Open Government Plan

National Endowment for the Arts

May 2012

I.   Introduction

A. Purpose of the plan

This plan provides a framework for implementing the President's Memorandum on Transparency and Open Government.

B. Principles

The foundation principles of Open Government are transparency, participation and collaboration. Transparency provides the public with information about what the government is doing. Participation allows the public to contribute ideas and expertise to improve policy-making. Collaboration encourages partnerships and cooperation within the Federal Government, across levels of government, and between the Government and private institutions.

C. Agency Commitment

The National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) enjoys a long history of openness with the arts community and the American people. As the Agency implements the principles of Open Government, it will seek to expand the availability of information, further promote public participation in its activities and improve participation and collaboration through the use of new technology.

II.	Transparency

A. Expanding Communications

The Agency routinely informs the public of the ongoing business of the agency through press releases, postings on the Agency website (www.arts.gov), and through print publications.

The NEA website has been expanded to include an Open Government section with direct access to much of the information described below. It is also the home of Freedom of Information Act reports and an electronic reading room.

The NEA Chairman has launched a national Art Works Tour through which he visits cities, towns, and communities to connect face-to-face with arts, community, business, and civic leaders. Each tour stop consists of a combination of public and invited meetings combined with roundtable discussions and tours of arts facilities and districts. The press has been actively encouraged to cover these stops.

Following is the status of communications initiatives in the agency's initial Open Government Plan as well as a new initiative that is planned.

Art Works blog (www.arts.gov/artworks) active / ongoing

> Beginning in the fall of 2009, the NEA introduced a blog onto the Agency's website on an experimental basis. As of March 2010, the Agency has developed an ongoing plan for regular updates that disseminate information about the Agency and its work on an ongoing basis.

Facebook   Completed

    The NEA launched a Facebook page (working name "NEAarts") which further extends the Agency's ability to connect with the public and disseminate information about the Agency, its work, and priorities.

Twitter   Completed

    The agency has introduced introduced its first Twitter account (working name "NEAarts"), which complements and extends our ability to connect with the public and disseminate information about the Agency and its work.

YouTube   Completed

    The Agency has a rich archive of video related to supported programs and initiatives. Many of these and other, newer files have been uploaded to YouTube.

iTunes   Ongoing

    The Agency has a rich archive of audio files, both archival and some specifically created by the NEA. These audio files are currently available on the NEA website (www.arts.gov). The NEA will also make these audio files available for download through iTunes (or iTunes U) in order to extend the number of people who are aware of, and view and otherwise use this audio.

Additional   Cancelled

> Following the launch of Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and iTunes, the NEA will develop a plan to also launch Scribd and Flickr (or Google Picasa or similar) accounts to share our print publications and photographs.

Webinars (new initiative)   1Q2013

> The Agency will use webinars to expand access to activities such as convenings that are now limited to those who can attend. This interactive environment will increase participation and serve to improve our interface with the arts community and the public.

B. Webcasting - Our Initial Flagship Initiative   Ongoing

While much of the National Endowment for the Arts' work has been open and accessible to the public, the barrier of geography, along with the costs associated with travel, have prevented many Americans from directly and personally interacting with the Agency.

In an effort to assure easy and broad participation, the NEA has begun regular webcasts of Agency public meetings. In February 2012, the NEA began hosting a quarterly series of webcasts to showcase research and programs supported by member agencies of our Interagency Task Force on the Arts and Human Development. We have also begun the regular webcast of our National Council meetings.

Website Redesign-New Flagship Initiative   May 2013

In January 2012, the NEA completed an assessment of its website (www.arts.gov) with an outside contractor. The assessment examined the site's content, architecture, traffic, and design as a means to

understanding how to better meet the needs of its various audiences and to determine strategies make it more user-friendly and interactive. As a result, the Public Affairs office has initiated a redesign of the website with the intent of improving information architecture and user navigation, as well as directing visitors to both business and a wide variety of social media and multi-media content.

One element currently under consideration is whether moving to an open-source content management system (CMS) is feasible within the current budget. Depending on the CMS decision, it is estimated that the redesign will be completed by May 2013.

C. Making Research Data Available

The Office of Research & Analysis plans to make the following resources (each a new open government initiative) available via the NEA website in FY 2013 and FY 2014:

- Research reports, raw data, the survey instrument, and data dictionary related to the 2012 Survey of Public Participation in the Arts (SPPA), the nation's largest recurring federal study of U.S. adult arts engagement patterns. Where possible, the NEA will make available comparable online reports, tools and resources related to two other surveys being planned: an arts component of the General Social Survey, and an Annual Arts Benchmarking Survey(a short-form version of the SPPA) that will begin in 2013.

- Indicators and data sources for understanding long-term outcomes associated with communities where NEA grants have been awarded to help improve livability. The Office of Research & Analysis aims to make available online capability for grantees to interact online with visualizations of secondary data tied to indicators that pertain to the types of outcomes their grants are

seeking to effect in a given community. These indicators and data sources will be vetted by an external group of stakeholders representing federal, academic, nonprofit, and commercial entities that are involved in research, policy, and planning around place-making initiatives.

- Final reports that emerge from the NEA's Art Works: Research Grants program, begun in 2011. To be posted to the Agency's website, the research reports will include methods, results, and data sources where possible.

- Public data repository with analytical tools for researchers to use in interrogating secondary datasets for variables related to the arts and culture. The NEA is currently exploring migration of this resource, with software, from a major research university.

- Searchable NEA grants database. Although not exclusively an Office of Research & Analysis project, this resource will allow the public to query the Agency's grants for data about project activity, geographic location, amounts awarded, and grantee organizations, among other key variables.

III.   Participation

Public participation plays a key role in the Arts Endowment's core mission activities via its broadly inclusive panel review processes. The Arts Endowment relies on panels comprised of individuals who possess a broad range of artistic and cultural points of view and include members representing a wide range of ethnic and geographic diversity.

During FY 2011, panelists who served were from 50 states and one jurisdiction, and 44% represented various races/ethnicities other than white. Most panelists are arts experts—persons who are qualified by

their training, experience, or demonstrable skill sets in one or more art forms. Each panel however, is also enhanced by the service of at least one layperson who is knowledgeable about the arts, but who is not engaged in the arts as a profession. These panels play a crucial role in the allocation of public resources by making recommendations for support, or rejection, for project applications that seek funding from the Agency.

A new initiative for 2012-2013 is the introduction of Virtual Panel Meetings. These panel meetings will be piloted in late 2012 and will permit panelists to participate from home or work, without the need to travel to Washington, DC. Using conferencing technology and a new electronic balloting system, panelists will review work samples and score applications for Endowment grants online.

IV.   Collaboration

The Agency is committed to collaborating with federal agencies and other government entities. The Deputy Chairman for Programs and Partnerships oversees the Agency's partnership agreements with all regional arts organizations, state arts agencies, and local arts agencies. The Office of Government Affairs oversees all of the Agency's federal partnerships. Together, these offices have a strong history of ensuring that the Agency uses these partnerships to maximize its potential to fulfill the Agency's mission.

From our initial plan, the Agency has completed a planned competition to design a new logo that captures the Chairman's theme of "Art Works".

The next initiative that will improve collaboration will be a redevelopment of our website. This is a new flagship initiative and is described in II.B. above.