



Executive Directors Peer Session

October 4, 2012

Notes

I. Welcome & Introductions

On behalf of the peer group coordinating team, West Virginia Commission on the Arts Executive Director Jeff Pierson welcomed participants, facilitated introductions and invited news flashes from around the nation. Highlights included:

- **Maryland** expects to receive \$2.4 million from video lottery sources.
- **South Carolina** is celebrating the 25th anniversary of its Arts in Basic Curriculum (ABC) program, and recently launched "The Hub," a new on-line resource for promoting arts information.
- The group cheered recent funding increases in **Michigan** and **Florida**.
- **Arizona** received a round of applause for its successful agency reauthorization. Reauthorization in **Texas** is proceeding favorably thus far.
- In January, the **National Endowment for the Arts** (NEA) will announce new reporting guidelines for NEA fiscal year 2014/state arts agency (SAA) fiscal year 2015 Partnership Agreement awards. The NEA encouraged directors to explore the new [NEA Handbook for State Arts Agencies & Regional Organizations](#), which summarizes many details about how to apply for and manage NEA awards.

II. NASAA News

NASAA CEO Jonathan Katz provided a short update on the NASAA board of directors' work to strengthen relationships between states and the NEA and Congress. A new Partnership and Leadership Task Force has been formed to assess policy opportunities and communications following the 2012 elections. Katz reported that the board has requested a strategic dialogue with the NEA about its evaluation of the Education Leaders Institute (ELI) and the NEA's future plans for arts education.

III. Advancing Arts Learning

Pennsylvania Council on the Arts Executive Director Philip Horn introduced National PTA Executive Director Eric Hargis. Hargis said that No Child Left Behind has driven nearly all education policy and instruction toward standardized measurement of math and reading. This has led to other crucially important aspects of education—

such as the arts, physical education and social sciences—receiving less attention. The National PTA is concerned about this trend and committed to arts education. The National PTA believes the research showing that students who participate in the arts ultimately score higher on achievement tests, have better attendance and graduation rates, and do better in college.

Hargis described the PTA Reflections program, through which 300,000 children participate in music, literature, photography, dance, visual arts and film. Hargis noted that every state PTA has a state Reflections coordinator, offering a good potential point of contact for state arts agencies. He noted that SAAs can participate as judges for this contest. National PTA Director of Programs & Partnerships Mary Pat King added that the Reflections program includes after-school, in-school and at-home activities. The PTA regards it as an important social and emotional development program and would like SAAs' help in recruiting children to participate on a local level. The National PTA also runs a small grant program for Title 1 schools.

Hargis indicated that joint advocacy for arts education is a partnership possibility, too, since parents are very ardent and compelling advocates. Challenges faced by local PTAs include the lack of a centralized database of PTA members nationwide. Many PTAs cannot communicate with their own local and state networks.

In a show of hands, five SAA directors reported having current connections with their state PTAs. Horn facilitated small-group discussions of [ways SAAs might deepen their relationships with PTAs](#).

IV. Communicating Our Value

Arizona Commission on the Arts Executive Director Bob Booker facilitated a discussion about how state arts agencies are building public value and conveying that value to different constituencies. Legislators and governors always will be important audiences for state arts councils, but our success increasingly rides on cultivating a broader base of support among business leaders, faith leaders, etc.

Booker reflected on policy change as a product of three forces: a window of political opportunity, the perceived public value of the change and the feasibility of the change. He noted that effective communications can affect all three forces and invited the group to share examples of strategies they were employing to good effect:

- **Rhode Island** is celebrating Arts and Humanities Month (October) by taking the governor on site visits to arts organizations that embody his policy goals. Those site visits are useful PR opportunities for both the arts and the governor, creating a win-win occasion for all.
- **Arizona's** The Choice is Art Campaign, its Public Value Advocacy Toolkit and its Arts Education Census all communicate and crystallize the agency's value.

- **Alaska** recently received \$50,000 to conduct research on the establishment of a new cultural trust. The process of putting that research team together is revealing potential partnerships with state parks, departments of mental health and other potentially powerful allies. Good connections also can be achieved programmatically; recently the state has begun to explore ways that the arts can address suicide rates, which is a big problem in Alaska. This has brought the SAA into dialogue with the military, health officials and other stakeholders in new ways.
- In **Texas**, all project grants are now structured as "Arts Respond" grants that align with the governor's policy priorities in education, economic development, health, human services, criminal justice, natural resources, public safety and agriculture. Being able to point to specific achievements in each of these areas helps the agency document its value to a broad range of decision makers.
- **Kentucky's** new cultural districts program has been embraced by the governor as a way to gain attention and good public relations (without having to spend any money). To address arts education issues, the Kentucky Arts Council is sponsoring a new education consultancy program. The state department of education recently discontinued assessment of the arts, which allowed many schools to cut back on their arts programs and related evaluation efforts. To address this slide, the Kentucky Arts Council is providing fee support for schools to engage assessment consultants in the hopes of helping districts that are willing to integrate the arts back into the curriculum.
- In **Colorado**, the creative arts have been identified as among the governor's 15 key industries and are included in the statewide blueprint for economic development. Furthermore, the state's economic development data gurus have taken over creative industries data collection for the state. This is leading to greater buy-in and greater utilization of evidence of the value of the arts to Colorado's economy.
- In **Mississippi**, the arts have been added to the state's overall economic blueprint. Furthermore, the arts commission has been able to capitalize on some other good public relations opportunities. The state recently changed its education ratings system for all public schools. On the same day that change was announced, the arts commission released its ratings of Whole Schools offering integrated arts learning for students. Every Whole School save one had increased achievement scores. The strategic timing of this release gave excellent visibility to the importance of arts education.
- **South Arts** has recently published a creative industries report, which was well received by southern governors and the Southern Legislative Conference.
- In conjunction with its Land and Legacy referendum, **Minnesota** is required by law to conduct a census of arts. The Arts Board used a survey research company out of Colorado to conduct the research based on a matrix of

engagement in the arts for individuals and organizations. The Arts Board avoided using the word "artists" in the survey.

- **Washington** has enhanced its board members' ability to serve as advocates for the agency. ArtsWA recruited an arts educator to lead the board's advocacy committee, and that individual took a "curricular" approach to the committee's work. The agency has been working to redefine statewide reach and is partnering with community foundations for the first time. ArtsWA has been actively encouraging local constituents—universities and local economic development offices—to use the Creative Vitality Index (CVI). If these constituents embrace the CVI and its principles, more policy opportunities for the arts could be created at the county and municipal levels.
- The **Nebraska** Arts Council and Nebraskans for the Arts have launched artsadvantage.com. The site features success stories in arts education and reveals how important arts experiences were for individuals who become high-achieving adults. (For example, the site contains a story of an Air Force colonel who was a dance major.)
- The **Canada Council** is working on shifting its performance measurement mind-set away from volume/output measures to more of an outcome measures framework. To achieve this, the council is rethinking the narrative information it collects from grantees and has instituted a "notable stories" field in final reports. This information is transferred to a data file so that compelling impact stories can be extracted and used systematically.
- **Arkansas** concurred that both states and constituents need to be able to tell our impact stories more effectively. Arkansas Arts Council Executive Director Joy Pennington (liaison to the Arts Education Advisory Group) noted that arts education managers were receiving storytelling training at this year's Professional Development Institute, and would be good resources for all state arts agency staff in thinking creatively about impact communications.

V. National Endowment for the Arts Guests

Kentucky Arts Council Executive Director Lori Meadows introduced several NEA visitors:

Laura Scanlan, State & Regional Director
Ayanna Hudson, Arts Education Director
Alyce Myatt, Media Arts Director
Michael Killoren, Local Arts Agencies & Challenge America Director
Michael Orlove, Artist Communities & Presenting Director

Scanlan observed that SAAs play important roles meaningful to the NEA discipline offices:

- They suggest names of panelists the NEA can consider when looking to create geographically representative and diverse panels.
- They encourage grant applications from arts organizations across the country.

Scanlan indicated that a monthly meeting of NEA program directors occurs, offering a chance for dialogue among the disciplines. The State & Regional program participates in those discussions. She invited the discipline directors visiting the Executive Directors Peer Session to share news from their departments and offer tips for SAAs to share with applicants.

- Orlove indicated that more than 400 artist communities exist across the country. The NEA is increasingly interested in working with these groups to foster arts development, place making and the attainment of many other benefits. He shared detailed information about the definition and criteria for the NEA's work with artist communities. Orlove indicated that strong work samples from applicants are of paramount importance in illustrating the quality of an applicant's grant project to a panel. Good grant writing is also essential.
- Myatt is charged with expanding the types of media the NEA supports. She indicated that the NEA still funds radio and television, but recently has expanded its grants to a much wider array of media, including on-line media, dramatic films, podcasts, radio and video games. For example, the NEA recently funded the development of a Facebook game to be released on November 13. As a companion to PBS programming, the product will offer mobile apps and web-based content. A new tablet app, "Red, Hot and Bach," will launch in February. The NEA continues to fund film festivals, but would like to see more applications from digital arts festivals and digital convenings. Prospective grantees need to signify their understanding of a changing media landscape. Myatt added that the film field desperately needs start-up funds, something the NEA is not in an ideal position to do, but perhaps states could help? Even small grants in increments of \$2,500 to fund trailers could be extremely meaningful, because work samples help filmmakers to generate other funds.
- Killoren manages the NEA's local arts agencies work and Challenge America fast track grants. He reported a renewed NEA interest in community cultural planning, public art planning and temporary public art installations. He noted a new collaborative initiative between the NEA and the Knight Foundation: grants to local arts agencies to generate art criticism and media publicity. Proposals for this initiative are now being accepted. His advice for applicants was "pick up the phone" and talk with NEA discipline directors about applications before you submit them. He noted that South Carolina has hosted conference calls with NEA staff and that the NEA is willing to do application workshop webinars for individual states. Killoren encouraged collaborative outreach between the NEA and SAAs.
- Leading the NEA's Arts Education office, Ayanna Hudson is the latest addition to the NEA's discipline directors team. Hudson said that the NEA's focus is on

preK-12 projects that deliver high-quality arts learning both in and outside of schools. The NEA is also very interested in projects that include long-term, in-depth partnerships and that showcase arts integration. The NEA would like to further understanding of arts education at the local level, so it will be supporting professional development projects that build the capacities of school and community leaders to understand arts education and use arts education data. Encouraging effective arts assessment is also an important part of the NEA's future agenda. Hudson noted that the NEA no longer funds consortium grants. She encouraged applicants to supply high-quality videos as part of their work samples and to articulate how each project meets formal learning standards.

2012 Executive Director Peer Session coordinators:

Bob Booker, Arizona Commission on the Arts

Lori Meadows, Kentucky Arts Council

Jeff Pierson, West Virginia Commission on the Arts

Session scribe and NASAA staff liaison: Kelly Barsdate

During the Executive Directors' peer group at Assembly 2012, the assembled group met Eric Hargis, National PTA Executive Director. Facilitated by Philip Horn (ED-PA and member of the PTA board), the group discussed strategies for facilitating connections between state arts agencies (SAAs) and Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs). The notes below were compiled by Philip Horn and augmented via the Executive Directors' NASAA listserv through October 12, 2012. Highlighted sections indicate areas of greatest interest. For current information, contact Philip Horn at phorn@pa.gov.

How can PTAs help SAAs?	States interested	AK	AZ	GA	ID	IA	IN	KY	MD	MI	MO	NY	RI	SC	VA	WA	WV	Total
Advocacy partner at state and local level	MI AZ VA MO AK RI IN SC	1	1				1			1	1		1	1	1			8
Partner grantor for shared priorities	WV MI MO MD								1	1	1						1	4
Partner in public will building campaign: arts education	AZ MI GA VA SC	1		1						1					1			4
Testify on each other's behalf: federal & state	ID, NY, VA, AZ MI MD AK RI IN SC	1			1		1		1	1		1	1	1	1			9
Share info Federal State Chapters SAA's	NY AK MI	1								1		1						3
																		0
Improve Arts Education																		0
Joint Advocacy	MO AK IN MI SC	1					1			1	1			1				5
Convening, best practices, showcases, get excitement/engagement	ID AZ WV IN	1			1		1										1	4
SAA grant workshops directed toward PTA's	RI KY IN MI SC						1	1		1			1	1				5
SAA's & Curriculum based program & services	IN VA AK ID SC	1			1		1							1	1			5
Arts patrons and parents	IN						1											1
																		0
Relate more meaningfully to PTA																		0
Sponsor state PTA meeting (arts booth)	IA MI VA NY KY						1	1		1		1			1			5
Identify PTA's already involved in partnerships & projects we fund	AZ MO VA IA IN		1			1	1				1				1			5
Visit state PTA boards - invite them to our	NY MO MI RI									1	1	1	1					4
Connect SAA & PTA advocates (need to determine how to do this)	MO IN MI VA SC						1			1	1			1	1			5
Encourage PTA to apply for SAA funding. Focus on underserved schools.	WV VA MO MI									1	1				1		1	4
																		0
Mash Up																		0
Integrate PTA into existing SAA arts ed training	VA ID RI KY AZ AK	1	1		1			1					1		1			6
Share research agenda	IA IN NY RI AK WA	1				1	1					1	1		1			6
PTA state mtg - have artist speakers	KY NY							1				1						2
Easy existing alignments																		0
PTA arts as entry point for military and immigrant families	VA MI									1					1			2
Use social media to publicize Reflections	WV NY IA SC					1						1					1	3
Bridge builder with difficult arts ed partners and players																		0
Poetry Out Loud	MO ID AS WA GA RI SC		1	1	1						1		1	1		1		7
PTA reps as grant panelists	WV NY											1					1	2
																		0
Add Value to PTA																		0
Recognition awards of excellence SAAs contribute \$\$\$	WV MI IA RI					1				1			1				1	4
Communication PTA card Comm on behalf of PTA to our constituents	KY MO AZ MD RI AK WV	1		1				1	1		1		1				1	7
Joint advocacy - we need to get to PTAs. Get in front of them	AZ ID IN WV MI MD RI AK	1	1		1		1		1	1			1				1	8
Visibility - Gallery space for Reflections	AZ WV MD MI RI		1						1				1				1	4
		11	6	3	6	4	12	5	5	14	9	8	11		11	1	9	