

BUILDING YOUR ARTS CHAMPION

Strategic Plan 2020 – 2023

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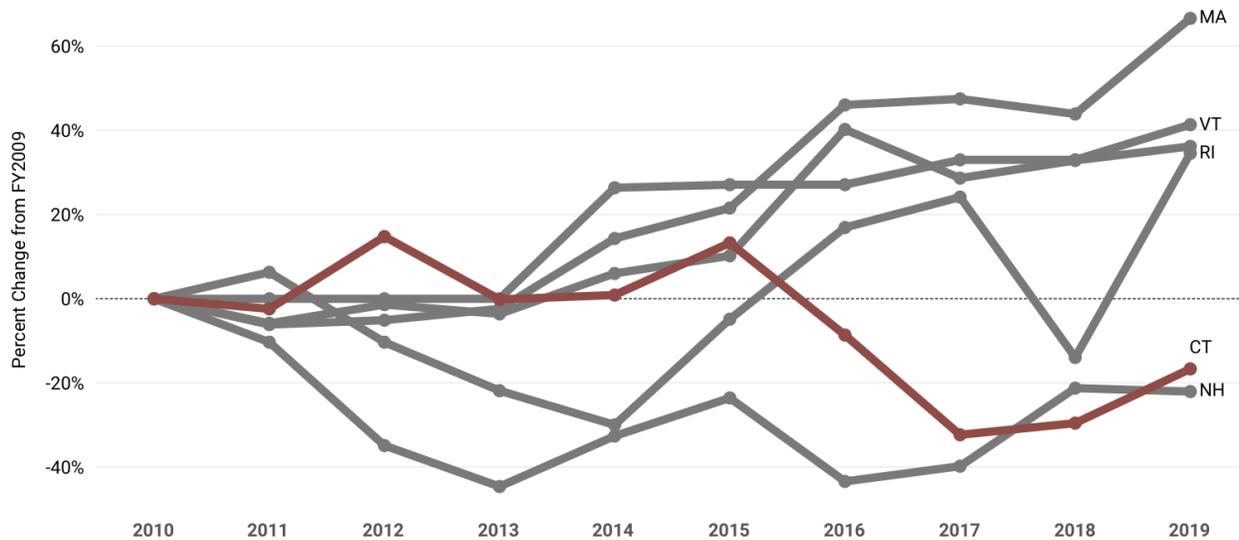
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Final Draft: 10/4/19

INTRODUCTION

The Connecticut Arts Alliance is the only statewide advocacy organization for the arts. Currently led by a volunteer Board of Directors, the organization has made significant strides in recent years to unite the arts community in support of the arts and to elevate awareness of its importance among leaders of state government. With these successes as a foundation, the organization is now strategically positioned to significantly expand its work. This document lays out a 3-year plan that will secure the resources and lay the groundwork for a strengthened and more impactful organization.

The CT Arts Alliance was formed in 2005 by the leadership of some of the state’s prominent arts institutions. Deeply concerned by the steady and precipitous decline in state funding for the arts, the fledgling organization worked to establish a united voice for the creative community. Despite these early efforts, the decreases continued through and beyond the Great Recession. While nearby Rhode Island and Massachusetts began their recovery and eventually increased investments in the arts beyond pre-recession levels, Connecticut’s structural financial challenges forced even further decreases.



Ten-Year Legislative Appropriations Percentage Change for New England (National Assembly of State Arts Agencies)

By 2015, arts leaders were calling on CT Arts Alliance to adopt a stronger, more proactive agenda to fight against this painful decade of declining state support. Inspired by MASSCreative’s innovative and grassroots approach in Massachusetts, the Board of Directors launched Create the Vote CT, a nonpartisan campaign to boost the voice of the arts during the 2018 gubernatorial election.

The initial outcomes from this first-time effort were both promising and significant:

- Engaged every gubernatorial candidate about why the arts are a key component of CT's economic and community vitality through questionnaires, sit-down meetings, and site visits
- Organized and hosted the state's first arts-focused Gubernatorial Candidate Forum with an audience of more than 200
- Enlisted 100 arts organizations as co-sponsors for the initiative
- Established new statewide affinity partnerships with Connecticut Alliance of Arts Education, Connecticut Nonprofit Alliance, Connecticut Tourism Coalition, Connecticut Humanities, and Connecticut Restaurant Association

When you stop having dreams and ideals - well, you might as well stop altogether.

Marian Anderson

As a direct result of this work, the profile of the arts community was raised significantly and its members invited to the table in unprecedented ways: members of the community were invited to join incoming Governor Ned Lamont's arts, culture and tourism policy task force while CT Arts Alliance hosted the first collaborative Arts, Culture, and Tourism Advocacy Day and influenced legislators to add the arts to the Culture and Tourism political caucus. Most importantly, Create the Vote CT helped to stabilize state arts funding for the first time in a decade.

Alongside these external successes, the Board of Directors was also strengthening its internal infrastructure - establishing a working committee structure, recruiting new board members that more closely mirror the makeup of Connecticut's communities, and launching a charter membership program that raised critical revenue while adding new voices to the call for greater public and private support for the arts.

There is still much work ahead to build on these successes. However, with this forward-thinking and bold strategic plan in place—and the support of the state's creative community, philanthropic sector, legislative leadership and thousands of individuals who believe in the power of the arts—CT Arts Alliance will be uniquely positioned to ensure that the arts are valued as fundamental components of a vibrant, healthy, connected, and equitable Connecticut.

METHODOLOGY

In 2019, the CT Arts Alliance engaged Matt Wilson, founding Executive Director of MASSCreative, Massachusetts's arts advocacy organization, as a consultant for this strategic plan. Matt had worked with CT Arts Alliance in the past and was familiar with the organization, CT's advocacy efforts, and many arts and cultural leaders in the state. MASSCreative has served as a role model for CT Arts Alliance and Matt has received national recognition for his work building the organization and his advocacy efforts.

Steering Committee Meeting February 21, 2019

- Overall process and planning (consultation with Matt Wilson)

Steering Committee Meeting March 8, 2019

- Vision, mission and values (consultation with Matt Wilson)

Steering Committee Meeting April 3, 2019

- Vision, mission and values (consultation with Matt Wilson)

Sub-Group Meetings April 11, 2019

- Organizational Infrastructure, Building Political Power and Influence, Program and Policy

Full Board Retreat June 12, 2019

- Facilitated by Matt Wilson
- 3/4 day retreat on strategic plan

Steering Committee Video/Conference Call July 29, 2019

- Review retreat input and outcomes
- Timeline, tasks, and assignments

Steering Committee Meeting August 19, 2019

- Strategic Plan Draft

Steering Committee Conference Call September 6, 2019

- Strategic Plan Draft

Steering Committee Meeting September 19, 2019

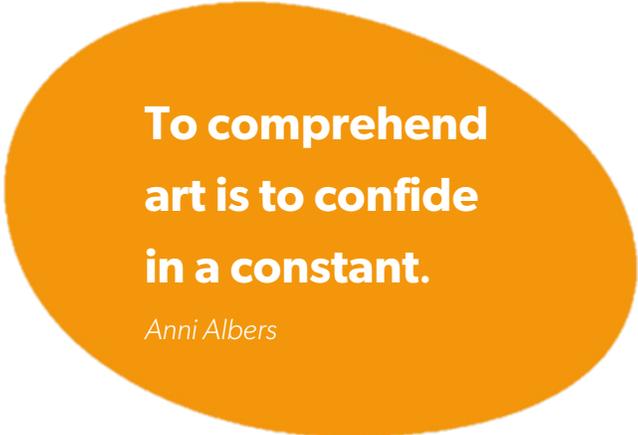
- Strategic Plan Draft

Steering Committee Meeting September 23, 2019 (consultation with Matt Wilson)

- Strategic Plan Implementation

Strategic Planning Committee

Amy Wynn (Chair), Elizabeth Barisser, Wendy Bury, Tatiana DaSilva, Darren Farrington, Daniel Fitzmaurice, Kolton Harris, Calida Jones, Brett Thompson



**To comprehend
art is to confide
in a constant.**

Anni Albers

MISSION / VISION / VALUES

Mission

The Connecticut Arts Alliance inspires support for the arts

Vision

Arts, culture, and creativity are valued as fundamental to vibrant, healthy, connected, and equitable communities in Connecticut.

Values

- Collective impact
- Meaningful partnerships
- Building consensus for a united voice in support of the arts
- Representing the needs and interests of Connecticut's arts community
- Opportunities for all to experience the arts

CT Arts Alliance coordinates its strategy with other statewide arts service organizations, including the CT Office of the Arts and the CT Arts Council + Foundation

**You cannot set art
off in a corner and
hope for it to have
vitality, reality,
and substance.**

Charles Ives

GOALS



BOARD

- Create a 501c3 organization
- Establish the necessary committees to execute its mission
- Recruit board members that represent the skills required and communities we serve



INFRASTRUCTURE

- Hire a fulltime staff person to lead the organization
- Raise \$100K-\$120K annually for a 3-year operating budget
- Develop supporting resources to execute the strategy

ADVOCACY

- Build on Create the Vote to engage residents and candidates for public office
- Train artists and arts organizations in advocacy best practices
- Mobilize citizens to understand the value of and take action to support the arts

INFLUENCE

- Establish a bold and expansive policy platform that increases public and private support
- Build an engaged membership that represents the diversity of the sector
- Cultivate and sustain mutually beneficial cross-sector partnerships



TIMELINE

	BOARD	INFRASTRUCTURE	ADVOCACY	INFLUENCE
Foundational Phase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create 501c3 organization • Decide role of 501c4 organization • Recruit initial Board members • Develop process to hire an Executive Director 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hire a project management consultant • Develop + execute fundraising campaign with organizations, foundations, and individual donors • Secure pledged investments • Create basic narrative + marketing materials 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current committees continue basic campaigns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current committees continue basic membership and partnership efforts • Conduct “Town Hall” events with members
Year 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruit, hire, + onboard Executive Director • Identify skills needed + recruit additional Board members 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine administrative needs – office, finance, development, marketing, legal • Develop sustainable business model 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop statewide education + awareness campaigns • Continue Create the Vote during elections 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create framework for policy platforms • Develop membership engagement strategy • Confirm current partnerships
Year 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop annual review for Executive Director + Board 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upgrade database + website 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess reach of campaigns – local/statewide • Consider hiring a contract lobbyist 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategically increase + engage membership • Identify + secure new partnerships
Year 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a new strategic plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider hiring part-time staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand current campaigns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop new partnerships