National Assembly of State Arts Agencies
KNOWLEDGE ★ REPRESENTATION ★ COMMUNITY

Information Services Summary
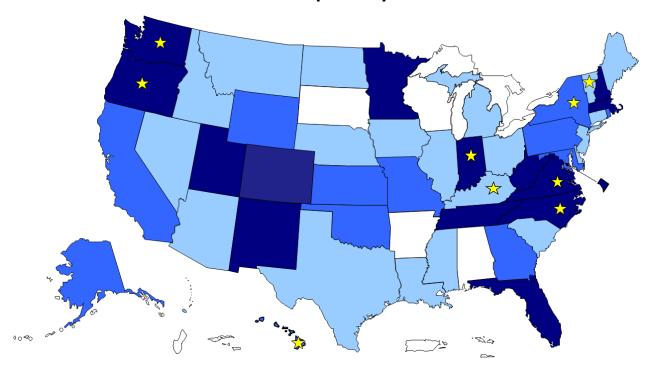**Fiscal Year 2015 (10/1/2014–3/31/2015)**

Providing responses to member questions—often within 24 hours—is an important component of NASAA's daily work. In the first six months of this fiscal year, NASAA staff fulfilled 227 information requests from state arts agencies (SAAs), partners and the public, answering questions about arts funding, the impact of the arts, or research available to support planning, evaluation, program design or policy decision making. NASAA also provides special services: speaking at statewide conferences, facilitating council meeting discussions and conducting custom research. For more information on these services, or to request information for your agency, contact Ryan Stubbs.

In the first half of fiscal year 2015, state arts agency information needs trended toward questions regarding new National Endowment for the arts (NEA) reporting requirements for Final Descriptive Reports, SAA grant-making trends and policy issues related to state legislative activity. NASAA data are perennially updated to allow for rapid response to the questions most frequently asked by NASAA members. This work allows NASAA to manage a high volume of information requests and deliver customized data, maps and reports.

The word cloud below illustrates the most asked-about subjects, and the charts following offer further details. This summary concludes with a categorized sampling of questions.
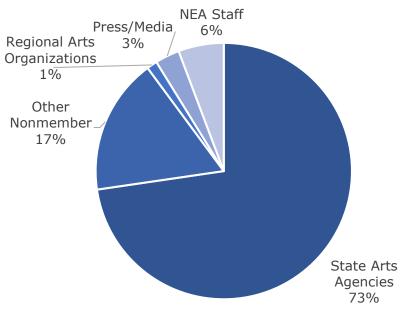
Information Requests by State

Requests Fulfilled
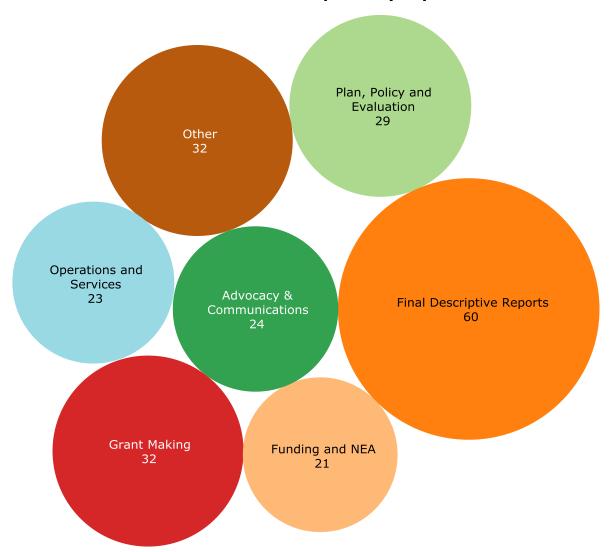- ☐ 0
- ☐ 1 or 2
- ☐ 3 or 4
- ☐ 5 or more

⭐ **Special service**
(commissioned research, facilitation services, speaking engagement or in-depth technical assistance)

Information Requests by Organization Type

- Regional Arts Organizations 1%
- Press/Media 3%
- NEA Staff 6%
- Other Nonmember 17%
- State Arts Agencies 73%

Information Requests by Topic

Other
32

Plan, Policy and Evaluation
29

Operations and Services
23

Advocacy & Communications
24

Final Descriptive Reports
60

Grant Making
32

Funding and NEA
21

"Inquiring Minds Want to Know…"
Examples of Recent Information Requests

Advocacy

- I need data and a map for a **meeting with my congressperson** to effectively communicate the importance of arts funding in my state and of funding to the NEA.
- Can NASAA help our board and stakeholders understand the facts behind various **supplemental funding** mechanisms?
- Several items of legislation have been **introduced this session** that would affect my agency. Can you review the bill text and help my council strategize its response?
- We are interested in doing a values survey of **what citizens in our state value about the arts.** Do you know of any models?
- Could you provide me with a list of facts **about NEA impact and grant making** as they pertain to the nation and our state?
- Can you tell me the **ROI for public funds invested in the arts?**
- Can you provide examples of effective **state advocacy organizations,** including those having good relationships with their state arts agencies?

FDR (Final Descriptive Report) Requirements

- I have a number of questions about how our system and procedures should be updated to accommodate the new NEA requirements for reporting **Activity Locations.**
- Is the NEA **Primary Strategic Outcome** necessary for grants without NEA Share?
- How do I fill out the new **Totals page?**
- Can you verify our reporting of **DUNS, individuals and fiscal agents** by reviewing our draft FDR?
- Could you send over the new **Quick and Easy Guide for NEA FY2015?**
- Do you have guidance on budgets for the **FDR implementation funds?**
- How are states dealing with the new NEA **Distinct Group definitions?**
- Can you conduct a **National Standard training** for us and talk about the new NEA reporting requirements?
- Can you send me a **sample FDR file** so that I can understand how our data dump should be structured?
- Can you send me the NEA reporting codes so I can instruct our grants management system provider to **modify our system?**

Funding

- What is our state's **per capita ranking** this year? How much funding would we need to be in the top 10 states in per capita appropriations?
- Can I have latest copy of the **State Arts Agency Revenues report?**
- Can you provide us with the **current appropriations data** for our commission meeting?
- How many states have **cultural trusts?** Which have resulted in sustainable funding?
- Do you have a **historical table for per capita state rankings?**
- Can you tell me how **state arts agencies placed in particular departments** have fared over time in terms of funding?
- Have state arts agency budgets shown any correlation to **partisan control?**

Grant Making

- Do you have information on **multiyear operating support programs?**
- Can you create **maps showing how grants from our agency are distributed?**
- Do you have examples of **individual artist** professional development grants?
- Which SAAs offer **fellowships** to emerging artists?
- Which SAAs have **decentralized granting programs?** What are best practices for such programs?

Policy, Planning and Evaluation

- I'm looking for models of agency **performance measurements.** Can you send NASAA's? How about examples from other states?
- Rumors are circling that my agency could be **consolidated into a different department.** How have other states addressed similar situations?
- Can you send us a copy of your **program evaluation** handbook?
- Our agency is considering how to structure our next **strategic planning process** in order to address agency needs, our governor's priorities and endemic advocacy issues. Can we meet with you to discuss some options?
- Do you have any examples of SAAs that are using their **50th anniversary celebrations** to jump-start any new planning or communications initiatives?
- Does NASAA have data pertaining to **companion foundations or 501(c)(3)s** created as elements of SAAs?
- What's your opinion on using **public value language in state arts agency plans?**
- Can you send me **examples of strategic plans** from other SAAs? I'm especially interested in looking at some models for agencies that are comparable to my state's.

Operations and Constituent Services

- We're recruiting a **new executive director.** Can you send me samples of other states' job postings, information on desired attributes and info on where to post the job?
- Do you have a list of arts agencies by funding size and **number of full-time staff?**
- Can you provide **salary data** for arts education managers, executive directors, deputy directors and public information officers in states similar to ours?
- Do you have a **national average** for what SAAs are spending on arts education annually?
- What states integrate **contact management solutions** into their grants software?
- Can you create maps showing the distribution of our **nongrant services?**
- I noticed that of the 14 states that have state-run **cultural district programs,** almost all of them were established though state legislation. Why is this the nature of how these programs are established?
- Do you know how many states use **on-line grants systems?**
- What types of **software and technology** do states use to manage grants?