

# FINDINGS AND QUESTIONS

This document provides a summary of the key findings and related questions from the Critical Issues Report (December 15, 2009) as part of the cultural plan process for Pierce County. It is based on community interviews, meetings and information gathered since October. For today's meeting, we will work with this document. The full report is available at the Arts and Cultural Services Division's web site at: <http://piercecountywa.org/pc/services/arts/culturalplan.htm>.

## SECTION 1. ORGANIZATIONS, EVENTS, AND ARTISTS

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### **1A. THE COUNTY IS RICH IN ARTS AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATIONS AND EVENTS AND, WHILE TACOMA CONTINUES TO PLAY A CENTRAL ROLE IN THE COUNTY'S CULTURAL LIFE, SEVERAL SMALLER CITIES ARE DEVELOPING SIGNIFICANT CULTURAL IDENTITIES.**

- 1.** How can we strengthen connections, relationships, and information-sharing within the cultural sector in the County?
- 2.** How might cultural organizations maximize their use of facilities?
- 3.** What approaches might enhance access to cultural activities in rural and suburban communities?

### **1B. THERE IS A VIBRANT AND GROWING COMMUNITY OF ARTISTS, ALTHOUGH EARNING A LIVING REMAINS A CHALLENGE.**

- 1.** How might artists residing in Pierce County be better connected to opportunities and information?
- 2.** What can be done to streamline artist application procedures by Pierce County funders?
- 3.** How might opportunities and information for teaching artists be enhanced?

### **1C. HISTORY AND HERITAGE PLAY A KEY ROLE IN PIERCE COUNTY'S CULTURAL LIFE.**

- 1.** How might heritage organizations and agencies maximize their resources to ensure a stronger sector?
- 2.** Is a County-wide scan needed to identify the most time-sensitive heritage sites? If so, how might that be accomplished?
- 3.** What types of heritage programs can most cost-effectively engage the public in rural as well as urban areas?

### **1D. THERE IS INCREASED AWARENESS OF THE IMPORTANCE OF CULTURAL PROGRAMMING FOR DIVERSE CONSTITUENCIES, ALTHOUGH SOME POPULATIONS REMAIN UNDERSERVED.**

- 1.** Is training and support needed for cultural organizations to better address shifting community demographics relative to their programs, staffing, and board membership?
- 2.** How can culturally specific groups be better supported to help preserve, share, and develop diverse cultural traditions and interests?



## **SECTION 2. CREATIVE LEARNING AND ARTS EDUCATION**

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### **2A. THERE ARE FLAGSHIP ARTS EDUCATION EFFORTS IN PIERCE COUNTY, THOUGH SCHOOL DISTRICTS HAVE LIMITED CAPACITY TO PROVIDE ARTS EDUCATION OR TO INTEGRATE ARTS LEARNING IN THE CLASSROOM AND SCHOOLS RELY HEAVILY ON CULTURAL ORGANIZATIONS.**

- 1.** What would a clearinghouse or matchmaking function that connected interested schools, teachers, cultural organizations, and/or teaching artists look like? Who might house this function?
- 2.** What kind of community advocacy and support will convince the leadership of Pierce County school districts to implement or expand arts education?
- 3.** What can be done about the disparity of access to cultural field trips County-wide?
- 4.** How can flagship arts programs be used to raise the visibility of Pierce County as a national leader in creative education?

### **2B. CREATIVE LEARNING EXTENDS BEYOND SCHOOLS AND MANY COMMUNITIES ARE INTERESTED IN PROVIDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL AGES AND SKILL LEVELS.**

- 1.** How can libraries, community centers, parks, community colleges, and universities better serve as conduits to arts and cultural learning for Pierce County residents?
- 2.** What systems might better support such efforts County-wide?
- 3.** What approaches might help independent arts schools and programs survive the recession?

### **2C. GROWING INTEREST IN PERSONAL AND LIFE-LONG PARTICIPATION IN CREATIVE PURSUITS IS CRITICAL TO PROVIDING A RICH MIX OF CULTURAL ACTIVITIES IN THE COUNTY.**

- 1.** What kind of networks or tools might support the informal arts and cultural pursuits of County residents?
- 2.** How might electronic media help link people, including those in rural or distant parts of the County, regarding shared cultural pursuits?



### **SECTION 3. COLLABORATION AND COMMUNICATION**

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#### **3A. THERE HAVE BEEN SUCCESSFUL COLLABORATIVE EFFORTS AND THERE ARE UNTAPPED POSSIBILITIES, BUT IMPLEMENTING COLLABORATIONS IS CHALLENGING WITHOUT ENTITIES TO FACILITATE THEM.**

- 1.** What kind of County-wide mechanism could facilitate the building of collaborative initiatives?
- 2.** How can skill-building opportunities be more available and accessible to board and staff members of cultural organizations throughout the County?
- 3.** How might we build better collaborations between non-arts-specific facilities and businesses and arts and cultural users?
- 4.** What is needed to strengthen the relationship between the culture and tourism sectors?

#### **3B. COMMUNICATION AMONG ARTISTS AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATIONS AND BETWEEN THE CULTURAL SECTOR AND THE LARGER COMMUNITY IS ADAPTING SLOWLY TO NEW APPROACHES.**

- 1.** What are the key opportunities County-wide to use online resources and social media for the cultural community?
- 2.** Do such opportunities differ if we look at artists, cultural organizations, the civic realm, or those seeking arts experiences? If so, how?
- 3.** How can communities build more effective approaches to encourage local print media to serve as a key local information source?



## **SECTION 4. AWARENESS, LEADERSHIP, AND RESOURCES**

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### **4A. UNDERSTANDING OF THE VALUE OF ARTS AND CULTURE VARIES AMONG CIVIC LEADERS AND THE CIVIC ROLE OF THE CULTURAL SECTOR IS NOT AS GREAT AS IT MIGHT BE.**

- 1.** What are the most likely ways for the cultural sector in Pierce County to craft a more unified and sustainable sector and voice?
- 2.** How might relationships between the cultural sector and the business and civic community be strengthened?
- 3.** How can cultural leaders who take on this work be supported by their peers?

### **4B. CULTURAL LEADERSHIP IN THE COUNTY IS DIFFUSE AND ARTS COMMISSIONS, OR SIMILAR ENTITIES, CAN BE CRITICAL GAME CHANGERS IN BUILDING SUCH LEADERSHIP.**

- 1.** What knowledge and technical assistance might be useful in creating and operating effective local cultural councils or commissions and developing local cultural leadership?
- 2.** What kind of County-wide mechanism for sharing information or resources among councils or commissions would be useful? Who might administer such a mechanism?

### **4C. THE ROLE, FUNCTION, AND CAPACITY OF THE PIERCE COUNTY ARTS AND CULTURAL SERVICES DIVISION IS POORLY UNDERSTOOD BY THE CULTURAL SECTOR.**

- 1.** How might the Division build stronger relationships and visibility in the cultural sector and with the media?
- 2.** Could the Division serve as a mechanism to link, facilitate, or support greater interaction within the cultural sector?
- 3.** Might the Division play a role in facilitating the creation and growth of local cultural commissions or similar entities, and connecting them to resources?
- 4.** How might the role of the Pierce County Arts Commission be clarified and strengthened? How might service on the Commission be encouraged?

### **4D. THE CULTURAL SECTOR FACES THE MOST CHALLENGING ECONOMIC SITUATION IN THE PAST FIFTY YEARS.**

- 1.** What steps can be taken to build a more cohesive, less competitive or fractured cultural funding landscape?
- 2.** What broad initiatives or approaches might improve financial resources for the sector? How can they be supported? Are there non-traditional sources or ideas that are timely?
- 3.** Are there particular approaches that can bolster vibrant but fragile entrepreneurial efforts or small arts and heritage groups?
- 4.** What ongoing technical assistance needs are greatest for the cultural sector in Pierce County? What are the immediate needs related to the current economic climate?