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Today’s Seminar

After the Election
Your Host

Eric Giles
Learning Services Manager
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I. The Election
II. NASAA and the Transition
III. Audience Q&A
After the Election

194 Democrats

240 Republicans

218 to win
• A robust and well-resourced NEA is able to make meaningful investments in the arts.

• A strong federal-state arts partnership reaches communities in every state, jurisdiction and congressional district.

• Federal agency efforts help ensure that all Americans have access to arts education programs.

• All federal agencies have the capacity to address top-priority national issues by drawing on arts and cultural resources.
President-elect Donald J. Trump

Vice President-elect Mike Pence
What can you do?

The Practical Advocate

Three Simple Ways to Advocate for the Arts

Your voice matters in arts advocacy. If you are a board member or employee of an arts organization or an advocate, volunteer, donor or an audience member, your message carries a special power: there is nothing that captures the attention of elected officials more than the hometown constituent point of view. This edition of The Practical Advocate offers three easy ways to voice your support for the arts in your state. None of them are complicated, and none involve lobbying or asking for money. All are easy and effective!

Now is an especially important time to get involved. Elections for 5,915 state legislative seats took place in November 2016—that's more than 80% of all state legislative positions. Some newly elected officials will be unfamiliar with issues relating to public support for the arts. For incumbents who retained their seats, a new term presents a fresh opportunity for legislators to make their mark on state policy. And you never know who will be appointed to committees that influence decisions about the arts. So the time is ripe to lay a strong foundation of understanding.

1. Congratulate the Winners

Once the legislators representing your state House and Senate district are sworn in, drop them a note to congratulate them on their election success. The note can be brief and it should not ask for anything. Instead, your goal is to establish contact and show that the arts are an involved part of the electorate.

It doesn’t matter whether you share the official’s party affiliation or political philosophy. Hearing from you at the outset of a term will set a positive tone for future consideration of policies and funding decisions affecting the arts.

Addresses can be found on your state legislature’s website. Or try CQ Roll Call, an on-line database that provides state and federal legislators’ postal mail and e-mail addresses, phone numbers, websites, Facebook pages and Twitter handles.

An initial note has even more power if a follow-up communication reinforces the connection. Good times to drop a line to your representative or senator are when you receive a grant from your state arts agency or launch a new program or initiative. Use these occasions to describe the impact of the arts on people your organization serves.

What Should I Say?

Here is a sample note of congratulations to a newly elected state legislator. Personize the communication by mentioning issues pertinent to your community or by enclosing materials from your organization.

Dear: Representative/Senator:

Congratulations on your election to the state legislature. As a resident and voter in House District 14, I want to thank you for your service to our great state and to Springfield, a town we’re both proud to call home.

I also am writing to express appreciation for the support the legislature has provided for the arts in Springfield. I’m a board member of Vivid Youth Corps, which recently received a grant from the Springfield Arts Council. The funds help our students (mostly low-income middle school students) their energies into creative community service. They restored the flagging on our downtown bandstand and completed a new mural on the playground of Talbott Elementary School. We attached a photo. Look at those kids grinning and standing tall!

I know you face a full legislative agenda that includes many issues important to our whole community. The arts can help with these goals, especially improving education and attracting more businesses to Springfield, a way that respects our quality of life. I’d be happy to serve as a resource on these topics.

Congratulations again and best wishes for the legislative session ahead.

Sincerely,

Jane Gordon

2. Extend an Invitation

Arts events allow politicians to directly experience what your organization does. Events also make tangible the broad base of support that the arts have. Legislators see the impact of your work firsthand and may also spot friends and supporters in the crowd.

- Invite an elected official (and his or her spouse) to attend a performance or exhibition, a community arts event, a school activity or a training program.
- Acknowledge the presence of the official at the event.
- Thank him or her for funding your state arts council.

The best time for an invitation is when your legislature is out of session, when most politicians are present in their home districts. If your event includes any special activities for donors (such as a reception, backstage tour or introductions to performers), consider including the legislator.

3. Give Prominent Credit

If you are a state arts agency grantee, your award will come with requirements for acknowledging support from the state through use of a logo or special language. This is far more than a bureaucratic exercise—it’s an essential way of showing that public arts funding is important to your community. Securing public funding is an achievement, so wear it with pride! Place the state arts agency's logo in a prominent spot on your website and materials. (Don’t bury it at the back.)

Consider celebrating your award in your newsletter or via social media channels.

Engage in Ongoing Advocacy

When you follow the steps above you gain dual influence: you are a constituent with a relationship the legislator recognizes. This makes your participation in later advocacy efforts doubly meaningful. Pathways to further participation:

- Sign up to receive regular communications from your state arts agency
- And keep them appraised of interactions you have with elected officials
- Most states have citizen arts advocacy groups that follow legislative action and notify the field of important developments. Stay in the loop by following your advocacy group’s Facebook page, Twitter feed or e-mail bulletins. Show your support by becoming a member.
- Attend your state’s arts day at the state capital.

Handy Resources

Who’s Who in Government Arts Funding shows how federal, state and local funding works; who benefits; and how arts advocacy is organized.

Why Should Government Support the Arts2 answers tough questions about public support for the arts. It includes research citations backing up the key arguments.

How can NASAA assist you?

After the Election
Looking Ahead to 2017: What’s on the Agenda?

- Appropriations
- Affordable Care Act repeal?
- Tax reform
- Infrastructure legislation
- Committee assignments remain a question mark.
What’s on your mind?

Q&A

Chat
After the Election

Inspiring Young Imaginaries

The North Dakota Arts Council and other state arts agencies support programs that foster academic success. More

Science and art merge in Jamestown fifth graders' work with plastic bottles and paint, modeled after Chihuly glass sculptures. Photo by Rebecca Engelmann

New & Noteworthy

New! Three Simple Ways to Advocate for the Arts

New! NASAA Assembly 2016 Proceedings and Photos

2016 State Legislative Roundup

Diversity Policies & Programs

Who's Who in Government Arts Funding

NASAA Leadership Awardees

Arts & Military Strategy Sampler

NASAA Accomplishments

Key Issues

State Arts Agency Appropriations

Why Should Government Support the Arts?

Creative Economic Development

New Engines of Growth: Five Roles for Arts, Culture and Design from NGA Arts Education

Quick Links

State Arts Agency Directory

NASAA Notes Newsletter

Federal Updates

For Council Members

Web Seminars

Your Gift at Work

NASAA Board of Directors

Contact NASAA

M = NASAA member-only content

www.nasaa-arts.org
Thanks for participating!

Questions or comments about this session? Contact NASAA Learning Services Manager Eric Giles: eric.giles@nasaa-arts.org

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