

# Regional Cultural Plan for Northern New Hampshire

*Regional collaborations working to promote, preserve, and employ  
North Country arts, culture, and heritage*

Developed by  
The Arts Alliance of Northern New Hampshire  
and its Regional & Local Partners

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## **Planning background**

In the fall of 2002, the Arts Alliance of Northern New Hampshire (the Alliance) and its partners launched a two-year regional cultural planning process for the North Country, overseen by a steering committee of regional leaders. The plan is advised by Dr. Craig Dreeszen.

**Planning goal:** The planning process aim is to develop realistic recommendations for action that can be taken at the regional, sub-regional, local and agency levels to enrich cultural life, improve access to programming, and increase educational opportunities in the arts throughout northern New Hampshire.

## **Long-Term Objectives of the Planning Process**

- Create a database inventory of cultural resources that can be used by the Alliance, our partners and members for purposes of outreach, planning, coordination, and marketing;
- Integrate the cultural plan into local and regional economic-development plans;
- Use an inclusive, cooperative planning process to build interest, involvement, and personal and financial investment in implementing the plan's recommendations.
- Devise a process that will continue beyond the publication and dissemination of the Regional Cultural Plan, allowing for ongoing input and refinement of the plan, for documentation of related successes, and for recommended changes and additions.

The cultural plan will succeed to the extent that the planning has set realistic long-term goals that build on North Country strengths, respond to regional needs, engage regional leaders, create partnerships, secure funding, mobilize action, and promote continuing and responsive cultural work throughout the region.

Because of the nature of a regional plan that encompasses a broad range of communities, it is the intention of the Arts Alliance and its partners that the plan serve as a template for action, a stimulus for collaboration, and an evolving resource rather than as a fixed, rigid and directive document. Each of our towns and sub-regions has its own accomplishments, options and opportunities to build upon; each is encouraged to use the plan as a starting point for its own planning purposes.

It is our hope that the plan will grow as an increasingly important and useful presence on the web through the addition of examples of work undertaken, links to existing efforts, and an exchange of ideas, resources, and suggestions. We look forward to working together on the major collaborative initiatives outlined in the plan.

**We envision that the North Country of New Hampshire will be experienced by both local residents and visitors as a region ripe with year-round arts experiences. We believe that cultural opportunities should be abundant, available, and accessible to people of all ages in all our communities, and that the arts should play an important role in community, educational, and economic life throughout our region.**

## **NORTHERN NEW HAMPSHIRE REGIONAL CULTURAL PLAN**

### **Long-Range Goals**

**1. Community and economic development:**

Strengthen programs and partnerships that tap the power of arts, culture, and heritage for regional community and economic development.

**2. Information and communications:**

Communicate information that raises awareness and appreciation of the region's arts, culture, and heritage resources.

**3. Cultural Programming:**

Promote access to quality cultural programming for all residents and visitors to Northern New Hampshire.

**4. Arts education:**

Support arts education as integral to public education and to lifelong learning throughout the region.

**5. Artists:**

Create support systems to encourage and promote North Country artists and their work.

**6. Cultural capacity:**

Build the capacity of the nonprofit cultural sector in Northern New Hampshire

## Cultural Plan Objectives

### Goal 1. **Community and economic development**

Strengthen programs and partnerships that tap the power of arts, culture, and heritage for regional community and economic development.

Objectives:

- a. Promote and develop cultural tourism in the region.
- b. Promote community building through cultural development by integrating culture into new and established community events.
- c. Work to strengthen and promote the region's creative economy as an important, recognized, and viable economic sector.
- d. Measure the economic impact of the region's creative/cultural sector over time.

Suggested actions include:

- Develop formal collaborations with statewide and regional tourism agencies, including NH Division of Travel & Tourism, White Mountain Attractions and NH Hospitality association, emphasizing and promoting the artistic and cultural heritage of the region
- Join forces with the recreation and hospitality industries to inform recreational tourists of the region's cultural resources, and to provide special off-season opportunities, including packages, coupons, and passes
- Work with tour-bus companies, travel agencies, and realtors to provide comprehensive information and access to cultural programs
- Offer regular cultural awareness training for workers in the hospitality industry throughout the region
- Develop artist-in-residence programs at hotels and inns
- Create collaborative events and festivals across the region, including studio tours and thematic celebrations
- Provide cultural programming for Old Home Days and other established school, church, and community events; partner with local nonprofits at their fundraising promotions; and develop arts treasure hunts and other community-based programs
- Work with local planning boards to encourage and facilitate inclusion of cultural planning as they revise their master plans and to discuss full cultural use of town buildings
- Form "Creative Economy" partnerships throughout the region to support and publicize entrepreneurial initiatives at the local and regional level and to work with individual North Country communities as they develop their "Creative Economy" niches
- Provided targeted opportunities for potential investors and entrepreneurs
- Display artwork in public places including courthouses, banks, and post offices
- Create common data-collection forms to track attendance at and economic impact of cultural programming
- Issue annual "Economic Report" on cultural events throughout the region

## Goal 2. **Information and communications**

Communicate information that raises the awareness and appreciation of the region's arts, culture, and heritage resources

Objectives:

- a. Collect comprehensive information on the region's arts, culture and heritage events and programs
- b. Disseminate promotion and publicity aimed at increasing public awareness of arts, culture and heritage programs and resources in the region
- c. Maintain and build the regional cultural inventory and find ways to make it accessible and usable
- d. Facilitate cooperative marketing and regular communication among cultural organizations throughout the region
- e. Share information that will strengthen the region's cultural organizations
- f. Increase awareness of existing cultural calendars and encourage links among event and planning calendars
- g. Provide individuals and organizations with the tools they need to advocate for the arts
- h. Organize regional arts advocacy efforts
- i. Gather examples of effective local and regional initiatives and strategies to continually refine the Regional Cultural Plan
- j. Convene periodic meetings of cultural and community leaders to apply the Cultural Plan as a regional template and to assist local cultural planning and development

Suggested actions include:

- Hire a cultural marketing coordinator for the region
- Create a unified regional marketing plan
- Work with local media (radio, cable TV, and print media) to develop comprehensive coverage of the cultural scene, and explore the possibilities of regular cultural columns and programs
- Create a region-wide cultural information distribution system for flyers, postcards, brochures, etc. utilizing the existing systems of individual arts organizations
- Develop a culture hot line and scheduling center
- Put the cultural inventory online as a regional directory
- Link all cultural websites within the region to one another and to tourism and cultural sites at the state and appropriate national levels
- Cooperate with chambers of commerce throughout the region

- Provide cultural information in motel and hotel rooms
- Hire artists to make “arts racks” to separate cultural information from general tourist brochures
- Develop listservs for arts providers, consumers, and advocates
- Provide regional advocacy training workshops
- Encourage student representation on cultural councils and committees

### **Goal 3. Cultural Programming**

Promote access to quality cultural programming for all residents and visitors to Northern New Hampshire.

Objectives:

- a. Identify all of the region’s cultural programs and facilities and work with media and tourism agencies (government, chambers of commerce, etc.) to promote awareness of and participation in cultural events.
- b. Encourage local cultural organizations to take advantage of existing programming resources
- c. Use regional meetings, collaboration, and this plan to help strengthen local cultural organizations’ capacity to produce and present programs
- d. Provide technical assistance to ensure the success of cultural events
- e. Work to develop local audiences for cultural programming
- f. Increase the variety and quality of program offerings throughout the region
- g. Document and disseminate information about successful efforts

Suggested actions include:

- Develop a cultural “Welcome Wagon” program for new residents
- Increase the number of family cultural programming offerings throughout the region
- Promote block-booking among cultural organizations
- Provide technical assistance for events planning, promotion and marketing
- Maximize use of and knowledge of existing supportive resources including the New England Foundation for the Arts, the NH State Council on the Arts, Arts Presenters of Northern New England, and the Arts Alliance
- Use Main Street programs and information centers as partners and resources
- Increase the number of “about-the-arts” programs to develop new and more educated audiences for various art forms
- Use the Arts Alliance website as a place for advertising cooperative opportunities and sharing ideas and resources
- Offer more arts programs in comfortable community spaces including libraries, homes, pre-schools, senior centers

#### Goal 4. Arts education

Support arts education as integral to public education and lifelong learning throughout the region.

Objectives:

- a. Advocate for increased access to arts education for students in pre-K through 12 in towns and school systems throughout the region
- b. Support and develop arts-education programs throughout the region through effective planning and communication
- c. Provide professional development opportunities in the arts throughout the region
- d. Encourage lifelong education in and through the arts through effective partnerships and communication across sectors (education, social-service, health, culture, etc.)
- e. Fully utilize the capacity of available technologies to provide high-quality arts-education opportunities throughout the region.
- f. Involve young people in the arts through community-service, after-school, and internship and mentoring programs.

Suggested actions include:

- Highlight and honor outstanding art educators and arts-education programs
- Seek sponsorships for cultural programming in schools and community centers
- Work with superintendents throughout the region on access to excellent technology programs featuring the arts
- Develop partnerships among local community theater and dance programs and schools
- Work with institutions of higher-education and teacher-training to provide on-site graduate and CEU programs
- Offer internships and community-service learning opportunities in the arts
- Provide learning opportunities for parents in the arts
- Offer intergenerational and children's arts camps during the summer and school vacations
- Train North Country artists to present in-school and after-school programs
- Provide bus-in programs throughout the region and develop relevant cultural field trips to important sites in the region and throughout the state
- Offer advocacy programs at administration and staff meetings
- Communicate regularly with the region's PTOs and PTAs and offer school arts advocacy and cultural information workshops
- Develop comprehensive offerings for all schools
- Present arts education talks at Rotary, Lions, and Kiwanis meetings
- Work with government and social-service agencies to provide youth with art spaces after school and on weekends

- Encourage volunteers-for-the-arts programs, as in sports
- Offer hands-on opportunities for community elders
- Work with local recreation departments to integrate the arts among their offerings
- Support local heritage and artist-in-the-school programs
- Develop partnerships with technical, computer, and graphic-arts programs at the high-school and post-secondary levels
- Partner with Key Clubs and community-service programs to educate and work with young volunteers

## Goal 5. **Artists**

Create support systems to encourage and promote North Country artists and their work.

Objectives:

- a. Identify the region's individual artists, artist cooperatives, and other artist coalitions
- b. Encourage networking and mutual support among artists
- c. Provide information and technical and marketing assistance to artists and artist groups
- d. Promote creative work as a viable career option
- e. Identify and promote creative-economy development strategies that encourage artists to live and work in the region (e.g., creative incubator spaces, studio development, artist-equity housing, etc.)

Suggested actions include:

- Investigate and pursue innovative approaches to artist zoning and housing through partnerships with local governments, zoning boards, etc.
- Hold regular like-group gatherings for artists in different media and disciplines
- Provide showcasing opportunities and exhibit opportunities for local artists
- Offer marketing programs for artists and arts associations
- Investigative cooperative marketing models throughout the country
- Work with local service organizations on community events such as artist auctions, open houses, etc.
- Ensure that Business After Hours includes artist studios and programs
- Work with local artists to create "Welcome Baskets" of local art and craft products
- Promote local artists' work in a wide variety of sites, venues, and media



## Goal 6. **Cultural capacity**

Build the capacity of the nonprofit cultural sector in Northern New Hampshire

Objectives:

- a. Provide information and assistance to help the region's nonprofit cultural organizations secure adequate funding, staff and volunteers, facilities, and technology
- b. Identify cultural facility needs and work to match these with available resources
- c. Work with cultural, tourism, economic, and community development organizations throughout the region to identify opportunities to help implement the cultural plan.
- d. Document success and achievements in cultural development throughout the region.
- e. Build support among the region's business community by showcasing the positive impact of arts, culture and heritage facilities, programs, and events
- f. Increase the Arts Alliance of Northern New Hampshire's capacity to coordinate implementation of the regional cultural plan.
- g. Reconvene the cultural plan steering committee and other volunteers to monitor and adapt the regional cultural plan on an ongoing basis

Suggested actions include:

- Explore partnerships with local businesses, chambers of commerce, and consultants, including the possibility of bundling accounting, purchasing, and insurance services
- Work with development professionals to build a North Country arts endowment and to provide appropriate development training
- Create a system to train and utilize arts volunteers throughout the region
- Assist cultural nonprofits with grant research and grant writing
- Coordinate regular information-sharing meetings and listservs for cultural nonprofits
- Provide cooperative advertising opportunities to all cultural nonprofits
- Provide excellent and low-cost workshops and nonprofit trainings specifically designed for North Country cultural nonprofits
- Create mentor programs for new organizations and new staff members of cultural nonprofits
- Explore dual memberships and cross-promotion among the region's cultural organizations
- Keep an updated inventory of cultural facilities, including possible sites, and work with local governments to provide space as needed
- Work with local organizations to develop innovative programs in nontraditional sites
- Provide facilities development workshops
- Research models of successful collaborative efforts and disseminate to all interested nonprofits
- Develop a broad range of partnerships with post-secondary programs that can provide interns, graduate students, and consultation for North Country cultural nonprofits for North Country cultural nonprofits