



## PRESS RELEASE – The Alaska State Council on the Arts

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **New Pathways | Alaska names inaugural organizations**

*Anchorage, Alaska* - Ten Alaska arts organizations have been selected to participate in a new program to accelerate innovation and the adoption of “next practices” to promote greater sustainability in the arts.

The program, titled New Pathways | Alaska, is a joint project of Rasmuson Foundation, EmcArts (a New York based nonprofit), The Foraker Group and the Alaska State Council on the Arts. New Pathways | Alaska provides, at no cost to organizations, workshops, consultation and coaching leading to the development of a major innovation project.

According to EmcArts President Richard Evans, “Today’s operating environment for the arts is highly complex. Arts leaders must be able to adapt their programs, strategies and organizational structures thoughtfully and quickly to respond to rapid changes and fleeting opportunities. To develop these adaptive capacities, organizations can benefit from carefully structured activity and interventions – formal assistance and effective frameworks like those provided through New Pathways – to support the design and testing of new strategies.”

Diane Kaplan, president of Rasmuson Foundation, heralded this new approach to supporting arts organizations in Alaska. “New research from The Foraker Group shows that 13 percent of all charitable nonprofits in Alaska are arts organizations, but these organizations only enjoy 4 percent of nonprofit revenues. This demonstrates that while the public desires access to arts experiences, organizations haven’t quite hit on the right formula to ensure their sustainability. We believe this approach will provide the opportunity for experimentation and learning that will benefit these organizations today and in the future.”

We are so excited to welcome the following organizations that have been selected for the first cohort of New Pathways:

- Alaska Humanities Forum (Anchorage) provides education-based programs to enhance cross-cultural understanding and increase knowledge and awareness of humanities, cultural, arts, civic, historical and intellectual pursuits throughout our state.
- Alaska Native Heritage Center (Anchorage) is a living cultural center that promotes active creation of art, featuring permanent collections and educational programs. It provides after-school programs for middle and high school students, and year-round exhibits and activities to residents and visitors of all ages.
- Alutiiq Museum (Kodiak) unites community, visitors and researchers in original research—archaeology, history, language, culture and art. They seek to preserve indigenous knowledge and objects to tell the Alutiiq story, past and present, via exhibits, publications and education programs.

- Anchorage Concert Association (Anchorage) is a multi-disciplinary performing arts presenter of big shows, small shows and intimate community engagement events. Their diverse season and outreach work are designed to have the greatest impact possible and expose Alaskans to the performing arts.
- Anchorage Symphony Orchestra (Anchorage) produces concerts and programs to inspire, educate and engage the community. In addition to a popular season of concerts offered annually, the Symphony serves the people of Southcentral Alaska through school time concerts for students, free concerts and free ticket programs.
- Island Institute (Sitka) explores the links between the literary arts and community engagement through programs such as the Sitka Symposium, a weeklong gathering bringing the literary arts and creative thinking to the service of community, Writers In Residence and Sitka Fellows Programs, publication of the biannual literary journal Connotations and a community conversations series.
- Ketchikan Area Arts and Humanities Council (Ketchikan) serves the entire community of Ketchikan with a fine art gallery, exhibits featuring area artists, two annual arts festivals, a performing arts series, two annual citywide art walks, the annual Wearable Art Show and a fiscal sponsorship program for small arts related groups.
- Kodiak Arts Council (Kodiak) is a local arts agency with a performing arts series, summer arts institute for youth, community theater program producing works of music, dance and theater, and a membership program.
- Perseverance Theatre's (Juneau/Anchorage) mission is to create professional theatre by and for Alaskans. The theatre serves a statewide audience with performances, outreach events and education programs in Juneau and Anchorage.
- Sheldon Museum and Cultural Center (Haines) provides exhibits of history, art and local culture. Along with the exhibits, it provides evening lectures, family workshops and children's camps.

The New Pathways | Alaska approach moves away from the traditional concept of technical assistance, which supports the improvement of current organizational strategies, to adaptive assistance that aims to accelerate the adoption of "next practices" for the field. For select participants, the program will provide up to \$75,000 for scaling promising innovations; and a variety of online learning tools (housed on ArtsFwd at <http://artsfwd.org/>) to capture and reinforce lessons learned and contribute to the national dialogue about innovation in the field.

A second group of organizations will be selected for a 2015 cohort, with applications opening in mid-2015. Application instructions and more in-depth program information are available on the Foraker Group website (<http://www.forakergroup.org/index.cfm/Shared-Services/New-Pathways>).

### **About Alaska State Council on the Arts**

ASCA is a state agency that fosters the development of the arts for all Alaskans through education, partnerships, grants and services.

### **About EmcArts**

EmcArts is a social enterprise for adaptive learning and innovation across the arts and culture field. They serve as a nonprofit intermediary for many arts funders, and as a service provider for the arts field around innovation. Through [ArtsFwd](#), EmcArts serves as a center for practitioners to share and learn about the power of effective innovation and adaptive change.

**About Foraker Group**

The Foraker Group guides organizations on their journey to sustainability – starting with a focus on mission, then looking beyond simply maintaining funding to the essential elements of board, staff and partnerships.

**About Rasmuson Foundation**

Rasmuson Foundation was created in May 1955 by Jenny Rasmuson to honor her late husband E.A. Rasmuson. The Foundation is a catalyst to promote a better life for all Alaskans.

*The Alaska State Council on the Arts is a division of the Alaska Department of Education and Early Development, and is governed by eleven council members appointed by the Governor. It is supported with general funds appropriated by the Alaska State Legislature and the National Endowment for the Arts, with additional support for arts education programs from the Rasmuson Foundation.*

*The mission of the Alaska State Council on the Arts (ASCA) is to foster the development of the arts for all Alaskans through education, partnerships, grants and services.*