



presents a report to the field

Fast Forward: Framing The Future

An Assessment of New Directions for the
New York State Arts Community 2005

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State of the Arts



NYSCA

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Alliance of New York State Arts Organizations FAST FORWARD: FRAMING THE FUTURE

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for the New York State Arts Community 2005

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Preface and Acknowledgements

Adventurous and passionate arts leaders are at the forefront of innovative community arts development in New York State. Their vision and “can do” attitude in the face of sometimes daunting odds is what helps drive change in their communities across the state.

Now, due to paradigm shifts spurred by technology, natural disasters, changing demographics, the economy, and 9/11, there is an imperative to consider new opportunities, to think outside the box, and move out of traditional comfort zones. It is clear that cultural organizations are part of an evolved ecosystem that requires a creative and analytical approach to planning, program delivery, and resource development.

First, it is critical to understand the statewide, regional and local issues at play. In response, the Alliance of New York State Arts Organizations has undertaken a comprehensive three part process in 2005 to understand the trends and the issues facing New York State’s cultural organizations. The results of an online needs assessment survey sent to 3,000 organizations were analyzed, 7 regional forums were convened and then followed by a state-wide think tank meeting in Glens Falls in September 2006.

This report documents and analyzes the process allowing us to determine the most relevant and effective services and resources needed to strengthen and build the capacity of cultural organizations. After all, producing and delivering effective programs and managing viable partnerships, requires healthy well-run organizations. This report gives us that platform.

It is certainly the right time to stare down the challenges we face with creative solutions and celebrate the fact that CHANGE BRINGS NEW OPPORTUNITIES.

For their support of the building blocks that made this report possible and for their support of Alliance programs and services, we thank the New York State Council on the Arts, Chairman Richard J. Schwartz and the State and Local Partnership program. We thank our consultant Anne Ackerson for her insight and skill in writing this report.

Judith Kaufman Weiner
Executive Director
Alliance of New York State Arts Organizations

Introduction and Methodology

This report is based on a year's worth of activity by the Alliance of New York State Arts Organizations aimed at probing the breadth of challenges facing the New York State's arts community. Months of data collection was combined with face-to-face gatherings to jumpstart a process of rethinking the existing models of arts service and delivery in the state and envisioning new directions for these organizations.

The Fast Forward project began with a Cultural Needs Assessment that was sent electronically to 3000 cultural organizations to identify the trends and the issues facing them and to determine the most effective, relevant, and important services needed to strengthen and empower those organizations. The survey results identified five major challenges facing arts organizations today: expanding the funding base, expanding, retaining and funding staff; acquisition, renovation or expansion of physical facilities, board recruitment, training, and revitalizing; and creating visibility for and recognition of the work arts organizations do.

The survey was followed by a series of seven regional focus groups in May, June, and July to determine if there were specific issues relevant to specific regions of New York State that had not yet been reported. The focus groups expanded the range of challenges to include: the importance of knowing audiences and being relevant to them, the need for performance measurement and articulation of the personal and public benefits of the arts, a desire to revision traditional forms of support, and a deeper understanding of the need as a field to speak with one clear voice.

On September 12-13, 2005 arts leaders from across the state gathered in Glens Falls to further refine needs, identify possible solutions and new models, and begin to envision new directions for arts organizations to bring the power and the passion of the arts to the widest possible audience. Stage-setting plenary sessions augmented think tank breakout discussions focusing on institutional solvency, change, organizational health, motivation, and advocacy.

This is just the beginning. As Douglas McLennan wrote in *Is There a Better Case for the Arts*, "I think one of our real challenges today is finding ways to have debates about culture in public. Politics is endlessly debated as is sports. But where are the frank public discussions about art and about culture?"¹

The outcomes of the Fast Forward project will inform the work of the Alliance, of many arts organizations and, hopefully, their audiences, for the foreseeable future.

¹ Douglas McLennan. *Is There a Better Case for the Arts?* ArtsJournal.com Blog. March 7-11, 2005.

Executive Summary

The Alliance's Fast Forward project was spurred by the fact that there are thousands of cultural organizations across New York State doing excellent and necessary work, but the external realities of operating a nonprofit arts organization in the 21st century -- excruciating competition for audience and dollars, changing demographics, and shifting trends in entertainment and life-long/informal learning -- all are having big impacts on whether or not these organizations survive or thrive.

Among the pressures being brought to bear on organizations large and small, urban and rural, are:

Audience Competition and Erosion

Are there less people to go around or are they being pulled in too many directions? How are people different after seeing a living performance or pressing their hands into wet clay? Or, could it be that arts organizations just aren't connecting with our communities? A recent Connecticut-based study noted that, not only can't arts organizations seem to answer these questions, "the arts industry suffers for lack of a simple value framework that communicates (its) worth to society and to the individuals (it) serves."

An Artistic Deficit

As cultural organizations cut their budgets to manage diminished revenue, many cut staff and programs. The results often force these organizations to retreat to tried-and-true activities -- safe and fundable, but without artistic risk -- and/or to become once again the domains of primarily wealthy patrons. The silent impact is often the people working in arts organizations -- many are underpaid and have fallen into an expanding gap between the arts rich and the arts poor.

Cultural Darwinism

Add to this mix a growing number of nascent cultural organizations that are often undercapitalized and under-skilled in management and governance. They're looking for audience share and funding, too.

Who Are the Next Generation of Arts Leaders?

Nonprofit organizations of all types are on the brink of a huge retirement wave in the next 5-15 years that will sweep veteran leaders from staffs and boards in unprecedented numbers. Are there enough future arts leaders in the pipeline or will the field be scrambling to recruit and train leaders? How easy will it be to recruit leaders when workloads are onerous and burnout is high? How might leaders from outside the field impact it?

The major themes that emerged during the course of the Fast Forward project are:

Theme 1: Understand and Quantify Your Impact

Arts organizations and arts advocates in general have become very savvy about interpreting what they do in terms of economic impact -- revenue turned back into communities through job creation, sales taxes, neighborhood revitalization, etc. But, beyond counting ticket sales, membership income, and art camp enrollees, how can arts organizations assess the good they do? As Fast Forward keynoter Ben Cameron asserted, "It's not about quantity, it's about value." And why is that important?

Theme 2: Know Your Audience – “The arts are our family photographs.”

Fast Forward presenters underscored a critical knowledge deficit among arts organizations about the wants, needs and values of their audiences -- their communities in general. Relevancy of mission and program is based upon ongoing conversations with the communities and constituencies cultural organizations serve.

The key elements of knowing your audience, therefore, include identifying trends and understanding their impacts, continually gathering feedback from arts participants and larger, community-based information about demographics and lifestyles, and letting audience wants, needs and values shape the program.

Theme 3: Expand Your Reach

“Despite the fact that there are thousands of arts organizations, we still haven’t touched or moved the broadest context of our communities,” stated Philip Morris, a Fast Forward presenter. Expanding the reach must begin with knowing and participating in your community, providing genuine connections to diverse audiences/communities, providing access to the creative process, and encouraging younger people to get involved with the organization in meaningful ways.

Theme 4: Strengthen or Change Organizational Structures- “Work must be sustainable and responsible.”

Fast Forward discussion groups weighed in with the need to adapt current organizational and employment models or create new ones. While other parts of the nonprofit sector may hold models, a strong theme in one discussion group was to look at entrepreneurial models from the for-profit sector and to pursue relationships with for-profits and educational institutions strictly to gain access to the latest thinking in organizational creativity and innovation. The upside here is that rethinking how arts organizations need to work may be highly attractive to younger workers – talented people who want flexible working environments where work can be accomplished in a variety of ways.

Theme 5: Coordinate, Collaborate, Consolidate

As a model for accomplishing mission, increasing visibility and funding potential, and lowering routine costs, coordination, collaboration and consolidation of programs and infrastructure need to be on the radar screens of every arts board and administrator.

Fast Forward participants lamented the continually expanding universe of arts organizations – on the one hand, adding vibrancy to arts communities; on the other shrinking the already small pie of funding and audience.

The Fast Forward project has surfaced the following possible new roles for The Alliance.

Lead the field in articulating and quantifying the value of the arts

Collaborate with the New York State arts community to research, benchmark, and develop a set of values metrics that all arts organizations can use to measure the intrinsic impact of their work on the people who participate in arts activities: gather, disseminate and analyze trend data.

Develop training programs and materials for arts boards

that 1) introduce people to the challenges and rewards of nonprofit arts board service; 2) refresh/deepen the skills of existing boards, veteran board members and

3) creating board networking events.

Offer technical assistance/information about succession planning to assist arts organizations in planning for future leadership.

Design new advocacy efforts aimed at creating dedicated funding streams to arts organizations on a city-by-city or county-by-county basis across the state; sponsoring networking opportunities with funders and elected officials.

Create toolkits and develop examples of best practices

Expand the Alliance website with model programs/projects/policies/forms, particularly in the areas of fundraising, planned giving, capital campaign planning and implementation; directories of corporate funders of the arts and funders by specific activity funded; trend data; board recruitment, cultural tourism, and advocacy.

Bring funders together to revision their priorities in meeting the current and future needs of arts organizations.

Why Fast Forward?

Despite the fact that there are thousands of cultural organizations across New York State doing excellent and necessary work, the external realities of operating a nonprofit arts organization in the 21st century -- excruciating competition for audience and dollars, changing demographics, and shifting trends in entertainment and life-long/informal learning -- all are having big impacts on whether or not these organizations survive or thrive. The Alliance perceived that it needed broad constituent input to give voice to these challenges, as well as create a platform for responding to them.

The outcomes of the Fast Forward Project are meant to leapfrog both the Alliance and its constituents forward in an effort to strategically advance the field in a relatively short period of time.

The Cultural Needs Assessment Survey

A Cultural Needs Assessment Survey was conducted by the Alliance in early 2005 that provided a profile of cultural organizations active in the state and the breadth of challenges they face. Among the 265 survey respondents were performing and visual arts organizations ranging from theater to electronic media, arts centers and arts councils, museums and historical societies.

The audiences these groups serve is overwhelmingly for the general public in all regions of the state. However, more than 60% offer special programming for artists, children and senior citizens. Programs and services produced by these organizations include performances, educational programs, exhibitions, workshops, production of arts information such as directories and websites, ethno-specific programming, regrants and grants, and local support for arts development and creation.

Respondents were evenly split regarding the growth of their budgets in 2004 – just as many budgets decreased or remained stagnant as grew. Indeed, this is a key element in the challenges facing these organizations. The overriding concern voiced by respondents was the need to identify and raise new sources of support for both

operating and special projects. The implications of fundraising and growing budgets has much to do with two additional challenges respondents noted: staffing – finding, developing, and retaining professional staff; and physical space – acquisition, renovation, and maintenance of affordable, adequate space to conduct mission-related activities.

Respondents also identified board recruitment, training and revitalization, and marketing and publicity as two additional key challenges they face.

The Regional Meetings

From May to June 2005, nearly 100 arts organization representatives convened in seven regional meetings across New York State to continue the conversation begun with the Needs Assessment Survey. Conversations clustered around the following topics: funding and solvency, particularly in regards to general operations; knowing your audience, relevancy to community, organizational health, advocacy. The regional meetings highlighted a thirst for new business models, new ways to deliver programs and products, a desire to understand and integrate more closely with local and regional communities, and a frustration that the value of creative work is generally not understood well or utilized well by schools and other learning environments.

Each topic includes a number of questions that ultimately must be addressed on an organization-by-organization basis or as a field speaking with one voice. Among the issues:

Funding and Solvency – how can we pay for staff?; how do we compete with others for the same philanthropic dollars?; how to we pay for skyrocketing insurance?; how can we diversify the funding base and diminish our reliance on government funding?; how do we create strategic business plans? Since NYSCA funding has its limitations, are there other potential sources of dedicated funding to the arts?; how do we share resources?

Knowing Your Audience – who is really being served and how?; what is the demonstrated value of that service and how do we measure it?; what do people want from us?; how do we reach and interest new generations of arts participants?; how do we think about trends that will affect us 5-10 years from now?; has there been a shift in the way people value the arts?

Relevancy to Community – how do we get bodies in the door?; what is the measurable impact of arts and culture on economic development and quality of life?; how do arts organizations gain an equal role at the community table?; how do we make the case that the arts are crucial to a community's infrastructure?

Organizational Health – is merger, consolidation or dissolution appropriate means to protect resources?; how do we change the structure of how we do business?; how are diverse, engaged boards recruited and retained?; why does board service scare people away?; how do we address high turnover of staff?; how do we plan for future succession of board and staff leaders?; how do we reimagine ourselves to accomplish the work?; how do we justify and fund the need for professional development for boards and staffs?; how do we break the crisis management cycle?; why is there a fear in taking risks?

Advocacy – how do we establish value as an industry?; how might we better educate funders to our needs and challenges?; how do we learn to be a continual advocate?; how do we learn to speak with one voice?

The Fast Forward Conference: Framing the Future

Based on the Cultural Needs Assessment Survey and the regional meetings, the Alliance next created a forum to bring the challenges and issues under closer scrutiny by a group of arts leaders. The conference consisted of stage-setting presentations followed by facilitated small-group discussions. The outcomes of the conference reinforced many concerns and attempted to offer new directions for individual organizations, the field as a whole, and the Alliance as a statewide service provider.

Audience Competition and Erosion

On any given day, an individual is bombarded with an overwhelming array of leisure activities from which to choose from hanging out with friends or family to taking a world cruise to rooting for the home team at the local sports arena, to being immersed in a concert, an art gallery, a DVD or the movie theater. Many leisure activities demand hours of our time and often command high pricetags, yet the decision-making time required to participate is often quite short, even last-minute. Welcome to “on-demand” entertainment -- the phenomenon of personalized activity calibrated to the schedule of the participant. Is it any wonder that subscription series have experienced a drop off or that it’s harder to find volunteers to take regular weekly or monthly stints?

Are there less people to go around or are they being pulled in too many directions? How are people different after seeing a living performance or pressing their hands into wet clay? Or, could it be that arts organizations just aren’t connecting with our communities? A recent Connecticut-based study noted that, not only can’t arts organizations seem to answer these questions, “the arts industry suffers for lack of a simple value framework that communicates (its) worth to society and to the individuals (it) serves.”²

Government funding for the arts in this country has always been slim, but it is especially difficult to reverse past declining trends in public support -- this is certainly true in New York State where recent efforts to grow the budget of the New York State Council on the Arts up to levels of the early 1990s have been difficult.

While corporations continue to be generous contributors to the arts, the nature of their philanthropy has changed greatly in the last 10-15 years, with far greater emphasis on the “transactional” aspect of contributions using marketing dollars to purchase visibility that ultimately sells product. Another shift can be seen in the growing numbers of small businesses participating in arts sponsorships, making them far more generous than larger corporations.³ Unfettered corporate contributions are exceedingly difficult to obtain -- the overwhelming majority of businesses surveyed by the Business Committee for the Arts indicated they give because of programs that extend arts education or address social causes. Most stated they would be inclined to give more if a proven need could be shown.

² Connecticut Commission on Culture and Tourism. *The Values Study: Rediscovering the Meaning and Value of Arts Participation*. 2004. p. 14.

³ Business Committee for the Arts. *Biennial Survey*. 2004.

An Artistic Deficit

As cultural organizations cut their budgets to manage diminished revenue, many cut staff and programs. The results often force these organizations to retreat to tried-and-true activities -- safe and fundable, but without artistic risk -- and/or to become once again the domains of primarily wealthy patrons. The silent impact is often the people working in arts organizations -- many are underpaid and have fallen into an expanding gap between the arts rich and the arts poor.

Cultural Darwinism

Add to this mix a growing number of nascent cultural organizations that are often undercapitalized and under-skilled in management and governance. They're looking for audience share and funding, too. Cultural organizations operate on the strength of the personalities of their founders, their boards and their executives. Passion for the work likely won't substitute very long for poor or ineffective staff or board leadership. It's becoming increasingly clear (something we've already seen in New York State) that the organizationally fittest will survive -- a cultural Darwinism of sorts is now at work.

Who Are the Next Generation of Arts Leaders?

Nonprofit organizations of all types are on the brink of a huge retirement wave in the next 5-15 years that will sweep veteran leaders from staffs and boards in unprecedented numbers. At the Fast Forward conference, at least 40% of attendees had been in the field for 20-30-plus years, many at the same organization. A minority of organizations have developed succession plans (for the nonprofit sector as a whole, 80% of organizations have not). Are there enough future arts leaders in the pipeline or will the field be scrambling to recruit and train leaders? How easy will it be to recruit leaders when workloads are onerous and burnout is high? How might leaders from outside the field impact it?

There's no safe harbor. Which may be why there's no time like the present to contemplate some radical departures from business as usual. As Ben Cameron said in the Fast Forward conference keynote, "It's time to drop the pole and grab the wire."

New Directions for New York States Nonprofit Arts Organizations

The Fast Forward Conference was an opportunity for arts leaders to contemplate these issues more deeply and to consider reinvention through how we think and talk about our organizations -- indeed, examining the essential elements of mission, relevance and institutional identity. As a result, five themes emerged that begin to address the concerns that surfaced in the survey and regional forums. Discussion groups were prompted by philosophical questions, but many developed specific tactics that any organization should contemplate implementing.

Theme 1: Understand and Quantify Your Impact

Arts organizations and arts advocates in general have become very savvy about interpreting what they do in terms of economic impact -- revenue turned back into communities through job creation, sales taxes, neighborhood revitalization, etc. But, beyond counting ticket sales, membership income, and art camp enrollees, how can arts organizations assess the good they do? As Fast Forward keynoter Ben Cameron asserted, "It's not about quantity, it's about value." And why is that important?

Cameron asked participants to begin with several basic questions:

What is the value my organization offers to the community?
What is the value my organization offers that is better than anyone else?
How would my community be damaged if my organization were to go away tomorrow?

It was clear in many Fast Forward discussions that understanding and quantifying the societal impact of an organization's mission positions that organization to attract broader and deeper participation, and drives it closer to the core of the communities it serves. However, there is a disturbing lack of metrics or a value framework to assist arts organizations in understanding and communicating their worth to society.

As speaker Philip Morris stated, "Our future needs to be about teaching society about the things that have value and putting a dollar amount on that value." But, as yet, there's no arts industry-wide yardstick for identifying and measuring this value. Arts organizations, with direction from umbrella service organizations, must work together to create this yardstick.

In addition, Fast Forward participants identified the following activities as key to keeping all arts organizations on track and future-focused:

Self-Assessment - the constant review of organizational performance against vision, mission and strategic goals. Assessment can take many forms and can be aided by an array of tools and techniques, such as surveys, facilitated discussions, and retreats.

Benchmarking - the routine critical comparison of an organization's elements with like elements from similar or diverse organizations. Virtually anything about an organization can be benchmarked with other organizations -- setting goals for benchmarking can make it a fruitful experience.

Evaluation - the regular appraisal of the effectiveness of people (board, staff and volunteers) and programs against predetermined internal and external factors. It's an opportunity to take a step back and gain a new perspective on work we can too easily take for granted. Yes, it is important to measure easily quantifiable activities such as attendance and finances. It is also important to look at and understand growth and decline - of program, staff retention, board participation, and the impact of technology.

Theme 2: Know Your Audience - "The arts are our family photographs."

Successful for-profit and nonprofit businesses understand the underlying tenets of a marketplace -- the cycles of supply and demand, even creating demand for goods and services. How do they manage or create these cycles to their advantage? How do they integrate products with the wants, needs and values of consumers?

Fast Forward presenters underscored a critical knowledge deficit among arts organizations about the wants, needs and values of their audiences -- their communities in general. Relevancy of mission and program is based upon ongoing conversations with the communities and constituencies cultural organizations serve. Ben Cameron provided a glimpse into the types of discussions all arts organizations need to be having:

Understand and reimagine what congregating is all about -- maybe it's about 6 pm curtain times and activities for kids so that parents can enjoy a show or concert. Maybe it's thinking how an arts organization can offer its programs "on demand", i.e., Sledgehammer Theater in San Francisco lets frequent theater-goers to go to a show however many times they want. It's about letting folks see and understand how artists work - what are we willing to disclose and how often do we do it?

The key elements of knowing your audience, therefore, include identifying trends and understanding their impacts, continually gathering feedback from arts participants and larger, community-based information about demographics and lifestyles, and letting audience wants, needs and values shape the program.

Getting at what people want, need and value means getting at arts audiences. In Connecticut, *The Values Study: Rediscovering the Meaning and Value of Arts Participation* (2004) interviewed 100 arts participants, and surveyed 500+ more, enabling the project's researchers to identify levels of participation and develop eight value clusters that individuals derived from that participation. These clusters are cognitive value, aesthetic value, physical value, emotional value, socio-cultural value, political value, spiritual value, and an overarching value set associated with identity formation, such as self-confidence, self-esteem, pride and dignity.⁴

The study then developed a values framework that arts organizations can use "to better understand how their programs resonate with audiences and visitors, and to think about new programs or how to add value to their existing programs" by allowing organizations to "see their programs through the eyes of current and potential users. What value connections are being made? What other value opportunities might be offered through new or different programs?"⁵

Armed with this information and expanded by organization-specific audience research, every arts organization in New York State should be able to take the first steps toward reinventing or reinforcing its relationships with existing and new arts participants.

Theme 3: Expand Your Reach

"Despite the fact that there are thousands of arts organizations, we still haven't touched or moved the broadest context of our communities," stated Philip Morris, a Fast Forward presenter.

It's time to get centered on the communities you serve.

While Ben Cameron declared, "The Internet has rearranged the notion of community resulting in an intellectual collapse of social discourse," many Fast Forward participants view technology as an important means of reaching current and new audiences, at least with information. While most participants agreed that face-to-face interaction with the arts and with artists is absolutely critical to an arts organization's mission, there may be an important cyber-niche for virtual creation of art and interplay among audiences.

⁴ Connecticut Commission on Culture and Tourism. *The Values Study: Rediscovering the Meaning and Value of Arts Participation*. 2004. p. 15-16.

⁵ *Ibid.* p. 16.

Part of expanding the reach involves making the decision to mirror the community with the board, staff, and volunteers. It requires an organization to take a critical look at outdated notions and ways of doing things and have the desire to embrace and become comfortable with change. Expanding the reach must begin with knowing and participating in your community, providing genuine connections to diverse audiences/communities, providing access to the creative process, and encouraging younger people to get involved with the organization in meaningful ways.

Theme 4: Strengthen or Change Organizational Structures- "Work must be sustainable and responsible."

It is absolutely critical that cultural organizations build and maintain strong internal infrastructures made up of engaged boards, functioning committees/taskforces, and passionate and able staffs and volunteers. This infrastructure of human resources is focused on a shared vision and mission that is both coherent and relevant.

For some arts organizations, this is a tall order. Fast Forward participants noted serious hurdles in building and maintaining staff morale, due largely to low salaries and meager benefits, overwhelming workloads without clear outcomes, and a feeling that the public does not see the value in what they do (or what the organization does).

Fast Forward discussion groups weighed in with the need to adapt current organizational and employment models or create new ones. While other parts of the nonprofit sector may hold models, a strong theme in one discussion group was to look at entrepreneurial models from the for-profit sector and to pursue relationships with for-profits and educational institutions strictly to gain access to the latest thinking in organizational creativity and innovation. The upside here is that rethinking how arts organizations need to work may be highly attractive to younger workers – talented people who want flexible working environments where work can be accomplished in a variety of ways.

The unresolved issue in many arts organizations remains diversification of boards, staffs, and audiences. Ben Cameron remarked, "The steps we think we've made have not been sustained." His take on moving this issue forward: diversity of organizations and audiences requires "making relationships, deep listening, not marketing."

Bill Ivey, former Chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts, wrote in *Is There a Better Case for the Arts*, "Let's paint a picture of what we think a vibrant cultural system should look like, and then advocate on behalf of policies that take us there."⁶ Perhaps this is also a way to approach reinventing the structures of arts organizations.

Theme 5: Coordinate, Collaborate, Consolidate

As a model for accomplishing mission, increasing visibility and funding potential, and lowering routine costs, coordination, collaboration and consolidation of programs and infrastructure need to be on the radar screens of every arts board and administrator.

⁶ Bill Ivey. Is There a Better Case for the Arts? ArtsJournal.com Blog. March 10, 2005.

Fast Forward participants lamented the continually expanding universe of arts organizations – on the one hand, adding vibrancy to arts communities; on the other shrinking the already small pie of funding and audience.

New Roles for The Alliance

Lead the field in articulating and quantifying the value of the arts

Collaborate with the New York State arts community to research, benchmark, and develop a set of values metrics that all arts organizations can use to measure the intrinsic impact of their work on the people who participate in arts activities: gather, disseminate and analyze trend data.

Develop training programs and materials for arts boards

that 1) introduce people to the challenges and rewards of nonprofit arts board service; 2) refresh/deepen the skills of existing boards, veteran board members and 3) creating board networking events.

Offer technical assistance/information about succession planning to assist arts organizations in planning for future leadership.

Design new advocacy efforts aimed at creating dedicated funding streams to arts organizations on a city-by-city or county-by-county basis across the state; sponsoring networking opportunities with funders and elected officials.

Create toolkits and develop examples of best practices

Expand the Alliance website with model programs/projects/policies/forms, particularly in the areas of fundraising, planned giving, capital campaign planning and implementation; directories of corporate funders of the arts and funders by specific activity funded; trend data; board recruitment, cultural tourism, and advocacy.

Bring funders together to revision their priorities in meeting the current and future needs of arts organizations.

Endnotes

- 1 Douglas McLennan. *Is There a Better Case for the Arts?* ArtsJournal.com. March 7-11, 2005.
- 2 Connecticut Commission on Culture and Tourism. *The Values Study: Rediscovering the Meaning and Value of Arts Participation.* 2004. p. 14.
- 3 Business Committee for the Arts biennial survey. 2004.
- 4 Connecticut Commission on Culture and Tourism. *The Values Study: Rediscovering the Meaning and Value of Arts Participation.* 2004. pp. 15-16.
- 5 Ibid. p. 16.

Appendices

CULTURAL NEEDS ASSESSMENT SURVEY RESULTS

The Alliance of New York State Arts Organizations has undertaken a Cultural Needs Assessment in 2005 to understand the trends and the issues facing New York State's cultural organizations and to determine the most effective, relevant, and important services needed to strengthen and empower those organizations.

The Cultural Needs Assessment is a two step process comprised of an Online Survey followed by seven Regional Focus Groups coordinated through the Alliance Regional Captain Network. The data is analyzed and managed by the Alliance's Associate Director Patricia Berman and her team with the advice of Dr. Stephen Chris, Buffalo State College.

The Cultural Needs Assessment Survey was distributed electronically in February 2005 to 3,000 cultural organizations in New York State. This sampling reflects a 15% return, which is considered statistically relevant. The responses are summarized in this report. The next part of the analysis will be a regional exploration conducted through a series of seven regional focus groups in May and June to determine if there are specific issues relevant to specific regions of New York State which have not yet been reported. The results of this survey are currently being used to plan upcoming Alliance activities and will greatly impact the future of the Alliance's work to serve the arts organizations in New York State.

▪ **RESPONSES**

265 Total Responses

40% are Members of the Alliance

60% are not

11.3% are Arts Action Members

19.5%	Theater
14.8%	Music
14.8%	Arts Centers
12.3%	Museums or Historic Societies
9.7%	Arts Councils
7.6%	Dance
6.4%	Visual Arts
5.9%	Statewide Service
3.8%	Electronic Media
3.4%	Literary
1.7%	Film

▪ **BUDGET INFORMATION**

Budgets of respondents range from \$0-15,000 to \$22 million

50.8% budgets have increased in the past year

27.1% budgets have decreased in the past year

22% report no change

▪ **CONSTITUENTS SERVED**

95.8%	General Public
75%	Artists
73.8%	Children
62.5%	Seniors
46.2%	Other Cultural or Service Agencies
31.2%	Ethno-Specific

WHAT ARE THE MOST IMPORTANT SERVICES THE ALLIANCE PROVIDES

• Info and Networking	75.3%
• Professional Development and Training for Boards and Staffs:	57.5%
• Technical Assistance	46.2%
• Public Policy Leadership	40.8%
• Local Advocacy Training	37.7%
• Online Communication and Training	27.4%
• Regional and Rural Workshops	24.7%
• Conferences/Retreats	17.0%
• Regional Meetings	16.1%
• Professional Consultant Services	42.2%

10 TOP SERVICES & PROGRAMS OF RESPONDENTS IN PRIORITY ORDER

- Performances
Theater/Concerts/Opera/Dance/Music Touring—High Quality Low Cost, Play productions, Community Theater
- Educational Programs
Youth, Seniors Community K-12, pre-K, home based, AIE curricular, adults, seniors, kids)
- Exhibitions
Includes Museum/Shops
- Workshops
Includes Residencies and Classes
- Arts Information
Includes Directories and Websites
- Ethnospecific programming
- Regrants and Grants
- Support Arts Development and Creation

CHALLENGES OF RESPONDENTS IN PRIORITY ORDER

1) FUNDING

Lack of Financial Resources • Funding Sources • Seed Money • Operating Support • Project Support Fundraising • Cash Flow • New Sources of Contributed Income • Lack of general operating support • Increase in multi-year support • Increase unearned income • Increase individual contributions Lack of capital funds • New sources • New revenue streams • Consistent funding • Expanding base • Diminishing foundation and corporate support Capital • Reaching corporate decision makers • Lack of GOS funding Program support • Increase earned revenue

2) STAFF

Need Staffing • Funding of salaries • Changing from all volunteer staff Professional Staff • Funds to Pay • Retention • Staff development

3) SPACE

Affordable Space • Space Acquisition • Renovation • Need for adequate facilities • Maintenance • Acquisition • Increase needed • Renovations Suitable venues for events • Space constraints

4) BOARD

Board Members • Board Training • Board Recruitment of Trustees • Expand Revitalize

5) MARKETING

Marketing • Visibility • Publicity • Recognition of Value

TOP SUGGESTIONS OF HOW THE ALLIANCE COULD HELP

1) FUNDING

Funding Sources for Endowments • Capital Campaign Consultation • Upper Level Fundraising Training • Planned Giving • Major Donor Cultivation Grant Resources • Capacity Building Grants • Assist on Funding • Funding tips • Individual giving • Large in-kind contributions • Compiled list of corporate funders specific to the arts • Creating arts revenue streams Funding • Government funding sources • Arts funding trends • Money Collaborative Fundraising • Fundraising training • Central Information on Funding • Corporate Sponsorship and Relationship Networking • Funding for equipment • Furniture and equipment resource referrals • Earned Income Ideas • Funding Opportunity Alerts • Cultivating Individual Donors Connecting Institutional Givers and Arts Organizations

2) BOARD

Board Development • Board Training • Growing the Board • Board Recruitment Tools • Board Building Seminars • Boards networking event Board Pep Talk Session

3) ADVOCACY

Advocacy • Lobbying • Lobbying State and Federal • Networking opportunities with legislators • Advocacy peer led sessions • Meet the legislators forums • How to build successful partnerships with legislators • Hold forums between agencies and effective elected officials • Regional and Federal Policy updates

4) MARKETING

Promotional Assistance • Collaborative Regional Marketing---How tos • Online email/web marketing • Promotion of local arts • Public awareness campaign along the lines of Americans for the Arts • Marketing consultation • Cheap Ways to Advertise • Develop Relationship with "I love New York" • Publicity and Marketing Workshops

2005 REGIONAL FORUM SUMMARIES

May 3, 2005 • Museum of the Earth • Ithaca, New York

- ▶ Money is a key issue.
- ▶ Would it be useful to assess the "field" to see who is really being served. Ask who THEY are really serving and if the service is really getting through. Then ask if they are serving who they think they are serving. ? How do you know who you serve? Where is the demand? What is the demonstrated value?
- ▶ How to change the perception that it's an industry. Establish the value as an industry.
- ▶ Regional collaborations are unclear
- ▶ Need support for the industry in a new way.
- ▶ What is the new community served? Where are the shifts?
- ▶ There is a shift in the way people define value
- ▶ The field is somewhat demoralized.

May 4, 2005 • Blue Seed Studio • Saranac Lake, New York Hosted by regional captain, Caroline Rubino

- ▶ Board Pool is way too small-----retention, recruitment are serious issues
Now there are new fears in board service because of scandals. A fear environment has taken hold. Some organizations have gotten so protective that common sense does not prevail
- ▶ Lack of Funds to pay qualified staff
- ▶ Upstate there is little money to raise. Without funding they are chained to the desks and cannot move. There is a lack of corporate/industrial base.
- ▶ In a way we are victims of our success-- there are so many new arts groups that the voice has been nullified. We need to speak in a unified voice.
- ▶ We need to approach the Department of Economic Development---specific \$ to provide jobs—job creation.....because there are small economies.
Like the CETA program---but CETA jobs were only 3 years.....need to figure out sustainability after 3 years. At this point there is no way to sustain the salary line.
- ▶ Volunteer bases are difficult. They are not reliable. Training takes so long.
- ▶ Rural communities don't have infrastructures...the gap in upstate rural/city needs to be filled by federal and state funding resources. Funders need to accept that the North Country has a lack of diversity of population
- ▶ Partner with other agencies/visibility, economic impact/dollars
- ▶ Look at arts as a business. People think not for profit is free
- ▶ Appreciation for the arts being in the community has definitely improved. There are statistics indicating that people attend arts events more than all professional sports combined. Use them to increase visibility

May 5, 2005 • Albany Institute of History and Art • Albany, New York Hosted by regional captain, Kay Stamer

- ▶ Capital Region is probably healthier than most of upstate.....but Capital Region too large to think about as a region.
- ▶ Closing of Albany-Schenectady League has been a significant wake up call.

- ▶ Chaos of Saratoga Performing Arts Center, which has defined the region, has made people nervous and has provoked a conversation about what the region is doing with cultural life. The SPAC situation is rippling. The community clearly viewed SPAC as a cultural icon. Wonder if that's going to happen again.
- ▶ Majors have the same boards, and they are aware of Albany-Schenectady and SPAC.....There is a need for Board training and fiduciary responsibilities: keeping compliant and behaving responsibly, governance, board roles and responsibility.
- ▶ Many of us have established programming and are just bopping along even though support is decreasing.
- ▶ Influx of population; property values are high: Mountains—second home owners--- --the valleys are getting primary home owners.....Ability to work from home electronically. What will be the impact of the population shift?
- ▶ We need to know what's going on economically in the area: People are moving in, People are moving out.....is industry moving in, is industry moving out? Figure out ways to find people who are interested in programming. Know the audience, know what they can afford. We're seeing newly retired people. "Bobos in Paradise" Bourgeois Bohemians.
- ▶ Challenges lay directly to the growth we've helped nurture. How to stay relevant to the organizations that are coming in.....that have projects and dollars. There is lots of great activity. How do we compete for same philanthropic dollars. New and developing centers growing up around longer standing institutions.....is more better and how to sustain all organizations.....
- ▶ Not enough staff and high turnover. Staff is an issue but it goes back to funding. Staff retention another issue. Hire young inexperienced staff and they go on to "greener pastures" On the other side of the coin, when you have a staff that has been there a long time.....whose salaries have increased over the years.....the salary lines get disproportionately high. The salary line looks top heavy, although it is essential for retention, especially relative to other industries. We tend to balance the budget on the back of employees.
- ▶ Succession: issues of executive director who had been there such a long time.....who's next?
- ▶ Struggling with a budget---insurance fees have skyrocketed.....which have increased budget. Insurance for programs with children difficult. Rules have changed vis a vis camp programs. Great visioned programs.....can't capitalize.
- ▶ The more volunteers you have the more you take to manage them. Get a volunteer to manage a volunteer. Americorps/Vista Volunteers have been a boon.
- ▶ Take a longer view....government funding for the arts will continue to decline. Effort needs to go to imagining differently how the work gets done. Anything that happens contrary to that is gravy. What else are we going to do.....
- ▶ Imagine how to support a visionary change. How can we diversify our funding and diminish reliance on government funding.
- ▶ Do something substantive. Need to invest enough money in the research necessary to deliver a statewide campaign that's going to generate money. To try to grab 30 million dollars.....it is just a drop in the bucket.
- ▶ There is so much richness in the Capital region..... Need a mechanism whereby the richness of the region is capitalized.
- ▶ Find ways to be collegial and aggressive. Need to stop being afraid of turf wars
Lack of leadership
- ▶ Extraordinary people in the arts in New York State. Work together to guarantee that cultural richness continues.
- ▶ Boards are frozen with the burden of fundraising.....They don't attend functions. Then they go into panic mode....and start to micromanage. Board Tune-Ups sound good. Boards need to know that they are not in it alone.

June 20, 2005 • Arts & Cultural Council for Greater Rochester • Rochester, New York • Hosted by regional captain, Sarah Lentini

▶ Stressed Industry

▶ The results of the survey are as expected, but the world is no longer the same. At a time when Starbucks might eat us for the lunch. The threat of the efficacy of the service that we're performing that is real. Challenges are the same, but the environment is different.

▶ How are people spending their time now?

▶ We need to continue to do what we need to do better and figure out new ways of delivery and interpretation of what we care about.

▶ Climate and cultural non-profit structure causes us to think of \$ every day.

Concern about funding---how much discretion we have with money. Increasingly funders don't want to fund administration, don't want to fund staff---and focus on program funding. Someone needs to pay for staff administration.

▶ We need to understand what people need and want.

▶ Whole idea of business planning. Competing for dollars. Have to understand the business landscape. Can't go out and assume that to market your product.....need to develop and understand your business plan so you can sustain yourself.

Is customer base changing? If so, you need to change to exist.....what are the potential customers and how do you access them? What you are trying to deliver has to have value.....and you need to be able to deliver it.

▶ Training and support of administrators is crucial.

▶ Too often non-profits are out fighting fires.

▶ Collaboration is great if it's appropriate.

▶ Education of the Funders is appropriate.....

Program or project driven funding is a problem. Need money for general operating support. Funders need to be educated.

▶ NYSCA funding has it's limitation. It would be lovely to have a state pot of money to access directly.....or differently. NYSCA has a category and set of structures: if they fit great, but not right for everything. What about Casino \$? Need a pool of money separate from NYSCA.

▶ Organizations are just working to stay about water. If you have all the money you want or need...how do you get the bodies in the door? We do what we do well with good publicity etc.....and audiences are going down.

▶ Philharmonic Orchestras all over the country: Audiences are getting older, audiences dwindling. How far do we go? Do we change the artistic product we're delivering? It's a real issue. Sometimes it works to make the changes and sometimes it doesn't.

▶ There is an issue of product and an issue of service delivery. What we are doing has value.....intrinsically. Addressing business models.....the product we're delivering is essential.

▶ Giving a lot of thought lately as to whether the structure of the not for profit model has run its course in this culture. It's a begging mentality. What we have is a valued service and it's wanted by the culture---nugget is true.... NFP organizations in general have become the step children in the over all scheme of how we do enterprise. It needs to change. This doesn't get at the deeper levels in the way we think about work, how we make it happen, how it connects to the outside world and how we pay for it.

Is what we're doing viable?

▶ Definition of value.....

- ▶ What is it that we need to be communicating to people that is as attractive as Disney. ▶ We need to learn something from that world. Driving decisions of how people are spending their money and time.
- ▶ We don't tell the story well at all.
- ▶ Challenge of poetry is that even you might not read it it's an important part of our culture and it needs to go on.
- ▶ Need to have a full marketing experience. Established cultural norms need to become relevant. We do the same old thing.....the same way.....and nobody buys.
- ▶ Careful when we talk about education-----we must raise a culture of creativity and not the practitioners. Raised in an environment steeped in culture. It would be wonderful if we had institutions that encouraged learning in a creative way.
- ▶ Board development is critical.....I see a growing gap in need between the organizational needs of short staffing and the demands on the volunteer to provide active advocacy and fundraising work. Old NFP model depended on PEOPLE with a lot of free time, available to come to meetings etc.....that is no longer the case. Concern now with Boards and the fiduciary role thereof. None of us adequately able to train leadership succession, pipeline of people coming up.....it is the single greatest challenge we have in the mid-size organizations. Recruitment, training, retention. Reinventing the wheel all the time. People serving on multiple boards. Ramp up level of understanding of boards.
- ▶ Can't make it work with a small staff.
- ▶ Business on Board..... the arts council or a service agency in the area.....training on how to work on boards, recruitment of young professionals through HR departments. A training course and a placement process. Training organizations on how to work with boards, but also training a pool of board members.
- ▶ Other potential sources of board members. Board training is a critical issue. Keeping Board Members engaged. Need to be proactive in finding people to come on the board who will give a gift.....it is very hard.
- ▶ Art is fundamental..... expression of the soul.....sorrows and joy..... it has to come out in some way. There is a disconnect between the economics and art.....
- ▶ On the state level facilitate meetings with legislators and lawmakers.....that could be developed further-----help smaller groups that don't have access or the time..... It is unwieldy process in NYS; it's a free for all, an inefficient use of everyone's time. Don't know the answer.

**Focus Group June 22, 2005 • Castellani Museum • *Niagara Falls, New York*
Hosted by Irene Rykszewski**

- ▶ Niagara is used to having so little....." The Niagara blood letting already happened 3 years ago.....so we are more stable now.
- ▶ Funders have been Erie Centric, particularly with the budget crisis in Buffalo. They encouraged bi-county collaboration and partnership, but because of crisis that has ground to a halt.
- ▶ Tensions between Erie and Niagara County do go a lot deeper than Arts and Cultural Organizations
- ▶ Everything has been regionalized. Transportation.....90% Erie; 10% Niagara Why is it not the case for Arts and Culturals?
- ▶ In Niagara----the CAN network is collaborative---working on reciprocal memberships, discount coupons
- ▶ Looking at the Rise of the Cultural Class.....going to take a trip to Paduka, Ky. But it's an upward climb with government red tape to cultural gentrification.
- ▶ Art Center needs the creative class of people.....Generally speaking as a region,

Western New York is slow on the uptake from the creative class and many innovative, creative thinkers have left because they couldn't find work. BUT, artists still can afford to live here.

- ▶ There is a huge amount of talent.....and then a vacuum right down the middle of people who are capable of running the organizations.
- ▶ Arts & Culture is now being talked about in the same breath as economic development.
- ▶ We are cautiously optimistic. There is a difference between gentrification and encouragement, acknowledgment of existing culture. Many areas of the country have been gentrified only to find that people don't go there any more. We must be careful about gentrification...new model is called "Smart City"...Diversity of culture is included. Previously gentrification was shown not to work....diversity of experience is what we can share...
- ▶ Arts need an equal role at the community table.
- ▶ Media is a problem. Buffalo media coverage is terrible too.
- ▶ Need information on economic impact studies. They've done some terrific monographs.....speak plainly to local legislators.

**June 23, 2005 • Arts Council in Buffalo and Erie County • Buffalo, New York
Hosted by regional captain, Celeste Lawson**

- ▶ Issue of crisis in Government Funding.
- ▶ References to Culture are almost discriminately negative in government
- ▶ Challenges are to learn how to better represent the importance of the arts
- ▶ Americans for the Arts Ad Campaign: Art, Ask for More.....in cooperation with the ad council. In the next phase, they are refocusing it with an advocacy bent. Parents, educators etc.....making them proactive. Arts Council in Buffalo has the ads.....but difficulty in getting it viewed at a time people could see it. Potential for linking art and economic development.
- ▶ People in Buffalo are disgruntled and unhappy. We all agree that it's the future generation we want to focus on. Difficult for politicians to ignore kids. Empire State Partnership.....
- ▶ Bought into the economic impact of the arts, but not the quality of life....but now they've put it into tourism. Arts Education increases tourism. Quality of life is important to the economic development. It was the impetus of the ArtsSpace project in Buffalo
- ▶ Disagreement about the multiplier effect for the arts. Growth compared to what or compared to how?
- ▶ Great interest in Bing Bill and a dedicated source of money for the arts in New York. Other states have lottery, casinos.....Whether it goes to NYSCA or another body is not relevant.
- ▶ Helpful to have talking points when visiting local officials.....
- ▶ In this transition....it's important that we make the case that art is part of the infrastructure of the community. Arts Community is Tired---have been working very hard.....to position the arts.....
- ▶ We're thinking too small. Not capitalizing on our strength as artists and problem solving. We're spending a disproportionate amount of time on the government. Let's get together, brand ourselves together. There is talent in this community of problem solvers.
- ▶ We're all been bitten. Let's spend our time uniting, getting together....and make ourselves a force.....collaborating.

- ▶ There are models in other industries. The arts partner and collaborate with ourselves....
 - ▶ We've got to think about the trends that we're seeing that are going to become the reality 5-10 years from now.
 - ▶ We need to advocate year round. Once the season is over....you hardly hear anything positive or negative. There has to be ongoing communication.....the silence is hurting the cultural sector. Advocacy is relationship building. Address the policies from a singular voice.
 - ▶ Cultural Darwinism
 - ▶ We need to have our own mechanism to advocate for the arts. Probably need to have the discussion of how essential is government funding to the arts?
 - ▶ As long as the arts is central to my being—then the arts should be funded by my tax money.
 - ▶ We continue to ignore the fact that the government \$ is not coming back.....the philosophical argument about the philosophical issues about government impact.....but today we haven't talked about alternate revenue streams.....this government \$ is not money that should put people out of business.
 - ▶ All organizations have cut. What have you done to work with other organizations, where are the collaborations? Where is the business community---second tier corporations could be giving much more. Where are the shared resources?
 - ▶ We need to change the structure of the way we do business. If we do get public money in the county, it will be ½ of what it used to be.....business has to change.
 - ▶ What does it mean when government money disappears in this community? That story needs to be told.
 - ▶ Understanding from your audiences...what are they liking, not liking. Better understanding of what the needs of the audiences are? Why are the arts important?
 - ▶ Burgeoning non-profit sector in Chautauqua: Wonderful growth and all competing with the same money. More non-profits going for the same money.
 - ▶ Looking at a whole side of asset development.....a joint fund.....the marketing arm of the CVB. There is still an interest in connecting artists, organizations, public sector, private sector. The initiative is not completely a tourism initiative, and it will be forward in the Fall---with much less money than before---because of the county cuts.....but it will move forward.
 - ▶ Business and non-profit don't understand each other very well. Need a mediator. Need to educate business people how non-profits work.....Most of the arts organizations get business people on their boards of directors.
 - ▶ Board recruitment is a real problem. It's a really small pool. It's an issue of getting enough people who are influential enough.
 - ▶ We need to use the language more appropriately. Private, Business, Government, Volunteer---the quality of life is supported equally from all four.
 - ▶ Transfer your relationship skills.....into the business community. Build individual relationships that go back and forth through all sectors.
 - ▶ Business on Board Model.....
- United Way has a program called emerging leaders, which is a training program..... Look at the training program.
- ▶ Weirdness of non-profit money. The difference between how money flows in for profit and not for profit industry. Non profit quarterly. NonProfits can't act like for profit business. But commercial business should take a page out of non-profit.
 - ▶ Spending a disproportionate amount of time on government is the operative issue.....but don't write it off. Some organizations are going to be very successful

going to businesses.....some are not. Disproportionate amount of time.....has to be spent and it's not going to be easy.

- ▶ A Strategy for keeping the message global. The other strategy are shared administrative services and collaboration.....it has to be a multi-pronged approach.
- ▶ Corporate giving..quid pro quo. We don't give you money for nothing. What's in it for their investment?

**July 7, 2005 • Huntington Arts Council • *Huntington, New York*
Hosted by regional captain, *Diana Cherryholmes***

Focus on marketing and audience development and the quality of the art

- ▶ Many emerging companies. Much competition
 - ▶ Family audience is growing the most---all for free programs however-----and all sitting on blankets.
 - ▶ A lot of school budgets got voted down-----that has been an impact. Need to cultivate a new generation.....
 - ▶ Shift in the way people value the arts.
 - ▶ Problem related to Audience Development at the Wang Center: there is an expressed hunger about Asian Things.....but when the programs are there and presented.....there is still a problem getting people in. Hunger doesn't translate.
 - ▶ Live theater isn't appreciated, over emphasis on sports, competition for recreational time
 - ▶ Forces programming at different times. Need to Master the Scheduling.....Day and Night---which necessitates a staff problem.....to accede to the needs of the very different kinds of audiences. You have to be there ALL THE TIME: days, nights, weekends.
 - ▶ The Arts Council has increasing demand on programs.....needs additional staff, but lacks the staff resources, and the resources to pay people an adequate salary.
 - ▶ Audience behavior has changed. I don't know how to act? I don't know when to clap? Maybe that's not so awful.....
- Additional Issues:
- ▶ Concerned about the art that is created. Concern about the quality of Art that's created in the region. Is the center for "community" arts or virtuostic art.
 - ▶ Media Problem on Long Island
 - ▶ Even if good, people don't come.
 - ▶ Name recognition, Name value. What are we presenting? Are we presenting something to our audiences that is interesting? We put forth such effort.....
 - ▶ There is a great deal of fear in taking risks. If we do that edgy show---we'll have to compensate for the ticket income that's lost with something else.
 - ▶ There is a lot less altruism.....not philanthropic...now it's about, What are we going to get in return? More marketing. Not so many patrons
 - ▶ Need resources. According to LI United Way, Suffolk is one of the lowest per capita giving counties in the nation. Individual Giving is down. Corporate Giving is down. Municipal is level.....or non existent. County is low, but level. State is down.
 - ▶ The government has bought into the Economic development issues. People get member items....it's new....
 - ▶ Board Training is an issue. Board doesn't even know what it is. Staff does more fundraising than board does. Boards should be give or get. Board and staffs working as teams.....
 - ▶ Facility is a constant drain; always something: Old spaces in need of repair. Others are large, cavernous and expensive to maintain.
 - ▶ Collaborations take a lot of time and effort.

- ▶ New Roger Tilles group up and running and there is a steep price to pay...\$5,000.....and then you're on the board. A great concept.....keeps coming up that maybe group should be part of the LIA, the LICVB etc. Concern that there is competition for dollars. Marketing and promotional group.
- ▶ Addition to the hotel motel tax failed.
- ▶ The arts need more of a concerted presence together.
- ▶ Suffolk County Office of Cultural Affairs director Michelle Stark was appointed to the board of the LICVB. Additionally, the Arts Councils in Suffolk County will meet with the director of the LICVB....with the meeting targeted for early fall. Increased pressure doesn't hurt. Other groups should meet with the LICVB....like missioned organizations getting together.
- ▶ Wondering if it would be possible to create some unified. LI Portal....and then market that. Got to create it, got to staff it.
- ▶ We are just a flourishing artistic community—optimistic, despite cut backs.

<p style="text-align: center;">FAST FORWARD: FRAMING THE FUTURE SUMMARY OF BREAKOUT DISCUSSIONS</p>
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*Note: Questions within each particular category were solicited from the field to determine the relevant issues to our constituents and are individually attributed when applicable.

“ORGANIZATIONAL HEALTH”... Diana Cherryholmes, Facilitator

- ▶ How do we measure Organizational Health? (*Anne Ackerson*)
- ▶ Looming Executive Director turnover in the field. How do you transition leadership and still maintain an effective, viable organization? (*Richard Driscoll*)
 - ▶ With a limited paid staff, what organizational structure allows the maximum amount of work to be done? (*Annette Schweiger*)
 - ▶ What is the nature and delivery of our services and programs in a technology-oriented, time deficient culture? (*Anne Ackerson*)
 - ▶ What is the best approach to attract, organize, and keep volunteers?

What are the “good bones” of an organization?

Bylaws, staff and committee structures, procedural systems in place, job descriptions, and a succession plan designed by the Board as part of strategic planning; board commitment

1. Measurement: What’s to be measured: attendance, volunteering, financial; we need to understand our “reach”, that is our demographics, our community involvement; we need to understand the importance and scope of technology/Web in reaching current and new audiences (tech audit)

We need to look at and understand growth: of program, finances, attendance, staff-retention; membership, board participation (committees, fundraising, attendance); community perception

Instruments to measure? Maryland Association of Nonprofits has good information

2. The organization of the Board: its leadership, diversity, and participation; its ability to fundraise. Do boards retreat to take that step back for review? Do they involve community participation in the visioning of the organization’s future?

Promote from within or look to the outside?; need to institutionalize values, mission and goals at the board level, have a stable board; outgoing ED to provide a lengthy departure notice; internal infrastructure in place with job descriptions, HR handbook and policies.

3. Staff: providing a living wage, benefits; retention; commitment to professional development

How can we improve salary structure and benefits? We need to create budgets with real salaries, and we need to educate boards so that they are supporters of this. Funders need education, too.

Staff issues: staying on task; using flowcharts to keep on task; restructuring duties to cover many bases; getting rid of the “that’s not my job” mentality; sharing staff with other orgs; outsourcing; building/keeping morale; keeping the passion; use of interns; collaboration

4. Delivery of service/program in a tech-oriented, time-deficient culture: email is not a panacea – it's great for delivering information, but it doesn't replace face-to-face interaction. How do we overcome the generational divide of the technological have's and have not's?

We must become tech savvy; printed materials are still valuable and needed, though. Technology is a way to reach new audiences. Need for technological technical assistance.

5. Volunteers – getting and keeping: valuable assets who need defined roles, goals and a measure of autonomy/empowerment; treat as valuable donors; understand their motivations for volunteering; thank them. Board members are a source of volunteer recruitment.

“THE ROAD TO SOLVENCY”... Sarah Lentini, Facilitator

- ▶ Where is the tipping point between philanthropy and entrepreneurship and how can we recognize or anticipate it? (*Anne Ackerson*)
- ▶ What are the collaborative and entrepreneurial opportunities available to us or that we can make happen (*Anne Ackerson*)
- ▶ What are some examples of collaborations that work between for profit and not for profit to their mutual benefit? (*Terri Osborne*).
- ▶ Private Giving Opportunities? Partnership Opportunities. Alternative and Government Funding?
- ▶ What are some earned income sources besides membership, admissions, gift shop, special events? (*Terri Osborne*)

How do we fund our work?

- Memberships and contributions
- corporate support – it has eroded; will it come back?
- Endowment funds
- Rental of space, shops, sales galleries, and other entrepreneurial ventures
- Using the Internet to raise funds

Important to balance mission and entrepreneurship; also legal ramifications of fundraising.

Good Business Practices

- look at outdated notions, live the mission
- present yourself as a place someone wants to invest in
- articulate how you can benefit the community
- invest in “possibility”; be innovative
- “not disconnected”; embrace opportunities
- think big; make a good impression
- understand that there's often not a difference between profit and nonprofit in how you operate
- offering medical benefits
- connect more squarely with business; creativity is the root of successful businesses
- partnering with companies such as IDEO that teach businesses how to be innovative (Lentini is doing this)

Where is funding coming from now and what do we foresee in the future?

- collaborations/partnerships, such as inserts in the local papers with overrun for the group's distribution; cultural tourism projects (www.DiscoverQueens.com); advertising on websites; educational programming (art gym, artists on location at businesses with an auction of their work at the end of the day); with museums for class space
- class offerings, art camps, art birthday parties
- space rentals to preschools, theatre companies; small banquets
- corporate funding for specific programs
- bed tax funds
- group tour development
- music coaching program in public schools
- BOCES matching funds
- Recording studios; CD production/sales
- Artist coop galleries: 80% of sales go to artist; must be a member
- Open painting day each week
- Workshops – poets and writers
- Tourism grants; DEC grants
- Chopin piano competition
- Fiber and needle arts shop to support classes; other supplies?
- Publications; representative artists
- Symposia
- Student training; mentoring
- Websites that can accept donations/memberships
- Creating virtual organizations

“ADVOCACY /MARKETING”... Elaine Giguere, Facilitator

- ▶ What steps can we take to raise the profile of the arts on all levels -- general public, government and business -- at the local, state and national levels? (*Elaine Giguere*)
- ▶ Lack of cohesive voice and effective message-making and delivery that advocates for the field. Absence of legislative and political will in both houses to restore NYSCA line and its subsets to pre-1990 level (*Richard Driscoll*)
- ▶ What are the key elements to effective lobbying? How is information best presented? (*Annette Schweiger*)
- ▶ What tools are we going to need for information, training, technology and marketing?
- ▶ What makes a website really work? (*Annette Schweiger*)

Advocacy and marketing are both about making your case and targeting your story. Why does art matter?

- arts give “safety” and a sense of “community” in times of catastrophe
- arts have both extrinsic and intrinsic value – education; art for art's sake
- arts are a basic human need – just as there are many types of hunger
- arts are more than product – “we don't make widgets”
- arts are a “human service”, creating community & giving people a voice

Ask your constituents about why art matters and use their responses in your advocacy and marketing work.

Advocacy goes beyond funding and government sources – it has many levels with many stakeholders that could

- encourage consortiums
- drive funder discussions about the need for a new vision for arts organizations and new models for organizational development, program design/delivery, audience development, merger or consolidation – “a grand scheme for NYS”
- work collaboratively to solve the problems of a field under stress
- shape public policy, as well a funder policy

How do we sell General Operating Support in a different way? Maybe it’s about tourism, economic development; or maybe it’s about advocating for the artists themselves who are the lifeblood of our field.

Marketing/Communication: the Internet is good for research, surveying, and information delivery, but it is no substitute for face-to-face advocacy. Aim for seamlessness between the arts and community.

“CHANGE”... Kay Stamer, Facilitator

- ▶ What have you seen in your lifetime that has been a powerful positive change in the human condition? Why did it happen? (*Philip Morris*)
- ▶ If it makes sense to break all the rules to revision our futures, which rules get broken first? What would the "new normal" look like? (*Anne Ackerson*)
- ▶ Whose art is it anyway? And why should anyone care about it? (*Anne Ackerson*)
- ▶ What do you fear about change?

What have you seen in your lifetime that has been a powerful positive change in the human condition?

- Civil Right Movement
- Health care and medicine – people living longer with better quality of life
- Increase in the standard of living
- More accessibility to art (not just for elites anymore) – art is now being supported by a broad base of people, not just well-heeled patrons

Why have these changes been successful? People banded together to make change happen. Who are the leaders?

- arts leaders/orgs who facilitate artists – requires passion, infrastructure, a willing board
- government and funders
- artists
- are arts leaders perceived as professional?

Art is personal. Must identify the creation of art with the commerce of art. Must know your audience – demographics, real estate, population movement, trends. Art is still perceived as elitist; more education needed; must engage younger generations; must embrace technology.

- Advocacy; market targeted
- speak and understand different groups (educators, youth, artists, etc.)
- more professional development needed, especially for smaller organizations

Arts service organizations: how to survive? Must adapt, stay relevant. There's a perception that service organizations and producers of art, but both are providers of art to communities.

How to gain relevancy? Redefinitions needed regarding service, quality, value. Know audience; understand various constituents; collaborate and interact with communities; it's not "our" art; encourage constituent ownership; network

Can support be sustained by community if not government funding is available? It depends on how you define community; how broad you make it. Too much "funder driven" mentality – we must form different relationships with government and funders – one of partnership.

"MOTIVATIONS"... Martha Strodel, Facilitator

- ▶ What motivates you, your friends, your town? What can you do about it? (*Philip Morris*)
- ▶ What are the obstacles to achieving success? What are some strategies for overcoming these obstacles? (*Anne Ackerson*)
- ▶ What does it mean to lead? To communicate? (*Philip Morris*)
- ▶ How to stay relevant in a changing environment?

Motivation must span generations and cultural communities. Who are we trying to motivate?

- Ourselves
- underserved audiences
- the wider public: younger generations (under 30) are the bridge to building new audience/support
- board
- staff
- youth
- media
- funders

What motivates us?

- crises, such as financial, physical, other people
- getting an outside view of a situation
- opportunities that come our way or that we make happen
- external forces; internal issues
- challenges; uncomfortable environments
- passion for mission
- mentoring; leadership
- self-assessment
- a specific task or issue that needs to be addressed
- asking for help; seeing results
- pleasure, fun, recognition
- change
- creativity; creative problem solving
- pride in heritage, culture, community
- empowerment
- desire to socialize across generations (board, audience, staff)

What do we want others to do?

- see the value in what we do
- attend and participate
- support us financially and as volunteers
- see our needs

What must we do first?

- we must become/stay relevant; we must be a mirror of the community; the community must be reflected in the staff and board
- attract youth audiences: with new arts; encourage board service; partner with colleges, elementary and high schools; offer scholarship programs and internships for youth
- work to know and participate in your community; establish formal and informal relationships, such as hold open meetings, meet the media, use surveys and focus groups; use folklorists to find out about communities; use audience word of mouth, guerilla marketing
- make sure you've done all you can to welcome and engage the community
 - deal with access issues
- provide genuine connections to diverse communities
- provide access to the creative process as a way to eliminate elitism of the arts
- encourage new/younger blood to get involved with our organizations – new board members want a meaningful role

Leadership

- leaders need to be out front but stay connected to the troops' interests
- leaders need to creatively solve problems
- leaders need to understand the needs of the staff to motivate them
- leaders need to focus team on mission and provide direction and act

PARTICIPANTS IN THE 2005 REGIONAL FORUMS AND FAST FORWARD

** denotes regional captain*

Marilyn Aitken, Tilles Center for the Performing Arts
Claire Aubrey, Carnegie Arts Center
Sharon Ball, Broome County Council on the Arts
Dr Anthony Bannon, George Eastman House,
Patricia Berman, Alliance of New York State Arts Organizations
Molly Bethel, Locust Street Art
Patti Lockwood-Blais, Earleville Opera House
Laurene Buckley, Castellani Museum
Dan Camenga, Sonnenberg Mansion and Gardens
***Diana Cherryholmes**, Huntington Arts Council
Susie Chodorow, Arts & Cultural Council for Greater Rochester
Miki Conn, Hamilton Hill Arts Center
Ned Corman, The Commission Project
Sharon Cropper, Hamilton Hill Arts Center
Susan Daul, North Country Cultural Center
Fred DeFeis, Arena Players
***Richard Driscoll**, Community Arts Partnership
Kim Driscoll, Cattaraugus Arts Council
Carolyn Fischer, Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra
June Foster, Rochester Film and Video Office
Charles Franklin, Arts Council in Buffalo and Erie County
Linda Furey, Huntington Arts Council
Michael Futter, Arts & Cultural Council for Greater Rochester
Andrea Galey, Niagara Art Center
Betty Garrison, Dream Catchers Creations
Dick Garth, Little Theatre
***Elaine Giguere**, Delaware Valley Arts Alliance
Rahwa Gihirmatzion, Ujima Company
Peter Goodman, consultant
Caitlin Gray, Catskill Mountain Foundation
Janice Gouldthorpe, Genesee Cener for Arts and Education
Dave Granville, Volunteer former director of the Arts Commission for the City of Buffalo
Glaire Gunther, Arts & Cultural Council for Greater Rochester
Elaine Harrigan, Keenan Center
Sandy Hinden, Dix Hills Center for the Performing Arts
Paul Hogan Sr. Program Officer of The Oshei Foundation
Kathryn Hollinger, Genesee Valley Council on the Arts
Debbi Honorof, Friends of the Arts
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Vanessa Kellogg, Northport Chorale
Seymour Knox, Alliance Board Member
Kate Koperski, Castellani Museum
Sara Krusenstjerna, Young Audiences
***Celeste Lawson**, Arts Council in Buffalo and Erie County

Barbara Park Leggett, Explore and More Children's Museum
***Sarah Lentini**, Arts & Cultural Council for Greater Rochester
Polly Little, Hallwalls
Bill Lebach, Depot Theater
Charlene Ritter Lester, Director Arts Sports and Tourism for Erie County
Henry McCartney, The Landmark Society of Western New York
Philip Morris, Proctors Theater
Sunita S. Mukhi, Charles B. Wang Center Sony Brook University,
Ken Neufeld, Studio Arena Theater
Carol Nichol, Northport Chorale
Eva Nicklas, Lewiston Arts Council
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The **Alliance of New York State Arts Organizations** has a 30-year history as New York's service association for community based arts and cultural organizations. The Alliance provides leadership and vision, and delivers services, resources and tools that strengthen cultural organizations. The Alliance informs the field on statewide and national issues affecting the arts and assists local arts agencies in building community support.

Alliance programs include a **Rural Arts Initiative** with dedicated staff to provide organizational development and one-on-one assistance to 33 organizations serving over half the counties of the State. Statewide **Arts Meetings** provide new skills and networking opportunities for arts administrators, board members and artists. **Training** workshops, **OnLine Live!**, a new interactive training and meeting program, professional **consultancies** and the **Regional Captain Network** provide unique professional development opportunities. **Site visits** and **regional partnerships** are supported by Alliance staff. A vast **electronic network** informs the field and mobilizes the arts community for annual events like **Arts Day in Albany**, the **New York State Cultural Development Areas Project** as well as for **information and training sessions**. **Publications and directories, networking and referrals** round out the information services.

Professional Development and Technical Assistance

- Discount on Professional Development Training Opportunities
- On Site Service of Rural Arts Manager
- Professional Consulting Services and Referrals
- Staff Site Visits
- OnLine Live! Training Seminars

Information Services

- www.theallianceny.org
- Referrals
- Networking
- Electronic Communications
- Personnel & Benefit Analysis
- Regional Captain Network
- Cyber Publications: Monthly Member Memos, Consulting Resources for NYS Arts Organizations, Challenge & Opportunity: A Post 9/11 Assessment of the New York State Arts Community, Growing Your Organization

Public Policy

- NYS Representation in Regional Forums
- Arts Day
- National Arts Advocacy in Washington DC
- NYS Cultural Development Areas Project

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