

Vermont

*Vermont Arts Council
Stacy Raphael, Arts Education Programs Manager*

General Information

Organization Mission Statement

The mission of the Vermont Arts Council (VAC) is to advance and preserve the arts at the center of Vermont communities.

Arts Education Program Overview

The Vermont Arts Council's arts education program consists of a number of grant programs, including a general Arts Learning Grant category for schools and organizations as well as a Teaching Artist Residency Grant program, geared predominantly but not exclusively to schools. The latter program is aligned with the VAC Teaching Artist Roster, a list maintained by VAC of Vermont teaching artists qualified to teach their art form in a number of arts learning settings, most commonly in a K-12 school setting. Although not exclusively an arts education grant program, VAC also supports small projects through the American Masterpieces program that tend to be educational in nature and are used most commonly by Vermont schools and libraries. These three programs represent a diverse array of arts education offerings for groups with a range of resources with which to deliver arts experiences.

In addition to grants and the artist roster program, the Vermont Arts Council heads the statewide Head Start Arts Partnership, a program that pairs arts organizations with local Head Start agencies to augment high quality arts experiences for youth and their parents. This program has been in existence since the early 1990s and has been a very successful early childhood arts model for the state.

The Council works closely with partners at the Vermont Alliance for Arts Education (VAAE) and the Vermont Department of Education (VTDOE) on many initiatives and in providing professional development to the field. Annually, VAAE presents a conference for arts educators; VAC supports the initiative through a discretionary grant program and with staff support and organizational communications. Through a similar special grant program, VAC continues to support excellence in statewide arts education in the form of the annual Governor's Institute for the Arts for Vermont high school students.

VAC acts as a fiscal agent for the Congressional High School Arts Competition, which runs through U.S. Representative Peter Welch's office, and runs the statewide Poetry Out Loud program, open to all Vermont public and independent high schools and home-schooled students.

Grant Programs

Types of Arts Education Grant Programs

- residency program
- in-school arts education
- out-of-school time arts education
- lifelong learning in the arts
- arts education program/project support for arts organizations
- quick funds/minigrants
- other: Director's Discretionary Arts Education Grants. VAC maintains special grants for two statewide arts education organizations. The first is for the Vermont Alliance for Arts Education. This grant helps to support the statewide conference presented each fall for arts specialists and teaching artists, as well as classroom teachers interested in arts integration. The second grant is to the Vermont Governor's Institute on the Arts. This grant helps to support the two-week arts camp, open to all Vermont high school students every summer. Both of these events help employ dozens of Vermont teaching artists every year.

Groups Eligible for Grant Programs

- pre-K centers
- public schools
- private/nonparochial schools
- private/parochial schools
- charter schools
- home school groups
- regional/local arts agencies
- arts organizations
- non-arts organizations
- arts education alliance or similar state-level organization

Total Number of Arts Education Grants Awarded in Most Recent Fiscal Year

55 grants

Total Dollar Value of Arts Education Grants Awarded in Most Recent Fiscal Year

\$140,000

Additional Comments on Arts Education Grant Programs

VAC grant programs were revamped in fiscal year 2009 to align more effectively with the agency's current strategic plan. In arts education, the previous Arts Integration Initiative Grant Program was merged with the Artist Residency Opportunity Grant Program into a single program called the Arts Learning Grant Program. The new program allows applicants to apply for a wide variety of activities encompassed by the previous two grant programs and is available to schools, municipalities, arts organizations and community organizations. Students do not have to be in the preK-12 age range; the program embraces lifelong learning in the arts.

VAC has maintained a rolling Teaching Artist Residency Grant Program that allows schools to hire teaching artists on the VAC roster for five-day (minimum) residencies. The Council is considering creating an even more streamlined "exposure" program that would get artists into schools for single-day presentations, with an emphasis on reaching underserved regions of the state.

Finally, although it is not explicitly an arts education grant program, many schools use the American Masterpieces presentation grant program for a variety of arts education

programming, from residencies to presentations and performances. The Council maintains a roster of 22 American Masterpieces artists who offer specific programming that celebrates the cultural heritage of the region.

Major Initiatives & Partnerships

New England Consortium of Artist-Educator Professionals

The New England Consortium of Artist-Educator Professionals (NECAP) is a regional teaching artist group dedicated to providing high quality professional development for its constituents and moving the field forward by engaging in national dialogue. The steering committee is anchored by the arts education managers at the state arts agencies from all six New England states.

New England Arts Assessment Network

This is a regional group of K-12 arts education stakeholders that operates as a think tank of best practices in the field of arts assessment, occasionally producing monographs and engaging in other related research. The Network is anchored by the fine arts consultants from the state departments of education and the arts education managers at the state arts agencies from all six New England states.

Dana Foundation Rural Teaching Artist Initiative: Extending the Dance Map

Extending the Dance Map is a tristate initiative to provide professional development for members of the dance and dance education communities. This project looked to provide resources to help foster a more positive environment for dance in schools and offered fellowships for early-career dance teaching artists to work for an extended amount of time in a school setting. Evaluation for this program is not yet complete.

Artist Residency Program

Artist Residency Program is administered by the state arts agency office.

- Entities other than schools may apply for the residency program.

Fee Structure for Teaching Artists

- The Vermont Arts Council does not impose a fee structure on teaching artists. The amount artists charge varies widely and sponsors must choose their artist based on their own goals and budgets.

Additional Comments on Residency Program

Although VAC has a specific residency program, its larger, general arts learning grant program is often used for more in-depth residency structures. Two plausible reasons for this are that the general AE grant program allows the applicant to request more money and to hire any artist or consultant with whom they would like to work, whereas the specific residency program dictates that recipients must hire an artist from the VAC roster.

Teaching Artist Roster Program

Teaching Artist Roster Basics:

- Roster artists are required for residency program.
- A panel is used to select roster artists.
- Applications for roster are reviewed once per year.
- To retain eligibility, artists must reapply. (Check with the agency for details.)

Additional Comments on Teaching Artist Roster

The Council is developing a reporting mechanism that, when filed, allows teaching artists to remain on the roster from year to year. This will be used for its first time in spring 2010.

Annual Events

Poetry Out Loud Statewide Competition

This is the culmination of a year of school based Poetry Out Loud programs and happens in the capital area with students from all over the state. This year, VAC will implement a semifinals competition in the afternoon and conclude with the finals in the evening.

VAAE Fall Arts Education Conference

This program has historically been geared toward arts specialists, but it also involves a good number of teaching artists and a growing number of classroom teachers. This event is considered a critical arts education conference for stakeholders, many of whom have been attending for more than two decades.

New England Arts Assessment Institute

The Vermont and New Hampshire Departments of Education have jointly presented this annual summer institute for music and visual arts teachers for the last three years. VAC staff serve on the steering committee.

Grant Seeker Workshops

The VAC programs staff holds three to six grant seeker workshops for schools, organizations and artists every year around the state. The Council is discussing the creation of Webinars and screencasts to assist grant seekers for the coming fiscal year.

Arts Teacher Recognition Event

VAAE traditionally holds a spring recognition event to recognize excellent arts educators around the state. The awards ceremony is held at the statehouse and also serves as an advocacy tool; the governor is often the presenter of these awards.

Professional Development Services

Provision of Professional Development Trainings, Workshops and/or Institutes

- For classroom teachers, professional development is administered in partnership with another organization. The VAAE annual conference is geared toward arts specialists but both teaching artists and classroom teachers often attend. The Council provides direct professional development to lead teachers involved with Poetry Out Loud. These teachers tend to be English language arts teachers.
- For arts specialists, professional development is administered in partnership with another organization. The Council partners with VAAE and VTDOE for the annual fall conference

and the Summer Arts Assessment Institute, respectively. The Council lends financial and staffing assistance to the former and staff assistance to the latter.

- For teaching artists, professional development is administered in partnership with another organization. The VAAE annual conference is geared toward arts specialists but both teaching artists and classroom teachers often attend. The Council provides direct professional development to guest teaching artists involved with Poetry Out Loud. These teaching artists go into the schools and support teachers and students who are implementing the POL curriculum. Furthermore, the Council directs teaching artists to the resources of NECAP, of which the VAC arts education manager is a steering committee member. NECAP presents a conference and an institute annually, in addition to acting as a clearinghouse of resources for teaching artists throughout New England and beyond via its listserv and Web site.

Additional Comments on Professional Development Services

The Council hopes to develop direct trainings for teaching artists.

Poetry Out Loud

Poetry Out Loud Administration

- in-house with arts education staff
- In-house with contracted staff

Poetry Out Loud Participation

- number of schools participating in Poetry Out Loud statewide: 30
- number of regional semifinals: 2
- Schools specifically for at-risk youth participate.

Poetry Out Loud Resources and Activities

- residency model
- teaching artist training
- classroom teacher training

Additional Prizes and Awards

- The state champion receives an engraved Danforth Pewter "trophy" bowl each year, and all state finalists receive books of poetry from Vermont poets.
- Additional prizes were purchased.

Partners, Funders or In-kind Donors That Support the Poetry Out Loud Program

Vermont Department of Education, Vermont Alliance for Arts Education, Vermont Humanities Council

Resources & Publications

Publications and Media Resources Provided:

- cultural resources directory including arts education
- social networking, e.g. Twitter or Facebook
- other: Teaching Artist Roster

The Vermont Arts Council, in conjunction with the State of Vermont and the Connect Vermont Network has developed a Vermont Arts Calendar and Directory of Artists and Cultural Organizations and Businesses. The calendar is tied to

www.vermontvacations.com and is a powerful tool that helps businesses, schools, organizations and artists list their public events. Those events are then disseminated to a full media list as a press release throughout Vermont and the region. The directory is a free resource that helps those engaged in cultural endeavors get found. For some, it is their only Web presence; for others it is a way to help direct more traffic to their own web sites. A subsection of that directory is the VAC Teaching Artist Roster. Principals, teachers and parent-teacher association members often use this resource as they plan artist residencies and other activities using professional artists in the classroom. VAC is often told that this resource is an invaluable tool for various groups as they look to engage artists or professional organizations in arts and culture related activities in Vermont.

Evaluation & Assessment

Assessment of Student Learning in the Arts

- The primary vehicle through which the Council engages in arts assessment related activities is through the VTDOE's Summer Arts Assessment Institute.

Program Evaluation for Grantees

- Program evaluation tools are provided. The Council provides hard copies of and Web links to a number of program evaluation documents, many available on the NEA Web site. The Baltimore Clayworks document "Measuring Joy," among others, is referenced specifically.
- The Council asks grant applicants to set up goals and outcomes for grant related activities and to demonstrate what methods of assessment will be used, then asks how the applicant will determine whether their goals have been achieved (i.e., whether the program has been successful). In the final report, applicants are asked to include samples of their assessment and evaluation tools, such as pre- and postsurveys, rubrics and teacher/student feedback forms.

Methods of Self-Evaluation of State Arts Agency's Arts Education Program

- quantitative and qualitative grants data
- participation data
- financial data
- surveys and feedback forms
- direct observations

Utilization of Evaluation

The main indicators that the Council uses to evaluate the strength and efficacy of its arts education program are geographic distribution and number of applicants accessing grants programs. The Council tracks feedback from grant recipients, which is built into the reporting document and looks at trends within its granting programs to see what is working and what is not. To date, the work is focused on grant making, but evaluation will need to be used to look at the overall arts education program to provide a more effective platform for arts education statewide.

Arts Education Staffing & Network Contacts

State Department of Education Arts Curriculum Specialist

Gail Kilkelly

State Alliance for Arts Education

Vermont Alliance for Arts Education (VAAE). The VAC arts education manager serves as a nonvoting member of the VAAE board. VAAE and VAC collaborate and coordinate on a variety of events, including the annual arts education conference. Effective November 1, 2009, the organization began working without an executive director for the first time in its history. This is a temporary situation, and the board and its network are moving forward with conference planning for the spring.

Arts Education Program Staff, Job Title, FTE

Stacy Raphael, Arts Education Programs Manager, 1.0

Arts Education Coordinator's Split Responsibilities

- other areas of work: Community Arts/American Masterpieces
- percent of time dedicated to arts education program: 90%

Staff Biography

With a background in theatre and music, Stacy Raphael has worked for EXITheater in Seattle, Weston Playhouse Theater in Vermont, and Portland Stage Company in Maine as an assistant director and dramaturg. She was the head performance art curator for Chicago's Around the Coyote Arts Festival from 2002-2004 and was a resident teaching artist at the Vergennes Opera House from 2004-2006, when she also worked with her own professional ensemble, Augenblick Theatre Company. Raphael has a degree from Colby College in performing arts and vocal music.