



**A Series of Focus Groups To
Identify Issues and Needs Regarding
Services of the North Dakota Council on the Arts (NDCA)**

Presented to:

The North Dakota Council on the Arts

A focus group is "a carefully planned discussion designed to obtain perceptions on a defined area of interest in a permissive, non-threatening environment. It is conducted with approximately seven to ten people by a skilled interviewer. The discussion is comfortable and often enjoyable for the participants as they share their ideas and perceptions. Group members influence each other by responding to ideas and comments in the discussion."¹

Submitted by The Consensus Council, Inc.

October 31, 2012

Final Report

¹ Richard A. Krueger, *Focus Groups: A practical guide for Applied Research*, 1988, page number unknown.

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North Dakota Council on the Arts Focus Group Process

Abstract

Purpose and Collaborative Effort: The primary purpose of this initiative was to determine the community view of the NDCA, to determine what needs are met and unmet and to inform strategic planning for the future. A secondary purpose was to meet with the NDCA Board of Directors for input on strategic plan progress and future direction.

Focus Group Process: The Consensus Council provided focus group planning, facilitation and documentation services for a series of eight (8) meetings to assist the NDCA in identifying issues and concerns related to the promotion, preservation and perpetuation of the arts in North Dakota. Services included identification of stakeholders and meeting participants, pre-meeting planning, on-site meeting facilitation and follow-up documentation. Seven of the eight meetings consisted of focus groups designed to elicit answers to predetermined questions. While all focus groups addressed some aspect of arts in education, one focus group was specifically designed to respond to detailed questions about arts in education. One meeting was held with the NDCA Board of Directors for strategic planning purposes.

Participants in the planning process included Jan Webb, Executive Director of the NDCA, and the Consensus Council. The team discussed, identified and outlined the various elements of the focus group process:

Focus Group Participants - Target Populations

- Planning Group Roles and Responsibilities
- Sample Documents
- Participant Invitations

Design of Agenda

- General Agenda and Script
- Focus Group Questions
- Participant Guidelines
- Demographic Questions

Focus Group Meetings

- Dates
- Locations/Venues
- Arrangements, food, beverages

The focus groups were then conducted/facilitated by staff of the Consensus Council, Inc. as follows:

- NDCA Board of Directors Meeting in Jamestown 8.2.12
- Bismarck Focus Group 8.13.12 (Arts in Education focus)
- Turtle Mountain Focus Group 8.15.12 (Native American focus)
- Dickinson Focus Group 8.20.12 (Community focus)
- Fargo Focus Groups (2) 8.22.12 (Community Focus)
- Williston Focus Group 10.15.12 (Community Focus)
- Minot Focus Group 10.15.12 (Community Focus)
- Grand Forks Focus Group 10.16.12 (Community Focus)

The information gathered at each focus group session was transcribed, sorted by question and categorized. A similar process was used regarding collection of the demographic information.

A great deal of information and material was generated and gathered in the process of developing and conducting the focus groups. Although it is important for the client (NDCA) to have access to all of that material to make a fair and valid appraisal of the responses and use it effectively in their planning process, the Consensus Council staff have developed the following summary which is intended to provide more of a "snapshot" presentation of the responses. Please note that this summary is not intended to take the place of a careful review of the specific data and information contained in the addendums and it is assumed by the Consensus Council staff that the addendums will be used as direct references. As in the case of any summary, a degree of license has been assumed by the author based on the need for brevity and their direct involvement and interactions with the participants of the various groups.

Facilitator Observations:

The following are general and specific observations made by the facilitator. They are included in this summary as a mechanism for identifying issues or concerns that may have affected the overall process and results and may be issues that deserve some additional consideration in the future planning process. The observations are not priorities and do not represent a systematic process - they are subjective by nature - and should be considered in that context.

1. Timing: The overall process was thoughtfully planned. While advance notice was given, additional time may have been beneficial in recruiting and inviting participants leading to a greater level of involvement by additional interested parties.
2. Attendance: Initially, it had been hoped that 10 to 12 participants would ultimately attend each focus group. While some groups did not have quite that many participants, the facilitator believes that the information gathered from those who actually attended is extensive and comprehensive, better attendance

may have resulted in an even broader response and more confidence that "all" of the concerns were identified.

3. **Sharing:** The participants demonstrated an open, willing and trusting attitude. They generally expressed a desire to provide the information being sought freely and shared with the goal that such information be used to potentially provide, improve services of the NDCA.
4. **Peer-to-peer Contact:** The facilitators noted, at every meeting, that participants were eager and willing to provide information and assistance to their peers. This was evidenced during and after the meetings when individuals who had knowledge of an issue or resource that was discussed during the meeting made direct, one-to-one contact with other participants who had questions or needed access to resources.
5. **Appreciation:** The facilitators noted a sincere appreciation from the participants in being given an opportunity to provide input. Many noted, as well, their gratitude for the NDCA staff and, in particular, Executive Director Jan Webb.

General Focus Group Response Trends and Facilitator Recommendations:

Consensus Council Executive Director Rose Stoller facilitated all focus groups. The following recommendations are based on the direct involvement with focus group participants, review of responses individually and in the aggregate and subjective evaluative opinion by Consensus Council staff. Based on this process, the following response trends and recommendations are offered in each question area.

What do you know about the NDCA? How have you worked with NDCA or used their resources?

While there was only one respondent who knew nothing about the NDCA, the majority of respondents were very familiar with their work. The NDCA is most recognized for their grant funding to programs in the community but are also know to be a rich source of information and resources. Many participants noted that they are grant recipients of the NDCA, funding which is much needed and greatly appreciated. Other often mentioned are the annual conference, professional development opportunities; work with tribal arts and the helpful staff at the NDCA.

These responses present an opportunity for the NDCA to highlight other areas of their work to communities statewide. Since most respondents readily acknowledged the grants that are available, they may be missing other opportunities the NDCA offers.

What, aside from grants, could the NDCA do for you, your community? What are your most immediate and important needs?

There were numerous comments about the NDCA assisting with a regional approach to arts promotion. That is, the NDCA could serve as a convener regionally to encourage

collaborative work in many substantive areas. It was often noted that people do not have/make enough time to meet with each other; the NDCA could facilitate that process. Particular areas of need expressed include marketing and promotion, arts education, economic impact, fundraising and Board development. The need to educate the North Dakota citizenry about the value of art, and the improved quality of life art brings was also raised in most communities. Many arts organizations are non-profit in nature (small staff, modest salaries) and noted that issues including Board development, fundraising, business and strategic planning and managing volunteers continues to take a lot of time and learning.

These responses present an opportunity for the NDCA to take a lead role is providing the infrastructure and support that regional arts programs/communities need. By convening regularly and sharing resources, arts organizations would begin to embrace the power of shared activities and strength. The responses also suggest that there is merit in supporting the need for professional marketing and promotion, through a statewide or regional avenue. The NDCA might consider contracting with a media advisor to assist the non-profits in their efforts. The NDCA might also consider developing/offering some training in the area of non-profit management.

What best practices are you aware of that you would like to replicate? What would you change about the current arts work you are doing?

The responses to this question ranged from specific events (Fargo Art Crawl, New Orleans Cork & Canvas, Pekin Art Festival) to broad ideas like involving more children in the arts (high visibility) or starting an Icelandic Arts program. In general, respondents are looking for replicable ideas and events that would be financially successful, draw a crowd and support collaboration among organizations. There were several mentions of the Minnesota Legacy Fund for Art that provides ongoing sustainable funding for community arts programs.

This information presents an opportunity for creating a similar “legacy-type” fund in North Dakota, given the surplus of resources now available. Such funding will assist the NDCA in their ability to develop “great ideas” grants, give more support to replication of proven and promising events and to support regional efforts at collaboration and education. In addition, best practices can be a feature of annual conference planning and/or regional planning.

Do you think that most people in North Dakota know about the importance of the arts? What are new and unique ways to create more visibility for arts in the state?

Respondents provided a resounding “no” in response to this question, with the exception of some Fargo residents who credit the City of Fargo for raising awareness on the importance of arts to life, as a result of art rising to #3 on a Fargo community survey of important community amenities. Repeatedly, the lack of knowledge relative to the

economic impact and revenue generation of the arts for communities and the state were mentioned. A focus on this impact, along with recognition of the rich history and heritage of the arts, may be appealing to new supporters. In western North Dakota, it was noted that the population is growing at a fast pace, bringing greater cultural diversity to the region. This diversity presents opportunities to learn, engage people and celebrate new cultural arts with the broader community.

Opportunity is ripe for the NDCA to consider an updated report on the economic impact of the arts in North Dakota. Shared with advocates and policymakers, such a report would elevate the need for additional funding opportunities to sustain and grow the arts in the state. In addition, the NDCA should make time for the staff, particularly for the Executive Director (already a high visibility leader) to present this information to a variety of groups statewide for education purposes. Preparation of such a presentation could also be handed off to local/regional groups to share in their personal and professional circles.

Are you aware of successful art-in-education programs in ND schools? Please describe.

There was concern expressed by the majority of respondents about schools eliminating arts programs from their curricula. The exception appears to be in Fargo where art is taught in all schools. There are several communities who have no art for elementary aged students, a time when students can be most effectively influenced. Good examples included the Fargo Creative Arts Studio, ND Museum of Art Rural Art Initiative, SALT and Poetry Out Loud. It was agreed that the positive impact of the arts on students' future success is not widely recognized.

These responses present an opportunity for the NDCA to establish baseline data and information about the impact of the arts on students, grades, test scores, college entrance and professional success. Such information would prove valuable in educating the public about this important connection. In time, arts organizations could use it to tell their stories/promote their work and policymakers could use it to make funding decisions.

What training needs do you have? If the NDCA offered training in your area, what would be the best kind of event – the best attended?

There were mixed responses to this question. However, the most frequently mentioned area is that of marketing and promotion for artists and arts organizations. In addition, as previously mentioned, respondents expressed an urgent need for non-profit training including grant seeking and grant writing, strategic and business planning, training for Boards of Directors and staff, leadership skill development, fundraising, legislative advocacy, use of social media, dealing with IRS requirements for non-profits and volunteer recruitment and management. Specific mention was made of having regional conferences rather than always convening in Bismarck. The NDCA was also asked to

explore revising the “budget page” for grant proposals (it is described as difficult and cumbersome) and to share stellar proposals (that were funded) as a tool for applicants to replicate.

Opportunities abound for the NDCA to strategize these many needs into an annual, or biennial training program or schedule. Previously mentioned was the need for regional collaboration among people/programs and training may be the needed nudge to help this collaboration materialize. Also, the NDCA might consider the use of seasoned consultants who could address some of the specific issues for non-profits.

What is the best way for the NDCA to reach you?

This question prompted a broad array of answers including postal mail, Email, E-newsletters (not too long), paper newsletters, postcards, newspapers, community calendars, social media (mostly Facebook), convening’s and face-to-face meetings, through the NDCA website and through paper mailings (posters, brochures, invitations) about specific events. There is some confusion about the differences between the paper newsletters published by the NDCA in comparison to the E-newsletter. Respondents also noted that it is a challenge to communicate with all generations across the age spectrum – people of different ages need/want different communication platforms.

Best practices in communication are a challenge for many groups and organizations. The NDCA might consider a way to clarify that the paper newsletter is not the same content as E-newsletters to assure better readership. Generally, the NDCA does a fine job of communication in various formats for various audiences. Groups and organizations will need to continue to keep abreast of technology changes as they occur, while not excluding those people who prefer other communications.

Arts in Education Focus Group Response Trends and Facilitator Recommendations:

How would you rate the depth, reach and quality of arts education in North Dakota?

While there were some good examples given, most participants felt that the overall reach and quality is low and they raised concern about the lack of art education in schools, as many schools have dropped art from their curriculum. Many respondents noted that federal programs like No Child Left Behind and the requirements of meeting Adequate Yearly Progress have forced classroom teachers to abandon creative arts. These schools and teachers are requesting that local Arts Councils fill this need. There is a need to integrate arts into other areas of curriculum and it was suggested that a partnership with STEM might be a good avenue. It was noted that younger teachers appear to be more open to arts education.

The NDCA might consider forming alliances and convening those teachers (young or not) to share their experiences and gain strength and knowledge from each other. They

might also serve as ambassadors to other schools considering arts education programs. This peer-to-peer model might also be used to impact policymakers and/or statewide associations like the ND School Boards Association, about the importance and impact of the arts on students.

Are there differences in arts education in rural/urban communities?

Respondents noted that some barriers exist that prevents successful grant projects, noting that the NDCA structure for applications can be rigid. It was also stated that the Teacher Incentive Grants make it hard for applicants to fit the guidelines. While urban communities tend to have more resources available to them for students and teachers, it was agreed that all people – whether rural or urban – desire art in their community and school. In a rural community, an artist in residence program can become a community wide endeavor (big fish in a small pond). There were questions about the arts fitting into the eligibility for STEM grants.

The NDCA might consider reviewing the grant application process to determine where/whether there is room to make it easier for applicants to apply. It might be good to consider adding a few of the process “critics” to the discussion to get their views. The NDCA might also consider exploring a partnership with the STEM program that could better integrate arts into their efforts (STEAM).

How are we doing with local arts organizations?

Responses indicate that the reach is good and that more integration is happening. Not all teachers are aware of the NDCA and a big announcement about multiple arts groups receiving grants could garner good interest by teachers, and the media. This would also serve to raise the visibility for the NDCA in the public’s eye.

The NDCA has an opportunity to reach larger numbers of teachers to get them interested in the arts. A training event for classroom teachers wanting to learn more about arts education might be a sound idea, if there were novel ideas about how arts education can help to meet standards in schools.

How have the arts impacted education in North Dakota?

Many positive impacts were noted by mentioning successful efforts like the Keep ND Clean contest, an annual “Art Day” in a school in an impoverished neighborhood, high participation in music (Band Day, Strolling Strings), Poetry Out Loud and more bands developing in school systems. It was also noted that there are many newcomers to North Dakota that are interested in art experiences.

The NDCA may wish to take a lead role in collecting information regarding the cultural diversity North Dakota is experiencing. This could lead to the development of

collaborative, community events to engage the general public to learn new art and culture – and for the newcomers to demonstrate their skills. Cinco de Mayo in Williston!

How do the current NDCA Arts in Education programs meet the diverse needs of schools and communities in North Dakota and how can they improve?

Respondents indicated that grants are used to bring artists into schools and that's a good thing. However, sometimes it is difficult to find an outside financial match to meet the requirements. It was also noted that many teachers don't have the time to do grant writing and are reluctant to try. The nature of grants is that they are temporary; we need to build partnerships with grants so they sustain. The idea of a traveling show or an art bus was also mentioned as a way to bring the art to the schools.

The NDCA might consider convening a small group of teachers, as discussed above, to review the application process and help to improve it. They might also then be interested in becoming mentors to first-time applicants.

What are the strengths and weaknesses of the NDCA?

The strengths mentioned are those of a strong, competent staff that provides good outreach, serves as a sound resource for questions and information and are passionate about their work. They work hard to get the grant money out into the communities. They could use more funding. They find and promote "gems" of artists from the state and help deliver economic impact statements. NDCA needs to be seen as more than just a grant maker; they need to highlight other programs, give people a better idea of what NDCA can do. They could join STEM. NDCA needs to help supporters to understand the funding issues, teach us about advocacy and help us in making contact with policymakers.

The NDCA may wish to explore partnership opportunities with STEM as a beginning step to achieving greater integration of arts in education. NDCA may also want to achieve higher visibility through an advertising or public service announcement campaign that falls with state agency guidelines. Finally, the NDCA may wish to contract with someone who is in a position to teach legislative advocacy to interested participants in the arts community.

What are the strengths and weaknesses of the NDCA grant application process and how could we improve?

There appears to be a lack of clarity about the NDCA grants processes, based on the responses. There was mention of redundant questions, guidelines for partnerships that are inflexible and only one way (online) to submit proposals.

NDCA should communicate readily and repeatedly about the service offered of reviewing grant proposals prior to final submission. This is a great opportunity for applicants (and is not often afforded by funders) and may relieve some of the anxiety of applicants. All processes should be continually reviewed and streamlined to prevent redundancy and NDCA should revisit the partnership requirements to determine if changes might be needed.

What should NDCA be, in addition to a funder?

Respondents believe that the NDCA should be the “go to” place for information, resources, advocacy, training and professional development. The NDCA staff should be used as experts on art, economic impact, and funding and curriculum development for arts in education.

This question was wide open and received a lot of “big advise” from the respondents. While the NDCA cannot be all things to all people, it may be worth considering the priorities noted in these responses. With a small staff, it is wise to assure that delegation is properly done, with supporting organizations. The NDCA gives substantial support to ARTS ND and should channel concerns from the respondents about advocacy, public policy, culture pulse, and other issues their way for assistance.

Demographic Totals

By Gender:

21 Males, 40 females

By Age:

30 years and younger: 4

Age 31-40: 5

Age 41-50: 5

Age 51-60: 26

Ages 61-70: 17

Ages 71 or older: 2

Old: 1

Near retirement: 1

Towns Represented

In North Dakota:

Bismarck

Belcourt

Bottineau

Burlington

Cando

Fargo

Grand Forks

Jamestown

Langdon

Minot

Rolette

Rugby

Velva

Williston

In Minnesota:

East Grand Forks

Hawley

Moorhead

Thief River Falls

Comprehensive Focus Group Reports, by Date Completed

North Dakota Council on the Arts (NDCA) Report on Information from the Focus Group Held 8/13/12 at the ND Tourism Office Bismarck, North Dakota

How would you rate the depth/reach and quality of arts education in ND?

- Very low and going lower – public schools are cutting arts programs
- Teachers need training for students who are getting art in only one class – they need to understand what art is
- The local arts councils are getting more requests to bring artists into schools
- Regarding depth, we are barely scratching the surface for students
- Teachers are confused about “art” implementation
- Teachers will meet the standards (the minutes) required but not the spirit
- In the 1980’s art was very limited in K-12 and it is actually worse now
- Tribal programs are also cutting art classes/art time
- Although cuts are happening, teachers really want more art education and students need more
- There is a need to better integrate art into other courses like science and math
- Teachers don’t get enough – or good enough – training
- There is a lack of development of creative thought
- Schools use nature classes for student experiences
- Some communities – Jamestown was mentioned – have very good music education and visual arts education
- Younger teachers know more about the importance of the arts/had better training
- There is a shortage of teachers in all areas
- Developing informal networks among teachers is a helpful tool in keeping interest and development high
- Some arts positions are simply not being renewed; in its place is a fine arts facilitator who may have time to see each classroom only once a year
- The question about STEM vs. STEAM should be raised. Some say arts are already a part of STEM. The NDCA should join STEM.
- There is no reach; rather, there is withdrawal
- There is an increase in graphic and visual design classes in the Career Academy
- There is a need to do a high visibility art curriculum with elementary students
- Parents are often not given adequate information regarding art instruction in public schools (or lack thereof)
- Research-based initiatives fair the best with funders and decision-makers; there is a need to have ready data to illustrate the importance of arts education. Approval needs to come from the top!

- STEM Consultants are in partnership with school administrators; this may be an avenue for messages about the importance of art
- Incubator/CTE Schools may be an avenue while Charter schools are an unlikely sell in ND
- There needs to be more than just visual arts for people to appreciate art
- Schools are using space for classes that were once used for art (looking like another low priority)
- We need to change the way we teach – integrate – no more silos!
- People of less means – the poor and working poor – should not have to rely on local arts councils
- Decision-makers won't cut athletics but will readily cut art
- Many may not see the importance of the arts compared to “Leaders” who became known through athletic achievements
- Because so many ND schools did not meet AYP (Adequate Yearly Progress) standards, teachers are so focused on the testing areas of math and reading
- Reading 180
- Schools not making AYP often have students who are living in poverty as well as more cultural diversity
- We need to learn more from existing best practices rather than reinventing the wheel

Are there differences in rural/urban communities?

- A group of Minot area elementary schools wanted to collaborate to get a grant from the NDCA for a National Geographic Map project. The application process was rigid and did not have a way for a group of schools to submit only one joint application.
- In a rural community an artists residency can be a community event – shared in schools and with the broader community
- It is hard to find grants that fit the project
- Teacher Incentive Grants make it hard for applicants to fit the guidelines
- There are a lot of STEM grants available. Can arts fit?
- Logistics and funding is always harder in rural communities
- One commonality is that all people – whether urban or rural – desire the arts
- Urban areas tend to have more resources for students and teachers
- There is often greater demand and more voices from urban areas

How are we doing with local arts organizations?

- The reach is good, more integration with teacher education in science, other areas
- Not all teachers are aware of the NDCA – there is some familiarity among art teachers
- Big announcements about multiple arts groups receiving grants from NDCA could garner good media interest

- The NDCA needs more visibility overall

How have the arts impacted education in ND? (Give examples)

- The Keep ND Clean contest every year may be getting repetitive
- There is a school in a low-income neighborhood that has an annual “Art Day” by bringing in 10 artists. This is a high priority for the school principal and there were grants written to support/sustain the project. Artists bring art of all kind that may not otherwise be available to the students. Working artists talk about art as their job/career. Parents support the effort.
- In tribal communities, art has a high impact; people will tell you that art saved their soul, helped them complete a degree, get up and go to school; art is valued culturally. The programs ultimately ended because of an Administrative decision
- Christmas in the Park (Bismarck) showcases student art
- High participation in Band Day parade (Bismarck)
- Strolling Strings are very popular
- Students were very interested in Jon O’s glass blowing demonstration at BSC; students and adults traveled from nearby communities to watch and learn
- The arts help to raise funds for programs
- Newcomers to ND are looking for art experiences
- PTO’s can be a resource for more arts in the school
- Poetry Out Loud is a great program that has grown over the years
- Art skills are needed for many careers - architecture, aviation, etc.
- Studies show that students skilled in both calculus and arts are, overall, better students
- There appears to be an increase in high school bands

How do the current NDCA Arts in Education programs meet the diverse needs of schools and communities in North Dakota and how can they improve?

- Grants bring artists to schools
- The requirement of an outside match may be a barrier
- Teacher Incentive Grants – teachers don’t have time to apply – how can an outside group help teachers with this?
- Some teachers have a better buy-in to writing the grant proposal than others
- DonorsChoice.org will donate to classrooms
- Grants are temporary – partnerships sustain
- There is a general lack of artists in some areas of ND
- Real art can occur without an artist
- How about art on a bus? A traveling show?

What are the strengths and weaknesses of the NDCA?

- Strong, competent staff, good outreach
- Passionate about the subject
- A sound resource for answers

- Want to get the grant money out to the field
- They have found gems in ND and helped to promote them
- Culturepulse.org and other efforts that bring diverse folks together
- Giving the message that art impacts commerce, tourism, education, etc.
- It needs to be more than just a place to get granting funds. Needs to be more emphasis on other programs
- Need to give people a better idea of what the NDCA can do – how they are an asset to the state (joining STEM would add value)
- NDCA needs money and to help people understand the source of money
- If more people understood the funding, they could talk with their local legislators about funding increases for the NDCA

What are the strengths and weaknesses of the NDCA grant application process? How could we improve?

- Applications are all on line and this may not be appropriate to the need/ability of all applicants
- NDCA is willing to review and advise on grant proposals before final submission
- The Arts in Education process is redundant (in questions) and could be streamlined
- We may not be able to find a partner in a rural community
- We need ways to get financial commitments from schools/school districts
- 20 teachers writing for the same grant - more flexibility for new ideas is needed – be open to the lack of available (required) partners
- There seems to be an increase in art classes in Bismarck High Schools – perhaps there should be more focus on elementary schools
- There is a lack of clarity about NDCA grant programs and processes

What should NDCA be in addition to being a funder?

- The “go to” place for resources and agency information
- Advocates for art and artists
- Give community support for artsy things
- Training and Workshops including teacher training, experiential work for teachers, pedagogy, specific to grant programs and how to be used for integration
- Webinars for training
- Develop a “History of Arts in ND” by using the many gems
- NDCA as a placeholder
- Give assistance with curriculum development
- Use NDCA as experts, to add gravitas, give the right messages
- Articulate what we represent vs. what we do

Demographics:

Gender: 2 Male, 4 Female

Age: 29: 1, 48: 1, 53: 1, 55: 1, 62: 1, 66: 1

Towns Represented: Bismarck, Bottineau, Jamestown, and Minot

Additional (written) Comments: None

**North Dakota Council on the Arts (NDCA)
Report on Information from the
Focus Group Held 8/15/12 at the Turtle Mountain Heritage Center
Belcourt, North Dakota**

What do you know about the NDCA? How have you worked with NDCA or used their resources?

- It used to be located in Fargo, years ago
- They provide funds for art projects
- They promote rural art – which is greatly appreciated
- They are approachable and helpful
- They are arts advocates
- They have a folklorist that's very good
- We couldn't operate our programs without NDCA grants
- NDCA was established in 1983 and has received funding ever since
- Gives us courage to carry on
- They work with tribal art and might consider working with tribal tourism
- Grants have been provided for "Youth Day" at United Tribes Technical College
- Sponsors the apprenticeship program
- Supports institutional grants and helped the Plains Art Center get started
- Supports rural arts initiatives
- They play a valuable role with limited dollars
- Used to offer matching grants for renovation (no longer offered)
- Got our program connected with the Smithsonian
- Biannual meetings help in planning
- Art for Life Program, now expanded to eight (8) locations
- Funded Turtle Mountain Art Center programs for a traveling art exhibit as well as the multigenerational turtle beadwork project (including storytelling)
- NDCA staff are always polite and helpful in answering questions about grant applications and reports

What, aside from grant funds, could the NDCA do for you, your community? What are your most immediate and important needs?

- Development of a roster for Artists in Residence, as well as sub-groups like "jazz" groups, as a resource
- Promote the NDCA through more use of video
- The required match for Art Camps must be through a school; that can be a barrier

- Advocacy from outside the NDCA may have more impact
- There needs to be a better emphasis on advocacy – more information from NDCA given out to arts advocates
- Increase, enhance partnerships with tourism, other state agencies
- Form local arts organizations that can be models and mentors for others
- Improve culture pulse to be used statewide, and to be consistent from east to west

What best practices are you aware of that you would like to replicate? What would you change about the arts work you are doing?

- Turtle Mountain is the new Medora
- Pekin Arts Weekend
- Big events are on the rise. We should consider a statewide arts festival that would move around the state. Model it after the Olympics, different arts, narrative, dance stages, lots of arts education
- The McKnight Foundation says that for every \$1 invested in the arts, \$11 is generated
- Develop an Indian Country art tour for all 5 tribes through the Native American Tourism Alliance
- Promotion of NDCA and the arts should be different and more statewide in nature
- A lot of funding for arts goes to public education – we should consider shifting those funds back to local arts organizations

Do you think most people in ND know about the importance of the arts? What are new/unique ways to get more visibility?

- Take away church music and they'll miss it!
- Generally, the answer is no
- Putting art in unexpected places (display in the grocery, gas station) increases recognition of artists
- The Art Student of The Month brings attention in our community; the local frame shop supports the effort by framing the artwork. We do this for public schools as well as home schools
- We should consider a big, visible art event/initiative for each ND county by creating partnerships for grants
- More partnerships with Economic Development, school systems and others would help to extend/expand arts recognition
- Turtle Mountain Tourism is interested in partnerships

Are you aware of successful arts-in-education programs in ND schools? Give examples.

- The Artist in Residence program at the Anne Carlsen Center was a great success
- The ND Museum of Art Rural Initiative
- Student access to local productions, shows

- Artists and writers who visit local schools to organize talking circles, provide education and judge art contests is a great way to create connections – this is a project of the AHEC
- Art in school has been pushed aside and very little school time given for art
- An overall increase in the Artist in Residence program would help

What training needs do you have? If the NDCA offered training in your area, what would be the best and most well attended?

- Grant writing
- Grant seeking
- Resources including successful partnerships and best practices, learning from each other
- Board of Director training (roles and responsibilities)
- Training regarding the Artist in Residence program
- How to develop successful partnerships
- Strategic and business planning

Demographics:

Gender: 2 Male, 7 Female

Age: 53: 1, 57: 1, 58: 2, 62: 1, 66: 1, 69: 1, 70: 1, 71: 1, 76: 1

Towns Represented: Belcourt, Cando, Langdon, Rolette, and Rugby

Additional (written) Comments:

- Interesting. I enjoyed meeting people in the area.
- I was pleased to take part – need more of these types of meetings.
- Very good training. Send us info that was discussed in the meeting. Thank you.
- Today's presentation was worthwhile attending. It was well planned and went according to schedule.
- Great focus group, short and sweet!

**North Dakota Council on the Arts (NDCA)
Report on Information from the
Focus Group Held 8/20/12 at Dickinson State University
Dickinson, North Dakota**

What do you know about the ND Council on the Arts? How have you worked with or used the resources of the NDCA?

- NDCA provides grants to generate and assist with projects
- The Council provides information (electronic and other formats) regarding projects, events, initiatives, resources, etc.
- They have always been very helpful and supportive of our gallery
- Their funding is geared to initiating or starting projects
- They provide information about opportunities and exhibits
- They assist with and provide professional development opportunities to teachers and others
- They are a source/resource for books, videos and other publications
- My service on the Grants Committee has provided some valuable experience

What – aside from grants – could the NDCA do for you/your community? What are your most important and immediate needs?

- Arts advocacy – at various levels (state and local leaders, policymakers, funders and the public) to promote and focus on the arts – avoid “self-serving” image
 - Support and attend events – help in getting the word out and promoting activities and efforts
 - Provide opportunities and options to network with other like-minded groups and individuals
 - Promote the value of art
 - Continue to provide financial support
 - Promote visibility
 - Serve as a continuous, clear source of information
- Assist and support in the development and implementation of a marketing/promotion plan
- Expand avenues (T.V., radio, newspapers, etc.) and options to promote, inform, advertise, educate and market the arts

- Develop and offer an “advertising/marketing co-op” to pool resources and reduce costs - offer membership or subscription options with advertising packages
- We need a real, functioning Roadhouse or Performing Arts Center for this geographical region – nothing from Fargo to at least Billings (the current community center is not able to meet the needs in terms of access, availability, public art displays or options)
 - Provide financial support
 - Help to develop the necessary political will – state and local levels
 - Promote the recognition of the importance and value of art – impact on various areas including economic impact
- Develop and distribute a PowerPoint presentation that provides information on the arts, explains and promotes the value - that can be used with various groups and organizations
- Focus on promoting localization – bring training and events to the community
- Develop and distribute an “Arts and Economic Prosperity” report on an annual basis
- Develop or become the “central clearinghouse” for all things art – information, education, resources and technical assistance – inclusive, interactive and easy to use
 - Provide personal experiences and stories
 - Share ideas and best practices
 - Post funding/grant opportunities
 - Post histories and documents
 - Provide opportunities for networking and discussion
 - Offer links to related groups, information and resources
- Develop and provide on-line training opportunities
- Service clubs are always seeking/looking for speakers and presentations
- Information booths at various events to promote art
- The Old Red Trail group is involved in an initiative to promote art

What best practices are you aware of that you would like to replicate? What would you change about the current arts work that you are doing?

- Promote, encourage and involve children – contests and other activities
- Utilize cross-marketing techniques – promote “other” arts at existing non-art local events
- Focus on promotion and marketing – an integrated plan
- Reach out to the “new” people that are in and coming to town – tabletop notices and information (Applebee’s)
- Emphasize involvement and partnering with schools as a way to interest children and reach parents and families
- Establish and provide an integrated calendar/schedule – one place to go

- Consider ways to attract interest and people (get them to come here) rather than just reaching them
- Consider/evaluate the use of the “Cultural Pulse” – pros and cons –
 - Current barriers: 1) too many steps involved; 2) too much notice time required and 3) not enough video

Are you aware of successful arts-in-education programs in N.D. schools? Please describe.

- I’m not really aware of any in the elementary or high schools.
- We need to develop some creative approaches that really interest kids.
- There are limited offerings -we have seen and continue to see a decline in funds, teachers and programs
- There is a great deal of competition for available funds, especially with athletics programming – we are seeing arts related programs losing out
- Students (and parents) could be offered opportunities to visit existing arts programs and initiatives in local communities – community sponsors could be approached for support – because there is so much demand on existing time and resources, it would be best to have a package delivery-ready before seeking the involvement and support of the schools and sponsors
- There is always the question of who is responsible to provide these opportunities – the government or the private sector – seems like it should be a partnership
- Arts in Education research indicated that students involved in art programs have higher math (and overall academic performance) scores and a lower dropout rate. This data needs to be shared more actively with educators, parents and policymakers
- Schools are understaffed and too busy to provide arts programming
- The arts are generally under recognized and under appreciated for their overall contributions to education

What training needs do you have? If the NDCA offered training in your area, what would be the best kind of event – the best attended?

- There must be a focus on developing a basic understanding and appreciation of the arts coupled with opportunities to network and connect
- A series of events and opportunities to promote the understanding of the importance of the arts to education and life
- Events should feature art displays and presentations should be dynamic and engaging
- It would be helpful to have assistance in developing a strategic plan on a local level – it should be focused on a “move to action” with specific action plans, timelines and products – it could be offered to communities that want it and should promote sustainability, accountability and products
- Artists should be recognized as entrepreneurs and offered assistance in the business aspects of their work – how to operate a business

- The business community needs to be involved and included in all aspects of any education, planning and promotional activities

Do you think that most people in ND know about the importance of the arts? What are new/unique ways to create more visibility for the arts in the state?

- No!!
- ND has a conservative personality - this is expressed in the way that the state views and supports art – what this area sees/recognizes as art – badlands landscapes, cowboys and Indians
- It is OK to play to the conservative nature, but diversity is good – the population is becoming more diverse and it is good to offer new experiences and offer opportunities to get people out of their comfort zones
- Most people do not understand the basics of art – the process and the work that goes into it – if they are educated and exposed to these aspects they will develop a positive attitude, appreciate it, be attracted to it, and be interested in it – need a plan to educate, explain and develop an appreciation for the arts
- Build on an economic or business focus – artists as small business people – provide success stories and numbers that emphasize the \$\$\$ benefits
- There has been and continues to be a misconception about artists abusing drugs and alcohol – need to end the myths
- The positives need to be identified and shared on a consistent basis
- People become complacent about what is always there – take them for granted - consider an approach that asks the question, “What if you didn’t have it?”
- Potentially offer a Day Without Art event and focus on how much art is really integrated into all/many/most aspects of our daily lives

What is the best way to get information to you?

- Website(s)
- Email
- E-newsletters
- Facebook
- Post cards (announcing events and gallery schedules)
- Newspapers
- Community calendars and schedules

Demographics:

Gender: 3 Male, 5 Female

Age: 27: 1, 39: 1, 47: 1, 51: 1, 52: 1, 53: 1, 56: 1, 64:1

Towns Represented: Bowman, Dickinson and South Heart

Additional (written) Comments:

- Most important is advocacy, public and legislative, illustrating artistic process and value of the arts
- Thank you

- Rose and Paul were great and in no way prompted us to say that, I promise

**North Dakota Council on the Arts (NDCA)
Report on Information from the
Focus Group – Fargo 1 - Held 8/22/12 at the Fargo Public Library
Fargo, North Dakota**

What do you know about the ND Council on the Arts? How have you worked with or used the resources of the NDCA?

- NDCA provides grants and financial support to our art organizations – also advocacy for the arts in a variety of ways including at the legislature
- The Council helps to increase awareness and knowledge of the arts
- They have an on-line roster of artists in the state
- Funds are provided through the NDCA and the NEA
- Jan answers emails and responds to questions promptly
- The Board is appointed by the governor
- They publish an on-line and hard copy newsletter – Prairie Arts
- They fund special projects and initiatives (Poetry Out Loud Project, etc.)
- They provide funding and partner with a variety of art groups to support a broad spectrum of arts in the state
- The roster serves as an ongoing history of the arts as well as a resource for “connecting”
- They provide grants for educational efforts and general operating expenses
- They support networking, conferences and professional development activities
- The support they offer is comprehensive, servicing a broad variety of all forms of art
- Prairie Public collaborates, works with and off of its relationship with the Council – offering programming and events, identifying listener interests and then developing interviews and programs based on that material/information

What – aside from grants – could the NDCA do for you/your community? What are your most important and immediate needs?

- Future planning initiatives - ND Vision 2020 (state) and Go 2030 (city) – identify and support the arts as components of quality living in the state – this is a critical

- time to take advantage of the opportunity that this recognition provides to ensure the inclusion of arts as a critical component of future development
- The collaboration of the various art groups offers an opportunity to develop a unified and powerful voice to carry the arts message throughout the state – we need to think BIG and seek support through the new resources that the energy boom has brought to the state and to address the cultural change that oil has brought
 - We need to respond to the “ask” and take advantage of the opportunity – we need to use care to express the message in the verbiage that ND will understand
 - We have struggled through some hard and difficult times – although things are improved they are still shaky – we need to focus on efforts that will support sustainability
 - We serve our region (upper Midwest), not just the FM metropolitan area – that includes both ND and MN – as a result, we need to be creative and responsive to the broader needs and offer outreach – this could be done through distance learning efforts – we would need equipment and technological support
 - We need more operating funds – want to focus on the art and not the paperwork
 - Funding could be directed to presenters and touring opportunities that will reach and involve more of the smaller, rural communities
 - Because of the regional nature of the service area, equity, border and border city issues have developed between ND and MN – MN’s Legacy fund has rules that restrict amounts of funding and where and how it can be used – ND is seen as having a great deal of oil wealth so the expectation is that MN funds are not needed in ND (oil boom backlash)
 - The groups involved view their efforts and resources collaboratively and see the FM area as one community – although it would be very difficult to totally reverse the trend and return to the philosophy and level of support that was established in the past, efforts should be made to reinitiate discussions to address the service area as a region and not separate states
 - The focus should be on ND – to develop a strong voice, identify resources and increase the funding provided to the arts
 - A plan should be developed to create a plan, develop and build a fund that utilizes a public/private partnership model and collaborates with “unlikely” partners
 - A work group should be developed that is made up of individuals who are powerful, recognized leaders to carry the message of the arts and the need for support and sustainability – this could include contacts with DPI, legislative candidates and possibly presentations by national experts
 - Efforts should be made to protect the culture and way of life of ND
 - Arts ND is a relatively new group that could serve as the organizing and coordinating nexus for this broader, comprehensive effort (meeting dates will be forwarded to members so that AND can be approached with this proposal/idea)

- There needs to be a stronger push to reach out to/involve/serve K-12 students
- The arts need to become a proactive part of the 21st Century Skills efforts – the value of the arts should be featured with the research to support it
- We need a gathering place – in person or on line – that will allow for discussions, sharing information and ideas, etc.

What best practices are you aware of that you would like to replicate? What would you change about the current arts work that you are doing?

- More focus on art rather than the tasks and requirements of raising money – “Its never the arts that burn you out”
- Partner with Arts ND – Fargo Schools
- Prairie Public has many hats as related to the arts – producer, reviewer, etc. - work to integrate the various elements of art into programming
- Socially Engaged Practice – effort to work with communities and groups to get the information about the arts out into the community – emphasizes the various aspects of art in people’s lives and their community with a focus on participation – train the leaders in the smaller communities to develop leadership and sustainability
- Find, train and encourage leaders – Immersive weekend with attendees from across the state to promote the potential of arts through community-focused opportunities and initiatives

Do you think that most people in ND know about the importance of the arts? What are new/unique ways to create more visibility for the arts in the state?

- In Fargo, the answer is “yes” – arts ranked #3 in the community survey
- Fargo schools have programs (K-12) that engage the youth
- Fargo/Moorhead has many groups that provide and promote the arts – they are engaged in collaborative efforts and the “buzz” becomes important and cannot be ignored
- Communities need a “point” person for the arts – someone who is a leader and advocate and is identified by their community as such
- The future focus needs to be on the utilization of technology to reach the smaller and outlying communities in the area
- Fargo does not look like an “artsie” community, but it has many opportunities, programs and activities – sidewalk history project as an example of community involvement, efficiency and bang for the buck
- Community focus is important – communities should be asked what they want and need
- Fargo government has been supportive and progressive, especially as it relates to the arts – encourage and value partnerships and collaboration with political leaders
- More funds should be made available for public artworks – ND is 1 of only 2 states that provide no support for these efforts

Are you aware of successful arts-in-education programs in N.D. schools? Please describe.

- In the FM area the arts-in-education programs are strong – music, theatre, etc. – Not cutting back on school focus – Development of the Creative Arts Center – Whole child philosophy
- Arts are a pillar of the Fargo Public Schools strategic plan
- Yes
- Statewide graduation standards should include credits for the arts

What training needs do you have? If the NDCA offered training in your area, what would be the best kind of event – the best attended?

- The Impact Foundation provides “plenty” of training and support – meet most needs
- Need and would benefit from training in how to engage and develop relationships and support from elected officials – city, county and state levels – a lunch and learn?
- Members should be encouraged to ask the “art” question of the candidates – Develop an ART SUPER PAC

What is the best way to get information to you?

- Website and emails
- Hardcopy info on events and schedules
- Newspapers
- Arts Partnership Initiative – Electronic (social) media – 21st Century Skills initiative

Demographics:

Gender: 2 Male; 6 Female

Age: 29: 1, 42: 1, 52: 1, 55:1, 58: 1, 62: 2, 65: 1

Towns Represented: Fargo and Moorhead, MN

Additional (written) Comments:

- This was an excellent experience – would be great to have an opportunity to do something like this with a statewide group.
- Thank you for reaching out to us all and providing this opportunity! Very much appreciated.
- Very interesting and informative.
- Thanks so much!

**North Dakota Council on the Arts (NDCA)
Report on Information from the
Focus Group Held 8/22/12 at the Fargo Public Library
Fargo, North Dakota**

What do you know about the NDCA? How have you worked with NDCA or used their resources?

- They are a funder
- Active with the Legislature
- Resource
- Promote arts around North Dakota
- Provide advocacy for children in the arts
- Decent communicator
- They need more money to broaden their influence, reach and for granting
- Have a limited budget
- Timid – they should be more aggressive with implementation of the arts
- They need to set up a legacy fund like Minnesota
- Oil money is proposed to be used for the environment (ballot measure) – why not the arts?
- I have received funding from them
- Convening of the biannual statewide arts meeting is a good thing
- Helped us with an opera tour across North Dakota
- They are a resource for networking – a connector

What, aside from grant funds, could the NDCA do for you, your community? What are your most immediate and important needs?

- Conduct a study regarding economic value to the community, dispel the business community thoughts about the arts

- Update the 2005 study
- Convince people that the arts are real and legitimate
- Gather the various studies and data that helps make the case for the arts
- How do we approach legislators?
- Look at best practices for gaining community support
- Cultivate leadership outside of the arts circle; assure that creative people/arts people are a part of decision-making groups
- Determine/assess who we are
- Help us to become a statewide arts community
- We need an umbrella organization – NDCA could facilitate this
- Need to reach a broader demographic
- Let people know we're here
- Reconnect with people who moved away and are now back in ND
- Develop a plan for regional mixers using the 4 regions of ND
- We need to think bigger in ND; how will we shape the state visually and artistically?
- We need vision, leadership and money
- We need to claim the opportunities we have in ND – it's a great place to visit and live

What best practices are you aware of that you would like to replicate? What would you change about the arts work you are doing?

- The MN model of a legacy fund
- Be more than practical
- Integrate public art into city, state planning
- Promote excellence rather than better than average
- Get people to attend events; we can't seem to draw a crowd even for free admission
- Create interest in new arts, art forms
- Get through the resistance to change in ND
- Increase philanthropy from the business community
- Capitalize on hometown people doing well
- Develop plans for "asking" for the funds
- How do we ask for money, how do we build a business plan?
- Use the work we do on writing grants to translate to other ways of getting funding
- Collaborate and learn from each other
- Access free trainings from the Impact Foundation and FMAF
- Capitalize on our existing strengths
- There are no festivals in ND
- Would love to do summer Shakespeare in the Park
- How can we optimize existing venues?

- Create more and better venues
- Reduce the turf issues
- Create a concert hall from the local Christian Science building
- There are few funds to help with advertising and promotion
- We have a creepy competitiveness here and are competing for limited resources – how do we turn this into a community of collaborators?
- We need to be a household word but there's little funding to promote and get us to that point
- I would like to concentrate more on art and less on administration
- We pay low salaries, hard to recruit good people
- We need a baby boomer rebirth
- We need to get more students (public school) participating in community arts

Do you think most people in ND know about the importance of the arts? What are new/unique ways to get more visibility?

- Generally, the answer is no
- Sometimes the answer is yes, especially in some rural communities
- Often we don't respect the local prodigy
- There seems to be less value and participation in the arts in recent years
- Communities need a leader, a mover and a shaker
- There is a need for more collaboration in arts education
- Children have so many activity choices and can't find time to focus on the arts
- Recruiting is sometimes easier in rural areas
- I want to do a mass mailing but it's too expensive; I'm looking for partners and collaborators to share the message and the cost
- There is a lot of perceived competition
- I wish we could purchase more advertising – have something daily about the arts
- We could have a continuous billboard, an electronic message board/billboard and other eye-catching advertising
- The opera partnered with the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts to create a new audience
- We are battling a bad reputation for having little/no impact in the community
- We should use new technology for the arts, much of which is free or low-cost
- Use technology to create art; is technology art? It's virtual only, is that okay?
- Get more young people at the table
- NDCA could model after some of the Fargo successes
- More money for interns for assistance/instruction in the field

Are you aware of successful arts-in-education programs in ND schools? Give examples.

- Trollwood

- Violin teacher from Edinburgh that had many students learning in rural communities in the area; now this teacher is in West Fargo, but is the same thing happening?
- Choral, band, orchestra are available if parents give the opportunity
- We need to get the attention of the parents
- Sometimes it is seen as an “extra” class, not part of the curriculum
- Community School of Arts
- It would be good to offer teacher training in the summer for art, music, drama
- The love of music theatre
- Some schools still do big musicals
- There is competition for Trollwood
- Teachers in other subject areas need to learn the importance of art in helping their students succeed
- Arts education is for integration, fusion
- There is likely more than we think regarding availability of arts education
- There are some good pockets in the state with arts education
- Communities need to have a driver to promote arts education
- Creative Arts Studio/Plains Art Museum

What training needs do you have? If the NDCA offered training in your area, what would be the best and most well attended?

- Marketing and social media
- Strategic planning
- Better understanding of donors, how to make the ask
- Fundraising and development
- Understanding your audience, demographics
- Nurturing younger audiences and how to market to them
- Running a non-profit
- Board development from top to bottom
- Recruitment of new Board members
- How to talk to our Legislators
- Artful communication
- Legislator profiles helpful to the arts community
- Leadership and staff building
- Collaboration, becoming a better collaborator
- Grant writing
- Reinventing when things aren’t going well, making timely, positive change
- Self-assessment, being truthful about what does and doesn’t work
- Volunteer management and how to engage volunteers who want short-term tasks

What is the best way to get information to you?

- Email
- Facebook or other social media
- Electronic newsletters
- Paper newsletters
- Convening's and meetings, face-to-face gatherings

Demographics:

Gender: 3 Male, 5 Female

Age: 39: 1, 40: 1, 44: 1, 52: 2, 55: 1, 57: 1, 60: 1

Towns Represented: Fargo, Hawley, MN and Moorhead, MN

Additional (written) Comments:

- Thank you for the opportunity
- Nicely done
- Good questions
- Sorry I was late, wonderful discussion

**North Dakota Council on the Arts (NDCA)
Report on Information from the
Focus Group – Williston - Held 10/15/12 at the James Memorial Library
Williston, North Dakota**

What do you know about the ND Council on the Arts? How have you worked with or used the resources of the NDCA?

- NDCA provides grants to organizations – I have been funded and not funded in the past
- I have been a grant recipient as a nonprofit organization
- They convene annual conferences
- I always get good information from Jan Webb – and at the conferences
- Promotion and preservation of the arts
- They have limited funding
- E-newsletters and paper newsletters
- Work to engage artists and supporters (a hard job to get people engaged)
- Institutional support is now at the max through NDCA

What – aside from grants – could the NDCA do for you/your community? What are your most important and immediate needs?

- Help us get arts education in the school district
- Help with promotion and marketing – the Old Armory will celebrate 100 years next year – how can we promote that?
- We need to be more collaborative in Williston, do more things together, cooperative bookings, meet like this more often
- Not much funding available for arts and culture – we are underserved
- Help with fundraising and Board Development
- Unify the arts groups
- Attract new people, especially newcomers to our community
- There is a lack of support for the arts, no city or county funds or tax sources
- The city is pursuing some funding now (for arts efforts) and could use ideas and best practices to help them make their decisions
- The downtown area could be a good place to grow more arts and culture
- We should connect with the President of Williston State College, have a 1:1 visit to see if he would be supportive
- Help us deal with pending retirements of the arts leaders, movers and shakers, in our community – who will carry this work on?

What best practices are you aware of that you would like to replicate? What would you change about the current arts work that you are doing?

- Something like an “art of the day” email
- More grants available for this area to address younger and more diverse populations
- We need to use social media to reach people but we also have to maintain contact with our older, longtime supporters (who might not use social media)
- Promoting and advertising – are there good examples?
- We should do a multi-use brochure together
- Children are always a good advertising hook
- We should promote more in the hotels to attract visitors (the Chamber will help)
- Develop a Community Day for the Arts
- We should convene our Boards jointly to work collaboratively

Do you think that most people in ND know about the importance of the arts? What are new/unique ways to create more visibility for the arts in the state?

- No, no, no, no
- It gets attention when arts comes out of the school curriculum (when it is taken away from schools)
- School Board members don’t seem to have an interest in the arts (or know the value)
- How do we define art?
- Our cultural backgrounds tend to define what we see as art

- Increase the access to/for youth via technology
- We need graphic, funky, eye-catching stuff
- We need more of a presence on Facebook
- We should maximize and learn about the cultures of people who have moved here and are living here – celebrate Cinco de Mayo
- We have a diverse – and more youthful – population now and should use that to our advantage; celebrate the diversity publicly through art

Are you aware of successful arts-in-education programs in N.D. schools? Please describe.

- There are art teachers in grades 7-12 but none in grades K-6
- Youth education on stage is a successful summer program
- We really need a K-6 curriculum
- Private schools might be offering more art than public schools
- Music is taught only in the elementary schools
- Parents need more education about art
- Art seems to not be a priority for many people, schools, etc.
- The college is interested in displaying visual art
- Community problems are often best solved by students, being creative (there are examples of communities that have done this)
- How about community murals around town?
- Streetscape will be completed by 2014
- Develop and support a graffiti alley (like Rapid City)

What training needs do you have? If the NDCA offered training in your area, what would be the best kind of event – the best attended?

- Don't always have training in Bismarck – move it around the state
- Conduct regional trainings
- Make sure that training is exciting and dynamic, with good speakers
- And that it talks not only about future vision but also the “here and now”
- Teach us how to communicate the importance of a vibrant arts community
- Use of social media
- How to renovate
- Ties to economic development – how can we better talk to each other?
- Evangelization of the arts
- Marketing and promoting (X4)

What is the best way to get information to you?

- Website and emails (X3)
- E-newsletters (but they should be shortened)
- Paper newsletters

- Something that doesn't leave any generation out of the loop

Demographics:

Gender: 3 Male; 3 Female (5 demographic sheets returned)

Age: 36: 1, 53: 1, 62: 2, 65: 1

Towns Represented: Williston

Additional (written) Comments: None

**North Dakota Council on the Arts (NDCA)
Report on Information from the
Focus Group in Minot - Held 10/15/12 at the Taube Museum of Art
Minot, North Dakota**

What do you know about the ND Council on the Arts? How have you worked with or used the resources of the NDCA?

- NDCA provides institutional support grants that are very helpful and much appreciated
- They encourage schools to use arts in education
- They have a small staff that work hard and produce great stuff
- They offer conferences for professional growth
- Many resources – the website, emails and newsletters
- Serve as a clearinghouse for state and federal grants
- Liaison to the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA)
- Jan Webb is a confidante
- I'm new and looking forward to working with them and learning more

What – aside from grants – could the NDCA do for you/your community? What are your most important and immediate needs?

- Arts education in elementary schools (these have been cut), ND has a surplus of money but no arts education
- Integration of the arts causes students (and parents) to become slaves
- Arts education is available to all schools but not all use it
- Arts should include everything from culinary arts to performing arts
- We should bring the Missoula Children’s Theater to ND – or create one of our own
- We need more children’s theater
- Travel and Tourism should do more to create a higher visibility/profile for the arts in ND
- Minot is the smallest city with a full time symphony and it isn’t mentioned by Tourism
- The NDCA calendar should link to the Tourism calendar – be more collaborative
- Tourism folks often decline publishing arts events – for a variety of reasons, few good ones
- Jan Webb recently spoke to the Minot Rotary and was well received; groups need to hear from state-level people who are experts
- We need to meet together routinely in Minot, not just once a year

What best practices are you aware of that you would like to replicate? What would you change about the current arts work that you are doing?

- Whatever will create a following – plastic arts, painting, traditional music
- 62 Doors will work with the NDCA to develop local initiatives and grow community interest
- Artistic mobility – this is a mission of the local arts committee
- Sand Point artists community, giving tours of local arts, artists
- The Fargo Art Crawl
- The Wine Walk in Minot
- We need capacity building
- NDCA could create a “great ideas” grant to encourage something creative
- The legislative culture is conservative

Do you think that most people in ND know about the importance of the arts? What are new/unique ways to create more visibility for the arts in the state?

- In Minot, no – most people don’t get it
- The economic impact of the arts in Minot is \$9.9 million – this information needs to get to the public and policymakers
- Arts are revenue generating to cities, counties and states
- Most people don’t realize the impact that art has on a students future
- We need to learn to speak the economic language and talk money

- There are successful volunteer led arts teaching programs in high schools and higher education
- We need to toot our own horns

Are you aware of successful arts-in-education programs in N.D. schools? Please describe.

- The creative arts studio in Fargo which is now in partnership with the Fargo Public Schools
- This may hinge on one great teacher like we have at the Magic City Campus
- Velva is a great example of a successful gala, art walk combined with music education (Iris) for a small community
- The Pangea House for adults and kids
- NDCA Poetry Out Loud – a terrific example
- Artists in Residence program through NDCA
- The SALT program
- Minot State University (and some surrounding schools) in theater and music

What training needs do you have? If the NDCA offered training in your area, what would be the best kind of event – the best attended?

- Grant writing
- Marketing for artists
- SALT – more structure, hands on with teachers and morph it into teacher training
- Recruiting and training volunteers (for Boards and other tasks)
- Teacher Incentive Grants are very helpful
- Small group training for teachers
- Change the complicated “budget” page for grant submissions
- Highlight well-prepared proposals for replication by others

Demographics:

Gender: 3 Male; 5 Female

Age: 46: 1, 53: 1, 56:1, 58: 1, 62: 1, 67: 2, Near retirement: 1

Towns Represented: Burlington, Minot and Velva

Additional (written) Comments:

- This was a good start!

NDCA is a great outfit, open to anyone that wants to make a

**North Dakota Council on the Arts (NDCA)
Report on Information from the
Focus Group in Grand Forks
Held 10/16/12 at the ND Museum of Art
Grand Forks, North Dakota**

What do you know about the ND Council on the Arts? How have you worked with or used the resources of the NDCA?

- NDCA gives out grants – I am a recipient
- Coordination of resources, jobs, etc. online – easy access
- I served on the NDCA Board of Directors
- NDCA reaches out and listens, then acts based on what they heard
- I have partnered with them to promote and sell publications

- I have known NDCA from the beginning, through rough times and now, Jan's leadership is good for NDCA
- I use their website and links
- NDCA strives to be Avant-garde
- Very helpful staff
- I don't know anything about them

What – aside from grants – could the NDCA do for you/your community? What are your most important and immediate needs?

- Help to create outdoor art – models to replicate, murals, support and marketing
- Create downtown pocket parks, outdoor galleries, performing artists
- A sculpture celebration
- Create ownership of the arts by the community
- Communication and face time (among arts groups) is not happening
- We need outreach and education, resources about the importance of the arts and promotion help
- Marketing plans, establishing a manual
- Nonprofits need help
- Outreach to all ages – children to the aging population
- A campaign that teaches that arts are integral for life in ND
- How to keep college students in ND after they graduate – jobs, arts, opportunities, funky, fun things
- There is a disconnect between the Community Theater and the campus – UND is not friendly to outside activities and we need to collaborate, not compete
- NDCA could serve as a liaison to the campus and the community
- Develop college credits like those freshmen receive, to attend community arts events
- Transportation from the campus to the community (for events) is a barrier
- We need help in writing testimony, giving testimony that will impact the legislative and funding processes
- Promotion of events should come from the top – high ranks in the community and the college
- Could the Convention & Visitors Bureau (CVB) partner with NDCA to do promotion?
- What are the best technological ways to connect with people?
- There have been changes in the way the Herald reports on art
- The North Valley Arts Council (NVAC) has great graphic artists – could they help in some of the graphics and design?
- NDCA has a primary focus on resources
- Marketing help is needed – how can we share one big marketing effort/plan among us?

What best practices are you aware of that you would like to replicate? What would you change about the current arts work that you are doing?

- More outdoor art, using Fargo as an example
- New Orleans has a Cork & Canvas promotion
- An Arts Weekend, and/or a season sampler
- A community-wide monthly brochure with all of our events
- Shared calendar for all of us
- A listing of credible, helpful websites that encourage and promote replication of successful events
- National conferences that teach good outreach and work to elevate artists as cultural ambassadors
- Develop an Icelandic Arts program – collaborate with the NDCA, the community of Cavalier and the ND Museum of Arts
- A Pageant of the Masters – symphony, art and performing arts
- All of the above requires a lot of collaboration

Do you think that most people in ND know about the importance of the arts? What are new/unique ways to create more visibility for the arts in the state?

- Generally, no
- We need to focus on selling the value of the arts
- How is art defined?
- There is a great need to link the arts to economics – how art creates revenue
- We need joint performances, ongoing events to show the community how we can work together and support each other
- Recognize the rich history and heritage of the arts – use that as an approach to educate people
- ND is rich with money – how do we assure that the arts will benefit?

Are you aware of successful arts-in-education programs in N.D. schools? Please describe.

- We need to keep arts education in elementary schools
- Children and visual arts – this is the most difficult
- Taking exhibitions from the ND Museum of Art to other communities and including lesson plans, standardized curriculum – prepare to hand off to schools for ongoing use
- Transportation is a barrier for urban and rural youth to get to events
- The impact of No Child Left Behind on teachers is felt by the arts
- Develop more programs that focus on art for nursing home residents, elderly people
- We need to refer to pedagogical experts/specialists for help when planning and developing curricula

What training needs do you have? If the NDCA offered training in your area, what would be the best kind of event – the best attended?

- Training in fundraising and advocacy for staff and Boards of Directors
- Mailings, timing of mailings/promotion, database management
- Marketing, how to use Publisher programs and other tools
- University of MN has summer offerings for technology training
- Using optimal timing for events, how to use weekends and evenings
- Working with volunteers
- Writing job descriptions
- People management – how to help staff, artists and volunteers be successful
- IRS Guidelines for nonprofit organizations
- Completing the IRS 990 form

Demographics:

Gender: 3 Male; 5 Female

Age: 29: 1, 41: 1, 47: 1, 53:1, 55: 1, 58: 1, 69: 1, Old: 1

Towns Represented: Grand Forks, Walhalla, ND and Thief River Falls, and East Grand Forks, MN

Additional (written) Comments:

- Thank you for having this. It's easy to isolate oneself as a solitary administrator/arts coordinator.

**ND Council on the Arts (NDCA) Strategic Planning
Schedule and Focus Group Process – 2012**

A strategic planning meeting will be convened with the NDCA Board of Directors as the first step in the process. Focus Groups will then be conducted across North Dakota as follows:

- August 2, 2012: Planning Meeting with NDCA Board of Directors in Jamestown
- August 13, 2012: Arts in Education Focus Group in Bismarck
- August 20, 2012: Focus Group in Dickinson
- August 15, 2012: Focus Group on the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa Indian Reservation
- August 22 -23: Focus Groups in Fargo
- October 15: Focus Groups in Williston and Minot
- October 16: Focus Group in Grand Forks

Focus Group Process Outline

Welcome and Purpose of Meeting

15 minutes

- NDCA Purpose
- Focus on artists, users and the general public, all ages
- Confidentiality
- How the information will be used
- Guidelines for “Focus Group Participation”

Introduction of Participants

5 minutes

Focus Group Questions

1 hour & 15 minutes

- 1. What do you know about the ND Council on the Arts?** (Follow-up question: How have you worked with or used the resources of the NDCA in the past??)
- 2. What, aside from grant funds, could the NDCA do for you and your community?** (Follow-up question: What are your most immediate and important needs?)
- 3. How best practices are you aware of that you would like to replicate?** (Follow-up question: What would you change about the current arts work you are doing?)
- 4. Do you think that most people in North Dakota know about the importance of the arts?** (Follow-up question: What are new or unique ways to get more visibility for the arts in North Dakota?)
- 5. Are you aware of successful arts-in-education programs in North Dakota schools?** (If yes, please describe.)

6. What training needs do you have? If the NDCA would offer training in your area, what would be the best kind of event, the best attended?
7. What is the best way to get information to you?

Wrap Up/Summary Comments

15 minutes

Items to bring:

- Demographic Information Sheets
- Name badges
- Paper and pencils
- Flip charts and marker
-
-
-
-

GUIDELINES FOR A GOOD FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT

I will answer questions as best I can.

I will answer questions honestly.

If I don't know or have an answer to a question, I won't make one up.

If I don't understand a question, I will ask the meeting helpers to explain it to me.

I will take turns with others answering questions.

I won't speak when others are speaking.

I will respect the answers and opinions of everyone here, even if I don't agree with them.

I will protect the privacy of everyone here during and after the meeting.

I will expect the same respect for MY privacy from everyone here.

I will work hard to be a good meeting participant and I will have fun doing it!

NDCA Focus Group Demographic Information

CONFIDENTIAL

MY AGE _____ MY GENDER _____

TOWN WHERE I LIVE _____

TODAY'S DATE _____

OTHER COMMENTS I HAVE ABOUT THIS FOCUS GROUP MEETING