



Strategic Plan

Maryland State Arts Council
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msac.org

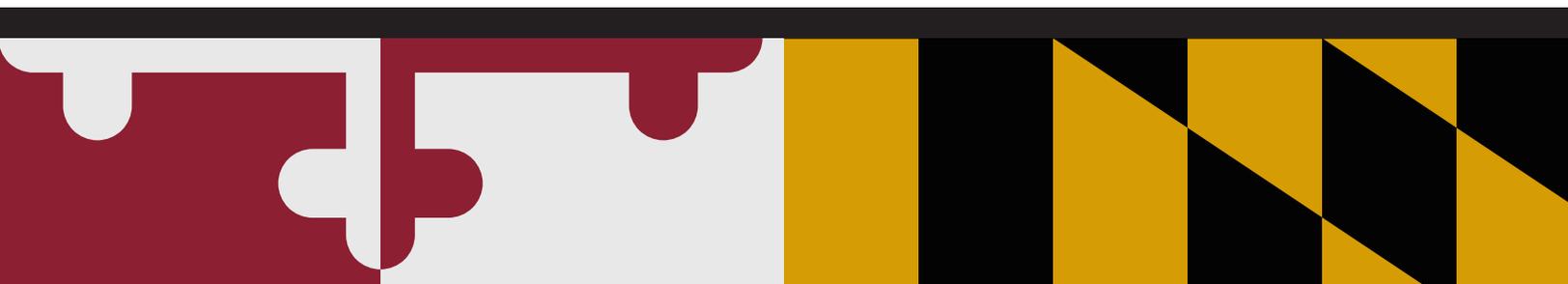
Strategic Plan

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Introduction

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Over the past two years, the Maryland State Arts Council (MSAC) has welcomed new executive leadership, staff, and invigorated councilors who are deeply engaged in efforts to highlight and strengthen the arts in Maryland in alignment with goals set by the Department of Commerce. Building upon existing momentum and a desire to position MSAC as a catalyst for the sector, the Council engaged AMS Planning & Research in 2018 to provide guidance in the development of a visionary and comprehensive plan for future strategic and operational direction.

MSAC and AMS embarked on a broadly inclusive process which provided room for creative thinking and meaningful conversations. The planning team sought to hear from often unheard voices and intentionally created space for honest expression and varied opinions regarding defining future strategic priorities.

The resulting strategic plan reflects the evolution of a legacy institution. It reimagines a decades-long approach to grant-making, makes recommendations regarding staff capacity and empowerment, encourages increased presence in the field, embraces non-traditional partnerships and relationships, articulates strategies to increase awareness of the Council's work, and commits to equity, diversity, and inclusion as foundational to the work of MSAC.

Based on statewide listening and goal definition in the strategic planning process, the MSAC staff and Council have already begun implementation of several strategies to improve specific programs. While MSAC recognizes a finite amount of resources exist to pursue the ambitious goals and objectives outlined in this plan, the Council is confident and poised to advance this work and play an essential role in ensuring every person has access to the transformative power of the arts.



PLANNING CONTEXT

Maryland’s vibrant arts community is the beneficiary of a committed State appropriation through MSAC, of which over 90 percent has historically been dedicated to grants serving organizations, county arts councils, and individual artists.

	Maryland State Arts Council	Minnesota State Arts Board	DC Commission on the Arts	Indiana Arts Commission	Mass Cultural Council
Service Area	6.05M	5.52M	694K	6.67M	6.86M
Annual Operating Budget	\$20M	\$40M	\$31M	\$6M	\$18M
Portion for Grants	90%	93%	93%	60%	72%
# Full-Time Staff	14	22	27	10	32

Figure 1: Summary Comparison of Benchmark Agencies

MSAC aspires to better adapt its programs in parallel with changing needs of the sector. Furthermore, the Council strives to provide services equitably across the State to break down barriers to engagement as well as grow and diversify constituents served and modes of support. The Council views this plan as a launch pad from which it can broaden the organization’s reach, increase its own capacity, grow resources for the arts community through partnerships, and continue to foster artistic excellence, development, and preservation of cultural heritage. MSAC strives to ensure continued investment in and commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion and articulate the vision for a new facility as an asset that enables the strategic direction.

The plan identifies attainable, measurable goals which both affirm the organization’s reimagined vision and mission as well as acknowledge issues, ideas, and initiatives important to MSAC stakeholders and the sector broadly. To that end, this strategic plan was developed with a tremendous amount of community input and places considerable emphasis on learning from others. In tandem with listening sessions and town halls MSAC staff held across the state, AMS conducted interviews with several community stakeholders, distributed a broad sector stakeholder survey, and shared learnings from other state arts agencies and service providers.

MSAC’S ASPIRATIONAL ROLE

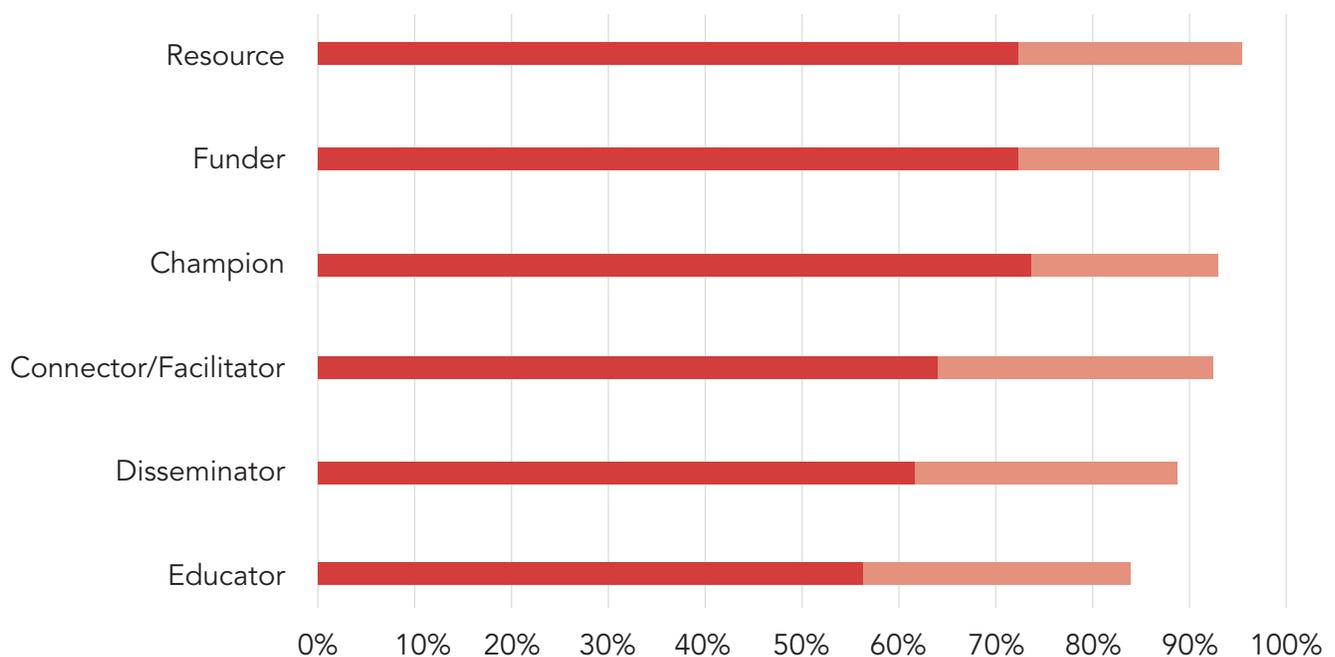


Figure 2 MSAC’s Perceived aspirational role based on stakeholder survey responses in order of agreement (n=681)

■ Strongly Agree
■ Agree

The planning committee considered MSAC’s current perceived role and how the Council might adapt to best serve Maryland’s arts and culture sector and help address specific challenges artists and arts organizations face. While MSAC plays multiple roles within the sector, its role as a funder is unsurprisingly most prominent. Ensuring equitable funding is and will remain a priority as MSAC considers additional non-monetary modes of support to engage the sector more deeply.

TOP PRIORITIES FOR MSAC



Figure 3 Top priorities for MSAC based on stakeholder survey responses (n=678)

MSAC's goals broadly mirror some of the challenges faced by Maryland's arts and culture sector. Perceptions of the Council's work are directly correlated with the degree of engagement with its stakeholders and constituents.

MSAC must grow awareness of its programs and enable opportunities for broader participation across the sector.



Figure 4 Challenges faced by artists and arts organizations from Creative Conversations and other listening sessions hosted by MSAC



Broader participation
across the sector



Leverage connections



Build its own capacity

MSAC strives to foster growth and success of the arts in Maryland, and views collaboration as critical to fulfilling this aspiration. MSAC's network is robust, with hundreds of relationships throughout the state. Whether it is through continued partnerships, new relationships in support of specific initiatives, or facilitating conversations amongst organizations and leaders with unique perspectives, MSAC aspires to leverage connections to advance its work and the impacts of the sector.

As a major source of operating support for arts organizations across Maryland, MSAC recognizes the need for its own staff and councilors to be properly resourced and informed to maximize its impact. To that end, MSAC has identified multiple areas in which training, professional development, open lines of communication, and thoughtful allocation of resources (money, time, and personnel) will help the organization build its own capacity.

The future of Maryland arts and culture is a vibrant, visible community of artists and organizations that are recognized and celebrated. MSAC's role in this community is to enable others to engage citizens across all geographies, to produce, present and preserve art of all forms, and to contribute to the quality of life in Maryland.

Evaluation Measures

Evaluation Measures

EVALUATION MEASURES

MSAC is committed to rigorous, on-going and transparent evaluation of strategic plan implementation. Council will reference plan intentions as guideposts in ongoing decision-making. We will conduct formal evaluation of our efforts on an annual basis, actively seeking means of quantifying impacts. Evaluation measures we intend to monitor include:

- Ongoing audit of equity, diversity, and inclusion progress
- Efficiency of response to input from and needs of constituents
- Attendance growth at MSAC and partner events
- Number of grant applicants (new, repeating) and characteristics of applicants as well as grantees
- Geographic impacts of services and funding (as we strive to expand our reach across the State)
- Marketing metrics to evaluate increased awareness (across all constituents: beneficiaries and grantees, partners, legislators, etc.)
- Satisfaction metrics across all internal and external stakeholders, beneficiaries, and partners
- Quality and success of partnerships in fulfilling goals

MSAC Staff has adopted both qualitative and quantitative metrics for evaluation of the above measures.



Appendix

APPENDIX

STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

AMS conducted over 20 interviews throughout Summer/Fall 2018 with the following individuals. Titles below reflect position held at the time of interview.

STAFF

PAMELA DUNNE, SENIOR PROGRAM DIRECTOR,

Grants for Organizations (Media, Multidiscipline, Visual Arts)

CHAD EDWARD BUTERBAUGH, DIRECTOR, Maryland Traditions,
PROGRAM DIRECTOR, Folk/Traditional Arts**STEVE DRAPALSKI, PROGRAM DIRECTOR,**

Grants for Organizations (Dance, Music, Theater) and Maryland Presenting and Touring Program Director

LIESEL FENNER, PUBIC ART PROGRAM DIRECTOR**DANA PARSONS, DIRECTOR OF GRANTS AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT****STEVEN SKERRITT-DAVIS, PROGRAM DIRECTOR,**

Community Arts Development, Arts & Entertainment Districts, and Individual Artists Awards Programs

KEN SKRZESZ, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**CHRISTINE STEWART, PROGRAM DIRECTOR,**

Grants for Organizations (Arts Service, Children's Events, Literary Arts) and Arts in Education

COUNCIL

BARBARA BERSHON, St. Mary's County

CARLA DU PREE, Howard County

JOAN M.G. LYON, Garret County, Board Secretary/Treasurer

JULIE MADDEN, Howard County

SHELLEY MORHAIM, Baltimore County, Chair

JOHN (JACK) RASMUSSEN, Incoming Chair

GARY VIKAN, Baltimore City

OTHERS

NICHOLAS COHEN, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, Maryland Citizens for the Arts

LIZ FITZSIMMONS, MANAGING DIRECTOR, Division of Tourism, Film, and the Arts

MIKE GILL, SECRETARY OF COMMENCE

YUMI HOGAN, FIRST LADY OF MARYLAND

ALYSIA LEE, FINE ARTS COORDINATOR, Maryland State Department of Education

BENJAMIN WU, DEPUTY SECRETARY OF COMMERCE

LISTENING SESSIONS

Prior to the strategic planning process, MSAC staff conducted seven program-specific listening sessions to garner feedback about each of the following existing MSAC programs:

Accessibility and Veterans Programs

Arts in Education (AiE)

Grants for Organizations (GFO)

Individual Artist Awards

(IAA, now named Independent Artists Awards)

Maryland Traditions

Presenting/Touring

Public Art

CREATIVE CONVERSATIONS

In tandem with the strategic planning process, MSAC staff conducted seven “Creative Conversations” across the State in 2018. During each meeting, MSAC staff solicited feedback on the following five questions to support the strategic plan:

1. What are the most pressing issues you face as an artist or as an arts organization?
2. What challenges exist in your community that intersect with the arts?
3. Are there specific ways MSAC could better support you?
4. What does success look like for MSAC in the short and long-term?
5. What three words best describe your aspiration for the future of arts and culture in Maryland?



SEPTEMBER 13: FREDERICK

The Delaplaine Arts Center

SEPTEMBER 17: HAVRE DE GRACE

The Cultural Center at Havre de Grace Opera House

SEPTEMBER 20: BALTIMORE

Creative Alliance

SEPTEMBER 24: SALISBURY

The Ward Museum of Waterfowl Art

SEPTEMBER 27: LEONARDTOWN

Leonardtown Town Hall

OCTOBER 1: ANNAPOLIS

Annapolis Shakespeare Company

OCTOBER 4: FROSTBURG

City Place



Stakeholder Survey

STAKEHOLDER SURVEY

In collaboration with MSAC, AMS conducted a stakeholder survey to understand current perceptions and performance of MSAC and gauge stakeholder priorities for investment. The survey was distributed by email between October and November 2018 and received 740 responses from individual artists, community members, educators, and individuals responding on behalf of arts and culture organizations, government entities, and schools.

Respondents reflect all counties and over a third of all Maryland zip codes. The responses include current and past MSAC grantees, individuals, and organizations who have partnered with or participated in an MSAC program, as well as some with no known intersections with MSAC.



Best Practices

BEST PRACTICES

In addition to the modes of primary research described above, AMS conducted research across the sector and interviewed four agencies on the topics below:

- Agency capacity building, board training, development, and structure
- Non-monetary support, training, facility models, and supporting non-501(c)3s
- Leading in equity, diversity, and inclusion and promoting access



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State of Maryland

Larry Hogan, Governor

Boyd K. Rutherford, Lieutenant Governor

Kelly M. Schulz, Secretary of Commerce



Current Staff List

Ken Skrzysz, Executive Director

Precious Blake

Arthur Brown

Chad Buterbaugh

Rose Chang

Amelia Evans

Liesel Fenner

Lillian Jacobson

Kayla Morgan

Tammy Oppel

Dana Parsons

C. Ryan Patterson

Keyonna Penick

Derrick Quevedo

Shaunte Roper

Steven Skerritt-Davis

Emily Sollenberger

Laura Weiss