



## WHAT WE LEARNED

### A summary of high level research results for the New Hampshire State Council on the Arts

Compiled by Maren Brown for 2013-2018 Strategic Plan:

### *INTERVIEW REPORT RESULTS*

#### **Summary of opportunities for the State Arts Agency:**

Interviewees offered a multitude of suggestions for the State Arts Agency to enhance its impact in the state, which include:

- There are opportunities for the New Hampshire State Council on the Arts to develop mutually-beneficial strategic partnerships, particularly with unconventional and non-arts sector allies.
- Convenings, such as conferences and workshops, provide much needed networking opportunities for diverse constituencies.
- As resources diminish, the State Arts Agency needs to refine its current role as a funder.
- There is a need for more cohesive branding and marketing strategies to raise awareness of the value of the arts.

#### **Observed needs and trends:**

- There is a need to broaden access to arts participation and creation among underserved populations.
  - There are pressing needs for the immigrant and refugee populations that could be addressed through the arts.
  - Youth-at-risk would benefit from arts exposure and education.
  - Participation in arts activities can help returning veterans, particularly those with PTSD and brain injuries, to adjust to life after active combat situations.
- Rural environments offer unique challenges in access to the arts.
  - Because of transportation issues within rural communities, public schools are seen as a critical hub for rural youth who want to engage in the arts.
  - There is a need to acknowledge the distinctions between an urban agenda for cultural development and a rural one.
  - Cultural districts need to be conceived differently in rural areas.

- The health care sector is increasing in scale in New Hampshire as the population ages.
  - Health care is a growing industry in the state.
  - New Hampshire's shifting demographics signal an aging population.
  - This trend towards aging could also signal less spending on the arts.
- There is growth in the recognition of the role of the arts in strengthening communities and fostering a sense of place.
  - The social impact of successful arts endeavors can be profound.
  - The arts are increasingly recognized as an economic driver in communities.
  - The exception to the demographic flight of younger people from New Hampshire is the in-migration of 30-year olds with children.
- There are opportunities for experiencing art in unconventional venues, such as hospitals and healing centers.
  - Hospital waiting rooms, filled with contemporary art, can become museum-like experiences for visitors.
  - There is a need for environmental design and renovation in hospitals/healing centers for veterans.
- There is an increased need for afterschool and out of school arts opportunities.
  - The afterschool sector continues to evolve and formalize, and there is a need for more out-of-school arts education.
- There is a general need for evidenced-based research and data in the arts.
  - Economic research has provided a critical, supportive role in the development of awareness in the value of the arts and its impact on the quality of life.
  - Evidence-based music therapy is increasingly recognized as an effective tool for rehabilitation.
  - Public health resources have tightened for youth and require specific, evidence-based impacts.

### **Opportunities:**

- There are opportunities for the New Hampshire State Council on the Arts to develop mutually-beneficial strategic partnerships, particularly with unconventional and non-arts sector allies:
  - Educational community
  - Veteran's services
  - Disability services
  - Juvenile justice system

- Substance abuse networks
- State agencies
- Municipal governments
- Convenings, such as conferences and workshops, provide much needed networking opportunities for diverse constituencies.
  - Conferences, regional exchanges, and the State Arts Agency’s general role as an information resource are seen as strengths.
  - Explore the possibility of virtual gatherings.
  - Consider ways to bring together arts and non-arts sector constituents to dialogue about common areas of interest.
  - There is a need for a national conference for state arts agency representatives to discuss their cultural districts programs.
- As resources diminish, the State Arts Agency needs to refine its current role as a funder.
  - Several suggestions were offered about how the State Arts Agency could strategically redesign its grantmaking role for greater impact.
- There is a need for more cohesive branding and marketing strategies to raise awareness of the value of the arts.
  - The arts can provide positive media messaging for various underserved communities.
  - Micro-districts could offer marketing opportunities to promote the arts.
  - Support the use of social media to promote the value of art therapy in working with veterans.
- Enhance marketing strategies to more effectively advocate for public funding of the arts in the state and to promote the work of the State Arts Agency itself.

## *SURVEY REPORT RESULTS*

**Five year priorities:** Both organizational and school representatives and artists were presented with the same list of potential priorities for the State Arts Agency over the next five years. Both groups identified the same top four priorities:

- “Provide funding opportunities for arts programs/projects/activities to benefit NH citizens”
- “Promote the value of arts to NH’s economy and quality of life”
- “Nurture creativity in young people through arts education”
- “Provide leadership in shaping public policy for support of the arts”

## Organizational affiliation:

What category best describes your organization/school? Please choose one from below:		
Answer Options	2013 Response #	2013 Response %
Nonprofit arts/cultural organization	106	51.7%
K-12 public/private school	43	21.0%
College or higher education institution	17	8.3%

## Artistic discipline:

What is your artistic discipline? (please select any that apply)				
Answer Options	2013 Response #	2013 Response %	2010* Response %	Response % DIFF 2013 vs. 2010
Visual Arts	139	50.0%	29.4%	20.60%
Crafts	51	18.3%	5.1%	13.20%
Literature	44	15.8%	15%	0.80%
Folk/Traditional Arts	43	15.5%	4.1%	11.40%
Music	42	15.1%	3.4%	11.70%

## Issues of importance:

Looking ahead, what issues or challenges will be important to your organization/school during the next five years? <i>1= not at all important to 4=very important</i>		
	2013 Rankings	2010 Rankings
Strengthening arts education programming	3.78	3.28
Strengthening arts programming	3.74	3.29
Developing a strong board	3.72	3.30
Repairing/renovating our facility	3.71	2.49
Securing funding	3.56	3.75

<b>What issues are important to you as an artist?</b>	
Please rate each of the items below: <i>1= not at all important to 4=very important</i>	
	<b>2013 Rankings</b>
Increase artistic skills & knowledge	3.39
Gain local, state, or national recognition as an artist	2.99
Secure equipment, materials or supplies needed to progress in artistic development	2.90
Access to low cost health insurance	2.89
Network with other artists	2.88

**Perceived benefit and participation levels:**

<b>Did you participate in or take advantage of any of the following State Arts Council services or programs? If yes, how beneficial were they?</b>		
	<b>Artists Ranking</b>	<b>Organization s Ranking</b>
<i>1= not at all beneficial to 4=very beneficial</i>		
Professional Development Workshops	2.96	2.61
Poetry Out Loud	2.96	2.76
Arts in Education Conference	2.93	2.74
E-Communications (ArtStarts & E-Opps)	2.92	2.83
Traditional Arts Exhibits/Conferences	2.92	2.43
Artist Rosters	2.70	2.71
Arts & Economic Prosperity Survey IV	2.35	2.64
Measuring Up: NH Arts Data Project	2.31	2.62

**Suggestions to improve programs and services:**

*Organizations:*

1. Revise grant making procedures.
2. Continue to provide leadership in arts education.
3. Collaborate and foster partnerships in support of arts in state.
4. Increase the visibility of the State Arts Agency and advocate for the arts.

*Artists:*

1. Increase investment and funding opportunities for artistic and professional development for artists.
2. Revisit criteria and broaden visibility of artist rosters.
3. Increase the visibility of the State Arts Agency's programs and services.
4. Offer exhibition and performance opportunities brokered by the State Arts Agency.

**Preferred modes of communication:**

<b>How do you prefer to receive information from the State Arts Council? (check all that apply)</b>		
	<b>Artists %</b>	<b>Organizations %</b>
E-Communications (Art Starts, E-Opps)	94.4%	91.0%
Website	45.6%	51.5%
Direct mail	23.3%	23.0%
Facebook	22.6%	17.0%
Posters/flyers	7.3%	6.5%
Radio	7.3%	4.0%
Newspaper listings	6.3%	6.0%

**Planning priorities:**

<b>What do you see as the priorities for the State Arts Council to address in the next five years?</b>		
<i>1= not at all important to 4=very important</i>	<b>Artists Ranking</b>	<b>Organizations Ranking</b>
Provide funding opportunities for arts programs/projects/activities to benefit NH citizens	3.56	3.65
Promote the value of arts to NH's economy and quality of life	3.64	3.51
Nurture creativity in young people through arts education	3.52	3.51
Provide leadership in shaping public policy for support of the arts	3.56	3.42
Provide arts education resources for NH's teachers, teaching artists and students	3.36	3.29
Facilitate new collaborations & partnerships to support the arts	3.37	3.20

**Other narrative responses:**

1. Partner with others.
2. Stimulate support for the arts. Enhancing the "Art Matters" portal of the State Arts Council website and building greater visibility for the arts was seen as an important component of the five year plan for the State Arts Agency by a few respondents.
3. Other advice included a suggested advisory board comprised of educators, capacity building for organizations, and additional operating support.

4. Multiple suggestions were made to enhance the visibility of the State Arts Agency's programs and services, to seek out reliable funding streams for the State Arts Agency, and to establish thoughtful priorities for the State Arts Agency's work.

## *FOCUS GROUP REPORT RESULTS*

### ***Focus Group #1***

#### **Addressing the Needs of "Youth at Risk" Through the Arts**

- Offer targeted funding to support the intersection of the arts and at-risk youth.
- Support youth arts education initiatives.
- Foster networking and information sharing between arts and youth development professionals.

### ***Forum***

#### **Creative Solutions: A Look at the Economic Impact of New Hampshire's Cultural Nonprofits**

- Continue to document the economic impact of the nonprofit arts.
- Support initiatives that revitalize downtown centers through the arts.

### ***Focus Group #2***

#### **Arts Education and Accessibility – Reaching Youth with Mental and Physical Disabilities**

- Increase access to arts education for youth with disabilities.
- Recruit artists with disabilities for the State Arts Agency's artist rosters.
- Highlight exemplars of the arts as a therapeutic tool in State Arts Agency conferences, convenings, and information services.
- Enhance awareness of new ADA regulations and the potential relevance to cultural nonprofits in State Arts Agency-sponsored workshops and grant programs.
- Explore opportunities for training artists with disabilities on marketing their work.

### ***Focus Group #3***

#### **Nurturing and Preserving New Hampshire's Heritage and Traditional Arts**

- Examine additional possibilities for expanding State Arts Agency traditional arts and heritage programs for youth.
- Consider ways to increase the promotion and presentation of New Hampshire's traditional arts.
- Convene members of the traditional arts and heritage communities to build the capacity of the sector.

- Explore possibilities for simplifying grant making procedures and modifying the existing structure of State Arts Agency grant programs.
- Provide additional grant-related resources to applicants.

#### ***Focus Group #4***

##### **Designing Communities for Livability and Prosperity through the Arts**

- Continue efforts to support creative place making in the state.
- Consider partnering with the New Hampshire Division of Travel and Tourism Development in promoting cultural tourism.
- Seek out stronger partnerships and build advocacy support with the business community.
- Explore ways to better communicate the value of the State Arts Agency.
- Examine how the arts can help retain younger residents.
- Support the display and presentation of art in non-traditional spaces in communities.

#### ***Focus Group #5***

##### **Reconnecting New Hampshire Veterans to Community Life through the Arts**

- Partner with veteran's service providers in a targeted effort to connect art programs with children of service members.

#### ***Focus Group #6***

##### **Higher Education and the Arts – Connecting with Future Arts Leaders and Constituencies**

- Highlight successful STEAM projects, with the hope of increasing funding for arts education.
- Raise awareness of the State Arts Agency's programs and services in New Hampshire's colleges and universities.
- Support engagement projects between higher education institutions and their local communities.
- Convene college arts faculty in the state for information sharing and networking.

#### ***Focus Group #7***

##### **Building Strong Communities through Public Value Partnerships for the Arts**

- Champion cooperative marketing efforts for cultural organizations in the state.
- Explore ways to remove barriers to liquor licensing for cultural nonprofits.
- Increase funding for particular audience segments.
- Subsidize transportation for arts education programming.
- Implement a streamlined grant programs to enable rural areas to more easily access the arts.
- Partner with the tourism division on promoting cultural tourism.

***Focus Group #8*****Arts Learning: PreK-12—In Schools and In Community Settings**

- Explore refinements to the Arts Education Roster, so that it better meets the needs of teachers.
- Consider offering shorter residency options and simplified grants for artist residencies.
- Continue to offer networking events and conferences, such as the arts in education conference.
- Explore the possibility of establishing student achievement awards.
- Mobilize more advocacy for arts education.