

Annual Arts Advocacy Plan – FY25

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Trudy Wild, Director of Public Grants & Advocacy



Expand Advocacy and Increase Awareness

United Arts of Central Florida (United Arts/UA) is the designated Local Arts Agency in the region, with a mission to enrich communities by investing in arts, science, and history. UA strives to expand its advocacy program and increase the awareness of the impact of the arts by elected officials and their administration in the four-county service area of Lake, Orange, Osceola and Seminole counties through an annual advocacy plan.

United Arts' Vision statement

All people of Central Florida have access to quality arts, science and history.

What is Advocacy? Advocating to public servants/elected officials – expanding awareness of the arts and culture community, who it is, what they do, how they impact the community/districts, the economy, and its needs to remain vibrant, competitive and sustainable.

Key dates – Fiscal year 2024-25

- September 2024 – Advocacy Mailing - Season preview issue *Artistry* magazine
- September 9-13, 2024 - National Arts Education Week messaging
- September-October 2024 - 1:1 Meetings with County and City Commissioners
- Oct-November 2024 – County delegation meetings – Public Comment
- November 2024 – Advocacy Mailing – *Artistry*
- November-December 2024 - 1:1 Meetings with Florida Legislators in District
- January 2025 – Advocacy Mailing - *Artistry*
- January-Feb 2025 -- 1:1 Meetings with County and City Commissioners
- March 2025 – Advocacy Mailing - *Artistry*
- March 12, 2025 – Florida Statewide Arts & Culture Advocacy Day at the Capitol in Tallahassee (session begins one week prior)
- April 2025 – Advocacy Mailing - *Artistry*
- April-May 2025 -- 1:1 Meetings with School Boards
- June 2025 – UA Annual Meeting Celebration

Overarching goals

- Increase awareness of elected officials of impact of the local arts community by expanding advocacy to all elected officials in the four-county United Arts service area
- Expand network of allies and partners and develop database to activate and engage volunteers on a regular basis.

Gaps/Needs/Opportunities

Audience segments & their challenges

- 140 Elected officials, aides, staff - our targeted audience
 - What do they care about? What committees do they serve on or lead?
 - What are we doing for them? How does the nonprofit arts community service/impact their constituencies/community?

Market/Industry research and trends – current state of affairs

- Staff and volunteer capacity; Dedicate 20 hours a month to develop and implement this program - need to build the team, and materials
- Expand network of advocates and engage the community
 - Arts organizations/artists/students/donors/etc.
 - Ease of use for advocacy participation
 - Arts Day in Tallahassee - Cost to participate (time away from work, transportation/hotel/meals (Tallahassee))
 - Increase Volunteer Advocacy Pool to include:
 - Teaching artists, arts organizations and arts workers, educators, parents and volunteers, education agencies
 - Businesses, community organizations – inform state of the arts, provide content in economic development (model: ArtsWave)
- Perception with confusion of advocacy vs lobbying and allowance for percentage of dollars for salaries from County or NEA funding
- Politics – must remain neutral; non-partisan

Strategies for advancing advocacy efforts

- Create an advocacy database – Salesforce implementation December 2024
 - Volunteers
 - Elected officials (federal, state, regional, local)

- Create an advocacy toolkit (written, social, training videos, soundbites, stories, key data points, economic impact, training on newsletter software, samples/templates for advocacy)
- Provide other agencies, Visit Orlando, OEP, CFHLA, and other Chambers, toolkits and speaking points to advocate on behalf of the arts
- Building internal framework for capacity, utilizing existing teams and process to further activate advocates, partners, and facilitate events (Outreach, Marketing, Advocacy, UA board, etc.)
- Activate Orange County Arts & Cultural Affairs Advisory Council, Sanford Public Art Committee and other public councils to help advance Advocacy Plan

Current engagement of elected officials – focus on & expand engagement

- Lake, Orange, Osceola, Seminole counties – mayor, commissioners, school board
 - Send bi-monthly communications
 - Send press releases & follow-ups
 - Invite to events

Target elected officials – engage & expand engagement – all elected officials in Lake, Orange, Osceola & Seminole counties

- U.S. Congressmen/women (6) senators and representatives within district - Lake, Orange, Osceola, Seminole counties)
- State legislators (22) – senators and representatives in Lake (4), Orange (15), Osceola (6), Seminole counties (5) (some legislators serve multiple county districts)
- Local mayors, commissioners, council members (90) in Lake (6), Orange (74), Osceola (5), Seminole counties (5)
- School board chair and members (22) in Lake (4), Orange (8), Osceola (5), Seminole counties (5)
- Total: 140 elected officials, plus legislative assistants, aides (for all legislators and elected officials)
 - Send bi-monthly communications
 - Send press releases
 - Invite to events

***Methods – meetings, communications, media* (not in use, but possible)**

- In-person strategies:
 - In-person and virtual meetings with elected officials
 - Attending events and webinars they sponsor; meet them where are
 - Invite to events

- Plan town hall, convening
- Communication strategies:
 - Written and email communications with elected officials
 - Contact management system
 - Learning what communication methods they prefer
 - Content presentation – constant contact
- Social media
 - Handles
 - Arts & Culture Calendar (previously OrlandoAtPlay.com) updates
- Press releases
- Op-ed pieces
- Outreach – impact of grants, capacity, arts education, community engagement

Goals and Tactics

Goals, activities, metrics, and tactics

- **Goal #1 - Expand advocacy to all elected officials in the four-county United Arts service area**
 - **#1 Activity** - Increase number of people (Board, partners, artists, volunteers) who are engaged in advocacy work (Improve the onboarding experience)
 - Measurable Metric: (identify baseline; 20% increase in number of partners in Year 1)
 - Tactics to complete the Activity:
 - Advocacy Volunteer Contact database is built, updated and remains current
 - Website content includes clear directions on how to access content (if password-enabled), training video, process
 - Ongoing training for all Advocacy Volunteers on resources of Americans for the Arts Social Impact Calculator <https://ww2.americansforthearts.org/explorer>
 - Develop Collateral and protocol for each advocacy meeting: (Presentation - PowerPoint, printed materials, Artistry magazine, business cards, take photograph at meeting and share on social)
 - Monthly Advocacy social posts, emails, and postcards showcasing a single benefit or impact story of arts and culture, with easy steps on how to use it.

- Develop Advocacy Media Toolkit or talking points – impact statements, stories, clear benefits and asks (if any)
 - Review participant activity stats and identify trends / contact points for inactive members.
 - **#2 Activity** – Increase number of 1:1 meetings and communications with elected officials
 - Measurable metric: Increase frequency ___of communications to 6 times per year
 - Measurable metric: Increase number of meetings to include all state legislators from all four counties and local commissioners and school board by Dec 2025
 - Elected officials: 142 total
 - > Number of US congressmen: 6
 - > Number of state elected officials: 23
 - > Number of local elected officials – mayors, commissioners, school board: 113
 - Research each elected official's committees and leadership roles and their position statements to align their interests with arts advocacy per Americans for the Arts <https://ww2.americansforthearts.org/explorer>
 - Attempt one annual 1:1
 - Follow up social post from UA
- **Goal #2 - State arts funding - Expand participation in state arts advocacy and maximize funding potential**
 - **#1 Activity** - Increase engagement with state delegates in their home offices prior to legislative session to grow relationships and awareness
 - Research each elected official's committees and leadership roles and their position statements to align their interests with arts advocacy per Americans for the Arts <https://ww2.americansforthearts.org/explorer>
 - Utilize Toolkit or talking points – impact statements, stories, clear benefits and asks (if any)
 - **#2 Activity** – Increase participation & effectiveness in Arts & Culture Day in Tallahassee
 - Measurable Metric: Increase trip participants by 5% each year

- Tactics to complete the Activity: Clear plan for process, form for participation, templates for coordination
- **#3 Activity** – Increase participation in advocacy alerts
 - Measurable Metric: Number of Social media posts – Capture baseline in year one
 - Measurable Metric: Number of alerts shared
 - Tactics to complete the Activity: Templates for communications; copy and paste messages and contacts (Stretch goal: Cap Whiz or other advocacy management)
 - Monthly social posts, emails, and postcards showcasing a single benefit or impact story of arts and culture, with easy steps on how to use it
 - Review participant activity stats and identify trends / contact points for inactive members

Messaging and Training - Metrics and Impact of Creative Industries

- Align message with what elected official cares about or leads on a committee -- Americans for the Arts' impact explorer: <https://ww2.americansforthearts.org/explorer>
- Update and provide cultural tourism stats for Central Florida
- Update arts education impact numbers
- Economic impact – Americans for the Arts' Arts & Economic Prosperity Study (AEP6); *The Economic and Social Impact Study of Nonprofit Arts and Culture Organizations and Their Audiences, 2023*
- Maintain UA website Arts Advocacy page: <https://unitedartscfl.org/initiatives/arts-advocacy/>

Contact: Trudy Wild | Trudy@UnitedArtsCFL.org | 321.972.9837