capacity to care for the Collection.
- Strengthen partner agency commitment to stewardship through Inter-Agency Agreements.

Objective 4: Build public awareness and understanding of the State Art Collection.

- Enable online exploration of the State Art Collection through interactive web resources.
- Provide related educational materials and opportunities for K-12 students and other learners.

GOAL 5: Document the impact of the arts and arts education, and share the findings.

The arts are a valuable and critical component to the economy, a strong education, community health and quality of life. Many types of data and research projects are proving this true, and this evidence must inform our decision making and help us tell our stories to the public and elected officials – and building understanding about the value of the arts to Washington.

Objective 1: Communicate the outcomes of Arts Commission investments.

- Collect, compile and use data about how the arts in Washington State are affecting peoples' lives.
- Engage program participants and constituencies in building and sharing stories about ArtsWA investments.

Objective 2: Research how the arts and arts education contribute to WA communities.

- Use the Creative Vitality Index and other community-specific data collection tools to provide an objective measurement system of impact of the arts and arts education.
- Connect with arts organizations in communities statewide to collect information about the arts in their communities.

Objective 3: Use national research, best practices and emerging models in the arts and arts education to inform our work and the work of our constituencies.

- Use available communications channels to distribute information in a format that is meaningful, relevant and useful to constituents.
- Host conferences, convenings, webinars and other educational events to inform constituents about the results of our research.

GOAL 6: Build leadership in and for the arts.

The arts benefit from good leadership within arts organizations and throughout the community. Leaders make the right things happen. They lead healthy organizations, advance issues, solve problems, serve as role models and encourage people to step up. Good leaders are informed, articulate and effective.

To fulfill our mission will require good leadership from ArtsWA. Our statewide role positions us to build the effectiveness of other arts leaders across Washington. We also must help other leaders – including policy makers, community leaders, coalition builders and arts champions – advance the arts.

Objective 1: Strengthen and support leadership within arts organizations.

- Build knowledge of key concepts of arts participation, arts management, arts education and stewardship of public art through information resources and focused learning opportunities.
- Develop and support skills of emerging and diverse leaders.

Objective 2: Strengthen and support the arts commitment of community leaders, policy makers and coalition builders.

- Provide information, training, encouragement and recognition for local efforts to advance the arts.
- Support pilot projects that enable connecting the arts to economic development, neighborhood revitalization, lifelong learning and other local issues.