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Technical Assistance and Training

Among the major services provided by arts councils have been programs — usually workshops — in arts management training. These are usually designed for those already in the field, and have proven to be in great demand. Many of the arts councils also perform technical services related to fundraising to help their constituent artists and arts organizations gain expertise and sophistication in the fundraising areas. These range from technical assistance on how to prepare grant applications to short courses in accounting and organizational management. Such workshops have been given as well by the national service agencies — ACA and the Association of College, University, and Community Arts Administrators (ACUCAA). In addition, single-discipline organizations have been able to get help from specialized service groups such as ASOL or the Foundation for the Extension and Development of the American Professional Theater (FEDAPT) or the Western Association of Art Museums (WAAM). Some state and regional groups have been conducting workshops, as have statewide assemblies of community arts councils. There never seems to be enough help to meet the needs of those who face the everyday problems of being the all-around manager of the single- or multifaceted, single- or multipurpose, single- or multidiscipline community arts organizations. A council like the one in Westchester County, New York, can report having sponsored over 70 workshops for artists and arts organizations.

Some of the more unique training programs have been Cleveland's Continuing Education program (extended and part of the program of the

Greater Columbus Arts Council at Ohio State University); Sacramento's program to help artists; the training programs of the Cultural Alliances; and the County and City Planning program being implemented by the state of California for community planning.

The Studies in Arts Administration program at Ohio State University's College of the Arts evolved from a three-year pilot program developed at Cleveland State University and implemented by the Cleveland Area Arts Council through a grant from the William J. Donner Foundation for professionals in the field. In Cleveland, the program involved year-long internships with five major arts organizations. In Columbus, courses were taken for credit or audited, and given in cooperation with the Greater Columbus Arts Council. At present, this council is conducting a similar program at Franklin University. These types of programs have a problem "taking hold" in an ongoing sense due to funding and personnel changes. Beneficial study might be focused on how community-generated programs, if desirable after a pilot phase, can create ongoing institutional support.

The Sacramento program, which takes an experienced team around to constituents for sessions on the "Fine Art of Survival," is aimed at the serious artist. The message is to "get yourself organized. Get out and do your own selling. And hang in there."¹ These sessions are presented by lawyers, accountants, and other arts administrators. While Sacramento's program is exemplary, there is hardly an arts council that doesn't provide some sort of assistance in the form of workshops for artists and arts organizations. The need is so great that there is always a ready audience for the information. The quality depends on the quality of planning and the expertise brought to the sessions. There is a wide range between the best and the worst of them. Perhaps some of the best have been given by other organizations, such as Poets and Writers, Inc. (New York City), the New Organization for Visual Art (NOVA) (Cleveland), and the Artists' Foundation (Boston) — organizations set up specifically to assist individual artists. The arts councils assist them in a multitude of technical ways, probably best in sessions on grantsmanship and organizational matters (such as board-staff relations), especially for the small and medium-sized organizations. Any major organization that has been around a while, having had to deal with these issues for a long time, probably has access to expertise more suited to its particular discipline from its own peer group.

The Sacramento and Columbus councils see as a priority being an effective and efficient source of technical assistance in arts management. They have gone about it in very different ways. But both provide a lot of individualized consultation on organizational planning and development, as well as personal management seminars for individual artists.

Important differences mark the priorities of these and other organizations (usually known as "cultural alliances"), the best known of which are

the Greater Philadelphia Cultural Alliance, the Massachusetts (formerly Metropolitan) Cultural Alliance of Boston, and the Cultural Alliance of Greater Washington (D.C.).

The alliances differ from any commissions or councils in that they are not involved in funding arts organizations or programming for the community – *they are in business to serve the cultural sector*. The advocacy role of the alliances is also important, as they try to keep their memberships informed and educated on critical issues affecting them, and to represent and articulate their collective interests effectively.

The Massachusetts (formerly Metropolitan) Cultural Alliance of Boston* has developed an extensive program of workshops and symposia designed to teach and train the cultural administrator in management skills. One series, made possible by a grant from business (the First National Bank of Boston), consisted of 32 workshops and comprised a “significant and coherent management training program at low cost.” The range of subjects covered include the expected ones, such as obtaining grants and funding, as well as some less often available, such as “trustee development” (which examines ways to “improve the workability of your board”). Costs were reasonable but substantial enough (about \$150 for members and \$225 for non-members) to insure a serious clientele. The Cultural Alliance of Greater Washington has a similar program. In Philadelphia, the services include a Matching Gifts and Rebate Plan being cosponsored by the Greater Philadelphia Cultural Alliance and the Western Savings Bank, which encourages greater individual support of nonprofit cultural institutions. This employee benefit program enables bank personnel to join cultural institutions at discount rates, as well as to make contributions to the institutions that will be matched by the bank.²

The package of services provided by each of these organizations is impressive. Examples of those provided by the Washington group include a cooperative purchasing plan with discounts from 25 to 60 percent; health and welfare insurance; a cooperative mailing service; legal liability insurance for directors, officers, and trustees; and a management development program. Arts councils have traditionally offered some of these services, but the alliances have concentrated on getting in, negotiating, and planning the service with outside professional businesses, and then on getting out instead of providing the service themselves. Theirs becomes a communication and monitoring role. Communications about these services is important, but remains one of the problems. If an artist needs them but hasn’t read the material, it’s as if it did not exist.

Cultural alliances must ultimately survive through the support of their memberships, but since they are serving nonprofit organizations that

*In its evolution to the Massachusetts Cultural Alliance, the group reflects its new services, which are statewide.

are not revenue-bearing, the funding potential is small. Although every organization, large or small, can use these services, the small ones need some of them most and have the least money.

NOTES

1. William Glackin, "The Fine Art of Artistic Survival," *Sacramento Bee*, September 30, 1979, p. 3.
2. Greater Philadelphia Cultural Alliance, *Annual Report* ("Collective Services"), 1980-81, p. 5.