

NWT Arts Council Strategic Plan 2014 - 2018

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NWT Arts Council

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Introduction

The NWT Arts Council is the GNWT's arts funding and advisory body. This strategic plan, the first in the Council's history, outlines the Council's mission, vision, values, goals and strategies.

Who we are and what we do

The NWT Arts Council was established August 1985, as an advisory board to the GNWT. The mandate of the NWT Arts Council is to promote the arts in the Northwest Territories.

The NWT Arts Council operates at arm's length from government under three guiding principles:

- Northern arts should reflect the cultural diversity of the population of the Northwest Territories.
- Financial support will be awarded based on artistic merit.
- The Council will be sensitive to the needs of all individuals, groups, organizations and regions of the Northwest Territories and be fair in its allocations of funds.

The six-member Advisory Board of the NWTAC provides leadership, inspiration, and advocacy to support and champion the artists and arts organizations in the NWT. The Advisory Board also acts as an expert panel to make recommendations on financial contributions to artists and arts organizations. The members represent six NWT regions - South Slave, North Slave, Tłı̄chǫ, Dehcho, Sahtu, and Beaufort-Delta. They are appointed for their expertise or interest in the arts and culture of the NWT.

The Community Programs Office, Culture and Heritage Division, GNWT Education, Culture and Employment, provides administrative support to the Advisory Board.

Mission

The NWT Arts Council's mission is to support the creation, presentation, education, and appreciation of works of art from imagination to final presentation by providing financial support and other assistance to the artists and arts organizations of the NWT. Through partnership, development, and advocacy, we work to achieve an environment that allows the arts to thrive for the benefit of the people of the NWT.

Vision

We envision a future in the Northwest Territories where:

- The artists of the NWT are appreciated for how they tell our stories and their work inspires us to understand and appreciate each other and value our cultural identities.
- The arts of the NWT are a vital part of people's lives and that most citizens of the NWT have experienced the arts during their education and in their communities, and have a life-long engagement with the arts.
- The artists and arts organizations in the NWT are thriving and are recognized as distinct, excellent and significant across Canada and around the world.
- The arts are viewed as vital to the health of the community.

Values/Beliefs

Our Vision springs from the following core beliefs which also provide the foundation for our Strategic Plan:

Art and artists:

- We believe that NWT artists and their work are at the centre of all we do.
- We believe that the arts of the NWT are distinctive and deeply rooted in the traditions of the original people and the land, water, and animals of the north.

Leadership, Partnerships and Collaboration:

- We believe the NWT Arts Council has an important role in encouraging partnerships, collaborations, networks to develop additional resources and support for NWT artists and arts organizations.

Engagement and access:

- We strive to make our funding programs and services as accessible as possible to all eligible artists and arts organizations in the Northwest Territories.
- We are committed to fostering a life-long engagement between NWT artists and our citizens.

Integrity, Accountability and Transparency:

- We will ensure that our policies and processes are open, inclusive, and accountable for the public trust we hold.

- We will ensure that our decision making process for contribution funding is fair and based on consensus.

Excellence:

- We believe our role is to support and sustain the achievement of artistic quality/excellence.
- We will also strive to ensure that our funding programs, services, administration, and delivery achieve the same level of excellence.

Diversity:

- We recognize and support diverse artistic practices, new generation artists and master artists, and artists and arts organizations of all cultural backgrounds for the value they provide to all people of the Northwest Territories.

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Background

The Advisory Board of the NWT Arts Council decided to undertake its first strategic planning process to ensure its programs and services accurately reflected the changing environment for NWT artists and arts organizations. The NWTAC also wanted to ensure that its own internal capacities and processes were examined and improved.

This Strategic Plan was developed from the results of a survey sent to NWT artists and arts organizations and the three-day strategic planning retreat held in Yellowknife, December 3-5, 2013. The retreat was attended by the Advisory Board and staff of the Community Programs Office, Culture and Heritage Division, GNWT Education, Culture and Employment.

This plan articulates the principles, priorities, goals and strategies that will guide the NWTAC in its work on behalf of the artists and arts organizations of the Northwest Territories and with community partners and collaborators to strengthen the arts community. The plan will also provide a document that can be shared broadly to enable greater understanding of the role of NWTAC.

GOALS AND STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Goal 1 **Strengthened leadership role and increased effectiveness of NWT Arts Council**

Objectives:

- Articulate the roles and responsibilities of the NWTAC and Advisory Board members.
- Implement best practice governance policies and procedures.
- Ensure that processes are in place for accountability and transparency in the contribution funding process and the financial management of public funds.
- Undertake more community consultations and research/data analysis to inform meaningful decision-making and development of policies, programs and planning.

Goal 2 Improved access to NWTAC funding programs

Objectives:

- Improve the funding application process to be more user-friendly, timely and accessible.
- Develop a communications plan to ensure that all artists in the Northwest Territories better understand the role and programs of the NWTAC.

Goal 3 Consolidate all arts programs and funding through NWTAC and increase arts funding capacity for NWT artists and arts organizations

Objectives:

- Facilitate the transfer of all ECE arts funding programs to NWTAC.
- Explore the merger of film, craft and arts programs and funding to oversight by NWTAC, under the auspices of the NWT Arts Strategy.
- Facilitate public and private financial support for NWT artists and arts organization in support of the programs of the NWTAC.
- Develop a strategy to access third party funding.

Goal 4 NWT artists and arts organizations are better supported.

Objectives:

- Provide contributions to artists at all stages of their career to allow them to develop and maintain their arts practice in the Northwest Territories.
- Provide access to career development as well as mentorship programs involving Elders/Master artists guiding/instructing emerging artists and youth in art making.
- Provide operating funding to arts organizations.
- Develop an inventory of NWT artists working in both traditional and contemporary styles to encourage existing and future peer networks.
- Increase funding opportunities for contemporary and traditional NWT artists and arts organizations.
- Investigate partnerships and collaborative arrangements that strengthen national and international touring and presentation opportunities for NWT artists and arts organizations.
- Advocate for development of a multi-disciplinary post-secondary arts school in the NWT.

Goal 5 Strengthened community resources, connections, and public engagement

Objectives:

- Increase resources available to NWT artists and arts organizations by establishing partnerships to access more resources from the community.
- Seek partnerships with government departments and with aboriginal governments, municipalities, educational authorities, local/regional/territorial/national heritage and cultural organizations, Friendship Centres and other community sectors.
- Assist artists and arts organizations to enhance community engagement and audience development in the Northwest Territories.
- Work with partners to increase opportunities for children and youth to participate and engage in arts activities and cultural experiences in school as well as in the community.
- Work with partners to improve support services to artists and arts organizations.
- Work with partners to develop and share research to advocate for the value of the arts in people's lives and demonstrate the economic and social value of the arts.