

Fortifying Maine's Creativity & Culture

A Five-Year Cultural Plan
2015 – 2020



MAINE ARTS
COMMISSION

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

It is with great pride and optimism that we present our Five-Year Cultural Plan to Fortify Maine’s Creativity & Culture. Together with 113 leaders who served on our Steering Committee, we are proud to present a plan that will continually strengthen culture and creativity’s impact on our state’s livability and prosperity. At this plan’s core is seeing that Maine’s dynamic, creative opportunities are available to all residents and the nearly 20 million tourists who visit us each year. The Maine Arts Commission has funded this project and will guide it. We are sharing this plan widely, with deepest gratitude, knowing that our partners and constituents who helped in its creation now stand ready to assist with implementation.



Altered book sculpture, Maine Arts Commission photo

When we began this journey in April 2014, little did we know the ground swell of enthusiasm and interest it would generate in communities both large and small across our state. That 6,520 people representative of every county and tribal nation stepped forward to be a part of this year-long planning process conveys a tremendous message that Maine cares about culture!

We express sincere appreciation to the 1,037 Maine artists and more than 450 creative sector workers who generously shared thoughtful insights and ideas. We owe a debt of gratitude to fellow Steering Committee

Members, Maine Arts Commission Members, and the Maine Arts Commission’s dedicated staff who assisted every step of the way.

As we look forward to Maine’s Bicentennial in 2020, what better time to reinvigorate the Maine Arts Commission; to ensure that the great wealth of Maine’s cultural resources will become a more visible and valued asset in our state.

Charles V. Stanhope, Plan Co-Chair
Laurie Lachance, Plan Co-Chair
Julie Richard, Executive Director

OUR VISION

Increase the impact of arts & culture on Maine’s livability, vitality, and prosperity.

OUR MISSION

The Maine Arts Commission shall encourage and stimulate public interest and participation in the cultural heritage and programs of our state; shall expand the state’s cultural resources; and shall encourage and assist freedom of artistic expression for the well-being of the arts, to meet the legitimate needs and aspirations of persons in all parts of the state.

THE MAINE ARTS COMMISSION TODAY



Maine Arts Commission offices, located in the historic Gage-McLean House in Augusta

Created in 1965 by the Maine legislature, the Maine Arts Commission provides services and allocates state and federal funding to support the state’s arts, creative, and cultural sector for the benefit of Maine’s citizens, visitors, and the economies of communities across the state.

It supports programs and partnerships that:

- ▶ Promote stronger and wider delivery of services within the arts and culture communities of Maine;
- ▶ Recognize the potential for advancing the arts through technology, in education, and in state and local economies;
- ▶ Preserve and strengthen Maine’s traditional arts;
- ▶ Focus on opportunities for all of Maine’s citizens, native peoples, and especially underserved populations and persons with disabilities to have meaningful encounters with art, artists, and art-making; and
- ▶ Increase local capacity for arts programs, thus energizing and broadening support for arts and culture in Maine.

In supporting these activities and pursuing its mission, the Maine Arts Commission looks for evidence of public benefit and efficient use of funds and other resources. Above all, the Maine Arts Commission strives to be flexible and adaptable, responding to needs and learning from opportunities and challenges, in order to increase the positive impact arts and culture has on Maine’s vitality, livability, and prosperity.

WHY PLAN?

Plans are road maps that guide us in achieving a shared vision. Plans remind us what matters most and inform choices and decisions along the way. In 2013 the Maine Arts Commission set out to develop a new five-year Cultural Plan to better understand what Maine artists and cultural organizations need in order to better connect with the public.

WHO WAS INVOLVED?

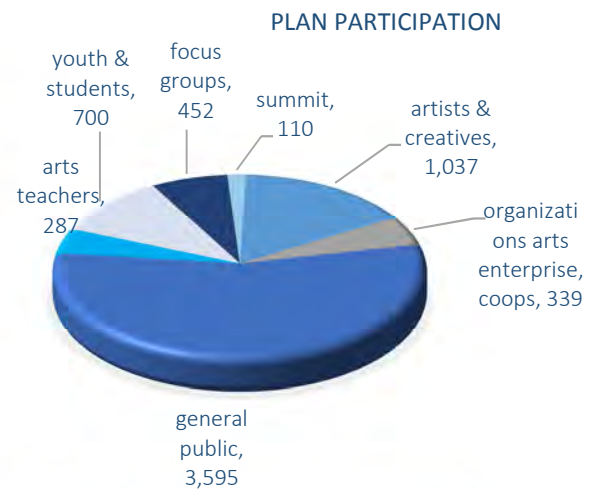
Guided by a steering committee of 113 leaders, 14 Maine Arts Commission Members and a staff of 10, plan development was a collective effort in its truest sense. A national consultant team was retained to facilitate the process.¹ Extensive research was conducted to better understand the geographic reach and relevance of current programs. Research on economic, tourism, environmental, and community development provided insights into major statewide priorities.

First-hand perceptions were gathered from 30 community conversations in 21 cities and towns, from Kennebunk and Rangeley to Eastport and Madawaska. From April 2014 through December 2014, a statewide opinion survey gathered perceptions from residents in all 16 counties to discover how arts and culture are perceived and valued. Some 1,037 artists and 430 arts leaders participated in the assessment, including surveys and gatherings around the state to affirm the cultural sector's most pressing needs.

With assistance from teachers in the Maine Arts Assessment Initiative, perceptions and ideas were collected from arts educators and students across the state. Youth Team Leaders from Tree Street based in Lewiston assisted with surveying Maine's youth involved in neighborhood programs.

In all, 6,520 residents contributed to the plan and helped find answers to these questions:

1. What do Maine residents think about arts and culture, and to what extent are arts and culture valued?
2. How important are Maine's cultural resources to tourists?
3. What do Maine's artists, arts, and cultural organizations need to succeed?
4. How might the Maine Arts Commission put the arts to work in other agendas important to Maine's future?
5. What is influencing the state's cultural development trends?
6. How could culture further distinguish Maine in the New England region, nationally, and internationally?



¹ Mataraza Consulting, Inc.

WHAT WE LEARNED AND WHERE WE ARE HEADED

Five strategic priorities emerged in this process and will be Maine Arts Commission's primary focus over the next five years.

Priority 1. Attract and leverage greater investment in Maine's arts, culture, and creative economy.

Mainers are proud of their local traditions, community character, and authenticity. Critical to the success of this plan is continued investment in the capacity and sustainability of Maine's cultural sector that contributes to all three.

Priority 2. Increase awareness of creative opportunities and their value to communities and local economies.

Perhaps the most important long-term outcome of this plan will be that Maine's residents and nearly twenty million tourists who travel here every year will be more aware of the state's dynamic, accessible, creative and cultural opportunities--and become more avid consumers.

Priority 3. Build on and further strengthen PK-12 arts education and lifelong learning programs.

Few plan findings were as resoundingly positive as the value Mainers place on arts education. Currently, the Maine Arts Commission, with its innovative approach to arts education, is reaching a growing number of schools and individuals through its Arts Education and Lifelong Learning programs and services.

Priority 4. Build arts and tourism synergy.

Tourism is critical to the state's economy and culture is critical to tourism. This plan will build upon efforts of the Maine Arts Commission with the Maine Office of Tourism and Maine Tourism Association to encourage, facilitate, and increase synergies between culture and tourism.

Priority 5. Strengthen Maine Arts Commission's capacity and stewardship.

Plan implementation will require greater capacity and resources than the Maine Arts Commission is presently able to provide. Establishment of a 501 (c)(3) arm is proposed in this plan to attract and leverage additional financial resources, enabling the Maine Arts Commission to more expeditiously deliver on its mission.

FORTIFY MAINE'S CREATIVITY & CULTURE



Portland Ovation's Photo, the Nile Project

KEY FINDINGS, FACTS, AND TRENDS

Findings, facts, and trends that emerged from extensive research and assessment set the stage for this Cultural Plan.

Quality of Life and Community Well-being Matter in Maine

- ▶ Quality of life and community well-being are fundamental principles embraced by Maine’s local and state governments, as well as leaders in business, economic, and community development. “Achieving a higher quality of life for all Maine residents requires a vibrant and sustainable economy supported by vital communities and a healthy environment.”² The Maine Arts Commission and Plan Leaders firmly believe arts and culture contribute significantly to all of the above, and through this plan will raise community awareness and appreciation.
- ▶ Job creation and business growth is at the top of every state government agenda. Beyond economic and work force development, some states are using arts, culture, and design to enhance economic growth. And here’s why: The more creative activities and places there are in a community, the higher the pride and affection residents have. These communities show over time a higher GDP (growth domestic product), a prime element in local economic vitality.³ By attracting, serving, and nurturing individual artists, the arts, creative, and cultural sector builds the sort of creative, problem-solving human capital that is an asset in building a stronger economy.
- ▶ Nationally, eighty-five percent of employers looking to hire creative people say they are unable to find the applicants they seek.⁴ As we can see by example in communities such as Portland and Bar Harbor, creative communities attract and keep creative individuals. Achieving the aspiration Mainers expressed in surveys, “in years to come, my community will be known as a creative center,” will be accomplished by the Maine Arts Commission

We Mainers are a pragmatic people who pride ourselves on being self-reliant, frugal, and resilient. Though these are admirable traits, they can sometimes work against us. Yet when we pull together collaboratively for a common goal, incredible gains result! The process for creating this cultural plan is a tremendous case in point. More than 6,500 Mainers participated in designing the vision of what could be. Now comes the best part, when we roll up sleeves together to turn these dreams into realities like only Mainers can do. I hope you will join us in building Maine’s cultural vitality.

Laurie Lachance,
Steering Committee Co -Chair

² Maine Economic Growth Council, *Measures of Growth* 2002

³ Knight Foundation, *Soul of the Community Project*, a three-year study conducted by Gallup of the 26 John S. and James L. Knight Foundation communities across the United States, December 2014

⁴ The Conference Board, *READY TO Innovate* 2008

The Maine Arts Commission is heartily encouraged by the results of the effort to create this cultural plan. That more than 6,500 residents enthusiastically participated in its development was the first indicator that culture matters greatly in Maine! What we have heard and learned about why Mainers in communities all across the state value arts and culture - reflected in this document - is extraordinary. This plan outlines our first steps. As we move forward with plan implementation we will continue to listen very carefully to our constituents and partners across Maine to be sure plan direction continuously represents unified common purpose. It encourages me, the Commission members, and the Commission staff to press forward with plan implementation as comprehensively and effectively as we possibly can.

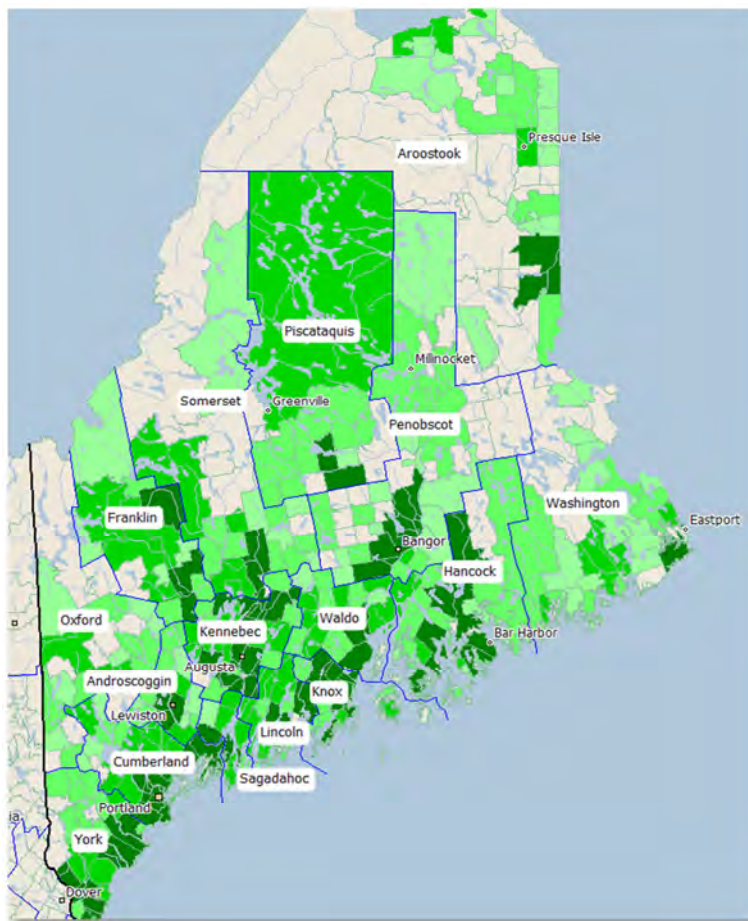
Charles V. Stanhope
Cultural Plan Steering Committee Co-Chair
Maine Arts Commission Chairperson

through greater financial support of organizations and artists working together to make their communities a better place.

Perhaps the most important long-term outcome of this plan will be that Maine's residents and nearly twenty million tourists who travel here every year will be more aware of the dynamic, accessible, creative and cultural opportunities, and become more avid consumers.

Culture Matters in Maine

More than half of one percent of Maine's population participated in this planning process. Opinions were received from residents in every Maine ZIP code as shown on this map - remarkable participation for a statewide plan! Mainers also are interested in and participate in cultural activities. Ninety eight (98) percent of residents surveyed indicated an interest in the arts. And when asked what kinds of entertainment and leisure-time activities they particularly enjoy, 2,581 residents shared 70 different activities. Among the top nine activities identified by 15% or more residents, six are arts-related.

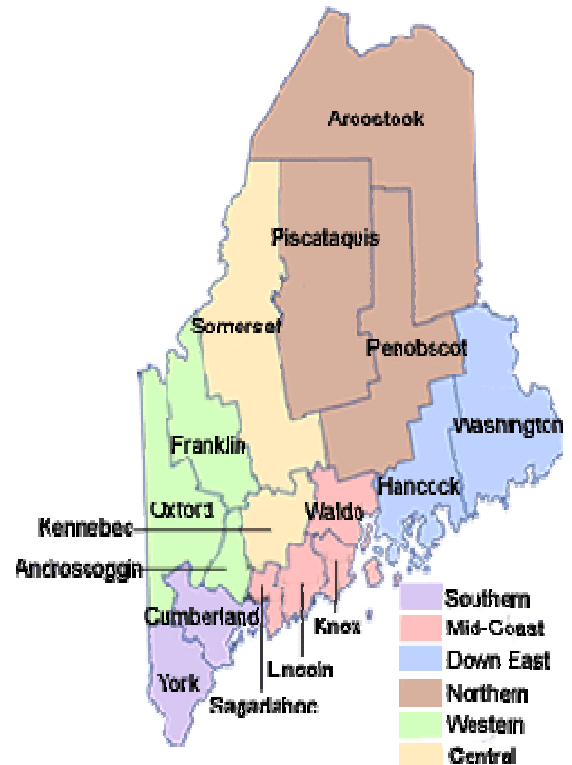


Source: Decision Support Partners, Inc.

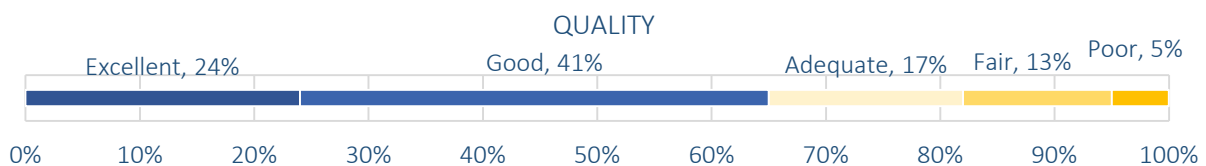
Mainers believe culture is the lifeblood of communities, reflective of local traditions, character, and authenticity. Public opinion surveys asked the open-ended question, “In years to come, what do you hope your community will be known for?” The reply, “as centers for arts and culture,” was the most frequently mentioned of more than 70 responses.

Even more significantly, when responses were segmented by geography using GrowSmart Maine’s economic development regions (pictured here), “as centers for arts and culture” was mentioned more often in each region than any other response.

All Respondents	N-2,581	Percentage of Respondents
1. Outdoor activities (non- water)	1,275	49%
2. Music concerts	1,122	43%
3. Home activities (reading, watching TV, games)	653	25%
4. Theater and Plays	567	22%
5. Water activities	552	21%
6. Movies	548	21%
7. Arts and crafts activities	501	19%
8. Any type of arts event	416	16%
9. Good restaurants	377	15%

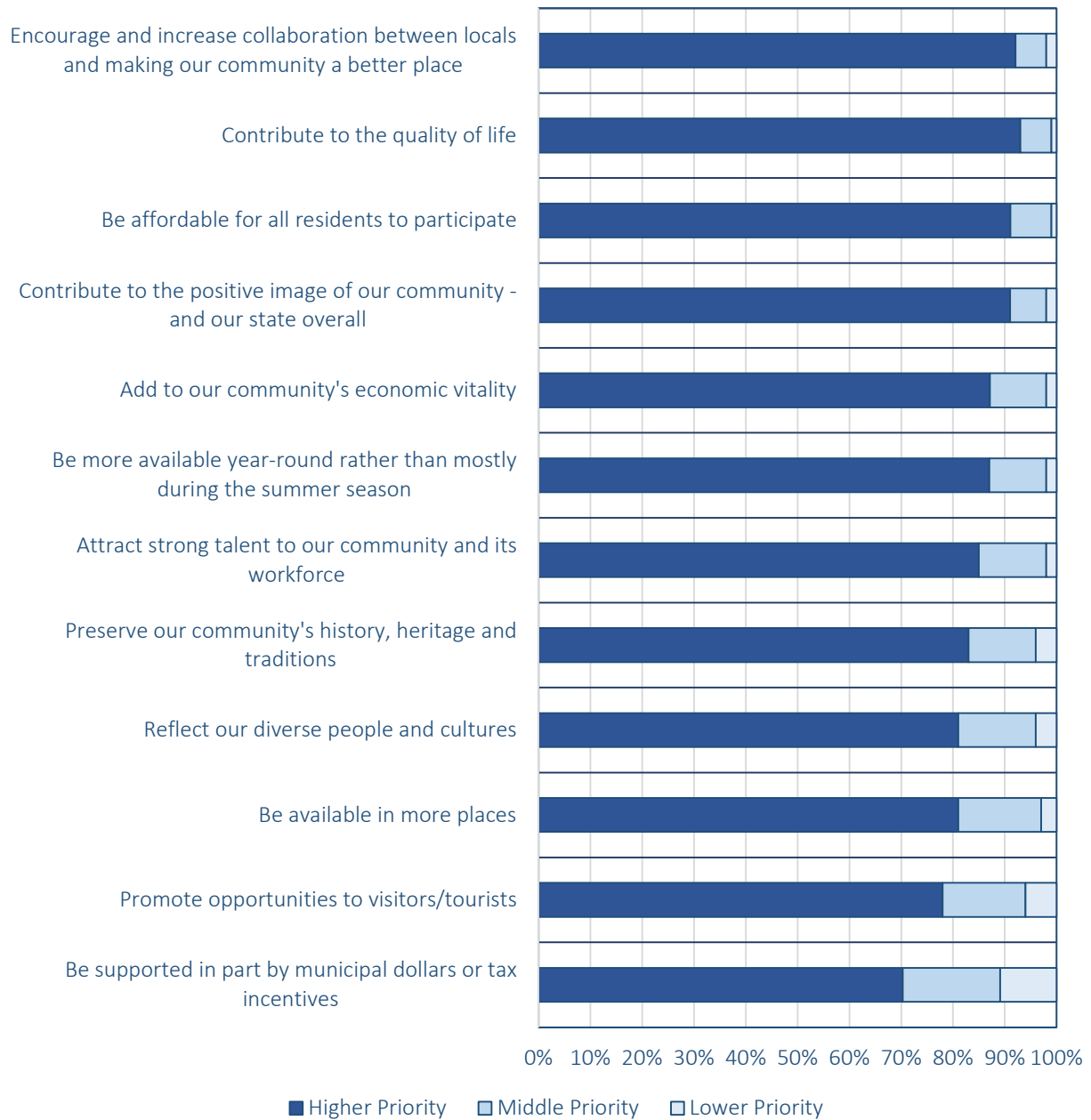


Maine residents’ perception about the quality of entertainment, celebrations, creative, and cultural activities in their communities is relatively high. Sixty-five (65) percent rated activities as good to excellent and 35% rated quality adequate to poor.



In this next chart, 2,697 residents shared opinions about the kinds of cultural impacts they would like to see. Of a dozen aspirations, only two of 10 were rated “middle priorities,” with the balance rated high. Also notable is the fact that 70% of respondents were in favor of municipal and tax incentives to support the arts.

I THINK ENTERTAINMENT, CREATIVE, AND CULTURAL ACTIVITIES
IN MY COMMUNITY SHOULD...



STRATEGIC PRIORITIES



Photo Courtesy of Abbe Museum

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES OVERVIEW

LEVERAGE INVESTMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Pursue fund development strategies difficult for artists and organizations to pursue on their own. • Continue professional development opportunities for artists and arts workers. • Continue to promote community development through the arts, creativity and culture. 	OUTCOMES
INCREASE AWARENESS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Create Maine Arts brand awareness. ▪ Encourage research and widely disseminate findings to increase the understanding of arts, creative, and cultural sector impacts and value. ▪ Increase arts, creative, and cultural sector recognition and celebrate success. ▪ Use Maine’s Bicentennial in 2020 as a marker in time when arts, creative, and cultural sector awareness will be greater than ever before. 	<p>By 2020...</p> <p>Successful advocacy increases State’s per capita appropriation from \$.61 to higher than the national average (\$1.09 in 2015),</p> <p>Generate a million+ dollars per year for creative and cultural investment,</p> <p>Build a statewide network that is 1,000 organizations and 3,000 artists strong, and</p> <p>75% of Maine’s schools are utilizing Maine Arts Commission’s arts education resources.</p>
FOSTER ARTS EDUCATION & LIFELONG LEARNING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Strengthen PK-12 arts education for all students. ▪ Support collaboration between PK-12 arts education and community cultural organizations. ▪ Grow and expand Maine Arts Commission’s PK-12 Arts Education efforts. ▪ Continue working with the Department of Education to strengthen PK-12 arts education. ▪ Collaborate with higher education institutions. ▪ Fortify Maine Arts Commission’s lifelong learning efforts. 	
BUILD ARTS & TOURISM SYNERGY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build a stronger bridge with the Office of Tourism and the Maine Tourism Association. ▪ Help strengthen cultural sector capacity to better utilize technology for marketing and PR. ▪ Create and disseminate cultural tourism best practices and guidelines. 	
STRENGTHEN COMMISSION CAPACITY & STEWARDSHIP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure the Maine Arts Commission’s capacity remains commensurate with planned growth. • Explore the feasibility of a 501(c)(3) arm and the proposed name, ArtsEngageME. • Build a statewide cultural sector network. • Keep this Cultural Plan current. 	



Creative Convo: Gallery in the 21st Century – Creative Portland

PRIORITY 1. LEVERAGE INVESTMENT TO STRENGTHEN AND BETTER CAPITALIZE THE ARTS, CREATIVE, AND CULTURAL SECTOR

FINDINGS

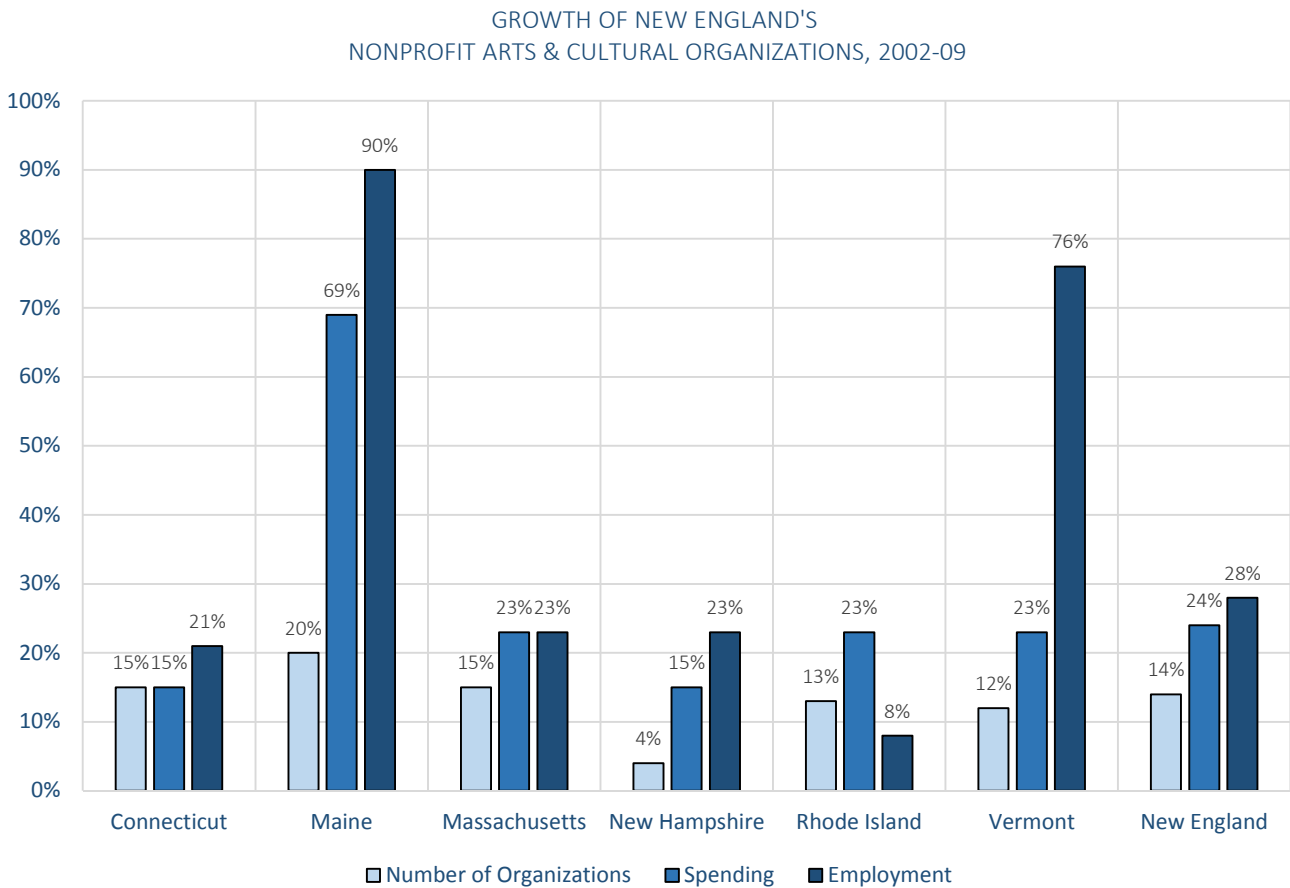
Arts and culture are big business in Maine

- Taken as a group, arts and cultural organizations in Maine constitute an economic powerhouse. A 2011 study⁵ commissioned by the New England Foundation for the Arts (hereafter referred to as NEFA) reported that spending by Maine's 2,292 nonprofit arts and

⁵ New England's Creative Economy: Nonprofit Sector Impact September 2011

cultural organizations amounted to \$262 million, and provided jobs for over 5,000 people. This volume of jobs would rank Maine’s arts, creative, and cultural sector 37th among 65 major sectors for which the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reports employment totals for the state.

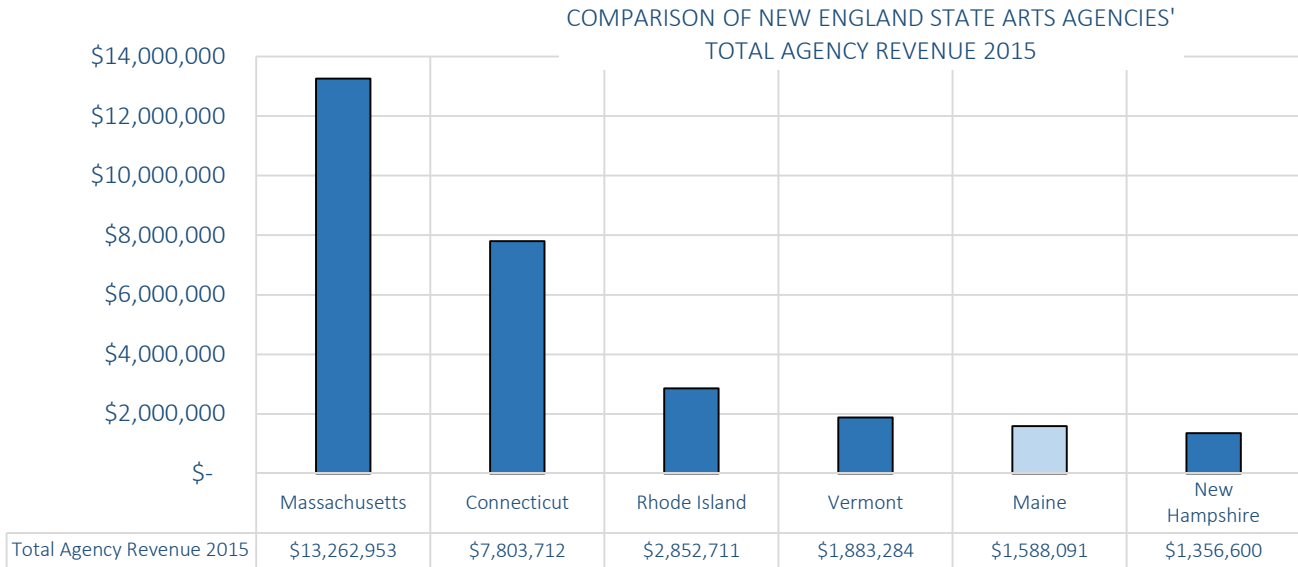
- That same 2011 NEFA study reported that every \$1.00 spent by a Maine nonprofit arts and cultural organization became \$2.00 in sales for businesses in Maine, and every job provided by a Maine nonprofit arts and cultural organization translated to 1.4 jobs for workers across the state.
- In comparison to other New England states using 2002-2009 data, Maine is a mecca that attracted the greatest number of creative economy workers. Going forward, how that talent is nurtured and applied for the mutual benefit of the sector and state will be a primary focus of the Maine Arts Commission.⁶



⁶ Ibid.

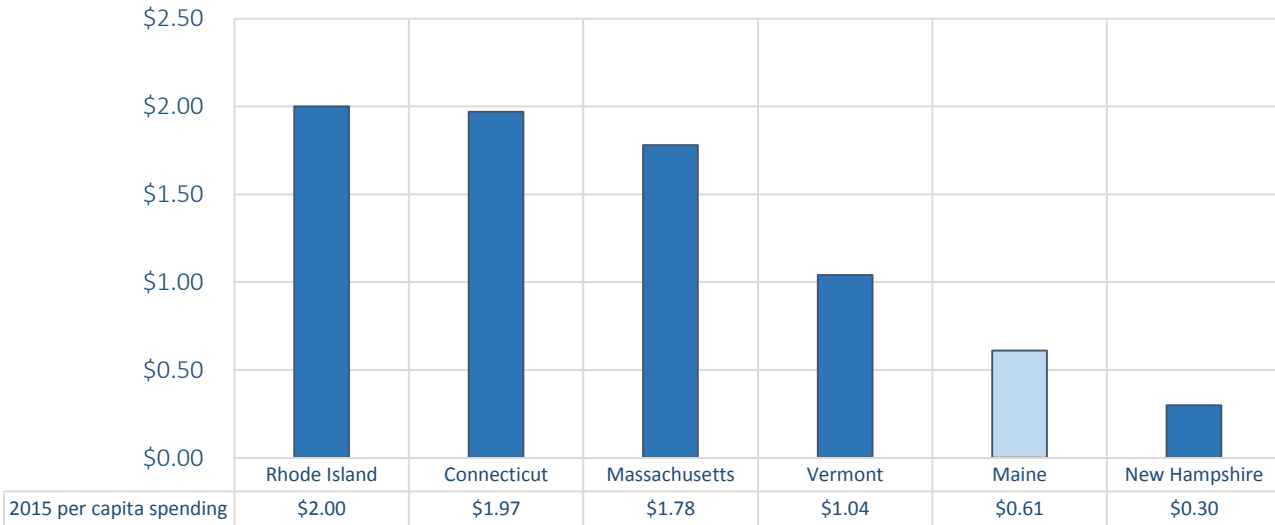
The arts, creative, and cultural sector is under-resourced

In these charts, Maine Arts Commission is compared to its New England State Arts Agency colleagues. The first compares total agency revenues and the second compares per capita levels.



The state arts agency national average per capita funding is \$1.09. Maine’s 2015 legislative appropriation to the arts is \$.61 per capita, ranking it 30th in the nation and fifth in New England. Legislative projections at the time of this plan are to increase Maine’s per capita to \$.73. in 2016/2017.

COMPARISON OF NEW ENGLAND STATE ARTS AGENCIES'
2015 PER CAPITA FUNDING



- Maine’s artist community is an underutilized resource. Only 14% of artists surveyed for this plan told us they are able to earn 100% of their livelihood through their art. While 37% of the artists surveyed use their art somewhat in their job, half the artists told us their art has little or nothing to do with their jobs. Capital investment in the creative and cultural sector is critically needed if its economic impacts are to grow.



Weavings from the Somali Bantu Community Association of Maine

- Many of Maine’s arts and cultural organizations are undercapitalized. Adapting operating models to keep pace with the realities of our time has been an uphill climb. Arts and cultural organizations are having to rethink what they offer and how to pay for it. New pricing structures to boost earned revenue and strategies to build a broader donor base are more important than ever. However, most organizations are ill-equipped to focus on these areas. In an analysis of 2013 financial trends, only 24% of organizations surveyed showed year-end gains, 43% broke even, and 33% ran deficits. In

community conversations, cultural leaders across the state spoke of human resource challenges. Staff positions lost during the recession were not reinstated. Volunteers are overtaxed and organizations are called on to do increasingly more with limited resources.

PRIORITY 1. STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

1.A. Pursue fund development strategies difficult for artists and organizations to pursue on their own.

- 1.A.1. Build online crowd funding to increase contributions directly to organizations, artists, community, education, lifelong learning projects, and more.
- 1.A.2. Advocate for more local public and private funding for creative enterprise.
- 1.A.3. Pursue and secure additional revenue streams to support the arts, building long-term, sustainable capital investment for the arts, creative, and cultural sector.
 - Build a statewide arts endowment.
 - Pursue dedicated revenue streams for the arts.
- 1.A.4. Pursue national foundation support.
- 1.A.5. Partner with the New England Foundation for the Arts on regional funding initiatives.
- 1.A.6. Encourage and help local artists and organizations leverage greater direct local support.

1.B. Continue professional development opportunities for artists and arts workers.

- 1.B.1. Strengthen and expand professional development and training opportunities across the state for artists and organizations in areas they identified as priorities.
- 1.B.2. Partner with other professional development resources such as universities, community colleges, and the Maine Association of Nonprofits as needed and appropriate.
- 1.B.3. Provide resources and tools for artists and arts workers to build their capacity and sustainability.
- 1.B.4. Continue Maine's International Conference on the Arts (MICA) bi-annually. In alternate years, partner with more sectors creating sessions for their gatherings.

1.C. Continue to promote community development through the arts.

1.C.1. Promote best practices and effective examples of community arts development. Distribute via websites, conferences, and publications of business, economic and community development associations, and local governments.

1.C.2. Continue incentivized funding for community development through the arts.

1.C.3. Disseminate suggestions to encourage community development through the arts. For example: creative enterprise zoning plus arts-friendly codes and ordinances; tax-increment financing; low or no cost loans; and development of cultural districts and public art ordinances.

1.C.4 Partner with those associations and others able and willing to expedite local community development and quality of life initiatives plus the resources to support them.



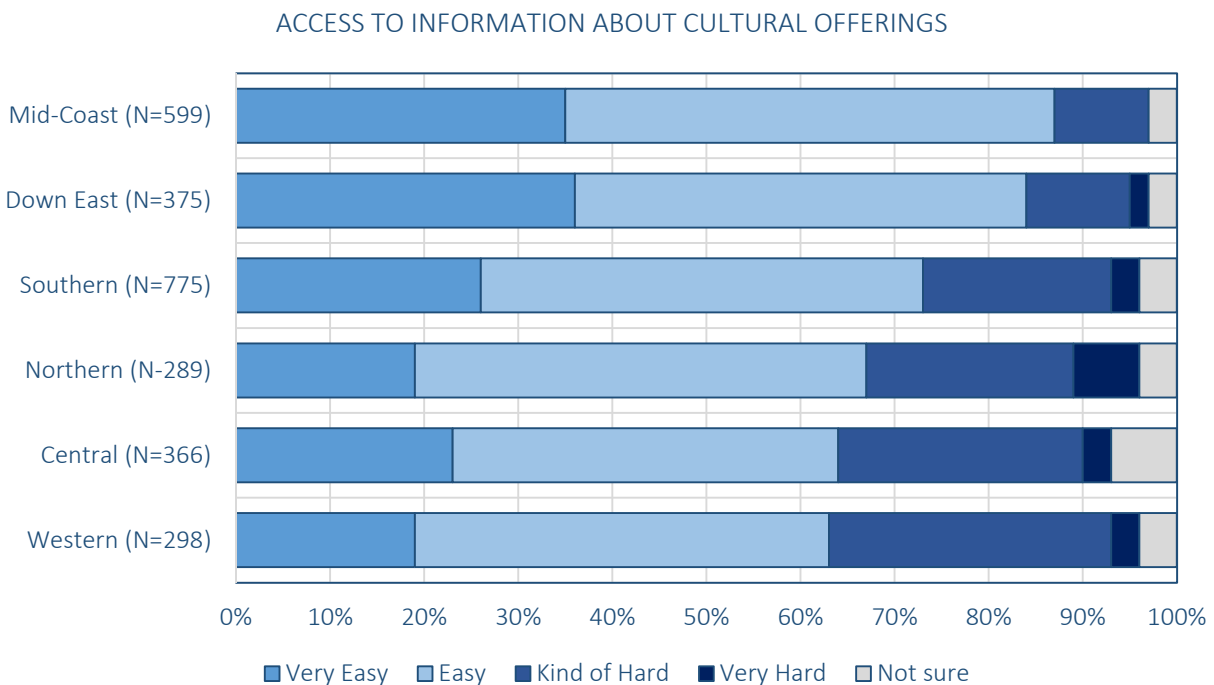
Maine FabLab, a place where anyone can make [almost] anything! And home of engine: propelling the creative community, Main Street Revitalization, Biddeford. Photo: Serranophotography.com

PRIORITY 2. INCREASE AWARENESS

FINDINGS

Information and marketing are vital to future success

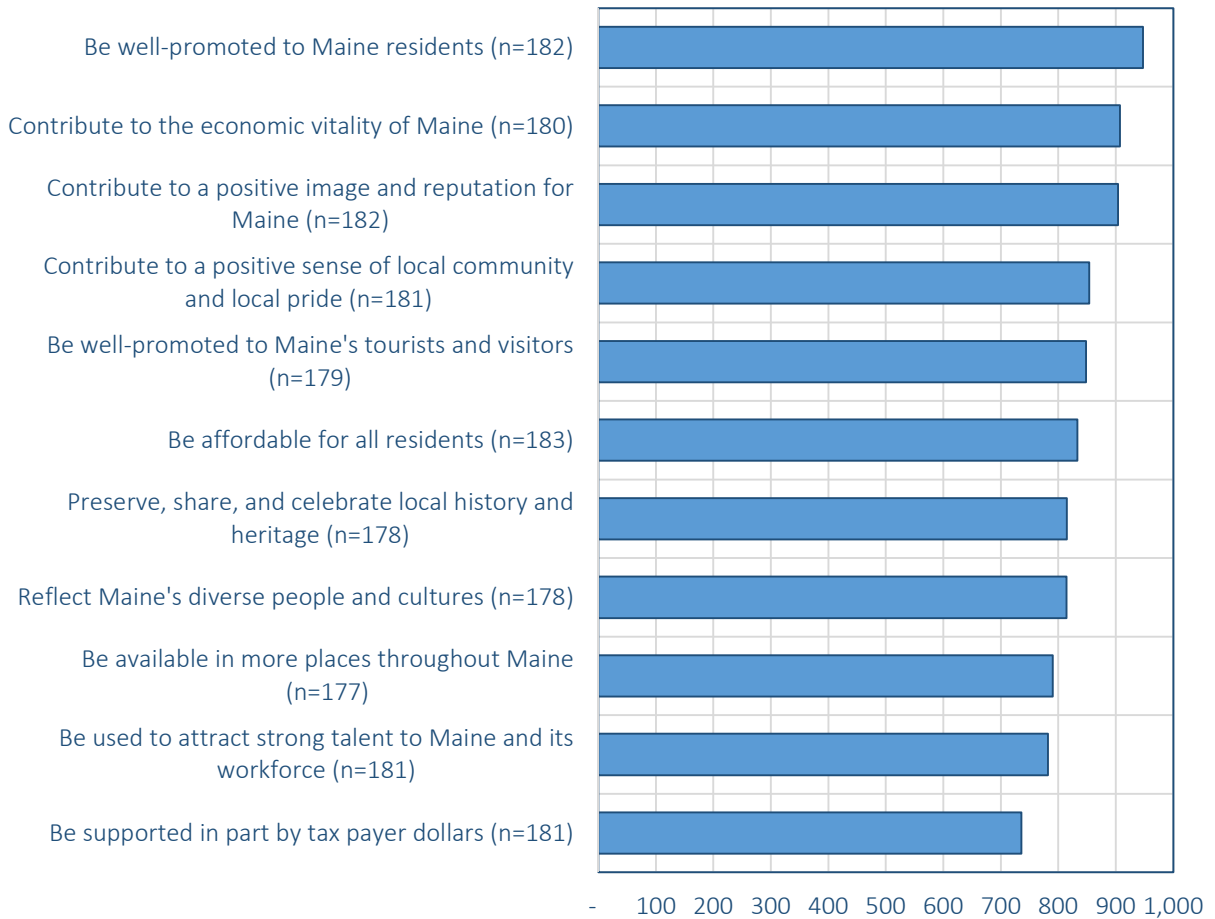
- Although more networks for communication exist than ever before, not everyone is well-informed about cultural resources in their communities. Plan research indicates visitors and potential visitors to Maine are more informed about Maine’s cultural offerings than Maine residents. In the Cultural Plan’s public opinion survey, organization survey, and community conversations, the need for improved marketing of arts, creative, and cultural sector offerings *to Maine residents* is amplified loudly and clearly.
- In questions about ease of access to local cultural information, among 2,702 public opinion survey respondents, those in Mid-Coast, Down East, and Southern regions of Maine showed greatest ease. However in Northern, Central, and Western regions of Maine, nearly a third of respondents found access to information difficult. This reality is further exacerbated by the absence of Wi-Fi.



- At March 2015 planning summits, “increasing awareness of creative opportunities and their value to Maine communities and local economies” was ranked as the second highest priority to be addressed in this Cultural Plan.

- Organizations participating in the planning survey rated “Be well-promoted to Maine residents” as first in weighing the importance of 11 cultural development priorities illustrated in this chart.

SUMMARY SCORE:
 "I THINK ARTS AND CULTURAL ACTIVITIES IN MAINE SHOULD..."



- Artists and organizations are limited in their capacity to market and promote themselves as can be seen in the following chart drawn from survey data. Only Maine’s larger cultural institutions have marketing and PR staff, and few organizations have PR and marketing budgets. Overall, approximately 60% of artists and organizations have web sites. Statewide and regional marketing strategies to raise local awareness are sorely needed.

SECTOR MARKETING AND PR CAPACITY	Web Sites	Facebook	Maine Arts Commission’s Database	NEFA’s Creative Ground Database	Other association web sites
Organizations (N=275)	59%	51%	18%	7%	22%
Artists (N=791)	63%	38%	25%	9%	34%

Celebration and Recognition Build Pride

- In this planning process, enthusiasm was high for creating annual statewide arts awards. Currently, Maine Governor's Awards recognize excellence in business, service and volunteerism, the environment, tourism, and economic development. At March planning summits, in addition to establishing annual arts awards, many suggested other sectors be approached to follow the lead of Maine's Office of Tourism with its annual Innovation and Creativity Award. This would increase recognition of the arts' role in advancing other important Maine agendas.

PRIORITY 2. STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

2.A. Create Maine Arts brand awareness.

2.A.1. Facilitate statewide communication and messaging. Identify the most effective networks and media outlets. Partner with them to find more ways to market Maine's artists, traditional arts, organizations, and creative enterprise.

2.A.2. Create a Maine Arts certificate of excellence recognizing communities, businesses, restaurants, hotels, schools, and more for achieving a high level of arts integration in all they do. Create and distribute a logo/decal for window display to call public attention to these entities across the state as a way to build greater awareness and pride in Maine arts and culture.



Bates Dance Festival

2.B. Encourage research on the positive impacts of Maine's arts and creativity, and widely disseminate findings.

2.B.1. Collaborate with education, tourism, business, and economic development leaders across Maine to include the arts and impact of creativity in their data collection and research where appropriate. Not only would this expand the depth and breadth of available research, it would increase the understanding - and value - of creative and cultural sector impacts.

2.B.2. Encourage and assist the New England Foundation for the Arts in instituting five-year regional economic impact report updates for New England’s State Arts Agencies.

2.C. Increase arts, creative, and cultural sector recognition and celebrate success.

2.C.1. Collaborate with respected existing Maine awards to add a “cultural award” recognizing excellence, innovation, and community vitality. Encourage communities to do the same, and over time, offer a ‘best of communities’ award.

2.C.2. Establish annual statewide arts recognition. Consider categories such as: business, Main Streets, cultural organization, local government, philanthropists, artists, school districts, health and wellness, and youth programs.

2.C.3. Promote all the above recipients as ArtsAmbassadors.

2.D. Use Maine’s Bicentennial in 2020 as a marker in time when arts, creative, and cultural sector awareness will be greater than ever before.

2.D.1. Take this opportunity to celebrate the cultural future of Maine through specific funding opportunities, cultural awareness, and fund development.

2.D.2. With the statewide network of artists and arts and cultural organizations set arts, creative, and cultural sector 2020 goals for the highest levels ever of visibility, participation, and support. Together, develop local strategies to help achieve them.



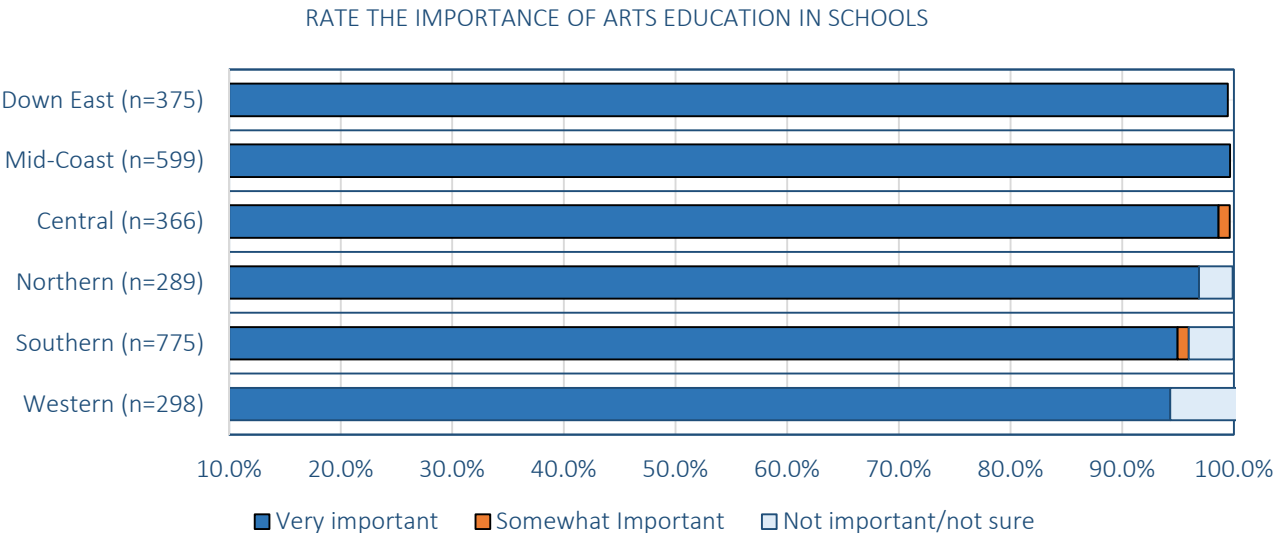
Maine Arts Commission photo

PRIORITY 3. FOSTER ARTS EDUCATION AND LIFELONG LEARNING

FINDINGS

Maine Values Arts Education

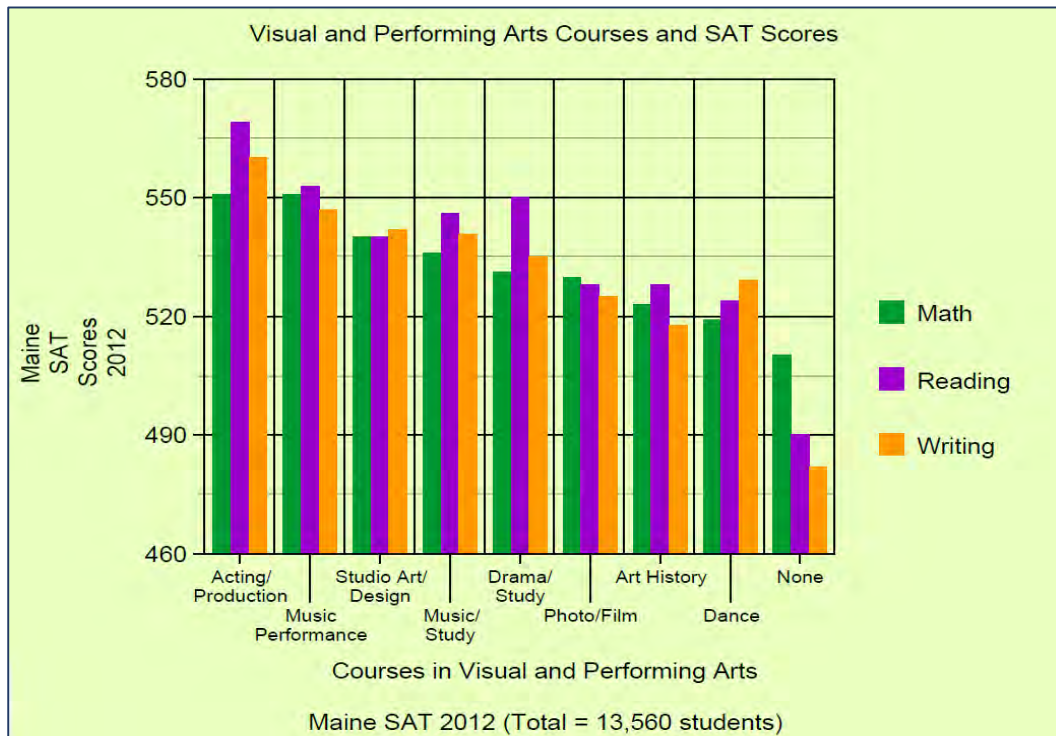
- Currently, the Maine Arts Commission, with its innovative approach to arts education, is reaching a growing number of schools through its Arts Education programs and services. Especially given education cutbacks, it is imperative that the Maine Arts Commission do even more!
- Few responses in public opinion surveys were as resoundingly positive, as illustrated in the graph below, as the importance of arts education in schools.



- Abundant national, concrete evidence shows the correlation between education in the arts and student success, not only in terms of academic achievement, but also in learning and development outside of the classroom. Substantial impact areas include critical thinking, decision making, and social skills that can be carried on throughout a student’s life.
- National Assembly of State Arts Agency research points to 65 distinct relationships between the arts and academic and social outcomes. Relationships include such associations as: visual arts instruction and reading readiness; dramatic enactment and conflict resolution skills; traditional dance and nonverbal reasoning; and learning piano and mathematics proficiency.⁷
- The arts impact SAT scores. Multiple independent studies have shown that increased years of enrollment in arts courses are positively correlated with higher SAT verbal and math scores.

⁷ Critical Evidence: How the Arts Benefit Student Achievement, National Assembly of State Arts Agencies, 2006, 9.

Students who took four years of arts coursework outperformed their peers who had one half-year or less of arts coursework by 58 points on the verbal portion and 38 points on the math portion of the SAT.⁸ Results of a 2012 study of 13,560 students in this next graph show the marked impacts of arts and creative activity on Maine student SAT scores. In the far right column are scores of students with no visual or performing arts courses as compared to the scores of students who did have visual and performing arts courses.

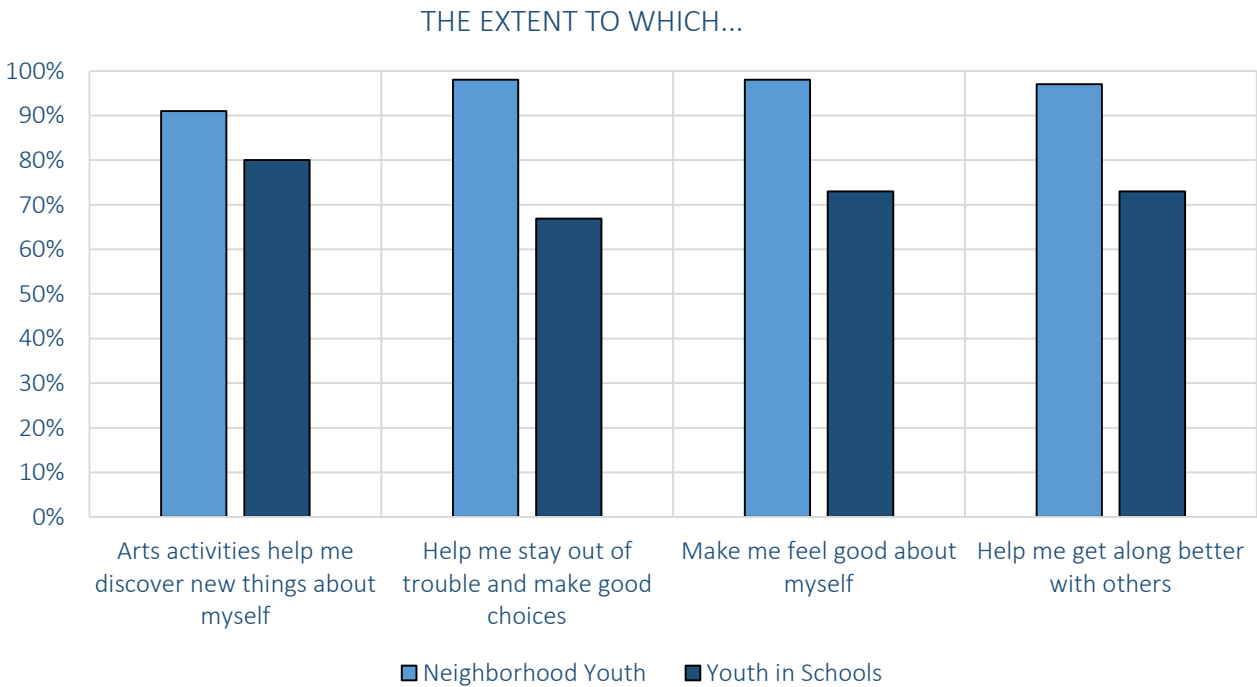


- As critical as arts education during the school day is, arts education opportunity outside the school day on weekends, and during summer months, is equally critical. In public opinion surveys, 98% of 2,702 respondents rated the importance of arts availability outside the school day as high or very high.
- National research conducted by the National Guild for Community Arts Education tells us that informal, out-of-school community arts education opportunities give teens a chance to stretch their minds, bodies, and imaginations in settings less obviously structured, programmatically more flexible, and conducive to more informal mentoring relationships with adults. It also points to opportunities that contrast with a formal classroom and provide a balance of structured and unstructured time, social interaction built into the learning experience, and opportunities for developing leadership, teamwork, communication, and other life skills.⁹

⁸ 2005 College-Bound Seniors: Total Group Profile Report, The College Board, 2005, Table 3-3; SAT Scores of Students Who Study the Arts: What We Can and Cannot Conclude about the Association, Kathryn Vaughn and Ellen Winner (Fall 2000)

⁹ Engaging Adolescents: Building Youth Participation in the Arts, National Guild for Community Arts Education, 2011, 3.

- Opinions heard directly from young people in Cultural Plan surveys offer compelling evidence as to the fundamental role and benefits of the arts in their lives. This graph compares opinions of youth enrolled in neighborhood and afterschool programs with youth enrolled in public schools. Responses of each group are high; however, responses of neighborhood youth are even higher.



- As educators of the next generation of arts consumers, higher education has an increasingly vital role to play in Maine’s cultural development. One excellent example is the University of Maine Farmington (UMF). With an active local and campus community of artists, musicians, poets, actors, writers, filmmakers, improv comics and more, the University has hosted performances by nationally and internationally known musicians, dance troupes, and comedians; exhibits by renowned artists; readings by Pulitzer Prize winning poets and renowned authors; and thought-provoking dramas, comedies, and musicals. And because of these offerings, UMF and the Farmington area is considered the cultural center of their region. This is just one example of what could be. Higher education leaders from across the state have stepped forward during this planning process, eager to do more.
- Maine’s Senior College Network, created in 1997 at the University of Southern Maine in Portland, is a consortium of 17 independent groups from York County to Fort Kent. This network provides non-credit courses, for modest annual membership and tuition fees, on hundreds of topics to thousands of Mainers age 50 and older who love to learn. Greater partnerships between local artists, arts and cultural organizations, and these and other

networks could significantly expand the reach of creative opportunities in communities across Maine.

- The Maine Arts Commission’s Creative Aging Program, grounded in the belief that the arts play a powerful role in enhancing the quality of life of older adults, is already winning national attention. Given Maine’s demographic trends, these programs will only grow in importance. In 2012, roughly one-third of the state’s population (420,000 people) was 55 or older. This number is projected to increase to 13% by 2022. A MaineHousing Report¹⁰ released in January 2015, cited a shortage of nearly 9,000 units of affordable housing for low income older people. Without any change to the existing rental stock, by 2022 the shortfall of affordable rental units will increase to more than 15,000. It substantiates the need for more creative aging programs and adds a sense of urgency to find housing solutions for its aging population. It also adds impetus to the Maine Arts Commission’s and MaineHousing’s collaboration to find longer-term housing solutions for aging, low-income Maine artists.

PRIORITY 3. STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

3.A. Strengthen PK-12 arts education for all students. *Strive to ensure every student has access to and is provided with an excellent arts education.*

3.A.1. Help build *sustainable*, long-lasting arts education programs in every school across Maine.

- Advocate for highly qualified and certified arts education teachers in every school.
- Advocate for quality arts integration teaching and learning opportunities, such as STEM to STEAM education.



Fruit Street School student artwork celebrating Chinese New Year

3.B. Support collaboration between PK-12 arts education and community cultural organizations.

3.B.1. Build a larger network of teaching artists and organizations available for residencies and to support the efforts of arts education teachers.

¹⁰ A Profile of Maine’s Older Population and Housing Stock, Abt Associates, Cambridge, January 2015.

3.C. Grow and expand MAC’s PK-12 Arts Education efforts.

3.C.1. Expand the Maine Arts Assessment Initiative that provides professional development resources and support to arts educators across the state.

3.D. Continue working with the Department of Education and Maine’s arts and cultural organizations to strengthen PK-12 arts education.

3.D.1. Building on the 2015 Education Census Project, forge stronger relations between the Maine Arts Commission and local arts organizations with schools.

3.D.2. Increase school awareness of and access to Maine Arts Commission and local arts organizations’ resources, tools, support, and professional development.

3.D.3. Explore new ideas and strategies to increase creative opportunities in early childhood education.

3.D.4. Promote excellent examples of local cultural organization’s PK-12 arts education programs on Maine Arts Commission’s website.

3.E. Collaborate with higher education institutions.

3.E.1. Work with arts and education departments at Maine’s higher education institutions to promote alignment with PK-12 arts education curricula.

3.E.2. Promote public awareness of arts programs at Maine’s colleges and universities.

3.E.3. Promote excellent examples of collaboration such as the University of Farmington on Maine Arts Commission’s website.

3.E.4. Once annual statewide arts awards are established, include a category for higher education’s role in Maine’s cultural development.

3.E.5. Build stronger connections between the Maine Arts Commission and local cultural organizations with higher education institutions that have degree programs in the arts as well as arts education to keep creative talent in Maine. Create pipelines to place the next generation of artists and future creative industry leaders.

3.F. Fortify Maine Arts Commission’s lifelong learning efforts.

3.F.1. Advocate for creative aging and wellness programs in more communities across Maine.

3.F.2. Offer creative aging capacity building, professional development, resources, and tools for local artists and organizations, and promote great examples of existing programs

on the Maine Arts Commission's website.

- 3.F.3. Build networks that connect artists and cultural organizations with continuing education programs in communities across Maine, such as the Maine Senior College Network and Maine Association of Area Agencies on Aging.
- 3.F.4. Connect local artists and cultural organizations with their community's libraries, senior centers, health care facilities, day care providers, and youth service organizations to ensure more creative learning opportunities are available for all ages in more Maine communities.
- 3.F.5. Continue collaboration with MaineHousing and private developers to create affordable senior artist colonies - starting with low income artists - throughout Maine.
- 3.F.6. Continue to pursue collaboration with Maine's health and wellness leaders to see that creative aging opportunities are available to residents of all ages across Maine.



PRIORITY 4. BUILD ARTS & TOURISM SYNERGY

FINDINGS

Tourism is critical to the state's economy and culture is critical to tourism.

- According to the Maine Office of Tourism and its analysis of consumer trends, tomorrow's visitors will want:
 - Special interest experiences – traveling with and for a purpose,
 - Interactive learning experiences (different cultures, personal enrichment, hands-on),
 - Authentic, unique experiences (with experience mattering more than the destination per se),
 - Physical or psychological challenges (particularly nature or culture),
 - Customized, individualized travel that matches one's personal identity and values.¹¹

We can conclude from this that the creative and cultural sector is uniquely positioned to provide just these types of experiences for visitors to Maine.

- Cultural/heritage travelers, compared to non-cultural/heritage travelers, take more trips (five per year compared to four per year) and spend more money on each trip (\$994 average compared to \$611 average).¹²
- Visit Maine's website, referenced annually by millions of tourists, lists 1,107 cultural sector entities (both commercial and nonprofit combined). Yet as this chart indicates, among organizations who participated in the Cultural Plan survey, tourists comprise a relatively small proportion of their annual attendance. What else will it take to boost the numbers in this chart?

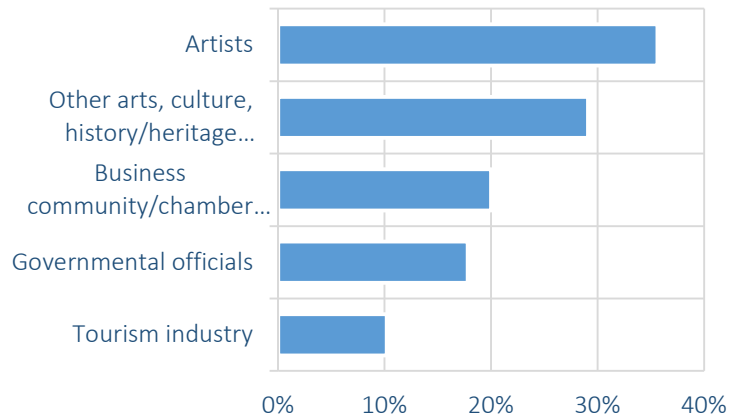
PERCENTAGE OF ATTENDANCE WHO ARE TOURISTS	PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS
None	4%
< 25% Tourists	27%
25% - 49% Tourists	13%
50-74% Tourists	12%
75%-99% Tourists	4%
100% Tourists	0%
Not reported	39%

¹¹ Maine Office of Tourism, Five-Year Strategic Plan, 2015-2019

¹² Mandala Research, Cultural Heritage Tourism News, winter 2010

- There's work to do in local relationship-building between arts and tourism. When cultural organizations, in response to the Cultural Plan survey, reported on the extent of their collaboration with local business, tourism-related entities, government, other cultural organizations, and artists, 'tourism-related entities' was rated lowest of five options. A closer look at this data collected by the plan's six geographic regions showed tourism collaboration rated lowest by organizations in five of six regions.

HIGHEST LEVEL OF LOCAL COLLABORATION



- As the Maine Office of Tourism continues its research to better understand and anticipate the needs of future visitors, the Maine Arts Commission looks forward to collaborating on deeper levels of data collection to find ways that will increase the value of creative experiences to more tourists. By doing so, the cultural sector could then pursue strategies heightening the visitor experience and helping Maine become the premier tourist destination in New England.

PRIORITY 4. STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

4.A. Build a stronger bridge with tourism.

- 4.A.1. Explore ideas with the Maine Office of Tourism and Main Tourism Association to more effectively promote and connect arts and tourism. Develop and implement integrated tactics by 2018.
- 4.A.2. Grow the Maine Arts Commission's and cultural sector's presence at tourism gatherings, in tourism industry networks, and at state conferences to exchange ideas and build relationships between tourism and cultural entities all across Maine--resulting in more tourists.

4.B. Strengthen cultural sector capacity to utilize technology for tourism marketing and PR.

- 4.B.1. Provide how-to materials guiding artists and cultural organizations in the use of apps, social media, and links to national and international media to promote their cultural offerings to tourists.

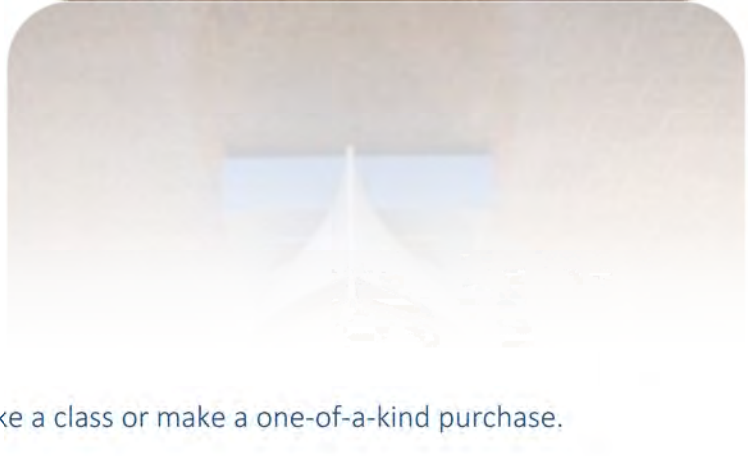
4.C. Create and disseminate cultural tourism best practices and guidelines.

4.C.1. With the Maine Office of Tourism and Maine Association of Tourism, offer workshops, professional development, incentives, encouragement, and resources enabling tourism and arts entities across the state to work better together.

4.C.2. Encourage local municipal governments to adopt cultural tourism best practices, guidelines, and tools that will be available on the websites of the Maine Arts Commission, the Maine Office of Tourism, and Maine Association of Tourism.

4.C.3. Ensure local wayfinding is in place for all creative and cultural locations (museums, galleries, historic sites, gardens, public art, landmarks, and more). Work with the Maine Office of Tourism and Maine Turnpike Authority to expedite.

4.C.4 Work with the Maine Office of Tourism to create and promote maps and itineraries of cultural places and programs across the state for both niche and general consumers. For example, in addition to museums, antiques, public art, and historic sites, promote locations such as arts incubators, arts centers, and maker spaces where tourists might take a class or make a one-of-a-kind purchase.



PRIORITY 5. STRENGTHEN THE MAINE ARTS COMMISSION'S CAPACITY AND STEWARDSHIP

FINDINGS

Enable the Maine Arts Commission to do more

This Cultural Plan aims to more effectively bring together the extraordinary, unique elements of the state's arts, creative, and cultural sectors - major economic forces - and put them to work for a better Maine. Fortifying the capacity of the Maine Arts Commission is a critical first step on this path.



Maine Arts Commission photo

Although there are more than 2,292 arts organizations and creative enterprises in communities across the state, since 2000 not more than 300 per year have applied for grants from the Maine Arts Commission. This is because fund amounts have been limited and, for many groups, not worth the effort to apply.

Yet as the planning team traveled the state, the Maine Arts Commission's stronger stewardship efforts and its staff were consistently recognized and commended. Specifically mentioned were the greater presence of Maine Arts Commission staff and Commission Members out in the field offering increased professional development and technical assistance, as well as the statewide arts conference. Maine Arts Commission's heightened efforts to increase the visibility of the cultural sector in the eyes of education, economic development, tourism, business, and local government are being noticed. Constituent responses in surveys, feedback from community conversations, and ideas and opinions shared at the March Cultural Planning Summits are all promising indicators of the Maine Arts Commission's broader reach and relevance.

In order to better harness this momentum, the Cultural Plan is recommending exploration of a supplemental funding mechanism – in Maine's case, a 501 (c)(3) arm. Twenty-seven (27) state arts agencies have developed supplemental mechanisms as do each of Maine Arts Commission's

seven partner state agencies in the Cultural Alliance. This arm would extend the Maine Arts Commission's 50-year role as "funder" to inaugurate a broader stewardship role.

- It would enable the Maine Arts Commission to more expeditiously deliver on its mission and - most importantly - pursue cultural development directions voiced by 6,520 Mainers from communities of all sizes participating in this process.
- It would extend the Maine Arts Commission's ability to leverage more financial resources than the cultural sector could attract on its own.
- It would better position the Maine Arts Commission to raise awareness of cultural assets across the state.
- The Maine Arts Commission, together with its 501 (c)(3) arm, would be better resourced to commission, promote, and more widely disseminate research.
- This arm would increase the Maine Arts Commission's capacity to build a more cohesive statewide network and mobilize the arts, culture, and arts education sectors in support of agendas important to Maine.

And finally, fortifying Maine Arts Commission capacity would enable it to preserve and promote two unique, distinguished cultural strengths of this state.

- The first is the rich, deep Native American traditions of the Wabanaki of Maine (Maliseet, Micmac, Passamaquoddy, and Penobscot tribes). Collectively, their work represents some of the oldest, most viable traditional arts practiced in the northeast corner of the United States today.¹³ Over the years, Maine Arts Commission has forged strong effective connections with each that must be sustained.
- Second is Maine's position as a U.S. border state encouraging and celebrating international exchange with New Brunswick. The arts in Maine and New Brunswick reflect an industry with deep and lasting traditions, balanced by innovation and creativity. Significant economic and civic contributions have been made in the past by the arts in both regions, and there are strong indications that this will continue in the future if managed appropriately.

¹³ Mundell, Kathleen, *North By Northeast: Wabanaki, Akwesasne Mohawk, and Tuscarora Traditional Arts*. (Gardiner, Maine, Tiffany House, 2008),vi

PRIORITY 5. STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

5.A. Ensure the Maine Arts Commission’s capacity remains commensurate with planned growth.

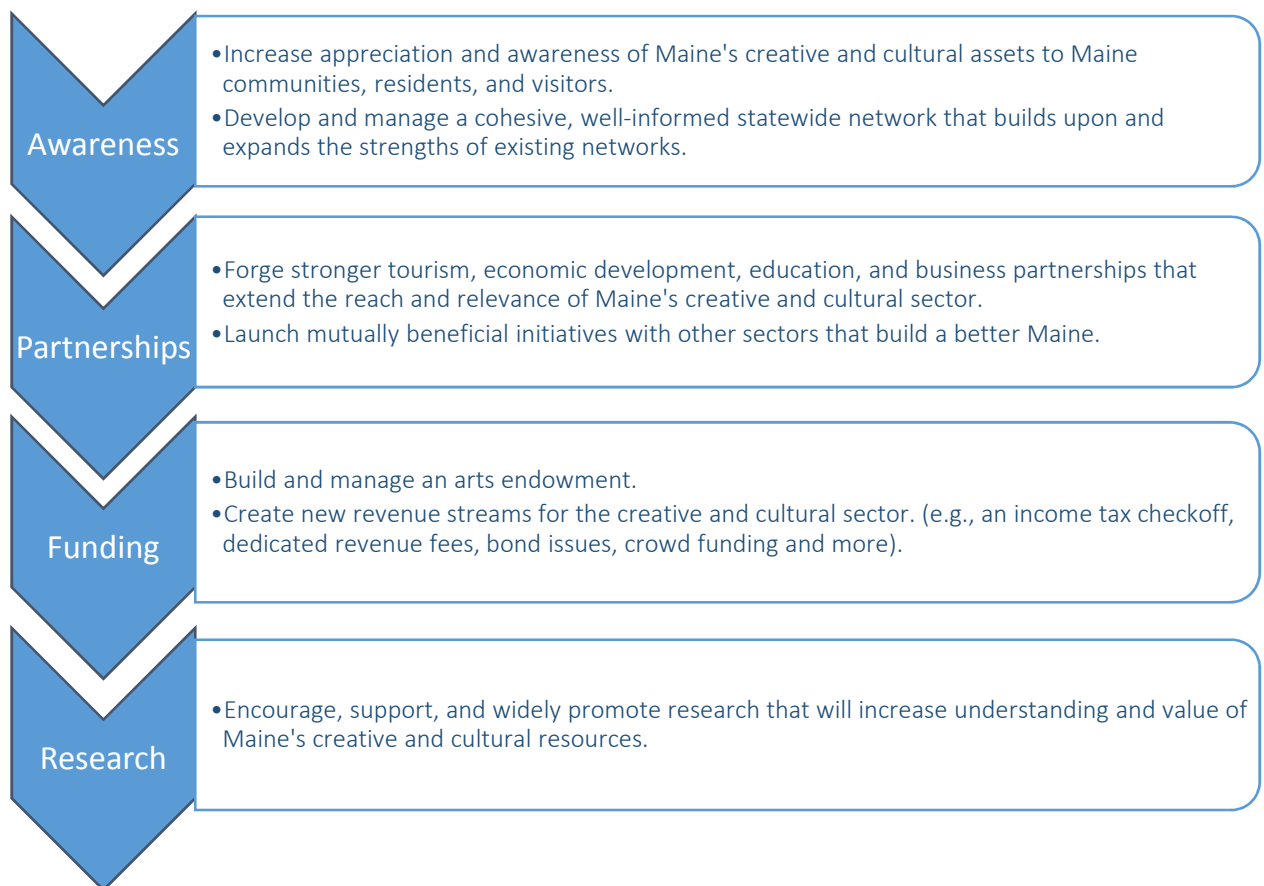
5.A.1 Continue to increase staff effectiveness, productivity, and the team environment.

5.A.2 See that the Maine Arts Commission has the systems it needs to succeed.

5.A.3 Strive to keep the Maine Arts Commission membership a rich combination of individuals knowledgeable and passionate about the state’s arts and cultural development who reflect Maine’s geographic, ethnic, and sector diversity: arts, business, education, philanthropy and community development.

5.B. Explore the feasibility of 501(c)(3) arm and the proposed name, ArtsEngageME.

5.B.1 Together, explore and determine these and other proposed purposes:



5.B.1. Explore proposed inclusive structure that would be representative of the field to potentially include:

- a) A Board of Trustees – separate from the Maine Arts Commission - to oversee ArtsEngageME and its two citizen representative groups.
- b) An ArtsEngageME Network representative of every artistic discipline, geographic area, organization type, and existing cultural and tribal network in the state.
- c) ArtsEngageME Advancement & Investment Advisors, a blue ribbon group of the most influential leaders, movers and shakers in Maine to garner resources and funding. Advisors would include nationally renowned Maine celebrities and artists, key cultural sector leaders, and leaders in tourism, business, industry, community and economic development, and education. Ideally, this group would help secure, protect, and grow dedicated revenue streams, including an endowment.

5.C. Build a statewide cultural sector network

5.C.1 Strengthen communications and information-sharing across the arts, creative, and cultural sector.

5.C.2 Connect with existing consortia for dance, craft, museums, musicians, traditional arts, visual artists, writers, and more. Strive to connect with and regularly communicate with every artist and every organization to keep current on sector needs, trends, and opportunities.

5.C.3 Unify the voice of the sector.

5.D. Keep this Cultural Plan current.

5.D.1 Annually assess and refresh cultural development priorities, strategies and actions doing everything possible to see that the state and the people of Maine are well-served by the cultural sector.

5.D.2 Fulfill Maine Arts Commission’s partnership mandate with the National Endowment for the Arts to develop a new plan every five years.

CONCLUSION

Fortifying Maine's Creativity & Culture, a plan forged with ideas and opinions from 6,520 Mainers including 1,000+ artists and more than 450 arts, creative, and cultural sector leaders, provides a pathway to ensure the great wealth of our cultural resources will become a more visible and valued Maine asset. This plan also reinforces Maine Arts Commission's profound renewed commitment to see that Maine's creative economy thrives. To be clear, the Maine Arts Commission will strive to ensure artists, creative innovators and makers, arts and cultural organizations, and arts education providers all across the state have the support and resources they need to succeed.

We're off to a good start, beginning with the State Legislature's proposed appropriation increase in 2016/2017 from \$.61 to .73 per capita funding. This, coupled with the proposed creation of a 501(c)(3) organization ArtsEngageME, will enable the Maine Arts Commission to more expeditiously deliver on its mission.

By 2020, we will strive to achieve the following:

1. Increase Maine's per capita appropriation from \$.61 to above the national average (currently \$1.09).
2. Distribute one million+ dollars per year for creative and cultural investment.
3. Grow the statewide network to include more than 1,000 organizations and 3,000 artists.
4. Increase Maine Arts brand awareness.
5. Ensure 75% of Maine's schools are using the Maine Arts Commission's arts education resources.
6. Develop strategic partnerships that will expedite Maine's cultural development, increasing the numbers of arts and creative experiences in the lives of Mainers.
7. Launch awards to celebrate extraordinary creativity, arts education, and community building through the arts.

8. Publish and promote research amplifying arts, creative, and cultural sector impacts and value.
9. See that arts, creative opportunities, entertainment, and purchase of Maine arts and crafts products are mentioned with increasing frequency as reasons why tourists visit Maine. This will be due to increased collaboration and partnerships between cultural and tourism providers across the state.
10. Establish ArtsEngageME.
11. Create five-year goals for Maine creative aging development and partnerships.

Above all, the Maine Arts Commission will continuously strive to be flexible and adaptable, responding to needs and learning from opportunities and challenges, in order to increase the positive impact arts and culture has on Maine's vitality, livability, and prosperity.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



Many contributed to this assessment and plan and to all are owed a debt of gratitude.

The Honorable Paul LaPage, Governor

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PLAN PHOTOS

Abbe Museum, Bar Harbor
Bar Harbor Vacation Guide

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