

# NATIONAL PERFORMANCE NETWORK STRATEGIC PLAN July 2008 -- July 2012

The National Performance Network (NPN) is a group of diverse cultural organizers, including artists, working to create meaningful partnerships and to provide leadership that enables the practice and public experience of the arts in the United States.

## Summary

In 2010 NPN will celebrate its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of operations. During its quarter-century of visionary programming, NPN has become an acknowledged leader in arts and culture in the U.S., playing a significant role in keeping artists' voices and the issues of equity and diversity in the foreground. It has nourished a remarkable cadre of the country's performing artists and forged a solid and respected network of 62 presenters.

This plan builds on the previous strategic plan (2005-2008) and capitalizes on NPN strengths and core competencies of networking, re-granting and convening. The plan also addresses organizational weaknesses, creating an on-going, open system for continual evaluation and learning.

The plan has three major thrusts: programming, operations and building/maintaining relationships. *Programmatically*, the plan includes objectives to refine current programs such as the Creation Fund, Residencies and Convenings, to make them even more relevant and useful. Other objectives will strengthen and expand the Community Fund, the Mentorship/Leadership Initiative and Performing Americas. Two significant new programs will launch during the span of this plan: the Visual Artists Network, which has already implemented a pilot year, and the 4<sup>th</sup> Subsidy fund, a new support system to address the gaps in the creation/presentation continuum.

*Operationally*, the plan has a major focus on upgrading technology, specifically a new database which will address various data collection needs, and an upgraded website. Another significant result of this plan will be the realization of the shared office environment, which will give NPN (and other New Orleans arts organizations) their first permanent home since Hurricane Katrina.

Building and maintaining relationships and connections is the third major thrust of this Plan, from more frequent and coordinated communication to the field, to the care and feeding of the Network itself. Central to this effort is a commitment to identifying and nurturing new leadership, from staff, board, NPN Partners and the field. And finally, NPN's relationships at home, through its various intermediary partnerships, will not only model the practice of community engagement, but also bring significant earned income to the organization.

The goals, objectives, strategies and action steps are envisioned as ways to embody NPN's core values. Chief among these values is a commitment to diversity, supported by structures and processes that insure it.

### **Core Values**

NPN is committed to fostering diversity and artistic experimentation through its support of artists and NPN Partners. As a visible leader and example of best practices in the field, NPN integrates the arts into public experience, furthers artistic pluralism, and acts as an advocate for cultural equity and social justice by supporting artistic activities that demonstrate our values.

We value

- ⇒ Partnerships among artists, communities, arts organizers, and organizations that create opportunities for artistic expression and deepen the general public's relationship with artists.
- ⇒ Freedom of expression – the unhindered flow of ideas, words and images basic to a free society.
- ⇒ Critical dialogue that fosters appreciation for creative process and the role of arts and culture in our society.
- ⇒ Life-long learning through exposure to, and participation in, the arts.
- ⇒ Diversity – points of view and experiences that are shaped by each individual's unique background, and art that celebrates that diversity.
- ⇒ Public funding support that recognizes the arts as integral to a healthy society.

### **Vision**

NPN creates programs, engages in cultural policy and leads the field toward a vision of the world where

- ⇒ Independent artists and companies are recognized as valid and important participants in a healthy and thriving community.
- ⇒ Arts organizers and cultural workers are actively engaged across economic sectors and business industries, providing creative approaches toward a healthy, just, and sustainable world.
- ⇒ Communities -- collections of people who share cultural heritages, philosophies, or geographic locations -- have broad access to art that is reflective of themselves and others.
- ⇒ Public and private supporters advocate for, and invest in, living artists and the organizations that support them.

## GOALS, OBJECTIVES, and STRATEGIES

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>GOAL 1</b> <b>SUSTAIN A HEALTHY, ROBUST NETWORK WHICH CREATES AN ENVIRONMENT FOR SHARED LEADERSHIP AND MUTUAL LEARNING FOR NPN PARTNERS AND THE FIELD</b></p>
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### CONTEXT

NPN is a vibrant network unlike any other in the U.S, composed of 62 of the most exciting presenters in the country who commission new work, present hundreds of artists annually, and engage in imaginative residency activities in their home communities. This goal addresses the 'care and feeding' of the Network as a growing, changing community of learners.

NPN's power as a network derives in part from its commitment to regular, face-to-face convenings, where people come together in person to build relationships, exchange information and share their successes and challenges. In such environments, artists and presenters can identify common cause and support each other's learning and development.

Since its earliest days at Dance Theatre Workshop, NPN has nurtured two decades -- a generation -- of imaginative and progressive leaders. This goal also addresses a comprehensive approach to leadership development, rooted firmly in NPN values of equity, democracy, and reciprocity. This begins with a deep commitment to diversity. By acknowledging the frequent power imbalance between artists and presenters, and frankly discussing the role of race, class, gender and sexual orientation, NPN has begun to shift those dynamics, and take those conversations to the wider field.

NPN strives to provide leadership by being an example of best practices in management and leadership and by addressing critical issues in the field. NPN claims for its constituents the national leadership that exists within the artist-centered and community-engaged sector of the field. NPN's focus on leadership includes an interest in mentoring as a way to lay the groundwork for future leadership and as an investment in the next generation.

#### Recent Accomplishments from Prior Plan

- Expanded NPN Partners to 62 through a careful board-driven process
- Tested a Mentorship/Leadership Initiative as a subset of the Community Fund
- Regularly convened successful Regional and Annual Meetings
- Instituted a new Regional Desk structure to nurture new leadership and build NPN Partner participation

#### Anticipated Outcomes from Proposed Plan

- ⇒ Annual Meetings continue to be source and inspiration for ideas, collaborations and exchange (measured by exit surveys)
- ⇒ Regional meetings become more useful to the NPN Partners and local artists

- ⇒ More NPN Partners and staff can speak knowledgeably about arts policy and the impact of other policies on the arts
- ⇒ The MLI program becomes more responsive to the field's needs (measured by number of applications)
- ⇒ Artists understand NPN better; NPN understands the needs of artists better
- ⇒ Reciprocal dialogue between NPN office and its NPN Partners continue to build knowledge, which is then shared with the wider field
- ⇒ NPN and its Partners, Board and staff become more skilled and practiced in a variety of evaluation methods, and model on-going learning and growth
- ⇒ The board continues to increase its skills in fiscal oversight, planning, governance, visibility and resource development

**Objective A: Create a clearly articulated network structure that supports and encourages participation and dynamic exchange among and between NPN Partners and the NPN office**

Strategies

1. *Strengthen communication from and between NPN Partners*
  - a) Institute an NPN Partner check-in between Regional and Annual Meetings, through email, surveys, or conference calls
  - b) Regularly assess NPN Partners' needs and incorporate into Plan as feasible
  - c) Determine preferred methods to share best practices (case studies?) and discuss emerging issues, including evaluation techniques
  - d) Encourage NPN Partners to tap into peer expertise (through use of MLI funds)
2. *Continue to build a diverse and responsive network*
  - a) Use annual survey to update current skill bank/inventory among Partners
  - b) Continue NPN Partners' annual self-evaluation to assess and/or affirm continued participation (Year One; then every 5 years)
  - c) Convene the NPN Partners Committee in the two-year process of identifying and incorporating new NPN Partners into the network (Year Two)
  - d) Engage board in determining priorities for new member profile/demographics

**Objective B: Continue to regularly convene NPN constituencies (NPN Partners, artists, funders, and colleagues)**

Strategies

3. *Convene an annual national forum (Annual Meeting) that focuses on national cultural policy, best practices and building artist/presenter relationships (on-going)*
  - a) Subsidize NPN Partners' travel to the Annual Meeting, in order to ensure full participation of the membership
  - b) Pending receipt of sufficient funds, fully subsidize NPN-supported artists' attendance at the Annual Meeting, in order to ensure that artists' voices are represented
  - c) Offer honoraria to speakers and panelists
  - d) Showcase artists through live performances, including local artists (see Goal 2, Objective A, 2 d)
  - e) Explore how best to showcase artists in the Visual Artists Network
  - f) Continue to strengthen the relevance and impact of workshops, panels, and presentations at the Annual meeting
    - institute a call for proposals from NPN Partners and artists

- invite NPN constituents to lead workshops and participate in the sharing of best practices
  - create opportunities for Partners with similar program focus (e.g. youth) to meet together during Meetings
2. *Convene regularly scheduled Regional Meetings that promote regional interchange and networking, using Regional Desks as coordinators*
    - a) Find more effective ways to disseminate information from the Regional Meetings to the rest of the national constituency
    - b) Compensate Regional Meeting hosts
    - c) Encourage initiatives, such as regional showcases, at Regional Meetings
    - d) Continue 'Artist Access Meetings' that provide professional development for artists at local sites ("Doing It On the Road"), including informational conversations about NPN
    - e) Improve publicity for the Artist Access Meetings

**Objective C: Strengthen NPN's capacity as a developer of new leadership for the field**  
**Strategies:**

1. *Create and use exemplary models of mentoring and leadership development for artists and arts administrators*
  - a) Develop a plan for expanding the Mentoring/Leadership Initiative (Year One)
  - b) Explore opportunities to reinstitute the National Arts Administration Mentorship Program (NAAMP) or its functional equivalent
    - Identify adhoc study group to revisit NAAMP final reports (Year One)
  - c) Initiate conversations with local universities or colleges (build on Xavier, Tulane, Dillard connections) and Columbia College (Year Two)
  - d) Create opportunities for NPN Partners to share best practices around youth leadership development
  - e) Explore other partnerships that create leadership development and mentorship opportunities for NPN Partners (Goal 2, Objective D) (on-going)
2. *Document and communicate to the field (case studies, web presence, etc.) about MLI and its lessons (See Goal 4, Objective B)*
3. *Engage in cultural policy discussions that inform and challenge the field from an artist-centered and community-engaged perspective, and facilitate NPN Partners and staff in being a voice in those discussions*
  - a) Prioritize opportunities for the NPN President/CEO to participate in national and international convenings and panels in order to advocate on behalf of NPN constituents (on-going)
  - b) Facilitate learning among NPN constituents about cultural policy decisions that impact their work and engage them in the dialogue (on-going)
    - Annual and Regional meetings
    - conference calls with NPN Partners
  - c) Support Board, NPN Partners and staff to engage in policy discussions by developing 'talking points' (Year Two)
  - d) Regularly survey NPN constituents in an effort to remain informed about key issues and concerns that affect their work
    - determine if/how Partners benefit from NPN membership

**GOAL 2**  
**TO SUPPORT THE CREATION AND CONTINUED DEVELOPMENT OF NEW WORK,  
WITH PARTICULAR ATTENTION TO BRIDGING THE SUPPORT GAPS FOR ARTISTS**

**CONTEXT**

NPN's core programmatic focus is to support the creation and touring of new work on a national, and more recently, international level. Since its inception in 1985, NPN has facilitated partnerships that link performing artists and NPN Partners from different communities across the U.S. with the goal of facilitating travel, community exchange, and the creation of new artistic work. NPN Partner Subsidy Programs (Performance Residencies, Creation Fund, and Community Fund) all directly or indirectly feed the practices of national touring and community engagement. The Performing Americas Project mirrors these practices and values, on an international stage. National and international programs are both addressed in this goal.

The arc from commissioning/creation to presentation/touring is complex and often requires supplementary resources in order for the work to be fully realized. NPN has long recognized the gaps that affect touring artists and companies of different profiles, disciplines, regions, and stages of growth, and envisioned a "4<sup>th</sup> Subsidy Fund" to begin to bridge some of these gaps. NPN is in the process of securing funding for this new subsidy; this goal also addresses the launch of this new endeavor.

Recognizing the historical connection of visual arts to performance art and the hybrid nature of contemporary work (with extensive use of new media, installations, etc.), NPN explored the feasibility of initiating a visual arts equivalent of the performance subsidies to address a gap in the contemporary arts world. A long planning process led to a pilot project in 2007, as NPN designed and launched the Visual Artists Network (VAN) with an initial group of seven diverse visual artists residencies, modeled after NPN's Performance Residencies. VAN is intended to establish a national network of visual artists, curators, and organizations, providing opportunities to under-recognized visual artists who seek to advance their careers as they connect with people and places.

This goal also recognizes that NPN does not work in a vacuum, and in fact has developed relationships with a wide variety of partners locally, nationally and internationally. These strategic partnerships will continue to add value to NPN's programs, enhance its ability to serve the field and contribute to income streams.

**Recent Accomplishments from Prior Plan**

- Exceeded three-year benchmarks for Community Residencies and Creation Fund
- Entered into multi-year intermediary agreements with five partners, four of which are located in New Orleans
- Explored the feasibility of a new fund through Hispanics in Philanthropy

- Successfully mentored and partnered with the Asian American Theatre Conference
- Successfully engaged in partnerships with Under the Radar and Alternate ROOTS
- Reinstated the Freight Fund

#### Anticipated Outcomes from Proposed Plan

- ⇒ Subsidies for Residencies and Creation Fund will increase
- ⇒ Use of the Community Fund will deepen
- ⇒ VAN will be operational
- ⇒ Fourth Subsidy will be operational
- ⇒ Performing Americas will be more self-sustaining, with LaRed's institutional capacity expanded
- ⇒ Other international touring opportunities will be researched
- ⇒ New partnerships will have developed as need and opportunity arise

#### **Objective A: Increase support for the contemporary artists/companies who tour the NPN Network, through the Core Subsidies**

##### Strategies

1. *Maintain and deepen NPN's Performance Residency Subsidy*
  - a) Increase artist fees for the NPN Performance Residency program
    - increase Residency artist fees, from \$625 to \$700; increase 'cap' to \$6,000 and NPN's percentage from 40% to 42% (Year One)
    - increase other subsidies: per diem, lodging, travel, and administrative fee (Year Two)
  - b) Assess impact of increased fees on NPN Partners' fundraising and on artists' careers (Year Three)
  - c) Maintain the Freight Fund (on-going)
  - d) - better communicate availability and use of Fund to NPN Partners
  - e) Evaluate the Residency Contract -- outside evaluator? (Year One)
2. *Maintain and deepen Creation Fund*
  - a) Continue the Creation Fund teleconferences to better facilitate communication (Year One; on-going)
  - b) Increase NPN match to \$6,000 to bring total minimum to \$10,000 (Year One)
  - c) Continue to highlight Creation Fund artists in NPN's booth at the Arts Presenters Conference, or as other opportunities arise (on-going)
  - d) Continue to present Creation Fund artists at the NPN Annual Meeting (on-going)
  - e) Pending receipt of sufficient funds, maintain the Creation Fund as a non-competitive program (on-going)
  - f) Explore ways for NPN to deepen and extend the impact of a Creation Fund for artist recipients
  - g) Expand the pool of outside (non-NPN) co-commissioners
3. *Maintain and deepen use of the Community Fund*
  - a) Evaluate current use of Fund: strengths/weaknesses
  - b) Convene NPN Partners and artists in dialogue around exemplary residency activities and persistent challenges

- c) Continue to offer examples of best practices and principles in residency activities, through publications and convenings
- d) Develop ways to share NPN Partners' learnings about use of Community Fund, particularly around work with specific constituencies (youth, LGBT, etc.)

**4. Launch a new fund that supports moving work from creation to stage**

NOTE: detailed program plan has been developed

- a) Name and frame the 4<sup>th</sup> subsidy program; launch pilot round (Year One)
- b) Refine process for Round Two (Spring 2010); research possible other funders/supporters (Year Two)
- c) Evaluate, and assess staff time/impact (implications for additional hire?) (Year Three)

**5. Capitalize on interlocking nature of four subsidies; seek opportunities to maximize the investment**

- a) Initiate on-going conversations at Annual and Regional Meetings
- b) Collect case studies and stories from all programs for 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Retrospective
- c) Explore opportunities with other performing arts organizations to expose NPN-supported artists to even broader audiences

**Objective B: Launch VAN as a program**

Strategies: NOTE: detailed program plan has been developed

- a) Build the VAN Partners to include 15 organizations and convene to evaluate the pilot and design the program; incorporate VAN in the Annual Meeting and showcase visual artists; support one residency for each of the 15 sites; pursue new funding (Year One)
- b) Publish 2010 catalogue; reconvene VAN Partners for continued program evaluation/refinement and artist professional development; support two residencies; pursue new funding to support VAN Creation Fund, Community Fund, and/or international program (Year Two)
- c) Publish 2011 catalogue; all activities above
- d) Explore possible collaboration with another leading national contemporary arts advocacy organization (Year Three)
- e) Discuss VAN's place in NPN's future and explore feasibility of options: collaboration, embedded in NPN as a program, or establishing a new organization (Year Four)

**Objective C: Pursue equitable strategic partnerships with like-minded organizations within the US, in order to better support diverse artists and presenters**

Strategies

1. *Explore new partnerships with culturally-specific networks and organizations that expand opportunities for artists of color*
  - a) Glean lessons from the Artists of Color Performance Residency Program, in order to build the case for supporting touring artists of color (Year One)
  - b) Close out HIPP partnership to satisfaction of funder (Year One)
  - c) Actively seek out opportunities for NPN to use its resources to support emerging, diverse or under-supported artists and presenters (on-going)
    - develop list of possible collaborators (National Black Arts Festival; National Black Theatre Festival; National Association of Latino Arts and Culture) (Year Two)
    - articulate shared outcomes

2. *Respond to and initiate strategic partnerships with regional and national organizations that share NPN's mission and values and serve artists or presenters*
  - a) Continue to build on relationships with Fractured Atlas, Creative Capital and Network of Ensemble Theatres (on-going)
  - b) Craft a viable and meaningful definition of 'partnership' to guide future decision-making and partnering (Year One)
  - c) Initiate conversations with possible collaborators; articulate shared outcomes (Year Two/Three)
  - d) Explore need/feasibility for staff position to manage partnerships
3. *Continue to support and encourage local partnerships (See Goal 5, Objective A)*
  - a) Support local partnerships in planning, documentation and evaluation
    - Home NOLA, Transforma, Creative Forces, Mardi Gras Indian Hall of Fame, Picture Projects
  - b) Strategize with local partners about funding sources and income streams

**Objective D: Play a role in the global cultural environment by facilitating and participating in international artist exchanges through partnerships with international networks**

**Strategies:**

1. *Pending receipt of sufficient funds, continue the Performing Americas Project with La RED to support artist exchanges between the U.S. and Latin America*
  - a) Continue to explore a partnership with Tulane University's Stone Center for Latin American Studies (Year One)
  - b) Fine-tune the Residency program based on assessment (reference diPedro report) (Year One)
  - c) Evaluate the pilot of the Creative Development Residency for non-performance-based exchanges between the U.S. and Latin America (i.e., management, technical, etc.)
    - suspend tours; focus on Creative Development Residency exchanges (Year One)
    - resume touring, under new or revised guidelines (Year Two)
  - d) Strengthen professional development aspect of PAP as a learning opportunity for presenters and artists without prior international experience (see Goal 1, C)
  - e) Commit to bi-lingual website and other relevant materials (Year Three)
2. *Explore opportunities for new international partnerships, especially in Japan and Southeast Asia*
  - a) Clarify intentions of program as professional development opportunity for artists and as cross-cultural learning in the age of globalization
  - b) Talk with Japan Foundation and Asia Society about interest and feasibility (Year One)
  - c) Develop relationships with Japanese presenters and networks (Year Two)
  - d) Utilize Duke support for pilot phase (Year Three)
  - e) Explore other international possibilities (Year Four)

**GOAL 3**  
**CONTINUE TO STRENGTHEN NPN AS A SUSTAINABLE ORGANIZATION**

**CONTEXT**

Throughout its history, NPN has existed with the support of a few key funders. While grateful for the generous support and validation, NPN recognizes the need to continue to diversify its income streams, stabilizing the organization against the vicissitudes of institutional funding and its programmatic obligations. This goal addresses the need to extend NPN's fund-raising capacity through improved technology and planning.

This goal addresses the need for NPN to maintain a strong and healthy internal organizational structure, including the development of diverse funding streams, thorough staff and program evaluation, and improved use of technology and new software. NPN doubled its staffing levels in the past three years, which enabled it to develop new income streams and maximize program delivery.

Building a stable and sustainable organization requires careful planning, vigilant monitoring of actions in the context of the goals and vision, and the ability to evaluate, assess, and then re-focus objectives or adopt new strategies if needed -- all hallmarks of a learning organization.

**Accomplishments**

- Increased staff capacity to 9 full-time staff on site, with 5 contract positions in the field, both full and part-time
- Successfully confirmed at least 75% of annual budget prior to the beginning of the fiscal year
- Secured multi-year grants from Duke, Ford and Warhol Foundations
- Developed partnerships with local organizations that provided NPN a presence in its home community, as well as significant unrestricted income
- Improved staff operations

**Anticipated Outcomes**

- ⇒ Continue sound financial policies and practices (measured by audit findings)
- ⇒ Percentage of funding coming from single source continues to decrease (no more than 33% by 2011)
- ⇒ New funding sources (foundations and corporations) have been identified, cultivated and successfully approached for programming and operating support
- ⇒ Development of an appropriate and sustainable program of donations from individuals
- ⇒ The CEO has enjoyed a 6-month sabbatical, with the organization continuing stable operations in her absence
- ⇒ A new database is installed, de-bugged and fully operational; staff is thoroughly comfortable with its operation
- ⇒ Staff leadership continues to grow

**Objective A: Continue to diversify contributed resources**

**Strategies**

1. *Create and use an annual fundraising plan that addresses multiple strategies for resource development (on-going)*
  - a) Include detailed notes about future prospects
  - b) Capitalize on 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary as fundraising opportunity
2. *Continue to diversify foundation, corporate and government sources (on-going)*
  - a) Annually add 3-5 prospects for cultivation and relationship-building
  - b) Identify potential regional and local funders at Annual and Regional Meeting sites (two years in advance for Annual Meetings)
  - c) Develop cultivation events that increase NPN's contributions from regional funders, particularly for the Annual Meetings
  - d) Continue to secure funds from multi-year funding sources
3. *Improve efficiency of internal systems for prospecting, tracking and solicitation*
  - a) See Objective E, below (database)
  - b) Determine methods for tracking and accounting in-kind
4. *Increase individual support*
  - a) Continue 100% giving from board and staff
  - b) Approach former directors of NPN Partner organizations (alumni) and artists who formerly toured in the Network for contributions, and for assistance in expanding NPN's individual donor base (Year One)
  - c) Explore strategies for soliciting contributions from current constituents and artists (Year Two)
  - d) Launch expanded "friends circle" to coincide with 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary (Year Three)

**Objective B: Continue to increase earned revenue**

**Strategies**

1. *Explore new ventures that expand earned income (unrestricted) through NPN's capacity to act as an Intermediary*
  - a) Continue to partner with racially and ethnically diverse organizations and networks
  - b) Expand role as an Intermediary with New Orleans-based projects and entities (see Goal 5, Objective A)
2. *Explore new ventures that utilize NPN's institutional competencies (network development, regranting, and convenings)*

**Objective C: Continue strong organizational planning**

**Strategies**

1. *Review Strategic Plan on a regular basis with board and staff (on-going)*
2. *Complete and regularly review financial policies and procedures (Year One)*
3. *Explore a cash reserve strategy, especially in light of the shared office space (Year Two)*

4. *Build staff skills in program evaluation*

**Objective D: Build a more effective, cohesive administrative staff**

Strategies

1. *Maintain and expand routine self- and peer evaluation of staff (on-going)*
  - a) Continue an evaluation process in which staff identify their goals and opportunities for learning (contract staff as well as office staff)
  - b) Structure staff positions to provide staff members with opportunities for growth
  - c) Commit to cross-training of staff so that job knowledge is shared
  
2. *Create a team-based approach to staffing that supports a learning environment and encourages leadership (on-going)*
  - a) Implement regular written staff reports shared between staff members and with board members
  - b) Provide professional development for staff by actively participating in board meetings, leading project meetings, obtaining leadership and facilitation training, and participating on boards, panels, and community projects, locally, regionally and nationally
    - provide adequate travel/registration costs in budget
  - c) Continue and refine Quarterly planning meetings and annual staff retreats
  - d) Better integrate off-site contract staff into the over-all programmatic work of the organization
    - provide time and budget sufficient for contract staff to attend annual staff retreats and quarterly planning meetings
  - e) Develop plans for CEO succession (emergency and planned) (Year One)
  
3. *Develop an organizational model where leadership is shared*
  - a) Identify areas and methods whereby the CEO and COO can share knowledge with other staff (on-going)
  - b) Continue to expand the budgeting process beyond the CEO and COO, giving departmental leaders greater responsibility in the development and management of the annual budget (on-going)
  - c) Build staff leadership so that multiple people are able to represent NPN (on-going)
  - d) Provide opportunities for staff to be the 'voice' of NPN, with mentoring by CEO and COO
  
4. *Create and implement a plan for the CEO sabbatical (Years One-Two)*
  - a) Develop COO's leadership abilities to act as CEO
  - b) Create a plan for the CEO to take a sabbatical (Feb-July 2010)
  - c) Develop other staff to fill the gaps of the COO's position while CEO is on sabbatical, or explore feasibility of interim management staff
  
5. *Improve working conditions for staff*
  - a) Complete office relocation (Year One) – See Goal 5, Objective B
  - b) Review need for ergonomic furnishings and additional equipment in connection with relocation
  - c) Pursue NPN match for individual retirement contributions (Year Two)
  - d) Regularly review Personnel Policy (on-going)

**Objective E: Improve Efficiency and Accuracy of Internal Operations**

**Strategies**

1. *Create office systems that enable efficient implementation of all programmatic and operational functions (on-going)*
  - a) Increase staff use of intranets and/or web-based file sharing and data management
  - b) Assess the operations manual to better reflect the evolving needs of the organization and its staff
  - c) Create flow charts for each job position and written job descriptions
  - d) Build time into quarterly planning to evaluate program
  - e) Evaluate outsourcing of bookkeeping for timeliness, accuracy and responsiveness
  - f) Assess internal communication needs of Performing Americas and local partnerships
  
2. *Update internal technology*
  - a) Purchase and install new database
  - b) Train all staff in new database, with formal and informal processes, accommodating different learning styles (Year One)
  - c) Provide on-going technical support and continually assess staff comfort and capacity with new database (Year Two)
  - d) Phase out old database (end of Year Two)
  - e) Evaluate (Year Three)

**Objective F: Continue to diversify Board and strengthen Board practice**

**Strategies**

1. *Ensure that the Board is fully functioning and responsive when carrying out NPN's mission*
  - a) Continue to refine a formal board evaluation process
  - b) Formalize a structure that allows active engagement by each board member in the fundraising process
  
2. *Continue annual self-evaluation*
  
3. *Charge Board Development Committee to insure board composition inclusive of diverse voices of NPN constituents*
  
4. *Use board meetings as opportunity to engage in cultural policy discussions on a regular basis*
  
5. *Develop a plan to address key issues identified in the board's most recent self-assessment*
  - a) Visibility – develop the “elevator speech”
  - b) Financial Oversight – develop skills around reading audits, financial reports, etc.
  - c) Resource Development --- engage in fund development and planning

**GOAL 4**  
**INCREASE NPN'S VISIBILITY AND IMPACT THROUGH MORE EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATIONS**

**CONTEXT**

Using a website that was assembled in the wake of Katrina, NPN has recognized the need to upgrade its technology. In the six months after the storm, the office was able to successfully operate from five scattered locations, using a combination of instant messaging, broadband cards, cell phones and centralized office documents (Web-Ex). These tools have become part of NPN's standard practice, but have not yet been fully utilized for maximum efficiency. Furthermore, out-moded grant application and reporting processes have hampered office efficiency.

This goal addresses a major upgrade in technology and its applications, one of the few weaknesses cited in a recent comprehensive organizational assessment and impact study commissioned by the Duke Foundation. Significantly, this goal also addresses NPN's need to 'tell its story' more effectively, to its Partners and to the field and to share its successes and learnings more widely. NPN's 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in 2010 will be a perfect opportunity for publications (electronic, print or web) that mark NPN's accomplishments.

Accomplishments

- A lengthy and careful analysis of over 40 database products
- A comprehensive assessment of technology needs
- Publication of a Directory, VAN Catalog and organizational brochure
- Continued use of networked office systems, included WebEx and IM

Anticipated Outcomes

- ⇒ NPN Partners are able to submit applications and reports on-line, and summaries are automated
- ⇒ A variety of communications/publications reach a variety of publics for a variety of purposes (a communications plan is created)
- ⇒ NPN is more visible

**Objective A: Invest in technology that allows artists and NPN Partners to efficiently access information about NPN's programs and services and to communicate with each other**

Strategies

1. *Use the website more effectively*
  - a) Update website; install on-line report and application functions (Year One)
  - b) Develop on-line media archive (photo, video) (Year One)
  - c) Evaluate web presence and on-line functions
  - d) Address recommendations from evaluation
  
2. *Enhance web content*

- a) Add audio and video streaming and ability to upload/download images
  - b) Develop 'portal' to allow presenters and artists to share information directly with each other
2. *Explore social networking sites to enhance direct communication between NPN Partners*

**Objective B: Strengthen NPN's presence through publications and activities**  
**Strategies**

1. *Increase attention to image and presence of NPN*
  - a) Develop consistency in all materials distributed by NPN
  - b) Utilize and expand the NPN website as a tool for increased name recognition (Year One)
  - c) Explore feasibility and need for communications coordinator (Years Two or Three)
  
2. *Regularly create and disseminate publications to examine issues in contemporary arts practice, stimulate cross-cultural dialogue, and promote NPN's leadership*
  - a) Clarify process and content for a regular e-News for NPN Partners (Year One)
  - b) Create a bi-annual newsletter that is distributed to NPN Partners, artists, funders, friends, and colleagues (Year Two)
  - c) Explore innovative methods or partners for sharing information about NPN practices, policies, and programs
  - d) Periodically publish or co-publish a cultural policy paper
  - e) Revise the NPN Directory to serve as an Annual Report by including financial information and data from the NPN Partner surveys (Year Two)
  - f) Evaluate and update brochure (Year Two)
  - g) Budget for the distribution and storage of new publications (on-going)

**Objective C: Celebrate NPN's 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary through publications**

1. *Create specific plan for celebration, including commissioning of new writing, collecting and editing previous writings, DVD documentary, etc. (Year One)*

**GOAL 5**  
**Establish NPN as an anchor in its home office community**

**CONTEXT:**

This goal is about NPN “practicing what it preaches,” about community engagement and being an authentic part of the local cultural life. NPN’s increased its efforts in the post-Katrina environment, by supporting artists who are working toward the rebuilding of New Orleans and the Gulf Coast. The national office’s commitment to community engagement positioned NPN to assist in recovery efforts on the Gulf Coast in a variety of ways.

NPN has evolved from a national program embedded in a local organization (DTW) into a national organization with embedded local programming. The goal of local activities is to expand NPN’s visibility, create viable local models that can be disseminated, and provide professional development for Louisiana artists and organizations. Currently NPN provides infrastructure support, planning services, office space (for some) and financial record keeping and reporting. NPN does not lead, make policy for, or run the day-to-day work of these projects.

Key to NPN’s success in this role is maintaining its advisory status, and ensuring that NPN staff can help build capacity for these projects without being over-taxed or drawn into day-to-day operations. When Duke Foundation support enabled NPN to increase its capacity by adding staff, NPN was able to use that added capacity to diversify income through these intermediary projects, in addition to embodying the mission in the local community.

**Accomplishments:**

- Played a key role in Gulf Coast Recovery projects, partnering with projects that received \$970,000 from national foundations, and realizing unrestricted income of \$97,000 in contracted administration fees
- Served as Institutional intermediary for *Building the Code* (documenting community-based arts)
- Served as Institutional intermediary for *Weaving the Web* (an audience development program)
- Supported and helped organize the 2004 Convergence of artists, educators, and community organizers
- Served as fiscal sponsor for Louisiana artists
- Provided offices and business services for Cuba Nola and Junebug Productions
- Commissioned a feasibility study for the Shared Office environment, and initiated conversations with a range of local organizations and artists

**Anticipated Outcomes:**

- ⇒ Intermediary functions and local partnerships will be refined and expanded
- ⇒ The NPN office will have successfully re-located
- ⇒ The shared office is serving all current needs and covering all costs (with possibility of additional revenue stream)

**Objective A: Engage in partnerships that strengthen and support local artists and arts organizations and influence the cultural practices and policies of NPN's home community**

**Strategies**

1. *See Goal 3, Objective B (earned income)*
2. *Continue to maintain connections to local artists and organizations through COO and other staff*
  - a) Present "Doing it on the Road" once a year in New Orleans or Louisiana
3. *Play an active role in the local arts ecology by championing individual artists and small arts organizations*
  - a) Engage in advocacy on behalf of artists and artist-centered organizations (on-going)
  - b) Formalize a policy that articulates NPN's role in its local community, the types of projects it supports, and how projects align with NPN's mission, vision, and values; involve Board's Policy Committee (Year One)
4. *Participate in local activities that strengthen the local arts community and create a connected arts environment*
  - a) Explore partnerships and relationships with universities to develop and engage the next generation of arts leaders (See Goal 1, Objective C)
  - b) Continue to have a Louisiana-based board member (on-going)
  - c) Encourage staff to be active in local and state associations; budget for dues
5. *Continue to serve as an Intermediary for local projects with national implications that align with NPN mission and values*
  - a) Home NOLA – planning, evaluation, documentation
  - b) Transforma -- planning, evaluation, documentation
  - c) Articulate a process for accepting new projects and on-going oversight
  - d) Continue to document and refine Partnership Agreements (on-going)
  - e) Evaluate and disseminate learnings (Year Three)

**Objective B: Implement NPN's shared office environment with other small performing arts organizations**

**Strategies**

1. *Continue development of shared office space*
  - a) Continue conversations with New Orleans Ballet Association or other anchor companies
  - b) Complete feasibility of lease or purchase, possible partnerships, low-cost financing and site selection (Year One)
  - c) Relocate (Year One/Two)
  - d) Develop facility policies and procedures (Year Two)
  - e) Assess policies, costs, additional partnerships (Year Three)