



MAYOR ADAMS TERM IN REVIEW

ARTS & CULTURE

When it comes to creativity, Portland's got a reputation. As proud of that reputation as we are, our administration can't take credit for it. It is the product of the work and vision of generations of Portlanders—from those who founded the first art museum on the West Coast, to those who played the first gig at the first music venue on East Burnside. From the beginning, these visionaries have always paired the question of “what kind of city do we want to be” with the question of “what role do the arts play in that?”

When we took office in 2009 the recession was wreaking havoc with our local economy, schools, and communities. The question of how the arts could help us address the issues of our time and be the city we aspire to be was more pertinent than ever. How could we consider ourselves a community that values creativity and education if we sat by and watched arts and music disappear from our schools? As our city changes and grows, how do we make sure that all of us have access to the arts? How do we guarantee that our strong reputation in the arts translates to more than just good press and actually manifests benefits for our entire community?

To answer these questions head on, in 2009 we published [Act for Art](#), the region's first comprehensive plan for the arts in 20 years. Informed by years of citizen engagement, Act for Art set three clear goals: Improve Access to the Arts and Arts Education, Strengthen our Cultural Infrastructure, and

Invest in Creative Talent. With the support of our community, City Council, the [Regional Arts & Culture Council](#) (RACC—the steward of our public investment in the arts), the [Creative Advocacy Network](#) (CAN), our six Portland school districts, the [Portland Development Commission](#), the [Governor's Office of Film & Television](#), and countless volunteers we're pleased to share that we've made real, substantive progress in realizing the vision of the plan. The arts are working for Portlanders.

The Arts Education & Access Fund

In November of this year, voters in Portland sent a crystal clear message that the arts matter in our schools and communities when they overwhelmingly (over 62%!) approved ballot measure 26-146, creating the Arts Education and Access Fund.

The product of years of best practices research and citizen input convened by CAN in community forums, conversations, surveys and more involving thousands of Portlanders, this fund will ensure that every Portland student in Kindergarten through 5th grade in all six of our public school districts will have an arts or music class taught by a certified arts teacher. It also generates funding for competitive RACC grants to schools and nonprofits to provide arts supplies and experiences like field trips and artist residencies to students, as well as to make arts experiences available to underserved communities. Additionally, it provides critical grant funding for Portland's

non-profit arts organizations to bring the arts to life in our city and increase public access to them. Funded by a \$35 annual income tax that excludes the lowest-income Portlanders altogether, the Arts Education & Access Fund is a sustainable, dedicated resource that builds a foundation that will help make Portlanders' goals for the arts for all in every classroom and neighborhood achievable for years to come.

Education, Youth, and Schools

The arts help kids learn better, plain and simple. Research has proven, again and again, that arts education increases cognitive capacity, encourages brain development, builds confidence, improves academic achievement and graduation rates, and teaches the critical reasoning and communication skills that are necessary in today's innovation economy.

That's why we immediately set to work getting the arts back into our schools in innovative ways, reversing decades of erosion that left more than 10,000 Portland students without arts in their schools, even while developing the plan to restore arts teachers. The [Right Brain Initiative](#) has been serving a growing number of Portland students every year since 2008. A program of RACC, Right Brain brings professional artists into classrooms, pairing them with teachers to deliver core subject curriculum through visual art, dance, music and drama to help students learn by engaging their whole brains. Right Brain is now serving 10,376 students in 31 schools in five districts. In the process, it's become a national model, receiving a prestigious \$25,000 grant from the National Endowment for the Arts in 2011. With the Arts Education & Access Fund now in place, The Right Brain Initiative can

scale up and help more students in more schools.

Largely because of the success of The Right Brain Initiative, Portland was one of the first places to be selected in 2010 to be part of the [Any Given Child](#) initiative of the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, D.C. Any Given Child helped us convene a collaborative conversation among school districts, arts organizations, civic and business leaders about arts education and begin to collect important data about how and where it is being delivered. In addition it highlighted the emerging national standard for a full arts education consisting of three parts—arts specialist teachers, arts integration (like the Right Brain Initiative), and arts experiences such as field trips.

This model shaped the Arts Education & Access Fund, which provides funding for all three pieces and puts Portland at the forefront of cities taking serious action to deliver arts learning to students in a meaningful way. With the Fund now in place, the joint effort between school districts, RACC, arts organizations, the City, and community partners can deepen and broaden to make sure all are coordinated to make the most meaningful impact possible for young people. It's an exciting time to be an elementary school student in Portland.

Access and Equity

Many arts organizations have been doing incredible work for years to make their performances, programs, and exhibits available to all Portlanders, regardless of their background, means, age or neighborhood. In 2010, when we set equity goals in our new contract with RACC, we

sought to coordinate those efforts and set up a system to track them so that we can measure progress and make sure that we are meeting our responsibility to benefit the whole city with our public investment in the arts.

RACC and arts organizations are taking a comprehensive look at their boards, staff, clients, audiences, programs, and services through an equity lens similar to the one developed by the city's new [Office of Equity and Human Rights](#). Led by a joint staff-board equity task force and a new outreach position on staff, RACC has been taking significant steps to ensure equitable delivery of their services and setting annual work plans to those ends. They are holding workshops and grant orientations in culturally specific venues and in a greater diversity of neighborhoods for a greater diversity of Portlanders. They are providing translation and interpretation services to guarantee that language is not a barrier. They are also creating new funding opportunities for culturally specific organizations to serve the artistic needs of their communities. This work creates a foundation for success in ensuring the Art Education and Access Fund is implemented in an equitable way.

One notable early success in the equity efforts of arts organizations is [Arts for All](#). A coalition of local classical music nonprofits catalyzed a program to provide \$5 tickets to Portlanders experiencing hardship and receiving [SNAP](#) assistance through their Oregon Trail cards. RACC and the City followed the lead of the arts organizations and helped coordinate these efforts, resulting in Arts for All. This program now includes more than 40 arts organizations of all kinds that have offered \$5 tickets to

thousands of Portlanders since launching the program in 2011.

Jobs, Innovation, and the Economy

The arts have been a boon to Portland's economy for some time, but never has that been more the case—and more needed—than in the past four years.

Portland has recently become a major city for television and film production, due to the leadership of the Governor's Office of Film and Television and the work of the [Mayor's Office of Film and Video](#) in attracting and keeping great television and film work in Portland. This growing film and video industry, led by shows such as *Leverage*, *Grimm*, and *Portlandia*, create hundreds of creative industry jobs and the ripple effect of film and television spending benefit many industries and small businesses in Portland. The statewide impact of film and video production in Oregon from 2007-2011 was over \$540 million dollars.

It isn't just commercial creative work that keeps the economic engine revving in Portland—our local arts and culture organizations support over 10,300 jobs and generate over \$253 million in economic impact annually according to Arts & Economic Prosperity IV, an economic impact report published by Americans for the Arts

We have used the platform of the Mayor's Office to shine a spotlight on some of the great work that our local independent artists are producing as well. [Listen Local](#) is a program that ensures that Portland's own musicians are featured on city phone lines, and we have worked with the Portland Development Commission (PDC) to activate [vacant](#)

[storefronts](#) downtown with work by local artists. We were also the first government to create a curated page on [Kickstarter](#) to help dozens of makers, artists, and organizations receive crowd-funding from our community, leveling the playing field a bit for artisans who don't have access to traditional capital.

We've come a long way in the last four years. We've established dedicated funding for arts education and access, we've created hundreds of millions of dollars of creative economic impact, provided arts learning for

thousands of students, and created programs and partnerships that ensure equal access to the full range of Portland's creativity. And we couldn't have done it without you—the citizens, volunteers, teachers, artists, parents, musicians, administrators, and advocates that guided this work and helped carry the load. Together we've made arts investments that benefit our entire city and will help ensure that Portland will be prosperous, healthy, educated, and equitable for all.