

Lake Region Arts Council
FY 2016-2017
Biennial Plan



Submitted by:
Maxine Adams
Executive Director
Submitted: May 12, 2015
Revised: July 29, 2015

**Lake Region Arts Council
LRAC FY 2016-2017 BIENNIAL PLAN**

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Lake Region Arts Council Biennial Plan FY 2016-2017

Introduction/General Information

Use of this Plan

This document has been prepared to meet the requirements of the Minnesota State Legislature to qualify the Lake Region Arts Council for receipt of a block allocation to be used in funding local arts development programs and activities. In addition, this two year plan is to provide a basis for decisions to be made by the Lake Region Arts Council regarding overall activities as a Regional Arts Council and to act as a guide against which progress can be measured as the Council strives to attain its stated goals in the next biennium (July 1, 2015 – June 30, 2017).

The FY 16-17 Biennial Plan has two different tracks. We will have separate plans for the base legislative appropriation and for the Arts and Cultural Heritage funds.

We hope that our Funders understand that these plans and budgets may change depending on action taken by the State Legislature and The McKnight Foundation. These plans and budgets may also change depending on future input from our constituents and the results of the joint strategic planning process with the Minnesota State Arts Board.

Mission Statement

“The mission of the Lake Region Arts Council is to encourage and support the vitality of the arts in west central Minnesota.”

Demographics of the Region

The Lake Region Arts Council serves the nine counties of: Becker, Clay, Douglas, Grant, Otter Tail, Pope, Stevens, Traverse and Wilkin in west central Minnesota. This area encompasses 8,073 square miles and has a total population of 224,636. The population density of 27.46 people per square mile characterizes the region as predominantly rural. The programs and services provided by the LRAC are especially important to the small town residents. Of the eighty-three communities in the region, only three have a population over 10,000. Seventy-three (88%) have 2,000 or fewer residents.

Because of the rural characteristics of the region, and the long distance between the two large communities, the LRAC is committed to providing access to quality arts events throughout the rural communities and support for artists at all stages of their careers.

History

Since its inception as an arm of the Rural Development Commission in 1977, the LRAC has been committed to providing access to quality arts opportunities and programming. In its early years, the LRAC offered only one grant program. In the most recent fiscal year, the LRAC provided eight grant programs to support the region's artists and arts organizations. LRAC also provides a monthly newsletter, technical assistance services, an artist registry data base, workshops for artists and arts organizations, two art galleries and meeting space for artists and arts organizations and a website.

Trends that Impact the Region

- Residents of the region cope with the reality of geographical remoteness, which inhibits the artists' opportunities to market their work. Other factors are adverse seasonal travel conditions, lack of public transportation and high travel costs.
- The region has a considerably lower family income than metropolitan areas, which impacts an artist's ability to provide for his or her family, and the range of arts events that can be offered.
- There is a scarcity of corporate and foundation presence and consequently, of sources of support within the region.
- The need for adequate performance and exhibit facilities continues.
- The region also encompasses a huge range demographics in that LRAC is home to the Fargo/Moorhead area, the largest metropolitan area between Minneapolis and Seattle and Traverse County, the least populated county by area in Minnesota and seven of the nine counties have a higher than average population over 65.

Biennial Planning Process and Needs Assessment Summary

Planning Process

The Planning Process for this Biennium has relied on several assessment tools, including the regional needs assessment survey done in 2012-13, on site interviews with grantees, input from our grantees final reports, workshop/networking evaluations and a LRAC Board self-assessment tool.

The LRAC dedicated time to the biennial planning process at several meetings from January 2015 to June of 2015. All eighteen members of the LRAC Council were involved in the planning process. Media releases were done, announcing a public review and final adoption of the FY 16-17 Biennial Plan to be held on April 28, 2015 at the LRAC offices in Fergus Falls.

In order to supply current data gathered from a larger sampling, in FY 2016-17 LRAC will conduct a needs assessment and make adjustments if necessary to our plan in FY 17. It is also LRAC's plan to do a needs assessment survey every two years to better coincide with the development of the biennial plan.

FY16-17 Needs Assessment Survey

Every four years The Lake Region Arts Council administers a Needs Assessment Survey to artists and arts organizations in the Counties of Clay, Becker, Douglas, Grants, Otter Tail, Pope, Stevens, Traverse and Wilkin Counties. The FY 16-17 Biennial Plan is based on the Needs Assessment Survey of 2012-13. The next survey will be taken in 2016-17.

The LRAC Needs Assessment Survey breakdown of statistics is as follows:

Total surveys sent=290 Organizations =138 Individual Artists=151
Total Response rate= 19%

Summary

The prioritized critical issues gleaned from all sources of feedback and the FY 16-17 needs surveys related to the base legislative appropriation were:

FY 16-17

- There is a stronger need for operational support than program support for arts organizations
- Need more participation and appreciation of art by general public
- Need more support for experimental art, new approaches to art
- Continue to offer workshops and maintain the LRAC Gallery, de-emphasize the LRAC newsletter and focus more on an online arts events calendar
- Explore how to facilitate partnering, networking and collaborations that support the arts
- Act as responsible stewards of public funds
- Respond pro-actively to increases in requests for grants and services

Biennial Planning Process and Needs Assessment Summary (cont.)

The prioritized critical issues gleaned from the focus groups and surveys related to the Arts and Cultural Heritage fund were:

FY 16 & 17

- LRAC should provide networking opportunities
- LRAC should provide workshop opportunities
- Public awareness and education about the arts is vital
- Increase accessibility to the arts
- Use technology to support the arts
- Encourage building partnerships and relationships
- Legacy Funding is important to support individual artists in the areas of access, education and cultural significance.
- There is an increased need for operational support.
- Need more participation and appreciation of art by general public.
- Need more support for experimental art, new approaches to art.

The LRAC dedicates its McKnight Foundation funding to the needs of individual artists, for which the critical issues were:

1. Need funding resources for artists.
2. Need marketing/advertising expertise and guidance.
3. Need space/opportunities to display art or performance space.

Our planning process has been split into two plans, one for the base legislative appropriation and a second for the Arts and Cultural Heritage fund.

Biennial Goals FY 2016-17, Base Legislative Appropriation:

Five goals with accompanying objectives were adopted to accomplish our mission and address the organizational and individual artist needs through our base legislative appropriation.

- I. Goal: Provide financial and technical support to artists.**
 - Objective A:** Provide Career Development, Artist Quick Start and Fellowship grants to individual artists.
 - Objective B:** Offer artist registry, Art Headlines newsletter, arts calendar, resource library, LRAC Gallery, LRAC website and workshops for artists.
 - Objective C:** Increase regional awareness of LRAC grants and services.

- II. Goal: Provide financial and technical support to organizations.**
 - Objective A:** Offer Project and Operating Support grants to organizations.
 - Objective B:** Offer artist registry, Art Headlines newsletter, arts calendar, resource library, LRAC website and workshops for organizations.
 - Objective C:** Increase regional awareness of LRAC grants and services.

- III. Goal: Maintain strong communication between LRAC and the MN Legislature.**
 - Objective A:** Keep region's Legislators informed about current activities and issues.
 - Objective B:** Support Arts Advocacy Day.
 - Objective C:** Maintain memberships in Minnesota Citizens for the Arts and Americans for the Arts.

- IV. Goal: Act as responsible stewards of public funds.**
 - Objective A:** In FY 16-17, work with our arts delivery partners to seek input on our strategic plan for best use of the base appropriation funding, based on feedback from the state's citizens.
 - Objective B:** Develop methods to increase our system's level of accountability, including but not limited to; peer review, checks and balances and public involvement.
 - Objective C:** Maintain a strong and highly functional Board of Directors.

Biennial Goals FY 2016-17, Arts and Cultural Heritage fund:

Six goals with accompanying objectives were adopted to accomplish our mission and address the organizational and individual artist needs through our Arts and Cultural Heritage fund.

I. Goal: Increase Access to the Arts by supporting Minnesota artists and arts organizations in creating, producing, and presenting high-quality arts activities; to overcome barriers to accessing high-quality arts activities; and to instill the arts into the community and public life in this state.

Objective A: Provide financial support to eligible individual artists and organizations for activities that support access to the arts.

II. Goal: Increase Art Education by supporting lifelong learning and appreciation of the arts, including but not exclusive to K-12 activities.

Objective A: Provide financial support to eligible individual artists and organizations for activities that support lifelong Arts Education.

III. Goal: Increase Arts & Cultural Heritage activities by supporting events and activities that represent the diverse ethnic and cultural arts traditions, including folk and traditional artists and art organizations, represented in this state.

Objective A: Provide financial support to eligible individual artists and organizations for activities that support arts and cultural heritage.

IV. Goal: Provide Services and Support to individuals and organizations that provide arts activities in our region.

Objective A: Provide Publicity/Public Awareness services to support and increase the visibility and understanding of the arts.

Objective B: Provide networking opportunities to share best practices and build relationships.

Objective C: Provide workshops to increase knowledge and expertise of individual artists and organizations.

Objective D: Provide individualized support through one on one meetings with LRAC staff to explore how to best utilize Arts & Cultural Heritage funds.

Objective E: Provide "LRAC Arts Organizational Development Program: From Surviving to Thriving", focused on building capacity in the areas of financial management, strategic planning, evaluation, publicity and board leadership.

Objective F: LRAC will provide an "Artist Work Sample Improvement Program" program designed to improve artists' ability to apply for and receive grants and enter juried competitions.

V. Goal: Achieve Accountability of Arts and Culture Fund by acting as responsible stewards of public funds.

Objective A: Work with our arts delivery partners to develop and refine a strategic plan for best use of the amendment funding, based on feedback from the state's citizens.

Objective B: Develop methods to increase our system's level of accountability, including but not limited to: peer review, checks and balances and public involvement.

Objective C: Maintain a strong and highly functional Board of Directors.

Outcome Evaluation Base Legislative Appropriation:

- I. Goal: Provide financial and technical support to artists.**
- II. Goal: Provide financial and technical support to organizations.**
 - A. In FY 16 and FY 17 of those receiving grants and services from the LRAC, 75% will indicate that their project was artistically successful, reached the target constituency and had community impact. This will be measured by the final reports.
- III. Goal: Maintain strong communication between LRAC and the MN Legislature.**
 - A. In FY 16-17 there will be at least 5 staff and constituent interactions with each of the LRAC legislators. This will be measured by letters, emails and phone calls from staff and constituents, attendance at Arts Advocacy Day and responses to calls for action from Minnesota Citizens for the Arts.
- IV. Goal: Act as responsible stewards of public funds.**
 - A. In FY 16-17, 75% of constituents will signify a satisfaction level of acceptable to superior when asked if the LRAC has acted as responsible stewards of the public funds they administer. This will be measured by a constituent survey.

Outcome Evaluation

Arts and Cultural Heritage fund:

I. Goal: Increase Access to the Arts by supporting Minnesota artists and arts organizations in creating, producing, and presenting high-quality arts activities; to overcome barriers to accessing high-quality arts activities; and to instill the arts into the community and public life in this state.

II. Goal: Increase Art Education by supporting lifelong learning and appreciation of the arts, including but not exclusive to K-12 activities.

III. Goal: Increase Arts & Cultural Heritage activities by supporting events and activities that represent the diverse ethnic and cultural arts traditions, including folk and traditional artists and art organizations, represented in this state.

For Goals I, II, III:

A. In FY 16-17 of those receiving grants and services from the LRAC, 75% will indicate that their project was artistically successful, reached the target constituency and had community impact. This will be measured by the final reports.

IV. Goal: Provide Services and Support to individuals and organizations that provide arts activities in our region.

A. In FY 16-17 the LRAC will provide publicity/public awareness services for a minimum of 15 Arts and Cultural Heritage grant recipients per year. This will result in and increased awareness of the arts in the LRAC region. This will be measured by staff tracking of publicity releases.

B. In FY 16-17 LRAC will provide resources for arts organizations and artists to attend a minimum of 2 networking opportunities, through scholarships or by holding networking meetings, with 75% attendees responding that they were impacted favorable. This will be measured by an exit survey.

C. In FY 16-17 LRAC will provide resources for arts organizations and artists to attend a minimum of 2 workshop opportunities, through scholarships or by holding workshops, with 75% attendees responding that they were impacted favorable. This will be measured by an exit survey.

D. In FY16-17 there will be a minimum of 20 individual support meetings held with constituents interested in the Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund.

E. In FY 16-FY 17 at least 75% of the arts organizations participating in the "LRAC Arts Organizational Development Program: From Surviving to Thriving", will report an increase in their ability to successfully manage their organizations. This will be measured by a participation satisfaction survey.

F. In FY 16-17 at least 75% of the artists that participate in the "Artist Work Sample Improvement Program" will report an increase in the quality of their work samples.

V. Goal: Achieve Accountability of Arts and Culture Fund by acting as responsible stewards of public funds.

A. In FY 16-17, 75% of constituents will signify a satisfaction level of acceptable to superior when asked if the LRAC has acted as responsible stewards of the public funds they administer. This will be measured by a constituent survey.

Programs and Services/Base Legislative Appropriation

For FY 2016-17 the Lake Region Arts Council intends to maintain all of our current base legislative funded programs and services.

The LRAC programs and services for our base legislative appropriations are summarized below. LRAC staff will provide grant writing workshops prior to each grant round. Information regarding the review criteria, process for evaluating grant requests, and eligibility requirements is included in the guidelines for each program. All of the LRAC programs and services address the biennial goals.

Project Grant Program:

Applicants may request up to \$3,000 per grant request with a maximum of \$5,000 funding annually. The guidelines and application form (Attachments A and B) are enclosed. There are two grant rounds per year. Final reports from the grant recipients are due 60 days after completion of the project. This program is funded by the base appropriation.

Operating Support Grant Program:

Eligible organizations may request up to a maximum of 10% of their annual expenses, not to exceed \$6,000. Guidelines and application forms are on file. There is one grant round per year. Final reports from the grant recipients are due in the spring of the year following the year of funding. This program is funded by the base appropriation and the Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund.

Individual Artist Quick Start Grant Program:

Individual artists may request up to \$750 for such things as equipment, attending workshops, traveling to study with a master artist, or purchasing supplies. Guidelines and application forms are on file. There is one grant round per year. Applications are reviewed by the LRAC Board. Final reports from the recipients are due 30 days after completion. The McKnight Foundation funds this program.

Career Development Grant Program:

Individual artists may request up to \$1,200 to develop their artistic careers. Guidelines and application forms are on file. There is one grant round per year. Final reports from the recipients are due 60 days after completion. The McKnight Foundation funds this program.

Fellowship Grant Program:

The purpose of this program is to recognize, reward, and encourage outstanding individual artists in the region. Applicants may request \$5000 to support a broad range of study or activities that contribute to their career as an artist. Guidelines and application forms are on file. The McKnight Foundation funds this program.

Artist Mentor Grant Program:

The Artist Mentor Program provides support to up to 16 students in grades 9-11. Each student receives a \$50 stipend and each mentor receives a \$600 mentoring fee. The Artist Mentor Program supplements arts education programs in our region's high schools by providing selected students the opportunity to study their chosen art with a practicing, professional artist. The goals are to enhance the student's artistic creativity and skill and to promote personal growth. The program also helps qualified artist in the area by employing them as mentors. Guidelines and application forms are on file. This program is funded by the base appropriation and the Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund.

Exhibit Gallery & Meeting Room:

The LRAC Gallery, established in July 1999 and funded by The McKnight Foundation, continues to provide presentation opportunities in the region for both visual and performing artists. The Gallery space is being doubled in FY10 from 500 square feet to a little over 1,100 square feet. The Gallery is located in the historic River Inn building in downtown Fergus Falls. Since our gallery does not charge a commission fee to the exhibitor, all the income from the sale goes directly to the artist. Besides the visual arts, we have presented the work of performing artists via literary readings and live musical performances. The expanded Gallery will also be used for workshop space and meeting space.

Individual Artist Professional Development Workshops:

The LRAC provides one workshop per biennium to strengthen the professionalism and marketing abilities of regional artists.

Organizational Workshops:

Historically, the LRAC has provided one nonprofit organizational workshop per biennium to build and strengthen the community arts organizations in the region. In addition, grant writing workshops are held prior to each LRAC grant round.

Artist Registry:

The LRAC maintains a computerized registry of all artists in the region who wish to be listed. It is used to put artists in touch with grant, exhibit and job opportunities. It is updated on an ongoing basis.

Technical Assistance:

Site visits, resource information and consultant assistance is provided free of charge by the LRAC staff to arts organizations and individual artists.

Web Site:

The LRAC website can be found at www.lrac4.org. The website provides online grant forms, expanded information about LRAC services, an arts calendar and access to the Art Headline newsletter.

Programs and Services/Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund

The LRAC programs and services for our Arts and Cultural Heritage funds are summarized below. The Arts and Cultural Heritage grant guidelines and application forms are on file.

Arts Access grants: LRAC will provide funding to support Minnesota artists and arts organizations in creating, producing, and presenting high-quality arts activities; to overcome barriers to accessing high-quality arts activities; and to instill the arts into the community and public life in this state.

Arts Education grants: LRAC will provide funding to support lifelong learning and appreciation of the arts, including but not exclusive to K-12 activities.

Arts & Cultural Heritage grants: LRAC will provide funding to support events and activities that represent the diverse ethnic and cultural arts traditions, including folk and traditional artists and art organizations, represented in this state.

LRAC Arts Legacy Grants for Local Governments: LRAC will provide grants for Local Governments to recognize county, city and township governments that support the arts and to encourage local government leaders to use the arts to build healthy communities. To be eligible, the local government must include an Arts Advisory Committee as part of their permanent governing structure. By changing the structure of local government, the grants will increase the likelihood that the cities will continue to include the Arts as part of their community planning process. The awards are for \$10,000 per year for a limit of two consecutive years. Proposals for Arts Legacy Grants for Local Governments will be reviewed at the November & April LRAC Board meetings.

LRAC Arts Organization "LRAC Arts Organizational Development Program: From Surviving to Thriving". LRAC will provide a program for arts organizations focused on helping to build capacity in the areas of financial management, strategic planning, evaluation, publicity and board leadership. This program is an effort by LRAC to address long term viability of regional arts organizations. Modelling after the Bush Foundation's successful Cohort approach to program development, participating organizations will be provided a financial incentive for participating and will provide feedback to LRAC over a series of cohort meetings, building the program from the ground up, with ample input from our arts organizational partners. FY 16 will be spent in gathering input from regional arts organizations about their needs regarding capacity building. FY 17 will see implementation of this cooperatively designed plan.

LRAC Artist "Work Sample Improvement Program": LRAC will provide the opportunity to individual artists to improve their work sample photographs through having their art work photographed by a professional photographer; attend classes on how to photograph their own art work and to attend workshops on how to develop a promotional tool kit. Poor quality work samples have been identified as a significant barrier for artists applying to opportunities outside the region. Purpose of this project is for artists to increase their chances of grant funding and acceptance into juried exhibits/opportunities outside our region by increasing the quality of their work samples. This project will be co-funded by the Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund and The McKnight Foundation.

LRAC Services and Support: LRAC will provide Publicity/Public Awareness support to increase the visibility and understanding of the arts. LRAC has invested in building a strong communication program including social media. LRAC has a Regional Media Coordinator and through his efforts we have a Facebook presence that connects with 4,800 subscribers. Our Facebook is so well known that we have arts events specifically asking us to post on our page on their behalf. In FY16-17 we will use our Facebook to promote local arts events and open up the opportunity for artists and arts organizations to use our Facebook page to promote their activities with paid “boosts”, thus increasing their reach. Payment is the responsibility of the arts organization. We also use our Facebook page to provide education about the importance of the arts. At least two times a week we post an arts educational post. LRAC also provides networking opportunities to share best practices and build relationships, workshops to increase knowledge and expertise of individual artists and organizations, and individualized support through one on one meetings with LRAC staff to explore how to use best Arts & Cultural Heritage funds.

Organizational Structure

The Lake Region Arts Council had its inception as an arm of the Rural Development Commission in 1977. The Lake Region Arts Council (LRAC) was then incorporated June 7, 1982 under the provisions of Chapter 317 of Minnesota Statutes, known as the Minnesota Non-Profit Corporation Act. The LRAC was established to carry on the arts programs and services of the West Central Regional Development Commission, which functioned from June 9, 1981 until the RDC was dissolved in June of 1982.

The LRAC has been determined exempt from federal income tax under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. It is exempt from State of Minnesota taxes as well under the provisions of Section 297A.25, Subdivision 1 (p) of the Minnesota Sales and Use Tax Law.

Bylaws of the Lake Region Arts Council were adopted July 20, 1982. The most recent amendments to the Bylaws were made in April, 2015. A copy of those Bylaws is on file with the MSAB office.

The membership of the LRAC is composed of two representatives from each of the nine counties in the region. Each Council member may serve no more than two consecutive three-year terms. The membership nomination process, duties and election of officers are all defined in the Bylaws. Qualifications of prospective LRAC Directors are listed on the nomination form and are on file.

Current members on the LRAC represent a broad cross-section of occupations, arts involvement, expertise and experience. Their qualifications are on file. The variety of art disciplines and arts backgrounds exhibited assures balanced, grass roots consideration of all arts programming and services conducted by the Lake Region Arts Council.

The LRAC staff is currently comprised of three people. Maxine Adams is the Executive Director. Her résumé is on file. Connie Payson is the Executive Assistant and Elizabeth Ostenson is the Grants Manager. Staff job descriptions are on file.

Budget

The budgets will be reviewed and revised in FY16 and FY17 based on funding decided on in the FY 15-16 Legislative sessions. The budgets are submitted separately as Excel workbooks.