

# National Assembly of State Arts Agencies

KNOWLEDGE ★ REPRESENTATION ★ COMMUNITY

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## Action Plan Highlights

October 2012 – September 2013

Organized around NASAA's [strategic plan](#), this document summarizes recent activities and accomplishments during the 2013 membership year.

### Goal 1: Develop resources, relationships and public policies that advance state arts agencies.

#### 1A. Represent state arts agency interests to federal decision makers

- New in '13 In preparation for the presidential nomination of a new **National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) chair**, the NASAA board, assisted by the Partnership & Leadership Advisory Group, advanced a set of [leadership characteristics and priority recommendations](#) designed to strengthen the NEA and capitalize on the state-federal partnership. NASAA shared these characteristics with White House staff as well as with individuals who have come to our attention as potential candidates for the position.
- NASAA's board president and CEO met regularly with senior **NEA leadership** to discuss issues affecting the federal-state partnership.
- New in '13 NASAA provided [feedback](#) on a draft of the **NEA's new 2014-2018 strategic plan**. We commended several aspects of the draft, including the prominent acknowledgement of the importance of the federal-state partnership and the plan's affirmation of the public value of the arts. We suggested two specific modifications to offer important clarifications regarding the role of state arts agencies.
- New in '13 The NEA is revising its **data collection policies** to determine what data states and regions will be required to report in the future. NASAA [advised the NEA and the field about the proposed changes](#), encouraged states and regions to weigh in, convened the National Standard Working Group to offer input, and answered numerous member inquiries about the revisions.
- The NASAA board requested a strategic policy dialogue with the NEA to discuss how the NEA and SAAs can best collaborate to attain shared **arts education** goals. NASAA's Arts Learning Advisory Group is meeting to discuss next steps regarding NASAA's [Agenda to Advance Learning in the Arts](#).
- The **House Appropriations Committee** issued its [FY2014 Report Language](#) intended to accompany the budget bill that includes the NEA. The committee reiterated its desire for the NEA to consult with states in developing and implementing arts education programs and policies, noting that it values the support for grass-roots communities provided by state arts agencies.
- NASAA cosponsored **Arts Advocacy Day**, playing an active role in developing the agenda and formulating the [Arts Issue Briefs](#) used by attendees. NASAA led an arts orientation workshop for congressional staffers and participated in briefing sessions for Advocacy Day attendees.

## 1B. Foster support for state arts agencies among key policy audiences

- A new **"STEAM" caucus** has been established in Congress to encourage policy changes that integrate the arts and design with STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) education. NASAA [alerted state arts agencies to this news](#), made contact with caucus members, and urged arts leaders to support their representatives' participation.
- NASAA collaborated with the NEA and the **U.S. Department of Transportation** to host an [Arts and Transportation web seminar](#). This session explained changes to MAP-21 policies and highlighted opportunities for state arts agencies to advance the integration of the arts in transportation planning as well as community livability, sustainability and creative place making.
- NASAA managed the [National Arts and Humanities Youth Program Awards](#) for the **President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities** to recognize outstanding after-school arts and humanities programs for underserved youth. Awardees for 2012 were celebrated at a White House event in November. New applications from 376 programs were adjudicated for the 2013 awards cycle. An August Leadership Enhancement Conference helped awardees to strengthen their programs and make the most of their federal recognition.
- NASAA represented and promoted state arts agencies in **influential national networks**, including the Arts Education Partnership, Grantmakers in the Arts, the National PTA<sup>®</sup>, Arts Presenters, Americans for the Arts and The Association of American Cultures.
- NASAA responded to continuing **press coverage of arts policy issues**, fielding media inquiries from local and state news outlets and consulting with state arts agencies to ensure that NASAA reinforced members' key messages.

## 1C. Strengthen the advocacy practices of state arts agencies

- In conjunction with Assembly 2012, NASAA hosted a joint **advocacy forum**, co-coordinated by NASAA and Americans for the Arts, with state arts agencies and the State Arts Advocacy Network.
- NASAA continued to actively **share information with state advocates**. NASAA distributed state arts agency funding data and policy alerts to all advocacy organizations and invited these networks to attend NASAA web seminars related to advocacy topics. NASAA also supplied customized data upon request to many advocacy groups.
- NASAA circulated **handy advocacy tools** tailored for members' use when meeting with congressional delegations: [Arts advocacy talking points](#) made it easy for members to discuss the benefits of federal arts funding to their state and the nation. New [NEA Fact sheets](#) can be customized for individual states. [Facts & Figures on the Creative Economy](#) was another popular advocacy tool in 2013.
- **Virtual briefing sessions** supported state arts agencies' federal level advocacy. NASAA hosted a postelection briefing in November to offer guidance for members establishing relationships with new members of Congress. A Federal Policy Telebriefing in March provided updates on the federal budget, news from two key caucuses (the new STEAM caucus and the Congressional Arts Caucus) and other policy issues.
- NASAA participated in orientation sessions convened by the **Western States Arts Federation** to facilitate advocacy by representatives of 13 western member agencies.

## Goal 2: Increase the knowledge and skills that state arts agencies use to serve the public effectively.

### 2A. Maintain a comprehensive fact base about state arts agencies

- The [State Arts Agency Legislative Appropriations Preview](#) for fiscal year 2014 offered a **forecast for state appropriations for the year ahead**. This year's report contained encouraging news, with 38 agencies anticipating appropriations increases.
- NASAA's [State Arts Agency Revenues: Fiscal Year 2013](#)<sup>M</sup> report provided a comprehensive analysis of **state arts agency budgets**, including legislative appropriations, state rankings, line items and trends over time.
- NASAA renewed one of our most popular data services: providing comparative statistics on state arts agency **staff size and compensation**. New 2013 data was released in January.
- **On-line resource areas** cataloging state arts agencies' [percent for art programs](#), [creative economy initiatives](#), [economic impact studies](#), [decentralization programs](#) and [strategic plans](#) were revised to reflect newly released materials from member states.
- NASAA expanded information on the **structure of state arts agencies within state government** to provide [additional placement details](#) about sister agencies contained within multidivision departments.
- To make **state arts agencies' authorizing legislation** easier to access, NASAA created a digital compilation of statutes from each state and jurisdiction. The compilation is searchable and reflects legislation changes enacted in recent years.
- [Support for Arts in Rural Communities](#) joined our suite of **grant-making fact sheets**, which offer quick views of state arts agency investments in key issue areas. The entire grants fact sheet collection was updated this year, including summaries of awards for [arts education](#), [individual artists](#), [operating support](#) and [local arts agencies](#).
- The 2013 edition of [State arts Agency Grant Making and Funding](#) offered a snapshot summary of **state arts agency resources** and how they are invested.

**M** This symbol indicates on-line content provided exclusively to NASAA members and partner agencies. If you need login assistance or a password reminder, visit [Login Help](#) or contact Development and Membership Manager [Dora Shick](#), 202-347-6352 x108.

New in '13

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### 2B. Facilitate members' use of information for planning, decision making and case making

- NASAA fulfilled 456 **information requests** in fiscal year 2013. Of this total, 298 inquiries came from members requesting data, programmatic information or advice on a variety of funding, operational, planning and policy issues. The other requests originated from nonmembers, including the NEA, advocacy groups, arts organizations, consultants, scholars and the press.
- Fourteen member agencies received special **technical assistance services** from NASAA this year. These services included customized research, strategic planning support, briefing sessions for council meetings, and presentations at state or regional convenings.
- NASAA produced customized **benchmarking reports or geographic analyses** for eight state arts agencies. These reports illustrate the reach and impact of public funding and support state arts agencies' planning and evaluation efforts.

## 2C. Provide analysis of current trends and key issues affecting state arts agencies

- New in '13* • NASAA published a **new policy brief** that focuses on [state percent for art policies](#). The brief summarizes percent for art trends, the benefits of these policies and the challenges states face in managing their programs. This publication equips arts managers, elected officials and advocates with a succinct overview of factors to take into account by any state considering changes to its current policies.
- New in '13* • The [Arts Education 2013 State Legislation Roundup](#) recapped the goals and the status of 15 bills affecting **arts education** at the state level.
- NASAA's monthly Executive Director's Column provided **strategic assessments** of [arts education policy opportunities](#), [state arts agencies' creativity](#), [lessons learned from the 2012 elections](#) and [public leadership role models](#), among other topics.
- The [Grants Almanac](#) and [Public Funding Sourcebook](#) were updated to offer detailed **trend data** to members and researchers interested in studying how state arts agency funding and grant making have changed over time.

## 2D. Deliver educational programs that strengthen members' knowledge and leadership skills

- New in '13* • NASAA's [web seminar series](#) provided **on-line learning** opportunities to more than 365 participants from 47 states this fiscal year. To broaden access to these popular sessions, NASAA instituted a guest login policy allowing state arts agencies to invite partners and constituents to participate. To complement web seminar transcripts, we began offering audio recordings of sessions, accessible via the [web seminar archive](#).
- New in '13* • The 2013 Professional Development Institute (PDI) convened in Denver, Colorado, in September. Conducted in cooperation with the NEA, this year's PDI was a joint gathering of both **state arts agency arts education managers and state department of education fine arts coordinators**. The agenda, which emphasized collective impact, was organized around the NEA's four new goals for arts education.
- More than a year of planning culminated in the [Assembly 2012](#) conference, hosted by the DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities. In addition to a full array of **educational sessions and networking opportunities** for more than 300 attendees, the conference featured national and local artists and showcased the creative vitality of the nation's capital. [Proceedings](#) are available on-line.
- NASAA planned the [2013 Leadership Institute](#) in Jackson, Wyoming, hosted by the Wyoming Arts Council / Wyoming Department of State Parks and Cultural Resources. Held in alternate years, **leadership institutes** are smaller, policy-oriented convenings specially designed for executive directors, deputy directors, chairs and council members. The 2013 institute, October 16-18, kicks off NASAA's 2014 fiscal year.

## 2E. Catalyze state arts agency innovation, evaluation, improvement and change

- [State to State](#), a monthly column in the NASAA Notes e-newsletter, profiled 31 **innovative state arts agency initiatives** during this year. Featured programs addressed the creative economy, accessibility, arts education, effective partnerships and nongrant services.
- NASAA observed the 2013 **NEA Partnership Agreement panel proceedings** to gather information about agency planning practices and monitor programmatic developments in the field. A [synthesis of the panel proceedings](#), promoted to states that are starting new three-year funding cycles with the NEA, contains planning tips and suggestions for state arts agencies preparing new Partnership Agreement applications.

New in '13

- NASAA is a partner in a **National Center for Creative Aging** initiative—[ENGAGE: State Communities of Practice in Arts, Health, and Aging](#)—to help state arts agencies strengthen collaborations among arts, aging and health care providers. NASAA facilitated portions of the kickoff meeting that convened 13 state arts agencies to commence work on state level plans to facilitate integration of the arts into healthy aging services.

New in '13

- [Be Prepared](#) emphasized the unique leadership role that state arts agencies can play in strengthening the crisis management and **emergency readiness** capacities of our field and for their constituents. In partnership with ArtsReady, NASAA presented a State Arts Agency Preparedness and Response web seminar.

New in '13

- NASAA served as an **advisory partner to numerous national research projects**, including Animating Democracy's Evaluating the Social Impact of the Arts initiative, the cultural district advisory council of Americans for the Arts, Grantmakers in the Arts's research advisory committee and the Cultural Data Project's strategic planning task force.

New in '13

- The **feasibility study** for a Partnership Data Portal concluded in January. Initiated by the NEA and conducted in collaboration with NASAA and a technical consulting team, the study assessed the potential benefits and limitations of migrating state and regional Final Descriptive Report (FDR) submissions to an on-line platform. All states and regions were invited to offer input, and advice was secured from technology partners, NEA staff and NASAA. The NEA announced in April that it does not plan to initiate construction of a portal at this time, but the feasibility study findings will usefully inform NEA and NASAA efforts to optimize the utility of FDR data.

### **Goal 3: Sustain a strong Assembly to support the work of state arts agencies now and in the future.**

#### **3A. Keep state arts agencies informed and connected with one another**

New in '13

- The [Federal Updates](#) section of the NASAA website provided **timely federal policy information** for state arts agencies. NASAA's Legislative Alert e-mails notify members about federal actions affecting state arts agencies and their constituents.
- Monthly issues of the [NASAA Notes newsletter](#) shared current news, updates on legislation, summaries of new research, and resource alerts useful to state arts agencies and their constituents.
- NASAA expanded the distribution list for [Report to Councils](#) to include all state arts agency council members. Specifically designed for **volunteer leaders**, this report offers highlights of NASAA activities and serves as a useful insert for council meeting materials.
- Given the complexity of the federal policy environment, NASAA issued a number of **special bulletins to members** to supplement our regular communications vehicles. These [communications](#)<sup>M</sup> explained the intricacies of the fiscal cliff, sequestration, the NEA leadership transition, arts education policy and other issues.
- Nine **peer groups** convened for networking and job-alike discussions during the Assembly 2012 conference. Additionally, NASAA participated in and served as the fiscal agent for the annual gathering of state arts agency community development managers in conjunction with the Americans for the Arts conference.

### 3B. Engage state arts agencies in the work of the Assembly

- **Member participation** in all aspects of NASAA's work has been extensive. All 55 member agencies have been active this year as board or committee volunteers, event faculty, conference attendees, donors or information users.
- The **Nominating Committee** engaged 83 executive directors and chairs through [extensive member interviews](#) that invited feedback about NASAA, informed NASAA's strategic planning and shaped nominations for the 2014 NASAA Board of Directors slate.
- Fifty-one agency directors, council members and affiliates contributed information to a special **relationship-mapping survey** NASAA conducted to identify connections with Congress and the administration.

New in '13

### 3C. Develop and maintain the financial, human and operational capacities required to serve and advance state arts agencies

- In June, **The Campaign for NASAA** launched with the goal of raising \$50,000 by September 30 to match a \$50,000 challenge grant provided by the Windgate Charitable Foundation. Contributions from more than 200 individuals in all 50 states helped NASAA not only attain this goal, but surpass it, securing more than \$100,000 while celebrating the work of state arts agencies and generating great momentum for NASAA.
- **Fund development** to support Assembly 2012 was highly successful. Our host agency, the DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities, contributed \$50,000 to the event, and an additional \$83,100 was secured from other partners and donors.
- NASAA secured **100% dues participation** from all member agencies.
- NASAA secured a **National Services grant** from the NEA to support our research, learning services, communications, convenings and operations.
- The NEA awarded NASAA **cooperative agreements** to manage a variety of research services, the National Arts and Humanities Youth Program Awards, and the arts education managers professional development program.
- NASAA's **earned income** activities included 16 fee-based services for states, regions and nonmember organizations this year. Services included speaking engagements, facilitation services, strategic planning consultation and customized research.
- NASAA's annual **financial and federal compliance audit** was conducted in February. The Audit Committee met with the auditors and shared a clean report with the board.
- NASAA conducted **evaluations** of Assembly 2012 and our web seminars. We also began collecting baseline data for a performance measurement dashboard. Combined with website and communications analytics and member engagement tracking data systems, this information will inform planning and decision making by NASAA's staff and board.
- NASAA completed an upgrade to the **login software** used to provide access members-only material on the [NASAA website](#). This upgrade offers better system performance and allows members to retain an active login on multiple computers and mobile devices.
- **Recruitment** for two staff positions was completed. Research Manager Paul Pietsch documents innovative member programs, monitors state legislation and coordinates special research projects. Director of Administration Sylvia Prickett oversees NASAA's operations, business, technology and human resource functions.
- First steps were completed in a comprehensive **technology systems upgrade** that will update key hardware, software and association business systems in NASAA's office. This work will continue into next fiscal year.

New in '13

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