

# SUPPORT FOR ARTS IN RURAL COMMUNITIES

Through many kinds of grants and services, state arts agencies (SAAs) increase citizen access to the arts and help each state to cultivate and promote its creative assets. This is especially true in rural communities<sup>1</sup>, where state arts agencies play a vital role in facilitating arts production, promotion, participation and preservation. The arts help to address some of the unique challenges faced by rural communities, including geographic isolation, infrastructure limitations and population flight. The arts can help to diversify rural economies by creating sustainable small businesses, improving quality of life for residents, and attracting visitors and investment.

State arts agencies serve rural communities in a variety of ways:

- **Grant funding:** State arts agencies invest nearly \$40 million in rural America through almost 5,000 direct grants to 1,997 rural communities. The extent of state arts agencies' reach into rural areas is even broader among those states with regranting or [decentralization programs](#).
- **Addressing accessibility and equity:** As stewards of public funds, state arts agencies have special responsibilities to make sure that underserved communities have equitable access to cultural resources. Because they administer both federal and state dollars, state arts agencies are in a strong position to ensure that this combined investment reaches rural communities. 14% of the U.S. population lives in rural communities. 13% of SAA grant funds—and almost a quarter of all SAA grant awards—are spent in these communities. Although these percentages vary from state to state, states with larger rural populations direct larger proportions of grants to rural communities.
- **Addressing unique infrastructure:** Proximity to a metropolitan area often allows citizens to access major arts institutions and a myriad of markets for cultural goods. In areas where this type of urban infrastructure doesn't exist, state arts agencies provide crucial services and programming through a variety of community facilities such as schools, community centers and other public venues that often serve as hubs for rural cultural activity.
- **Preserving cultural heritage:** In addition to grants that support arts activities, states offer a variety of services and initiatives aimed at promoting and preserving cultural heritage in rural communities. State arts agency initiatives such as heritage trails, cultural tourism initiatives and support for the traditional arts help sustain and promote distinctive cultural assets and inform the public about the value of these assets.
- **Public partnerships:** State arts agencies partner with government agencies at all levels to administer programs in rural areas. For example, some SAAs promote arts and wellness initiatives in conjunction with health and human service agencies. Other SAAs facilitate rural economic development initiatives in conjunction with state, local or regional economic development authorities. Rural arts development initiatives also have included partnerships with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, with state universities, and with rural Promise Zones designated by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Grant dollars awarded:	\$39,622,673
Share of all SAA grant dollars:	13%
Largest grant:	\$650,361
Median grant:	\$3,000
Number of grants awarded:	4,976
Share of all SAA grants:	22%
Number of rural communities served:	1,997

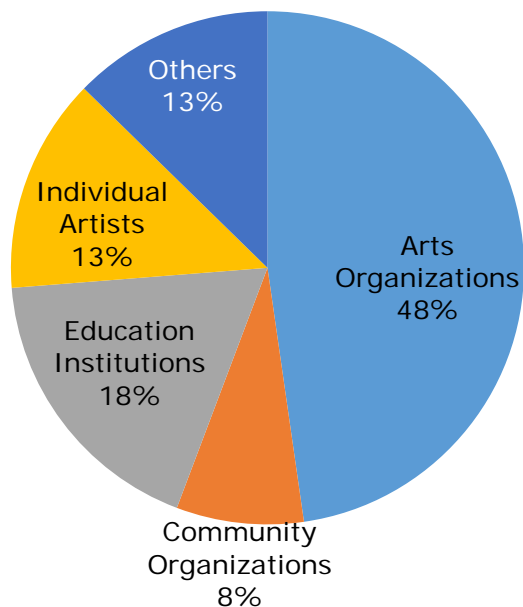
<sup>1</sup> For the purpose of this fact sheet, *rural* is defined as counties outside of any [metropolitan statistical areas](#) (MSAs). MSAs are areas defined by the [U.S. Office of Management and Budget](#) as at least one urbanized area of 50,000 or more population, plus adjacent territory that has a high degree of social and economic integration with the core as measured by commuting ties.

**State Arts Agency Grants to Rural Areas**  
Fiscal Years 2009-2018

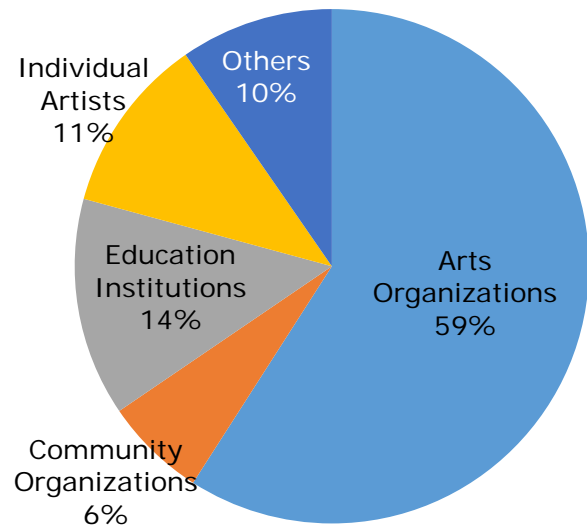
FY	No. of Grants		Grant Dollars	
2009	5,844	25%	\$38,696,020	15%
2010	5,491	25%	\$37,944,043	16%
2011	5,494	25%	\$36,533,001	16%
2012	5,448	26%	\$31,920,691	15%
2013	5,207	26%	\$32,066,193	15%
2014	5,169	25%	\$35,062,386	14%
2015	5,141	25%	\$35,290,961	14%
2016	4,998	24%	\$34,938,438	14%
2017	5,455	24%	\$40,079,203	14%
2018	4,976	22%	\$39,622,673	13%

The figures in this snapshot represent data from 2018 or the most recent information available. Statistics reflect only grants awarded by the state arts agency; they do not reflect nongrant programs and services, which in some instances make up a substantial portion of state arts agency support.

**State Arts Agency Grants to Rural Communities, by Institution Type FY2018**



**State Arts Agency Grants to Urban Communities, by Institution Type FY2018**



Source: NASAA Final Descriptive Reports, 2018. Pie charts show the portion of grants (not funds) awarded to each type of grantee. The view excludes grants to local arts agencies and grantees not reporting an institution classification.

**National Assembly of State Arts Agencies**

The National Assembly of State Arts Agencies (NASAA) represents the nation's state and jurisdictional arts agencies and serves as a clearinghouse for data and research about public funding and the arts. This report draws on data from state arts agencies' Final Descriptive Reports of grant-making activity submitted annually to the National Endowment for the Arts and NASAA. NASAA's collection of grant-making statistics is supported in part through a cooperative agreement with the Arts Endowment. For more information on the work of state arts agencies, call NASAA at 202-347-6352, e-mail [nasaa@nasaa-arts.org](mailto:nasaa@nasaa-arts.org) or visit [nasaa-arts.org](http://nasaa-arts.org).

**National Assembly of State Arts Agencies**  
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**NATIONAL ENDOWMENT for the ARTS**  
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# State Arts Agency Awards in Rural Areas, Fiscal Year 2018



All state arts agency grants in Northern Marianas, American Samoa and the Virgin Islands go to nonmetropolitan areas.