

STRATEGIC PLAN 2004–2008



AMERICANS
for the ARTS

SERVING COMMUNITIES.
ENRICHING LIVES.



SERVING COMMUNITIES. ENRICHING LIVES.

Steven D. Spiess
Chairman

Robert L. Lynch
President and CEO

March 29, 2004

Dear Members and Friends,

As you know, with the announcement of an extraordinary gift from Ruth Lilly in late 2002, Americans for the Arts began a strategic planning process and invited you to participate. More than 1,000 of you responded, whether by completing a survey, being interviewed by phone or in person, or expressing your thoughts via one of our leadership councils. Throughout 2003, our board of directors listened to the information you gave us and used it to outline the direction that Americans for the Arts will take over the next five years. We're pleased to now present that direction to you in this document.

With a vision of access to the arts for every American, Americans for the Arts has affirmed the following goals:

1. Foster an environment in which the arts can thrive and contribute to the creation of more livable communities.
2. Generate more public- and private-sector resources for the arts and arts education.
3. Build individual appreciation of the value of the arts.

While we will continue our longstanding focus on working with both organizational and individual leaders, we have also realized the need to increase the involvement of individual citizens in order for every American to have the opportunity to appreciate, value, and participate in all forms of the arts; therefore, we have added that emphasis in the third goal.

You told us that you wanted us to concentrate our efforts in two major areas, and that's what we're going to do. First, we will increase the national clout of the arts, and then—equally important—we will provide you with the local tools you need to advance the arts and arts education. We will expand our work in engaging and mobilizing leaders from the public sector and private sector, as well as arts organizations and those who are artists. To achieve our goals, Americans for the Arts will employ key strategies in five areas: research and information, policy and advocacy, professional development, visibility and recognition, and strategic alliances and partnerships. The following pages address our new action plan in more detail.

In particular, over the last several months we have also been working on a new staffing structure to implement this vision and these strategies over the coming year. The structure may be viewed at www.AmericansForTheArts.org/staff, which has links to our job bank where we will continue to post our new positions. Key among them will include three new directors to work on federal, state, and local policy issues in our government and public affairs department and a director of leadership initiatives and member relations and local arts agency coordinators in our field services department. We will also hire a vice president of external affairs who will be responsible for overseeing all fundraising, as well as volunteer leadership and communications functions for the organization.

We will use on a matching basis some of the resources generated by the Lilly gift to begin to establish a \$50 million endowment over the next five years that will ensure the sustainability of Americans for the Arts and contribute to our long-term ability to serve our members and advance our mission. Finally, with the creation of a related 501(c)(4) organization, we will enlist and mobilize 100,000 citizen activists who will ensure that arts-friendly public policies are adopted and public and private resources are maximized.

We all know that the arts are important to our society and to each of us as human beings. It is a benefit to our country that its citizens embrace the value of the arts. With this tremendous expansion of the power base dedicated to advancing the arts, Americans for the Arts and our thousands of partners like you are poised to elevate the arts agenda to a level never before reached in our country. We are tremendously excited to embark on this journey together with you, and look forward to your continuing advice and involvement.

Sincerely,



Steven D. Spiess
Chair, Board of Directors



Robert L. Lynch
President and CEO

New Action Steps 2004–2008: Highlights

RESEARCH AND INFORMATION

Continue to conduct action-oriented research and provide the data and information tools needed to advance the arts

- Create a national arts index measuring the cultural health and vitality of the arts
- Conduct annual public opinion surveys quantifying how people value and participate in the arts
- Conduct an annual economic impact study documenting business and employment trends in the arts from the nonprofit and for-profit creative industries using Dun & Bradstreet data
- Conduct a national economic impact study of the nonprofit arts industry every five years
- Disseminate strategically timed research about the arts, arts and civic dialogue, and arts and community development

POLICY AND ADVOCACY

Increase policy development activities and advocacy efforts

- Build a strong national arts policy roundtable of leaders to help frame public- and private-sector cultural policy positions for the advancement of the arts and arts education at the national, state, and local levels
 - Develop a wide series of policy discussions and forums to encourage the flow of new ideas for the arts industry
 - Work with national, state, and local leadership organizations to familiarize decision-makers with cultural policy options and arts support mechanisms
 - Increase the stature and visibility of the annual Nancy Hanks Lecture on Arts and Public Policy
- Build a larger advocacy movement for the arts at the national, state, and local levels
 - Coordinate and link 50 statewide advocacy efforts to address state issues and form a more cohesive national advocacy force at the federal, state, and local levels
 - Create a team of 50 state advocacy captains to mobilize grassroots efforts to advance federal issues
 - Create a national advocacy communications infrastructure with the launch of a one-stop federal, state, and local arts advocacy Web portal
 - Increase advocacy and policy staff at the federal, state, and local levels
- Create a connected 501(c)(4) organization to Americans for the Arts that will conduct advocacy campaigns and house a political action committee (PAC) for the arts
 - Build a membership base of 100,000 citizen activists
 - Extend membership invitations to individual artists, arts management professionals, board leaders, and arts audiences throughout the United States
 - Hire public membership staff

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Provide an array of training and leadership development opportunities to the diverse field and leadership of the cultural support infrastructure of America

- Create a new and more accessible choice membership dues structure
- Implement targeted professional development and training programs
- Build more advisory councils of local arts leaders in key programmatic areas
- Expand leadership development training for emerging and diverse leaders
- Help create new local arts agencies in communities where they don't exist
- Help establish additional united arts funds in communities where appropriate
- Establish a network of volunteer leaders of local and state arts service entities
- Broaden collaboration with the 40,000+ nonprofit arts organizations and their professional staffs and volunteer leaders
- Expand training in arts and civic dialogue work
- Increase field services staff

VISIBILITY AND RECOGNITION

Invest in increased visibility opportunities

- Create new national public service advertising campaigns about the value of the arts and arts education
- Increase partnerships with network and cable television, radio, print, billboard, and online media
- Increase public recognition of leadership events like The National Arts Awards and the Public Leadership in the Arts Awards
- Expand National Arts & Humanities Month activities and coverage
- Expand targeted advertising and op-ed placements
- Create an Artists Committee of prominent artists from all disciplines
- Establish more opportunities for coverage of arts and civic dialogue work, public art, arts education, and other key areas of local cultural achievement
- Increase recognition of the contributions of distinguished arts leaders through awards such as the Selina Roberts Ottum, Michael Newton, and Public Art Network Awards

STRATEGIC ALLIANCES AND PARTNERSHIPS

Promote and expand collaboration in the form of alliances, partnerships, linkages, and mergers

- Advance efforts with the entertainment industry, such as current work with The Film Foundation, the National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences, and the Ad Council, and with more national arts service organizations
- Connect with more national associations for elected leaders, such as the United States Conference of Mayors, the National Governors Association, and the National Conference of State Legislatures
- Connect with more national associations for the private sector, such as the Arts & Business Council, the Business Roundtable, and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce
- Build and forge stronger connections to public- and private-sector leaders through Americans for the Arts' internal leadership committees: the Board of Directors, the American Arts Policy Roundtable, the National Leadership Council, and the President's Advisory Committee
- Develop a strong private-sector initiative for arts funding with corporate leaders; individual philanthropists; and national, community, and family foundations
- Develop an initiative to increase arts giving by young and emerging philanthropists

**Thank you for the work you do in strengthening communities and enriching lives through the arts.
We look forward to working with you and serving you over the next five years.**



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