

# Cultural Connection

Includes goals from these [Creative Communities Reports](#):

- Highlight Local Cultural Organizations (St. Johnsbury)
  - Rutland as an Arts and Culture Destination
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- Strong partnerships should be used to get the general public more involved in the arts and culture and understand the benefit of investments in this sector. The team moving forward will need to host many opportunities for people to get involved in creating a shared vision. An important question for arts groups should be what they might accomplish through economies of scale, shared space, collective assets and collaborative energies.
  - More mundane issues beyond the big vision will be how to organize the players behind an effort, how they will make decisions, and how to sustain the infrastructure. The group will also need to find a common language. One thing to be clear on from the beginning is what information will not be shared. A particular example is in sharing mailing or e-mailing lists, which has become a concern with rising amounts of SPAM.
  - A good way to be sure you get everyone who might be interested in collaboration to the table is to cross check your invitations with the **Vermont Arts Council's** online arts directory ([vermontartsdirectory.org/](http://vermontartsdirectory.org/)). This list isn't guaranteed to have everyone, so check for organizations that aren't on the list (and you can encourage them to join the directory). Simply helping everyone share information on a regular basis is a major accomplishment and potential partnerships will naturally emerge.
  - The Arts Council can help get word out about all events, such as performances, gallery openings, and community suppers, through the **Vermont Arts Calendar**. This calendar ([www.vermontartscouncil.org/Resources/Calendar/tabid/90/Default.aspx](http://www.vermontartscouncil.org/Resources/Calendar/tabid/90/Default.aspx)) is also a way to keep track of what's going on in your own backyard
  - The **Vermont Arts Council** offers a grant for Local Arts Partnerships. Planning grants of up to \$2,500 and implementation grants of up to \$10,000 / year are available to arts organizations starting working partnerships with other community organizations. Contact the VT Arts Council's Director of Community Programs (802) 828-3778
  - Rutland recently initiated a process of developing greater collaboration between its arts groups. **Whitney Lamy** helped lead that effort and can be reached at [director@crossroadsarts.com](mailto:director@crossroadsarts.com) or (802) 775-0356.
  - The **AD Henderson Foundation** makes grants specifically for arts education. Talk to the **Brattleboro Music Center** about funding / operations for educational centers ([bmcvt.org/](http://bmcvt.org/)).
  - If you decide to go forward with an arts festival, or any large event with an entertainment component, there are several conferences that will provide good information along with networking opportunities:
    - **North East Regional Folk Alliance** - ([nerfa.org/](http://nerfa.org/)) – At Kutscher's Country Club in the Catskills every November. Good panels, good networking opportunities, manageable size, but very performer-based.
    - **Ontario Council of Folk Festivals** ([ocff.ca/](http://ocff.ca/)) – This annual convention is held in October each year and is a fantastic resource for those contemplating building an event. The fairly small size (around 300-400 registrants) makes it manageable. There are panels on how to break down the

tasks inherent in a festival, Committee/volunteer recruitment, sponsorship, etc. Dozens of small communities in Ontario have vibrant festivals with devoted patrons returning year after year - there's no reason why New England couldn't!

- **North American Folk Music & Dance Alliance** – <http://www.folkalliance.org/Default.aspx>. Visit the conference link. A wonderful opportunity to see a vast number of musical acts loosely falling within the 'contemporary folk' genre. The conference is huge (maybe 1,500+ registrants) and heavily skewed toward performers. There are useful panels, mentoring and networking opportunities, but it is more diluted than either OCFE or NERFA (above).

Compiled by the **Vermont Council on Rural Development**, 802-223-6091, [www.vtrural.org](http://www.vtrural.org)