



NATIONAL  
ENDOWMENT  
FOR THE ARTS

---

A great nation  
deserves great art.

*Strategic Plan: FY 2006 - 2011*

November 2006

BLANK PAGE

# National Endowment for the Arts

## *Strategic Plan: FY 2006 - 2011*

### ***Vision***

A Nation in which artistic excellence is celebrated, supported, and available to all.

### ***Mission***

To support excellence in the arts, both new and established; bring the arts to all Americans; and provide leadership in arts education.

### ***Goals***

#### **1. Access to Artistic Excellence**

To encourage and support artistic excellence; preserve our cultural heritage; and provide access to the arts for all Americans.

#### **2. Learning in the Arts**

To advance arts education for children and youth.

#### **3. Partnerships for the Arts**

To develop and maintain partnerships that support excellence in the arts, both new and established; bring the arts to all Americans; and provide leadership in arts education.

#### **4. Management**

To enable the Arts Endowment to achieve its mission through effective, efficient, and responsible management of resources.

***Areas of Special Emphasis***

**1. National Initiatives**

A grants program that serves the American people by creating large model programs of indisputable artistic merit and broad public reach accompanied by substantive educational materials for schools, students, and teachers. The strategy embodies the agency's four-pronged commitment to artistic excellence, public accessibility, arts education, and partnership.

**2. International Activities**

Programs that support the presentation of American arts and artists at international venues; encourage exchanges of U.S. artists with artists of other nations; indemnify art objects from other countries for the purpose of exhibition in the U.S.; and sponsor presentations of the work of foreign artists in the United States.

# Section 1

## OVERVIEW

### Introduction

The National Endowment for the Arts was established by Congress 40 years ago on the premise that an “advanced civilization must not limit its efforts to science and technology alone, but must give full value and support to the other great branches of scholarly and cultural activity.”<sup>1</sup> While the arts must remain primarily a matter for local and private initiative, the Arts Endowment has a responsibility to promote access to art for all Americans, preserve cultural heritage, foster creative talent, improve arts education, and present the best American art to American and foreign audiences. Today, the National Endowment for the Arts is the standard-bearer of public funding, the nation’s leading institution for the promotion of the arts and arts education. Each year, it gives out more than 2,000 grants exceeding \$100 million, funding the arts in all 50 States and six U.S. jurisdictions, including rural areas, inner cities, and military bases.

The substantial role the National Endowment for the Arts has played in promoting the arts has conferred upon the Agency a strong profile in public life. The Arts Endowment has been instrumental in nurturing support for the key arts institutions and major cultural events of our time, including the design competition for the Vietnam Veterans Memorial; the American Film Institute; support for hundreds of exhibitions introducing millions of Americans to great artworks from abroad, beginning with the 1976 King Tut exhibit (“Treasures of Tutankhamen”); the Monterey Jazz Festival; PBS’s *Great Performances* series; and Spoleto Festival USA. During the 1970s and 1980s, the Arts Endowment helped establish a vast system of regional theaters, opera and dance companies, and orchestras that have become part of the fabric of communities dispersed across the States.

The awards the Arts Endowment gives to organizations have a multiplying effect. A grant from the Arts Endowment bestows upon an organization the imprimatur of excellence, and every grant dollar helps the recipient generate an estimated seven dollars in additional support from other sources.

The Arts Endowment has been instrumental in building an infrastructure of partnerships among Federal, regional, State, and local agencies, private foundations, and the business community. The 56 State and jurisdictional arts agencies, along with their six regional arts organizations, cooperate with the Arts Endowment to distribute Federal support for projects that benefit local communities. Recently, the Arts Endowment is engaged internationally through sponsorship of programs that showcase the best American arts, foster artistic exchange, and increase world recognition of the excellence and vibrancy of American culture.

---

<sup>1</sup> From 20 U.S.C. § 951

Another way in which the Arts Endowment serves the American people is through its Office of Research and Analysis. Apart from compiling data on the Agency's grantmaking operations, the Office issues detailed reports on significant topics affecting artists, arts educators, and arts organizations, and documents important arts trends in U.S. society of interest to foundations, philanthropic enterprises, the media, and the general public. One such report was *Reading at Risk: A Survey of Literary Reading in America*. Released in July 2004, the report showed that reading rates, for literature in particular and books in general, had declined dramatically in the preceding ten years, especially among young adults. Because of the importance of reading to workplace skills, active citizenship, and a vibrant culture, the findings of *Reading at Risk* sent reverberations through the publishing, educational, writing, and scholarly worlds, providing reliable information on behavioral trends affecting the strength and security of the Nation.

As an agency funded with taxpayer dollars, the Arts Endowment takes full responsibility for serving the American people and maintaining the public trust. This strategic plan presents the Agency's goals for the next six years, with performance measures in accordance with the Government Performance and Results Act.

### **Programs and Operations**

To fulfill its legislative mandate to promote the arts and arts education in America, the Arts Endowment has developed grant programs, National Initiatives, leadership activities, and partnerships. The Agency's primary task is to award matching grants for arts projects conducted by non-profit organizations. Annually, the Agency also provides non-matching individual fellowships in literature, and honorary fellowships in jazz and the folk and traditional arts. Forty percent of the Arts Endowment's grantmaking funding goes to the 56 State and jurisdictional arts agencies and their six regional arts organizations. All applications are reviewed on the basis of artistic excellence and merit by panels of citizen experts that make recommendations to the National Council on the Arts, which then recommends them to the Chairman.

Leadership activities and partnerships take other forms as well, with the shared goal of advancing the arts significantly and demonstrating national or field-wide importance. One example is the *National Medal of Arts*, the highest award given to artists and arts patrons by the United States Government; the non-monetary Medal is awarded annually by the President, based on recommendations from the National Council on the Arts. The Arts Endowment also works with outside entities to develop initiatives that encourage public knowledge, education, understanding, appreciation of, and access to, the arts through a variety of media including film, radio, and video.

**Access to Artistic Excellence** grants support projects that promote artistic excellence, preserve cultural heritage, and broaden access to the arts in communities throughout the country. Matching grants go directly to organizations and range from \$5,000 to \$150,000. One grant category within Access to Artistic Excellence is **Challenge America: Reaching Every Community**, a special program that extends the reach of the arts to underserved populations. Grants support local projects that bring the arts to communities traditionally limited by geographic or economic barriers.

Arts education is a primary concern of the Arts Endowment, and the increasing financial and curricular pressures on public schools and after-school programs have brought a new urgency to the field. Through **Learning in the Arts for Children and Youth**, the Arts Endowment raises the quality and availability of arts education for our young citizens. Projects engage skilled artists and qualified teachers to help students experience, study, or perform in different art disciplines. In accordance with the “No Child Left Behind Act,” projects also must assess student learning according to national, State, or local arts education standards.

The Arts Endowment recognizes the achievements of outstanding artists through four special programs. **Literature Fellowships** are awarded to creative writers (\$20,000) and translators (\$10,000 and \$20,000) of exceptional talent to provide them with time for writing, research or translation. The **NEA Jazz Masters Fellowships** honor lifetime achievement by musicians, vocalists, and critics in celebrating one of America’s great artistic contributions to the world with a \$25,000 award. The **NEA National Heritage Fellowships** (\$20,000) go to individuals who have contributed to the excellence and endurance of the folk and traditional arts. The **National Medal of Arts**, as previously mentioned, honors artists and arts patrons for their outstanding contributions to American culture, and is the highest award given to artists and arts patrons by the Federal government. The Arts Endowment’s National Council on the Arts nominates potential recipients to the President, who makes the decision and presents the awards annually.

To provide leadership in promoting excellence in the arts and arts education, the Arts Endowment has developed a series of **National Initiatives**. Current National Initiatives include:

***American Masterpieces: Three Centuries of Artistic Genius*** – A program to acquaint Americans with the best of their artistic legacy. Through tours, local presentations, and arts education, citizens young and old experience the finest works of dance, theater, literature, music, visual arts, and folk and traditional arts. The literary component of *American Masterpieces*, ***The Big Read***, provides resources and materials to communities across the country to encourage citizens to read and discuss a single book.

***Shakespeare in American Communities*** – Begun in 2003, to date 1,500 performances have reached more than 1,100 communities in all 50 States, bringing professional theater productions of Shakespeare and related educational activities to Americans of all ages. Through the added component of *Shakespeare for a New Generation*, a special emphasis is placed on reaching middle- and high-school students with limited access to the arts. Multimedia educational materials have reached more than 11 million students.

***NEA Jazz Masters on Tour*** and ***Jazz in the Schools*** – To broaden awareness of America’s jazz heritage, the Arts Endowment sponsors live performances of jazz artists in all 50 States, produces programs of music and interviews with NEA Jazz Masters for radio and television, and has created (in partnership with Jazz at Lincoln Center) a five-unit, Web-based curriculum and multi-media toolkit for use in high school classrooms.

***Poetry Out Loud: National Poetry Recitation Contest*** – A high school program that encourages students to memorize and recite great poetry. The Arts Endowment has

partnered with The Poetry Foundation, which is matching Federal funds dollar for dollar. The 51 State Arts Agencies (including DC) are working with high schools to conduct State-level competitions during Spring 2006. We estimate that more than 1,000 schools will participate, involving 250,000 students. The *Poetry Out Loud* National Finals will take place in Washington, DC in May 2006.

***Great American Voices Military Base Tour: Unforgettable Melodies from Opera & Broadway*** – Continues our efforts to serve military personnel and their families by providing professional performances of well-known opera and Broadway classics at military bases across the country.

***Operation Homecoming: Writing the Wartime Experience*** – A unique literary project to preserve the stories and reflections of U.S. military personnel and their families. In combination with the military services and the Department of Defense, and with substantial private support, the Arts Endowment sponsored workshops conducted by distinguished writers for troops returning from Afghanistan and Iraq, and their spouses, on military installations throughout the country and overseas. The program expanded in 2005 to include a military installation tour of the acclaimed one-man play, “Beyond Glory,” performed by Stephen Lang, bringing to the stage the personal accounts of Medal of Honor recipients. This initiative will come to a close in 2007 with the publication of an anthology of the writing, transfer of writings to the Library of Congress, and production of an educational film about the program and its impact.

***NEA Arts Journalism Institutes*** – Created to improve arts criticism in classical music, opera, theater and dance. The institutes are designed for journalists who cover the arts for print and broadcast outlets located outside the country's largest media markets, where professional development opportunities are limited. Currently, three institutes are held each year: for dance critics, hosted by the American Dance Festival, at Duke University; for classical music and opera critics at Columbia University; and for theater critics at the University of Southern California.

The Arts Endowment has several other **Leadership Initiatives** underway. The ***Arts on Radio and Television*** supports projects for radio and television arts programs that are intended for national broadcast with grants ranging from \$20,000 to \$200,000. ***The Mayors' Institute on City Design*** dates from 1986 and is one of the most successful programs of its kind. Each year, the institute conducts workshops for mayors to meet with design professionals to address civic design and development issues specific to their cities. ***Save America's Treasures*** is a collaborative effort of the National Park Service with three other Federal cultural agencies and Congress to restore the nation's threatened cultural resources. The Arts Endowment's contribution involves the review of applications from nonprofit organizations for the preservation or conservation of nationally significant collections of cultural artifacts and works of art.

## **Summary**



### ***Access and Funding***

The arts in the United States are extraordinarily complex and fertile. Americans may experience the arts through a wide array of drama, visual art, dance, music, and literature available in local theaters, museums, libraries, universities, and performance halls, as well as on radio, television, and the Internet. During the last 40 years, the arts and culture sector has boomed as the number of performing arts groups has risen to an all-time high. Brilliant young talents may be found in any field, and skillful writers, visual artists, dancers, musicians, and actors present daily to audiences large and small, rural and urban.

The proliferation of U.S. arts institutions in every region of the country has been mirrored by substantial gains in financial support for the arts. Private philanthropy has increased dramatically since 1965, and public agencies have come into being at the Federal, State, and local levels. In 2003, total arts expenditures at the State level were \$345 million<sup>2</sup>, and at the city and local level an estimated \$770 million<sup>3</sup>. During the stock market boom of the 1990s, private donors created endowments earmarked for the arts, while foundations placed the arts at the center of their portfolios. Large corporations expanded their philanthropy to include the arts, especially in arts education; 47 percent of all businesses gave money to the arts, and those with philanthropic budgets devoted an average of 19 percent of giving to the arts.<sup>4</sup> Much of this was made possible by the incentives of the U.S. tax system, which allows donations to tax-exempt nonprofit organizations to qualify as potential tax deductions.

While the variety and decentralization of funding fosters innovation and diversity in the field, it also has a down side. The dynamic and heavily private nature of the system means that arts funding follows the ups and downs of the overall economy. State arts agency budgets depend largely on State tax revenues, and in the wake of the economic downturn after 9/11, funding in some States plummeted – in California, for instance, State arts agency funding fell from \$20 million in 2003 to \$2 million in 2004<sup>5</sup>. Foundations and corporations, too, alter their philanthropy in response to financial conditions, often leaving arts organizations unable to forecast costs and income more than one year in advance.

The economy affects public education budgets as well, and arts education is particularly vulnerable. The difficulty of sustaining arts programs in schools has been well documented, at the same time that the benefits of arts programs are widely acknowledged. Although the arts are a core subject, many school administrators downplay subjects not tied to standardized testing. Some transfer their arts offerings to magnet schools or share arts teachers among two or three schools at a time.

---

2 National Association of State Arts Agencies (NASAA): Annual Legislative Appropriations Survey.

3 Americans for the Arts: Table on Government Support for the Arts Funding in the annual report on the U.S. Urban Arts Federation.

4 *How the U.S. Funds the Arts*, p. 17.

5 NASAA: Annual Legislative Appropriations Survey.

### ***U.S. Public Participation in the Arts***

The vagaries of funding have their counterpart in trends in public participation. Since 1982, the Arts Endowment's Office of Research and Analysis has tracked audience participation in different art forms, breaking audiences down by age, income, education level, gender, race/ethnicity, region, and other demographic factors. The latest *Survey of Public Participation in the Arts* (SPPA) was conducted in 2002, designed by the Arts Endowment and executed by the U.S. Bureau of the Census. The SPPA tabulated participation rates for music (jazz, opera, classical), dance (ballet, "other"), theater (musical and nonmusical), art museums and art fairs, and literature (fiction, poetry, drama). From 1992 to 2002, while some art forms saw the numbers of participants rise slightly, the percentage of Americans participating in almost every art form declined. Most troubling were the attendance rates for young adults age 18-24. There has been a "graying" of the audience in the United States for many years, but the 2002 study showed that the trend is accelerating. Some findings for 18-24-year-olds:

- participation rates for literary reading fell from 58 to 43 percent
- rates for art museum attendance fell from 28.7 percent to 23.7 percent
- rates for ballet declined from 5.3 percent to 2.6 percent

The trend is an ominous one, marking a deep shift in community life that has economic, technological, and professional origins. This is a transformation the implications of which are yet to be understood.

### ***Policies***

The Arts Endowment has the ability to play a tactical part in the nation's culture and education. Because it is the official arts agency of the United States, the programs it funds, the research it releases, and the events it convenes are expected to represent the best expression of American art.

The Arts Endowment best supports the arts through strategic interventions in arts policy and funding that demonstrate the value of the arts to U.S. society. The Arts Endowment:

- is committed to funding superior programs that bring joy and inspiration to citizens through a rigorous application review process;
- funds programs that foster access to artistic excellence and arts education, and that encourage partnerships;
- funds programs that present the best American art to international audiences;
- encourages discussions about the centrality of the arts to intellectual and community life, presenting an intelligent, evidence-based case for the historical, educational, and moral value of the arts in public life and in individual lives.

***Performance Measures***

The Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) of 1993 mandates that Federal agencies publish a strategic plan covering a six-year period, and that the plan be updated and revised at least every three years. The Act is predicated on the assumption that Federal agencies are accountable for the performance and results of the programs for which public funds are provided.

The Arts Endowment relies upon a number of approaches and techniques to ensure the effectiveness of its programs and policies.

1. *Panel Review.* Advisory Panels assess the merits of grant applications and participate in policy discussions that help assess Agency effectiveness and guide future strategies. These citizen panels are composed of artists, arts professionals, and lay people who are knowledgeable about the arts and the impact of Arts Endowment grants in serving the American people.
2. *Grant Awards.* Awards are made pursuant to application guidelines that articulate the availability of funds for projects and activities consistent with Agency outcomes and goals.
3. *Final Reports.* All award recipients are required to submit final reports. Final reports include narrative, statistical and financial information, and, when required, samples of work created through the supported project. Learning in the Arts grantees are required to align their programs with national, State, or local arts education standards.
4. *Targeted Research.* To compile information necessary to inform policy, the Arts Endowment examines relevant trends in U.S. society, such as the demographics of public participation in the arts and the effects of cultural activity on the economy.
5. *Issue-oriented Convening.* To inform program and policy development, the Arts Endowment organizes discussions with experts and field representatives focused on specific issues, for example, the economic challenges facing artists or a specific arts discipline.

*NEA Strategic Plan: FY 2006-2011*

6. *Qualitative Review.* To weigh the impact and quality of the programs we fund, the Arts Endowment is exploring a review process with several potential components, including:
  - a) *Sampling.* Each year, the Agency will randomly select up to 10 funded and completed grants for review.
  - b) *Independent Evaluators.* The Arts Endowment's qualitative reviews will include independent evaluators.
  - c) *Analysis.* Reviewers may visit the site of the project and observe at least one performance, exhibit or presentation; examine the grantee's final narrative and financial reports; gauge the project's impact; and prepare a summary.
  - d) *Agency Review.* The summaries will be submitted to the Chairman's Office for review and assessment.

## **Section 2**

# **STRATEGIC GOALS**

### **Strategic Goal #1: ACCESS TO ARTISTIC EXCELLENCE**

#### **Program Outcome Goals**

Through direct grant awards:

- **Artists and arts organizations have opportunities to create, interpret, present, and perform artistic work;**
- **Artistic works and cultural traditions are preserved;**
- **Audiences throughout the Nation have opportunities to experience a wide range of art forms and activities;**
- **The arts contribute to the strengthening of communities;**
- **Organizations enhance their ability to realize their artistic and public service goals.**

#### **Rationale**

The National Endowment for the Arts provides access to the arts throughout the Nation by encouraging applications from a variety of organizations, selecting the best projects, and awarding grants of money. Although government funds represent only a small fraction of the total support to non-profits for arts projects, the Arts Endowment nonetheless plays a vital, catalytic role in providing financial incentives that help to: encourage artistic creation; encourage the presentation of both new and established art works; preserve our cultural heritage; and enable Americans to participate in the experience of the arts through tours and presentations in communities throughout America.

**Strategies**

The Arts Endowment will **encourage and support excellence in the arts, both new and traditional, support the preservation of our cultural heritage, and provide access to the arts for all Americans** through the careful review of applications and the award of grants for:

- Creation of new works, including commissions
- Regional and/or national tours
- Home-base productions, performances and presentations
- Exhibitions
- Festivals
- Publication and distribution of literary fiction
- Readings
- Screenings
- Artists' communities and residencies
- Professional development and training
- Individual fellowships for creative writing and translation
- Preservation of cultural heritage
- Conservation
- Documentation
- Multi-State presentations
- Broadcasts
- Audience Development

**Strategic Goal #1, Access to Artistic Excellence, Performance Measures:**

- **Total number and aggregate dollar value of grants which encourage and support artistic creativity**
- **Total number and aggregate dollar value of grants which support the preservation of our cultural heritage**
- **Total number and aggregate dollar value of grants which make the arts more widely available**
- **Total number of concerts/readings/performances**
- **Total number of works conserved, repaired, restored, documented**
- **Total number of residencies**
- **Total number of individuals benefiting from projects (divided into broadcasting and non-broadcasting) which make the arts widely available**

**Qualitative measure:** In addition to the quantitative measures of **Access to Artistic Excellence** programs, a **qualitative evaluation process** is currently being explored at the Arts Endowment. Given our available resources, we are considering a process that, each year, will gather a small sample from the programs funded and assign an independent evaluator to assess the project's quality and impact.

## **Strategic Goal #2: LEARNING IN THE ARTS**

### **Program Outcome Goals**

- **Children and youth demonstrate skills, knowledge, and/or understanding of the arts, consistent with national, State, or local arts education standards;**
- **Teachers, artists, and others demonstrate knowledge and skills necessary to engage children in arts learning, consistent with national, State, or local arts education standards;**
- **National, State, and local entities demonstrate a commitment to arts learning for children and youth, consistent with national, State, or local arts education standards.**

### **Rationale**

The Arts Endowment maintains that all children, not only those with special artistic talent, should be educated in the arts. The opportunity to study artistic traditions, and to create and perform in different artistic media, is essential to the development of informed, active citizens and necessary for the maintenance of a vibrant democratic nation.

Through its support of projects, national and leadership initiatives, and partnership efforts under the Learning in the Arts goal, the Arts Endowment plays a vital role in helping children and youth acquire knowledge, skills, and understanding of the arts.

In accordance with the “No Child Left Behind Act,” which identifies the arts as a core academic subject and insists on standards-based curricula, the Arts Endowment has taken a leadership role in promoting the arts as a serious discipline of study and participation. In the United States today, a large segment of the youth population has never witnessed a live theatre performance or visited a museum. Affirming that exposure to different arts disciplines is an essential element in education, the Arts Endowment is instituting a rigorous program that builds knowledge and skills in the arts, and tests students to measure their proficiency.



## Strategies

- **Implement a grants application and review process that**
  - **supports projects that engage youth in studying artistic traditions, developing artistic skills, and performing in artistic media;**
  - **develops strong arts curricula and effective teaching practices;**
  - **identifies model programs that may be replicated elsewhere.**

For example, the national initiative *Shakespeare for a New Generation* provides funding to theater companies and festivals to conduct education outreach programs involving performances of Shakespeare for youth audiences. Similar firsthand engagement with the arts and classroom instruction are part of the *NEA Jazz Masters*, *American Masterpieces*, and *The Big Read* initiatives.

- **Address structural and curricular deficiencies in arts education in schools by developing and supporting complementary projects.** For example:
  - *National Endowment for the Arts Summer Schools in the Arts for Children and Youth*, a program of funding for intense, multi-week immersions in the arts for students during the summer months.
  - *National Endowment for the Arts Teacher Institutes*, a summer program of rigorous instruction for teachers focused on in-depth learning about artistic masterworks and on effective assessment of arts learning.
  - *National Endowment for the Arts School Leader Institutes*, a symposium convened in selected States in which teams of State leaders, superintendents, principals, and others develop strategic plans for increasing and improving arts education in their schools.
- **Provide reliable and useful information to arts educators and arts education organizations.** The Arts Endowment commissions and/or funds studies related to the field. These include surveys of arts participation among young adults and arts course-taking by college students, and fast-response surveys documenting the presence of arts programs in the public schools.

**Strategic Goal #2, Learning in the Arts, Performance Measures:**

- **Total number and aggregate dollar value of grants which support arts education programs**
- **Number of concerts/readings/performances**
- **Number of residencies**
- **Number of projects devoted to professional development of teachers and artists, and number of teachers and artists benefiting**
- **Number of children benefiting from Learning in the Arts-funded programs**
- **Number of artists and teachers participating in Learning in the Arts-funded programs**
- **Number of projects that demonstrate the commitment of National, State, and local entities to arts learning for children and youth**

**Qualitative measure:** In addition to the quantitative measures of **Learning in the Arts** programs, a **qualitative evaluation process** is currently being explored at the Arts Endowment. Given our available resources, we are considering a process that, each year, will gather a small sample from the programs funded and assign an independent evaluator to assess the quality and impact of the project.

## Strategic Goal # 3: PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE ARTS

### Program Outcome Goals

- **Activities supported through partnerships with State arts agencies and regional arts organizations make the arts and arts education widely available.**
- **Activities supported through partnerships with other public and private sector organizations make the arts and arts education widely available.**

### Rationale

Throughout America, numerous publicly- and privately-supported agencies and organizations exist at the regional, State and local levels. Since its inception, the National Endowment for the Arts has been a partner with many of them in pursuing our joint mission to foster the creation, performance, and exhibition of works of art, and to facilitate their delivery in communities large and small, rural and urban, throughout the country.

Our partners include:

- ***Federal agencies***, including the Department of Defense and the Department of Education, that work with the Arts Endowment to carry out projects of mutual interest.
- ***Publicly-supported State arts agencies (SAAs)*** which exist in all 50 States, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, and the Northern Marianas. Through this national program, funded by 40 percent of the Arts Endowment's annual grantmaking appropriation, these vital partners join with the Arts Endowment in supporting arts projects.
- Six principal ***regional arts organizations (RAOs)***, created by State arts leaders in partnership with the Arts Endowment and the private sector to serve the needs of citizens in specific geographic regions of the nation.
- ***Private sector organizations***, including The Boeing Company and Verizon in recent years, which help the Agency implement its national initiatives.

**Strategies**

- **Collaborate with Federal partners** to provide grants and support programs that advance the missions of all participating agencies;
- **Support State arts agency efforts** to provide grants to organizations and individuals in as many communities as possible;
- **Support regional arts organization efforts** to tour and present high-quality performing, visual and literary arts throughout the Nation.

**Strategic Goal #3, National Partnerships for the Arts, Performance Measures:**

- **Number and aggregate dollar value of grants to Federal and State arts agencies (basic operating portion only)**
- **Number and aggregate dollar value of grants to regional arts organizations (basic operating portion only)**
- **Number of national initiatives undertaken in partnership with public and private sector organizations**
- **The number of individual communities reached through partnership programs**

**Qualitative measure:** In addition to the quantitative measures of **National Partnerships for the Arts** programs, a **qualitative evaluation process** is currently being explored at the Arts Endowment. Given our available resources, we are considering a process that, each year, will gather a small sample from the partnerships created and assign an independent evaluator to assess their quality and impact.

## **Strategic Goal # 4: MANAGEMENT**

The Arts Endowment is a high-performing and publicly accountable organization committed to supporting excellence in the arts, both new and established; bringing the arts to all Americans; and providing leadership in arts education through the fair and responsible awarding of grants, cooperative agreements and contracts, and through national initiatives, leadership, and research and analysis. Paramount to all of its activities is the application of sound business practices, effective and responsible use of resources, and innovative and dynamic leadership. Thus, the Agency's management goal is:

*To enable the Arts Endowment to achieve its mission through effective, efficient, and responsible management of resources.*

Achievement of this goal is intended to result in five outcomes, which we identify below along with the strategies necessary to ensure their implementation.

### **1. Service to the public is improved** through the following strategies:

- Regularly examine the information provided to and required of applicants for grants, cooperative agreements, and contracts, with the intent of streamlining and simplifying wherever possible.
- Ensure high-quality and fair application review by knowledgeable experts, complying with legislative, Federal, and Agency policies and regulations.
- Use technology to improve application and award processing, including such functions as application submission and award administration.
- Improve access to and the availability of information to the public concerning Agency planning, programming, budget, and research and analysis activity, particularly through the use of the Agency's website.
- Ensure appropriate competition in Agency grant, cooperative agreement, and contract activity.

### **2. Overall operations are improved** through the following strategies:

- Improve internal business processes through the application of technology.
- Continually evaluate – and revise as necessary – policies, procedures, and processes.

*NEA Strategic Plan: FY 2006-2011*

- Actively participate in government-wide work groups concerning changes to existing, or establishment of new, government-wide policies, procedures and/or practices.
- Ensure allocation of program, administrative, and staffing resources that optimize achievement of the Agency's mission in the most effective and efficient manner.

**3. Attention to human capital is recognized as critical to a high-performing, effective, and efficient organization, as demonstrated by the following strategies:**

- Maintain equal opportunity employer status and enforce nondiscrimination laws, rules, regulations, and policies.
- Continue Agency commitment to the recruitment and retention of a talented workforce reflecting the diversity of today's society.
- Ensure that employee competencies are aligned with position requirements.
- Establish individual development plans for every employee, and make desired and relevant training available to staff, consistent with available resources.
- Fill critical vacancies quickly by utilizing the most effective and efficient human resource recruitment tools available.
- Ensure that allocation of positions is appropriate and essential to the business of the Agency, consistent with available resources and Agency priorities.
- Ensure availability of opportunities for employees to participate in work and family-friendly programs.
- Maintain an effective and efficient performance evaluation system, with incentive programs astutely used to recognize and motivate employee performance.

**4. Financial management is improved through the following strategies:**

- Increase use of automated systems in financial management.
- Ensure production of required financial statements according to established deadlines.
- Enhance access to, and timeliness of, financial data to ensure more informed decision-making.

- Enhance communication to staff concerning budget planning, assumptions, and allocations.
- Improve integration of planning, budgeting, and performance.

**5. Organizational alignment contributes to achievement of the Agency's mission and goals** through the following strategies:

- Ensure that organizational structure and reporting and working relationships are clearly aligned with the Agency's Strategic Plan and goals.
- Preserve flexibility in managing work, particularly to ensure that the Agency is able to respond quickly to changing needs and priorities.
- Review Agency staffing and implement appropriate succession planning.
- Ensure staffing structure provides career development opportunities and continuity of operations in the event of staffing changes.

**BLANK PAGE**



## Section 3

# AREAS OF SPECIAL EMPHASIS

### National Initiatives

#### Rationale

Many Americans have never attended a theater or dance performance, visited a museum or gallery space, listened to a live symphony or opera, or read a great work of literature outside a classroom. They are deprived of experiencing the forms and traditions of good art that shape our society and give the most eloquent expression of our humanity. Americans respect the arts, but many lack the time, money, resources, or guidance to participate in them. Many are isolated by geography, living in communities without thriving arts venues and growing up in a world of distractions and diversions that thwart the deep, reflective experiences provided by the arts.

To bring the arts to all individuals in the republic, the Arts Endowment instituted National Initiatives that reach into communities across the Nation. The Arts Endowment continues to foster widespread access to the arts by awarding direct grants to support arts projects conducted by arts organizations scattered throughout the States, as well as by joining in partnership with State Arts Agencies and their Regional Arts Organizations to develop programs of national significance and broad reach. National Initiatives augment these approaches.

The advantages of the National Initiatives are multiple, and each one advances the general mission of the Agency.

- The specific initiatives are national in scope, bringing high quality art to vast populations.
- They fulfill a catalytic function, demonstrating the importance and value of quality art and its benefits to everyday life.
- They engage with regional arts organizations, arts service and leadership organizations, other Federal agencies, and private sector funders in a common cause to introduce Americans, especially the young, to exemplary art and arts education.

The national model also allows for a different kind of activity: the national recognition of the achievement of living artists. Through the *NEA National Heritage Fellowships*, *NEA Jazz Masters*, and the *National Medal of Arts*, the Arts Endowment showcases and celebrates practicing artists for a lifetime of achievement.

**Strategies**

National Initiatives help the Arts Endowment achieve its goals through some unique elements:

- **Provide programs with substantial content for broad national distribution.** To develop programs that reflect the best artistic traditions and strong artistic content, the Arts Endowment consults artists, teachers, and scholars.
- **Select partners capable of administering the program according to the highest managerial standards.** To select partners capable of managing individual projects, the Arts Endowment chooses from applicants with proven track records in the management of large-scale national touring or presenting projects.
- **Select arts organizations capable of presenting the program content according to the highest technical and aesthetic standards.** To select organizations of the highest artistic caliber, capable of presenting the project content, the Arts Endowment invites proposals and subjects them to peer-panel review and recommendation.
- **Ensure a broad, national distribution of the program, targeting rural and urban underserved communities and populations.** To ensure broad geographic distribution, the Arts Endowment uses award competitions in the selection of regions, States and communities where national initiative events will be presented.

## **International Activities**

### **Rationale**

As part of its mission to support artistic creativity, the National Endowment for the Arts has for many years funded the presentation and exhibition of American arts and performances by American artists in foreign lands. International settings allow U.S. artists to interact with colleagues from different cultures, fostering cross-fertilization that has produced an explosion of innovation and creativity during the last 100 years. The benefit works in reverse, too, as residency programs for foreign artists bring to American audiences the riches of world arts, crafts, and civilizations.

The Arts Endowment recognizes the value of international contact. An understanding of the excellence of American arts and traditions and the democratic values that nurtured their creation has never been more needed around the world. The advent of globalization and expansion of digital technologies and expanded markets has created an urgent need for cultural understanding.

With the Open World Leadership Center, for instance, the Arts Endowment has joined with the Library of Congress in providing residencies for Russian cultural leaders and artists with American arts organizations, introducing them to an environment that nurtures creativity, encourages diversity, and advances freedom of expression. In another program, since the mid-1980s the Arts Endowment has supported the participation of American artists at international festivals in cooperation with private funders and the U.S. Department of State. The Arts Endowment continues this work through USArtists International, an initiative for U.S. artists to participate in foreign festivals. Such initiatives are important because the heritage of American art and the work of high-quality performing arts groups offer a dynamic and meaningful representation of cultural life in the United States. They provide a deeper perspective on American history, values, and experience than those of the dominant presentations of U.S. popular culture that, today, span the globe.

With the end of the Cold War in the 1990s, when the United States no longer needed to sustain its image in the face of the global threat of communism, the presentation of American artists and arts organizations once conducted by the U.S. Information Agency was reduced. But the catastrophe of 9/11, the instability in the Middle East, Central Asia, and South America, and anti-American feeling in Europe have placed new pressures on American foreign and domestic policy. It is crucial that we offer the best from our artistic past and present, bringing our leading artistic legacies of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century (modernist literature, Abstract Expressionism, blues and jazz, etc.) to audiences for whom “America” only signifies franchises and TV shows. In this effort, the National Endowment for the Arts joins with the U.S. Department of State to play a leadership role in future international arts programs.

**Strategies**

- **Support for American artists and arts groups** for participation in international festivals and tours, and presentation of U.S. artwork in exhibitions held in other countries.
- **Support for artists' residency and touring programs**, including artist exchanges, wherein foreign artists may study, teach or perform in the United States, and their American counterparts have the opportunity to perform, learn, and work abroad.
- **Support for U.S. festivals and exhibitions** that showcase the work of foreign artists, writers, and filmmakers.
- **Indemnity for artwork from foreign countries** being exhibited by U.S. museums or other nonprofit organizations.