

2004 Statewide Forums on Careers in the Arts for People with Disabilities.

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Introduction

This report provides a brief overview of the five states that conducted Careers in the Arts Forums for People with Disabilities in 2004. The information provided is a summary from the detailed reports submitted by each state. It highlights the participants, activities conducted, outcomes and future activities, as well as total expenses.

None of the states would have been able to accomplish the outcomes they achieved without the active involvement, collaboration and in many cases, financial and in-kind support from a diverse and active planning committee. The committees typically had representatives from key disability related state agencies such as vocational rehabilitation, independent living centers, social security and arts organizations that assist artists with disabilities; as well as representatives from education, small business, arts groups and associations, policy makers, social security, and University Centers for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities.

Key to the success of all of the forums was the community collaboration and the knowledgeable and respected presenters, which attracted people to the forums. Credibility was added to the forums by the presence of legislators and holding events at well-known arts venues such as a major museum.

For some of the states, the statewide forum was a new activity, for others a next step. Either way, a learning curve is inevitably associated with any new endeavor. All encountered some frustrations and setbacks, such as challenges in 'nailing down' topics and speakers, outreach to artists with disabilities, securing necessary financial support, or experienced disappointment when the broader arts community, legislators or disability employment specialists were not engaged.

Most states emphasized the importance of the involvement of artists with and without

disabilities that could speak to the local 'arts scene', and provide pragmatic and useable information. All were in agreement about the role of the forums in reducing the isolation of artists by providing networking opportunities and a chance to show or display their artistic work.

The reward of building in an evaluation, discussion and planning session were apparent, as all laid the groundwork for future collaborations, workshops events or subsequent forums. Most of the future activities aim to increase the visibility of artists with disabilities in their communities, provide skill building and professional development opportunities, and/or educate and inform cultural venues about accessibility.

Statewide Forums on Careers in the Arts for People with Disabilities

Arkansas

Pathways and Barriers to Success in the Workplace

- August 27, 2004- 2nd Congressional District Forum, University of Central Arkansas, Conway
- September 14, 2004-3rd Congressional District Forum, University of Arkansas, Fayetteville
- September 21, 2004-4th Congressional District Forum, University of Arkansas, Pine Bluff
- October 1, 2004-1st Congressional District Forum, Arkansas State University, Jonesboro
- 2004-ArtLinks Conference, Hot Springs Convention Center, October 18-19.

Participants: One hundred and thirty nine participants attended the four forums; twenty-seven were artists with disabilities engaged in music, theatre, visual arts, and design. The artists had varying disabilities including physical, sensory, mental and visual disabilities.

The majority of the participants were affiliated with disability based organizations [i.e., independent living centers, ARC]; allied health, education or rehabilitation professionals; service providers; theatre companies; or arts council staff.

Forum Activities: All forums except the ArtLinks Conference had the same structure. The first hour was a welcome and an introduction to the disability services offered by the hosting university and the surrounding community. This hour included representatives from the Universities' disability services, Student Support Services and other TRIO programming, and the Disability Rights Center. Following this introduction, there were two or three lectures from different disability and arts representatives, with Q & A at the end of each lecture. There were no concurrent sessions. This was followed by lunch and artists performances. The final hour and a half of the day was reserved for a panel discussion moderated by a state legislator. This section allowed everyone present to introduce themselves and network with other participants.

Outcomes/Future Activities: The Arkansas Arts Council is committed to exploring models of successful programming that they could use to develop innovative, accessible and focused programming for the long term benefit for artists with disabilities.

Total Expenses: \$15,000

Indiana

Indiana Art Works: Employing Creativity

- October 5 & 6, 2004-Embassy Suites Hotel, Indianapolis; Indianapolis Artsgarden, a downtown exhibit/performance space operated by the Arts Council of Indianapolis

Participants: A total of 102 participants attended the two-day forum with approximately half being people with disabilities. Of the 25 artists that completed a survey evaluation, most were between 36 and 65 years old, with the majority unemployed. For those employed, 43% reported income from arts related work. Visual arts was the best represented of the arts disciplines.

Forum Activities: Day One: The forum began with an opening lunch with a keynote speaker and concurrent sessions. An artist with a disability provided music. Sessions were presenter-led with time for Q and A after each presentation. In addition to the sessions, there was an exhibitor room and an opportunity for each participant to be part of a collaborative art project. The day ended with the opening night reception and "Artists Showcase." The showcase featured performing artists with disabilities. It also marked the beginning of the 14-day Visual Arts Showcase that included 30 works of six artists with disabilities. Both showcases were held in the Indianapolis Artsgarden.

Day Two: The second day began with morning roundtables (to further discuss Day One session topics), a keynote speaker and facilitator-led discussion, networking lunch (with collaborative project conclusion), and concluded with a facilitator-led 'bringing it all together' session for participants to discuss plans for future forums and other endeavors.

Outcomes/Future Activities: Immediately following the Forum all transcripts were posted on IAC website. In early 2005, a packet will be sent to all attendees, exhibitor and friends of the evaluation, survey report and final session notes. A meeting will be convened in March 2005 to review the Forum and develop specific plans to address recommendations, which includes the possibility of mini forum for 2005.

Total Expenses: \$39,529

Massachusetts

Putting Creativity to Work: A Forum on Careers in the Arts For People with Disabilities

- November 9, 2004-Radisson Hotel, Boston

Participants: There were 225 participants at the Forum including 84 artists with various disabilities. The primary discipline of the artists was visual arts. The other participants were rehabilitation professionals, educators, other professionals, and personal care attendants.

Forum: Putting Creativity to Work: A Forum on Careers in the Arts for People with Disabilities was a one-day forum that brought together artists, art administrators, vocational rehabilitation professionals, educators and employers to address the educational and vocational needs of people with disabilities pursuing careers in the arts. The Forum incorporated plenary sessions on artists success stories and employment opportunities, and break out sessions on related topics pertaining to assistive technology, promoting work to the business sector, creative growth, marketing strategies, Work Incentive 101, publishing literary works, grants and services, and working with cultural organizations and rehabilitation professionals to reduce barriers to employment in the arts. Breakfast and lunch were provided for all participants and their PCA's. A social reception with live music (performed by a Blind musician) and refreshments took place at the conclusion of the Forum.

Outcomes/Future Activities: Based on the evaluation of the forum, there is a need to plan and provide additional workshops for rehabilitation professionals and to create an artist with disabilities network. VSA arts plans to implement a 14 week Putting Creativity to Work course sometime this spring aimed to assist artists with disabilities in the marketing and selling of their work.

The New England Foundation for the Arts (NEFA) in a partnership with MCC will soon release an On-line Cultural Marketplace. The Online Cultural Marketplace (OCM) endeavors to strengthen the creative industry by more efficiently linking artists in New England with the theaters, community centers, libraries, spiritual centers, schools, festivals, museums, galleries and coffeehouses that hire them to provide cultural programming in their communities.

A suite of web-based tools on the OCM will enable artists to post and maintain their portfolios online, with special features like streaming video and audio samples. Presenters will use the tool to locate appropriate artists, view work samples, negotiate, and draw up contracts. Both artists and presenters will have access to technical assistance such as how to document their work or tips on writing a contract.

Total Expenses: \$39,417

Missouri

Careers in the Arts!

- October 5, 2004-Kauffman Foundation Conference Center, Kansas City
- October 7, 2004-University of Missouri, Columbia
- October 13, 2004-University of Missouri, St. Louis

Participants: There were a total of 112 participants at the Missouri Forums, 45 participants in the Kansas City, 29 in Columbia and 38 in St. Louis. Approximately 80% of the participants were artists with disabilities; with two-thirds of those identifying themselves as professionals. Over half were visual artists. The largest category of disabilities was physical disabilities; 14% were minorities. Approximately 70% reported working full or part time with nearly 50% earning with less than \$15,000 in total income. The average income earned from art was \$1,744, ranging from \$50 to \$8,000.

Forum Activities: Using panels, roundtables and breakout sessions, the forums invited a conversation on a variety of topics of importance to artists with disabilities. The program began with short welcomes from the Missouri Arts Council and VSA arts of Missouri as well as the local "host." Then the keynote speaker gave a thirty-minute presentation and then answered questions. This was followed by a panel discussion involving three to six participants including a moderator. In the panel discussion professional artists and others talked about their experiences and challenges in developing a career in the arts. After lunch, roundtables were set up where participants could rotate and get information on a number of topics and programs. The afternoon breakout sessions focused on education, employment, and social security. The day concluded with a performance. Each forum featured a cultural organization that offered complimentary tickets to some or all of the participants. These were designed to promote an accessible cultural attraction in each city while rewarding forum participants. While the format and topics for the Forums were the same for each location, the specific content varied depending on the expertise of the individual speakers. Furthermore, 60% of the program schedule was open to networking and talking with presenters and other participants.

Outcomes/Future Activities: An executive summary of the Forums will be sent to all participants. Additional programs and services that address resource information, logistical assistance and arts employment are in the planning stages. VSA arts and the Missouri Arts Council are under discussion to create follow-up activities between now and June 30, 2005.

Total Expenses: \$9,124

Texas

Artworks

Artwork Workshops

- January 20 & 21, 2004 -Austin Museum of Art, Austin,
- February 19 & 20, 2004- Antonio Museum of Art, San Antonio
- April 27 & 28, 2004 -Museum of Fine Arts Houston, Houston,
- May 18 & 19, 2004- Dallas Museum of Art, Dallas

Artwork Annual Careers in the Arts Forum

- September 23&24, 2004-Holiday Inn Town Lake, Austin

Participants: There were a total to 173 participants, with 83 visual artists attending the ArtsWork Workshops, and 90 artists, arts organizations, rehabilitation and employment professionals, and policy makers attending the Forum. The majority [75-90%] of the artists attending the workshops were artists with disabilities.

Forum Activities: Each **Regional Workshop** was designed as a two-day event to support artists with disabilities as they jumpstarted their career as a visual artist. The workshop included an art-making activity of "Creating Your Artist Vision". Each participant was provided a large poster board and a variety of pens, markers, etc. and was asked to draw a self-portrait somewhere on the board. Then, throughout the two days, visual information was added as each topic was presented.

The **Annual Forum** had a statewide focus, as well as expanding to include performing, media and literary artists. The two-day forum included a keynote speaker each day, plenary, panel discussions, small group discussions, social security consultations, performance and an 'open mic' and artist showcase.

Outcomes/Future Activities:

In the immediate future, VSA arts in collaboration with Imagine Art will create a web-based resource for networking by workshop and forum participants. Other future activities include: writing articles for publication by artists with disabilities who participated in the forum an article about an artist with a disability for a newsletter, and possibly short film by a filmmaker with a disability of the next forum.

VSA arts Texas is committed to continuing to carry out annual Careers in the Arts Forums. Evaluation results identified the need to educate arts administrators to offer viable employment options in accessible venues, to encourage rehabilitation and employment counselors to actively pursue employment options in the arts for their clients with disabilities, and to support artists and developing artists through professional development opportunities and technical assistance. An additional positive outcome of this year's forum was an invitation by The Greater Denton Arts Council to host the next forum in North Texas along with two exhibits by artists with disabilities.

Total Expenses: \$45,386

PR: [n/a](#)Rank: [3704](#)