

Arts Organizations at a Crossroads

NCAPER's Arts Organizations at a Crossroads (OAX) project focuses on existential crises and decisions faced by nonprofit and for-profit arts organizations, as distinct from the topics of reopening, developing COVID-safe programming, and navigating governmental and private funding opportunities. OAX addresses issues of executive management and governance. [A fact sheet on Arts Organizations at a Crossroads is here.](#)

We will continue to update this list of resources for arts organizations considering significant structural shifts or in significant distress. We encourage you to become informed about your options, and use these tools for playing out various scenarios and pathways, to make the best decision possible. These resources address a range of structural choices including:

- Shared services/back-end collaborations
- Strategic alliances
- Radical restructuring
- Financing
- Suspension/hibernation/hiatus
- Mergers/acquisitions/consolidations
- Dissolutions/other exit strategies
- Bankruptcy/insolvency

Please don't wait until it is too late, and you are forced into steps not of your choosing.

Examples of Resilience and Successful Pivoting

Stories of Resilience

Arts United, of Fort Wayne, Indiana, has collected short-form documentaries of [stories of resiliency](#) in our current environment in the arts and culture sector.

Deciding Whether and How to Wind Down

[Winding Down webinar series](#) – Nebraska Arts Council (January – March 2021)

Winding Down is a series of three webinars that take organizations through the steps of determining whether to close, merge, or go dormant and how to wind down in a way that takes the community's love of your organization into account. [Recordings of each hour-long webinar, and the Council's Winding Down Workbook are available.](#)

- I. Discussions and Decisions
- II. Legal and Financial Steps
- III. Leaving a Legacy

Leadership in the Current Environment

[Recover, Rebuild, Renew Webinar Series](#) – Massachusetts Cultural Council

A series of 42 webinars running February – June, 2021, for board members and leadership staff of arts and cultural organizations, featuring experts exploring these areas in the current environment:

- Human Resources
- Trauma and Arts-Related Healing
- Legal Issues for Arts Administrators
- Board and Governance
- Leadership and Management

- Financial Management
- Advocacy

[Recordings of previous webinars are available](#), and registration for upcoming webinars is free, and open to anyone regardless of location.

Reports and Governance Tools

[Arts Organizations' Early Response to COVID-19](#), from [The Wallace Foundation](#), looks at a recent survey of arts education leaders, providing insights that arts organizations can draw on as they undertake their planning.

[In It for the Long Haul](#), from [SMU DataArts](#), offers “three propositions that any organization can develop and align in order to achieve success: its value proposition, revenue proposition, and people proposition...these steps have the potential to differentiate the organizations that not only weather the crisis but grow through it.”

[Guiding Board Members and Continuing Your Mission During COVID and Beyond](#) is a video from the New York State Council on the Arts, to help structure productive board conversations.

Cash Flow and Business Modeling

Clarify your cash flow situation with cash flow projection tools and templates from [The Wallace Foundation and Fiscal Management Associates](#).

The [Nonprofit Finance Funds' COVID-19 and the Nonprofit Sector resources](#) include cash flow tools.

[Merger and Alliance Toolkit](#) from LaPiana Consulting

A sustainable business model that provides reliable revenue to cover the full cost of doing business is crucial to a nonprofit's ability to provide services effectively and grow to its potential. [Use this worksheet](#) to help articulate components of your business model. From the [Nonprofit Finance Fund](#).

Scenario Planning

[Navigating Uncertain Times: A Scenario Planning Toolkit for Arts and Culture](#) from The Wallace Foundation. A scenario planning toolkit is designed to help arts organizations think through how to respond to various future conditions.

[Tough Times Call for Tough Action: A Decision Framework for Nonprofit Leaders and Boards](#), from [SeaChange](#)

Legal Assistance

[Volunteer Lawyers for the Arts](#), active in about 25 states can assist with landlord/tenant disputes, lease renegotiation, stopping collections, etc., as well as steps for more significant organizational shifts.
<https://vlany.org/national-directory-of-volunteer-lawyers-for-the-arts/>
<https://vlaa.org/get-help/other-vlas/>

Other sources for pro-bono or “low-bono” legal assistance include:
[https://www.probonopartner.org/https://www.probonopartner.org/
Lawyers Alliance for New York](https://www.probonopartner.org/https://www.probonopartner.org/Lawyers Alliance for New York)

You might also explore local resources through university law school clinics, and city, county and state bar associations.

[Know the legal requirements](#) for retention of certain documents and records.