



AMERICANS
for the **ARTS**

STRATEGIC PLAN 2009–2011

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AMERICANS FOR THE ARTS STRATEGIC PLAN: 2009–2011

In 2010 Americans for the Arts will celebrate 50 years of advancing the arts in America. This milestone affords us the opportunity to reflect upon the impact the organization has had during this time and in the future. For the past two years, Americans for the Arts has been in a strategic planning process that enabled us to gather the thoughts of more than 6,000 stakeholders through surveys, focus groups, and dialogue. As the organization prepared to release the results of this work, the current economic crisis shook the nation and the world. The marriage of the organization's planning outcomes and fiscal realities resulted in a call for a renewed focus on core audiences and the vital programs that serve them. The following is the organization's new strategic plan for 2009–2011.

Throughout the process, Americans for the Arts worked with AMS Planning & Research to conduct a scan of the arts environment. The following are the 12 key issues that were most consistently raised as needing attention in the coming years.

TWELVE KEY ISSUES

1. The uncertainty that results from the deteriorating state of the American economy.
2. The impact of the changing demographics of our country and communities.
3. The need for greater leadership capacity from both professional and volunteer leadership.
4. The impact of technology on artistic production, issues of intellectual property, and concern about quality/accuracy of information.
5. Making the case for the productive link between arts and education.
6. Articulating the "arts value" message as boundaries blur between disciplines, art forms, methods of production, and modes of delivery.
7. The role of experts (i.e., artists and arts organizations) in a society where customers become "self-curators" seeking new, more participatory forms of artistic experiences in lieu of passive, more observational forms.
8. Managing the changing mix and composition of financial support, along with demands for demonstrated, measurable outcomes.
9. Contributing to community vitality as cities and places compete to attract "creative class" knowledge workers.
10. Reconsidering the traditional nonprofit arts organization business model given shifts in content, delivery methods and consumption.
11. Providing support for individual artists and the creation of new work.
12. Positioning the arts sector's international role in enabling mutual understanding and managing the impact of globalization.

All of our work is chronicled in the broader environmental scan itself, which can be found on the Americans for the Arts website: www.AmericansForTheArts.org/go/strategicplan.

CORE AUDIENCES

Americans for the Arts believes that the best way to be sure that the arts are recognized as integral to the lives of all people and essential to the health and vitality of communities and the nation in the 21st century is by working concurrently with a matrix of decision-making stakeholder groups. While we reach out to many audiences, our core constituents include:

- Local arts enabling and service organizations, including Local Arts Agencies, Arts Councils, Departments of Cultural Affairs, Arts & Business Councils, Business Committees for the Arts, and United Arts Funds as well as the State Arts Advocacy Organizations and state-based arts organizations that serve them;
- Private Sector Leaders from businesses and foundations;
- Arts Advocates who participate in the Arts Action Fund or are electronically connected to us;
- Public Sector Leaders/Elected Officials including Mayors, Lt. Governors, Senators, Representatives, City/ County Managers, and many others; and
- Individuals of power and influence including accomplished artists, philanthropists and patrons, civic leaders, volunteers, and arts board members.

THE VISION OF AMERICANS FOR THE ARTS

The vision of Americans for the Arts is that the arts are recognized as integral to the lives of all people and essential to the health and vitality of communities and the nation.

THE MISSION OF AMERICANS FOR THE ARTS

The mission of Americans for the Arts is to serve, advance, and lead the network of organizations and individuals who cultivate, promote, sustain, and support the arts in America.

THE STRATEGIES OF AMERICANS FOR THE ARTS

To achieve this mission, Americans for the Arts has designed a series of strategies to reach our three program goals. These strategies cover seven clusters: policy, research, professional development, private sector advocacy, public-sector advocacy, visibility, and strategic alliances. Action items based upon these directives are laced throughout our three program goals:

Goal One: Strengthening an Informed Leadership

Lead and serve individuals and organizations to help build environments in which the arts and arts education thrive and contribute to more vibrant and creative communities.

- Build and enable a nationwide constituency of local, state, regional, and national arts professionals;
- Provide in-person and online professional development programs to arts leaders such as the annual convention (2009 in Seattle and 2011 in San Diego), a National 50-Year Summit on the Future of the Arts in 2010 in Baltimore, National Arts Marketing Project conferences and workshops, and webinars;
- Provide research and information needed to advance the value proposition for arts and arts education such as Arts & Economic Prosperity studies, customized economic impact reports, Creative Industries reports, National Arts Index, National Arts Policy Database, issue-based Monographs, and a vigorous interactive website at www.AmericansfortheArts.org;
- Provide opportunities for the field to connect with one another and offer Americans for the Arts advice and guidance through leadership networks, including the Public Art Network, Emerging Leaders Network, Arts Education Network, Private Sector Network (Arts & Business Councils, Business Committees for the Arts, and United Arts Funds), State Arts Action Network, U.S. Urban Arts Federation, Local Arts Agencies Council, Animating Democracy Network, and the continued evolution of new groups serving arts organizations working in rural and county areas;
- Per the merger with Arts & Business Council Inc., strengthen the Arts & Business Council of New York as the local arts organization dedicated to building arts and business partnerships in the New York area;
- Offer communication vehicles and ways to share case studies and questions, such as targeted websites, blogs, podcasts, listservs, electronic newsletters, and quarterly Arts Link newsletter featuring the local knowledge base of our 5,000 constituent arts organizations;
- Strengthen the ability of Local Arts Agencies to serve the needs of their constituencies through programs and practices that reflect the true diversity of their communities by providing opportunities for discussion and sharing successful programs and research;
- Build a network of civic activists who are informed and prepared to take action in support of the arts and arts education when needed through the Arts Action Fund, with the ultimate goal of one million members;
- Provide tools, information, and resources for philanthropic, volunteer, and business leaders to support their efforts to ensure that the arts thrive in their communities;
- Develop and maintain strategic alliances with national decision-makers; organizations in local, state, and federal government; and organizations in the private sector and in education; and
- Increase focus on advancing the arts needs and interests of the broadly diverse communities we serve.

Goal Two: Increasing Resources for the Arts

Generate meaningful public- and private sector policies and more leaders and resources for the arts and arts education.

- Lead the effort to secure appropriations for the arts and arts education from the federal government, including the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act and appropriations from the National Endowment for the Arts, National Endowment for the Humanities, Institute for Museum and Library Services, Department of State, Corporation for Public Broadcasting, Department of Housing and Urban Development, Corporation for National Service, Department of Transportation, Department of Justice, Department of Labor, Federal Communications Commission, Department of Commerce, and National Park Service;
- Renew efforts to secure federal funding for the Local Arts Agency Network to enable support for local discipline-based arts organizations and artists throughout the United States;
- Continue ArtsVote, the program originally designed to ensure the arts were a core part of the 2008 presidential campaign and other key election campaigns. Focus on ongoing federal elections and prepare for 2012 presidential elections;
- Increase state government investment in state arts agencies and departments of education by continuing to build alliances at the state level with organizations such as the National Lieutenant Governors Association and by arming state advocates with the information they need;
- Increase local government investment in support of local arts agencies, the arts and arts education by working with partners such as the U.S. Conference of Mayors, statewide arts advocacy organizations and providing economic impact data to local arts advocates;
- Increase private sector support for the arts from businesses nationwide by using the Business Committee for the Arts Executive Board, conducting educational forums, distributing newsletters, recognizing generous businesses through the BCA TEN and National Arts Awards, and developing a visibility campaign all of which deliver messages on how support for the arts improves the communities in which they work and improves workforce readiness;
- Continue to work with foundations through partnerships with Grantmakers in the Arts and the Council on Foundations to demonstrate the short- and long-term impact the arts have on the intrinsic and extrinsic value of the arts;
- Generate increased funding for the arts from individuals, arts patrons, and philanthropic leaders through recognition such as the National Arts Awards and by gathering these individuals together in communities across the country and sharing examples of the impact of their support for the arts;
- Increase the number of public art programs in communities across the country by advocating for more communities to invest in public art;
- Increase the number of communities in which there is a staffed Local Arts Agency capable of supporting P16 arts education standards and policies through community cultural planning and strong partnerships with the local school district by providing networking, research, and training opportunities and partnering with the Arts Education Partnership, American Association of School Administrators, and National School Boards Association;
- Grow the Americans for the Arts Action fund, a 501c(4) advocacy organization, with a connected political action committee that focuses on advocacy and political activities; and
- Seek increased opportunities for the American arts community to benefit from international collaboration.

Goal Three: Advancing the Value Proposition for the Arts

Build individual awareness and appreciation of the value of the arts and arts education.

- Reach out to the more than 120 millions of Americans who participate in the arts but do not recognize the value of the arts and arts education in their lives via interactive social networking campaigns and localized media partnerships;
- Build the general public's recognition for the arts as a vital component of education in the public school system by engaging parents and arts advocates in The Arts. Ask for More. public service announcement campaign;
- Use the Americans for the Arts Action Fund as a tool to motivate arts and culture supporters to take action and further the arts in their communities, states, and the nation;
- Coordinate National Arts and Humanities Month each year to draw attention to the impact of the arts in communities across the country; and
- Continue an aggressive press strategy of proactive and rapid response through all media channels, including cost-effective written, radio, and web mechanisms.

Goal Four: Ensuring Organizational Sustainability

Ensure the operational stability of the organization and its ability to creatively respond to opportunities and challenges.

- Increase the number of professional members in Americans for the Arts and public members in the Arts Action Fund in order to grow an informed, mobilized, and influential constituent base;
- Reduce budget by just over 20 percent for 2009, realign core staff, and continually reevaluate a three-year budget projection;
- Frequently reassess and manage long-term investment strategies that generate annual income to supplement the earned and contributed resources needed to ensure sustainability of Americans for the Arts;
- Continuously evaluate strategies for generating earned income in concert with the needs of our stakeholders and the resources available to them;
- Increase and broaden the organization's private- and public-sector funding base;
- Cultivate and inform the strongest volunteer leadership for Americans for the Arts that provides guidance on advancing the organization and its mission and represents the diversity of the communities we serve. In addition to a Board of Directors, continue to coordinate activities of other leadership groups such as field-based Councils and Networks, National Leadership Council, National Patrons Council, Business Committee for the Arts Executive Board, and National Arts Policy Roundtable;
- Cultivate and broaden a diversified base of funders, members, partners, and decision-makers by building recognition of Americans for the Arts as a key influential arts organization working to advance all of the arts in America; and
- Conduct the operations of Americans for the Arts in an entrepreneurial and focused approach that is the result of an inventive, resourceful, and motivated staff; a balanced budget; and environmentally sound and innovative business practices.

Americans for the Arts remains focused on its mission to advance the arts and arts education in our country by strengthening an informed arts leadership, increasing resources for the arts from the private and public sectors and growing the awareness of the value and importance of the arts in our everyday lives. Our success depends on the progress we can make together. We look forward to continuing to work with our members, partners, colleagues, funders, and friends in this important effort.