

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

South Dakota Arts Council's new strategic plan was adopted in July 2014 and will guide the Council through its 2017 fiscal year ending June 30, 2017.

### **Our focus is on people and place – South Dakotans and South Dakota.**

We want to broaden appreciation for the arts; revive schools and communities; connect with and through the people; and enhance the quality of life in South Dakota.

**We're not going in a completely new direction from our last strategic plan, but we are changing lanes and shifting gears.** Public input that was gathered to inform a new strategic plan showed us that though our goals are still widely supported, our priorities needed to be reorganized to fit the changing needs of our constituents. The need for greater **public awareness** of SDAC and our grantees' programming emerged as a top need from our partner organizations. Our artists expressed a need for more frequent and deeper opportunities to **connect** with one another and for different ways of communicating with us. **Communication** is the key component in this plan.

Though the landscape varies greatly in South Dakota, six themes carried through from Great Plains to the Missouri River valley to the Badlands and the mountains of the Black Hills. We have used the input we received to reorganize, focus, and strengthen our long-term goals.

### **Goal 1: Increase public awareness and support of the arts**

### **Goal 2: Advance the arts as essential to learning**

### **Goal 3: Raise the standards for access and inclusion in the arts**

### **Goal 4: Support artists through inclusive programs and networks**

### **Goal 5: Strengthen arts organizations as partners in education, community, and economic development**

### **Goal 6: Position the arts as essential to South Dakota Tourism**

Each of these goals has three major objectives we would like to meet – one in each year of the plan.

This new plan presents exciting opportunities for the staff and board of the South Dakota Arts Council. Though we're in the plan's early stages, we have begun some of the work already. Maintaining this momentum will be challenging, but the rewards for meeting these objectives are immeasurable.

## THE PLAN

Established in 1966 and funded by the State Legislature and the National Endowment for the Arts, the **South Dakota Arts Council** (SDAC) is a state agency serving South Dakotans and their communities through the arts. The Council is the advisory board to the SDAC staff within the Department of Tourism. Council members are appointed by the Governor.

**Mission.** The mission of the South Dakota Arts Council is to make quality arts programs accessible throughout the state through funds, services and information.

**Vision.** Our vision is to transform South Dakota's communities and people through the arts. We see deeper public awareness broadening appreciation for the fine arts; better arts education reviving school environments; wider access to the arts fostering understanding among cultures; and artists and arts organizations enhancing the quality of life for all South Dakotans.

**Beliefs.** We maintain these **public values**:

- ✚ Greater public awareness of the value of the arts fosters sustained public and private support.
- ✚ Arts education stimulates creativity, communication, and lifelong learning.
- ✚ Universal access to the arts is intrinsic to the well-being of all South Dakotans.
- ✚ Artists are central to the creative environment of South Dakota.
- ✚ Arts organizations contribute to vibrant, progressive communities.
- ✚ The arts play an essential role in cultural tourism.

**Goals.**

- ✚ Increase public awareness and support of the arts.
- ✚ Advance the arts as essential to learning.
- ✚ Raise the standards for access and inclusion in the arts.
- ✚ Support artists through inclusive programs and networks.
- ✚ Strengthen arts organizations as partners in education, community, and economic development
- ✚ Position the arts as essential to South Dakota tourism.

**Strategies.** The South Dakota Arts Council will use five major strategies to meet objectives and achieve our goals. These strategies are specifically referenced throughout the plan.

- Strategy 1: Grant-making
- Strategy 2: Policy & Advisory
- Strategy 3: Partnerships & Programs
- Strategy 4: Information and Communications
- Strategy 5: Training & Professional Development

## **Goal 1: Increase public awareness and support of the arts**

**Year 1.** Open channels of information among artists, educators, organizations, and the public.

- Through Information & Communications, we have formed an SDAC communications task force addressing strategies to expand access to information and awareness of SDAC services and opportunities for constituents.
- Through Partnerships & Programs, we will collect data and evaluate effectiveness of the current public awareness initiative, then recommend improvements and enhancements.
- Through Training & Professional Development, we will help communicate the value of their work to their communities.

**Year 2.** Provide a broad-based, easily accessible, statewide public awareness campaign.

- Through Information & Communications, we will use all available media in a coordinated effort.
- Through Partnerships & Programs with statewide service organizations, we will use the state arts conference, statewide arts publications and broadcasts, and awards and honors programs, to engender public support.
- Through Policy & Advisory, we will develop a policy for regular communication with other state agencies.

**Year 3.** Enlist grantees to create opportunities to discuss and demonstrate the public value of the arts to community leaders.

- Through Information & Communications, we will distribute the Public Awareness Campaign for grantees to use at the community level as well as statewide.
- Through Partnerships & Programs, we will promote community conversations on civic engagement and active community development through the arts.
- Through Grant-making, we will provide bonus points for grant applicants who include plans for public awareness in grant applications.

## **Goal 2: Advance the arts as essential to learning**

**Year 1.** Develop an advocacy tool kit for community use in arts education.

- Through Partnership & Programs, we will form a South Dakota Alliance for Arts Education task force to develop a tool kit that is adaptable and useful at the local level.
- Through Information & Communications, we will establish more links to arts education advocacy and resources for parents and educators on website, print and other media.
- Through Training & Professional Development, we will offer advocacy training in the annual Arts Education institute and plan workshops for our state arts conference.

**Year 2.** Challenge South Dakota cultural organizations, artists, and community leaders to provide lifelong learning opportunities through the arts.

- Through Partnership & Programs, we will collaborate with organizations statewide serving preschool children and older adults through the Artists in Schools & Communities and Touring Arts outreach activities.
- Through Information & Communications, we will form a South Dakota Alliance for Arts Education Advisory Council task force to develop guidelines and models for opportunities in early childhood and continuing education in the arts.
- Through Grant-making, we will earmark part of the Artists in Schools and Communities grants budget for early childhood and older adult learners and encourage more applications from organizations to provide residencies for those groups.

**Year 3.** Expand resources and programs that will enhance understanding and help students achieve success through integrated arts learning.

- Through Partnerships and Programs, we will collaborate with the Department of Education to develop teacher in-service workshops on using the arts to enhance learning in other content areas.
- Through Grant-making, we will increase the Arts Education grants budget and continue to fund Artists in Schools and Communities residencies, Excursion Grants, and Educator Grants.
- Through Policy & Advisory, we will form a South Dakota Alliance for Arts Education Advisory Council working group to develop arts integration examples and guidelines for elementary classroom teachers, based in South Dakota fine arts standards.

### **Goal 3: Raise the standards for access and inclusion in the arts**

**Year 1.** Commit to a policy of inclusion in every program to overcome barriers imposed by economic status, education, discrimination, distance, and special needs by building on the SDAC Arts Expansion Policy, which focuses on cultural participation of the state's rural citizens, ethnic minority groups – particularly Native Americans – and a growing number of immigrants.

- Through Grant-making, we will maintain the emphasis on this objective through a bonus-point system for inclusive projects and programs on grant applications.
- Through Information & Communications, we will regularly feature and publicize success stories about arts organizations, educators and artists who have overcome one or more of the listed barriers.
- Through Policy & Advisory, we will form an accessibility task force of the Community Arts Network Advisory Council to share successes and best practices for inclusion for local arts organizations.

**Year 2.** Offer programs and assistance that expand equal access to the arts.

- Through Grant-making, we will explore the viability of adding a grant category specifically for inclusive projects and programs.
- Through Information & Communications, we will continue to publicize inclusion and access success stories; and work with the Community Arts Network Advisory Council to develop a handbook and technical assistance for local cultural organizations.
- Through Partnerships & Programs, we will collaborate with other agencies and organizations doing significant work to overcome barriers to open arts opportunities in communities and schools statewide; we will also present workshops at state arts conference.

**Year 3.** Assist grantees in implementing plans for access and inclusion.

- Through Grant-making, we will encourage organizations to send staff and volunteers to professional development trainings and conferences, such as the Leadership Exchange in Arts and Disability with the help of our professional development grants.
- Through Information & Communications, we will continue to feature success stories through our publications and social media platforms.
- Through Training & Professional Development, we will offer workshops at state arts conference and in conjunction with spring Regional Arts Meetings. In partnership with South Dakotans for the Arts, we will revise and update the Community Arts Handbook to use as a workbook by local arts and educational organizations.

## **Goal 4: Support artists through inclusive programs and networks**

**Year 1.** Offer grants programs that provide direct support to South Dakota artists.

- Through Partnerships and Programs, we will continue the Artists in Schools and Communities, Touring Arts, Art for State Buildings, Governor's Biennial Art Exhibition, Governor's Awards, State Arts Conference, and First Lady's Prairie Arts Showcase – all programs that support and promote the work of artists.
- Through Grant-making, we will continue to grant support in the categories of Artist Career Development, Artist Collaborations, Artist Fellowships, Artist Projects, and Traditional Arts Apprenticeship grants.

**Year 2.** Help South Dakota artists find resources, information, and networking opportunities.

- Through Partnerships & Programs, we will enlist the Community Arts Network Advisory Council to focus on strengthening artist networks and guilds statewide.
- Through Information & Communication, we will improve upon or develop a new online clearinghouse for information and access to materials and services.

**Year 3.** Provide professional development and technical assistance for South Dakota artists.

- Through Partnerships & Programs, we will collaborate with the Arts Business Institute and First Peoples' Fund to expand opportunities for South Dakota artists to participate in their programs of professional development.
- Through Training and Professional Development, we will assist artist networks and guilds as they incorporate business and skills training in their retreats and conferences to expand local access to quality professional development for artists.

## **Goal 5: Strengthen Arts Organizations as partners in education, community, and economic development**

**Year 1.** Maintain grant programs that support the operations, programming, presentations, and projects of South Dakota arts organizations.

- Through Information and Communication, we will continue to upgrade and facilitate the grant application process for large and small organizations and find ways to expand access to grant information and deadlines.
- Through Policy & Advisory, we will clearly articulate SDAC goals and objectives and their relationship to grant guidelines and expectations for grantees.
- Through Grant-making, we will award Arts Challenge, Project, Importation of Musicians, Statewide Services, Arts Opportunity, Technical Assistance, and Professional Development grants to arts organizations across the state.

**Year 2.** Provide training, professional development, and networking opportunities for staff and volunteers of arts organizations at regional and statewide meetings and conferences.

- Through Information & Communication, the CAN Advisory Council will revise and update the *Community Arts Handbook*, available online in workbook form; continue CANmail and develop networks through all media; and encourage the formation of presenters and other information and resource exchanges.
- Through Training & Professional Development, we will support and assist attendance at out-of-state sessions, and provide affordable and accessible in-state board, staff, and volunteer training.
- Through Partnerships & Programs, we will offer a full track of training workshops for organizations at the biennial state arts conference, with follow-up online sessions throughout the year, and present mini-workshops at annual spring regional arts meetings.

**Year 3.** Explore new ways to help organizations with promotions and marketing.

- Through Information & Communications, we will connect organizations statewide to an accessible, comprehensive, statewide public awareness campaign.
- Through Partnerships and Programs, we will collaborate with Departments of Tourism and Economic Development to include arts organizations and events in their state and regional conferences and promotions.
- Through Policy & Advisory, we will develop guidelines to strengthen capacity of organizations to produce strong marketing practices and advise the Department of Tourism and other agencies on information about arts events and programs for their marketing and promotions.

## **Goal 6: Position the arts as essential to South Dakota Tourism**

**Year 1.** Advise and inform the Department of Tourism, other state agencies, and public and private organizations on cultural tourism opportunities.

- Through Policy & Advisory, we will report findings and proposals made by the SDAC Communications Task Force to the Department of Tourism and others, as relevant.
- Through Partnerships & Programs, we will report cultural tourism data from arts organizations.
- Through Information & Communications, we will distribute all public awareness communications to these agencies and organizations.

**Year 2.** Encourage grant proposals from artists and organizations that enhance community development through cultural tourism.

- Through Policy & Advisory, we will advise and encourage innovative collaborations with local and regional tourism organizations.
- Through Partnerships & Programs, we will explore new initiatives in partnership with heritage and history organizations and institutions.
- Through Grant-making, we will add a bonus point for applications that include cultural tourism opportunities.

**Year 3.** Collaborate with Heritage and History organizations to help promote their traditional arts presentations and exhibits.

- Through Policy & Advisory, we will provide opportunities for consultation with arts experts.
- Through Partnerships & Programs, we will present a touring traditional arts exhibit and/or performances in history and heritage venues statewide.
- Through Information & Communications, we will cooperate on marketing and publicity.

## Evaluation

The South Dakota Arts Council will evaluate progress made on these goals in a variety of ways.

**Grant reports.** We have three main methods of evaluating our grant programs, including data-collection, self-evaluation, and observation.

The first is the grant evaluation completed by the grantee. Every grantee must complete the grant evaluation form, which reports to us the number of people reached through the grant funds, the dollars spent to complete the grant projects or programs, and the grantee's self-evaluation on the effectiveness of projects and programs associated with the grant funds.

On-site evaluations are completed by SDAC staff and board members attending SDAC-sponsored events. The evaluations ask for numbers of participants and for evaluators to rate the outcomes of the events as they relate to the Council's long-term goals.

Our Annual Report contains a list of all of our grants awarded. They are broken down by city, which provides us with a picture of the reach of SDAC funding across the state. This is an effective evaluation tool to work on expanding and maintaining connections in South Dakota Communities.

**Conversations.** In South Dakota, we value the conversations we have with our constituents and use these as a method for evaluating our programs and services in three major ways.

Our Regional Arts meetings are held each spring, varying somewhat in location. The latest regional meetings were held in seven communities across the state. During regional meetings, we ask attendees for feedback on what we've been doing and input on what we should do in the future. We also share information with constituents during these meetings.

Every other year, we hold a Statewide Arts Conference, in cooperation with South Dakotans for the Arts. During these conferences, we invite artists, staff and volunteers from arts organizations, educators, administrators, legislators and public officials to join us to hold important conversations about the role of the SDAC and how we can evolve to help meet the needs of our constituents.

In preparation for our strategic planning, every three years we send out a constituent survey rating the importance and efficacy of work the SDAC has done. We also gather further input as to what our constituents would like to see us do in the future.

**Connections.** In order to evaluate the effectiveness of our communications, we track the numbers of people who are reached via our various platforms.

Numbers are gathered at Regional Arts Meetings, the Arts Education Institute, State Arts Conference, the Governor's Awards in the Arts, and other meetings and events.

Electronic media platforms include social media (Facebook, Twitter, and Linked In groups), and our online version of *Arts Alive*, published 3 times a year.

We count the reach of broadcasts on news programs and our public broadcasting stations; and track readers reached by printed publications including news releases, *Arts Alive*, and public information brochures and reports.

We also use analytics and geolocation services to review our website view statistics.

**Data.** In addition to our own data collection, we use information from other agencies and organizations to help us learn about our impact in the state.

Data from the state Department of Education that communicates school demographics is available and will be used to evaluate progress on arts education goals.

We will also use data from Americans for the Arts including information about creative industries report and the economic impact study. In 2011, the SDAC partnered with AFTA to conduct the Arts in Economic Prosperity IV study. Now we can use those numbers in comparison with current ones for tracking and evaluation purposes.

**Further methods** of evaluation come from feedback from attendees at workshops, conferences, our summer Arts Education Institute, and also from artists who conduct residencies and touring events. Over a period of several years, these evaluations provide longitudinal results used to determine trends and best practices.

**Our Board.**

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