

building an artistic future for arizona

**arizona commission on the arts
strategic plan FY2011-FY2016**

Developed by the Arizona Commission on the Arts
Ratified by Commission Approval: September 16, 2010

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Development of the Arts Commission's strategic plan took place in fiscal years 2010 and 2011. Titled *Building an Artistic Future for Arizona*, the plan initially spanned four years (fiscal years 2011-2014) and was ratified by the Arts Commission's Governor-appointed board on September 16, 2010 for implementation October 01, 2010.

During fiscal year 2014, the Arts Commission elected to extend the plan to fiscal year 2016.

The Arts Commission is in the initial stages of planning a robust process to support the development of its next strategic plan. This planning process will take place in fiscal year 2015 and will expand upon the successful statewide engagement strategies implemented in fiscal years 2010 and 2011.

Building an Artistic Future for Arizona represents a cohesive set of strategies to advance a collective cause: stability and progress for the Arizona arts sector.

Desired Outcomes are developed as ideal results for the entire Arizona arts sector. *Arts Commission Goals* are developed as planned objectives for the Arts Commission itself.

AGENCY MISSION STATEMENT:

We imagine an Arizona where everyone can participate in and experience the arts.

DESIRED OUTCOMES:

1. Arizonans can access vibrant, quality arts and cultural activities wherever they live, and have opportunities to participate as practitioners, professionals, patrons, donors and volunteers.
2. Arizona residents can make healthy livable wages working in myriad facets of the arts. Their contributions are valued and respected.
3. Students have access to quality, robust arts education programs in Arizona schools. In-school arts opportunities are enhanced by meaningful opportunities in out-of-school and community settings.
4. Arts and cultural programs and organizations are considered societal cornerstones and are employed as partners in the revitalization and sustainability of streets, neighborhoods and communities.
5. Recognizing the arts sector's role in economic viability and enhanced quality of life, Arizona's for-profit businesses invest in the arts as partners, supporters and champions.

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STRATEGIC PLAN

PLAN INTRODUCTION:

The Arizona Commission on the Arts is a 48-year old agency of the State of Arizona which maintains a strong commitment to thoughtful, inclusive planning and evaluation.

PLAN METHODOLOGY:

- This is a 6-year plan, for fiscal years 2011 through 2016.
- **Desired Outcomes** (numbers 1-5) are developed as ideal results for the entire Arizona arts sector.
- **Arts Commission Goals** (numbered “a” through “e-g”) are developed as planned objectives for the Arts Commission itself. Goals are meant to be prioritized each fiscal year; not all goals will be addressed each year.
- **Operational and Programmatic Strategies** along with selected target goals for each fiscal year are addressed more specifically in agency workplans, wherein particular tasks and programs are outlined, developed and evaluated.
- The “The Choice is Art” campaign is referenced under each Desired Outcome because it is a multi-year campaign, aligned with the strategic plan, with a broad focus on building public value for the arts in Arizona but constructed to evolve to address a different aim or focus each year.
- Each Arts Commission Goal is “coded” with any of the following which apply:

- *Leadership and Partnerships* – LP

The Arizona Commission on the Arts is best known, statewide and nationally, as a leader in arts administration, a pacesetter in research and analysis, and as a catalyst for innovative partnerships in support of the Arizona arts sector. *Leadership and Partnerships* reflects the Arts Commission’s role as a leading arts policy and information source and as a catalyst brokering cross-sector and intra-sector partnerships.

- *Programs and Services* – PS

The Arizona Commission on the Arts continually develops and offers professional development training and learning opportunities meant to enhance the skills of statewide delivery agents of arts and cultural programming, including individuals working in arts organizations, schools and

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community service organizations as well as individual artists, educators and arts patrons. *Programs and Services* support participation and learning in, through and about the arts, meet identified needs, and positively impact agency grantmaking activities.

- *Strategic Funding* – SF

The Arizona Commission on the Arts provides funding support to the Arizona arts sector through several grantmaking processes. Grants are delivered to support applicant learning, promote artistic quality and authenticity, encourage responsible business practices, reach a broad range of Arizona citizens, and increase public participation and public benefit. *Strategic Funding* is distributed through transparent public processes constructed to ensure efficiency and accountability.

AGENCY MISSION STATEMENT:

We imagine an Arizona where everyone can participate in and experience the arts.

DESIRED OUTCOMES AND ARTS COMMISSION GOALS:

1. Arizonans can access vibrant, quality arts and cultural activities wherever they live, and have opportunities to participate as practitioners, professionals, patrons, donors and volunteers.

In support of this Desired Outcome for the Arizona arts sector, the Arts Commission will:

- a. Provide learning opportunities to delivery agents of arts and cultural programming to help them leverage assets, procure funding, develop and maintain audiences, improve the quality of products and services, honor Arizona's diverse cultural heritage, and deepen and expand their mission-focused service of communities through the arts. – LP, PS
- b. Continue to deliver grant funding to statewide arts organizations, schools, community service organizations and individuals which demonstrate quality artistic programming, evidence of public benefit and public participation, and responsible financial practices. – SF
- c. Make focused financial and programmatic investments in both geographic and programmatic areas where demonstrable needs exist but where arts and cultural programming is scarce, nonexistent or vulnerable. – LP, PS, SF
- d. Serve as Arizona's chief delivery agent – through technology, communications, publications and expertise – for research and information related to arts resources, funding and learning opportunities. – LP, PS

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- e. Work to maintain existing levels of public funding for the arts in Arizona, while developing more protected private funds sources supported by Arizona foundations, corporations and individual donors. – LP, SF
 - f. Implement and advance “The Choice is Art,” a statewide promotional campaign for the arts in Arizona, to increase awareness of existing statewide programs and services, encourage participation and cultivate public value and support for the arts. – LP, PS, SF
2. Arizona residents can make healthy livable wages working in myriad facets of the arts. Their contributions are valued and respected.

In support of this Desired Outcome for the Arizona arts sector, the Arts Commission will:

- a. Continue to develop and deliver adaptive, sequential skills-building programs to Arizona artists and arts administrators to help them compete for local and national funding, increase professional capacity, promote their creative contributions to Arizona communities, and build support for the arts and arts education. – LP, PS
- b. Deliver grant funding and work to develop new funding programs in support of individual artists and administrators. – SF
- c. Introduce incentives within grantmaking processes to challenge Arizona arts organizations to meet regional benchmarks for artist and administrator pay and benefits. – LP, SF
- d. Promote and provide visibility to individuals working in the arts; connect Arizona arts professionals to other professional sectors to encourage partnership, mutual benefit and employment. – LP, PS
- e. Nurture existing arts service organizations based on artistic disciplines and cultural initiatives; support the development of independent arts service organizations in geographic and programmatic areas where service organizations are scarce, nonexistent or vulnerable. – LP, PS
- f. Implement and advance “The Choice is Art,” a statewide promotional campaign for the arts in Arizona, to foster understanding about the scope of the arts sector and the contributions of Arizona arts professionals. – LP, PS, SF

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3. Students have access to quality, robust arts education programs in Arizona schools. In-school arts opportunities are enhanced by meaningful opportunities in out-of-school and community settings.

In support of this Desired Outcome for the Arizona arts sector, the Arts Commission will:

- a. Develop and provide innovative, current and sequential learning opportunities to delivery agents of statewide arts learning programs. Offer practical training to diverse arts education stakeholders and cultivate the next generation of arts educators. – LP, PS
- b. Activate and expand partnerships with local, state and federal arts education policymakers. Contribute as an expert conduit, providing research and information to policymakers, and then providing context to resources delivered to Arizona arts organizations, parents, classroom educators, art specialists, teaching artists, school administrators and school boards. – LP, PS
- c. Pursue opportunities to build a network of Arizona arts organizations, parents, classroom educators, art specialists, teaching artists, school administrators and school boards to integrate learning in, through and about the arts in school curricula as well as school district missions, policies, budgets and practices. Offer practical training and support to develop their ability and fluency in building public support for arts education. – LP
- d. Continue to deliver grant funding to quality arts programming which supports lifelong learning in, through and about the arts, and to quality student-centered arts programming which supports the Arizona Department of Education's Academic Standards in the Arts for preK-12 Arizona students. – SF
- e. Introduce incentives within grantmaking processes to challenge Arizona schools, arts organizations and community organizations to broaden, deepen and diversify their development and delivery of in school, out-of-school and community-based arts learning programs. – LP, SF
- f. Make focused financial and programmatic investments in both geographic and programmatic areas where demonstrable needs exist but where arts education programming is scarce, nonexistent or vulnerable. – LP, PS, SF
- g. Implement and advance "The Choice is Art," a statewide promotional campaign for the arts in Arizona, to build broad public support for programs which engage students in learning in, through and about the arts, in the pursuit of positive personal, educational and community outcomes. – LP, PS, SF

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4. Arts and cultural programs and organizations are considered societal cornerstones and are employed as partners in the revitalization and sustainability of streets, neighborhoods and communities.

In support of this Desired Outcome for the Arizona arts sector, the Arts Commission will:

- a. Conduct, aggregate and provide access to best-practices research related to partnerships between arts delivery agents and community-based initiatives, government agencies and other-sector local businesses. Counsel arts organizations, community organizations and artists to utilize resources to fullest advantage. – LP, PS
 - b. Activate and expand agency relationships with existing and nontraditional partners in order to facilitate collaborations between Arizona arts programs and other-sector initiatives. – LP
 - c. Deliver grant funding to collaborative projects which employ quality arts and cultural programming in the pursuit of favorable community outcomes. Deliver funding for this purpose in every Arizona county. – LP, SF
 - d. Provide opportunities for arts leaders, in particular next-generation arts leaders, to network with community officials, diverse cultural leaders, faith leaders and local businesspeople. – PS
 - e. Implement and advance “The Choice is Art,” a statewide promotional campaign for the arts in Arizona, to broadly promote the arts sector’s role in community health and livability, as well as the industry’s potential to positively impact the fiscal position and sustainability of Arizona cities and towns. – LP, PS, SF
5. Recognizing the arts sector’s role in economic viability and enhanced quality of life, Arizona’s for-profit businesses invest in the arts as partners, supporters and champions.

In support of this Desired Outcome for the Arizona arts sector, the Arts Commission will:

- a. Serve as leading reliable resource for information and research related to cultural policy, emerging and hybrid business models, economic impact of the arts and culture industry, and public support for arts and culture. Promote opportunities to share research with Arizona’s elected officials, small businesses and corporate leaders. – LP, PS
- b. Introduce incentives within grantmaking processes to encourage Arizona arts organizations to develop mutually beneficial and mission-supported partnerships with for-profit entities. – LP, SF
- c. Facilitate opportunities for arts leaders to participate in other-sector policy forums, convenings and initiatives. – LP, PS

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- d. Develop communications strategies to focus and adapt agency messaging based on the needs and interests of diverse audiences and authorizers. – PS
- e. Implement and advance “The Choice is Art,” a statewide promotional campaign for the arts in Arizona, to illuminate the for-profit sector’s short- and long-term interest in supporting a vibrant, sustainable statewide arts sector. Employ Arizona small businesses and corporations as partners in the effort. – LP, PS, SF

PLAN DEVELOPMENT OVERVIEW:

Data Collection Phase

In fiscal years 2010 and 2011, the Arts Commission conducted a series of statewide listening session meetings in Flagstaff, Lake Havasu City, Mesa, Show Low, Surprise, Tubac, Tucson and Yuma, and at the conclusion of the 2010 Southwest Arts Conference in Chandler, Arizona. Arts Commission staff also led focused meetings with key stakeholders while providing services in Arizona communities, to examine constituents’ needs and concerns more thoroughly and in more intimate settings.

In this timeframe the Arts Commission’s broad mailing list was surveyed and focused survey/interview instruments were developed for artists, arts educators, arts administrators, city managers/mayors, faith leaders, and high school and college students, about the impact of the arts in their work and personal lives. Three separate survey instruments were developed for Arizona arts organizations to monitor the effects of the economic downturn on their sustainability, artistic product and services.

In addition, the Arts Commission consulted and partnered with local task forces on arts-based research, the results of which include the *Asset Building for Artists Initiative* with the Community Foundation for Southern Arizona and the landmark *Arizona Arts Education Census* with the Arizona Arts Education Research Institute, of which the Arts Commission is a collaborator.

Beyond listening sessions and surveys, the Arts Commission conducted a focused review of available research and publications provided by other statewide and regional sources, in particular the wealth of research made available by Arizona’s regional service organization, the Western States Arts Federation.

Approach to Data Collection

The Arts Commission framed its data collection approach around two core ideas:

1. *Take full advantage of past efforts and existing data, no need to start from zero.*

The Arts Commission promotes evaluation and assessment in all of its programs, its staff and Governor-appointed board continually evaluating and modifying programs to best utilize limited resources and to

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improve effectiveness and reach. In a typical year, the Arts Commission conducts or convenes between ten and fifteen surveys and focus groups, then analyzes feedback and implements strategic improvements to programs and services.

Because the Arts Commission has successfully integrated evaluative processes into its operational culture, at the outset of the planning phase there was a wealth of recent constituent data available to Arts Commission staff. In addition, the Arts Commission staff firmly believed that survey and listening session discussion would be richer and more meaningful if respondents were presented with a framework of ideas and then asked to provide feedback.

Therefore the agency chose not to conduct an open-ended feedback-gathering effort, but to start with five directional statements about which respondents could provide feedback and engage in deeper discussion. These statements were expansive in scope and were referred to throughout the planning phase as a “long-term vision for a sustainable arts sector.”

Though the Arts Commission did not set out to use the “long-term vision for a sustainable arts sector” as the framework for what would become the five Desired Outcomes statements within the strategic plan, the five points received overwhelming constituent support throughout the planning phase, and indeed were strengthened and shaped by constituent feedback in surveys and in in-person meetings.

2. *Galvanize and empower the arts sector in the spirit of self-sufficiency.*

Between fiscal years 2008 and 2012 the Arizona arts sector lost nearly 70% of state funding for the arts due to enacted legislative reductions (important to note that in per capita arts support, Arizona ranked near the bottom in national rankings *prior to* these reductions).

Losses included the elimination and “sweep” of the State-held Arizona ArtShare Endowment, constructed to provide an interest-based protected funding stream for the arts in perpetuity, built over twelve years with support from the Arizona State Legislature and the Arizona arts sector. With the elimination of what arts organizations and schools considered to be a model achievement, the arts sector experienced a loss in available grant funding and a significant blow to morale. In the wake of these losses, the Arts Commission was called upon to take on even larger roles as leader and catalyst.

Therefore the Arts Commission set out to develop a plan *with* the arts community, to empower the arts community: to rally artists, educators, administrators and advocates behind a cohesive set of strategies to advance our collective cause. Not simply a plan detailing what the Arts Commission intended to do to move the arts sector forward, but a plan outlining how we could improve our circumstances together.

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Data Collection Results and Plan Development

After each listening session and survey, results were collated, analyzed and discussed with the Arts Commission staff, Governor-appointed board and other key stakeholders. Survey results and analytics were made available on the Arts Commission website in order to share data and to solicit additional constituent feedback.

In analyzing the collected data, several needs rose immediately to the top: constituents responded that they needed more funding support and asked the Arts Commission to continue providing professional development and training.

Overwhelmingly, constituents requested a statewide visibility campaign they could use to build public value for the arts in their communities, advance the conversation about arts and culture, and utilize in support of audience development and local arts advocacy efforts.

The *Building an Artistic Future for Arizona* strategic plan therefore contains a promotional campaign for the arts in Arizona, meant to build public value for the arts, advance the cultural conversation and develop a privately-held funding stream.

“The Choice is Art” will address some or all the following areas over the course of six years: the importance of access to quality arts education opportunities, the significant contributions of Arizona artists and arts professionals, the positive impact of the arts on community health and livability, the broad economic impact of Arizona’s arts and culture sector, and the singular role of the arts in promoting cultural understanding.