

# Arts Plan NJ Planning Process

## Leadership

In 2004, the NJ State Council on the Arts led the effort to refresh Arts Plan NJ, first adopted in 1998. The first step was to constitute a broadly representative planning committee, which came to include the ArtPride NJ Foundation, the Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation, the New Jersey Network Foundation, and the NJ Theatre Alliance. The committee established the following goals for the planning process:

"We take great pride in how extensively we have actively sought diverse opinions in the reshaping of Arts Plan NJ. Technologies such as web-based conferencing, online surveying and, of course, email substantially broadened the base of leaders who could participate in our process this time. Our new Plan reflects that inclusiveness and broadens the definition of the arts."

**ELIZABETH CHRISTOPHERSON**  
NEW JERSEY NETWORK, PRESIDENT  
ARTS PLAN NJ STRATEGIC PLANNING  
COMMITTEE, CHAIR

- Emphasize ways for the arts to enhance quality of life;
- Create implementation strategies;
- Develop partnerships with other entities/sectors;
- Achieve consensus on goals to prepare a refreshed Arts Plan NJ;
- Involve a broad base of New Jerseyans in planning and implementation;
- Provide a context in which everyone can make their own strategic plans;
- Develop support for the process.

The partners established theme areas through which to explore what the arts mean to our lives and how they can improve the quality of life in this state:

- Arts Education;
- Artists' Services;
- Cultural Participation and Access;
- Economic and Community Development through the Arts;
- Technology and the Arts.

The committee, working with Wolf, Keens and Co., then designed a process that would engage on an extended basis literally hundreds of New Jersey leaders from widely diverse fields to explore those five theme areas and actually create the foundation for both a major conference and the plan itself.

The response was wildly enthusiastic. On July 22, 2004, over one hundred leaders gathered at the Governor's mansion and with the Governor's full endorsement to launch the process.

## The Working Groups

In all, nearly 300 leaders from all walks of life were organized onto five "theme teams," each with a staffed working group of 10-12 persons (see Appendix A). Each working group convened up to five times to follow a uniform protocol of inquiry that would examine the validity of existing goals and strategies, changes in the landscape, new ideas and strategies needed, new partnerships to be formed, performance measures, and the new capacities that the arts community must develop in order to fulfill its role to the fullest. The protocol also included discussion of the public value of this work, how it is created and how it can be articulated effectively. The "theme team" members behind each working group were utilized in various ways: filling in gaps discovered on the working group, surveying and polling, and solicitation of best practices. From this work came the extensive Working Group Consensus Reports. A sixth team of state and national leaders was formed and charged to review all the theme reports. Working to achieve the goals set forth, they re-imagined how the New Jersey arts community's infrastructure would need to be developed. This sixth group also issued a position paper with six proposition statements for the New Jersey arts community of tomorrow. Together these reports formed the basis for the design of a two-day Governor's Conference on the Arts and the foundation of the Plan.

# Planning Process & Governor's Conference

## The Governor's Conference on the Arts

On April 7 and 8, 2005, 325 people gathered at NJN Studios in Trenton for the Governor's Conference on the Arts. They included leaders from many different sectors and fields, such as education, philanthropy, business, economic and community development, transportation, planning, healthcare, media, arts and history. Presenters included the Governor and five cabinet officials. The goal was final consensus building through a carefully crafted series of plenary and breakout sessions. Culturally diverse performances began and ended every session. Day I was dedicated to consensus on the goals of the five theme areas and Day II to consensus on the propositions for improving the arts community's capacity to reach the goals of the reshaped Arts Plan and maximize its public value for the people of New Jersey.



Left to Right: John McEwen, NJ Theatre Alliance; Judith Brodsky, Rutgers Center for Innovative Print and Paper; Ross Danis, the Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation; Jean Holtz, New Brunswick Development Corporation; Cephas Bowles, WBGO; Mark Packer, Appel Farm Arts & Music Center

## Drafting the Plan

Following the conference, Wolf, Keens and Co., utilizing the now voluminous body of reports and recordings including those from New Jersey State Council on the Arts roundtables with artists and arts education summits, penned the first draft of a refreshed Arts Plan. After a review by the planning team, a second draft of Arts Plan NJ was unveiled at the statewide "Arts Alive! Conference," sponsored by an Arts Plan NJ Planning Partner, the New Jersey Theatre Alliance, in September 2005. This launched an extensive vetting and feedback process for finalizing the plan.

## Public Vetting of the Plan

Over the course of the next several months, more than 600 New Jerseyans availed themselves of the opportunity to respond to the draft Plan through an extensive online survey, three Town Meetings (north, central and south), Arts Council board and staff retreats, and eight teleconference focus groups. Professionals engaged for the focus groups included artists, educators, board members of cultural organizations as well as professionals from business and industry, tourism, community development, healthcare and media. From this came numerous suggestions for improvement, development and implementation of the plan.

## Adoption of the New Arts Plan NJ

Finally, with all this input a final draft was completed and readied for adoption, key to which was the development of an even more comprehensive endorsement, implementation and monitoring strategy than the first plan. With the endorsement of this Plan, individuals will be asked to choose and implement a strategy that aligns with their own goals or the goals of their community or workplace. The Plan will be launched at ArtPride NJ's annual meeting set for March 13, 2008. The launch event will feature Governor Corzine (invited), Secretary of State Nina Mitchell Wells in the company of New Jersey's key leaders from all vital sectors who have endorsed the plan and are ready to get to work!

*"The arts community has a critical impact on the economic vitality of New Jersey's communities. A night at the theater can mean that local restaurants fill tables and their employees earn their wages, baby-sitters earn spending money, parking lot attendants remain employed, and ultimately, all these wage-earners plow their money back into the retail economy. That's an amazing ripple effect when you think about it. It's immensely clear to us at Bank of America that the arts bring great value to this state. It's why arts and culture are a permanent focus of our philanthropic goals in New Jersey."*

—ANN LIMBERG, PRESIDENT, BANK OF AMERICA, NEW JERSEY