



## **Commission on Cultural Development Arts and Cultural Policy**

**City of Bangor, Maine**



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## **MISSION STATEMENT**

The City of Bangor Commission on Cultural Development supports art and culture in Bangor, Maine through funding, marketing, advocacy, and education to benefit citizens, visitors, and the economic and cultural vitality of the city.

## **VISION STATEMENT**

To enrich and advance Bangor as a vibrant city of arts and culture.

(Image Credits Clockwise from Top Left: American Folk Festival, Penobscot Theatre Company, Photo by City Staff, Bangor Arts Society, University of Maine Art Museum, Robinson Ballet by Gary Soucy)

## **BACKGROUND**

The City of Bangor created a Commission on Cultural Development (CCD, or the Commission) in November of 2004 with the mission to “promote the development of Bangor as a regional arts center that nurtures the artistic and cultural expression of its diverse peoples.” (Bangor City Ordinances, Chapter 23, Section 18) The Commission has authorization to assess Bangor’s cultural needs, develop and maintain a comprehensive Arts and Cultural Policy, review grant applications and public art requests, and work with the community to identify and encourage opportunities for the incubation of promising arts and cultural enterprises.

Since its inception, the CCD has recommended that the City award over half a million dollars in grants to dozens of cultural institutions throughout Bangor. The funds have supported a variety of programs that range from educating elementary school children about music through the Bangor Symphony Orchestra, to events highlighting the ecological health of the Penobscot River with the Penobscot Watershed Coalition. The financial impact of the funds provided by the Commission encourages growth and sustains creative industries, enterprises, and workforces in Bangor. Individual artists and cultural organizations are integral to the identity of the City, fostering an environment for community and economy to prosper. The CCD uses "artists" in broad terms to encompass all varieties of creators of culture.

Within the structure of its mission, the Commission on Cultural Development is responsible for developing an Arts and Cultural Policy “using a five-year vision statement and strategic objectives that support the vision statement and based on an assessment of Bangor’s cultural needs and assets.” (Bangor City Ordinances, Chapter 95, Section 6) In order to establish a policy that integrates all aspects of the cultural life in Bangor, the Commission conducted a series of internal work sessions and sought critical input from community members and stakeholders throughout the planning process. A community forum was held at the Bangor Public Library where the Commission gathered information and details about visions for culture in the region as well as suggestions about actionable steps that can be taken to promote arts and culture in Bangor. In addition to the forum, a questionnaire was given to participants to further encourage feedback. Another meeting was held with the leadership of cultural non-profits in Bangor to discuss the current landscape of cultural activity in the area and suggested needed improvements. From these sources, the CCD created a comprehensive Arts and Cultural Policy to outline how it will move forward in the next five years with an established mission for the City.

Note that the prioritization for each section in the Arts and Cultural Policy will be dependent on budget and resources.

## SECTION 1 FUNDING

Based on the annual allocation, the Commission on Cultural Development is responsible for reviewing grant requests and making recommendations to City Council on awarding funds to support the programs of Bangor's cultural nonprofits and individual artists. The CCD recognizes that through excellence in artistic programming, these organizations enhance the quality of life for citizens and visitors in Bangor. City support is needed in order for the organizations to successfully carry out their diverse cultural missions. The grant program shall continue to be the primary focus of the Commission and the majority of the City's annual budget allocation to the CCD shall be used for this purpose; and the Commission further understands the importance of identifying new funding sources such as the Maine Arts Commission and to generate a better awareness of the Optional Cultural Investment Fund.

### **Goal #1: Create greater awareness of the Optional Cultural Investment Fund**

- Strategy: Work collaboratively with City staff and Councilors to develop an efficient method of disseminating information about the Optional Cultural Investment Fund.  
*Timeline: 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018*
- Strategy: Work collaboratively with City staff to get updates on the amount of funding that is being generated as the primary indicator of the program's success  
*Timeline: 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018*
- Strategy: To increase citizen contribution to this Fund, organize and staff up to seven informational tables at various arts-related venues or events, which dually addresses a goal outlined in the Marketing section  
*Timeline: 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018*

### **Goal #2: Pursue Maine Arts Commission grant**

- Strategy: Distribute Council approved Arts and Cultural Policy to the leadership of Maine Arts Commission (MAC). This was noted by MAC as a necessary document in the City of Bangor's ability to pursue possible future MAC grants  
*Timeline: 2014*
- Strategy: Arrange meetings with Executive Directors of cultural organizations and City Staff to identify needs within the community (in line with criteria of the grant) and develop framework for a grant request and work through the application process  
*Timeline: 2015, 2016*

### **Goal #3: Work with the City of Bangor and Cultural Institutions to pursue other grants such as those administered by National Endowment of the Arts**

- Strategy: Research applicable grants and organize brainstorming session with City staff to identify potential opportunities to link arts and culture with development efforts  
*Timeline: 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018*

## SECTION 2 ADVOCACY

The Commission on Cultural Development advocates on behalf of individual artists and cultural organizations operating within the City of Bangor to advance decisions, policies, and infrastructural developments conducive to a flourishing arts community. The Commission wishes to heighten awareness of decision makers and the public on the economic impact and value of the arts, advise City Council on local and state policies affecting the arts sector, and champion this cause as a priority in the City's strategic development.

### **Goal #1: Capture quantitative data on the City's arts and cultural organizations and individual artists contributing to Bangor's creative economy**

- Strategy: Develop and administer a cultural census to catalog individuals and organizations that comprise the City's arts sector, which dually addresses a goal outlined in the Marketing section  
*Timeline: 2015*
- Strategy: Using the developed census tool, quantify impact and demonstrate the depth and diversity of artistic enterprise in Bangor  
*Timeline: 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018*

### **Goal #2: Empower and mobilize arts supporters, educators, and community and business leaders to advocate for policies that promote the arts and public funding to fuel sector development and growth citywide**

- Strategy: Convene meetings of those vested in the arts, arts supporters, and the general public to heighten awareness of issues affecting the sector and to inspire and facilitate individual and collective advocacy, which dually addresses a goal outlined in the Marketing section  
*Timeline: 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018*
- Strategy: Leverage electronic communications tools to facilitate information sharing and mobilization  
*Timeline: 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018*

### **Goal #3: Advise City Council on matters pertaining to Bangor arts and culture**

- Strategy: Update the Council on the Commission's activities as well as share data gathered through cultural census findings, provide summary analysis of local trends and state legislative issues, and make recommendations concerning decisions impacting Bangor artists and arts and cultural organizations  
*Timeline: Twice annually; 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018*
- Strategy: Draft a policy for the Council's review and approval governing the selection, installation, and maintenance of artwork in public spaces  
*Timeline: 2015*
- Strategy: Create opportunities for policymakers and decision makers to engage informally with Bangor artists and arts and cultural organizations to deepen understanding and appreciation of the sector's contributions and challenges  
*Timeline: 2015, 2017*

## SECTION 3 EDUCATION

Professional development opportunities further artists' craft (e.g. writing, painting, and performance), reach, and operations. Through partnership with professionals, the Commission will enhance the artistic and cultural community through individual education in areas where artists may lack resources. Artists will benefit from an environment where they can learn and share information on how to grow a business, apply for grants to fund their cultural and artistic ventures, get published, find gallery representation, understand their tax situation as artists, market their art, etc. In addition, local area businesses profit from learning to collaborate with artists to boost operations. With time, these offerings are expected to raise the visibility and economic status of the artists and to benefit citizens, visitors, and the cultural richness of the City of Bangor.

### **Goal #1: Provide professional development workshops in a variety of topics**

- Strategy: Present a workshop to educate artists about grant writing and the application processes (specific treatment paid toward the CCD and Maine Arts Commission grants)  
*Timeline: Twice annually; 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018*
- Strategy: Present a workshop to educate artists about marketing artwork and sharing information in the artistic community  
*Timeline: 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018*
- Strategy: Present a workshop to educate self-employed artists about taxes and tax issues. Workshops will operate on an annual basis before sensitive deadlines (e.g. end of tax year)  
*Timeline: 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018*
- Strategy: Present a workshop to educate local writers about self-publishing and approaching publishers  
*Timeline: 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018*

### **Goal #2: Offer a seminar for business owners on ways to boost their business by partnering with local artists**

- Strategy: Partner with local organizations to identify experienced business-arts partnerships  
*Timeline: 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018*
- Strategy: Invite some of these organizations to create a panel for the seminar  
*Timeline: 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018*
- Strategy: Partner with local community-serving organizations to promote event and benefits of such ongoing business-arts partnerships  
*Timeline: 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018*
- Strategy: Secure a venue, and advertise and promote these events  
*Timeline: 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018*

## SECTION 4 MARKETING

Historically, marketing of arts and culture for the City of Bangor has been the responsibility of individual organizations, with some support provided through local non-profit organizations and consortiums. With the explosion of artistic and cultural energy in the region over the last five years, the City is ideally situated to enact a comprehensive plan to buttress Bangor's identity as a generator and supporter of arts and culture.

Arts and cultural marketing plans are a common occurrence in arts communities small and large. Cities such as Fredericksburg, VA (population, 24,000), the City of Santa Cruz, CA (population, 62,000), and the City of San Francisco, CA (population 825,000) have utilized similar methods to support their local arts and cultural endeavors. Bangor's assessment of needs and the resulting goals were developed through an analysis of recurring themes expressed in public focus groups, sessions with cultural leaders in the City, and an examination of benchmarking reports and plans across the country.

**Goal #1: Develop and maintain a digital presence managed through the Commission and City Liaison. As the recipient of grant funding to create the current "Bangor Arts" brand, the City of Bangor owns and thus delegates responsibility of the brand to the CCD, including website administration and logo usage.**

- Strategy: Develop and maintain a section for the Commission on the existing "Bangor Arts" website that includes:
  - Basic information, Vision Statement, and Mission Statement
  - Unified calendar of "Bangor Arts" events
  - Funding opportunities available through the CCD's grant and the application for them
  - Education initiatives such as the free, Commission-hosted education workshops
  - Resources such as a list of organizations specializing in economic development, community activity, tourism, and public interest groups, and City departments
  - A section in which artists can post classifieds
  - Contact form that goes to Commission Chair and City Liaison

*Timeline: 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018*

- Strategy: Disseminate a seasonal e-newsletter through a compiled list of stakeholders (City officials, artists, "Bangor Arts" affiliates, and the public)

*Timeline: 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018*

- Strategy: Maintain a consistent social media presence through the "Bangor Arts" platforms with two to five weekly posts that communicate arts and cultural opportunities as well as development and funding opportunities through CCD grants

*Timeline: 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018*

**Goal #2: Promote Bangor as a cultural destination through a month of the arts**

- Strategy: Designate a visible, multi-disciplinary arts and culture month to annually highlight activities, organizations, and artists

*Timeline: 2014*

- Strategy: Promote collaboration between organizations and individual artists to participate in the designated arts and culture month  
*Timeline: 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018*
- Strategy: Request sponsorship by Bangor-based businesses  
*Timeline: 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018*
- Strategy: Bill the designated cultural month through web presence on “Bangor Arts” website and postings in businesses throughout the region  
*Timeline: 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018*
- Strategy: Link to economic development organizations and non-profit groups  
*Timeline: 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018*

### **Goal #3: Strengthen connections between the City and Bangor’s cultural community through streamlined messaging and improved communication**

- Strategy: Update and expand the “Bangor Arts” brochure (subject to funding)  
*Timeline: 2015, 2016*
- Strategy: Compile a list of assets and resources and cultural stakeholders for dissemination and website display, and inventory of publicly-held art on City property, which dually addresses a goal outlined in the Advocacy section  
*Timeline: 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018*
- Strategy: Facilitate awareness and disseminate materials (“Bangor Arts” brochure and CCD e-newsletter) to economic development organizations  
*Timeline: 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018*
- Strategy: Tabling efforts at up to seven arts events, which dually addresses a goal outlined in the Funding section  
*Timeline: 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018*

### **Goal #4: Collect and evaluate data on artistic events, organizations, and the cultural environment, as well as identify and promote opportunities for collaboration between artists and cultural organizations**

- Strategy: Update City officials and arts and cultural organizations through the e-newsletter and a personal message from the Commission, which dually addresses a goal outlined in the Advocacy section  
*Timeline: Twice annually; 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018*
- Strategy: Host two cultural forums annually for the public, and arts and cultural organizations to voice questions, comments, and ideas  
*Timeline: 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018*
- Strategy: Review opportunities and pertinent information to disseminate to arts and culture organizations, economic development organizations, and the public  
*Timeline: Twice annually; 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018*
- Strategy: Review and amend artistic and cultural stakeholders in the community listed on the CCD’s assets and resource list  
*Timeline: 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018*
- Strategy: Quantitatively measure economic impact of individuals and organizations in the arts sector through anonymous surveys

*Timeline: 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018*

- Strategy: Conduct an annual poll or survey on what public art citizens would like to see and at what locations throughout the City

*Timeline: 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018*

## SECTION 5 CULTURAL VIBRANCY

The Commission itself can be an agent of change to inspire cultural vibrancy throughout the City. The effect is to highlight Bangor as a whole and contiguous entity, rather than as individual pieces. By working with stakeholders in the City (e.g. City government departments, business owners, individual artists, and arts and cultural organizations), the Commission can target specific outlets in which groups collaborate and contribute directly to this end.

### **GOAL #1: Advocate for a specific location, either downtown or adjacent to downtown, as a permanent public art installation or display**

- Strategy: Identify suitable locations and contact necessary parties to ensure stakeholder support (landlords, businesses, and businesses adjacent to prospective location)  
*Timeline: 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018*
- Strategy: Seek grant money that can be used to fund an installation and consider, seeking outside funding from businesses with a vested interest in the arts in Bangor  
*Timeline: 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018*
- Strategy: Request proposals from Maine artists for the identified public location. After selecting acceptable proposals, write project summaries for each covering factors such as theme, size, materials, timeline, cost, and the positive impact in the community  
*Timeline: 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018*
- Strategy: Using the proposals and public art policy outlined in an Advocacy goal of this plan, initiate a dialogue with City Council, non-profit organizations, local businesses, and other concerned parties and request suggestions and secure necessary permissions  
*Timeline: 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018*

### **GOAL #2: Promote all of Bangor as a cultural destination with the intent of bringing the arts to neighborhoods outside the hub of the Arts District**

- Strategy: Work with Parks & Recreation Department and arts and cultural organizations in Bangor to plan one arts event per summer in a park  
*Timeline: 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018*
- Strategy: Collaborate with Bangor Mall management or management of a Mall area business center to host cultural events  
*Timeline: 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018*
- Strategy: Solicit arts and cultural organizations and individual artists for submission and ideas, taking into account theme, message, timeline, cost, and positive impact in the community that befit the venue space  
*Timeline: 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018*