



**STRATEGIC PLAN 2018-2022**





Shellman, Georgia

# Introduction

The arts have long been understood to be a significant and meaningful architect in the development and growth of healthy societies. Georgia's story has been no different. From the earliest days of its founding, the arts have shaped the cultural identity of the state of Georgia. We have used the arts to tell our story, carry forth diverse traditions and shape the place we live. As our society has developed, the state's role in supporting and advancing the arts industry has continued to evolve.

Today, the state's dedicated arts agency, Georgia Council for the Arts (GCA), is much more than a purveyor of the arts, but supports the transformation of ideas produced in our creative sectors into an economic and social reality and advances policy and state programs that build and strengthen the quality of life throughout Georgia. Housed within the Georgia Department of Economic Development (GDEcD) since 2011, GCA is positioned to leverage resources and cultivate support for the arts as an economic development strategy that builds relationships with artists and arts organizations that enrich and strengthen the resiliency of communities throughout Georgia. These efforts, initiated in GCA's 2013 Strategic Plan, serve as a conduit between state-wide agencies and local communities, redefine and increase access to GCA tools that support localities, facilitate economic growth and improve quality of life throughout Georgia.

In keeping with GCA's mission to cultivate the growth of vibrant, thriving Georgia communities through the Arts, this next strategic plan is characterized by building upon the strategic efforts and accomplishments of the last five years. Thus, GCA will continue to leverage its position in state government and our connections with local communities to facilitate mutually beneficial relationships of action; build strategic partnerships that increase local access to artistic resources and their products; and, align programming and resource allocation with other economic and community development initiatives to further enhance opportunities for Georgians.

## ON THE COVER

TOP: *The Little Mermaid* - Serenbe Playhouse, Chattahoochee Hills

BOTTOM LEFT: Gilmer Arts Dulcimers, Ellijay

BOTTOM RIGHT: Morris Museum of Art, Augusta

## Letter from the Staff and Council for the Arts

A few months prior to the start of community forums for GCA's last strategic plan, we had joined the Georgia Department of Economic Development and enthusiastically embraced the new opportunity to be a part of an integrated strategy for economic development. We saw nothing but potential, and yet our feet were firmly planted in the understanding that we needed to be thoughtful and collaborative in the path we set forth for how to integrate the arts into state economic development practices while remaining realistic about the allocation of our constrained resources. Through the planning forums we set out to answer a pivotal question: not what could we do with the resources we had, but what should we be doing with those resources? What came of the community meetings, interviews and online surveys was a new mission, vision and strategic plan that set the vision and direction for GCA's future, and served as the platform for rebuilding and rebranding the organization. Every initiative and program that has been undertaken in the five years since the plan was approved has been strategically aimed at advancing our mission and goals while reviving our relevance and innovation. Each new or revised program idea has been evaluated through one critical question: "to what end?" If the answer doesn't align with a specific objective or if we realize that the end we seek is beyond our means to make progress (for example, will require staff or financial resources beyond our means) we redirect. Meaning, that our plan has both empowered new work and has given us the permission to say no to ideas that we love, but know that we can't responsibly move forward. As a result, the portfolio developed has drastically changed our relationships within state government, with local communities and government, with artists and with arts organizations. We are, first and foremost, grateful to the arts organizations and artists that have shared in the vision and the work. We are also grateful for the support of the Governor's Office, the Georgia Department of Economic Development, and the Georgia General Assembly.

In the years since we wrote the first plan, driven by new strategies and our position in the state, our emphasis on the role of the arts in economic development has expanded. The shift, however, has not compromised our focus on Georgia artists and arts organizations. Rather, it has amplified our ability to be in service to them through our mission. This position has enabled us to advance our strategic objectives while building understanding and value for the work across sectors. For example, we have positioned our work in arts education alongside workforce development, joined forces with the Georgia Tourism division to support arts-focused tourism and grown support for our grants program, especially in rural areas of the state, through a lens of economic and community development. We remained firmly rooted in the path set forth by our 2013-2018 strategic plan. Under its guidance, we have grown and leveraged this platform to build strategic partnerships, increase our funding and build allies across state agencies and sectors. That plan has paved the way for this one.

On the following pages you will find GCA's roadmap for the next five years. It is the result of twelve months of planning, including four statewide, community-based meetings, over 1,000 responses to surveys (both online and in-person) and one-on-one interviews and meetings with key stakeholders. The 2018 - 2022 plan builds on the foundation laid by our previous plan and more assertively places GCA in a position to influence public will. Like the plan that came before, this plan empowers new work and gives us permission to say no to ideas that we love, but know that we can't responsibly move forward. We believe it also positions us to advance policy and practice at the state and local level that recognizes and supports the significant work done by artists and arts organizations. It is their work that serves to connect Georgians to one another and to identity of place, and provides individuals with opportunities to mediate and/or amplify life's experiences through the arts. Further, when fully resourced and supported, arts programs serve as a source for creative community-based solutions to community-based challenges, and equip our students to be innovative and adaptable, key skills that contribute to their future success. We believe that creativity is a renewable resource that can break down barriers between sectors and build the connectivity on which communities grow their economy, foster relationships that build social networks and generate culture. The strategies on the following pages focus GCA's work over the next five years in service to that belief, and in support of the artists and arts organizations that enable that powerful work to happen.



Governor Deal, GCA Executive Director Karen Paty and First Lady Deal with Art of Georgia Submissions



Atlanta Music Project, Atlanta



Janisse Ray, Georgia author and contributor to GCA's publication *Inspired Georgia*, reads from the book with Girl Scout Madyson Bruce at the Altama Museum of Art & History, Vidalia

## Mission

The mission of Georgia Council for the Arts is to cultivate the growth of vibrant, thriving Georgia communities through the arts.

## Guiding Principles

- ▶ The arts contribute to a thriving state economy by attracting tourism, creating jobs, revitalizing communities, attracting new businesses and keeping existing businesses in our state.
- ▶ The arts define our collective sense of place and identity as Georgians.
- ▶ Arts participation has a powerful impact on individuals, with potential benefits ranging from improved physical and mental health and increased civic engagement, to new skills development and better problem-solving.
- ▶ Arts learning is essential to cultivating the next generation of entrepreneurs, leaders, inventors, and creative problem solvers that will place Georgia as a leader in the global economy.

## Values

The following values guide Georgia Council for the Arts to ensure that our funding reflects our principles and that our own work is consistently mission-driven and delivered through the highest level of professionalism and commitment to the arts and culture community in our state.

- Equity
- Inclusion
- Accessibility
- Stewardship
- Partnerships & Collaboration
- Excellence
- Integrity
- Transparency
- Transformation
- Deep and lasting community connections



## Catalyze Economic Development through the Arts

The arts are a viable and successful economic development tool for local communities and our state's economy. The Creative Industries in Georgia employ nearly 200,000 people<sup>1</sup> and contribute over \$37 billion in annual revenue.<sup>2</sup> Through programs, partnerships, grants, and the dissemination of research on the economic impact of the arts, GCA will catalyze economic development through the arts in Georgia.

### 1. Serve as a resource for evidence of the economic impact of the arts by maintaining a robust online library of data.

- a. Publish updated creative economy data, as new data sets are made available.
- b. Increase the number of Georgia-specific "Leveraging Public Investment in the Arts" case studies.
- c. Publish data highlighting the economic impact of GCA grants.
- d. Increase awareness and utility of the Economic Impact Calculator, along with practical information on how to talk about local economic impact.

### 2. Support the growth and sustainability of the nonprofit arts industry.

- a. Use grant making to arts organizations as a strategy to promote organizational capacity, fiscal stability, and economic impact on local communities.
- b. Develop capacity building opportunities for arts organizations and artists to reach their full potential as part of local economic engines.
- c. Leverage statewide partnerships and collaborations with non-arts sectors to increase support for and engagement with artists and arts organizations.
- d. Maintain existing and grow new strategic partnerships that promote, message and advance support for the role of the arts in economic development (examples: GDEcD, GMA, UGA Archways, DCA).

### 3. Annually evaluate the distribution of GCA grants to advance equity in grant making and access to GCA funding by under-resourced and marginalized communities.

### 4. Advance the growth of the arts as a tourism strategy for local economic development by continuing strategic partnerships with the Tourism Division of the Georgia Department of Economic Development.

- a. Maintain position on tourism resource team.
- b. Work as allies in supporting local government to develop economic development strategies tied to creative placemaking and cultural tourism.
- c. Provide connections between the arts community and the tourism industry throughout the state.

### 5. Support rural economic development through the arts.

- a. Provide programming that serves as a springboard for local economic development through the arts such as touring exhibits & region-specific capacity building training.
- b. Work within GDEcD to support the state's efforts in rural communities by: identifying local cultural assets and identifying the resources and infrastructure necessary to enable those assets to become leaders in economic growth, connecting local artists with revitalization efforts, and engaging regional arts organizations in this work.
- c. Work directly with local governments, artists, and arts organizations in rural communities to help develop local strategies for the arts & economic development.

### 6. Cultivate and nurture internal collaborations and alliances within the divisions of the Georgia Department of Economic Development to amplify the role of the arts in the state's strategies towards job creation and industry support.

<sup>1</sup>EMSI 2016

<sup>2</sup>Economic Census and Nonemployer Statistics 2012



The Hudgens Center for the Arts, Duluth



# College Readiness and Lifelong Learning

Arts education develops critical thinking skills, which are key to college readiness, lifelong learning, and workforce development.

*GCA Arts Education Campaign*



*The Wizard of Oz - Blue Ridge Community Theatre, Blue Ridge*

## Enrich Individual Lives through the Arts

The arts profoundly impact the lives of Georgians at every age and throughout various life experiences.

GCA is committed to building avenues of support (policy, program, financial, and informational) for artists, arts educators and arts organizations to increase awareness of and access to programs that advance lifelong learning in the arts. GCA will support state and local programs and partnerships that engage individuals in meaningful arts experiences and contribute to a portfolio of school and community-based transformative arts learning opportunities for Georgians.

### 1. Advance Arts Learning:

- a. Provide grant support to expand access to arts learning for K-12 students throughout the state – including in-school, out-of-school, and after school opportunities – and for underserved populations in rural and high poverty communities.
- b. Promote the benefits of arts learning through publications, research, resources, best practices, case studies, and success stories that highlight model work in arts learning in Georgia.
- c. Provide resources to advance arts learning, and support the implementation of STEAM and Arts Integration strategies in K-12 schools.
- d. Work with the Georgia Department of Education to support the state’s new Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) plan, to promote adoption of the state’s updated fine arts standards, and to incorporate the fine arts (visual art, music, dance, theatre, media arts, and [for GCA] creative writing) as an essential component of educating the whole child in K-12 schools throughout the state.
- e. Promote the field of teaching artists that work in schools and with community-based organizations serving K-12 students through an online registry and connect their work to available GCA grant funds.
- f. Support literary arts programs for high school students, including Poetry Out Loud and the Poet Laureate’s Prize.
- g. Engage in strategic partnerships, including with the Department of Education, the Governor’s Office of Student Achievement, the Georgia Partnership for Excellence in Education, and arts education professional associations to expand access to arts learning throughout Georgia.

### 2. Through strategic partnerships and collaborations work to expand access to the arts and creative arts therapies.

- a. Provide support and resources to expand the work of teaching artists with special populations throughout the state.
- b. Provide research, publications, and resources on the benefits of the arts in institutional settings and for specific populations, as well as best practices, case studies, and success stories. This may include areas of work such as arts and aging, arts in medicine, arts for people with disabilities, arts in corrections and arts and juvenile justice.
- c. Provide support and resources to state and local arts organizations and agencies to expand work with specific populations and people in institutional settings.
- d. Strengthen GCA’s working relationship with the Georgia Department of Corrections to advance a cohesive vision for an Arts in Prisons program and build the community of artists and arts organizations working with offenders in our state prison system.
- e. Explore opportunities to build partnerships that connect our veterans and active duty military member with healing arts programs and experiences.
- f. Serve as a partner and bridge between the arts community and the state’s education and prevention work to respond to the opioid epidemic (and addiction in general).

## Build Community Vitality

By engaging individual participation in community cultural life, the arts strengthen the connections that build community resiliency and foster innovation in communities' responses to challenges. Towns and cities throughout Georgia have harnessed the power of the arts to strengthen community vitality, build resiliency and improve quality of life. By supporting, documenting and sharing their stories as evidence of how the arts cultivate healthier communities, GCA will advance efforts to integrate arts organizations, artists and arts educators as partners in community development.

### 1. Provide grant support and resources to encourage community development through the arts.

- a. Integrate best practices for equity and inclusion in grant programs to encourage and model best practices for equity and inclusion in the arts locally.
- b. Fund arts programming that has relevance and meaning to grantees' communities (can be geographic or other).
- c. Share best practices and impact stories from GCA grantees.
- d. Continue to grow GCA staff consultations with local governments to develop strategies for working with and providing meaningful support for arts organizations and artists.
  - i. Identify and share best practices for artists working within local government.
  - ii. Through resources and sharing best practices, build pathways to collaboration between the arts and local government, including but not limited to transportation, parks and recreation, downtown development, and other areas of local government.
  - iii. Include the preservation and continuation of traditional art forms and cultural heritage throughout Georgia.

### 2. Advance the conversation about creative placemaking, including tools, resources, and best practices.

- a. Build partnerships to support cultural planning.
- b. Develop resources and guidelines for best practices in public art.
- c. Continue to foster and strengthen partnerships and collaborations with non-arts entities such as GMA, DCA, and the Archways program at UGA to advance the work of the arts in placemaking.

### 3. Continue touring exhibits and other programs that reach into communities and serve as a catalyst for local arts programming.

### 4. Continue strategic partnership with the Georgia Department of Economic Development's Tourism division and the Tourism Resource Team to advance the role of the arts in local cultural heritage tourism initiatives that build community connections and promote a sense of place.

### 5. Produce convenings and webinars to support the development and connectivity of the Georgia arts community, advancing organizational capacity building and individual professional development.



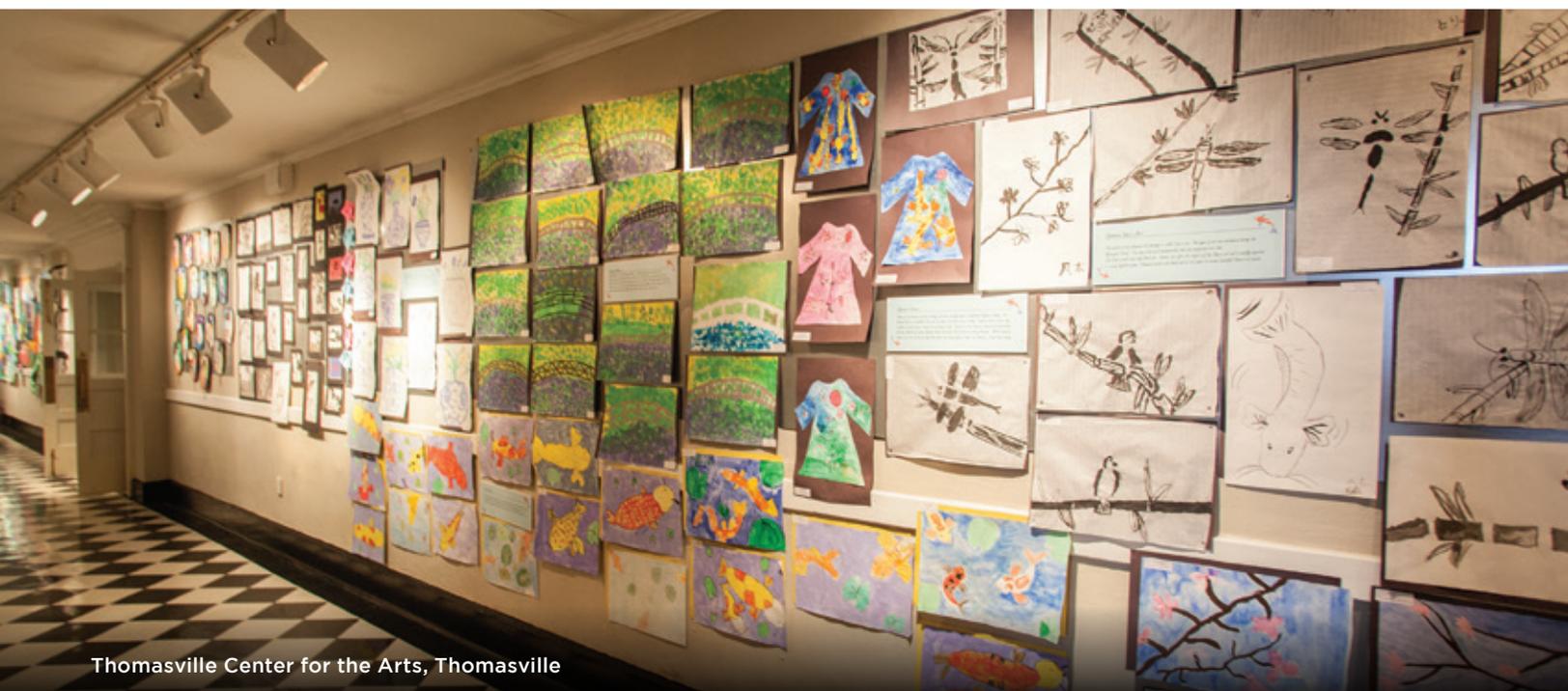
City of Monroe



*The Magic Flute* - Atlanta Opera, Atlanta • Photo by Raftermen



Savannah Music Festival, Savannah • Photo by Frank Stewart



Thomasville Center for the Arts, Thomasville

## Tell the Story

Transformative work is being done by Georgia artists, arts organizations and arts educators to advance economic development, cultivate strong communities and deeply impact individual lives.

Broad recognition and value for this work is directly connected to public awareness.

GCA will coordinate efforts to promote the story of the creative sector and the power of the arts in economic development, the enrichment of individual lives, and community vitality.

### 1. Develop advocacy materials and messaging for widespread use.

- a. Continue to push out the arts education campaign.
- b. Develop a general value of the arts campaign modeled on the arts education campaign platform (useful through multiple platforms).

### 2. Cultivate continued support for and continue to program the Governor's Awards for the Arts & Humanities.

### 3. Create platforms to continually spotlight Georgia's artists and arts organizations.

- a. Produce and share publications and exhibits (existing and new).
- b. Utilize social media and digital platforms to highlight major accomplishments by Georgia artists and arts organizations

### 4. Convene a messaging task force to guide GCA's messaging strategies.

### 5. Develop a concise marketing and messaging plan for the division – both ongoing and a format for program-specific marketing.

- a. Digital media strategy
  - i. Redesign GCA's website.
  - ii. Examine social media presence and opportunities in order to optimize impact.
  - iii. Utilize digital media to share GCA staff speaking engagements and community visits and connect current activity back to existing GCA resources.
  - iv. Examine existing digital communication for opportunities to maximize impact.
- b. Traditional media strategy
  - i. Share resources for artists and arts organizations to market themselves.
  - ii. Pitch localized best practices and impact stories to highlight the work and successes of the arts around the state.
  - iii. Create opportunities for Georgians to connect with GCA initiatives (touring exhibits, readings, books, etc.).
  - iv. Continue to build collaborations with non-arts entities to advance messaging.
- c. Promote the State Art Collection, including its digital presence and online exhibits, and continue to seek innovative ways to share the work across the state.
- d. Promote the digitized Traditional Arts Research Collection and online exhibits as a state treasure and as a research and educational tool.

In the Spring of 2017, Georgia Council for the Arts initiated work on a new strategic plan, a document intended to serve as a timely and inspirational guidepost to carry forward our work in support of the arts. In keeping with our guiding principle to function with strategic intention, GCA again partnered with the Carl Vinson Institute of Government (CVIOG) to develop and implement the planning process to guide the 2018 – 2022 Plan. CVIOG worked with GCA in 2012 to develop our first five-year strategic plan written as a division of the Georgia Department of Economic Development. From this first planning process GCA crafted a new mission and a plan that set the foundation for support of the arts through the lens of the state’s integrated economic development strategy.

In partnership with CVIOG, GCA staff outlined and defined processes to ensure substantial public engagement, interpreted gathered input, and codified this input into our strategic plan. Our goal was to produce a plan that reflected input from our broad range of stakeholders throughout Georgia. Thus, we utilized a multi-faceted process that included a partnership with the Georgia Municipal Association, arts organizations throughout the state, colleges and universities and a plurality of data gathering techniques under the moniker of ‘Create Georgia: Shaping the future of the arts in Georgia.’

This process included four (4) Create Georgia input sessions around the state where over 130 artists, arts administrators, volunteers, educators, mayors, city council members and local government staff engaged in thematic discussions on the current state of arts and culture, future opportunities and challenges, big ideas for arts and culture, and the future role of GCA. The input sessions were held in Gainesville, LaGrange, Dublin, and Atlanta. The participants worked in small groups answering three questions to help guide GCA’s work over the next five (5) years:

1. In your world right now (locally, regionally), what is changing? What are the challenges? What are the opportunities?
2. Understanding what is happening locally, and if money is no object, what are your three (3) biggest wishes for the arts and culture in Georgia the next 5 to 10 years?
3. How can GCA respond to what is happening locally and your big wishes? How does GCA advance those priorities? How does GCA advance those in a way that supports local communities and supports the overall vitality of the state?

A digital questionnaire was also distributed that in addition to the above contributors, extended our information seeking processes to donors, foundations, and grant makers (709 questionnaires received). In addition, a paper survey traveled with GCA’s exhibit from the book “Inspired Georgia” and solicited feedback from patrons, gallery visitors and students in Zebulon, Milledgeville, Rome, Vidalia, Statesboro and Albany. Once data was collected, a facilitated Board/Staff Retreat was held to analyze the trends that emerged from the community feedback and began Strategic Plan development. Following the retreat, and the completion of the first draft of the plan’s goals, a digital questionnaire was implemented that allowed participants to affirm, negate and/or comment on the strategic priorities presented (237 responses). Summarily, approximately 1,100 responses were utilized in the formation of this plan.

Through the process of deliberative dialogue on the information gathered, our strategic priorities and plans for achieving these priorities have been identified and provided with high levels of public input. Within the context of the lessons learned from our previous strategic initiatives, this Strategic Plan is presented.



*Inspired Georgia* Traveling Photo Exhibit - Georgia Southern University



*Same Time Next Year*, True Colors Theatre Company, Atlanta

## GCA would like to thank our partners in planning:



Carl Vinson  
Institute of Government  
UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA



GCA would also like to thank all of the arts organizations that contributed photos to this publication, and our national partner agency, The National Endowment for the Arts.



Georgia Pick and Bow Traditional Music School, Dahlonega



Pasaquan, Buena Vista





AthFest, Athens • Photo by Jamie deRevere



A division of the  
Georgia Department of Economic Development  
GAArts.org



The Historic Ritz Theatre, Toccoa



Boys & Girls Clubs of Metro Atlanta