

## **Proposition Statements**

### **The New Jersey Arts of Tomorrow**

After extensive, in depth-discussion about the finances, operational capacities, artistry, audiences and community relationships of arts organization and institutions in the context of the five theme team consensus reports, the New Jersey Arts of Tomorrow Theme Team presented the following proposition statements as large “pieces of the puzzle” that will help answer the following question:

What must New Jersey non-profit arts organizations and the cultural community do and become in order to: a) advance and fulfill their missions to the fullest extent possible; b) ensure long-term viability and relevance; c) assume the most prominent civic position possible in providing recognized and valued public benefit?

**Proposition 1. Increasing Capitalization and Financial Sustainability:** Cultural organizations must work with greater savvy collectively, in partnership with other sectors and as models for others in developing new, permanent and additional revenues to support growth of programs, operations and staff as well as construction and improvement of facilities.

**Proposition 2. Engaging a Larger, Broader and More Diverse Public:** Cultural organizations must adopt new modes of working in communities and communicating with diverse publics in ways that meet people and communities where they are. They must welcome and integrate new populations into arts programs and venues as well as into organizational operations and stewardship, must respect diverse traditions and values and provide meaningful arts experiences, and must constantly seek to break down perceptual, practical and experiential barriers to arts participation for all New Jerseyans.

**Proposition 3. Improving Arts Education:** Cultural organizations must be committed to the premise of a robust, sequential, high quality arts experience for children attending schools in our state and use their positions in the community to be advocates for arts education. Cultural organizations must devote themselves to and increase their efforts in providing arts education programs that are of the highest quality, accessibility and meaning and must become greater community resources to schools and educational settings of all types.

**Proposition 4. Setting Standards for Our Work:** Cultural organizations should develop and endorse a set of “Arts Plan Accords” that recognize the intrinsic and instrumental value of all the arts to the well-being of people and communities, and then commit themselves to advancing the Arts Plan New Jersey. This may be accomplished by adopting a set of board-approved principles and values that set high standards for their operations and governance, standards that are used to measure progress, growth and impact. Organizations should also be encouraged to integrate these values and standards into their strategic planning process as well.

**Proposition 5. Becoming A Better Community of Learning and Practice:** The cultural community should seek to identify, document, and share best practices and models for arts programming and participation, governance, administration, accessibility, and finances. In doing so, organizations should commit to on-going learning opportunities for their staffs, artists, and boards and others connected to their institutions. This practice of learning and sharing should extend to other institutions and fields with which the arts would partner and connect and the means of

achieving this greater community of knowledge and practice should be formalized/institutionalized wherever possible.

**Proposition 6. Forging Deeper Relationships with Artists:** Cultural organizations must be vigilant in working to ensure that they are welcoming and nurturing havens for artists and creativity. They must more profoundly include artists in their operations and decision-making and work collectively and with other sectors to help secure for artists the support, skills and assistance they require in order that they flourish and succeed. And they must help connect art and artists to community life in ways that reveal their value and improve quality of life.

**Cross-cutting Issues:** Throughout all of these propositions there are certain crosscutting issues that will be essential elements of any strategy developed to fulfill the proposition.

1. Effective advocacy at all levels
2. Infrastructure growth that increases technical assistance, skills development, and access to professional services, information, knowledge and best practice
3. Partnership development and collaboration with a broad cross-section of New Jersey interests, public and private sectors and fields of endeavor including the for-profit cultural industry
4. Improved and expanded use of technology

## **Proposition 1. Increasing Capitalization and Financial Sustainability:**

**The Proposition:** Cultural organizations must work with greater savvy collectively, in partnership with other sectors and as models for others in developing new, permanent and additional revenues to support growth of programs, operations and staff as well as construction and improvement of facilities.

**Rationale:** Only when cultural institutions are properly capitalized, possessing sufficient assets and reliable revenue streams, will they be able to do three essential things:

1. Achieve their finest artistry
2. Provide their maximum public benefit through the growth and development of programs and services and
3. Sustain this growth and impact despite changes in the economy, support policies, sources, and participation patterns or the growth of their competitors for leisure time, disposable income and audiences

### **Possible Core Strategies and Issues:**

1. Fully fund the New Jersey Cultural Trust, which by its very nature is intended to fulfill the proposition
2. Consider the statewide need for major capital investment in development of cultural facilities and develop the public/private sources for it
3. Encourage development of sources of unrestricted revenue for cultural institutions
4. Encourage organizations to share resources of all sorts, especially facilities
5. Because there is no one model of financial health, the means of providing the knowledge, insight and savvy necessary to develop and achieve the plan that is “right” for an organization is vital. We need programs and systems of technical assistance especially for smaller developing organizations. This extends to business training. Perhaps we also need a Volunteer Accountants for the Arts.
6. Number 5 notwithstanding, the need to diversify income is a general principle for all cultural organizations
7. Planned giving and donor directed giving (preferably unrestricted) should be more fully explored
8. Advocacy on behalf of all existing sources and higher funding levels of them, including the Arts Council and Cultural Trust, as well as potential new sources of public and private revenue. The arts community must be vigilant and advocacy needs to extend to all levels of government as well as to the private sector.

NOTE: Very little has been discussed to date about new, innovative or necessary earned income strategies including such things as property management, business ownership and merchandizing

## **Proposition 2. Engaging a Larger, Broader and More Diverse Public**

**The Proposition:** Cultural organizations must adopt new modes of working in communities and communicating with diverse publics in ways that meet people and communities where they are. They must welcome and integrate new populations into arts programs and venues as well as into organizational operations and stewardship. They must respect diverse traditions and values and provide meaningful arts experiences, and must constantly seek to break down perceptual, practical and experiential barriers to arts participation for all New Jerseyans.

**Rationale:** New Jersey is one of the most culturally diverse states in the nation and remains among the top five immigration points in the nation. Its population is changing quickly and it is growing older as well. Cultural participation patterns are also changing, and in many cases traditional audiences are falling off. The ability of the cultural community to expand what actually composes it and to include and engage a far larger and more diverse cross section of the 8.5 million people who live in New Jersey and to provide them with deep and meaningful experiences are critical to several things including:

1. Provide more people with the intrinsic value the arts offer to improve life
2. Elevate the importance of the arts to more persons with the ability to support them
3. Build audiences
4. Build the capacity of the arts to increase and extend the instrumental value of the arts to communities, i.e. economic impact, business retention, urban revitalization, etc.
5. Define our state and our culture and building our legacy

### **Possible Core Strategies and Issues:**

1. This work takes time and long term investment; it may be best to focus on a particular community and keep at it until success is achieved.
2. This work is increasingly about building personal relationships and community trust
3. Board development/diversification and inclusion of new populations into institutional structures and decision-making may be key.
4. This work requires cultural institutions to get out into communities and embrace people where they congregate and work and forge partnerships with their cultural and social institutions
5. We must develop new and connect to alternative communications networks
6. We may need to reshape our programming so as to make it more inviting and accessible and prepare to introduce new art forms for which we will need training and technical assistance
7. But # 6 notwithstanding, organizations should approach this with care and planning.
8. We need to know more about how to do this and share our knowledge
9. In other ways harnessing technology may be vital both to reaching new audiences and competing for leisure time.
10. Sustain statewide marketing initiatives and cultivate new ways to brand our state so as to attract audiences and project the arts as a vital element of what makes NJ great
11. Continue to develop relationship with tourism industry
12. Reexamine our organizational and governance structures to include different types of advisory groups and task forces.

### **Proposition 3. Improving Arts Education**

**The Proposition:** Cultural organizations must be committed to the premise of a robust, sequential, high quality arts experience for children attending schools in our state and use their positions in the community to be advocates for arts education. Cultural organizations must devote themselves to and increase their efforts in providing arts education programs that are of the highest quality, accessibility and meaning and must become greater community resources to schools and educational settings of all types.

**Rationale:** The early and sustained engagement of children in the arts is the most powerful force by which to impart the intrinsic value of the arts for a life time, nurture creativity in all people, build cross-cultural understanding and grow the artists, audiences and cultural stewards of tomorrow. All cultural institutions to some extent contribute to education and arts education occurs in a wide variety of formal and informal ways throughout one's life. However, for the cultural institution there are three primary means by which to contribute to that education:

1. Become a greater and more vital resource to New Jersey schools
2. Become a greater and more effective advocate for arts education, and
3. Build programming, operations and services that constantly seek to provide arts education for persons of all ages

#### **Possible Core Strategies and Issues:**

1. Complete the arts education mapping/census project and build the proposed arts education knowledge center
2. Rebuild a robust statewide arts education advocacy network/organization with far greater involvement and commitment of cultural institutions than has previously been the case
3. Involve more board members in this work
4. Strengthen and increase the capacity of ArtPRIDE New Jersey
5. Strengthen partnerships with the NJ Department of Education
6. Connect the work of cultural organizations to the professional development needs of educators and teaching artists
7. Develop and index arts program development with NJ Core Content Standards
8. Cultivate new means of communicating and working with higher education on a variety of issues including classroom teacher training, artist training and general student education
9. Extend gains made in developing pilot arts education infused schools to others

#### **Proposition 4.           Setting Standards for Our Work**

**The Proposition:** Cultural organizations should develop and endorse a set of “Arts Plan Accords” that recognize the intrinsic and instrumental value of all the arts to the well-being of people and communities, and then commit themselves to advancing Arts Plan New Jersey. This may be accomplished by adopting a set of board-approved principles and values that set high standards for their operations and governance, standards that are used to measure progress, growth and impacts. Organizations should be encouraged to integrate these values and standards into their strategic planning process as well.

**Rationale:** The major successes of the New Jersey arts community have been built upon its unique ability to develop and share common values and goals and to work together in achieving them. The inclusive Arts Plan planning process itself exemplifies the principle, particularly with its notion of enlisting broad-based endorsement. Where it could be strengthened is in achieving not just endorsement, but commitment of organizations, particularly cultural organizations, to embracing its principles, implementing its strategies and building that work into the very structure and operations of the institutions itself. With more organizations working in that way the community will be better able to

1. Tackle big issues
2. Benchmark progress/success both individually and collectively
3. Enhance sources of support
4. Make most effective and efficient use of collective talents and resources
5. Strengthen the advocacy base

#### **Possible Core Strategies and Issues**

1. Develop a resolution, a set of New Jersey Arts Plan Accords, that recognizes the value of the arts, supports to vision of Arts Plan, commits boards to advancing it and endorses statements of organizational values and guiding principles
2. Commit ourselves to best practices and highest professional standards of operations, management, public service, stewardship, accountability and governance
3. Commit ourselves to the highest standards of artistry, to support for arts education, to broaden and diversify audiences, to access for all and to be involved in community development
4. Commit ourselves to being vigilant and effective advocates for the entire arts community as well as for other related communities with which we partner; join ArtPRIDE NJ
5. Conduct open and inclusive strategic planning on an institutional level that clearly identifies the roles to be played in advancing ArtsPlan and sets realistic performance measures that are regularly assessed
6. Commit ourselves to serving artists through fair compensation and benefits, safe and healthy work conditions, as well as environments and processes that honor, respect and promote their creativity
7. Commit ourselves to staff development and retention through fair compensation and benefits, professional development and promotional opportunities

## **Proposition 5. Becoming A Better Community of Learning and Practice**

**Proposition:** The cultural community should seek to identify, document, and share best practices and models for arts programming and participation, governance, administration, accessibility, and finances. In doing so, organizations should commit to on-going learning opportunities for their staff, artists, and board and others connected to their institutions. This practice of learning and sharing should extend to other institutions and fields with which the arts would partner and connect. The means of achieving this greater community of knowledge and practice should be formalized/institutionalized wherever possible.

**Rationale:** Increasingly, the non-profit cultural industry can be viewed as a “knowledge” industry in which success is most easily and greatly achieved through the acquisition and application of knowledge and information about a vast array of subjects. Many are intrinsic to field itself with regard to artistry, operations, facilities, and our technologies. Some are common to business in general such as marketing and promotions. Some are entirely outside the field, but important because they create the pathways to other partners. If cultural organizations dedicate themselves to becoming a better community of learning and practice, they will

1. Increase the number of industries and interests that are actively supporting the arts
2. Work more effectively and efficiently
3. Build greater cohesion as a community and hence capacity to address major, common issues
4. Build an infrastructure that facilitates emergence and growth of cultural organizations

### **Possible Core Strategies and Issues:**

1. Cultivate establishment and growth of service organizations
2. Maintain the effort created by the Arts Plan process to continue regular convenings on subjects of key importance to the arts community
3. Enhance the role of the Council on the Arts as a catalyst for information and knowledge sharing and as a “convener”
4. Become more actively involved in the events and functions of other related industries
5. Work to connect all cultural organizations to existing information and knowledge networks such as Americans for the Arts, the Arts & Business Council etc.
6. Create a Blue Ribbon committee of arts leaders that carries forward the work of the NJ Arts of Tomorrow Working Group.
7. Cultivate leadership through institutes and professional development opportunities
8. Seek ways to work across disciplines and to include all valuable stakeholders including the commercial arts industry
9. Employ technology to advantage in disseminating information and models of best practice

## **Proposition 6. Forging Deeper Relationships with Artists**

**The Proposition:** Cultural organizations must be vigilant in working to ensure that they are welcoming and nurturing havens for artists and creativity. They must more profoundly include artists in their operations and decision-making and work collectively and with other sectors to help secure for artists the support, skills and assistance they require in order that they flourish and succeed. And they must help connect art and artists to community life in ways that reveal their value and improve quality of life.

**Rationale:** Artists are the lifeblood of the non-profit cultural industry and artistic creativity resides in some measure in all people. Professional artists in 21<sup>st</sup> century America and in this unique state face a staggering array of challenges to success; and their success is critical both to the success of the industry as well as the improvement of the quality of life and communities. Therefore it is critical that the field itself be devoted both to addressing the obstacles to the success of artists and to fully benefiting, as cultural institutions from all that artists have to offer. If we do, we will

1. Achieve new artistic heights
2. Attract even greater artistic creativity to our state
3. Connect artists to an increased array of opportunities for expression and involvement in our communities
4. Bring new and valuable perspectives into cultural institutions that will enhance programs and their ability to serve audiences

### **Possible Core Strategies and Issues:**

1. Work to establish a statewide artists service organization and information network and infrastructure that increasingly provides the technical assistance and professional development opportunities necessary for artists to acquire the business skills and access to resources necessary for success
2. Take collective aim at the issue of securing affordable health insurance for artists as well as the live, work and marketplace space needs of artists
3. Support development of the NJ Volunteer Lawyers for the Arts
4. Advocate strenuously for laws and regulatory practices that support the work and viability of artists
5. Dedicate ourselves to including artists into our organizations at all levels and listen
6. Develop arts programming that not only presents the work, but reveals the creative process to a wider array of persons and communities
7. Assist in forging the connections between artists and other community opportunities for involvement and creative expression, most especially the schools
8. Work with the higher education community to help ensure that artists are better equipped to enter the commercial marketplace
9. Encourage communities to include artists in their decision-making, governance, planning, events, and community development strategies