

KENTUCKY ARTS COUNCIL STRATEGIC PLAN

**2015 — 2021**



A VISION FOR THE FUTURE  
OF THE ARTS IN KENTUCKY

## INTRODUCTION

The legislated purpose of the Kentucky Arts Council is to develop and promote a broadly conceived state policy of support for the arts in Kentucky. As the state arts agency, the arts council is charged with the development and implementation of a state arts plan. Realizing that change is constant, this six-year plan is intended to evolve based on current needs, opportunities, challenges and environmental factors. An annual review will be conducted, as well as a mid-point assessment at the three-year mark. To prioritize and assign specific tasks, the agency produces an annual work plan outlining the objectives, strategies and actions on which the agency will focus during the current year.

The goals and objectives for this plan were developed following broad-based public input. This input was compiled by means of multiple surveys, interviews, forums, focus groups and review of existing state, regional and national literature and reports. In addition, a multi-year assessment of all existing programs and major events was conducted. Five themes emerged on which the resulting goals were built. These themes are:

- Vibrant Communities
- Creative Industry
- Creativity and Innovation
- Entrepreneurship
- Showcasing the Arts

The arts council provides access to the arts through multiple means. The goals in this plan are meant to be accomplished through working with our partners.

## MISSION

The mission of the Kentucky Arts Council is to foster environments for the people of Kentucky to value, participate in and benefit from the arts

## ENDS

The mission-related ends demonstrate the long-range purpose and vision of the agency and are principled by what good can be done for whom and at what cost. These considerations guide the planning, programming, implementation and evaluation of all work of the agency. All of the ends statements have equal priority.

- Kentuckians value the role of arts in society: The people of Kentucky will understand the arts as necessary for successful and thriving communities, an enhanced quality of life, development of a well-rounded 21st century workforce and a strong creative industry.
- Public policy at all levels supports the arts in Kentucky: Public policy is supportive of the arts overall as well as the work of the Kentucky Arts Council as the state arts agency. The arts are included in policy decisions outside of the arts field including education, economic and community development.
- Statewide delivery of arts programs and services is provided: The people of Kentucky have increased access to the arts and have participation opportunities in their own communities and across the Commonwealth. Arts participation is broadened, deepened and diversified.
- Lifelong education in the arts is encouraged: The people of Kentucky have lifelong opportunities to learn through the arts. Lifelong education in the arts is valued and accessible.
- Artists live and work in a supportive environment: The environment in Kentucky is such that artists are able to create and market their work while making a living wage.

# VALUES

Working in partnership with organizations and individuals to deliver arts programs and services throughout the state, we ask that applicants and partners keep the following guiding values in mind when working with the Kentucky Arts Council:

## ARTISTS' COMPENSATION

The Kentucky Arts Council believes that artists' time and work have real value, for which artists should be fairly compensated. In dealing with artists' creative services and works, we want to ensure that:

- Artists are fully engaged in plans for use of their work.
- It is not standard practice to solicit gratis creative services and works, demonstrations or performances.
- All parties mutually agree upon equitable compensation for services, works or performances.

## DIVERSITY

The Kentucky Arts Council believes that arts programs and services should be accessible to all people of the Commonwealth. We recognize that communities are not limited to geographic boundaries and may be defined by common factors such as occupation, recreation, religion, ethnicity, belief, etc., that are shared by a group of people. The members of these groups share a common culture and a sense of aesthetics. Their unique and diverse art forms bring people together and can promote positive intercultural relations among the state's various communities, including:

- Persons of all ages.
- Gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender communities.
- Persons of all ethnic and racial groups.
- Persons with disabilities.
- Geographically or economically isolated communities.
- Disadvantaged and at-risk persons.
- Institutionalized persons.

## PRESERVATION OF CULTURAL RESOURCES

The Kentucky Arts Council believes that the arts and cultural resources of Kentucky are key to understanding our heritage, and that honoring the past will help build our future. Recognizing that knowledge of our history will help build our future, we support identifying, documenting, conserving and protecting the cultural resources of the state, including:

- Artistic works.
- Cultural traditions.
- Historic sites.
- Historic structures.

## ADVOCACY

The Kentucky Arts Council believes it is important for individuals and organizations to advocate for the arts and promote how they enhance our communities and our lives. We encourage our constituents to influence public policy by:

- Acknowledging public funding sources.
- Becoming involved in the public life of the community.
- Getting to know legislators and local officials and staying informed about issues.
- Involving public officials in arts activities or the activities of arts organizations.
- Asking legislators and local officials to vote for positions supporting the arts.
- Discussing the value of the arts with peers.

# CREATIVE INDUSTRY

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*Build and expand Kentucky's creative industry, promote the economic impact of the arts and position the creative industry as an integral sector in the economy.*

Kentucky's creative industry encompasses artists, organizations and businesses working in the traditional art fields but also includes enterprises in the creative fields of applied, technical and/or commercial arts. The Kentucky Arts Council will take on an expanded role as a convener and coordinator to help connect existing resources with new opportunities, and identify new creative industry stakeholders.

**Objective: Build and promote Kentucky's creative industry.**

Strategy: Develop and implement an action plan for expansion of the creative industry based on the creative industry report and recommendations.

Strategy: Investigate funding for statewide initiatives to develop Kentucky's creative industry.

**Objective: Develop and expand Kentucky's arts infrastructure.**

Strategy: Seek out partnerships to ensure the arts are included in economic, business, community and workforce development efforts.

Strategy: Identify, promote and offer assistance in presenting ready-made programming for underserved communities.

**Objective: Build capacity of organizations to produce and present the arts.**

Strategy: Provide and strengthen access to resources, training and technical assistance.

**Objective: Demonstrate the value of the arts as essential to the economy.**

Strategy: Develop more advanced measurement tools to demonstrate evidence of the impact of the arts, and provide access to research that supports the value of the arts.

**Objective: Encourage and facilitate public and private partnerships to develop Kentucky's creative industry.**

Strategy: Facilitate convenings and networking opportunities to introduce potential partners to Kentucky's creative industry.

Strategy: Broaden and diversify the definition of our stakeholders to be effectively engaged.

Strategy: Engage private investors in the growth potential for Kentucky's creative industry.

# VIBRANT COMMUNITIES

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*Foster environments and provide resources for the arts to thrive, improve quality of life through the arts and promote cultural expression in communities.*

Kentucky communities are increasingly utilizing the arts to revitalize local areas or entire towns. The arts, culture and creative enterprises play a unique role in communities through creative placemaking and civic innovation. The Kentucky Arts Council recognizes that communities may have a geographic identity or be based on a shared culture, and opportunities to participate in the arts must be accessible to all.

## **Objective: Build capacity of communities to use arts and cultural assets to develop vibrant communities.**

Strategy: Promote arts businesses and arts entrepreneurs as essential to a vibrant community.

Strategy: Package, promote and disseminate the inaugural creative industry report as a toolkit.

Strategy: Illustrate how the arts can be used as a tool to recruit business enterprises to the community.

Strategy: Help communities understand and develop the arts as an economic driver.

## **Objective: Increase understanding among stakeholders and policymakers in the role of arts and culture in creating vibrant communities.**

Strategy: Ensure stakeholders, planners and developers understand how arts and arts services fit into urban and community planning.

Strategy: Facilitate and encourage cooperation among local tourism, arts and heritage entities.

Strategy: Encourage planners and community leaders to use artists in community-based projects.

## **Objective: Accelerate creative placemaking in Kentucky.**

Strategy: Continue support for the Creative Commonwealth Network.

## **Objective: Create awareness among all Kentuckians of available art programs, opportunities and amenities.**

Strategy: Facilitate presentations of the arts in communities.

Strategy: Provide resources for arts organizations to identify and reach broader audiences.

Strategy: Create toolkit and/or offer resources to facilitate development and implementation of arts and cultural activities and events including exhibits, performances and festivals.

## **Objective: Encourage networking and exchange programs among communities and arts organizations for the touring of performances and exhibits.**

Strategy: Identify and promote arts and cultural presenters and programs available to tour throughout the state.

Strategy: Identify and convene arts and cultural cohorts such as performing arts centers, historic theaters, community art centers and local arts councils to share ideas and best practices.

## **Objective: Strengthen relationships with, and services, to underserved communities.**

Strategy: Identify and connect with underserved communities to determine needs.

Strategy: Facilitate connections with recent immigrants and support, recognize and celebrate their art forms and arts entrepreneurs.

Strategy: Support artists with disabilities.

Strategy: Promote artwork from diverse populations throughout the Commonwealth.

**Objective: Strengthen and enhance the Kentucky Cultural Districts program.**

Strategy: Provide stronger branding for and recognition of the program.

Strategy: Research incentives used by other industries in the state and incentives for cultural districts used in other states.

Strategy: Establish an annual technical assistance/convening schedule for cultural districts.

Strategy: Assess and redesign the application and selection process.

Strategy: Assess and redesign annual reporting mechanisms and requirements for continued designation.

**Objective: Support the enhancement of community identities and the promotion of cultural expression through the arts.**

Strategy: Assist communities in identifying and raising awareness about unique cultural assets.

Strategy: Identify exemplary vibrant communities and share their stories.

Strategy: Support, promote and celebrate artists and arts organizations doing innovative art activities and projects.

Strategy: Facilitate the creation of more public art across the state.

**Objective: Recognize and promote communities that are invested in arts entrepreneurship.**

Strategy: Identify and offer support to communities that are actively making use of the arts in civic vibrancy.

# CREATIVITY AND INNOVATION

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*Support, enhance and encourage arts as basic to lifelong education and demonstrate the value of creativity and innovation for creative workforce development and arts access across generations.*

Creativity and innovation are critical in developing the skill sets needed for the 21st century workforce. The Kentucky Arts Council will expand its role as a convener and resource for arts education, and will work with educators, arts organizations, businesses and communities to use and promote arts learning for all ages.

**Objective: Expand the leadership role of the Kentucky Arts Council as a resource, partner and convener to provide information about integrating learning in, through and about the arts.**

Strategy: Provide practical training and support for educators, teaching artists, parents and arts organizations.

Strategy: Work with partners to promote and disseminate research and best practices in arts education.

**Objective: Support and enhance arts as critical to education and demonstrate the value of creativity and innovation for pre-K through secondary education students.**

Strategy: Identify and form partnerships with education authorizers — teachers, parents, guardians, site-based councils — who can influence student learning.

Strategy: Promote resources related to creativity and innovation offered by the arts council and other agencies and organizations.

Strategy: Work with colleges and universities to provide training in arts integration for the next generation of educators.

Strategy: Identify Kentuckians who are innovative and creative.

**Objective: Assist schools and educators in developing and fulfilling their Arts and Humanities Program Review and the Kentucky Core Academic Standards for the Arts and Humanities and the new National Core Arts Standards.**

Strategy: Assist educators in defining “media arts” as an art form to align with national arts standards.

Strategy: Expand and promote services offered through the Specialists With Arts Tactics program.

**Objective: Encourage and support creative youth arts development programs outside of school.**

Strategy: Develop and make available best practices in quality creative youth arts development programs.

Strategy: Work with arts partners to facilitate expanded opportunities to develop and implement creative youth arts development programs.

**Objective: Create an arts career educational campaign.**

Strategy: Create opportunities for student artists to work and interact with professional artists.

Strategy: Document the professional careers of a broad spectrum of well-known Kentucky artists and share this with youth interested in a career in the arts.

Strategy: Develop a mentorship program between professional artists and youth.

**Objective: Demonstrate the importance of creativity and innovation in Kentucky’s 21st century workforce.**

Strategy: Foster understanding and recognition of the arts as an integral part of workforce development.

Strategy: Identify and educate non-arts partners in the role creativity and innovation play in the success of their sectors.

Strategy: Showcase examples of how creativity leads to innovation in business and workforce development.

Strategy: Develop and convene a Kentucky creativity and innovation leadership advisory group.

**Objective: Assist organizations and communities in developing and implementing arts opportunities for adult learners.**

Strategy: Provide training and resources based on community needs.

Strategy: Collect and disseminate information on best practices.

Strategy: Identify possible partner groups that have a presence throughout the state (e.g. public libraries and cooperative extension offices).

Strategy: Connect organizations and communities with Kentucky's working artists.

# ENTREPRENEURSHIP

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*Support small arts business development and provide resources, tools and opportunities to enable arts entrepreneurs to expand and promote their business.*

Kentucky's creative talent and businesses are important to the competitiveness and growth of other important sectors of the Commonwealth's economy including tourism, manufacturing and design services. To facilitate entrepreneurial growth and expansion, the Kentucky Arts Council will identify and support opportunities for creative entrepreneurs and enterprises including exposure to expanded markets, opportunities to convene with professional peers, foster innovative collaborations and facilitate access to business services and training.

**Objective: Equip artists and arts organizations with business tools and training.**

Strategy: Develop and maintain training for artists at all stages of their careers.

Strategy: Offer opportunities for artists to share best practices.

Strategy: Expand existing website resources to include tools, tutorials, links and other information.

Strategy: Engage local artists in community initiatives and creative placemaking.

**Objective: Increase the skill level of Kentucky artists and arts organizations in marketing and media relations.**

Strategy: Provide training, marketing resources and successful models.

Strategy: Facilitate connections between artists and arts organizations and the media.

**Objective: Facilitate development of shared maker and meeting spaces in communities throughout state.**

Strategy: Identify and catalog existing maker and meeting spaces.

Strategy: Identify partners that are interested in creating and providing spaces.

**Objective: Facilitate inclusion of artisan-entrepreneur needs into business incubation programs and spaces.**

Strategy: Develop a comprehensive resource list of available programs through Small Business Development Centers, cooperative extension services, etc.

Strategy: Develop relationships and partnerships with organizations and programs to develop and implement business incubator programs.

**Objective: Develop and recognize arts entrepreneurs as community and business leaders.**

Strategy: Bring together artists and community business leaders.

Strategy: Partner with leadership training programs across the state to influence the inclusion of artists.

Strategy: Provide access to business and leadership training for arts entrepreneurs.

Strategy: Raise the visibility of arts entrepreneurs.

Strategy: Promote and emphasize the role of professional artists and business leaders.

**Objective: Expand regional and national markets and exposure for artists.**

Strategy: Develop and expand business opportunities like sales, exhibitions and performances for artists.

Strategy: Expand opportunities for adjudicated artists to exhibit at fairs and festivals.

Strategy: Negotiate agreements for adjudicated artists to participate in external art and craft events based on their Kentucky Crafted status.

Strategy: Develop and expand qualified wholesale trade attendance at Kentucky Crafted: The Market

**Objective: Create more opportunities for Kentucky artists to interact with the Kentucky Arts Council.**

Strategy: Provide training opportunities for artists what introduce them to the Kentucky Arts Council and assist them as they develop their professional careers.

Strategy: Host open calls to artists for professional showcase opportunities that introduce them to working with the arts council.

# SHOWCASING THE ARTS

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*Elevate and demonstrate the role of the arts and recognize, reward and highlight artistic excellence and Kentucky's unique artistic culture and traditions.*

In order to foster an environment where exemplary artists and arts organizations feel valued, the Kentucky Arts Council will continue to tell their stories at the local, regional and national levels through a variety of media while awarding excellence across the Commonwealth, artist career spans and arts disciplines.

**Objective: Showcase the arts across the entire state at all times, as much as possible.**

Strategy: Give recognition to communities, organizations and individuals that are making significant contributions through the arts.

Strategy: Establish 2015 as the “year of the arts” in Kentucky.

**Objective: Reach a broader audience through multiple channels.**

Strategy: Utilize up to date technology and accessible modes of communication including mobile apps, online sales platforms, video streaming and podcasts.

**Objective: Provide timely information to the general public about the arts in Kentucky.**

Strategy: Create a twice yearly online arts magazine with high quality, informative and substantive information about the arts in Kentucky.

**Objective: Raise awareness among Kentucky media about the arts and Kentucky artists.**

Strategy: Further develop media contacts by making personal connections with key figures.

Strategy: Develop a program to encourage buy-in from Kentucky media.

**Objective: Raise the visibility of artists across the Commonwealth.**

Strategy: Seek out opportunities to showcase folk and traditional arts and artists.

Strategy: Explore new ways to showcase adjudicated artists.

Strategy: Communicate the benefits of hiring professional artists when presenting community events like festivals.

**Objective: Provide learning opportunities and resources for artists to professionally promote their own art.**

Strategy: Connect artists with resources and provide instructions on how to develop professional marketing and promotions.

**Objective: Ensure Kentucky Arts Council staff is knowledgeable about methods of marketing, selling and distributing arts products, and can serve as valuable resource to professional Kentucky artists.**

Strategy: Increase ongoing professional development for staff and provide access to research and resources.

**Objective: Create interactive and challenging activities with partner agencies to promote the arts and Kentucky artists.**

Strategy: Challenge artists through design contests, marketing RFPs and other innovative competitions to create work that promotes the state in an official capacity.

## Methodology

The Kentucky Arts Council began its strategic planning process in the spring of 2013 when staff revisited the current plan at an agency retreat. Research was conducted regarding national arts trends and Kentucky's key issues and current landscape. Standards-based assessment of all program areas, activities and events was conducted including a multi-year trend analysis. In September 2013, Kentucky Arts Council board members provided input, and over the next nine months they reviewed the mission and ends statements, resulting in revisions that better reflect the current needs of the people of the Commonwealth.

The process for public input began in December 2013 with the Shaping Our Appalachian Region (SOAR) Summit initiated by Governor Steve L. Beshear and Congressman Hal Rogers, and attended by 1,800 persons. Though SOAR is not arts specific, the initial summit included a break-out group for Tourism, Arts and Heritage (TAH) and notes from this session and the TAH working group sessions helped inform this plan. Other input was gathered through focus groups, interviews, in-person and on-line surveys and site visits. In addition, information was garnered from required public value and creative industry reports from grantees and artists in adjudicated programs, and summary reports from partner programs.

An in-person survey focusing on how the arts help create vibrant communities was completed by 252 persons at Kentucky Crafted: The Market; an online survey asking constituents for their perception of the current status and needs for the future of the arts was completed by 1,138 persons; and a survey of creative freelancers was completed by 735 persons.

Through analysis of the public input, research and assessment of current programs and activities, five overarching thematic goals emerged. These goals support the mission and ends of the Kentucky Arts Council, and form the basis of the 2015-2021 state arts plan. The resulting plan, A Vision for the Future of the Arts in Kentucky, is intended to evolve and adapt based on current needs, opportunities, challenges and environmental factors.



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