

## Being an Arts Ambassador

As appointed leaders, chairs and council members are **champions** for the arts and **ambassadors** for their state arts agencies. This unique—and influential—role builds public awareness of the arts and fosters greater understanding of state arts agencies. Your ambassadorial job is one of the building blocks of effective advocacy. Your role as an educator lays a solid foundation of good will and good information to support resource growth and policy development for the arts. Here are some practical ways to get started.

### Speak Out

**Identify yourself as an arts council representative in your community,** throughout your own network and in informal settings. Some people you meet may not know what a state arts agency is—you can help them learn! Also, the simple act of a friendly person identifying as a council member helps to demystify public support for the arts and creates open lines of communication between councils and the residents they serve.



**Be a conduit for good stories and good news.** Spread the word about all the

great things the arts achieve in your state. Share information about arts events and inspiring stories about the arts (and circulate the latest news from your state arts agency) in person, via social media and through email.

**Let your voice be heard.** Write an op-ed in your local paper, a blog or a short newsletter article about the importance of the arts—and your state arts agency—to your community. Speak from the heart. Ask your state arts agency's staff for facts and figures to make your story even more persuasive.

## Reach Out

**Visit with grantees** to congratulate them on their awards, to encourage their good work, and to learn more about their needs and aspirations.



**Introduce yourself to your legislative delegation.** If you don't already know your state and federal house and senate members, get acquainted. You do not need to ask for anything during an initial visit or phone call. Instead, start by thanking them for their public service, letting them know that the arts are important to their constituents, sharing a short positive story and offering to be a resource for information in the future.

**Attend forums on issues other than the arts.** Take note of trends that may affect the arts, and offer suggestions for how the arts

can connect to what the group is trying to achieve. Your visible presence at town hall meetings, civic events, education meetings or business gatherings sends a powerful message about how the arts are integral to all aspects of community life.

## Stay Informed

**Sharpen your talking points.** Your state arts agency staff can provide information on grants awarded and succinct descriptions of programs the agency offers. Keep this information on hand, along with articles or stories you might want to reference in the future.

**Tune in to the latest news** from your state arts agency, your state arts advocacy organization and NASAA. Email NASAA Communications Manager [Sue Struve](#) to get connected.

**Inquire.** Don't be shy! If you are curious about some aspect of state arts agency services, [ask your state arts agency](#) or [ask NASAA](#). Our research staff is dedicated to answering your questions.

## Useful Resources

[Why Should Government Support the Arts?](#) This handy policy brief answers frequently asked questions about public support for the arts.

[Advocacy vs. Lobbying: An Arts Primer](#) After explaining the difference between advocacy and lobbying, this guide addresses some common myths and misconceptions helpful to board members.

## National Assembly of State Arts Agencies

The National Assembly of State Arts Agencies (NASAA) is a nonpartisan, not-for-profit organization that serves America's state arts agencies. We are a clearinghouse for information on best practices and research on cultural policy, public funding for the arts and the programs of state arts agencies. For more information, visit [www.nasaa-arts.org](http://www.nasaa-arts.org).

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STATE ARTS AGENCIES  
Knowledge ▲ Representation ▲ Community