

MARIN ARTS COUNCIL

STRATEGIC PLAN

2010-2014

Approved by the Marin Arts Council Board 3/8/2010

The Marin Arts Council promotes active and creative lives through engagement in the arts.

Introduction

“There are more artists per capita living and working in Marin County than in any other county in the United States.”

(Source - Jim Flavell, Marin Community Foundation)

The Strategic Plan for Marin Arts Council (aka Marin Arts) is a four-year initiative that will establish Marin County as a community that expresses creativity through innovative approaches to economic development, education and government, a mecca for artists and all creative people.

The arts add value to every community. By engaging the deep pool of artistic talent and promoting the diverse artistic experiences offered here, we propose a new focus for Marin’s economy that will:

- Serve residents and visitors alike
- Attract and keep creative individuals who drive innovation
- Draw enterprises seeking a culturally rich environment for business and a stimulating quality of life for their employees
- Use the arts to teach children the skills that will make them successful in the 21st century workforce, which includes innovation, imagination, critical thinking and collaboration
- Promote excellence in artistic expression, citizen engagement and community enhancement

Our Vision

Where the arts thrive,
community flourishes,
and lives are filled with discovery.

Our vision was reached through comprehensive discussions with arts and community leaders, board members, staff, advisors, consultants and artists from all disciplines regarding art’s place in people’s lives and Marin Art’s role in this community.

Beliefs & Goals

The development of the arts at all levels is proven to be the single most effective way to achieve sustainable economic growth and to enrich the quality of life for all citizens.

(Research from Americans for the Arts and the NEA)

Belief #1 – Where the Arts Thrive

Goals

1. Create an environment where artists can work, thrive and feel supported in their creative lives
2. Grow and leverage community support for Marin’s arts organizations
3. Develop a cohesive brand for Marin Arts

Successful implementation of these goals will enable people in every corner of the county to engage in creative experiences and live out their artistic aspirations. Artists will be an integral part of civic life as they stimulate creativity, innovation and conversation.

Belief #2 - Community Flourishes

Goals

1. Promote the importance of the “Creative Economy” to Marin’s economic future
2. Showcase cultural offerings
3. Develop Marin as a leading arts destination

Marin Arts will link the pursuit of the arts at all levels to the economic life of our communities. Our efforts will ensure that the county’s arts industry is robust and continues to fuel the Bay Area’s already strong creative economy. The arts will be an essential ingredient of countywide policy and practice as well as a source of civic pride.

Belief #3 - Lives Filled with Discovery

Goals

1. Expand opportunities for all citizens, especially those in underserved communities, to experience the arts
2. Provide Marin’s youth with arts learning experiences that spark a lifetime of creativity, imagination and innovation
3. Expand the reach of arts programs and services that reflect Marin County’s diverse cultures

These efforts will increase participation by creating a sense of excitement and discovery in the art and cultural life of Marin. We will ensure that Marin’s communities use the arts to reach across boundaries to celebrate and share cultures.

Strategies

Belief #1 - Where the Arts Thrive

For the past decade, we've made significant strides toward positioning the arts as essential to all that makes Marin an exceptional place to live, work and play. We will continue to build a greater public awareness and understanding of the connection between the arts, creativity, education and the economy by the branding of Marin Arts. Artists, arts organizations and supporters need to discover, consider, evaluate and implement Marin Arts as a strategy to advance Marin locally and in the national marketplace.

Our primary goal is to provide citizens and visitors opportunities to learn about Marin County's rich arts and cultural assets and to encourage participation. The strategies for achieving our belief include:

Goal #1 - Create an environment where artists can work, thrive and feel supported in their creative lives

- Conduct a comprehensive artist survey to determine a more accurate profile of the arts community and its needs
- Expand and deepen artist and arts leaders Round Tables and Forums
- Expand Open Studios to include components of dance, theatre, music, film and poetry

Goal #2 - Grow and leverage community support for Marin's arts organizations

- Promote and develop MarinArts.org as the central provider of arts-related information
- Leverage partnerships so that arts organizations throughout the county can participate in cooperative media and advertising opportunities
- Explore the potential of being a central ticket agency for the county

Goal #3 - Brand Marin Arts

- Form a countywide marketing consortium to position and market Marin as a destination for arts and culture which includes promoting the vital economic and social impact that the arts industry has on Marin
- Expand MarinArts.org and strengthen the website's role as a calendar of events.
- Create a MarinArts.org marketing plan to increase participation in arts events by residents and visitors
- Expand relationships regionally and nationally with the arts media and the travel press by hosting annual press tours of Marin
- Place content and video in Facebook, YouTube, and other social media outlets to broaden and deepen participation in the arts

Belief #2 - Community Flourishes

We must immediately research the affect of the arts industry on Marin's economy. This research along with other national studies will produce useful statistics.

The presence of creative professionals in a given county is the single most important factor associated with the amount that visitors will spend. The presence of creative workers is also strongly associated with rising household incomes. Counties that have more workers per capita in arts-related occupations are more likely to retain current residents and attract new residents than counties that have fewer arts-related workers.

The strategies for achieving our belief include:

Goal #1 - Promote the importance of the creative economy to Marin's economic future

- Expand our Survey Initiative to the 11 municipalities of Marin by surveying arts assets and cultural traditions, public art projects that enhance community identity and community arts events
- Conduct an economic impact evaluation
- Develop "Creative Vitality Indicators" that can be used by cities, towns and the county to capture a more complete picture of the health and impact of Marin's arts industry
- Develop tools for arts organizations to measure the economic affect of their programs and activities
- Continue to integrate the arts into the General Plans for cities, towns, and the county to ensure the ongoing recognition of the arts as part of the economic fabric of our communities
- Partner with local Chambers of Commerce to develop materials encouraging creative industries to locate in Marin and engage in our civic life

Goal #2 - Showcase cultural offerings and make the arts a centerpiece of Marin's identity

- Implement an annual countywide two-week (eventually four-week) festival called the "Marin Arts Open"
- Develop partnerships with city and town Art Commissions to help them use their arts and cultural resources to revitalize downtown business districts
- Partner with city governments to help arts organizations make better use of city services (for instance, Mill Valley has a program that provides non-profit organizations within Mill Valley to reserve banner space on East Blithedale Avenue for their events)
- Provide leadership for arts projects that celebrate community partnerships and cultural identity and enliven public spaces, transportation systems, streetscapes, and greenways

Goal #3 - Develop Marin as a leading arts tourism destination

Tourism continues to be one of the Northern California's top industries whose cultural visitors are educated, affluent travelers.

- Influence residents and visitors to travel to events across Marin through website marketing and increased media relations
- Develop tourism products such as itineraries, lodging and event packages
- Broaden our partnerships with tourism offices and partner with local Convention & Visitors Bureaus to package arts content
- Provide technical assistance to local arts organizations on arts tourism product development and promotion
- Further develop the members' section of MarinArts.org as a resource for networking and support for local artists and arts organizations

Belief #3 - Lives Filled With Discovery

Exposure to the arts promotes innovation, imagination, critical thinking and collaboration, the skills necessary to live productive and meaningful lives.

Goal #1 - Expand opportunities for all citizens to experience the arts

Marin's vast network of artists and arts organizations provides us with high quality exhibits, performances, workshops and classes, presentations, readings and festivals – a multitude of ways for the county's citizens and visitors to participate in arts and culture. Still there are significant segments of our population that require distinct and focused strategies to become (or remain) full participants in Marin's arts network. These Marin groups include:

- Aging residents, who have reduced mobility yet maintain strong interest in the arts
- Multicultural populations, who have rich cultural traditions that strengthen their communities and can help build bonds amongst all Marin's citizens
- Disabled populations, for whom the arts provide an important avenue for participation in and contributions to our community
- Generation X and Y's "creative class," who seek interactive experiences that allow them to customize and curate their participation

The strategies for achieving our belief include:

- Encourage arts organizations to provide more access points to broaden, deepen and diversify participation in the arts
- Encourage arts organizations to offer innovative learning and participatory experiences to attract new audiences
- Engage younger, older and more diverse audiences by providing access to workshops and conferences led by national experts on arts participation
- Identify and engage artists who are not currently a part of the formal arts infrastructure

Goal #2 - Increase arts programs and services that reach citizens in underserved communities and reflect the state's diverse cultures

- Provide more support to grant seekers
- Fund arts programs and develop projects that engage and reflect Marin's ethnic communities.

Goal #3 - Provide Marin's young people with arts learning experiences that spark creativity, imagination and innovation

Most of our major arts organizations have developed engaging arts learning programs for students. We have an expansive roster of teaching artists and companies that, through artist residencies, create valuable learning opportunities for children, their families and educators. Increasing awareness of, access to and participation in these programs will encourage lifelong learning and prepare children for the challenges of the 21st century.

- Identify programs that provide in-depth educational experiences
- Develop a section of our website that provides comprehensive resources for educators, students and families
- Establish partnership agreements with the education providers around the county to produce strategic, coordinated Arts in Education programs in various geographic regions
- Expand the Marin Poets in the Schools and Teamworks programs
- Create interactive installations at our gallery as well as the Marin County Fair that provide opportunities to learn about the arts

In conclusion...

This comprehensive 4-year initiative is a living, breathing document. Several factors will help shape and guide the eventual outcome. At this time the priority steps are viewed as:

1. The move to 906 Fourth Street in San Rafael to increase visibility for Marin Arts and raise awareness of all the arts in the area
2. Expansion of Open Studios and its transition to “Marin Arts Open”
3. Cultural Participation Initiative which will result in a comprehensive arts survey whose findings will shape many of the strategies in this plan including tools for development and facts which can be used for advocacy
4. Development of exhibits and arts programming at 906 Fourth Street with efforts focused on showcasing the high level of arts in Marin
5. Continued expansion of our MarinArts.org website going live this year, preferably by May in time for Open Studios
 - Develop positioning statement / tag line
 - Ability to sell artwork, products and tickets online
 - Ability to rent art online
 - Member’s section for networking and marketing
6. Continuation of quarterly arts forums as a way to network, build and strengthen relationships between arts organizations in all arts fields
7. Growth of classes and workshops