

**Indiana Arts Commission**  
**Quarterly Business Meeting**  
Friday, March 7, 2024, 9:00 AM (ET)  
Columbus Visitor's Center  
506 5<sup>th</sup> Street  
Columbus, IN 47201



Anne Penny Valentine, Chair

*There will be a brief break at approximately 10:00 AM. (ET)*

**Members Present:** Réna Bradley, Chad Bolser, Dave Haist, Greg Hull, Laurie Burns McRobbie, Jake Oakman, Kelsey Peaper, Azizi Arrington-Slocum, Renee Thomas, Anne Penny Valentine, Scott Wylie

**Members Present via Zoom:** Walter Knabe

**Members Absent:** Daniel Martinez

**IAC Staff Present:** Jordan Adams, Eric Ashby, Connie Brahm, Lydia Campbell-Maher, Austin Hendricks, Miah Michaelson, Stephanie Pfendler, Gwendolyn Pickett, André Zhang Sonera

**RAP Partners Present:** Sherri Wright

**RAP Partners Present via Zoom:** Kayla Myers

**Special Presenters Present:** Dr. Jon Kay

## **AGENDA**

- 1. Call to Order.** Commission Chair Anne Penny Valentine called the meeting to order at 9:00 AM.
  - a. Welcome.** The Commission was welcomed by the Columbus Visitor's Center Director of Partnerships Erin Hawkins, the Columbus Area Arts Council Executive Director Brooke Hawkins, and the Executive Director of Administration of the City of Columbus Eric Frey. Each gave a brief introduction to the work of their organization as well as welcomed the Commission to Columbus. All thanked the Commission for their work with the Arts, both in rural and urban Indiana.
  - b. Roll Call.** Indiana Arts Commission Administrative Assistant Austin Hendricks called the roll.  
**See the attendance list above.**
- 2. Approval of Agenda and December 6, 2024, Meeting Minutes.** Ms. Valentine called for changes or amendments to this item. None were spoken. Ms. Valentine called for a motion to approve the agenda and minutes. Commissioner Jake Oakman motioned, and Commissioner Laurie Burns McRobbie seconded. **All were in favor, and the motion passed.**
- 3. Consent Agenda.** The following items were presented for the Consent Agenda:
  - a. Items Submitted for Commission Approval**
    - i. FY25 Year-to-Date Financials
    - ii. WIP Exchange Labs Selection Authority
    - iii. Creative Business Strategy Selection Authority
  - b. Reports for review:**
    - i. Arts Trust Report
    - ii. Communications Report
    - iii. Staff Updates and Activity Report
    - iv. External Partnership Update
    - v. Creative Community Pathways Update

Ms. Valentine called for changes to this agenda item. None were spoken. She then called for a motion to approve the consent agenda. Commissioner Réna Bradley motioned, and Commissioner Kelsey Peaper seconded. **All were in favor, and the motion passed.**

- 4. Traditional Arts Indiana Presentation.** Dr. Jon Kay presented this agenda item. He briefly reminded the Commission of his work with Traditional Arts Indiana (TAI). He noted that the program has a positive relationship with the IAC and Indiana University (IU). He said that there have been seven apprentices chosen for the apprenticeship program, as well as three heritage fellowship recipients chosen. He noted that the contracts have not been solidified yet, so he cannot announce specifics, but there is representation from several counties in Indiana, some of which are underserved. He then highlighted a few of the programs within the apprenticeships and the fellowships. Dr. Kay also shared that this program tries to serve all formats of traditional arts. He highlighted the intersection of traditional arts and the Creative Aging program. He noted that the Creative Aging workshop has been funded through two separate grants. He thanked the Commission for their funding and support so that this work can grow as well as leverage additional dollars from other organizations such as the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA). He reminded the Commission of the Culture Carry program and noted that it is in a healthy spot. Dr. Kay shared that there will be an exhibit of the work from Culture Carry at the Cook Center in the next quarter. He concluded by sharing specific art examples TAI covers. Dr. Kay called for questions. None were spoken. He concluded that the memorandum of understanding with IU expires on July 1, 2025. He expects it should be renewed. IAC Executive Director Miah Michaelsen added that the NEA has provided specific funding for Folk Life within traditional arts. She noted that the IAC is unusual compared to other states as it uses IU as a partner to facilitate this work. She added that this is a fantastic partnership and is appreciative of TAI. She also thanked Dr. Kay and IAC Director of Artist Services, Jordan Adams, for their work with TAI to get more people engaged with this genre of art.

## **5. Committee Reports.**

### **a. Committee on the Future.**

- i. **Staffing Updates.** IAC Deputy Director André Zhang Sonera presented this item. He congratulated Eric Ashby on his promotion to Director of Programs. Mr. Ashby's old position currently has five finalists in progress, and he and Mr. Ashby will interview the candidates together in the coming weeks. Mr. Zhang Sonera thanked Stephanie Haines, the outgoing Arts Education and Accessibility Program Manager, for her eight years of work with the Commission, and shared that she has stepped away from the IAC earlier this week.

Ms. Michaelsen added that Commissioners Sofia Souto and Mark Maxwell have stepped away from their appointments on the Commission. She added that the agency is navigating the process on reappointments with the new gubernatorial administration. She thanked both for their service.

- ii. **FY26 Budget First Look.** Mr. Zhang Sonera presented this agenda item. Ms. Valentine thanked the staff for giving this update early rather than just finding out the budget in June, along with the options that they presented. Mr. Zhang Sonera noted that the Fiscal Year will turn over on July 1, 2025. He highlighted that there is an expected 33% reduction in state dollars. He noted that the revenue assumption is that there is a 33% reduction for the agency budget (\$1.72 million), which will match funding levels from

FY17. He also noted that there will likely be a 12% reduction from the NEA grant (\$124.2k). There will be a 3% reduction in Trust drawing (\$3.8k) and a 2% management holdback. There are three current scenarios of budget possibilities currently, all expecting a reduction in overall funding. He added that the cultural trust draw is supplied by the sale of Arts Trust license plate. Mr. Zhang Sonera continued by presenting three budget possibilities for FY26. In Scenario A: 57% of the budget would go to core grants (AOS/APS). In Scenario B: there is a 56% investment in the core grants. Scenario C: shows a 51% investment in the core grants, so as to appropriate more budget to other programs. Mr. Zhang Sonera noted that currently, the IAC appropriates 51% of its budget to core programs. He noted that the agency is not asking the commissioners to choose any of the possible scenarios but is giving them options of what the budget might look like for FY26. In expense assumptions, there will be a .16% increase in Point One (Personnel), a 50% reduction in Point Three (Professional Services) and a 28% reduction in Point Nine (Shared Services). *Please see the attached memo for additional information.* He called for questions, and Ms. McRobbie asked if the draw from the cultural trust draw is under the control of the agency. Mr. Zhang Sonera responded yes, but that the agency would like to keep a healthy balance in the trust to continue drawing in the future. Mr. Zhang Sonera went through and reviewed how the expected budget reduction in expenses will reduce funding in each core grants and the Regional Arts Partnership in each of the three scenarios. *Please see the attached memo for a detailed breakdown of each scenario's expenses.* He noted that the assumption in Point Seven (Grants) expenses will result in a reduction of 195 organizations funded with a reduction in 39% of overall investment and 56% reduction of investment in rural counties. Mr. Zhang Sonera highlighted that the House budget has been passed and is currently in the Senate. It will be reviewed by them before going to the Governor in the coming months.

Ms. Michaelson called for questions for Mr. Zhang Sonera. Ms. Valentine asked if this information has been shared with partners outside the agency. Ms. Michaelson responded that yes it has been. She added that the agency will need to decide if the plan is to fund more organizations with less money, or less organizations for more money. She highlighted that the third scenario was planned so other programs can still receive funding from the IAC with the budget change. Ms. Michaelson also added that, per the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies (NASAA) reports, the State of Indiana is investing \$0.76 per resident for arts in the state. This new budget would take it to \$0.50 per capita. With this change the State of Indiana would be in the bottom tier of arts investment among all states in the nation, according to the data. Ms. Bradley asked if the budget is currently expected to be passed as-is. Ms. Valentine responded that it may change while in committee in the State Senate. Ms. Michaelson noted that the federal budget expires next Friday March 14, 2025, with either a resolution or shutdown expected. She noted that if the continuing resolution is passed next week, the IAC may see a slight bump, but if not, it would be a few months before the update comes to the agency. She noted that the IAC should know all the pieces of the budget by the end of April. Ms. Valentine thanked Ms. Michaelson and the staff for being thoughtful and thinking through the options that may come from the changes both state and federally. Ms. Michaelson added that the NEA compliance requirements for grantees are currently in conversations, and the IAC will find out from the NEA what the compliance requirements are when they receive the state agency partnership agreement. She also noted that currently the executive orders from the Federal Executive Branch do not

interfere with the work the IAC does.

- iii. **CY25 Agency Goals Presentation.** Mr. Zhang Sonera continued with this agenda item. He noted that there has been the restructuring of the state government with the IAC finding itself under the Commerce vertical. And presented the following agency goals for Calendar Year 2025:

- **Goal 1: Strengthen Strategic Partnerships to Drive Community and Economic Development.**
- **Goal 2: Expanding services and resources to strengthen the arts workforce.**
- **Goal 3: Amplifying the impact of the programs through data-driven storytelling.**
- **Goal 4: Deepen community Engagement through Arts-Based Connections**

*Please see the attached memo for a detailed breakdown of how the agency plans to pursue and measure success with these goals.* He called for questions. Ms. Valentine commented that with the change of administration shifting goals is appropriate. A motion was called. Mr. Oakman motioned, and Commissioner Chad Bolser seconded. **All were in favor and the motion passed.**

- iv. **KPI Report.** IAC Director of Programs Eric Ashby presented the Key Performance Indicator (KPI) Report. He began with the Technical Assistance (TA) statistics. He noted that the Regional Arts Partners (RAP) will have done well over 200 hours of TA through a myriad of methods, from phone calls to in-person meetings. Mr. Ashby took special note of their work and applauded them for it. Mr. Ashby also noted that Commissioner Scott Wylie and Pro Bono Indiana put in 70 hours of TA as well. He noted that at the end of the year, he would expect around 2,000 hours invested in this KPI. He noted that this KPI is important no matter what happens with the budget. He also thanked Commissioner Scott Wylie for his work with Pro Bono Indiana's artist services hotline and their hours of technical assistance. He also updated the commission on non-arts grantees. He noted that the \$300,000 from the Lilly Endowment in partnership with the Indiana Economic Development Corporation (IEDC) for cultural planning. He also noted that the number of non-arts organizations and artist grantees is now up to 169 in FY25. Mr. Ashby noted that as Every County Funded ramps up, he expects the target number of 175 will be achieved, if not exceeded. Mr. Haist noted he appreciates the reports about the KPIs, and wanted to know how much of the \$250 million from Lilly Endowment has been disbursed. Ms. Michaelsen replied that of the \$65 million that was designated for arts and culture, approximately \$1.5M has been distributed to date for arts and culture planning work taking place in each of the 15 READI regions.

**b. Programs, Grants, and Services**

- i. **Arts Organization Support Update.** Mr. Ashby also presented this agenda item. He gave a brief review of what Arts Organization Support (AOS) is 267 applications submitted with an 8% increase from FY24-25 cycle. He noted that 19% of the applications came from rural counties. There are 57 counties (62% of the State's counties), and with a five-county increase. He noted that there were some new applicants in the program. He then broke down the applications by region. He

highlighted Region 7 (Greater Indianapolis Area) had an increase of eight applications. In Region 12 (Greater New Albany Area) had a three-project application increase. He noted that the applications were consistent between this cycle and the previous cycle. Mr. Ashby highlighted that the demand for this program is only increasing.

- ii. **Arts Project Support Update.** Mr. Ashby continued with this agenda item. He briefly reviewed the scope of the Arts Project Support (APS) program before reporting on the application statistics. He noted that this program will be offered twice a year. There were 270 applications in the Spring Cycle, with an expected 100 applications for the second cycle. He noted that in FY25, there were 323 applications, with 32% of the applications were rural, which was a 3% increase. Overall, 73 counties had applications, constituting an increase of two counties. The median budget size of applicants is \$68,960. He added that the range of budget applications is very large in this program, ranging from several thousand to hundreds of thousands. Mr. Ashby also noted that after funding, applicants will leverage about \$4,000,000 beyond the IAC investment. He then provided a regional breakdown, with notable highlights from Region 1 (Greater Gary Area), Region 2 (Greater South Bend Area), and Region 7 (Greater Indianapolis Area) with the most applications. He then presented statistics for both programs combined. 82 counties have an application, with a total of 537 applications, with 7 of the 15 of the FY25 Every County Funded grantees in the applicant pool. He highlighted that these two programs are a big lift, and he shouted out the staff and Regional Arts Partners getting this program to the close of the applications.

Mr. Ashby called for questions. Ms. McRobbie asked if the potential budget applies to the Fall deadline of APS. Ms. Michaelsen noted that the agency is expecting to hold back some money for that purpose, and that the APS Fall cycle will be a much more competitive cycle. Ms. Valentine congratulated the staff on the work in these two programs and the work on the ground, coming through in the data for AOS and APS. Mr. Wylie added that the IAC is a reliable source of funding for these organizations, even in the current period of uncertainty. He added he appraises that the public seems to trust the IAC, evidenced by the applications.

- iii. **Panelist and Reviewer Intake Process Presentation.** Mr. Ashby presented this agenda item. He noted that Grant Reviewers were actively recruited through a public interest form. There are over 130 Reviewers currently, with varying geographies and professional backgrounds represented. He noted that they will receive training soon, and get their applicants and score based on the criteria, with reviews between March and end of April 2025, and AOS panels from April 21-30. He noted that the AOS panels will not be recorded but invited the Commissioners to attend. From here, he noted that there is a final eligibility check, reviewer training, reviews will be wrapped 4/28, scores go to the frameworks, and the IAC will present funding recommendations at the June QBM. Ms. Michaelsen added that the APS program will be an asynchronous review process with no live panel.

**At this point, the meeting took a short break beginning at 10:01 AM.**

**The meeting resumed at 10:14 AM.**

- iv. Fellowship for Creative Teaching Wrap-Up.** Mr. Ashby concluded with this agenda item. In the departure of the former Arts Education and Accessibility Program Manager, Stephanie Haines, he noted that this program is focused on embedding arts in non-arts educators. He gave a brief review of the goals and outcomes of the program. He noted that the past two cohorts were very successful, with many teachers sharing excitement and surprise at the benefits. He noted that new partnerships with teachers and schools have formed. The second iteration of this was stronger than the first; he also highlighted a specific example from a final report, with one German teacher changing her traditional test-based final to be a theater activity. He thanked Ms. Haines for her work in this program.
- v. WIP Exchange Labs Update.** IAC Artist Services Manager Jordan Adams presented this agenda item. She swapped the order of Work in Progress (WIP) and On-Ramp. She gave the Commission a reminder of what her work is with the agency. She recapped the Artist Needs Assessment. The assessment was completed between Fall 2023 and Winter 2024 with 11 listening sessions consisting of 150 artists and 500+ survey responses. There were results based on programming with Dr. Elaine Grogan Luttrull, with six programs that are being piloted over the next few years. *Please see the attached memo for additional information.* She highlighted that the Creative Business Strategy Series and WIP Exchange Labs are rolling out in 2025. She then shared this program's update. She gave a brief review of the scope of the program. Ms. Adams reminded the Commission that this is a small grant opportunity of \$250-\$1,000 and the partners for this program are Richmond Art Museum in the Eastern Region, Greencastle Arts Council in the Western Region, and the New Harmony Project in the Southern Region. Ms. Adams feels very good about these current partners with Northern and Central Region partners, which are still being sourced. Ms. Adams attended all three February labs and highlighted her experience at the listening sessions, and shared specific artists and their projects. Ms. Adams called for questions. None were spoken.
- vi. On-Ramp Evaluation Update.** Ms. Adams continued with this agenda item. For this item, (which was presented before WIP Exchange Labs), She noted that there were six different cohorts from 2018-2024. There will be a programmatic pause for evaluation in 2025, and it will return in 2026. The evaluation will be conducted by Measurement Resources, an organization based out of Columbus, Ohio. Evaluation and program impact are the goals of the assessment from Measurement Resources. She shared the project leads of the evaluation. She shared that there have already been conversations with the evaluators and that they are in contracting development right now. Measurement Resources shared a few of their previous work with the IAC, such as Collaborative Arts Impact Initiative, and Impact Reports. Ms. Adams called for questions. None were spoken.
- vii. Every County Funded Framework Amendment.** IAC Communities Services Manager Lydia Campbell-Maher presented this agenda item. She gave a review of what her portfolio of Communities Services entails as well as a brief history of her position. She noted that the Every County Program (ECF) program is a low-barrier program, with 15 counties targeted for FY25. She recommended that the grant eligibility is expanded to include 501(c)4, 501(c)6, K-12 schools, and preapproved fiscal sponsor. The long-term goal is that grantees move from ECF to core grant funding. *The specific amendment verbiage can be found in the attached memo.* Ms. Campbell-Maher called

for questions. None were spoken. Ms. Valentine called for a motion to approve the amendment. Mr. Haist moved, and Ms. McRobbie seconded. **The motion was approved unanimously, and the amendment was passed.**

**viii. Creative Convergence Update.** Ms. Campbell-Maher continued her portion of the meeting with this agenda item. She gave a brief overview of this program and noted that this year it was held in Fishers, Indiana. She noted that all the teams are cross-discipline teams, so they can all work together to grow the outcomes of this program. Ms. Campbell-Maher highlighted that the cohort included 10 different communities, some of which overlapped with the ECF program. Ms. Campbell-Maher highlighted Suzy White as a previous grantee of Creative Convergence, who shared her experience with the current cohort. She noted that all the communities also applied for early action grants in addition to the training. She then shared each community's project. *Please see the attached memo or details of the exact communities included in this program.* Some of these communities are also ECF grantees. She also noted a waiting list for this program due to its popularity. Some of the feedback Ms. Campbell-Maher shared from the survey was generally positive. The current grantee communities are in their implementation period as of March 1, 2025. Ms. Campbell-Maher shared the specific projects with the current cohort of communities. *Please see the attached memo for additional information.* Ms. Campbell-Maher called for questions. None were spoken.

**ix. READI & Lilly Endowment Arts & Culture Initiative.** Ms. Michaelsen gave an update on this agenda item. She shared that READI stands for the Regional Economic Acceleration and Development Initiative, which is a program by the Indiana Economic Development Corporation (IEDC). She noted that the 15 IEDC regions can apply for projects primarily for physical or civic improvement projects, but not as many arts and culture projects. The IAC was not previously involved in this project but currently is. As of last January 2025, the Lilly Endowment granted \$250 million to the IEDC, with \$65 million focusing on accelerating arts and culture. The IAC is supporting this effort by assisting in the selection of consulting teams, participating in the public meetings, and will have a role in the project proposal review process. Ms. Michaelsen reemphasized that this is an IEDC program and that the IAC is supporting it. She added that this funding is not meant to supplant the AOS and APS programs, it is additional funding provided by the Lilly Endowment and IEDC. By the end of the calendar year there will be 15 different cultural and arts plans to review. She also noted that the plans will also be shared between the 15 regions and that there is a possibility that the plans will be shared for public response.

Ms. Michaelsen called for questions. Commissioner Greg Hull asked if the public response would be online or in-person. Ms. Michaelsen responded that they do not know yet. Commissioner Renee Thomas asked for an example of a potential project. Ms. Michaelsen responded that she is thinking that "transformational projects" will be ones that, in 10-15 years will be looked back on as having changed the arts and culture landscape in that section of the state. Mr. Bolser asked if there would be consideration for any projects that are primarily arts-based and still be transformational, with regard to this program. Ms. Michaelsen responded that yes, there are some projects that are being ideated that could meet Mr. Bolser's definition. Ms. McRobbie asked how the IEDC divided the state into their 15 regions, and if the regions are the right kinds of regions for the programs. Ms. Michaelsen responded that all the state agencies determine their

regions internally, and she believes that the IEDC has made a good choice for their department, as it is an economic development organization and not an arts one. Mr. Haist asked when the project plans are expected to be applied for. Ms. Michaelsen responded that it will likely be mid-Summer. No more discussion was had on this point.

- 6. Regional Arts Partnership Consortium Report.** Regional Arts Partner (RAP), Sherri Wright, gave this update. She shared that the regional partners involved with READI are very thankful for Ms. Michaelsen helping to plug READI applicants into arts and culture within their region. She also shared that the partners are all working very hard on the core grant programs at this time, along with moving into review process. The next step is assigning panelists to their grants. This will be the focus of the partnership for the next few months. Ms. Wright noted that she is excited to see how the Fall cycle of APS works when it comes. She also highlighted that the partnership is looking at how they can be advocates and help with the potential cuts to the budget. RAP Kayla Myers added her thanks to Ms. Michaelsen for the READI 2.0 grant, and Mr. Ashby for his help with the AOS/APS application cycle. She also is very happy with the asynchronous panels for APS. Ms. Wright thanked Mr. Ashby and the IAC staff for all their technical support during this AOS/APS cycle.
- 7. Consent Agenda Items Moved to Full Agenda (if any).** None at this time.
- 8. Old Business and New Business.** Ms. Valentine called for any old or new business at this time. Mr. Ashby thanked the Operations team for their work in getting the reviewers onboarded to the cycle. Ms. Valentine echoed Mr. Ashby's sentiment. Ms. Valentine then shared the remaining CY25 Quarterly Business Meeting (QBM) meeting dates and locations, as follows: June 13 in Indianapolis, September 5 in South Bend, and December 12 in Indianapolis. Ms. Michaelsen added that the June QBM and the Committee meetings in the June Cycle might be longer, and that the IAC may call a Committee meeting in addition before the meeting. She also noted that the June QBM may have some important decisions to make and encouraged Commissioners to engage in all the possible changes. Mr. Hull asked for a list of other organizations in the Commerce Vertical. Ms. McRobbie asked if replacement Commissioners can be recommended by current Commissioners. Ms. Michaelsen responded yes, and that the agency is waiting for instructions from the Governor's Office on how to appoint new commissioners.
- 9. Adjournment of Quarterly Meeting.** Ms. Valentine called for a motion to adjourn. Mr. Oakman motioned; Ms. McRobbie seconded. **All were in favor and the meeting adjourned at 11:14AM.**