

Public Funding for the Arts

An Outline for Securing Local Public Sector Funding for the Arts

Ohio Citizens for the Arts

***Keeping the Arts
Strong in Ohio***

**Ohio Citizens for the Arts
77 South High Street, 2nd floor
Columbus, Ohio 43215-6108
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www.OhioCitizensForTheArts.org**

Public Funding for the Arts

Ohio Citizens for the Arts is pleased to provide you with a basic template of information to consider when thinking about a local ballot initiative to support the arts in your community. Many of our members have had great success in securing local public funding for the arts. One great example of this is the arts and cultural organizations in Cuyahoga County who joined forces with community and elected leaders to secure a dedicated revenue stream for the county's arts and cultural assets. The Cuyahoga County 1.5 cents per cigarette tax dedicated for county arts organizations will raise about \$20 million per year just for one county. By contrast, the entire Ohio Arts Council budget for 2 years for all 88 counties is only \$23 million dollars. Moreover, because of continuing cuts to that budget, the OCA encourages local communities to explore other public income opportunities to supplement OAC funding which may even be more lucrative and reliable.

This success has helped Ohio Citizens for the Arts better understand the time, commitment, and process of taking on a ballot initiative at the local level to support the arts. The Ohio Citizens for the Arts Board of Trustees' believe that our role as advocacy leaders is to share data, research, and tools to help you advocate for the arts in your community. This document is a result of many conversations, presentations, and information gathering. Please know that Ohio Citizens for the Arts is *not* proposing a state ballot initiative for the arts. This template was created as a tool for our members and others interested in supporting public funding for the arts at the local level. Information for this template has been gathered from a number of sources which are referenced at the end of this document.

Ohio Citizens for the Arts, established in 1976, is a volunteer not-for-profit grassroots organization working to increase public support of the arts in Ohio. Ohio Citizens for the Arts advocates on behalf of the Ohio Arts Council and the arts throughout the state of Ohio. It is with the active participation of thousands of individuals and organizations that we successfully advocate for public funding for the arts at the state and national levels. Our individual members are corporate leaders, citizens who love the arts, parents, students, teachers, artists, arts administrators, policy-makers, and others who support our mission. Our organizational members range from PTAs to world renowned orchestras. There is a place for everyone at Ohio Citizens for the Arts!

When considering a ballot initiative to support the arts, there is much to be done in regards to homework, assessment, research, communication, and leadership. What follows is a basic outline to help you begin thinking about the steps that will lead to a successful effort to support the arts in your community.

HOMEWORK

Needs Assessment

- What are the needs of the artists and arts organizations in your community?
 - Operating support
 - Project support
 - Artistic support
 - Other _____

- What are the community goals that the arts and cultural sector can attain?
 - Economic
 - Education
 - Neighborhood
 - Cultural
- Are the identified community goals consistent with the arts and cultural sector?
 - Support public funding of the arts
 - Outreach to individuals, families, schools, and organizations
 - Other _____
- Is a ballot initiative the only way to address the identified needs?
 - What other sources of local public sector funding exist?
 - Are there other potential partners to benefit from a ballot initiative? (schools K-12, higher education, community development organizations, chambers of commerce, etc.)

Resource Assessment

- Are there sufficient resources to carry out a ballot initiative?
 - Committed Leadership (public sector, corporate sector, education sector, organized labor sector, etc.)
 - Money—Fundraising
 - Time
 - Message:
 - Making the case for the cause
 - Succinct and compelling to communicate the cause
 - Organizational Capacity:
 - Dedicated staff, volunteers, and community leaders
 - Allies for the long haul (business, education, health and human services, organized labor, religious groups, etc.)

Understanding the Process

- Learn the process and rules for conducting a ballot initiative in your community
 - Obtain rules and procedures from city, county, and state officials
 - Read, ask questions, and record information collected as reference material
 - Consider professional counsel (legal, lobbyist, fundraisers, etc.)

Playing by the Rules

- Work in a transparent environment
 - Meetings should be open – include the media
 - Gather information and share it with everyone interested in the ballot initiative
 - Ask other groups who have succeeded and failed at ballot initiatives to share their successes and learning experiences

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Analysis of the Political Climate

- Who will support?
- Who will oppose?
- What else is on the ballot?
- When is the best time for the initiative to appear on the ballot?
- Is the public ready to say yes to public funding for the arts?

The questions have been answered. The resources are secured. The partners and allies are ready to work together. The community is involved. The rules and process are understood. The political climate is good. *What now?*

CREATING A CAMPAIGN

Message

- What is the wording for the question on the ballot?
- Have all the legal requirements been met?
- Community meetings
 - Fraternal organizations, religious groups, social service groups, business groups, health and human service groups, chambers of commerce, tourism industry, etc.
 - Arts and culture sector: senior staff of arts organization, artists, Board members of cultural organizations, etc.
- Polls and surveys that test public opinion
- Media, communications, and legal counsel
- Avoid preconceptions of what you want to do through polls and surveys
- The issue must impact the voter
- Good research will lead to a quality message

Tapping Campaign Leaders

- Use your research, data, public value stories, and messaging to find:
 - Individuals to lead and support the campaign
 - Organizations to lead and support the campaign
 - Individuals and organizations to contribute to the campaign
 - Individuals who will vote for the ballot question

Media

- The media will be a key component to your efforts
 - The media must be involved from the start
 - Identify reporters who will listen to your case based on facts. Remember the media is a referee it is not a player.
- Earned media (free media) from individuals and organizations
 - Public value stories in the media
 - Endorsements by individuals and organizations for the ballot initiative
 - No organization is too small
 - Speaking training and engagements consistent with message and a clear set of answers to a set of pre-determined questions

- Media (advertising)
 - Direct mail
 - Brochures and literature drops
 - Advertising (print and electronic)
 - Web and Internet based components
 - Contributed (curtain and gallery speeches, arts and cultural organization newsletters and emails, resolutions of support of the initiative by arts and cultural organization Boards)

STRUCTURE and STRATEGY:

Establishing the People Structure

- Leadership Team
 - Steering Committee or Campaign Committee (paid and non-paid positions):
 - Campaign Manager
 - Media Manager
 - Campaign Treasurer
 - Fundraising Manager
 - Field Manager
 - Community Outreach Manager
 - Media Connections
 - Individuals and Organizations representing the arts
 - Individuals and Organizations representing other interested parties (usual and unusual suspects)
 - Neighborhood Coordinators
 - Arts Boards Key Contacts
 - Artists Key Contacts
 - Legislators (city, county, state)
 - Legislative staff (city, county, state)

Setting the People into Motion

- Collect Signatures to secure your question gets on the ballot
 - Enlist volunteers to train individuals on how to collect signatures
 - Enlist volunteers to collect signatures
 - Enlist volunteers to check validity of signatures
 - Make the case to local officials to exercise their authority to place an arts and culture initiative on the ballot
 - Collect more signatures than you need
- Voter Registration
 - Work with the League of Women Voters and other like minded organizations to guide you
 - Enlist college and university students who are eager to get involved to help with voter registration
 - Host voter registration tables at tradeshow, arts events, festivals, libraries, public radio, and television events

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Finding and Following the Money

- Develop a comprehensive budget
 - Paid staff
 - Legal assistance for financial filings, ballot language filed with Board of Elections, etc.
 - Media
 - Research
 - Polling, surveys, drafting of ballot language, messaging, voter education materials
 - Campaign office and operating costs
 - Print and web-based resources
 - Collection of petition signatures
 - Legal challenges against the signatures submitted
 - Paid advertising
 - Mailings
 - Community meetings
 - Legislative counsel or consultant
- Develop a fundraising program
 - Understand campaign finance and the rules
 - Build database of potential donors
 - Ask groups supporting the initiative to use their Board, members, and donors contact list to seek contributions
 - Fundraisers
 - Special events
 - Web based solicitations
 - Direct mail
 - Telephone solicitations
- Creating the Fundraising Team
 - Staff and consultants
 - Key donors and people of influence
 - People connectors and networkers
- Low budgets just don't work - lessons from other campaigns:
 - Don't start with a dollar figure in mind and work backward
 - You must do your research on real costs – guesstimates don't work
 - Work in worst-case scenario mode when developing the budget
 - The 'what' and 'how' of your campaign will help develop a solidly detailed budget
 - Don't lose your campaign because you run out of money

COMMUNICATION

- Communicate effectively and often
 - Communicate with everyone—transparency works!
 - Communicate so that there is no doubt or wonder about your message, efforts, and goals

Sources:

- *A Long and Winding Road: Local Public Sector Arts and Culture Funding*, Thomas Schorgl, Executive Director, Community Partnership for Arts and Culture, Presentation to Ohio Citizens for the Arts, April 2008 www.cpacbiz.org
- *Ballot Questions: A Resource Kit for Members of the State Arts Action Network*, Senator Stan Rosenberg, President Pro Tempore, Massachusetts State Senate and Jay H. Dick, Director of Arts Policy, Americans for the Arts
- *Ballot Considerations*: Ohio Citizen Action, Paul Ryder, Organizing Director, www.ohiocitizen.org
- Initiative and Referendum Institute: www.iandrinstute.org
- Ballot Initiative Strategy Center: www.ballot.org

YOUR NOTES:

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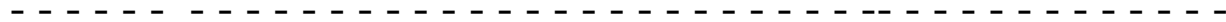
GET INVOLVED:

If you are interested in becoming involved and supporting arts advocacy we invite you to join Ohio Citizens for the Arts. Everyone is welcome to join and participate in our efforts to support public funding for the Arts.

Individual Membership

Membership Levels:	Name_____
\$600 Benefactor	Address_____
\$300 Patron	City_____ State____ Zip (+4)_____ - _____
\$120 Sponsor	Daytime Phone (____)_____
\$60 Sustaining	Evening Phone (____)_____
\$50 Household	Email_____
\$30 Member	

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Organization Membership

Organization Membership dues are based on the annual budget of your organization:

<i>Up to \$25,000</i> \$30	Name of Organization_____
<i>\$25-50,000</i> \$60	_____
<i>\$50-100,000</i> \$120	Executive_____
<i>\$100-200,000</i> \$240	Address_____
<i>\$200-300,000</i> \$360	City_____ State____ Zip (+4)_____ - _____
<i>\$300-400,000</i> \$480	Daytime Phone (____)_____
<i>\$400-500,000</i> \$600	Evening Phone (____)_____
<i>Over \$500,000</i> \$660	E-mail_____

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