



STATE ARTS PLAN

2015-2017

A NEW STRATEGIC DIRECTION

The Ohio Arts Council's *STATE ARTS PLAN: 2015-2017* continues to serve as a sector-wide strategic plan to guide the development of Ohio's arts and cultural sector, including the work of the Council. Four interrelated foundational principles – or *action areas* – underpin the plan, forming the basis of the work the agency and its partners, grantees, and collaborators will undertake over three years: INVEST, ENGAGE, INNOVATE, and LEAD.

Within each action area, key objectives are outlined to guide investment and innovation activities, policy development, program prioritization, and resource deployment. This plan anchors the agency's work toward successfully realizing a vision for strengthening the arts in Ohio.

FROM THE CHAIR & EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Colleagues and friends,

The last 18 months have been a time of exciting positive change for the Ohio Arts Council. We have celebrated historic budget increases, welcomed new leaders with new ideas to our staff and board, modernized programs and platforms, and – critically – met with hundreds and hundreds of Ohio residents all along the way to make sure our work reflected your needs.

Noted author and leadership expert Simon Sinek has said, *"If you have the opportunity to do amazing things in your life, I strongly encourage you to invite someone to join you."*

We've taken this advice to heart.

We're visiting with you in your communities. We're touring inspiring spaces, old and new. We're meeting with staff and supporters, artists, students, and teachers. We're sampling performances, planning sessions, workshops, and even a few culinary secrets known only to locals. We're learning why you love your towns. We're working on new ways to help you do what you do. We're sharing funding opportunities, resources, advice, and contacts. We're taking note of your needs and finding solutions. And we're just getting started.

Thank you for your willingness to join in this work with us. Thank you for your creativity, enthusiasm, and perseverance in pursuing your missions, advancing the arts, and culturally enriching your communities. Thank you for your support of our work in investment and engagement. Most of all, thank you for your hospitality and your participation. Together we make a dynamic team of arts leaders.

We hope you like what you see in the ongoing work of the *State Arts Plan 2015-2017*. We hope you see yourself in our shared accomplishments – and are inspired by the work yet to come. We know you'll want to join with us in the shared work of improving Ohio through investment and engagement in the arts and culture. Everyone is invited.

We look forward to seeing each of you in your communities soon. And, don't forget, you're always welcome to visit with us in Columbus at the OAC offices.

Warmly,



Jeffrey A. Rich

CHAIR



Donna S. Collins

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

27,197,954 arts experiences reported by grantees funded last year

local and private dollars raised to match each OAC dollar

\$53

66% reduction in length of 2016 grantmaking guidelines

FY2016-17 appropriation from Ohio General Assembly

\$22,698,408

31.9% budget increase from prior biennium

staff visits to Ohio communities in the second half 2015

117

6,434 likes on the OAC's Facebook page

OAC's 2016 appropriation from the National Endowment for the Arts

\$949,700

6 years in a row Ohio has competitively earned the nation's second-highest NEA state award

NEA dollars spent on administrative expenses

\$0

647 grants made in 2015 to Ohio artists and nonprofit organizations

>>> Read about other recent accomplishments [on our website.](#)

INVEST

Make bold, smart investments in the arts and culture

STRATEGIC ACTIONS

A. Secure adequate state, federal, and other resources to support Ohio's arts and culture sector

objectives

1. Funding opportunities are researched and leveraged for the benefit of the agency and its constituents.
2. Successful state-level funding allows the agency to invest in a higher overall percentage of applicant requests.
3. Agency work and outcomes continue to be recognized by the National Endowment for the Arts as among the best in the nation.
4. Mission-driven partnerships with other funding entities lead to increased resources.

B. Commit public resources to invest in and support the work of Ohio artists and organizations in an equitable, transparent, and accessible manner

objectives

1. Consistent and flexible funding is provided to support the operating activities of nonprofit creative sector organizations.
2. A modernized online grant application and adjudication process results in an improved user experience, more robust reporting and communication capability, enhanced data security, and reduced costs for review and assessment.
3. Agency funding increases in diversity to better represent underserved communities and constituent groups in grant-making.
4. Individual creative expression and entrepreneurship are supported through funding and resources.
5. Constituent participation in the Cultural Data Project is evaluated to maximize the use of resulting data and right-size reporting burdens.

C. Assess and improve all aspects of agency funding, services, and processes on an ongoing basis to better reflect constituent needs, goals, and outcomes

objectives

1. Program efficiency and vitality are informed by grant-making trend analysis and examination of relevant models from all sectors.
2. Constituent and stakeholder feedback informs the design of grant programs, services, processes, and resources, resulting in improved applicant satisfaction.
3. Individual artist grant-making is evaluated to improve efficiency and long-term impact.
4. Deliberate reflection is integrated into ongoing agency work, resulting in continually revitalized strategic planning processes, program adaptation, and responsiveness to constituents.

OUTCOME

Bold, smart investments in the arts and culture will result in greater stability for Ohio's arts and cultural organizations. Grantee stability will be improved by the creation of social value, economic value, and increased organizational capacity. OAC investments of reliable resources in all 88 Ohio counties will lead to improved economic conditions for arts and cultural organizations and creative entrepreneurs. Creative industry jobs in Ohio will be created and retained. Simultaneously, the effectiveness and efficiency of OAC systems and processes will increase.

"OAC does a fantastic job keeping staffing costs low and services high."

– Anonymous 2015 grantee

*"General operating support is helping the Lincoln Theatre serve the community through education and artistic programs ... it also provides an important **"stamp of approval"** for the significant work that we do."*

– Larry H. James, Chair, Lincoln Theatre Association, Columbus

"The OAC's approach makes it possible for a novice grant writer, or a seasoned professional, to produce clear and successful proposals for projects **that offer real benefit to the citizens of Ohio."**

– Anonymous 2015 grantee

"I learned so much from the process and feel energized by new ideas for connections, programs, etc. Thanks for all the hard work you are doing to support creative projects in our state."

– Cathy Mayhugh, Director of Exhibitions, Fitton Center for Creative Arts, Hamilton, and 2015 OAC panelist

ENGAGE

Spark authentic arts dialogue and idea-sharing among the general public and the agency's constituents and stakeholders

STRATEGIC ACTIONS

A. Discover, develop, and share clear, compelling, and timely messages about the positive impact of the arts and creativity

objectives

1. Messaging and branding are refocused agency-wide to deliver consistent and compelling tone and voice in all media formats.
2. A strategic and comprehensive plan guides agency communications, including all digital, social, and print media content.
3. Agency communications feature constituent success stories and best practices, increasing the visibility of the impact of the arts and creativity.
4. Dynamic messaging tools are available for use by constituents, board, and staff.

B. Coordinate, provide, and promote capacity building and professional development opportunities for individuals and organizations

objectives

1. Professional learning opportunities are designed to align with constituent needs at various points of career development and in many organizational roles.
2. Agency approach to constituent capacity building is reassessed, with redevelopment focused on topical and up-to-date resources, needs assessment, and sharing best practices.
3. Online affinity groups, peer networks, and other learning pathways between and among organizations and their staff members are established.
4. Internal staff professional development will be intentional, systematic, and designed to improve service delivery and constituent interaction.

C. Convene a wide variety of constituents on an ongoing basis to identify and discuss arts-related trends, needs, research, and other topics

objectives

1. Agency staff and board members regularly visit Ohio communities to meet with local artists and administrators, share information, gather feedback, and highlight local successes.
2. Peer groups of arts colleagues are convened regularly to share best practices, exchange ideas, and discuss other relevant topics.
3. A re-invigorated statewide conference is designed and hosted by the agency on a regular basis.

D. Provide the highest level of accessible customer service to constituents and all members of the public

objectives

1. Staff cross-training is implemented to improve communication, responsiveness to constituents, and product fluency.
2. Staff members provide timely, accurate, and accessible service to the public.
3. New and more instructive metrics are developed to more accurately measure customer satisfaction with OAC programs, services, processes, and resources.

OUTCOME

Authentic arts dialogue and idea sharing will be sparked among the general public, the agency's constituents, stakeholders, and staff. By engaging with the field in meaningful ways, the OAC will be a catalyst for increasing the knowledge and learning of Ohio's creative sector professionals. Ohio residents and tourists will increase their awareness of ways to engage in creative expression and participate in the arts, resulting in changed attitudes about the value of arts and culture for their lives. OAC staff will remain knowledgeable about current research and trends affecting the field, while increasing the effectiveness of agency communications, product fluency, and customer service.

"On behalf of all of us, thank you so much. You enriched the lives of many. I have had quite a few students approach me and tell me how much they enjoyed the workshop here at Northwest."

– Dr. Mike Shreffler, Superintendent,
Northwest Local Schools, 2015 IMPACT site
featuring *Alash* Tuvan throat singers, Canal
Fulton

"It was invigorating and exciting to spend the time with you. I know about the OAC but to have faces to put to the organization is so much better. What a wealth of resources you offer!"

– Laurie MacKenzie-Crane,
Graphics Communication Office,
Denison University, Granville

"The Ohio Arts Council does a wonderful job of promoting and sustaining the dynamic arts landscape in our state."

– George Bilgere, Individual Excellence Awards recipient,
Poetry, Shaker Heights

INNOVATE

Drive Ohio's arts community toward forward-looking creative evolution

STRATEGIC ACTIONS

A. Encourage experimentation and risk-taking designed to improve the accessibility, affordability, and diversity of arts experiences

objectives

1. Grant programs reward applicants' creative problem-solving in improving program design, accessibility, and affordability.
2. Creative economic development projects are supported via a flexible review process tailored to attract projects of varying sizes, genres, and anticipated outcomes.
3. Dedicated funding is provided for pilot projects designed to present arts experiences in unexpected ways or in non-traditional venues.
4. Collaborative projects are supported resulting in the creation of new works across all artistic genres.

B. Support the design of new models and exploratory approaches to engage new arts audiences

objectives

1. Evaluation criteria in all grant programs consider the sophistication and appropriateness of applicants' audience engagement strategies, including minimizing barriers to participation.
2. A central, agency-wide artist roster is created to consolidate current listings across all genres into a single resource that links creative talent with entities interested in engaging and hiring artists.
3. Resources culled from local, state, and national data are compiled to provide arts organizations' staff and boards with exploratory new approaches to audience engagement.
4. Agency research is conducted to adapt strategies used in other sectors, including customer experience design, for use in the arts and cultural sector.

C. Recognize the impact and interaction of creative economic development and creative expression

objectives

1. Locally driven, authentic creative place-making activities are supported in Ohio communities.
2. Creative economy research, trends, and impact stories are collected and promoted.
3. Public and private sector partners collaborate on programming including an "Innovation Works" campaign that highlights the value of creative expression and creative economic development.
4. Local arts councils and centers develop programs connecting local artists and arts organizations with businesses.

D. Modernize the agency's development and use of technology

objectives

1. The agency's website is redesigned to be interactive, user-friendly, and up-to-date.
2. Accessible online interactive mapping describes grantees, supported activities, and agency programs.
3. Technology is used to promote festivals, showcase constituent events, and provide real-time data on arts events.
4. A collaboration with state and national partners is launched to design web-based tools that measure the quantity and quality of arts education in Ohio's schools.
5. Strategic IT planning guides staff skill-building and equipment purchasing, positioning the agency for sustainable technological proficiency.

OUTCOME

Ohio's arts community will design and implement forward-looking creative innovations to improve the accessibility, affordability, and diversity of arts experiences. The OAC will support the development of exploratory approaches and new models – both in-school and community-based – that contribute to the health and well-being of children, elders, individual artists, and the general public. Improved access to training will help artists and arts professionals grow and thrive. New ideas will be leveraged to ensure increased programmatic and administrative innovation across the agency.

"ARTIE is a huge improvement over OLGA!"

– Anonymous 2015 grantee

"These awards are invaluable. I believe that for too long, African Americans have been pigeonholed by limited assumptions of the scope of their creative activity. I want to explode this."

– Jeffrey Mumford, Individual Excellence Awards recipient, Music Composition, Oberlin

"I've learned something I had never done before. I didn't quite think I was capable of learning something new, especially at 80 years old. It was magical."

– Margaret, residency participant, Creative Aging Ohio initiative, The Laurels of Athens

"The TeachArtsOhio Initiative is going to change the way we look at school residencies well into the future. From the moment I enter the building until the time I leave I am fully engaged with teachers, children, and administrators. Together we are making such a positive impact."

– Candace Mazur Darman, 2016 TeachArtsOhio initiative resident artist, Columbus

LEAD

Play an active leadership role in the ongoing development of Ohio's arts and cultural sector.

STRATEGIC ACTIONS

A. Cultivate valuable relationships among leaders at all levels in the public, private, and nonprofit arts and cultural sectors

objectives

1. Successful models in advancing local leadership development are adapted to build capacity in emerging – as well as established – community leaders.
2. State and national agency directors engage with OAC board and staff leadership to explore opportunities for partnership and collaboration.

B. Develop and leverage mission-driven strategic partnerships and collaborations

objectives

1. Statewide arts and cultural service organizations are supported in their key role within the state's arts and cultural ecosystem.
2. Partnerships are formed with state and regional organizations to improve the efficiency, reach, and impact of agency arts education programs.
3. Cross-promotional efforts position the arts at the center of Ohio tourism and development efforts.

C. Work to shape arts, education, and cultural policy

objectives

1. State and federal policy and legislation affecting the arts will be monitored and, when appropriate, the OAC will provide counsel to improve its development.
2. The agency will be a responsive and reliable resource for policymakers and citizen advocates looking for information on the arts and their impact.
3. The agency's *Guidelines* policy document is streamlined to focus on applicants' intended outcomes.

D. Improve the ability of individuals and organizations to measure and communicate their value and impact

objectives

1. Arts participation data is collected, analyzed, and disseminated for the purpose of informing future practice, programming, and policy.
2. Training and tools enable artists and organizations to better share their impact and value.
3. Individual artist and organizational grantees provide details of their impact for use in enhancing existing – or creating new – resources.

E. Enhance and invigorate agency visibility, vitality, and assets

objectives

1. Flagship agency events are evaluated to maximize effectiveness, vitality, and relevance.
2. Students and other emerging leaders pursuing careers in arts education, arts administration, or public policy engage with the agency through internship and administrative fellowship opportunities.
3. Public meeting practices and protocols, including signage, technology, and presentation resources, are upgraded to reflect the professionalism associated with agency branding and messaging.

OUTCOME

Ohio's arts and cultural sector will benefit from the OAC's active leadership role in developing and training the field. Mission-driven strategic partnerships and collaborations will be developed at all levels, in both the public and private sectors. Sound policies for the arts, culture, and education will serve to strengthen and invigorate agency visibility, vitality, and assets. Ohio's arts and cultural sector network, leadership development, and collaboration will increase.

"We are grateful that the State of Ohio, through the Ohio Arts Council, finds a way to help support the arts in Ohio and includes the traditional arts among the art forms supported. It is **very gratifying** to be able to help someone achieve a level of proficiency in an art form that they want to pursue and then see them go out into the world and do it."

- Warren Waldron, Traditional Arts Apprenticeships
Master Artist, Somerville

"The Riffe Gallery serves as an **essential** nexus for art, artists, galleries, and museums in Ohio."

- Ann Fortescue, Director,
Springfield Museum of Art, Springfield

"I just wanted you to know how much I appreciate the Ohio Arts Council. Just the process of applying for this award **helps me grow as an artist**. Sitting in on the jurying process is like a graduate seminar."

- Sue Cavanaugh, 2016 Individual Excellence Awards
applicant, Columbus

*"I just wanted to write briefly to congratulate you on what was probably **the best organized panel I have ever experienced.**"*

- Ellen Harvey, FY2015 Individual
Excellence Awards panelist,
Brooklyn, NY

"We are really excited to catch the feel of your team and see the energy you each bring to your work."

- Lisa Ramsey, Assistant Director, Trumbull
Neighborhood Partnership, Warren

The 2014 development that preceded the launch of the **STATE ARTS PLAN: 2015-2017** included board and staff prioritization exercises, guided reflection, statewide surveys, focus groups, facilitated planning sessions, and strategic research into public and constituent opinion.

METHODOLOGY

- ▷ **Online survey** completed by **5,782** individuals from **all 88 Ohio counties**, including more than 1,600 current or former grantees or their representatives
- ▷ **Engagement Tour visits** made to **23 organizations** in **five Ohio communities**
- ▷ **Engagement Tour conversations** held with more than **500 people** to celebrate the arts in their communities and share ideas about the future
- ▷ **In-depth focus groups and one-on-one interviews** conducted with **42 arts leaders** from **16 Ohio communities** all over the state

FINDINGS

- ▷ Ohioans **overwhelmingly support public funding** of the arts and arts education, including both arts organizations and individuals.
- ▷ Ohioans derive **personal, educational, and community benefits** from participating in the arts and engaging in creative expression.
- ▷ Ohioans want **high-quality, affordable arts experiences** that provide educational value and take place close to home.
- ▷ Agency constituents want **visibility, clear messaging, and credible research** to guide state and local policy development, as well as targeted professional development and technological innovation.

GET INVOLVED

Join us in improving Ohio through the arts and culture!

- ▷ **Host** an Ohio Arts Council professional development session, community cultural planning session, or networking event in your community.
- ▷ **Nominate** a Governor's Awards winner, Ohio Poet Laureate, or Ohio Heritage Fellow.
- ▷ **Learn** how to host an artist in residence in your community, what arts events are coming up nearby, or what current research says about the impact of the arts and culture.
- ▷ **Serve** as an OAC panelist, or nominate a colleague.
- ▷ **Join** the conversation online at our ArtsOhio blog, social media feeds, or next webinar.
- ▷ **Contact us** for more information about upcoming funding opportunities, Riffe Gallery exhibitions, professional development opportunities, panel meeting dates, or to learn more about any of the goals or objectives outlined in the State Arts Plan.