

Kentucky Arts Council Strategic Plan 2023-2026

The Kentucky Arts Council's strategic plan for calendar years 2023-2026 organizes its work under four goals as identified through feedback from constituents and stakeholders, national trends and events of significant importance, surveys and data collection, and response from the field in the last three years. During that time our country experienced the Covid-19 pandemic (ongoing) and our state experienced multiple large-scale disasters, which have also impacted our work.

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.

Plan Goals, Objectives and Strategies

Goal: Tell the Story of the Value that Arts & Culture Play in the Commonwealth

Objective: Advance the acknowledgment and importance of public funding for the arts.

Strategy: Strengthen work with Kentucky arts advocacy proponents to build advocacy efforts among Kentucky nonprofit arts organizations and statewide arts stakeholders through regular convenings, open conversations, promotion of tools and networks.

Strategy: Promote and share state and local creative industry data, and other informational resources, to increase advocacy in the field focusing on accessibility and ease of use.

Strategy: Create robust public information and outreach tools for use of stakeholders to enhance widespread public promotion of the arts.

Strategy: Create learning opportunities for individual artists to participate in advocacy, promoting the benefit of artists and arts business to communities, including the local and state economy.

Objective: Serve as an information hub for the Kentucky arts community; Develop concise, targeted messaging plans and public information tools to elevate and promote the Kentucky Arts Council, Kentucky artists and arts organizations.

Strategy: Research and implement use of contemporary mechanisms for communicating with the public, including social media usage, newsletters and methods of distribution.

Strategy: Distribute timely and current information to stakeholders to generate conversations that elevate important arts issues in the field.

Strategy: Create initiatives to connect organizations, businesses, and communities with Kentucky's working artists.

Strategy: Redesign Kentucky Arts Council website to benefit end users with focus on equity and accessibility, streamlining information.

Strategy: Increase use of video and audio production and integrate as part of overall communications strategy.



Work by Kris Grenier, Kentucky Crafted Directory

Goal: Building Capacity Through Arts & Culture

Objective: Expand participation, accessibility and inclusion in the arts for all Kentuckians,

Strategy: Identify and elevate artists and artforms in historically marginalized and underserved communities utilizing KAC and partner networks. Document new stakeholders.

Strategy: Evaluate barriers to participation and develop new ways to make programs accessible. Utilize information collected from Kentucky Arts Partnership cultural equity plans to examine needs at the community level and organize response among state and local efforts.

Strategy: Translate guidelines, resources and program materials into other languages and implement accessibility and inclusivity practices to assist applicants with varying needs in completing applications.

Objective: Preserve and promote Kentucky's cultural heritage, cultural diversity and folk and traditional arts.

Strategy: Increase awareness and access to Kentucky folklife archives and documentation.

Strategy: Cultivate the preservation and teaching of traditional art forms within Kentucky communities by continuing to work with the Kentucky Folklife Program at Western Kentucky University in presenting the Kentucky Community Scholars program.

Strategy: Identify, document, preserve and promote Kentucky folk and traditional artists, practices and traditions through field work and assessment by Folk and Traditional Arts Director.

Objective: Invest in arts and cultural organizations that contribute to community development and enhance everyday life.

Strategy: Provide operational support through nonprofit arts organizations granting program and provide direct technical assistance and learning opportunities based on feedback from the field, continuing to focus on cultural equity through diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility.

Strategy: Elevate capacity as convener and connector in addressing important issues for nonprofit arts and cultural organizations.

Strategy: Increase communication and relations with the field to effectively demonstrate and increase public support for the arts in Kentucky.

Objective: Participate and advocate for disaster and emergency preparedness, response and recovery among Kentucky artists, arts organizations and the arts field.



Photograph: Governor's Derby Exhibit reception

Plan Goals, Objectives and Strategies

Strategy: Work with National Coalition for Arts Preparedness and Emergency Response to continue assistance to the field following 2021 and 2022 disasters in western and eastern Kentucky, respectively. Connect artists and organizations with grant opportunities following disasters.

Strategy: Develop series of national workshops and webinars related to emergency preparedness, response, recovery, and mitigation for the arts and culture field in coordination with NCAPER, Americans for the Arts, National Assembly of State Arts Agencies, and other national, state and local stakeholders.

Strategy: Provide opportunities for individual artists to connect to state and national preparedness learning and tools.

Strategy: Continue to provide information, connections to resources and technical assistance to Kentucky Arts Organizations, artists and arts businesses in recovery from losses due to COVID-19 pandemic shutdown.

Strategy: Collect data in partnership with other institutions to inform the field at the local, state and national levels about the need for funding, educational and technical resources and networks,

related to immediate, mid-term and long-term recovery following disasters.



Work by Aleta Stone, Kentucky Crafted Directory

Goal: Support Arts Education and Expand Lifelong Learning Through the Arts

Objective: Create new opportunities for children to experience the arts in educational settings.

Strategy: Thoroughly assess Kentucky Arts Council arts education grants, services and programming in relation to meeting the needs of teachers and

schools, and supporting teaching artists.

Strategy: Strengthen partnerships with arts in education stakeholders and interest groups to develop shared programming opportunities that meet the needs of Kentucky teachers and children.

Strategy: Connect Kentucky teaching artists with Kentucky classroom teachers to expand arts education.

Objective: Eliminate barriers to improve access to arts education.

Strategy: Identify and eliminate barriers for teachers and schools to apply for arts education grant funding by establishing or reinforcing direct relationships with schools and the Kentucky Department of Education.

Strategy: Create multiple points of entry for teachers and schools to access arts education opportunities through networking and partnership with the arts council.

Strategy: Identify and expand programming for lifelong learning through arts and cultural experiences targeted at adult populations.

Strategy: Expand grant eligibility to incorporate opportunities for preschool and older adult populations.

Objective: Address needs of Kentucky's professional teaching artists.

Strategy: Support Kentucky teaching artists through networking opportunities and connections to grants and funding.

Strategy: Regularly convene teaching artists and arts education stakeholders to solicit feedback from the field, provide technical assistance and learning opportunities; create arts education newsletter.

Strategy: Identify career-based grant and funding opportunities to support Kentucky teaching artists.

Goal: Expand Access in Grants, Programs, Outreach, and Resources

Objective: Advance knowledge and practice in access for KAC staff and board.

Strategy: Align KAC policies, procedures and practices with a focus on access for all, especially underserved communities.

Strategy: Develop a learning and sharing culture at KAC around access.

Strategy: Work with local, state, regional and national partners to promote funding and other support for the field to advance access in the arts.

Objective: Continue support to organizations in deepening access at the organizational and local level.

Strategy: Provide training and technical assistance to nonprofit arts organizations in relation to access.

Strategy: Demonstrate and promote best access practices in planning and implementation.

Strategy: Create opportunities for arts stakeholders to participate in continual access conversations.

Objective: Remove barriers to access in grants, programs and projects.

Strategy: Address communication and technology accessibility issues in relation to grant and program applications.



Photograph: Kentucky Writers' Day with Kentucky Poet Laureate Crystal Wilkinson

Plan Goals, Objectives and Strategies

Objective: Seek feedback and establish open lines of communication for reporting barriers to program participation; increase outreach to underserved communities.

Strategy: Continue to identify and apply to grant opportunities to support this work.

Objective: Research and implement use of appropriate tools of communications to reach audiences not currently served through traditional means of communication. Employ paid advertising when funds are available.

Strategy: Raise awareness among state, regional and national media about the arts in Kentucky by effectively using social media to promote the arts and meaningfully increase relationships with arts reporters and news outlets.

Strategy: Showcase Kentucky nonprofit arts organizations and individual artists through presentations and participation in the Creative Industry Summit online learning series.

Strategy: Work with nonprofit arts organizations, artists, partners and stakeholders to publicly recognize accomplishments and achievements by Kentuckians in the arts.



Photograph: Kentucky Ballet Theatre

Goal: Expand statewide delivery of arts services and experiences (*added Sept. 19, 2025*).

Objective: Determine geographic areas with weak or non-existent delivery from the Kentucky Arts Council.

Strategy: Map delivery in the context of political boundaries for the past five fiscal years, including counties, regions, and legislative districts.

Strategy: Make interactive, responsive delivery maps available to the public through the Kentucky Arts Council website.

Objective: Expand engagement with local arts agencies.

Strategy: Find and make connections with arts organizations that do not currently apply to the Kentucky Arts Council's grants and programs.

Objective: Increase delivery to the Commonwealth by expanding services to rural areas, small-budget organizations, and other underserved communities.

Strategy: Hold listening sessions in partnership with arts organizations in underserved geographic locations.

Strategy: Revise general operating support grant opportunities to better serve the needs of smaller budget and rural organizations, while continuing to support long-standing partners irrespective of size or location.

Goal Addendum Justification: The Kentucky Arts Council's relevance is linked to its representation in communities big and small, rural and urban, near to Frankfort and far, along with our ability to serve them strategically and effectively. The arts council's value is tied to our demonstrated commitment to serving as many Kentuckians as possible. As the Kentucky Arts Council prepares for its 60th anniversary in 2026 and a new strategic plan for 2027-2030, this is an opportunity to revisit our commitment to all of our end statements, beginning with "statewide delivery of arts programs and services is provided."



Photograph: The Carnegie