

**D.C. Commission on the Arts and Humanities
Strategic Plan
FY 2004 – 2008**

Mission:

The mission of the D.C. Commission on the Arts and Humanities is to provide grants, programs, and education activities that encourage diverse artistic expressions and learning opportunities so that all District of Columbia residents and visitors can experience the rich culture of our city.

In partnership with the community, DCCAH promotes excellence in the arts by initiating and supporting programs, activities, and policies that inspire, nurture, and reflect the multi-ethnic character and cultural diversity of the District.

About the Commission

The D.C. Commission on the Arts and Humanities is the District of Columbia's official arts agency. Since 1968, the DCCAH has developed programs and initiatives that support local artists, arts organizations, and arts activities, for the benefit of the city. Under the direction of the Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development, the DCCAH functions simultaneously as a state and local arts agency, and is the sole source of public funding for the arts in the District of Columbia.

Through our grants programs, agency services, and special initiatives, the DCCAH strives to achieve the following goals:

- ◆ **Increase access to and awareness of the arts for all District residents**
- ◆ **Arts education and learning in the arts for all ages**
- ◆ **Building community through the arts**
- ◆ **Create and strengthen partnerships in the arts**
- ◆ **Preserve and highlight the District's cultural diversity and heritage**

Please Note: Many objectives and strategies and initiatives are cross-cutting, and will positively meet other agency goals.)

GOAL I: Increase access to and awareness of the arts for all District residents

Objective 1: Support artists and arts organizations that serve the District

The District is home to a variety of artists and arts organizations, ranging in size, mission and capacity. These artists and organizations benefit the entire city through their work, provide quality arts experiences to their communities, and represent every neighborhood in the District. Many small to medium sized groups have been challenged by the increased costs of operating in the District, and have been courted by neighboring counties. There has also been increased demand from city residents for more arts programs in every Ward.

Strategies:

- ◆ **Maintain and expand project grant opportunities to fund artists and arts activities** (*Artist Fellowship Program, Young Artist Program, City Arts Projects, Arts Education Projects, Small Projects Program*)
- ◆ **Maintain and expand general operating support for small to medium-sized arts groups** (*East of the River Program, Grants-in-Aid*)
- ◆ **Create leadership development grants for capacity building** (*Arts Advancement Program, East of the River Program, Cultural Facilities Program*)
- ◆ **Provide technical assistance workshops and professional development to expand knowledge in the field** (*Grants Workshops, Young Artist Program Series, Ward 7 Arts Workshops, Advocacy Workshops*)

Objective 2: Expand opportunities for arts participation for residents and visitors

As the city has continued to rebuild and reinvigorate, there have been increased demand for arts programs and activities to highlight and celebrate the District's neighborhoods, and to introduce visitors to the culture "beyond the Mall." There has also been an increased need for quality programs for children and youth. Programs such as the Shakespeare Theatre's *Free for All* performances, the Adams Morgan Neighborhood Festival, the free workshops of the Dance DC Festival and the Hip-Hop Theatre Festival, and the Cultural Tourism's historic neighborhood walking tours are all examples of quality arts and cultural programs that encourage arts participation.

Strategies:

- ◆ **Support free and low cost arts activities throughout the city, with a particular emphasis on underserved neighborhoods** (*City Arts Projects, East of the River Projects, Community-Based Arts Education Projects*)
- ◆ **Attract cultural tourists to neighborhood and locally-focused cultural sights and events** (*Cultural Tourism DC Partnership*)
- ◆ **Maintain and expand funding for grassroots community-based arts organizations** (*City Arts Projects, East of the River Program, Cultural Facilities Program*)
- ◆ **Create special initiatives that highlight the District's arts scene, with a participatory focus** (*Dance DC Festival, Hip-Hop Theatre Festival, Mayor's Arts Awards*)

GOAL I: Increase access to and awareness of the arts for all District residents (continued)

Objective 3: Increase awareness of arts opportunities in the District

As the city's cultural landscape has expanded, there has been an increased need for targeted communications strategies that increase knowledge of opportunities and initiatives for arts organizations and artists, as well as methods for communicating to the public about the variety of arts and cultural experiences available to them. Reflecting the dual nature of the city, communication strategies are implemented on a variety of levels, from the high tech and high profile to the grassroots and simple.

Strategies:

- ◆ **Use technology to speed communication to arts organizations and artists** (*email blast announcements, arts education listserv, neighborhood listserv, grantee and applicant listserv, FindArt DC online job bank*)
- ◆ **Partner with media for communication of arts events and initiatives** (*Washington Post and washingtonpost.com for PandaMania and FilmFest DC, City Paper for the Hip-Hop Theatre Festival, District Cablevision for the Mayor's Arts Awards*)
- ◆ **Increase communications and public relations efforts** (*Media consultant, newsletter, website*)
- ◆ **Participate in grassroots activities to increase awareness** (*staff participation in community fairs, District Government information booths, neighborhood meetings*)

GOAL II: Arts education and learning in the arts for all ages

Objective 1: To help ensure that the arts are basic to the education of children and young adults in grades pre-K through 12.

The arts are a valuable part of education, but are frequently reduced or cut by District schools with limited resources or other academic concerns. The DCCAH works to increase the arts in schools for every student in the District. We strategically targets schools that have chosen to keep arts specialists and arts classes as part of their curriculum, offering them additional support and resources, and we encourage other schools to make the choice for the arts by supporting arts organizations who work in partnership with them, and increased access to arts education performances.

Strategies:

- ◆ **Maintain and enhance funding for quality arts education programs for pre-K through 12 grades** (*School-Based Arts Education Projects Grants, Arts for Every Student Partnership*)
- ◆ **Target funding and resources to encourage more arts in the classroom, with added benefits for schools that maintain their arts specialists** (*Teacher Mini Grants Pilot Program, Arts Education Resource Fair*)
- ◆ **Develop and support model programs and disseminate lessons learned from them** (*Teacher Mini Grants, Arts Education Pilot Program, Arts Education Newsletter*)
- ◆ **Align funding priorities to DCPS and National Standards** (*Arts Education Projects, Teacher Mini Grants, Pilot Program*)
- ◆ **Advocate for increased arts education resources for schools and community** (*DC Advocates for the Arts partnership, DC Voice public engagement working group*)

GOAL II: Arts education and learning in the arts for all ages (continued)

Objective 2: To expand opportunities for children and young adults to participate in and to increase their understanding of or skills in the arts.

The arts can be a powerful and positive influence on children and youth beyond the school day. They increase confidence and strengthen resiliency skills, and have been shown to have a particularly positive effect on high-risk youth. The DCCAH is committed to supporting arts learning before and after school and in the summer, as well as in the classroom.

Strategies

- ◆ **Maintain and enhance funding for quality arts programs both during and after the school day** (*Community-Based Arts Education Project Grants, City Arts Projects*)
- ◆ **Provide participatory arts experiences for children and youth as part of special initiatives** (*Dance DC Festival Workshops, East of the River Cultural Workshops, Larry Neal Writer's Awards for Youth*)
- ◆ **Support community resources in underserved areas that provide arts programs for youth** (*East of the River Grants Program, Latino Initiative, Young Artist Program Grants*)

Objective 3: To provide professional development opportunities for artists, arts professionals, and teachers.

Focus groups and meetings with teachers have informed the DCCAH that many teachers feel they lack the skills and confidence to use the arts regularly in their classroom. Teaching artists have also felt that they needed more training in classroom management, assessment, and in working with content standards. The DCCAH has worked to enhance the knowledge and experience of the District's arts education community through professional development.

Strategies

- ◆ **Partner with qualified organizations to provide professional development for arts organizations and teachers** (*DC Arts and Humanities Education Collaborative*)
- ◆ **Fund organizations that provide quality professional development in the arts, and support independent professional development initiatives** (*Arts Education Project Grants, Teacher Mini Grants*)
- ◆ **Build resources and skills of arts community through shared professional development and networking** (*DC Arts Education Summer Institute, Arts Education Resource Fair*)
- ◆ **Provide technical assistance to arts specialists in DCPS and Public Charter Schools** (*Teacher Mini Grant workshops, DC Arts Education Association workshop presentations, DCPS Arts Specialist Content Forums*)

GOAL II: Arts education and learning in the arts for all ages (continued)

Objective 4: Provide lifelong learning opportunities in the arts

Although the predominant focus of the DCCAH's Arts Learning programs has been children and youth, the agency supports continuing the learning cycle for all of its residents. Learning through the arts provides invaluable opportunities to share and celebrate the culture of the city, and to deepen community connections through the love of learning.

Strategies

- ◆ **Maintain and enhance funding for community arts instruction programs** (*City Arts Projects Grants, Small Projects Program, East of the River Grants*)
- ◆ **Provide underserved communities and populations resources for increased arts learning and participation** (*East of the River Grants Program, Latino Initiative, Young Artist Program*)
- ◆ **Encourage and support cross-generational learning opportunities** (*Elders Learning Through the Arts Program, Folk & Traditional Arts Mini-Grant Program*)

GOAL III: Building community through the arts

Objective 1: Support the role of the arts in citywide economic development and planning

The arts community has been a part of revitalizing neighborhoods in the District for decades, but it has primarily been in an informal and unplanned manner. Subsequently, many artists and arts organizations have lost their spaces to developers as the real estate market has boomed. Also, the positive effects of the arts in the community have not benefited all communities and some artists have chosen to move to neighboring counties that have marketed to them. The DCCAH has worked strategically to keep its cultural resources in the District, where they benefit the city economically as well as aesthetically.

Strategies

Partner with appropriate agencies and organizations to encourage cultural components in planning and development (*DC Office of Planning, DC "Main Street" Initiative, Cultural Development Corporation*)

Build public and policymaker awareness of the economic benefits of the cultural community (*DC Advocates for the Arts, Cultural Alliance of Washington/Arts Economic Impact Study, Arts Funding Taskforce*)

Provide resources and incentives for cultural programs to remain in the District & support infrastructure of community arts programs (*Cultural Facilities Grant Program, Arts Advancement Program, East of the River Program*)

GOAL III: Building community through the arts *(continued)*

Objective 2: Support community enhancement through public art

Responses from community forums, Citizen's Summits and the Comprehensive Plan meetings have shown that residents overwhelmingly support public art in their neighborhoods as a means of beautifying the city and reflecting community diversity and pride. The DCCAH is committed to using public art as a means to enhance neighborhoods and to facilitate community building through dialogue and participation.

Strategies

Partner with government agencies and other entities to increase public art space (*DC Office of Parks and Recreation, Metro Art in Transit Program*)

Encourage community input through public arts (*H Street NE Arts Project, Expressive Signs Arts Project, Metro Art in Transit Program, Community Arts Initiatives*)

Utilize public art opportunities to increase arts participation (*Art Walk public art/performance space, PandaMania photography contest, Community Arts Initiatives*)

Objective 3: Maintain and enhance funding for cultural hubs in underserved communities and build their organizational capacity

Grassroots community arts programs have been one of the greatest resources for neighborhoods in the city, underserved communities in particular, providing needed programs and positive alternatives for youth and adults alike. Many small and medium arts groups in the city have limited training in management and planning, making it difficult for them to grow to scale and to compete with larger, established organizations for support. As many District neighborhoods are rapidly changing (and facing positive and negative consequences from that change), the DCCAH plans to support these organizations so that they remain resources for the community .

Strategies

Provide funding and resources to support development of arts organization infrastructure (*Art Advancement Program, Cultural Facilities Program, East of the River Program, Latino Initiative*)

Establish partnerships to provide expertise to community arts organizations (*Cultural Alliance Business Volunteers for the Arts, Cultural Development Corporation's Flashpoint Arts Incubator, Washington Area Lawyers for the Arts Assistance Program*)

Advocate for space for arts organizations in government and community service agencies (*DC Office of Planning, DC Parks and Recreation, DC Advocates for the Arts*)

GOAL IV: Create and strengthen partnerships in the arts

Objective 1 -- Develop strategic partnerships to increase agency impact

As a small agency with limited staff, the DCCAH uses partnerships with other government agencies and arts and cultural service providers to deepen the impact of our initiatives and to make more and better resources available for the entire city. By tying our efforts to our partners' initiatives, we are able to work more effectively for the city's cultural community.

Strategies

- ◆ **Develop agency partnerships with District government for planning and facilitation resources** (*D.C. Office of Planning, District Comprehensive Plan, Mayor's Citizen Summits*)
- ◆ **Partner with regional arts organizations for providing increased services** (*Arts Education Collaborative partnerships, Cultural Alliance of Greater Washington, Washington Regional Association of Grantmakers membership*)
- ◆ **Build DCCAH partnerships with business, government, and community leaders for expertise and additional resources for agency initiatives and events** (*NASA/DCCAH/Metro L'Enfant Plaza Public Art initiative, Washington Post/City Paper/District Cablevision partnerships for media support, Kennedy Center and the Mayor's Arts Awards*)

Objective 2 -- Encourage arts community partnerships to advance shared goals

Arts and cultural organizations both large and small can benefit by working together on the city's big issues and concerns. Through facilitating networking and sharing information, the DCCAH works with all of the city's organizations to improve arts access for everyone.

Strategies

- ◆ **Fund and support arts partnerships for facility development** (*Flashpoint Arts Incubator, the Atlas Performing Arts Center, Tivoli Theater Development*)
- ◆ **Fund and support arts partnerships for advocacy, policy, and joint programming** (*DC Advocates for the Arts, DC Arts and Humanities Education Collaborative,)*
- ◆ **Develop and fund arts partnerships for shared capacity building and partner development** (*Ward 7 Arts Collaborative*)

GOAL IV: Create and strengthen partnerships in the arts
(continued)

Objective 3 -- Encourage business and arts partnerships to benefit neighborhoods and communities

Through capital funding projects, technical assistance, and advocacy, the DCCAH helps develop successful public/private partnerships throughout the city. These partnerships increase arts resources at the community level, and creates more opportunity for neighborhood arts participation

Strategies

- ◆ **Facilitate business and arts partnerships for public art** (*PEPCO Plaza public art and community gallery partnership, PandaMania Arts Project corporate partnerships*)
- ◆ **Advise and support business and arts partnerships for facilities** (*Town Hall Education Arts and Recreation Campus/THEARC, Cultural Development Arts Incubator Program, The Mather Building Condominiums artist live/work space development*)
- ◆ **Broker and support business and arts partnerships for festivals and special events** (*Jemal Development/Art-O-Matic support, City Paper/Hip-Hop Theatre Festival support*)

GOAL V: Preserve and highlight the District's cultural diversity and heritage

Objective 1 -- Support and document the city's unique cultural heritage

Washington DC has a wealth of folk, ethnic and traditional artists, and a unique cultural identity as both a city and a symbol. The DCCAH works to support the artists and craftsmen who call the District their home, and to make their cultural traditions accessible to the city's residents and visitors

Strategies:

Fund and support the city's folk, ethnic, and traditional artists (*City Arts Projects, Folk and Traditional Arts Mini Grants, Small Projects Program, Elders Learning Through the Arts*)

Document the city's folk artists and cultural heritage (*Folk and Traditional Arts Mini Grants, DCCAH Website*)

Fund and support the ethnic and community traditions of the city (*Latino Initiative Program, Folk and Traditional Arts Mini Grants, City Arts Projects, Elders Learning Through the Arts, Dance DC Festival*)

GOAL V: Preserve and highlight the District’s cultural diversity and heritage
(continued)

Objective 2 -- Highlight and promote the diversity and history of the city’s arts and culture

In a city with scores of arts programs and with large Federal cultural institutions such as the Smithsonian, the DCCAH works to promote the unique local arts and culture to bring the complete cultural picture of the city to residents and visitors alike.

Strategies:

- ◆ **Promote folk, ethnic and traditional artists through special programming and performances** (*Dance DC Festival, the Mayor’s Arts Awards ceremony, DC’s participation in the Smithsonian Folklife Festival*)
- ◆ **Support public workshops and presentations of the city’s traditional arts and cultures** (*City Arts Projects, Folk and Traditional Arts Mini Grants, neighborhood festival sponsorships*)
- ◆ **Highlight District artists and the District’s visual identity through Public Art program** (*Washington Arts Bank/Images of Washington program, Community Public Art Initiative*)
- ◆ **Build public awareness of the city’s cultural strengths** (*District Cablevision partnership, Media Consultant initiative, Agency website and newsletter*)