



NORTH CAROLINA ARTS COUNCIL STRATEGIC PLAN 2005-2009

“I decided that we would never be civilized – in the sensitive and human sense – if we did not strive to have the arts, in the broadest definitions, become a part of the lives of all people.”

Governor Terry Sanford on why he established the North Carolina Arts Council in 1964

The North Carolina Arts Council is a state agency and part of the Department of Cultural Resources, the nation’s first cabinet level state department for the arts, history, and libraries. Our funding comes primarily from the North Carolina legislature and the National Endowment for the Arts, a federal agency.

As we have for over 40 years, the North Carolina Arts Council

- Promotes excellence in its many forms of artistic expression
- Supports the exemplary artists and organizations that make up the state’s robust arts industry
- Puts artists in the classroom to enhance student learning
- Expands the range of opportunities for North Carolinians to experience the arts

PLAN DEVELOPMENT

In the winter of 2003 we held four public meetings to create a civic dialogue about the public value of the arts in North Carolina. At that time, NCAC was facing the most serious proposed budget cut in its history, and many city and county governments were slashing their support for the arts. It was urgent to better understand and articulate the importance of the arts to the state and its communities.

More than 200 citizens and arts providers attended meetings in Fayetteville, Washington, Asheville, and Greensboro. During the meetings, we asked participants to respond to the following questions: 1) What are you currently doing that aligns most closely with your community’s public values? 2) What can we do as an industry to increase the public value of our work? and 3) How can we better measure, document, and articulate the value of the arts to society?

Through these public meetings, we were able to collectively create a public value framework structured around the overarching values of vibrant communities, creative and productive citizens, and the cultural vitality of the state. Our planning process has inspired us to develop a

plan that tells a story about the value of the arts to North Carolinians – how they strengthen communities, improve people’s lives, and build our cultural legacy. The plan’s goals and objectives are stated as value-based outcomes and its strategies are designed to both reflect and promote these values.

In February 2005, we conducted another series of public meetings to gain feedback on the draft of our plan. More than 275 people attended meetings in Manteo, Kinston, Durham, Hickory, Spruce Pine, and Brasstown. The meetings were lively, informative, and inspiring, and the overall response to the plan was extremely positive. We incorporated several suggestions from the public meetings into the final draft of the plan. The Strategic Plan was adopted by the North Carolina Arts Council board on March 15, 2005, and amended by the board on June 8, 2006.

PLAN SUMMARY

MISSION: TO MAKE NORTH CAROLINA A BETTER STATE THROUGH THE ARTS

We accomplish this in partnership with

- **Artists and arts organizations**
- **Other organizations that use the arts to make their communities stronger**
- **North Carolinians – young and old – who enjoy and participate in the arts**

GOAL I: VIBRANT COMMUNITIES

1. Local arts councils ensure that the arts are central to community life.
2. Art makes community spaces attractive and distinctive.
3. Arts facilities invigorate downtowns and become community gathering places.
4. Art programs build cross-cultural understanding.

GOAL II: CREATIVE AND PRODUCTIVE CITIZENS

1. North Carolina’s strong network of arts organizations provides citizens access to a wide variety of creative experiences.
2. The state’s arts industry is a potent force in economic growth and generates jobs for North Carolina workers.
3. Arts in education programs are essential to the personal and intellectual growth of North Carolina’s young people.
4. Participation in the arts contributes to lifelong learning and the well-being of the state’s citizens.

GOAL III: NORTH CAROLINA’S CULTURAL VITALITY

1. A strong artist base stimulates individual creative expression, builds the state’s cultural legacy, and encourages civic dialogue.
2. Citizen awareness of the state’s arts and cultural assets creates a strong state identity based on pride in North Carolina’s cultural heritage.
3. Cultural tourists reinforce the relevance of North Carolina’s arts and culture.

STRATEGIC PLAN 2005-2009

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GOAL I: VIBRANT COMMUNITIES

1. Local arts councils ensure that the arts are central to community life.

Since our inception we have worked to establish a solid infrastructure of local arts councils; one in every county has been our goal. With 84 countywide arts councils, we are short of our goal but we do have one of the strongest networks of local arts councils in the nation. Winston-Salem is home to the country's oldest arts council, and Charlotte ranks first nationally in united arts fund drives. Collectively, local arts councils have made a tremendous impact on the cultural lives of their communities and are vital players in community planning and economic development.

Arts councils sponsor festivals and community celebrations, ensure strong arts in education programs in their schools, and provide funding and services to artists and arts organizations in their counties. Over the past several years, reduced government and private funding has forced arts councils to cut staff, programs, and services.

Strategies

- Increase funding for local arts councils to stabilize operations and expand programs.
- Fund the development of 3-5 regional models to strengthen access to the arts in rural counties without an arts council. Develop incentives to increase regional collaboration among arts councils.
- Hold an annual professional development retreat for local arts council directors, and create additional training programs for staff and board members. Develop strategies for improving salaries, benefits, and professional standards for local arts councils.

2. Art makes community spaces attractive and distinctive.

Art enhances community gateways, city centers, and parks and trails and gives meaning and identity to the state's rural towns and urban centers. In 2001, we established the Creating Place Program to promote the economic, social, and aesthetic benefits of public

art and good community design. Today, there are percent for art programs in Asheville, Charlotte, and Chapel Hill. Nine cities and towns of varying sizes have public art master plans, and 16 communities have newly established public art commissions.

The state's first regional light rail systems in the Triangle and Charlotte both include percent for art programs. Recent projects funded by us include way-finding art markers to educate people about the fishing industry in Morehead City, a creative design and art for a garden that pays homage to the Wilmington folk artist Minnie Evans, and creation of a design for the North Carolina Freedom Monument in Raleigh to commemorate the contributions of the state's African-Americans. We also maintain the state's public art collection of 80 artworks located in state office buildings, universities, hospitals, and gardens.

Strategies

- Provide funding and technical assistance to help communities develop public art master plans, percent for art programs, and public art commissions.
- Provide funding for projects that celebrate community history and cultural identity and enhance and enliven public spaces, transportation systems, streetscapes, and greenways.
- Pilot a public art program to place artists in schools to collaborate with students, teachers, and administrators on the creation of artwork that reflects the school's character and spirit. Encourage schools to include funds for public art in new school construction projects.
- Develop a partnership with the state's Department of Transportation to incorporate art and design into selected highway and transportation projects. Tour the Creative Transportation Exhibit to communities around the state to demonstrate how art can enhance roadways, streetscapes, and transportation systems.
- Make presentations to citizens, community leaders, and town planners about the benefits of public art and design projects. Serve on public art commissions and committees. Advocate for inclusion of artists in the planning and design phase of public projects such as buildings, parks, and community infrastructure.
- Provide workshops, training, and Web resources to help North Carolina artists compete for public art commissions.

3. Arts facilities invigorate downtowns and become community gathering places.

North Carolina towns and cities have long understood that arts facilities can transform a neglected neighborhood, increase downtown property values, and become magnets that draw restaurants, galleries, and specialty shops to open nearby. At the center of Charlotte's stunning re-birth are major new arts centers, museums, and theaters. Communities have preserved historic architecture by converting abandoned mills, warehouses, banks, department stores, churches, and schools into arts centers, theaters, museums, and studios. Towns like Greensboro, New Bern, Asheville, Salisbury, Wilson, and Fayetteville have built or renovated facilities that served as centerpieces of downtown revitalization.

In rural areas, facilities like the North Carolina Pottery Center in Seagrove and the Core Sound Waterfowl Museum on Harkers Island serve as gateways and interpretive centers for visitors to their regions. In recent years there has been an increased demand for arts facilities, and more than 75 communities are currently involved in some phase of renovation, repair, or new construction of museums, theaters, arts centers, and studio spaces.

Strategies

- Provide funding and technical assistance to support the planning and development of adapting, renovating, or building arts facilities. Provide resource information about arts facility development on our Web site.
- Research a public/private approach to support capital projects for arts organizations to convert historic and abandoned buildings, expand existing facilities, and construct new facilities.

4. Arts programs build cross-cultural understanding.

North Carolina's African American population is almost twice the national average, and the state is home to the largest number of Native Americans east of the Mississippi. We have the fastest growing Latino population in the nation, and the Triad, the foothills, and Charlotte are home to large Southeast Asian resettlement communities. North Carolina's diverse cultures are reflected in a strong infrastructure of African American, Native American, Latino, and Asian American cultural centers, galleries, theaters, music ensembles, museums, and dance companies as well as through the many talented artists working in the state. A growing number of festivals, programs, and events are helping communities better understand the cultural traditions and expressions of their newer Latino and Asian immigrant populations.

The Arts Council is collaborating with the Center for International Understanding, which conducts cultural exchange programs to Mexico to help civic leaders better understand the issues of integrating immigrants into their communities. We support the inclusion of arts leaders in visits to the Mexican communities that are the primary source of the county's immigrants.

Strategies

- Provide financial support and technical assistance to develop and sustain community-based multicultural organizations that provide arts programs reflective of the state's diverse cultures.
- Provide funding for arts programs that build appreciation and understanding of the state's African-American, Native American, Latino, and Asian American populations.
- Provide translation services and make more information available in Spanish on our Web site. Continue to support the participation of arts leaders in the Center for International Understanding's Mexico exchange program.
- Develop a Latino Initiative to increase arts programming that both reflects the state's Latino culture and engages its Latino population.

GOAL II: CREATIVE AND PRODUCTIVE CITIZENS

1. North Carolina's strong network of arts organizations provides citizens access to a wide variety of creative experiences.

The state's arts organizations are as numerous as they are varied. From opera companies, art museums, literary magazines, and dance companies to community theaters, gospel choirs, art guilds, and fiddlers' conventions, citizens in rural and urban areas have access to hundreds of art classes, performances, poetry readings, exhibitions, and festivals. Artists from North Carolina, across the country, and around the world perform in our concert halls, theaters, and school auditoriums, and exhibit in arts centers and museums.

The state's recent economic recession dramatically affected the budgets of arts groups, decreasing contributions and endowment income and eliminating cash reserves. At the same time, several new arts organizations, including a ballet company, an arts center, a craft museum, a theater, and a film festival came into being as major institutions and earned national attention for their work.

Strategies

- Increase support for the Grassroots Arts Program, which distributes funds on a per capita basis for arts programs in all 100 counties.
- Provide funding and technical assistance to developing rural arts organizations to establish programs and stabilize operations.
- Provide funds to arts presenters to support performance series and artist residencies in their communities. Facilitate planning and collaboration among artists, presenters, and community participants to encourage longer community based artist residencies.
- Fund statewide service organizations to provide resource information and networking opportunities to arts professionals. Provide long-term organizational development programs and short-term technical assistance to strengthen arts organizations. Provide resource information on fundraising and other opportunities through our Web site and through regular email communications.

2. The state's arts industry is a potent force in economic growth and generates jobs for North Carolina workers.

Our 2003 economic impact study, conducted by Appalachian State University's business school, revealed that North Carolina's nonprofit arts organizations have a \$723 million impact on the state's economy. Additional studies show that the arts generate \$26 million in Watauga County, \$60 million in Buncombe County, \$67 million in Wake County, and \$94 million in Mecklenberg County. The nonprofit arts sector provides nearly 7,000 full-time jobs and generates an estimated \$32 million in federal and state taxes.

The arts help our communities rank high on “Best Places to Live” lists and creativity indexes, attracting new businesses and residents. Many of our rural areas are developing their rich cultural traditions in craft and music as sustainable economic development strategies to replace the loss of jobs in agriculture and manufacturing.

Strategies

- Complete an additional study that documents employment within the entire creative sector, both commercial and non-profit. The study will identify rural and urban centers with high concentrations of artists and other creative workers and recommend sectors with expansion potential such as design, crafts, film, publishing, and music.
- Distribute economic impact information and make PowerPoint presentations to city and county commissions, planners, economic developers, and arts providers.
- Develop a Creative Economy Initiative to generate new models for using the arts to stimulate community economic growth.

3. Arts in education programs are essential to the personal and intellectual growth of North Carolina’s young people.

Whether in schools or communities, the arts help students develop self-confidence, creativity, higher order thinking skills, discipline, interpersonal skills, and academic success. When the arts are integrated into education, students become more excited about learning and teachers, administrators, and families become more engaged. Artists become part of the community, working with students and teachers to choreograph dances, write stories and poems, and paint murals on the walls.

We fund artists and arts organizations to provide over 300 arts in education programs to schools annually. We’ve developed pre-school arts programs for children ages 3-5 with Smart Start and More at Four. We support afterschool and summer programs for underserved youth, two of which have won national “Coming Up Taller Awards.” The popular Junior Appalachian Musicians (JAM) program helps students in mountain counties discover and reclaim their musical traditions by pairing them with local musicians.

Strategies

- Provide funding for artist residencies in schools that include performances, presentations, and hands on work with students, families, and educators.
- Provide funding for pre-school arts programs and afterschool and summer arts programs for underserved youth. Expand the JAM program in mountain counties and to other geographic regions with rich cultural traditions.
- Provide funding and technical assistance to help rural communities establish ongoing arts in education programs. Develop a rural touring program and organize annual artist residencies in rural schools with the least access to arts in education opportunities.

- Establish a training program for North Carolina teaching artists. Certify a core group of master teaching artists who can lead professional development workshops for arts educators, afterschool providers, and early childhood teachers.
- Develop 3 regional Teacher Institute sites to train school-based teams of arts educators, classroom teachers, and school administrators to develop arts integrated curricula.
- Conduct an Arts in Education Study to document and analyze the scope and depth of arts in education in North Carolina schools and afterschool programs. Co-sponsor a statewide Arts in Education Conference in 2006 with the Department of Public Instruction, the North Carolina A+ Schools Network, and the state's Kennedy Center Partnership Teams. Announce the results of the study at that time.
- Through our Web site provide information on model AIE programs, annotated resource links, and summaries of current research and legislation.

4. Participation in the arts contributes to lifelong learning and the well-being of the state's citizens.

Studies show that people who continue to engage in active learning experiences throughout their lives achieve a higher level of contentment and happiness. Many adults turn to the arts to find creative outlets and make community connections. They take pottery classes, learn to play an instrument, join a book club, or subscribe to the symphony. They act in community theater productions, sing in the choir, play the sax in a jazz club, or belong to the watercolor society.

Increasingly, arts organizations are providing participatory learning opportunities to deepen the arts experience for their audiences and communities. They offer lectures and classes with visiting master artists who conduct creativity institutes for business people and organize jam sessions, drumming circles, and poetry slams.

Recognizing the important role that the arts play in the healing process, many of our hospitals have arts in healthcare programs. The arts create an uplifting environment, keep patients engaged and motivated, and provide an outlet for emotion that aids in healing and acceptance. The arts improve learning for developmentally disabled children and adults.

Strategies

- Provide funding and technical assistance to arts organizations to increase adult learning opportunities.
- Support arts programs in hospitals, mental health facilities, and healthcare organizations. Provide funding to North Carolina Arts for Health Network to conduct training institutes for arts professionals, art therapists, and health care providers.
- Develop services to make stronger connections to the informal arts sector.

GOAL III. NORTH CAROLINA'S CULTURAL VITALITY

1. A strong artist base stimulates individual creative expression, builds the state's cultural legacy, and encourages civic dialogue.

Many of our nation's greatest artists have come from North Carolina: Thomas Wolfe, Thelonius Monk, O. Henry, Elizabeth Cotton, Romare Bearden, and John Coltrane, to name a few. Doc Watson, Shirley Caesar, and Earl Scruggs are among the 12 North Carolinians who have received National Heritage Fellowships. North Carolina artists are frequently nominated for Grammys and other national awards, and in 2003, two films based on books by North Carolina writers Charles Frazier and Daniel Wallace were nominated for Academy Awards.

The state's growing number of BFA and MFA programs and reputation for supporting the arts have fueled a recent influx of talented artists including jazz saxophonist Branford Marsalis, actress Linda Lavin, and writer Jan Karon. Many artists today spend as much time working in schools, community centers, and healthcare facilities as they do in studios, galleries, concert halls, and theaters. They encourage creativity in all of us and their art helps us better understand the beauty, challenges, and complexities of the world we live in.

Strategies

- Increase the number of fellowships awarded to artists annually to recognize artistic achievement and support the development and creation of new work. Provide opportunities for artists to be in residence at centers outside the state. Hold an exhibition and publish a catalog of the work of visual arts fellowship recipients.
- Increase operating support funds to the state's established arts organizations that are the primary employers and supporters of professional artists.
- Increase community recognition and annual financial support to over 100 artists through the Regional Artists Project Grant Program, run by local arts councils.
- Maintain a Web site for the state's Poet Laureate and provide funds to support public readings and workshops for NC writers and poets.
- Publish and distribute the *North Carolina Touring Artist Directory* in print and on our Web site to increase employment for notable North Carolina artists who perform, teach, and conduct residencies in school and community settings.
- Produce Arts Market, a biennial artists showcase and booking conference, to bring together over 500 artists and presenters.
- Publish and distribute a directory of North Carolina artists who produce functional crafted works designed and integrated into the home setting, such as tile flooring and wall features, staircases and railings, stained glass windows, stonework, and other built-in and attached fixtures. The directory will be developed in both print and Web formats as a resource to architects, designers, and builders.
- Hold 2-3 artist retreats and workshops annually to help artists organize, plan, and sustain their creative careers. Provide artists' resource information on funding, jobs, competitions, training, and services on our Web site. Encourage arts

councils to create support networks for local artists and to help artists promote their work.

- Reinstate the Visiting Artists Program in partnership with the Community College System to place artists at community colleges across the state. Explore similar partnerships with other colleges and universities.

2. Citizen awareness of the state's arts and cultural assets creates a strong state identity based on pride in North Carolina's cultural heritage.

The state's artistic and cultural achievements reflect the ingenuity, inventiveness, and determination of its people. North Carolina is the birthplace of outdoor drama and has the oldest state supported symphony, craft school, local arts council, publicly owned art collection, and folk music festival in the nation. Our traditions in ballad singing, gospel and blues music, basket making, and pottery are among the richest in the nation and retain their vitality in communities across the state. Many of our artists and arts organizations enjoy regional, national, and even international reputations, and North Carolina is often referred to as a literary mecca in major publications.

Strategies

- Promote our Web site, www.ncarts.org, as a primary source for information on North Carolina's arts and culture and as a mechanism for helping funded artists and arts organizations market their work. Continue to expand and improve our searchable database of the state's artists and arts organizations. Work with the print and electronic media to generate features on North Carolina arts and culture.
- Provide funds for folk arts programs and for the production and distribution of CDs, films, and publications that document the state's traditional culture. Honor the state's outstanding traditional artists through the North Carolina Folk Heritage Awards Program. Train community arts organizations to develop programs that feature their community's traditions and traditional artists.
- Provide support for ARTS North Carolina's statewide arts awareness campaign. Make PowerPoint presentations on the arts in North Carolina to citizen groups, business and community leaders, and government officials. Make these presentations available for constituent use.
- Assist with the North Carolina Awards, presented annually by the Governor for outstanding achievement in the arts, literature, science, and public service.

3. Cultural tourists reinforce the relevance of North Carolina's arts and culture.

In 2003, North Carolina was named one of the top 10 states in cultural tourism by Smithsonian Magazine and the Travel Industry Association of America. Through our Blue Ridge Heritage Initiative, we've published two guidebooks, one on traditional Appalachian music and one on Cherokee arts and culture, which draw visitors to over 300 sites and venues in western North Carolina. More than 10,000 copies have been sold, and the Initiative recently received the Preserve America Presidential Award. We developed a number of other cultural tourism trails that feature outdoor dramas and summer performing arts venues, North Carolina crafts, African American arts and culture, and our literary heritage.

The 2-year statewide “Celebration of Craft” is featured prominently on the 2004 state highway map. HomegrownHandmade.com is an agri-Cultural tourism initiative funded by the Golden LEAF Foundation to develop trails in tobacco dependent counties in the east and Piedmont regions. The trails will feature farm stays, artists’ studios, u-pic fruits and vegetables, and harvest and farm festivals that include craft and music.

Strategies

- Complete agri-Cultural tourism trails in 77 counties for homegrownhandmade.com. Produce CDs for travelers and develop itineraries and packages. Develop “North Carolina Works,” three cultural trails on occupational traditions in the rural east and Piedmont. Develop tours and special programs to introduce visitors to local people such as farmers, boat builders, decoy carvers, tobacco auctioneers, musicians, and storytellers.
- Complete the NC Literary Trail, which divides the state into 7 regions and includes sites important to the state’s literary heritage, excerpts from North Carolina literature, and places writers visit and recommend.
- Develop an African American music trail to showcase the state’s deeply rooted heritage of jazz, blues, and gospel music.
- Update and expand our trails that feature North Carolina craft, African American arts and culture, and the state’s performing arts venues. Develop additional interpretive signage and marketing materials for the Blue Ridge music and Cherokee heritage trails.

STRATEGIC INITIATIVES SUMMARY

The plan contains 49 strategies for increasing the public value of our work over the next 2 budget bienniums. These are a combination of ongoing activities and new initiatives. Below is a summary of major strategies that will require additional funds.

Increase operating support funds to the state's established arts organizations.	\$1 million
Increase support for the Grassroots Arts Program, which distributes funds on a per capita basis for arts programs in all 100 counties.	\$1 million
Expand the Regional Rural Arts Council Initiative to encourage more arts councils to provide services regionally.	\$ 100,000
Conduct an Arts in Education Study to document and analyze the scope and depth of arts in education in North Carolina schools and after school programs.	\$ 50,000
Create a touring program to bring select artists to rural schools with the least access to arts in education programs.	\$ 500,000
Expand the Junior Appalachian Musicians (JAM) after school program into other regions with rich cultural traditions.	\$ 250,000
Expand our system of cultural tourism trails to include a literary trail, a jazz, blues, and gospel music trail, and trails that focus on the maritime and agricultural traditions of the east and piedmont.	\$ 250,000
Establish a fund to support capital projects for arts organizations to convert historic and abandoned buildings, expand existing facilities, and construct new facilities.	\$ to be determined
Re-instate the Visiting Artist Program in partnership with the Community College System to place artists at community colleges across the state.	\$ to be determined
Develop a Latino Initiative to increase arts programming that both reflects the state's Latino culture and engages its Latino population.	\$ to be determined
Develop a Creative Economy Initiative to generate new models for using the arts to stimulate community economic growth.	\$ to be determined

2005-09 Strategic Plan adopted by the North Carolina Arts Council board March 15, 2005