WHAT WE’VE ACHIEVED - VALUES & VISION: FY2010-2013

This update characterizes the Nevada Arts Council’s services and activities (2010 – 2013) that responded to the critical issues identified in Values & Vision: Nevada Arts Council’s Strategic Plan, 2010-2015.

Values & Vision provided the framework that effectively guided the Nevada Arts Council (NAC) through an unanticipated and devastating recession, from which Nevada continues to recover. This economic crisis influenced the state’s ability to provide citizen services through massive budget reductions. It altered the demographics of our communities, and the spending and activity behavior of Nevada’s residents and visitors. The NAC budget was reduced by more than 49% during the course of several legislative sessions. These cuts resulted in the suspension of critical grant categories and agency activities, reduced grant amounts in nearly every category and loss of staffing. Still suspended are the Challenge, Design and Local Sustainability grants; the OASIS statewide cultural conference, Governor’s Arts Awards, the neon artsletter. Substantially reduced grant awards are a reality in most categories, as are the number of outreach programs, including community and grantee site visits, and topic-specific workshops. During this time period, major technological advances occurred, which can benefit the Arts Council and its constituents tremendously. However the training opportunities for agency staff and our constituents have been slower than we would want, again due to loss of funding.

This abbreviated report illustrates that with the support and collaborate spirit of our partners in the arts, cultural and educational sectors, NAC continued to serve the state and our direct constituent while holding to the agency’s enduring principles.

We have identified many, but not all of the programs and services provided by the NAC from 2010 -2013. As well, it recognizes the actions not achieved during the time-period covered by the Values & Vision plan.

CRITICAL ISSUES AND ACTION STEPS

1. Public Awareness and Participation
2. Arts Learning
3. Artists
4. Cultural Organizations
5. Community Building
6. Advocacy and Communications

CRITICAL ISSUE 1: Public Awareness and Participation

The arts give voice to the human experience; they are the guardians of our varied cultures. In addition to teaching us about history and cross-cultural achievements, engagement with any art form stimulates the mind and imagination in ways that are essential to human progress. And art, with its direct and powerful language, can communicate an individual’s view of the world so that others might see and hear and
understand, and can be the strongest of connectors that bring a diversity of people together to share commonalities and differences.

GOALS
1. Nevadans broaden and diversify participation in arts and cultural activities in their own and other communities
2. Nevadans deepen their understanding of the intrinsic and public value of the arts
3. Arts organizations, artists and the broader community recognize and support diversity and accessibility in arts and cultural activities

STRATEGIES/Actions Taken
• Use existing NAC outreach programs as opportunities to engage citizens in various arts activities in rural and urban communities throughout the state, and to build public understanding of the value of the arts. (These include the Nevada Touring Initiative; Poetry Out Loud; curated exhibitions, lecture-demonstrations and residencies by folk, traditional and contemporary artists; and various award ceremonies.)
• Develop broadcast media and internet initiatives that explore the breadth of Nevada’s artistic community. (These include Nevada Stories online video series on folk and traditional artists; Poetry Out Loud PBS television special and website feature, and Great Basin Exteriors: A Photographic Survey, an interactive website featuring the artists and work from the traveling exhibition of the same name.)
• Develop new initiatives for the capital city population. These include The Work of Art series at the Nevada State Legislature and the 2011 Inaugural Arts and Culture Celebration that featured tours of local galleries and museums and an afternoon showcase of literary and performing artists at the Brewery Arts Center.
• Keep costs to NAC events and workshops free or low to encourage participation.
• Maintain grant opportunities to a broad range of organizations and individuals that provide arts and cultural activities at the local level.
• Produced print and online publications featuring the Nevada’s artists and cultures for public distribution. (These include full-color Gallery Guides for each NTI traveling exhibition, the Family Flowers/Flores Familiares exhibit in Las Vegas, and the updated Enduring Traditions: The Culture and Heritage of Lake Tahoe, Nevada, Driving and Walking Tour 72-page guidebook.)
• Provided information and assistance to NV150.
• Increased print and social media presence.
• Partnered with local and national groups to present unique opportunities, including the StoryBox Project to promote the power of storytelling, and celebrates storytellers.
• Provided images of Native American culture and western heritage from the Nevada Folklife Archives for the State of Nevada’s 2011 Comprehensive Annual Financial Report.

CRITICAL ISSUE 2: Arts Learning
A critical component in any model of education, the arts enhance the learning experience for all Nevadans. The goal to improve Nevada’s educational systems is shared by virtually everyone, as is the desire for Nevadans to be professionally, personally and socially productive citizens. The challenge is two-fold: to communicate the role of the arts in achieving both, and to expand the availability and quality of arts education and engagement experiences along the learning continuum.

GOALS
• Build a network of educators, teaching artists, and cultural organizations to create innovative and quality arts learning opportunities for all ages
• Strengthen the statewide advocacy movement to nurture political, educational, cultural and community leaders to advocate on behalf of arts education for all children living in Nevada
• Provide consistent and compelling documentation about the critical need for arts education to Nevada’s policy makers and its citizens

STRATEGIES/Actions Taken
• Maintained Poetry Out Loud as a statewide program available to high school-aged students in rural counties by securing outside funding (FY13: 40 schools, 2,600 students)
• Increased student participation in the arts by creating Powering up Poetry: Poets in Residence workshops for students in rural communities, and SPARK!, a poetry writing and recitation competition for Clark County high school students culminating at the Vegas Valley Book Festival.
• Maintained grant funding and program services for schools and arts educators to support professional development and projects.
• Increased the number of arts education programs offered by arts organizations across the state through the creation of Arts Learning Component funding.
• Distributed NAC publications to schools and organizations on creating artist residencies, fine arts standards and program evaluations.
• Developed marketing strategies to promote the sales of the Arts License Plate to support NAC and VSA arts of Nevada grants and statewide programs for preK-12 arts learning.
• Partnered with KNPB to produce a half-hour television special of the 2013 Nevada Poetry Out Loud State Finals, which is also featured on the station’s website.
• Initiated a review of arts-discipline specific classes provided to K-12 students across Nevada in cooperation with the Nevada Department of Education.
• Encouraged schools to use artists in short-term residencies by creating the streamlined Artist Residency Express grant.
• Maintain quality grant panels to provide educators and schools an impartial environment in which competitive grant applications are evaluated for funding; and to gain insights to effective grant writing and program evaluation.

CRITICAL ISSUE 3: Artists
Artists enrich every element of Nevada’s quality of life, and the vigor of Nevada’s arts industry relies on the quality of artists living and working in the state. Nevada artists seek opportunities to connect with a larger network in which enhanced visibility and career development enable them to cope with working and living conditions that include isolation, lack of public acknowledgement and insufficient financial support.

GOALS
• A strong well-supported diverse community of artists that is recognized for exceptional and innovative work
• Enhanced services to individual artists in both business and career development through collaborations, partnerships and the development of new sources of funding
• Engagement of artists of all disciplines in planning and programming for educational, community and cultural initiatives

STRATEGIES/Actions Taken

• Maintained grant funding for artists through Artist Fellowships, Folklife Apprenticeships, Jackpot and Professional Development grant categories.
• Use existing NAC programs as opportunities to support and promote Nevada artists. (These include the Nevada Touring Initiative; Poetry Out Loud; folk, traditional and contemporary artist lecture-demonstrations and residencies; conferences and convenings; and various award ceremonies.)
• Developed new programs and initiatives to demonstrate the breadth Nevada’s artistic community. (These include Nevada Stories, an online video series featuring Nevada’s folk and traditional artists and cultural organizations; and The Work of Art lecture/demonstration series at the Nevada State Legislature.)
• Maintained Office Exhibition Series and Legislative Exhibitions Series spotlighting Nevada visual artists, and associated receptions and artist talks for the public.
• Published The Handbook for Nevada Folk and Traditional Artists and presented workshop on the same topic in Las Vegas
• Recognized artists through Governor’s Arts Awards and Nevada Heritage Awards.
• Established an Artist Profiles section on the Arts4Nevada.org website.
• Provided timely opportunity e-blasts to artists of all genres throughout the state.
• Marketed artists featured in NAC exhibitions to the general public and legislative community through mailers, postcards and calendars
• Expanded Folklife Education Initiative to provide free public programs, workshops, etc. by folk and traditional artists to museums, interpretive centers, nonprofit organizations, festivals as well as to schools throughout the state
• Focused on Nevada artists in Nevada Touring Initiative’s traveling exhibitions from 2010-2013. (These include 22 folk and traditional artists in One Is Silver, the Other Is Gold: Celebrating 25 Years of Nevada Folklife Apprenticeships; 35 artists working in two- and three-dimensional art forms in Wally’s World: The Loneliest Art Collection in Nevada; 16 printmakers in Geographical Divides: Finding Common Ground; and photographs by Erik Lauritzen (1953–2007) in Stop the Car, Dad!, by Nolan Preece in Great Basin Exteriors: A Photographic Survey, and by Geoffrey Nelson in A Tribe of Artists: Costumes and Culture at Burning Man.)
• Maintain quality grant panels to provide artists an impartial environment in which competitive grant applications are evaluated for funding; and to gain insights to effective grant writing and program evaluation.
• Facilitated the performances of Las Vegan Mario Gonzalez, Paraguayan harpist, in at the Homegrown Concert Series, and of Pyramid Lake Paiute elder Ralph Burns, a National Endowment for the Arts National Heritage Fellowship, at the Lisner Auditorium, both in Washington, DC.
CRITICAL ISSUE 4: Cultural Organizations

The stability of Nevada’s arts and cultural institutions is not just desirable, it is necessary. Investment in the state’s arts industry is not a luxury, nor has it ever been excessive. It is essential for the state’s educational, economic and social well-being. From developing local wealth to enhancing Nevada’s image, nationally and internationally, Nevada’s nonprofit arts industry is a consequential business that benefits us all. And it is a reflection of our own unique cultural and history.

GOALS
- A strong well-supported diverse creative industry that is recognized for exceptional and innovative work
- Increased support of and funding for Nevada's cultural infrastructure, including nonprofit organizations, public institutions and entrepreneurial ventures
- Cultural service providers that provide rich experiences for residents and visitors that are diverse and inclusionary

STRATEGIES/Actions Taken
- Maintained grant funding to arts organizations across the state for general operations, projects and initiatives and professional development of paid and unpaid staff and board members.
- Distributed $250,500 in federal stimulus funding to 39 arts organizations for staff positions in FY2010.
- Maintained a level of services and resources to Nevada arts organizations so that they may able to offer arts experiences to all persons.
- Streamlined grant application process for organizations.
- Incorporated Arts Learning funding in the Partners in Excellence grant category to support existing arts education programs of grantees, and encourage those without to add an arts education/learning program to their portfolio of services.
- Maintained OASIS statewide arts conference through 2011 by securing outside funding.
- Offered workshops across the state and through webinars on Grants Online™, grants management, grant and proposal writing, and other topics.
- Disseminated press releases featuring grant recipients.
- Encouraged nonprofit organizations to use artists in short-term residencies by creating the streamlined Artist Residency Express grant.
- Maintain quality grant panels to provide arts organizations an impartial environment in which competitive grant applications are evaluated for funding; and to gain insights to effective grant writing and program evaluation.

CRITICAL ISSUE 5: Community Building

Communities that flourish recognize their own identity, culture, traditional art forms and the value of working together at a local level. The arts are at the heart of the community development process and elevating the relevance and visibility of the arts in communities large and small leads to the overall sustainability of Nevada's arts industries. As Robert Gard wrote in 1969, “One of the first principles of community arts councils should be the assumption that they are and should be an instrument of social change affecting change in both the arts and community life in general...they should be experimental...in order to develop a community of creative abundance.”
GOALS
- Dynamic communities with a sense of place, an engaged citizenry and vibrant quality of life
- Increased local based arts and cultural programming through statewide collaboration and communication
- Purposeful relationship between the creative industry and those sharing a common interest in community development

STRATEGIES/Actions Taken
- Maintained grant funding that promotes and supports collaborative arts projects between communities, and within communities.
- Maintained grant funding to support arts-centric programs presented by community based and non-arts nonprofit organizations.
- Use NAC outreach programming, including exhibitions, lecture-demonstrations, residencies, award ceremonies, as an opportunity to increase local arts engagement activities.
- Identified and maintained partnerships with funders, organizations and groups outside the arts to enhance agency’s reach into the community, such as Healthy Coalitions of Storey and Lyon Counties, Renown Medical Foundation, Nevada Humanities, Barrick Mining and NV Energy.
- Maintained Arts @ the Heart Convening, focusing on community action planning, collaboration, local leadership engagement and training.
- Initiated Community Catalysts Network to “anchor” community based programming, promote collaboration and communications; and support local arts agencies and partnerships with tourism and business sectors.
- Host quarterly Community Catalysts Network conference calls and meetings.
- Sponsored extended artist residencies in Winnemucca and Elko with the Utah Repertory Dance Theatre, supported by Barrick Gold of North America.
- Sponsored the creation of ARTslam presentations by a dozen local arts and community groups, now featured on the NAC website.
- Established an ongoing partnership with Renown Health Foundation to advance the role of the arts in wellness and healing programs.
- Worked with community and political leaders to begin restoration of NAC budget.
- Encouraged nonprofit organizations to use artists in short-term residencies by creating the streamlined Artist Residency Express grant.
- Assisted with new funding stream for public art in Clark County, and with plans for a Nevada Veteran’s Memorial in Carson City.
- Promoting cultural tourism plan/initiatives for communities and arts organizations through shared activities with Nevada Commission on Tourism and presentation of cultural tourism specialists

CRITICAL ISSUE 6: Advocacy and Communications
Webster’s Dictionary defines advocacy as “the act of speaking, writing or acting in support of something or someone.” Advocacy is educating neighbors, co-workers, elected officials and the general public about an issue of importance. Every discussion with an individual or a group about the value of the arts or arts education is public advocacy. Every voice matters. Many voices speaking on an issue of mutual concern can and will make a difference. Communication systems and advocacy strategies go hand in hand. Sharing, understanding and using information is part of our daily lives, and is an absolute necessity to advocate clearly and successfully on behalf of the arts, public funding for the arts, and arts education for all.
GOALS
 Build political clout in support of arts and arts education at the local and state levels
 Unify and strengthen the statewide advocacy movement and nurture leadership to advocate on behalf of increased funding for the creative industry
 Position the Nevada Arts Council as the clearinghouse for information, communications and professional development

STRATEGIES/Actions Taken
• Maintained the Arts4Nevada.org partnership for online presence as a statewide advocacy action and training center for staff and board members of arts organizations, artists, educators, elected officials and members of the public.
• Developed online candidate survey and profiles on A4N website for three election cycles.
• Invested in strategic memberships and partnerships with local associations related to the arts, funding, and the nonprofit sector such as: Nevada Alliance of Nonprofits, Nevada Museum Association, Reno Arts Consortium, CCACC, SNAC, local chambers of commerce and convention and visitor bureaus, Nevada Indian Commission.
• Expanded NAC website resources.
• Continued distribution of NAN, e-blasts.
• Increased marketing through press releases of NAC and other arts events.
• Organized arts advocacy events including grasstops/grassroots day with legislators, and supported local advocacy efforts.
• Developed and maintained Community Catalyst Network and quarterly meetings.
• Supported Nevada Arts Advocates Arts Day.
• Facilitated quarterly Nevada Presenters Network and listserv.
• Broadened scope of resources available on the NAC website.
• Offered workshops across the state and through webinars on Grants Online, grants management, grant and proposal writing, and other topics.
• Facilitated the National Association of Counties’ Arts Advocacy Award 2011 for NAC Board Chair at national conference and awards dinner in Reno.
• Created the “Stand up for the Arts” campaign and PSA for broadcast media.
• Manage FB pages for the NAC, Stand Up for the Arts and Poetry Out Loud.
• Maintain memberships in national and regional networks such as National Assembly of Arts Agencies, Western States Arts Federation, Grantmakers in the Arts, Americans for the Arts Northwest Presenters to broaden and deepen the agency’s experts; inform agency policy and gain access to resources for our constituents.

The following are some areas that we did not work on directly, though may have addressed by acting in response to queries or requests from the field. If there are ways to describe these for the report, please note in your responses. Thanks.

• supported arts enterprise activities in Reno
• agency wide approach to professional development program
• strategy to promote statewide initiatives beyond A4N and NAN
• strategy to address the barriers to public access
• agency wide effort to develop local funding opportunities and facility development – acted in response to queries
• focus on access
• next generation of leaders
• continuation of arts ed statewide dialogue – what partnerships?

*No capacity building initiatives through the Nevada Cultural Trust*