

Oregon

*Oregon Arts Commission
Deb Vaughn, Arts Education Coordinator*

General Information

Organization Mission Statement

The arts and culture are touchstones of community and civic life and it is essential to preserve, stabilize and develop their central role to benefit Oregonians and Oregon's quality of life. The Oregon Arts Commission (OAC) believes:

- The arts help us discover who we are.
- The arts bring people together, strengthening communities.
- The arts are critical for our students.
- The arts add value to Oregon's economy.

The Commission's role is:

- to lead through advocacy, policy development and planning;
- to seek funding for and make grants to the arts;
- to build coalitions between the public and private sectors and between arts and culture organizations;
- to ensure the arts touch the lives of all Oregonians.

Arts Education Mission Statement

Oregonians have access to quality arts learning opportunities. (Oregon Arts Commission Strategic Plan, 2006-2011)

Arts Education Program Overview

The key components of OAC's arts education programs are grants (available yearly to organizations providing ongoing, sequential arts education programs to support K-12 learning objectives), leadership (through partnership, best practices dissemination and communication) and special initiatives.

Several initiatives developed in the past two years strongly support the goal of arts being central to all Oregon students' education. In November 2008, the Arts Commission hosted the first Oregon Arts Education Congress. Building on the momentum from prior statewide convenings, the Commission gathered 100 diverse stakeholders in the arts from the business community, arts organizations, education and local funders for one day to participate in a statewide visioning process. The result of this work was the formation of a statewide leadership team that directed the writing of a "Declaration of Creative Rights" by Oregon arts education advocate and poet Kim Stafford. This vision statement provides common language for arts education advocates across Oregon to discuss the value of their work. Another outgrowth of the leadership team is the launch of on-line learning teams. Using an on-line forum moderated by team chairs, Oregonians are now able to discuss critical issues, share resources and engage in dialogue. These forums were used to ground the second Oregon Arts Education Congress, November 2, 2009, which resulted in the assembly of a high level leadership team to address a broad state agenda. The Congress has helped to assemble a rapidly growing network of arts education supporters who are ready to take action whenever there is a need. A yearly monograph profiling best practices allows an opportunity to highlight local success stories. These activities, in addition to a healthy relationship with the Oregon Department of Education, provide ongoing support for preK-12 opportunities.

The most effective vehicle the Oregon Arts Commission has for expanding opportunities and access to the arts for children is through OAC's Arts Learning Grant program. A competitive application process emphasizing evaluation, sustainability and high-quality programming supports 20 organizations in providing sustained, sequential arts education programs—some to critically underserved areas of the state. This grant program is available to not-for-profit organizations. Programs featured in OAC's best practices monograph describe many of these funded projects. OAC continues to develop strategic partnerships with emerging and established regional initiatives, supporting them in their missions and sharing resources. Delivery of the Poetry Out Loud program offers another opportunity to provide opportunities for Oregon's students.

Professional development and learning in the arts will be greatly enhanced through the use of OAC's newly developed on-line learning teams, providing increased communication across a geographically diverse state and a forum for ongoing dialogue to accompany in-person meetings. Training in arts education is a key component in many arts learning grantee programs, and through funding these initiatives, OAC is able to support programs that respond directly to local needs. OAC maintains strong relationships with the Oregon Department of Education and the Coalition of Oregon School Administrators and participates in annual meetings of professional arts teaching associations.

Grant Programs

Types of Arts Education Grant Programs

- arts education program/project support for arts organizations

Groups Eligible for Grant Programs

- regional/local arts agencies
- arts organizations
- arts education alliance or similar statewide organization
- Any 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization may apply.

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

21 grants

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

\$ 186,000

Additional Comments on Arts Education Grant Programs

The Oregon Arts Commission's Grants for Arts Learning support efforts to:

- expand opportunities for children and youth to participate in and increase their skills, understanding and knowledge of the arts;
- provide professional development opportunities so Oregon's teaching artists, arts professionals and teachers have increased capacity to teach the arts;
- advocate for the arts as basic to the education of children and youth in grades preK-12.

Requests for Grants for Arts Learning may include support for the following:

- Regional or statewide work with schools and communities to develop, implement and deliver substantive arts education programs for students and teachers
- Advocacy work and networking among teachers, artists, students and communities to make the arts an integral part of learning
- Clearinghouse services providing information about research, programs, services and issues in arts education
- Professional development for teachers including institutes, conferences and workshops

Although the focus of Arts Commission support is arts education programs within schools, meaningful cocurricular or extracurricular activities also are important. These can take place as part of an extended school day or other after-school program, during vacation periods and in cultural organizations.

Major Initiatives & Partnerships

Oregon Department of Education (ODE) Partnership

OAC contributes to a monthly arts education e-mail newsletter that serves as a clearinghouse of information and is sent to more than 3,000 arts specialists and administrators. Bimonthly update meetings ensure ongoing and open communication. The arts education specialist does twice-yearly updates via teleconference to arts learning grantees.

Arts Learning Monograph

This annual publication profiles Oregon based best practices models, drawn primarily from current arts learning grantees.

Coalition of Oregon School Administrators

A newly developing partnership explores professional development needs and opportunities for principals and superintendents.

Monthly Teleconferences of arts learning grantees

A monthly hour-long teleconference convened and moderated by the Oregon Arts Commission, this call brings together arts education program staff members and other key state partners. Topics have included reaching rural schools, ODE updates, best practices program sharing and developing effective internships.

On-line Learning Teams

Chaired and moderated by arts education leaders in the state, these on-line forums were launched in fall 2009 as a space for constituents to engage in dialogue about critical arts education issues as well as share resources.

Artist Residency Program

Comments on Residency Program

Artist residencies are coordinated and delivered by local and regional organizations serving their communities directly rather than arranged on a statewide level. This allows for programs that are more responsive to school district needs and unique to each region of a geographically diverse state (the 9th largest state in terms of land mass). These organizations are regularly supported through OAC's Grants for Arts Learning Program.

Teaching Artist Roster Program

Teaching Artist Roster Basics:

Most regional arts councils maintain rosters of local artists and arts educators available for residency work. The level of planning and facilitation of residencies varies depending on regional need.

Annual Events

Annual Arts Education Congress

The event serves as a critical vehicle to unify the field, build advocacy and develop program capacity. OAC held its second congress (for which the number of attendees nearly double from the first Congress). Delegates from around the state spend a day in facilitated conversations, training and brainstorming. Key leaders are engaged in planning and follow-up. Keynote speakers address current topics. Event is paired with on-line conversations prior to and following the face-to-face event.

Annual Arts Summit

This event focuses on a critical arts issue in Oregon (most recently, collaboration); the arts education community benefits from the event as another yearly opportunity for face-to-face learning. The May 2009 event included the first public reading of the Declaration of Creative Rights and active recruitment of new members of the OAC on-line network.

Professional Development Services

Provision of Professional Development Trainings, Workshops and/or Institutes

- For classroom teachers, professional development is offered through partnerships with grantees and other collaborators. OAC presents at workshops hosted by regional organizations and grant recipients.
- For arts specialists, professional development is offered in partnership with other organizations. OAC presents at workshops hosted by regional organizations and grant recipients, as well as at professional organizations such as the Oregon Art Educators Association.

- For teaching artists, professional development is offered in partnership with other organizations. OAC presents at workshops hosted by regional organizations and grant recipients.
- For school administrators, professional development is offered in partnership with other organizations. OAC presents at conferences hosted by organizations such as the Department of Education and Coalition of School Administrators.

Additional Comments on Professional Development Services

OAC presents at the Oregon Parent-Teacher Association Conference for parents.

Poetry Out Loud

Poetry Out Loud Administration

- in-house with arts education staff

Poetry Out Loud Participation

- number of schools participating in Poetry Out Loud statewide: 22
- Home-schooled students participate.
- Schools specifically for students with disabilities participate.

Poetry Out Loud Resources and Activities

- lesson plans
- evaluation

Additional Prizes and Awards

- Each state contestant receives an anthology of Oregon poetry with a personalized bookplate.
- Additional prizes were purchased.

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

Many organizations support OAC's work by helping to disseminate information and recruit participants: Oregon Department of Education, Oregon Parent-Teacher Association, regional arts councils, local arts organizations, the Oregon Speech and Debate Coaches Association and Oregon Council of Teachers of English.

Resources & Publications

Publications and Media Resources Provided:

- arts education annual report
- streaming video or audio

The Commission has launched an interactive on-line forum that will allow constituents from around the state to engage in conversations about arts education resources and issues.

In June 2009, OAC published a monograph highlighting best practices in Oregon arts education, including the 2008 National Teacher of the Year, Michael Geisen, a science teacher in rural Prineville. Geisen embodies whole-brain teaching and the Right Brain Initiative, a Portland metro area project dedicated to providing equitable, quality arts education experiences to every K-8 student in the region.

For the past two years, OAC has videotaped the state Poetry Out Loud contest and posts performances of the state winner and runners-up on its Web site.

OAC maintains a statewide listserv of more than 300 individuals, stemming from the Arts Education Congress participants and other stakeholders, to disseminate information about events and resources.

Evaluation & Assessment

Assessment of Student Learning in the Arts

- Sample assessment tools are provided. OAC developed a rubric for use in evaluating arts learning grants that was used for the first time to score the fiscal year 2010 applications. Panelists responded positively to this tool and it will continue to be refined for further use next year.
- Through the convening of monthly teleconferences of grantees, resources are shared between organizations. The topic of assessment comes up frequently and as resources are developed, they are disseminated electronically to those interested.

Program Evaluation for Grantees

- Evaluation tools and frameworks are provided for grantees. As part of OAC's technical assistance program for 2008, program evaluation trainer Michael Sikes, who now works for the Arts Education Partnership, provided training to 50 individuals. This workshop directly resulted in improved evaluation plans from a majority of grantees.
- In the grant-making process, 20 possible points (out of 100) are related to evaluation. Applicants are asked to articulate how they measure achievement in arts learning as well as program progress and impact. They must state the desired outcomes of the proposed activities and outline a plan for measurement, including the use of evaluation findings. A successful application clearly and thoroughly addresses achievement, progress and impact. The program outcomes are aligned with the goals and a specific plan for the use of those findings is articulated.
- In final reports, grantees are required to provide information about how their programming met the needs that were identified in the initial application, how feedback was collected on programming, how feedback was disseminated and to whom, what service adjustments may be made given this feedback, and how achievement of goals was measured.

Methods of Self-Evaluation of State Arts Agency's Arts Education Program

- quantitative and qualitative grants data
- participation data
- financial data
- surveys and feedback forms
- direct observations

Utilization of Evaluation

OAC is constantly working to improve its grant programs. Adjustments are made primarily based on informal feedback from grantees. More formal feedback is gathered from Poetry Out Loud teachers through on-line surveying to identify what needs exist and how Oregon-specific resources might meet those needs.

Arts Education Staffing & Network Contacts

State Department of Education Arts Curriculum Specialist

Michael Fridley (.25 FTE arts education)

State Alliance for Arts Education

Oregon Alliance for Arts Education. This organization is in a period of transition and its future path is unclear. A lack of financial stability resulted in the elimination of the 1.5 FTE staff positions in July 2008. The organization lost several board members earlier this year and is engaged in a board-driven strategic planning process, but stable funding continues to be a concern. OAC's informal partnership continues as its arts education coordinator serves on the advisory board. Monthly meetings with the Alliance and the ODE assure communication remains open between the three entities.

Arts Education Program Staff, Job Title, FTE

Deborah Vaughn, Arts Education Coordinator, 1.0

Staff Biographies

Prior to joining the Oregon Arts Commission, Deborah Vaughn worked as school services manager for Oregon Children's Theatre in Portland, Oregon. A trained singer, actor and writer, she was a public school artist in residence through Phoenix, Arizona's 21st Century Learning Grant. Vaughn has worked as a creative drama teacher in both Oregon and Arizona and served as the educational consultant for Sojourn Theatre's Freshman Initiative Project. She served as a member of the Visioning Committee for the Right Brain Initiative. She holds an M.F.A. in theatre for youth from Arizona State University and a B.A. in theatre from University of Portland.

Concluding Thoughts & Additional Comments

March 2008 marked the first time in the 40-year history of the Oregon Arts Commission that the arts education position was full-time. This accomplishment has allowed the Commission to significantly increase its capacity in the area of arts education. Reinstatement of regular publication of the best practices "Connections" monograph, revision and strengthening of the arts learning grant application, establishment of the annual Arts Education Congress, broader statewide engagement of strategic partners (ODE, professional organizations, grantees) and increased technical assistance (monthly teleconferences) are direct results of this increased capacity.