

# IOWA DEPARTMENT OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS

IOWA ARTS COUNCIL    PRODUCE IOWA    STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF IOWA

## DCA STRATEGIC PLAN FRAMEWORK 2022-2026

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The Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs encompasses the State Historical Society of Iowa, which includes the Library, Archives and Museums, as well as Historic Sites and the State Historic Preservation Office; the Iowa Arts Council; the interim Iowa Humanities Council; and Produce Iowa, the state office of media production.

### I. MISSION

We empower Iowans to create and sustain culturally vibrant communities by connecting with the people, places and points of pride that define our state.

### II. VISION

All Iowans have opportunities to learn, create and thrive through the arts, history, humanities, film and media.

<p><b><u>GOVERNOR'S PRIORITIES<sup>1</sup></u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Cut taxes for all Iowans</li><li>● Make Iowa an employment destination</li><li>● Improve access to child care</li><li>● Build Iowa's health care workforce</li><li>● Prepare students for the workforce</li><li>● Provide educational choice and transparency for Iowa families</li><li>● Grow the fuels of the future</li></ul>	<p><b><u>DCA PRIORITIES</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Grow Iowa's prosperity through the creative economy and workforce</li><li>● Increase public access and engagement with arts, culture and history resources</li><li>● Build the sustainability of our cultural organizations</li><li>● Promote and preserve Iowa arts, culture, film and history</li><li>● Provide dynamic lifelong learning opportunities</li></ul>
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<sup>1</sup> Governor Reynolds' Priorities, updated January 2022. <https://governor.iowa.gov/vision>

### III. DCA CORE VALUES

#### **Collaboration and Leadership**

We act in service to, and with, Iowans to develop programs, partnerships and resources that respond to their needs. We listen, learn and collaborate to ensure inclusion and relevance, and then act to fulfill our leadership role.

#### **Diversity and Inclusion**

Recognizing and respecting diversity in all that we do, we honor and elevate people, places and points of pride across Iowa, and work to ensure that all Iowans have opportunities to tell their stories and to see and hear those stories reflected authentically in the cultural life of our state.

#### **Accessibility and Engagement**

We strive to ensure that all Iowans feel connected to our agency, while we increase the accessibility of public resources. We believe every Iowan should have access to meaningful opportunities to engage with the arts, culture, history, and the humanities, recognizing the clear benefits to personal and community well-being.

#### **Excellence**

We seek to exemplify professional standards and best practices within our organization and cultivate excellence in our role working to preserve and promote Iowa's cultural heritage, history and artistic creativity.

#### **Knowledge and Creativity**

We are dedicated to lifelong learning, research and sharing knowledge. We cultivate curiosity and the creativity that stimulates innovation and growth.

## **IV. WHAT IOWANS WANT FROM THE IOWA DEPARTMENT OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS**

### **1. Build networks and cultivate leadership.**

- Promote collaboration, peer learning and mentorship
- Facilitate knowledge sharing
- Develop pipelines to nurture diverse arts and cultural leadership

### **2. Foster sustainable organizations and creative practices.**

- Develop resources to support organizations and individuals with their need to focus on revenue generation, business planning and raising capital.
- Focus on career pathways into cultural and creative fields
- Address capacity and audience development challenges.

### **3. Promote the value and impact of Iowa's cultural and creative sector.**

- Support tourism efforts around arts, film and historical destinations
- Increase community interest in local arts, history and culture
- Assist cultural partners with expanding their visibility and reach
- Build awareness of Iowa as a viable option for creative workers and projects

### **4. Enhance access to arts, history, and culture.**

- Develop new tools, resources and platforms to increase awareness and access, particularly for underrepresented and underserved communities
- Increase assistance and education around grant funding opportunities
- Continue focus on online educational resources, virtual programming and digital accessibility
- Ensure K-12 students have access to robust history and arts learning experiences inside and outside of classroom

# IOWA ARTS COUNCIL STRATEGIC PLAN 2022-2026

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### **I. Introduction**

The Iowa Arts Council (IAC) operates as a division of its parent agency, the Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs (IDCA), which also encompasses the State Historical Society of Iowa and the State Historic Preservation Office; the interim Iowa Humanities Council; and Produce Iowa, the state office of media production.

Established in 1967, IAC serves as Iowa's state arts agency and works in collaboration with its federal agency partner, the National Endowment for the Arts, and regional arts partner, Arts Midwest, to carry out its mission to cultivate creativity, learning and participation in the arts in Iowa.

### **II. Planning Process**

The IDCA, along with its divisions, regularly seeks public input on its priorities and strategic goals and develops a new plan approximately every three years (view the [department's](#) and the [IAC's](#) 2019-21 strategic plans).

In anticipation of developing a new strategic plan, in spring 2021, the IDCA retained Wastyn & Associates to facilitate a public input process. Between May and October 2021, the IDCA and Wastyn & Associates hosted five, virtual public input sessions and conducted a public survey to determine current perceptions of and future priorities for the agency. Altogether, the public input phase engaged more than 1,100 Iowans from the arts, culture, humanities, and creative sectors.

Staff and board input was sought at multiple points throughout this process. The IAC also organized a series of conversations with leaders in the arts and state arts agency field.

## **I. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

### **Goal 1: Build an arts infrastructure that reaches every corner of our state.**

#### **WHAT WE NEED TO DO**

##### **1. Promote accessibility of grant opportunities.**

- Clearly communicate eligibility requirements and consider ways to streamline and simplify application and reporting requirements
- Develop user-friendly materials and improve navigation of resources
- Align grant funding opportunities with the greatest needs in the field
- Provide additional technical assistance to first time applicants and those who have not received funding in recent years to increase their competitiveness

##### **2. Act as a statewide resource hub to connect and support the field.**

- Build networks and develop tools that connect communities, schools, and organizations to artists, and vice versa
- Create more informal opportunities and virtual spaces for peer learning, sharing best practices and exchanging ideas
- Establish feedback loops and opportunities for co-creation of IAC programs with diverse stakeholders to continually evolve IAC work and best support Iowa's creative sector

##### **3. Boost our outreach and service to under-resourced and under-represented communities.**

- Develop and demonstrate inclusive models of working with diverse communities, organizations and leaders
- Bridge urban, rural and suburban parts of our state through shared resources and greater collaboration.

##### **4. Promote access to the arts.**

- Address barriers related to age, health, disabilities, and socioeconomic status
- Maintain virtual programming to promote accessibility and engage new arts participants
- Incorporate diverse representation so programs are inviting to the broader community
- Develop resources and training to help organizations address their barriers related to costs/admission fees, lack of staff/volunteers, technology and limited open hours
- Share best practices related to increasing accessibility for those with disabilities

**5. Increase access to arts learning experiences for K-12 students.**

- Work with arts education partners to address learning loss and social-emotional learning from the pandemic
- Connect teaching artists, schools and nonprofits

**WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE**

- Arts leaders have more informal and ongoing opportunities to connect and learn
- Local arts agencies are better connected and knowledgeable about resources
- Communities, schools and organizations have more tools for finding and working with artists, and vice versa
- More K-12 students have access to meaningful arts learning opportunities and career and learning pathways in the arts
- Greater adoption of best practices around accessibility by arts organizations

## **Goal 2: Grow a sustainable and thriving ecosystem for the arts in Iowa.**

### **WHAT WE NEED TO DO**

#### **1. Build the capacity and resilience of arts organizations.**

- Share and encourage best practices to strengthen financial sustainability including resources and training related to revenue generation and raising capital
- Focus on all signals of organizational strength, including stable leadership, operating models and community relationships that build social capital
- Assist organizations with their challenge of attracting new and younger audience members, volunteers, staff, and board members

#### **2. Focus on artist support systems.**

- Promote infrastructure beneficial to sustaining an artistic practice and career in Iowa
- Connect artists to funding and career development opportunities
- Support career development opportunities for artists, including artist mentorship, peer to peer learning, and leadership trainings

#### **3. Cultivate arts leadership.**

- Focus on the leadership pipeline by developing paid internships, as well as opportunities for emerging and mid-career leaders
- Support arts leaders and artists in developing skills and competencies that will enable them to lead more effective organizations and practices [Aligns with NEA Objective 3.1]

#### **4. Support arts businesses and creative entrepreneurs.**

- Connect small and emerging creative businesses to entrepreneurship resources
- Promote culturally-diverse businesses that contribute to cultural and social vibrancy

### **WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE**

- A growing and thriving arts sector that is also financially resilient, sustainable and prepared for future crises
- Improved support systems and ecosystem for Iowa artists and arts workers
- All arts and cultural leaders have career development and leadership opportunities
- Improved resources for diverse arts and cultural businesses and creative entrepreneurs

### **Goal 3: Support and champion Iowa's creative economy.**

#### **WHAT WE NEED TO DO**

##### **1. Communicate the public value and impact of the arts & creative industries.**

- Collect and share stories and data that demonstrate how the arts strengthen communities
- Develop and share compelling messaging strategies developed with public input
- Increase media presence and presentation about the arts; focus on the work being done and its impact in terms of Iowa's economy
- Work with partners to form a more cohesive network of Iowa arts and cultural leaders engaged in advocating for the arts
- Reinforce and elevate the essential role artists as citizens serve in their communities

##### **2. Promote the economic impact of creative places.**

- Emphasize the role of arts, culture, history and film in attracting and retaining talent
- Measure and promote the impact of Iowa's creative economy and previous investments made through IAC programs

##### **3. Invest in creative projects that enhance the cultural identity of communities and districts.**

- Develop strategies for the growth of our districts, neighborhoods and towns by showcasing their unique arts, historic and cultural assets
- Intentionally engage artists in community development initiatives
- Develop new tools, funding opportunities and resources for designated cultural districts

##### **4. Promote career pathways in the arts and creative fields.**

- Work with partners to promote new and emerging career pathways in creative industries that can be a growth industry for Iowa

##### **5. Promote the ability of the arts to address real-world challenges and build social capital.**

- Nurture and support cross-sector partnerships that include the arts and artists as a core partner to address community needs
- Foster arts programming that seeks to advance individual and community health and well-being

#### **WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE**

- Greater recognition of the economic impact of the arts in Iowa and value to talent attraction and retention efforts
- Social benefits of the arts are better understood and communicated
- Arts community speaks with a more unified voice
- Increased awareness of career pathways in creative industries
- Arts and culture are recognized as core to successful community development work and a key driver in successful outcomes to a host of community needs and challenges.