



# Connect | Create | Celebrate

## UP ARTS AND CULTURE ALLIANCE STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

The purpose of the Upper Peninsula Arts and Culture Alliance is to foster and promote creativity through building connections among artists, performers, audiences, arts and culture organizations as well as the economic development, recreation and tourism industries with which we must closely align to create a thriving future for our region. The Alliance encompasses all fifteen counties of the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. If we are successful the arts and culture sector will be more visible, be more connected, be more celebrated, be more sustainable as a part of the broader fabric of regional Upper Peninsula Development.

### WE ENVISION

the Upper Peninsula of Michigan alive with

- ...a **renewed pride** of place, identity and optimism for the future
- ...**thriving communities** expressing their unique character
- ...a **next generation finding their place** and putting down roots
- ...a **vitality that invites** the visitor, the developer, the investor
- ...an invitation to **build on our best assets** to create a healthy tomorrow.

### WE ENVISION

a region with a culture that cherishes arts, artists, creativity and innovation.



“Crisp, cold water cascades over Tahquamenon Falls’ craggy rocks. Sunlight dapples through towering hardwoods, white pine, and hemlock...one of the last wild places in the Midwest. Stunning vistas like these draw artists of all types to Michigan’s Upper Peninsula. But the same vast expanse of land that provides them with inspiration also makes it difficult for them to feed off each other’s creativity.”

—The Review, *MI Municipal League*, July/Aug, 2017, . pg. 35

*Inspired by the Lake. Rocks III.  
Peg Sandin, Watercolor Artist  
Ironwood, Michigan.  
Used by permission of the artist*

## WE VALUE the role of arts and culture for these contributions to our region:

- **CREATE.** As an integral part of creating healthy communities, contributing to mental health, physical health, and spiritual health.
- **CONNECT.** As a connector to a larger whole, an effective bridge between sectors and ideas.
- **CELEBRATE.** As a vehicle to celebrate, find optimism and hope for a common future.
- **CONTRIBUTE.** As key contributors to the health and vitality & economy of rural communities.
- **COMPASSION.** As a cultivator of compassion, honoring individuals and also the spaces between them.
- **CONSERVE.** As responsible for preserving the best parts of our human existence, preserving our identity as a people.
- **CHANNEL.** As a vehicle to breaking down divides among people, finding shared purpose.

## Why Amplify the Voice of Arts and Culture?

The role of arts and culture as a partner in community and regional vitalization and revitalization has been explored in communities throughout Michigan and across the US. Successful projects highlight the value of creativity in building a distinct local character and story, a distinct pride of place. Knight Foundation<sup>1</sup> refers to arts and culture as the Soul of the Community and particularly identifies the key importance of arts and culture in developing a strong emotional connection, an attachment to place. Other writings report that attachment has clear benefits in terms of openness to embrace differences, civic engagement, willingness to actively contribute to a community's growth, and economic success.<sup>2,3</sup> What follows are what we have found to be indicators of the importance of arts and culture to the core of rural community development:

- **Essential to community vitality:** Arts and culture are the invitation to gather, to connect and be drawn into community. Arts and culture create a community aesthetic that attracts both visitors and new residents. Through cultural activity communities celebrate and invite participation authentically as a part of community.
- **Invitation to discovery:** Arts and culture have from our earliest history been an important part of the communities of the UP; they are integrally tied to our amazing natural beauty. Arts and culture can be a focus for the UP as a tourist destination.
- **Crucial to post-industrial rural economic development:** To attract a next generation in areas of rural declining population, arts and culture are critical. Most of the younger generation cite arts as a non-negotiable part of their lives. Arts and culture encourage a quality of life that can attract and retain residents and reverse the "brain drain."
- **Self-expression:** Finding outlets for expression of self and creativity and finding the "right community" are often identified as more critical than the "right job" in deciding where to locate.
- **Civic Engagement:** The Arts and Culture engaged citizen is also the citizen that is significantly more civically engaged.<sup>4</sup> Building understanding of ourselves and finding creative expression creates better citizens locally and globally.
- **Only beauty is sustainable:** People are drawn to beautiful. We are creating a "human beauty" to match the natural beauty of the UP.
- **Catalyst for growth:** Arts and culture are a catalyst for both cultural and economic growth. They enhance pride of place and invite us to celebrate the UP as a great place to live as well as a great place to visit. Arts and culture are essential to bring people to our communities as tourists and as an essential part of our economy.
- **Unite people:** Arts and culture unite people of diverse backgrounds and provide a means for the exchange of ideas.

## History

The Upper Peninsula Arts and Culture Alliance is an affiliation organization comprised of artists, artisans and arts organizations, historians and culture bearers, as well as allies in related sectors such as tourism and recreation, local and regional government, planning and economic development.

In 2016, the idea of an Alliance emerged in recognition of the synergy to be gained by working together as a 15 county affinity group to more intentionally work together

in the development of the arts and culture sector. A team of leaders began holding conversations, engaged the Michigan Council on Arts and Cultural Affairs, and through a small grant hired a facilitator to guide the process. A design team (listed on page 4) began meeting and gave shape to this important regional effort. At present a baseline of more than 1,000 artists, artisans, and arts and culture organizations have been identified throughout the UP and invited into the unfolding work of this Alliance.

### We invite you to find us on social media.

-  UPArtAlliance
-  UPArtAlliance
-  @upartsandculture
-  [linkedin.com/company/22300231](https://www.linkedin.com/company/22300231)

We also invite you to read the feature published by the Michigan Municipal League in the July/August 2017 issue of *The Review* (see page 35).

# UP Arts and Culture Alliance Strategic Framework for 2018-2019:

A plan identifying goals and measurable outcomes in 4 key areas of development essential to building a region with an economy and culture that cherishes arts, artists, creativity and innovation.



## CONNECT AND PROMOTE

Market the rich and unique artistic, cultural and creative assets of the Upper Peninsula.

**GOAL 1: Build the Alliance as a communications network and resource hub**, utilizing social media and web-based technology as well as in person events, to link all stakeholders and interested audiences and keep them informed.

**By year end 2019** the Alliance will have built and become recognized for its robust web-based presence, including a strong and consistent voice through social media to link the Arts and Culture sector and its allies to important resources and activities, serving as a resource hub.

## WORK TOGETHER

Work together locally and regionally to build presence of arts and culture in regional vitality.

**GOAL 1: Partner across sectors.** Identify opportunities to build relationships with key stakeholders and influencers in planning and development fields – economic development, tourism and recreation, planning – striving to build presence within other planning efforts across the Upper Peninsula.

**GOAL 2: Promote opportunities to work together within the arts and culture sector**, vetting through the Alliance governance structure. Use the Alliance communications network to build awareness, engagement and support for opportunities and projects.

**By year end 2019** the Alliance will have in place strong relationships with the three economic development regions of the UP as well as local governmental and business leadership and tourism.

**Beginning in 2018** the Alliance will provide local networking opportunities through events to build local presence, learn the local needs and assets, and offer resources, especially within underserved counties—Alger, Baraga, Dickinson, Iron, Keweenaw, Luce, Menominee and Schoolcraft—as identified by Michigan Council for Arts and Cultural Affairs.

## MEASURE THE IMPACT

Deepen the qualitative and quantitative analysis

**GOAL 1: Continue to identify local assets and resources** through community engagement processes. Make the case for the importance of arts and culture to the vitality of the Upper Peninsula, its people, its communities, its economy.

**GOAL 2: Economic Impact Study.** Continue to make the quantitative case for the importance of arts and culture to the Upper Peninsula economy through partnership with existing regional research houses.

**By year end 2019** the Alliance will have constructed and shared evidence of the impact of arts and culture, both in terms of community vitality as well as economic impact, and implemented systems and tools for ongoing tracking of social and economic impact.

## CONTINUE TO GROW

Create and maintain a solid Alliance structure

**GOAL 1: Sustain and uphold the governance structure** including bylaws, an Alliance Council, and an Executive Committee with express powers, role descriptions, and terms of office.

**GOAL 2: Identify and promote paths to involvement** and provide mechanisms for interested parties to participate in the Alliance.

**GOAL 3: Human & Financial Capacity.** Develop internal capacity to sustain the work of the Alliance throughout the Upper Peninsula.

**By year end 2017** the Alliance will have adopted and implemented a solid governance structure with a first slate of Alliance Council members in place, and implemented a process for affiliation.

**By year end 2017** the Alliance will have a path to solidifying internal capacity to sustain the work, both financial and human capacity.

## We are grateful for the generosity of commitment, time and personal travel expense to launch the Alliance on the part of the Design Team:

### EXECUTIVE TEAM

**Tiina Harris**, Manager, City of Marquette Arts and Culture Office, Marquette

**Mary Jennings**, Director of Programming and Development, Rozsa Center for the Performing Arts, Michigan Technological University, Houghton

**Philip Rice**, Director, Mackinac Arts Council, Mackinac Island

**Howard Sandin**, Board of Directors, Downtown Art Place; and retired physician, Ironwood

### DESIGN TEAM

**Melissa Matuscak Alan**, Director & Curator DeVos Art Museum, Northern Michigan University, Marquette

**Jared Anderson**, DMA, Chair of Visual and Performing Arts, Michigan Technological University, Houghton

**Otto Bacon**, artist and board member, Sault Area Arts Council, Sault Ste. Marie

**Ellen Benoit**, Assistant Director, Eastern Upper Peninsula Planning Commission, Sault Ste. Marie

**Ritch Branstrom**, found object specialist, Rapid River, Michigan Council for Arts and Cultural Affairs

**Lisa Craig Brisson**, Executive Director, Michigan Museums Association, Cheboygan

**Cynthia Coté**, Executive Director, Copper Country Community Arts Council, Hancock

**Sharon Dorrity**, Director of Constituent Relations, Director, LSSU Arts Center Gallery, Lake Superior State University, Sault Ste. Marie

**Alex Flannery**, Advancement Campaign Assistant, Interlochen Center for the Arts, Interlochen

**Kristine Granger**, Art Faculty, Bay College Marquette Arts Commission, Marquette

**Bruce Greenhill**, Managing Director, The Historic Ironwood Theatre, Ironwood

**Nancy Korpela**, Board of Directors, Downtown Art Place; owner of 906 Boom Gallery; business start-up consultant, Ironwood

**Dotty LaJoye**, CUPPAD Regional Commission, Escanaba

**Mike Leonard**, Pastel Artist; retired former USDA; Downtown Art Place Volunteer, Ironwood

**Josh Loar**, Professor of Practice, Visual and Performing Arts, Michigan Technological University, Houghton

**Tom Nemacheck**, Director, UP Travel & Recreation, Iron Mountain

**Sue Roll**, Business Director, The Bonifas Arts Center, Escanaba

**Emilie Schada**, Regional Planner, CUPPAD Regional Commission, Escanaba

**Arlene Schneller**, Multimedia Artist, Bessemer

**Shena Sloboda**, Sault Arts Council/Alberta House, Sault Ste. Marie

**Denise Vandeville**, Dean, International School of Art & Design; Associate Professor, Ceramic Design, Finlandia University, Hancock

**Pasqua Warstler**, Executive and Artistic Director, The Bonifas Arts Center, Escanaba

### FACILITATOR

**Sharon Rodning Bash**, Sr. Program Director, ArtsLab, Arts Midwest, Minneapolis, MN 55408

1 Knight Foundation, Soul of the Community

2 Gadwa Nicodemus, Grantmakers in the Arts, Summer 2014. [https://metrisarts.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/.../GIA-Reader-25-2\\_Nicodemus.pdf](https://metrisarts.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/.../GIA-Reader-25-2_Nicodemus.pdf)

3 Art of the Rural resources. <http://artoftherural.org/resources/>

4 Arts and Civic Engagement. <http://philanthropynewsdigest.org/connections/hearts-and-minds-the-arts-and-civic-engagement>

