

2006-07 Statewide Forums and Follow-up Activities of Statewide Forums on Careers in the Arts for People with Disabilities

Final Report:

Summary of 2006-07 Statewide Forums and Follow-up Activities of Statewide Forums on Careers in the Arts for People with Disabilities

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Two states, Maine and Tennessee conducted a Statewide Forum on Careers in the Arts for People with Disabilities. The 2006-2007 year also marks the first year that states that previously conducted Forums were funded to conduct follow-up activities. Follow-up activities were conducted by Arkansas, Florida, Hawaii, Indiana, Minnesota, Ohio, Texas, and Washington. States were awarded from the \$15,000 to conduct a Forum and follow-up states received \$5000 to conduct their follow-up activities with the exception of Arkansas who received \$2500. This report is divided into three sections. The first section provides a description of the two new Forum events including the forum activity, participants, outcomes future activities, and total expenses. The second section will describe similar characteristics of the eight follow-up states. The third section describes the evolution of the technical assistance provided by the NADC to Forum conveners. Actual dollars expended to conduct the forums were also reported. Additional dollars were secured from the Social Security Administration and non federal support.

MAINE

The Art of Working: Working in the Arts

Forum Activity: Maine held a one-day Forum on April 6, 2007 at the Holiday Inn by the Bay in Portland Maine. The Forum began with a breakfast and group gathering with introductory remarks. This was followed by concurrent panel discussions arranged by art forms. Lunch included a keynote address followed by three sessions of concurrent workshops related to the business and financial side of the arts and professional development opportunities. The most highly attended sessions were “marketing yourself as an artist” and “your portfolio and resume.”

Participants: There were a total of 111 participants, 74 of whom were artists. Of the 74 artists, 72% were known to have a disability. Artists in attendance represented a variety of disabilities, including physical, psychological, visual, hearing, learning disabilities and developmental disabilities. Other participants included artist presenters; non-artist presenters including administrators, Vocational Rehabilitation, disability professionals, family members, and government leaders; VSA arts of Maine volunteers; and Maine Arts Commission staff/volunteers.

Outcomes: Seventy-six percent of artists completing the evaluation forms indicated they gained knowledge to further their careers in the arts and 64% agreed that they had gained self-confidence to pursue an arts career. Sixty-four percent were highly satisfied with the Forum and not one indicated that were dissatisfied. Eighty-two percent of arts administrators and supporters indicated they had acquired resources to help artists with disabilities to gain employment in the arts and 73% had gained the confidence to assist these artists to find employment. Eighty-two percent said they were highly satisfied with the Forum and not one said they were dissatisfied.

Since the Forum, the staff at VSA arts of Maine has had many calls from artists asking for mentoring services and guidance and feedback on marketing materials and business plans. Three artists have either purchased new computers or sought used equipment to use in promoting their art careers.

In addition, many organizations made offers to work artists from the Forum or registered with VSA arts of Maine. For example, the Portland Stage Company, as a result of the Forum, has agreed to work with any artist with a disability who approaches VSA arts of Maine about wanting to work in theater. A museum administrator and another theater administrator made similar offers, asking for VSA arts of Maine to continue to encourage qualified artists to apply for auditions and juried exhibitions. Another organization that works with people with developmental disabilities has approached VSA arts of Maine for suggestions of artists with disabilities that they might hire to teach various art classes.

Future Activities: In June of 2007, the Forum planning committee, now the Maine Arts Commission Arts Accessibility Task Force, planned to meet to discuss the Forum results and ideas for the future. Possible short term activities under consideration for VSA arts of Maine include:

- à hosting quarterly artist networking meetings, possibly regionally;
- à creating a computer station with internet access, scanner, printers, etc., for artists to come to the VSA arts of Maine office and work on resumes, artist statements, enter artist registries and search for calls for art;
- à offering skills-based or follow up workshops, such as framing artwork or preparing for an exhibition;
- à inviting all artists on the VSA arts of Maine mail list to the existing professional development workshops for artists;
- à offering workshops at Maine's Career Centers throughout state;
- à formalizing the artist mentor program, including arranging more mentorships between more established artists and emerging artists, regardless of disabilities;
- à providing micro-loans for artists (already approved by VSA arts of Maine Board and in process);
- à partnering with neighboring states to explore regional models; and
- à inviting more artists to join the VSA arts of Board and Advisory Board.

Since the Forum, the Maine Arts Commission has adopted a new goal for its Strategic Long Range Plan: *To Provide Full Access to the Arts for all Maine Citizens: Inclusivity, Tolerance and Freedom of Expression* articulating their formal commitment to providing greater access to all Maine artists, including those with disabilities.

Total Expenses: \$44,441

TENNESSEE

artsTALK

Forum Activities: Tennessee conducted their Forum October 6 and 7 in 2006 on the Middle Tennessee State University in Murfreesboro, Tennessee. The Forum began with a keynote address by Estelle Condra followed by a plenary session for visual and performing artists. The day concluded with a movie premiere of *The Goal* and a Q and A session with the film's producer and an actress from the film. The second day included multiple concurrent sessions on topics such as *Benefits to Work and PASS*, examples of how working artists with disabilities have pursued and obtained their career goals, demonstration of adaptive technology, and how employers have successfully worked with artists with disabilities.

Participants: Eighty registrants attended the conference on the first day with another 100 Middle State Tennessee State University students. Attendance was greater on the first day than the second. From the evaluations, it appeared that many artists had more than one disability and were in either the visual or literary arts.

Outcomes: Sixty-seven percent of artists completing the evaluation forms indicated they gained knowledge to further their careers in the arts and 83% agreed that they had gained self-confidence to pursue an arts career. Eighty-three percent were satisfied or highly satisfied with the Forum. Artists commented that one of the most useful aspects of the Forum was networking and exposure to others with disabilities. Half of the arts administrators and supporters indicated they had acquired resources to help artists with disabilities to gain employment in the arts. Likewise, half indicated they had gained the confidence to assist these artists to find employment. Eighty percent said they were highly satisfied or satisfied with the Forum. Administrators and other professionals commented that the most useful aspects of the Forum were networking and knowledge of resources for artists.

Future Activities: VSA arts Tennessee and the Tennessee Arts Commission are working with an East Tennessee photographer to schedule training/photography sessions for artists with disabilities to learn about photographing and/or cataloging their work. VSA arts and the Commission also plan to pay registration fees for at least 4 artists with disabilities to attend the Vanderbilt Medical Center and The Society for the Arts in Healthcare annual conference.

Total Expenses: \$20,800

Follow-up Activities

Follow-up activities were based on identification of needs from the previously conducted Forum on Careers in the Arts for People with Disabilities and fostered a range of activities. Each state implemented projects responsive to the needs of artists within their states such as: professional development workshops, exhibitions, a strategic planning meeting, a web-based arts magazine, an online directory of artists or regional networking meetings. Approximately 250 individuals with disabilities participated in these various activities. This next section provides a

summary of each state's activities, participants/target audience, outcomes, future activities, and total expenses.

ARKANSAS

Strategic Planning Meeting

Follow-up Activity: A strategic planning meeting was held on November 2, 2006 at the C.A. Vines 4-H Center in Little Rock, Arkansas. The purpose of the event was to reconvene artists with disabilities and other partners from 2003 & 2004 regionally conducted forums to discuss joint initiatives to provide assistance and activities to increase employment opportunities for artists with disabilities. This event included panel discussions, break-out sessions, and entertainment by artists with disabilities.

Participants: There were 45 total participants at the strategic planning meeting, 6 of who had disabilities. Half of the individuals with disabilities had visual disabilities and the other half had developmental disabilities. Approximately three quarters of the participants were Caucasian.

Outcomes: Several priority areas were identified at this meeting: arts education in the schools starting at an early age; employment; marketing the talents and products of people with disabilities; transportation; knowledge and skill development around issues of self-marketing, benefits planning, self-employment; and advocacy with the state legislature regarding support for inclusion of people with disabilities in the arts. Short term and long term goals need to be identified within these areas.

Future Activities: A second planning conference will occur to select appropriate strategies to reach these goals.

Total Expenses: \$4,000

FLORIDA

The Arts- A Realistic Career Path

Follow-up Activities: Florida was involved in multiple follow-up activities which included presentations to vocational rehabilitation staff (4), school transition counselors, museum staff, and job placement counselors. In addition, Florida provided 2 professional development workshops for artists with disabilities. A total of 8 exhibitions showcased work members of the VSAFL artist registry with 45 different artists participating. The dates and locations of these events are in the table below.

Presentations

Date	Location	Numbers with disabilities	Other participants
7/18	Tampa	40	60
8/18	Orlando	20	40
9/15	Port Richey		13
10/13	Gainesville	0	7
10/21	Tampa	0	8

2/15	Jacksonville	1	7
3/20	Tampa	5	0

Exhibitions

Date	Location	Number of Artists
7/11-8/30	Hillsborough County Community College – Ybor Campus	12
10/5-10/31	Hillsborough County Community College – Dale Mabry Campus	13
10/4-6	Ruth Eckerd Performing Arts Center	21
12/13/06-11/30/07	State office of Vocational Rehab Tallahassee	13
2/1/07-4/15/07	Florida Mental Health Institute University of South Florida, Tampa Spring Collaborative	39
5/2-7/30	Florida Mental Health Institute University of South Florida, Tampa Summer Collaborative	58
5/15-6/30	Oldsmar City Hall	10
5/17-6/28	Tampa Museum of Art	15

Outcomes: Each formal presentation included a pre and post evaluation regarding awareness of careers in the arts. Ninety percent of respondents indicated increased understanding and awareness of the impact of the creative industries on the economy and the great number of jobs that are part of the creative economy. In addition, Florida increased its registry membership from 99 to 117 and had the following employment outcomes:

- 10 registry members had short term employment with VSAFL
- \$7,000 in work sold at exhibitions.

Future Activities: A new initiative to develop teaching modules in careers in the arts for middle school students is in the development stages with commitments from the Florida Department of Education, the Florida Alliance for Arts Education to partner with VSAFL. Florida also has several post grant presentations about careers in the arts scheduled:

- 2 visits at a Polk county museum of middle school students who are blind
- A presentation at the statewide meeting of the Juvenile Justice Education Institute in Hillsborough county
- A presentation at the United Spinal Association national meeting in Orange County
- A presentation at the annual meeting of the Florida Arts Educators Association
- 2 presentations for workforce offices in Columbia and Alachua counties

Total Expenses: \$12,500

HAWAII

www.hiartmagazine.com

Follow-up Activity: HiArtmagazine.com is an online quarterly magazine highlighting the work of and opportunities for artists with and without disabilities in Hawaii.

Target Audience: The target audience is the general population of individuals interested in arts and careers in the arts in Hawaii.

Planning Committee Members: The advisory board was comprised of a cross section of individuals of diverse ethnicities and disabilities. More than half of the committee were people of color (Hawaiian, Pacific Islanders, Asian American; more than half were individuals with disabilities – physical, mental, emotional. The planning committee met for an editorial design and planning meeting. Members contributed to editorial content, editorial advisory.

Outcomes: Two quarterly issues were published with a total of 20 plus articles, a quarter of which related to disability and access topics. The magazine featured 12 individuals in the VSA arts of Hawaii-Pacific (Hawaii Artists Cooperative) commercial pottery apprenticeship on Hawaii Island.

Total Expenses: \$15,500

INDIANA

ArtsWORK Indiana Website

<http://www.artsworkindiana.org>

Follow-up Activity: The ArtsWORK Indiana Web site is an online directory created to address the need for information on arts careers and networking opportunities identified through concerns raised at 2004 Forum and survey results. The web site provides a space for online discussion, information on arts-related careers, and a searchable database of ongoing and one-time professional arts-related opportunities. The current address for this new website is <http://www.iidc.indiana.edu/artswork/index.php>. When it has its official launch the address will be <http://www.artsworkindiana.org>

Target Audience: The target audience is:

- Individuals with disabilities and arts careers;
- Individuals with disabilities who are interested in exploring arts careers or who have not been able to break into the field;
- Supporters (counselors, family and friends, educators, etc.) and;
- Potential employers.

Evaluation Plan: Since the web site is not quite up and running there is no data yet about its usage. However, Indiana has several plans for evaluating their site including:

- Conducting an electronic customer satisfaction survey (See URL: http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=ReX8d72wJTU30EWs56pGZg_3d_3d);
- Obtaining feedback from testing with selected user group;
- Obtaining informal feedback from the Forum Bulletin Board (embedded in the site) and via e-mail; and
- Obtaining feedback and data from the volume of site visitors, contributions to the databases and on-line discussions.

Future Activities: Indiana plans to promote the use of their web site through presenting at the Indiana

Federation of Librarians conference (November 2007) to reach public and school media librarians and developing and presenting a scenario about how to use the website through ArtsWORK Indiana's "Wheelchair Monologue" initiative

Total Expenses: \$15,500

MINNESOTA

Regional Networking Development for Minnesota Artists with Disabilities

Follow-up Activities: Minnesota conducted 18 regional meetings throughout the state to build regional networks of artists with disabilities based on the Artists with Disabilities Alliance (AWDA) headquartered in the Twin Cities. Regional meetings occurred in Mankato (4), Bemidji (3), Fergus Falls (3), Duluth (3), St. Cloud (3), Mora (1), and Hinckley (1). The first meeting was a "getting to know you" meeting and opportunity to discuss the goals of the group. The second meeting involved time to share and receive feedback on art work along with a topic focused discussion. The third meeting was to discuss how to continue the regional network meetings.

Participants: A total of 8 meetings were held with 37 artists attending more than one gathering.

Outcomes: Evaluation forms completed by 25 people attending final sessions in their region indicated that 92% (23/25) were interested in attending the next gathering whenever and wherever it might be scheduled. Of those same 25, 88% (22) indicated that "... attending these networking gatherings have assisted you in your pursuit of your activity in the arts." As part of that same evaluation, attendees were asked the following question to determine their level of commitment to the arts as a career. Responses from that question indicated approximately 32% of the attendees at the last session felt that their arts activity is essential to their survival and that approximately 40% see the arts as their career path. No one marked, "I am not sure why I do it." Networking at these meetings has also led to discussion of potential collaborative efforts between artists.

St. Cloud group has met independently (July 19th). Seven artists attended this meeting (6 "regulars" and one new participant) where they discussed both naming the group as well as creating a poster to be displayed in community locations publicizing the group meetings at the local center for independent living.

Future Activities: VSA arts of Minnesota will assist all groups with publicizing any regional gathering and serving as an ongoing resource for speakers, information and contacts. They along with 3 of the 6 regional arts council directors have offered to serve as a fiscal agent if any of the groups feel that they might be able to solicit donations to further their efforts. VSA arts Minnesota will also continue to offer its Artist Recognition grants of at least \$1,000 to artists with disabilities pursuing the arts as a career around the state. Six of these grants are currently available each year.

Many of the participants at this year's networking gatherings were new to the MSAB, but now, having been added to the MSAB database will gain access to announcements regarding funding and other opportunities.

Total Expenses: \$22,720

OHIO

Careers in the Arts: Using the CA Workbook as a Tool for Success

Follow-up Activities: Ohio had several activities related to promote and provide training on how to use the Careers in the Arts Workbook. The activities focused on two target audiences: 1) artists and service providers who attended the 2005 forum and 2) artists with disabilities and organizations serving people with disabilities who may not have known about the Forum or the workbook. A networking workshop was held on November 14, 2006 at the Vern Riffe Center for Government and the Arts in Columbus to share ideas and successes encountered by artists with disabilities functioning independently and by service providers supporting artists' work through facilities or agencies.

The partners also presented sessions at conferences and gatherings to share the information about the project and to build awareness of career possibilities:

- August 14, 2006-Ohio Association of County Boards of MRDD
- September 28, 2006-Brain Injury Association
- October 30, 2006-Clearwater Council on Government
- December 14-Easter Seals Directors
- June 7, 2007-Ohio Developmental Disability Council Health and Employment Committee

Participants: Fifty-seven service providers, artists, and presenters attended the November networking workshop. There were 130 participants at the presentations.

Outcomes: Through the presentations 120 workbooks were distributed. Several individual artists have experienced new opportunities through their association with VSA arts of Ohio and the Ohio Arts Council. For instance, artist Michael Oliver has used his relationship with VSAO to promote his artwork in other galleries in the central Ohio area and to gain publicity for his talents as his artwork travels the state in VSAO's Accessible Expressions Ohio touring exhibition

Twenty-seven participants completed a workshop evaluation. All indicated they were satisfied or highly satisfied with the workshop.

Thirty six artists with disabilities completed an artists' survey and 11 completed a service provider survey. Artist surveys indicated that 80% wanted to sell their art and 47% had actually gained employment in the arts field or sold their art. However, less than a quarter of these artists had a resume. Seven individuals participated in a follow-up telephone interview regarding what has happened since the workshop and their use of the workbook. Participants indicated a desire for more information on benefits planning with real life scenarios and resources on funding opportunities.

Future Activities: Ohio has several more presentations planned in September and November 2007 to discuss how to share information about the project and career possibilities for artists with disabilities.

VSA arts of Ohio has created the ATIC or Artist Technology and Information Center where artists can use a dedicated computer, with the aid of a coach, to access online information, complete grant applications or build a website in order to take advantage of the opportunities technology is offering.

Second, VSAO is planning a workshop for the fall of 2007 during which key issues to be discussed will be marketing and grant writing.

Third, and finally, the partners will continue to promote opportunities for artists to generate income, other than from the traditional means of creating and selling their art, through residencies, employment at arts organizations, and pursuing careers in the arts through non-traditional means such as web design or commercial graphics.

Total Expenses: \$17,950

TEXAS

Unraveling the Mystery of Self-Employment in the Arts

Follow-up Activities: Texas held a two-day workshop on self-employment on January 23 & 24, 2007 in Austin. David Hammis conducted a workshop on the topic of self-employment in the arts with an emphasis on using the PASS program along with his book, "Making Self-Employment Work for People with Disabilities." Each participant received a workshop binder and CD. Videos of self-employment success stories were shown.

Participants: Forty-four individuals attended the workshop, nearly half (48%) of whom were artists with disabilities. More than third (36%) were DARS counselors, employment professionals, and other specialists in the fields of disability.

Outcomes: Artists with disabilities received several resources on self-employment. Some participants contacted employment specialists and Social Security Administration directly after the workshop to get started. Representatives from disability and social service agencies gained information to share with their colleagues in the area of self-employment and programs available to help artists with disabilities work.

Future Activities: Future activities being planned include more workshops on

the PASS plan through a partnership with the National Pass Network. Texas is also planning networking meetings in five cities around Texas for artists with disabilities. These networking meetings will provide artists a chance to support each other in their creative endeavors and help each other promote their work.

Total Expenses: \$14,638

WASHINGTON

Catch Your Audience: Practical Tools for Building Arts Careers and Markets

Follow-up Activity: Washington conducted a workshop on May 2, 2007 at the Seattle Center House. The workshop began with a keynote address by David Roche followed by a presentation by Artist Trust and a panel

of artists with disabilities. Participants also had the opportunity to meet one-on-one or in small groups with a particular artist on the panel.

Participants: There were 34 participants, 27 who self-identified as artists with disabilities.

Outcomes: Evaluation forms from the end of the workshop were positive about the event. Some people needed more definition of what an 'artist' was; i.e. some thought an artist was only a painter and were surprised that performing and media arts were included.

At least one artist stated that the workshop "made we change my mind about quitting my arts efforts and encouraged me to stick with it." Another artist got a job at the workshop when VSA arts of Washington hired him to do a performance the next week at their arts education disability festival.

Future Activities: Washington has applied for additional funding to host a similar workshop in the eastern part of the state.

Total Expenses: \$12,021

Technical Assistance Provided by the NADC

Representatives from VSA and the state arts agency from each state were required to participate in monthly teleconferences. Starting in December 2006, the teleconference calls were focused on specific topics which were generated by the group. Topics included: working with artists at varying levels in their careers; presentations on the Plan for Achieving Self-Support (PASS) program and self-employment in the arts; and sustaining forum activities. The teleconference calls often included guest speakers which included states who conducted activities related to the topic, a successful artist (Pamela Walker), and a regional center to share their expertise. In addition, participants received supplemental materials and resources related to the topic of the day.

Evaluations from five of the six states were received and indicated they were all satisfied or highly satisfied with the technical assistance they received from the NADC. States commented that the most useful aspects of the technical assistance were the opportunities to share expertise and experiences among the different states. Comments further reflected an appreciation of the new format of having topic focused calls. There were also suggestions for improving the way the NADC offered assistance with a strong recommendation that NADC staff should attend the activities of the state to gain a full impression of what each one was doing and to provide more in-depth assistance. Another suggestion was the possibility of offering alternative dates or repeating teleconference calls. These recommendations will be implemented during the next year of technical assistance calls. The NADC is currently in the process of developing topics and agendas for the next round of teleconference calls.