

CALIFORNIA ARTS COUNCIL

STRATEGIC PLAN

ADOPTED JANUARY 2014



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MISSION

Advancing California through the arts and creativity.

VISION

Californians thrive from public belief in, and support for creativity and the arts. To that end, we envision a California where:

- the lives of all Californians are enriched by access to and participation in a diverse spectrum of artists and arts and cultural experiences;
- the arts are woven into the fabric of daily life—promoting civic engagement, encouraging collective problem solving and building bridges across cultures;
- the arts enjoy strong, sustained public support;
- the arts ecosystem reflects contributions from all of California’s diverse populations;
- our students are provided with quality arts education so that they can reach their full potential, including advanced education;
- streets, neighborhoods, and communities are revitalized, enriched and enlivened by art and culture;
- creative industries are recognized as crucial to the economy;
- public and private resources for the arts increase and are sustained to more effectively serve the people of California;
- Californians’ artistic contributions mark the long-term legacy of the state;
- the California Arts Council is recognized as an innovative and cutting-edge agency and known as a regional leader among state arts agencies for its exemplary work on behalf of all Californians; and
- the California Arts Council is a source for policy development and builds a strong foundation for the arts in our state.

VALUES

In fulfilling our mission and vision, we take actions that express the following values:

- The arts are a societal cornerstone that bring people together and build community. Arts and culture have a direct impact on the health, welfare, and economic well being of all Californians and their communities.
- Arts education is an essential tool for healthy human development, core curriculum and lifelong learning that must be available to all—during early development years, during and after school, and for all ages.
- This agency has a role to play in increasing access to the arts for Californians who live or work in areas where the arts are scarce, nonexistent, or vulnerable.
- Diversity is embraced as a source of vibrancy for the state of California.
- Development, preservation and care of the state’s artistic resources, including our artists and art organizations, are central to the state’s social, educational and economic growth and, as such, state government has a responsibility to fund the arts in California.
- Distribution of funds and services must be fair and transparent.
- As we engage in partnerships, collaborations, and collective endeavors with other government agencies, private, and nonprofit entities across sectors, we encourage constituents to do the same.
- Further developing and sustaining strong relationships with the Governor and Legislature and encouraging constituents to do the same with local elected officials is essential.
- Best practices, quality research, and emerging models inform our work to provide the highest quality of service to Californians and their communities.
- Being proactive and nimble in responding to changes in the arts and the larger business communities, including how technology has changed how Californians access, create, and distribute the arts is a best practice.

INTRODUCTION

This plan reflects the mission of the California Arts Council (CAC), and lays out a clear vision and discrete steps for achieving the CAC’s strategic goals over the next 3-5 years.

The new strategic plan is intended to speak to a variety of audiences in furtherance of the CAC’s call to serve all Californians: artists and arts organizations, educators, members of the public, workers in the creative economy, elected officials, thought leaders, and members of the private sector.

This plan is grounded in feedback gleaned from extensive outreach to stakeholders throughout California and the best thinking of Council Members and staff. It seeks not only to build upon existing programs and partnerships, but also to develop new ideas and strengthen relationships across the state.

The arts and creativity are of bedrock significance to a population of over 38 million people who enjoy economic advancement, civic engagement, and personal fulfillment from the arts. To achieve increased levels of support, the CAC recognizes the need to ensure that members of the public and decision makers fully understand the extent to which the arts enrich and improve the lives of Californians. To that end, this plan reflects a comprehensive, multi-pronged effort to build public will and resources for the arts and develop champions statewide.

After the nine month planning process, the CAC has identified four strategic pillars and accompanying goals to guide it over the next 3-5 years:





BUILDING PUBLIC WILL AND RESOURCES FOR THE ARTS

GOAL: Ensure strong support for the arts statewide among the public, elected officials, and decision makers.

Public will is crucial to the work of the CAC. As the state agency responsible for advancing California through the arts, building participation and appreciation for the arts is a core function of everything the CAC does. A key component of this work requires making the case for the arts to the public and building relationships with CAC constituents, members of the arts community, elected officials, and other stakeholders, in an effort to secure the resources and other support necessary to sustain the state's arts ecosystem.

Building public will and resources require two separate, distinct steps: first, raising awareness about, and belief in, the value of the arts with those who are not already thinking about this issue; and second, inspiring people to act and take the necessary steps to secure strong support for the arts.

The CAC is uniquely positioned to build public will through its ability to marshal the field and fulfill a role that artists and arts organizations are not always able to assume on their own—to advance a coordinated, organized effort communicating directly with members of the public and elected officials to ensure that the arts are recognized, celebrated, and supported.

OBJECTIVES

1. Activate CAC constituents, the arts community, stakeholders, and the public

Tasks	a. Communicate success stories about the arts locally and statewide
	b. Provide information to arts organizations
	c. Use research as a tool to drive and activate public will
	d. Regularly and proactively communicate with constituents to stay abreast of developments from the field
	e. Consider reinstating an Arts Day with activities in the Capitol as well as at the local level and implement ongoing outreach around its goals
	f. Raise awareness of CAC-funded programs and events
	g. Publish a calendar outlining key CAC events e.g. Council meetings, convenings, grant application deadlines, etc.
	h. Work with State-Local Partners as a key resource for communicating with local elected officials and recognizing excellence in local programs

2. Develop and provide messaging to Californians about the value of the arts and creativity to the state

Tasks	a. Create materials outlining the value of the arts in both print and digital formats
	b. Identify opportunities to garner media coverage of the arts
	c. Develop quotes and background information for reporters on emerging arts issues and legislation
	d. Keep abreast of, and implement as appropriate, best practices in effectively promoting the arts and creativity

3. Build renewed visibility for the arts and the CAC with California's elected officials

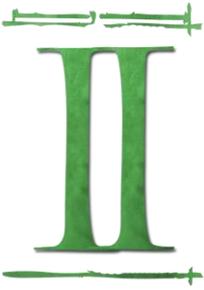
Tasks	a. Develop public hearing strategy around the arts
	b. Develop and leverage state government relationships
	c. Provide information to elected officials regarding the benefits of the arts to their constituents
	d. Encourage communication between constituents and elected officials
	e. Look for targeted opportunities to expose key elected officials to exceptional CAC grantee work

4. Leverage relationships and connections of Council Members within the arts community and throughout the public, private, and nonprofit sectors

Tasks	a. Map and leverage relationships and connections of Council Members within the arts community, the private sector, and local and state government
	b. Create a variety of methods to recognize outstanding work by California artists and arts organizations
	c. Engage with and encourage involvement of alumni Council Members

5. With invigorated public will, work to secure additional resources for CAC programs and services

Tasks	a. Ramp up marketing the California Arts License Plate
	b. Conduct outreach to maximize the potential of the Keep Arts in Schools Fund on state tax returns
	c. Work to identify private sector support for CAC programs
	d. Work to acquire additional general fund monies
	e. Consider entrepreneurial opportunities in order to develop new resources



DIVERSITY, ACCESS, AND PARTNERSHIPS

GOAL: Ensure the CAC’s work is reflective of California’s diverse populations and accessible to all.

Diversity and access informs all of the CAC’s work. The CAC believes that public investment in the arts should reflect the public that funds it. The CAC is committed to being responsive to changing demographics of all types—ethnicity, age, gender, sexual orientation, immigration status, geographic locations, population densities, socio-economic, disability, etc.

The richness and diversity of California is an invaluable asset to the state’s ecosystem. To remain effective, the CAC must regularly engage with all of the various populations that make up California. The CAC is always aiming to expand its footprint into more communities and is committed to developing new partnerships that benefit all Californians.

OBJECTIVES

1. Work to ensure that diverse voices help to shape arts policy

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| Tasks | a. Continue to empanel diverse experts to review grant applications |
| | b. Seek the counsel of diverse stakeholders from both within and outside the arts on an ad hoc basis |
| | c. Nurture ongoing relationships with geographically diverse and culturally-specific arts organizations |
| | d. Cultivate relationships with and seek the input of voices outside the arts |

2. Provide services for California’s diverse population

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| Tasks | a. Continue to pursue working with populations reflective of the rich demographic makeup of California |
| | b. Strive to provide grants, resources and services that serve all geographic regions of the state |
| | c. Work to enhance opportunities (career and participation) in the arts for people with disabilities |

3. Strive to increase accessibility of CAC staff and Council Members

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| Tasks | a. Conduct Council meetings and/or convenings in geographically diverse locations and in venues representing various disciplines and organization sizes |
| | b. Use all methods to ensure accessibility of CAC Staff |
| | c. Strive for geographic, ethnic, and professionally diverse makeup of Council Members and Staff |

4. Use technology to maximize accessibility

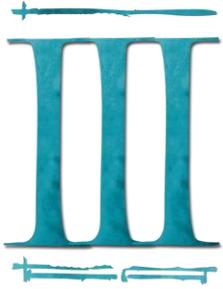
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| Tasks | a. Utilize webinars and other virtual methods to facilitate free and accessible events |
| | b. Provide resources for the field and public via the CAC website and social media platforms |
| | c. Explore the development of online platforms to showcase CAC grantee photos, videos, and stories |
| | d. Maintain an online arts resources library on the CAC website |
| | e. Explore ways to make CAC programs and services accessible to those on the far side of the digital divide |

5. Collaborate and partner with other government agencies to maximize the potential for the integration of the arts across state government

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| Tasks | a. Continue work on arts education with the California Department of Education |
| | b. Ramp up relationships in development with state agencies (such as the Department of Corrections, GoBiz, etc.) |
| | c. Identify state agencies to determine if the arts are or could be incorporated into collaborative work |

6. Pursue collaborations and partnerships with the private sector

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| Tasks | a. Establish list of opportunities conducive to private sector collaboration and conduct outreach to potential partners |
| | b. Participate in events and conferences that draw attendees from the private sector |
| | c. Identify go-to leaders in California’s creative economic industries. Regularly seek their counsel and provide periodic updates on issues of interest to them. |
| | d. Identify businesses that rely on creative people to become champions of the arts, including participation in hearings and outreach to state legislators |



THOUGHT LEADERSHIP

GOAL: Establish the CAC as a leading authority and champion for the arts in California, regionally, and nationally.

California is a magnet for creative people and industries. By operating as a thought leader, the CAC can provide important services not currently available to its constituents that will enable arts organizations to grow and thrive. The CAC can champion the best work of California artists and arts organizations and help to develop new avenues of support for innovative, impactful work.

The CAC has considerable institutional knowledge at its disposal, as well as widespread access to national, regional, and local arts leaders. This focus will help CAC constituents access their counterparts and peers in diverse communities to exchange information and access new resources.

OBJECTIVES

1. Provide leadership and facilitate conversations to address issues where the arts may inform the conversation

Tasks	a. Call on the state’s arts experts and other stakeholders to convene ad hoc task forces on an as needed basis to seek new ideas and input on specific issues
	b. Host in-person and online convenings for arts practitioners and leaders
	c. Pursue opportunities, such as trainings, speaking engagements, panel involvement and conference attendance, etc., for Staff and Council Members to effectively engage and grow their expertise on arts issues
	d. Maintain productive relationships with regional and national arts groups

2. Help shape state and local policy

Tasks	a. Make examples of best practices, success stories, and prototype models available to local arts communities for developing local policies
	b. Explore legislation that would advance the arts
	c. Explore methods to develop new resources for the arts

3. Highlight and promote arts innovation, the value of the arts, and successful arts programs

Tasks	a. Support research that informs various sectors on the value of the arts
	b. Maximize CAC website and newsletters as effective communication tools
	c. Help to develop and publicize successful case studies and grantee stories
	d. Assemble collateral from events and symposia and make available to the field, as appropriate
	e. Honor and recognize artists, arts organizations, arts leaders and supporters
	f. Consider reinstituting a statewide arts award to recognize excellence among California artists

4. Work to provide practical services to working artists and constituent organizations

Tasks	a. Maintain professional development and networking opportunities
	b. Maintain resource library for artists seeking support information
	c. Explore collaborations with arts service organizations to address the needs of the field
	d. Support the development of emerging arts leaders
	e. Promote new and existing strategies to harness the collective buying power of arts organizations



PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

GOAL: Ensure programmatic excellence, effectiveness, and relevance in all of the CAC’s programs and services

Implementing excellent grants programs is a bedrock function of the CAC, as confirmed by input for this Strategic Plan. The CAC is committed to maintaining grants programs that offer support for public access to the arts, lifelong arts education, the state’s cultural infrastructure, and help to working artists. The CAC will proactively embrace innovation by evolving current programs and/or by developing new programs, especially upon any expansion of funding streams, and will consider various methods for funding worthy projects in addition to grants.

OBJECTIVES

1. Effectively manage and evolve CAC resources to address changing needs

Tasks	a. Continue support of arts organizations through grants and services
	b. Provide relevant and valuable technical assistance to arts organizations and artists
	c. Explore avenues of support for individual artists
	d. Leverage public and private partnerships and collaborations to create valuable programs that improve the lives of Californians
	e. Continue to support the California Poet Laureate

2. Keep abreast of current program strategies and best practices in arts grantmaking

Tasks	a. Maximize use of Cultural Data Project to inform programs and services
	b. Identify and support new and innovative ideas, as possible and appropriate
	c. Encourage lifelong arts participation

3. Maintain commitment to arts education

Tasks	a. Sustain funding to Artists in Schools, or a variation on that program
	b. Continue participation in CREATE CA coalition
	c. Explore pilot projects within the field to support innovative models that address systemic change

4. Continually examine CAC grant application eligibility, guidelines, and funding levels

Tasks	a. Examine funding formulas for existing grants programs to ensure that funds are tailored to support organizations according to their needs
	b. Review grant evaluation procedures to ensure accountability and facilitate transparency
	c. Ensure clear, measurable outcomes are met by aligning evaluation requirements with Strategic Plan priorities
	d. Use research to inform actions
	e. Use the expertise of California’s arts community to inform and guide CAC activities

METHODOLOGY

The strategic planning process generated insightful feedback from stakeholders across the state. This plan reflects the best thinking of the CAC's constituent organizations, applicants, grantees, Council Members, staff, consultants, private sector representatives, foundations, government leaders and members of the public.

The CAC conducted a survey and received nearly 1,100 responses regarding the CAC's strategic direction (Appendix I). Between April and October 2013, the CAC Strategic Planning Team (Council Member Task Force Chair and key CAC staff members) and consultants completed nine Listening Tours attended by nearly 350 participants from across California (Appendix II), including two virtual Listening Tours for those unable to attend in person.

The Strategic Planning consultants also conducted one-on-one interviews with key members of the CAC Staff as well as each individual Council Member and distilled their feedback into guidance on the CAC's strengths, weaknesses, and strategic priorities. The consultants also interviewed nearly 70 stakeholders in one-on-one meetings and phone calls with a diverse cross-section of sectors, from working artists and heads of local arts organizations to representatives of private foundations and business leaders (Appendix III).

In July, Council Members and key Staff provided further input into the Strategic Plan in a daylong retreat, where they developed a SWOT analysis (assessment of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) and discussed the CAC's strategic direction. The Strategic Planning Team conducted follow-up interviews with Council Members and maintained regular communication throughout the entire planning process.

Primary Techniques and Timeline:

- **Listening Tour:** Locations: Santa Barbara, Los Angeles, Fresno, Redding, San Francisco, Sacramento, San Jose, San Diego, Orange County. (February-July 2013)
- **Stakeholder Interviews:** August 2013 - January 2014
- **1st Round Council Member Interviews:** July 2013
- **Staff Interviews:** July 2013
- **Retreat:** July 2013
- **Field Survey:** July - September 2013
- **2nd Round Council Member Interviews:** September - November 2013