

**OHIO ARTS COUNCIL  
PROGRAMS AND PUBLIC POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING  
APRIL 8, 2013**

The meeting was called to order by Committee Chair Sharon Howard at 10:10 a.m. at the Ohio Arts Council office on the 33<sup>rd</sup> floor of the Rhodes State Office Tower, Columbus. The Programs and Public Policy Committee members in attendance were: Karen Bell, Louisa Celebrezze, Sara Jane DeHoff, Monica Kridler, Jeff Rich and Ginger Warner. Also present was OAC board member Sara Vance Waddell; Legislative Aide Damien Hardy for Senator Eric Kearney; and Legislative Aide Goran Babic for Senator Gayle Manning. OAC staff members in attendance were: Julie Henahan, Mary Campbell-Zopf, Karine Aswad, Dia Foley, Dan Katona, Jim Szekacs and Elizabeth Weinstein.

**Simplification of OAC Grant Applications & Reporting**

Executive Director Julie Henahan reported that in the summer of 2009, the OAC board and staff systematically rethought its business model in response to ongoing state budget reductions and subsequent layoffs of staff during a special board meeting. A significant part of that process was to develop a series of strategies to streamline existing grant application and reporting processes. Since 2009, improvements in the grant-making process have been informed by the annual OAC Constituent Satisfaction Survey, three-party grant program evaluations and the agency's 2011-2013 strategic plan.

Listed below are highlights of major changes:

- In 2010 and 2011, the OAC contracted with Dr. Craig Dreeszen of Dreeszen and Associates, to conduct an evaluation of its Arts Learning grant program—Artist Express, Artist in Residence (AIR) and Arts Partnership (AP). The OAC staff enacted a number of significant changes to streamline these programs:
  - Grantees may now apply for two-year grants in AIR and AP during the first year of the new biennium.
  - AIR review criteria were reduced from 15 to 9; the number of application questions remained the same but the wording of the questions was simplified.
  - AP review criteria were reduced from 24 to 17; application questions were reduced from 10 to 6 with a much stronger emphasis on the results of the learning experience, as documented through credible evaluation methods. Application questions were also simplified.
- The agency revised its FY2012-2013 grant guidelines to allow for more multi-year grants in Arts Access and Sustainability. Longer grant cycles will reduce constituents' reporting burden and the agency's administrative workload and costs associated with processing applications and conducting panel reviews.
- The FY2014-2015 grant guidelines introduced a four-year grant cycle for Sustainability. This has been a popular change in our guidelines. Annual updates and reporting are still required.
- Beginning in January 2013, Dr. Craig Dreeszen, in conjunction with OAC board and staff, is conducting an evaluation of the Artists with Disabilities Access Program (ADAP). Dr. Dreeszen is using an evaluation protocol similar to the one used for the evaluation of the Arts Learning grant programs. One important aim of the ADAP evaluation is to find ways to simplify both the application and reporting process.

- In the last quarter of 2013, the Arts Access program will be evaluated by Dr. Dreeszen, using the same protocol as described above. Additionally, the introduction of the new online grants system next year will also help simplify the application and reporting process for the Arts Access program, which provides operating support to arts organizations that have annual budgets under \$30,000.
- To address constituent feedback about the Arts Access program, staff will seek to reduce the reporting burden for applying organizations, almost all of which are volunteer-run.

Committee member Sara Jane DeHoff stated that reducing the application and reporting burden for applicants is important for all OAC programs. She added that recently she worked with an organization on an application and discovered that the application form was difficult to complete. Ms. DeHoff believes that smaller Northwest arts and cultural organizations are no longer applying because they have a smaller number of staff and do not have enough time to complete an application.

Committee member Karen Bell interjected that she is happy that the OAC is streamlining its programs. These accomplishments are a great example of how the board has had an effect on agency work. Ms. Bell inquired about the additional requirements that the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) is going to be collecting and how they are going to change data collection and analysis if the OAC is simplifying its program applications and reporting requirements. Ms. Henahan responded that the NEA has decided to table their new data gathering and reporting requirements tied to their performance measurements standards. She added that one of the things that the OAC staff is going to be looking at closely, during the development of the new online grants management system, is reducing the redundancy between our application and what is asked of our constituents and what the Cultural Data Project (CDP) asks of the same constituents. Ms. Bell inquired whether the OAC is working with the regional state arts agencies through this process. Ms. Henahan responded, yes, some states in the Midwest region are using CDP and have been helpful through this process.

Ms. Henahan paused her presentation when Board Chair and committee member Jeff Rich asked Dan Katona, research and program development director, to briefly update the committee on the agency's transition to a new online grants management system. Mr. Katona reported that the transition process is on track per the timeline that was discussed with the OAC board during previous meetings. Smart Simple, one of the two vendors that offer products closely aligned with agency needs, has become the leading choice. Several questions from the OAC and the Department of Administrative Services Office of Information Technology have been posed and addressed by Smart Simple. Security questions and privacy issues have been addressed successfully. The OAC staff will participate in a live demo, hosted by Smart Simple, next week, which will allow a closer assessment of functionality. Mr. Rich inquired if the new system will be implemented in the fall. Mr. Katona said he thought so.

Ms. Henahan continued her report by adding that the agency anticipates addressing the following areas in the Arts Access program:

- Reduce overall amount of data required for a complete and competitive application (including applicant background data, proposal narrative, budget materials, support materials, etc.)
- Simplify application instructions and evaluation criteria, wherever possible

- Move to online submission of support materials
- Improve notification process alerting potential applicants to deadlines, required materials and other opportunities

### **Arts Ambassadors Materials**

Deputy Director Mary Campbell-Zopf directed the members' attention to the Arts Ambassador materials found in the Council Book. She reviewed that the board might already be familiar with this material since they were used during the last budget process. There is a variety of examples and tips for good communication with authorizers, i.e., legislators, policy-makers, etc. Ms. Campbell-Zopf walked the members through the documents: Web Resources, Ten Easy Steps to Smarter Communication, Mistakes to Avoid, Op Eds, and 2010-2013 OAC Accomplishments. Updates have been made to the agency Fact Sheet and Highlights as well. This material is available on the *Making the Case* page on the agency's website and available to all constituents.

### **OAC Accomplishments 2010-2013**

Ms. Campbell-Zopf presented the Accomplishment Overview for the last three years. This work could not have been achieved without the participation of many of the current OAC board members. This planning process was the most publicly inclusive strategic planning process in the history of the agency. We can all share in the sense of accomplishment, especially since during this time period the agency faced significant budget cuts. This work is a great example of what can be accomplished when a board works together with a clear policy direction and solid strategies. Below are a few of the highlights from her presentation.

- The OAC is regarded as one of the nation's leading state arts agencies. In the past cycles, the OAC has received the second-largest National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) Partnership Grant in the U.S.—\$1,023,600 (FY2010), \$1,141,600 (FY2011) and \$980,000 (FY2012).
- The OAC partners with Cityfolk, ThinkTV and the Ohio Humanities Council to increase public awareness of folk and traditional forms. This partnership sponsors the *Ohio Traditions* website to spotlight traditional artists and folk arts activities across the state. The OAC's NEA grant enabled the funding of website development and maintenance.
- The OAC's new Creative Economy grants are helping to create jobs and income, revitalize communities and downtowns, draw cultural tourists and strengthen livability.
- The OAC's Percent for Art program continues to impact communities large and small across the state.
- The OAC collaborates with a diverse array of partners to make the arts a vital part of public life, broaden access to the arts, and keep Ohio citizens informed about opportunities for engaging with the arts in their communities and throughout the state. It uses a variety of media and events to keep citizens informed and deepen their arts involvement.
- The new strategic plan placed greater emphasis on outcome evaluation in all grant programs. In response to this objective, the OAC contracted with Craig Dreeszen & Associates to evaluate all three of the OAC's Arts Learning grant programs—Artist Express, Artist in Residence and Arts Partnership. These rigorous evaluations found that the programs are working as intended to positively impact lifelong learning in the arts. The evaluations also determined that the programs could be strengthened through greater emphasis on program evaluation and learner assessment.

- Kelly Barsdate, chief program and planning officer of the National Assembly for State Arts Agencies (NASAA) in Washington, D.C., presented a national overview of policy trends affecting state arts agencies to the OAC board in January 2013. Included in this presentation was a briefing on the latest federal budget developments, as well as a review of special state-level policy innovations that state arts agencies are pursuing. The presentation was a kick-off to a series of policy discussions the OAC board will hold about Ohio's creative economy and how to support and promote it over the next two years.
- The OAC enabled five emerging arts and cultural leaders to attend the pre-conference sessions of the 2012 Americans for the Arts' *Emerging Leaders Conference* in San Antonio, Texas. Conference sessions addressed career planning, visioning and leadership development.
- The OAC supported three Ohio artists to attend the *2012 Alliance of Artists Communities Conference* in Kansas City, Missouri.
- In 2011, the executive directors from the OAC, the Indiana Arts Commission and the Michigan Council for Arts and Cultural Affairs partnered to present a free capacity-building workshop for arts organizations in their states. On April 18-19, 2013, the OAC, IAC and MCACA are sponsoring a joint colloquium—*Embracing Community Change Through the Arts*— at the DeBartolo Performing Arts Center of Notre Dame. The two-day colloquium will explore best practices on the first day and practical planning tools to advance diversity on the second.

Ms. Campbell-Zopf shared that she hopes the OAC board and constituents will use this information during their meetings with legislators. It is self evident how much work has occurred over the past few years, all of which was coordinated with the OAC board.

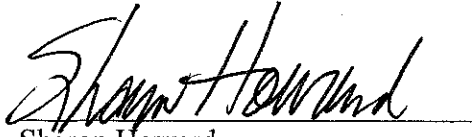
Ms. DeHoff stated that this is an incredible report and asked if the staff has printed it for distribution. Ms. Campbell-Zopf responded that the agency typically doesn't print documents but they are available in electronic form. Ms. DeHoff said she planned to print it to distribute as she meets with legislative members and Toledo leaders. She added that this is a great tool for the board to use. Ms. Henahan stated that this piece has been printed and included in the packets that she has taken to her meetings with legislators.

Ms. Howard inquired how the field can receive the Ten Easy Steps to Smarter Communication and Mistakes to Avoid that are included in the Council Book. Ms. Campbell-Zopf responded that this material will be emailed to several constituents who will be asked to serve as arts ambassadors. Staff will mail an electronic version of these documents to the OAC board members. Ms. Campbell-Zopf added that it is important to communicate the value of the arts and the impact on communities throughout the year and not only during the budget season.

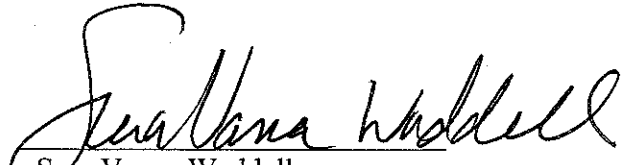
Approved: June 19, 2013

The meeting adjourned at 10:35 a.m.

*An audio recording of this session is available upon request.*



Sharon Howard  
Programs & Public Policy Committee  
Chair



Sara Vance Waddell  
OAC Board Secretary