

Louisiana

*Louisiana Division of the Arts
Bethany A. France, Director of Arts-in-Education*

General Information

Organization Mission Statement

The arts are an essential and unique part of life in Louisiana to which each citizen has a right. The Louisiana Division of the Arts (LDOA), in cooperation with the Louisiana State Arts Council, is the catalyst for participation, education, development, and promotion of excellence in the arts. It is the responsibility of the Division to support established arts institutions, nurture both emerging arts organizations and the state's overall cultural economy, assist individual artists, encourage the expansion of audiences, and stimulate public participation in the arts in Louisiana.

Arts Education Program Overview

The Arts-in-Education Grant Program supports efforts to make the arts part of the basic curriculum for every student in Louisiana schools. It includes an artist-in-residence category that supports programming occurring in Louisiana public, private, alternative, elementary, junior/middle and senior high schools during the school day.

The Arts-in-Education Grant Program supports:

- the infrastructure of a school's or school system's abilities to incorporate the arts in the learning process
- plans to build and strengthen the knowledge base and capacity for arts education
- comprehensive arts education programming of nonprofit arts organizations and the integration of these programs within school(s) learning
- artists in residence at schools

Goals of the Arts-in-Education Grant Program are:

- To create and improve arts education for Louisiana youth
- To support creativity and sustainability of authentic Louisiana culture
- To create an environment that values organizations that foster and support creativity and artists

During the 2007 legislative session, Louisiana made a strong and ambitious move when Senate Bill 299, which garnered an almost unprecedented 57 coauthors, received unanimous approval in both the House and Senate and was signed by the governor as Act 175. Act 175 requires "the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education to develop, adopt, and provide for the implementation of a visual arts curriculum and a performing arts curriculum in public schools." Act 175 has been used as a catalyst to begin focusing on the creation of fully art integrated schools. Six art integrated schools will be piloted during the 2010/2011 school year.

Grant Programs

Types of Arts Education Grant Programs

- Artists-in-residence program

Groups Eligible for Grant Programs

- public schools
- private/nonparochial schools
- private/parochial schools
- charter schools
- regional/local arts agencies
- arts organizations
- non-arts organizations
- other colleges and universities, school boards and districts

Total Number of Arts Education Grants Awarded in Most Recent Fiscal Year

18 grants

Total Dollar Value of Arts Education Grants Awarded in Most Recent Fiscal Year

\$ 188,960

Major Initiatives & Partnerships

Poetry Out Loud

In partnership with the National Endowment for the Arts and the Poetry Foundation, Poetry Out Loud encourages youth to learn and perform famous poems in competition with other teens, first in school finals, then in city finals, and then in the state final competition. Louisiana's Poetry Out Loud program is coordinated by LDOA and the Arts Council of Greater Baton Rouge and is supported by regional arts councils across the state.

ICI Schools (tentative title)

As a result of experience at the National Endowment for the Arts Education Leadership Institute (ELI) and because of the passing of Act 175, the Louisiana Division of the Arts is in the process of planning a model school program, ICI (Imagination, Creativity and Innovation) Schools, that will pilot beginning in July 2010. Lieutenant Governor Landrieu has formed a task force that includes the ELI team and three other arts education specialists from around the state.

Kennedy Center Professional Development

In partnership with the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts and the Acadiana Arts Council, LDOA invited 60 artists to train with the Kennedy Center using their "Artist as Educators" model. These teaching artists will be utilized during the ICI Schools pilot.

Louisiana Partnership for the Arts Education Focus

In March 2009, Louisiana's ELI team addressed the Louisiana Partnership for the Arts (LPA), Louisiana's arts advocacy organization, with an update of Act 175 and introduced the concept of the model school program. LPA membership agreed to make arts education a focal point of advocacy for the 2010/2011 fiscal year. LDOA hopes to work with Metropolitan Group to create a strategic plan for advocacy.

Annual Events

Cultural Economy Summit

Each year, Lieutenant Governor Landrieu hosts the Cultural Economy Summit and World Cultural Economic Forum, which have attracted audiences from across Louisiana and around the world. Last year, the Forum hosted 72 countries and 200 international delegates; in previous years, summits have engaged between 800 and 1,100 participants representing all sectors. This year, a panel will focus on successful model school programs around the country.

Professional Development Services

Provision of Professional Development Trainings, Workshops and/or Institutes

- For teaching artists, professional development is administered in partnership with another organization. In June 2009, LDOA invited the Kennedy Center to administer their “Artist as Educators” professional development seminar in Louisiana. This seminar built a core of highly skilled teaching artists to support Act 175 and the pilot school program. Sixty artists from around the state were trained at the Acadiana Arts Council in Lafayette, Louisiana.

Poetry Out Loud

Poetry Out Loud Administration

- in-house with arts education staff
- with partner organizations: The Arts Council of Greater Baton Rouge helps LDOA coordinate Poetry Out Loud. Regional arts councils from around the state help LDOA secure the schools and teaching artists.

Poetry Out Loud Participation

- number of schools participating in Poetry Out Loud statewide: 11
- Home-schooled students participate.
- number of regional semifinals: 4

Poetry Out Loud Resources and Activities

- teaching artist training

Additional Prizes and Awards

- This year’s prizes included book bags, movie tickets, and other donated items. LDOA had Poetry Out Loud posters created and framed for each winner.
- Additional prizes were purchased and donated.

Partners, Funders or In-kind Donors That Support the Poetry Out Loud Program

Rave Movie Theatre, Whole Foods, Papa John’s

Arts Education Staffing & Network Contacts

State Department of Education Arts Curriculum Specialist

Richard Baker

Arts Education Program Staff, Job Title, FTE

Bethany France, Director of Arts-in-Education, 1.0

Staff Biography

Bethany France joined the Louisiana Division of the Arts in 2007. Originally from Massachusetts, Bethany earned her bachelor's degree in communications from Suffolk University in Boston. Previously, she served as assistant director of admissions at the New England Institute of Art and Communications, Boston, where she worked with students to secure financial resources for their college tuition. In 2002, France relocated to Louisiana to take part in Teach For America, where she taught second grade at Progress Elementary School in North Baton Rouge. In 2004, she took the position of mentoring director for the Big Buddy Program. There, she worked with elementary school-age children and their adult mentors. She also had the opportunity to develop a curriculum for camps offered to elementary students.

Concluding Thoughts & Additional Comments

The Arts Education Program at LDOA is experiencing a major transformation. In fiscal year 2011, the director of arts in education's job responsibilities will no longer focus on grant programs but on Act 175 and the pilot of LDOA's model school program.