The Middlesex County Office of Arts and History develops and funds programs throughout the County that promote public interest in local and County history, in the arts and in the cultural values, goals and traditions of the community, the State and the nation.
GOALS, STRATEGIES AND TACTICS
To advance our vision and mission, in service to our Core Constituencies, and in keeping with our values and beliefs, we have set the following goals, to be achieved in the next five years.

Supporting Great Arts and History in Our Neighborhoods

GOAL 1: Use Arts and History as a means to build community in municipalities throughout the County.
National studies support the benefits the arts provide as an engine for both community and economic development. Place-based arts and culture make for more viable, sustainable communities that are also attractive to younger generations, who prefer neighborhoods that are walkable and where there is a strong sense of place. Investments here can build that fabric. Assistance in capacity building for those organizations is a significant opportunity for the County.

Ensuring Sustainability of Our Investments

GOAL 2: Protect and leverage the significant operating and capital investments the County makes through the Cultural & Arts Fund, with an eye on long-term sustainability.
The County has dedicated significant funding to strategic bricks and mortar projects and operating support that will deliver great value to the community. To ensure that these investments provide broad-based and sustainable ROI, funding should be based on metrics and data to ensure that capital investments are not made without accompanying market demand. Additionally, investments must go hand-in-hand with the commitment of partner communities where investments are made, and with the assurance that organizations and groups throughout the County will derive benefit from the investments.

Ensuring Best Practice Grant Making Across All County Programs

GOAL 3: Align all County Arts and History grant programs – adhering to best practices to most effectively serve the needs of the community, tell the County’s compelling story, and support best practices set forth in the policies established by the Board of Chosen Freeholders.
Aligning all County Arts and History grant programs will create a more navigable path for arts and history organizations for which County funding is available, and allow the County to more efficiently build awareness for the work it does. Additionally, doing so will enable the Board of Chosen Freeholders to realize its commitment to being a “best in class” funder by bringing all of its funding programs into alignment with national best practices, and to do so in the most cost effective way.

Strengthening Arts Education for Our Children and Youth

GOAL 4: Advocate for strengthening arts education in Middlesex County public schools by partnering with community leaders and professionals.
New Jersey is a recognized nationally for its commitment to arts curriculum in schools. The County recognizes the importance of arts literacy in the development of the County’s young people, and the importance of those young people to our community. Using the rich and varied resources of our community, the County will seek out, convene and actively engage in efforts to strengthen arts-based education and programming in schools.

Building Organizational Capacity to Serve Our Community

GOAL 5: Build a strong County Office of Arts and History to provide best in class grants and programs.
Achieving the goals of the plan will require investments to grow capacity of the County’s operations, specifically, investments in: technology to measure impact; website and social media tools to more effectively communicate with the County’s constituencies; systems platforms to more effectively connect the sector; grant processing and administration upgrades to properly steward the County’s investment; and capacity building programs to help ensure that the County’s organizations get the leadership development and technical skills they need to sustain their organizations.