



Careers in the Arts Toolkit Online Dialogue

December 6, 2017 – January 8, 2018
Final Report



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Introduction to the Dialogue

Many supporters of the arts, including Art Beyond Sight (ABS), believe that making disability identity an asset to the arts is integral to reshape our culture. Talented artists and cultural workers with disabilities have their own experiences which should be nurtured and represented in the art world. The lack of representation of people with disabilities in the arts imposes a barrier for others who want to be part of society's artistic community and influence culture. To create a more inclusive community, the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) partnered with ABS to develop the Careers in the Arts Toolkit, which will seek to increase employment opportunities in the arts for people with disabilities through an online resource and educational webinars to connect job seekers and employers with key supporting resources and practices.

In an effort to inform the development of this Toolkit, NEA and ABS collaborated with the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) to host an ePolicyWorks crowdsourcing event. This Careers in the Arts Toolkit online dialogue built upon the information gathered in the 2016 NEA-sponsored Careers in the Arts Dialogue, which identified and examined several key issues related to opportunities for people with disabilities in the arts. The Careers in the Arts Toolkit dialogue took a more in-depth look at those key issues to explore effective resources and programs pertaining to these targeted areas of focus. Dialogue participants also identified and explored additional issues of relevance and importance to ensure the best, latest, and most comprehensive resources and exemplary programs would be included in the toolkit.

The Careers in the Arts Toolkit dialogue was divided into three main topic areas:

1. Education & Job Training: Resources, Opportunities, Strategies
2. Artistic Discipline-Specific Challenges & Progress
3. Disclosures & Representation: Best Practices

Participants were asked to keep the following questions in mind when posting ideas on these topic areas, as well as when, commenting and voting on submitted ideas:

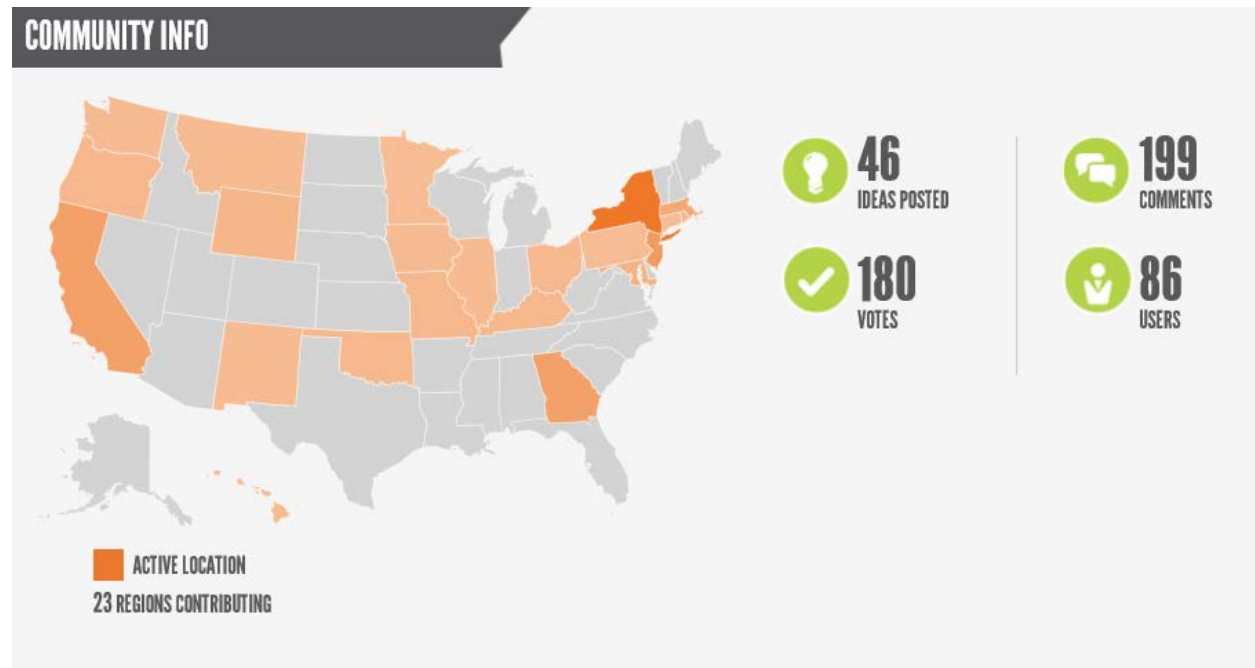
- What resources and programs would be most useful in helping people with disabilities prepare for and obtain employment in the arts and culture sector?
- What resources and programs would be most useful in preparing arts employers to train job seekers with disabilities?

An archive and complete results of the Careers in the Arts Toolkit online dialogue can be found at the Careers in the Arts ePolicyWorks community page at [CareersInTheArts.ePolicyWorks.org](https://careersinthearts.epolicyworks.org).

Participant Summary and Dialogue Activity

The dialogue opened for participation at 8 a.m. ET on December 13, 2017 and closed at midnight on January 8, 2018. Below are details about the dialogue registrants and participants, including the community map of participants, statistics on the number of dialogue visitors, users and participants, and demographic information as provided by registrants.

Map of Active Participants across the United States



Visitor and Participants during the Dialogue

- Total Careers in the Arts community members: 491
- New Careers in the Arts community members: 87
- Active dialogue participants submitting ideas, comments and votes: 86
- Total unique visitors during the dialogue: 1,606
- Total page views: 8,558
- Average pages per visit: 3.57
- Average visit duration: 3:57
- Returning visitors: 14.67 percent
- Bounce rate (percentage of participants who leave after viewing the first page of the dialogue): 53.21 percent

Number of Ideas, Votes and Comments per Topic

In total, 86 participants posted 46 ideas, voted 180 times and left 199 comments on dialogue topics.

Education & Job Training: Resources, Opportunities, Strategies

- Total Ideas: 28
- Total Comments: 130
- Total Votes: 118

Artistic Discipline-Specific Challenges & Progress

- Total Ideas: 11
- Total Comments: 33
- Total Votes: 37

Disclosures & Representation: Best Practices

- Total Ideas: 9
- Total Comments: 37
- Total Votes: 34

Outreach Efforts

In order to engage a broad range of participants in the Careers in the Arts Toolkit online dialogue, ePolicyWorks engaged in a multitude of strategic outreach efforts, including emails and social media posts. Email blasts were distributed to previous ePolicyWorks dialogue participants and key stakeholders in the current dialogue topic area. This outreach strategy is critical to informing and shaping the conversation in every online dialogue, ensuring that the right people are brought to the table to contribute.

Total Dialogue Outreach Emails

- Email Blasts: 5
- Emails Delivered: 6,349
- Emails Opened: 1,494 (24.50 percent open rate)
- Total number of clicks on links in emails (excluding multiple clicks of the same link): 239

Total Tweets

- Tweets and retweets linked to dialogue home page: 16

Top Ideas by Vote Contributed by Dialogue Participants

Participants in the Careers in the Arts Toolkit online dialogue enjoyed a robust discussion on different ideas around job training, discipline-specific challenges, and disclosure and representation.

Education & Job Training: Resources, Opportunities, Strategies

1. Career Transition Strategies for Late-in-Life Artists

9 votes and 9 comments

Unlike other underrepresented groups, not every artist enters the population of people with disabilities at a young age. Artists who become disabled later in life often must reboot their careers and find new ways to work, in effect re-emerging. Any anecdotal experience, resource materials, and/or assistive tools you can share on effective ways to transition and adapt to a new reality as a person in the arts with a disability?

2. Arts Education in IEPs

7 votes and 5 comments

Individualized Education Programs sometimes require rather inflexible "outcomes" of learning. Those designing IEPs can struggle to explain arts outcomes in the terms and measures thought to be required. In some cases, educators remove arts education from IEPs altogether for these reasons. We need a way to share standards for arts outcomes in IEPs and stress that disability arts is an expansive and transformative field that can be introduced early in a student's education.

3. Internships and Mentorships

6 votes and 1 comment

Many cities are home to Arts and Cultural Alliances which are an ideal opportunity for students with disabilities to get exposure to careers in arts administration. If these Cultural Alliances whose membership is often the leaders of cultural attractions in cities were to partner with College and University Disability Support Services, it would offer amazing opportunities for both Internships and Mentorships for higher education students with disability to get exposure to careers that they may not have previously realized can be arts related. The more people with disabilities we have working in the arts, the more inclusive the environments will become, leading to increased opportunities both behind the scenes and on the stages. Arts and Cultural leaders need incentive to take the initiative to become the models of an inclusive and diverse industry.

4. Job App

5 votes and 12 comments

Develop an application for job seekers to input what they are able to do, tasks which require accommodation to perform and what their limitations are. The application would then synthesize this data and produce a possible match for employment/jobs, which could then be matched against job posts that are a good fit for the prospective employee.

5. Creating Integrated, Professional Productions to Showcase Talent

5 votes and 10 comments

Open Circle Theatre creates a professional theatre that integrates artists and arts administrators with and without disabilities. We then seek recognition and participation in the DC theatre scene so that artists with disabilities get seen and then cast and hired by other theatres. We truly believe that showing artists with disabilities in roles that others had not considered them for in the past not only gets these specific artists work, it also shows how, rather than an obstacle, disability can enhance productions' aesthetics and deepen the theatre experience for all.

Artistic Discipline-Specific Challenges & Progress

1. VAPA for Students with Disabilities

8 votes and 9 comments

VAPA: Visual and Performing Arts Framework

Accommodations for Student with Disabilities

Compiled by Jonn Paris-Salb 2016

Students with disabilities are not typically invited to participate in arts programs for general education students. The arts are as important to the school experience as is academics for some students. The important issue is that accommodations must be in place in order for some of the students to access the arts. When a student with an Individualized Education Program (IEP) or a student using a Section 504 Plan wants to participate the teacher or person in charge should review the IEP or 504 in order for the student to be included as mandated by law.

LAWS AND REGULATIONS

GENERAL ARTS

VISUAL ARTS

PERFORMING ARTS

RESOURCES

YOUTUBE

[Author note: this comment has been shortened for length. The full text can be found at <https://careersinthearts.epolicyworks.org/a/dtd/VAPA-for-Students-with-Disabilities/917790-40649#idea-tab-details>.]

2. Grants Mentor Program – Grants Workshops for Disabled Artists

5 votes and 5 comments

Are there existing resources or programs that folks know that realize this great suggestion?

@lisaniderman in the 2016 Careers in the Arts Dialogue suggested to "Consider creating a Grants Mentor Program to help interested disabled artists determine specific artistic goals, resource needs, planned or proposed projects (taking into consideration any needs or limitations due to the disability). Mentors can help identify programs and resources that might help meet those needs based on factors such as discipline and geography. Resources could include grant programs, but also may expand the reach to any ongoing program areas that might facilitate the needs. Hold an NADC workshop where applicants could participate online for maximum participation, and create a "needs assessment" and then work to create an individualized action plan for how to move forward. I find that I am often at a loss as to where to look for resources as a disabled artist, with specific needs, to help move my artistic vision forward. I would find such service of great benefit."

(<https://careersinthearts.epolicyworks.org/a/dtd/Create-Grants-Mentor-Program-Hold-Workshop-for-Disabled-Artists/825808-40649>)

3. Recommended Resources for a Theatrical Director

4 votes and 5 comments

What are existing resources helpful to theatre directors who do not have the experience and would like full inclusion for people with disabilities in their "open calls" and productions?

4. Creating Welcoming Spaces

4 votes and 1 comment

ADA requirements do not necessarily provide guidelines for creating inclusive, welcoming spaces that allow disabled people to thrive. In dance, there may be programs and venues may be accessible to audiences, but there are often serious barriers to disabled artists who are performing.

What are some resources available for artists to find accessible dance spaces? And how can we create more of them to increase opportunities, not just for disabled dancers, but for disabled creatives, such as choreographers, production and technical staff, producers, directors, and more?

One example is SpaceFinder's accessible dance space directory:

<https://nyc.spacefinder.org/communities/DanceNYC>

Is there anyone who knows of venues or other directories who model best practices for creating welcoming spaces? And what training should be given to venue staff?

5. Using Arts and Artists as a Social Media to Change Our World for

3 votes and 1 comment

Use arts to change our global world , use artists as a game changers in our society to better our children and mothers in future, arts as a social media to spread the word arts, use painters to paint our cities in green, arts and artists in one stage to be a game changers in our world, think arts global

Disclosures & Representation: Best Practices

1. Artists and Accommodation for Auditions

7 votes and 7 comments

Discuss best practices for artists who needs accommodation for auditions. Also, how can we apply this to AEA, SAG-AFTRA and other affiliations?

2. Navigating Multiple/Intersectional Identities

5 votes and 3 comments

Much of the discourse in the contemporary arts world currently revolves around intersectionality and race and gender/sexuality among them. With disability as a given, what are some institutions/programs/resources already out there that are navigating the multiple/intersectional identities with disability as one of them? What are some ways to engage intersectionality in future projects/programs?

Here are a couple of examples of recent programs where this topic was being considered

<https://dacphome.org/2017/11/20/immigrants-and-refugees-with-disabilities-dis-representation-discussion-series/>

<https://disabilityvisibilityproject.com/2017/04/19/interview-with-writerartist-khairani-barokka/>

<http://vsamass.org/pivotx/2016-05-05/disability-and-intersectionality-art-exhibit-call-for-art>

3. Flexibility, Visibility, and Culture Shift

4 votes and 7 comments

As someone with an invisible illness and disability, I have the privilege of choosing to conceal my challenges most of the time; however, this only leads to immense struggles for me down the line as I am not able to perform my job to the best of my abilities when I'm struggling with chronic pain and fatigue. Working for an organization that outwardly, visibly supports diversity and inclusion efforts, and works diligently to put their implicit biases in check helps build trust. Disclosing a disability and/or illness in the interview/hiring process can be terrifying.

Another thing that has helped immensely is having a flexible schedule. Of course, there are days where flexibility is not always the best option, but having the ability to work from home and/or put in my hours when I have the most cognitive focus has been instrumental in allowing me to remain in the workforce; as is the ability to see my medical care team during typical work hours. Along those lines, providing health care benefits is huge help for those of us that rely on our medical care team for support.

In my experience, the arts industry falls into an unhealthy martyrdom mentality. While the work we produce is supposed to enhance, nurture, and evolve our society, we seem to forget to do the same things for ourselves, with self-care as an afterthought. Having a chronic illness that impacts my energy levels and focus has taught me that pacing, and self-care are vital to the work, and having multiple perspectives from people who struggle to work a 40-hour week in our fast-paced world is just as valuable as the perspectives of people who can function on only 5 hours of sleep and thrive in aggressive environments. My experience has taught me the value of thoughtful reflection and centered approaches - something I see our industry, and society at-large, struggle with. Overvaluing expedience also means that organizations have less capacity and agility to think creatively about accommodations, which are personal and unique to each artist. Taking a pause to look at the way arts organizations function without ample resources would go a long way to create space for increased accessibility conversations and action, which can lead to meaningful policy change at a government level.

4. Festivals & Diversity Lottery

4 votes and 3 comments

Dear all:

I am a profoundly deaf performance artist, filmmaker, playwright and poet. I've found that the best way to give myself opportunities as a Deaf performer, is to participate in fringe festivals--the type of festival that accepts and promotes all kinds of performance arts--theater, spoken word, slam poetry, stand-up comedy, and yes ASL poetry. Fringe festivals are known for having

great representation of diverse groups, including disabled of all kinds. I have performed at a few fringe festivals using my own original works using American Sign Language.

Recently, I just got accepted to perform at Orlando International Fringe Arts Festival, which is the largest fringe festival in the country. Over 300 people had applied to perform at Orlando. I got into Orlando because I applied for the Diversity/Accessibility Lottery which was set up for minority performers. I am very grateful and happy for this amazing opportunity.

I strongly believe that more festivals, including fringe, theater, playwriting, visual arts, music, etc... should be encouraged to set up Diversity Lotteries and actively reach out to Disabled and Deaf artists and encourage them to apply for Diversity lotteries. From then onward, we would have more representation of Disabled and Deaf artists and hear/see/watch more of their works being shown onstage. There should be some kind of a positive incentive for festivals to make this happen.

5. Include Disabled Artists in Diversity as a Cultural Issue

4 votes and 2 comments

In response to this suggestion by @moderatordol3, @sandahlcarrie in the 2016 Dialogue asked the question "...access/accommodations is an ADA compliance issue and participation by disabled artists is a diversity and cultural issue. How do we do both at the same time?"

Are there any "Best Practice Examples" of Cultural Organizations that are doing it right? Are there any guidelines for language and action items to help folks be truly inclusive? @khayward @tallerimc @liveincalifornia

@nicoleq

@moderatordol3 wrote in 2016: This is probably a very simple item but one that isn't done often enough. Include Disability. For arts organizations, arts service organizations, arts agencies, and arts funders, when doing outreach, creating programs, projects, or funding the same please:

1. SPECIFICALLY include disability in the list of "diversities" welcome to apply (beyond women, minorities etc.). Use the word.
2. Do outreach to places and groups you may not have done outreach to before: minority serving institutions, schools, independent living centers, arts schools, community groups, etc.
3. Invite creative pros with disabilities to your festivals, to judge your competitions, to be interviewed/profiled for your newsletter etc. Ask them not just about their disability, ask them about their CRAFT.

4. Check your demographics. Just as many organizations ask folks to volunteer demographic information about themselves (age, gender, race etc.) why not add disability to the list? This gives you a better picture of who are your patrons, who are your grant submitters as well as recipients, and who are your participants. If it is voluntary, individuals can always opt out, but greater information will help you better plan.

<https://careersinthearts.epolicyworks.org/a/dtd/Include-disability/825884-40649>

Conclusion

Hosted by NEA and ABS in collaboration with ODEP, the Careers in the Arts Toolkit online dialogue sought to identify the resources that would prove most effective for people with disabilities pursuing education, training, and employment opportunities across all arts and culture disciplines, not only as artists but cultural workers as well. These partners were able to build upon information gathered in a previous NEA-sponsored dialogue, the Careers in the Arts Dialogue, and are now moving forward with information collected in this dialogue to an online resource and educational webinars to connect job seekers and employers with key supporting resources and practices in an effort to increase employment opportunities in the arts for people with disabilities. The Careers in the Arts Toolkit is projected to be launched in 2018.

In total, 86 dialogue participants posted 46 ideas, 199 comments and voted 180 times throughout the duration of the dialogue. These participants provided a great deal of insightful commentary that will be used in the Toolkit's production. The ideas and resources suggested will be reviewed and taken into consideration by the partners. In the end, the Toolkit aims to be a comprehensive collection of tools, programs, and training that people with disabilities will need to compete, contribute, and thrive in the arts world.