



THE ARTS CENTER OF THE CAPITAL REGION

265 River Street | Troy, NY 12180
artscenteronline.org | (518) 273-0552

CULTURAL PLAN 2015/2016 (Last revision 8/25/15)

OVERVIEW

The Cultural Plan at The Arts Center of the Capital Region reflects our mission as the region’s preeminent proponent of the arts and creative education, expression, and appreciation; engaging people in the creative process. Since 1978 The Arts Center of the Capital Region has proudly supported its mission and the needs of artists and arts organizations in the region through the administration of the New York State Decentralization re-grant program. As a DEC re-grant site, The Arts Center brings together the artistic diversity of the core tri-county Capital Region of New York, Albany, Schenectady and Rensselaer counties, and facilitates their outreach and impact throughout the region.

Moving forward, we look to foster even more growth, increasing the amount of grant applications, and defining a need for greater funding for this densely populated region. The latest Decentralization Re-Grant cycle in the Capital Region has shown a growth in interest of 165%, while the final number of applications submitted was up by 90%, which clearly reflects a need for more funding. The three counties in this region have shown slow steady growth, as opposed to the stagnation or decrease in populations in the surrounding counties.

Population	Albany	Schenectady	Rensselaer
2010	304,204	154,727	159,429
2013	306,945	155,333	159,918

Based upon U.S. Census data

The increase of growth in the region’s creative economy is also strong, as was shown in “Leveraging Regional Assets for A Vibrant Future,” the new study from the Regional Alliance for a Creative Economy, which points out that, “The Capital Region has the second highest concentration of creative jobs amongst metropolitan regions of similar size” (p. 4). The study also found that urban centers in the region are under a period of revitalization and are creating communities specifically appealing to young artists (p. 13). All of this creative growth strengthens the need for The Arts Center to promote its place in the region as a hub of creative activity and a resource to artists and arts organizations in the community.

The following are the goals of The Arts Center of the Capital Region towards strengthening our impact on artists and arts organizations in the Capital Region by increasing their impact and exposure to the Capital Region community through the Decentralization Re-grant program and other initiatives.



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GOAL #1: Aid struggling, new, small and emerging arts & cultural organizations in their growth.

ACTION STEPS:

- Give priority funding to new and emerging arts & cultural organizations who comply with DEC guidelines.
- Increase marketing efforts to spread the word about available funding.
- Promote programming of funded arts and cultural organizations to grow their audience and raise awareness for the grant program.
- Find funding to create free professional development programs geared towards arts organizations.

WISH LIST

- *Host meet-ups and workshops to help facilitate collaboration and greater awareness of arts and arts organizations.*
- *Find funding for capital expenditures that support long term growth.*
- *Work directly with organizations to develop a directed plan for growth.*

GOAL #2: Support artists and programs of high quality and creative scope.

ACTION STEPS:

- Prioritize funding for all grants that present programs and artists of high artistic merit, and uniquely creative scope.
- Reward organizations and artists who strive for excellence and creative growth through programs which reflect upon their past, while exhibiting artistic growth into the future.
- Eliminate funding for organizations who show little or no creative growth from year to year.
- Foster the administrative growth of artists and arts and cultural organizations who are not funded due to mistakes or deficiencies in their application process in order to help them understand how to succeed and grow in the next grant cycle.
- Host a pre-application “showcase” of previously funded projects to be shown to potential applicants: video, photos, interviews, impact statements, etc.
- Cultivate mentoring relationships with artists and organizations.
- Set up a rubric and guidelines of expectations so that artists and organizations know what qualifies as “high artistic merit”.

WISH LIST

- *Create a list of local/regional artists and their particular talents.*
- *Form partnerships/alliances with area colleges (with high caliber arts departments) for connections with students/alumni/supporters.*



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GOAL #3: Promote programs and artists with the strongest community impact.

ACTION STEPS:

- Prioritize funding to programs and artists that involve the community in the creative process in an active and not passive role.
- Educate the prospective regrantees as to what a strong, impactful artistic process looks like.
- Provide training/resources to teach artists how to achieve/measure impact.
- Create an objective rubric defining and measuring “community impact”.
- Suggest the use of end of project surveys for the audiences to provide stats for “community impact”.
- Encourage artists and organizations to host talkbacks, use interactive approaches and outreach to measure community impact.
- Facilitate the presentation of grantee programs and work that exemplifies this community component.

WISH LIST

- *Approach municipalities/community agencies to identify best areas for collaboration, where it would be most impactful and visible.*
- *Form an advisory panel with representatives from different regions/neighborhoods so they can share info about their specific needs.*

GOAL #4: Increase arts programs and artists in the rural areas and culturally diverse pockets of our region. (comment: since we have made a big deal about population growth in the region, is there a sense if rural areas are growing, or if growth is primarily in urban areas – just a question?)

ACTION STEPS:

- Prioritize funding for rural areas of our region.
- Prioritize funding for arts programs that express a community’s traditions, culture, and heritage.
- Locate organizations in these areas that can fiscally sponsor or be the applicant organization for artists interested in offering programs in their region or work with their population.
- Facilitate the relationship between artists and schools in these regions to expand arts in education in these areas.
- Locate and educate culturally diverse artists in these areas so they will apply for funding.
- Support programs that build on and challenges community traditions.
- Focus on “street level” marketing in rural areas.
- Increase focus on marketing in churches in rural and underserved areas.

Comment: what specific steps will be take to reach culturally diverse artists and arts orgs (not just rural, but artists of different cultures that represent the region’s population)



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WISH LIST

- *Observe and support grassroots community & cultural centers; hold local, affordable events relevant to the area.*
- *Set up artist's showcases in various locations, public buildings or even at farmer's market.*
- *Provide transportation either for artists or community members → around the needs of collaborative projects/workshops/shows, etc.*
- *Organize funding and partnership program for "touring" classes, exhibitions, etc.*

GOAL #5: Promote the creative intersection of art and technology.

ACTION STEPS:

- Publicize grant program funding at organizations/higher education institutions where artists who are interested in tech art are. (*RPI, Sage, Hudson Valley, UAlbany, Union*).
- Promote our summer artist in residence who is working at this intersection and facilitate community involvement.
- Hold an artist "working collaborative event" in conjunction with the Tech Valley Center of Gravity to promote work that integrates technology and art.
- Identify subject matter experts in the area of arts/technology to serve as a resource in brainstorming new art/tech ideas or programs.

WISH LIST

- *Compile listing of special funding for art/technology based projects → either new vs. existing grant sources.*
- *Provide match-up service for non-techie artists and techies, such as a online project directory with descriptions, contact info & "help wanted" details.*

GOAL #6: Facilitate more artist-driven projects and partnerships.

ACTION STEPS:

- Create networking opportunities for artists to encourage discussion of creative ideas and program development.
- Increase awareness of re-grant program and funding available at artist cooperatives and work/live spaces.
- Use the Artist in Residence program to educate the community about opportunities for Individual artists and artists collaborative.
- Publicize program fully at all Nuts and Bolts artist seminars, asking the Instructor to bring attention to the opportunity and hand out information.
- Use The Arts Center's artist instructor email list to disseminate information to the target group.
- Increase awareness of Arts Center resources.



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WISH LIST

- *Institute mini-grants artists (~\$500) for the purpose of putting together and solidifying coherent presentation of a project, to provide proof of concept.*
- *Create a public, online forum for artists.*

GOAL #7: Increase Arts in Education projects throughout the region.

ACTION STEPS:

- Increase outreach and education of the program to school administration, teachers and PTA/booster organizations.
- Find not-for profits affiliated with schools to assist the artist-driven Arts in Education projects, and facilitate carry through.
- Send communication to school administration during the summer to educate them on the possibilities of funding for their school.
- Highly market the successful projects in the schools in order to bring awareness of the program.
- Facilitate a meeting with/questionnaire for successful Arts in Education artists to roundtable difficulties and roadblocks with in the process and completion of projects.
- Help artists/arts organizations to navigate school programming channels.

WISH LIST

- *Provide “how-to’s” and benefits information to schools about Art in Ed. programs with visiting artists.*
- *Host regular in-house activities for students inside arts organizations to promote a sense of ownership.*
- *Offer arts/arts organizations some training in Common Core and curriculum needs.*
- *Collaborate with youth in neighborhoods to be cultural demographers of their neighborhoods.*
- *Place artist’s events (concerts, exhibitions, painting and drawing demos, etc) in public or private schools in the region.*

GOAL #8: Foster the appreciation of artists and arts organizations while connecting the artist community as a whole.

ACTION STEPS:

- Promote funded DEC activities through active calendar of events posted on our website.
- Advertise DEC events/programs through our online newsletter and feature on webpage.
- Feature DEC funded programs of high quality at The Arts Center when possible.
- Host an artist collaborative community event (See Goal#5).
- Create stronger ties with media.
- Feature projects that connect artists with each other and organizations.
- Support facilities that can lend space to artists for exhibitions.



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WISH LIST

- *Lend public spaces to artists for exhibitions.*
- *Provide artists with facilities to host low cost or free events that are open to the public.*
- *Develop advertising dollars - for arts events, shows → partner with local media → can be part of a matching sponsorship program with area business.*
- *Workshops/skill share for artists.*
- *Hold community forums for audience to reach out on what they want to see or do artistically.*

GOAL #9: Assist with the business acumen and marketing needs of individual artists and small arts organizations.

ACTION STEPS:

- Continue the partnership with the Community Loan Fund to host successful “Nuts and Bolts” free workshops for artists.
- Find funding and create an intensive program to assist a core group of artists and small arts organizations in their self marketing skills and tools to promote financial independence.
 - **Funding found from Key Bank for a program titled “Nuts & Bolts & Beyond”**
- Announce news on website(s) and inform artists in the region.
- Create community calendar for artists and organizations, begin with grant applicant (or recipient) projects.

WISH LIST

- *Allow artists to have a blog page that is within The Arts Center’s website*
- *Connect artists/arts organizations with professional markets (a la ABC in NY).*
- *Utilize/create network of local printers, publishers, graphic artists, web design, radio/TV, etc. as artist support. Offer discounts and incentives along with cross-marketing.*

GOAL #10: Refocus outreach in Schenectady County to attract and support new artists and arts organizations.

ACTION STEPS:

- Hold more informational seminars in Schenectady County.
- Select seminar locations in diverse pockets and rural libraries.
- Use known arts organization in Schenectady as ambassadors for the program (Proctors, SCCC, Schenectady Historical Society, etc).
- Strategically place promotional materials in Schenectady County location.
- Target outreach and connect to identify artists that specialize in arts/culture on the African/Latino/Caribbean/Guyanese diasporas.
- Conduct or support study of opportunity areas within Schenectady that can support emerging visual/performance art (facilities that can be developed into arts spaces).



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- Connect with Schenectady Gazette → story/article/spread in the paper.
- Identify roles previously filled/associated with the former Albany/Schenectady league of Arts. Many people need to know that the “Arts Center in Troy” is their go-to resource.

WISH LIST

- *In-person meetings (regular) perhaps as well as “office hours” at the Chamber or Proctors may help as well for a successful outreach back to the community. Outreach to add Schenectady-based artists directly to The Arts Center email list.*

GOAL #11: Create and Implement a Cultural Map of our tri-county region.

ACTION STEPS: *Applying for a REDC grant for this*

- Facilitate the research and documentation necessary by acquiring an appropriate intern to undergo the project.
- Locate and contact sources to assist in the community research.
- Create a voluntary questionnaire for The Arts Center constituencies for information gathering and send via constant contact.

IDEAS FOR GATHERING AND IMPLEMENTATION

- *Fold into an app/google.*
- *On map have a link to organization websites.*
- *Make the map available in schools, libraries, galleries, theaters, etc.*
- *Host social activities - parties - to bring artists of all kinds together, can be movable to various arts locations on map (could be incorporated into the take back the night programs in the tri-county cities) .*
- *Utilize youth to be cultural demographers of the neighborhood, ensure better spread of centers.*

GOAL #12: Insure that the Cultural Plan is a vital, living document which reflects activity and goals for the current time period and the Institution as a whole.

ACTION STEPS:

- Review the cultural plan each trimester, documenting growth, successes and difficulties.
- Continually update with current actions taken.
- Incorporate a reflection of the cultural plan into The Arts Center’s new Strategic plan.
- Find symmetries between the report on the Capital Region’s Creative Economy and The Arts Center’s mission and Cultural Plan, and reflect how we are supporting the region’s creative economy.
- Make Cultural plan available online and/or through social media outlets that reinforce connectivity and visibility.

WISH LIST

- *Google doc for commenting and to encourage feedback and dialogue on goals.*



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