

SUPPORT FOR ARTS IN RURAL COMMUNITIES

Through many kinds of grants and services, state arts agencies (SAAs) increase citizen access to the arts and help each state to cultivate and promote its creative assets. This is especially true in rural communities¹, where state arts agencies play a vital role in facilitating arts production, promotion, participation and preservation. The arts help to address some of the unique challenges faced by rural communities, including geographic isolation, infrastructure limitations and population flight. The arts can help to diversify rural economies by creating sustainable small businesses, improving quality of life for residents, and attracting visitors and investment.

State arts agencies serve rural communities in a variety of ways:

- **Addressing accessibility and equity:** As stewards of public funds, state arts agencies have special responsibilities to make sure that underserved communities have equitable access to cultural resources. Because they administer both federal and state dollars, state arts agencies are in a strong position to ensure that this combined investment reaches rural communities. While 14% of the U.S. population lives in rural communities, a quarter of all SAA grants go to these communities. Although these percentages vary from state to state, states with larger rural populations direct larger proportions of grants to rural communities.

Grant dollars awarded:	\$35,290,961
Share of all SAA grant dollars:	14%
Largest grant:	\$657,737
Median grant:	\$2,550
Number of grants awarded:	5,141
Share of all SAA grants:	25%
Number of rural communities served:	2,071

- **Addressing unique infrastructure:** Proximity to a metropolitan area often allows citizens to access major performing arts centers, museums, and a myriad of cultural activities and markets for cultural goods. In areas where this type of urban infrastructure doesn't exist, state arts agencies provide crucial services and programming through a variety of community facilities such as schools, community centers and other public venues.
- **Grant funding:** State arts agencies invest \$35 million in rural communities. These grants support all types of arts activities, disciplines, arts education activities and a diverse range of institutions. State arts agencies make more than 5,100 direct grants to 2,071 communities across the country. The extent of state arts agencies' reach into rural areas is even broader among those states with regranting or [decentralization programs](#).
- **Preserving cultural heritage:** In addition to grants that support arts activities, states offer a variety of services and initiatives aimed at promoting and preserving cultural heritage in rural communities. State arts agency initiatives such as heritage trails, cultural tourism initiatives and support for the traditional arts help sustain and promote distinctive cultural assets and inform the public about the value of these assets.
- **Partnerships with other government service organizations:** State arts agencies partner with multiple federal and state service organizations that administer programs in rural areas. For example, states promote arts and health care initiatives in conjunction with health and human service agencies, and facilitate using the arts for rural economic development in conjunction with county, state and federal development agencies.

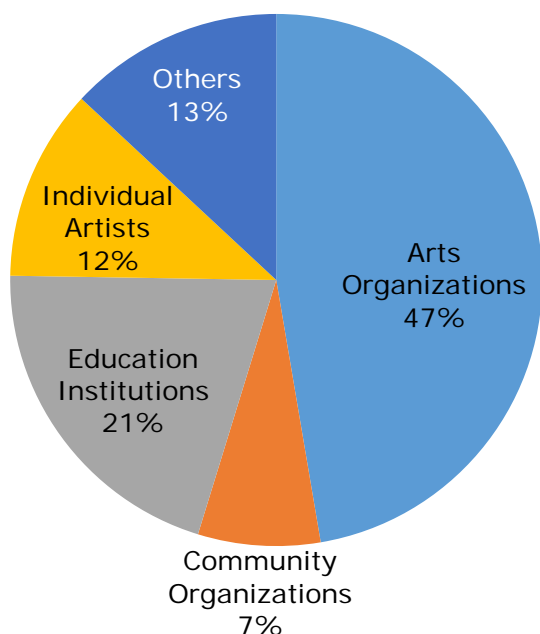
¹ For the purpose of this fact sheet, *rural* is defined as counties outside of any [metropolitan statistical areas](#) (MSAs). MSAs are areas defined by the [U.S. Office of Management and Budget](#) as cities or urbanized areas with a population of 50,000 or more, including the county containing the city and all contiguous counties that are economically and socially integrated with the central county.

State Arts Agency Grants to Rural Areas Fiscal Years 2006-2015

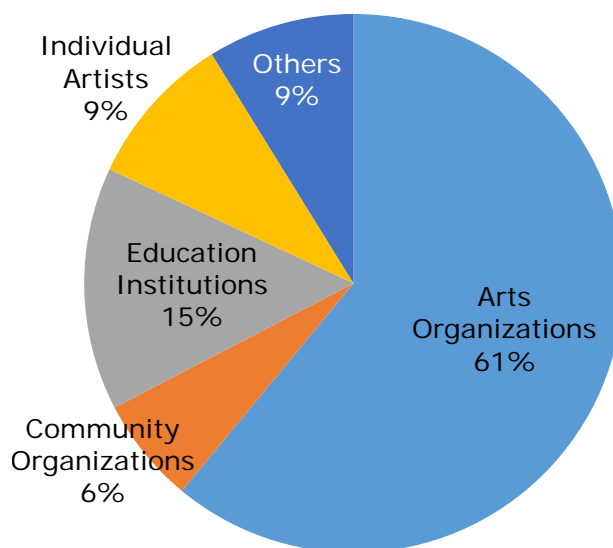
Fiscal Year	No. of Grants		Grant Dollars	
	No.	%	Dollars	%
2006	6,935	26%	\$37,722,830	13%
2007	5,953	25%	\$37,678,754	13%
2008	6,157	25%	\$41,247,122	15%
2009	5,844	25%	\$38,696,020	15%
2010	5,491	25%	\$37,944,043	16%
2011	5,494	25%	\$36,533,001	16%
2012	5,448	26%	\$31,920,691	15%
2013	5,207	26%	\$32,066,193	15%
2014	5,169	25%	\$35,062,386	14%
2015	5,141	25%	\$35,290,961	14%

The figures in this snapshot represent data from 2015 or the most recent information available. Statistics reflect only grants awarded by the state arts agency; they do not reflect nongrant programs and services, which in some instances make up a substantial portion of state arts agency activities.

State Arts Agency Grants to Rural Communities, by Institution Type FY2015



State Arts Agency Grants to Urban Communities, by Institution Type FY2015



Source: NASAA Final Descriptive Reports, 2015. Pie charts show the portion of grants (not funds) awarded to each type of grantee. The view excludes grants to local arts agencies and grantees not reporting an institution classification.

National Assembly of State Arts Agencies

The National Assembly of State Arts Agencies (NASAA) represents the nation's state and jurisdictional arts agencies and serves as a clearinghouse for data and research about public funding and the arts. This report draws on data from state arts agencies' final descriptive reports of grant-making activity submitted annually to the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) and NASAA. NASAA's collection of grant-making statistics is supported in part through a cooperative agreement with the NEA. For more information on the work of state arts agencies, call NASAA at 202-347-6352, e-mail nasaa@nasaa-arts.org or visit www.nasaa-arts.org.

National Assembly of
State Arts Agencies
KNOWLEDGE ★ REPRESENTATION ★ COMMUNITY



State Arts Agency Awards in Rural Areas, Fiscal Year 2015

