



Public Information Officer (PIO) Peer Session Notes

Thursday, October 14

Introductions

Danny Belanger, Louisiana Division of the Arts
Casey Blake, Arizona Commission on the Arts
Shelby Brewer, Arkansas Arts Council
Leah Frelinghuysen, Association of Performing Arts Presenters (APAP)
Justin Knabb, Americans for the Arts
Gaye Greever McElwain, Texas Commission on the Arts, cofacilitator
Amy McKay, Ohio Arts Council
Anne Romens, Arts Midwest
Amy Schmidt, North Dakota Council on the Arts
Diane Scolaro, Vermont Arts Council, cofacilitator (NOTE: Diane has joined Norwich University as the Director of Alumni Relations and Career Development.)
Sue Struve, NASAA

Agency Updates

- Ohio has lost 47% of their budget/staff; Amy joined the agency four months ago, in June; they will soon launch a new website.
- In Louisiana, the budget has gone from \$9 million to \$3.4 million; they are focusing on better use of social media and trying to connect with a younger audience.
- Arizona has lost 60% of its budget and staff since 2007.
- Arkansas has launched a contest on Facebook to celebrate Arts and Humanities Month.
- North Dakota is interested in doing more with social networking.
- All session attendees wear more than one hat at their agency. Job responsibilities include PIO, marketing, cultural tourism, social media, website maintenance, on-line grant programs, research, and accessibility.
- APAP's conference happens in New York on January 7-11, 2011, and will provide an excellent networking opportunity for artists and presenters.
- Texas is expecting a challenging session as the state faces a projected budget shortfall of \$22 billion.
- Vermont has just launched the "Art Supports Me" campaign.
- Vermont is the only state arts agency (SAA) that is also a 501(c)3 not-for-profit membership organization. As a result, they don't have a separate advocacy organization lobbying for the arts. The executive director and PIO do that work along with grassroots support across the state.

The Leadership Role of State Arts Agencies

- Louisiana compiled a databook for legislators with return-on-investment information demonstrating a \$1:\$13 return. They worked with funded organizations in each parish

to get information for each legislator. This work helped them restore funding for programs that had been canceled. Grant recipients are required to include economic impact information in final grant reports and on application forms.

- The group discussed the pros and cons of economic impact data. Most agreed it is difficult to conduct reliable and accurate research. Many PIOs do not have access to the economic impact numbers reported by grant recipients. Others have found that economic impact numbers are often viewed with suspicion or negatively compared to other industries that show greater return on investment. Even so, most felt economic impact data was valuable.
- Many SAAs use the economic impact information provided by Americans for the Arts, even though it is not considered to be comprehensive.
- We discussed the "slippery slope" of making the case for the public value of the creative economy. The Department of Labor does not track creative industries, and information is often included under "sports" or "entertainment." There are discrepancies between federal and state reporting.
- Several SAAs track using Dunns numbers.
- Arkansas conducted a four-year creative economy project that determined the arts are the state's third largest employer. However, it has been difficult to get that word out.
- Texas's Arts Respond grants are specifically tied to state priorities: education, criminal justice, health and human services, natural resources, economic development. Grants of this type highlight how the arts are integrated into our lives, as opposed to being "icing on the cake."

Advocacy and Lobbying

- Most SAAs have a separate advocacy group with which they work.
- Arizona has a system where a liaison is charged with maintaining a relationship with a specific legislator and a second person is responsible for organizing the community to ensure there are invitations to arts events, stories are gathered, etc.
- Texas requires grant recipients to send thank-you letters to legislators, which has worked very well. Vermont tried thank-you letters, but it worked against them when a legislator discovered they were a grant requirement.
- Louisiana asks grantees to invite legislators to their events and include that information in the grant applications.
- Sue reminded us of NASAA's advocacy tools on their website.
- Diane pointed out the legislators need to feel "I funded this and see the value" so they understand the direct correlation between the funds they appropriate and the success of the arts community.
- North Dakota presents legislators with an oversized check at a PR event to increase awareness.
- Ohio works closely with Ohio Citizens for the Arts on projects like arts advocacy day, the governor's arts awards, etc.
- Several SAAs use the Capwiz advocacy campaign management tool and recommend it.
- Some SAAs do not have a close relationship with their advocacy groups, and some advocacy groups do not work directly in support of SAAs.
- It was suggested that regional arts organizations could host meetings of SAA directors and their advocacy groups to enhance relationships.
- It was suggested that you can use the media to get your word out, but you should go to reporters who do not cover the arts (example: business writers).
- Vermont's Arts Supports Me campaign encourages people to share how they, their communities and businesses are impacted by the arts. They plan on using the stories in radio, TV, Web and print promotions. They took funds for Art Supports Me out of grants

with the idea that they needed a marketing campaign in order to secure more funding for grants. As part of the program, the legislature will receive an arts profile every week.

- Arizona has launched an ad campaign intended to drive traffic to their website, where there is information on why the arts matter, interactive maps to connect people to the arts, and information on funding for their endowment. Because it is "tricky to use public funds for advertising" they have asked their board to foot the \$6,000 cost.
- Texas provides all senators with a list of funded organizations in their district along with a CD that contains a media list, prewritten press release, newsletter and website text. Senators then announce the grants in their district and get the press coverage. Representatives are given the grant list and newsletter/website text, but not the press information. The goal is to increase awareness of the Commission's funding in each district, give legislators the opportunity to announce good news to their constituents and connect legislators with their local arts community.

Saturday, October 16

Attendees

Danny Belanger, Louisiana Division of the Arts
Casey Blake, Arizona Commission on the Arts
Shelby Brewer, Arkansas Arts Council
Gaye Greever McElwain, Texas Commission on the Arts, cofacilitator
Amy McKay, Ohio Arts Council
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Making the Most of Technology

- Tubemogul takes video and distributes it for free to other sites.
 - <http://www.tubemogul.com/>
- Animoto automatically, and for free, produces beautifully orchestrated, completely unique video pieces from your photos, video clips and music.
 - <http://animoto.com/>
- Socius is an on-line community, event management and content management system designed for associations, user groups, trade groups and customer communities.
 - <http://www.socius.com/>
- Forrester Research has developed a community management checklist.
 - http://www.forrester.com/rb/Research/community_management_checklist/q/id/57058/t/2
- Hootsuite makes it easy to manage a variety of social media platforms and to share the workload within teams.
 - <http://hootsuite.com/>
- Mike Brooks at the Kentucky Arts Council developed social media guidelines.
 - Mike.Brooks@ky.gov
- Louisiana used Animoto to promote Poetry Out Loud.
- Arizona has a use policy on their Facebook page. It was modeled after Illinois's policy.
- Minnesota Citizens for the Arts has social media guidelines.
- Even though social media is more casual, PIOs agreed that grammar and correct spelling for content generated by the SAA is still a requirement.
- North Dakota had to secure board permission to set up Facebook.

- Most SAAs at the table use Google Analytics to track website and social media activity.
- Google provides grants for on-line advertising. Grants are equal to \$1,000 in ad space and help you come up faster/higher in search engines.
- Katya's Nonprofit Marketing Blog is a great resource.
 - <http://www.nonprofitmarketingblog.com/>
- Having a variety of postings on a regular basis is key yet a challenge.
- Several have tried on-line contests without much luck/participation.
- A big challenge is deciding what is "Facebook worthy."
- Offensive or inappropriate posts are removed; this is clearly addressed in policies.
- Casey in Arizona will send information on Facebook SAA communications group.
- There is a lot of variance in the ways SAAs have implemented social media in their communication strategies. Some have met a great deal of resistance while others have no rules in place to limit or guide them. Some are encouraged to pursue social media and others have been discouraged. Many question how to make the best use of social media. For everyone, the result has been an increased workload.

Be ArtsReady

Mollie Lakin-Hayes from South Arts gave a brief overview of ArtsReady, a program designed to help arts organizations with readiness planning. ArtsReady is intended to help with a wide variety of situations, including natural disasters, theft, death of a staff member, fire, damage to electronic data, etc. The website, www.artsready.org, contains numerous free resources. Additional services are available through paid subscriptions. Mollie provided us with packets containing information and promotional materials. She is happy to provide information for inclusion in our newsletters and for any upcoming conferences that we may host. Her contact information is:

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