The Arts Center of the Capital Region formed as the Rensselaer County Center for the Arts in 1962, and by invitation from the New York State Council on the Arts, became the Decentralization Regrant Site for Albany, Rensselaer and Schenectady Counties in 1978. The Arts Center is proud to be the region’s preeminent proponent of the arts, creative education and expression and works to nurture and facilitate artistic diversity, outreach and impact through the Capital Region.

We strive to foster growth in the artistic community by increasing the quality and quantity of grant applications. Interest has grown, slowly, but steadily, through 2014 and has stabilized over the last five years (averaging 67 applications/year). Additionally, in 2020 we were able to continue the success balance funding between all three represented counties through our grant programs with a 6% differential between most- and least-funded regions.

A 2013 study from the Regional Alliance for a Creative Economy - ‘Leveraging Regional Assets for a Vibrant Creative Economy’ - shows that “the Capital Region has the second highest concentration of creative jobs amongst metropolitan regions of similar size.” 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. This creative growth provides the impetus for The Arts Center to solidify its place in the region as a hub of artistic activity and a resource to artists and arts organizations in the community.

COVID 19 has dramatically impacted the creative field, within this current state of closures and pending re-openings at the Arts Center, there are a vast amount of unknown outcomes to the state of the arts. Moving forward, the Arts Center will be focusing on a one year plan to enact new approaches towards enriching our artistic community. Throughout this period, the Arts Center will survey the needs of the community in order to provide the necessary resources in areas most needed within the artistic realm.

The following are the goals set forth by The Arts Center to strengthen the Capital Region by increasing impact and exposure to the community through the Decentralization Regrant program and other initiatives.
GOAL #1: Foster the connectivity and appreciation of artists and arts organizations in our region

Tasks In Progress

● Advertising DEC events/programs through our online newsletter every-other-month and featuring them on webpage/social media as well as promoting funded activities through a calendar of events posted on our [website](#).
● DEC events/program organizers provide updates in three segments throughout the grant cycle. This consists of pre-project planning updates, project execution updates, and post project updates. This visual/written information is then promoted through the Arts Center online outlets to share with the local community.
● Developing stronger ties with local media outlets
  ○ Working with local radio/television stations, including WAMC and SACC My4TV, to promote artist resources and programming
● Lending public spaces to artists for exhibitions for free or at low cost for public events
  ○ Faculty/Student Gallery for 1-month short-run exhibits
  ○ Utilization of Black Box Theater for productions during Troy Night Out 11 nights/year
  ○ Work to find other organizations that offer their space to artists at little or no cost
● Holding community “State of the Arts” forums for community members, artists and arts administrators to provide feedback about the art they want to do or see

● Create online resource map to foster the needs of artists and arts organizations
● Public Art
  ○ Continuation of projects in Troy
  ○ Continue to host State of the Arts forums throughout Capital Region

FY 21-22 Goals

● COVID-19
  ○ Implement “postpone, reschedule, rethink” for all current grant projects
  ○ Flexibility in project scope, execution, and date of completion
  ○ Provide feedback and resources for grant projects to reimagine how they can impact their community under new restrictions within New York State

GOAL #2: Connect with emerging, underrepresented and rural artists and arts agencies

Tasks In Progress

● Give priority funding to new and emerging arts + cultural organizations
  ○ Implemented through grant and panel guidelines
  ○ Implemented a 1-year grace period after 3 sequential cycles of approved applications to allow for new programs
● Provide State of the Arts forums for underrepresented artists + cultural organizations
  ○ Implement in-person/virtual State of the Art forums specifically for underserved areas to attend
  ○ Virtual sessions will enable easy access to information without travel
  ○ Collaborate with well served organizations in underserved areas to host forums for underrepresented artists and organizations

● Increase marketing efforts throughout all 3 represented counties with focus on addressing underserved rural areas and Schenectady County
  ○ Continued improvement of website/online presence
  ○ Digital updates via PDF flyers, newsletters, and online event information provided to libraries, churches, esp. In rural areas

FY 21-22 Goals

● Research and provide resources in how to connect digitally with underserved areas due to COVID-19
  ○ Utilization of online interface software
  ○ Provide training in new digital platforms

● Enhance the State of the Arts forums to focus on topics such as diversity within the arts and provide sessions to include the underserved arts communities, artists, and organizations
● Develop and implement virtual forums if in-person sessions are no longer allowed due to COVID

GOAL #3: Ensure art and artists’ impact on our community

Tasks In Progress

● Prioritizing funding to programs and artists that involve the community in the creative process
  ○ Highlighted in grant and panel guidelines
● Provide training/resources to teach artists how to achieve/measure impact, utilize project surveys, host talkbacks and use interactive approaches
  ○ Implemented in Artist Initiative Workshops and Critical Forum Program
● Transition current programs into online platform due to COVID-19
  ○ Enables outreach to be accessible to the community on a larger scale

FY 21-22 Goals

● Provide the Arts Center facility as an active physical resource for grantees to impact the community
  ○ Access to 13 studios, black box theater, gallery, and event space
● Provide resources for programs to broaden their audience via public access outlets and online video presence
**GOAL #4: Encourage creative integration of art projects within area school systems**

**Tasks In Progress**

- Foster online access and enrichment for schools
- Provide resources for local school districts to continue enrichment through the arts
- Increase outreach and education of the program to school administration, teachers and PTA/booster organizations
  - Communicate through programs already in place on premises including Troy School District’s 21st Century, ARC Community Inclusion Project, CEO Programs, etc.
  - Contact school administration during the summer to educate them regarding funding possibilities and past successful programming
    - Utilize artists currently involved in DEC programs to speak first-hand on challenges and successes
  - Facilitate a meeting with Q&A for successful Arts Education artists to roundtable difficulties and roadblocks within the process
    - Dovetail with Art of Teaching program
  - Troy Cultural Alliance program for student interns in collaboration with Troy High School

**FY 21-22 Goals**

- With physical locations of schools being closed due to COVID-19, a re envisioning of programs must occur to ensure the continuation of current collaborations with school districts

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**GOAL #5: Strengthen Artist Stability**

**Tasks In Progress**

- Increase marketing/presence of funding opportunities in cooperatives/work-live spaces and build mailing lists - be sure to keep in touch and up to date
- Find funding to continue free professional development programs for artists and organizations
  - Business of Art Workshops are offered monthly in cooperation with the Community Loan Fund
  - Visual Arts Program - Art of Teaching
  - Present at area organizations including Albany Barn and ACE (now Center for Economic Growth) Symposium and networking events
- Offering member discounts and incentives as well as cross-marketing to artists and local businesses through Try Troy program

**FY 21-22 Goals**

- Increase Artist Training initiatives for those impacted by COVID-19
  - Online program/event training