



for the Arts and
Entertainment
Industries

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DC Commission on the Arts & Humanities

Strategic Plan

2010-2014

Introduction

In December 2008, AMS Planning & Research was engaged by the DC Commission on the Arts & Humanities to assist with the development of its next five-year strategic plan.

Over a period of one year, AMS led an inclusive process to receive input from stakeholders and the public at large, conducted a comprehensive review of agency practices, and researched best practices from model agencies elsewhere in the United States.

The plan which follows has had the benefit of broad engagement and input from community leaders, agency grantees, artists, educators, and DC citizens. It takes other relevant initiatives (Mayor's Comprehensive Plan, Creative DC Action Plan, Arts Education Task Force Report, DC Creates! Public Art Master Plan, etc.) into consideration. It is informed by success stories from other communities and recommends inter-locking goals and strategies to engage community, enhance the arts, and reinforce the position of Washington, DC as one of the great cultural centers in the nation and the world.

AMS would like to thank the staff of the Commission, particularly Executive Director Gloria Nauden and Director of Grants and Legislative Affairs Catherine Cleary for their assistance during this planning year. To effectively engage a broad constituency into a planning process requires great effort, and their support was invaluable in achieving that goal.

Background

The D.C. Commission on the Arts and Humanities is the District of Columbia's official arts agency. Since 1968, the DCCAH has developed programs and initiatives that support local artists, arts organizations, and arts activities for the benefit of the city. Under the direction of the Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development, the DCCAH functions simultaneously as a state and local arts agency, and is the sole source of public funding for the arts in the District of Columbia.

In his 2006 Comprehensive Plan, Mayor Adrian Fenty expressed the administration's abiding support for arts and culture as a key element to the City's success. The Plan places a priority on public art, developing infrastructure in support of arts activities, recruiting and retaining artist citizens, and creating a civic environment that attracts knowledge workers and other members of the creative class. It acknowledges the contribution of the arts to the city's economy and looks to sustain the arts as a reflection of local values and community identity.

Process

AMS began the planning process with a series of structured interviews with thirteen Commissioners and staff. The Consultants also reviewed significant amounts of background documentation, including previous agency plans, grant-making guidelines, budgets, organizational charts, annual performance plans and performance measures, and other internal reports. An aggregate analysis of participating organization ticket buyers was conducted to provide a snapshot of existing and potential arts patrons.

Next a survey was conducted of agency grantees and stakeholders to assess the familiarity and impact of DCCAH's programs, solicit feedback on constituents' perceptions of DCCAH, understand constituents' top priorities, and offer an opportunity for constituents to provide additional feedback. The consultants then conducted approximately twenty leadership interviews with representatives from City Administration, D.C. Public Schools, and related agencies (including Tourism, Economic Partnership, Cultural Alliance, and the Humanities Council) to understand priorities, other initiatives, and environmental factors that might impact agency planning.

Seven years of agency budgets and grant-making were analyzed. Program evaluations were conducted based on a set of measures established to define breadth or reach into the community, efficiency of investment, and, based on survey responses, perception of program impact.

The planning process took place in an environment of national economic recession and anxiety. After multiple years of budget growth, the severe economic recession resulted in agency budget cutbacks. The Mayor and Administration put increased focus on efficiency and accountability, and eliminated line-item budget funding which impacted several agency grantees.

AMS researched and interviewed five public arts agencies, as well as leadership from two national service organizations to understand current trends, model practices and creative solutions being developed in other communities.

The consultants consolidated all of the data to date and conducted a public input session which was attended by an array of stakeholders including individual artists, arts organization leadership, social service organizations and City administration. Participants were asked to reflect on three key areas of importance to the Commission's constituency and stakeholders: "Support for Artists and Arts Organizations," "The Role of Arts Education," and "Advocacy, Branding and Visibility." Results of that session informed a set of six goal statements, which were subsequently reviewed in three focus group settings. A draft of the full strategic plan was posted on the agency website for public comment for thirty days.

Copies of all interim reports and other work product are available through the Commission.

DC Commission on the Arts & Humanities Strategic Plan

Mission

The mission of the D.C. Commission on the Arts and Humanities is to provide grants, programs and education activities that encourage diverse artistic expressions and learning opportunities so that all District of Columbia residents and visitors can experience the rich culture of our city.

In partnership with the community, DCCAH promotes excellence in the arts by initiating and supporting programs, activities, and policies that inspire, nurture, and reflect the multi-ethnic character and cultural diversity of the District.

Vision of Success

DC is known as a vibrant city where technology, the arts, business, education and government intersect to stimulate ideas and engage the community at large. The arts are widely recognized as contributing significantly to neighborhood vitality, community diversity, job creation and economic impact.

The City has visible arts and art activities in a variety of neighborhoods throughout the District, and DC is recognized world-wide as a top city for artists and creative industry workers. The public school system boasts a curriculum infused with arts references and experiences; and opportunities abound for citizens of all ages and economic means to enrich their lives and the community through the arts.

The DC Commission on the Arts & Humanities is the known resource for information and funding among artists and arts organizations. The Agency has steadily increasing funding for grant making and services; and is positioned nationally among the top states in per capita funding for the arts.

Goals, Objectives & Strategies

Goal I

Support Artists & Arts Organizations

First and foremost the agency's role is to be a funder and a resource to arts organizations and artists in order to support the arts infrastructure that improves the quality of life for DC residents, stimulates the local economy and makes culture a distinct part of DC's identity.

- Objective 1: Strengthen core programs that support the agency's mission
- Objective 2: Develop services to support artists and arts organizations to build their capacity in business development
- Objective 3: Support initiatives and provide resources to enable artistic professional development and the creative process
- Objective 4: Serve as the central source for referrals and information for services and resources

Strategies

- Continue to aggressively reach and support the most innovative and impactful artists and arts organizations
- Pursue outreach and awareness activities to ensure access by new potential grantees. Use the website and social media to alert artists to grant and commission opportunities.
- Engage in policy discussions with other agencies that can enhance presence and support of artists and arts organizations
- Consolidate grant-making programs to ensure effectiveness and efficiency (without reducing number or diversity of grantees)
- Collect and distribute information on potential grant partners for artists and arts organizations (e.g., retirement homes, educators)
- Develop a website with the DCCAH brand that serves as a centralized clearinghouse for job and internship opportunities, venue information, funding opportunities and other resources (either via a compilation of links or through DCCAH's own data)
- Create additional opportunities for visual artists to showcase and enhance sales of art
- Investigate and implement professional development opportunities and conduct workshops for artists to expand their technical skills and craft

- Determine evaluation criteria for each grant program and annually assess the effectiveness of grant programs to those measurements

Assessment Measures

- Number of grantees
- Attendance at workshops and information sessions
- Increase in applications to core programs for artists and arts organizations
- Number of hits to DCCAH website

Goal II Be a Catalyst for the Creative Economy

A recent study commissioned by the DC Departments of Planning and Economic Partnership¹ quantified that more than 90,000 individuals are employed in the creative sector.² Creative employment provides over \$5 billion in earnings and accounts for 10% of the District's jobs base. Beyond direct jobs, creative industries and talent provide competitive advantage to other key DC industries.

- Objective 1: Provide information and resources to individuals engaged in the creative economy
- Objective 2: Serve as a bridge between agency constituents and coordinate initiatives with the Creative DC Action Agenda

Strategies

- In partnership with the Cultural Alliance, Americans for the Arts and others, support efforts to measure the breadth and depth of the impact of the arts in DC
- Partner with other City agencies and organizations to leverage DC's cultural assets in the attraction and retention of creative industry businesses

¹ *Creative Capital: The Creative DC Action Agenda*

² The “Creative Economy” was defined in the study as the set of “Businesses and organizations in which creative content is central to both the cultural and economic values of what they produce. These include businesses, individuals, and organizations involved in all stages of the creative process-conception, production and initial presentation of the product

- Support the use of non-traditional spaces for performances and visual art
- Facilitate the use of vacant commercial spaces for temporary visual art exhibits and performances to promote neighborhood revitalization
- Engage in outreach to culinary and media arts sectors
- In conjunction with the Comprehensive Plan and related Small Area Plans continue to focus on presence of art, arts activities and artists in individual neighborhoods
- Maintain flexible definition of artistic delivery
- Support marketing efforts for cutting edge contemporary arts activities and installations

Assessment Measures

- Continued growth in the District's Creative Economy
- Business leaders citing creative economy as important to success

Goal III Support and Facilitate City-wide Engagement in Arts Education

Arts education lays the foundation of skills for the next generation of America's artists. For all of DC's students it nurtures creativity, teaches skills which carry over to other academic subjects, and educates students about other cultures. As a result, arts education is a stated priority for the DC Public School system (DCPS). Additionally, citizens and artists support lifelong learning opportunities as a way of enhancing the quality of life for DC residents. In other words, residents of the City benefit from engagement in the arts, and the arts benefit from diverse community participation.

- Objective 1: Use Agency resources and visibility to continue to generate support for arts education, especially in the schools.
- Objective 2: Engage in research and participate in development of informed and specific goals for arts education district-wide.
- Objective 3: Support opportunities for lifelong arts education outside of the school setting.

Strategies

- Inventory existing arts education initiatives as part of a DC cultural census (see Goal II)

- In partnership with the Arts Education Collaborative, work in tandem with the Office of the Mayor and DCPS to provide counsel and advice on arts education curriculum and the alignment between arts education offerings and educational standards
- Develop a plan to support arts education initiatives in DC's Charter Schools
- Facilitate partnerships between public schools, artists and arts organizations on in-school and after-school arts education programs
- Support or initiate training of artists in DCPS curriculum requirements to align arts education with educational standards
- Facilitate new or expanded relationships with DC universities, Department of Parks & Recreation and after school programs and arts centers to create more quality community arts education programs
- Support artists and arts organizations who provide life-long learning opportunities
- Collect and distribute information on arts-based teacher training opportunities
- Become a center of information linking DC residents to lifelong learning arts opportunities
- Invest in existing community art center(s) to ensure that they have high quality, accessible art programs

Assessment Measures

- Creation of a set of baseline data regarding existing arts education programs
- Establishment of measurable goals for arts education throughout the schools, both public and charter, which are supported by the Mayor and Schools Chancellor
- Creation of baseline data regarding citizen arts participation; establish goals and strategies to enhance engagement
- Continued engagement of the Arts Education Task Force in plan development, with City support

Goal IV

Brand DC as an Arts Town

The Mayor's comprehensive plan recognizes that Washington is one of the country's leading cultural centers, and that the

arts are an expression of local values and a source of community pride. Residents and visitors alike embrace the breadth of experience available from both the nation's most robust and traditional cultural institutions as well as the cutting edge diversity of non-traditional venues and art forms. Because of the large international population provided by the embassies and universities, art and culture becomes part of Washington's international identity.

- Objective 1: Implement Public Art plan
- Objective 2: Retain and recruit resident artists
- Objective 3: Enhance neighborhood vitality
- Objective 4: Serve as a bridge between agency constituents and coordinate initiatives with the Creative DC Action Agenda

Strategies

- In conjunction with the Comprehensive Plan and related Small Area Plans encourage the City to designate Arts Districts
- Collaborate with Destination DC, Cultural Tourism and other entities to coordinate messaging about the arts in DC
- Identify bureaucratic barriers to artists and arts organizations and work with the appropriate City offices to eliminate or mitigate these barriers
- Advocate for the creation of tax incentives that encourage the growth of the arts sector
- Collaborate with developers and City agencies to create more subsidized housing and studio space for artists
- Revitalize existing community arts center(s) and explore the creation of new ones in underserved neighborhoods

Assessment Measures

- Number of working artists residing in DC
- Establishment of Arts Districts
- Tangible examples of arts activities and installations revitalizing neighborhoods with vacant stores and buildings

Goal V Champion the Arts as a Critical Component of a World Class Inclusive City

Continued efforts to showcase the breadth and diversity of DC's arts and artists will reinforce the arts as providing economic impact and

jobs, supporting tourism and enhancing quality of life for its residents. Advocacy is linked to both the DC “brand” and to community vibrancy through exposure to and engagement in the arts.

- Objective 1: Provide data that measures the impact of the arts to DC
- Objective 2: Tie advocacy to agency visibility through promotion of grantees, grantee funding and impact of grantee activities on DC's local economy and quality of life
- Objective 3: Showcase investments and impact in the context of the three challenges articulated in the DC Vision for an Inclusive City (Creating Successful Neighborhoods; Increasing Access to Education and Employment; Connecting the Whole City)

Strategies

- Develop annual fact gathering similar to Maryland's *Cultural Data Project* or Americans for the Arts *Arts & Economic Prosperity*
- Host an annual “State of the Arts” conference or event designed to share information and showcase the breadth and diversity of DC arts.
- Encourage active and visible engagement of Commissioners at arts events and advocacy efforts.
- Create a marketing campaign promoting attendance at arts events and the purchase of visual art from DC artists

Assessment Measures

- Elected officials and leaders of the administration consider and incorporate DC's vibrant arts and culture scene in planning documents and economic development initiatives.
- Agency leadership is included in policy meetings and strategy sessions regarding the health of the City.

Goal VI

Explore Ways to Build Agency Resources

The Agency provides a critical role in providing unrestricted general operating support to arts organizations and artists. The City's vibrancy depends on these resources that support the artistic process. The current economic environment requires creativity, efficiency and collaboration to maximize resources.

- Objective 1: Engage with other agencies in order to accomplish mutual objectives with partnership funding and shared resources

Objective 2: Develop additional sources of revenue

Strategies

- Identify potential sources of additional federal funding
- Identify areas of potential collaboration with compatible City agencies and invest in mutual partnerships
- Develop case for dedicated funding stream out of City budget

Assessment Measures

- Revenue growth
- Percentage of grant requests funded
- Total grants awarded
- Median grant size per recipient

Strategy Prioritization and Outcome Measures

Goal I: Support Artists & Arts Organizations

First and foremost the agency's role is to be a funder and a resource to arts organizations and artists in order to support the arts infrastructure that improves the quality of life for DC residents, stimulates the local economy and makes culture a distinct part of DC's identity.

- Objective 1: Strengthen core programs that support the agency's mission
- Objective 2: Develop services to support artists and arts organizations to build their capacity in business development
- Objective 3: Support initiatives and provide resources to enable artistic professional development and the creative process
- Objective 4: Serve as the central source for referrals and information for services and resources

Strategies

	Priority	Outcome Measures
Continue to aggressively reach and support the most innovative and impactful artists and arts organizations	High & Immediate	Growth in number of discrete grantees
Pursue outreach and awareness activities to ensure access by new potential grantees. Use the website and social media to alert artists to grant and commission opportunities.	High & Immediate	Increase in applications to core programs for artists and arts organizations
Engage in policy discussions with other agencies that can enhance presence and support of artists and arts organizations	High & Immediate	Involvement in inter-agency coalitions and plans
Consolidate grant-making programs to ensure effectiveness and efficiency (without reducing number or diversity of grantees)	Long-Term	Fewer programs/panels with same or increased number of grantees
Collect and distribute information on potential grant partners for artists and arts organizations (e.g., retirement homes, educators)	As Resources are Available	Brochure; section on website
Develop a website with the DCCAH brand that serves as a centralized clearinghouse for job and internship opportunities, venue information, funding opportunities and other resources (either via a compilation of links or through DCCAH's own data)	Long-Term	Increase in number of hits to DCCAH website
Create additional opportunities for visual artists to showcase and enhance sales of art	As Resources are Available	Increase in art sales
Investigate and implement professional development opportunities and conduct workshops for artists to expand their technical skills and craft	Long-Term	Attendance at workshops and information sessions
Determine evaluation criteria for each grant program and annually assess the effectiveness of grant programs to those measurements	Long-Term	Development & use of formal assessment program

Strategy Prioritization and Outcome Measures

Goal II: Be a Catalyst for the Creative Economy

A recent study commissioned by the DC Departments of Planning and Economic Partnership quantified that more than 90,000 individuals are employed in the creative sector. Creative employment provides over \$5 billion in earnings and accounts for 10% of the District's jobs base. Beyond direct jobs, creative industries and talent provide competitive advantage to other key DC industries.

Objective 1: Provide information and resources to individuals engaged in the creative economy

Objective 2: Serve as a bridge between agency constituents and coordinate initiatives with the Creative DC Action Agenda

Strategies

	Priority	Outcome Measures
In partnership with the Cultural Alliance, Americans for the Arts and others, support efforts to measure the breadth and depth of the impact of the arts in DC	Long-Term	Cultural Census
Partner with other City agencies and organizations to leverage DC's cultural assets in the attraction and retention of creative industry businesses	High & Immediate	Ref: Creative DC Action Agenda Outcomes
Support the use of non-traditional spaces for performances and visual art	High & Immediate	Art Salons
Facilitate the use of vacant commercial spaces for temporary visual art exhibits and performances to promote neighborhood revitalization	High & Immediate	Events & Exhibits in vacant spaces
Engage in outreach to culinary and media arts sectors	Long-Term	Growth in e-blast list from these sectors
In conjunction with the Comprehensive Plan and related Small Area Plans continue to focus on presence of art, arts activities and artists in individual neighborhoods	Long-Term	Growth in neighborhood events and installations
Maintain flexible definition of artistic delivery	High & Immediate	Identified in grant-making guidelines
Support marketing efforts for cutting edge contemporary arts activities and installations	As Resources are Available	Electronic Marketing Support Network

Strategy Prioritization and Outcome Measures

Goal III: Support and Facilitate City-wide Engagement in Arts Education

Arts education lays the foundation of skills for the next generation of America's artists. For all of DC's students it nurtures creativity, teaches skills which carry over to other academic subjects, and educates students about other cultures. As a result, arts education is a stated priority for the DC Public School system (DCPS). Additionally, citizens and artists support lifelong learning opportunities as a way of enhancing the quality of life for DC residents. In other words, residents of the City benefit from engagement in the arts, and the arts benefit from diverse community participation.

Objective 1: Use Agency resources and visibility to continue to generate support for arts education, especially in the schools.
 Objective 2: Engage in research and participate in development of informed and specific goals for arts education district-wide
 Objective 3: Support opportunities for lifelong arts education outside of the school setting.

Strategies

	Priority	Outcome Measures
Inventory existing arts education initiatives as part of a DC cultural census (see Goal II)	Long-Term	Cultural Census
In partnership with the Arts Education Collaborative, work in tandem with the Office of the Mayor and DCPS to provide counsel and advice on arts education curriculum and the alignment between arts education offerings and educational standards	High & Immediate	Implementation of Arts Education Task Force Policy Recommendation; Ref: Creative DC Action Agenda Outcomes
Develop a plan to support arts education initiatives in DC's Charter Schools	Long-Term	Plan
Facilitate partnerships between public schools, artists and arts organizations on in-school and after-school arts education programs	Long-Term	More Artists in Schools grants
Support or initiate training of artists in DCPS curriculum requirements to align arts education with educational standards	As Resources are Available	More Artists in Schools grants
Facilitate new or expanded relationships with DC universities, Department of Parks & Recreation and after school programs and arts centers to create more quality community arts education programs	Long-Term	More Partners in Arts Education grants
Support artists and arts organizations who provide life-long learning opportunities	High & Immediate	Expanded grant-making guidelines for education programs in partnership with social service agencies & other
Collect and distribute information on arts-based teacher training opportunities	Long-Term	Brochure; information on website
Become a center of information linking DC residents to lifelong learning arts opportunities	Long-Term	Increase in number of hits to DCCAH website
Invest in existing community art center(s) to ensure that they have high quality, accessible art programs	As Resources are Available	Ref: Creative DC Action Agenda Outcomes

Strategy Prioritization and Outcome Measures

Goal IV: Brand DC as an Arts Town

The Mayor's comprehensive plan recognizes that Washington is one of the country's leading cultural centers, and that the arts are an expression of local values and a source of community pride. Residents and visitors alike embrace the breadth of experience available from both the nation's most robust and traditional cultural institutions as well as the cutting edge diversity of non-traditional venues and art forms. Because of the large international population provided by the embassies and universities, art and culture becomes part of Washington's international identity.

- Objective 1: Implement Public Art plan
- Objective 2: Retain and recruit resident artists
- Objective 3: Enhance neighborhood vitality
- Objective 4: Serve as a bridge between agency constituents and coordinate initiatives with the Creative DC Action Agenda

Strategies

	Priority	Outcome Measures
In conjunction with the Comprehensive Plan and related Small Area Plans encourage the City to designate Arts Districts	Long-Term	Designation of Arts Districts
Collaborate with Destination DC, Cultural Tourism and other entities to coordinate messaging about the arts in DC	High & Immediate	Ref: Creative DC Action Agenda Outcomes
Identify bureaucratic barriers to artists and arts organizations and work with the appropriate City offices to eliminate or mitigate these barriers	High & Immediate	Ref: Creative DC Action Agenda Outcomes
Advocate for the creation of tax incentives that encourage the growth of the arts sector	High & Immediate	Ref: Creative DC Action Agenda Outcomes
Collaborate with developers and City agencies to create more subsidized housing and studio space for artists	High & Immediate	Ref: Creative DC Action Agenda Outcomes
Revitalize existing community arts center(s) and explore the creation of new ones in underserved neighborhoods	As Resources are Available	Ref: Creative DC Action Agenda Outcomes

Strategy Prioritization and Outcome Measures

Goal V: Champion the Arts as a Critical Component of a World Class Inclusive City

Continued efforts to showcase the breadth and diversity of DC's arts and artists will reinforce the arts as providing economic impact and jobs, supporting tourism and enhancing quality of life for its residents. Advocacy is linked to both the DC "brand" and to community vibrancy through exposure to and engagement in the arts.

Objective 1: Provide data that measures the impact of the arts to DC

Objective 2: Tie advocacy to agency visibility through promotion of grantees, grantee funding and impact of grantee activities on DC's local economy and quality of life

Objective 3: Showcase investments and impact in the context of the three challenges articulated in the DC Vision for an Inclusive City (Creating Successful Neighborhoods; Increasing Access to Education and Employment; Connecting the Whole City)

Strategies

	Priority	Outcome Measures
Develop annual fact gathering similar to Maryland's Cultural Data Project or Americans for the Arts Arts & Economic Prosperity	As Resources are Available	Cultural Census
Host an annual "State of the Arts" conference or event designed to share information and showcase the breadth and diversity of DC arts.	As Resources are Available	Ref: Creative DC Action Agenda Outcomes "Creative Expo"
Encourage active and visible engagement of Commissioners at arts events and advocacy efforts.	High & Immediate	Attendance at events
Create a marketing campaign promoting attendance at arts events and the purchase of visual art from DC artists	As Resources are Available	Campaign

Goal VI: Explore Ways to Build Agency Resources

The Agency provides a critical role in providing unrestricted general operating support to arts organizations and artists. The City's vibrancy depends on these resources that support the artistic process. The current economic environment requires creativity, efficiency and collaboration to maximize resources.

Objective 1: Engage with other agencies in order to accomplish mutual objectives with partnership funding and shared resources

Objective 2: Develop additional sources of revenue

Strategies

	Priority	Outcome Measures
Identify potential sources of additional federal funding	High & Immediate	Federal funding
Identify areas of potential collaboration with compatible City agencies and invest in mutual partnerships	High & Immediate	Interagency partnerships
Develop case for dedicated funding stream out of City budget	Long-Term	Dedicated funding

Appendix

The following interim reports and work product inform the development of the strategic plan. Copies of each report are available at the office of the DC Commission on the Arts & Humanities.

- ▶ Interview Response Summary Report
- ▶ Combined Customer Data File Analysis
- ▶ Summary Report: On-line Survey of Constituents
- ▶ Best Practices Research Report
- ▶ Operations Analysis Report
- ▶ Program Evaluation and Recommendations Report
- ▶ Public Input Session Report