

## STRATEGY SAMPLER

# State Arts & Military Initiatives

A substantial body of research has established that arts engagement yields physical, cognitive and emotional benefits—such as efficacious recovery from injury and illness, healthy aging, and improved interpersonal relationships and outlook on life. These findings are used increasingly by art therapists, health professionals and social service providers to guide their work with various groups of people, including military and veteran populations. In fact, there is growing recognition that the arts play a particularly powerful role in efforts supporting active-duty service members, reservists, veterans, their families and other members of the military community.

On the national level, several efforts are fostering broader and deeper understanding of how the arts benefit military and veteran populations. The National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) [Military Healing Arts Partnership](#) enables creative art therapies and arts engagement activities to support wounded, ill and injured service members and their families. Meanwhile, the [National Initiative for Arts & Health in the Military](#), led by Americans for the Arts, is working across the military, government and arts sectors to advance the policy and practice of creativity as a tool for well-being across the military continuum.

State arts agencies (SAAs) are poised to assume a leading role in supporting other efforts at the state level. SAAs and regional arts organizations (RAOs) not only are able to fund individuals, organizations and partnerships working with veterans, active-duty service members, reservists and their families, but also can provide technical assistance, information and other nongrant services. Additionally, because SAAs and RAOs are skilled facilitators of relationships between various stakeholders, they are primed to cultivate networks of service providers, funders and others working with military and veteran communities.

This strategy sampler summarizes existing policy goals, services and relationships of SAAs and RAOs working to support military and veteran populations through the arts. It also highlights programmatic issues and other challenges these agencies face in realizing their arts and military goals. The information reviewed herein was collected by NASAA using a [mixed methods approach](#)—which also yielded a companion report, [Arts & Military Snap Survey Results](#)—to illustrate a range of creative strategies that SAAs and RAOs can deploy in service of military and veteran populations.

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## UNIQUE NEEDS & RECIPROCAL BENEFITS [\(back to Table of Contents\)](#)

### Know Your State's Military Population

According to the **U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)**, in 2013 there were 22.3 million living veterans.<sup>1</sup> The number is projected to be 21.4 million in 2016 and 14.5 million in 2043.<sup>2</sup> The VA's [National Center for Veterans Analysis and Statistics](#) features a number of tools useful for arts and military efforts, including state summaries of veteran populations and related demographic maps and reports.

**U.S. Department of Defense (DOD)** records show more than 1.3 million active-duty personnel currently serving in the four branches of the military and the Coast Guard.<sup>3</sup> There are an additional 823,000 members of the National Guard and military reserve forces.<sup>4</sup> A [2014 DOD report](#) includes each state's population of active-duty personnel and reserve forces (pp. 33 and 88). A [2013 Governing.com article](#) breaks down these populations by service branch.

All the agencies, service providers and experts NASAA consulted during the preparation of this sampler emphasized the value of considering the distinctive needs of military and veteran communities when designing programs to serve them. Military life imparts unique experiences, rewards and risks to those who serve and remains central to the identity of many veterans. In addition, some aspects of military life—including combat deployments, frequent relocations and related cultural acclimation—can have great impact on military families, their friends and the communities in which they live. The demands of war engagements have particularly acute effects. Since 2001, more than 2 million U.S. troops have deployed to conflict zones in Afghanistan and Iraq, leading to more than 6,800 fatalities and 52,000 wounded (including more than 138,000 diagnoses of post-traumatic stress disorder and more than 316,000 cases of traumatic brain injury).<sup>5 6</sup>

When designed with such experiences and needs in mind, arts programs can facilitate service members' resilience, recovery and community reintegration. It is particularly important, however, that work with survivors of physical or psychological trauma include trained professionals (such as medical personnel, art therapists and social workers) in the delivery of care.

Recognition of and respect for service is valued across the military continuum and is often the result of arts and military initiatives. In this way, the arts meet another need of wounded warriors, veterans and other members of the military community and also provide a civic benefit to citizens who have not served. Military engagements, past and present, have had an indelible effect on our society, and the arts not only can create the space for but also contribute directly to discourse about this important part of the American experience.

## POLICIES, PROGRAMS & SERVICES

State arts agencies and regional arts organizations use a wide array of policies and programs to support military personnel, veterans and their families. There is no one-size-fits-all approach. Rather, the strategies vary according to the nature of the state's military population, the resources available, and the readiness of partners and constituents to participate. Below is an array of examples of, and program design advice on, both grant and nongrant services.

### Dedicated Grant Programs [\(back to TOC\)](#)

Grant programs focused on arts and military initiatives may award funding to arts groups as well as other organizations

### California's Arts & Military Grant

Through its [Veterans Initiative in the Arts](#)—now in its second year—the **California Arts Council** awards grants of up to \$10,000 to projects that increase equity, access and opportunities for veterans to participate in quality arts programming that is sensitive and responsive to their unique experiences. Eligible projects must include at least one nonprofit arts organization and one veterans focused nonprofit or local government agency.

working with active-duty service members, reservists, veterans and/or their families. Nonprofit organizations as well as schools and units of local government may be eligible. The goals of such programs include facilitating opportunities for creative expression, arts learning and participatory cultural experiences.

If grant applicants have little or no experience working with military and/or veteran populations, they may need help understanding how their assets and resources can meet this community's unique needs. For example, applicants may seek information or other assistance from the many (governmental and nongovernmental) service providers offering medical, social and logistical support to military and veteran communities. These service providers often perform highly specialized functions, which can make them essential allies for grantees. Applicants seeking help may first need to map networks of service providers before determining the best source for assistance.

### Nongrant Programs

The **Massachusetts Cultural Council** leverages its [UP Inclusive Design Initiative](#), which provides accessibility related technical assistance to arts organizations, to connect with disabled veterans.

The **Nevada Arts Council** [Folklife Program](#) collaborated with the University of Nevada, Reno, and the Pyramid Lake Paiute Museum to fund workshops to train veterans, nonveterans and members of a Paiute group to conduct and record oral histories.

The **North Carolina Arts Council's** (NCAC) [2012-14 Poet Laureate](#), Joseph Bathanti, worked extensively with veterans through his official duties promoting the "transformative qualities of poetry." Following his tenure as poet laureate, Bathanti became, with NCAC assistance, the first writer in residence at the [VA Medical Center](#) in Asheville.

### Other Grant Programs

**Mid-America Arts Alliance** has supported the work of [SongwritingWith:Soldiers](#), a nonprofit that helps service members and veterans craft music in collaboration with professional songwriters, through its [Artistic Innovations](#) grant program. Through its [ExhibitsUSA](#) program, the RAO developed an exhibition, *Citizen-Soldier-Artist*, featuring 18 artists focused on how the arts facilitate healing.

The **New Hampshire State Council on the Arts** awarded an [Arts in Health Project](#) grant to the New Hampshire Veterans Home for a project bringing two musicians who worked with residents, one-on-one and in small groups, and who presented interactive concerts for residents, their caregivers and the community.

**New Mexico Arts's** [Art and Social Service](#) grant has attracted applications from a project pairing professional poets with women combat veterans and from a museum about military families.

The **Oklahoma Arts Council's** [Arts Learning in Communities](#) grant can be used for arts instruction and engagement, which could serve veterans.

In 2015, the **Texas Commission on the Arts** awarded seven [Arts Respond Project](#) grants to arts and military projects.

### Leveraging Other Grant Programs [\(back to TOC\)](#)

There are challenges in creating a new grant program focused on addressing the needs of military and veteran populations. There may be insufficient funding to sustain a new grant category, for example, or the administrative process to designate it may be cumbersome. There also may be uncertainty as to whether there is sufficient constituent demand for such a program. As a result, SAAs and RAOs may prefer to support arts and military projects through existing programs that are flexible enough to serve military and veteran communities along with other populations.

Examples of programs that fund arts and military initiatives as well as efforts focused on other issues include arts education, community development and project grants. General operating support grants, meanwhile, can bolster the organizations behind population-specific projects. Decentralized grant programs can provide indirect support via local arts councils and other recipients who regrant funds to underwrite arts and military efforts. However, grants that address special needs related to health care, aging and social services may have more success reaching and supporting military and veteran communities. Arts in health grants, for example, lend themselves to initiatives undertaken in state- and federally run health care facilities for veterans and

wounded warriors. Similarly, creative aging and social service grants may support art projects conducted in VA hospitals and veterans' retirement homes.

### Oklahoma's Arts & Military Initiative

Through its arts and military pilot program, which began in December 2015, the **Oklahoma Arts Council** (OAC) is working with the state's Department of Veterans Affairs and a local partner, the [Firehouse Art Center](#), to provide arts learning and engagement activities to the residents of the Oklahoma Veterans Center in Norman. There will be an exhibition of the veterans' artwork following the conclusion of the pilot's photography, creative writing and visual arts classes. One goal of the pilot is to demonstrate how public agencies, nonprofit organizations and community groups can best serve military and veteran communities through the arts. To that end, a [professor from the University of Oklahoma](#) is conducting an assessment of the pilot, which is to be the basis for a set of arts and military guidelines OAC plans to create and share publicly.

### The Role of Artists [\(back to TOC\)](#)

Some SAA programs focus on the work of artists as a critical component of serving military and veteran communities. Artist-in-residence grants, especially, enable SAAs to connect individual teaching artists with military service members, veterans and their families who are seeking opportunities for arts learning or creative work. These grant programs tend to be offered throughout the calendar year, usually fund time-limited projects and often can be awarded through a relatively quick adjudication process. As a result, they provide a low-threshold way for arts organizations, military/veterans groups and individual artists to meet rapidly the needs of military and veteran communities. One important consideration for these programs (and for all efforts connecting civilians and former or current service members) is ensuring that teaching artists understand the unique needs of military personnel and/or the special requirements of working in military-operated facilities.

### Knowledge Sharing [\(back to TOC\)](#)

A critical resource enabling arts and military work is two-way knowledge building: arts nonprofits must understand the needs of military and veteran populations, and military focused service providers need to be able to recognize the arts community (including SAAs and RAOs) as a resource. Knowledge sharing does not have to be expensive, time-consuming or formal to be effective. SAAs and RAOs have many methods at their disposal to disseminate information and make connections among stakeholders. This work tends to be more flexible and situationally adaptive than grant making.

#### *Convenings*

Several SAAs have convened or plan to organize a summit, conference or roundtable discussion focused on arts and military issues. Given the financial realities of convenings—such as the costs of space rental, sound equipment, food and staff time—SAAs and RAOs planning an arts and military event may opt to seek dedicated funding for it

#### Convenings

The **DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities** worked with a local nonprofit to present a [Healing through Art](#) panel discussion that featured a music therapist as well as the director of the [Creative Arts Program](#) at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center.

The **Texas Commission on the Arts** used grant funding from the University of California Los Angeles's [National Arts & Disability Center](#) to host an arts and military symposium bringing together veterans and active-duty military personnel.

The **Virginia Commission for the Arts** featured a special panel discussion on arts and military issues at its [Art Works 2016 Conference](#). The panel included the program head of the Graduate Art Therapy & Counseling Program at Eastern Virginia Medical School, a commissioner of the Virginia Department of Veterans Services, the director of the Virginia Veteran and Family Support Program, and leaders from nonprofit arts groups.

from a foundation, other state agencies or the state legislature. Another consideration is whether to partner with a state agency or nonprofit group focused on military and veteran affairs.

In addition, there are benefits to featuring arts and military work at an SAA or RAO convening with a broader arts agenda, such as an annual conference or a governor's arts awards ceremony. While this approach may not engage as many representatives of the armed forces, it's an affordable way to raise awareness within the arts community about pertinent research, resources and potential partners.

Other ways to foster arts and military work through convenings include attending conferences—like the [National Military Experience & the Arts Symposium](#) that took place in Oklahoma in 2015—and supporting special arts and military sessions at events focused on broader topics such as arts in health care, creative aging and arts learning. SAAs and RAOs can contribute to these events by arranging for panelist participation and/or providing financial, promotional, administrative or logistical assistance.

### *Raising Awareness*

SAAs and RAOs, which already have networks underlying their grant and nongrant programs and services, are natural brokers of information about the power of the arts to improve the well-being of individuals, families and communities. This advocacy capacity is a valuable asset for arts and military initiatives. Among the tools SAAs and RAOs can use to communicate about arts and military issues are webinars, newsletters, social media, listservs, on-line directories and other issue-specific web pages. The value of the day-to-day interactions SAA and RAO staffs have with grantees, partners and other constituents, however, should not be overlooked. Whether formal and informal, this personal contact—through a site visit, phone call, e-mail or other means—can inspire new grant applications, partnerships and interest in working with military and veteran populations.

#### **Outreach Strategies**

##### **Colorado Creative Industries**

produced a [video](#) highlighting the work of a 2014 Governor's Creative Leadership Award recipient and his work with the [Art of War](#) project, which helps veterans with post-traumatic stress disorder heal through the arts.

##### **The Texas Commission on the Arts**

developed a [brochure](#) with VSA Texas to promote their Distinguished Artist Veteran Initiative, through which they work with local veterans' groups to provide training to arts organizations on how to serve veterans.

### **Knowledge Gathering** ([back to TOC](#))

To serve as an information hub supporting arts and military initiatives, SAAs and RAOs may conduct original research or pool existing data from other sources on military and veteran populations or other topics. Depending on their goals and knowledge gaps, they may decide to collect data through surveys, focus groups or partnerships with other state agencies. Informal means of collecting data, such as grantee site visits and day-to-day communication with constituents, also can be fruitful.

### *Surveys*

Surveys are a good tool for identifying existing arts and military efforts as well as the latent interest in serving military and veteran communities through the arts. Four SAAs have conducted such a survey, and nearly 15 more have reported that they may. SAAs and RAOs surveying past, current and potential grantees and partners can collect actionable data either by limiting their questions to arts and military issues, by focusing more broadly on related topics such as arts in health care, or by leveraging constituent satisfaction surveys and other unrelated questionnaires. Some SAAs note the possibility of additional benefits of conducting an arts and military survey, such as:

## Surveys

**New Mexico Arts** had two goals when it surveyed its constituents about arts focused programs for veterans and military families. It wanted to identify existing arts and military efforts, and it aimed to build and strengthen connections between the state's arts and military communities.

The **Oklahoma Arts Council** (OAC) developed its arts and military pilot program with guidance from a statewide community survey it deployed in 2015. In its [survey report](#), OAC reviews what it learned about the needs of military and veteran communities, the arts programs addressing them, and the level of constituent interest for additional arts and military opportunities.

When the **Texas Commission on the Arts** conducted its arts and military survey in 2012, it used grant funding from the University of California Los Angeles's [National Arts & Disability Center](#) to hire an intern (who was a veteran) to lead the effort.

Through a 2015 survey, the **Virginia Commission for the Arts** aimed to create a database of organizations supporting creative aging and/or arts and military activities in Virginia.

- facilitating connections and partnerships between arts communities and military related communities
- disseminating information about arts and military issues and how the arts can address them
- identifying and encouraging potential grant applications for arts and military projects

The value of surveys, however, comes at the expense and effort of deploying them. Surveys conducted by third-party contractors are available for a price but may require less work for the SAA or RAO. Conversely, one done in-house through an on-line platform, phone calls or e-mail questionnaires may require less capital outlay but probably will demand greater staff time and commitment. Seeking funding from a foundation, another state agency or the state legislature is one way to offset a survey's overhead costs.

## Strategic Planning

Developing a new strategic plan is always an opportunity for SAAs and RAOs to reconnect with their known constituents as well as to identify and build relationships with populations not traditionally associated with the arts, such as military and veteran communities. Thirteen SAAs and RAOs have designed a strategic planning process to include individuals and organizations working with and/or representing active-duty service members, veterans and their families.

## Other Services [\(back to TOC\)](#)

### Public Art

Installing public art is one of the most common nongrant services SAAs provide to military and veteran communities. Public art installations sited in medical facilities can reduce the stress of patients and visitors and nurture environments conducive to healing and resiliency.<sup>7</sup> As of April 2016, 17 SAAs have used their percent for art programs to place artwork in National Guard bases and other state-funded military installations, military treatment facilities, veterans' hospitals, veterans' retirement homes and military cemeteries. (State percent for art programs, which generally are governed by legislatively created policies, use a designated portion of the capital budget of a new or renovated state facility—typically 1%—to commission, purchase, install and/or

## Public Art Projects

The **Nevada Arts Council**, in partnership with the state Department of Veterans Services and a number of nonprofit veteran's organizations, is facilitating the selection process for a memorial on the capitol grounds honoring Nevada's fallen warriors.

Through its [Percent for Art program](#), the **New Hampshire State Council on the Arts** has installed public art in a state-run retirement home for veterans and in a National Guard facility.

**New Mexico Arts** has leveraged its [Art in Public Places](#) program to locate public art in veterans' and military treatment facilities, including a unit for Alzheimer's patients.

maintain artwork in it. For more information, see NASAA's [Percent for Art Policy Brief](#).) Percent for art installations usually require the SAA to work with the state agency hosting the public art, which, in cases involving military or veteran facilities, is an opportunity to cultivate future arts and military partnerships.

### Exhibitions and Performances

Through its [Art in the Capitol](#) program, the **Maine Arts Commission** organizes an annual exhibition of veterans' artwork in the state house and the capitol complex. Volunteers representing veterans who are artists help curate the show.

To mark the 70th anniversary of D-Day, **Mid-America Arts Alliance** organized a [series of special events](#) exploring how the arts benefit the lives of veterans, including an exhibition on the arts, healing and military experience; a papermaking workshop with the Combat Paper Project; a public discussion about veterans and contemporary art; and a concert of well-known singer-songwriters performing compositions written by participants of the SongwritingWith:Soldiers program.

Over the past five years, the **New England Foundation for the Arts** has awarded about \$500,000 in grant funding—via its [National Dance Project](#) and [National Theater Project](#)—to artists working with military and veteran populations. The grants support the creation as well as the presentation of original performances.

### Exhibitions, Performances & Special Events

Many SAAs showcase the artwork of their constituents in their own gallery and/or performance space or organize arts programming in other state-owned facilities, such as the capitol building or the governor's mansion. While these government facilities may be only temporary arts spaces, they can be good locations for showcasing the creative work of military personnel and veterans. By facilitating arts and military exhibitions, performances and/or related programming on state property, SAAs raise the visibility—for both policymakers and citizens—of military and veteran issues as well as the power of the arts to address them. They also can validate the artistic practices and leverage the creative careers of service members and veterans. Finally, by demonstrating their capacity to serve constituents as well as the public value of investing in the arts, SAAs may engender support from and opportunities to collaborate with the governor's office, state legislators and other state agencies.

At least 23 state arts agencies support their state's military and veteran communities by participating in the [Blue Star Museums Program](#). Blue Star Museums is a collaboration among the NEA, Blue Star Families, the Department of Defense and museums across America. Each summer, from Memorial Day through Labor Day, Blue Star Museums offer free admission to active-duty military personnel, including reservists and members of the National Guard, as well as their families.

## RELATIONSHIPS

### State Agencies [\(back to TOC\)](#)

The most productive SAA relationships with other state agencies are those built on mutual interest and efforts to support service members, veterans and their families through the arts. SAA relationships with state humanities councils and agencies working with veterans are common. Less common, but potentially beneficial nonetheless, are connections with state universities, governors' offices and state budget agencies.

#### *Veterans Affairs and Health Care*

As of February 2016, 11 SAAs report connections with active-duty military groups, 15 with military health care facilities and 23 with state agencies serving veterans. The nature of these relationships varies, from

formal partnerships to informal conversations and consultations. These interagency relationships can lay the groundwork for arts and military programs and can raise awareness about related issues and opportunities. Some SAAs, for example, cite these relationships as a driver of grant applications from arts groups working with military and veteran populations.

### *Humanities Councils*

Relationships with state humanities councils (SHCs) are frequent, with 34 SAAs and RAOs reporting such a connection relative to arts and military program development, information dissemination, event organization and other areas. Several SAAs note that partnerships with SHCs are particularly conducive to poetry and literature initiatives. Others have worked with or plan to collaborate with SHCs to adjudicate grant applications, to develop programming, to disseminate information or to organize a convening. At the national level, the National Endowment for the Humanities offers grants to SHCs through [Standing Together: The Humanities and the Experience of War](#), an initiative it launched in 2014 to support efforts focused on military service and the military community.

### **State Legislators** ([back to TOC](#))

Supporting military and veteran populations is a goal that often transcends issue interests or political affiliations. As a result, arts and military programs can be the forge of productive relationships between SAAs and state legislators, including those who may not have been previous advocates for the arts. Relationships with individual legislators and/or legislative committees are important, as lawmakers not only help enable the overall capacity of SAAs but also can champion more focused efforts by introducing or supporting appropriation, authorization or other supportive bills. In addition, legislators can use their statewide visibility to draw attention to the needs of service members, veterans and their families.

### **Relationships**

While developing its [Honoring Our Service Members](#) grant program, the **Arizona Commission on the Arts** (ACA) worked with a state senator who was a strong advocate for the military and for the creation of a state poet laureate post. The lawmaker helped convene stakeholders from the arts and military communities to talk about their needs and how ACA could address them.

**New Mexico Arts** and the **Texas Commission on the Arts** each have an informal but productive relationship with their state agency focused on veterans' affairs. These relationships, facilitated in part by physical proximity and personal relationships, yield valuable data on veteran populations, advice, and help promoting arts and military efforts.

The **Pennsylvania Council on the Arts** partnered with the state Department of Military and Veterans Affairs to apply for a \$50,000 [Long Term Care](#) grant from the state's Department of Health and Department of Human Services. If awarded, the grant would support teaching-artist residencies in six state-run long-term care homes for veterans.

The **Texas Commission on the Arts** has a close (but nonfinancial) relationship with [VSA Texas](#). They have collaborated on a number of arts and military projects, including the [Distinguished Artist Veteran Initiative](#).

To integrate veterans into a forthcoming initiative on health and wellness, the **Wyoming Arts Council** is reaching out to a federal VA Medical Center as well as a state veterans' facility. It also is considering how it could provide resources to support an art therapy group at the VA Medical Center.

The **Virginia Commission for the Arts** (VCA) aims to connect various arts and military stakeholders to each other as well as to private and public funding sources and other opportunities. VCA has a Special Constituencies Committee through which commission members provide leadership on arts and military issues.

## TIPS AND ADVICE [\(back to TOC\)](#)

- **Differentiate between military policies and populations.** There are many different political and personal beliefs regarding U.S. military policy. It is important for artists and arts providers to be able to differentiate between their own views on military policies and their support for military or veteran populations. Focusing on the benefits of the arts will limit distractions from program goals.
- **Understand military culture.** The needs of active-duty service members and veterans are informed by their unique military experiences. Efforts to understand military culture will be helpful to SAAs, RAOs, arts organizations, and individual artists engaging in arts and military work. For example, knowing the difference between military branches and their respective ranks can help build rapport with members of the military and veteran community. Likewise, understanding the special requirements of working in military focused facilities can ease potential administrative challenges.
- **Include trained professionals when serving survivors of trauma.** It is important to include the help of professional specialists, like medical personnel, art therapists and social workers, when providing services to survivors of physical and psychological trauma. While arts engagement can be an effective strategy for healing from trauma, it is not a simple process and should not be approached lightly.
- **Nurture relationships.** As with any partnership, arts and military collaborations are not one-size-fits-all. SAAs and RAOs collaborating with a state agency or a nonprofit group outside of the arts sector may want to pay close attention to building a strong foundational relationship. It may be useful, for example, to facilitate dialogue about the cultures of the military and arts sectors. It also is helpful to have clear conversations about setting goals, strategies and project timelines.
- **Cultivate credible champions.** When conceiving or promoting a new arts and military initiative, it is essential to have individuals from within the military community on board as advisors and supporters. A champion with knowledge of—and credibility within—the armed forces can give arts programs good aim and facilitate uptake among potential partners and providers.
- **Leverage existing programs and engagement mechanisms.** Many existing SAA and RAO programs—like arts in health care initiatives and even general project grants—may be well suited to support service members, veterans and their families. In fact, it may be wise initially to leverage an existing program in service of military and veteran communities before investing money and time into designing and launching a new one. The same is true for constituent outreach: military connections can be infused into existing planning practices, data collection efforts and convenings. To build awareness about arts and military programs and issues, an SAA or RAO can use its newsletter, website and other extant modes of communication. Day-to-day interactions, either formal or informal, with individual grantees, partners and other constituents are also valuable.

### State Legislation

A **Maine** bill enacted during the 2016 session, [H.B. 1504](#), establishes November 1 as Veterans in the Arts and Humanities Day in celebration of "the significant contributions of veterans of the United States Armed Forces in the arts and humanities."

As of April 2016, the Hawai'i state legislature is considering a bill ([H.B. 2741](#)) that would appropriate funding to the **Hawai'i State Foundation on Culture and the Arts** (HSFCA) for an "arts in the military program." The bill would enable HSFCA to award grants to arts and military efforts with the goal of providing "greater access to the arts for active-duty military members, veterans, and their families." The SAA filed testimony in support of the bill.

## RECOMMENDED RESOURCES [\(back to TOC\)](#)

### NEA Military Healing Arts Partnership

Through its [Military Healing Arts Partnership](#), the National Endowment for the Arts supports creative art therapies and arts engagement activities to help wounded, ill and injured service members and their families in their recovery, reintegration or transition to civilian life. The program, which began in 2011, supports therapeutic writing, art therapy and music therapy at the Walter Reed National Military Medical Center's National Intrepid Center of Excellence in Maryland and at Fort Belvoir in Virginia. See articles from [National Geographic](#), [NBC News](#) and [NEA Arts Magazine](#) for additional information.

The NEA currently is expanding the Military Healing Arts Partnership in order to support a greater number of service members and their families. The NEA will announce more details soon.

The NEA Military Healing Arts Partnership includes investments in research to advance understanding of the biological, psychosocial, behavioral and economic impacts of creative arts therapies deployed through patient-centered, integrative care. It plans to publish later in 2016 the results of a research effort it is collaborating on with Walter Reed's National Intrepid Center of Excellence and Drexel University's Creative Arts Therapies Ph.D. program.

### National Initiative for Arts & Health in the Military (Americans for the Arts)

The [National Initiative for Arts & Health in the Military](#) is an effort led by Americans for the Arts (AFTA) that advances the arts in health, healing, and health care for military service members, veterans, their families and caregivers. Working with partners from the military, government, and the private and nonprofit sectors, AFTA aims to raise visibility, understanding, and support of arts and military efforts, to advance arts and military policy and practice, and to broaden the availability of arts and military opportunities. The initiative has produced a number of resources:

- [Arts, Health, and Well-Being Across the Military Continuum—White Paper and Framing a National Plan for Action](#) This 2013 paper explains how the arts can benefit military and veteran communities and offers a series of recommendations for related research, policy and practice. It is based on the discussions of two national convenings, the 2013 National Summit on Arts, Health, and Well-Being Across the Military Continuum and the 2012 Arts & Health in the Military National Roundtable. See also a [summary fact sheet](#) of the white paper.
- [The Arts: A Promising Solution to Meeting the Challenges of Today's Military—A Summary Report and Blueprint for Action](#) This 2012 brief reflects the conversations of the 2012 Arts & Health in the Military National Roundtable and was developed to begin the conversation about creating a national plan to foster arts and military efforts. It laid the groundwork that led to the 2013 white paper above.
- [National Initiative for Arts & Health in the Military Convenings](#) This web page features materials—including agendas, presentations, speaker bios and fact sheets—from three convenings: the 2015 Veterans and the Arts Congressional Briefing, the 2015 National Summit on Advancing Research in the Arts for Health and Well-being across the Military Continuum, and the 2013 National Summit: Arts, Health and Well-Being Across the Military Continuum.
- [Art in Service: Supporting the Military Community and Changing the Public Narrative](#) This 2013 paper from AFTA's [Animating Democracy](#) program highlights examples of how the arts

can build awareness of military experiences, contribute to cultural diplomacy, facilitate veterans' reintegration, and contribute to healing and wellness.

- [National Initiative for Arts and Health in the Military Network Directory](#) This resource identifies individuals and organizations that support or provide arts programs and services to military service members, veterans and their families.

#### Other Research and Resources

- [National Coalition of Creative Arts Therapies Associations](#) The NCCATA website links to a number of journals focused on arts therapy across multiple creative disciplines.
- [Arts in Health: Strengthening Our Nation's Health through the Arts](#) This issue brief, which AFTA published in support of Arts Advocacy Day 2012, lists a number of proposals for national policies related to arts and military work.
- [The Difficult Transition from Military to Civilian Life](#) This 2011 article from the Pew Research Center addresses issues related to reintegrating into civilian life after military service.
- [National Center for Veterans Analysis and Statistics](#) Part of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, the NCVAS collects and analyzes statistics on veteran populations. It offers a number of resources, including state summaries of demographic data and population projections
- [State and Territorial Support for Members of the Military, Veterans and Their Families](#) Published in 2015 by the National Governors Association, this report catalogs (in seven categories) what benefits, services and programs each state and jurisdictional territory offers to active-duty service members, reservists, veterans and their families. It also tallies the number of National Guard members, reservists and their spouses and children living every state.
- [Standing Together: The Humanities and the Experience of War](#) This National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) initiative, which began in 2014, supports research exploring war and its aftermath, fosters understanding of military experiences, and supports veterans and their families. Through the initiative, the NEH is offering [Dialogues on the Experience of War](#) grants through which it underwrites discussion groups at college and university campuses, veterans' centers, public libraries, museums, and other community venues.
- [A Guide to U.S. Military Casualty Statistics: Operation Freedom's Sentinel, Operation Inherent Resolve, Operation New Dawn, Operation Iraqi Freedom, and Operation Enduring Freedom](#) This 2015 report from the Congressional Research Service presents statistics about U.S. military and civilian casualties during the active and completed combat operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. It includes data on post-traumatic stress disorder, traumatic brain injury and amputations, which are the hallmark injuries of these conflicts.
- [Returning Home from Iraq and Afghanistan: Preliminary Assessment of Readjustment Needs of Veterans, Service Members, and Their Families](#) This 2010 report from the Institute of Medicine of the National Academies considers the demographics of service members deployed in the combat operations in Afghanistan and Iraq as well as the health and social impacts of those deployments.

## State Level Allies

Apart from state agencies, numerous nonprofit organizations and practitioner coalitions exist that conduct work in multiple states. These groups may be helpful as information providers or possible partners and grantees. Below are examples cited by SAAs and RAOs.

- The [National Initiative for Arts and Health in the Military Network Directory](#) features a state-by-state list of individuals and organizations that support or provide arts programs and services to military service members, veterans and their families.
- Chartered and incorporated by Congress in 1919, the [American Legion](#) is today the nation's largest wartime-veterans' service organization.
- Together, the [VFW](#) (Veterans of Foreign Wars) and its [VFW Auxiliaries](#) have nearly 1.7 million members and work to serve veterans and their communities through camaraderie and advocacy.
- The [Combat Paper Project](#) leads papermaking workshops for veterans who use their service-worn uniforms as the raw material to create works of art. The group's goal is to leverage the transformative process of papermaking to help veterans reclaim their uniforms through art in order to express their personal military experiences.
- [SongwritingWith:Soldiers](#) is a nonprofit that helps members of the military and veterans craft music reflecting their experiences by partnering them with professional songwriters.
- [The Telling Project](#) employs theatre to deepen understanding of the military experience. Through performance, the nonprofit group enables veterans and military family members to share their stories with their communities, which eases transition back to civil society and strengthens social bonds.
- [Music & Memory](#) aims to improve the quality of life for people struggling with Alzheimer's, dementia and other cognitive and physical challenges. The organization trains eldercare professionals and family caregivers on how to create and share music that triggers memories patients may otherwise have trouble accessing.
- In an effort to infuse creativity in the lives and caregiving of aging adults, [TimeSlips](#) trains individuals and organizations in storytelling and community building.

For more information, or to share your own state's new efforts, contact NASAA Research Manager [Paul Pietsch](#).

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY [\(back to TOC\)](#)

NASAA developed this strategy sampler using a mixed-methods approach to capture the full range of arts and military work being conducted or considered by state arts agencies and regional arts organizations. Methods included an on-line survey, phone interviews, e-mail interviews and collecting extant information from relevant service organization websites.

Between January and March 2016, NASAA administered a "snap survey" to learn more about SAA and RAO policies, programs, services, partnerships and other efforts to serve military and veteran populations. NASAA designed the brief questionnaire to surface existing initiatives, to gauge interest in

pursuing relevant program work and to identify key issues. The survey had a response rate of 89%, with 49 out of 56 SAAs and all six RAOs answering its questions. (See NASAA's [Arts & Military Snap Survey Results](#).) Additionally, between January and April 2016, NASAA conducted 22 phone interviews and 7 e-mail interviews with personnel from 26 SAAs and RAOs engaged in arts and military work. Supplementing these data, NASAA mined information available from the NEA, AFTA, the VA, the Congressional Research Service other sources.

This strategy sampler was authored in April 2016 by Paul Pietsch.

The National Assembly of State Arts Agencies (NASAA) is the membership organization that serves the nation's state arts agencies. NASAA helps state arts agencies fulfill their many citizen service roles by providing knowledge services, representation and leadership programs that strengthen the state arts agency community. NASAA also serves as a clearinghouse for data and research about public funding and the arts. For more information on the work of state arts agencies, call 202-347-6352 or visit [www.nasaa-arts.org](http://www.nasaa-arts.org).



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## NOTES [\(back to TOC\)](#)

1. National Center for Veterans Analysis and Statistics, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, "Table 1L: VETPOP2014 Living Veterans by Age Group, Gender, 2013-2043," 2014, [http://www.va.gov/vetdata/Veteran\\_Population.asp](http://www.va.gov/vetdata/Veteran_Population.asp) ([back to article](#))
2. National Center for Veterans Analysis and Statistics, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, "Table 1L: VETPOP2014 Living Veterans by Age Group, Gender, 2013-2043," 2014, [http://www.va.gov/vetdata/Veteran\\_Population.asp](http://www.va.gov/vetdata/Veteran_Population.asp) ([back to article](#))
3. Defense Manpower Data Center, Office of the Secretary of Defense, U.S. Department of Defense, "Armed Forces Strength Figures for January 31, 2016," 2016, [http://www.nasaa-arts.org/Research/Best-Practices/DOD%20Data\\_Armed%20Forces%20Strength%20Figures%20Jan%202016.pdf](http://www.nasaa-arts.org/Research/Best-Practices/DOD%20Data_Armed%20Forces%20Strength%20Figures%20Jan%202016.pdf) ([back to article](#))
4. Defense Manpower Data Center, Office of the Secretary of Defense, U.S. Department of Defense, "Selected Reserves by Rank/Grade, January 31, 2016," 2016, [http://www.nasaa-arts.org/Research/Best-Practices/DOD%20Data\\_Reserves%20Personnel%20by%20Rank%20Jan%202016.pdf](http://www.nasaa-arts.org/Research/Best-Practices/DOD%20Data_Reserves%20Personnel%20by%20Rank%20Jan%202016.pdf) ([back to article](#))
5. According to the [National Initiative for Arts & Health in the Military's fact sheet](#), supporting its "Arts, Health, and Well-Being Across the Military Continuum—White Paper and Framing a National Plan for Action" (AFTA, 2013), more than 2 million troops deployed in the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan between 2001 and 2013. A [2010 report from the Institute of Medicine of the National Academies](#) puts the number deployed between 2001 and 2009 at 1.9 million. ([back to article](#))
6. Congressional Research Service, "A Guide to U.S. Military Casualty Statistics: Operation Freedom's Sentinel, Operation Inherent Resolve, Operation New Dawn, Operation Iraqi Freedom, and Operation Enduring Freedom," 2015, pp. 1, 2 and 4, <https://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/natsec/RS22452.pdf> ([back to article](#))

7. For more information on how public art installations in medical facilities benefit patients and visitors, see "Arts in Healthcare: 2009 State of the Field Report," Society for the Arts in Healthcare, 2009, [http://www.americansforthearts.org/sites/default/files/ArtsInHealthcare\\_0.pdf](http://www.americansforthearts.org/sites/default/files/ArtsInHealthcare_0.pdf); "More Hospitals Use the Healing Powers of Public Art," *Wall Street Journal*, August 18, 2014, <http://www.wsj.com/articles/more-hospitals-use-the-healing-powers-of-public-art-1408404629>; and "The Healing Power of Art: Can Hospital Collections Help?" NBC News, September 23, 2014, <http://www.nbcnews.com/health/health-news/healing-power-art-can-hospital-collections-help-n208966> (*back to article*)