



Statewide Forums on Careers in the Arts for People with Disabilities and Follow-up Projects

Alaska (2013-2014)

The Alaska State Council on the Arts and the Center for Human Development at the University of Alaska Anchorage planned and implemented a set of regional forums and a statewide forum. The regional forums were hosted in Juneau, Fairbanks, Bethel, and Kotzebue in April, 2014. The Statewide Forum was held in Anchorage on May 12th, 2014, with 60 participants attending. There was a half-day follow-up session for agencies with art programs for individuals with developmental disabilities on May 13, 2014. The forums were a great opportunity for discussion and networking. The general format of the regional forums was a session on business skills for artistic endeavors, panel discussion on business skills and career preparation for artists, and discussions to identify challenges in developing artistic careers and solutions. The Statewide Forum included a professional development panel, performance, roundtable discussions by artistic discipline, building networks roundtables, networking reception, and screening of "Shooting Beauty." The panel discussions were well received and included panelists who had useful knowledge and experiences to share. Many of the artists with disabilities in attendance at the forums were excited to have the opportunity to meet and interact with other artists. The agency half-day forum was a great opportunity for agencies to collaborate, discuss their challenges, and share information. Recommendations centered on areas of marketing; business skills; support, mentoring, and networking; time and resources; and agency collaborations and advocacy. As a result of the forums, an artist group in Fairbanks was created.

Arizona (2005)

Forum

Building Your Career was held in 2005 as a professional development, networking and solution-building conference for Arizona artists with disabilities; arts

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managers, presenters, publishers and exhibitors; and people in government and services who work to develop creative career opportunities for Arizonans. The conference was focused on emerging and established artists pursuing a career in the arts and utilized an application procedure where arts and arts administrators described their professional experience and current stage in their career development. The conference was held in 2005 following the LEAD Conference in Phoenix. Building Your Career featured Keynote speaker John Killacky as well as interactive and small-group sessions, presentations and discussions with local, regional and national artists and arts workers. A presentation of the Creative Industries Study, highlighting the impact of creative workers in Arizona and nationally was also discussed. The aim was to develop an action plan which would allow: artists to further their careers; arts workers to increase their engagement of artists with disabilities; service and government representatives to further policy and programs; and strategies to increase career opportunities for artists with disabilities.

Arkansas (2004, 2006-2007)

Forum

The Arkansas's Statewide Forum was held in 2004 to provide an in-depth view and analysis of the essential employment issues that affect artists, art administrators and art technicians with disabilities. The goal was to assess the experiences and needs of artists with disabilities across the employment continuum from elementary school, high school, college/graduate studies, to job entry, to job maintenance and to job advancement. By addressing the full continuum of education and work, the forum provided a more in-depth study of the issues faced by artists with disabilities and subgroups of the population of artists who are disabled. In addition, the forum attempted to identify strategies and resources for artists, art administrators, and art technicians that would enable them to cope with and adjust to the school and the workplace.

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Follow-up

The Arkansas Arts Council and VSA Arts Arkansas conducted a one-day strategic planning forum follow-up session in Little Rock, Arkansas in September 2006. The objectives of the planning session were designed to: further assist VSA Arts Arkansas in establishing a statewide organization that would act as liaison for increasing career opportunities for artists with disabilities throughout the State of Arkansas; and allow artists and service providers the opportunity to dialogue on possible joint initiatives for artists with disabilities to be successful in the workforce.

California (2003)

Forum

In 2003, California conducted, “Hire Value” A Statewide Forum on Careers in the Arts for Artists with Disabilities. This forum had the goal to connect people in California and assist them in identifying barriers, as well as developing a way to support people with disabilities who were looking for careers in the arts. With the assistance of a diverse and experienced planning committee there were two forums held in 2003 that addressed a number of urgent topics, including: Infrastructure Development, “Lifelong Learning” leading to Careers in the Arts, and Resource Development. The forums were targeted for working artists, arts organizations, cultural and educational institutions and decision/policy makers in the disability/rehabilitation agencies. The forums were held in the northern and southern parts of the state.

Colorado (2007-2008)

Forum

The Colorado Council on the Arts, VSA Colorado, and PHAMALY (the Physically Handicapped Actors and Musical Artists League, Inc.) joined forces to offer the first statewide Colorado forum on careers in the arts for people with disabilities. This one- day event was held at the Metropolitan State College of Denver in 2008. It provided arts practitioners, arts employers, vocational counselors for people with

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disabilities, artists with disabilities, and all others who were interested in an opportunity to convene and explore topics on arts employment in Colorado for people with disabilities. Breakout sessions included: career planning and placement workshop for artists with disabilities; panel with arts organizations/arts employers to explore common challenges and solutions of accessibility accommodations for employers of people with disabilities; roundtable discussion for artists with disabilities to identify challenges and successes of marketing, networking, public relations, and promotion of artists with disabilities; performances/exhibitions of the work of disability-related theatre/dance/visual arts organizations; and social networking for artists with disabilities and Colorado arts organizations.

Connecticut (2008-2009, 2010, 2013-2014)

Forum

The Connecticut Commission on Culture & Tourism, in partnership with Young Audiences Arts for Learning Connecticut, a VSA Arts affiliate, conducted a one-day statewide forum in 2008 at the Carol Autorino Center for the Arts and Humanities at Saint Joseph College in West Hartford. The forum brought together artists with disabilities, service providers, arts organizations, representatives of state agencies (education, rehabilitation services, social services, etc.) and others to share success stories, hear about the changing workplace and state agency support, discuss the business side of the arts, and recommend next steps. The goals of the Forum were to promote dialogue and exchange; identify opportunities, barriers, challenges, and career needs of artists with disabilities; and develop preliminary strategies to begin addressing these needs.

Follow-up

In 2010, the State Office of Arts and Young Audiences of Connecticut/VSA adjudicated and coordinated three exhibitions displaying 56 art pieces (selected from 91 submitted) from 39 artists with disabilities ages 16 and over. The exhibitions modeled

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accessibility including Braille, large print, interpretation, and audio description. Over the three exhibitions, 1200 participated including visual and performing artists with disabilities, educators, state commissioners, art gallery managers/owners, teaching artists with and without disabilities, arts and social service organizations' staff, exhibiting artists' families, friends and representatives, CT Statewide Advisory Committee members, and the general public. A second activity included developing an accessible, resource based website hosted by Young Audiences of Connecticut (a VSA affiliate). The ADA accessible website (www.ctvsa.org) contains a list of state and national materials and links to resources on accessibility and the arts; an event calendar with information on inclusive arts and disability events in CT; an online art gallery of works by CT artists with disabilities and a listing of Connecticut VSA Teaching Artists.

On March 22, 2014, the Connecticut Office of the Arts State of Connecticut convened the Inspire conference that brought together educators, artist/mentors, arts organizations, and others who use the arts in working with people with disabilities. Sample conference topics included: using UDL, the arts in your classroom, inclusive theatre, comedy, music, and poetry, art and health in the military, artisan marketplace. In addition, Connecticut also conducted workshops at ten sites to bring together artists with people with disabilities to explore creativity and possible mentorship matches and local arts opportunities. Across the conference and workshops, 350 participated with about 60 artists with disabilities.

Florida (2005, 2006-2007, 2007-2008)

Forum

In 2005, Florida held a Forum on Careers in the Arts for Persons with Disabilities. The project included: development of regional networks for artists with disabilities; professional development; exhibition and performance opportunities. The Forum culminated in a day long forum focusing on How to Advance Careers for Artists with Disabilities. The focus groups were held in: Tallahassee; Ft. Myers; Deland and Clearwater, and the Forum held in

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Jacksonville. “On Their Own” provided a logical step for the development of a comprehensive statewide program that the stated the needs for artists with disabilities.

Follow-up

In 2006, VSA Arts of Florida in partnership with the State of Florida, Division of Cultural Affairs proposed “The Arts-A Realistic Career Path”, a professional development initiative for Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) counselors and students in the Masters in Rehabilitation Counseling Program at Florida’s state universities. This was a follow-up activity. The project included a series of training sessions as well as follow-up activities. Training consisted of a sixty minute presentation on arts as a career choice, handouts and a resource list. Trainings included a presentation by a career artist with a disability. Additional activities included an informational one page newsletter related to careers in the arts, a quarterly phone call with regional VR supervisors to discuss follow-up training and additional resources, and presentations to job placement counselors that work with individuals with disabilities and university job placement offices on careers in the arts.

The State of Florida, Division of Cultural Affairs in partnership with VSA Arts of Florida (VSAFL) proposed “Creating a Community Presence”, a comprehensive follow-up program in 2007 that supported members of the VSAFL artist registry of artists with disabilities through training, technical assistance and a statewide exhibition program. The program included training opportunities on skill development, networking with artists with and without disabilities and exhibition opportunities both inclusive and only for artists with disabilities. The partnership provided the opportunity for VSAFL artists to participate in all WTCA activities including calls to art for in house exhibitions, workshop opportunities, use of studio space and networking for artists with and without disabilities. WTCA is well recognized in the Tampa Bay area for its excellence in programming and exhibitions.

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Hawaii (2003, 2006-2007)

Forum

The Hawai'i Statewide Forum was held in 2003 which included a network of public discussions held geographically across the islands of Oahu, Kauai, Maui and the Big Island of Hawai'i. The forum enabled the public to express concerns, plans and objectives, which contributed to improve the quality and capacity for artists with disabilities. The Hawai'i public reflected on the importance of education, transition, retention and community supports to sustain employment; and reflected on the day-to-day life in arts-related workplace for employees with disabilities and how to educate employers on their roles; assess the educational and career needs, community supports and systemic barriers of artists, arts technicians and arts administrators with disabilities; identify and recommended priorities to policy and decision-makers for earmarking financial and programmatic resources to address the needs of artists, art technicians, arts administrators with disabilities, and recommended an implementation plan to eliminate systemic barriers and hindrances to arts access and career opportunities.

Follow-up

VSA Arts Hawaii-Pacific and the Hawaii State Foundation on Culture & the Arts received a follow-up project in 2006 to conduct "HI Art", an inclusive Hawaii arts magazine creating an inter-related publication (online and print) that focused on a variety of topics of interest to artists with and without disabilities. Topics of related interest to non-disabled artists, the general community, and art patrons included: featured on emerging and prominent artists, native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander artists, major shows, exhibits, critiques, reviews, a calendar of events for all major museums, and First Friday statewide events promoted by DBEDT and State Foundation and Tourism Industry. "Standing" section related to disability advocacy and included: training on a variety of business subjects related to self-employment and disabilities, a showcasing of artists with disabilities and their work, mentorship programming for emerging artists with disabilities,

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creative vocational projects for transition age youth, a statewide network of artists with disabilities, federal and state healthcare and work incentives and programs for individuals with disabilities, and publicizing career development opportunities, conferences and/or meetings.

Illinois (2008-2009)

Forum

In the Spring 2009, The Illinois Arts in partnership with the Illinois Department of Human Services/Office of Compliance Access and Workplace Safety and Access Living, convened two forums on careers in the arts for people with disabilities. The forums were held in Chicago (northern) and the state capital of Springfield (central). The forums brought together resources, inspired new partnerships, and provided educational and artistic experiences for participants with and without disabilities from throughout Illinois. Each forum had agendas tailored to respond to local needs and resources. Both forums included: presentations by organizations and agencies to provide information on available resources and services; panels with experts that addressed the climate of the arts and disability community; professional development workshops; roundtable discussions; showcases of artists with disabilities; keynotes that provided insight in the field of arts and disabilities and future developments.

Indiana (2004, 2006-2007, 2008-2009, 2010)

Forum

A statewide Advisory Team, along with representatives of the Indiana Arts Commission (IAC), Indiana Institute on Disability and Community (IIDC), and VSA Arts of Indiana (VSAI) worked together to plan and conduct the 2004 Indiana Forum. The Forum provided a venue for individuals with disabilities, working or aspiring to work in arts fields, to obtain relevant information, voice their needs, network with their peers, and form alliances.

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Follow-up

The VSA Arts of Indiana (VSAI) and the Indiana Arts Commission (IAC) developed a comprehensive, statewide Internet site focused on careers in the arts for people with disabilities in 2007. This project was a follow-up to their 2004 Statewide Forum. The content included features on Indiana residents with disabilities working in the arts, informational resources with extensive links to other relevant sites (including state SSA & RSA), a searchable database of events and networking/job opportunities, a discussion forum/electronic bulletin board, and an online directory of Indiana arts workers.

In 2008, The Indiana Arts Commission, VSA Arts of Indiana, and the Indiana Institute on Disability and Community partnered to increase awareness and usage of the ArtsWORK Indiana website. Creative Connections was a series of regional presentations given by artists and arts administrators with disabilities with the purpose of educating people with disabilities, rehabilitation professionals, disability service providers and arts organizations about the viability of careers in the arts for people with disabilities. They had six presentations given in six different locations around the state (Columbus, Indianapolis, Valparaiso, Muncie, Richmond and New Albany). These sites were chosen to decentralize their activities and to reach out to underserved areas of the state. They partnered with regional vocational and community rehabilitation providers and regional arts partners in each location.

In 2010, The Indiana Arts Commission (IAC) continued its partnership with VSA of Indiana (VSAI), Indiana Institute on Disability and Community (IIDC) and ArtsWORK Indiana (AWI) along with several local organizations to support the creation and development of two satellite ArtsWORK networking groups in New Albany and Bloomington. Attendance at meetings ranged from 4-20 in New Albany and 4-18 in Bloomington. Each location conducted monthly meetings comprised of skills-based presentations by experienced local leaders and networking opportunities related to careers in the arts. Objectives accomplished over the course of this project included: employment of 6 artists with disabilities, engaging 5 additional arts organizations,

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municipal agencies, university institutes and disability service providers from around the state in the planning and implementation of activities; hosting 23 meetings reaching over 200 participants from 11 Indiana counties (including participants from Kentucky). New Albany planned a one month exhibition of their presenter's work in July that coincided with their citywide arts celebration. Eight artists, all with disabilities, had their work shown as part of a larger, New Albany City Wide Celebration. The opening night of the exhibition coincided with an arts walk and drew 200-300 visitors that evening alone and approximately 400 visitors over the month of the exhibition. In addition, Indiana updated their ArtsWORK Indiana website, <http://www.artsworkindiana.org/>, to reflect the most up to date resources and changes in technology. Through hiring an artist with a disability to research grant opportunities, Indiana has applied for three additional funding opportunities to support an identified need of mentorship.

Kentucky (2012-2013, 2013-2014)

Forum

On June 29, 2012, the Kentucky Arts Council held an (un)conference on careers in the arts for artists with a disability. Unlike a typical conference, participants created the agenda for each of the afternoon's sessions onsite. Everyone was an expert, and everyone had an opportunity to share professional needs, concerns, experiences and stories. Artists at all levels working in all media (visual art, literary art, performing art) were encouraged to attend. This (un)conference was the basis of content for professional development and career assistance the Kentucky Arts Council provided to artists of all abilities in September, October and early November. Forum topics included marketing, the formation of artist communities, artists as small business owners, accessibility in schools and studios, networking, funding opportunities, artists as disability advocates and transportation.

In 2014, the Kentucky Arts Council used their existing, competitive jury process to create an exhibit called "Identity," to start a conversation about how disability does (or

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does not) inform an artist's work and identity. Exhibit artwork from 30 selected artists (43 artists submitted work for consideration) travelled to Louisville, Lexington and Bowling Green. Four works were incorporated into "Kentucky Visions at the Capitol," an annual exhibit at the Kentucky legislative offices from January through April. Artwork was offered for sale in each location and prices were published in a pamphlet that was pre-mailed to constituents in the exhibition region or available on-site. As a complementary activity to the exhibit, the arts council offered a purchase award for branding of the arts council accessibility communications. The Kentucky Arts Council solicited art and design work from artists with disabilities and elected a jury to choose one piece, with two runners up, for the purchase award. Thirty-five artists submitted work and three were awarded money for marketing tools. Two received commissions or additional awards after receiving this award.

Maine (2006-2007, 2012-2013)

Forum

The Maine Careers in the Arts Forum for People with Disabilities was held in 2006 to assess the educational and career needs of artists with disabilities, and develop and implement strategies to overcome barriers. The content of the Forum was informed by the work of a primary planning committee, statewide advisory committees, and a series of artME workshops hosted by the Maine Arts Commission. The Forum sought to assess the state's resources for people with disabilities and document existing services, strengthen attending organizations' and agencies' combined ability to serve the needs of artists with disabilities and create partnerships between providers of disability services, cultural venues, artists with and without disabilities and state agencies in order to improve employment opportunities and services for adult artists with disabilities.

Follow-up

The Maine Arts Commission and Alpha One Independent Living Center collaborated to produce a networking and mentoring event for artists with disabilities. The event was titled, "Compass Readings," held in Freeport, ME, on October 23, 2012. The

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event included motivational speakers as well as workshops for artists with disabilities. The workshops were designed to provide information about the professional arts environment to artists with disabilities, as well as give them an opportunity to ask questions and seek feedback concerning their work. Maine discovered that there is an enthusiastic audience for such events and that the audience is hungry for mentorship opportunities and opportunities to network.

Maryland (2002)

Forum

The Maryland State Arts Council and The Center for VSA Arts Maryland convened a one-day Forum in November, 2002 at Center Stage, a professional regional theatre in Baltimore. Participants included artists with disabilities, local arts council representatives, arts institution representatives, educators, The Department of Rehabilitation Services counselors, and community service providers. The purpose of the Forum was to educate and motivate arts producers, policymakers and educators to include people with disabilities in all aspects of their operations; provide training and information on a range of employment opportunities for artists with disabilities; and formalize networks currently in place among artists with disabilities and local agencies and art institutions and organizations. The Forum concluded with a theatrical performance prominently featuring artists with disabilities and open to outside audiences to generate additional public interest.

Massachusetts (2004, 2008-2009)

Forum

In 2004, Massachusetts held a one-day forum with plenary sessions on employment opportunities and breakout sessions on related topics pertaining to reasonable accommodations, studio art movement, creative growth, inclusionary programs and working with cultural organizations and rehabilitation professionals to reduce barriers to employment in the arts. The forum was an extension of the effort the

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Massachusetts Cultural Council (MCC) was making to increase the connections of cultural organizations to their communities. The Massachusetts Cultural Council has a long history of partnership and collaboration with VSA Arts of Massachusetts (VSAM). MCC and VSAM continue to face the challenge of how to promote the involvement artists, humanists and interpretive scientists with disabilities in the state's creative economy. The Forum was held in the Fall of 2004 at an accessible cultural facility in Boston.

Follow-up

In 2008 Massachusetts held a follow-up forum to their Putting Creativity to Work: A Forum on Careers in the Arts for People with Disabilities held in 2004. The needs discovered during their forum persuaded them to refocus their ADA Cultural Access Grants on employing artists with disabilities which led to the creation of the follow-up forum. The forum was a day-long event.

Michigan (2007-2008)

Forum

In 2007 Michigan held a professional development forum through training workshops including Social Security benefits, business and marketing plans, web site development, taxes and accounting; a professional artists panel; keynote by Jaehn Clare, disability advocate, actor, director, producer, and playwright; and showcased opportunities for participating artists. Presented by VSA Arts of Michigan, as a partner at the annual Michigan Rehabilitation Conference, the Forum collaborators were Michigan Council for Arts and Cultural Affairs, MARO Employment and Training Association, Michigan Statewide Independent Living Council, Michigan Commission on Disability Concerns, and ArtServe Michigan. Members of these organizations are extremely active in the disability community, and set policy that affected the livelihood of its members.

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Minnesota (2002, 2006-2007, 2007-2008)

Forum

The Minnesota State Arts Board and VSA Arts of Minnesota convened a day and half forum in March 2002 and follow-up one-day seminar in October 2002 at the University of Minnesota. Participants included artists with disabilities, arts administrators, vocational specialists, and foundation and funding administrators. The goals and objectives of the forum were: Artists with disabilities created a personal work plan to identify and achieve career goals; arts administrators identified a list of workplace characteristics and/or attitudes that served as barriers to hiring a person with a disability and a list of possible solutions; vocational advisors identified a new list of careers and corresponding contact persons; and foundation or other funding administrators identified funding guidelines or procedures as well as workplace and program characteristics that may serve as barriers to accommodating the needs of artists with disabilities and created possible solutions.

Follow-up

In 2006, The Minnesota State Arts Board and VSA Arts of Minnesota proposed to further develop the monthly-meeting artist-support network named the Artists with Disabilities Alliance (AWDA). This was a follow-up to their 2002 forum on Careers in the Arts for Persons with Disabilities. Meetings were hosted to serve as incubators for creating additional AWDA groups in five targeted regions around Minnesota. Staff from VSA Arts of Minnesota and the Minnesota State Arts Board planned, marketed and conducted three meetings during the project period in three of the larger population center regions and one meeting in the two remaining locations. The meetings brought together individuals who self-identified as artists with disabilities to locations relatively close to where they live and brought them in contact with disability employment service providers, State Social Security Administrators, art funders and other groups and individuals who supported their career development.

During Minnesota's follow-up forum in 2007, staff from the Minnesota State Arts

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Board (MSAB) and VSA Arts of Minnesota established six regional groups of artists with disabilities based on a four-year model begun by the Twin Cities based Artists with Disabilities Alliance (AWDA). VSA Arts of Minnesota staff provided technical assistance to the groups and facilitated the payment of small pools of funding for each group. Funds were made available to groups to cover speaker costs, exhibit expenses, communication accommodations (for example ASL interpreters) or expenses related to presentations or performances put on by members of the group. Small amounts of funding were also available to cover one-time expenses for individual regional group members to offset the cost of a class or admission or entry fee. The sole purpose for continuing the support of these groups was to enable Minnesota artists with disabilities to increase skills, opportunities and a system of personal and organizational support which resulted in the forwarding of their careers in the arts.

Mississippi (2003)

Forum

The Mississippi Forum on Careers in the Arts for People with Disabilities was convened in 2003. The forum aimed to encourage better services from cultural organizations to artists by creating a network of support through strong partnerships. In addition, the forum aimed to increase professional opportunity awareness with the expectation that more artists with disabilities become gainfully employed across the state. Forum participants were encouraged to ask questions, as well as define personal issues and obstacles. An extension of this forum was to continue to look for new collaborations and partnerships with individuals, state and community agencies, and organizations to expand resources. The forum concluded with a reception and performance.

Missouri (2004, 2012-2013)

Forum

Missouri Forum for Careers in the Arts for People with Disabilities took place in

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2004. The goals were threefold: to identify the needs of artists and arts administrators with disabilities; raise public awareness of the barriers to careers in the arts for people with disabilities; and include other organizations in partnership with Missouri Arts Council and VSA Arts of Missouri to address the needs and barriers. Ultimately the two organizations wanted to foster an inclusive arts industry in the state, one that had the same career opportunities for people with and without disabilities. Three forums took place one in Kansas City, one in Columbia, and one in St. Louis. The forums coincided with both the National Arts and Humanities Month and National Disability Employment Awareness Month.

Follow-up

Missouri completed two follow-up activities: traveling exhibitions and web-based training videos. **Exhibitions** – The exhibition *Where We Can Read The Wind* traveled to 4 galleries in the state of Missouri. The exhibitions were on view at each gallery/venue for approximately 8 weeks before the exhibit traveled to the next venue. *Where We Can Read The Wind* exhibited in: Hannibal Arts Council, Hannibal, MO - May 25, 2012 – June 23, 2012; Gallery on C Street, Springfield, MO – July 6, 2012 – August 28, 2012; and Capital Arts, Jefferson City, MO – September 16, 2012 – November 1, 2012

There was an opening reception for each exhibition and at two of the three venues there was one additional event. At the Hannibal Arts Council there was a poetry reading and at Gallery on C Street there was a reception that coincided with the city's artwalk and one of the artists in *Where We Can Read The Wind* was featured for the evening. **Web-based training videos** – Each video is approximately 15 minutes in length. Each video addresses a different topic relating to the career development for artists. One video is with Robin Hirsch, Assistant Director of Art St. Louis. Robin discussed the benefits of belonging to a member based arts organization and how to submit work to juried exhibitions. She also familiarized the viewer with Art St. Louis and the scope in which they serve artists in the region. The second video was with Philip Hitchcock, owner and director of PHD Gallery. Philip runs a commercial gallery in St. Louis. He covered how to

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approach a commercial gallery in hopes of pursuing gallery representation. The third video was an interview with Rob Cornman. Rob is an artist living with a disability and making a living off of his artwork. Rob discussed his work and how he pursued his career in the arts. Each video is available at <http://www.vsamissouri.org/webinar-videos> and YouTube.

Nebraska (2005, 2007-2008)

Forum

The Nebraska Arts Council and VSA Arts Nebraska presented two public forums, one in Omaha on September 15, 2005 and one in Kearney on October 18, 2005. The theme was to be Inspiration, Purpose and Identity: Careers in the Arts for Persons with Disabilities. The forums included a discussion on the definition of career, the obstacles presented to people with disabilities in pursuing a career in the arts, and opportunities for people with disabilities to create a fulfilling career in the arts. The target audience included people with disabilities, representatives of arts organizations and those providing services to people with disabilities, and the general public. The Forums targeted arts organizations to raise their awareness and help them recognize ways to include artists with disabilities. The Forums also demonstrated the importance to educators and counselors on the benefits of encouraging people with disabilities to pursue careers in the arts.

Follow-up

Nebraska held a follow-up forum to the Statewide Forum for Careers in the Arts for People with Disabilities in 2007. Their goal was to create a network of artists with disabilities to provide technical assistance, mentoring and workshops called the “Enabled Artists Collective”. The culminating event was a forum where participating artists could present, exhibit or showcase their work.

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New Hampshire (2005)

Forum

In 2005 New Hampshire held Creative Work Opportunities for All which brought together artists, arts administrators, vocational rehabilitation professionals, educators and employers to address the educational and vocational needs of people with disabilities pursuing careers in the arts. The New Hampshire State Council on the Arts and VSA Arts of New Hampshire has long been partners in facilitating access to the arts for all people, including those with disabilities. The goal of the forum was to ensure that people with disabilities have the resources that they need to pursue employment opportunities in the arts. At the same time, the forum raised awareness of this untapped creative workforce and of the need to break down the barriers that currently exist. This one-day forum included breakout sessions on various issues concerning employment, training, benefits planning, exhibition and marketing of artwork, and school-to-work transitions. Participants had the opportunity to connect with their peers and network with arts and employment professionals. In addition, a wealth of resources was made available to attendees to guide them in further pursuing arts career opportunities.

New Jersey (2008-2009)

Forum

In 2008, The New Jersey State Council on the Arts in conjunction with VSA Arts of NJ, the NJ Theatre Alliance/Cultural Access Network and the NJ Division of Disability Services among others presented a series of three regional workshops for people with disabilities who are interested in careers in the arts. The workshops took place in Central NJ, in North NJ. The workshops researched the educational and vocational needs of the participants and identified barriers that prevent them from careers as artists, arts administrators or arts technicians. The collaborating organizations presented programs and services to address these issues. Available resources and links to accessibility services were posted on the Cultural Access Network's web-site. The year long project included presentations by performing, visual and literary artists with

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disabilities.

New Mexico (2002)

Forum

New Mexico Arts and VSA Arts of New Mexico convened a two-day forum at the University of New Mexico's Continuing Education and Community Services Conference Center in Albuquerque in the fall of 2002. The focus of the activities was to emphasize the possibilities for artists with disabilities and included entrepreneurs who have successfully established economically viable arts businesses that are accessible to artists with disabilities. The goals of the forum were to: establish a network among professional and emerging artists with disabilities, rehabilitation professionals, state government agency representatives and art business owners; encourage partnerships between art businesses, arts administrators, rehabilitation and access professionals; stimulate a dialogue between artists, arts administrators and rehabilitation professionals about the viable careers in the arts for people with disabilities; and identify specific strategies and priorities for VSA NIM and NMA's efforts to promote and realize successful career paths in the arts for people with disabilities.

North Dakota (2007-2008, 2012-2013)

Forum

In 2007, North Dakota assisted individuals with disabilities who are pursuing, or who would like to pursue, careers in the arts. The North Dakota Council on the Arts, together with Dakota West Arts Council (a VSA Arts affiliate), and the North Dakota Center for Persons with Disabilities (a University Center of Excellence on Developmental Disabilities), conducted a program to assess the education and career needs and barriers for artists and arts administrators with disabilities; and develop and implement strategies to overcome the barriers and advance the careers of individuals with disabilities.

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Follow-up

North Dakota engaged in three follow-up activities. *Activity 1 – establish interactive statewide website:* The NDCPD web master developed the site layout and design and ensured accessibility. It went live in December 2012: <http://www.ndcpd.org/artequalswork>. In addition, a Facebook page was created: <https://www.facebook.com/ArtEqualsWork>. *Activity 2 – host pre-conference in conjunction with statewide NDCA Arts Conference* The pre-conference took place on Tuesday, March 26th 2013 from 1:00pm-4:30pm; Participants were able to attend the conference opening reception from 5:00pm-7:00pm. These events took place at the Radisson Hotel in Bismarck, North Dakota. Speakers at the preconference included Wayne Pruse, Art Instructor and Galley owner; Kimberly Forness Wilson, Artist with disability and art instructor; Marty Campbell, parent of child with disabilities; Tama Smith, nationally recognized artist and business owner, and employer of persons with disabilities; Kari Shea, Regional VR administrator, Tony Weiler, ND Commissioner of Labor; and Josh Villbrandt, regional DD service provider and employment specialist. *Activity 3 – presentation to state vocational rehabilitation and other job support personnel:* The North Dakota Vocational Rehabilitation Conference took place October 9-12, 2012, at the Alerus Center in Grand Forks, North Dakota. Project Director, Amy Schmidt, presented “Art=Work in North Dakota” which included information on careers in the arts for persons with disabilities and the importance of the arts. Kimberly Forness Wilson, an artist with a disability, told her story on how the arts help get her through her pain and brought artwork to the conference and displayed this work during her talk. A copy of the presentation to the Vocational Rehabilitation staff is available online at <http://www.nd.gov/arts/ada/pdfs/ArtEqualsWorkinNorthDakota.pdf>.

Ohio (2005, 2006-2007)

Forum

The Ohio Arts Council and VSA Arts of Ohio worked together to present the forum on Careers in the Arts for People with Disabilities: Strategies for Success in 2005. The forum was a one-day event held in Columbus, Ohio. The purpose of the forum was

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to identify barriers and discuss strategies for achieving successful careers in the arts. The information presented during the forum was collected and collated into a workbook for artists, mentors, and coaches to use as a professional development tool.

Follow-up

In 2006, VSA Arts of Ohio and Ohio Arts Council received follow-up funds to distribute the career workbook (that they developed in the 2005 Statewide Forum on Careers in the Arts) and conducted training for rehabilitation and vocational representatives in its use, hold discussions with counselors, teachers and mentors about what really works and what doesn't, and follow-up with Career Forum attendees to assess the value of the Forum and the workbook. The career workbook was designed to be a comprehensive tool to help artists with disabilities to successfully address: 1) the barriers to success in the area of employment identified at the forum; and 2) methods for developing their careers.

Puerto Rico (2003)

Forum

Puerto Rico conducted four regional Forums between August and November 2003. The structure given to the Forums were open focal groups, where discussions developed addressing their own experiences, barriers on their daily living and while developing their arts careers, resources available or not at the local regional level and possible strategies emerging from their experiences to advance their artistic development. Guide questions were designed to direct the conversations while a facilitator led the process. Supporting personnel consisting of four regional coordinators, facilitators, secretary and note taker assisted the process at each meeting. Two sign language interpreters attended each forum. The discussion groups were also composed of pertinent governmental agencies and their outcomes were related to the themes discussed: needs and obstacles, policies, available services and resources, educational programs, funding, career development opportunities, employment,

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communication tools, and future strategic actions to impact careers development and employment.

Tennessee (2006-2007, 2010)

Forum

Arts Talk was a one and one-half day forum that took place in 2006 which brought together artists, arts employers, arts administrators and service providers to identify barriers and develop strategies for the successful employment of artists with disabilities. Focusing on the theme of Communication, Arts Talk promoted an understanding between artists and employers by creating an atmosphere of open dialog. Estelle Condra who is a nationally recognized author, storyteller and actress was the keynote speaker for the event. Her performances and presentations encouraged the audience to continue on with persistence, creativity and a positive attitude. Forum participants received a booklet that assisted them as they pursue careers in the arts or as they hire artists with disabilities.

Follow-up

In 2010, the Tennessee Arts Commission and VSA Tennessee collaborated to coordinate a culminating event showcasing the multiple talents and disciplines of artists with disabilities at the Schermerhorn Nashville Symphony Hall. The Schermerhorn event engaged special education students and teachers in the morning and was open to the public later that evening. Each session included: 10 hands on activity stations, performances by 6 groups, and 4 art exhibits. There was a 3 hour professional development session led by the Nashville Symphony on how to use music to connect to education. Participating artists increased their confidence, networked with each other and those attending the event such as music industry executives, and gained employment opportunities including: the Young Jazz Trio was hired to perform at an upcoming Symphony event; one of the visual artists who was in the pottery exhibit got her own one woman exhibit; and the Dulcimer Choir and Angela Mosley were hired to

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perform at the MegaConference. Following the Schermerhorn event, Tennessee partnered with the Jazz Workshop to provide professional development to musicians with disabilities. The workshop involved music professionals who spoke to the young artists about ways to market themselves, things to expect when entering the music industry, some critique on their performance and the opportunity to go into a recording studio and create a CD for promotional purposes. The artists with disabilities learned improvisation skills which were demonstrated by the end of the workshop in the final performance. They also learned information regarding what it takes to be a musician and steps to making music a career. Many of the artists with disabilities entered a recording studio for the first time in their lives.

Texas (2004, 2006-2007, 2007-2008, 2010, 2012-2013)

Forum

Texas held their first Statewide Forum on Careers in the Arts for Persons with Disabilities in 2004. They launched ArtWorks, a program that supports the professional development of artists with disabilities. Four workshops for visual artists were conducted in Austin, San Antonio, Houston and Dallas.

Follow-up

In 2006, The Texas Careers Forum follow-up activities were delivered through ArtWorks, professional development opportunities that included: writing and performance workshops; copyright and other legal workshops; photographing and other documentation support; calls for art and assistance with exhibit set-up, marketing, etc.; master classes taught by artists with disabilities. Conducted in Dallas, Houston, San Antonio and other communities as requested, these workshops reached people for whom transportation can be an issue.

ArtWorks NetWork Series was developed by VSA Arts of Texas and the Texas Commission on the Arts (TCA) to empower artists with disabilities to unite and support each other as a community. Held in 2007, five regional workshops around the state of

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Texas, partnered with the local office of Cultural Affairs to present ArtWorks NetWork. At the initial meeting artists learned about local and state resources for artists, specific resources for artists with disabilities and how to use Social Security work incentives to become self-employed as an artist. The networking session allowed individuals to share resources to support mutual artistic goals, have critique sessions, and organize group exhibitions in order to advance the growth of the arts community in their region. ArtWorks NetWork meetings were scheduled for El Paso, Houston, San Antonio, Tyler, and Fort Worth.

In 2010, TCA and VSA Texas in collaboration with local organizations conducted three workshops in on accessibility issues including revisions to the ADA and hiring artists with disabilities in the cultural districts of Lubbock, Dallas, and Houston. Through the accessibility workshops, artists with disabilities shared their stories of success and their artwork. New artists were discovered to add to the VSA roster, one of whom became a featured artist in a solo show at the VSA Texas Access Gallery, and another artist presenter sold a painting after his presentation. Workshop participants also gained knowledge about the capability and talent of artists with disabilities. In addition, the “Revisions to the Americans with Disabilities Act” portion of the workshop was invited to present at the statewide conference presented by TCA in February 2011. Two sessions were scheduled and participants from 35 arts organizations attended with many questions. In response to feedback from the trainings, Texas developed an online ADA Tool Kit: <http://www.vsatx.org/adaToolkit.html>. The toolkit provides information about the revised Americans with Disabilities Act guidelines, disability awareness and customer service tips and techniques, arts and disability organizations, and a link to the TCA on-line marketing toolkit.

In 2012-2013, TCA and VSA Texas focused their follow-up activities on the needs of veterans with disabilities through the Distinguished Artist Veteran Initiative. This included an exhibition of art by veteran artists and a statewide survey of arts programs for veterans. They surveyed all the TCA arts organizations about their programs and services to military families and veterans. They found that, while the interest in arts

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programs for veterans was widespread, there were few programs in existence. They reached large gatherings of people at the Texas Commission on the Arts Statewide Conference and the Texas Veterans Commission Veterans Expo, and found that face-to-face contact was the best way to gauge interest. They found that some arts organizations have begun to reach out to veterans in partnership with government organizations. They formed six partnerships to create new connections between arts and Veterans organizations to expand the program activities of the Distinguished Artist Veteran Initiative.

Washington (2003, 2006-2007)

Open Space Technology was used to generate issues and identify priorities to advance arts careers for individuals with disabilities in Washington State in 2003. Three one-day Forums gathered interested people to explore the question, “What can we best do to advance careers in the arts for individuals with disabilities in Washington State?” Open Space is a method of discussion that allows all who attend to set the agenda and discuss the issues that matter to them. People who could not attend the one-day forums participated in a discussion on-line. All of the input collected was included in a publication that was distributed to interested individuals, arts groups, organizations, and the Washington State Legislature. The project addressed opportunities and hindrances within the arts community, education, and vocational rehabilitation that impacts artists with disabilities in Washington.

Washington held a follow-up entitled, “State’s project is Practical Professional Development; Tools for Joining the Market”. This workshop was held in early 2007 in the Puget Sound region of the state where the majority of artists with disabilities reside. These workshops introduced the basic portfolio that was needed by artists in various fields in order to compete in the artistic workplace. Topics covered included such items as: how to write an artist resume, artist statement essentials, tips about slide sheets, digital images, manuscripts, or audio/visual tapes and information on approaching galleries, getting the ‘gig’ and entering the established artistic marketing systems.

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