

CRAFTING THE FUTURE OF THE ARTS IN THE SOUTH

A STRATEGIC PLAN FOR 2010-2016

SOUTH ARTS

South Arts (formerly the Southern Arts Federation), a nonprofit regional arts organization, was founded in 1975 to build on the South's unique heritage and enhance the public value of the arts. South Arts' work responds to the arts environment and cultural trends with a regional perspective. South Arts offers an annual portfolio of activities designed to address arts-related issues important to our region and to link the South with the nation and the world through the arts.

The organization works in partnership with the nine state arts agencies of Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina and Tennessee. South Arts is funded by the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), foundations, corporations, individuals and member states.

SOUTH ARTS

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BUILDING A BETTER SOUTH THROUGH THE ARTS

The arts are integral to the robust economic, social, cultural and educational vitality of the South. That belief guides the activities of South Arts, a nonprofit regional arts organization with a mission to:

- Advance excellence in the arts
- Connect the arts to key state and national policies
- Nurture a vibrant quality of life

In 2009, with 35 years of past success and a new decade approaching, South Arts undertook a comprehensive strategic planning process to evaluate its direction and establish goals for the next several years. The resulting Strategic Plan will serve as an active planning and evaluation tool that will guide the organization's annual portfolio of activities. With this tool, South Arts can be more nimble and responsive to opportunities while maintaining a targeted focus on long-term goals.



Alternate formats of this publication may be obtained by contacting South Arts at 404-874-7244.



AT THE HEART OF THE SOUTH ARTS STRATEGIC PLAN ARE FIVE INTERRELATED STRATEGIC GOALS. EACH GOAL IS SUPPORTED BY SPECIFIC STRATEGIES.

GOAL 1

THE ARTS POSITIVELY IMPACT REGIONAL ISSUES.

South Arts is uniquely suited to identifying regional needs and designing programs and services to help build and sustain the arts. By becoming an advocate for high priority focus areas – what we call a Smart Agenda – South Arts can assume a leadership role in regional policy discussions and decision-making.

- Identify relevant cultural, educational, political, social and economic issues
- Develop new broad-scale initiatives that contribute to and are recognized as important to the health and vitality of the region

GOAL 2

DIALOGUE AND COLLECTIVE ACTION WITH STRATEGIC ALLIES BRINGS ABOUT PROGRESS ON KEY AGENDA ISSUES.

The power of convening lies in the convergence of setting the agenda; drawing together those with valuable information, perspective and influence; and using gatherings – in-person and virtual – to provide opportunities for networking, dialogue, learning and action to address issues.

The success of the South Arts Strategic Plan will rest in large part on strategic alliances with an expanding circle of public and private entities. Three key groups of allies are our member State Arts Agencies, the National Endowment for the Arts, and public and private leadership organizations in the region. The need for mutually beneficial strategic partnerships and alliances is evident in each of the goals and will lead to a stronger South Arts and a stronger region.

- Organize conferences, summits, workshops and seminars to enlist and broaden the constituency on agenda issues
- Increase knowledge and effectiveness within the regional arts constituency

GOAL 3

PERTINENT INFORMATION AND RESEARCH IS MORE ACCESSIBLE AND USABLE TO THE REGION.

Those working in the arts will be strengthened by having greater ability to make information-based decisions, and will be able to learn through demonstration projects, models and innovation. South Arts can play a key role by filtering and contextualizing existing and new information with a regional and an arts perspective. Ready access to data and analysis related to arts education, economic trends and creative economies, arts participation, social engagement, and the use of social media is particularly crucial in advocating for the arts.

- Make information accessible to inform decisions and actions
- Understand and improve the region's standing in key agenda areas
- Initiate research to develop new knowledge
- Provide and encourage the use of best practices to arts constituents to strengthen their work

GOAL 4

INCREASED OPPORTUNITIES AND RESOURCES EXIST TO EXTEND THE ARTS OF THE SOUTH WITHIN AND BEYOND THE REGIONAL BORDERS, AND TO ATTRACT THE ARTS OF THE WORLD TO THE SOUTH.

As a regional arts organization we have a unique opportunity to make visible the authentic, comprehensive nature of southern arts. Simultaneously, those in our region should have the chance to experience the best of American and world culture in their own communities, in ways that build deeper understanding of others and of the art form.

- Highlight and promote the full range and diversity of artistic expression, both traditional and new/contemporary, in the region
- Increase opportunities and resources from public and private sources
- Deliver timely and relevant arts programs and services that meet the needs of the region
- Increase national and international markets for the arts of the region
- Make arts from across the country and around the world accessible to the people of the South

GOAL 5

EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE PRACTICES ENSURE OUR ORGANIZATION'S STABILITY.

South Arts has strong federal and state partners, but these partnerships have created a high level of dependence on public funding. We have a responsibility to expand our partnership base, both to attract investment by a broader range of public and private entities and to expand our communications and service networks.

- Sustain an effective staff and board to be successful in carrying out this strategic plan
- Develop a financial master plan
- Strengthen communications through a multi-year master plan
- Ensure that South Arts provides value and benefit for its member state arts agencies
- Ensure accountability and guide decision-making through evaluation and reflection

