

Marketing Toolkit for Artists and Organizations

This toolkit incorporates basic outreach strategies and marketing methods to help artists and organizations reach a wider audience and improve public awareness of their work and programming. Each section offers strategic tips and guidelines for using these communication mediums to expand audiences effectively. Choose the outreach methods that work best for your programming, capacity, budget, and intended audience.

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Social Media

Instagram

Instagram Overview

- Instagram is a multi-media platform allowing for curation and expression of your arts/organization's identity, work, portfolio, and interactive content.
- Tacoma has a strong local community on Instagram with many artists and organizations regularly posting.
- Genuine engagement with your audience through comments and direct messages fosters a sense of community.

Instagram Content Strategy Tips

- Posts are your Gallery or Display, showcasing images of your work, flyers, short-form video content, announcements, etc.
- High-resolution photos of your work are essential. **Share your best quality content to engage your community with your important work!**
- Use posts to show your portfolio, share event photos, provide insight into your artistic process, or engage with the community.
- Connect posts in series or creative ways for community engagement.
- **People love faces!** Share yours on a post on occasion and watch the likes come in.
- A Carousel is a collection of up to 10 images in one post. This feature is a great way to do some storytelling. Consider showing your process on a work in progress. Or snapshots of how your day went intermixed with your art. Be creative.
- **Use all Instagram tools** like location, filters, stickers, and audio. Using these tools notifies Instagram's algorithm to put your post in front of more of your audience.
- **Post and engage the community with your content regularly.** Try posting regularly (2-3 times per week up to daily) with various types of content such as posts, reels, and stories, to increase your overall engagement. Infrequent posts are unfortunately not promoted often in the algorithm.
- **If you are posting about a project that is currently funded by the Tacoma Arts Commission, create a Collaboration Post in your mobile app with @Tacomaarts for enhanced promotion.** Steps:
 - Let us know before planning to add us as a collaborator (email dgarcia2@tacoma.gov)
 - Make sure your post contains the City of Tacoma logo for your funded project.
 - Tap "Tag people" before publishing your post
 - Tap "Invite collaborator," search for [@Tacomaarts](https://www.instagram.com/tacomaarts), and select
 - Once we accept your invitation, your post will appear on the Tacoma Arts Commission's timeline

Instagram Stories

- Share posts, photos, and 15-second videos; stories disappear after 24 hours.
- Share creative process, work in progress, or reminders for upcoming events.
- Utilize features like polls, timer countdowns, music, and organize Story Highlights for important content.
- Instagram tends to favor posts and stories that utilize its regular new features such as new buttons, stickers, and other in-app additions.

Instagram Reels

- Share videos up to 90 seconds long and add music, filters, and other components to help grab attention. Reels are like TikTok's short-form video content and have been increasing in popularity.
- Use original content.
- Add music, filters, and other Instagram features. You can also add a description under your Reel (the same as you would for a post) to let your community know what you're up to.
- Reels is Instagram's answer to TikTok, so it's prioritizing its use in the algorithm more often.
- Use a variety of content. This also "hacks" the Instagram algorithm. It's like a frequent flier's reward. The more it's used, the more rewards (or in this case engagement and presence online) are provided.

Instagram Live

- Instagram Live allows you to film a session live with your viewers or users tuning in to watch you. This can be a great way to explain a process, showcase your work, and perform. You can reshare your live video as a video post to your feed.

Instagram Threads

- Instagram Threads is essentially a similar platform to X (Twitter) that allows you to share text updates and join public conversations.

TikTok

TikTok Overview

- TikTok allows for the sharing of short-form videos ranging from 15 seconds to a minute.
- Showcase your creative process, behind-the-scenes footage, or highlight specific aspects of artwork.
- Strong algorithm quickly propels content to a wide audience.

TikTok Content Strategy Tips

- Understand TikTok's format: **Short-form video content is a great way to showcase your artistic presence, experience, personality, and story.** If you think of it as a storytelling tool, it becomes clear why it is so popular.
- Create viral art videos: Showcase your creative process and add your artistic spin to existing trends and use trending “sounds” or audio clips of music or popular culture memes to propel your content even further.
- Use the tools TikTok provides – their content algorithm is primed to recognize when you have used their filters, applications, different sharing capabilities, etc., and will reflect in how it promotes your material.
- **Engage with the art community: Collaborate, duet, comment, and respond to build a supportive community.**
- A TikTok Duet allows you to post your video side-by-side with a video from another creator on TikTok. A Duet contains two videos in a split screen that play at the same time. Duets can be anything from one creator crafting a song for others to sing on, to providing important social critique and commentary.
- Grow your following. Consistency is key. Promote TikTok content on other platforms.
- Follow and interact with other accounts and genuinely comment on content that you like.

Facebook

Facebook Overview

- Facebook supports various content creation formats, including images, videos, articles, event pages, and link sharing. This can allow for different types of content, including long-form content, making it suitable for in-depth discussions, artist interviews, and showcasing the creative process.
- **Facebook has strong advertising tools that allow artists/organizations to reach specific demographics and target audiences through boosted posts, targeted ads, and analytic-based performance evaluation and strategies.**
- Facebook allows artists to create dedicated pages for their art, providing a professional space to showcase portfolios, share updates, provide event information and registration, and engage with the community through Facebook groups.
- Facebook Marketplace is also a valuable resource to purchase used items like furniture, art supplies, and other items (use caution).

Facebook Content Strategy Tips

- **Joining groups related to your art, interests, or purpose, is like having a “artist salon” or “symposium” at your fingertips. There are lots of support groups for every interest, even obscure ones!**
- Use the richness of [Facebook’s ad-boosting features](#) to narrow in on the demographic and interest data points for your target audience. Ads are a great way to promote events and important happenings and a budget of even \$50 can make an impression on thousands of accounts.
- Facebook has one of the largest, most well-established audiences and is still the dominant social media platform.
- Facebook marketing can be as simple or complex as you would like. Here’s a [helpful guide from Hootsuite](#) if you want to go even further in expanding your skill set and promotional reach.

Other Social Media Channels

Other social media channels that can offer benefits to artists and organizations include Reddit, Bluesky, Discord, LinkedIn, Pinterest, Etsy and Snapchat. Following is one suggestion for each of these platforms to prompt your exploration:

- **Reddit:** Find your community. Reddit can be a great place to find help for projects, information about specific interests, and promote locally on spaces like r/Tacoma.
- **Bluesky:** Great space for literary artists or social commentary.
- **Discord** is a great way to interact with people with similar interests and can be a great tool for learning, discussion, and event sharing.
- **LinkedIn:** Get your professional on. This is a great place for nonprofit organizations to network.
- **Pinterest:** Collect and share ideas, work, process, and more.
- **Etsy:** Sell your work with your online store.
- **Snapchat:** Connect with other artists quickly and have fun with their many content options.

Personal vs. Artist or Organization Social Media Accounts

It's recommended to create a social media account for your artistic practice or organization that is separate from your personal account – but find the approach that works best for you.

Some things to consider:

- Separation of your personal and artist/organization page can allow for increased engagement and movement towards business/sales where you want it to.
- Your artist/organization account can reflect your personality and can increase engagement with a community of similar interests.
- Your artist or organization account should be public so it can be accessed by anyone on social media.
- A personal account allows you to stay connected with those who matter most to you, without distraction. This account could be private so only those you approve can access your content.
- Share the good work you're doing on your personal page and share your personality and character on your business page. People love personal connection (and cat photos) in the right doses.

Meta Business Account for Instagram and Facebook

- Meta allows you to create ads, see your content's performance through analytics, schedule your social media posts, manage your messages, and more. Learn more about [Meta Business Suite here](#).
- **Utilize the “boost” function to promote your post, event, show, etc.** It's essentially a paid advertisement and can be affordable. For example, you can set a dollar amount to spend per day (\$5), for a specified duration (5 days), to reach a desired demographic (25-65 years old, Tacoma metro area, interests in visual arts), and reach or make impressions (your post will show on their timeline) close to 10,000 people. That's a lot of potential!
- Interact and engage with your audience across Facebook, Messenger, and Instagram all in one place through their message center.

BEST PRACTICES FOR SOCIAL MEDIA

Optimize your profile

Make sure that your profile is optimized and accessible.

- Consider switching to a business account.
- **Make your account public so others can find and discover you. Pro-tip: Keep a separate personal account and one art/organization account.**
- Use a relevant, clear profile photo or logo.
- **Write a clear bio that states concisely what you as an artist or organization do.**
- Keep it simple and inviting by avoiding jargon.
- Link to your shop, website, or external projects through the “link or website” option in your bio.
 - [LinkTree](#), and other “micro-sites” allow you to create a single link in your bio that houses multiple links. This is especially useful if you’re promoting your website, event registrations, artist calls, etc. as it allows the community to interact simply with your various offerings.

Imagery and Graphics

- **Use the highest-quality visuals possible.** Take some extra time in the photo editing stage. You want your photos/videos to tell a story quickly and grab attention.
- Use the optimal size formats between the different social media channels. Here are the most common sizes as of June 2025:
 - Instagram Post – Square 1080 x 1350 pixels
 - Instagram Story – Vertical Rectangle 1080 x 1920 pixels
 - Instagram Reels – Vertical Rectangle 1080 x 1920 pixels (leave some space at the top, bottom, and sides to ensure readability)
 - TikTok - Vertical Rectangle 1080 x 1920 pixels (leave some space at the top, bottom, and sides to ensure readability)
 - Facebook Profile Photo – 196 x 196 pixels
 - Facebook Landscape – 1080 x 566 pixels
 - Facebook Portrait – 1080 x 1359 pixels

Accessibility

Use Alt-Text and other techniques to ensure your content is accessible to everyone.

- **Add simple descriptions to your photos – but the descriptions don’t have to be devoid of character.**
- **Use high contrast and simple color palettes.**
- **Use captions in your videos and reels.**
- Consider alternate content formats such as video with audio and subtitles or audio/text formats as ways for more people to have greater access to your content.
- Check out this guide from [Digital.gov](https://www.digital.gov) for a more in-depth look at accessibility in your posts.

Invest in Engagement

- **Take notice of the types of content that people respond to; this is your connection point to your audience.**
- Engagement is a feedback loop. Invest time in engaging with other creators. Ten minutes a day makes a big difference! It takes time to build, so be patient.
- Craft engaging captions. Know your audience, be authentic, create intrigue, use humor, tell a story, ask questions, use emojis and symbols, include a call to action (“like and share this post”, etc.), incorporate relevant hashtags, and create connections and relevance when you can.

Hashtags

Hashtags are a way of categorizing your posts so others can search the tag to discover more of their interests. Hashtags help spark engagement and show the relativity of your content to the algorithm. Use hashtags that already have high engagement rates and that relate to your purpose. Here are some to get you going:

- #TacomaWa (best hashtag for Tacoma, Washington - #Tacoma leads you to the truck)
- Avoid too generic of a hashtag as the volume of posts associated with the hashtag can make it difficult for others to find you. Narrow down to your intended audience. #Artist is very broad – try finding your medium or purpose such as #sketchartist, #tacomaartist, or #nonprofitwa
- Look for opportunities – try #artistcall or #artistgrantswa. Search interests to help you find your community by searching hashtags that call to you such as #beatmaker or #ceramicartist
- Keep your number of hashtags between 3 and 5 – too many hashtags can minimize your search presence.
- Use CamelCase on your hashtags (merging multiple words together but indicating the start of a new word with a capital letter, ex: #LoveTacoma)

Posting Times

- Post at optimal times for your audience. Identify the ideal sharing and posting times for higher engagement and mark them on your daily calendar.
- Experiment with different times and content to find what works for your audience. Take note of when you are on social media, as others are likely doing the same.
- Here are some suggested posting times for artists and organizations:
 - Monday to Friday: 5 am – 7 am, 11 am, 1 pm, 5 pm – 7 pm
 - Sunday: 7 am, 6 pm – 8 pm

Commerce – Set up Shop!

Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, and other social media channels offer a Commerce platform you can use to increase your sales. If you're looking to set up your shop via social media, take a look at these helpful guides:

- [Instagram Shopping Guide](#)
- [Facebook Shops](#)
- [TikTok Shop](#)
- [How to open an Etsy Shop](#)
- [Shopify](#) is an e-commerce platform that can help small businesses build an online store

MAKE CONNECTIONS BEYOND SOCIAL MEDIA

Local Markets and Festivals

Local markets, fairs, and festivals provide a great opportunity to talk in person with other local artists, organizations, and community members. They are a great way to connect, market, and make sales. Each event has its audience and requirements, and some have a fee to participate. Below are just a few popular markets, fairs, and festivals to get you started. Follow their social media to stay connected on upcoming calls, ways to apply, and other information.

- [Tacoma Farmer's Market](#)
- [Tacoma Night Market](#)
- [Black Night Market](#)
- [Festival Herencia Latina](#)
- [Hilltop Street Fair](#)
- [Art on the Ave](#)
- [Proctor Arts Fest](#)
- [Lincoln District Food Walk](#)

Arts at the Armory and Tacoma Studio Tour (for artists)

- The [Tacoma Studio Tour](#) and [Arts at the Armory](#) are City-produced events for Tacoma-based artists, working across all artistic disciplines. These events are free for artists to participate in, but an application is required. Stay connected with us at [Tacomaartsmonth.org](#), [@tacomaarts on Instagram](#), [@Tacomaartscommission on Facebook](#), or email dgarcia2@tacoma.gov for more information

Workshops and Learning Opportunities

Explore free and sliding scale fee workshops and resources offered by local and regional resources including:

- [Artist Trust](#)
- [Spaceworks Tacoma](#)
- [Washington Lawyers for the Arts](#)
- [Communities Rise](#)
- [City of Tacoma's Arts and Cultural Vitality Division](#)
- [Make it Tacoma](#)
- [Tacoma Venues & Events' SkillsShops](#)

City of Tacoma Opportunities

The City of Tacoma's Arts and Cultural Vitality Division has two branches, Tacoma Arts and Tacoma Creates. We're here to help and can provide you with all the information you need about the various funding and other programs below:

- [Public Art](#)
- [Tacoma Creates](#) Funding
- [Community Arts Projects](#) Funding
- [Tacoma Artist Initiative Program](#) Funding
- [Tacoma Arts Month](#)
- [Arts at the Armory](#)
- [Tacoma Poet Laureate](#)

MARKETING 101

Canva and Adobe Creative

If your digital graphic design skills are a little rusty, [Canva](#) offers some free templates that allow you to easily create quality graphics to share. They have a paid version available as well that offers more templates and images.

For those who are comfortable with digital design tools, did you know you can brush up on your Adobe Creative skills for free? Learn the entire Adobe Creative Cloud suite, which includes applications such as Photoshop, Lightroom, and Illustrator, through Tacoma Public Library. The library can also teach you about gaming, using drawing tablets, and converting audio and video tapes to digital formats. Pierce County Library System also offers digital and technology courses, such as iPad and Cloud basics, 3-D printing classes, and website building.

Posters and Flyers

Posters and flyers are an effective tool for communicating with local audiences about specific events, programs, or exhibits. Here are a few tips:

- Select eye-catching imagery with essential details such as event name, time, date, location, cost, where to register, and any other essential information. Keep it simple!
- QR Codes are easy to make and make registering or learning more about your event easy for someone to access. [QRcodemonkey.com](https://www.qrmonkeys.com/) is a great resource to make and download a free QR code.
- Libraries offer free prints and copies in color up to a certain dollar amount that can be very reasonable and accessible with your library card.
- Seek permission from local businesses to display posters.
 - Arts and cultural programs are a great way of bringing customers into our local businesses. Consider hosting your arts event at a local business and watch everyone benefit while building our local economy. The proof is in the pudding: <https://www.tacoma.gov/aep>
- Inform Puget Sound is a business that can distribute your posters, postcards, and other promotional materials around Pierce County for a reasonable fee. They have an established network of restaurants, retail businesses, colleges, health clinics, offices, and more in the Tacoma area. Contact Sandra Coffen with Inform Puget Sound at 253-272-4893

E-Newsletters

Build an email list over time and use platforms like Mad Mimi, MailChimp, or Constant Contact for newsletters. If you have a website, add in a pop-up window that encourages and easily allows visitors to sign up for your newsletter.

Content Tips:

- Send newsletters about upcoming events, shows, workshops, presentations, and more.
- Personalize content to connect with readers. Include visuals and personalize subject lines for better engagement.
- Send out newsletters periodically, only when you have relevant content to share; sending out newsletters too often or with content audience members don't find relevant will lead people to unsubscribe.

Press Releases

Press releases inform the media about your programming and can expand your audience through traditional media coverage. Please see this [example of a press release](#) and find a list of [local/regional media outlets here](#).

Best Practices:

- Be professional and authentic; avoid overselling. There is a higher chance of getting published through a small media outlet if they can print your release verbatim.
- Time releases strategically - align with newsworthy topics and avoid overlap with other major news cycle stories.

Format Tips:

- Press releases should be double-spaced, with the name of the artist or organization at the top of the first page along with the website, address, and contact information (phone/email) for the media contact.
- Include a headline that conveys the program in a few words and is intriguing enough for people to read the rest of the release for more details.
- The first paragraph should include who is presenting what, where, and when. Why should people attend? How can tickets be purchased?
- Subsequent paragraphs can include details about the programming and artists involved.
- Quotes from artists or key people involved in the program are a useful way to convey your message first-hand.
- If the press release is longer than one page, write "-More-" at the bottom of each page. At the end of the last page, include "# # #" to indicate the end of the release.

Print and Digital Advertising

Traditional advertising is cost-effective when consistently reaching your target audience. Choose platforms related to your programming and that will reach your target audience.

- Make sure your design employs the following: readability with clear and legible fonts; colors that contrast well; logical arrangement of accurate information including the name of the program, date, time, and location; and space in your design for clarity.

Local Event Calendars

Following is a list of local online event calendars you may want to post your public events to. There is no cost to post an event to these calendars, but some have restrictions on the type of content that they accept.

- Visit Tacoma Pierce County – <https://www.visitpiercecounty.com/events/submit-an-event/>
- Tacoma News Tribune - <https://www.thenewstribune.com/events/#/>
- Weekly Volcano - <https://weekly-volcano.com/calendar-page/>
- Tacoma Weekly - https://tacomaweekly.com/index0.htm?twindow=Form&smenu=198&pform={{SubmitEvents}}&mad=No&sname=target_form2.asp&site=tacomaweekly.com
- South Sound Talk - <https://www.southsoundtalk.com/tacoma-events-calendar/>
- South Sound Magazine - <https://www.southsoundmag.com/local-events/>
- Northwest Public Broadcasting - <https://www.nwpb.org/events/>
- KNKX - <https://www.knkx.org/calendar>
- Tacoma Creates – <https://www.tacomacreates.org/events>
(Only organization who are currently funded through Tacoma Creates can post events to this calendar)
- Tacoma Arts Month – www.tacomaartsmoonth.org
(Focuses on events happening during October)
- ParentMap - <https://www.parentmap.com/calendar>
(Focuses on events for families with young children)
- Macaroni Kid - <https://south-puget-sound.macaronikid.com/events>
(Focuses on events for families with young children)

TacomaArt Listserv

Use the TacomaArt Listserv to promote your next program or opportunity, look for collaborations, and interact with 1,250+ other artists, arts organizations, and their supporters. Subscribe to and share opportunities through the [TacomaArt Listserv](#).

PeachJar

[PeachJar](#) is a flyer delivery service used by Tacoma Public Schools to inform parents and students and can be a tool for sharing information about relevant programming. Tacoma Public Schools offers some [guidance on how to best use PeachJar](#).

Local/Regional Media Outlets

Following is a list of local and regional media outlets. Send a press release to the media outlets whose audiences and missions are aligned with what you are promoting.

- Crosscut – editor@crosscut.com
- Evening Magazine – eriddle@king5.com
- Fort Lewis Ranger - editor@ftlewisranger.com
- FOX TV – tips@q13fox.com
- Grit City Magazine – editor@gritcitymag.com
- International Examiner - editor@iexaminer.org
- KING5 - newstips@king5.com
- KIRO Radio – newsdesk@973kiro.com
- KIRO TV News - newstips@kirotv.com
- KNKX - news@knkx.org; fmonares@knkx.org
- KOMO TV News - tips@komo4news.com
- KUNS TV - noticias@kunstv.com
- KUOW - newsroom@kuow.org
- Northwest Asian Weekly - editor@nwasianweekly.com
- Northwest Public Broadcasting – news@nwpb.org
- Parent Map – editor@parentmap.com
- Radio Tacoma - somosvtru@gmail.com; info@radiotacoma.org
- Seattle Medium - aaron.allen@seattlemedium.com
- Showcase Magazine - calendar@showcasemedialive.com

- South Sound Magazine - info@premiermedia.net
- South Sound Talk - submit@southsoundtalk.com
- Tacoma News Tribune - newstips@thenewstribune.com
- Tacoma Weekly - news@tacomaweekly.com
- Travel Tacoma - april@traveltacoma.com
- TV Tacoma – CityLine show – cdemark@cityoftacoma.org
- Weekly Volcano - angela@weekly-volcano.com

GET IN TOUCH WITH US

City of Tacoma Contacts

We're here to help!

- **Daniel Garcia** (he/him), Community Programs Specialist - dgarcia2@tacoma.gov, 253-830-6763
- **Naomi Strom-Avila** (she/her), Funding and Cultural Programs Manager, nstrom-avila@tacoma.gov, 253-591-5191

PRESS RELEASE EXAMPLE

Below is an example of a successful press release by local artist Roxann Murray.

News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 13, 2024

MEDIA CONTACT

Roxann Murray, photographer, atouchofwanderlust@gmail.com, (253)355-1912

Photography Exhibition at Washington State History Museum Highlights Indigenous Matriarchs in the Pacific Northwest

TACOMA, Wash. --

Tacoma photographer Roxann Murray will have an exhibition of eight photographs at the Washington State History Museum titled “Matriarch: Portraits of Indigenous Women in the Pacific Northwest Fighting for our Collective Future.” The exhibition will be on display February 24 to May 20, 2024 in the community gallery. The exhibition is free to access during regular museum hours of Tuesday through Sunday, 10:00 AM - 5:00 PM and on the third Thursday of each month from 10:00 AM - 8:00 PM. An opening reception commemorating Women’s History Month and a meet and greet with the artist and women featured in the exhibition will take place on March 2, at 2:00 PM.

“I am beyond grateful for the opportunity to photograph these women. They are my friends and mentors, and they have taught me about preserving traditions, protecting land and water, caring for community, and celebrating my own Native heritage,” Murray said.

The exhibit includes portraits of eight Indigenous women who are leaders in their communities. The women include Carolyn Christmas (Mi’kmaq), Mariana Harvey (Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation), Sweetwater Nannauck (Tlingit, Tsimshian, Haida), Paige Pettibon (Bitterroot Salish), Nancy Shippentower (Puyallup, Tulalip), Janene Hampton (Snpink’tn, Syilx) Lisa Fruichantie (Seminole Nation of Oklahoma), and Elizabeth Satiacum (Quileute). The women were invited to participate in the project based on their leadership in environmental and social justice movements in their communities.

“Know where you come from. Love who you are; love who your people are. If you step off track, it’s not the end of the world; you can always step back on it.”, Carolyn Christmas said during her photoshoot with Murray.

Murray is a Tacoma-based artist with Nakota and Dakota descendance and she specializes in community, nature, and travel photography. Her work can be seen at <https://atouchofwanderlustphotography.com> or on Instagram at @atouchofwanderlust. “Matriarch: Portraits of Indigenous Women in the Pacific Northwest Fighting for our Collective Future” was funded by the Tacoma Arts Commission through the Tacoma Artists Initiative Program.

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Matriarch



Photography by Roxann Murray

**FEB 24, 2024-
MAY 20, 2024**

Washington State History Museum
1911 Pacific Ave, Tacoma



Project funded by the Tacoma Arts Commission