



Council on the Arts

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Agency: New York State Council on the Arts

Subject: Transparency Plan Update 2024

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DELIVERABLES ACHIEVED SINCE 2021

Communications: NYSCA's communications and outreach efforts have expanded significantly since 2021. The NYSCA communications portfolio is now overseen by Communications Director Ann Marie Sekeres, who joined NYSCA in July 2022.

NYSCA now develops a strategic content calendar to maintain an active social media presence. Weeks are dedicated to different geographic areas or artistic disciplines. We also began reposting grantees who tagged us to our Instagram and Facebook stories and boosted select posts to rural communities.

In calendar year 2023, NYSCA's social media activity increased by 700%, with our pages reaching 637,000 impressions (a 223% increase from the previous year). We also have 200% more direct followers in 2023 than in 2022. We also maintain an eblast newsletter to approximately 14,000 arts and culture professionals.

NYSCA also continued to grow our virtual convenings, such as webinars and office hours relating to our application opportunities. In 2023, our FY2024 grantmaking webinars and office hours brought in over 4,000 attendees. Information regarding office hour registration and our recorded webinars can be found, [here](#).

NYSCA also redeveloped its [Help Desk](#), which receives requests ranging from contracting/payment status to general NYSCA information inquiries. The NYSCA Help Desk inbox is monitored by multiple staff members, ensuring timely responses to all inquiries.

FOIL: NYSCA has transitioned to the Granicus portal for all FOIL-related items. Access to Granicus has greatly streamlined our response process, reduced burden for NYSCA staff, and ensures that we are compliant with FOIL requirements. For more information regarding the FOIL process, please click [here](#).

Website: NYSCA routinely conducts reviews of our website to assess and update functionality and clarity of materials. For our FY2024 grantmaking rounds, we significantly streamlined text on the website and in application guidelines to clarify key application requirements and reduce the materials burden for applicants.

INITIATIVES TO BE IMPLEMENTED IN 2024

Agency Communications: NYSCA plans to boost social media posts about the open application period and office hours, focusing on underserved regions across New York State. With a small budget, we can effectively target audiences involved in the arts in specific counties. This strategy worked when we were messaging about our prequalification requirements and contributed to our reduction of ineligible applications by 40%. We would also distribute our application marketing materials to our grantmaking partners throughout the State and ask them to share on their channels. Through this initiative, we hope to increase new applications from underrepresented populations and regions.

Grantee Map: NYSCA will develop a map of current grantees for our website. This helpful visual aid will showcase the incredible breadth of state-supported organizations and artists across as well as the reach of NYSCA grantmaking. The map will correspond to our Smart Simple database, updating in real time and reflecting each successive grantmaking round.

State-wide Convenings: NYSCA plans to develop series of state-wide convenings in partnership with our grantees, experts across a variety of disciplines, and non-state funders. Topics would range from information sessions regarding our grant opportunities to navigating our sector's ongoing recovery. These convenings would create valuable opportunities for NYSCA and our field to be in direct conversation with one another – greatly expanding access to our funding, ensuring that NYSCA is responding the evolving needs of our field, and reaffirming New York as a national and global leader in arts and culture.

Expanding Operations-Specific Outreach: As part of NYSCA's continued efforts to increase access to our funding, the NYSCA Operations team will launch various initiatives to prepare our field for any changes to NYSCA and State processes. These include:

- Building out NYSCA's current application portal, SmartSimple, to also include the final grant reporting process. This will create a one-stop-shop for our field to both apply for funding and report on their grants – reducing the burden of rely on multiple portals.
- Hosting virtual office hours with NYSCA staff to walk grantees through changes to the reporting process in real-time.

Additionally, the state's transition from Grants Gateway to SFS greatly impacts every grantee and applicant, as well as NYSCA's operational processes such as procurement, vendrep, prequalification, and contracting. A transition of this magnitude requires a comprehensive communications plan for our field. NYSCA will build out our website, eblast communications, and social media to feature timely updates (including new training materials from SFS) to ensure that our field has the necessary tools to properly access SFS and apply for NYSCA funding.