

# The South Carolina Arts Commission

## Fiscal Year 2001 Accountability Report

### Section I - Executive Summary

#### **Our Mission**

The mission of the South Carolina Arts Commission springs from the 1967 act which created it, mandating the agency “to insure that the arts... will continue to grow and play an ever more significant part in the welfare and educational experiences of our citizens.”

Last revised in 1998 during the creation of the agency’s current three-year strategic plan (1999-2002), the agency’s mission statement continues to guide its commissioners, senior management and staff:

*With a commitment to excellence across the spectrum of our state’s cultures and forms of expression, the South Carolina Arts Commission pursues its public charge to develop a thriving arts environment, which is essential to quality of life, education, and economic vitality for all South Carolinians.*

The Arts Commission has worked to accomplish its mission by concentrating resources on three strategic goals:

- **Arts Education**, to establish the arts as an integral part of South Carolina’s educational systems and the lifelong learning process of our citizens;
- **Community Arts Development**, to stimulate the development of South Carolina’s culturally diverse arts resources and organizations and promote creative partnerships to improve the quality of our lives, preserve our cultural heritage, and enhance our economic growth; and
- **Artist Development**, to encourage, nurture and support the artistic growth and personal and economic well being of South Carolina’s artists.

#### **Our Values**

During its recent planning process, the board, management and staff of the Arts Commission discussed the agency’s organizational values, discovering that all three groups share ideals that influence daily decisions and are reflected in the agency’s behavior:

- *We are a public agency*, relying on public funds and a mandate from the citizenry to provide service and be responsible to the people of South Carolina. We operate within the realm of state government, aware of its opportunities and limitations.
- *We are committed to providing service to all constituents* by building relationships with the people and communities we serve, being responsive to their needs and proactive in our outreach. We value the state’s cultural diversity and strive to reflect that diversity in our staffing and programming.
- *We are accountable for our actions* and conduct agency business in an environment of honesty, fairness, integrity and openness. We strive to be a responsible steward of public resources, investing those resources prudently for the greatest public benefit.
- *We are passionate about the arts*. The commissioners and staff of the Arts Commission share the belief that artistic expression and experiences are vital to human society and individual

well being. We are committed to building respect and support for those who create art in its many forms, as well as building opportunities for the public to experience art in the widest variety of ways.

- *We strive for quality and excellence* in all we do, maintaining the highest levels of professional conduct and sharing the highest levels of skill, knowledge and experience in the workplace and with our constituents. We operate in an environment that encourages planning, communication and collaboration to maximize our individual strengths for the public good.
- *We believe education is our best hope* for building a statewide community of citizens who value the arts. Educational outreach to children, teachers, parents, artists, arts organizations and all other citizens lays the groundwork for all of our other programs.
- *We value independence, tempered with personal responsibility.* As a small agency with a highly creative and committed staff, we believe that encouraging flexibility, ambition, innovation and entrepreneurial thinking among employees results in higher quality service to the public, increases staff commitment to the agency and its mission, and a fosters a stronger work ethic.
- *We create a positive work environment* for employees where staff at all levels are involved in decision-making and are supported by management and peers in an atmosphere of mutual respect. Individuality, friendships and fun combine with professionalism to encourage job satisfaction and personal fulfillment in the workplace.

### **Major Achievements: FY 00-01**

The Arts Commission celebrated some major successes and agency milestones in fiscal year 2000-2001. Some of the year's highlights:

- The agency secured a major grant from the Wallace-Reader's Digest Funds, providing \$800,000 over five years to develop initiatives for increasing cultural participation among South Carolinians.
- The Arts Commission completed its Canvas of the People, a series of surveys, interviews and public meetings across the state to assess the long-range needs of artists, arts organizations, and the arts-interested public. Information collected is being used to construct a long-range plan for the arts in South Carolina, due to be released in fall 2001.
- Significant developments in the Arts in Basic Curriculum (ABC) initiative included the addition of an ABC Outreach Coordinator to promote the program across the state. Consequently, the ABC program expanded its reach into school districts of greatest need, and the number of schools applying for ABC "QuickStart" grants significantly increased.
- The agency expanded its grants program and, for the first time, offered a grant category in Facilities Planning and Development. Another first-time offering was the District Arts Coordinator Initiative to help school districts create arts curriculum program coordinators at the district level.
- Triennial 2001, an exhibition mounted through a partnership between the Arts Commission and the S.C. State Museum, opened in April, providing an overview of contemporary visual art in the Palmetto State.
- It was a particularly notable year for the Literary Arts Program with the publication of *Inheritance*, an anthology of short fiction by South Carolinians whose works have been

previously published through the Fiction Project, a 17-year partnership between the Arts Commission and two South Carolina newspapers.

- Expanded outreach to underserved communities, including the Arts Commission's involvement with the Latino Network, resulting in more visibility for the agency's programs in the Latino community and an increase in grant applications and requests for services from this growing population. Also noteworthy are Traditional Arts apprenticeships, seeking to preserve cultural and artistic traditions in the state, many in rural and underserved regions.
- The Arts Commission, working with three other statewide arts organizations, completed a comprehensive plan for the development of dance in the state. A similar planning process is now underway addressing the needs of community theatre.
- For the first time, two opportunities to link performing artists with potential bookings were consolidated into a consecutive two-day package. Response was excellent, and the redesigned format provided comparable service to constituents at a lower cost, with substantially reduced costs to the agency for production of the event.
- The agency's state financial audit for FY:00 was completed with no major findings.

### **Upcoming Opportunities**

The S.C. Arts Commission anticipates a number of notable opportunities for the upcoming year. Among them:

- Implementing the first phase of the Public Participation Project. This initiative, funded by a major grant from the Wallace-Reader's Digest Funds, presents the agency with an opportunity to make significant progress in the area of public participation in the arts. Based on research conducted in FY00-01, eroding participation in cultural activities poses a major challenge to the arts community in South Carolina.
- Completing the long-range plan for the arts in South Carolina. The priorities identified in the new plan will give the agency an opportunity to re-evaluate current programs and realign staff responsibilities to address statewide needs.
- Introduction of the new E-grant system of online applications for Arts Commission grants. This new process has the potential to dramatically impact the intake, processing and data tracking components of our granting program while making the process more accessible and user-friendly for constituents.
- Convening of the statewide conference of arts organizations. This biennial gathering of artists, organizations, teachers and administrators provides a forum for professional development, networking and information sharing within the statewide arts community. Public participation is expected to be a theme.

## **Barriers to Success**

In order to accomplish the Arts Commission's goals for the year, we must overcome some known obstacles:

- Diminished granting capacity. Recent reductions in our state appropriations have reduced the amount of money the Arts Commission grants to local communities, where the money can have the most direct impact. After several years of expanded local funding, continuing the momentum through lean years will be a challenge.
- Staff morale. Budget cuts have frozen plans to fill vacant staff positions in several areas, reduced our ability to provide training and professional development opportunities, and reduced our ability to recognize and reward staff in meaningful ways. Finding creative ways to retain, encourage and motivate staff will be a challenge in the year ahead.
- Aging and/or obsolete equipment. Budget cuts will delay plans for making key hardware upgrades that would extend the agency's ability to provide more online services to constituents, especially in granting programs.
- Declining arts participation. Recent research in the state confirms that South Carolina is in line with national patterns of declining public participation in arts activities. Declining participation means fewer audiences and less financial support for artists and arts organizations.

## **Section II - Business Overview**

The S.C. Arts Commission employs a total of thirty-six permanent staff and four temporary staff, headquartered at the agency's offices at 1800 Gervais Street in Columbia.

### **Expenditures/appropriations chart**

See table 2.1, page 9.

### **Key customers and suppliers**

The Arts Commission is committed to serving all residents of South Carolina. The agency identifies its key customer groups as the following:

- Students
- Teachers
- Parents
- Artists
- Arts councils
- Arts organizations
- Arts consumers
- National foundations and funders, currently the Wallace-Reader's Digest funds and the National Endowment for the Arts

The agency's key suppliers include:

- Grantees
- Legislature
- Department of Education
- National Endowment for the Arts
- National Association of State Arts Agencies
- Other national and regional organizations
- Foundations, including the S.C. Arts Foundation and the Wallace-Reader's Digest Funds
- Corporations
- Colleges and universities

### **Major products and services**

The Arts Commission offers a wide range of services in three major areas: Arts Education, Community Arts and Artist Development:

#### **Arts Education**

**Arts in the Basic Curriculum (ABC)** - Provides grants and assistance designed to help the arts become a basic in South Carolina schools.

**Arts in Education (AIE)** - Provides grants for residencies, performances, projects, planning and implementation of comprehensive arts education plans. Also provides a booking conference for education sponsors and roster artists, and a profile directory of residency artists.

**Media Arts Education** - Initiates partnerships which provide workshops and teleconferences on media literacy and film/video/new technologies for teachers and students.

**Roster of Approved Artists** - Provides qualified artists for Arts in Education Program.

### **Community Arts**

**Art Accessibility (504)** - Provides assistance through awareness training to artists and organizations in developing architectural, programmatic and attitudinal accessibility for persons with disabilities.

**Art in Public Places** - Provides technical assistance to organizations interested in art in public places.

**“Artifacts”** - A quarterly publication that provides information on all Arts Commission programs, as well as arts events and activities statewide.

**Artists in Communities** - Provides arts programming in community settings through artist residencies in all art disciplines. The guiding principle of this program is that the arts help build and strengthen communities and that the experience of the arts should be available to people of all ages.

**Arts Calendar** - Broadcasts of segments of local and regional arts activities on SC Educational Radio. A companion web page is linked to the Arts Commission’s web site.

**ArtsNet** - Provides grants and technical assistance to help South Carolina arts organizations gain access to and use online electronic communications resources.

**Biennial Support/Annual Support/Subgranting/Project Support/Quarterly Grants** - Provides matching funds to professional artists and arts organizations to promote quality arts projects and services.

**Cultural Visions for Rural Communities** - Provides funding and technical assistance to rural South Carolina communities to stimulate economic development through the use of existing cultural assets and by the formation of strong partnerships between cultural and economic development agencies at the local and state level.

**Design Arts** - Provides grant assistance to communities and organizations developing activities that will promote design excellence in the areas of architecture, landscape architecture, urban design and planning, graphic and product design, interior design and historic preservation. Grants are limited to non-capital expenditures. Program supports the South Carolina Design Arts Partnership, which delivers broadly based design assistance to South Carolina communities and is a project of the Arts Commission; Clemson University College of Architecture, Arts and

Humanities; Clemson University Cooperative Extension Service; and the South Carolina Downtown Development Association.

**Elizabeth O'Neill Verner Governor's Awards for the Arts** - Presents annually the highest honor the state gives in the arts to South Carolina organizations, businesses and individuals participating in the growth and advancement of the arts in South Carolina.

**Email Newsletter** - A brief letter available by email with opportunities, deadlines, dates and internet resources of interest to artists and organizations.

**Folklife and Traditional Arts** - Provides technical assistance and grants to community organizations seeking to identify, document and present traditional art forms and their practitioners. Also provides technical assistance to traditional artists seeking to promote or sustain their art forms.

**Multicultural Initiatives** - Provides development assistance to ethnic and tribal artists and organizations through training subsidies and development grants. Also provides planning grants to mainstream organizations to help them address multicultural needs.

**% for Art** - Encourages funds to be set aside by state entities to purchase artwork for new and renovated state buildings.

**Rural Arts** - Encourages partnerships between local groups and the Commission to develop the arts in non-urban areas where little or no organized arts activity exists.

**Salary Assistance** - Provides matching grants to assist South Carolina arts organizations in securing and maintaining the permanent staff they need to fulfill their organizational missions.

**Writers Reading** - Provides funding assistance for nonprofit organizations in South Carolina to present readings by either nationally recognized writers or by South Carolina writers on the Arts Commission's Approved Artist Roster. Program is co-sponsored by the SC Humanities Council and S.C. State Library.

### **Artist Development**

**Fellowships** - Recognizes the artistic achievements of artists who show significant quality in their work. Disciplines are rotated on a yearly basis.

**Performing Arts Showcase** - Provides opportunity for juried performing artists to perform for presenters through an event co-sponsored by the S.C. Presenters Network and S.C. Arts Alliance, held in conjunction with the Arts in Education booking conference.

**Community Tour** - Provides fee support for performances in South Carolina by selected South Carolina performing ensembles/soloists.

**Media Arts Center** - Provides workshops, technical assistance, equipment access, studio access and film/video exhibitions in ten southeastern states.

**Regional Media Artists Program** - Provides film/video equipment awards and Southeastern Media Institute tuition assistance to regional media artists through a partnership with state arts councils in Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, Tennessee, Kentucky, Virginia and North Carolina.

**Slide Registry** - Provides an image bank of slides for any organization/individual in South Carolina to review when interested in purchasing or exhibiting works by visual artists.

**South Carolina Fiction Project** - Publishes works of short fiction through a partnership with *The (Charleston) Post & Courier* newspaper.

**Southeastern Media Institute** - A biennial event featuring intensive film/video/audio workshops and screenings.

**Southern Circuit** - Tours six internationally recognized independent film/video artists who screen and discuss their work in nine southeastern cities.

**State Art Collection** - Builds and maintains a collection of work by contemporary South Carolina artists which is displayed in state buildings and loaned to arts organizations for special exhibitions, both in-state and out-of-state.

**“Untitled”** - Provides artists of all disciplines with marketing information and opportunities through a printed publication and web page. The printed version is mailed free to SC artists 5 times a year.

**Visual Arts Exhibitions** - Provides exhibitions of South Carolina artists' works.

## **Organizational Structure**

See table 2.2, page 10.

**Table 2.1 - Accountability Report Appropriations/Expenditures Chart**

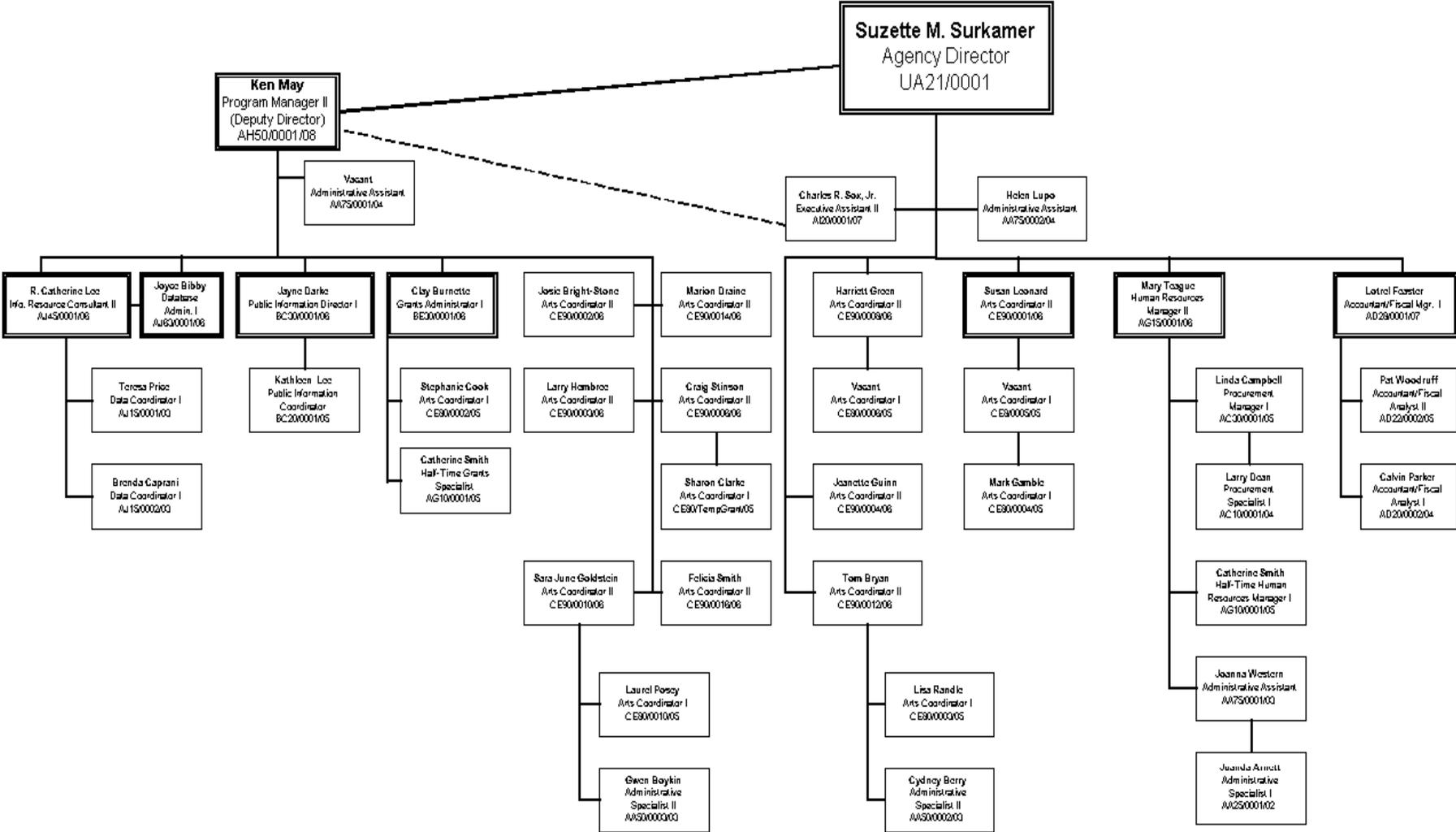
**Base Budget Expenditures and Appropriations**

<b>Major Budget Categories</b>	<b>99-00 Actual Expenditures</b>		<b>00-01 Actual Expenditures</b>		<b>01-02 Appropriations Act</b>	
	<b>Total Funds</b>	<b>General Funds</b>	<b>Total Funds</b>	<b>General Funds</b>	<b>Total Funds</b>	<b>General Funds</b>
Personal Service	1,275,170.00	1,223,847.40	1,387,787.02	1,271,874.49	1,472,530.00	1,326,775.00
Other Operating	949,460.79	842,542.64	1,007,908.07	851,006.61	1,168,106.00	844,199.00
Special Items	204,529.00	204,529.00	722,846.00	722,846.00	656,016.00	656,016.00
Permanent Improvements	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Case Services	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Distributions to Subdivisions	1,956,106.91	1,306,249.02	1,548,016.96	1,175,901.69	2,375,715.00	1,341,403.00
Fringe Benefits	323,640.51	311,975.52	371,105.36	344,114.12	371,652.00	343,404.00
Non-recurring	862,174.19	862,174.19	882,687.81	882,687.81	0.00	0.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$5,571,081.40</b>	<b>\$4,751,317.77</b>	<b>\$5,920,351.22</b>	<b>\$5,248,430.72</b>	<b>6,044,019.00</b>	<b>4,511,797.00</b>

**Other Expenditures**

<b>Sources of Funds</b>	<b>99-00 Actual Expenditures</b>	<b>00-01 Actual Expenditures</b>
Supplemental Bills	862,174.19	882,687.81
Capital Reserve Funds	0	0
Bonds	0	0

Table 2.2 – S.C. Arts Commission Organizational Structure



### **Section III – Elements of the Malcolm Baldrige Award Criteria**

#### **Category 1 – Leadership**

##### **1.1 How do senior leaders set, deploy and communicate:**

###### **a-b. Short and long term direction, performance expectations?**

The Board of Commissioners and senior management staff are guided by the agency's mission, which they interpret in terms of the needs of the state and its people at large. Long-term direction is set through long-range planning, combining broad public involvement, extensive research into local and national trends, and an understanding of gubernatorial and legislative priorities for the state. An example is the Arts Commission's current *Ten Year Plan for the Arts in South Carolina 1992-2002*, and its successor, currently in production, which will lay out a broad direction for the arts in South Carolina through 2010. The long-range plan includes issues to be addressed by the Arts Commission, but also includes contributions by the agency's partners in the public and private sectors. Shorter-term direction is set in the Arts Commission's three-year strategic plans, which outline agency strategies for achieving long-range goals and performance expectations for measuring the agency's success. Further, senior managers work with agency staff to identify short-term goals and set performance expectations in annual work plans, which are created for each of the agency's programs.

###### **c. Organizational values?**

It is the philosophy of the leaders at the S.C. Arts Commission that organizational values cannot be *set*, but they must be *discovered* by the group of people who share them. In facilitated discussions, commissioners, managers and staff recently reviewed and discussed organizational values and came to a common understanding of the guiding principals that influence decision making and organizational behavior. The resulting values statement appears in the Executive Summary (Section I) of this accountability report. The values listed do not represent a set of characteristics agreed upon and adopted by the agency. Rather, they represent a set of common beliefs that have long guided the agency in its operations, but may not have been formally articulated in a document until now.

###### **d. Empowerment and innovation?**

Senior leaders at the Arts Commission encourage staff to work independently and creatively to accomplish the goals established in their work plans and the agency's strategic plan. Leaders and staff believe that such entrepreneurial thinking has resulted in creative partnerships, successful outcomes, and a higher level of job satisfaction that may not have occurred in other operational climates. Indeed, the Arts Commission has recognized *independence, tempered with personal responsibility* as one of its organizational values. One very recent example of empowerment and innovation is a staff proposal for restructuring the agency. The plan was created wholly by staff and is currently being considered by senior managers, who have applauded the staff's initiative.

**e. Organizational and employee learning?**

Learning is a constant process at the Arts Commission, taking place at all levels of the organization. Senior leaders challenge themselves and staff to keep abreast of research and national trends that can impact the agency's work in South Carolina. Recently, the agency director provided every program coordinator with a personal copy of *Learning Audiences: Adult Arts Participation and the Learning Consciousness*. This final report of the Adult Arts Education Project gave staff some critical background information on public cultural participation as the agency prepares to move ahead with long-term initiatives to address cultural participation in South Carolina. Agency leaders encourage staff to take advantage of opportunities to learn within and across their specific disciplines, and an agency-wide training program keeps staff current on issues and skills needed to perform efficiently in the workplace.

**f. Ethical behavior?**

Commissioners and senior managers set a high standard for ethical behavior and set the example for the staff to emulate. Because a significant part of the agency's program involves distributing public funds through grantmaking, the staff is sensitive to ethical issues and is encouraged by leaders to engage in frank and open discussions regarding ethics. Agency leaders regularly provide guidance to staff on ethical questions, and have sought opinions from the State Ethics Commission when answers were not immediately clear.

**1.2 How do senior leaders establish and promote a focus on customers?**

Customers are at the center of the Arts Commission's programs, and it is the goal of the agency's leaders to provide constituents with the broadest level of input, access and participation in agency activities. Agency leaders maintain a high level of visibility among constituents, and the management team has built an organizational structure that encourages frequent personal contact between staff and constituents statewide. The agency's use of "coordinators in the field" helps insure that constituents have direct and easy access to Arts Commission staff, regardless of the customer's physical location. Senior leaders regularly review programs with staff to help insure that Arts Commission services are simple to find, easy to use, and are of the greatest benefit to constituents. Revisions to make programs more accessible and stronger for the customer are common. Last year, the Arts Commission toured the state with the *Canvas of the People*, a series of twelve public meetings designed to help the Arts Commission gauge local needs in the arts community and incorporate those needs into its planning process.

**1.3 What performance measures are regularly reviewed by your senior leaders?**

The Arts Commission's leaders gauge the success of agency programs by measuring the reach of those programs into South Carolina's communities and the impact those programs have locally and statewide. Data collected each year from grant recipients and others participating in Arts Commission programs helps paint the picture of the agency's efforts to serve the statewide arts community. The long-range plan for the arts and the agency's three year strategic plan are key tools in assessing the agency's progress toward its strategic goals. Programs are checked against the plans to insure the Arts Commission is maintaining the direction they set. Performance

measures are individualized for specific programs through annual work plans and for individual staff members through the Employee Performance Management System (EPMS).

**1.4 How do senior leaders use organizational performance review findings and employee feedback to improve their own leadership effectiveness and the effectiveness of management throughout the organization?**

Senior leaders at the Arts Commission use organizational performance review findings to make key decisions about the agency's direction as it seeks to accomplish its strategic goals. They are not opposed to adjusting a plan to more effectively steer the agency toward its goals. Agency leaders look at information about the overall health of the state's arts community as a reflection on the performance of the Arts Commission. Recent findings showing declining public participation in the arts statewide are cause for concern, and the agency is laying the groundwork for addressing this area in its long-range plan. Senior leaders take advantage of the agency's small size to maintain a high level of personal contact with each employee, in both one-on-one and group settings. Their management styles are highly participatory, and staff members at all levels are encouraged to provide feedback and suggestions for managerial and programmatic improvements. Staff members regularly make their opinions known, and managers regularly reiterate their support for that level of interaction by utilizing staff suggestions where beneficial, and actively soliciting continued input into the management process.

**1.5 How does the organization address the current and potential impact of its products, programs, services, facilities and operations, including associated risks?**

The Arts Commission bases each current and new program on the needs of the state and its citizens. Those needs become apparent in many ways, but are primarily identified through public input on the agency's programs, direct interaction between staff and constituents, and statewide priorities established by the governor and the General Assembly. The impact of current programs is tracked through direct contact with customers and through data reported by grantees and program participants. The information is compiled in an agency database, through which agency leaders and staff can easily analyze trends, make program decisions and predict the future impact and costs of the agency's programs and services.

**1.6 How does senior leadership set and communicate key organizational priorities for improvement?**

Senior leaders at the Arts Commission use the agency's planning process effectively to determine areas where improvement and change are warranted. Programs are monitored against existing long-range and strategic plans, and changes are recommended when necessary to insure all are aligned. Input collected from the public and staff, as well as available constituent data are used when making dramatic changes in the agency's strategic goals or key programs. Changes are communicated to staff and constituents through direct interaction and the agency's network of communication tools, including newsletters, email and web site.

**1.7 How does senior leadership and the agency actively support and strengthen the community? Include how you identify and determine areas of emphasis.**

Community arts development is one of the Arts Commission's strategic goals. Indeed, much of the agency's resources and energies focus on building and supporting strong local arts programs which, themselves, support and strengthen communities. The organizational structure of the Arts Commission confirms that commitment to communities through its regional coordinators – staff in the field across the state who build relationships with local communities and have a direct impact on their cultural climates. Senior leaders use a variety of sources of information to help determine strategic ways of using agency resources to strengthen communities, including public input, research into local and national trends and staff observations. Education is the primary area of current emphasis, identified by *every* source as a priority for the Arts Commission's efforts.

**Category 2 – Strategic Planning**

**2.1 What is your strategic planning process, including participants, and how does it account for:**

**a. Customer needs and expectations?**

In the Arts Commission's strategic planning process, customer needs and expectations are identified through extensive public input. In the agency's most recent round of preparation for a new long-range plan, representatives from the Arts Commission held twelve meetings around the state to engage artists, arts organizations, educators, students, and other stakeholders in a dialog designed to reveal their current needs and expectations for the arts in South Carolina. Those who did not participate in person were invited to submit information via mailed questionnaires, email surveys and questions on the agency's web site. The agency conducted personal interviews of a diverse array of civic, business and community leaders across the state to capture their perspectives and priorities concerning the arts. Also, the agency commissioned a public opinion survey through the University of South Carolina to create a representative snapshot of arts involvement and of South Carolinians' opinions on the value of arts in their lives and communities. In all, more than 1330 individuals have participated in the planning process.

**b. Financial, societal and other risks?**

A great deal of study and research goes into the Arts Commission's strategic planning process, including a thorough evaluation of the costs of implementing recommendations or creating new programs. As a good steward of state resources, the Arts Commission uses planning to make the most prudent use of its state dollars. Research also helps the agency anticipate other risks, costs and barriers and plan for minimizing or dealing with those risks as they arise.

**c – d. Human resource and operational capabilities and needs?**

The Arts Commission understands that, just as programs have financial costs, they carry costs in terms of human resources and operational capacity. When exploring new programs or new strategic directions, the agency's planning process includes an assessment of the investment of human resources required and the impact of the new initiative on the agency's current operations. Agency leaders, commissioners and staff work together to prioritize future needs and current programs, and are willing to adjust existing programs to make way for new directions that will help the agency fulfill its mission.

**e. Supplies/contractor/partner capabilities and needs?**

The Arts Commission has a strong history of working with partners statewide who share the agency's commitment to the arts in South Carolina, so much so that searching for effective and innovative partnerships has become a natural part of the planning process. Partners are sought who can deepen the impact of a program by bringing resources, experience, customers and prestige beyond the usual capabilities of the agency. Programs are planned to capitalize on partners' strengths and deepen the relationships between agency, partners and constituents.

**2.2 How do you develop and track action plans that address your key strategic objectives?**

Plans for action begin in the agency's three-year strategic plans. Based on broad objectives set in the long-range plan for the arts, the three-year strategic plan outlines specific strategies to support the objectives. Annual work plans for each program specify actions and assign performance measures targeted toward successful implementation of the strategies. Program budgets and timelines are linked to the work plans to guarantee that adequate resources are available. Agency managers track progress through regular meetings involving agency leaders, staff and partners, and monitoring of timelines and budgets.

**2.3 How do you communicate and deploy your strategic objectives, action plans and performance measures?**

The agency's long-range plan is published and distributed in a variety of ways: printed copies are provided to key constituent groups, state and local government leaders and partners, accompanied by a statewide awareness campaign to alert the public to the plan. Summaries of the plan are widely distributed through agency newsletters. The complete plan is also available on the agency's web site. The agency's three-year strategic plans are created by and distributed to agency commissioners, management and staff, as well as key partners involved in implementing specific actions. Annual work plans and performance measures are created, deployed and tracked by agency management and program staff.

### **Category 3 – Customer Focus**

#### **3.1 Identify key customers and stakeholders.**

For the Arts Commission, key customers and stakeholders are K-12 students, their teachers and parents, artists, regional arts councils, local arts organizations, arts consumers, local governments and organizations interested in economic development and planning, the General Assembly, the Governor, the National Endowment for the Arts, partners in our initiatives such as corporations, local and national foundations, other state agencies, the S.C. Department of Education, the state's colleges and universities, regional and national arts organizations and any citizen or organization interested in the quality of life and economic benefits the arts bring to the state of South Carolina.

#### **3.2 How do you determine who your customers are and what are their key requirements?**

The Arts Commission identifies its customers in several ways. Some customers are mandated. The act that created the Arts Commission in 1967 charges the agency to work on behalf of all citizens of the state. The agency interprets the same act as a mandate to involve the arts in the education process of South Carolinians. Some customers identify themselves to the agency, seeking funding or technical support in their efforts to deliver arts programming and education in their communities. Other customers are strategically sought out by the Arts Commission for their skills, resources or experience that could enhance the agency's ability to fulfill its mission. The requirements of each group can be very different, and the Arts Commission maintains contact with its customers through formal and informal interaction, research and tracking to monitor their changing needs and plan the best methods of satisfying them.

Grantees are customers, in the sense that they come to the agency for resources, but they are accountable to the agency for the grant-funded work they do. The Arts Commission is interested in seeing these artists and organizations mature and progress in their work, and one of the best ways to track this progress is through objective panel reviews of their grant proposals. These reviews give the commission a snapshot of an organization's health, general artistic focus and its commitment to supporting its community. Proposals give specific information on projects and activities and key needs and requirements. Objective evaluations of grant applications also provide the Arts Commission with an indication of where it might focus its efforts statewide to provide assistance in areas that may need improvement.

#### **3.3 How do you keep your listening and learning methods current with changing customer/business needs?**

The commission, managers and staff of the Arts Commission share the belief that direct, personal constituent contact is the best way to maintain an understanding of customer needs. The agency's organizational structure encourages frequent contact between staff and constituents, and allows them to build relationships in communities throughout the state. The agency regularly convenes conferences, meetings and forums which bring constituents together to discuss needs and ways to address them. New and emerging technology has broadened the agency's capacity to

gather feedback from its constituents, and expanded its ways of responding. The agency's web site shows a pattern of increased use by constituents, and email continues to grow as a vehicle for communicating and gathering information from our customers. A current "E-grant" initiative at the Arts Commission will significantly modernize our methods of dealing with a significant group of customers who are looking for a more efficient and simplified way of providing information to the agency.

**3.4 How do you use information from customers/stakeholders to improve services or programs?**

Information supplied by constituents is a key consideration in evaluating and making decisions about agency programs and services. The Arts Commission's recent *Canvas of the People* gathered information from constituent groups statewide. They voiced their thoughts and ideas on the agency's strategic goals and programs, and the agency is currently using that information to help set its long- and short-term direction. Constituents also supply information to the Arts Commission in their grant proposals and final reports, which supply more quantitative information about the communities and populations they serve, their success in reaching those communities, and the amount of local investment generated by state dollars. Analysis of this information helps the Arts Commission identify areas where change may improve the effectiveness of programs or make better use of state resources.

**3.5 How do you measure customer/stakeholder satisfaction?**

Past efforts to solicit information on customer satisfaction have included constituent forums, open-ended questions on the final report form for grant recipients, evaluation surveys associated with meetings or conferences, and similar vehicles for collecting feedback in addition to the staff's direct interaction with customers. A more structured customer satisfaction survey is currently in development. Targeting our large base of grant recipients around the state, the survey will help the Arts Commission gather more quantitative information about the levels of satisfaction among one of our most important constituent groups.

**3.6 How do you build positive relationships with customers and stakeholders? Indicate any key distinctions between different customer groups.**

One of the strengths of the Arts Commission is its track record of creating and maintaining strong personal relationships with its constituents. Agency commissioners, managers and staff place a high priority on being accessible and responsive to constituents. The agency organizes itself to provide the most access and expertise directly to constituents through its discipline and region-based arts coordinator system. Through this system, constituents have a direct relationship with a staff member who is knowledgeable in a specialized field, be it arts in education, visual arts, performing arts, craft, literary arts or other art forms. Other staff are assigned to cover specific regions of the state, so arts organizations can rely on having access to someone who is knowledgeable about the physical, economic, social and cultural makeup of their own communities. One area of recent emphasis has been building relationships within the state's growing Latino community. The addition of a bilingual arts coordinator to the staff has helped the Arts Commission see significant progress in its outreach to this community. In all

regions and arts disciplines, constituents repeatedly voice their appreciation of this personalized system of constituent service and the value it adds to the Arts Commission's programs.

#### **Category 4 – Information and Analysis**

##### **4.1 How do you decide which operations, processes and systems to measure?**

For the Arts Commission, setting out to measure the results of our programs is a challenge. How does one measure joy? How does one quantify creativity, the artistic process, or inspiration? Rather than attempting to measure such abstracts, the Arts Commission has chosen to measure what it considers to be key indicators of the agency's success at building a thriving arts community in South Carolina, indicators that measure the agency's reach into communities, the return on its investment in artists and organizations, and the overall climate of arts participation in the state. Support processes such as procurement and accounting set standards for their operations, and measure their success in order to maintain a smooth workflow within the agency and with their associated offices elsewhere in state government.

##### **4.2 How do you ensure data quality, reliability, completeness and availability for decision-making?**

By far, the largest set of data the Arts Commission uses comes from information supplied by grantees in their proposals and the final reports required by the terms of their grant agreements. Information submitted is checked for accuracy by the arts coordinator who deals most directly with that artist or organization. The competitive nature of the Arts Commission's grants process is such that inaccurate or incomplete information renders an applicant ineligible for funding. Grantees are also subject to periodic audits to verify financial data. For most surveys, polls and focus groups, the agency contracts with qualified research professionals to guarantee accuracy and solid methodology. Surveys generated within the agency are constructed using the best known practices. Data collected by the agency is available to staff and constituents in printed form, electronically in the agency's database or on the agency's web site.

##### **4.3 How do you use data/information analysis to provide effective support for decision-making?**

The Arts Commission monitors its data to make informed decisions about programs and strategic direction, using the data to highlight areas where improvement may be needed, or where notable levels of success are being achieved. A recent example is research showing that school districts with district-level coordinators for arts curricula have more success implementing standards-based arts programming in their schools. Those findings led the Arts Commission to implement a new grant program to help school districts that lacked such staff to create and fund district arts coordinator positions.

#### **4.4 How do you select and use comparative data and information?**

The Arts Commission uses comparative data to show how the agency performs regionally or nationally with its counterparts in other states. The agency also reviews data over periods of time, which allow it to track trends and monitor progress in some key areas.

### **Category 5 – Human Resources**

#### **5.1 How do you and your managers/supervisors encourage and motivate employees (formally and/or informally) to develop and utilize their full potential?**

Employees at the S.C. Arts Commission are encouraged to seek contentment in the contexts of both their professional and personal lives. Staff are given a great deal of flexibility to exercise independence and creativity when setting their work priorities and carrying out their duties. Managers have established a very open management style, which encourages employees to provide input and opinions at all levels of agency operation. When funding is available, the agency uses merit increases to reward outstanding job performance. Opportunities for professional development and skills training are consistently made available to staff, and several staff appreciation and recognition events are held during the year. For personal development, the agency offers employees a tuition assistance program to encourage staff to seek higher education. Flexible work schedules allow staff to adjust their work times around needs at home. The agency has a wellness program that encourages staff to practice good exercise and nutrition habits. A group regularly walks at lunchtime, and the agency periodically invites a health professional to a brown-bag lunch with staff to discuss health matters. Health screenings and flu shots are offered during the year.

#### **5.2 How do you identify and address key developmental and training needs, including job skills training, performance excellence training, diversity training, management/leadership development, new employee orientation and safety training?**

Agency-wide training requirements are driven by changing staffing needs, changing organizational structures, and changes in technology or major agency processes. The key to identifying needs for individual training and staff development is an ongoing dialog between supervisors and employees. This open communication helps both supervisor and employee identify areas where additional growth or skills could be beneficial for the agency and the staff member. The Arts Commission has a detailed new employee orientation program that formally introduces new staff to the diverse functions of the agency, while allowing the new employee to quickly become acquainted with co-workers. Safety training is conducted with appropriate staff. A staff team is currently working on developing a disaster plan for the agency in an effort to protect staff and resources in case of a major emergency. Plans for FY02 include extensive staff training in the area of audience participation as the agency launches its *Public Participation Project*.

**5.3 How does your employee performance management system, including feedback to and from employees, support high performance?**

Managers and supervisors at the Arts Commission share the belief that the Employee Performance Management System is an ongoing communication process that takes place all year long, not just at evaluation time. Employees actively participate in the creation of personal planning documents, and frequent discussions between supervisors and employees help track personal progress throughout the year in order for the employee to have the best opportunity for high achievement. Merit raises linked to EPMS results help provide a reward for outstanding performance when those raises are possible. In FY01, the agency's human resources office worked to update position descriptions agency-wide, and worked with supervisors to update EPMS documents in order to recognize and encourage high performance.

**5.4 What formal and/or informal assessment methods and measures do you use to determine employee well being, satisfaction and motivation?**

Being a small agency, the Arts Commission enjoys the ability to gather its entire staff together to discuss a wide range of issues concerning the organization. These "all staff" meetings are frequent and members of the staff are open and vocal about their concerns, needs, ideas and celebrations. These gatherings are excellent barometers of staff morale and a valuable tool for discovering areas where improvements may be needed. Smaller group meetings between the executive director and specific departments allow a dialog focused on assessing departmental needs. Again, the ongoing dialog between supervisors and employees is the key method for tracking well being, satisfaction and motivation.

**5.5 How do you maintain a safe and healthy work environment?**

The Arts Commission's Property and Procurement department works to maintain a safe and healthy workplace for the agency's staff by ensuring compliance with safety and building standards. It maintains relationships with city, state and federal agencies that monitor and provide information about workplace health and safety. The agency is sensitive to employee concerns about health and safety, including a recent check of water quality based on employee concerns, and an evaluation of ergonomics within agency offices to improve comfort and reduce injuries on the job. The agency's wellness program seeks to assist staff in maintaining good health at the workplace and elsewhere.

**5.6 What is the extent of your involvement in the community?**

Throughout the year, the Arts Commission participates in agency-wide projects to contribute to the well being of the midlands and statewide community. Last year the agency participated in a children's literacy project in which staff members donated children's books to a local organization. Another project involved donations to purchase art supplies for an area camp for children with AIDS. The agency has adopted a family at the holidays, has participated in a breast cancer walk, and has supported a golf tournament to benefit an area children's home. In addition to agency-wide involvement in the community, individual staff members support the community through their participation in civic, cultural and philanthropic activities. The staff as a whole is

quick to respond to the needs of fellow staff members. Recent examples of the caring nature of the Arts Commission staff include providing meals for an injured co-worker and taking gifts and personal greetings to the home of a retiree with an extended illness.

## **Category 6 – Process Management**

### **6.1 What are your key design and delivery processes for products/services, and how do you incorporate new technology, changing customer and mission-related requirements, into these design and delivery processes and systems?**

Decisions about programs and services offered by the Arts Commission are made in anticipation of, or in response to, the needs of our constituent base. Through the information-gathering process of public meetings, surveys, research, interaction with customers, and monitoring trends, the Arts Commission keeps pace with the changing needs of its constituents and makes relevant services available to meet those needs and accomplish the agency's goals. For example, recent constituent input for the agency's planning process indicates a growing need for artists and organizations to have access to the latest research, information and training to help them improve their own program design and delivery systems. The Arts Commission is now working on integrating ways to meet those needs into its long-range planning. Recent technology innovations have expanded opportunities for delivering information and services, and for making information and services more accessible to a wider range of constituents. The Arts Commission has embraced new technology, specifically using computers and the Internet to expand its ability to offer and deliver services. The agency has also offered a grant program which encourages its constituents to acquire or update computers and online access so they can take advantage of emerging technology opportunities.

### **6.2 How does your day-to-day operation of key production/delivery processes ensure meeting key performance requirements?**

The Arts Commission operates in a continuing cycle of planning, communicating, evaluating and adjusting its programs, overlaid on a rolling cycle of program and grant deadlines for the agency and its grantees. Day-to-day operations are targeted toward providing accurate, timely and relevant assistance and information to our constituents in order that they, in turn, may provide accurate, timely and relevant services that advance the Arts Commission's strategic goals in their communities. Our constituents are an excellent barometer for gauging the success of our day-to-day operations, and they do not hesitate to sound the alarm if a breakdown in the production/delivery cycle occurs.

### **6.3 What are your key support processes, and how do you improve and update these processes to achieve better performance?**

Key processes that support the Arts Commission's programmatic work include information processing and management, accounting, facilities management, procurement, human resource management, and public information. Staff members in these areas fully participate in agency-wide planning, and conduct planning for improving and updating functions in their departments.

Planning in these areas is especially sensitive to using technology for improving support processes and making more efficient use of agency resources.

**6.4 How do you manage and support your key supplier/contractor/partner interactions and processes to improve performance?**

Relationships with partners are key to the success of many of the Arts Commission's programs. The agency identifies its partners early, and involves them in the planning and development process, with a goal of utilizing the strengths and resources of each partner for mutual benefit. Partners are involved in decision-making, implementing, evaluating and documenting. The Arts Commission frequently acts as "lead" partner in some initiatives, and frequently participates as a partner in programs initiated by other agencies and organizations.

The Arts Commission's relationship with its grantees is a unique one, in which grantees are customers, seeking grants and services from the agency, but grantees are also "contractors," fulfilling a contracted obligation to carry out programming or provide services in local communities in exchange for a monetary award. The Arts Commission works diligently to maintain strong relationships with its grantees and provide a level of monetary and technical support that encourages improvement among grantees and builds their capacity for providing stronger services at the local level.

**Category 7 – Results**

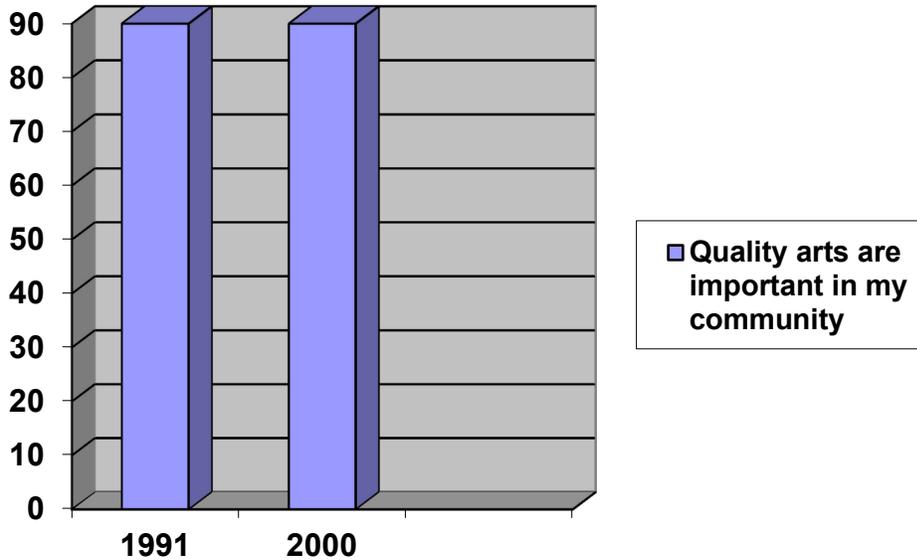
**7.1 What are your performance levels and trends for the key measures of customer satisfaction?**

The Arts Commission has relied on maintaining close customer contact and providing ways for customers to be involved and supply feedback. While these methods of tracking customer satisfaction have not yielded data that can be represented on a graph, they have resulted in a relationship in which customers feel comfortable voicing their concerns when improvement is needed, and they know the Arts Commission will be responsive to those concerns. The agency is in the process of developing a measurement tool that will attempt to collect more objective indicators of customer satisfaction.

**7.2 What are your performance levels and trends for the key measures of mission accomplishment?**

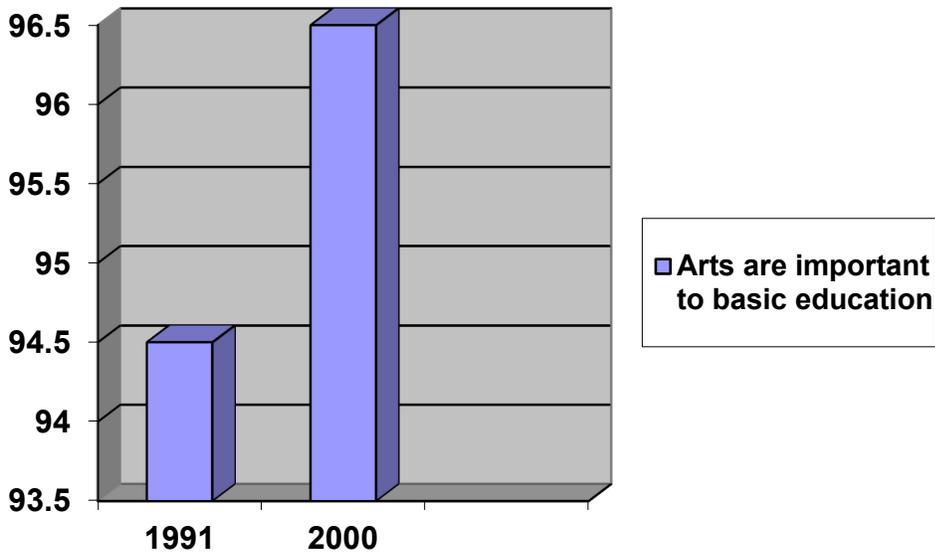
Among its measures of mission accomplishment, the Arts Commission looks for trends in public behavior and opinion related to the arts in South Carolina. In the fall of 2000, the agency commissioned the University of South Carolina to conduct a survey following up on one conducted in 1991. The 2000 survey questions were phrased and asked in exactly the same way as in 1991 to guarantee comparable results. The findings have been most useful as the Arts Commission creates a new long-range plan for the arts in the state.

**Figure 7.2a – Percentage of South Carolinians who say quality arts are important to have available in their communities.**



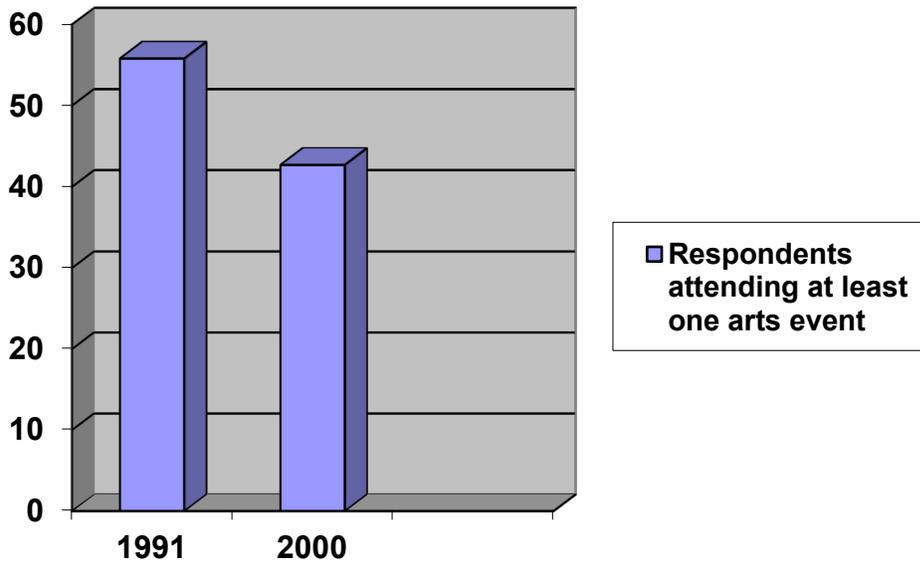
A very high percentage of respondents, virtually the same in 2000 as in 1991, feel it is important to have quality arts opportunities available in their communities, lending support to the Arts Commission’s belief that its message of arts contributing to quality of life, and its direct efforts to support community arts initiatives, are achieving success.

**Figure 7.2b - Percentage of South Carolinians who say the arts are an important part of a child’s basic education.**



A very high percentage of respondents, slightly higher in 2000 than in 1991, consider arts to be an important part of a child’s basic K-12 education. This, combined with other research pointing to the value in arts education, supports the Arts Commission’s efforts to increase its outreach to schools across the state (see figure 7.2d).

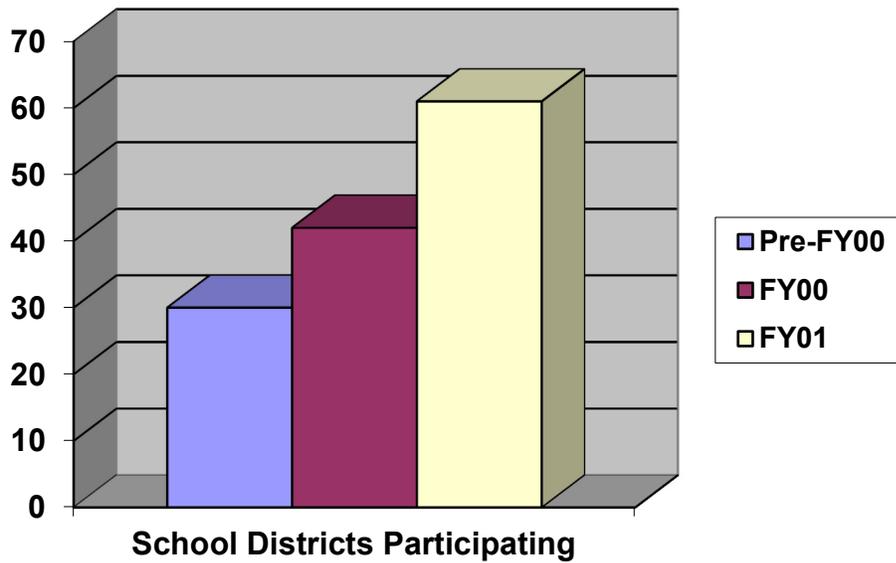
**Figure 7.2c – Percentage of South Carolinians attending at least one arts event in the last year.**



The change in reported arts attendance levels over ten years is significant, but is consistent with trends observed nationwide. Studying and addressing levels of public participation has been identified as one of the agency’s priorities in its long- and short-term planning.

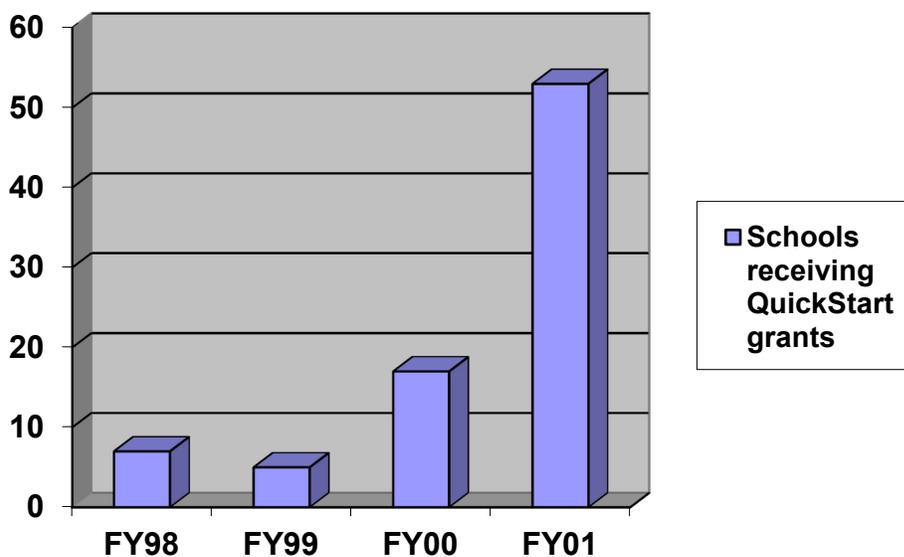
**Note:** The survey added a question in 2000 that did not appear in the 1991 survey, asking whether the respondent or a member of the respondent’s household had been involved in creating art in the last year. Findings show 57% of South Carolina households are involved in some arts activity. This data will be used in future research to track the activity of South Carolinians as art makers.

**Figure 7.2d – Growth in outreach to schools by ABC Partnership**



Integrating standards-based arts programming into the basic K-12 curriculum is one of the Arts Commission’s primary strategic goals, addressed through its Arts in Basic Curriculum (ABC) Partnership. Among its indicators for success is the number of school districts reached and participating in this arts education initiative. The combined efforts of the Arts Commission and a new ABC Outreach Coordinator hired in FY01 have resulted in a 203% increase in schools reached in 42 counties since 1999.

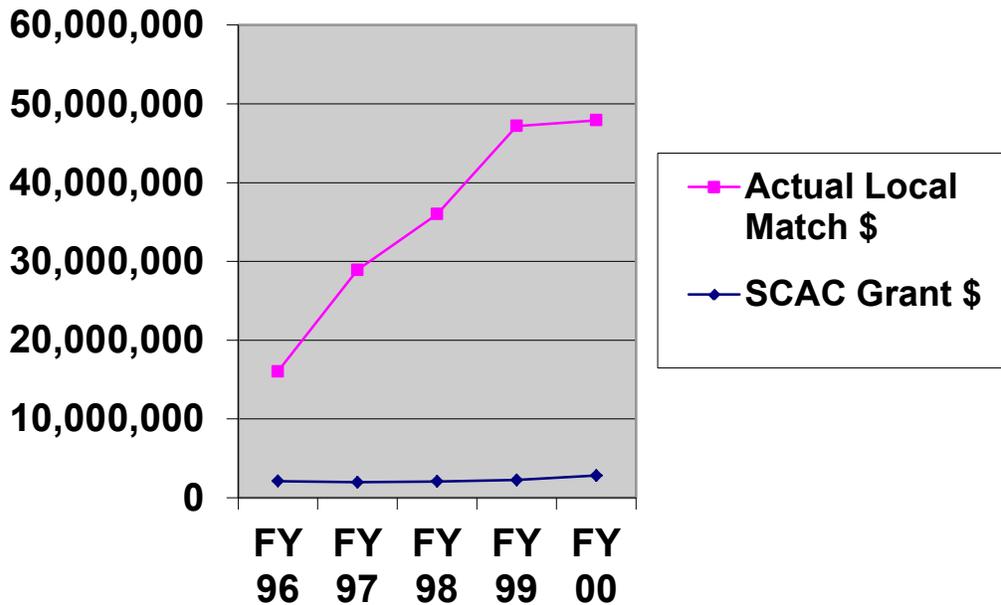
**Figure 7.2e - Schools participating in QuickStart grant program**



The increase in outreach to schools has had a dramatic impact on the number of schools taking advantage of Arts Commission programs. One example is the sharp rise in schools served by the

agency’s QuickStart grants program, which provides rapid-response funding for artists in residence in schools that have not received such support in the recent past. This program has had notable success in school districts designated by the state as “districts of greatest need.”

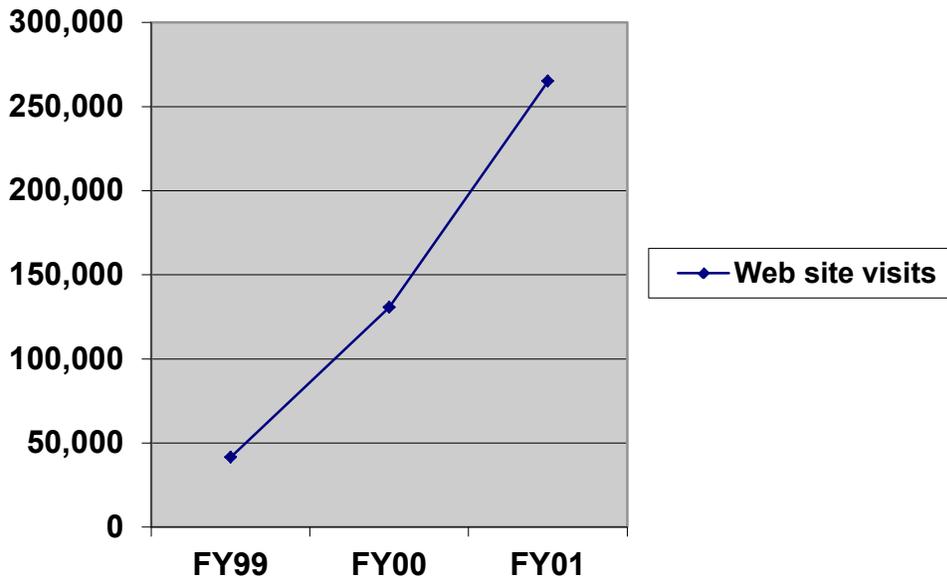
**Figure 7.2f – Local return on Arts Commission investment**



One key indicator of the Arts Commission’s success in arts and community development is the return on the agency’s investment through its grants programs. The Arts Commission considers its grants program as an investment in South Carolina’s local communities. Artists and organizations who receive Arts Commission grants are required to locally match their awards, usually on a 2:1 or 3:1 ratio (local:arts commission). From 1996 to 2000 (the last year for which complete records are available\*) the Arts Commission’s grant investment increased by 34%, while documented local matching has grown 224%.

\* The deadline for grantees to submit final reports for FY01 was set to align with the state’s accountability report deadlines based on the previous year, so data was not received in time to meet the new earlier state accountability report deadline. The deadline for grantees has been adjusted for next year.

**Figure 7.2g - Visits to agency web site**



The Arts Commission's web site has become one of the agency's primary tools for communicating with constituents, gathering information and delivering services. The agency continues to make improvements and expand the functionality of the site, while providing equal service to constituents who may not have full access to technology. The web site has seen a more than 600% increase in traffic since tracking began in FY99. The agency has experienced significant cost savings over distributing printed materials, and most constituents tell us they appreciate the flexibility and ease of access of information via the web.

**7.3 What are your performance levels and trends for the key measures of employee satisfaction, involvement and development?**

Because the Arts Commission is a small agency, it has been able to use informal methods of gauging employee satisfaction, involvement and development: frequent direct contact between supervisors and employees, frequent direct communication between staff and executive managers, one-on-one staff interaction and a genuine concern among employees for one another. From these we know that, in general, the employees at the Arts Commission are passionate about the agency's mission and committed to performance excellence. They value independence and creativity in the workplace and want to contribute to a positive work environment. The agency promotes and strives to supply the qualities the staff identifies with a satisfactory work experience, and we feel we succeed. Agency leaders are beginning to sense the impact of recent cuts to the agency budget on employee morale, and will be challenged to find ways of mitigating that impact in the year ahead.

**7.4 What are your performance levels and trends for the key measures of supplier/contractor/partner performance?**

The Arts Commission looks at its pool of grantees around the state as its primary group of “contractors,” using state funds from the agency to provide arts and arts services in local communities. One key indicator of performance from this group is the peer panel review process, through which grant proposals are evaluated and scored by panels of arts professionals. Grant awards are based in large part on these scores, but other factors, such as grant histories and outreach goals, are figured into the final decision. While the peer panel review process does render a numerical score, the makeup and priorities of the panels may change from year to year, and different panels review different categories of grant proposals within the same year. The agency uses these scores as a reflection of past performance, and a solid predictor of future success for grant applicants. The agency is looking at ways these scores can be used as a valid measure for contractor performance over the long term.

The other primary measure of contractor (grantee) performance is the final report each is required to submit in order to fulfill its contract and receive final payment. The final report verifies the grantee accomplished the goals set in the original grant proposal and provided the required local matching funds. In FY00, grantees achieved 98% compliance with this requirement.

**7.5 What are your performance levels and trends for the key measures of regulatory/legal compliance and citizenship?**

The Arts Commission is consistently compliant with legal and regulatory requirements including those for hiring, facility safety, records management, and Freedom of Information. A recent evaluation of the agency’s office building and grounds for compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act discovered a deficiency in accessible parking, and arrangements are being made to correct that.

In addition to its own compliance, the Arts Commission asks for assurance from its contractors (grantees) that they are in compliance with federal and state regulations governing them, and make efforts to assist them where needed, particularly in the area of access for people with disabilities.

**7.6 What are your current levels and trends of financial performance?**

The Arts Commission receives its funding from two primary sources, state appropriations and a federal allotment from the National Endowment for the Arts. It is not a significant revenue-generating agency, and therefore experiences little fluctuation directly based on trends which impact earned revenue. The agency consistently operates within its annual budget, and has a long track record of clean financial audits. The Arts Commission, like all state agencies in South Carolina, is currently reducing its budget to comply with mandated cuts and reductions as the state deals with budget shortfalls.