

Wyoming

Wyoming Arts Council

Camellia El-Antably, Arts Education Specialist/Deputy Manager

General Information

Organization Mission Statement

To enhance the quality of life for the people of Wyoming by providing resources to sustain, promote and cultivate the arts.

Arts Education Mission Statement

From the Wyoming Arts Council's long-range plan:

The Wyoming Arts Council (WAC) envisions a state where:

- abundant opportunities to experience and participate in the arts are available to all, including underserved populations, elders, children and adults;
- all children receive sequential art education as part of the K-12 curriculum in dance, folk arts, literature, music, theater and the visual arts as part of the academic curriculum;
- citizens are aware of the importance of the arts and actively support school programs and other arts education opportunities;
- and all teachers receive training in all core academic content, including the arts, because WAC believes that every citizen's life will be richer if they participate, and gain skills, in the arts.

Some of the long-term benefits to the state include citizens who:

- participate in all aspects of community life;
- value the rich diversity of arts practiced in Wyoming, the United States and the world;
- contribute to the preservation of art forms and the creation of new work;
- exercise creative thinking skills at work and in the greater community.

The Wyoming Arts Council will initiate and participate in collaborative programs and projects both to increase access to lifelong arts learning opportunities and to strengthen public arts education in Wyoming.

Arts Education Program Overview

WAC has made arts education a priority since its founding in 1967. The program started with artists in the schools, and grew into a multifaceted program advocating for lifelong arts education opportunities. Today, the program is responsible for initiating and participating in collaborative programs and projects to both increase lifelong arts learning opportunities and strengthen public arts education in Wyoming. While the strategies have changed through the years, the central goal of making arts education more accessible to Wyoming citizens has not. The Council has consistently supported arts education by making it a strong component of its long-range plan and growing its grant budget to the second largest in the agency.

Wyoming has been very fortunate in the past decade to have supportive superintendents of education and governors. Most students in Wyoming have access to visual art and music instruction; about half of the high schools offer some form of theatre. Thus, WAC has been able to focus its efforts on stronger arts standards, and on providing support for teachers. WAC staff has played a key role in the development of arts standards in the state. Through an informal partnership with the Wyoming Department of Education (WDE), WAC has provided content expertise to WDE, districts and teachers across the state. WAC continues to work actively with WDE on a variety of arts issues.

Other partnerships develop on an ad hoc basis. WAC works consistently with the University of Wyoming Art Museum and the three statewide arts teacher organizations to provide professional development opportunities. One of WAC's goals is to offer more professional development to a wider audience than arts teachers. The program has partnered with other states to develop advocacy brochures, and is working with three other states and Western States Arts Federation (WESTAF) to develop a survey on arts education in the public school system.

One of the key roles of WAC, and the arts education program, is to provide technical assistance to organizations and schools. In this large state, arts education staff provide a bridge, helping people make connections and develop a supportive environment for arts education efforts. Staff provides workshops and one-on-one assistance with grants and serves as a resource for information on arts education, organization building and advocacy.

The WAC arts education program has the second largest grant budget in the agency and runs two major programs: Arts Education Ongoing and Arts Education Biennial. Both programs support arts education for all ages and are used in a variety of ways. Arts Education Biennial is a new program that was developed in response to grantee requests.

WAC's most recent long-range plan laid out the ambitious goal for the arts education program of developing a statewide arts education plan. The program is striving to build the connections between the various stakeholders to make such a plan possible.

Grant Programs

Types of Arts Education Grant Programs

- in-school arts education
- out-of-school-time arts education
- lifelong learning in the arts
- arts education program/project support for arts organizations
- quick funds/minigrants

Groups Eligible for Grant Programs

- pre-K centers
- public schools
- private/nonparochial schools
- private/parochial schools
- charter schools
- home school groups
- regional/local arts agencies
- arts organizations
- non-arts organizations
- arts education alliance or similar statewide organization

Multiyear Grants

Multiyear grants are available for two years.

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

46 grants

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

\$ 229,524

Additional Comments on Arts Education Grant Programs

Several other programs in the agency fund education programming. Three programs in particular are used heavily by schools and organizations doing arts education: Technology in the Arts, Arts Access, and Arts across Wyoming.

Major Initiatives & Partnerships

Statewide Arts Education Yearly Assessment

This is a partnership between Idaho, Montana, Utah, WESTAF and Wyoming to collect, evaluate and disseminate data regarding arts education in the public school system.

Support for Arts Teachers

WAC partners with the three arts teacher organizations in Wyoming—Wyoming Music Educators Association, Wyoming Secondary Art Educators, and Wyoming Educators of Secondary Theatre—to provide services for teachers, increase organizational capacity and, indirectly, support statewide student arts programming.

Wyoming Department of Education

An unofficial partnership to serve teachers in the state. WAC has provided content expertise to the Wyoming Department of Education (WDE) for about 12 years, and provides professional development opportunities to teachers through grants and programs.

Funding for Arts Education Program from Sources Other Than NEA and State General Fund

WDE provided funding for several years that offered professional development opportunities. The last of that funding was used in summer 2009. The program has made some money from professional development class fees, which will be used to provide more programming next year.

Additional Comments on Initiatives and Partnerships

WAC has numerous unofficial partnerships and works with a wide variety of people, sometimes in an ad hoc way. For example, the Arts Council regularly partners with the community colleges and the university to provide programming.

Teaching Artist Roster Program

Teaching Artist Roster Basics:

- A panel is used to select roster artists.
- Applications for roster are reviewed once per year.
- To retain eligibility, artists must reapply every five years.

Additional Comments on Teaching Artist Roster

WAC's roster includes teaching artists who are selected based on artistic merit and ability to present to audiences. Many use it as a source for teaching artists, but WAC prefers to let organizations and schools interview and select artists. All roster artists must apply every five years. In between, artists confirm their desire to remain on the roster and provide updated information. The Arts across Wyoming Grant Program requires the use of roster artists.

Professional Development Services

Provision of Professional Development Trainings, Workshops and/or Institutes

- For classroom teachers, professional development is administered by the state arts agency office. All WAC programs are open to classroom teachers but are not well publicized to them.
- For arts specialists, professional development is administered by the state arts agency office. WAC provides workshops in the arts. Currently they are all in visual arts, but next year there are plans for theatre and music. Visual arts teachers have few opportunities to learn new media, so WAC focuses on that: this year, the Council offered training in bronze casting and fused glass.

Additional Comments on Professional Development Services

Unfortunately, Wyoming lost organizations which do this. Teacher organizations provide some professional development, which is supported through WAC partnership grants.

Poetry Out Loud

Poetry Out Loud Administration

- in-house with arts education staff
- in-house with other state arts agency staff

Poetry Out Loud Participation

- number of schools participating in Poetry Out Loud statewide: 5

Poetry Out Loud Resources and Activities

- workshops in conjunction with state finals

Additional Prizes and Awards

- books of poetry by the poet laureate of Wyoming and the of the United States, and books about writing poetry
- Additional prizes were purchased.

Resources & Publications

Publications and Media Resources Provided:

- other: Youth Arts Month Poster. This annual publication is a collaboration between an art program and the Arts Council that is a way for a district to highlight one of its art programs. The art program provides a ready-to-print poster using student artwork from the program's district; often, students design the poster. WAC provides minimal guidelines about the poster, prints it, and mails it statewide and sometimes nationally. WAC frames a copy of the poster with the governor's proclamation of Youth Arts Month and gives it to the district. Usually it hangs in the board room or the superintendent's office, providing recognition for the art program.

Evaluation & Assessment

Assessment of Student Learning in the Arts

- Sample assessment tools are provided. Currently, they are being reviewed and are not available. Once the process is complete, they will be published on paper and on WAC's Web site.
- WAC provides occasional trainings and houses the work of the Wyoming Arts Assessment Coalition.

Program Evaluation for Grantees

- Two years ago, WAC changed the Arts in Education Grant to an Arts Education Biennial Grant. This program allows applicants to apply for two years of funding at once. One of the major differences in the application is that it is based on past history; applicants are asked to write about their activities in the previous two years and describe the evaluation procedures they used to ensure their goals were met and how they will use that evaluation information to inform their plans for the next two years. Last year was the first time this had been asked of grantees and it was very uneven in quality, but WAC expects it to improve over time.

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

- formal external evaluation
- quantitative and qualitative grants data
- financial data
- surveys and feedback forms
- interviews
- focus groups and town hall meetings

Utilization of Evaluation

WAC does not use evaluation data as efficiently or effectively as it could. The Council uses any available data source—usually feedback through grant forms, surveys and interviews—to improve grant programs and make them user friendly.

Arts Education Staffing & Network Contacts

State Department of Education Arts Curriculum Specialist

Alan Moore is the person to contact for information.

Arts Education Program Staff, Job Title, FTE

- Camellia El-Antably, Arts Education Specialist/Deputy Manager, 1.0

Arts Education Coordinator's Split Responsibilities

- other areas of work: deputy manager of the agency
- percent of time dedicated to arts education program: 60%

Staff Biographies

Prior to joining WAC, Camellia El-Antably served for three years as the fine arts specialist for the Wyoming Department of Education. She continues to work with K-12 teachers on implementing state educational standards, creating meaningful professional development opportunities, and serving as an advocate for arts programming in the schools and for arts teachers.

In 2009, El-Antably cofounded Clay Paper Scissors Gallery & Studio in Cheyenne to provide studio workspaces for artists, classes for the community and a gallery featuring contemporary art. Camellia is a working artist in a variety of media, including book art, textiles, and glass. Prior to coming to Wyoming, she served two years in the Peace Corps doing economic development for women in Jordan. She has an M.A. in book arts from Camberwell College of Arts in London and a B.A. from Mills College in Oakland, California. Camellia is an artist with an interest in a wide variety of forms from book arts and printmaking to lace making and needle arts. Her interest in education was sparked by her mother, a lifelong educator, and the many other excellent educators who have influenced her.

Concluding Thoughts & Additional Comments

WAC served for several years as the Wyoming Department of Education arts content specialist. Although this is no longer a formal agreement between agencies, WAC has continued to provide many of the same services to WDE and the teachers in the state. These include professional development activities and extensive technical assistance. WAC staff served on the standards steering committee during the recent review of state standards and led the arts committee in its review. A more in-depth review began in 2009, and WAC will continue to be involved in guiding the review of arts standards for WDE.