

Multnomah County Cultural Coalition

Multnomah County
Cultural Plan
2013-2017

*Building Participation in the Arts,
Humanities and Heritage*

Prepared and updated for the Oregon Cultural Trust
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INTRODUCTION

The Multnomah County Cultural Planning Committee (MCCPC) was established in April 2003, under the auspices of Multnomah County Commissioner Maria Rojo de Steffey, and charged with the responsibility of developing a plan for the use and distribution in Multnomah County of Community Cultural Participation Grant program funds from the Oregon Cultural Trust. The Committee evaluated existing information about cultural needs and resources in the county and developed priorities for the use of the Cultural Trust funds. The committee also considered the remarkable variety of cultural interests and activities in the county, and deliberated long and hard about the best way to deploy Community Cultural Participation Grant funds in this diverse community. The committee adopted a capacious and elastic approach to culture, consistent with the diversity and variety of forms that cultural life assumes in the county.

In 2008 the Committee revised and approved the following priorities for the Multnomah County Cultural Plan. The Multnomah County Cultural Coalition is cognizant of, and works to compliment efforts of existing arts, heritage, historical, humanities and preservation organizations in the county. These include the Regional Arts & Culture Council, Oregon Humanities, Bosco-Milligan Foundation and the Oregon Historical Society among others. Of note in its revised plan, the Committee felt strongly that its efforts in arts education and cultural awareness among youth should align with and support The Right Brain Initiative—a collaborative initiative involving arts organizations, school districts, governments, and private donors to develop a comprehensive solution for providing arts education opportunities for every student in the Portland metropolitan area.

The 2012 plan revision includes a focusing of cultural plan priorities with emphasis on the importance of advocating for the Oregon Cultural Trust and the renewal of the Oregon Cultural Trust Tax Credit.

CULTURAL PLAN PRIORITIES

1. MAKE CULTURE ACCESSIBLE AND AFFORDABLE TO MULTNOMAH COUNTY RESIDENTS.

Multnomah County is rich with opportunities for cultural participation. At the same time, there may be a number of circumstances that prevent or discourage more people from taking advantage of these opportunities. Venue, location, cost, lack of familiarity, and perceptions of exclusivity can all negatively affect cultural participation. The Coalition recognizes that while it cannot alone fund or guide a thorough study to examine barriers to arts participation, its grants to worthy cultural and heritage organizations has, and will continue to, reach new and diverse audiences.

Strategy: Improve participation in existing cultural experiences.

Foster and fund partnerships and collaborations between organizations representing different constituencies and disciplines, or organizations serving different social functions (e.g. churches

and the symphony, the leaders of various ethnic communities and the Portland Art Museum, community centers and the Oregon Historical Society, etc.) The purpose of these collaborations is to widen and diversify the audience for existing cultural organizations and institutions.

Strategy: Actively encourage MCCC to reflect the cultural, geographic, and social ecology of the county

The Cultural Coalition will continue to engage its constituents, grantees and members in the cultivation of new members to make the Coalition more reflective of the county overall make up socially, culturally and geographically.

2. SUPPORT AND ENCOURAGE NEW AND DIVERSE CULTURAL ACTIVITIES AND ORGANIZATIONS

Cultural organizations contribute to the life of our community in many ways. Every cultural organization, even well-established ones, begins with the discovery of a shared interest in some cultural pursuit. The Coalition will encourage efforts to organize new cultural activities and form new cultural organizations.

3. ACHIEVE THE PLAN'S PRIORITIES BY RE-GRANTING FUNDS FROM THE OREGON CULTURAL TRUST

Strategy: Continue the Community Cultural Participation Grant Program

The Coalition will continue to develop, award and monitor its grant program to support community-based cultural or heritage events, programs and organizations. Community Cultural Participation Grants can be used for a specific cultural event, program, or activity, as long as it is open to the public. Any nonprofit organization or registered neighborhood association will be eligible to apply for a grant. Groups of citizens with a declared common purpose consistent with the goals of this grant program are also eligible to apply.

These grants of up to \$2,000 are intended to encourage people to come together to pursue new activities and to develop new groups and organizations. Examples of the kinds of projects that might be funded include reading and discussion groups at a local community center, an ethnic festival, a neighborhood arts fair, or a project to preserve some aspect of the region's cultural history. The application process will be simple and streamlined. Information about the availability of these grants will be disseminated broadly.

4. ADVOCATE AND PROMOTE PUBLIC AWARENESS OF THE OREGON CULTURAL TRUST AND THE MULTNOMAH COUNTY CULTURAL COALITION.

The Coalition will ensure that elected officials, community leaders, the media, and county residents are well informed regarding its activities, and that information about events and performances funded by the Oregon Cultural Trust is broadly disseminated.

- a. Promote public awareness of the Oregon Cultural Trust

Provide County Commissioners, Metro Councilors, City Commissioners, and other public officials with a written annual report chronicling the Coalition's activities, including a list of all grants made and the events, performances, and programs arising from this support.

- b. Require recipients of Oregon Cultural Trust funding or support to publicly acknowledge this in their written materials.

- c. Multnomah County Coalition Committee members will serve as ambassadors for the Oregon Cultural Trust and advocate for the significance of the County's diverse cultural offerings. Coalition members will act as ambassadors for arts and culture by making community leaders, elected officials and the public aware of events and performances that have been supported through Cultural Trust grants.

- d. Engage in advocacy around public investment in the Oregon Cultural Trust and renewal of the OCT tax credit in 2013.

5. PROMOTES COLLABORATION AND PARTNERSHIPS WHICH SUPPORT THE ABOVE

6. PROVIDES EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION THROUGH OUR WEBSITE AND MARKETING MATERIALS

7. INCREASE CULTURAL AND GEOGRAPHIC DIVERSITY OF THE BENEFICIARIES OF THE MCCC.

APPENDIX 2:
MULTNOMAH COUNTY CULTURAL COALITION
STRUCTURE AND BYLAWS

Purpose

The role of the Multnomah County Cultural Coalition is to implement, evaluate and update the Multnomah County Cultural Plan. The MCCC will set timelines and create policies and procedures to govern the distribution of Community Cultural Participation Grants funds and will be responsible for measuring the progress of Cultural Plan priorities through the use of appropriate benchmarks, ensuring that arts, heritage, humanities and preservation goals are well represented. The Coalition will publicly advocate for the Oregon Cultural Trust and Multnomah County's Cultural plan, administer MCCC funds (from Trust and other sources), oversee grant making activities and hire and manage staff as required.

Coalition Membership and Terms

The Multnomah County Cultural Coalition will have at least six but not more than 12 members who have a demonstrated interest or expertise in the areas of arts, heritage, humanities, or preservation. Coalition membership should comprise a broad spectrum of the county cultural stakeholders (including residents from outside of Portland) and should include representatives from small and large organizations, and from a variety of ethnic and cultural communities, and age cohorts.

Coalition members will serve a three-year term. One third of Coalition members' terms will expire each year. The MCCC may nominate potential candidates and elect them to the Coalition. Self-nominations will also be welcome. With this in mind, MCCC will make a public announcement of openings and deadlines for those wishing to recommend them or someone else to serve on the Coalition.

A Coalition member may resign at any time, either orally at any meeting of the Coalition, or in writing to the Secretary. A member may be removed, with or without cause, at any duly announced meeting of the MCCC by a two-thirds vote of the members.

Officers and Elections

There shall be two Coalition Co-Chairs, a Secretary, and a Treasurer. Officers can be elected at a duly announced meeting where there is a quorum (50% of membership in attendance).

The Co-Chairs shall facilitate Coalition meetings and liaison with county and state officials as needed. The Treasurer will liaison with MCCC's fiscal agent and report on finances to the Coalition. In the absence of staff, the Treasurer will be responsible for bringing requests for expenditures before the Coalition for approval. The Secretary will ensure that proper recordkeeping is performed and will prepare and distribute minutes from Coalition meetings.

Coalition Meetings

The Coalition will meet as often as necessary, and at least once per quarter. Subcommittees will meet as required. Excessive absenteeism from Coalition meetings and subcommittee meetings will be a cause for removal from the Coalition.

Authority to Appoint Committees

The Multnomah County Coalition may appoint and adopt committees as needed to facilitate Coalition activities. For example:

- Executive Committee—Between full Coalition meetings, the Executive Committee can make decisions and exercise authority on behalf of the full Coalition, except in instances where a decision by the full Coalition is required.
- Grants Committee—The Grant Committee manages the MCCC’s grantmaking activities and brings recommendations for funding to the entire Coalition for approval.
- Ad Hoc or Special Committees—As needed, the Co-Chairs or Coalition members may appoint ad hoc or special committees.

Conflicts of Interest

Conflict of interest, or the appearance of a conflict of interest, exists if a relative of a Coalition member or an organization with which a Coalition member is affiliated is a grant applicant or would benefit directly from a specific grant. In such instances, the Coalition member may participate in discussion preceding the vote but must recuse himself or herself from the vote.

Fiscal Considerations

The Coalition will be responsible for the prudent fiscal oversight of MCCC funds and expenditures and retains ultimate responsibility for all fiscal decisions. The Regional Arts and Culture Council (RACC) will serve as MCCC’s fiscal agent and the MCCC’s fiscal year will coincide with that of RACC. In the future, as dictated by need or preference, the MCCC may elect to change its fiscal agent or incorporate as its own 501(c)(3).

Management of Programs

MCCC will at the outset contract with a suitable partner cultural agency—such as the Regional Arts and Cultural Council—to administer its grant program as efficiently as possible. The contracting agency will propose a reasonable fee for these services.

Revision of Plan

The Coalition will be responsible for updating and amending the Plan as required. At a minimum, after three years, the Coalition will evaluate the entire Plan and report on the progress being made on the priorities and associated benchmarks. The Coalition will forward any proposed changes to the Oregon Cultural Trust Board for review.

Amendments

These bylaws may be amended at any regular meeting of the Multnomah County Cultural Coalition by a two-thirds vote.