

Report to Councils January 2015

As a state arts agency council member, you play a unique role as a citizen leader advocating for the arts and culture. Let NASAA be your year-round resource, providing you with research tools, relevant news and advocacy aids. To receive NASAA Report to Councils regularly, contact Communications Manager [Sue Struve](#).

NEA Funding Update

After intense negotiations in December, both houses of Congress passed a [fiscal year 2015 budget](#) for most federal agencies, including the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), which will maintain level funding of \$146 million. Be sure you are on NASAA's [Legislative Alert e-mail list](#) so we can keep you abreast of federal developments affecting your agency.

Reach Out!

This month, the arts field needs to forge new relationships as Republicans assume control of the Senate and expand their majority in the House. Your outreach to new (and returning) members of your state delegation is essential. Make contact early, before you need support. Here are some simple tips:

- Start by congratulating your senator or representative on their election.
- Ask about their goals and interests. Listening not only demonstrates respect, it paves the way for future discussions about how the arts relate to their policy priorities.
- Share a (very brief!) story or factoid about the difference federal arts funding has made in that elected official's state or congressional district.
- Offer to be a future resource for additional information and thank them for their time.

When volunteer state arts leaders initiate this kind of contact, the outlook for the entire field brightens. Thank you for your past actions in this regard—and those still to come!

Chairs and Council Members at Assembly 2014

State arts agency council members and commissioners from around the nation convened in November during a special peer session at [NASAA Assembly 2014](#) in New Orleans, where they shared success strategies and spoke freely about their challenges. A discussion with former state representatives and congressional staffers covered getting the arts on election platforms, the difference between advocacy and lobbying, and cultivating relations with state arts advocacy organizations. A highlight of the session was a talk with NEA Chairman Jane Chu, who responded to questions from participants and from NASAA CEO Jonathan Katz. See the [Chairs and Council Members Peer Session notes](#) for further details.



State arts agency chairs and council members expanded their expertise at NASAA Assembly 2014 in New Orleans. Photo: GeorgeLong.com

Council Terms, Powers and Duties

Researched and published in response to council members' requests, NASAA's new [State Arts Agency Council Terms, Powers and Duties](#) report is a national aggregation of the legislated powers and duties common to many SAA councils, as well as a state-by-state comparison of council terms. Among the findings in the report:

- The average state arts agency council has 15 members.
- Consecutive terms for council members are allowed in 40 states.
- In addition to responsibility for distributing NEA Partnership Agreement funds, some state arts agency councils manage arts money allocated by other federal agencies or given by private sources.

NASAA 2015 Leadership Institute in Salt Lake City: Join Us!

Be sure NASAA's next annual gathering is on your calendar! The [2015 Leadership Institute](#) takes place October 7-9 in Salt Lake City, Utah. Hosted by the [Utah Division of Arts & Museums](#), this conference is designed specifically for state arts agency leaders: chairs, council members, executive directors and deputy directors. This year we draw from the [Change Leader Program](#), meet with colleagues to address challenges and successes, and enjoy the beauty and cultural bounty of Utah. We'll send additional details your way soon.

NASAA Works for You

As the only organization whose mission is to strengthen state arts agencies, NASAA makes certain [our every action](#) is for your benefit. We are your champions in Washington, D.C.; our research reports and other tools help you make the case for the arts in your state; and we provide ways for you to connect with colleagues. [Your contribution](#) to NASAA's Annual Fund will help to [maintain the momentum](#) in 2015. Thank you!

Youth Arts Program Awards Presented at White House

In November, [12 programs](#) that provide excellent arts and humanities learning opportunities to young people were awarded the [National Arts and Humanities Youth Program Award](#). The winners each received \$10,000 and an invitation to accept their award from First Lady Michelle Obama at a White House ceremony. NASAA manages the award events in partnership with the President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities, the National Endowment for the Arts, the National Endowment for the Humanities, and the Institute of Museum and Library Services. [Applications for the 2015 awards](#) are being accepted until February 2.



First Lady Michelle Obama (left) congratulates 2014 National Arts and Humanities Youth Program Award winner TeenSpace: Circle of Mentoring.
Photo: Steven Purcell